Connecting local with global, and evidence with users, from research design to policy action

2018 ANNUAL REPORT
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PEP Global Secretariat
Duduville Campus, Kasarani
P.O. Box 30772-00100
Nairobi, Kenya  +254 (20) 8632681
Info@pep-net.org

PEP partners

De La Salle University
Angelo King Institute
for Economic and Business Studies
UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL
Message from the Board Chair

PEP pursued, in 2018, the consolidation of its institutional base and its strategic diversification agenda to bolster the sustainability of the organization. And throughout the year, PEP worked diligently to cement our place at the cutting edge of international development efforts.

PEP continued to provide essential support for our researchers to strengthen the capacity for high-quality policy analysis in developing countries. In addition, it went further to foster consistent collaboration between local knowledge producers and policymakers. PEP has been reaching out to potential donors to expand the range of topics that our unique expertise and (research and policy-engagement) capacity building model can help to address in developing countries.

Multiple publications in peer-reviewed journals and international conference presentations by PEP researchers, Research Fellows, and staff have continued to raise our standing and that of PEP-supported researchers throughout the world. In enabling and promoting the voices of developing-country researchers, PEP is contributing significantly to national and international policy debates while helping to refocus the way these debates are defined and conducted.

2018 also represented a new step for PEP in supporting high quality research and capacity development for evidence-informed decision making when the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation awarded funding for a program to strengthen impact evaluation capacities in East and West Africa. Consequently, from 2019, researchers and government officers will work together under a new three-year program to strengthen impact evaluation capacities in East and West Africa. A base of better-trained and policy-engaged researchers, combined with increased government enthusiasm for impact evaluations, should lead to better-quality public policies for sustainable development in the target countries. Researchers and government officers will also work together in other PEP methodologies thanks to a two-year extension of the ongoing PAGE II Program by IDRC.

On behalf of my fellow Board members, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to all members of the PEP family: The Global Secretariat, the Program Committee, the resource persons and mentors, the donors, the Partners, the Research Fellows. I also thank the large number of PEP grantee researchers in developing countries who are able to provide an evidence base of the highest quality to decision makers and inform national and international development policies.

As a Board, we are proud to be part of PEP’s continued success and to be able to support, in a modest way, your endeavours.

Mustapha K. Nabli
Chair, PEP Board of Directors
Message from the Executive Director

I am pleased and proud to say that 2018 has been a very successful year for PEP. We have been working closely with our stakeholders and cultivating new partnerships to grow a more vibrant organization.

2018 was also a year that significantly raised PEP’s profile as a source of internationally high-quality research for policy and capacity-building expertise for evidence-informed decision making.

These achievements were recognized by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation who awarded funding to PEP for a three-year initiative to strengthen impact evaluation capacities in East and West Africa. This ambitious program to foster a culture of evidence-based policymaking in Africa by working with government officials and researchers simultaneously is nevertheless well within PEP’s areas of expertise.

PEP’s flagship PAGE II project remained the main focus of activities throughout the year. Following the 2018 PEP Annual Conference held in India, in June, we selected the second round of teams to receive support under PAGE II. Meanwhile, over half the project teams of the first cohort (selected in 2017) completed their research and began publishing their findings.

We continued our commitment to supporting developing-country researchers through the PEP online training courses and the PEP Research Fellows program. We introduced a new course on Measuring and Alleviating Poverty and Inequality, which, together with the two existing courses, forms a graduate microprogram certified by Université Laval in Canada. We also selected 13 new PEP Research Fellows (bringing the total to 20) to take part in all aspects of PEP activities and promote the greater participation of local researchers in national and international development policy debates.

We are proud of and grateful to the large number of PEP researchers in developing countries around the world who, despite facing many and varied challenges, are generating an evidence base of the highest quality and bringing that evidence to strategic stakeholders and decision makers.

Our achievements over the past 12 months would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of PEP staff, Research Directors, resource persons and mentors, local researchers, Research Fellows, and all of our partners. It is thanks to this unwavering collaboration that we will continue to produce policy-relevant evidence and build capacities in developing countries.

I would also like to thank our donors, the PEP Board of Directors, collaborating institutions, and all other stakeholders for their continued support and look forward to working closely with you moving forward.
2018 highlights

Supporting 200+ researchers through 45 projects in 33 countries

Training

PEP online training courses: 142 participants
New policy outreach mentorship program: 135 participants
Advanced technical training workshops: 67 participants
International study visits: 43 participants

Research

17 papers published in peer-reviewed scientific journals
  13 in high-ranking journals, and 9 from projects supported in LICs
Key themes of PEP-supported research in 2018 include:
  Youth employment • Women’s economic empowerment
  Entrepreneurship & financial inclusion • Migration & remittances
  Productive employment in rural farm & non-farm sectors

Reach

124,861 downloads of PEP papers and policy briefs
8,349 subscribers to the new PEP paper series on SSRN
11 country studies reported in national news media
17 projects contribute to evidence-informed policymaking
About PEP

Connecting local with global,

and evidence with users,

from research design to policy action
What we do

Our vision
A global network that brings together researchers and research institutions from around the world, to build capacity and undertake research that provides contextualized solutions to key economic and social policy challenges in developing countries.

Our mission
To build research capacity in developing countries, and put this capacity to work where it is most needed, to generate a relevant evidence base for development policy.

The Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to:

Building and promoting capacity in developing countries

high-quality research
Addressing specific knowledge gaps from a local perspective

for

policy engagement
Connecting local experts and evidence with key stakeholders

locally-defined and sustainable development policies

We do this by:

Linking promising researchers with international experts for customized training, mentorship and support.

Providing continual mentoring, peer review, and a comprehensive support package to enable rigorous policy analysis.

Fostering engagement with policy stakeholders from research design to policy action.
PEP has developed a unique research "Grant Plus" support program that empowers local experts in developing countries to produce high-quality scientific evidence, while successfully engaging with policy stakeholders and decision-makers.

The program is combined with a sophisticated web-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system, which enables PEP to oversee the progress and assess the impact of supported projects in three key areas:

capacity building - research quality - policy outreach

M&E data from (82) PEP projects (including 344 researchers) supported between 2013 and 2018 reveals that:

1 in 3 projects results in findings taken up to influence policy

1 in 3 papers is published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal

1 in 2 researchers experiences a major career promoting event

1 in 4 researchers is called to advise on national policy processes

Also, in terms of dissemination and outreach:

61% of teams organize national policy conferences

94% of teams discuss findings in person with decision-makers

57% of projects reported in national news media

72% of teams receive new funding or contracts to pursue related research

37% of teams present findings at high-level international conferences

74% of teams engage stakeholders in the dissemination of findings

In 2018, there was...

15,919 registered members on the PEP website, 1,220 new

8,349 subscribers to the new (2018) SSRN PEP paper series

87,315 downloads of PEP working papers

37,546 downloads of PEP policy briefs

140,900 impressions of PEP tweets

4,122 followers on the PEP Facebook page, 707 new
Scope

64 developing countries
300+ projects
1000+ local researchers 48% women
36% in low-income/fragile situations

THEMES

Employment & labour markets
Training & education
Social protection
Child well-being
Growth & fiscal policy

Youth employment
Women’s economic empowerment
Poverty, inequality & inclusiveness
Impact of government programs
Agriculture & food security

The geographic scope of PEP activities, combined with a “networking” type of organizational structure, provides a unique opportunity for locally-based, often isolated, Southern researchers to share and learn from international peers.

These exchanges allow comparisons of research results, conclusions, and methodological applications among countries and regions, promoting increased South-South knowledge transfer.

A multi-donor funded organization

Started with funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, PEP is now an international organization that is funded by multiple donors and received support from a growing list of institutions.

Since 2002, PEP has received support from the governments of Australia (AusAID), Canada (CIDA, IDRC), the Netherlands (NWO) and the United Kingdom (UK Aid/DFID), as well as a number of regional and international organizations and development partners (Hewlett Foundation, IADB, IFPRI, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, and the World Bank Group). Several PEP initiatives have also been commissioned directly by developing country governments, especially in Africa.

In 2018, most PEP activities were supported by UK Aid and the IDRC, through the PAGE II initiative (see pages 10-15).
PEP has four global thematic research groups (TRGs) that offer technical research support on the specific analytical approaches the researchers choose to be trained in and apply during their PEP project. These approaches allow PEP researchers to analyse a broad range of policy issues related to sustainable development.

Each group is supported by world-leading experts in the relevant methodologies (pages 36-37). In many cases, their support of PEP researchers has led them to develop innovative tools and techniques for developing country-specific applications, which are now acknowledged as some of the field’s most valuable contributions.

### Community-based monitoring system

CBMS aims to address data gaps for policymaking and program implementation while empowering communities to participate in the development process. It generates necessary disaggregated data to identify specific needs and areas for priority program/policy action and monitoring impacts over time.

This entails the design of CBMS in local context, development of indicator systems and data collection instruments, local capacity building, primary data collection and validation. Since 2003, PEP had supported institutions in 25 countries across regions for conduct of CBMS projects on multidimensional poverty analysis and providing empirical evidences on key development issues.

### Macro-micro policy modelling

Building and using economy-wide models as “laboratories” to simulate macro policies/shocks and their impacts on welfare at the household level. This program adopts sophisticated computable general equilibrium (CGE) and other micro modelling techniques.

Through research under this program, PEP-affiliated experts have developed a series of reference CGE models and related tools that have been used (downloaded) by 777 policy analysts and researchers in 132 countries.

As of December 2018, PEP has trained 319 local researchers, in 37 developing countries, to develop and apply CGE models and related techniques for policy analysis.

### Experimental research

Using experimental research methods to provide rigorous assessments of the impacts of policy interventions on a variety of outcomes - including both expected benefits and unintended effects.

Experimental impact evaluation methods include randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and field experiments, and thus the collection of primary data.

As of December 2018, PEP has supported 18 locally-led projects of experimental research in 15 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

### Microeconomic analysis

Designing and applying rigorous techniques of microeconomic non-experimental analysis to understand the effectiveness and distributive effects of public interventions in developing countries.

Research activities conducted through this program led PEP-affiliated experts to develop innovative software tools for distributive analysis: DAD and DASP (for Stata). These tools have been downloaded by 8,183 and 9,988 users, respectively, in 210 countries.

As of December 2018, PEP has trained 453 local researchers, in 48 developing countries, to use advanced techniques of microeconomic analysis.
"PEP has raised research capacity-building to a fine art"
- IDRC Canada

"The PEP project is a very useful experience for my career. We have received tremendous guidance and support from our mentor and others in the PEP team."

Eleni Yitbarek, Ethiopia

"Being part of PEP has offered me knowledge and skills that I will use for years to come in any professional environment."

Ivan Vchkov, Macedonia

"The knowledge, experience and confidence that I gained through the PEP project have helped be the first Cambodian economist to be selected, out of 1500 PhD applicants worldwide, to participate in the IMF Economist Program."

Dyna Heng, Cambodia

"My participation in the PEP Conference was a life changing experience. I have gained a lot and look forward to implementing what I have learned."

Mgeni Msafiri, Tanzania

"PEP is very dedicated to improving our skills in better communicating our results to policy makers."

Jelena Žarković, Serbia

"I have really benefitted from thinking to put the policy context at the initial stage of the research."

Yesuf M. Awel, Ethiopia

"Our PEP policy outreach mentor provided useful and thought-provoking insights to our policy context analysis and dissemination strategy."

Benjamin Musah Abu, Ghana
A global research & capacity building initiative,
supporting locally-led projects of...

Policy Analysis on Growth and Employment
In 2012, PEP was granted funding by the UK Department for International Development (DFID, or UK Aid) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, to implement a major initiative aimed at building and supporting local capacities for “Policy Analysis on Growth and Employment” (PAGE) issues in developing countries.

Between 2012 and 2016, PEP supported a total of 65 projects in 34 countries under the PAGE I initiative. It was highly successful in achieving, even surpassing, its objectives for research and scientific quality, capacity development, and policy influence.

Given the success of PAGE I, both donors decided to build on this unique program by granting funding for PAGE II, to support 45 new projects in 33 countries by 2020. Initiated in 2016, the ongoing PAGE II initiative thus represents PEP’s core activity in 2018.

### Key outcomes from PAGE (I & II) to date

#### 110 projects in 47 countries
- 50 projects in low-income economies, fragile or conflict situations
- **475 local researchers trained**
  - 56% women
  - 36% female team leaders
  - 35 years average age at project selection

#### Impact
- **39 projects have resulted in findings used to inform policy debates or decisions**

Also

- **184 researchers have experienced major career-promoting events**
  - 46% of these career events have led to the researchers’ increased involvement in policy advisory processes

#### Publications
- **86 working papers**
  - 71,205 downloads by the end of 2018
- **68 policy briefs**
  - 51,136 downloads by the end of 2018
- **22 scientific journal articles**
  - Including 12 in high-ranking journals

#### Dissemination
- **50 teams organized national policy conferences**
- **28 projects presented at international conferences**
- **47 projects reported in national news media**

82 PAGE projects were completed by the end of 2018.
29 are ongoing i.e. are yet to produce/publish their results.
Selection of PAGE II grant recipients

Competitive calls for proposals

PEP launched calls for proposals in 2016 and 2017 to identify the projects to be supported under each of the PAGE II funding rounds.

International experts carefully evaluated every proposal and provided detailed comments to help applicants improve their proposal development skills.

Online courses

As part of PEP’s efforts to expand capacity-building under PAGE II, shortlisted project team members must complete an online technical training course on the methodology they wish to apply.

The first session of PEP online courses was held in 2017, for applicants supported under the first round PAGE II funding. Another was held in 2018 for the second round of applicants.

Those who successfully completed the online courses were then eligible for:

Presentations and in-class training at the PEP Annual Conference

Up to two members per team were invited to present and discuss their project proposals with an audience of peers and PEP-affiliated international experts during the 2017 and 2018 PEP Annual Conferences, where they received additional in-person training.

In-class training was provided in:
- Advanced research techniques
- Scientific writing
- Policy engagement and communications

The presentations allow PEP evaluators to complete their appraisal and selection of grant recipients.

Find out more about the 2018 PEP Annual Conference on pages 21-23.
2nd funding round: 16 new projects selected in 2018
For a total of 45 projects supported under the PAGE II initiative

201 researchers - 117 women
18 female project leaders
33 developing countries

47% are in low-income economies & fragile/conflict situations

Thematic priorities
Under the broad theme of inclusive growth and employment, PAGE II projects investigate a range of more specific sub-themes, including:

- Gender & women’s economic empowerment
- Productive employment in rural farm & non-farm sectors
- Sectoral composition/patterns of economic growth
- Entrepreneurship & financial inclusion
- Youth employment

Analytical approaches
The projects are divided between PEP’s four Thematic Research Groups (page 8), according to methodology:

- Microeconomic analysis - 18 projects
- Macro-micro policy simulations - 13 projects
- Community-based monitoring systems - 8 projects
- Experimental research - 6 projects

During project implementation, PAGE II grant recipients receive ongoing support through:

- Scientific mentorship
- Policy outreach mentorship
- International study/field visits
- International peer review
- Publication co-authorship
- Communication training; Editing
International study and field visits

In 2018, 32 PAGE II researchers (50% women, 56% from LIEs) benefited from an international study visit, to work with their scientific PEP mentors on finalizing and reporting their research results.

Another 14 researchers in Mongolia, Peru and Malawi also benefited from a field visit by their PEP mentors.

Evaluation of research results

In June 2018, a group of 16 country project teams - supported under the first round of PAGE II funding - were invited to present and discuss their final research results with PEP-affiliated experts and peers at the PEP Annual Conference in India.

They received comments from participants, discussants and their PEP-assigned evaluators, to help them improve their final research reports. The revised reports were then sent to the PEP scientific committees for final evaluation.

Publications

Once the PEP scientific committees approved these 16 projects’ final reports, they were sent to external referees for a new round of evaluation, and further revisions, before being published as part of the PEP working paper series.

The teams then started working with their mentors to prepare articles for submission to high-level scientific journals.

Meanwhile, advisory support was being provided, by PEP’s policy outreach and communication experts, to help the teams refine the «policy messaging» of their findings. The key policy messages were then used to prepare communication tools, such as policy briefs and slide presentations, for dissemination.

Sharing findings with stakeholders

All PEP-supported research teams are required to engage in periodic consultations with stakeholders throughout their project; this ensures that the teams also get the opportunity to share and discuss their findings with the stakeholders, in person.

By the end of 2018, nearly all teams with approved final reports had already communicated their findings with potential users - resulting in the use of their evidence to inform ongoing policy debates or decision processes, in a number of cases. Two teams had also organized national policy conferences, intended for a broader audience.
Innovations under PAGE II

Capacity building
Through the PAGE II initiative, PEP aims to expand capacity-building activities for a broader and longer-lasting effect in the countries of supported teams.

The capacity-building innovations introduced under PAGE II include:

• Online training courses in various analytical approaches (page 18)
• Two members per team attend the PEP Conferences (in-class training, international peer-review) and study visits with mentors
• New technical (advanced) and non-technical training workshops

Policy outreach
From years of experience and a great number of successful impact stories, PEP has drawn important lessons that contributed to informing an innovative support program to help researchers design and implement effective policy engagement strategies. This program includes:

• Guidance in policy context analysis and stakeholder mapping
• Intensive workshops (2) to review best practices for policy engagement and communication
• Periodic advisory support from a “policy outreach mentor” (i.e. policy experts based in the same country/region), to help understand policy needs and identify/engage with key stakeholders

First PEP institutionalization project
Through this project, conceptualized and channelled through the Macro-Micro Policy Modeling group (page 8), PEP aims to:

• Develop and establish expertise in policy analysis using Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) models, within a selected research center
• Bridge research and policy through an institutionalized approach

This new type of support was piloted through 2017 and 2018 with a center in Mongolia, the Economic Research Institute (ERI) - selected out of 37 applicant institutions in 2016.

In 2018, the project team/center held two policy consultation and dissemination workshops and published two policy briefs. Several members were also invited to attend the PEP Annual Conference, as well as an international study visit in Canada.
Other initiatives

Strengthening Impact Evaluation Capacities in Africa

Diffusing PEP training through distance learning courses

A new PEP Research Fellowship program
Strengthening Impact Evaluation Capacities in East & West Africa

Funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

In September 2018, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation awarded PEP funding of $1.4M (US) over three years for activities to strengthen impact evaluation capacities in East and West Africa.

Coordinated by PEP’s Experimental Research group (page 8), PEP will provide support for local analysts and government officials interested in conducting impact evaluations (IEs) of government programs.

This initiative aims to reduce the gap between impact evaluation capabilities and demand (from local government and international organizations) in East and West Africa.

Activities - Under this initiative, PEP will:

• Organize a thematic conference on the integration of policy evaluation into policy design
• Extend the IE course as part of the PEP online training program (page 18)
• Organize an intensive (one-week), in-class training workshop in advanced IE methods for researchers and government officials in a target country
• Provide customized mentoring to government officials in conducting rigorous IEs of existing policies
• Support two locally-led impact evaluation projects using field experiments

Why?

Evidence-based policymaking is essential to foster growth and achieve long-term development. Despite recent increases in sound impact evaluations (IEs) carried out in Africa, local capacity remains low, particularly for evaluation design and implementation.

Local capacity is particularly important as researchers based in the study country are more familiar with the local context, better able to monitor all the steps of an IE, and develop closer ties with policymakers before, during and after the evaluation.

A base of better-trained and policy-engaged researchers, combined with increased government enthusiasm for IEs, should lead to better quality public policies for development in the target countries.
Online training program

Advanced training, provided by world-leading experts, in cutting-edge concepts and methodologies in development economics

From January to March 2018, PEP held the second edition of its new online training program on the most up-to-date techniques and tools for economic policy analysis.

The program aims to help local researchers contribute to the design of effective national growth and poverty reduction strategies in their own countries.

The courses are offered in collaboration with, and accredited by, Université Laval. On successful completion of each course, Université Laval provides students with a certificate of completion, and awards a graduate microprogram certificate to students who complete all three courses within a maximum of four years.

In 2018, the program included the following three courses:

**Policy Impact Analysis**

Policy impact analysis is used to determine which policies, interventions and programs work, for whom, and in what circumstances. Through an applied, non-technical approach, this course provides practical guidelines for designing and implementing various types of experimental and non-experimental techniques, including how to select the appropriate technique for each context.

**Computable General Equilibrium Modelling**

Computable general equilibrium (CGE) models are powerful analytical tools used widely in both developing and developed countries. This course introduces all aspects of this type of modeling, both theoretical and applied. At the end of the course, participants are able to develop, program and use a computable general equilibrium model.

**Measuring and Alleviating Poverty and Inequality**

Poverty and inequality reduction is a central objective of economic policies in both developed and developing countries. This course introduces the main theoretical and empirical aspects of the economic analysis of poverty and inequality: distributive analysis, poverty and inequality measures and profiles, multidimensional poverty, robustness, pro-poor growth and policies, poverty alleviation, targeting criteria and the distributive effects of price changes and tax reforms. Each theoretical class is accompanied with practices on real data.
As part of its ongoing efforts to promote the greater participation of local researchers in national and international development policy debates, PEP has established a new Research Fellowship program for its alumni.

An initial group of seven PEP Research Fellows was selected in 2017, 13 new Fellows joined them following a second call for applications that was launched in 2018.

In both calls, PEP invited all members of research teams with a completed PEP project to apply. PEP Research Fellows are selected for the high quality of their publications, research, training, teaching, conference participation, grants, and past PEP-funded projects.

Of the 20 researchers selected in 2017 and 2018: 9 are women, 8 come from countries in Africa, 7 from Latin America, 4 from Asia and 1 from Eastern Europe. Collectively, the Fellows have extensive experience in the four methodologies applied in PEP research (page 8) and in a variety of thematic areas.

What do PEP Research Fellows do?

Research Fellows take part in all aspects of PEP activities, including providing scientific support, designing and implementing PEP projects, organizing PEP training activities, disseminating PEP research, and representing PEP at key international conferences.

Special grant scheme for PEP Fellows

Along with the Fellowship program, PEP also created a special grant scheme to allow the new Fellows to receive PEP support for the advancement of knowledge in specific thematic areas. Two subsequent calls were launched in 2017 and 2018, to invite the selected PEP Fellows to submit proposals for support under this new scheme.

The first (selected in February 2018) is a collective project involving five of the seven Fellows appointed in 2017. It focuses on "Examining the Impact of Early Childbearing on Labor Market Outcomes" using two separate analyses – one for Brazil and a cross-country one that uses DHS data.

A second project was selected in September 2018, involving two Research Fellows who are analysing the “Low Take-up of Social Benefits and Financial Inclusion” in Argentina.

In both cases, multiple high-level publications are expected to result from the projects, along with significant stakeholder engagement.
Conferences
Sharing PEP research around the world

PEP Annual Conference and Policy Forum in India

14th CBMS-Philippines National Conference

Discussing PEP and PEP research worldwide
Bangalore, India
June 7 to 13, 2018

The 2018 PEP Annual Conference in India brought together 125 researchers, practitioners, international experts, representatives of donor and international organizations, and policy actors from 43 countries for a highly successful event.

As PEP’s second Annual Conference under the PAGE II programme, research teams at different project stages were invited to present their progress, findings, or new proposals. PEP Resource Persons, staff and experts also provided intensive training sessions tailored to the methodologies being used and to the different project stages. The conference concluded with a high-level Policy Forum on Women, Children & Climate Change.

**Strengthening capacities for policy research**

In line with its core mission to build and improve the technical knowledge and abilities of developing country researchers, PEP takes advantage of these annual gatherings to provide a variety of technical and non-technical training workshops for attendees.

In 2018, the researchers who were invited to present new proposals (under PAGE II) received advanced technical training on how to apply cutting-edge research methods and analytical tools for microeconomic analysis and macro-micro policy simulation. Meanwhile, the workshops for researchers using the CBMS methodology focused on the use of CBMS in monitoring the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and poverty mapping.

The workshops included theory and practical work, guided by PEP Resource Persons and experts in the methodologies being taught.

Under the PAGE II initiative, PEP has increased features to encourage policy outreach and ensure the long-term impact of PEP research. In India, PEP Communication and M&E experts led two intensive workshops reviewing best practices for 1) policy engagement and 2) research communications.

Finally, a scientific writing workshop was offered to provide practical advice on writing a high-quality paper and getting it published in peer-reviewed journals.

All workshops included innovations fostered through the experience of PEP-supported research and initiatives.
Presentation of progress reports, recent findings and new project proposals

The primary purpose of the PEP Annual Conference is to bring together PEP grant applicants and recipients with international experts who provide feedback that will help the teams improve their prospective or supported policy research endeavours. In addition to this expert advice, attending developing country researchers also get a rare opportunity to meet and discuss with their peers from around the world.

In 2018, 29 teams that had been selected for support in 2017 under the first round of PAGE II funding were invited to present reports on the progress and/or results they had achieved over the past year (2017-2018).

A further 21 research teams, shortlisted for the second PAGE II funding round, were invited to send up to two representatives to present their proposals prior to final selection.

2018 PEP Best Practice Awards

The PEP Best Practice Awards reward PEP-supported project teams who have made outstanding efforts to engage and link their research with policy and decision-making at home, while pursuing the highest standards in terms of scientific and technical quality.

This year, prizes were awarded to the highest-achieving team in each of the two methodological groups that had reached the final stage of their research cycle.

The 2018 PEP Best Practice Award for the macro-micro policy modelling group was presented to Wamadini dite Minata Souratié, Farida Koinda, and Rasmata Samandoulougou from Burkina Faso, for their project examining the impacts of “Agricultural policies on women’s employment and income”.

For the microeconomic analysis group, the Award was presented to Yesuf M. Awel, Jonse Bane Boka, Hiywot Menker, Ajebush Shafi, Eleni A. Yitbarek, and Mulatu Zerihun, for their project providing evidence from urban Ethiopia on “Financial inclusion, gender disparity in risk appetite, and micro and small enterprise performance”.

Policy Forum
Women, children and climate change

Concluding the 2018 PEP Annual Conference, PEP hosted a high-level policy forum to define priority issues for an effective and inclusive policy research agenda on “women, children and climate change”. The discussions concentrated on how children and women in developing countries are affected by and respond to climate change effects, as well as the policy needs and perspectives that researchers should understand before engaging in related studies.

A total of 130 people from 43 countries attended, including researchers, international experts, stakeholders, donors, and decision makers. The event featured two panel discussions, one focusing on Children and Climate Change, and the other on Women and Climate Change. The expert panellists, from local and international organizations (UNICEF, 3ie, Save the Children, MHT, IRADe), provided an overview of the importance of policy research and policy action on these topics and highlighted key knowledge gaps.

Following each panel discussion, a breakout session of table discussions organized by research methodology allowed the audience to review and propose research solutions to the highlighted knowledge gaps.

In addition to live streaming the event, the key lessons and recommendations drawn from the discussions were later synthesized, published as a report, and widely circulated by PEP to benefit all PEP researchers and subscribers.

The 2018 PEP Annual Conference was organized by the PEP Global Secretariat, thanks to support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID, or UK Aid) and Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC).
Reducing Inequalities through CBMS

The 14th CBMS-Philippines National Conference brought together more than 800 delegates including local chief executives and planning officers, national government officials, as well as representatives of country-based NGOs, development partners and academia.

Under the general theme of Reducing Inequalities through Community-based Monitoring Systems (CBMS) - see page 8), the three-day policy conference featured discussions and experience-sharing regarding the best practices and latest developments for the use of CBMS to improve various aspects of local governance - from planning and budgeting to public service delivery, and to inform interventions related to disaster risk reduction management, migration, poverty, inequality and development.

A roster of distinguished speakers included senators, governors, undersecretaries of several high-level national government offices and agencies, the UNDP Philippines Country Director, etc.

The main sessions of the conference were structured around “Use of CBMS” for the following sub-themes:

- Localizing the SDGs
- Disaster preparedness and management
- Fostering evidence-based legislation
- Improving local governance

Since 1999, the CBMS has been adopted by local government units in 77 provinces of the Philippines - including 1031 municipalities, 93 cities, and 29,259 barangays.

Government authorities have made various policy issuances in support of the implementation and use of CBMS at the local, provincial and national levels.

The conference was organized by the CBMS Network Office of the De La Salle University-Angelo King Institute for Economic and Business Studies (DLSU-AKI) in collaboration with the Department of the Interior Local Government (DILG).

Other partners included the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Union of Local Authorities in the Philippines (ULA), the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LCP), and the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP). The conference was held at the Novotel Manila Araneta Center in Quezon City.
Discussing PEP research worldwide

International conferences
In 2018, PEP and PEP research were presented/discussed by senior key staff or researchers at the following international events:

**Nairobi, Kenya – March 6-7**  
African Evidence Informed Policy Forum

**Oxford, UK – March 18-20**  
CSAE Conference 2018: Economic Development in Africa

**Belgrade, Serbia – June 6-8**  
The Future of the Welfare State in the Western Balkans

**Lausanne, Switzerland – June 26-29**  
2018 International Tech4Dev Conference

**Nairobi, Kenya – July 25-27**  
Evidence to Action 2018 Conference

**Pretoria, South Africa – September 25-28**  
Evidence 2018 Conference

**Helsinki, Finland – September 13-15**  
UNU-WIDER Development Conference

**Saly, Senegal – October 8-12**  
UNESCO regional workshop to strengthen evidence use in policymaking

**Bangkok, Thailand – November 12-14**  
TTI Exchange 2018

**London, UK – December 5-6**  
Annual Conference of the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

Discussing PEP findings with national policy stakeholders
All PEP research teams are provided with guidance and support to engage and communicate with key policy stakeholders at the national level.

This includes support for organizing national policy conferences, which contributes to raising the profile of the researchers at home while democratizing their findings for the general public. The majority of these events also benefit from broad media coverage by national news agencies.

By the end of 2018, several PAGE II research teams had already organized events to disseminate their findings with national stakeholders in Ghana, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Togo and Uruguay. Meanwhile, another 9 teams were preparing for events scheduled in early 2019.

Beyond these public events, PEP researchers also get the opportunity to discuss their findings, in person, with stakeholders, as PEP requires that researchers engage in periodic policy consultations throughout the project cycle.

By the end of 2018, at least 15 research teams, supported under PAGE II, had already discussed their findings in the context of direct/private meetings with stakeholders in Benin, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Macedonia, Niger, Palestine, Senegal, Serbia, Togo and Uruguay.

Promoting the use of CBMS for localizing the SDGs and monitoring child poverty
In 2018, Dr. Celia Reyes, CBMS Network Team Leader and PEP-CBMS Research Program Director presented the uses of CBMS in:

**Siem Reap, Cambodia - August 20-21**  
2018 ASEAN-China-UNDP Symposium on Localising the SDGs and Realising Poverty Eradication

**New York, USA - October 11-12**  
CROP and Equity for Children Workshop on Addressing Inclusion Among Children & Adolescents Living in Poverty
Publications

PEP Working Papers

PEP Policy Briefs

Scientific journal publications based on PEP research
Given that the first cohort of PAGE II projects were not completed until the end of the year, only 17 papers were published as part of the PEP Working Paper series in 2018. These include 1 from a first PAGE II project, 9 from CBMS projects supported under PAGE I (page 10), 5 from projects supported under STAARS initiative, and the rest from research conducted by PEP resource persons (pages 36-37).

By the end of 2018, PEP had published a total of 393 working papers, including 31 published in two languages.

In addition to the PEP website, all working papers are listed with both SSRN (Social Sciences Research Network) and RePEc (Research Papers in Economics) to ensure extensive worldwide circulation.

In 2018 alone, PEP working papers were downloaded 87,315 times

Papers based on STAARS and PAGE II projects, as well as PEP resource persons’ research

2018-01 Diversity more or less? Household resilience and food security in rural Nigeria
By Senakpon F.A. Dedehouanou and John McPeak

2018-02 Food insecurity and family structure in Nigeria
By Nkechi S. Owoo

2018-03 Do safety net transfers improve household diets and reduce undernutrition? Evidence from rural Ethiopia
By Tagel Gebrehiwot and Carolina Castilla

2018-04 Locus of control and technology adoption in Africa: Evidence from Ethiopia
By Kibrom Abay, Guush Berhane and Garrick Blalock

2018-05 Does gender matter in the adoption of sustainable agricultural technologies? A case of push-pull technology in Kenya
By Beatrice W. Murithi, Gracious M. Diiro. Menale Kassie and Geoffrey Muricho

2018-06 Validating the collective model of household consumption using direct evidence on sharing
By Olivier Bargain, Guy Lacroix and Luca Tiberti

2018-07 Rural non-farm engagement and agriculture commercialization in Ghana: Complements or competitors? By Paul Kwame Nkegbe, Abdelkrim Araar, Benjamin Musah Abu, Yazidu Ustarz, Hamdiyah Alhassan, Edinam Dope Setsoafia and Shamsia Abdul-Wahab

2018-08 The role of weather on schooling and work of young adults in Madagascar
By Francesca Marchetta, David E. Sahn and Luca Tiberti
As projects involving CBMS (page 8) usually produce more than one paper, some of the CBMS project teams supported under the PAGE I initiative (2012-2016) continued to publish results through 2017 and 2018. The CBMS papers published in 2018 are listed below.

Papers based on CBMS projects supported under PAGE I (2012-2016)

CBMS 2017-01  Poverty profile of Muthithi location Murang’a County  
By Diana Kimani, Patrick C. Kariuki, Phyllis M. Machio, Kone Michel, Michael Murigi and Jane Mariara

CBMS 2017-02  CBMS in Bolivia: Santa Cruz Valleys poverty profile  
By Werner Hernani-Limarino, Efrain Candia, Javier Aliaga-Lordemann, Paul Villaroel and Sherli Mamani

CBMS 2017-05  Evaluating government programs for enhancing the welfare of the youth towards entrepreneurship  
By Mitzie Irene Conchada, Marites Tiongco, Paulynne Castillo and Divina Edralin

CBMS 2017-06  Making social health insurance and micro-savings programs work for the informal sector in the Philippines  
By Mitzie Irene Conchada and Marites Tiongco

CBMS 2017-07  CBMS in Uganda: Poverty profile  
By Johnson Libega Kagugube, Margaret Banga, John Bosco Mubiru and John Nsubuga

CBMS 2017-09  Poverty profile of Mohammadpur (West) Union Parishad of Bangladesh  
By Abdullah Al Mamun

CBMS 2017-10  Youth employment and entrepreneurship scenario in rural areas of Bangladesh: A case of Mohammedpur West Union  
By Ranjan Kumar Guha and Abdullah Al Mamun

CBMS 2017-11  The lynchpin of development in Pakistan: Community Based Monitoring System at grassroots level  
By Nadeem Akhtar, Aaadil Wasim, Fatima Yamin Hafiza Ruhma Amin and Shujaat Farooq

CBMS 2017-12  Youth employment and entrepreneurship scenario in rural areas of Bangladesh: A case of Mohammedpur West Union  
By Nadeem Akhtar, Aaadil Wasim, Fatima Yamin Hafiza Ruhma Amin and Shujaat Farooq

In 2018, the CBMS group also published:

The Many Faces of Poverty
Volume 9

Edited by:
CBMS Network Office, DSLU-AKI
Published and distributed by:
De La Salle University Publishing House

New PEP paper series on SSRN

In July 2018, a new PEP working paper series was launched on the Social Sciences Research Network (SSRN) website, featuring 281 of the existing PEP working papers.

By the end of the year, the new series had 8,349 subscribed members, and the papers had been downloaded (via SSRN) 8,351 times.
A PEP policy brief is a short, non-technical summary of the research conducted and is based on the peer-reviewed PEP working paper. It presents the main conclusions and policy implications of the research project. The briefs are widely distributed to all policy-relevant stakeholders.

In 2018, PEP published 10 policy briefs (listed below), from projects supported under the PAGE I (2012-2016), STAARS and PAGE II initiatives. By the end of 2018, the total number of PEP policy briefs published was 187.

In 2018 alone, PEP policy briefs were downloaded 37,546 times

175 Impact of fiscal consolidation on the Mongolian economy
   By Tsolmon Baatarzorig, Nyambaatar Batbayar, Delgermaa Begz, Unurjargal Davaa, Ragchaasuren Galindev and Oyunzul Tserendorj

176 Economic and distributional impacts of fuel price subsidy changes in Mongolia
   By Ragchaasuren Galindev, Tsolmon Baatarzorig, Nyambaatar Batbayar, Delgermaa Begz, Unurjargal Davaa and Oyunzul Tserendorj

177 Challenges and prospects of entrepreneurship development and job creation for unemployed youth: Evidence from Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa City Administrations, Ethiopia
   By Abel Tewolde Mehari, Christian Feleke, Kassahun Mamo Geleta, Hayat Fentaw and Senayit Seyoum Yilma

178 Avocado contract farming in Kenya: Does it work?
   By Jane Kabubo Mariara, Menno Pradhan and Oostendorp Remco

179 The booming Peruvian avocado export sector: Lessons for Kenya
   By Ricardo Forte, Jane Kabubo Mariara, Menno Pradhan and Oostendorp Remco

180 Youth employment scenario in rural areas of Bangladesh: A case of Mohammedpur West Union
   By Ranjan Kumar Guha and Abdullah Al Mamun

181 Abstruse business registration process impeding youth entrepreneurship: A case of Katakwi District
   By Johnson Lubega Kagugube, Margaret Banga, John Bosco Mubiru and John Nsubuga

182 Impact on the Mongolian economy of foreign direct investment in the coal export sector
   By Ragchaasuren Galindev, Tsolmon Baatarzorig, Nyambaatar Batbayar, Delgermaa Begz, Unurjargal Davaa and Oyunzul Tserendorj

183 Uruguay’s domestic workers boosted by minimum wage policy
   By Alma Espino Gonzalez, Soledad Salvador, Sharon Katzковicz, Gabriela Pedetti and Martina Querejeta

184 Easing school to work transitions in Benin
In 2018, papers from 17 PEP-supported projects were published in international peer-reviewed journals, including 5 as part of a special issue of the Economic Development and Environment Journal.

By the end of 2018, 1 in 3 projects supported by PEP since 2012 had resulted in a scientific journal publication. 65% of these publications are in high-ranking journals, and nearly half from projects led in low-income or fragile/conflict situations.

From PEP-supported researchers and projects

Following the publication of a PEP working paper, PEP encourages and supports teams to prepare and submit their work to high-level scientific journals, often through collaboration with their PEP project mentor.

The increasing number of PEP-supported researchers whose findings are published in top development economics and policy journals demonstrates the success of these capacity building initiatives and challenges the near monopoly of these journals by researchers working in Europe or North America.

Hongqin Chang, Ping Ai and Yuan Li
Land tenure policy and off-farm employment in rural China
IZA Journal of Development and Migration, 2018, 8:9

Dosse Mawussi Djahini-Afawoubo and Esso-Hanam Atake
Extension of mandatory health insurance to informal sector workers in Togo

Nkechi S. Owoo
Food insecurity and family structure in Nigeria
SSM-Population Health, Volume 4, April 2018: 117-125

Beatrice W. Muriithi, Kassie Menale, Gracious Diro and Goeffrey Muricho
Does gender matter in the adoption of push-pull pest management and other sustainable agricultural practices? Evidence from Western Kenya
Food Security, Volume 10, Issue 2, April 2018: 253-272

Sénakpon F.A. Dedehouanou, Abdelkrim Araar, Aichatou Ousseini, Abdoulaziz Laouali Harouna and Maimounata Jabir
Spillovers from off-farm self-employment opportunities in rural Niger
World Development, Volume 105, May 2018: 428-442

Abdoulaye I. Djido and Bekele A. Shiferaw
Patterns of labor productivity and income diversification - Empirical evidence from Uganda and Nigeria
World Development, Volume 105, May 2018: 416-427
Eduardo Zegarra, Angie Higuchi and Ricardo Vargas
Assessing the impacts of a peer-to-peer training programme for women in Peru
Development in Practice, Volume 28, Issue 6, 2018: 754-763

Tagel Gebrehiwot and Carolina Castilla
Do safety net transfers improve diets and reduce undernutrition? Evidence from rural Ethiopia
The Journal of Development Studies, Published online (August 2018)

Agnes Zabsonre, Maxime Agbo and Juste Somé
Gold exploitation and socioeconomic outcomes: The case of Burkina Faso
World Development, Volume 109, September 2018: 206–221

Blagica Petreski, Despina Tumanoska, Jorge Dávalos and Marjan Petreski
New light on the remittances-poverty-health nexus in Macedonia
International Migration, Volume 56, Issue 5, Septembre 2018: 26-41

Nicholas-James Clavet, Luca Tiberti, Marko Vladisavljevic, Jelena Zarkovic Rakic, Aleksandra Anic, Gorana Krstic and Sasa Randelovic
Reduction of child poverty in Serbia: Benefit or employment strategy?
Economics of Transition, Volume 26, Issue 4, October 2018

Jorge Davalos, Trung Xuan Hoang and Luca Tiberti
The effect of input-trade liberalisation on farm and non-farm labour in Vietnam
European Review of Agricultural Economics, Published online (December 2018)

Special issue: "Natural Resources and Economic Development"
Editors: John Cockburn, Hélène Maisonnave and Luca Tiberti

Delphine Carole Sisso and Olivier Beaumais
Gold price volatility, tax revenue, and employment: Can Burkina Faso’s adaption strategy avoid resource curse?

Saadatou Sangare and Helene Maisonnave
Mining and petroleum boom and public spending policies in Niger: A dynamic computable general equilibrium analysis

Tsolmon Baatarzorig, Raagchasuren Galindev and Helene Maisonnave
Effects of ups and downs of the Mongolian mining sector

Renato Vargas, Maynor Cabrera, Martin Cicowiez, Pamela Escobar, Violeta Hernández, Javier Cabrera, and Vivian Guzmán
Climate risk and food security in Guatemala

Gadom Djal Gadom, Armand Mboutchouang Kountchou and Abdelkrim Araar
The impact of oil revenues on wellbeing in Chad
From PEP staff and resource persons

Below is a selection of scientific articles published in 2018 and based on the work and findings of PEP-affiliated international experts or PEP resource persons:

Paola Ballon
A structural equation model of female empowerment
The Journal of Development Studies, Volume 54, Issue 8: 1303-1320

Sabina Dewan and Lucas Ronconi
US free trade agreements and enforcement of labor law in Latin America
Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society, Volume 57, Issue 1, January 2018: 35-56

Sébastien Mathouraparsad and Bernard Decaluwé
A comparative analysis of economies of the French overseas department through the social accounting matrices
Revue d’Economie Régionale et Urbaine, Numéro 1, February 2018: 61-89

Martin Henseler and Hélène Maisonnave
Low world oil prices: A chance to reform fuel subsidies and promote public transport? A case study for South Africa

Marcelo Bergolo and Estefanía Galván
Intra-household behavioral responses to cash transfer programs. Evidence from a regression discontinuity design
World Development, Volume 103, March 2018: 100-118

Marcelo Bérgolo, Rodrigo Ceni, Guillermo Cruces, Matias Giaccobasso and Ricardo Perez-Truglia
Misperceptions about tax audits

Onil Banerjee, Martin Cicowiez, Emily J. Morris and Adela Moreda
Boosting tourism’s contribution to growth and development: Analysis of the evidence

Paola Ballon, John Cockburn, Sylvain Dessy and Setou Diarra
Monetary and multidimensional child poverty: Why they differ

John Cockburn, Véronique Robichaud and Luca Tiberti
Energy subsidy reform and poverty in Arab countries: A comparative CGE-microsimulation analysis of Egypt and Jordan
Review of Income and Wealth, Volume 64, Issue 1: S249-S273
Jane Mariara, Andy McKay, Andy Newell and Cinzia Rienzo  
**Gender gaps in the path to adulthood for young females and males in six African countries from the 1990s to the 2010s**  
IZA Journal of Development and Migration, Volume 8, Issue 16, December 2018

Luca Tiberti, Martin Cicowiez, John Cockburn  
**A top-down with behaviour (TDB) microsimulation toolkit for distributive analysis**  

Luca Tiberti, Hélène Maisonnave, Margaret Chitiga and Ramos Emmanuel Mabugu  
**The economy-wide impacts of the South African Child Support Grant: A microsimulation-computable general equilibrium analysis**  

Maria Laura Alzua, Habiba Djebbari, and Amy J Pickering  
**A community-based program promotes sanitation**  
Economic Development and Cultural Change, Forthcoming (available online)

Onil Banerjee, Martin Cicowiez, Thomas Ochuodhoc, Michel Masozera, Bernabas Wolde, Pankaj Lal, Sebastian Dudek, and Janaki R.R. Alavalapati  
**Financing the sustainable management of Rwanda’s protected areas**  
Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Volume 26, 2018 - Issue 8: 1381-1397

Elise Klein and Paola Ballon  
**Rethinking measures of psychological agency: A study on the urban fringe of Bamako**  

Nicolas Pécastaing, Jorge Davalos, and Andy Inga  
**The effect of Peru’s CDM investments on households’ welfare: An econometric approach**  
Energy Policy, Volume 123, December 2018: 198-207

Lucas Ronconi, Juan Casazza, and Eduardo Reese  
**The incidence of the provision of infrastructures in the price of land**  
Revista Latinoamericana de Estudio Urbano Regionales, Volume 44(135), 2018: 5-28

Jorge Davalos  
**Trade openness effects on informality and the real exchange rate channel**  
Who we are

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Angelo King Institute, De La Salle University
Philippine

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Representative of PEP Research Fellows
Associate Professor
Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar
Senegal
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Jane Mariara
Executive Director, PEP
Kenya

Celia M. Reyes
Research Director, PEP
Philippines Institute for Development Studies, and CBMS Network Office
Philippines

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Research Director, PEP
Experimental research
CEDLAS-Conicet, Argentina

Luca Tiberti
Research Director, PEP
Microeconomic analysis
Université Laval, Canada

Margaret Chitiga
Research Director, PEP
Macro-micro policy modelling
University of Pretoria, South Africa

Marjorie Alain
Ex-Officio member
Director of Communications, Monitoring and Evaluation, PEP
Canada

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Executive Director - Kenya

Angela M. Nyaga
Executive Assistant - Kenya

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Interim Senior Program Officer - Kenya

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Aissatou Diop
Senior Grant Administrator - Senegal

Marie Celeste Diouf
Assistant Grant Administrator - Senegal

Communications and M&E

Marjorie Alain
Director of Communications, Monitoring and Evaluation - Canada

Manuel Paradis
Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator
Canada

Jennie Hurwood
Communications Officer - Canada

Finance

Philip A. Ade
Senior Finance Officer - Kenya

Scientific Advisor

John Cockburn
Scientific Advisor - Canada
Who we are

Thematic Research Groups and resource persons

The success of PEP activities in terms of high-quality research and capacity building is due, in great part, to the engagement and support of world-renowned international experts in the field of development research. Those who contributed to PEP activities in 2018 are listed below, according to their associated TRG (page 8).

Community-based monitoring systems

Celia M. Reyes
President, PIDS; CBMS Network Director
CBMS Network Office, DLSU-AKI
Philippines

Anne Bernadette Mandap
Research and Administration Officer
CBMS Network Office, DLSU-AKI
Philippines

Jasminda Asirot-Quilitis
Senior Research Associate
CBMS Network Office, DLSU-AKI
Philippines

Steffie Joi Calubayan
Research Associate
CBMS Network Office, DLSU-AKI
Philippines

William Randall Spence
President, Economic and Social Development Affiliates
Canada

Sudarno Sumarto
Senior Fellow, SMERU Research Institute
Policy Adviser, Office of the Vice President
Republic of Indonesia

Felix Ankomah Asante
Director, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)
Ghana

Nancy Spence
Consultant, Economic and Social Development Affiliates
Canada

Experimental research

Maria Laura Alzua
Research Director, PEP
Deputy Director, CEDLAS
Argentina

Habiba Djebbari
Research Fellow
CIRPÉE, IZA
France

Ana Dammert
Assistant Professor
Carleton University
Canada

Defina Cerisoli
Research Officer
PEP, PIERI Group
Argentina

Guillermo Cruces
Deputy Director
CEDLAS
Argentina

Jose Galdo
Assistant Professor
Carleton University
Canada

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Macro-micro policy modelling

Margaret Chitiga Mabugu  
Research Director, PEP  
Professor, University of Pretoria  
South Africa

Bernard Decaluwé  
Professor  
Université Laval  
Canada

Hélène Maisonnave  
Professor  
Université Le Havre  
France

Olivier Beaumais  
Professor-Researcher  
Université de Rouen  
France

Lulit Mitik Beyene  
Managing Director  
IESD Research  
Ethiopia

Martin Cicowiez  
Professor, Univ. Nacional de la Plata  
Researcher, CEDLAS  
Argentina

Martin Hanseler  
Researcher  
Université Le Havre  
France

Sébastian Mathouraparsad  
Assistant Professor  
Université des Antilles  
Guadeloupe

Véronique Robichaud  
Consultant  
Université Laval  
Canada

Microeconomic analysis

Luca Tiberti  
Research Director, PEP  
Assistant Professor, Université Laval  
Canada

Abdelkrim Araar  
Researcher  
Université Laval  
Canada

Marcelo Bérgolo  
Assistant Professor, Instituto de Economía  
Universidad de La República  
Uruguay

Jorge Davalos  
Assistant Professor  
Universidad del Pacífico  
Peru

Francesca Marchetta  
Assistant Professor  
Université Clermont Auvergne  
France

Guy Lacroix  
Chair, Department of Economics  
Université Laval  
Canada

Bruno Larue  
Professor  
Université Laval  
Canada

Dileni Gunewardena  
Professor  
University of Peradeniya  
Sri Lanka

Maria Adelaida Lopera  
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Sumarto Sudarno
SMERU Research Institute
Policy Advisor, Office of the Vice President
Republic of Indonesia

Felix Ankoham Asante
Director, Institute of Statistical, Social & Economic Research (ISSER)
Ghana

Sophal Chan
Director
Center for Policy Studies
Cambodia

Coordinated by:

Marjorie Alain
Director of Communication, Monitoring and Evaluation, PEP
Canada
We wish to express our gratitude to the donors who have made our work possible in 2018.