SBE Economics Research Fellows Program: 2014 Project Descriptions

1. Bank Lending and The Role of Guaranteed Funding

   It is an experimental study. The purpose of this research project is to study and compare the behavior of bank lenders with and without funding insurance, using experimental economics methods. Bank lenders have access to funds, which they can use to lend to borrowers. The fundamental research question is whether lenders would behave differently if their funds are insured, backed, or guaranteed, vs. if they are not. In broader sense, it aims at establishing a foundation for studying the question of lending with one’s own money vs. lending with other people’s money. **Faculty: Dr. Christie.**

2. Religious Commitment and Economic Decision-Making

   It is an experimental study. Its research question is the following: Does a person’s faith and religious commitment have a meaningful influence on opportunistic and/or unethical economic behavior, such as self-seeking deception (unethical) or material selfishness? More broadly, does religious commitment lead to ethical economic behavior? **Faculty: Dr. Christie.**

3. Conditions Affecting Ecuadorian Migrants in the U.S.

   In cooperation with the Embassy of Ecuador, a socio-economic research on Ecuadorian migrants in the United States will be carried out. Specifically, it will investigate the conditions that affect migrants in the 6 largest metropolitan areas where they are concentrated: New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Illinois, Florida, and North Carolina. The goal of the research is to identify areas of need and assistance where the Embassy could help migrants through design and execution of programs that target such needs. **Faculty: Dr. Cruz-Zuniga.**

4. Development for Profit: the Case of Los Castaños, Honduras

   In Cooperation with Inter-Mac, an affiliate of Clark Realty Capital, this evaluation project seeks to determine the effectiveness in delivering the services of Inter-Mac’s Los Castaños de Choloma, a housing project designed to benefit low and lower middle-income families in
Choloma in Cortés, Honduras. By means of an integral economic development approach to impact evaluation, this assessment seeks to determine whether this housing development for profit initiatives does advance the socio-economic wellbeing of its beneficiaries and if it contributes to sustainable economic growth. It also aims at assisting Inter-Mac in continuing maximizing its investments while improving the quality of life of Honduran families. **Faculty: Dr. Aguirre**

5. **APIB’s AIDS Prevention Program for Banana Farmers, Guatemala**
   The main goal of the Association of Independent Banana Producers (APIB) is to promote responsible agribusiness in the productive sector of the country through constant development and competitiveness in each of the production units of Banana. It also seeks to promote the transfers of knowledge between partners, exchange of experiences, and shared learning in order to improve productivity of the guild. In 2013-2014 they developed and implemented an HIV prevention program directed to Banana farm employees. By means of an integral economic development approach to impact evaluation, this research project seeks to determine whether this intervention is effective in preventing AIDS, in improving the socio-economic wellbeing of its beneficiaries, and in contributing towards sustainable economic growth. **Faculty: Dr. Cas and Dr. Cruz-Zuniga.**

6. **APIB’s Cooperative for Banana Farmers, Guatemala**
   The main goal of the Association of Independent Banana Producers (APIB) is to promote responsible agribusiness in the productive sector of the country through constant development and competitiveness in each of the production units of Banana. It also seeks to promote the transfers of knowledge between partners, exchange of experiences, and shared learning in order to improve productivity of the guild. Some company members of APIB have workers cooperatives operating in the farm. By means of an integral economic development approach to impact evaluation, this research project seeks to determine whether existing cooperatives do advance the socio-economic wellbeing of its beneficiaries and whether they are effectively contributing towards sustainable economic growth. **Faculty: Dr. Aguirre**

7. **Strengthening Local and Regional Development: Red Nacional de Grupos Gestores, Guatemala**
   *Grupos Gestores* are local, permanent, autonomous, and non-for profit associations. They are created with an entrepreneurial vision and are integrated by representatives from the different sectors of a given community, mainly business leaders from different sectors of the local economy, academicians, and civic society as well as local authorities. The purpose of this group is to advance the economic development at the local level (district, city, county). By means of an integral economic development approach to impact evaluation, this research project seeks to determine whether the work of Grupos gestores is effective in advancing the socio-economic wellbeing of its beneficiaries and whether they are effectively contributing towards sustainable economic growth. **Faculty: Dr. Aguirre**
8. **Improving Quality Teaching Training, Nigeria**

This research evaluation project seeks to study the impact and effectiveness of a teacher training program in public high schools carried out by QAARDAN (Quality Assurance and Research Development Agency) in Nigeria. For 6 years the organization has been actively involved in teacher training workshops with the ultimate goal of assisting school administrators and teachers in developing themselves professionally. The training also seeks to ignite a sense of leadership in teachers by motivating them to play a central role in their students’ development. By means of an integral economic development approach to impact evaluation, this research project seeks to determine whether this training does advance the socio-economic wellbeing of its beneficiaries and if it contributes to sustainable economic growth. **Faculty: Dr. Cruz-Zuniga and Dr. Cas.**

9. **Improving Primary Education, Dominican Republic**

This research evaluation project seeks to study the impact and effectiveness of a community based local school “Café con leche”. For 6 years the organization has been actively involved in teacher training workshops with the ultimate goal of assisting school administrators and teachers in developing themselves professionally. The training also seeks to ignite a sense of leadership in teachers by motivating them to play a central role in their students’ development. By means of an integral economic development approach to impact evaluation, this research project seeks to determine whether this training does advance the socio-economic wellbeing of its beneficiaries and if it contributes to sustainable economic growth. **Faculty: Dr. Cruz-Zuniga and Dr. Cas.**

10. **Cost-Benefit Analysis of Institutional Strengthening Investment in Developing Countries, CRS**

Local institutional strengthening is a key component of sustainable economic development. CRS has worked on this area extensively. Partnering with a variety of local organizations and using their Integral Human Development approach, they utilized a variety of instruments to build institutional capacity. This research will undertake a cost-benefit analysis of CRS capacity strengthening projects worldwide in order to determine their efficiency and financial sustainability. Short and long term benefits will be analyzed. **Faculty: Dr. Cruz-Zuniga.**

11. **Family Structure and the Effectiveness of Interventions for Development**

This research project examines the influence that family characteristics have on the effectiveness of interventions implemented at the local level to strengthen sustainable economic growth. To do so, it utilizes household data collected from different programs implemented in developing countries. **Faculty: Dr. Aguirre**