A GLANCE AT THE REALITY OF THE SOUTHERN CONE OF THE AMERICAS

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PARAGUAY

Paraguay is located in the middle of South America. It has an area of 400,000 km² and almost 6,000,000 inhabitants.

The primary economic activities are the export of commodities. It is the fourth largest exporter of soybeans in the world. It also exports cotton, meat and electrical energy.
Paraguay has a lot to offer as cultural and natural heritage. It takes pride in being a multiethnic and culturally diverse society. Its population is conformed of various native populations and immigrants from every continent. There was a process of miscegenation with the Guarani Indians and their language remains to this day. It is the only case in Latin America where a native language is spoken by a large majority of the non native people.
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<th>PARAGUAYAN STATISTICS</th>
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<td><strong>GDP Growth</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Annual Per Capita income</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Inflation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tax evasion</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Monetary reserves</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Foreign debt</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Poverty</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Unemployment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Underemployment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Housing deficit 730.000</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Running water coverage</strong></td>
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### PARAGUAYAN STATISTICS

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<tr>
<td>Annual Population growth</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
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<td>Population below the poverty level</td>
<td>1,964,906</td>
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<td>Illiteracy rate</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
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<td>Functional illiteracy</td>
<td>around 60%</td>
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<td>Children out of the school system</td>
<td>1,627,769</td>
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<td>Not in school for economic reasons</td>
<td>932,717</td>
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<td>Dropped out in the primary cycle</td>
<td>48 out of 100</td>
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<td>Did not finish high school</td>
<td>77 out of 100</td>
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**Source:** UNDP Paraguay 2003 United Nations Programs Human Development
Paraguay is in a process of democratic transition after 35 years of dictatorship. One of its gravest problems is land distribution. The great majority of land is in the hands of a very small minority.

Corruption in the political sector takes credibility away from the leadership. There is freedom of the press, but the press’ power to control is not satisfactory because of the weakness of the judicial system.

Paraguay takes part in a Regional Integration Block, MERCOSUR which is currently suffering a great economic and social crisis which weakens the civil sector.
INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, as you all know, this administration has suffered from a serious lack of legitimate recognition. As a consequence, it has been almost impossible to gather information about the activities of all the UNESCO Centers and Clubs in the Southern Cone of Latin America. As a result, the current report refers only to the operation and activities of the UNESCO Center of Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay, during its inaugural term.
The UNESCO Center of Asunción was founded in 2001. The current Executive Board began a program on March of 2003 to strengthen the institution continuing the efforts of the past team under the ideals of the United Nation Organization for Education Sciences and Culture.

One priority was to unconditionally support the already functioning projects of the Paraguayan National Commission taking into account the fact that we must strengthen our civil society and the sectors involved in those issues.

We exercised leadership in order to gain a national and international position, to become more visible and attain public recognition. First we prioritized activities related to the UN Internacional years. First the “Fresh Water Year”, the “Fight Against Slavery and its Abolition”, and now the year of “Micro Credits”. The institution achieved a greater presence in the press through reflections about some Principal Documents from UNESCO like the “International Convention of Heritage” of 1972 during the year of “Heritage” (2002-2003).
UNESCO Center of Asunción
ACTIVITY REPORT 2003-2005
Most important highlighted in blue


• Support for “The Opera in School” proyect with the Pro Music Foundation in this case “La Serva Padrona de Joan Bautista Pergolesi”.

• Interinstitutional Projects of Education and Culture with conferences, seminars and round tables. Publication of articles in the press with reflexions on these matters.

• Co-sponsor of Internacional Literature Simposium. “Culture, Region and Identity” with the Argentine Embassy and local universities (4-9 August 2003)
UNESCO Center of Asunción
ACTIVITY REPORT  2003-2005

• Support for the Cultural Ministry of Paraguay in the Proyect “Cabildo de Pilar Espacio del Mercosur”


• Attendance at the meeting of UNESCO Civil Network of Spain and Latinamerica in Cáceres, Extremadura (June 2003).

• Attendance at the Congress of FMACU in Limassol Cyprus. (September 2003).

• Projects in the Internacional Year of Fresh Water co-sponsored with the largest daily newspaper of the country, ABC Color.
UNESCO Center of Asunción
ACTIVITY REPORT  2003-2005

• Workshops for teachers based on the book “Culture in the Classroom” by Prof. Beatrice Bosio in the “Asunción Book Faire” 2003 organized by the Paraguayan Book Chamber (CAPEL)

• Workshop in the Iberoamerican University “Paraguay Multiethnical and Pluricultural Country/Paraguay: Its Cultural and Natural Heritage”.

• Support for the Philosophic Olimpics 2003

• Support along with other institutions for the presentation of Bethoven’s 9th. Synphony under direction of Maestro Diego Sanchez Haase, which was declared Human Heritage by UNESCO.
UNESCO Center of Asunción
ACTIVITY REPORT 2003-2005

• Participation in the round table reflection on “The University in the 21st. Century. Vision and Projection in the Contemporary Scene.”


• Participation of a Paraguay representative, Fabiola Alcorta Member of “The Youth Parlament”.

• Co-organisation of the meetings of reflection about “Heritage” with CICOP (International Center of Preservation of Heritage) and presentation of the lecture ”Cultural Diversity, Humanity Heritage” (2003)
UNESCO Center of Asunción
ACTIVITY REPORT 2003-2005

• Co-sponsor with the Paraguayan Philosophical Association of the colloquium for the World Day of Philosophy.

• Participation in the meeting with Mr. Andrew Radolf, adviser of the UNESCO Latin America and Caribbe Region Office for Communication and Information.

• Incorporation of UNESCO Center to the Cultural-Network created by the new Viceminister of Culture, Ing. Bruno Barrios, at the Education Ministry.

• Attendance at the meeting of the FMACU Executive Board in Vinci, Italy from February 27 to March 2, 2004, where the Manifesto of Cerretto Giudi was launched.
UNESCO Center of Asunción
ACTIVITY REPORT 2003-2005

• Administration for the launching of the project for the “Bañado Sur” garbage dump, informal education for children, in association with the Foundation “Faith and Joy.”

• Coordination of the course “Latinamerican and Paraguayan Thought in the Twentieth Century” and publication project: “Paraguayan Thought in the Twentieth Century” with Dr. Eduardo Deves Valdés of the Institute of Higher Learning of the National University of Chile.

• Support for the publication of the Book “Slavery in Paraguay” by Dr. Alfredo Boccia Romañach during the UN International year for the “Fights Against Slavery, and Its Abolition.” 2004. Article in press.
UNESCO Center of Asunción
ACTIVITY REPORT  2003-2005


- Support for the Proyect “Piribebuy la Heroica” in Piribebuy, Paraguay, a photographic exposition on The War of Triple Alliance (1864-1870).
UNESCO Center of Asunción  
ACTIVITY REPORT 2003-2005

- Organization of the course “For a Democratic and Philosophical Transformation of Education from Latin América” by Prof. Mauricio Langon Member of the Uruguayan Philosophic Association and Corredor de las Ideas del Conosur. In the Government Education Institute for Teachers (ISE), Agosto 2004.

- Support and organization of the music Festival with Rolando Chaparro “Afropolka Instrument of Liberty” with the “Tamborileros del Cambacua” during UN Internacional Year for the Fight Against Slavery, and for its Abolition”.

- Technical assistance on the project for the National Law of Culture soon to be approved by Congress
UNESCO Center of Asunción
ACTIVITY REPORT  2003-2005

Support and co-administration to Conference and Seminars

• VIII Iberomab Meeting. “Man and Biosphere Program of UNESCO”
• III National Meeting for peace education: “Learning to Be”
• Cycle of Conferences on French Thought.
• National Seminar on the “International Convention on Cultural Diversity and Artistics Expresion.”
UNESCO Center of Asunción
ACTIVITY REPORT  2003-2005
CD Sponsoring and Presentation

• Presentation of “Nerendape Roju” by the paraguayan soprano Cristina Vera Díaz and the italian pianist Paolo Marsochi with the support of the Italian Embassy.

• Organization of the presentation of the Peteke - Peteke Band, which collects researchs on the oral tradition of Yaguaron by the etno musicologist Guillermo Sequera.

• Presentation of “Afropolka” by the composer Rolando Chaparro in the International Year of UN “Fights Against Slavery, and its Abolition” (2004).
UNESCO Center of Asunción
ACTIVITY REPORT 2003-2005

Publications

• Almanac 2005 in collaboration with the newspaper ABC Color with the winning drawing of the national contest “Defending Life by Caring for Water” during the UN Internacional Year of Fresh Water.
• Paraguayan Thought of the XX Century (currently being edited).
One of the UNESCO Center proposals was and always will be to wholeheartedly support the strengthening of civil society. We will be calling for new members in an open policy in order to move forward and encourage open discussion on the most important subjects with relationship to national and regional realities.

The Document on *Cultural Policies for Development* is one of our greatest achievements. This document was drafted by members of the cultural, educational and scientific communities specially invited by the UNESCO Center for this purpose. It stresses the fact that culture is an inversion and can become an important instrument for the eradication of poverty, one of the central problems for today’s paraguayan society.
I would like to thank the Honorary Advisory Committee, made up of well-known specialist who helped us with their wise advice, the Members of the Executive Committee as well as the General Direction of Culture of the City of Asunción, Manzana de la Rivera Direction, ITAIPÚ BINACIONAL, CIDSEP- KONRAD ADENAUER, ABC Color, Italian Embassy, Brasilian Embassy, Universidad del Norte, Catholic University of Asunción and the national press.
A REFLECTION ON UNESCO CENTRES AND CLUBS IN THE REGION

UNESCO has demonstrated a preference for supporting government programs, while Centers and Clubs are given a secondary status. Taking into account the fact that UNESCO Centers normally gather together personalities from the educational, intellectual and artistic communities with long histories of commitment in their areas and wide public recognition, as well as enthusiastic and hope filled young volunteers, this situation needs to be changed.

In South America (not including the Caribbean) there are UNESCO Centers in Montevideo, Uruguay and Asuncion, Paraguay, and a Federation in Venezuela.
As a result I would like to propose that:

THE NEXT GENERAL DIRECTOR OF UNESCO BE A LATIN AMERICAN IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THE REGION. (Like Federico Mayor Zaragoza strengthened Spain)

The Spanish UNESCO civil network is a powerful factor.

The Federations have become a real force and they should be included as a pressure group in order to persuade the government to work together with others in Member countries in order to make possible to realize the UNESCO ideals.

Bearing in mind a realistic criterium, I would say that to maintain UNESCO Centers in our countries, it would means that members have to contribute financially toward the running of the office.
Finally,

There are difficulties in getting and maintaining sponsorship in third world countries. Legislation does not favor private donations to non-profit organizations. The work of getting sponsors is very time-consuming and takes away time from other important projects.

On the other hand, the work of UNESCO Centres takes the place of the Government, where it is not present.

Therefore, we recognize the necessity and usefulness of said centres but only within a framework of sustainability.

Prof. Beatriz G. de Bosio

President Centro UNESCO Asuncion

Paris, July 18, 2005