



General Conference
35th session, Paris 2009

rep

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Report

35 C/REP/5
1 September 2009
Original: English

**REPORT BY THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE UNESCO
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (IESALC)
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTE FOR 2008-2009**

OUTLINE

Source: Article V, paragraph 5.2.2 of the Statutes of IESALC.

Background: In accordance with this article, the Governing Board of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) submits to the General Conference a report on the activities of IESALC during the 2008-2009 biennium.

Purpose: This report informs the General Conference of the achievements of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) during the 2008-2009 biennium, under the directorship of Ana Lucia Gazzola (July 2006–August 2008) and José Renato de Carvalho (Director a.i. from September 2008 to date).

1. In accordance with the 2005 evaluation process, IESALC Programme Activities have been geared towards: (i) the consolidation of its strategic and central role in the development of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, and (ii) the organization and realization of the Regional Conference on Higher Education (RCHE) in Cartagena de Indias, July 2008 which was a central event in achieving the Institute's strategic objectives and a preparatory event in the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) in Paris, July 2009. The Institute has further worked towards the implementation of RCHE recommendations.

PROJECTS

2. Reaffirming the Institute's role in the region, six strategic projects were developed with the aim of renewing the framework for higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean and elaborating conceptual references and related texts to the RCHE 2008:

- *Trends in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*¹ (prospective studies on themes such as expansion and equity, quality and relevance, science, technology and sustainable development and new scenarios in a regional perspective);
- *Comparative Study on Systems for Accrediting and Evaluating the Quality of Postgraduate Courses in Latin America and the Caribbean*² (benchmark studies towards the promotion of mutual knowledge, cooperation in quality assurance, support for student mobility and the implementation of joint regional or subregional programmes);
- *Map of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean* (description of national higher education³ systems, construction of a regional glossary and establishment of a computer-based information system in every country with the aim of developing a regional database);
- *Cultural Diversity and Interculturality in Higher Education in Latin America*: (survey on existing intercultural higher education institutions in the region, a report on their institutional development, lessons learned and recommendations for their improvement);
- *Journal of Higher Education and Society* (regular publication of this IESALC journal);
- *Thinkers and Makers in Latin American Universities* (Latin American thinkers and universities in 20 countries over the past two centuries).

3. All of these projects, studies, seminars and surveys, coordinated by international committees of specialists, and involving a significant number of highly representative researchers, have yielded significant data and results, contributed to the generation of publications, constituted instruments for progress and cooperation and provided important inputs for governments, institutions and experts. All of these different activities shaped and nourished the discussion agenda of the Regional Conference of Higher Education (RCHE 2008, Colombia) in July 2008, an event held under the leadership of IESALC and a preparatory event to the UNESCO 2009 WCHE.

4. Following the realization of the RCHE 2008, the institutional projects were driven towards the implementation of the Conference recommendations.

- *Dissemination of the RCHE 2008 Declaration and Plan of Action* (publication and dissemination of the RCHE 2008 Declaration and the Plan of Action, revision of the IESALC webpage, publication of a journal, technical and/or financial support to the regional events organized around the recommendations of the Regional Conference).
- *Elaboration and Implementation of the Latin American and the Caribbean Space of Higher Education (ENLACES)*: (elaboration of the proposal of ENLACES, convening of partners and technical support, mobilization of university networks and the council of rectors, analysis and debate of the proposal and development of related programmes and projects).
- *Cultural Diversity and Interculturality in Higher Education in Latin America – Phase II*: (survey on the existing intercultural programmes in universities and other higher education institutions in the region, analysis, description of eight experiences in strategic areas such as

¹ Ten major thematic studies were concluded.

² The project is completed and a book has been published embedding the findings.

³ Thirty-three national studies and glossaries, and one regional glossary were finalized.

education, health, environment, local development, agriculture, rights and culture, and lessons learned and recommendations for their improvement).

- *Map of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean – Phase II* (consolidation of its technological infrastructure – software and hardware – and expansion of its implementation process).

PUBLICATIONS

5. During the period in question, 14 publications were finalized and nine of these were launched within the framework of the Regional Conference in Higher Education, namely:

- *Tendencias de la Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe* [Trends in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean];
- *La Educación Superior in America Latina y el Caribe: 10 años despues de la Conferencia Mundial de 1998* [Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: ten years after the 1998 World Conference];
- *Universidad y desarrollo en Latinoamérica: experiencias exitosas de Centros de Investigación* [University and Development in Latin America: Successful experiences of Research Centres];
- *Diversidad Cultural e Interculturalidad en Educación Superior: experiencias en América Latina* [Cultural Diversity and Interculturality in Higher Education: Experiences in Latin America];
- *Hacia una Política Regional de aseguramiento de la Calidad en Educación Superior para América Latina y el Caribe* [Towards a Regional Policy of Quality Assurance in Higher Education for Latin America and the Caribbean];
- *Pensadores y Forjadores de la Universidad Latinoamericana* [Thinkers and Makers of the Latin American University];
- *Glosario de la Educación Superior* [Higher Education Glossary] (an online glossary);
- “*Educación Superior y Sociedad*” [Higher Education And Society] (two issues of the journal re-launched).

6. Following the RCHE 2008, IESALC issued five new publications:

- *Higher Education in Latin America*;
- *Instituciones Interculturales de Educación Superior en America Latina: procesos de construcción, logros, innovaciones y desafíos* [Higher Education Intercultural Institutions in Latin America: Processes involved in their construction, achievements, innovations and challenges];
- *Educación Superior, Colaboración Intercultural y Desarrollo Sostenible/Buen Vivir. Experiencias en América Latina* [Higher Education, Intercultural Collaboration and Sustainable Development/Living Well. Experiences in Latin America];
- *Educación Superior y Sociedad* [Higher Education and Society] (four issues in 2009);

- *Fuga de cerebros, movilidad académica y redes científicas* – a co-publication [Brain Drain, academic mobility and scientific networks].

SPONSORSHIP OF REGIONAL EVENTS

7. IESALC convened the Regional Conference on Higher Education⁴ in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in June 2008 and, through it, made an extraordinary contribution to the LAC region. The outcomes of the RCHE 2008 represent a road map for higher education policy in the region, and are likely to be a source on inspiration for the reforms to be undertaken over the next decade, as were those of the previous RCHE (1998, Havana).

8. Towards fulfilling one of the recommendations of the RCHE Declaration and embodying its regional networking role, IESALC brought together 37 of the most representative University Networks and Councils of Rectors in Latin America and the Caribbean in Lima (June 2006)⁵ to discuss the construction of the Latin American and Caribbean Higher Education Space (ENLACES). The political support expressed by the participants in Lima, and their commitment to collaboratively supporting IESALC in this challenge symbolizes the strengths of IESALC's legitimacy and leadership in the region.

9. IESALC has also co-organized a myriad of events pre- and post-CRES 2008. The Institute was present – through its Director or representatives – at 41⁶ regional events in order to present and debate the outcomes of the RCHE and the ENLACES proposal, and to mobilize regional participation in the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education.

REGIONAL AGREEMENT ON THE RECOGNITION OF STUDIES, DIPLOMAS AND DEGREES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

10. As the Secretariat for this agreement, IESALC commissioned a study aimed at assessing the state of art and the ineffectiveness of the 1974 Regional Agreement on Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas. The findings and conclusions of this study are published in the book "*Hacia una Política Regional de Aseguramiento de la Calidad en Educación Superior para América Latina y el Caribe*" [Towards a Regional Higher Education Quality Assurance Policy for Latin America and the Caribbean]. IESALC is considering reopening the debate on the revision of the Agreement with Member States – with the aim of either reformulating or voiding it, and is calling for the convening of a regional conference in November 2009 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Argentina.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO MEMBER STATES

11. One of IESALC's major functions is to provide technical assistance to Higher Education Institutions and Member States through *official missions* and *institutional assessments and/or on-demand governmental requests*.

12. Institutional assessments and governmental requests: A relevant activity in this area has been the Map of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean which was proposed by IESALC but benefited from the partnership of Ministries of Education. It will build capacity in all countries and organize national databases on higher education which are essential inputs for policy development

⁴ RCHE 2008 was attended by 3,359 people (including 16 regional Ministers/Vice-Ministers). The Science and Technology Exhibit had 61 exhibitors and the Higher Education University Book Fair featured 94 printing houses.

⁵ **Ten** University Networks, **3** Inter-Continental Networks, **14** Councils of Rectors and **4** Higher Education promotion agencies were present at this third encounter.

⁶ The most emblematic include: (a) the first National Higher Education Congress in Nicaragua (December 2008); (b) Working Group Meeting on the Formation of ENLACES (Panama City, November 2008); and (c) International Seminar in Teacher Training for the Twenty-First Century (Trinidad and Tobago, October 2008).

and a clear need in the region. Other technical assistance projects include the creation of the Latin American Doctorate in Education, to be launched in October 2009 and the feasibility study to create a Joint Doctorate in Agrarian Studies and Sustainable Development in the Region. The Institute has also partnered with the Ministry of Higher Education of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for a training scheme in the art of evaluating and accrediting higher education institutions.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

13. IESALC has provided training to librarians in the use of the CAPES Portal and has actively participated in a special Committee with the Kipus network to create a regional Doctorate in Teacher Training to be launched in October 2009. IESALC has also launched a process to update an already well-received online course in the region aimed at building capacities in assessing and accrediting higher education institutions. This course was originally launched in 2005. Equally, IESALC has signed a memorandum of understanding with SIU⁷ to make computer-based applications developed by SIN accessible through ENLACES in areas of university management and information handling.

COMMUNICATION

14. Communication is a key component for regional dialogue and information exchange. IESALC enhanced its communication methods and tools in order to foster greater collaboration in shaping regional agendas, and in disseminating new ideas and practices. The Institute redesigned its website and its publication *IESALC Informa* [IESALC reports], now available in Spanish, English and Portuguese. Distributed to more than 120,000 readers, it is made available to a broad base of stakeholders in the region and gives visibility to their activities. In an effort to support its host country, IESALC has become one of three entities outside of Brazil to provide online access to the CAPES Portal,⁸ and is also responsible for the conversion of the Information and Documentation Centre into an Electronic Library in Higher Education.

15. Additionally, IESALC promoted seven cultural meetings (*tertulias*) and debates on issues of contemporary interest, as well as art exhibitions.

ACADEMIC STAFF

16. During 2008, IESALC reinforced its academic capacity through extrabudgetary funds, incorporating a full-time senior academic into IESALC's pool of consultants. A programme for international fellows was created.⁹ IESALC also received interns from Venezuela and abroad.

FUNDRAISING

17. The focus on fundraising had excellent results, underscoring recognition of the Institute's strategic value by regional and extra-regional donors. The governments of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil and of Spain have also made important contributions or directly financed activities developed by IESALC. The Governments of Uruguay, Colombia and Argentina promoted events with the Institute. All pilot countries of the Map Project agreed to support the cost of this phase. It is important to mention that the Regional Conference in Higher Education (2008, Colombia) was fully

⁷ Integrated University System, which develops IT solutions and provides services on behalf of the National University System of the Argentine Republic.

⁸ An electronic scientific library comprising the complete texts of more than 11,000 journals and 102 databases in all areas of knowledge.

⁹ Funds from Spain and Brazil support this programme, through which foreign scholars spend one academic semester at IESALC. These are innovative ways through which IESALC has increased its academic capacity with low impact on its budget.

financed with extrabudgetary funds (US \$1,892,703.85). Recently, IESALC received financial support for the 2009 WCHE from the Governments of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Ecuador and from the University of Panama.

CONCLUSION

18. The Board believes IESALC has grown significantly during the biennium and has continued along its path of leadership in higher education in the region. All of the indicators used to assess its development are extremely positive. It is also important to note that, as part of the academic community of the region, we, the Members of the Board, are aware of the views of all our strategic stakeholders. We assure the General Conference that this has been a period of remarkable change and achievement – one in which IESALC has fully complied with the region's expectations and brought its mandate to fruition.