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Evaluation of the UNESCO Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Background

UNESCO has six Institutes and two Centres classified as ‘category one’ in the field of education, which are expected to contribute to the objectives and priorities of UNESCO’s education programme through offering services and technical assistance to Member States, partners, and to the network of UNESCO field offices. The Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) was established in 1998, following its conversion from a UNESCO Regional Centre for Higher Education (CRESALC), to promote the development and renewal of higher education.

Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to inform UNESCO entities and units, as well as Member States and cooperation partners, on the relevance of IESALC’s activities to UNESCO’s priorities, the results achieved by IESALC, the quality of coordination and interaction between UNESCO entities and partners, and the effectiveness of its financial and organisational management. UNESCO has commissioned this evaluation of IESALC as part of its broader review of education institutes and centres in the context of the UNESCO reform process.

Scope

The scope of this evaluation covers both organisational management and results achieved by the Institute. The framework for analysis includes consideration of the alignment of IESALC’s programmes with UNESCO’s strategies and goals in higher education and the results achieved by IESALC and the effectiveness of its programmes in achieving its objectives. The evaluation also considers the role that IESALC is performing within the context of UNESCO’s overall decentralisation strategy and the quality of coordination between IESALC, other UNESCO entities and stakeholders. Finally, the funding situation - particularly extra-budgetary funding - of the Institute is considered, as well as the quality of organisation management and the interaction of functional autonomy, governance and accountability.

Methodology

The evaluation is a mixed-method analysis that draws on a document and file review, semi-structured interviews in UNESCO Headquarters, IESALC and during field visits, and an online survey of stakeholders. The purpose of a mixed method design is to use the strengths of some methods to counteract the weaknesses of others. The major limitation of our design is that, in the absence of historical and objectively measured indicators of performance, we were required to place significant reliance on the subjective views of interviewees and survey

respondents. We countered the risk of bias by comparing and contrasting findings from a variety of sources and obtained using a variety of methods.

Key Achievements

Management Change

There has been ongoing management change at IESALC throughout the evaluation period. Since the appointment of the new Director of the Institute in 2001, IESALC has embarked on a significant period of reorganisation with the aim of improving its efficiency and effectiveness. Key organisational initiatives include:

- Contracting out organisational support functions;
- Accessing research and technical expertise by way of a decentralised network of consultants and contractors, rather than building in-house academic and technical capability;
- Use of information and communication technologies to improve access to information and to improve the cost-effectiveness of information sharing; and
- Up-grading the security and safety of the premises.

These management initiatives led to significant improvements in administrative efficiency and allowed a redirection of budget away from personnel costs and overhead towards programme costs, which increased from 18% in 2001 to 58% in 2004.

Clearing-house

IESALC's role as an information clearing-house is a major strength of the Institute. Since 2001, the Institute has focused on digital dissemination of information, through a regular digital bulletin, the publication of CD-ROMS (for those without access to the internet) and through its website. Uptake of these information products has grown at a rapid rate, with the bulletin alone now reaching 80,000 people each fortnight. All of the research studies, software and other publications commissioned by IESALC are made freely available on its website, and the Institute also publishes a growing number of publications as co-editions with other bodies (usually universities in the region).

Research and technical assistance

IESALC's studies of national and regional higher education trends and practices are valued by many of the stakeholders interviewed and surveyed, particularly for raising awareness of issues and for the international comparative approach. A notable example in co-operative work is IESALC's support for and dissemination of electronic tools for accreditation and evaluation. Examples of very positive feedback from Member States include assistance with the setting up of a new Ministry in the Dominican Republic, and the facilitation of a broad-

based consultation process for the Venezuelan Government in the context of a higher education legislative reform project.

UNESCO profile in Higher Education in the region

IESALC has made a significant contribution to raising the profile and presence of UNESCO within the higher education sector in Latin America and the Caribbean. While IESALC's 'presence' varies by country, and is low in some parts of the region, its profile belies its size owing to the significant volume of studies sponsored, seminars held, networks facilitated, and its strong digital presence. IESALC has developed a rich vein of networks within the higher education community in the region.

Challenges

Results-based management

In recent years UNESCO has implemented a range of 'results-based management' reforms aimed at improving the framework within which education institutes specify and report against their objectives, performance measures and work programmes for each biennium. In line with these changes, we expected to see the proposed work programme and budget for IESALC justified and debated within the context of a well-articulated strategic and results-based framework (e.g. intervention logic). Similarly, we expected to see progress towards improved outcomes-oriented reporting by the Board of IESALC. In practice, we found considerable room for improvement in both these areas. While there is a need for IESALC to improve the quality of its planning and reporting practices, this needs to be supported by a higher level of training and guidance from UNESCO Headquarters on how to implement results-based management practices.

Recommendations

The higher education priorities of UNESCO should be expressed with greater clarity and communicated to IESALC in a meaningful way prior to the commencement of each new biennium, such as in the form of a Letter of Expectations that provides more specific guidance as to UNESCO priorities than the high-level priorities identified by the General Conference in its biennial programme and budget [page 67];

IESALC should develop more of a results-oriented approach to planning and reporting, which could include surveying stakeholders to ensure the continued value and relevance of IESALC's work to stakeholders [page 55];

UNESCO needs to provide greater support (training and guidance) to IESALC to enable it to make more effective use of management tools such as SISTER and to encourage the adoption of other best practice (results-oriented) management systems [page 62];

Governance, monitoring and accountability

The Institute is expected to operate with a high degree of operational and functional autonomy. However, such autonomy relies on effective accountability for the outcomes which are to be achieved. The evaluation found a number of weaknesses in the current governance and accountability framework for the Institute and we have made a number of recommendations to strengthen both the governance role of the Board and the monitoring oversight role of the Assistant Director General.

Recommendations

The Governing Board of IESALC should give further consideration to how it, including through its Executive Committee, can improve its oversight of IESALC given the infrequent meetings and deficiencies in the coverage and quality of reporting provided to it. In particular, consideration should be given to the use of information and communication technologies to enable more regular and effective governance of IESALC, given the impracticalities and cost of more frequent meetings in person [page 64]; and

UNESCO should clarify where formal responsibility lies for oversight and monitoring of IESALC and its Governing Board, including through identifying the roles, responsibilities and skill sets required for that role [page 68];

The Assistant Director General for Education should consider establishing a Monitoring Advisory Unit to oversee the performance of the Institutes, and should provide appropriate training and resources to Secretariat staff to assist them to perform this function [page 68];

Extra-budgetary funding

There are potentially significant measurement problems associated with reported shares of extra-budgetary funding, such as under-reporting owing to in-kind contributions and co-funding arrangements that do not involve receipt of revenue. Nevertheless, reported contributions from donors and beneficiaries - other than the host-country - have represented only 1.7% of funding for IESALC over the evaluation period, which is very low in comparison with other education institutes. Although IESALC is aware that extra-budgetary funding is encouraged by UNESCO Headquarters, there was no awareness of any specific targets set for extra-budgetary funding. IESALC considers that extra-budgetary funding is not necessarily consistent with its strategy and prefers to leverage its resources through other means, notably its practice of encouraging partner organisations to co-fund research and other activities. It is difficult to be precise about the extent of this leverage but it appears to be significant. Despite this, the low levels of extra-budgetary funding received by IESALC have probably acted as a constraint on the scale of its activities and, therefore, its impacts.

Recommendations

IESALC should keep sufficient records to enable the measurement of the extent to which the Institute's funding of its programme is leveraged with third-party resources [page 60];

UNESCO should consider making clearer its expectations of IESALC in respect of the raising of extra-budgetary funding [page 60]

Cooperation and coordination with Field Offices and Institutes

There are significant opportunities for improvement in the interaction between UNESCO Headquarters, field offices and IESALC. With Headquarters, the exchange of information appears to be formal and bureaucratic. Despite the volume of IESALC's formal reporting, there is a perception at Headquarters of not being familiar with IESALC's activities, while IESALC in return indicated that it received little feedback on whether it was meeting Headquarters' expectations. Interactions between IESALC and field offices are variable by country but there is a lack of systematic contact. Regional coordination on higher education issues within the UNESCO system is a weakness, which raises the risks of overlap, duplication and the lack of a coordinated approach. Beyond the region, we found little evidence of working relationships between IESALC and the other education Institutes, including with the European Centre for Higher Education in Bucharest (CEPES), with which there is potential for synergies and possible overlaps.

Recommendations

IESALC should make a concerted effort to establish regular and good working relationships with UNESCO offices in the region, notwithstanding that good quality relationships require two-way communication and commitment from each party [page 52];

IESALC needs to develop indicators and report on performance in the area of relationship management [page 52];

Priority should be given to interaction and sharing of conceptual and methodological learning between the institutes, particularly between IESALC and CEPES given the potential for synergies and/or unnecessary duplication [page 52].

Internal expertise and capabilities

IESALC has a strategy of outsourcing its research and technical higher education expertise, for the most part to academics and other contractors. In other words, in terms of its research and capacity building activities (including technical assistance to Member States), IESALC basically operates as a 'virtual institute'. This is justified on the basis that it enables a high volume of research to be supported across a diverse range of topics utilising specialist expertise, without significant overhead or lack of specialism associated with building in-house capability. While this strategy appears to us to have merits, we consider that building a small,

critical mass of ‘in-house’ academic and technical expertise (requiring additional staff) would add to the capacity of the Institute to engage with stakeholders and bolster the quality assurance system for work commissioned by the Institute.

Recommendations

Notwithstanding the benefits of a lean and decentralised mode of operation, IESALC should consider recruiting additional staff with academic or technical expertise in order to add to the capacity for engagement with its stakeholders and to bolster the quality assurance systems on work commissioned by the Institute [page 34];

IESALC should improve its quality assurance process for studies published or supported by IESALC principally through the use of formal academic peer review [page 34];

Standard-setting function

Although IESALC is mandated to act as the Secretariat for the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Latin America and the Caribbean, most of its activities in the ‘standard-setting’ area have not been directed at fulfilling its Secretariat role. Indeed, it would appear that a meeting of the signatories to the Convention has not been held since 2001. This is of concern to staff in the Education division of UNESCO Headquarters, however staff at IESALC indicated that the Convention is not considered to be a priority by the countries in the region. While there has been little progress in the context of the Convention, IESALC has undertaken a range of activities in the areas of accreditation and evaluation, in partnership with organisations in Member States. It has developed and distributed ‘open-source’ evaluation software, which has been utilised in a number of universities throughout the region.

Influence on UNESCO strategies and programme priorities for higher education

We found some evidence of a lack of awareness, including by members of the Governing Board, that IESALC was expected to contribute to and influence the higher education strategies and programmes of UNESCO. Indeed, the general view we encountered was that the role of IESALC was to adapt UNESCO policies and priorities to local conditions. There is therefore a need to clarify the expectations of UNESCO in this regard and for there to be more frequent strategic dialogue between IESALC and UNESCO Headquarters.

Recommendation

The expectation that IESALC should be a major contributor to the broader UNESCO debate on higher education strategies and programme priorities should be re-communicated to the Board and Director of IESALC, and both the Institute and UNESCO Headquarters should take steps to engage in strategic-level discussions early in new biennium planning rounds [page 30].

Language barriers

The primary working language of the Institute is Spanish. However, the capacity to communicate in English, French and Portuguese are also necessary to communicate with the countries of the Caribbean, Haiti and Brazil respectively. All country (and sub-regional) studies are published in the language of the subject country or region, without translation into the other languages, which represents a barrier to shared knowledge. In addition, language has proved to be a barrier for communication between IESALC and other parts of UNESCO, including Headquarters. While IESALC has staff with competencies in a range of languages, we consider that knowledge sharing and cooperation could be enhanced considerably if there was a higher-level of language (including translation) skills.

Recommendation

IESALC should develop a cost-effective strategy to overcome the communication barriers associated with the publication of information in the subject country's language [page 42];

Overall

We have found that IESALC is making a positive contribution towards the achievement of its objectives, as outlined in its Statutes and, despite some gaps, it is broadly operating in line with the higher education priorities of UNESCO. Its key strength is in its role as information clearing house, through which it has created a significant presence in the higher education community in the region. It has also had a positive impact across its other roles – laboratory of ideas, standard setter, capacity builder and catalyst for international cooperation. In general, however, its impacts are commensurate with its resources, which have been constrained by a lack of extra-budgetary funding. While it is premature to measure IESALC against the 'ideal' or 'benchmark' for UNESCO Institutes, since that 'ideal' has only recently been articulated, IESALC still has a considerable way to go before it could be judged as having achieved that standard.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Over the course of its history, UNESCO has established six Institutes and two Centres classified as ‘category one’ in the field of education. The Institutes and Centres are intended to serve in their field of specialisation as international focal points for the provision of information and expertise to member states, working towards improved education outcomes in collaboration with partners in Member States and the network of UNESCO field offices. In this context, the Institutes are expected to make an important contribution to the attainment of the strategic objectives and programmatic priorities of UNESCO’s education programme (Major Programme I) and to the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA).

The institutes are expected to operate with independence and autonomy from UNESCO Headquarters, while at the same time being strongly guided by the priorities set out in UNESCO’s education programme. In the context of its reform process, UNESCO has initiated a review of its education institutes and centres, with the aim of considering the continued operation of and support to each institute or centre against alternative modalities of providing equivalent or better programme support for UNESCO activities. This evaluation forms part of that review.

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of this evaluation is to contribute to UNESCO’s review of education institutes and centres in the context of its reform process. To this end, the evaluators were asked by UNESCO to focus on the following key points as regards to the effectiveness and efficiency of IESALC:

- Relevance of its activities to UNESCO’s programme priorities in the field of higher education;
- Results achieved by IESALC, and its contribution to UNESCO’s efforts in achieving respective EFA goals, with an emphasis on higher education goals;

- Quality of coordination and interaction between UNESCO Headquarters, other Institutes, Field Offices and IESALC's partner entities with regard to planning and implementation of programmes; and
- Funding patterns, mechanisms and their risks for sustained institutional capacity, and viability and quality of organizational management and programme implementation systems adopted by IESALC.

EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This section summarises the evaluation design and methods used to reach evaluation findings. The choice of evaluation design and methodology is influenced by the time, resources and information available and the nature of the activities and outcomes being evaluated.

EVALUATION DESIGN

We utilised a mixed-method evaluation design that involved a combination of conventional qualitative methods (e.g. documentary review, semi-structured interviews, illustrative examples and non-probabilistic survey methods). In choosing this approach we were guided by four major principles of mixed-method evaluation design¹:

- **Triangulation** seeks to improve the accuracy of results through the collection and analysis of data from different sources and using different methods, thereby overcoming weaknesses or intrinsic biases associated with a single observation or method;
- **Complementarity** refers to the use of mixed methods to provide additional richness and detail that can only be uncovered through comparison of results generated using different methods;
- **Development** is where the results from one method are used to shape subsequent methods or steps in the evaluation process. In our case, we used documentary review and interview methods to assist in the selection of examples and for questionnaire design; and
- **Expansion** refers to the capacity of mixed methods to extend the scope and breadth of evaluative inquiry, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the subject being evaluated.

The evaluation uses a post-intervention design. We addressed the lack of an *ex ante* evaluation framework for IESALC by using interview and survey instruments to uncover respondents' views of the outcomes attributed to IESALC's activities and services. To counter weaknesses in this design, we utilised multiple lines of enquiry in order to confirm and validate findings.

¹ Adapted from explanations in Petter and Gallivan (2004) based on the framework developed in Greene et al (1989).

EVALUATION METHODS

The main evaluation methods utilised were as follows:

Document and File Review

A document and file review was completed to identify pre-existing information. It included:

- Review of UNESCO Executive Board and General Conference reports, including the biennial programmes and budgets;
- Education for All and related strategy statements that set out UNESCO's goals and priorities in the area of higher education;
- IESALC Governing Board reports, which provide a record of the governance and oversight of IESALC activities by the Governing Board;
- Documents available on IESALC's web site including country and thematic studies, the regular digital bulletin, and information on IESALC's agreements with its partners in member states; and
- Financial information provided by IESALC.

Interviews

We conducted a number of semi-structured interviews with members of IESALC's Governing Board, IESALC staff, other UNESCO staff and with representatives of stakeholders in member states (e.g. officials from government ministries, councils of rectors, and other higher education bodies including individual universities). A list of interviewees is included in Appendix Two.

The purpose of interviews was to elicit richer information than could be gathered through other means and to fill gaps in information following the documentary review. Interviews were also conducted to provide verification of data collected through other sources and to assist in the process of triangulating findings. Significant use was made of interviews in the context of this evaluation as:

- There are no specific targets by which to measure the performance of IESALC;²
- The relationship between activities and outcomes is expected to be complex and difficult to measure using survey methods;
- There are likely to be many influences beyond IESALC's own activities on the outcomes it seeks to influence; and

² IESALC's approved program for the 2004-05 Biennium - 32 C/5 - describes the specific results expected from IESALC and indicators to measure its performance but there are no specific objectives or targets set.

- Interviews enable the capture of unintended or unimagined results that are also difficult to capture through other methods.

Interviews allow in-depth probing which permits a rich and detailed picture of what has happened and why. They allow the incorporation of illustrative examples which add realism, immediacy and depth to data and results collected via other methods.

Meaningful Examples

Examples of activities or projects supported by IESALC and their results have been described to bring the evaluation ‘alive’. They are an illustrative device and in all cases are supported by more general findings. The examples selected for inclusion in this report were selected following analysis of the data generated by other evaluation methods.

Survey

Given the large number of IESALC stakeholders spread across a large geographic area, a survey was used to collect data on the views of stakeholders on their relationship with IESALC and the results achieved by the Institute. The survey was administered on-line between mid-May and early-June.

The survey was emailed to 265 stakeholders with whom IESALC was expected to have had some form of engagement. However, 44 surveys were not delivered due to technical difficulties or changed addresses. These stakeholders were identified from a variety of sources, including but not limited to documents provided by IESALC:

- A list of institutions with whom IESALC has agreements;
- Institutions identified in IESALC activity reports;
- Lists of higher education bodies³ in the region; and
- A list of higher education specialists in the region who have acted as consultants for IESALC.

A number of open-ended questions were included together with Likert-type questions about the impacts of IESALC. 54 valid responses were received (a 24% response rate). This response rate compares with a typical response rate of 26% for online surveys).⁴

We proposed that a second survey be sent to a wider sample of people who receive IESALC’s regular digital bulletin. As this group regularly receives electronic communications from IESALC, notably the Digital Bulletin, the questionnaire focussed on the use and perceived value of IESALC’s online services. IESALC staff initially offered the use of their database but the Director of IESALC subsequently indicated that the information system programme

³ Contact details for Ministry of Education officials in each of the countries of the region were requested from IESALC but not received by the evaluation team.

⁴ Hamilton, M. B. (2005) Online Survey Response Rates and Times: Background and Guidance for Industry, SuperSurvey Whitepaper.

was unable to carry out surveys, but they were developing a new online survey tool under the banner of the Latin American University Barometer. Unfortunately, the tool was not ready in time to be used in this evaluation. Contacts from the database of bulletin recipients were not made available for the researchers to carry out their own email-based survey.

The survey questionnaire administered by the evaluation team and a detailed analysis of results are included in Annex Three of this report.

LIMITATIONS

The purpose of a mixed-method design is to use the strengths of some methods to counteract the weaknesses of others, thereby contributing to a more robust overall design. However, no evaluation design is perfect. The major limitation of our design is that, in the absence of historical and objectively measured performance indicators, we were required to strongly rely on the subjective views of interviewees and survey respondents in arriving at our findings. Asking survey respondents to attribute the outcomes to activities requires accurate recall of past events and subtle and complex judgements about multiple contributing factors about which they have imperfect information. We countered the risk of bias in the views of respondents by comparing and contrasting findings from a variety of sources and obtained using a number of different methods. Nevertheless, it is common for respondents to over-estimate their powers of deduction and so our findings risk being exaggerated.

A large volume of information was considered for this evaluation. IESALC provided open access to their staff and information while the evaluation team were in Caracas and most information requested was provided to us. IESALC staff also assisted with the organisation of interviews with a number of stakeholders in the field. However, time in the Caracas office was limited, and subsequent requests for further information were not all provided as requested.

STRATEGIC AND PROGRAMMATIC CONTEXT

UNESCO is the only UN body with a mandate to support national capacity-building in higher education. The organisation aims to play a leading role in higher education reform globally, through acting as a laboratory of ideas, a clearing house for information, a standard-setter, capacity builder in Member States and being a catalyst for international cooperation. These five functions come together in support of assisting Member States to adapt their higher education systems to meet the demands associated with the emergence of knowledge-based societies and the new social, cultural and economic challenges of an increasingly globalised world.

UNESCO reinvigorated its work in the field of higher education in 1995, with the publication of the Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education. The paper made a major contribution to the debate on higher education, and paved the way for UNESCO to redefine its role and strategies in support of higher education reform.

Following on from the policy paper, UNESCO's medium-term strategy for the period 1996-2001 highlighted the need for the role and functions of higher education systems and institutions in Member States to be re-examined. It indicated that its "strategy in higher education would be guided by three watchwords: relevance, quality and internationalisation, and would be geared to three objectives: enlarging access to higher education systems; improving their management; and strengthening their links with the world of work."⁵

With the aim of advancing the debate beyond strategy to action, and to renew support for UNESCO's efforts in the area of higher education, a series of five regional conferences were held between November 1996 and March 1998, which resulted in the development of Regional Declarations on Higher Education and Regional Plans of Action. This work culminated in the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE), which established basic principles for reform of higher education systems throughout the world. The Conference, and the resulting World Declaration and Framework for Priority Action on Higher Education, shaped UNESCO's strategy for the advancement of higher education outcomes. In particular, the following priority outcomes were agreed for UNESCO:

⁵ 28 C/4

- (a) To promote better co-ordination and co-operation among stakeholders in higher education, within the context of national and regional priorities, with a view to pooling and sharing resources, avoiding overlap, and advancing higher education outcomes;
- (b) To become a forum for reflection on higher education issues by: preparing update reports on the state of knowledge on higher education issues in all parts of the world; promoting innovative projects of training and research that enhance the role of higher education; and providing access information and facilitating its exchange;
- (c) To support institutions of higher education in the least developed parts of the world and in regions suffering the effects of conflict or natural disasters;
- (d) To renew efforts to create and/or strengthen centres of excellence in developing countries;
- (e) To initiate an international instrument on academic freedom, autonomy and social responsibility; and
- (f) To ensure follow-up to the World Declaration on Higher Education and the Framework for Priority Action.

In 1999, UNESCO began initiatives to ensure the follow-up to the WCHE. This included establishing the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge, supporting reforms underway in Member States and implementing measures to strengthen regional networks in higher education, including the conversion of the Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC) into IESALC. In particular, it was agreed that:

“The Regional Offices in Dakar, Bangkok and Beirut, CEPES⁶ and IESALC will play a key role in promoting and coordinating the follow-up to the Conference in their respective regions through symposia, advisory services, technical assistance, training and clearing-house services. They will work closely with Member States and all relevant partners and support regional networks on higher education.”⁷

Another important initiative was the launch of the Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in October 2002. It aimed to promote international cooperation in higher education by enabling a dialogue between different stakeholders and building bridges between intergovernmental organisations⁸. Following the inaugural Forum meeting, an Action Plan for 2004-05 was developed for UNESCO within the framework of its standard-setting, capacity building and clearing-house functions.

⁶ CEPES is the European Centre for Higher Education in Bucharest.

⁷ 30 C/5

⁸ UNESCO, 2004, Higher Education in a Globalised Society, Education Position Paper

Of particular relevance for IESALC were the following actions:

- Reviewing and updating existing regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications, for which IESALC has the role of regional secretariat;
- Furthering research on higher education, particularly on the definition of national public good in the context of increasing trans-border provision of higher education;
- Capacity building at the regional and national levels for quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms within a strengthened international framework; and
- Building the capacity of higher education stakeholders by developing information tools as well as skills training on the diversity of learning institutions, learning and learners

UNESCO Regional Conventions on the Recognition of Qualifications⁹

UNESCO Regional Conventions on the recognition of qualifications are legally binding instruments which, globally, have been ratified by more than 100 Member States. The Conventions aim to promote international cooperation in higher education and to reduce obstacles to the mobility of teachers and students through the mutual recognition of degrees and qualifications between the ratifying countries.

The Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Latin America and the Caribbean was first ratified by Mexico in 1975. It has subsequently been ratified by 12 member states, although two states (Chile and Brazil) subsequently denounced the Convention.¹⁰ Under its Statutes, IESALC is the secretariat for the Regional Convention on for Latin America and the Caribbean, with the aim of supporting Member States to update and implement the convention.

Five years after the World Conference, UNESCO hosted a Higher Education Partners Meeting (WCHE+5, 2003) to identify changes in higher education since 1998, to identify examples of good practice, and to define priorities for future action for Member States and individual institutions. The WCHE+5 Partners Meeting reasserted the importance and validity of the basic principles of the 1998 World Declaration on Higher Education, which continues to this day to provide the main strategic direction for UNESCO's actions in higher education¹¹. Conference participants proposed greater recognition of the role of UNESCO declarations and legal instruments, such as the UNESCO Regional Conventions on the Recognition of Qualifications, as important tools for guiding development of national higher education policy frameworks in the context of globalisation, borderless higher education and liberalisation of trade in education.

⁹ Source: UNESCO (2004) Higher Education in a Globalised Society: UNESCO Education Position Paper.

¹⁰ A list of ratifying states can be found at http://www.unesco.org/education/studyingabroad/tools/conventions_lac_member_states.shtml

¹¹ 31 C/4, UNESCO Medium Term Strategy 2002-2007

The Role of Education Institutes in the context of UNESCO's Decentralisation Strategy

In 1999, as part of a broad reform process¹², UNESCO launched its decentralisation strategy with the objective of enhancing its impact and relevance in Member States while at the same time ensuring the overall coherence of UNESCO as “one organisation, with one overall mission” (171 EX/6 Part III, page 1). Fundamentally, the aim was to allow the design and implementation of programmes that, while global in scope, are adapted to the local needs and specific circumstances of Member States.

In terms of institutional reform, the decentralisation process focused on rationalising and reorganising the network of programme implementing offices within a simpler *two-tier system*: the creation of offices representing clusters of countries (cluster offices) backed up by regional bureau specialising in each of UNESCO's field of competence.¹³ Within this framework, UNESCO's education institutes can be viewed as providing *third-tier* technical support in highly specialised disciplines (e.g. educational planning, higher education).

From a pragmatic perspective, the institutes are recognised as having the potential to be precious sources of expertise in specific sectoral or inter-sectoral areas. In the context of the decentralisation strategy, they are responsible for providing relevant support directly to Member States, either internationally or regionally, in exactly the same way as the field network (171 EX/6 Part III, page 5). Yet they are also expected to contribute to greater programme coherence and, in particular, to dovetail their strategies and activities with UNESCO's overarching strategies, major programmes and main lines of activity.

Developing an institutional system that balances global coherence against responsiveness to the particular needs of Member States has and will continue to challenge the UNESCO system. Nowhere is achieving this balance more challenging than in the context of UNESCO's category one institutions. Notwithstanding the higher degree of specialisation of the institutes compared to regional bureaux and cluster offices, the regional focus of some institutes (e.g. IESALC and CEPES) brings into sharp relief the potential for overlap, duplication and inefficient use of scarce resources within a more streamlined UNESCO structure.

It is in recognition of the complexities involved in achieving the objectives of the reform process generally, and the strategy of decentralisation in particular, that UNESCO has initiated a review of institutes and centres with the aim of considering the continued

¹² The reforms were far-reaching and were aimed at rethinking priorities, refocusing its actions, streamlining its structures and management procedures and re-motivating its staff.

¹³ Cluster offices are intended to be the cornerstone of the new system, consisting of multi-disciplinary teams covering all UNESCO fields of competence. Cluster offices are intended to be the country-level delivery platform vis-à-vis member states. In contrast, Regional bureaux are intended to be pools of expertise in a particular field of competence, and to provide technical support to Cluster Offices in their country-level activities.

operation of and support to each institute or centre against alternative modalities of providing equivalent or better programme support for UNESCO activities. In particular, the Executive Board has asked the Director General “to express more clearly the need for UNESCO’s education institutes and centres to contribute, in a coherent and complementary manner, to the achievement of the objectives and sub-objectives of the education strategy and, to that end, to develop focused and concentrated programmes, to adopt results-oriented approaches and to enhance visibility and outreach”.¹⁴

In support of this, UNESCO has recently taken steps to more clearly define the purpose, role and scope of activities of UNESCO institutes and centres as well as their relationships within the relevant programme sectors. The aim of this exercise was to:

- Reinforce the relevance of institutes and centres to the Member States;
- Avoid duplication and enable synergies within the UNESCO system;
- Enhance coherence, quality and impact of UNESCO programmes; and
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness in policy formulation, programme development and delivery.

Finally, in support of the general aims of the reform process, and to complement the institutional reforms, UNESCO has introduced a number of results-oriented management reforms. In particular, it has put in place a number of management tools including: better e-connectivity; the SISTER¹⁵ programme management and monitoring tool; and the FABS finance and budget system. It has also instituted an “institute taskforce” to facilitate greater dialogue between the Directors of the education institutes and their colleagues in the Education section of UNESCO Headquarters.

It is important to consider the implications of this significant reform process for this evaluation. UNESCO’s decentralisation strategy and related reforms are both highly-relevant and potentially confounding factors for this analysis. The various reforms have occurred gradually over time and many of the initiatives are still being bedded down. Clearly, the historical performance of IESALC cannot be evaluated against the normative benchmark of an effectively functioning, decentralised UNESCO system. Nevertheless, the outcomes sought from the reform process are a strong signal of the manner in which IESALC is expected to function within the UNESCO system, and the reforms are therefore an important backdrop against which to consider our recommendations.

¹⁴ 162 EX/18

¹⁵ SISTER is the UNESCO System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results.

BRIEF HISTORY OF IESALC

The history of IESALC comprises three distinct phases:

- The formation and operation of the Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC);
- The transformation of CRESALC into IESALC; and
- IESALC in the 21st Century.

Phase I – The Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean

In 1971, UNESCO held its fourth Conference of Ministers of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (MINEDLAC IV, Caracas, 1971) with the theme of the promotion of science and technology in relation to development. The Conference recommended the establishment of a Regional Centre for information on higher education in the region and commissioned a study of the feasibility of creating such a centre.

Subsequent studies carried out over the period 1972 – 1976 confirmed the need for a Regional Centre that would contribute positively to the evolution of higher education institutions and systems in the region, and foster international cooperation in this policy area. At UNESCO's 19th General Conference, the work plan for the creation of the Centre was agreed and, on 6 November 1976, the Director General of UNESCO signed a Host Agreement with the Government of Venezuela establishing the means of cooperation for the establishment of the Centre. CRESALC was officially inaugurated on 14 February 1978 and, until 1997, it functioned as a decentralised unit of the UNESCO Secretariat directed by an International Advisory Committee.

During the 1980s and mid-1990s, CRESALC gradually established itself as a significant facilitator of dialogue between Member States in the field of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. The landmark Regional Conference¹⁶ on “Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean” recognised the important role played by CRESALC in “the promotion of comparative research, the provision of spaces of dialogue, reflection and debate among the principal actors of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the gradual achievement of a consensus as regards strategic guidelines and regional objectives which can help the institutions in the management of their particular transformation.”¹⁷

¹⁶ This was the first regional conference held in preparation for the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education.

¹⁷ Declaration adopted during the Regional Conference on Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, Havana, Cuba, 18-22 November 1996.

The participants in the Regional Conference requested CRESALC to coordinate and prepare a plan of action for the transformation of higher education in the region, using the recommendations of the Regional Conference as the basis for the plan. CRESALC subsequently led a process of consultation involving representatives of Member States, experts in the field of higher education, non-governmental organisations, the UNESCO Director of the Department of Higher Education, as well as the advisory group and staff of CRESALC. The resulting Plan of Action for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean called for general and specific actions to improve outcomes in five key areas:

- The relevance of higher education systems and institutions;
- The quality of higher education systems and institutions;
- The management and financing of higher education institutions;
- The use of information and communication technologies as a tool for improving the quality, relevance of, and access to higher education; and
- Re-focusing of international-cooperation to promote the sharing of experiences and facilitation of mutual learning.

Phase II – The Transformation of CRESALC into IESALC

The development of the regional Plan of Action prompted calls by some Member States, led by Venezuela, for the rejuvenation and strengthening of CRESALC as the preferred regional body for coordinating and facilitating the advancement of the agreed agenda. The General Conference, at its 29th session, subsequently decided to transform CRESALC into an International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America (IESALC).¹⁸ Following this decision, the Statutes¹⁹ and financial regulations of the Institute were approved by the Executive Board at its 155th session in September 1998 (see box on following page).

During the transitional 1998-99 biennium, IESALC focussed its activity on strengthening its organisational infrastructure and on launching several projects guided by the Regional Plan of Action. The Institute also assisted with preparatory activities for the World Conference on Higher Education and negotiated a revised Host country Agreement with Venezuela.

¹⁸ This decision resulted from a draft resolution proposed by Venezuela, and supported by 12 other countries of the Latin America and Caribbean region, to modify the statutes of IESALC in order to convert it into a UNESCO Institute [29 C/DR. REV. 125].

¹⁹ Draft Statutes were originally proposed for approval to the 154th session of the Executive Board in March 1998, but the Executive Board concluded that further negotiation and consultation with the Member States of the region was needed [154 EX/19].

KEY FEATURES OF IESALC'S STATUTES

Mission

To contribute to the transformation of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean Region and its national higher education institutions and systems, on the basis of sustainable development of human resources, helping also to guarantee the relevance, quality, efficiency and equity of all higher education activities in the context of a new approach to regional and international-cooperation fostering an equitable partnership of all the actors involved.

Objectives

1. To foster closer-cooperation among Member States in the Region, their institutions and specialists in the field of higher education;
2. To help improve mutual knowledge of the higher education systems in the Region and in other regions of the world with a view to facilitating comparison among them and their development;
3. To help improve and develop higher education systems and institutions, within the reform process of any Member State requesting the Institute's co-operation;
4. To encourage and support in the context of regional integration greater mobility of higher education professionals, especially those in relatively less developed countries, with a view to making better use of human and educational resources and helping to facilitate greater flexibility in the recognition of higher education studies, diplomas and degrees between the countries of the Region and other parts of the World; and
5. To facilitate an exchange of information and experience among the institutions, centres and specialists in the Region and in other parts of the world.

Governance

The Governing Board consists of thirteen (13) members appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO, of whom three (3) must be from the countries of the CARICOM sub-region.²⁰ While the Board enjoys considerable intellectual, administrative and functional autonomy, it must operate within the framework of the general policy approved by the General Conference of UNESCO. The Governing Board must meet at least once every two years and must adopt its own Rules of Procedure. The Board's main functions are to:

1. Decide on the allocation of funding and approve the annual budget and programme for the Institute's activities;
2. Report to the General Conference on the activities of the Institute every two years;
3. Decide on the appointment of the Director and principal officers of the Institute; and
4. Ensure that the Institute is soundly managed in accordance with UNESCO principles.

Funding

Funds for the administration of the Institute come from the budget approved by the General Conference, supplemented by extra-budgetary voluntary contributions.

²⁰ CARICOM stands for Caribbean Community and Common Market.

Phase III – IESALC in the 21st Century

The turn of the century marked the beginning of the third phase of the Institute's history. With its newly approved Statutes, and the appointment of the Governing Board of IESALC at the 30th Session of the General Conference, the Governing Board met for the first time in May 2000. The main business of the Board at its first meeting was to adopt its Rules of Procedure, establish its Executive Committee and approve a Work Programme for the remainder of the year.

The work programme of the Institute during 2000 focused on maintaining continuity of the existing programme established by the Director of CRESALC, Mr Luiz Yarzabal, and the interim Director of IESALC, Mr Francisco López-Segrera. In particular, the programme focused on strengthening the capabilities of higher education institutions in the region, including through:

- Promoting evaluation and accreditation practices as tools for systematically improving the quality and relevance of higher education institutions;
- Assisting with the formation of specialist regional networks to foster the information and knowledge sharing amongst higher education stakeholders in the region;
- Facilitating the acquisition and use of new information and communication technologies for teaching, research and administration; and
- Sponsoring and publishing research and collecting and disseminating relevant information through its Information and Documentation Service.

During 2000, the Board set about establishing the new governance and managerial structures necessary to support the Institute's revised mandate, in particular focussing on the recruitment of a new Director for the Institute. To this end, the Executive Committee met twice in 2000 to analyse and evaluate possible candidates and, in December 2000, a selection panel²¹ met to interview five short-listed candidates. This process resulted in the appointment by the Director-General of Dr Claudio Rama, the current Director of the Institute, who took up his duties in May 2001.

Under the direction of Dr Rama, and with the approval of the Governing Board, IESALC revised its strategy in 2001. The decisions taken and rationale given for them are reported in the Final Report of the First Special Meeting of the IESALC Governing Board. In particular, the revised strategy involved focussing on a small number of projects to be funded from extra-budgetary sources. These included two aspects of the Institute's work which have been ongoing priorities: a University Self-Evaluation System; and the Latin American and Caribbean University Observatory.

²¹ The Selection Panel comprised the Chairperson of the Governing Board, a member of the Board's Executive Committee, the Acting Assistant Director-General for Education and the Chief of Recruitment of UNESCO's Bureau of Human Resources Management. The short-list was selected following an open international selection process.

The Director's Report of 2002²² summarises the changes which took place at IESALC during 2001/02, including the closure and sale of the printing press and a reduction in staff of the Institute. This "restructuring" achieved significant savings in costs and resulted in the transformation of the Institute into what could be described as a 'virtual' institute: its core functions of research and technical assistance are performed by contracted academics/experts throughout the higher education sector although its information clearinghouse function remains 'in-house'.

CURRENT IESALC STRATEGY

Since 2001, IESALC has pursued a strategy which is aimed at facilitating Member States through a 'process', with each country progressing at different speeds and to different degrees. This 'process' begins with the country study, followed by seminars, leading to thematic studies and the creation of networks. The final component in some cases is larger projects such as technical assistance. The intention is that the process is self-reinforcing, with synergies found between the different activities.

This strategy generally has remained constant through the years 2002-2005, although with themes added and additional activity around individual technical assistance projects. This is evident from studying the Director's Reports to the Governing Board (which then become the Board's reports to UNESCO HQ).

The next sections of the report considers in turn;

- The relevance of IESALC's work programme to UNESCO's goals and strategies;
- the results achieved by IESALC compared to its own objectives and the wider UNESCO agenda;
- The effectiveness of IESALC's coordination with the rest of UNESCO and with its external stakeholders; and,
- The financial and organisational management of IESALC, including its governance arrangements.

²² Report of the Director Administrative and Financial Management 2002 IESALC. Annex to Governing Board 2nd Ordinary Meeting, Final Report, Feb 2003.

This section discusses the ‘relevance’ of IESALC’s activities, by which we mean how well these activities align with UNESCO’s strategies and programme priorities in the field of higher education.

UNESCO’s goals in higher education are less easily consolidated and stated than those for basic education in Education for All. At the highest level there are overarching outcomes identified at the WCHE and in UNESCO’s medium term strategies (C4s), while the priorities for each biennium are variously defined at the level of sub-programmes and main lines of action within the programme and budget (C5s). Even more specifically, C5s identify priority areas of focus for IESALC and describe the results to be achieved by IESALC for each biennium (although specific targets are not provided). These are summarised in Appendix Five.

IESALC Executive Board members interviewed, finance staff and the Director were unanimous in their view that C4, C5 and other strategic guidelines are considered during planning processes and that the Institute’s activities are fully aligned to UNESCO strategies and goals.

Alignment with General Conference Priorities for IESALC

It is easiest to see the alignment of IESALC’s programme with the priorities for IESALC approved by the **General Conference** each biennium. These have remained relatively unchanged since IESALC’s formation and invite the IESALC Board to focus on assistance to member states in higher education policy formulation, the development and reinforcement of inter-university cooperation, and its role as clearing house and reference centre. The evaluation team sees the activities of the Institute as broadly consistent with its C5 priorities.

Alignment with the World Declaration and Framework for Higher Education

IESALC’s programmes are strongly aligned with three of the priority outcomes agreed for UNESCO in the World Declaration and Framework for Priority Action;

- Promoting better co-ordination and co-operation among stakeholders in higher education;
- Becoming a forum for reflection on higher education issues; and
- Supporting institutions of higher education in least developed areas of the world.

It is less clear how IESALC programmes have contributed to other priorities for action:

- Renewing efforts towards creating and/or strengthening centres of excellence in developing countries; and
- Taking the initiative to draw up an international instrument on academic freedom, autonomy and social responsibility concerning the status of higher-education teaching personnel.

Co-ordination and co-operation is a constant theme in the various strategies and roles for UNESCO offices. IESALC's programme of establishing or participating in networks (e.g. macro universities, evaluation) and of co-funding its various projects with local higher education partners is well-aligned with this part of the Framework.

IESALC's programme of commissioning studies of topical issues in higher education, using an approach that promotes comparable studies between countries, is well-aligned with the objective of being a **forum for reflection** on higher education issues. On the whole, however, it may be more accurate to describe IESALC as a facilitator or broker rather than providing the forum itself, as many seminars and events are organised jointly with local stakeholders. Some interviewees held that IESALC's supports more "superficial" studies which have pushed the Institute further away from the Academy. However, the strong digital presence of the Institute (i.e. the digital bulletin, website and CDs) represents an important forum by providing access to information and facilitating exchanges of information.

The role of **supporting institutions of higher education** throughout the region is a part of IESALC's programmes. Unlike the undertaking of studies, it is not possible for the Institute to spread its technical assistance (or facilitation thereof) across all countries in the region, at least in the short- to medium-term. Resource constraints allow intensive engagement in only a small number of technical assistance projects each year, although arguably this activity could be increased with greater use of extra-budgetary funding. A further constraint is that technical assistance generally can only take place at the invitation of the country involved, whether directly from the Government or facilitated through UNESCO field offices, as is recognised in the statutes of the Institute.

Based on the reports available, IESALC has undertaken technical assistance projects in 10 countries in its region, out of 33. More generally, it provides support for institutions throughout the region through the development and utilisation of evaluation software and through supporting the structuring and functioning of various regional and sub-regional networks.

Alignment with Major Programme One: Education

The alignment of IESALC's programme with the Biennium sub-programmes under Major Programme One: Education requires detailed consideration of the themes and topics studied and supported by IESALC. Without restating all the main lines of action, there are examples both of IESALC prioritising new issues which have received priority in a new biennium (e.g. teacher training) as well as examples of apparent gaps (e.g. science and technology as identified in the latest biennium).

Table 1 portrays major activities of IESALC against the roles UNESCO sets for itself. This is necessarily a summary analysis which does not capture every programme or activity that IESALC has undertaken. However, it shows how the main actions of the Institute are aligned with UNESCO's expressed roles.

Table 1: UNESCO Roles, IESALC Statute Objectives and Major Activities, 1998-2005.

UNESCO Roles	IESALC Statute : Objectives	IESALC Major Activities
Laboratory of Ideas	To help improve mutual knowledge of the higher education systems in the Region and in other regions of the world with a view to facilitating comparison among them and their development.	In the period 1998-2005 IESALC reported that 150 reports were commissioned on a variety of themes and countries. (EX/INF.10) Most of these are published on the website of IESALC. Numerous national and regional seminars were supported by IESALC each year (e.g. 24 seminars were undertaken in 2004 – mostly jointly presented by IESALC and a partner)
Clearing House	To facilitate an exchange of information and experience among the institutions, centres and specialists in the Region and in other parts of the world.	Database receiving a regular digital bulletin grew from 15,648 contacts in 2002 to almost 80,000 in May 2005. The IESALC website has large number of reports on countries and themes with counts of pages visited passing 3,000 per day in 2005. A large project of updating and improving the database of higher education legislation for each country is underway. 21 co-publications were published in 2004 having risen from just 4 in 2001 when the printing press was closed.
Capacity Builder	To help improve and develop higher education systems and institutions, within the reform process of any Member State requesting the Institute's co-operation	University Management Software: 3 open-source software programmes are on the website as of May 2005, which allows institutions to adjust the content to suit their own requirements. Teacher training - new series of downloadable resources appearing throughout 2005 (International Federation of Faith and Joy publishing with support of IESALC) Assistance to Venezuela, Panama, Bolivia, Argentina on higher education law reform and accreditation. Assistance to Dominican Republic on design of Higher Education Ministry 2002. New contract with Dominican Republic May 2005.
Catalyst for International Cooperation	To foster closer-cooperation among Member States in the Region, their institutions and specialists in the field of higher education.	Networks established on a number of topics of regional interest (e.g. Macro-universities, Religious universities). Cooperation agreement with Andean Development Fund (CAF) on higher education reform in Argentina may lead to more large-scale co-operative work with this major funding body.
Standard-setter	To encourage and support in the context of regional integration greater mobility of higher education professionals	Secretariat for the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Latin America and the Caribbean. Seminars focused around diagnostic country studies and evaluation software. Evaluation guides for eight countries are available on the website. IESALC also carried out a series of activities pertaining the regional integration of Higher Education in the region, such as seminars and the proposal of a harmonised legislative framework .

IESALC Participation in UNESCO Higher Education Strategy Formulation

Based on the evidence available, IESALC has played little role in the design of UNESCO programmes and strategies for higher education. Given the current organisational structure of the Institute, the Director is the only person likely to undertake this role. Staff at the Institute, other than the Director, were not aware of any input they could have into UNESCO's programmes and strategies.

Members of the IESALC Governing Board that we spoke to did not see this as their role. Rather, they see the role of the Institute as being to adapt UNESCO policies to local conditions. IESALC, unlike most other Institutes, has a regional focus. Given this and other constraints, it is questionable to what extent IESALC has the capacity to contribute to broader UNESCO policy, although it should be and active participant in the debate.

Recommendation:

The expectation that IESALC should be a major contributor to the broader UNESCO debate on higher education strategies and programme priorities should be re-communicated to the Board and Director of IESALC, and both the Institute and UNESCO Headquarters should take steps to engage in strategic-level discussions early in new biennium planning rounds.

IESALC'S ACTIVITIES COMPARED TO ITS ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

In order to judge the results of IESALC's activities, the evaluation team undertook interviews and a survey. We have also used illustrative examples as a means of illuminating our general findings. A significant factor impeding the assessment of the results of IESALC activities is the lack of results-based reporting by the Institute. Although IESALC reports are reasonably thorough, they tend to focus on describing activities rather than providing information on how they contribute to overall outcomes. This has caused the evaluation team to form its own judgements on the intended and actual impacts of the work. The specification of intended outcomes and reporting against those outcomes (i.e. adopting a results-based management regime) is an area in which significant improvements could be made.

The online survey represents one source of information on the results of IESALC. Table 2 shows respondents' views on the impact of IESALC's activities on each of its objectives.

Table 2: Survey results on the impact of IESALC against its objectives

	Big difference	Some difference	No difference	Not applicable
Fostering closer co-operation among the countries, institutions and specialists in the field of higher education	28 (65%)	7 (16%)	4 (9%)	4 (9%)
Enhancing the capacity and capability of institutions and specialists working in the field of higher education	20 (48%)	16 (38%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)
Facilitating exchanges of information and experience among higher education institutions and specialists in the region	22 (52%)	12 (29%)	4 (10%)	4 (10%)
Improving access to and the quality of information on higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean	25 (60%)	12 (29%)	1 (2%)	4 (10%)
Helping to improve mutual knowledge of higher education systems in the region and in other regions	30 (70%)	8 (19%)	2 (5%)	3 (7%)
Helping to improve and develop higher education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean	24 (56%)	10 (23%)	5 (12%)	4 (9%)
Encouraging greater mobility of higher education professionals in support of closer regional integration	14 (33%)	13 (31%)	6 (14%)	9 (21%)

In order to consider the question of the effectiveness of IESALC's activities in achieving its objectives, we group IESALC's activities within the main roles of UNESCO. This also enables the activities of the Institute to be identified in relation to the relevant Main Lines of Action of each biennium.

Laboratory of ideas

*"UNESCO will play a key role in anticipating and defining, in the light of the ethical principles that it champions, the most important emerging problems in its spheres of competence, and in identifying appropriate strategies and policies to deal with them"*²³.

One of IESALC's main roles is the commissioning of country and thematic studies. A current list of themes (and the numbers of studies published on each) is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Number of reports on IESALC Website by Theme (as at June 2005)

Theme	Regional or Sub-Regional Reports	Country Reports
National Reports	1	19
Postgraduates	-	17
Accreditation and Evaluation	6	16
Gender	1	16
Educational Finance	-	15
Legislation on Higher Education	1	15
Virtual Education	6	13
Internationalization of Higher Education	4	13
Special Needs Education (disability)	-	11
University Reforms	3	11
University Publishing Houses	1	10
Indigenous Higher Education	1	10
Non-university higher education institutions	-	8
Macro-universities	2	5
Private Higher Education	-	4
University desertion	-	3
Mass Media	1	2
University Degrees (recognition)	1	2
Religious Universities	2	-
Total	30	190

²³ C4 Medium-term strategy 2002/7

How effective are these activities in contributing to the objectives of the Institute?

The publication and dissemination of research on higher education contributes to the Institute's objective of helping **“improve mutual knowledge of the higher education systems ...with a view to facilitating comparison among them and their development.”** The studies increase the stock of knowledge about higher education and, in some cases, interviewees have indicated that the research commissioned by IESALC was the first such research done in a country, or on a particular theme in the region. The fact that the national reports are designed to collect comparable information enables regional comparisons, allowing country experiences to be compared and contrasted.

IESALC's strategy is to build a culture of research in higher education, particularly in countries which have not invested in this before. It does this by commissioning contractors throughout the region to undertake research, rather than conducting the research in-house. This is a deliberate strategy of IESALC to build capability in Member States rather than within UNESCO.

The relevant Main Lines of Action which IESALC is expected to contribute to include policy reform of Higher Education (included in 2000/01 and 2002/03). In some instances, the research commissioned by IESALC has acted as a pathway to technical assistance and reform projects, for example through identifying for governments weaknesses in current policy settings.

Survey respondents identified some of the most important results of IESALC to be “helping government understand what needs to be done” and “raising awareness of the importance of investing in research”. ‘Helping to improve mutual knowledge of higher education systems in the region and in other regions’ was the area where the largest number of survey respondents (70%) thought IESALC had made a big difference.

While IESALC has unquestionably increased the quantity of research available on higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, some stakeholders questioned the quality of the studies funded by the Institute. For example, one interviewee (who had also worked as a consultant for IESALC) suggested that IESALC was ‘not the best qualified but did the most quantity of work – it was agile’. Criticisms of the quality of IESALC-sponsored research raise questions about the quality assurance process in place.

IESALC Quality Assurance Process

1. Nomination by organisations (Ministries of Education, Universities, Councils of rectors, NGOs and others) of an appropriate consultant to conduct the study, given the selected theme and/or country of study;
2. Consideration of the Curriculum Vitae of the consultant;
3. Independent inquiries (e.g. reference checks) about the professional skills of the suggested consultant;
4. Elaboration of a contract with terms of reference broadly detailed;
5. IESALC read and accept study;
6. Debate of the study at a national meeting or regional seminar;
7. Publication of the study in co-edition with an institution (governmental or university) in many cases.

It is beyond the scope of the evaluation to assess the quality of the studies commissioned by IESALC. However, the quality assurance process as described to us by IESALC does not appear to be robust. Our two principal concerns relate to steps five and six above. The current Director, or the Contracts Manager, is responsible for reading all reports before payment is made. Given the wide range of topics, countries and specialist knowledge involved, this can not be considered a review of academic quality but rather a contract compliance step. The only academic peer review possibility is the seminar. Seminars are usually held discuss reports before they are finalised, but there are mixed views from interviewees as to their effectiveness as peer review, other than correcting factual mistakes.

Recommendation:

IESALC should improve its quality assurance process for studies published or supported by IESALC principally through the use of formal academic peer review.

Notwithstanding the benefits of a lean and decentralised mode of operation, IESALC should consider recruiting additional staff with academic or technical expertise in order to add to the capacity for engagement with its stakeholders and to bolster the quality assurance systems on work commissioned by the Institute.

It should be noted that IESALC's stated objective is to "help improve mutual knowledge of the higher education systems in the Region **and in other regions of the world**". The Institute appropriately has a strong focus on its region but is clearly expected to do so with an eye to global developments in higher education. We have seen relatively little evidence of international input or research from beyond the region being utilised (although some research from beyond the Latin America and Caribbean region is published on the website). Closer communication with CEPES – UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education – would

be one potential mechanism for improving IESALC's connectedness with global higher education developments.

THE NATURE OF COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

There is great diversity within the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region. The region includes some 33 Member States, of which 15 are members of CARICOM, the Caribbean community, and are non-Spanish speaking (mostly English except Haiti and Suriname).

The majority of CARICOM countries have very small populations and few tertiary institutions or students. Overall, the Caribbean represents less than two percent of the population of the region represented by IESALC, yet reports on the Caribbean make up eight percent of the studies funded by IESALC and five percent of IESALC's budget is reported as being directed towards the Caribbean²⁴.

Language and historical ties are stronger drivers in the higher education sector than is geographical proximity in some cases. For example, Spain and Portugal cooperate with Spanish-speaking Latin American countries on Ibero-American initiatives, while much of the Caribbean sends students to the United Kingdom or Commonwealth countries rather than to its Latin American neighbours.

At the other extreme, Brazil is one of the E-9 countries – the nine most populous countries with high illiteracy rates - which are a particular priority for Education for All (see 32 C/5 p53). The E-9 countries are a priority target group for UNESCO's Major Programme One. Brazil has its own UNESCO office, which is the largest of all UNESCO field offices. As a general comment it should also be noted that even within the sub-regions of Latin America, the Caribbean or Central America, there is a great deal of variation between countries. The share of indigenous people, or African descendants for example, in the population is much larger in some countries of the region than in others, which can have a strong influence on political priorities.

To provide an indication of the geographical coverage of IESALC's activities, we have 'mapped' the research reports, seminars and bulletin recipients of IESALC in figures 1-3.

²⁴ Source: Dr Rama, correspondence with evaluators.

Caribbean Sub-Region

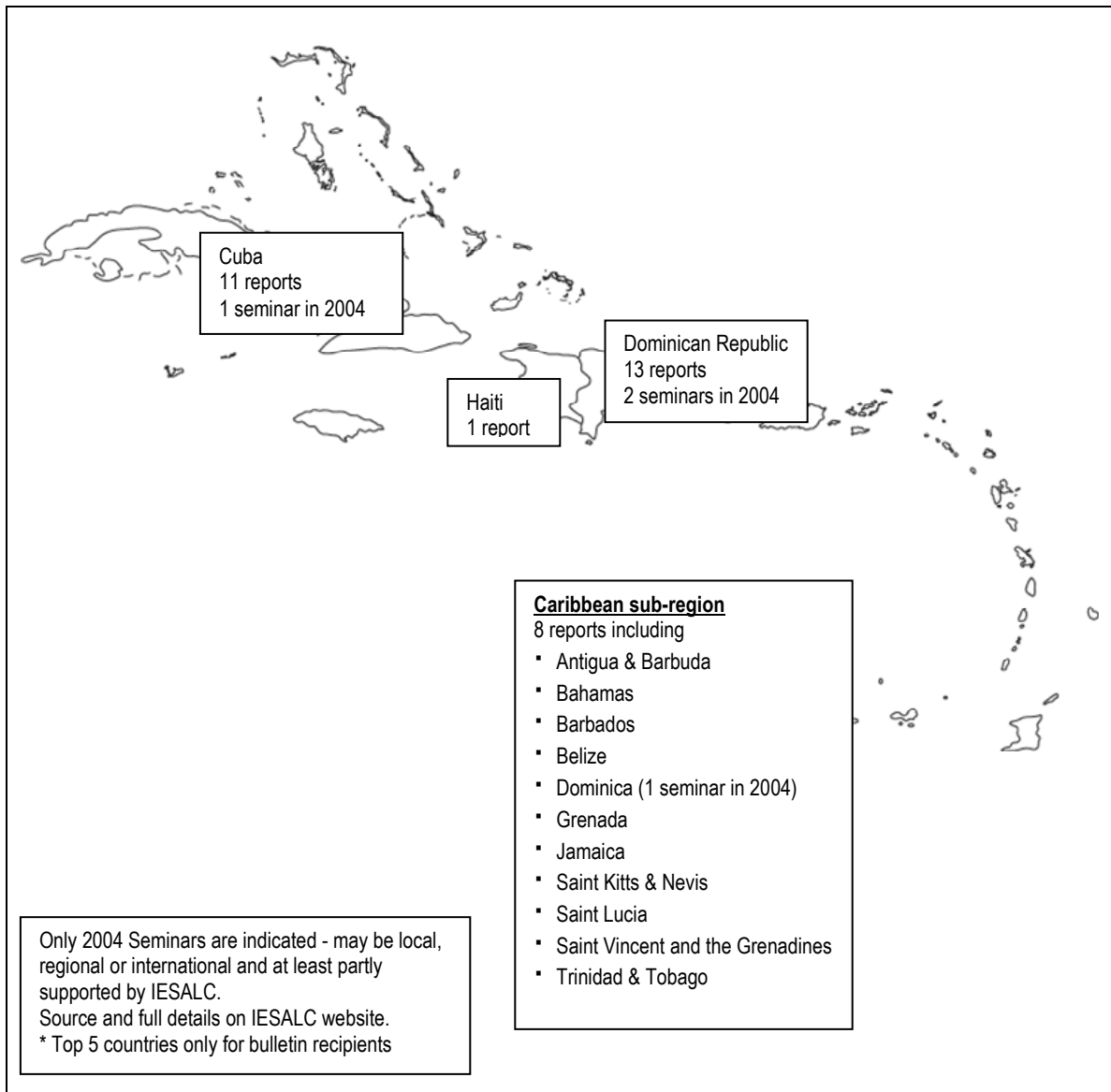


Figure 1: Reports, seminars (2004) and countries with largest number of Bulletin recipients, Caribbean sub-region.

South America Sub-Region

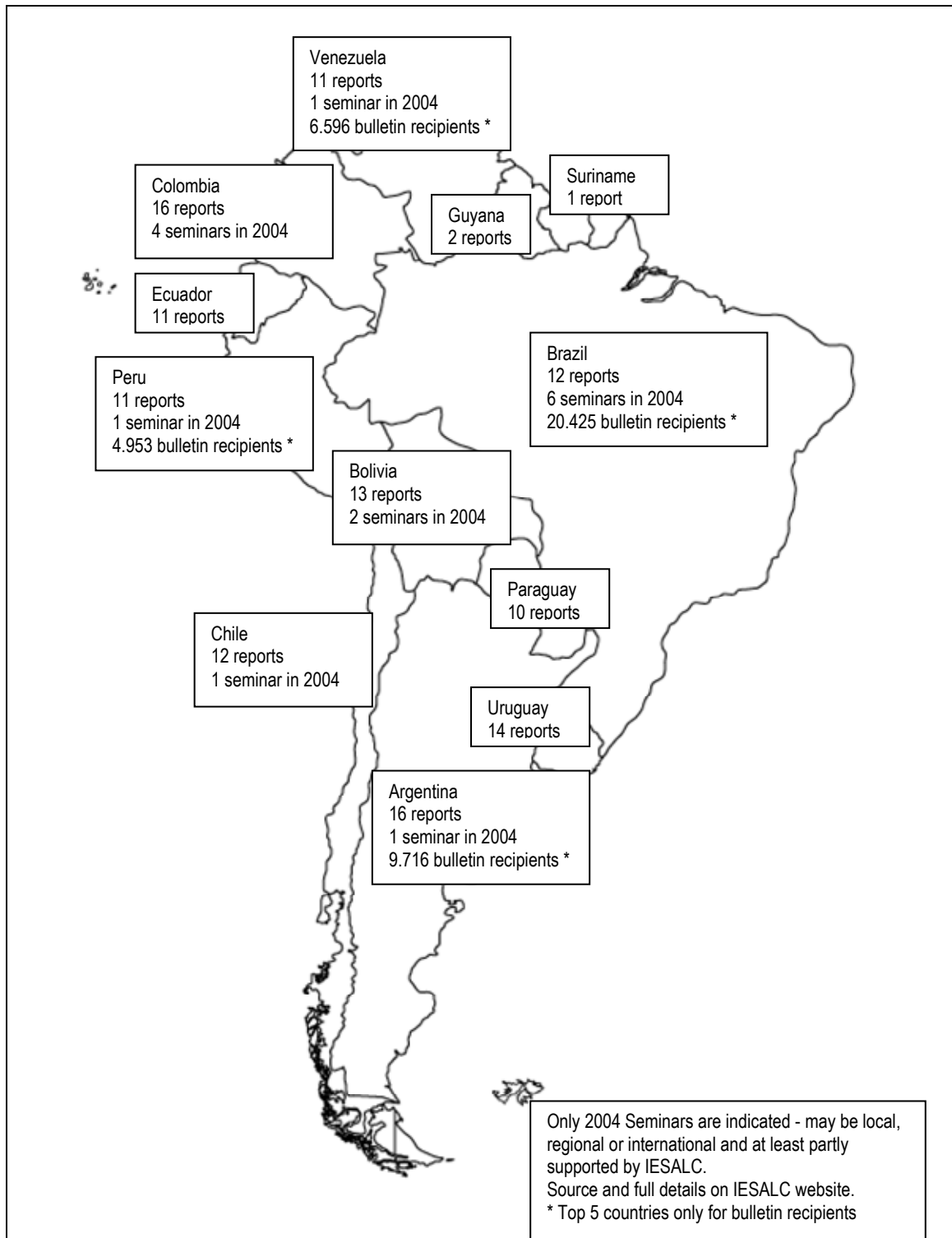


Figure 2: Reports, seminars (2004) and countries with largest number of Bulletin recipients, South America sub-region.

Central America Sub-Region

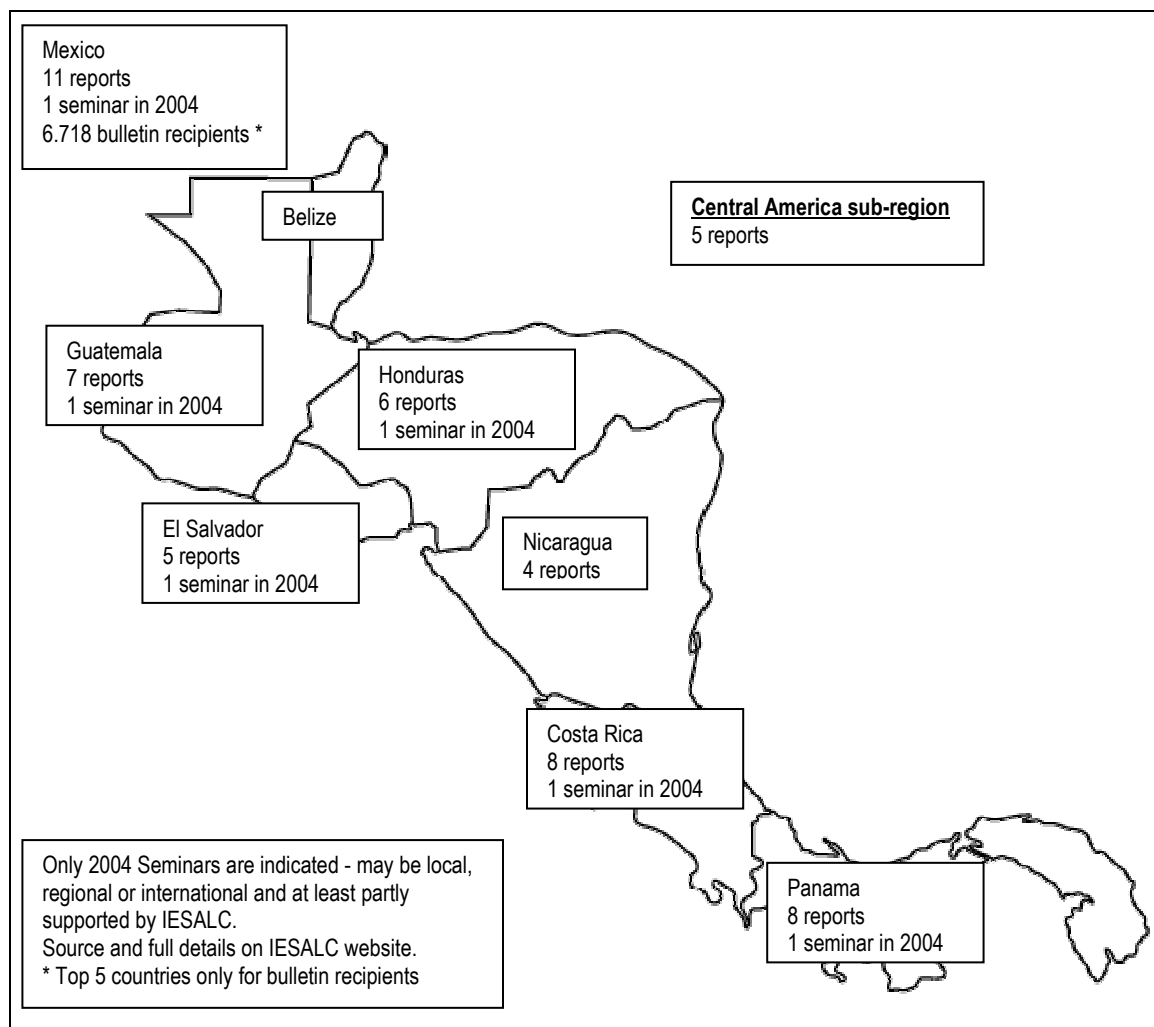


Figure 3: Reports, seminars (2004) and countries with largest number of Bulletin recipients, Central America sub-region.

How effective is IESALC at contributing to UNESCO's programmes and strategies?

The aims of the **decentralisation** strategy may be evidenced by the process of choosing topics and themes of research to be studied. Although some thematic studies clearly follow UNESCO's priorities in higher education (e.g. evaluation and accreditation), others reflect more of a regional focus. For example, one interviewee suggested that the choice of religious universities as a theme for research and the establishment of a regional network of religious universities reflected the large regional presence of religious universities - both long-established (e.g. Catholic) institutions and new (e.g. Adventist) religious universities. This topic may not have been selected for study if IESALC was guided solely by UNESCO's stated higher education priorities. This may be considered a positive example of the regional focus of IESALC enhancing the relevance of UNESCO activities to Member States in the region, as intended by the decentralisation strategy.

Example: Indigenous education in Colombia

Project / Intended Outcome: The Indigenous People Organizations in Colombia (ONIC) and IESALC have intensified their work together since 2002. This relationship began in response to a specific desire of indigenous people in Colombia to have their own understanding of the state of indigenous higher education in the country in order to support their proposal to establish an Indigenous People's University.

Activities: Studies have been undertaken and seminars held on the subject of Indigenous higher education. IESALC promoted the creation of an alliance of Colombian Universities for Indigenous Higher Education in close cooperation with the Vice Ministry for Higher Education.

Outcome: In the view of ONIC, IESALC played a very important role in bringing government and indigenous leaders together to discuss higher education for indigenous people. According to ONIC, until IESALC's participation they had little chance to discuss this issue with the Government. ONIC also recognised IESALC's contribution in giving greater visibility to community activities and social projects developed and implemented by indigenous people in the region.

A representative of the Government in Colombia on the other hand, complained that the Government has very little say on the selection of the studies supported by IESALC or on the selection of the consultants. He specifically felt some imposition by IESALC on the discussions about the creation of an Indigenous University, as the Colombian Government has positioned itself against this proposition.

CLEARING HOUSE

“UNESCO has a role in gathering, transferring, disseminating and sharing available information, knowledge and best practices in its fields of competence, identifying innovative solutions and testing them through pilot projects.”

Each biennium approved programme and budget since 2000/01 has included an expectation that IESALC will disseminate widely the results of research and technical cooperation projects.

What activities are included?

The activities of IESALC as a clearing-house are its strongest asset. The visibility of the Institute is much higher than in the past, due in large part to its Digital Bulletin and website. For example, one survey respondent said that “[the information role] is IESALC’s most important work; it represents IESALC’s comparative advantage”. This ‘reach’ or penetration into the higher education community has raised the visibility of the Institute and UNESCO in the region.

IESALC disseminates and shares information very openly through its digital offerings, primarily the Digital Bulletin (by email) and the IESALC website. It also provides CD-ROMs for those without access to the Internet, and publishes books in co-edition with partners. On the other hand, in 2001 the Board approved the suspension of the indexed journal on higher education that had previously been published by IESALC. Although it had a relatively small distribution and was costly to produce, some interviewees argued the journal contained high-quality information and analysis, and facilitated IESALC’s ability to influence the agenda and academic debate.

Another way in which IESALC increases access to, and the relevance of, its tools is through the use of “open-source” code for the evaluation software it has developed. This means that copyright is not applicable and enables users of the software, such as universities, to modify the software to suit their own needs. In addition, IESALC regularly runs seminars for the higher education community to disseminate the findings of its studies and to promote debate and networking.

How effective are these activities in contributing to the objectives of the Institute?

Through the digital provision of information and the running of seminars, IESALC aims to satisfy its objective “to facilitate an exchange of information and experience among the institutions, centres and specialists in the Region and in other parts of the world”.

To measure their success at providing access to information, IESALC monitor the *number* of people who access the Institute’s digital offerings through its website. Table 4 illustrates that in May 2005, almost 14,000 visits were made to the website per week, compared with only 2,700 visits per week less than a year earlier. These visits are facilitated by IESALC’s practice of embedding hyperlinks in the fortnightly emailed Digital Bulletin.

Table 4: Website usage, provided by IESALC.

Date (week of)	Number of visited pages	Average Pages Visited/day	Number of visitors
10 to 16 August 2004	17,001	2,426	2,728
01 to 07 October 2004	20,619	2,946	4,659
25 to 31 January 2005	22,670	3,239	12,445
03 to 09 May 2005	22,657	3,337	13,893

The number of people receiving the Digital Bulletin is also known, and has increased significantly over time to become what is claimed to be the largest database of higher education contacts in the Latin America and Caribbean region. The number of recipients of the Digital Bulletin grew²⁵ from 153 contacts in May 2001 to 15,648 contacts in the end of 2002, and to almost 80,000 in May 2004. IESALC have not surveyed those who receive the Bulletin and so do not have any information available on recipients’ views on the usefulness of the Bulletin and website. While IESALC have developed a tool for surveying recipients of the Digital Bulletin during the course of this evaluation, this is yet to be used for measuring the satisfaction of recipients with IESALC’s information services.

Sharing information: the importance of language for IESALC’s dissemination role²⁶

The IESALC website and Digital Bulletin are predominantly in the Spanish language. A mirror website has become operational since this evaluation began, with some basic content in English, although the quality of translation is variable.

All country (and sub-regional) studies are published in the language of the subject country or sub-region (i.e. results for the English-speaking Caribbean are reported in English, Latin America in Spanish, Haiti in French and Brazilian studies in Portuguese). The same applies

²⁵ The bulletin started in May 2001 with 153 subscribers, at the beginning of 2002 this number was 880 and it was over 15,500 by the end of the year.

²⁶ The role of language in communications of the Institute with other parts of UNESCO is discussed later.

for the press cuttings service of the Bulletin: articles are included in their language of origin, partly because of the importance of accuracy, and partly because of the costs involved in translation.

While these practices ensure that the study is useful for its primary audience, it raises the question of whether information-sharing is impeded by the lack of publication in multiple languages.

Language is a barrier to information sharing between the Caribbean (English, French, Dutch) and the Latin America (Spanish) sub-regions. It is also a potential communication barrier between Brazil and the rest of the region -Portuguese speakers can understand Spanish texts, but this is more difficult and risks some meaning being lost. The Spanish-language dominance of the region may also be a barrier for the rest of the world accessing and making use of IESALC-funded studies (although Spanish is recognised by UNESCO as an international language).

One way to address these issues is by undertaking more translations of IESALC publications. This would have to be done in a cost-effective manner, since IESALC typically only pays US\$1000 for each research report it commissions. The cost of professional translation may therefore be prohibitive. However, there may be other options available to increase accessibility, including publication of multi-lingual report abstracts as some academic databases provide. This may require the Institute acquiring increased language capabilities.

Recommendations:

IESALC should develop a cost-effective strategy to overcome the communication barriers associated with the publication of information in the subject country's language.

Stakeholder views on the Digital Bulletin and website should periodically be surveyed to ensure its continued value and relevance to stakeholders.

STANDARD-SETTER

“UNESCO will serve as a central forum for articulating the ethical, normative and intellectual issues of our time, fostering multidisciplinary exchange and mutual understanding, working – where possible and desirable – towards universal agreements on these issues, benchmarking targets and mobilizing international opinion.”²⁷

In the 2002/3 biennium (31C/5) one of the Main Lines of Action relevant to IESALC was “development of new norms and standards” and a result expected of IESALC was

²⁷ C/4 Medium term strategy 2002/7, UNESCO.

“accountability and transparency of the evaluation and accreditation processes increased through promoting evaluation and accreditation of programmes”.

What activities are included?

At the current time, the majority of actions in the area of standards for accreditation and evaluation are seminars and diagnostic studies, as well as the development and distribution of evaluation software. Some technical assistance projects also focus on standard-setting, as discussed in the following section.

The main responsibility of IESALC in this area is to act as the Secretariat for the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Latin America and the Caribbean. As discussed in the context section of this report, ten countries currently recognise the Convention (with the largest Brazil, and also Chile, having repudiated it). From the reports made to the Governing Board and the General Conference, it appears that no significant meetings on the Regional Convention have been held since 2001, and Headquarters staff expressed concern that IESALC had chosen to let it lapse. When asked about this, an IESALC staff member said that the Convention was not of interest to countries in the region, with few belonging, and that she had not been aware that IESALC had this role.

The Director of IESALC subsequently indicated to us that the development of accreditation agencies in a number of countries in recent years, and the transfer of responsibility for the Convention to those accreditation bodies, has removed a ‘roadblock’ that should enable a stronger focus on the Regional Convention by IESALC in the future. At the time of writing this report, further support of the Convention is in IESALC’s workplan for the forthcoming year. An intention was expressed to the evaluation team to reproduce the Bologna process (European agreement) in Latin America and the Caribbean. When asked whether IESALC had met or spoken to the UNESCO institute staff responsible for the Bologna process, a staff member stated that this was not necessary at this stage as they had access to the papers related to this issue. This is symptomatic of lack of engagement between IESALC and the staff in the Education Sector.

How effective are these in contributing to the objectives of the Institute?

One of IESALC’s objectives is “to encourage and support in the context of regional integration greater mobility of higher education professionals, especially those in relatively less developed countries, with a view to making better use of human and educational resources and helping to facilitate greater flexibility in the recognition of higher education studies, diplomas and degrees between the countries of the Region and other parts of the world.”

It is plausible that the activities of IESALC in reporting on and comparing countries, disseminating guides to self-evaluation, and encouraging institutions and governments to meet international standards contributes to this outcome, even in the absence of efforts to extent the relevance and application of the Regional Convention. However, there is insufficient evidence to estimate the impact of these activities on the objective.

Example: Evaluation software with the Dominican Republic Association for Evaluation and Accreditation (ADAAC)

Project / Intended Outcome: ADAAC, together with universities, developed guidelines for evaluation of universities based on a review of international evaluation practices. It was proposed that the results of this work should be widely disseminated throughout the Latin America and the Caribbean region, including through the conversion of the guidelines into software to assist in its dissemination and utilisation.

IESALC's Role: IESALC met ADAAC representatives at a seminar and suggested a project to distribute the guidelines in Latin America and the Caribbean through evaluation software. IESALC supported the design of the software, provided general guidelines, reviewed the manual, partially financed the development of the software, and presented the resulting software at a seminar for Member States.

Outcome: The software has been sent to many countries in the region and is available on the IESALC website. Many people from governments and universities have contacted ADAAC asking for technical support and orientation. Unfortunately, there is no data available on the uptake of the software.

The context section of this report discussed the launch of the Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, and the associated Plan of Action for 2004/5. As this biennium is not yet concluded, we cannot comment further on progress against the Plan of Action other than to state that IESALC has scheduled work on this in its 2004/5 Programme and Budget.

CAPACITY BUILDER

“UNESCO will organize international cooperation for servicing its stakeholders, especially its Member States, in building human and institutional capacities in all its fields of competence.”

The ‘results expected’ of IESALC in the C/5 documents included. in 2000/01, “encouraging human resource development through ad-hoc courses, research and improved planning, management and evaluation of higher education” and, in 2002/03, “a well-trained group of evaluators, researchers and managers of higher education institutions”.

What activities are included?

IESALC has undertaken a small number of significant technical assistance projects, such as in Panama, where IESALC provided technical assistance by supporting the drafting of legislation relating to the establishment of the National Evaluation and Accreditation System. This activity was aimed at improving the quality of higher education in Panama and IESALC worked together with the Panama Ministry of Education and Council of Rectors in support of this project. In December 2004, the results of the project were delivered to the Minister and the Vice-Minister of Education of Panama for final review.²⁸

In Venezuela, IESALC provided financial and technical assistance to the Ministry of Higher Education, the University Association (AVERU) and the Association of University Colleges “in matters related to the organization and execution of approximately one hundred (100) meetings that were held – at a national level – with the object of analysing and gathering the opinion of the main actors involved in the Project of Law of Higher Education ... with the object of reaching a consensus about the new regulation frame[work].”²⁹ IESALC’s role in this was commended by interviewees in Venezuela. The draft legislation has stalled in the parliamentary process, although this is clearly beyond the control of IESALC.

Example: Evaluation of Bolivian Universities

Project / Intended Outcome: The project was to support the evaluation and accreditation process of eight private universities in Bolivia, to verify the compliance of the requirements established by the General Private Universities Regulation, and to demonstrate self-evaluation capability.

IESALC’s Role: The Bolivian Ministry of Education approached IESALC to facilitate this work and an agreement was made between the Ministry and IESALC which resulted in the universities paying a fee directly to IESALC. IESALC (through a consultant) was given responsibility for coordinating the project, selecting the external (peer) assessors, and documenting the process and findings for the Vice Ministry of Education.

Outcome: The resulting evaluation guides and other non-confidential material were published on the IESALC website, and the work resulted in the accreditation of the qualifying institutions as full universities. IESALC also provided the training of national evaluators with the support of an international evaluation specialist.

While less direct than the provision of technical assistance, IESALC’s strategy of recruiting consultants from the academic and government community to undertake research and to act as consultants on technical assistance projects offers those consultants opportunities to build their capacities, perhaps in areas where they would not otherwise be working. Thus, IESALC

²⁸ Doc 171 EX/4 Jan – Dec 2004

²⁹ Report of the Director on Activities and Administrative Management 2003. (At Third Ordinary Governing Board Meeting)

can be said to be increasing the capability of the network of higher education consultants that it works with, by giving them experience that they would not otherwise be exposed to.

How effective are these activities in contributing to the objectives of the Institute?

The objective “to help improve and develop higher education systems and institutions, within the reform process of any Member State requesting the Institute’s co-operation” appears to be served in the examples provided to us of technical assistance by IESALC. Once again, it is worth noting that IESALC does not provide technical assistance ‘in-house’ and instead contract ‘experts’ in the region to undertake the work. Under the current operating model, IESALC does not possess sufficient technical capacity within its small team to provide technical assistance directly to Member States.

In terms of the technical assistance projects IESALC has been involved with, it appears to have been relatively successful in fulfilling its objective capacity building. However, the technical assistance projects are by no means universal, since the factors influencing Member States’ requests for the Institute’s support depends on the willingness of governments to work with IESALC and their specific needs. It is also the case that political factors can lead to work being stalled (e.g. the Venezuelan Higher Education Bill is now stalled).

Some interviewees suggested that more countries might ask for technical assistance if IESALC had a better technical capacity and reputation in-house. It has also been suggested that it is smaller countries that are most likely to ask for assistance, although Venezuela – the host country of IESALC – is a clear exception.

When analyzing the planning processes and the definition of priorities for IESALC’s activities, the needs or demands of Member States for technical assistance did not appear to be very relevant to the decision making. That might explain the perception that only some countries benefiting from IESALC capacity building services.

How effective are these in contributing to UNESCO’s programmes and strategies?

The overall impact of IESALC’s technical assistance is necessarily limited by the number of countries involved. Involvement in processes such as law reform or accreditation should be counted as positive moves towards an overall goal of better-quality institutions and systems in the region. Compared to the other functions of IESALC (e.g. laboratory of ideas or clearing house), fewer survey respondents thought IESALC had made a significant difference to lifting the capability and capacity of higher education institutions and systems in the region.

CATALYST FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

“UNESCO as a technical multidisciplinary agency will assume a catalytic role for development cooperation in its fields of competence. To that end it will seek to ensure that the objectives, principles and priorities it promotes are followed suit by other multi- and bilateral programmes and that projects are implemented, in particular at regional and national levels, through innovation, effective interventions and wise practices.”

The relevant Main Line of Action that IESALC is expected to contribute to include cooperation in higher education (2000/01 and 2004/5). The results expected of IESALC in the current biennium include “enhanced regional cooperation in the field of higher education”.

How effective are these in contributing to the objectives of the Institute?

The objective of fostering cooperation between countries in the region is clearly supported by the activities and strategy of IESALC, which involves bringing higher education specialists, universities and governments together to consider various themes or regional situations. Beyond this, the lack of extra-budgetary funding shows that there has been relatively little cooperation with other development organisations. The relationship with the Andean Development Corporation (see example below) represents a possible change to this situation.

Example: Andean Development Corporation (CAF).

CAF is a development funding agency, comparable to the IDB or World Bank. Originally its coverage was Andean countries, but now it covers the whole of Latin America.

Project / Intended Outcome: CAF recently created a sector for social development, focussing on education. The plan is an ‘Andean Agenda for Education’ identifying investment opportunities in the education sector. CAF chooses not to develop its own research (as the World Bank does) but instead intends to leverage the work of IESALC (or in the case of basic education, the UNESCO office in Chile).

Activities: Examples of CAF-sponsored projects include a US\$40 million project on Higher Education in Argentina, which includes development of legislation, implementation and pilots in universities. Other projects in the region are being negotiated with Education Ministries.

Role of IESALC: IESALC (through its consultants) have played a ‘think-tank’ role according to CAF. The process is that a country approaches CAF to fund a higher education project, CAF in turn approach IESALC, and IESALC hire consultants to undertake the project. CAF have indicated that IESALC could potentially take a larger role in its projects in the future.

Outcome: These projects are only in a design phase. The fact that IESALC is a UNESCO Institute is very important for CAF’s credibility in this area.

How effective are these activities in contributing to UNESCO's programmes and strategies?

Education For All goals do not directly refer to higher education. The WCHE and the related World Declaration and Framework for Priority Action on Higher Education outline UNESCO's main priorities and objectives in the area of higher education. The contribution to UNESCO respective EFA goals are very limited, except for the efforts on teacher preparation (a clear shadow area with the activities developed by UNESCO regional office in Chile) and on stimulating access to higher education to people traditionally excluded (life long education, people with disabilities, and indigenous peoples).

All interviewees we spoke to indicated that, were it not for the existence of IESALC, UNESCO would have almost no presence in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Therefore, despite some questions about the quality of some IESALC work, the Institute has made an important contribution in terms of lifting UNESCO's presence in the region, and has developed close working relationships with many Member States.

Arguably, the co-operative process which IESALC has adopted (i.e. commissioning national studies jointly with partners in Member States and running seminars to disseminate results, often leading to the commissioning of further work) allows the countries themselves to influence the agenda. This is evidenced by the fact that not every country has had exactly the same set of studies done.

More evidence of the involvement of the member states (government and/or universities) lies in the fact that most studies are undertaken with either co-funding or in-kind investment by the country. The studies have another important role in the area, since they let countries know what other countries are doing and may subsidise the definition of parameters and references for benchmarking processes, with consequent improvements in higher education policies.

Recommendation:

IESALC should consult regularly with Member States and key regional stakeholders in higher education with a view to identifying priorities for the Institute and informing its strategic planning processes.

QUALITY OF COORDINATION AND INTERACTION WITH RELEVANT ENTITIES

The UNESCO institutions with which we expected IESALC to have a high degree of interaction and exhibit coordination included;

- UNESCO Headquarters (HQ) in Paris;
- UNESCO field offices in the region (national, regional, cluster); and
- Other UNESCO institutes, particularly CEPES.

In terms of external stakeholders, we expected to see evidence of close working relationships with:

- Member States in Latin America and Caribbean, especially their Ministries of Education and/or the agencies responsible for higher education;
- The universities and higher education systems in the countries of Latin America and Caribbean; and
- Relevant Non-Governmental Organizations in the region, especially those related to research, accreditation, evaluation and policy making/advocacy in higher education.

Looking at the broadest definition of the higher education stakeholders, we might also expect to see relationships with employers groups (in relation to UNESCO's desire to bring education closer to the world of work) and students associations in some circumstances. According to IESALC staff, IESALC has worked with a student organisations in Guatemala, Colombia (an event with 147 student leaders) and in Venezuela, as part of the law discussion process.

Coordination between other UNESCO offices and IESALC appears to be infrequent and ad hoc. In general, contacts with HQ and cluster offices are done strictly to fulfil bureaucratic procedures; whenever closer relations were identified, they usually reflected personal rather than institutional relationships. No systematic relationships between sectors and offices could be identified and it seems the general rule is each unit ignores whatever is done by other UNESCO units in the field, although IESALC has sent 5 staff members to Paris between 2001 and 2005. This is consistent with the findings of an earlier evaluation into field offices³⁰, which found a lack of coordination, including with Institutes, as the most common issue found during their review of 10 field offices.

³⁰ IOS evaluation of field offices reported in 167 EX/14

One prerequisite for good communications is that there are staff on both sides willing and available to take part. One aspect of the ‘virtual Institute’ or ‘outsourcing’ strategy that IESALC has implemented is that consultants, unless specifically contracted, do not have the same responsibilities as staff might have to take part in wider UNESCO activities. It may be that the heavy reliance on consultants and the lack of professional staff (in the sense of UNESCO “P” posts or similar academic/policy qualified people) in the Institute may have lessened IESALC’s contribution to the wider UNESCO community. UNESCO Headquarters staff mentioned that most of their dealings had to be channelled through the Director of IESALC which had caused problems in terms of delays and a lack of responsiveness— in reality, there may not be other IESALC staff that could help.

Coordination and Interaction with Headquarters

There is a significant opportunity for improvement in the interaction between Headquarters and IESALC. The exchange of information, in most cases, is done in a rather formal and bureaucratic way. From IESALC’s perspective, they sent 185 reports between 2001 and 2005 but ‘have never received any feedback’. No one in IESALC other than the Director has regular contact with Paris, other than on technical issues such as library or IT matters.

A lack of language competency within IESALC has been identified as a problem. The large majority of IESALC’s work is carried out in Spanish but IESALC have complained that there are few Spanish speakers in Headquarters working in this field and none at a senior level. Spanish is one of the official languages of UNESCO, but English and French are the predominant ‘working’ languages. Although staff at IESALC have competencies in these other languages, the evaluation team observed that language remained a barrier to high-quality comprehension and dialogue, both in spoken and written communications.

Despite the volume of reporting, there was a perception from Headquarters that they ‘did not know’ what IESALC was doing, while IESALC could not be sure if it is meeting Headquarters’ expectations, other than through the formal process of budgetary approval. The lack of communication does not result in overlapping activities with HQ, since Paris has very few field activities for higher education in the region. Nevertheless, opportunities for shared understanding, joint work and synergies are unlikely to be captured in this environment. This also has implications for Headquarters’ oversight and monitoring of IESALC, as discussed in the following section.

Coordination and interaction with field offices and institutes

As with relationships with UNESCO HQ, we have not identified evidence of regular and high-quality communications between IESALC and field, cluster or regional offices as is expected under the decentralisation strategy of UNESCO. In most cases the UNESCO offices in the region do not know what IESALC is doing and vice versa. There is a lack of

systematic contact between UNESCO offices in the region and IESALC, and a lack of clarity over expectations of IESALC in this regard: IESALC staff indicated that they did not consider it their job to keep country offices informed.

According to IESALC, their regular communication procedure is: IESALC communicates/invites the field office to take part in a meeting when it is held in the country/region of such office. Sometimes this occurs very late in the process. In our view, it would be valuable if contact was made earlier and local offices should at least be consulted on potential participants. In some cases, a field office reported a sense that IESALC was invading their territory. Formal complaints have been made to UNESCO HQ on occasion about the lack of consultation by IESALC, however good relationship management is a two way street. Relationships with the largest UNESCO offices in the region, Chile and Brazil, appear to be particularly tense. This possibly reflects the significant risk of overlap with some of the work of these offices.

The possibility of overlapping activities within the region is high. There is a perception that the efforts of field offices to increase their extra-budgetary funding results in competition between UNESCO agencies for government funds, which has caused some conflicts between IESALC and field offices. This problem has diminished due to the closure of some national offices, allowing more “moving space” for IESALC (such as in the Dominican Republic) and the emphasis in basic education that most offices of the region follow. A potential overlap with OREALC in Chile on teacher training has generated some difficulties at times.

In addition to IESALC, within Latin America and the Caribbean UNESCO has cluster offices in Cuba, Ecuador, Uruguay and Jamaica, a regional office in Chile, a regional office for IIEP in Argentina and some important field offices, such as the one in Brazil. IESALC staff have commented to us that all the local offices are sent reports on IESALC’s activities in their respective countries, with little response. Notwithstanding written reports, these offices appear to meet only seldomly. There is no regular forum for discussion on matters of coordination or on UNESCO regional strategies. Consequently, there is almost no coordination and very little interaction.

A quote from a regional UNESCO office states “IESALC is not an institute, it is a regional office for Higher Education, just like the one in Cuba is for culture. And in that sense it has never fulfilled its mission of creating programmes oriented to improve higher education in the region”. This perception has been echoed by others in UNESCO offices. It is clear that IESALC is not fulfilling the role of supporting UNESCO offices in the region, as was envisaged by the UNESCO decentralisation strategy.

The evaluation team were able to identify few examples of working relationships with other UNESCO Institutes and centres. In particular, CEPES³¹ in Bucharest has a very similar role to IESALC - promoting the development of higher education in Europe - and therefore represents a significant opportunity for shared learning and benchmarking. From the evidence we did see, there was no significant relationship between IESALC and CEPES.

For example, as previously mentioned, one IESALC staff member spoke of undertaking a similar exercise to the Bologna process on the recognition of qualifications in Latin America and the Caribbean. When asked about the potential to learn from CEPES staff about their experiences in the Bologna process, the IESALC staff member indicated that they did not see any need to contact CEPES staff. Another example mentioned by UNESCO Headquarters interviewees was that IESALC did not involve or invite CEPES to a meeting of Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union. Both CEPES and IESALC have commented that budgetary constraints have not allowed them to take up the opportunity to develop close relationships and that this would remain a barrier to working together. According to CEPES, most contacts with IESALC take place at HQ-organised meetings and represent a very limited opportunity for engagement. While the geographical boundaries between the two Institutes are clear and do not overlap, we consider that there is considerable room for closer cooperation and mutual learning a strategic and conceptual basis.

Recommendations:

IESALC should make a concerted effort to establish regular and good working relationships with UNESCO offices in the region, notwithstanding that good quality relationships require two-way communication and commitment from each party.

IESALC needs to develop indicators and report on performance in the area of relationship management.

Priority should be given to interaction and sharing of conceptual and methodological learning between the institutes, particularly between IESALC and CEPES given the potential for synergies and/or unnecessary duplication.

Coordination and interaction with stakeholders

IESALC has developed some solid partnerships with governments, university associations, universities and NGOs working in the region. Most of these partnerships were built upon the country studies networking strategy, although some activities were with individual higher education institutions, particularly in relation to accreditation and quality assurance. The

³¹ CEPES comments by email to evaluation team..

outsourcing of studies by IESALC has helped it to consolidate linkages with many institutions throughout the region.

Positive comments were received in our survey on IESALC's contribution to international relationships and its role as a partner in discussions on higher education in the region. The Dominican Republic was the subject of a field visit and is a state where IESALC has provided significant technical assistance. A former Minister of State of the Dominican Republic particularly valued IESALC's role in creating 'buy in' and a sense of ownership among local stakeholders.

IESALC recognizes its limitations in working with the CARICOM countries, and also with the only Francophone nation in the Caribbean, Haiti³². For most of the interviewees this problem relates to the language barrier, as well as practical problems with travel and communications between the countries. In part this stems from the relatively small population (and therefore higher education sector) in these countries, but there does appear to be room for more cooperation with non-Spanish speaking countries in the region. Strategies to improve this situation have been attempted in the past, and currently a proposal for a scholarship arrangement for Caribbean students has been made to the Venezuelan government.

The Higher Education system in much of the region contains a plethora of organisations. For example, there are 51 Councils of University Rectors alone. This means that IESALC has to be selective about which partners it works with. Some interviewees questioned the criteria IESALC adopted to select its partners in some countries. According to some stakeholders, the associations and institutions IESALC works in partnership with are not always the best qualified and they are profiting from their association to UNESCO and damaging IESALC's image in the region. Given the diversity of higher education actors in the region, it will never be possible to leave all stakeholders satisfied with IESALC's efforts.

Coordination and interaction with national governments

IESALC has improved and enhanced its communication with national governments. The digital bulletin, the country studies and the seminars, along with the way the institute is managed, has helped IESALC to know what Member States are doing and to get known. The strategy of developing many different country studies with the support of local consultants has helped IESALC to build some networks with national governments, but, one interviewee commented that IESALC does not always consult the government on the selection of themes to be studied.

³² The Caribbean population represents 1.26% of the entire population of the region. There is only one French speaking country (Haiti), the other French speaking territories, such as Guadeloupe and Martinique, are not part of the IESALC's working area.

In all visited countries, most of the interviewees mentioned IESALC has played an important role in bringing together different stakeholders – especially governments – for the purposes of dialogue and negotiation. The usefulness of its participation in the Venezuelan debate on the legal framework for higher education was highlighted by many people.

Coordination and interaction with universities and higher education professionals

There are a very large number of universities and higher education professionals in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. The first characteristic of IESALC's strategy is the emphasis on the internet as means for communication. Significant resources have been invested in developing IESALC's website and the digital bulletin reaches many institutions and professionals. The number of visitors to IESALC website has grown steadily and the bulletin is received by almost 80,000 people approximately every fortnight. The internet has enabled IESALC to improve the reach and cost-effectiveness of its information dissemination activities within the higher education systems in the region (setting aside the language issue).

The second characteristic is the support of national Rectors or University Associations. Most studies and other activities are undertaken jointly with this kind of organisation. These bodies have been partners of IESALC in most country studies and, along with national government organisations, have played an important role in defining the themes to be studied and in the selection of consultants. They represent one of IESALC's most important partners in building and strengthening networks, but some interviewees have questioned their legitimacy in representing the higher education sector in that country.

Coordination and interaction with NGOs

Apart from the university associations, IESALC has no systematic strategy to communicate with NGOs. The website and the bulletin are probably accessed by these organizations but there is no clear strategy to engage with NGOs. Nevertheless, these organizations are often involved in IESALC networking events. The discussion on higher education for indigenous people in Colombia is an example of IESALC's country studies leading to cooperation with NGOs.

In recent years the discussion on accreditation and evaluation has brought IESALC closer to NGOs that deal with this issue, such as RIACES³³ and ADAAC. IESALC's accreditation program has been prepared in collaboration with accreditation agencies established in the region, and some other projects have been undertaken with NGOs (e.g. on gender issues and

³³ RIACES is an international network on evaluation and accreditation that associates Latin American and Iberic countries, Spain holds the secretariat.

access for people with disabilities) in countries such as Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Colombia.

Recommendations:

IESALC should consult regularly with Member States and key regional stakeholders in higher education with a view to identifying priorities for the Institute and informing its strategic planning processes.

IESALC should develop more of a results-oriented approach to planning and reporting, which could include surveying stakeholders to ensure the continued value and relevance of IESALC's work to stakeholders.

The evaluation team was asked to focus on three aspects of IESALC's financial and organisational management:

- Analyse the funding patterns, mechanisms and their risks for sustained institutional capacity, and viability;
- Assess the process by which extra-budgetary resources are sought and obtained and to what extent the extra-budgetary funding is aligned to the strategic objectives of UNESCO; and
- Examine the quality of organisational management and the impact of the extent of functional autonomy provided.

We analyse these issues below under three headings: funding patterns and extra-budgetary funding; financial and organisational management; and governance.

Funding patterns and extra-budgetary funding

Table 5 illustrates the key patterns in funding sources for IESALC over the period 2000-2005.

The key features to note are that:

- Overall funding has been very stable since 2001, with annual income averaging US\$1.2 million for the four years to 2004;
- The share of extra-budgetary funding in total funding has remained stable at 9.3% over the period;
- The stability in overall funding patterns masks significant changes in the composition of extra-budgetary funding, which has shown a decline in revenue from publishing activities (due to a restructuring of the publishing unit) offset by savings and a significant increase in host country funding; and
- Contributions from donors and beneficiaries - other than the host-country - have not been a significant source of funding for IESALC, representing 1.7% of total funding over the period.

Table 5: IESALC INCOME FOR THE YEAR'S ENDING 2000-2005 by Source

<p style="text-align: center;">IESALC INCOME <i>2000 to 2005 (YTD as at 30.04.2005)</i> US\$</p>						
INCOME	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
UNESCO REGULAR BUDGET	1,304,000	1,055,500	1,110,100	1,093,600	1,100,000	1,100,000
<i>% OF TOTAL INCOME</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>93%</i>	<i>95%</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>89%</i>	<i>98%</i>
EXTRA BUDGETARY						
Host country	6,532	6,526	5,136	148,308	100,250	100,250*
Revenue generating activities	98,526	77,489	43,594	2,503	2,007	1,678
Contributions from donors and beneficiaries	45,043	-	15,000	-	37,631	24,963
Non-operating revenue	-	712	72	67	61	25
TOTAL EXTRA-BUDGETARY	150,101	84,727	63,802	150,878	139,949	26,667
<i>% OF TOTAL INCOME</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>2%</i>
TOTAL INCOME	1,454,101	1,140,227	1,173,902	1,244,478	1,239,949	1,126,667

Source: IESALC (2005)

The stability of overall funding patterns and the low reliance on potentially volatile extra-budgetary contributions from non-host country sources suggests that the risks to sustained institutional capacity and viability are relatively low. In recent history, regular programme funding has been very stable, although the General Conference has signalled its intention to allocate future regular programme funding more on the basis of the relative effectiveness of its institutes and centres. In this climate, additional extra-budgetary funding would assist to diversify IESALC's reliance on regular programme funding.

Extra-Budgetary Funding

Extra-budgetary funds are those that do not form part of the assessed contributions of Member States to the regular budget. The Director General is authorised to receive such funds for the implementation of programmes and projects consistent with the aims, policies and activities of UNESCO. Throughout the UN system, extra-budgetary funding has been growing in importance since the 1980s and has become a significant funding source. This is the case for the other education institutes, which have all increased their share of extra-budgetary funding, to varying degrees, since 1998-99. Table 6 provides a comparison of the extra-budgetary funds raised by UNESCO's eight education institutes and centres. Taken on face value, IESALC does not compare favourably with the other Institutes in terms of its share of extra-budgetary funding. However, there are a number of potentially ameliorating factors to consider:

- The Institutes located in Western Europe (France, German and Switzerland) raise significantly larger shares of total funding from extra-budgetary sources, potentially reflecting a larger local pool of potential funding sources;
- In general, the older, more established and larger institutes have higher extra-budgetary shares than the younger and smaller institutes or centres; and
- There are potentially significant measurement problems associated with reported shares of extra-budgetary funding, such as under-reporting owing to in-kind contributions and co-funding arrangements that do not involve receipt of revenue.

Table 6: Funding by Institute

Institute or Centre	Location of Headquarters	Year Established	Total Funding (US\$)	% of EBF	Average % of EBF
			2002-03	2002-03	96/97 – 02/03
UNEVOC	Bonn	2000	1,947,353	92%	85%
UIE	Hamburg	1952	6,915,000	73%	66%
IIEP	Paris	1963	15,822,188	65%	62%
IITE	Moscow	1997	2,488,400	56%	35%
IICBA	Addis Ababa	1999	3,755,000	47%	33%
IBE	Geneva	1969	8,563,413	46%	25%
CEPES	Romania	1972	2,560,600	22%	18%
IESALC	Caracas	1998	2,418,380	9%	5%

In our interviews we found that the Director of the Institute is keenly aware that UNESCO encourages the use of extra-budgetary funding, and the Governing Board of IESALC is also aware of this expectation. However, our interviews with UNESCO HQ personnel and representatives of the Institute suggest that there is a lack of clarity around the specific expectations for the generation of extra-budgetary funding. There are also differing views about the appropriateness and risks of using extra-budgetary funding as a significant funding source.

Staff at the UNESCO HQ said that there is a general expectation that extra-budgetary funding should be the main source of funding for the education institutes. Indeed, more than one staff member spoke of a target ratio for extra-budgetary to regular budget funding of 4:1. However, we could find no written evidence that this is UNESCO policy, or that this expectation had been clearly communicated to the Institute’s Director and Governing Board.

The Institute has not actively sought extra-budgetary funding as part of its strategy for leveraging its resources, although some funding requests have been made recently³⁴. Rather, IESALC aims to leverage its resources by adopting a general practice of co-funding individual

³⁴ According to IESALC in Argentina two projects have been called for proposal with the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) and a pre-agreement was signed on June 8th.

programme initiatives. That is, most studies, publications and events of IESALC are co-funded by member states, higher education institutes and other NGOs. Due to the nature of these contractual arrangements, the contributions of these funding partners do not get reported as extra-budgetary funding.³⁵

This strategy of indirectly leveraging resources, rather than seeking direct extra-budgetary contributions, emerged for two reasons. First, early attempts by IESALC to raise extra-budgetary funds had generated only limited amounts of financial support, but had significant opportunity costs in terms of the time and effort required to secure resources. Second, since 2001 the Institute has embarked on a strategy of deliberately building up the capability of consultants and institutions in the area of higher education by working in partnership to further the objectives of both the Institute and its stakeholders in Member States.

The current Director of the Institute considers that if IESALC relied on extra-budgetary funding, it may constrain the flexibility of the Institute to direct its funding towards UNESCO programme priorities. As a matter of principle, there are no obvious reasons why one method of leveraging third party of resources should be preferred over another. Extra-budgetary funding is one potential model but potentially has both benefits and drawbacks for UNESCO. The main benefits of extra-budgetary funding are:³⁶

- Supporting and supplementing core programmes by expanding and strengthening institutional capability;
- Enabling improvements in programme and/or financial management by establishing clear accountability for specific results;
- Increasing the public and political profile of the UN; and
- Providing a measure of stakeholder support or satisfaction with performance.

In contrast, extra-budgetary funding has some potential drawbacks:

- Core resources will subsidise extra-budgetary projects and be diverted to narrower or bilateral priorities; and
- Extra-budgetary funding agreements may undermine the statutory programme and budgeting approval and implementation process.

As an alternative means of leveraging third-party resources, IESALC's high-volume/low-contribution co-funding model has the potential to offer many of the same advantages as EBF, but with less risk of cross-subsidisation. Furthermore, IESALC's practice of setting its work programme and budget, and then seeking to partner with other institutions as a means

³⁵ Typically, the Institute pays part of the cost of an activity or project to a contractor, who either contributes in kind or who collects part-payment from a co-funder.

³⁶ The list of benefits and drawbacks was adapted from 169 EX/29 External Auditor's report and Joint Inspection Unit Report 2002/03 on EXB Support Costs.

of achieving it, means that EBF remains relevant to the overall programme of IESALC. This is in contrast with the results of field office evaluations undertaken by IOS, which showed that EBF fund-raising was *ad hoc* and without a clear strategy [167 EX/14 refers].

We attempted to estimate the extent of leveraging of third party resources through co-funding but it was not possible due to incomplete information.³⁷ However, based on a small sample of agreements that we reviewed, and which contained sufficient financial information to enable us to quantify the financial commitments made by the Institute and third parties, we found that a ratio of at least 1:1 was typical among the agreements. That is, for a given co-funded project or activity, every dollar contributed by IESALC was at least matched by a commitment from third parties.

Recommendation:

IESALC should keep sufficient records to enable the measurement of the extent to which the Institute's funding of its programme is leveraged with third-party resources.

UNESCO should consider making clearer its expectations of IESALC in respect of the raising of extra-budgetary funding.

Financial and Organisational Management

The financial and organisational management of the Institute is the responsibility of its Director, supported by administrative staff. Since 2001, and the appointment of the new Director of the Institute, IESALC has embarked on a significant period of reorganisation with the aim of improving its efficiency and effectiveness. Key organisational initiatives include:

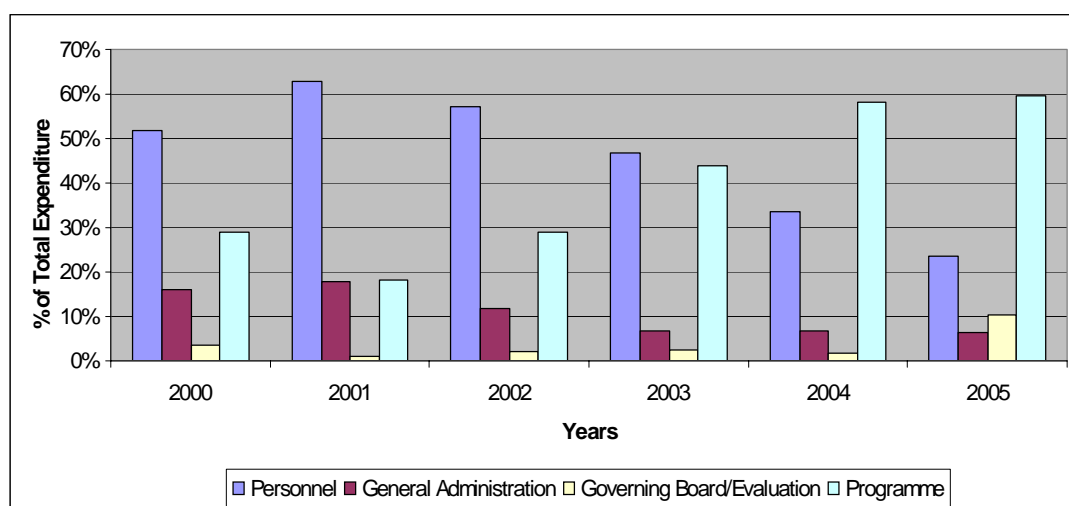
- Contracting out organisational support functions, such as the publishing unit, enabling reductions in support staff and the sale of surplus equipment (e.g. the printing press);
- Maintaining research and technical expertise by way of a decentralised network of consultants and contractors, rather than as employees;
- Effective use of information and communication technologies as a means of improving access to information and reducing the costs of dissemination (e.g. the digital bulletin reaches approximately 80,000 individuals and the IESALC information service now has a searchable online catalogue); and,
- Upgrading of the security and safety of the premises.

³⁷ We asked IESALC to provide us with information on the extent of third-party leveraging but this was not forthcoming. We were able to review contracts and agreements published on IESALC's web site but were not provided with copies of other agreements. Furthermore, the contracts we reviewed did not always specify the financial and in-kind contributions of third-parties. The team had access to the entire contracts database while in Caracas, but with numerous individual contracts, there was no summary available.

The improvements in administrative efficiency resulting from the above programme can be seen in the patterns of allocation of expenditure by the Institute. Figure 4 shows a significant change in the composition of expenditure by IESALC over the period 2000 - 2005.³⁸ In particular, it shows that:

- Personnel costs have almost halved as a share of total expenditure, declining from 63% in 2001 to 34% in 2005;
- Administration costs, including for the Governing Board, have declined significantly from 19% of total expenditure in 2001 to 8% in 2004; and
- A significant increase in programme costs from a low of 18% in 2001 to 58% in 2004, representing a more than trebling of the share of expenditure on the programme.

Figure 4: IESALC Expenditure by Type (2000 – 2005³⁹)



Staffing:

In 2001 eleven⁴⁰ staff left the Institute as a result of downsizing. Current staffing (June 2005) totals 17 people (7 are contracted by Paris, there is a vacant P4 and 2 NPO positions which are currently in the process of being filled):

- 6 people in the library (chief, 2 assistant, web designer, journalist and software engineer);
- 4 administrative support (cleaning, receptionist/telephone operator, 2 security);
- 1 budget;
- 1 accountant; and

³⁸ Based on financial information supplied by IESALC.

³⁹ 2005 figures are based on YTD expenditure as at 30 April 2005.

⁴⁰ Source: Report of the Director Administrative and Financial Management 2002 IESALC. Annex to Governing Board 2nd Ordinary Meeting, Final Report, Feb 2003.

- 5 people on direction (Dr Rama, secretary, 2 technical assistant and clerk).

Based on our interviews, it would appear that the Director of the Institute has a high-degree of autonomy over the organisational management of the Institute, including investment in premises, equipment and infrastructure. While the Director reports transparently on an annual basis to the Governing Board on administrative expenditures and investment activity, it is not apparent that the Governing Board has previously approved non-programme expenditure in detail.

Recommendation:

The Director of IESALC should seek the approval of the Governing Board, or its Executive Committee in between sessions of the Board, on a detailed budget for administrative expenses and capital improvement work on an annual basis, in addition to the current approval sought for the programme budget.

In terms of management systems, our principle findings are that:

- SISTER has not been used as intended, with little detailed results-based reporting;
- The finance staff at IESALC reported that FABS was useful; and
- Systems have been created in-house at IESALC, including the contract management database, to improve service delivery.

Recommendation:

UNESCO needs to provide greater support (training and guidance) to IESALC to enable it to make more effective use of management tools such as SISTER and to encourage the adoption of other best practice (results-oriented) management systems.

Governance

Within the context of assessing the quality of the Institute’s overall management and the impact and extent of its functional autonomy, we have looked at how it is governed both by its Governing Board and in the broader context of the UNESCO system. We are not simply looking for compliance with the written requirements of the Board and the Director, but rather at how and whether the governance arrangements of the Institute are sufficient to ensure the effectiveness of the Institute.

Governing Board

The Institute is governed by its own Board, within the mandate set out in its Statutes and by its own Rules of Procedure. The Board comprises thirteen members of which nine are official representatives of the Member States of the region elected by the Heads of Delegation

of GRULAC at the General Conference, three are appointed by the Director General from the list submitted by the councils of rectors of the region, and one is appointed by the Director General from among the NGOs collaborating with UNESCO in the field of higher education. Each member is appointed for a period of four years and, in order to foster rotation between the countries of the Region, no member can be immediately re-elected.

The functions of the Board are to lay down the general policy and nature of the Institute's activities, within the framework of the general policy approved by the General Conference of UNESCO. In particular, the Board's main functions are to:

- Decide how the funds allocated to the Institute for its operation are to be used and to adopt its annual budget;
- Report to the General Conference on the activities of the Institute every two years;
- Approve the annual report on the programme and budget of the Institute, the proposals on the structure and programming of the Institute, and the reports on the evaluations of its activities
- Advise on the formulation, execution, evaluation and follow-up of the Institute's work programme, so that its activities respond to the needs for development and improvement of higher education in the Region
- Take any decisions of a general nature that it considers necessary for the preparation and execution of the Institute's programme;
- Advise the Director on the appointment of principal officers; and
- Ensure that the Institute is soundly managed in accordance with UNESCO principles.

In the performance of the above functions, the Board must convene in ordinary session at least once every two years and may hold extra-ordinary sessions in certain circumstances. The Board has an Executive Committee, comprising the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and three members of the Board, which has delegated authority from the Board to carry out certain functions in between Board meetings. The Director-General and the Director of the Institute are able to participate in the Board's debates but without the right to vote. We examined a number of the Governing Board's documents, most of which were available on their website thereby promoting transparency of operation. We also interviewed members from two countries and received survey responses from a number of current and former members of the Board. Based on this work, we have arrived at the following findings:

- Relations between the governing Board and the Director of the Institute are good and feedback we received from members of the Board was strongly supportive of the Director;
- Generally speaking, the roles and responsibilities of the Board are clearly defined in Statute, and are agreed and understood by its members. Having said that, the nature

of the mechanism for the bulk of Board appointments is such that it is difficult for UNESCO to ensure the calibre of individual Board members or to ensure an appropriate overall mix of skills and experience on the Board;

- To fulfil its responsibilities, the Board requires reliable, timely and relevant information, with the main objective of good information being to assist the governing bodies to monitor progress against goals. While the Board receives detailed reporting about the proposed programme and budget, improvements could be made in the quality of that reporting. In particular, we would expect to see the proposed work programme and budget justified and debated within the context of a well-articulated strategic and results-based framework. We found evidence that Board members did engage in strategic discussion and made suggestions to improve the proposed work programme. However, we could find no evidence of how this feedback was taken into account in the reformulation of the programme and budget. Furthermore, the focus of information provided to the Board was on activities planned or undertaken rather than results expected or achieved, which limited the Board's ability to assess trade-offs and impacts of different activities;
- Some Board members indicated that due to the infrequent nature of Board meetings, they felt they could not exercise proper oversight over the Institute. For example, one member said that the Board operates *ex-post facto* and that, after approving the work plan, the Board only finds out much later what IESALC has done. The same member questioned whether more frequent meetings would be an efficient use of resources, preferring to see the resources directed to the programme⁴¹; and,
- The Director General has been represented by a number of different Secretariat personnel at the Board meetings of the Institute⁴², although there was no representative from the Secretariat at the most recent meeting. Given the importance of clear and consistent lines of communication between the Director General (or his representative) and IESALC within the context of decentralisation, it is important that the Director General be represented at every meeting of the Board.

Recommendation:

The Governing Board of IESALC should give further consideration to how it, including through its Executive Committee, can improve its oversight of IESALC given the infrequent meetings and deficiencies in the coverage and quality of reporting provided to it. In particular, consideration should be given to the use of information and communication technologies to enable more regular and effective governance of IESALC, given the impracticalities and cost of more frequent meetings in person.

⁴¹ The Board has its ordinary meetings according to IESALC's statutes, every two years, but there is a question of how frequently it should meet in order to better exercise oversight.

⁴² The Director General was represented by the Assistant Director General, Education (Caracas, 2000), by the Director of Education, Higher Education Division (Caracas, 2001 and Havana, 2002), and by the IESALC focal point in the Education Sector (San Jose, 2003).

The Board should request the Director of the Institute to prepare a strategic plan on an annual basis, setting out the strategy of the Institute, what its priorities are, and how resources will be used to achieve those priorities. The plan should explicitly consider the institutional capacity required to deliver on the strategy, including IT and staffing needs, and the implications for the budget. The strategic plan should also articulate how the role of the Institute contributes to the higher education priorities of UNESCO.

Oversight by the Director-General and the General Conference of UNESCO

Within the context of decentralisation, the Institute is expected to operate with a high degree of operational and functional autonomy, but its Governing Board is also accountable to the Director General and, ultimately, to the General Conference of UNESCO. As with the Governing Board's oversight over the Director of the Institute, the Director General is responsible for maintaining oversight over the activities of the Institute and the performance of its Governing Board. The capacity of the Secretariat to perform this oversight function on behalf of the Director General is an area of weakness. Achieving effective monitoring and oversight requires:⁴³

- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- Clear specification of objectives and performance expectations;
- Transparent and regular reporting on performance;
- Adequate procedures for monitoring and review of performance; and
- Adequate incentives and the ability to enforce sanctions.

We found weaknesses in all five of these areas:

Definition of Roles and Responsibilities

While the roles and responsibilities of IESALC's Governing Board are generally clear, the expectations in respect reporting lines between the Director of the Institute and the Director General are not. The current reporting lines have most recently been articulated as follows:

“Without prejudice to their obligations vis-à-vis their respective governing bodies, all directors and heads of UNESCO institutes and centres, as staff members of the Secretariat, should, as a matter of principle and overall coherence, ... be placed under the direct authority of the Sector Assistant Director-General and always report through him or her to the Director General, as their tasks comprise the coordination of a programme/sector's overall effort”.

However, this reporting relationship has been described by the External Auditor of UNESCO as “not confirmed” and “experimental” and differing views remain on what the specific relationships and accountabilities should be. This situation should be clarified as soon as possible and formal measures taken to improve the frequency and quality of reporting between the education institutes and the ADG Education.

Specification of objectives and performance expectations

Significant improvements have been made in recent years to the overall framework in which IESALC’s objectives and performance expectations for each biennium are set. The approved programme and budget of UNESCO now routinely includes specific performance expectations and measures for the institutes. These overarching documents are in turn by systems for capturing more detailed information: the Financial and Budgeting System (FABS) and the System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results (SISTER).

Despite these initiatives, there is still considerable room for improvement in the identification and specification of objectives and performance expectations. While systems such as SISTER are now in place, we found little evidence of their use beyond minimum reporting of activities. This is not just the responsibility of the Institute. The shift to a results-based management orientation and culture requires a high degree of training and support on the part of the UNESCO HQ and significant resources have been invested to this end. However, more could be done by both the Institute and the UNESCO HQ to work towards a common framework and understanding of the objectives and expected results.

A key challenge for UNESCO is to achieve overall congruence of the programmes of the education institutions with UNESCO’s overarching education policies and priorities, while ensuring that the activities of the Institutes, particularly those with a specific regional focus, remain relevant to member states. In the case of higher education, this task is particularly challenging given the myriad of policy statements and action plans that set out UNESCO’s higher education priorities, and the fact that more than one Institute has a higher education focus (i.e. CEPES). Achieving a coordinated and effective overall programme in the area of higher education requires frequent and regular communication between the parties involved. However, our evaluation found little evidence of a strategic dialogue between UNESCO HQ and the Institute with regard to IESALC’s priority setting within the context of UNESCO’s overarching strategy. While the work programme of the Institute is routinely mapped against Main Lines of Action, we were left with a strong sense that this was done out of the need to fit the programme into UNESCO’s programmatic framework, rather than because this made

⁴³ Adapted from A Results-Based Governing Framework for UNESCO Institutes, 169 EX/29 Annex.

strategic sense. Furthermore, we were not able to identify a relationship between IESALC and CEPES.

Transparency and regularity of reporting

While the quality of IESALC's reporting to the General Conference has improved in recent years, it remains well short of the standard achieved by some other Institutes, such as IIEP. We found that the reports of IESALC focussed excessively on the activities undertaken, rather than assessing performance in the context of results and outcomes achieved. The reports are dense and tend to be inclusive of all activities, rather than providing summary information and focussing on a small number of key issues. While the responsibility is with IESALC to improve its reporting, we consider that UNESCO HQ has a role to play in providing guidance in this respect.

Adequate monitoring and review of performance

As discussed above, monitoring and review of the performance of the education institutes is an important function of the Secretariat given the significant amount of programme funding directed through the Institutes. In addition, the Institute should put in place mechanisms for self-evaluation, such as the surveying of users of its digital services discussed earlier.

While the ADG Education formally has responsibility for monitoring and oversight of the education institutes, the Secretariat staff responsible for this function feel they have little in the way of the tools or authority to exercise this function. If the Secretariat is to improve its oversight of the Institutes, it needs to consider how best to resource and build capability to perform this function. The ADG Education should consider establishing a Monitoring Advisory Unit to oversee the performance of the institutes. Potential tools that could be used to improve UNESCO HQ's monitoring function include the use of Letters of Expectations, and improved use of systems such as SISTER. In addition to monitoring the performance of the Institutes, the Monitoring Advisory Unit could provide guidance to the Institutes on how to improve the quality of strategic planning and results-based reporting.

Recommendations:

The higher education priorities of UNESCO should be expressed with greater clarity and communicated to IESALC in a meaningful way prior to the commencement of a new biennium, such as in the form of a Letter of Expectations that provides more specific guidance as to UNESCO priorities than the high-level priorities identified by the General Conference in its biennial programme and budget.

UNESCO should clarify where formal responsibility lies for oversight and monitoring of IESALC and its Governing Board, including through identifying the roles, responsibilities and skill sets required for that role.

The Assistant Director General for Education should consider establishing a Monitoring Advisory Unit to oversee the performance of the Institutes, and should provide appropriate training and resources to Secretariat staff responsible for this function.

UNESCO should adopt a regular and proactive dialogue with IESALC around higher education priorities globally and locally, with a view to informing strategy and policy development.

LESSONS LEARNED/MAIN FINDINGS

This section briefly summaries the main lessons learned and key findings from this evaluation.

RELEVANCE TO UNESCO

In general, the roles performed and activities undertaken by IESALC are aligned with UNESCO's higher education policy priorities as embodied in:

- The C4 Medium Term Strategies;
- The C5 Programmes and Budgets; and
- The World Declaration and Framework for Higher Education.

However, the alignment between the work programme of the Institute and the strategic and programmatic priorities of UNESCO was achieved without little strategic dialogue or feedback between IESALC and other UNESCO offices (including Headquarters), or between IESALC and stakeholders in Member States. We were left with a strong sense that the routine 'mapping' of IESALC's work programme against UNESCO's Main Lines of Action was done out of the need to fit the programme into UNESCO's programmatic framework, rather than because this made strategic sense.

Similarly, IESALC has not made a significant contribution to the broader UNESCO debate on higher education strategy and programme priorities. A major finding of our evaluation is the need for IESALC (and other UNESCO offices) to engage in more communication and debate on their respective roles in contributing to higher education outcomes.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

This evaluation has found that IESALC has made a positive contribution towards the achievement of its objectives, as outlined in its Statutes.

IESALC's role as an information clearing-house is a major strength of the Institute. Its strategy of improving access to and disseminating information through the development of a strong online presence has proved very successful, and uptake of its digital bulletin and website access has grown at a rapid rate. It has also had a positive impact across its other roles – laboratory of ideas, standard setter, capacity builder and catalyst for international cooperation.

In general, IESALC has used its limited resources to good effect but the scale of its impact is commensurate with those resources. Its lack of extra-budgetary funding as made it difficult to build critical mass, although it has countered this to an extent through other means of leveraging resources. Nevertheless, the lack of funding scale and IESALC's strategy of not building inhouse academic and technical capability, has constrained IESALC's capacity to engage more widely with stakeholders and to play a more direct hand in the provision of technical assistance.

QUALITY OF CO-ORDINATION AND INTERACTION

IESALC has demonstrated good networking with higher education institutions and government agencies in Member States across the region. Geographically, however, its involvement of IESALC across the region varies considerably from country to country. IESALC has been relatively successful at fostering the development of networks within the higher education community and, principally through its Director, is an active participant in those networks.

There are significant opportunities for improvement in the interaction between UNESCO Headquarters, field offices and IESALC. Within the region, there is, in general, a low-level of communication and interaction among the different offices, raising the risks of overlap, duplication and the lack of a coordinated approach. Communications with Headquarters are also relatively poor, despite the volume of formal reporting, particularly around biennium planning processes when there would be considerable value in dialogue.

Beyond the region, we found little evidence of working relationships between IESALC and the other education Institutes, including with the European Centre for Higher Education in Bucharest (CEPES). Particularly with CEPES there is scope for overlap as well as opportunities for synergies that may be being missed.

FUNDING / GOVERNANCE / ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Since the appointment of the new Director of the Institute in 2001, IESALC has embarked on a significant period of reorganisation with the aim of improving its efficiency and effectiveness. Key organisational initiatives included:

- Contracting out organisational support functions;
- Accessing research and technical expertise by way of a decentralised network of consultants and contractors, rather than building in-house academic and technical capability;

- Use of information and communication technologies to improve access to information and to improve the cost-effectiveness of information sharing; and
- Up-grading the security and safety of the premises.

These management initiatives led to significant improvements in administrative efficiency and allowed a redirection of budget away from personnel costs and overhead towards programme costs.

In terms of funding, despite measurement problems, the reported contributions from donors and beneficiaries – other than the host-country – has represented only 1.7% of funding for IESALC over the evaluation period, which is very low in comparison with other education institutes. This has been countered, albeit to an unmeasurable extent, by IESALC's practice of encouraging partner organisations to co-fund research and other activities. Nevertheless, the lack of extra budgetary funding is likely to have acted as a significant constraint on the scale of its activities and, therefore, the results it has been able to achieve.

The evaluation has found that there are significant weaknesses in the governance, monitoring and accountability of the Institute. While the Institute is expected to operate with a high degree of operational and functional autonomy, such autonomy relies on effective accountability for the outcomes which are to be achieved. The weaknesses in the current governance and accountability framework for the Institute relate to difficulties that the Governing Board has in performing its governance role, and a lack of a strong monitoring or oversight role of the Education Sector of UNESCO Headquarters.

OVERALL LESSONS

Probably the single biggest lesson from this evaluation is that the decentralisation process and the shift to a results-based management orientation and culture requires a significant and ongoing commitment by all actors within the UNESCO system, supported by the development and implementation of improved tools, the provision of guidance and training, and institutional reforms that reinforce the desired changes. Within a system as large and as geographically spread as UNESCO, the importance of communication between the different actors is paramount. Yet communication between IESALC, Cluster and Regional Offices, Headquarters and the other Institutes and Centres is the single greatest area of weakness that we found. Developing a UNESCO system that balances global coherence against responsiveness to the particular needs of Member States has and will continue to challenge the UNESCO system as long as there is a low-level of high-quality information flowing throughout the system. This suggests the need for UNESCO to continue and intensify its efforts to bring about the outcomes desired from its reform process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNING BOARD OF IESALC

Recommendations:

1. The Governing Board of IESALC should give further consideration to how it, including through its Executive Committee, can improve its oversight of IESALC given the infrequent meetings and deficiencies in the coverage and quality of reporting provided to it. In particular, consideration should be given to the use of information and communication technologies to enable more regular and effective governance of IESALC, given the impracticalities and cost of more frequent meetings in person [page 64]; and
2. The Board should request the Director of the Institute to prepare a strategic plan on an annual basis, setting out the strategy of the Institute, what its priorities are, and how its resources will be used to achieve those priorities. The plan should explicitly consider the institutional capacity required to deliver on the strategy, including IT and staffing needs, and the implications for the budget. The strategic plan should also articulate how the role of the Institute contributes to the higher education priorities of UNESCO [page 65].

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DIRECTOR OF IESALC

Recommendations:

3. The Director of IESALC should seek the approval of the Governing Board, or its Executive Committee in between sessions of the Board, on a detailed budget for administrative expenses and capital improvement work on an annual basis, in addition to the current approval sought for the programme budget [page 62];
4. IESALC should consult regularly with Member States and key regional stakeholders in higher education with a view to identifying priorities for the Institute and informing its strategic planning processes [pages 48 and 55];
5. Notwithstanding the benefits of a lean and decentralised mode of operation, IESALC should consider recruiting additional staff with academic or technical expertise in order to add to the capacity for engagement with its stakeholders and to bolster the quality assurance systems on work commissioned by the Institute [page 34];
6. IESALC should improve its quality assurance process for studies published or supported by IESALC principally through the use of formal academic peer review [page 34];
7. IESALC should keep sufficient records to enable the measurement of the extent to

which the Institute's funding of its programme is leveraged with third-party resources [page 60];

8. IESALC should develop more of a results-oriented approach to planning and reporting, which could include surveying stakeholders to ensure the continued value and relevance of IESALC's work to stakeholders [page 55];
9. IESALC should develop a cost-effective strategy to overcome the communication barriers associated with the publication of information in the subject country's language [page 42];
10. Stakeholders' views on the Digital Bulletin and website should periodically be surveyed by IESALC to ensure its continued value and relevance to stakeholders [page 42];
11. IESALC should make a concerted effort to establish regular and good working relationships with UNESCO offices in the region, notwithstanding that good quality relationships require two-way communication and commitment from each party page 52];
12. IESALC needs to develop indicators and report on performance in the area of relationship management [page 52];
13. Priority should be given to interaction and sharing of conceptual and methodological learning between the institutes, particularly between IESALC and CEPES given the potential for synergies and/or unnecessary duplication [page 52].

RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNESCO

Recommendations:

14. UNESCO needs to provide greater support (training and guidance) to IESALC to enable it to make more effective use of management tools such as SISTER and to encourage the adoption of other best practice (results-oriented) management systems [page 62];
15. The higher education priorities of UNESCO should be expressed with greater clarity and communicated to IESALC in a meaningful way prior to the commencement of each new biennium, such as in the form of a Letter of Expectations that provides more specific guidance as to UNESCO priorities than the high-level priorities identified by the General Conference in its biennial programme and budget [page 67];
16. UNESCO should clarify where formal responsibility lies for oversight and monitoring of IESALC and its Governing Board, including through identifying the roles, responsibilities and skill sets required for that role [page 68];
17. The Assistant Director General for Education should consider establishing a Monitoring Advisory Unit to oversee the performance of the Institutes, and should provide appropriate training and resources to Secretariat staff to assist them to perform this function page 68];
18. UNESCO should adopt a regular and proactive dialogue with IESALC around higher education priorities globally and locally, with a view to informing strategy and policy development [page 68]; and

19. The expectation that IESALC should be a major contributor to the broader UNESCO debate on higher education strategies and programme priorities should be re-communicated to the Board and Director of IESALC, and both the Institute and UNESCO Headquarters should take steps to engage in strategic-level discussions early in new biennium planning rounds *[page 30]*.
20. UNESCO should consider making clearer its expectations of IESALC in respect of the raising of extra-budgetary funding *[page 60]*

APPENDIX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

UNESCO has established six Institutes in the field of education over the course of its history. The Institutes serve in their fields of specialization as international reference centres and poles of expertise to provide services and technical assistance to Member States, cooperation partners and also internally to the network of UNESCO field offices. In this context, the Institutes are expected to contribute directly to attaining the strategic objectives and programmatic priorities of UNESCO's education programme (Major Programme I), and more specifically to implementing the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA), which was adopted at the World Education Forum in 2000.

The Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and The Caribbean (IESALC) is one of these UNESCO's Institutes. IESALC was created in 1998, being transformed from its former body, the Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC, founded in 1978). IESALC aims to promote the development and renewal of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. More specifically, the objectives of the Institute are:

- To foster closer co-operation among Member States in the region, their institutions and specialists in the field of higher education;
- To help improve mutual knowledge of the higher education systems in the region and to facilitate their comparison with those in other regions of the world;
- To assist Member States requesting the Institute's co-operation in developing and improving their higher education systems and institutions;
- To encourage greater mobility in the field of higher education by facilitating the recognition studies, diplomas and degrees within the Region and between the Region and other parts of the world;
- To facilitate the exchange of information and experience among the institutions, centres and specialists in the Region and those in other parts of the world; and
- To promote national and regional mechanisms for improving the quality of higher education through evaluation and accreditation.

For these purposes, IESALC carries out the following activities:

- Preparation of national and regional reports on trends in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Promotion of research on legislative issues and reform, and on the management and evaluation of university, especially Latin American macro universities;
- Establishment of Ibero-American Network for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality of Higher Education;
- Examining the possibilities of virtual universities to strengthen the quality and pertinence of higher education; and
- Provision of news and information on higher education.

At the beginning of UNESCO's reform towards decentralization, the General Conference, at its 31st session (2001), called for a system of coordination and division of labour between the Secretariat at Headquarters and all units away from Headquarters, including Education Institutes. In this context, the Executive Board at its 162 session (162 EX/18)⁴⁴ raises a series of questions with respects to the Institutes, which can be applied to IESALC as follows:

- Does IESALC enhance UNESCO's overall effort as a specialized United Nations agency, and how;
- Do the activities of IESALC reflect UNESCO's programme priorities; and
- What are the roles, contribution and comparative advantages of IESALC in the context of decentralization?

PURPOSE

The purpose of this evaluation is to inform relevant entities and units including: UNESCO Task Force on Category I UNESCO Institutes and Centres; UNESCO Task Force on Decentralization; Education Sector of UNESCO; other relevant units; Member States of UNESCO and IESALC; and its cooperation partners, regarding the following points:

- Relevance of its activities to UNESCO's programme priorities especially in the field of higher education;
- Results achieved by IESALC, and its contribution to UNESCO's efforts in achieving respective EFA goals;
- Quality of coordination and interaction between UNESCO Headquarters, other Institutes, Field Offices and IESALC's partner entities with regard to planning and implementation of programmes; and

⁴⁴ In addition, the Executive Board at its 162nd session (2001) confirmed (162 EX/18) "the principle of linking financial allocations to the institutes and centers with the results of their regular performance evaluations, starting from document 32 C/5".

- Funding patterns, mechanisms and their risks for sustained institutional capacity, and viability, and quality of organizational management and programme implementation systems adopted by IESALC.

SCOPE

In order to meet the purpose of the evaluation described above, the following evaluation parameters shall be considered in the process of designing a detailed analytical framework and developing appropriate performance indicators:

(a) Relevance of its activities to UNESCO's programmes;

- Determine whether IESALC's programmes are in alignment with the UNESCO's strategies and goals, especially in the field of higher education; and
- Determine to what extent IESALC has contributed to the design and implementation of UNESCO's programmes and strategies.

(b) Results achieved

- Assess to what extent IESALC has achieved its organizational objectives, which is the development and renewal of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Examine whether IESALC's activities, such as analysis on regional trends in higher education, research on legislative issues, and so on are effective in achieving the above-mentioned organizational objectives;
- Assess to what extent IESALC contributes to UNESCO in achieving respective EFA goals; and
- Assess whether the results achieved by the IESALC have reinforced UNESCO's overall decentralization strategy by providing a better and more timely response to the needs of Member States.

(c) Quality of coordination and interaction with relevant entities

- Assess the effectiveness of coordination and interaction with Headquarters (notably with the Divisions of the Education Sector), the Institutes and Field Offices; and
- Assess the quality of partnerships with other relevant entities.

(d) Funding pattern and quality of organisational management

- Analyse the funding patterns, mechanisms and their risks for sustained institutional capacity, and viability;
- Assess the process by which extra-budgetary resources are sought and obtained and to what extent the extra-budgetary funding is aligned to the strategic objectives of UNESCO; and
- Examine the quality of organizational management and the impact of the extent of functional autonomy provided.

APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION SOURCES

Interviews and meetings

Staff from IESALC

Director
Contracts Manager
Chief Librarian
Administrator and Administrative Assistant
Engineer
Consultants

Staff from UNESCO HQ

Jean-Yves Le Saux Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO Headquarters
Stamenka Uvalic-Trumbic and Team, Chief, Section for Reform, Innovation and Quality Assurance Division of Higher Education, UNESCO Headquarters.
Quian Tang, Director of Executive Office, Education
Alexander Sannikov, UNESCO's Regional Education Adviser for Europe
Victor Sologaitoa, Chief, Latin America and the Caribbean, External Relations Division UNESCO Headquarters
Olav Hernar, Internal Oversight Service, UNESCO Headquarters
Sabine Detzel, Former Programme Specialist, Education at Kingston Cluster Office

Dominican Republic

Saturnino de Los Santos – Executive Director of ADAAC (Dominican Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation)
Jose Goico – Former Vice-secretary for Higher Education of Dominican Republic and Executive Director for ADRU – Dominican Republic Association for University Rectors
Dr Andres Reyes, former minister of education and minister of higher education
Daniel Vargas Pena, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (SEESCYT)– Director of post graduates
Miguel Escala, IESALC Governing Board member

Venezuela

Darwin Caraballo – Head Executive on Social Development of CAF – Corporacion Andina de Fomento, based in Caracas

Cesar Villaroel, Consultant for IESALC and related to the Universidad Central de Venezuela
Jose Miguel Cortazar, on the Exec Board of IESALC, and is also a higher education academic expert, and is on the council of the University Central de Venezuela.

Umberto Gonzalez, Ministry of Education

Rigoberto Lanz, Professor, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Observatorio Internacional de Reformas Universitarias (ORUS)

Colombia

Javier Botero Alvarez, Vice-ministry for Higher Education, Colombia

Luiz Enrique Orozco, Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia

Xiomara Zarur e Carlos Forero – ASCUM/Bogotá/ Colombia

Abadio Green. Coordinates the experience on indigenous people university of the Indigenous Organization of Antioquia, OIA

Indigenous leaders and 4 coordinators of projects developed with indigenous people communities in Colombia:

Alcibiades Escué, Indigenous Leader. Maestro de Sabiduría UNESCO

Armando Valbuena. Former president of ONIC

Arquimedes Vitones. Mayor of Toribio, a famous indigenous politician, “UNESCO Master on Knowledge”

Avelina Pancho. Coordinator of the research on higher education for indigenous people in Colombia sponsored by IESALC

Giovanni Yule. Chief of the Regional Indigenous People Council in the region of Cauca - CRIC

Libio Palechor. Coordinator of the Education Program of the CRIC

Luis Evelis Andrade. President of ONIC

Padre Antonio Bonanomi

Gilberto Munoz Coronado

Graciela Bolanos

Manuel Ramiro Munoz. Consultant IESALC/UNESCO

Key documents

- 154 EX/19 Draft Statutes of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
- 155 EX/22 Revised draft statutes of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
- 162 EX/18 Overall Strategy for UNESCO's Institutes and Centres and their Governing Bodies
- 162 EX/INF.8 Proposals on Overall Strategy for UNESCO's Institutes and Centres and their Governing Bodies
- 169 EX/10 Chief, Latin America and the Caribbean, External Relations and Cooperation Division
- 169 EX/29 Report by the External Auditor on the Performance Audits Undertaken in the 2002-03 Biennium
- 171 EX/6 PART III Report by the Director-General on the Reform Process: Decentralization
- 171 EX/8 Report by the Director-General on the follow-up to the EFA Strategic Review and UNESCO's Strategy for the 2005-2015 period
- 171 EX/INF.10 Report by the Director-General on the principles and guidelines regarding the establishment and operation of category 1 UNESCO Institutes and centres
- 171 EX/18 Report by the Director-General principles and guidelines regarding the establishment and operation of category 1 UNESCO Institutes and centres
- 171 EX/43 Report by the Director-General on cooperation between UNESCO and the OECD in drafting guidelines on Quality provision in cross-border higher education
- 28 C/4 Medium- term Strategy 1996-2001
- 30 C/5 General Conference Approved Programme and Budget 2000-01
- 31 C/4 Medium- term Strategy 2002-2007
- 31 C/5 General Conference Approved Programme and Budget 2002-03
- 32 C/5 General Conference Approved Programme and Budget 2004-05
- 32 C/33 Financial report and audited financial statements relating to the accounts of UNESCO for the financial period ended 31 December 2001, and report by the external auditor 7 August 2003
- IESALC Governing Board Papers:
- IES/CA/EX.I/9 Final Report - 1st Special Meeting of the Governing Board
- Spanish only Final Report - 1st Ordinary Meeting of the Governing Board
- Final Report - 2nd Ordinary Meeting of the Governing Board
- IES/ CA III-OR/7 Final Report - 3rd Ordinary Meeting of the Governing Board
- 32 C/REP/6 IESALC General Conference Report on Activities 2002-03
- 31 C/REP/7 IESALC General Conference Report on Activities 2000-01
- Biennial report 1998/9, IESALC

Education For All: Dakar Framework for Action (including regional framework of action for the Latin America and Caribbean)

Evaluation of IIEP (2002)

Reforms and innovations in higher education in some Latin American and Caribbean countries 1998-2003, UNESCO, 2003

Regional Declaration on Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, Regional Conference On Policies And Strategies For The Transformation Of Higher Education In Latin America And The Caribbean Havana, Cuba, November 1996

World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century

APPENDIX 3: SURVEY RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

An on-line survey of IESALC stakeholders was administered between mid-May and mid-June. The purpose of the survey was to gather the views of stakeholders on their relationships with IESALC and the results achieved by the Institute. An on-line survey instrument was chosen because as of the large number and wide geographic distribution of IESALC stakeholders and because time and resources constrained the amount of field visits.

SURVEY METHODS

Questionnaire design

The nature of the data to be collected (stakeholders' perceptions about IESALC) led us to use two broad types of questions:

- Open-ended questions aimed at collecting descriptive data; and
- Specific qualitative questions that could be answered on a Likert-type scale of responses.

The questionnaire was deliberately kept short (eleven questions in all) so as to keep item non-response to a minimum. The average time to complete the questionnaire was just under eleven minutes.

Survey administration

In terms of survey procedure, it was not possible to pilot the questionnaire due to the limited time available to conduct the survey. Respondents were contacted by email, which introduced the survey and included a hyperlink to the survey. The use of unique identifiers allowed us to track responses, which permitted follow-up emails to be sent to increase response rates.

The survey was self-administered and instructions for completion were included in the email (in English, Spanish, and Portuguese as appropriate). Participants were told that IESALC would not have access to individual responses. Some respondents encountered problems accessing the survey and so were sent a copy of the survey as a Microsoft Word document.

Sampling and response rates

The survey was sent to 265 stakeholders identified from a range of sources, including but not limited to documents provided by IESALC.⁴⁵ The stakeholders were distributed across a range of organisations including: universities, government agencies, higher education bodies and NGOs. After data cleaning, 54 valid responses were received (a 20% response rate).

Limitations

The major limitations of our survey method are:

- The non-probabilistic method of sample selection may mean the sample is not representative of IESALC stakeholders generally, which limits the generalisability of results;
- Even if the sample was representative of IESALC stakeholders, the response rate of 20% gives rise to potential for selection biases. This potential bias is exacerbated by the fact that approximately one-quarter of total respondents had at some time worked for IESALC as a contractor (e.g. on a country or thematic study); and
- Mis-attribution of cause and effect by survey respondents.

SURVEY RESULTS

Profile of Respondents

The following tables show the profile of respondents by language of questionnaire response, gender of respondent, type of organisation and country represented.

Table A3.1 Language of Questionnaire Response

Language	No.	%
Spanish	45	83%
Portuguese	5	9%
English	4	7%
Total	54	100%

Table A3.2 Gender of Respondent

Gender	No.	%
Male	37	69%
Female	14	26%
Not defined	3	6%
Total	54	100%

⁴⁵ Specific sources of individual stakeholders included: a list of representatives of institutions with whom IESALC has agreements; representatives of institutions identified in IESALC biennial activity reports; lists of representatives of higher education bodies⁴⁵ in the region; and a list of higher education specialists in the region who have acted as consultants for IESALC.

Table A3.3 Organisations represented by respondents

Organisation	No.	%
Universities	32	59%
Higher education bodies (NGOs)	7	13%
Government	3	6%
International organisations	2	4%
Individuals	7	13%
Other	3	6%
Total	54	100%

Table A3.4 Countries represented by respondents

Organisation	No.	%
Argentina	7	13%
Bolivia	7	13%
Uruguay	6	11%
Brazil	5	9%
Dominican Republic	3	6%
Other Latin American	17	31%
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	3	6%
Other (e.g. North American)	2	4%
Not identified	4	7%
Total	54	100%

Open-ended Questions

Some coding of survey responses was undertaken but mostly we report the translated responses to illustrate the range of responses received. For Likert-type responses, the distribution of results is reported.

Questions 1 and 2 asked for the name and organisation of the respondent. These results are not reported for reasons of confidentiality.

Question 3: Briefly describe your or your organisation's relationship with the Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC), emphasising how often you engage with the Institute and the reason(s) for engagement.

Based on survey responses, the relationships between respondents and IESALC's can be coded on two dimensions: the "closeness" of the relationship and the nature of the activities performed. Tables A3.5 and A3.6 summarise the results:

Table A3.5 "Closeness" of relationships with IESALC

Closeness of relationship	No.	%
Close personal relationship	9	17%
Close institutional relationship	2	4%
Specific relation to the Director	1	2%
No direct relationship	5	9%
Unspecified	37	69%
Total	54	100%

Table A3.6 Nature of relationships with IESALC

Nature of relationship	No.	%
Participation in IESALC events	18	29%
Participation in country studies (as a contractor to IESALC)	15	24%
Participation in country studies (as an institution)	13	21%
Receive the digital bulletin	6	10%
Exchange of information	6	10%
Work on evaluation and accreditation	3	5%
Work on publications	1	2%
Total	62	100%

Question 4: What results or outcomes has the work of IESALC contributed to your organisation and its beneficiaries?

This question elicited a range of responses. The most important positive results mentioned were as follows:

- IESALC stimulates the exchange of experiences and information and contributes to [building] international relationships and cooperation [amongst] universities and other institutions;
- The results of the studies have been used to help universities, governments and other institutions plan their activities and to define policies for higher education. The studies help government to understand what needs to be done. For example, the

country study on university publishers in Brazil, conducted for the first time with the support of IESALC, collected and systematized information of 122 publishers all over the country, and this information has helped them on evaluating their performance and to orient (re-orient) their planning efforts;

- In some countries [examples given included the Dominican Republic and Venezuela], the collection and systematization of information on higher education has raised [consciousness of] the importance of investing in research;
- It has helped countries to understand and “discover” the state of art of higher education and to compare it to the situation in Latin America and Caribbean (benchmarking);
- Many researchers, teachers and students are using the studies publicized by IESALC to develop and support their own researches;
- The access to information about the universities evaluation has helped them to improve the quality of their processes and services;
- Has helped on capacity building in evaluation and accreditation through the training of human resources on these subjects. IESALC has also offered technical assistance on the auto-evaluation activities developed by some universities, mostly in Bolivia;
- IESALC was an important partner on the discussions on higher education in the region; on the creation of the Union of Macro-Universities and on the publishing of researches and studies;
- The studies and the meetings have helped on the regulation and improvement of the higher education systems in the region, especially for the private sector; and
- IESALC has afforded the [institution] the opportunity to network with similar institutions, form lasting relationships and problem solve institutional concerns.

Nevertheless, approximately 10 percent of respondents perceived little in the way of results.

Typical responses included:

- No other results than attending to events and receiving the bulletin; and
- There were no positive results at all.

Question 5: How often do you or your organisation use the following IESALC services? (responses: regularly, occasionally, rarely and never)

Table A3.7 reports the frequency of use of IESALC services by respondents:

Table A3.7 Frequency of use of IESALC Services

	Regularly	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Digital bulletin	39 (83%)	5 (11%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
Country studies	29 (64%)	10 (22%)	4 (9%)	2 (4%)
Thematic studies	20 (43%)	19 (41%)	2 (4%)	5 (11%)
Information Service	10 (24%)	18 (43%)	7 (17%)	7 (17%)
Technical assistance	6 (14%)	10 (23%)	12 (27%)	16 (36%)
Training/capacity-building	3 (7%)	9 (21%)	11 (26%)	20 (47%)
Seminars and conferences	14 (31%)	19 (42%)	9 (20%)	3 (7%)

Question 6: How much of a positive difference has IESALC made in the Latin America and Caribbean region in each of the following areas?

Table A3.8 Extent of positive differences by IESALC

	Big difference	Some difference	No difference	Not applicable
Fostering closer co-operation among the countries, institutions and specialists in the field of higher education	28 (65%)	7 (16%)	4 (9%)	4 (9%)
Enhancing the capacity and capability of institutions and specialists working in the field of higher education	20 (48%)	16 (38%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)
Facilitating exchanges of information and experience among higher education institutions and specialists in the region	22 (52%)	12 (29%)	4 (10%)	4 (10%)
Improving access to and the quality of information on higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean	25 (60%)	12 (29%)	1 (2%)	4 (10%)
Helping to improve mutual knowledge of higher education systems in the region and in other regions	30 (70%)	8 (19%)	2 (5%)	3 (7%)
Helping to improve and develop higher education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean	24 (56%)	10 (23%)	5 (12%)	4 (9%)
Encouraging greater mobility of higher education professionals in support of closer regional integration	14 (33%)	13 (31%)	6 (14%)	9 (21%)

Question 7: *How would you rate the Institute's overall effectiveness in:*

- (a) *Providing technical assistance and advice to Member States, institutions and specialists in support of higher education reforms;*
- (b) *Coordinating the publication and dissemination of research and other information relevant to higher education;*
- (c) *Facilitating the development of networks and cooperation between higher education organisations; and*
- (d) *Building the capacity and capability of higher education institutions and specialists (e.g. through training).*

The nature of the responses to these questions allowed us to code perceptions about the Institute's effectiveness in a range of categories from big impact to little impact. We also report below some of the most informative translated responses.

Table A3.9 Effectiveness at providing technical assistance

Effectiveness at technical assistance	No.	%
High effectiveness	8	30%
Medium effectiveness	6	22%
Low effectiveness	4	15%
Very low or no effectiveness	4	15%
Don't know/Cannot judge	5	19%
Total	27	10%

In relation to effectiveness of technical assistance, the most illustrative comments were:

- The less developed countries profit more from IESALC activities than do countries with more significant resources, such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Mexico; and
- Maybe in Latin American countries [they are effective in providing technical assistance] but in the Dutch and English speaking Member States I personally do not have this experience.

Table A3.10 Effectiveness at research and information dissemination

Effectiveness at information dissemination	No.	%
High effectiveness	24	73%
Medium effectiveness	5	15%
Low effectiveness	3	9%
Very low or no effectiveness	1	3%
Don't know/Cannot judge	0	0%
Total	33	100%

Comments on IESALC's effectiveness at research and information dissemination include:

- It is IESALC most important work; it represents IESALC's comparative advantage;
- The bulletin and the studies are very good. The website is interesting and full of important information;
- No other organization does such work;
- The studies are important scientific reference; and
- Outstanding, although there needs to be a facility to make more documents available in English.

Table A3.11 Effectiveness at developing networks and coordination

Effectiveness at networks and coordination	No.	%
High effectiveness	10	37%
Medium effectiveness	4	15%
Low effectiveness	3	11%
Very low or no effectiveness	2	7%
Don't know/Cannot judge	8	30%
Total	27	100%

In relation to effectiveness at developing networks and coordination, the most illustrative comments were:

- IESALC is important because [it] brings the existing networks together and supports the creation of new networks; its cooperation is limited to the interest of the other organizations to participate in these efforts;
- It supports the existing networks;
- Could be better; could invest more in the creation of new networks;
- IESALC promotes the creation and the empowerment of new and existing networks, such as: the network on evaluation and accreditation; the CINDA Network; the ALFA-ACRO Network; the network of confessional (religious) universities;

- It acts in coordination with other institutions such as the Inter-American Organization of Universities (OUI); the Ibero-American Association for Long Distance Education (AIESAD) and the Consortium of Long Distance Education Networks (CREA); and
- I think the language differences (Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English) are playing a main role in the way [that] certain countries feel sufficiently involved and want to make use of the facilities.

Table A3.12 Effectiveness at capability and capacity building

Effectiveness at capability and capacity building	No.	%
High effectiveness	5	17%
Medium effectiveness	6	21%
Low effectiveness	8	28%
Very low or no effectiveness	3	10%
Don't know/Cannot judge	7	24%
Total	29	100%

The most illustrative comments in respect of effectiveness at capability and capacity building were:

- It is done on an indirect basis, through events and publications;
- Can be much better;
- It is acceptable;
- There are only the seminars and events; and
- IESALC is very important, has cooperated with our formation courses and has helped on capacity building activities organized by the countries government.

Question 8: *Are there any other comments about IESALC you wish to make?*

Most comments were complementary about the role IESALC is playing while at the same time many believe it should and could do more:

- In general IESALC's work is very positive, but it can do a lot more;
- The study on distance education is reference in Brazil;
- The evaluation is very positive, IESALC can not stop the research;
- The Director is a regional leader, congratulations to him, it was a positive change;
- IESALC has been very useful to [institution] to fulfill its institutional mission;
- The studies vary and are of good quality; IESALC should invest more on networking;
- Although with little budget IESALC has opened spaces for non-traditional themes in higher education in Latin America and Caribbean;
- One can notice how much IESALC activities have advanced in the region;
- The activities in Central America, especially in Guatemala, can be rated A+;
- IESALC moved, in no time, from a almost unknown institution to a very well known organization in Latin America and Caribbean;
- It would be good if IESALC could capitalize its efforts through institutionalized cooperation processes;
- Its works are well valued and recognized, with a "touch" of democracy and credibility;
- It is doing important studies with little money;
- It is helping to amplify the knowledge on higher education in the region;
- They have completed many good initiatives in the past five years; and
- As a new organisation it has set its goals high and is going a long way towards achieving it.

Some respondents indicated that resource constraints have constrained its effectiveness:

- The budget for research should be bigger;
- They need more money;
- IESALC needs more money to go from mere recommendations to effective action; and
- IESALC plays an important role, but it lacks resources and does not have enough experts attached to it.

A small number of respondents question its effectiveness:

- There is no previous planning on the activities IESALC will develop, which does not allow the coordination of activities with other institutions;

- Much more could have been done;
- It should interact more with the Higher Education field;
- No positive results at all; and
- I do think that the mission and objectives of IESALC are praiseworthy but the organisation in my view does not have the capacity to assist all member states; the English and Dutch speaking countries especially do not benefit much from the work of the [Institute].

APPENDIX 4: IESALC'S STATUTES

STATUTES OF THE UNESCO INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (IESALC)

Article 1 - Characteristics, connections and location

1.1 The Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC) is hereby converted into the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) (hereinafter referred to as 'the Institute'), whose legal, administrative and operational framework is defined herein.

1.2 As an integral part of UNESCO, the Institute shall enjoy the intellectual, administrative and functional autonomy necessary to achieve its objectives, in accordance with the present Statutes.

1.3 The Institute's headquarters shall be in Caracas, Venezuela.

Article 2 - Mission

The essential mission of the Institute shall be to contribute to the development of higher education in the Latin America and the Caribbean region (hereinafter referred to as 'the Region') and its national higher education institutions and systems, on the basis of sustainable development of human resources, helping also to guarantee the relevance, quality, efficiency and equity of all higher education activities in the context of a new approach to regional and international co-operation fostering a proportional partnership of all the actors involved.

Article 3 - Objectives and functions

3.1 In order to accomplish its mission, in the context of the Region, the Institute shall set itself the following general objectives: 3.1.1 To foster closer co-operation among Member States in the Region, their institutions and specialists in the field of higher education.

3.1.1 To help improve mutual knowledge of the higher education systems in the Region with a view to facilitating its comparison with other regions of the world and thereby contributing to its development.

3.1.2 To help any Member State requesting the Institute's co-operation to improve and develop higher education systems and institutions within the reform process upon which it is engaged.

3.1.3 To encourage and support in the context of regional integration greater mobility of higher education professionals, especially those in relatively less developed countries, with a view to making better use of human and educational resources and helping to facilitate greater flexibility in regard to the recognition of higher education studies, diplomas and degrees between the countries of the Region and other parts of the world.

3.1.4 To facilitate the exchange of information and experience among the institutions, centres and specialists in the Region and those in other parts of the world.

3.1.5 To promote national and regional mechanisms for strengthening the quality of higher education through evaluation and accreditation.

3.2 The Institute shall contribute to the planning, evaluation and follow-up of UNESCO's

programmes as they concern higher education, in co-operation with the units of UNESCO and the programmes approved by the Organization, and also with its various institutes, governmental and non-governmental organizations and other organizations of the United Nations system active in this field, at the national, subregional, regional and international levels. To that end, the Institute's responsibilities shall be:

3.2.1 To prepare and organize at least once every two years a session of the Governing Board of the Institute, pursuant to decisions of the General Conference of UNESCO and in accordance with the Organization's standards in force and applicable.

3.2.2 To further the dissemination and implementation of the recommendations of the Governing Board.

3.2.3 To encourage the regular holding of conferences and meetings on higher education in the Region, which will be forums for co-operation and debate among institutions at this level of the education system as a means of supporting the preparation and implementation of action plans to modernize those institutions. To record, organize and disseminate the recommendations and action plans resulting from those conferences and meetings and provide technical co-operation for the higher education activities requested by the Member States of the Region, and to carry out actions within its competence.

3.2.4 To carry out studies, analyses, projects and research contributing to the formulation of policies, strategies and other regional initiatives relating to higher education in the Region, which may serve as the basis for the formulation of policies, plans and strategies at the national and institutional levels, as deemed appropriate by the Member States of the Region and their higher education institutions.

3.2.5 To serve as a forum for the discussion of short-, medium- and long-term issues, challenges and opportunities on the basis of forward-looking studies carried out in support of action plans for the development of higher education in the Region.

3.2.6 To promote and encourage training, research and service provision programmes in the Region leading to the transformation and modernization of higher education, the education system as a whole and its environment.

3.2.7 To strengthen its Information and Documentation Centre and its Publications Unit so that they can facilitate, support and disseminate the work of research groups and academic communities involved in higher education in the Region, and convey their findings to governments, public and private production sectors and other interested social agents, through an effective information and communication system. To develop procedures for the exchange and circulation of documents and information among higher education institutions, specialists and national bodies representing higher education in the Region and in other regions.

3.2.8 To provide assistance designed to produce a favourable impact on the quality of education and on research into higher education, while helping to secure the permanence, sustained quality and replenishment of the Region's intellectual capacity.

3.2.9 To encourage the development of programmes fostering the mobility of students, higher education academic staff and professionals in the Region, especially those in relatively less developed countries.

3.2.10 To formulate and follow up action plans to encourage the creation of new forms and styles of international co-operation permitting the intensification of South-South, North-South and South-North co-operation with favourable implications for the Region.

3.2.11 To constitute an expanded regional consultative forum for organizations, associations, networks and co-operation programmes, so as to contribute to their establishment and development, while asserting its status as a forum for the discussion of the long-term themes, problems, challenges and opportunities inherent in higher education in the Region.

3.2.12 To act as a support centre in the Region for accreditation and evaluation procedures, by setting up data banks on higher education systems and scientific and technological systems, relating to both institutions and the individuals who work in them (managers, administrators, teachers, lecturers, researchers, students, civil servants and public service employees) and specialists in the above-mentioned procedures.

3.2.13 To promote and undertake practical action to support and set in motion programmes for student and academic mobility in order to attain common quality standards that will make possible the recognition of courses and qualifications. To provide the secretariat of the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

3.2.14 To co-ordinate the projects and activities of UNESCO's programmes for higher education in the Region, with particular emphasis on training and research Chairs and co-operation networks in higher education and the academic world in general.

3.2.15 To reinforce and promote, within its field of competence, UNESCO's activities and presence in the Region and to step up interaction with other agencies of the United Nations system and with subregional, regional and international co-operation bodies, endeavouring to ensure that those measures are synergetic and complementary.

3.2.16 To support the holding of academic events organized by the national bodies representing higher education institutions in the Region by sending experts in specific aspects of higher education.

3.3 So as to be able to respond to the multifunctional and multidimensional nature of higher education, the Institute shall, in close collaboration with the Member States, exercise its functions on the basis of intersectoral and interdisciplinary co-operation both within UNESCO and outside it.

Article 4 - Membership of the Governing Board

4.1 The Institute shall be administered by a Governing Board, hereinafter called 'the Board', which shall be governed by the present Statutes and by its own Rules of Procedure, which it shall adopt at its first meeting.

4.2 The Board shall consist of thirteen (13) members distributed as follows: nine (9) shall be official representatives of the Member States of the Region chosen by these states at a plenary meeting of the Heads of Delegation of GRULAC at the UNESCO General Conference; of these nine (9) governmental representatives, six (6) shall be from countries of Latin America, one (1) of whom shall be from the host country of the Institute and three (3) from countries of CARICOM; three (3) members shall be appointed by the Director-General from the list submitted by the councils of rectors of the Region or their equivalents, of whom two (2) shall be from countries of Latin America and one (1) from a country of CARICOM; one (1) member representing the NGOs shall be appointed by the Director-General from among the NGOs collaborating with UNESCO in the field of higher education.

4.3 The members of the Board shall exercise their functions ad honorem for a period of four (4) years, without being immediately re-elected, so as to foster rotation between the countries of the Region. In the event of the resignation or death of one of the members, the corresponding government or the Director-General, as the case may be, shall appoint a new incumbent for the remainder of the term of office of the outgoing member.

Transitional provision

4.4 For the purpose of forming the first Governing Board of the Institute, five (5) governmental representatives and two (2) members appointed by the Director-General shall be chosen for a period of three (3) years. The remainder shall be chosen or appointed for a period of five (5) years. The end of their respective terms of office will accordingly coincide

with the 31st and 32nd sessions of the General Conference of UNESCO.

4.5 In addition to the 13 members mentioned above, the Director of the Institute, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board, may invite to Board meetings, with observer status, individuals who, by virtue of their responsibilities, are in a position to assist the Board in its work and who come from governmental or non-governmental organizations, the United Nations system or higher education, scientific or academic establishments in the Region. The Director shall endeavour to make a choice among those bodies that is as representative as possible.

4.6 The Board shall choose a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from among its members. The Director of the Institute shall perform the duties of Secretary. The Chair shall be held on an alternating basis, for two (2) terms by Latin America and one (1) term on behalf of CARICOM. Whenever Latin America provides the Chairperson, CARICOM shall provide the Vice-Chairperson and vice versa.

Article 5 - Functions of the Governing Board

5.1 The Board shall lay down the general policy and the nature of the Institute's activities, within the framework of the general policy approved by the General Conference of UNESCO and with due regard to the obligations inherent in the fact that the Institute is an integral part of UNESCO. 5.2 The specific functions of the Board shall be the following:

5.2.1 To decide how the funds allocated to the Institute for its operation are to be used and to adopt its annual budget, the draft of which shall be drawn up by the Director of the Institute in close collaboration with the Director-General of UNESCO and the Chairperson of the Board.

5.2.2 To submit to the General Conference of UNESCO, once every two years, corresponding to the UNESCO budgetary cycle, a report on the activities of the Institute covering the same period as the report of the Director-General on the activities of UNESCO.

5.2.3 To receive for approval the annual report on the programme and budget of the Institute, drawn up by the Director, the proposals on the structure and programming of the Institute and the reports on the evaluation of its activities.

5.2.4 To advise the Director-General of UNESCO and the Director of the Institute on the formulation, execution, evaluation and follow-up of the Institute's work programme, so that its activities respond to the needs for development and improvement of higher education in the Region.

5.2.5 To take any decisions of a general nature that it considers necessary for the preparation and execution of the Institute's programme. 5.2.6 To contribute to the exchange and dissemination of experience, information and knowledge, by participating in the Institute's activities and projects.

5.2.7 To advise the Director of the Institute on the appointment of its principal officers, in accordance with the stipulations of Article 7.1 of these Statutes. 5.2.8 To ensure that the Institute is soundly managed in accordance with UNESCO principles.

Article 6 - Methods of work of the Governing Board

10.1 The Secretary of the Board, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Board, shall convene the ordinary session of the Board at least once every two years; extraordinary sessions may nevertheless be convened at the request of the Chairperson of the Board or at the request of at least seven (7) of its members or one third of the countries of the Region.

10.2 The Board shall adopt its Rules of Procedure at its first meeting and shall revise them whenever it deems necessary.

10.3 The Board shall establish an Executive Committee, which shall be convened by its Chairperson and shall meet as often as required by the needs of the programme. It shall consist of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and three (3) of the members of the Board. In order to ensure proportional geographical distribution among the countries of the Region, one member shall be from a country of Latin America, one member from a country of CARICOM and one member from the councils of rectors or their equivalents or the NGOs. These latter three members shall be chosen in accordance with the provisions of the Board's Rules of Procedure. The Executive Committee shall perform the functions assigned to it by the Board.

10.4 Travel costs and subsistence allowances of the members of the Board shall be assumed by the Institute, in accordance with the relevant regulations of UNESCO.

10.5 The Executive Committee shall draw up the provisional agenda and the schedule of meetings of the Board and of its committee.

10.6 The Director-General and the Director of the Institute shall participate in the Board's debates without the right to vote.

10.7 The Board may choose to hold any of its meetings in private without observers. The Director-General and the Director of the Institute shall have the right to attend all private meetings of the Board.

Article 7 - Staff

7.1 The Director of the Institute shall be appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO for a term of office of four (4) years from a list presented by the Board, on the basis of the candidacies submitted by the Member States to the Board. The Director of the Institute, by virtue of the authority delegated to him by the Director-General, shall appoint the officers of the Institute and the other members of its staff, having due regard to the provisions of the

7.2 The Director and all the Institute's staff shall be subject to the Organization's Staff Regulations and Staff Rules.

7.3 The Director of the Institute shall be responsible for the technical, institutional, budgetary, financial and administrative functioning of the Institute and shall report on the execution of the annual programme and budget of the Institute to the Board and to the Director-General, who shall submit those reports to the Executive Board of UNESCO.

7.4 The Director, in close collaboration with the Director-General of UNESCO and the Executive Committee, shall draw up the draft programme and budget of the Institute, which shall be submitted to the Board for approval.

7.5 The Director of the Institute, with the consent of the Board and the approval of the Director-General, may promulgate special regulations, compatible with the relevant UNESCO provisions, concerning the Institute's staff or finances.

7.6 A proportional distribution of professional staff from the countries of Latin America and of CARICOM shall be established.

Article 8 - Programme and budget

8.1 The funds allocated for the administration of the Institute shall come from the budget approved by the General Conference, in addition to any gifts, subventions and extrabudgetary voluntary contributions and other income accruing from the sale of publications, the Institute's activities and the provision of services to other institutions, which shall be deposited in a Special Account to be established by the Director-General of UNESCO, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Organization, and with the Financial Regulations applicable to the account in question. The Special Account shall be administered by the Director of the Institute pursuant to the above-mentioned provisions.

8.2 In the framework of the programme and budget approved by the General Conference, the Institute may establish and/or maintain direct relations with governmental and non-governmental organizations so as to facilitate the execution of its programmes.

Article 9 - Amendment of the Statutes

The present Statutes may be amended by the Executive Board of UNESCO at the request of the Board and in consultation with the Director-General of UNESCO.

Article 10 - Administrative regulations

With the consent of the Board and the approval of the Director-General of UNESCO, the Director of the Institute shall draw up administrative regulations, on condition that they are compatible with the provisions of the present Statutes and UNESCO practices.

Article 11 - Transitional and special provisions

11.1 The Director-General of UNESCO shall take the necessary steps to ensure that the Institute and its Board function in a satisfactory manner. The Institute shall commence its functions with the resources which were approved for that purpose by the General Conference at its 29th session.

11.2 The Director of the Institute, with the approval of the Director-General, shall draw up the provisional agenda and schedule of the first session of the Board.

11.3 The Director of CRESALC shall remain in office as Director of IESALC until the first meeting of the Governing Board following the 30th session of the General Conference.

Article 12 - Entry into force of the Statutes

The present Statutes shall enter into force on the date of their approval by the Executive Board of UNESCO.

APPENDIX 5: EVOLUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND IESALC PRIORITIES

2000-01 Biennium (30C/5)	2002-03 Biennium (31C/5)	2004-05 Biennium (32C/5)
<p>Relevant UNESCO Sub-Programmes under Major Programme One: Education</p> <p>I.2 Reform of education in the perspective of education for all throughout life</p> <p><i>1.2.3 Higher Education and Development</i></p> <p><i>Main priorities in higher education:</i></p> <p>Assist Member States, higher education institutions and other stakeholders in the follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education, in particular by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulating debate on key issues and on the design of strategies and policies relevant to higher education reform and development • Promoting inter-university cooperation and academic mobility • Enhancing the contribution of higher education to the renewal of education systems in general • Improving the status and training of teachers. <p>Another priority is to consolidate and strengthen the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme as an effective tool for the transfer of knowledge, for the improvement of research, for training and for the development of higher education, in particular in developing countries and the countries in transition.</p>	<p>Relevant UNESCO Sub-Programmes under Major Programme One</p> <p>I.2 Building knowledge societies through quality education and renewal of education systems</p> <p><i>1.2.2 Renewal of education systems</i></p> <p><i>Main priorities in higher education:</i></p> <p>Assist Member States, higher education institutions and other stakeholders in the follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education. Priority initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidating and strengthening the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme • Promoting quality assurance and accreditation as well as the academic mobility of students and staff • Support Member States to improve the quality of teacher education 	<p>Relevant UNESCO Sub-Programmes under Major Programme One</p> <p>I.2 Building Learning Societies</p> <p><i>1.2.1 Beyond universal primary education</i></p> <p><i>Main priorities in higher education:</i></p> <p>Assist Member States and institutions to reform their higher education systems, following the recommendations of the World Conference on Higher Education and the Higher Education Partners' Meeting (WCHE+5). Priority areas of focus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing the process for assisting in the general reform of institutions and systems • Facilitating debate on the impact of globalisation on higher education • Promoting education and capacity-building in science and technology • Supporting teachers and education personnel <p><i>1.2.2 Education and Globalisation</i></p> <p><i>Main priorities in higher education:</i></p> <p>Assist Member States, institutions and other stakeholders, particularly at the higher education level, to respond to the challenges of globalization by supporting the development of international guidelines</p>

2000-01 Biennium (30C/5)	2002-03 Biennium (31C/5)	2004-05 Biennium (32C/5)
		<p>and norms, and by providing a discussion forum on quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications.</p> <p>Strengthen the use of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme as innovative and effective modalities of programme delivery, especially as regards UNESCO's function as a catalyst for international cooperation.</p>
<p><i>Relevant Main Lines of Action:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I.2.3 MLA 1: Policy and reform of higher education • I.2.3 MLA 2: Reinforcing inter-university cooperation and academic mobility 	<p><i>Relevant Main Lines of Action:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I.2.2 MLA 3: Reform, innovation and internationalisation in higher education • I.2.2 MLA 4: Improving teacher education and the status of teachers • I.2.2. MLA 5: Development of new norms and standards 	<p><i>Relevant Main Lines of Action:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I.2.1 MLA 2: Promoting education and capacity-building in science and technology • I.2.1 MLA 4: Promoting diversity and cooperation in higher education • I.2.1 MLA 5: Supporting teachers and education personnel • I.2.2 MLA 1: Responding to opportunities and challenges • I.2.2 MLA 2: Global networks supporting EFA, human rights education and education for a culture of peace
<p><i>Key actions outlined in UNESCO strategy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assisting Member States and higher education institutions in the implementation of the Declaration and Framework for Priority Action of the World Conference on Higher Education • through the regional offices and UNESCO higher education institutes, promoting and coordinating the follow-up to the Conference in the regions through symposia, advisory services, technical assistance, training and clearing-house services • encouraging research on higher education policy and better interaction between research and policy development in the context of the UNESCO/UNU Forum on Higher Education 	<p><i>Key actions outlined in UNESCO strategy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging use of ICTs and open-learning/distance education methods • exploring innovative modes of financing higher education • reviewing the regional conventions on mutual recognition of qualifications • promoting university autonomy and academic freedom • support to Member States for capacity-building and the system and institutional levels • address issues raised by globalisation (trans-national education, e-learning), by exploring 	<p><i>Key actions outlined in UNESCO strategy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inter-sectoral initiative focussed on strengthening Member States' capacities in policymaking, planning and monitoring of national programmes at school and higher education levels • Research findings on higher education, research and knowledge production relevant to local context will be identified and disseminated • The regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications will be reviewed in the light of new developments in higher education • There will be a special focus on quality assurance and accreditation, particularly in Africa

2000-01 Biennium (30C/5)	2002-03 Biennium (31C/5)	2004-05 Biennium (32C/5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to support and reinforce the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs programme as a principal means of developing inter-university cooperation and promoting quality teaching, training and research as well as transfer of knowledge and know-how in selected priority areas. 	<p>mechanisms for quality assurance and accreditation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> pursue an international framework for accreditation and quality assurance continue to play lead role in the worldwide reflection on higher education reform assess progress five years after WCHE strengthening women's role in decision-making in higher education refocusing of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme improving the quality of teacher training and re-training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation with NGOs will be strengthened and private sector involvement in the higher education agenda will be encouraged Encouraging governments to use its Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel to improve the training and status of teachers, head teachers and heads of teacher-training institutes To respond to the interest in open and distance learning and ICTs, UNESCO will produce policy-and-practice guidelines on salient applications Teachers' associations will be encouraged to become active partners in the preparation of a comprehensive report of the world situation with regard to academic freedom It will promote multi-disciplinary research on how knowledge production is affected by globalization, examining concepts of public and private good, providing evidence on the impact of borderless education on widening access, student, teacher and researcher mobility and the supply of virtual education, and studying the implications of trade agreements on academic freedom, research and intellectual property The Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education will help to build capacity for this purpose, with the aim of empowering the education community at system and institutional levels to make informed decisions in relation to new trade agreements Continue to use the revamped UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme to improve higher education institutions by developing Chairs as centres of excellence with dynamic links to academic groups in other countries. Chairs's networks will also be utilised

2000-01 Biennium (30C/5)	2002-03 Biennium (31C/5)	2004-05 Biennium (32C/5)
		by UNESCO higher education institutes, in cooperation with programme sectors and field offices, to refine and strengthen the intellectual underpinnings of their activities. A new initiative, Academics across Borders, will be launched in order to reinforce academic solidarity globally.
<p>General Conference Mandate for IESALC:</p> <p>The General Conference:</p> <p>1. <i>invites</i> the Governing Board of IESALC to focus the Institute's programme on the following priorities:</p> <p>(a) to contribute to the renewal of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean through regional follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education;</p> <p>(b) to initiate and reinforce inter-university cooperation including the establishment of specialised cooperation networks focusing on research, planning, management and evaluation in the field of higher education; and</p> <p>(c) to act as a clearing house and reference centre supporting Member States and institutions in the improvement of higher education.</p>	<p>General Conference Mandate for IESALC:</p> <p>The General Conference:</p> <p>1. <i>invites</i> the Governing Board of IESALC to focus the Institute's programme on the following priorities:</p> <p>(a) to contribute to the renewal of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean through regional follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education;</p> <p>(b) to initiate and reinforce inter-university cooperation including the establishment of specialised cooperation networks focusing on research, planning, management and evaluation in the field of higher education; and</p> <p>(c) to act as a clearing house and reference centre supporting Member States and institutions in the improvement of higher education.</p> <p>2. <i>invites</i> the Governing Board to ensure harmonisation of IESALC's orientations and activities with the relevant objectives and strategies of the Education Programme.</p>	<p>General Conference Mandate for IESALC:</p> <p>The General Conference:</p> <p>1. <i>invites</i> the Governing Board of IESALC to give priority to the following objectives in the Institute's programme:</p> <p>(a) to contribute to the renewal of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean through regional follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education and through assistance to member States in formulating higher-education policies;</p> <p>(b) to develop and reinforce inter-university cooperation, including the establishment of specialised cooperation networks focusing on research, planning, management and evaluation in the field of higher education; and</p> <p>(c) to act as a clearing house and reference centre supporting Member States and institutions in the improvement of higher education.</p> <p>2. <i>invites</i> the Governing Board to ensure a harmonization of the orientations and activities of IESALC with the relevant objectives and strategies of the education programme.</p>

2000-01 Biennium (30C/5)	2002-03 Biennium (31C/5)	2004-05 Biennium (32C/5)
<p>Results expected of IESALC at the end of the biennium:</p> <p>Renewal and transformation of higher education in the Latin America and the Caribbean region accelerated in particular by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging human resource development through ad hoc courses, research and improved planning, management and evaluation of higher education through the creation of specialized cooperative networks; • setting up a network of associated institutions and partners to support IESALC's activities in the field of higher education; • strengthening cooperation among institutions of higher education at the regional and subregional levels through the conclusion of necessary agreements; • mobilizing experienced specialists and trained evaluators, researchers and managers, to assist in the improvement of higher education in the region through the establishment of a roster; • disseminating widely the results of research and technical cooperation projects; • further developing activities through higher education networks, the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme and fostering academic mobility through a wider application of the regional convention 	<p>Results expected of IESALC at the end of the biennium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, planning, management, evaluation training and policy-making activities supported by regional networks and cooperation agreements reached among institutions of higher education at the subregional and regional levels • A well-trained group of evaluators, researchers and managers of higher education institutions, which will contribute to the improvement of quality and relevance of higher education in the region • Conceptual and methodological bases for the development and implementation of new paradigms for research, teaching, learning, management and policy-making in higher education, based on new information and communication technologies • Results of research and technical cooperation projects diffused through periodical and occasional publications • Accountability and transparency of the evaluation and accreditation processes increased through promoting evaluation and accreditation of programmes • New models of institutional management systems drawn up contributing to the training of leaders, managers and public policy-makers. • The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs and Networks Programme evaluated, strengthened and extended aimed at establishing a permanent monitoring system for the evaluation and coordination of the Chairs and networks for the development of higher education in the region. 	<p>Results expected of IESALC at the end of the biennium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced regional cooperation in the field of higher education • Information and research findings on higher education for the region widely disseminated • Capacities for higher education in Member States of the region developed <p><i>Performance indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number/type of cooperation agreements among governments of Member States, and their higher education institutions at the sub-regional and regional levels; • number/type of non-governmental organizations and higher education institutions and associations involved in the IESALC network • Observatory of Higher Education about research results, technical cooperation projects and trends and prospects expanded and widely used • number of publications published and disseminated. • number of Member States where IESALC is an active partner in the formulation of higher education policies; • number of Member States and higher education institutions where IESALC is an active partner in improving evaluation and accreditation processes.