

Science diplomacy and new mechanisms for the internationalization of higher education in Mexico

Subtopic: The experiences of academic and scientific cooperation in the Pacific region

Korean Foundation in Mexico and Latin America¹

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Mexico and the International Development Cooperation

International cooperation for development is a very important device to improve development, to share development burden, and share experience. Mexico has been working since long time ago in a closed relationship with countries interested in innovative models of cooperation. Having in mind that cooperation is the way to spread experiences, helping to build a stable world and to fulfill the needs of sustainable development, to analyze what moves countries to cooperate becomes an important issue to find out how we can work together in order to get better outcomes.

Mexico already has become a middle income country, belonging to OCDE has the commitment to experience not only as a receptor country, but also as a donor; this duality offers a positive challenge to learn and to share experiences. As a donor, Mexico is dedicated to the support Central America, which is a natural region for Mexican financial cooperation. The “Mesoamerica” project is a high level political issue that link cooperation, development and integration of ten countries in order to favor projects oriented to improve the life quality of people. All member countries work to enhance economic and social development in the region, which has a 215 millions of habitants and a GNP of USD\$1,616 as 2011.

¹ With support of the Network on Internationalization and Academic and Scientific Mobility (RIMAC in Spanish), CONACYT Thematic Network Program, Mexico

Mexico has, since 2011, an international development cooperation law, as well as an Agency (AMEXCID²), which allows to have a well-organized partner and to respond to the emerging international structure. For Mexico, cooperating is a tool to share the very best of our country and to face global challenges together. Mexico promotes strategic alliances with developed countries, as well as private and social sectors, local government and specialized institutions to build a joint agenda to promote cooperation on key areas: science, culture, tourism, education, and technology.

As a dual actor, Mexico receive and offer cooperation, strengthen capacities, sharing successful experiences and exchanging qualified human resources, working with strategic partners to get better results, not only for Mexico but for those countries supported by South – South cooperation or triangular cooperation.

As a donor, Mexico is dedicated to strengthen practices on technical and scientific cooperation. Its priorities areas are: health, environment, education, infrastructure, science and technology, improving our good practices and sharing knowledge. As a receptor, Mexico coordinates process to negotiate projects with cooperation partners in order to realize programs that improve good practices in third countries.

Mexico is an actor with global responsibility and cooperates to reach the Sustainable Development Objectives of the 2030 Agenda. So, Mexico has an inter-institutional coordination with local governments, international agencies, and international organizations.

Mexico is interested in to improve tools to plan and evaluate projects to collaborating with those countries with experience and expertise in key areas to support projects in third countries, as an actor committed with the global stability and the global Agenda 2030.

AMEXCID participates in several international organizations; recently Mexico has participated in the United National General Assembly working on the definition of the Agenda 2030. According to the 17 goals, Mexico will work on closed relation with private

² Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo, <http://amexcid.gob.mx/>

sector and civil society organizations in order to improve sustainable development. Mexico is committed to strengthen its presence in the world, promoting Mexico as an attractive tourism destination, as a profitable market and a commercial chain for global productive network.

Mexico assumes education as a key sector to improve development. Education opens opportunities for all people, but mainly for those countries where educative offer is limited. Mexico offers as well as receives a rich program of scholarships and academic exchange opportunities. So, through AMEXCID, Mexico contributes to high education internationalization, working with national institutions and promoting international mobility abroad. Mexico coordinates educative cooperation programs with its counterparts and international agencies throughout a wide range of programs and projects.

International Education in Mexico

Mexico looks in its education system for strengthening international quality certification, at institutional level and, above all, of the plans and programs of study trend. The challenges are in Mexico: How to participate in these mechanisms, not only as a consumer of services in what specialists call “the international market for quality” assurance but as afferent, and how to define, together with other countries, to identify and share relevant indicators and experiments about it. While some University programs operate decently institutional arrangements between counterparties to recognize periods of study undertaken outside, in most cases, internal bureaucratic procedures work with their own agreements, some of them face credit difficulty and then, discouraging short mobility.

It stands the leading role played by a few establishments that have managed to accumulate skills and results while more than 3,000 public and private high education institutions registered in Mexico have strategies and some visible results by their own, contributing to their internationalization; it is equally essential to stress the importance of student mobility as the main aspect of internationalization policies at the institutional, associative and governmental levels in order to improve student mobility.

Mexico is working in specific proposals trying to link Mexican universities, higher education institutions abroad and private sector designing measures to support and ensure the quality of offers not only in undergraduate studies but also in postdoctoral level promoting scientific exchange and perform a systematic record innovative devices of international cooperation and joint programs between Mexico and strategic partners.

Korean Foundation: The Interview

In Asia Pacific, Mexico works closely with most of the countries within the framework of cultural and educative agreements. Particularly with South Korea Mexico subscribed the “Mexico – South Korea Cultural Agreement” which is in force since 1966. The main objective is to encourage and facilitate the mutual knowledge of their respective cultures, customs and history. Giving that Agreement Mexico and South Korea has been working hard to promote academic mobility, improving mutual knowledge and improve technology to share experience and culture.

In this context, Korean Foundation has been playing an important role to foster bilateral cultural cooperation. In order to have a global scope of Korean Foundation’s activities in Latin America and Mexico, Dr. Hyang-Joo Park, Director of Korean Studies Department, was interviewed by the team of researchers from CINVESTAV:

1) What relevance has Latin America region, and Mexico in particular terms in the programs of the Korea Foundation

➤ Mexico is one of the member countries of MIKTA launched in 2013³. MIKTA is an innovative cross-regional partnership of middle powers, initiated by Korea, for global public good. Mexico and Korea will have more actively cooperated on global issues than before. To promote better understanding of Korea in the MIKTA member countries, the Korea Foundation will support education and research on Korean culture and society.

³ Integrated by Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia. <http://www.mikta.org/>

2) *What have been the most important results in support for the promotion of Korean studies in Mexico?*

➤ As a result of our activities, many Associations for Korean Studies have been organized in Latin America such as Colombian Association of Korean Studies, Association of Korean Studies in Argentina, and Latin American Encounter of Korean Studies.

And Korea-related courses are provided in more than 9 countries including Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Panama, Nicaragua, and etc. Also, we have been dispatching a professor (Dr. Park Chae Soon) to the National University of La Plata to teach political sciences and international relations regarding Korea.

Furthermore, the King Sejong Institutes have been established in 10 countries in Latin America including Mexico, Guatemala, Uruguay, and etc..

3) *Which is the most important education programs implemented in Mexico by Korea Foundation?*

➤ As for now, KF Global e-School program is the most important program implemented in Mexico. Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, one of our partner universities participating in KF Global e-School program, plays a key role to organize and administrate the program. The program offers 4 courses to 32 universities in 7 countries in 2015.

4) *How many Mexicans and Latin Americans have participated in the program of fellowship programs (Fellowship for Graduate Studies, Postdoctoral Fellowship, and Fellowship for Field Research) during the 2000 to 2014?*

➤ In total, only 34 people have participated in our program during the period.

The detail is as followed:

1. Fellowship for Field Research: 19
2. Korean Language Training Fellowship: 10
3. KF Korean Language and Culture Program for Diplomats: 5
4. Fellowship for Graduate Studies, Postdoctoral Fellowship: (Not offered in Latin America region. However, Latin American students who enter the universities in the US or Australasia may apply for the KF Fellowship for Graduate Studies),

5) *Mexico and Latin American countries have participated in the Youth Exchange Program?*

➤ Unfortunately, the Korea Foundation does not have Youth Exchange Program between Korea and Latin American countries yet.

6) *Mexico and Latin American countries, what role are they playing in strategies for the Korea Foundation on public diplomacy?*

➤ Please refer the answer to the first question.

7) *What are the most important programs to promote the study of Korea that the Korea Foundation performs in Japan and China?*

➤ The Korea Foundation's flagship program is the "Support for the Establishment of the Korean Studies Professorship" program. We supported to establish almost 120 professorships in the US, Europe, and Australasia to offer Korean studies courses and conduct research on Korea. In addition, we are mainly focused on supporting lectures, conferences, workshops and other events promoting Korean studies that are organized by Korean studies centers in overseas universities and academic societies in Japan and China. And there are many scholars studying Korea in Japan and China, so we offer scholarships for the graduate students.

8) *In your experience, how Mexican universities can participate more within the different programs of the Korea Foundation?*

➤ First, as I mentioned earlier, we are conducting KF Global e-School program in Mexico. So, Mexican universities can easily participate with the Foundation's program through e-school program.

Also, if there is enough demand, you could apply for the 'Support for Employment of Contract Faculty Member' (which financially supports hiring new faculty members) with the goal of expanding courses in Korean studies programs and Korean language programs.

Lastly, we have a program called 'Dispatch of visiting professor'. Under this program, we dispatches visiting professors of relevant fields to overseas universities that are planning to expand the pool of Korea-related courses but experiencing difficulty in finding qualified staff.

Professors and researchers at the Mexican universities and research institutions who have specialties in East Asia including Korea or comparative studies between Korea and Mexico may apply for the KF Fellowship for Field Research.