



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

DECISION

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Vice-chancellor

Action plan for Lund University's collaboration with Latin America 2021-2024

Decided by the vice-chancellor on 10 December 2020

Background

In 2018, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs established a national action plan for Latin America which emphasises the role of universities as relevant agents to promote collaboration with the region. For Lund University (LU) internationalisation is a prioritised area (strategic plan 2017-2026) and the action plan for internationalisation drawn up in 2019 stipulates the production of regional action plans. Against this background, LU's reference group for Latin America has been tasked by the international council with drawing up the present action plan.

Definition of Latin America

LU applies the accepted cultural geography definition of the American continent in which Latin America comprises all the countries south of the USA whose official language is a Romance language.

The conditions of higher education in Latin America

Latin America is a development region with great potential. According to Web of Science, Latin America's total research production amounts to approximately 5% of annual global research production (Sweden accounts for around 1.4%). However, conditions in the region vary considerably between countries. Brazil accounts for just under half of the total research production in Latin America, followed by Mexico, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia, which altogether account for around 40%, while the remaining 21 countries in the region account for around 10%. If you consider expected years of study and the proportion of the population that pursues studies beyond compulsory schooling (Human Development Index 2019), Chile comes highest in 41st place just before Portugal, and Haiti comes last in 168th just before Afghanistan. Based on the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list, 6 countries end up in the lowest categories of "least developed" and "lower middle income", while 12 countries end up in the "higher middle income" category. Chile and Uruguay are classed as high income countries. Brazil, with just over 200 million inhabitants, is the single most important economic motor in the region. However, only a few Brazilian states account for the lion's share of the country's economic growth. The state of Sao Paulo has a GDP of USD 687 billion and generates one third of Brazil's total GDP,

compared to Chile which has a total GDP of USD 277 billion. This is also reflected in higher education, with 40% of all Brazilian research production originating from the state of Sao Paulo.

LU and Latin America

There has been a clearly rising trend for co-publications between LU and Latin America over the past 10 years. A similar trend can also be observed on the national level. Brazil accounts for around 60% of all co-publications between LU and Latin America. In addition to Brazil, LU also has a significant number of co-publications with Mexico, Chile and Argentina. LU is currently involved in two ongoing strategic research initiatives in the region. In Brazil, LU is collaborating with the state of Sao Paulo's research council (FAPESP) and in Chile, LU is working with Uppsala University on coordinating the Swedish-Chilean research platform, ACCESS. Furthermore, LU's membership in the Swedish-Brazilian network CISB has enabled good contact interfaces, above all for researchers at LTH. Regarding external research and education funding, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Swedish Research Council, STINT, and the EU tools for internationalisation are important agents that account for the majority of LU's externally funded initiatives in the region. When it comes to student exchanges, LU has exchange agreements with 16 higher education institutions in 8 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela). Two of these higher education institutions are members of the U21 network. LTH is involved in around 60% of LU's incoming and outgoing student mobility with the region, which is mainly generated from the networks Magalhaes and TIME. The remainder is essentially handled by LU's External Relations division which manages the university-wide agreements. The School of Economics and Management (LUSEM) and the Faculty of Science account for just under one per cent each. Recruitment of Master's students is another important LU activity in Latin America. The majority of just over 130 students admitted in 2020 who stated a Latin American country as their country of education came from Brazil, Mexico or Colombia.

Opportunities for LU's work with Latin America 2021-2024

LU is a highly ranked institution with a very good reputation; it annually generates many requests for collaboration to which it must respond. The present action plan is to provide LU with clear priorities and goals for activities in the region for the coming years.

Work within the framework of ACCESS and the collaboration with FAPESP have shown good results and a significant interest and engagement on the part of teaching staff and researchers. Relations within ACCESS and with FAPESP are consolidated and there are very good opportunities to further develop these collaborations. It is clear that collaborations based on mutual commitment generate qualitative and long-term results.

For a time, LU has been in dialogue with Uruguay's innovation and research council (ANII) which has shown great interest in co-financed collaboration projects with LU. Uruguay has established itself as an economically and politically stable country in the region, which has also generated very extensive investments in the educational sector. Per capita, Uruguay produces the second-largest volume of research in Latin America (after Chile). The present action plan proposes that LU investigate the opportunity to develop formalised collaborations with Uruguay in research and education. LU currently has no student exchange agreements with Uruguay.

Prioritised countries 2021-2024

The present action plan chooses primarily to focus on Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, as these countries offer very good conditions for mutually funded collaborations with high quality higher education institutions.

As secondarily prioritised countries, LU identifies Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Costa Rica. LU currently has several established and important collaborations with these countries and sees great potential for intensifying these collaborations in future. The action plan is to be revised in 2024. LU's work concerning Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Costa Rica during 2021-2024 will mainly deal with continuous monitoring, dialogue and less extensive initiatives.

Goals

The present action plan has a university-wide reach and will be complemented with a plan of activities during 2021. The goal is to reinforce knowledge and expertise within LU concerning collaboration opportunities with Latin America. Existing collaborations between LU and Brazil and Chile are to continue and intensify. New collaborations in education and research are to be developed with Uruguay. Work on student mobility is to be maintained and developed. The U21, TIME, Magalhaes and CISB networks are to be utilised as far as possible for university-wide initiatives in the region. Within the framework of student recruitment, LU is to continue developing and managing collaborations with scholarship organisations in the whole region. The reference group for Latin America will continuously monitor developments in Latin America and, where necessary, propose changes and adaptations to the action plan. Furthermore, the geographical distance is a challenge from a sustainability perspective. Collaborations and meetings are, as far as possible, to be developed and implemented via digital platforms. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic places further demands on international collaborations, with the current impossibility of arranging meetings in person. During the autumn semester 2020, LU will collaborate with the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile to develop a virtual doctoral students' course. Experiences from this course will be valuable for the STINT-funded graduate school between Sweden and Chile coordinated by LU, which is to begin in 2021. It is also hoped that this type of virtual collaboration will be applicable with other partners in the region in future.

Measures

A, To utilise existing knowledge and reinforce expertise on collaboration with Latin America

1. Continue the ongoing work with the reference group for Latin America to implement the action plan, hold continuous discussions and compile a revision of the action plan for 2025-2028.
2. Organise a symposium to present LU's work with Latin America in 2021-2024. Target group: stakeholders within and outside LU. The symposium is to aim to:
 - a. highlight existing tools and resources for collaboration
 - b. provide information on the status of education and research in the region
 - c. present good examples of collaboration with the region
 - d. provide information on the economic and political status in the region
3. Organise a closing seminar in the autumn semester 2024 with the aim of:
 - a. presenting lessons learned and results of the action plan
 - b. discussing conditions and challenges
 - c. presenting a revised action plan for 2025-2028

B, To promote research collaboration with Latin America

1. Prioritise initiatives with Brazil, Chile and Uruguay.

- a. Fund the participation of LU researchers in the research symposia organised in the framework of ACCESS during 2021-2024
 - b. Implement the graduate school with Chile which is partially funded by STINT within the framework of ACCESS during 2021-2024
 - c. Continue collaboration with FAPESP through calls for applications for co-financed projects.
 - i. Investigate opportunities for more extensive projects with FAPESP
 - d. Gauge the opportunities for a formalised collaboration with the Uruguayan research council ANIL. Possible measures could include:
 - i. a contact seminar in 2022 for researchers within jointly defined disciplinary fields
 - ii. co-financing of collaboration funding
 - iii. co-financing of doctoral students
2. Monitor developments in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Costa Rica and potentially implement minor initiatives.
 3. Otherwise highlight relevant and accessible resources to increase research collaborations between LU and Latin America.

C, To promote educational collaborations, student mobility and student recruitment

1. Utilise financial tools such as Linnaeus Palme and Erasmus+ to stimulate educational collaborations with Latin America.
2. Reinforce student mobility with Latin America.
 - a. Stimulate and support outgoing mobility for students and doctoral students to Latin America
 - b. Gauge the opportunities for exchange agreements with higher education institutions in Uruguay
3. Reinforce student recruitment in Latin America.
 - a. Investigate and develop collaboration with scholarship organisations in the region
 - b. Administrate existing agreements with scholarship organisations
 - c. Continue recruitment work in the region
4. Within contract education, prioritise countries that show interest in LU and countries prioritised by Swedish public authorities.

D, Ethical considerations

1. In collaboration with STINT, Karolinska Institutet and the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), LU has drawn up a document for responsible internationalisation (Responsible internationalisation: Guidelines for reflection on international academic collaboration). The document offers a well-considered structure for reflection in view of international collaborations. The present action plan recommends using this document as a resource in cases where ethical questions arise.

E, Knowledge transfer and communication

1. Internal aims are to highlight the action plan and to update digital platforms concerning university-wide initiatives focusing on Latin America.
2. External aims are to highlight LU in Latin America and to highlight LU's experience and know-how concerning collaborations in the region, both within Sweden and internationally.