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SEINÄJOEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Helli Kitinoja, Ville-Pekka Mäkeläinen, Julio Vallejo Medina
& Ari Virkamäki (eds.)

**DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATION IN
LATIN AMERICA: COLLABORATION
IN EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND
BUSINESS - OPENING UP NEW
OPPORTUNITIES**

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Seinäjoki 2017

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ESIPUHE

*Tapio Varmola, KT, dosentti, toimitusjohtaja, rehtori
Seinäjoen ammattikorkeakoulu*

Tässä julkaisussa kuvataan erilaisia koulutukseen, tutkimukseen ja kehittämistoimintaan sekä kansainväliseen liiketoimintaan liittyviä mahdollisuuksia Latinalaisessa Amerikassa. Julkaisussa esitettävät esimerkit yhteistyöstä perustuvat Seinäjoen ammattikorkeakoulun ja sen sidosryhmien lähes kahdenkymmenen vuoden pitkäjänteiseen kehittämistyöhön Latinalaisen Amerikan kumppanien kanssa.

Suomi on usein toiminnassaan liian EU-keskeinen. Katseen siirto maapallon toiselle laidalle on hyväksi niin opiskelijoille, opettajille, tutkijoille kuin yrittäjillekin.

Toiminta yhteyksien vahvistamiseksi Latinalaiseen Amerikkaan jatkuu verkostomaisesti. Siinä tarvitaan yhteistyötä ammattikorkeakoulujen ja yliopistojen sekä alueellisten toimijoiden kesken. Yhteydet Latinalaisen Amerikan maiden suurlähetystöihin ovat erittäin tärkeitä.

Kiitän kaikkia julkaisun tuottamiseen osallistuneita toimijoita erinomaisesta yhteistyöstä.

FOREWORD

*Dr. Tapio Varmola, CEO, President
Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences*

This publication describes a variety of opportunities related to education, research and development, and international business in Latin America. The opportunities emerging in this publication are based on almost twenty years of experiences of the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and its stakeholders with Latin American partners.

Finland often concentrates in its activities too much on EU area. Looking at the other side of the world broadens the visions of students, teachers, researchers and entrepreneurs

The activities towards strengthening the co-operation in South America continues in networks. In this activity co-operation between universities of applied sciences, universities and local actors is needed. Connections to Latin American Embassies are very important.

I would like to thank all participants for excellent work in the publication process.

PREFACIO

Dr. Tapio Varmola, Rector

Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas de Seinäjoki

Esta publicación describe una variedad de oportunidades relacionadas con la educación, investigación y desarrollo, y negocios internacionales en América Latina. Las oportunidades que emergen en esta publicación se basan en casi veinte años de experiencias de la Universidad Seinäjoki de Ciencias Aplicadas y sus partes interesadas con socios latinoamericanos

Finlandia, a menudo, ha actuado demasiado centrada en la Unión Europea. Dirigir la mirada hacia otras regiones del planeta es importante tanto para los estudiantes, profesores e investigadores como para los empresarios.

Las actividades de fortalecimiento de la cooperación en América del Sur continúan en forma de redes. En esta actividad es necesaria la cooperación entre universidades de ciencias aplicadas, universidades y actores locales. Las conexiones con las embajadas latinoamericanas son muy importantes.

Agradezco a todas las entidades y personas que contribuyeron en esta publicación por su excelente cooperación.

"Kulkija, valmista tietä ei ole, tietä tehdään kävellen."
"Walker, there is no path, the path is made by walking."
"Caminante, no hay camino se hace camino al andar."
Antonio Machado (Spanish poet, 1875 – 1939)



PICTURE 1. President Varmola and Rector Hallu signing a cooperation agreement between Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and University of Buenos Aires, UBA (Julio Vallejo Medina 2009).

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Tapio Varmola

ESIPUHE

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Ari Virkamäki, Manager of Education

Seinäjoki UAS

Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences (Seinäjoki UAS) has a long history in co-operation with Latin America. During last 20 years many projects have been carried out. Last one was 'Latin American business and service center conceptualization' project which ended during summer 2015. The project was funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The idea about starting this type of conceptualization project was formed when the knowledge level about Latin America in Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences had reached a high enough level among Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences. The rise of the knowledge level was acknowledged also in the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The above described process in Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and especially in the School of Business and Culture has been a long process. Key persons in this process have been the current president of the university, Dr. Tapio Varmola, and the former dean of Business School, Kalevi Karjanlahti. Their support for these activities was of vital importance and guaranteed the availability of resources needed to develop knowledge and connections to Latin America during 20 years. Also the vision to use resources for activities in Latin America was to large extent theirs. Dr. Elina Varamäki enabled during her term as a dean the continuation and further development of these activities.

The actual project team of business related projects has been formed in most of the cases by Julio Vallejo Medina, Ari Virkamäki and Ville-Pekka Mäkeläinen. Julio Vallejo Medina has played a major role in the projects as an expert of Latin America and as a maintainer and developer of existing relationship networks. These networks have been in a vital role in the creation of a strong position of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences in Latin America. The role of these networks cannot be under estimated. These strong co-operation networks are also visible in the list of honorary contributors (after the foreword). Ari Virkamäki has been in a key position to connect projects with local enterprises in South Ostrobothnia. This applies also to the latest project but also to many others before this one. Ari Virkamäki has been in charge of company connections

in all of the Latin American cooperation of Seinäjoki UAS. His close connections to South Ostrobothnia companies have been important for the regional influence of our projects. Ville-Pekka Mäkeläinen has been in charge of substance related to international business and international marketing in the projects discussed above. Helli Kitinoja, director of Global Education Services and Export of Expertise project, has as a Manager of International Relations of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences participated in the development of activities of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences in Latin America in many different ways. In part of the activities Helli Kitinoja has been a part of the project team carrying out project applications and practical project work. Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences was also among the first Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences which succeeded in 2015 to get Erasmus+ Global Mobility financing for Latin American cooperation from the European Union.

For high level operations you need good partners. Numerous partners in the region of South Ostrobothnia have participated in many projects of the University of Applied Sciences. The Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia and Seinäjoki Tango Festival Ltd. have participated in many of our activities throughout the years. We would like to emphasize also the role of South Ostrobothnia Chamber of Commerce as a key player for enabling co-operation with companies in many projects. Chamber of Commerce has also brought in many of the projects company perspectives in practical project work. During recent years Tomi Kohtanen has personally been involved in many of our projects directed towards Latin America. The Federation of Enterprises in South Ostrobothnia has also been an important partner in projects in co-operational activities towards local companies.

Foreign partners have been in a very important role in the development of relationships of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences towards Latin America. Especially important has been the role of University of Buenos Aires and the role of professor Jorge Marchini. He has taught during many years a course concentrating on business in Latin America in our university and he has also participated in many of the projects. Professor Marchini has contributed in many ways to the development of the relationships of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences with our co-operation partners. Other important university connections in Latin America have especially been: Catholic University of Buenos Aires, University of Santiago del Estero and CETYS in Mexico. From our European partners we have to emphasize the role of the University of Granada. Through different projects and discussions especially with professor Guillermo Maraver the formation of operational model introduced in this paper has been clarified.

Last but not least we want to express our gratitude for a long time support for the Embassies of Argentina and Brazil. They have supported our activities and participated in many of our projects. Later we have had co-operations with the other Embassies of the countries of Pacific Alliance (Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru) and Uruguay as well.

We want to thank of all them for co-operation which has proven to be very fruitful. Education export is now becoming a new potential cooperation area with Latin America. In Finland's Government's Program education export is mentioned as one of the key areas. In these activities Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences wants to be among the pioneers of this business and assist the internationalization of local enterprises at the same time. Latin America is among the potential market areas for this business. Report consists of articles covering four different areas. Latin America as a cultural, educational and operational environment is the first area. Articles are written by Carlos Risso who is Charge d'affaires at the Embassy of Argentina, Norma Pensado who is the Ambassador of Mexico, Pablo Sader who is the Ambassador of Uruguay and Antônio Francisco Da Costa e Silva, Ambassador of Brazil to Finland. Second topic is Latin America as a partner in educational activities. Third topic is Latin America as a business environment and the last one Latin American cooperation creates new potential for business.

For the reader – this report deals with one of the most important economic areas in the world. Brazilian economy is among top ten economies in the whole world. Despite the problems faced in Brazil during last few years it will rise sometimes in the list of the largest economies of the world and will pull the whole Latin America to grow economically. Portuguese is spoken in Brazil, but the role of Spanish as a global trading language can't be ignored. Globally Spanish is spoken as a mother language by over 400 million people. That is a much bigger number compared to native English speakers.

The background features a large, abstract graphic composed of several overlapping, curved shapes. On the left side, there are two curved bands of blue, one lighter and one darker, that sweep across the top and down towards the bottom left. On the right side, a large, solid green shape curves upwards from the bottom right towards the top right, meeting the blue shapes. The overall composition is dynamic and modern.

I PART

LATIN AMERICA AS A CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

ARGENTINA, CLOSER THAN GEOGRAPHY SUGGESTS

Honorary Contributor

Carlos S. Risso Dominguez, In charge of Affairs, Embassy of Argentina in Finland

1 ARGENTINA AND SEINÄJOKI

Defying the distance that physically separates Seinäjoki from Argentina, both have undoubtedly enjoyed a special bond through tango, reflected by Argentine tango artists having taken part at the annual Tangomarkkinat for now more than a decade. Also the 2010 Cumbre Mundial del Tango has brought several high profile artists from Argentina to Seinäjoki, while last year, when the same event was organized in the Argentine city of Zárate (about 90 km from the capital), Seinäjoki and Tangomarkkinat seized this as an opportunity for Finnish tango to also set foot on Argentine soil. From the Argentine perspective, tango might have made Seinäjoki one of the best-know Finnish cities, at least among tango enthusiasts.

But setting aside the relevance of tango, there are many other interesting aspects and elements that Seinäjoki shares with many cities in Argentina, such as for example its rural location in the heart of a vast and sparsely, its focus on agriculture and food production, or the great importance it attaches to education. There are therefore many reasons not only for tango enthusiasts, but also businessmen, professors and officials from Seinäjoki to take a closer look at Argentina, were very recently a new government has taken office, putting a renewed emphasis on developing new ties with foreign partners especially through new business opportunities and cooperation in various fields considered to be essential for Argentina's development.

2 ABOUT ARGENTINA

Argentina is the second largest country in South America with an area of nearly 3 million square kilometers and a population of 42.9 million inhabitants. The country is divided in 23 provinces and the Federal Capital, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, which gathers about 35% of the Argentine population, or around 14 million inhabitants. Almost 92% of the whole population lives in cities, some of the most populated ones being Córdoba, Rosario and Mendoza, with over a million inhabitants each.



PICTURE 2. Puerto Madero, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (Ministry of Tourism of the Argentine Republic 2016).

Bordered by the Andes in the west and the South Atlantic Ocean to the east, Argentina's neighboring countries are Chile to the west, Bolivia and Paraguay to the north, and Brazil and Uruguay to the northeast. The longest land border measures 6,691 kilometers and it is the one that separates Argentina and Chile.

The Argentine territory covers two continents: America and Antarctica. Argentina has had a continued presence in Antarctica since 1904 and currently operates a total of 13 Antarctic bases. One of them has been in operation for 112 years and is the oldest permanent human settlement that exists in the Antarctic territory. Since 1988, the National Meteorological Institute of Argentina also cooperates with the Finnish Meteorological Institute by providing logistical support to the latter's Antarctic research activities and housing its technical equipment.

Argentina has a great climatic variety: mild and humid in the Pampas, cold and humid plains in the west end of Patagonia, subtropical in the Northeast and warm in the Northwest. From November to March, the average temperature in Argentina is 23 degrees and from June to September it is 12 degrees.



PICTURE 3. Perito Moreno Glacier, Patagonia (Ministry of Tourism of the Argentine Republic 2016).

From a socioeconomic perspective, Argentina has the highest Human Development Index in Latin America. According to the latest report of the United Nations (2015), Argentina is one of the countries which have a “very high human development”. The country also has an advanced scientific and technological development, a diversified industrial infrastructure and a widely developed and strong cultural industry.

The current Argentine society has its origins in immigration, mainly from Spain and Italy, but also from many other European –including Finland–, Latin American and even African countries. Italian immigration is particularly noteworthy, around 20 million Argentines being of Italian origin. Spanish is the only official language of Argentina, although a large part of the population speaks Italian and English is widespread, especially in the commercial and tourist sectors.

3 RECENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

On December 10th, 2015, Mauricio Macri, former mayor of the City of Buenos Aires, was inaugurated as President of Argentina, after having won the presidential elections in the second round (ballotage) by 51,34% to 48,66% against the ruling party’s candidate.



PICTURE 4. The President and his cabinet of Ministers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Argentine Republic 2016).

After the change of government, Argentina has renewed and reinforced its commitment to economic and social development, and improving the business environment is one of the key aspects of the new government program. Only a few months into the new government, several issues that were hindering these ambitions in the short term have already been addressed. Most noticeably, Argentina came to an agreement with a comparatively small group of creditors which however had successfully blocked the country's exit of the 2001 default by refusing to take part of the debt restructuring process 94 percent of creditor's had agreed upon. At the end of April 2015, after almost 15 years, Argentina was finally able to return to the international capital markets. It was able to issue bonds worth \$16.5 billion, after encountering a demand that exceeded expectations by around 300 percent.

Another major achievement was the opening of the currency exchange market and the stabilization of the country's currency –the Argentine Peso– already during the first weeks of 2016. This put an end to the increasing difficulties of previous years to exchange currencies and transfer funds from or to Argentina, but most fundamentally allowed the currency to gradually recover saver's and investor's trust.

Since December 2015, several well-known companies have already announced new investment projects in Argentina, such as:

- CocaCola (\$1 billion)
- Telefónica (\$650 million)
- Fiat-Chrysler (\$500 million)
- Unilever (\$345 million)
- Ford (\$220 million)
- Saint-Gobain (\$200 million)
- Bridgestone (\$187 million)
- Dow Chemicals (\$123 million)
- Globant (\$90 million)
- Bosch (\$80 million)
- Procter & Gamble (\$50 million)



PICTURE 5. Sarmiento`s underground railroad renovations (Presidency of the Argentine Republic 2016).

Several organizations have also enabled new loans for development project, such as \$6.3 billion approved by the World Bank (2016-2019), \$5 billion by the IDB (2016-2019) and \$1.03 billion by CAF (2016). Together with strong public investment, these resources will be mainly used to improve the country's infrastructure giving careful consideration not only to its social but also to its productive needs.

More recently, Finnish credit agency Finnvera (2016) has again started to support trade with Argentina and is investigating how to guarantee long-term credits given that "Argentina is now becoming an attractive market for many companies".

Another short-term achievement that suggests a promising mid-term tendency is a fiscal deficit reduction of 16.4% in the first quarter of 2016, and an increase in private employment by 0.5% in February compared to the same month last year.

In these months also some less popular measures were taken that were however deemed necessary to pave the way for future growth, and it is expected that these measures will contribute to significantly improve the attractiveness of Argentina for investors and entrepreneurs already in the short term. This has been acknowledged by many political and economic leaders around the world, some of which decided to visit Argentina already during the first months of this year, joined in some cases by large business delegations, such as the President of the United States Barack Obama, the President of France Francois Hollande, the Prime Minister of Italy Matteo Renzi, the Prime Minister of Finland Juha Sipilä, or the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini.



PICTURE 6. President Mauricio Macri met with Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä in October 2016 (Presidency of the Argentine Republic 2016).

The challenges Argentina faces are not to be underestimated: having to struggle with several external and internal issues that are also not unfamiliar to its neighbors and many other countries around the world, Argentina's total GDP is predicted to show a slight decline during the first half of the year and is expected to return to a path of growth only during the second half. However, GDP is expected to grow from \$ 510 billion to \$ 610 billion by 2020.

4 OPPORTUNITIES

In its path to strong economic growth, Argentina will be able to rely on several of its structural advantages and also some positive features worth highlighting:

1. A large economy with a highly qualified workforce (Sources: UN, FMI, IDB, INDEC, all 2015):
 - 43 million inhabitants
 - GDP (PPP): \$964.279 billion (25th)
 - GDP per capita (PPP): \$22,375 (56th)
 - Human Development Index: 0.836 ("very high")
 - Free public education (including universities)



PICTURE 7. The Government speeds up procedures for the export of beef to the EU (Presidency of the Argentine Republic 2016).

2. A globally integrated economy:
 - Member of the G-20, group of 20 industrialized and emerging countries.
 - Full member of Mercosur, international trade association that brings together more than 293 million people in Latin America and whose GDP is 5 billion US dollars (2015).
 - Strengthened bilateral relations with the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as well as other developing countries.

3. Rich resources available for sustainable development:
 - 4,500 km of mountain ranges with mining resources: gold, copper, lithium, carbon, lead, zinc, tin, silver and potassium.
 - 4,700 km coast along the Atlantic Ocean with rich fisheries.
 - Vast oil and gas resources with exploration and exploitation opportunities.

4. Investment opportunities in several productive sectors of the economy:
 - Leading country in the international food market and great technological development in the agrifood value chain.
 - Accelerated development of renewable energies, biotechnology, software, creative industries and other frontier sectors.
 - Main tourist destination in Latin America, with almost 6 million tourists per year.
 - Increase in the productive capacity of domestic and foreign companies, with 96% of FDI flows being directed to new projects and expansion.

There are several economic sectors that have been assigned strategic importance and many benefits are offered to those willing to contribute to their development, thus providing a wide array of interesting investment opportunities. A few examples:

Forestry:

- A 30 year-period of tax stability, which may be extended to a maximum of 50 years
- Early VAT refund, tax exemptions and non-reimbursable funds for planted forests
- Special depreciation for income tax purposes

Renewable energies:

Depending on the project, investors may choose between either of the following options:

- Early VAT refund on the purchase, manufacturing, elaboration or import of capital goods or infrastructure works
 - Flexibilization in income tax payments through the accelerated amortization of assets for income tax purposes
 - Eligible assets are not taxable for Minimum Presumed Income Tax purposes
 - Exemptions in the payments of custom duties in the import of related goods
-



PICTURE 8. Around 313 million tons of goods are transported every year in Argentina (Presidency of the Argentine Republic 2016).

Biotechnology:

- Depreciation for income tax on capital goods, special equipment or new components to be used for promoted projects
- Early refund of VAT paid on the purchase of capital goods, equipment, etc.
- 50% of paid-up employers' social security contributions is converted into tax credits

Mining:

- Deduction of 200% of exploration expenses in income tax assessment
- Deduction of up to 100% of the amount invested in determining the project feasibility for the purposes of income tax assessment
- VAT refund on exploration costs
- Tax stability for a 30-year period after filing the feasibility study
- Accelerated depreciation for income tax purposes
- Exemption from import duties on capital goods
- Early refund and financing of VAT for new exploitation projects or projects to expand the productive capacity, in the definitive import on purchase of new capital goods and investment in infrastructure for the productive process
- Exemption from the asset tax, elimination of duties on exports, provincial and municipal taxes, ceiling on royalty payments and capitalization of reserves
- 5 years of exemption from taxes applicable to production and marketing of the mining activity

Software:

- Tax stability for national taxes until December 31, 2019
- Tax credits (except for income tax): up to 70% of employers' social security contributions
- Software companies are exempt from VAT withholdings and collections
- 60% reduction in income tax, applicable to both domestic and foreign sources of income

5 ARGENTINA, CLOSER THAN GEOGRAPHY SUGGESTS

Argentina's developments in recent months have been extensively referred to and covered in depth by journalists, analysts and experts from all around the world, leading to a general consensus that the country is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for investors and businessmen. Many of these opportunities lie in areas where also Finnish companies have expertise and could make significant contributions. Not only, but especially those enterprises that have already expanded to other non-European countries should not shy away from the distance between Europe and Argentina, but keep in mind that many of their European peers have been doing business in Argentina already for many decades, taking advantage among many other factors of the cultural and linguistic background Argentina shares with Europe.

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MEXICO AS A STRATEGIC PARTNER FOR FINLAND

Honorary Contributor

Norma Pensado, Ambassador of Mexico to Finland

1 INTRODUCTION

This year Mexico and Finland are celebrating 80 years of the signing of their Friendship Treaty that gave birth to their Diplomatic Relations. In these years, particularly during the last 15 years, the cooperation between the two nations has increased significantly and it could be affirmed that both the public and private sectors are more aware of the multiple opportunities and mutual benefits of closer relations.

The University of Applied Sciences of Seinäjoki is one of the Universities that shares academic activities with Mexican universities, and has been very active in the promotion and organization of commercial and academic events with Latin American countries in an attempt to strengthen the links between the region and Finland, and also creating more awareness of the huge potential of the region for students at this University in their future careers.

This contribution is part of the activities of the Embassy of Mexico aimed at promoting business and investment opportunities with Finland, but particularly, at creating awareness of the large possibilities of cooperation between both countries.

2 A COUNTRY WITH MULTIPLE ADVANTAGES

Mexico is a country with multiple advantages. It is a megadiverse country with multiple ecosystems and a large biodiversity; geographically it is located in a very advantageous location, with the USA as its northern neighbor, and at the same time representing a bridge between North America and the rest of Latin America. It has oceans at both sides.

Mexico is gradually growing at a fast pace and is becoming a centre of Nordic businesses in Latin America. Mexico is part of the G20, one of the 3 trade partners in NAFTA, and member also of the Pacific Alliance. Mexico has 11 trade agreements with 46 countries. It is currently very attractive for investors and companies wishing to establish and operate in a country with large potential and a geostrategical location like Mexico.



PICTURE 9. Mexico in NAFTA Super Corridor Map (Society for American Sovereignty 2016).

Part of this attractiveness is due to the fact that since 2014, the Government of President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, has been implementing 11 Structural Reforms throughout the country, many of them having as a direct consequence the openness of strategic sectors. This has been directly related to possible cooperation with Finland, and has awoken the interest of this country, particularly in the energy reform, the ICT reform, and the education reform. Their implication mostly has to do with the opening of the sectors to foreign investment and the volume of projects of potential collaboration with foreign companies and institutions that have the know-how, the resources and the technology to contribute to the national development of Mexico.

Excluding the Oil Sector, the economy has grown at a rate above 3% since the end of 2014. Some of the strongest sectors in the Mexican economy are: automotive, energy, health, manufacturing, mining, retail, telecoms and transportation logistics. On the

other hand, the main interest of Mexico in Finland is: education, clean technologies, maritime industry, environment, and forestry.



PICTURE 10. Strong sectors in the Mexican economy (Commercial Counsellor of ProMexico 2016).

Mexico shares 50 years of forestry cooperation at a governmental and academic levels, and it is one of the strongest points in the bilateral relation since it has allowed academic exchange of professors and students, common research projects and governmental collaboration.

In an aim to explore further collaboration and concrete meeting points in the bilateral agenda, President of Finland, Mr Sauli Niinistö, visited Mexico on May 2015. This visit undoubtedly has contributed to reinvigorate the bilateral agenda, resulting in the signing of several Memoranda of Understanding and agreements between government and academic institutions.

The structural reforms Mexico has been undergoing, represent a window of opportunity to countries like Finland, whose various competitive sectors match the needs and challenges of Mexico. The Energy Reform is turning the energy sector into one of the most powerful engines of national economic growth. The oil sector is opening up to foreign investment and to infrastructure projects of great dimension that were difficult to achieve before the reform.

The Education Reform aims to transform education and it departs from the premise that education is a fundamental right. It aims at making sure that the teachers are suitable to educate the Mexican students. The immediate implication of this reform is a better preparation level of Mexicans to join the workforce.

Tax reform promotes economic growth and includes elements with social goals. The funds obtained will be destined to education, unemployment insurance and a universal pension system. The reform will preserve one of the most effective and competitive business rates in the OECD. There will be investment in human capital, innovation and infrastructure. Foreign trade will be enhanced, by simplifying customs regulations.

Regarding the Financial Reform, its mission is that all Mexican citizens and businesses to have products and services that are adequate for their needs and have competitive prices. The reform is turning the financial sector into an effective tool for the nation's comprehensive development. With the reform, it is expected that by 2018 the internal financing of the private sector will be equivalent to 40% of Mexico's GDP; in 2012, it was equivalent to 25%.

Telecommunications reform aims at strengthening the rights linked to freedom of speech and information and the establishment of the right to have access to information technologies and communication, as well as to broadcasting and telecommunication services, broadband included. Foreign direct investment is now allowed up to a 100% in broadcasting. The program "Connectivity" is one of the focus areas of the Finnish telecom companies towards Mexico because of the large business potential it entails. Mexico is also attaching great importance to Innovation and R&D investment, as well as the promotion of scientific and technological activities. Innovation is a skill required to solve problems successfully and compete with other economies in the world. Mexico and Finland share this interest, and are collaborating at the academic level.

The Trans-Atlantic Platform (T-AP) is a collaboration - on an unprecedented scale - between key humanities and social science funders from South America, North America, and Europe. The Platform underpins a truly trans-Atlantic network of programme managers, and social sciences and humanities research councils and facilitators, with involvement across the Americas. Major research funders in Europe and the Americas have partnered to pave the way for increased transatlantic research collaboration in the social sciences and humanities. There are partners from Europe (including Finland) and eight from America (including Mexico). Horizon 2020 is also another platform where Finnish-Mexican institutions are collaborating in R&D projects. In the case of forestry cooperation, Mexico and Finland share a long story of collaboration between public sector and the universities.

3 CONCLUSION

We look forward to continue further collaboration with Finland and to narrow the gap of distance through strengthening academic collaboration, increasing trade and investment, and contributing to the mutual development and knowledge of both countries.

The University of Applied Sciences of Seinäjoki can further play an important role of building bridges with Mexican academic institutions.

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LINKS BETWEEN URUGUAY AND FINLAND

Honorary Contributor

Pablo Sader, Ambassador of Uruguay to Finland

1 INTRODUCTION

Uruguay and Finland have very significant economic links, having developed an important mutually beneficial strategic partnership based on shared principles of sustainable development. Both countries are not only compatible, but also extremely complementary. This assertion goes beyond rhetoric and is reflected in hard data, as we will see.

Finland is the second largest foreign investor in Uruguay, with approximately 10% of the accumulated FDI stock. The total investments of the Finnish firms in Uruguay exceeds three billion euros.

In 2007, the Metsä Group built the first pulp mill in Fray Bentos (later acquired by UPM). In 2013, Montes del Plata a joint venture between Stora Enso and the Chilean Arauco, commenced the operation of a second plant in the Conchillas area. These two major greenfield projects have also brought about others, mainly in the forestry sector, among them notably Kemira and Ponsse. Wärtsilä manages a combined cycle electricity plant in the outskirts of Montevideo. All of these companies found in Uruguay a very reliable and secure investment climate.

The two pulp mills are among the largest investments abroad by any Finnish company and the two largest single FDI greenfield projects in Uruguay`s history. The two plants are among the best in the world; they use last generation technology and uphold the strictest environmental standards. Their added production capacity is beyond 2.8 million tons a year. According to 2015 and 2016 figures, with 1.2 billion US dollars, cellulose fiber is the second most exported commodity. It accounts for 14 per cent of the total exports in 2015. Both UPM and Montes del Plata are among the top 10 exporters. They employ directly more than 1000 personnel and indirectly about 10.000.

Their importance is not only quantitative but also qualitative; put together they generate 320MW of electricity based in the processing of biomass, a figure that represents 18% of the electricity produced in Uruguay. In addition, they operate state-of-the-art seedlings nurseries, and conduct important research and development and have vast logistics operations.

It is worthwhile noting that the Finnish companies established in Uruguay are good corporate citizens, practitioners of the social responsibility concept, engaging in varied activities of cooperation within their surrounding communities and the society at large. When it comes to bilateral trade, the exchange is relatively modest but significant if put in the context of trade between Finland and Latin America.

TABLE 1. Bilateral Trade Finland – Uruguay (Finnish Customs Foreign Trade Statistics 2015).

BILATERAL TRADE FINLAND - URUGUAY (euros)		
	IMPORTS	EXPORTS
2010	4.823.741	23.388.614
2011	5.007.602	41.275.758
2012	11.224.614	17.596.053
2013	12.879.825	36.083.081
2014	3.781.066	20.807.084
2015	36.514.00	37.466.000

According to Finnish Customs trade statistics, Finnish main imports from Uruguay is cellulose pulp, animal and vegetable oils and fats and food. Finnish exports towards Uruguay are principally machinery and transport equipment, basic manufactures and chemical and related products.

Politically, Uruguay and Finland enjoy excellent relations. There are frequent high-level visits and both countries cooperate very well in international organizations, where they share common principles and objectives.

To illustrate that, in September 2014 former President José Mujica visited Finland, had a meeting with President Niinistö and the then Prime Minister Stubb and maintained productive contacts with Finnish business. Vice President Sendic and Prime Minister Sipilä met in Brussels at the margins of the EU-CELAC summit to discuss bilateral relations. Both Foreign Ministers regularly meet in New York during the United Nations General Assembly, where Uruguay and Finland co-sponsor activities in the field of peacekeeping and International security. Two important Delegations of the Committees for the Future and Social Affairs of the Finnish Parliament visited Uruguay over the last six months. Last September 2015 there was a meeting of the mechanism of Political consultations in Helsinki at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers. In addition, there is

an ongoing dynamic exchange of public and private delegations in areas such as wood industries, social welfare, bio-economy, future studies and education.

Scientific and Technological cooperation is carried out within the existing regulatory framework. There are ongoing contacts in the fields of bio-economy, social welfare and, mainly, education (teacher training, remote learning, among other areas).

It is interesting to note that Uruguay and Finland share a common passion for Tango. Uruguay is one of the cradles of the genre and is justly proud of its contribution. In that regard, we consider the Tangomarkkinat Festival in Seinäjoki as one of the most prestigious venues in the international scene. Since 2014, Uruguay has organized the participation of talented and well-known Uruguayan artists to the Festival.

In view of the expanding critical mass of the bilateral relation, Uruguay decided to open a resident Embassy in Helsinki in February 2014. Previously, the diplomatic representation to Finland was conducted from the Uruguayan Embassy in Stockholm. Our Embassy in Helsinki is also cross-accredited to Estonia and Latvia.

2 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Uruguay with an average growth rate of more than 5 per cent over the last 12 years, investment grade, solid democratic institutions, the prevalence of the rule of law and remarkable socio-economic indicators offers good opportunities for increased trade and investment. The South Ostrobothnia region with its productive capabilities and entrepreneurial skills in food production, hi-tech and woodwork is very well suited to benefit from this potential.

So far, we have no records of significant economic or commercial activity between firms originating in the region and Uruguay. However, the size and scale of the region's enterprises are particularly suitable and compatible with the size and characteristics of the Uruguayan market. In particular, Uruguay offers potential as a regional base for expansion into the wider South and Latin American markets.

Clean-tech, renewable energies, non-cellulose forestry industries, global services, logistics are several examples of fields that have good potential to develop.

I believe that there is a need for further mutual awareness as a starting point. In that regard, the leadership shown by the launching and operation of Latin America Service Center EU project has been a major contribution. In that regard, the efforts by the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and the Chamber of Commerce of South Ostrobothnia are worth praising.

3 COOPERATION WITH THE LATIN AMERICAN CENTER FOR BUSINESS AND SERVICES OF SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

In November 2014, I had the enormous pleasure of addressing over 40 International students of Business and Culture School of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences (SeAMK) in a Business seminar about Uruguay. I was able to interact with smart and motivated young people who were very well oriented by the faculty and produced high quality presentations. I am most grateful to SeAMK for this opportunity and hope that our participation was somewhat useful to the students.

On that trip to Seinäjoki, I also had the chance to be acquainted with the South Ostrobothnia region realities visiting the EPEC Company and getting an excellent briefing at the Seinäjoki Region Business Service Center.

The Latin America Centre´s leadership was also instrumental in the signing of the cooperation MOU between SeAMK and the UDELAR (Uruguay National University). Rectors Roberto Markarian and Tapio Varmola signed the MOU in March 2015 in Montevideo. We at the Embassy look forward to the implementation of collaborative activities and stand ready to lend our assistance as required.

Last but not least: the Embassy is extremely grateful to SeAMK for the advice, logistic cooperation and overall warm welcome that we have enjoyed during the participation of Uruguayan artists in Tangomarkkinat in 2014 and 2015. For those editions of the Festival, Uruguay was represented by talented singers Tabaré Leyton and Maia Castro along their respective musical ensembles. We are looking forward to renewing our cooperation for the 2016 edition, where singer Ana Karina Rossi and pianist Alberto Magnoni perform for the Finnish audiences. I sincerely believe that the cooperation we are receiving from SeAMK is instrumental to both develop awareness and business opportunities for the South Ostrobothnia region and is a relevant contribution the bilateral relation as a whole.

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BRAZILIAN-FINNISH EDUCATION COOPERATION: STRONG AND CONSTANTLY IMPROVING PARTNERSHIP

Honorary Contributor

Antônio F. Da Costa e Silva, Ambassador of Brazil to Finland

1 INTRODUCTION

We meet in complex times for both the Finnish and Brazilian economies, in an international climate that shows less favourable winds for us to sail through the challenges we are confronted with. These circumstances, while requiring strong mobilization and sense of purpose from our governments and peoples, do not call for introspection. On the contrary: the intertwining between domestic and international affairs is becoming ever deeper, further diluting the boundaries between foreign policy, as traditionally conceived, and the other spheres of government, including one of its central dimensions: educational policies.

International cooperation is a vital component of national development in its broadest sense, and I consider Brazilian-Finnish relations, particularly in the field of education, a successful example on how bilateral relations can foster and nurture the development efforts of two societies and countries that, while geographically distant, are increasingly brought closer by stronger ties of dialogue, cooperation and friendship, the central tenets of any successful foreign policy and – more importantly – of our shared future as active members of the international community.

Political and economic cooperation between our two countries continues to thrive, one of the best examples of which is precisely in the field of education. Education should be at the heart of every aspiration for equality, fairness and prosperity. Finland is a role model in this regard, and we, Brazilians, are eager to learn from Finnish problem-solving paradigms and practices, while offering our contribution in creativity and flexible thinking.

2 BRAZIL – FINLAND AGREEMENTS

In 1990, the Agreement between Brazil and Finland on Cultural, Educational and Scientific Cooperation entered into force, which led both countries into a considerable number of partnerships. Most of them tended to be bilateral understandings between Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences. A research made by the Brazil-Finland Cultural Centre in 2012 showed a map of the agreements in force between Brazilian and Finnish high-education institutions. Until that date, 12 out of the 16 Finnish Universities had some kind of cooperation arrangement with their Brazilian counterparts.

The Brazilian Government's Science without Borders Program, launched in 2011, and the MoU signed between CIMO and Capes, in 2015, brought a positive change to the scope of this cooperation, taking it to another level. The Embassy of Brazil has been accompanying and supporting the steady amplification and deepening of student and knowledge exchange between our two countries. Such steadiness permeates all facets of our bilateral relation. Since 2012, Finland has hosted more than 200 Brazilian Science without Borders' students spread from Helsinki to Lapland. Finland was among the very first countries to embark on the Program and to offer a significant array of opportunities for Brazilian students.

We are very proud of this partnership. The feedback that we have been receiving from both sides is very positive. Brazilian students return from Finland not only with a very good general impression of their stay, but also take with them singular and valuable experiences: one of intellect; one of social adaptation; and one of individual autonomy. These are all decisive experiences in forging capacities for an encompassing global view. The students carry an experience of estrangement – of self-estrangement – that allows them to better evaluate their own paths and possibilities. Consequences in terms of widening horizons and greater development are self-evident. Positive economic outcome thereof is well documented.

I am also glad to point out that our bilateral relations on educational matters have been broadened by a new strong project, launched in 2012: the VET – Teachers for the Future Program. In line with the major priorities in the area of education in Brazil for the past decade, technical and vocational education is now an integral part in Brazilian-Finnish cooperation and one I hope will continue to grow in the future. Between 2014 and 2016, our Federal Institutions of Education, Science and Technology have sent to Finland 107 teachers, in three separate cohorts, in order to further develop the exchange of abilities and knowledge on technical and vocational training.

Teachers that came to Finland returned to Brazil with as valuable a baggage as the students that benefited from the Science without Borders program. But this baggage

has an even richer content, as those teachers will be able to use it to multiply, to their students and through their research, the experience and lessons they acquired during their stay in Finland. Most importantly, both personally and within their institutions, they will contribute to promote stronger and hopefully permanent interaction between the Brazilian and Finnish systems of vocational education for the benefit of both countries.

The improvement of skills development is in the centre of current structural priorities in most emerging economies. A wide range of policies has built bridges between education and labor demands in order to promote better fitting between available workforce skills and private sector demand, social inclusion and the ensuing economic growth. Among these efforts, technical and vocational education has become a global trend in favour of disadvantaged youth and adults who lack formal qualifications or live with disabilities. In order to generate the educated and socially inclusive labour force that a modern economy demands, Brazil is among the countries that have striven to boost technical and vocational education. Data from national and international sources, including studies by the World Bank, by UNESCO and by the Inter-American Development Bank, point out to the significant gains, both by the workforce and by the private sector, that are already being reaped in Brazil with a more robust integration between the educational system and the labour market.

Let me also stress the significant contribution of the Brazil-Finland Cultural Centre – CCBF in the educational field, as the Centre commemorates this year its 15th anniversary. Brazil has only 24 such centres around the world and only three in Europe: Barcelona, Rome and Helsinki. Since October 2001, CCBF has taught Brazilian Portuguese to over 1500 students, who seek its services for a wide variety of purposes, both professional and personal, and has promoted, in Helsinki and elsewhere in Finland, a wide array of cultural activities. The CCBF is a central asset of the Brazilian Embassy in Finland, by promoting dialogue and understanding between both countries at its most essential level: that of language and culture.

The strategic importance of education for sustainable development and inclusive economic growth demands close attention to relevant knowledge and experience gathered elsewhere. Challenges in such a multidimensional field are numerous. Brazil has found in Finland a trusted and willing partner with which we are keen on promoting exchanges in such matters. Especially in these difficult times, this relationship is of the utmost relevance, as was clearly showcased by the signing, this last August, by Timo Soini and José Serra, respectively the Finnish and Brazilian Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of the “List of Priorities for the Cooperation between Brazil and Finland”. That List contains the goals both countries will pursue, in the immediate future, in their bilateral undertakings and, most telling, has included, as its first chapter, the priorities for cooperation on education. Strengthening higher, vocational and basic education

cooperation, enlarging the VET – Teachers for the Future Program and developing institutional cooperation between universities are the focus for the following years.

3 CONCLUSION

It could not be otherwise. As recent events that have captured international attention have shown, we live in times when increasing interdependence – from trade and investment to immigration and the environment – has yet to offer complete answers to persistent fragmentation, both among the international community and within national societies. Brazil and Finland are setting a clear example, in this regard: education, cooperation and dialogue are essential instruments to understand the world we live in, in all its complexity, and to offer solutions that respond to the challenge of integrating the realities of interdependence and fragmentation into a virtuous cycle for the benefit of each of our individual societies and of an international sustainable and cooperative community.

The background features a large, abstract graphic composed of several overlapping, curved shapes. On the left side, there are two curved bands: a lighter cyan one on top and a darker blue one below it. These curves sweep from the top left towards the bottom right. The right side of the image is dominated by a large, solid green area that also curves from the top right towards the bottom left, meeting the blue bands.

II PART

LATIN AMERICA AS A PARTNER IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

LATIN AMERICA AS A PARTNER IN A GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION COOPERATION

Tiina Vihma-Purovaara, Counsellor of Education, Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland

Our national systems worldwide are challenged by big trends, such as digitalisation, creative destruction of jobs and organizations, migration flows, alternative learning environments, and financial constraints, to name just a few.

Everybody is looking for sustainable policies and strategies to support good quality education that is innovation-rich and effective, and meets the lifelong and life-wide needs of individuals, as well as the needs of the society, environment and the economy.

Education and research are a precondition for progress, prosperity and welfare for both individual citizens and the society as a whole. On our own we are weak – however fine defined education and research policies and activities we have. In this changing world cooperation is crucial, especially when facing joint, tricky challenges. All of us have certainly seen how important personal contacts, networks, institutional connections and actions are in solving problems.

Higher education institutions have world wide networks, strategic partners, as well as institutional peers with whom they can validate their choices and means of cooperation. With Latin American partners we can see huge amounts of different ways of working together. These are for example student and expert mobility, joint projects, research, training and capacity building exercises, joining forces in European or global programmes, participating in Academic Summits and networks such as COIMBRA.

Student mobility from and to Latin America and Caribbean Countries has been nicely growing in the last ten years, but there is still place for improvement. In 2005 there were 271 students from Finland staying in LAC-countries for their exchange, and in 2015 the number was 312. From LAC countries the numbers were 143 and 232. The amount of Finnish young people who have chosen to study their degrees abroad is approximately two per cent of the whole age group. This is why the statistics towards LAC countries are not overwhelming. On the other hand, Finland has been pretty attractive to students from the LAC countries, as the number has also been growing smoothly: in 2010 there were 403 degree students and in 2015 already 484. (CIMO 2016.) The change in the Finnish tuition fee system may have some effects in the amount of students coming to

Finland, but we hope it will also make decision making easier for students considering studying abroad – we are an open, safe and very well-functioning society welcoming students from the LAC to Finland.

On policy level Finland has been active in the EU-CELAC – research and innovation dialogues as well as in the Academic Summit –preparations and will continue in the future as well. Our purpose is to match-make our institutions, experts, students with those from LAC countries to work jointly on national level activities but especially on European programmes – as they often bring stronger impact than the national smaller cooperation initiatives. For this purpose, the Ministry of Education and Culture has been funding project called FinCEAL as of 2013. Purpose of the FinCEAL project is the support for Finnish researchers focusing on Africa, Asia and the LAC regions. The project focuses on supporting Finnish research and innovation under the thematic areas defined in the bi-regional STI dialogues. In EU-CELAC the themes support the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation priorities, decided jointly by the Ministers of the Regions, namely ICT for societal challenges, Bio-economy, Renewable Energy, Health, Biodiversity and Climate Change.

In Finland higher education, research and innovation walk frequently hand in hand – especially in the best cases. This is why we in the Ministry are happy to see all Higher Education Institutions and Research performing Organisations, in the process and participating in the activities. Four years ago, Instituto Iberoamericano de Finlandia/ Instituto Ibero-Americano da Finlândia, non-governmental body promoting co-operation between Finnish and Ibero-American cultural and academic organizations and professionals, prepared a report on the needs and targets of Finnish higher education and research actors towards Latin America. It was clear already then that language is still a barrier for profound collaboration between the LAC region and Finland. Also more information and contacts were needed. (OKM 2012.)

Our aim, in the Ministry, has been the strengthening of cooperation and links between LAC region and Finland in higher education and research. I think much has happened in the last four years, but it is the actors who make the difference – higher education institutions and their strategies and priorities as well as visionary and tireless individuals who are always prepared to start new innovative cooperation actions. In the constantly changing world we need both – individuals and institutions – to make education, research, as well as our lives better, together.

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COOPERATION OF CIMO WITH LATIN AMERICA – WITH A FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL MOBILITY

Jaana Mutanen, Programme Manager, CIMO International Traineeships and Postgraduate Studies

1 THE TRAINEESHIP COOPERATION OF CIMO WITH LATIN AMERICA BEGAN 15 YEARS AGO

For more than two decades, CIMO Centre for International Mobility has been making Finnish students more international in response to working-life needs. Among the many tools of internationalization, practical training abroad has served its purpose very well. Working life requires diverse language skills, but also many competences fostered by international experience. During the last decade, trainees have increasingly been sent to other than English-speaking countries, and over the last years in increasing numbers also beyond Europe, for example to Latin American countries as Chile, Brazil, Argentina and Peru. These countries are in fact very attractive to Finnish students.

1.1 Importing and Exporting expertise

CIMO has already for 20 years offered to students of higher education and recent graduates traineeships in Finnish organizations abroad or in an organization with close ties to Finland, such as Finnish embassies, Finnish Cultural and Scientific Institutes and FinPro (Export, Invest and Visit Finland). Through these kind of placements Finnish employers working abroad provide high-quality traineeship opportunities for students and recent graduates all over the world.

Next year CIMO begins to offer designed traineeship placements also in foreign organizations abroad. This kind of possibility to make a traineeship abroad has also existed already for two decades, but from next year on the system of traineeships in foreign organizations will be even more targeted and expertise oriented. From the next year on traineeship placements will be available in the fields of expertise of Finland and the destination countries, for example in such fields as clean tech and environment, forestry, mining, industrial design, mechanical engineering, tourism, social work, IT and game industry, teaching and education as well as wine industry or nutrition. The focus areas of the Academy of Finland will also be taken into account when selecting the fields of expertise. Some of the traineeship placements will still be in the so-called soft industries and designed for humanists, social scientists and educationalists as it is harder for them to find paid traineeships in their own field from abroad.

The aim is to sharpen the traineeships on offer to increase the competitiveness of Finns and to expand and deepen understanding between cultures. At the same time, we also export Finnish know-how to our partner countries as well as import expertise from these countries to Finland.

1.2 International traineeships boost working life competencies

Hidden Competences is a research project carried out by CIMO and the Nordic think tank Demos Helsinki. The original report *Piilotettu osaaminen (Hidden Competences)*, available in Finnish, was written by Demos Helsinki and published in 2013.

The report *Hidden Competences* introduces such an extended understanding of international competences. While language skills, cultural knowledge and tolerance have often been understood to be at the basis of international competences, three new factors emerged through this research work. The extended understanding of international competences encompasses productivity, resilience and curiosity. (Siivonen 2013.) Up to that Finnish students learn abroad networking and learn to look at their home country with new eyes. The professional self-image of the student begins in any case to take its course.

1.3 English no longer cuts it alone

According to the survey (2014) by the Confederation of Finnish Industries, internationalization has given rise to a demand for much more diverse language skills in Finnish working life. English skills are required on all organizational levels and in all kinds of duties. But the needs do not end there. There is now an increasing demand for personal command of other languages, too. The survey shows that almost a third of the companies involved have use for the Russian language. But the growing role of Asia and South America in the global economy will also encourage the need for speakers of Chinese, Spanish and Portuguese. (EK 2014.) CIMO has anticipated these needs and demands by focusing on certain countries in its trainee programs, for example the Latin American countries.

When we talk about language skills other than English, it is relevant to note that many students applying for a training placement have already in past years had different kind of mobility periods for example in Spain. During these exchanges, they have learnt the language or improved the language skills of their host country. Some students have also taken international language certificates.

An increasing share of higher education students and recent graduates who have applied to take part in international traineeship programs through CIMO now speak for example Spanish or even Portuguese. Actually the interest of the young Finns towards Spanish has raised significantly in the past decade. Not only at the university level, but also in high schools. Professor Andrew Chestermann from the University of Helsinki said already some years ago that the language skills of the Finnish students of humanities are astonishing versatile. In the long run this will benefit a lot Finland.

On the other hand, and talking about the English skills of the Finnish students, the skills are good or in many cases very good. This offers to the students of English together with good pedagogical skills a possibility to teach English abroad, for example in such countries where there is a political wish to improve the English skills of the students as in Brazil or in Chile.

2 TALKING ABOUT BRAZIL, CHILE AND SOME OTHER DESTINATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

Latin America as destination is very popular among Finnish students as many Finnish students speak Spanish and part of them also Portuguese. Talking about Brazil, the newest of the traineeship destinations of CIMO, in the year 2014 in CIMO's traineeship programs there were 20 students going to a traineeship period to Brazil but in the year 2015 already 34 students. When the Brazil-program of CIMO begun in the year 2014 it was among the applicants the second most popular destination after China. This specific year there were more or less 180 applicants to Brazil in different traineeship programs of CIMO (that is Finnish organizations abroad, international organizations, local organizations in the country of destination). Of Latin American traineeship programs of CIMO the oldest one is Chile. CIMO also sends Finnish trainees to Argentina and Peru.



PICTURE 11. Jaana Mutanen from CIMO in Peru (Ari-Pekka Sihvonen)

In the year 2015 CIMO sent altogether more or less 300 Finnish trainees abroad and them all around the world. Usually from 50 to 60 of them do yearly the traineeship in one of the Latin American countries. (CIMO 2016.)

2.1 Brazil

In the first application round, half of those selected as trainees to Brazil managed Portuguese. The Director of the Brazilian cooperation organization of CIMO, the

Brazilian Experience Rafaela Rolim told about the Finnish trainees and about the Brazilian business culture:

"I am very impressed about the foreign language abilities of the Finnish students and about their interest to work for better world and better future of the mankind. Most of the Finnish students have already been abroad, some of them various times, different from American students who arrive here.

Brazilians are very good in networking. In Brazil the personal contacts matters. Some foreigners say, we do man-to-man business and in other countries business is done with firms. In Brazil you learn to be flexible. Brazilians are very creative, and it may be because of our scarce resources. And we have also here astonishing entrepreneurs, rich of ideas. And the Brazilian entrepreneurs do not fear to implement their ideas."

2.2 Chile

The long-term Chilean cooperation partner of CIMO, Professor Lillian Gonzales from the Universidad de la Frontera stated already in the year 2004 that Finnish trainees are important to Chile. And now we are talking about teaching English to Chileans, about the model of equality between the genres and about the efficacy.

Talking about Finland in Chile there were and is interest towards Finnish education, research, innovation and towards student and other academic exchanges. The Finnish trainees are seen as ambassadors of their country and they spread the know-how of Finland in Chile. Professor Gonzales said that the local employers were astonished about the quality of Finnish trainees: their professionalism, their independent character, their multilingualism and that many of the Finnish students speak Spanish well or even very well.



PICTURE 12. Travelling over the Andi mountains from Argentina to Chile (Jaana Mutanen)

3 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' EXCHANGE SCHEME

Government officials' exchange schemes facilitate the civil servants' international mobility and professional development. The scheme is funded by the Ministry of Finance. Government officials' exchange scheme opens up international opportunities to civil servants to all over world as for example to Latin America. There is available financial support to individual civil servants on short-term secondments in their own administrative field abroad.

4 OTHER CIMO FUNDED COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN FINLAND AND THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

4.1 Scholarship opportunities for Latin-American students to Finland

Finnish HEIs provide over 450 English-taught degree programmes at Bachelor, Master and PhD levels. Information is available in the Study in Finland-database. The CIMO Fellowships programme is open to doctoral level students. The student contacts a FI university and the FI hosting department applies to CIMO for the grant. CIMO has also bilateral cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico in the field of postgraduate studies for Mexicans in Finland and for Finns in Mexico.

4.2 Science without Borders

Finland is participating in Science without Borders -program and having negotiations on the bilateral cooperation with Brazil. Science without Borders is a large-scale nationwide scholarship program primarily funded by the Brazilian federal government. The program seeks to strengthen and expand the initiatives of science and technology, innovation and competitiveness through international mobility of students and researchers. The program is a joint effort of the Ministry of Education (MEC) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT) through their respective funding agencies - CAPES and CNPq.

The programme offers various types of scholarships for Brazilian students: Undergraduate Study Abroad, PhD Internships Abroad, Full-Time PhD, and Postdoc. The Science without Borders program enables Brazilian undergraduate students (Bachelor's and Master's) to spend an exchange period at a Finnish university or university of applied sciences (UAS). The period of the scholarship is up to 12 months. This is a one-year non-degree program, as students will return to complete their degrees in Brazil.

4.3 Inter-institutional cooperation

Finnish and Latin-American HEIs can engage in CIMO funded partnerships within the following schemes:

- HEI ICI programme
 - the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degrees
 - the Erasmus+ capacity building actions
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- the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility
- The HEI ICI (HEI Institutional Cooperation Instrument) programme supports academic partnerships between Finnish HEIs and HEIs in developing countries and is funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In the previous HEI ICI programme (2013-2015), Latin-American institutions were active in three projects: in Peru within teacher education and food science, and in Venezuela within forestry. The HEI ICI projects aim to improve the quality and relevance of higher education by modernizing curricula, teaching methods and materials, as well as enhancing management capacities.

Within institutional bilateral agreements, the EU programme Erasmus+ offers scholarships for short-term exchanges of 3-12 months, on all levels.

Degree scholarships are available for students applying to the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree programmes running at Finnish HEIs.

The Erasmus+ capacity building action supports multi-lateral partnerships, which can involve funding for project-related mobility on all levels. In 2015, Finnish HEIs were involved in three selected projects with Latin-America (Aalto University and Metropolia University of Applied Science in 2 projects).

5 SEMINARS ON COOPERATION AND EXCHANGES WITH LATIN AMERICA

In the year 2011 CIMO, Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and University of Tampere organized a two-day seminar focusing on cooperation between Finland and Latin American countries and in the year 2006 CIMO and the University of Helsinki, Iberoamerican Center (Latin American Studies) and the Master's Degree Programme on International Encounters at the University of Helsinki an info evening or you can call is as a small seminar too.



PICTURE 13. Latin American seminar hosted by Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, Tampere University and CIMO in 2011 (Helli Kitinoja)

The first seminar focused on cooperation between Finland and Latin American countries and on links between the worlds of education and work and gathered representatives of educational and working-life organisations to Seinäjoki. The seminar was a part of the annual seminars of TraiNet, the Finnish Network of International Training Mobility existing since the year 2008. TraiNet is managed by CIMO. The Info evening on Latin America focused on giving information about possibilities to study or make a traineeship period in Latin America or in Spain. In both seminars Professor Martti Pärssinen from the Department of Latin American Studies of the University of Helsinki and the embassies of Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Peru and Spain were present.

During the years Finland, CIMO together with Finnish higher education institutions have also participated in various international student fairs in Latin America in Brazil and in Chile.

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POTENTIALS IN THE FIELD OF GLOBAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND EXPORT OF EXPERTISE WITH LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Helli Kitinoja, Director of the Development project of Global Education Services, Seinäjoki UAS

1 INTRODUCTION

In the International Strategy 2015 (SeAMK 2008) and in the main strategy (SeAMK 2016) of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences (Seinäjoki UAS) export of education and expertise has been one of the main aims. Purpose is that in a year 2020 Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has continuously increasing export of expertise and education activities in every educational field and in each focus areas. The mentioned focus areas are sustainable food solutions and food chain; health, wellbeing and cultural services; energy-efficient and intelligent systems; and new business concepts and entrepreneurship. Seinäjoki UAS is also a member of the Finpro Education Export Finland Network (EEF).

In the Strategy for Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland in 2009-2015 (OPM 2009) expertise in higher education was seen nationally significant export product. Export of expertise and competence was one of the five main aims in the strategy. In 2010 the Finnish Government published the Strategy for the Export of Expertise (OPM 2010) and three years later the Ministry of Education and Culture published an Action Plan to increase the export of education and expertise (OKM 2013).

The National Government Programme (VN 2015) has commercial aims also in the fields of research, education and expertise. The latest national policy paper "Koulutusviennin Tiekartta" from the Ministry of Education and Culture offers Action Plan for the years 2016-2019 aiming to increase the export of expertise in education (OKM 2016).

In 2014-2015 Seinäjoki UAS coordinated a project "Etelä-Pohjanmaan ruokaketjun Euroopan yhteydet" / "The connections of the food chain from South Ostrobothnia to Europe". One of the results of this project was a model for organizing export of education and expertise activities in Seinäjoki Region. The Networking model was seen to be the best one based on a survey, which was done for the stakeholders in the South Ostrobothnia region. The project was financed by the European Regional Development Fund (EAKR). (Korsbäck 2015; Korsbäck & Peltola 2016.)

2 LATIN AMERICA AS A PARTNER IN THE EXPORT OF EXPERTISE

Among the Finnish Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences Latin America has been seen one of the important market areas, especially Argentina and Brazil. Especially the Finnish primary school and vocational school teacher educations are already well-known products in Latin America.

2.1 Strategic Management

Strategic decisions and management in the organization are core elements in aiming to the positive results in the field of export of expertise and global education services. Commitment, clear aims as well as human and financial resources are needed in the organization. (El Cheikh 2015, Kitinoja, Perttunen, Rääkkönen & Virtanen 2016.)

Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has done strategical decisions when the co-operation with Argentina and later with other Latin American and Ibero American countries was started almost twenty years ago. Seinäjoki UAS was one of the first Finnish higher education institutions having partner universities, student and staff mobility and projects in Latin America. Latin American co-operation offered also a positive image and marketing-value for Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and it was a message for the applicants, international students, partner universities abroad and other stakeholders telling about innovative and active higher education institution. Commitment was needed among the decision makers and staff members. Also the results were seen in the numbers of projects and project financing, mobility, lectures, seminars and conferences as well as in the partnerships with the industry and other stakeholders.

2.2 Networks and Partnerships

Multidimensional and strong regional, national and international networks and partnerships between higher education institutions, industry and public administration are needed to achieve successful export of education and expertise. Business networks and personal contacts play an important role when exporting educational services. (OPM 2010, El Cheikh 2015, OKM 2016.)

Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has nine partner universities in Latin American countries and many of them in other Ibero American countries. Seinäjoki UAS has also many other partnerships besides universities in Latin America. These contacts and strategic partnerships should be able to utilize in the development of global education

services. Good cooperation with the Embassies and other organizations and networks are also valuable. In the Latin American Network there is a need for organizations with a special expertise like South Ostrobothnian Chamber of Commerce, Association of Entrepreneurs, Regional Council, Health Care District, Vocational School, Seinäjoki University Consortium and City of Seinäjoki. Also networking with other higher education institutions in Finland is important. Working together and sharing knowledge in the network creates also new service innovations and supports export activities. Cultural projects, networks and joint events support also business activities and vice versa.

2.3 Service design and co-creation based on the customer needs

Customers, their needs and expectations are most important in service design and product development. Co-creation approach is a working method today in a service design process. (El Cheikh 2015, Keränen 2015.) Quality-labels, references and accreditation was seen important in product development and marketing based on the survey, which was done the Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (Kitinoja et. al. 2016).

Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has described its main product groups for the export of expertise: degree programmes with tuition fees and tailor-made degree programmes, short and intensive programmes, study visits, training for trainers, tailor-made services integrated to the export activities of the companies, evaluation and development services.



PICTURE 14. Tapio Hellman from the School of Technology in the Adult Education Center, City of Zarate in 2015 (Helli Kitinoja)

The first experience from the export of expertise Seinäjoki UAS got from Argentina in 2015. City of Zarate opened a new Adult Education Center and one of the staff members of the School of Technology was having lectures there as a first visiting expert. The aim is to continue cooperation with the City of Zarate. There are also opportunities for the export of education and expertise for instance in the fields of food chain and business with the Baltic States and Russia. Based on the former cooperation Seinäjoki UAS has important information about the market areas and customer needs.

2.4 Higher education – working life cooperation

Not only higher education institutions but also companies can get extra benefits from the cooperation in the field of export of services and products. Internationalization and international business of the companies can increase by integrating global education services to the products of the companies and also higher education institutions can find new customers in global education market through the cooperation with the industry.

Seinäjoki University of Applied Science has had cooperation with the companies and working life in each of its Latin American projects. Both education and business have got extra value from the cooperation. In the field of food and agriculture e.g. there are many new opportunities for joint export activities and new fields should be investigated, too.

3 CONCLUSIONS

In the field of export of education and expertise with Latin America there is a need for cooperation among the Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences and other stakeholders, like companies and public organizations. Also international strategic partnerships and networks are ready to be utilized. Through cooperation Finland can offer co-created integrated services, tailor-made concepts, high-level education and continuity to the international markets of education and expertise. Exchange of knowledge and sharing the best practices also save resources and offer added value for everyone.

Export of education and expertise is a new level in the internationalization of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and higher education institutions generally and it has to be institutionalized as also other international activities earlier. Negotiations and meetings with Latin American partner universities offer good opportunities for market surveys, co-creation of joint products or marketing situations. Academic staff members, supporting staff members and administration need preparation and training for achieving this new level in the internationalization of the Universities of Applied Sciences.

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PROCESS AND EXPERIENCES OF STUDENT MOBILITY IN LATIN AMERICA

Eemeli Jokelainen, Alumni (BBA) of Seinäjoki UAS

Julio Vallejo Medina, Ibero American Coordinator, Seinäjoki UAS

1 INTRODUCTION

This article has two parts. The first one is a description of the evolution of the activities in the University of Buenos Aires and the second one is a fresh description from the point of view of the student

The activities of the University of Applied Sciences Seinäjoki at the School of Business began methodically in 1998 with the organizations of short courses focused to business and Latin American business culture. Soon these course activities expanded to larger projects for regular students of our University and also open to entrepreneurs of the region of South Ostrobothnia. These courses include study trips to target countries in Latin America mainly Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Allowing direct contact with Latin American universities, enterprises and other institutions.

Later the activities directed to Latin America were extended by organization of international seminars, courses, exchange of professors and students. In this article we will refer especially to the exchange of students. The first student exchanges with universities of Latin American countries began in year 2000. The first University that received the first students from our university was the Universidad Nacional del Sur in Argentina. Later, the Catholic University of Buenos Aires and the National University of Buenos Aires in Argentina became popular destinations. In recent years, the exchange with Mexican and Brazilian universities has increased.

Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, Business School has Cooperation with several Latin-American Universities. At the moment the most active universities, from the point of view of exchange students are: In Argentina: Buenos Aires University, Buenos Aires Catholic University, National University of Santiago del Estero; In Brazil: University of Pelotas and Joinville University; in Chile; Catholic University of Santiago; in Mexico Cety's University; in Uruguay, Universidad de la Republica.

2 KNOWLEDGE OF LATIN AMERICAN LANGUAGES AND LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE

From the beginning the University of Applied Sciences took in consideration the positive meaning of previous knowledge of Latin America. Two aspects were keys to foster exchange.

From the point of view of language Latin America offers good possibilities for exchange students. In Latin America main languages are Spanish and Portuguese. The University of Applied Sciences of Seinäjoki offers courses in Spanish. Brazilian universities offer on the other hand courses in English. However, due to importance of Spanish as mother tongue Spanish-speaking universities offer few courses in English. Every year we recruit students who have studied Spanish in high school, this previous knowledge of Spanish, facilitates the exchange. On the other hand, the fact that Spanish is one of the largest native languages of the world effects the lack of interest towards English as the language of instruction.

It is wrong to consider Latin American culture to be homogenous. We can affirm that because to the composition of the population, Latin America countries have cultural differences between others.

In countries where immigration from Europe plays a major role, there are cultural aspects similar with European cultural environment which allows faster adaptation. For example, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile are good examples of countries with large percentage of immigration, not only European but also from other regions of the world. Brazil also may be included in this group, especially in the southern region. In contrast, countries where the indigenous population is in majority there exists larger cultural distance, such as, for example, Bolivia and Peru. It is important to mention the African culture having a strong influence in the countries of the Caribbean and Brazil.

Observing at the diagram of Inghelhart, we can define the cultural distances between Latin American countries and Finland. The nearest countries are culturally Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Comparing the Latin American culture with the culture of the countries of origin of international students, it is possible to make conclusions from the differences between Latin America and the countries of these students.

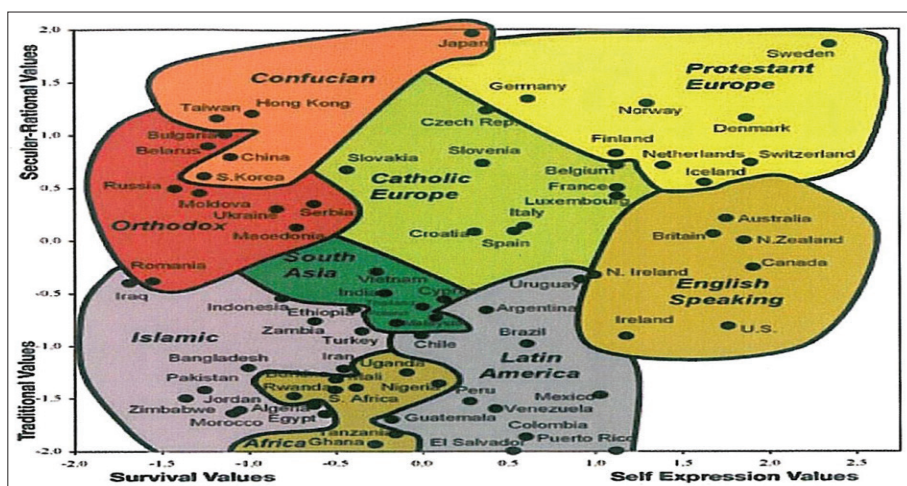


FIGURE 1. Cultural distances (Inglehart 2000).

3 STUDENT MOBILITY WITH LATIN AMERICA

The student mobility with Latin American universities is quite regular and takes place both directions. Brazil's program Science without borders increased student exchange quite a lot.

To increase and encourage the mobility with Latin America, we used different solutions. In order to respond to the language barrier, we created the module Latin American studies in collaboration with the CETYS University in Mexico. This program allows to get ten credits at our University and twenty credits in CETYS. Studies in the Mexican university are in English, allowing the participation of exchange students with lower level of Spanish language, at the same time it gives us the opportunity to acquire better knowledge of the language and culture of the place of exchange.

Another example of international teamwork was realized with Buenos Aires university, in collaboration with Professor Jorge Marchini a pilot educational experience has been set. Eemeli Jokelainen from Seinäjoki UAS and Sonia Wehrent from UBA participated in this pilot experiment. This pilot project is based on the collaborative model proposed in the Latin American project.

3.1 Setting up common culture aspects, understanding and approving cultural differences

The courses focused on business culture and culture in Latin America provide tools and give the exchange students the possibility of knowing in advance the cultural differences and common aspects during the study exchange period.

As mentioned earlier students get to know during their studies the commonalities between Finnish culture and the culture of Latin American countries. They use e.g. various theories created by famous scientists and authors such as, for example, Hofstede, G. to realize differences between these cultures.

Shortly, we can say that to support the student mobility to Latin America the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences offers a holistic environment that includes education of students in the area of business, languages and culture that facilitates the decision to go to Latin America for their mobility period.

4 STUDENT MOBILITY SEMESTER IN BUENOS AIRES DESCRIBED BY THE ALUMNI

My mobility period in Buenos Aires university gave me many good experiences. I learned a lot about culture in Argentina and Buenos Aires. Argentina is a huge country with an area of 280,000 square kilometers. The total population is 45 million, so the population density is more or less like in Finland. The South has glaciers and penguins. North has rainforest and huge variations of animals. The whole Argentina has amazing landscapes.

I did my exchange student semester in the University of Buenos Aires, in the Faculty of Economy. It was excellent time to learn about a different way how to handle things in business life. Students were diligent and all the classes were fully attended. I was lucky that professor Jorge Marchini tutored me to get into University of Buenos Aires. I learned also Spanish but that was not the only important thing. An even more important experience was to learn to how people behaved in the different business culture and what is the expectation about Finnish business culture.



PICTURE 15. Eemeli Jokelainen student from Seinäjoki UAS, Professor Jorge Marchini and Sonia Wehrent student from UBA. Buenos Aires 2008. (Eemeli Jokelainen)

I had my own student partner Sonia Wehrent in UBA. She helped me to learn many things from business in Argentina. Also I did two levels in Spanish language at UBA. In economic studies I also met people from different countries of Latin America and also from Finland and from many other places. I really liked that study environment and it gave to me so much perspective from other places in the world.

People in Argentina are very friendly. They take you to visit different places around Buenos Aires and even around the Argentina. They know how to enjoy their life and they are very passionate about football which is their religion. I also got my own team there, Racing Avellaneda. The most popular teams are Boca Juniors and River Plate.

In my eyes family is very important in Argentina. Similar way like in Italy. They meet every Sunday with the whole family enjoying the time together as a family and sharing the news of that week.

People in Southern Ostrobothnia know tango because of the tango festival in Seinäjoki. Argentina has the strongest tango culture in the world. Their tango culture is stiffer than our and it is part of the whole culture and part of Buenos Aires. Both dancing and singing are important in Argentinian tango. The shows are very technical and professional tango artists are very much appreciated in Argentina.

Argentina is famous from the meat and wine. To eat great asados (barbeque) around the city with excellent wine is a lovely combination. Sometimes there is also live tango musician in the restaurant and that is the cream on the cake. You will love it!

Buenos Aires is more than just capital of Argentina. I have heard many times that people compare Buenos Aires with Barcelona. It is full of different nations from Latin America but also around the world. Nightlife in boliche (nightclub) is something you cannot have here in Finland or even in Europe. These all are good reasons go to Argentina. Vamos Argentina!

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The background features three broad, curved bands of color. The top band is a light cyan, the middle band is a dark blue, and the bottom band is a vibrant green. The bands curve from the top left towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

III PART

LATIN AMERICA AS A BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

THE LONG COOPERATION BETWEEN SOUTH OSTROBOTHNIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Tommi Kohtanen, Director, South Ostrobothnia Chamber of Commerce

1 INTRODUCTION

Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and South Ostrobothnia Chamber of Commerce have been co-operating for years. Supporting and encouraging companies to seek new businesses and to develop current business relations have been one of the focus points for co-operation for at least last 10 years or longer.

South Ostrobothnia Chamber of commerce is one of the regional chambers in Finland and operating in the region of South Ostrobothnia, which regional centre is the city of Seinäjoki. The region is rich with small and medium size companies. Due to the fact that most of the companies are small, their level of internationalisation is relatively low and their efforts to internationalise can often be supported by national and regional business support organisations like the chamber of commerce and the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences.

2 LATIN AMERICA AS A POTENTIAL MARKET AREA

Latin America is a good potential market for Finnish and South Ostrobothnia companies. Although the area is distant from Finland and presents many challenges like greater transportation costs compared to closer markets, different time zone, language and cultural differences, it can be seen more as a chance than threat. The companies in the South Ostrobothnia are developing and manufacturing such technologies which can, e.g. help Latin American companies to increase their competitiveness and to develop products which can be then imported e.g. into EU.

Most of the companies are following world market closely and they see different economy trends in different parts of the world. When approximately 10 years ago many people were discussing about BRIC-countries meaning Brazil, Russia, India and China, and their growth and huge market potential, we now see the situation where world

economic trends have either completely stopped or at least slowed down the growth in these countries. When Brazil used to be one of these BRIC-countries and often mentioned the pace-maker in South America, we now see some market challenges to rise which are actually affecting the overall interest towards Latin American markets. This makes it more difficult to attract new companies to become interested in these markets, which have, however, still potential.

3 SUPPORT FOR THE COMPANIES IN THE BUSINESS WITH LATIN AMERICA

Over the years Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and South Ostrobothnia Chamber of Commerce have arranged a trade mission to Argentina and Chile, arranged annual Latin America Business Seminar and several other events and meetings to promote new business for South Ostrobothnia and Latin American companies.

Annual business seminar about Latin America has long traditions in Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. South Ostrobothnia Chamber of Commerce has been a partner organiser for this event also for many years. The program has been planned together carefully and the Chamber of Commerce has invited its member companies to participate the seminar. Chamber of Commerce has also often provided one of the speakers to the seminar to tell about international business potential and practical experiences doing business in Latin America.

One of the highlight of the co-operation was a trade mission to Argentina and Chile in 2011. The idea for this came directly from companies who were interested in investigating markets further but wanted to have external support in doing so. The project started already in 2010 when a group of companies were in contact with the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and discussed about their needs. It was then agreed that preliminary study will be made to define the most potential market countries for these companies. Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences organized a research by using their own and Finpro experts and the promising results were presented to companies. After reviewing the outcome, most of the companies decided to continue the project and the Chamber of Commerce came along to coordinate the actual trade mission program and arrangements. Finally, in late 2011 four company representatives together with Mr. Julio Vallejo from Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and Mr. Tomi Kohtanen from the Chamber of Commerce visited Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile to meet and network with local companies and business influencers to look for cooperation possibilities between countries and their companies.

Later the Chamber of Commerce participated the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences project to develop a Center for Latin America Business. This project was made thoroughly by interviewing companies to find out their most important needs and to develop services to meet with these needs. One of the important aspects for this project was also to develop suitable business models for Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences to work with the companies even together with other experts and consultants.

The co-operation has been continuing and is still continuing to keep the Latin American business potential in company decision makers' minds.



PICTURE 16. Delegation of South Ostrobothnia Chamber of Commerce visiting Valparaiso, Chile in 2009. (Julio Vallejo Medina)

SEINÄJOKI AND LATIN AMERICA: A LINK WITH RESULTS

Jorge Marchini, Lead Professor of Economy, University of Buenos Aires

1 INTRODUCTION

It is present for higher education institutions the permanent need to rethink their strategies, activities and result. A good example of the challenge has been the need for universities to take on the trend of internationalization of education in parallel to the growing interrelationships among countries (Singh 2002).

As often happens in life, it is significant that the beginning of a transcendent bond emerged from a circumstantial initiative: the visit of a delegation from Seinäjoki to Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1999.

An initial interview was hold then by Manager of Education Ari Virkamäki with the University of Buenos Aires. Though the departing point was the of each other's knowledge, a particular curiosity was initially present: Buenos Aires and Seinäjoki share a strong identification with a popular art expression: the tango (Marchini 2007). The common cultural affinity undoubtedly helped to establish a dialogue basis, but as a pleasant conversation went on, it was also possible to recognize since the beginning differences, but, even more noticeably, common purposes and challenges.

The discovery of shared purposes was not enough. For the continuity of a subsequent fluid communication was essential the tireless impulse of Ibero American Coordinator Julio Vallejo Medina of the University of Applied Sciences of Seinäjoki. His tenacious work enhanced mutual trust and allowed to discover specifically concrete and viable potential alternatives for academic collaboration and complementation.

It was recognized from the beginning the need to institutionalize links, not only for the development of formal relations, if not, and overall, to make them instrumental for a greater intra-regional framework. The recognition of not yet exploited potentialities. for commercial, economic and cultural links started to be evident.

The first strong step was taken through the signature of an agreement for academic collaboration with the Universidad Nacional del Sur, in the southern city of Bahia Blanca, alongside the visit of an important delegation of the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. The first public seminar was hold on conditions and opportunities

for the development of bilateral relations. The interest aroused by the event led a few months later in a collaborative relationship on trade and investment issued between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Seinäjoki and the Stock Exchange Market of Bahia Blanca, opened with a formal visit to Argentina of its management Pertti Kinnunen, under the auspices of the European Union.

From a cautious beginning, it was possible to the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences to expand its academic network in Latin America, evolving to be thanks to continuity and consistency, the Finnish university with major links with the region. Agreements were signed with: Universidad Católica Argentina (www.uca.edu.ar), Universidad de Santiago del Estero (www.unse.edu.ar), Federico Santa María Technical University (<http://www.usm.cl/>), Joinville University, Universidade da Região de Joinville Pontificia Universidade Católica do Paraná, CETYS University, being of particular importance the formal understandings reached with the leading major national and prestigious universities: Universidad de Buenos Aires (2008), Argentina (www.uba.ar), and Universidad de la República de Uruguay (2015) (www.universidad.edu.uy).

2 FROM FORMALITY TO REALITY

An annual seminar started to be held since 2001 in the University of Applied Sciences of Seinäjoki, "Doing Business with Latin America", with and an unbroken continuity since then. It should be noted the significance of the propositional established teaching methodology and practice since its inception to link students with potential interest of companies in the region to develop concrete business with Latin American countries through conducted guided research. As a corollary of each annual course public events have been organized. with the participation of diplomatic representatives of Latin American countries for the dialogue and involvement of the business community, representatives and public officials of Seinäjoki.

Added as complementary contributions should be also mentioned the enormous significance of the exchange of students and professors between universities that has helped to generate a very broad network of contacts adding research alternatives to the mutual recognition and confidence to investigate realistically conditions, potential and limits for cooperation and complementarity initiatives.

Firm steps and positive results enabled the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences to lead the organization of joint proposal of European and Latin American universities to develop distance learning. Alternatives and technologies The project was selected and supported by the European Union through the ALFA program, and made possible very timely intra-continental exchanges knowledge and experiences

3 FROM THE ACADEMY TO REGIONAL NEEDS

The process has been a demonstration of the potentialities of a positive combination of academic aims with the crescent needs of public and private sectors to search for new opportunities to enhance trade and economic ties. Systematic research, plus the consolidation and improvement of activities and the ample network develop, led naturally the interest of South Ostrobothnia's companies to investigate specific opportunities to approach Latin America.

Individual initial approaches with positive results led in 2010 to the joint organization by the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences with the Chamber of Commerce of Southern Ostrobothnia (www.southostro.chamber.fi) to the first exploratory trade mission to South America. The project, supported by FINPRO and coordinated with outstanding commitment and proficiency by the chamber's official Mr. Tomi Kohtanen, was aimed towards Argentina and Chile. Regional firms specialized in forestry related equipment and technology, wooden houses, and synthetic textiles for sports fields participated. Results were very positive, as focused concrete links were opened and even immediate sales attained. So positive results would not have been possible without the established long term strategy.

4 STRIVE FOR NEW GOALS AND RESULTS

It is possible to indicate a first general conclusion: against all previous prejudices and fears, the experience has shown that previously unknown potentialities are present. Anyway, the accomplished results should be referred only as initial positive demonstrations.

The process has been long and fruitful, but it is not enough just to satisfied for what has been achieved so far. New goals and targets must be raised, these must be defined knowing the gained assets and advantages of what has been done, but also recognizing that the world is going through a period of enormous changes and restructuring that must be faced in a systematic, creative and proactive way.

Tentatively, some areas may be indicated that could provide big opportunities in the future, among others:

1. Educational services. The work already done by the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences to consolidate the enormous prestige of the Finnish educational system must be highlighted (Schwartzman 2002).
 2. Equipment and technology for forestry and wood processing industries, particularly taking into consideration the actual big expansion of these sectors in South America (Gwynne & Cristobal 2014).
-

3. Equipment and technology for agricultural production and food industries as Latin America needs urgently to improve productivity and quality (Uauy & Monteiro 2004).
4. Products and services related to information systems, industrial design, metalworking, house building, textiles and high quality clothing, applied electronics (Cimoli, Ferraz & Primi 2005).
5. Cultural industries, in particular settling deals and ventures directly or indirectly linked to tango internationalization, but also other art expressions.

Much has been done, but much more can and must be attained. The only clue is to keep working. It is present for higher education institutions the permanent need to rethink their strategies, activities and result. A good example of the challenge has been the need for universities to take on the trend of internationalization of education in parallel to the growing interrelationships among countries.

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EXPERIENCES AS AN ENTREPRENEUR ABOUT LATIN AMERICAN COOPERATION WITH SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Esko Rintamäki, Managing Director, Finnlamelli Ltd.

Ville-Pekka Mäkeläinen, Principal Lecturer, Seinäjoki UAS

1 COMPANY PROFILE

Finnlamelli Ltd. is a manufacturer of high quality laminated log houses. The product assortment of Finnlamelli consists of following type of houses: town houses, leisure time houses, saunas and public buildings like restaurants, schools and kindergartens. In addition to domestic markets, Finnlamelli Ltd. operates also in the international markets. In addition to our own models, we manufacture houses in line with our customers' plans. Especially in houses provided to international customers, houses will be adjusted in line with the requirements of the local architecture, customers' wishes and also to the local climate. Exports account about 40% of our turnover.

Finnlamelli Ltd. has a good expertise and experience to implement projects in a variety of production equipment ensure the discerning first-class product for the customer. High quality of our products is ensured by our quality control system, external quality controlling is taken care of by VTT. Our products are certified and CE-marked. For exports Finnlamelli products are also certified by foreign inspection bodies.

Finnlamelli Ltd. focuses on manufacturing and marketing of glulam beam products. In addition to log houses Finnlamelli product assortment also includes Timberkoti-houses which are based on pillar-beam structures. Glued wood structures have been used widely in the structures of these houses. Joints are made with CNC-machining tools. In Timberkoti-houses large areas of glass can be connected with wood or stone structures.

2 PARTNERSHIP IN BUSINESS

Finnlamelli Ltd. has collaborated with Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences for many years. Co-operation has taken place in many forms: theses and study-

related internships, research activities and project cooperation in many forms. For Finnlamelli Ltd. development targets have been mostly in following areas: planning systems, the technical characteristics of the product, their testing and marketing.

In project co-operation we have received support in internationalization and for the analysis of new markets. One important form of cooperation has also been the training, which has been implemented in various subject areas.

Finnlamelli Ltd. has also presented Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences wishes related to curriculum content development and training offerings. Based on the actual cooperation it can be stated that co-operation has brought benefits to both parties.

It has been very easy to co-operate with Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has also actively taken up the development topics raised by Finnlamelli Ltd. and offered their resources and expertise to resolve these problems.

3 LATIN AMERICA AS A NEW MARKET AREA

For Finnlamelli Ltd. Latin America is a new market area, which offers the opportunity to expand the marketing area geographically and this specific market can also balance the amount of production throughout the whole year. Traditionally, the log house deliveries have taken place in export countries at the same time as the season in Finland.

Latin America has a tradition of wood construction and wood is a well-known building material. A product manufactured by using new technique and being made of high quality material, is expected to have a high demand also in those markets. For Finnlamelli Ltd. the most important markets in Latin America have been Chile and Argentina. Brazil is also an interesting market area.

Latin America's economy is developing. This creates opportunities for increasing trade. There are ongoing negotiations between EU and Latin American countries to remove trade barriers. It is important to remove the duties which would undermine our competitiveness as compared to local actors. From our point of view, the meetings and negotiations discussed above are very important.

For our part, we still have much to learn from the Latin American trading. Creating a customer relationship requires a knowledge of local culture and business practices. We can meet customer needs in product quality and in the adjustment to local conditions. The most important thing is to find good partners with whom the sales network can be

built. In this work, contacts acquired through Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. Appointments through Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences contacts have proven to be very valuable.



PICTURE 17. Managing Director Esko Rintamäki having a presentation in Argentina (Julio Vallejo Medina)

The background features a large, abstract graphic composed of several overlapping, curved shapes. On the left side, there are two curved bands: a lighter cyan one on top and a darker blue one below it. These curves sweep from the left edge towards the right. The bottom right portion of the image is a solid, vibrant green, which appears to be a large, curved shape that meets the other elements. The overall composition is dynamic and modern.

IV PART

LATIN AMERICAN COOPERATION
CREATES NEW POTENTIAL FOR
BUSINESS

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES` COOPERATION WITH LATIN AMERICA DURING 1997-2016

Ari Virkamäki, Manager of Education

Julio Vallejo Medina, Ibero American Coordinator

Seinäjoki UAS

1 BACKGROUND

The Business School of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences started Latin America-oriented specific courses of business and culture in 1997. Programs included Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American business culture. After that, during the years 1998, 1999, 2000 Seinäjoki Business School organized Latin American Business and culture courses which included field trips to Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. (Archives 2016.)

Delegation members were business students, teachers, authorities of the City of Seinäjoki and representatives of Seinäjoki Tango Festival. This concept which involved representatives of different sectors of the community, business and culture, gave more strength to future projects. The courses financed by Vaasa provincial government provided an important starting point for cooperation and researching between Latin American universities and South Ostrobothnia region's business. From the beginning the Chamber of Commerce of South Ostrobothnia participated in the projects.



PICTURE 18. Prof. Jorge Marchini, Ari Virkamäki and Julio Vallejo Medina (Jaana Mutanen)

The Business School of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences in collaboration with the University of Buenos Aires started officially in year 2002 with a Business in Latin America course. During courses the students have conducted business surveys for companies in the region of South Ostrobothnia. In the framework of the course open seminars were arranged for local companies. Key speakers were Ambassadors of Latin American countries and commercial attaches in Finland, as well as other business experts from Latin America. Professor Jorge Marchini was key person in the development of this education.

2 STUDENT AND TEACHER MOBILITY

Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has active cooperation with many universities in Latin American countries. This cooperation includes as a substantial part student and teacher exchange especially with Argentinean universities. Some years ago student mobility from Brazil increased because of the program Science without Borders. This mobility opened doors for engineering students in Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. The total number of incoming students from Brazil to Finland averaged around 70. It was positive for internalization for our region that 10 percent of incoming Brazilian students in Finland came to study at Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. (Archives 2016.)

3 PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Over the years Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has implemented many projects concerning business and culture. One of the most important projects "South America as a business potential foresight" was implemented in 1999. The project was financed by the European Social Funding. The project produced a book "Export Guide to Argentina and to Brazil. (Vallejo Medina, Mäkeläinen, Riihimäki & Vainionkulma 2000.) Since 2000 Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has been a coordinator for various projects, for example, in 2004 Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences participated as a partner in the ALFA FADO project. This project has had 10 partners in total, five from Latin America and five from Europe. The theme of the project was the construction of the E-Learning Strategy in both continents.



PICTURE 19. Alfa FADO project meeting in Brazil at the University of Pelotas in 2005 (Helli Kitinoja)

In 2010 an important project was carried out, "Export to Latin American markets - opportunities and challenges". As a result of the project four companies from South Ostrobothnia visited Argentina and Chile searching for business partners. Some companies started to conduct business in Latin America after this project.

Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has been developing and organizing many projects and events in collaboration with the City of Seinäjoki and Seinäjoki Tango Festival (Vallejo Medina & Virkamäki 2014). The most important and challenging was Cumbre Mundial del Tango in 2011. This Tango Summit was the first held outside of the Ibero-American countries. Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has been playing a central role in the internationalization of Finnish tango. There were more than thirty cities from all around the world participating in the Seinäjoki Summit. Delegations came from countries such as Japan, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia, Vietnam as well as various European countries. As a result of the activities of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences many relations with international tango festivals were created. Degree and mobility students also have participated in the projects as conference assistants, doing practical training or writing Bachelor's Theses and other project assignments. Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has created a unique cultural cooperation with the city of Buenos Aires.

4 CONCLUSION

This article provides some insights how Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has been acting on many fronts in Latin America, from the academic field to business and culture. The work in different fields have provided to Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences an unique expertise not found elsewhere in Finland. This work has been a foundation for the business and service center conceptualization project. In the report of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture it was mentioned that Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences could offer Latin American expertise and services for companies in the South Ostrobothnia region and even throughout Finland (OKM 2012). We expect that new generations of professionals will use this experience in Latin America.

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CONCEPT FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN BUSINESS AND SERVICE CENTER

Ville-Pekka Mäkeläinen, Principal Lecturer

Julio Vallejo Medina, Ibero American Coordinator

Ari Virkamäki, Manager of Education

Helli Kitinoja, Director of the Development project of Global Education Services

Seinäjoki UAS

1 INTRODUCTION

In 2013–2015 Seinäjoki UAS coordinated a project entitled 'Conceptualization of the Business and Service Center of Latin America. The aim of this project was the development of cooperation between an educational institution and business life. In this project service packages were developed to meet the needs of local enterprises in the area of international business and especially Latin America. The project was financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). (Latinalaisen Amerikan liiketoiminta- ja palvelukeskuksen kotisivu / Home page of the Latin American Business and Service Center 2016.)

Aim of the project was to create a concept for the Business and Service Center of Latin America. In this article the services of the Business and Service Center are described as well as the operational model for the Center being created.

2 SERVICES OFFERED BY THE LATIN AMERICAN BUSINESS AND SERVICE CENTER

Based on the surveys and focus group workshops during the project it was decided that four service packages should be available when the center would be established. Two additional service packages will be added later to the service tray. In the first stage (which was to be called prototype stage) the four first services would be tested.

2.1 Information about the markets

Enterprises face different types of information needs related to their target markets. One of the key challenges for the companies is to find co-operation partners for

starting and developing operations in the target area. The Latin American Business and Service Center provides companies an opportunity to find potential co-operation partners. Company has to take the final responsibility and they have to make the final choice between potential candidates.

Companies are also facing different types of information needs. The answers can be found through the implementation of marketing research. These can be in the form of competitor analysis, definition of segments and different types of market selection related decisions. The research related to segments and markets creates information for the company for the decision making process. The actual decision based on this information is carried out by the company.

2.2 Practical marketing activities

Practical marketing activities which companies were interested as a service were raising level of awareness in the target markets, branding and adaptation of the product. These activities could be carried out depending on the character of the project by an intern, as a course case or as a thesis project. The role of the company in all of the above mentioned activities is remarkable. Close co-operation is required between the company and the student as well as the faculty participating in the joint activities to guarantee the success of the project.

Trade fairs differ from other marketing activities based on their project character. As a student project you might implement part of a trade fair project e.g. planning the trade fair and / or implementation of the fair. The work carried out after the trade fair requires at least active participation from the company to guarantee success.

2.3 Services connected to the time used for the productization of the service

Customers and their needs and expectations are most important aspects of service design and product development process. Participation of local students from the partner university of Seinäjoki UAS abroad in sales calls and in the visits of foreign customers in the customer organization in Finland were found to be important services for the Finnish companies. Translation services for rarer languages are also needed in the companies.

Payments covering these services could be a payment based on a time used, maximum 200 euros / one day, and travel expenses of the student should also be covered by the company. Translation service payments follow the pricing methods of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences.

2.4 Training and education

Cultural knowledge and especially country specific knowledge is needed in the companies having international business. Cultural and language education could be offered also in co-operation with other institutions, the University of Helsinki as an example. The Language Center of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences is also involved in one way or another. More courses should also be provided for the students about Latin America, country and area specific courses, and students should do student projects in those courses for companies.

From all the above mentioned services Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences makes an offer for the company. The company is informed that the project will be carried out as a student project and the risks connected to these type of assignments. However, the student projects will always be carried out under the supervision of faculty members of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. The final result of the student project is checked with the client and the bill has to be accepted by the client. If the client is not satisfied with the final result, Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences negotiates about the bill with the client.

Later, after the prototype stage of the Latin American Business and Service Center the following additional services will be introduced.

2.5 Assisting companies in the penetration process to foreign markets

One of the services is to assist the companies to utilize the readymade financial packages, e.g. under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, for internationalization, especially for a starting phase of internationalization. Financial package is provided for the company e.g. for market research or partner search including travelling to the target country. This service can be combined with a partner search done as a student project earlier.

2.6 Sharing information through the web-page

Information related to the business in Latin America can be available for the companies on the web-page and social media as a part of the service package. Based on the discussions with the company, information concerning knowledge about e.g. financing options, customs practices, export documentation, safety regulations and standards might be needed. Web- page could provide this information for the companies. The web-page can be updated partly as a student work.

3 OPERATIONAL MODEL FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN BUSINESS AND SERVICE CENTER

The operational model of the Latin American Business and Service Center is based on the existing networks (Figure 2.) where key partners are:

- the partners of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences in Iberian Peninsula and in Latin America including their faculty, staff and students,
- in Finland especially University of Helsinki, possible additional co-operation partners are other universities of applied sciences in Finland,
- organizations supporting the development of foreign trade both in the region of South Ostrobothnia and in the target countries (e.g. South Ostrobothnia Chamber of Commerce) and
- companies operating in the region of South Ostrobothnia and in the target markets.

Networked co-operation supports the accumulation of know-how. In a key position in the operation of this model are the students of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. A database will be developed where companies with development project ideas can be matched with students looking for study projects. Company projects will be stored in this database. The development of the database will be started after the prototype stage of the Latin American Business and Service Center has been completed. The faculty and staff of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences assist and supervise students in the above discussed student-company projects.

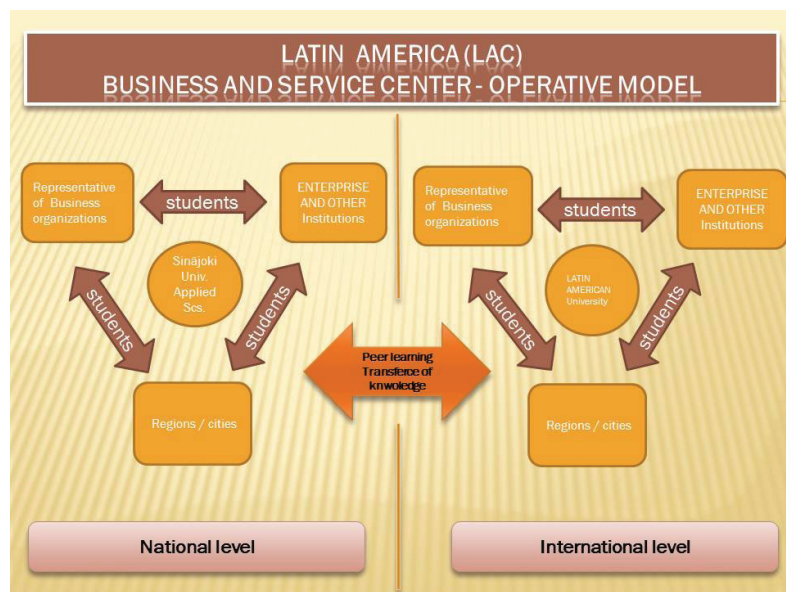


FIGURE 2. The operational model for the Latin American Business and Service Center.

4 DEVELOPMENT NEEDS RELATED TO THE POTENTIAL LAUNCH OF THE LATIN AMERICAN BUSINESS AND SERVICE CENTER IN THE FUTURE

This concept can be implemented with the students of International Business programs in the School of Business and Culture and it would also bring new learning opportunities for students in an applied environment in co-operation with companies. Part of the professional studies could be organized in practical company projects. Studies organized in this form do not yet exist in international business program instructed in English language. Also it should be utilized multidisciplinary approach and students from other degree programmes besides international business could participate in these students-company projects.

The operational concept formed creates an opportunity for enterprises to benefit from the existing cohort of international students to fulfill the different internationalization needs of the companies from translation services all the way to demanding marketing research assignments. For enterprises this concept offers a way to test the students and their knowledge in projects and provides an opportunity for the companies to hire knowledgeable people for their organization in the future. Companies could have the same goal with the thesis projects which the students carry out.

The operational concept designed in the Conceptualization of the Business and Service Center of Latin America project has been created to provide services in South Ostrobothnia and neighboring areas through students as a resource. The services should cover the whole globe and not concentrate only on Latin American markets. In this situation we could utilize the skills and knowledge of international students more broadly in versatile international business projects of local enterprises as well as in joint business projects of companies, Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and other institutions.

When it was investigated the needs of the companies related to the services offered by the Business and Service Center, it was found out that the companies had a need to do research in the fields of business and technology. This need can be met by offering e.g. a two-member team for the project where a business or international business student and an engineering student solve the problem or challenge together as a team. There could also be a need for a combination of industrial engineering and management education as a co-operation project between the School of Technology and the School of Business and Culture. This need has been raised for discussion by local companies already earlier and it has been visible as an interest towards education for sales engineers and purchasing engineers already for some time. Industrial engineering and management education has been organized earlier in co-operation between the

Schools of Business and Technology of Seinäjoki UAS. Now both Schools are situated in the same campus and so it would be easier to implement a joint programme in the future.

The aim is to raise the share of export activities of the South Ostrobothnian companies from one and a half up to two per cent among the total export of the Finnish companies until the year 2020 (Etelä-Pohjanmaan kansainvälistymisen toimintaohjelma 2014). Latin America is one of the potential market areas. This aim is easier to achieve if companies, industry, higher education institutions, public services and other stakeholders work together.

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CONCLUSIONS

Helli Kitinoja, Director of the Development project of Global Education Services

Ville-Pekka Mäkeläinen, Principal Lecturer

Julio Vallejo Medina, Ibero American Coordinator

Ari Virkamäki, Manager of Education

Seinäjoki UAS

Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has been active in Latin America for almost 20 years. As can be seen from this publication, many different activities have taken place during this time period. Latin America was seen as an important operational area for Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences since late 90's. Latin America and Asia, especially Japan and China were seen as important operational areas both from students and local business point of view since mid and late 90's. Both continents offer extra value and open new opportunities for the students, staff members and stakeholders. Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has been like a pioneer opening up the doors to new partnerships.

This publication discusses different aspects of cooperation with Latin America:

- Latin America as a cultural and operation environment
- Latin America as a partner in the field of education
- Latin America as a business environment
- Development of cooperational activities between business and education

We would like to thank you for all the authors for articles written about these different topics. All the topics include interesting viewpoints about current state of development in Latin America and future perspectives for development as well.

It is very important to recognize the opportunities existing in Latin American countries. Latin American economy has shown positive development during past years and a growing number of Finnish companies are active in those markets. There has been also interest shown from South Ostrobothnian business life towards Latin American markets. Same type of opportunities could be recognized also in the field of education. From education export and export of expertise point of view Latin America is seen as a very potential market area.

More and more educational institutions both from domestic point of view as well as internationally are active in Latin America. Keeping the good position Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences has reached becomes tougher in the future due to increased competition in the field of education.

After the completion of the latest project Conceptualization of the Business and Service Center of Latin America it is time to take a look what lies ahead in the future. In this financial situation it is impossible to start the operation of Latin American Business and Service Center in the near future. The operational concept created is described as a prototype version in this publication. When financially it is possible to reconsider to start the operation of the Business and Service Center, the concept can be brought up for further testing and development. However, the services designed can be integrated into the global education services and export of expertise activities of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences.

SEINÄJOEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULUN JULKAISUSARJA - PUBLICATIONS OF SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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SEINÄJOEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Seinäjoen korkeakoulukirjasto
Kalevankatu 35, PL 97, 60101 Seinäjoki
puh. 020 124 5040 fax 020 124 5041
seamk.kirjasto@seamk.fi

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