

## **Financing state higher education**

For an institution of higher education such as the Universidad de Antofagasta, it is imperative to emphasize the importance of state funding for public universities. State support is crucial to preserve their autonomy and contribute to society's development. Recently, the solidarity expressed by the Consortium of State Universities of Chile (CUECH) towards the Interuniversity Council of Argentina (CIN) underlines the importance of public education and scientific research in solving our societies' structural problems.

Throughout its history, Chile has faced persistent socioeconomic inequalities manifested in a disparate distribution of resources and educational opportunities. Low-income families are significantly affected, encountering more significant obstacles to accessing quality education, which contributes to perpetuating the educational gaps in the country. The State's higher education institutions have a fundamental and missionary role in this context: finding solutions through their teaching and research to propel Chile toward full development. Nevertheless, these public universities must have adequate funding to achieve this goal. Adequate financial resources guarantee the quality of the education they offer and strengthen their capacity to face the country's social and economic challenges.

Studies in European and North American countries reinforce the importance of state funding for higher education. Research such as that of Barr and Crawford [1] in the United Kingdom has shown that adequate government support is essential to ensure academic excellence and equality of opportunity in public universities.

Additionally, studies in the United States have highlighted that government investment in research and development in public institutions boosts innovation and economic progress [2]. Doyle and Skinner's work [3], which has highlighted how state funding in scholarship and student aid programs in public universities in the United States has contributed to improving accessibility and equity in higher education, is another relevant example [3].

Various studies in Chile have highlighted the challenges public universities face regarding funding and educational quality. The report of the National Accreditation Commission (CNA) has identified significant inequalities in funding and quality among higher education institutions in the country. Moreover, academic studies conducted by institutions such as the Center for Public Studies (CEP) and Foundation Chile21 have highlighted the need to increase state funding to ensure equitable access to higher education and improve the quality of education (CEP). These researches highlight the importance of adequate public policies that promote equity and access to higher education in our country.

Meanwhile, studies such as [4] have evidenced how excessive dependence on the market as a regulator of public universities' success can undermine their mission of generating knowledge and serving society.

Therefore, it is paramount that the state recognize the strategic role of regional universities in developing the country and sustainably increase its financial support. This distinction will contribute to reducing territorial inequalities and strengthening the educational system's capacity to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Adequate state funding is an indispensable requirement to guarantee the quality, equity, and autonomy of state universities. From the Universidad de Antofagasta, we reaffirm our commitment to public higher education and call on all interested parties to rally in defense of this fundamental principle for our society's human and social development.

#### REFERENCES

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