

Potentiating Student Mobility in LAC: An Evaluation of the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Program

Report prepared for Partners of the Americas

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016 Partners of the Americas (PoA) commissioned an evaluation for the pilot of the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* (100K) program which focused on capacity-building innovations to promote student mobility in Latin American Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This pilot was launched with the financial support of Department of State (DOS) and the Ford Foundation, and in 2014 it granted USD 25,000 to ten HEIs from Brazil (3), Colombia (1), Ecuador (1), Mexico (4) and Panama (1). The grant period lasted one year.

The premise of the 100K Program is that small leveraging grants that encourage HEI investment and new or strengthened partnerships can catalyze increased HEI capacity to engage in student mobility in the Americas. This retrospective outcome evaluation analyzed direct or indirect results perceived one year or less after the end of the grant. The team gathered data using three methods: document analysis; 68 semi-structured interviews with HEI stakeholders; and site visits to three of the winning HEIs.

FINDINGS

This first competition of the 100K program required HEIs to establish or strengthen partnerships with one or more U.S. HEIs, but allowed a variety of types of capacity-building innovations, except for student travel expenses. Although the proposed innovations were heterogeneous, there were common outcomes.

Pre-funding outcomes

- **Creation, formalization and strengthening of partnerships with U.S. HEIs** was achieved by all, as a requirement for the competition.
- **Investment and engagement of authorities.** All ten HEIs committed counterpart funds to the implementation of their proposals; two matched the 100K grant; two doubled the amount and one more than tripled it.
- **Development of professional skills.** Half of the grantees received technical assistance to develop their proposals, thus increasing their skills in grant applications, especially for US government grants.

Implementation outcomes

Eight out of ten HEIs fully implemented all the proposed innovations. Most grantees reported that the program **enabled the establishment of new models and services that laid the foundation for future increases in student mobility.** Among these structures, offering academic and professional opportunities to international students added most value to improve the HEIs' potential to recruit paying students, including: introducing faculty-led courses in English; getting international accreditation; joint research or internships; and adapting mobility programs to academic calendar differences between North and South.

Post-funding outcomes

- **Partnerships strengthened and new MoUs signed.** Six HEIs have maintained their partnerships with U.S. HEIs and five reported having accomplished new agreements to co-create mobility initiatives. In total, eight new MoUs were signed one year after the grant ended.
- **Increased awareness of institutional strengths and needs.** Four grantees reported that the 100K program improved their understanding of the U.S. students' profile and their ability to adapt services.
- **Increased investment in student mobility.** Authorities from seven HEIs have increased their investment in internationalization and student mobility. Moreover, three HEIs expanded the staff of their International Relations (IIRR) Offices to support student mobility services.
- **Visibility and improvement of institutional image.** Eight HEIs identified increased institutional visibility as one of the most significant benefits from the 100K grant. In four cases, the IIRR Offices reported that the program improved their participation in HEI decision-making processes.
- **Engagement with student mobility HEI networks.** Program activities introduced the HEIs to an expanded network of experts on student mobility and potential HEI partners. This benefit prompted authorities from eight HEIs to continue to support participation of their IIRR Offices at regional student mobility events.
- **Increased numbers of students engaged:** One year after the program ended, only one HEI saw

an increase of incoming international students, due to numerous barriers identified.

BARRIERS FOR STUDENT MOBILITY IN LAC

Stakeholders agree that are four main barriers that affects LAC HEIs to improve student mobility in the Western Hemisphere. Discouraging mobility from North to South are: the **language barrier** between LAC and U.S, especially for Brazilian HEIs; **fears of security issues in LAC and the US DOS travel warning** were a major barrier in Colombia, Brazil, and in some states in Mexico to the establishment of sustainable partnerships with U.S. institutions; and the difference in the **academic calendars between the North and the South**, which discourages students who fear getting behind in their academic plans. The **cost of student mobility** to the U.S impeded mobility from South to North, except when large government programs provided scholarships. In spite these barriers, eight out of ten of the winning HEIs experienced positive breakthroughs in their experiments with solutions to these challenges.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The 100K grant acted as an incentive for most HEIs to increase their support for student mobility. In this sense, **the findings confirm the theory of change in the 100K program: that small leveraging grants that encourage HEI investment and new or strengthened partnerships can play a catalytic role in increasing HEI capacity to engage in student mobility in the Americas.** The cases of increased HEI capacity suggest potential to increase student mobility if remaining barriers can be addressed.

The evaluation identified effective practices that enabled the grants to produce significant results:

Objective 1. Increased sustainable exchange and cooperation partnerships among Western Hemisphere HEIs

- **High counterpart investment from grantees.** Three HEIs whose counterpart funding surpassed the amount received from the grant have scaled up their initiatives and maintained partnerships.
- **Lowering tuition costs.** The HEIs with most sustainable mobility programs were those that negotiated tuition waivers with partners and/or created scholarships for their students for mobility opportunities.

- **Working with diverse international partners.** Engaging diverse HEIs was important for sustainability, rather than having only one or two bilateral agreements to expand student mobility. Strategies included promotional activities such as encouraging campus visits, and working in HEI consortia.
- **Enabling students to progress towards their academic and professional goals.** Providing courses, research and internship opportunities; offering academic courses for credit in English; and getting international accreditation were the most effective strategies to attract U.S. HEI partners and students.

The cases of failure to attract or sustain partnerships reinforce these findings. For example, innovations that did not engage faculty as well as strengthening the IIRR Office had difficulty in offering attractive academic benefits to incoming students.

Outcome 1. Increased investment by HEIs, LAC governments, & private sector in new effective strategies and models for study abroad, including human, financial, and in-kind resources

- **Setting conditions on the use of the grant and requesting cost-sharing** from the applicants pushed grantees to mobilize their own resources to put the capacity-building innovations in place.
- **Creation of internal strategic alliances.** Involving authorities and faculty members in the grant proposals increased the HEIs' chances for more actors to support the innovations.
- **Publicity for the HEIs.** The exposure of the HEIs to U.S. government institutions and conferences improved the HEIs' visibility and the engagement of their authorities in the program.

Outcome 2. Increased capacity of LAC and U.S. HEIs to develop and administer effective study abroad programs

- **Autonomy and freedom** for grantees to explore context-specific solutions to student mobility barriers is important.
- **Flexibility and availability of PoA** staff members for technical assistance yielded capacity-building results.
- **Regional workshops** on student mobility for showed networking and learning benefits in several cases.

ABBREVIATIONS

100K	100,000 Strong in the Americas
DOS	U.S. Department of State
EAFIT	Universidad EAFIT
FAE	FAE Centro Universitario
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IFSEMG	Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciencia e Tecnologia do Sudeste de Minas Gerais
IIRR	International relations
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFSA	Association of International Educators
PoA	Partners of the Americas
TEC	Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey
U.S.	United States of America
UAQ	Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro
UFV	Universidade Federal de Viçosa
UGTO	Universidad de Guanajuato
UIMQRoo	Universidad Intercultural Maya de Quintana Roo
USFQ	Universidad San Francisco de Quito
USMA	Universidad Santa María la Antigua

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 2011 the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* program (100K program) was launched by President Obama to expand study abroad through the continent, enhance hemispheric competitiveness and provide young people with opportunities to become globally-aware and cross-culturally competent so they can meet the demands of today's global workforce (U.S. State of Department, n.d.).

The program target is for 100,000 students to engage in student mobility in the Western Hemisphere by the year 2020. To achieve this goal, the U.S. Department of State (DOS), Partners of the Americas (PoA) and the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) created a matching grant program to support the initiatives of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Since its creation, the program has had 16 competitions and has granted approximately USD 1.9 million to over 150 institutions.

This report presents the key findings of an evaluation commissioned in 2016 by PoA for the pilot (Competition 1) of the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* program which focused on capacity-building for student mobility in ten Latin American HEIs. The findings confirm the theory of change in the 100K program – that small leveraging grants that encourage HEI investment and strengthened partners – can play a catalytic role in increasing HEI capacity to engage in student mobility in the Americas. The document reports on the student mobility and capacity development results for the HEIs, and lessons learned from both successful and unsuccessful strategies to overcome common challenges in student mobility partnerships among HEIs in the Americas.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The **main objective** of the evaluation is to analyze the effectiveness of the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* ten capacity-building innovation grants to Latin American HEIs in the program's first competition to increase bi-directional study abroad between the U.S. and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The evaluation posed two **questions**:

- *Did the 100K program enable the grantees to sustainably increase their partnerships with U.S. HEIs?*
- *Did it enhance their capacity to develop and administer effective study abroad programs?*

To answer these questions, the evaluation posits three **specific objectives**:

- Identify the main changes or innovations proposed by the winning HEIs and determine whether they increased their ability to conduct educational exchanges.
- Identify the factors that facilitated or obstructed the HEIs to achieve their proposed goals.
- Identify best practices and lessons learned in capacity-building strategies to inform future strategies of the 100K program.

1.2 LOGIC MODEL

Based on the questions and objectives described, a logic model was designed to facilitate the analysis of the evaluation's findings and to guide future monitoring and evaluation activities for the 100K program.

IMPACT: Expanded preparation of Western Hemisphere post-secondary students to have the language, experience and cross-cultural skills necessary to be successful global leaders in the 21st century workforce.



GOAL: Expanded access to & engagement in study abroad programs among Western Hemisphere Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for a larger and more diverse body of students



Objective 1
Increased sustainable exchange and cooperation partnerships among Western Hemisphere HEIs



Outcome 1

Increased investment by HEIs, governments, foundations, & private sector in new effective strategies and models for study abroad, including human, financial, and in-kind resources

Outcome 2

Increased capacity of Western Hemisphere HEIs to develop and administer effective study abroad programs



Output 1.1

Innovation grants stimulate new investments in study abroad by HEIs in U.S. and other Western Hemisphere countries.

Output 1.2

Private sector entities, foundations, & non-U.S. governments support new 100K rounds and grants.

Output 2.1

New or improved study abroad structures, systems, programs, and models engage students in the Western Hemisphere.

Output 2.2

HEIs and PoA identify and evaluate effective innovations to expand study abroad.

Output 2.3

HEIs increase engagement in learning exchanges and dissemination.



Activities
“Leveraging grants” competitions encourage dedication of HEIs’ own resources and inclusion of outside resources to make innovations sustainable.

Activities
PoA outreach and fundraising to non-US government entities, foundations, and private sector companies.

Activities
The RFP framework of 100K competitions encourages innovation, including new curricula or majors, internal collaboration, external partners, policies and infrastructure.

Activities
Technical assistance from PoA staff to improve proposals and adjust programs during implementation.

Evaluation of Competition One & dissemination of findings.

Activities
Technical workshops, webinars, & publications to share, discuss, and disseminate innovative, effective study abroad strategies among U.S. & LAC HEIs.

Figure 1. Logic Model for the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* Program

The logic model suggests that the achievement of sustainable exchange partnerships between HEIs (Objective 1), depends on increased investment (Outcome 1) and increased capacity (Outcome 2) for student mobility among HEIs. Evidence for Outcome 1 would be new types of HEI investments (Output 1.1), and new government and private sector partners supporting the programs (Output 1.2). Evidence for Outcome 2 would be new programs, structures and systems to promote student mobility (Output 2.1), efforts to identify and evaluate innovative strategies (Output 2.2), and to disseminate findings and participate in learning exchanges (Output 2.3).

A complete list of the indicators that were used to evaluate the outcomes of the suggested logic model can be found in Annex 1.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This retrospective outcome evaluation focused on assessing the progress of the grantees on the program’s goal, objective, and outcomes one year after the pilot ended. The evaluation explored the diverse results perceived by different stakeholders (authorities and staff of HEIs, businesses, students and public entities) as a direct or indirect result of the program, and analyzed whether the grants had a long-lasting effect on the HEIs’ internationalization efforts.

The evaluation covered all ten winning HEIs of the program’s first competition round implemented in the 2014/2015 period.

Table 1. Winning Latin American HEIs from the first competition round

Country	HEIs
Brazil	FAE Centro Universitario(*); Universidade Federal de Viçosa; Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Sudeste de Minas Gerais
Colombia	Universidad EAFIT(*)
Ecuador	Universidad San Francisco de Quito
Mexico	Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey; Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro(*); Universidad de Guanajuato (*); Universidad Intercultural Maya de Quintana Roo
Panama	Universidad Santa María la Antigua

(*) Selected case studies.

For data collection, the evaluation focused on three qualitative methods. First, an extensive documentary analysis that included primary documents such as the grantees’ innovations proposals, quarterly and final reports, publicity material, financial reports, and updated student mobility reports. Second, semi-structured interviews were held with 68 informants between July and October of 2016 to triangulate data¹. Most of the interviews were retrospective as the evaluated HEIs were no longer grantees. The interview guides were adapted to the type of stakeholder, and are attached as Annex 11 and 12. Interview data was triangulated through comparison with other testimonies and with documentary analysis. Third, the evaluation included site visits to three HEIs who were selected as case studies by PoA.² A site visit guide was prepared for this purpose, also attached in Annex 12. These visits allowed more in-depth analysis of the barriers and the successes of the student mobility program

¹ Informants included 37 representatives from LAC HEIs, 21 students, 5 representatives from U.S. HEIs, among others. A full list of the interviewees can be found in Annex 10.

² A fourth site in Mexico was chosen, but the evaluator was not able to schedule a full visit.

through interviews with a wider variety of stakeholders. The selection was based on purposive sampling, with two main criteria:

- 1) Universities who started out with low or medium capacity: These are the universities most likely to benefit from a small grant.
- 2) Opportunities to learn from successes: The barriers to student mobility are considerable. Those universities who have devised strategies to overcome common barriers pose important learning opportunities for the 100K program.

The evaluation had some limitations. First, the consultant team was not able to apply a survey to former U.S. and LAC students that benefited from the mobility programs due to time limitations and lack of contact by the HEIs after students went back to their home countries. Second, in two³ of the ten HEIs the representatives in charge of implementing the proposals no longer work in the institutions and were not able to provide information on the current situation of the innovations. Therefore, the evaluation was only able to do a follow-up of eight of the ten winning HEIs.

This report comprises three additional sections. Section II explains in further detail the 100K program and its first pilot, and summarizes the grantees winning proposals. Section III presents the most relevant findings regarding the effects of the program's grants on the winning HEIs during different stages of the pilot. Then, it highlights the challenges HEIs face to reach the program's goal. Finally, section IV summarizes the evaluation's results and explores the lessons learned on capacity-building and sustainable partnerships to increase student mobility in the Americas.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE 100,000 STRONG IN THE AMERICAS PROGRAM

Compared to exchanges with other more distant regions, relatively few U.S. students participate in study abroad programs in LAC. According to the Institute of International Education (2015), in 2013/2014 more than 304,000 U.S. students studied abroad for academic credit; 62% participated in a summer program and 35% went abroad for a whole semester. However, the top destinations were European countries such as U.K., Italy, Spain and France.

On the other hand, between 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 the number of international students in the U.S. increased 10% reaching 974,926 students, and the number of LAC students increased by nearly 20%. Though the reasons for the latter are not confirmed, a possible explanation is the introduction of large-student mobility programs supported by national governments such as *Ciencias Sem Fronteiras* (CSF) in Brazil and *Proyecta 100,000* in Mexico where the number of students in the observed periods rose 78.2% and 15.4% respectively. Still, LAC students represented barely 8.9% of international students in the U.S. in 2014/2015 while Asian students represented 64.3% (Institute of International Education, 2015).

The low numbers for student mobility between U.S. and LAC are attributed mainly to language barriers, tuition costs and the lack of networks and initiatives to stimulate international mobility between these two regions (Interview with PoA representatives, 2016). The evaluation identified additional barriers to be discussed in Section III. The 100K program aims to reverse this situation through stimulating innovation to address these barriers, thus strengthening of the capacity of U.S. and LAC HEIs to create sustainable exchange partnerships with their counterparts.

³ Universidad San Francisco de Quito (Ecuador) and Universidad Intercultural Maya de Quintana Roo (Mexico).

2.1 OBJECTIVE OF THE 100K PROGRAM’S PILOT

In 2013, the first competition round for the 100K program was launched with the financial support of Department of State (DOS) and the Ford Foundation. Known as the “Capacity-Building Program to Reach 100,000 Strong”, this pilot supported capacity building grants that would award USD 25,000 to ten HEIs in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Peru. PoA also provided targeted technical assistance to help the winning HEIs implement promising innovations that corresponded to current evidence on effective practices, to increase their potential to expand study abroad exchanges and collaboration with U.S. institutions (Partners of the Americas, 2013).

The competitors’ proposals had to include current or planned collaborations with partner U.S. HEIs. Due to the public nature of the competition’s funding, the award had several limitations and could not be used for travel expenses for students or HEIs’ staff⁴. The winners were selected taking into consideration their engagement and commitment to invest in capacity building in their institutions, reducing mobility barriers and expanding internationalization opportunities.

The first competition differs from the current 100K program in its exclusive focus on capacity strengthening of the LAC HEIs. Therefore, the findings are most relevant to capacity development of HEIs in Latin America, although there are partial findings on barriers and successes among U.S. partners from interviews with Latin American students who participated in exchanges in U.S. universities.

2.2 WINNING PROPOSALS

The program’s first competition was very flexible and did not force participants to adhere or follow a specific model or structure. Consequently, the winning proposals could include more than one type of capacity-building innovation. As shown on Table 2, they also differed on the types of innovations, agreements and the direction of student mobility they endorsed.

Table 2. Types of innovations, agreements and direction of student mobility promoted by the winning proposals

	Type	Description	Activities
Innovations	Introduction and/or expansion of study abroad programs and mobility agreements	Establishment, adaptation and extension of research and study abroad programs, and of formal agreements between two or more HEIs to increase student mobility among them.	Language courses, joint research programs, summer or January break programs ⁵ , Internet-based joint courses
	Improvement of services for student mobility	Implementation and/or upgrade of services to guarantee a fluent communication with international students and facilitate their rapid adaptation to different education systems and cultural contexts.	Peer mentoring, service learning, cultural activities, welcoming programs, housing services
	Recruitment	Increase publicity and offer work and financing opportunities to attract more international students.	Scholarships, marketing strategies, internships

⁴ Nowadays the program receives the financial support of private and public entities and grantees are allowed to use up to 25% of the award in travel expenses.

⁵ Corresponding to U.S. academic schedules.

	Type	Description	Activities
	Adaptation of faculty structures	Adjustment of curricula and processes to facilitate international students' insertion to the education system and secure the recognition of academic credits.	Translation of syllabi into English, implementation of courses in English
	Training activities for staff and faculty	Train and prepare teachers and staff to receive, guide and interact with international students.	Staff and faculty exchanges, seminars and courses
	Improvement of management processes	Investment and implementation of tools, systems and projects to assess and modernize current mobility programs and services.	Evaluations, web-based data management systems
Agreement	Bilateral	Mobility agreement between one Latin American and one U.S. HEI.	---
	Consortium	Mobility agreement between one or more Latin American HEI and one or more U.S. HEI.	---
Direction of student mobility	Outbound	Innovation and/or agreement focused on sending LAC students to the U.S.	---
	Inbound	Innovation and/or agreement focused on receiving U.S. students.	---
	Both	Innovation and/or agreement focused on sending LAC students to the U.S. and receiving U.S. students.	---

Box 1 briefly presents the HEIs winning proposals. A more detailed description of the three case studies can be found in Annexes 4 to 7.

Box 1. Summary of the ten winning proposals

FAE Centro Universitario – Curitiba, Brazil

FAE's proposal focused on three components: 1) implement a "Brazilian Portuguese for Foreign Students Program"; 2) establish an International Student Office (ISO) for incoming students; and 3) develop a mentorship program to help international students adapt to Brazil. FAE associated with Siena College who covered the expenses of 60% of the incoming group of students and 50% of the tuition of FAE students that went to their institution as part of an undergraduate program.

In 2015, FAE received 15 students to take the Portuguese program and sent four students to Siena College. Though the Portuguese program was originally designed as a 72 hours (4 weeks) program, it was halved due to lack of funds. In 2016, Siena College was not able to send more students. Though the mentor program has extended to graduate students, the ISO has not been implemented yet. Both HEIs continue to collaborate and have created three double degree programs. However, the cost of tuition for FAE students at Siena College is still high for LAC standards.

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Sudeste de Minas Gerais (IFSEMG) – Minas Gerais, Brazil

The IFSEMG participated in the pilot as a consortium with Iracambi Research Center in Brazil and Ball State University in the U.S. to create a smart collaboration program in which U.S. students would travel

to Brazil for 21 days and alternate between studying in one of the IFSEMG campuses, and carrying out practical internships at Iracambi. Brazilian and U.S. students also benefited from distance learning webinars and language courses.

Even with PoA's help, it took IFSEMG three months to register with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service to receive the grant money. Although this initial snag created time pressures in the program's schedule, IFSEMG's capacity to deal with administrative requirements when receiving international funds was increased.

The program hosted 24 U.S. students from Hampton University and Ball State University, and 26 students from IFSEMG. Though the consortium is no longer in place, IFSEMG continues offering short-term mobility programs and has managed to sustain the number of international students. Their commitment to student mobility has expanded and the director gives presentations on lessons learned in student mobility to other Brazilian HEIs.

Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (TEC) – Monterrey, Mexico

TEC (Campus Hidalgo) allied with George Mason University (GMU) to develop a course on "Global Entrepreneurship and Social Change" that included three activities: 1) Faculty exchange between professors to design a technology-based taught course to implement in both universities; 2) implement a Globally-Networked Learning (GNL) platform to enable smart collaboration so Mexican and U.S. students could interact online; and 3) a student exchange component in which ten students of each institution would visit each HEI for a week to attend a seminar.

21 students enrolled in the course (nine students from GMU and 12 from TEC). During the exchange component, TEC encountered a major difficulty. Three weeks before the TEC group travelled to GMU, the HEI found out that, because part of the funding for the course came from DOS, Mexican participants needed a student visa, not a tourist one. Getting a student visa supposed an extra cost (USD 400 per student plus transportation to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City) that TEC covered. PoA, the U.S. Embassy, DOS and TEC worked together to make sure all students got their visa on time. As a result of the course, students were able to improve their level of cultural sensitivity and engagement with other cultures. The Global Entrepreneurship course was not replicated due to the lack of time and research commitments of the participating professors. However, TEC and GMU are discussing the possibility of introducing the course in TEC's campus in Guadalajara as well as co-taught courses in the Engineering Department using the Global Classroom model.

Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro (UAQ) – Querétaro, Mexico

UAQ is part of a consortium that includes eight local HEIs, Queretaro's Council for Science and Technology, private companies and research centers in Mexico. For nearly 20 years, this consortium has had an agreement with West Virginia University (WVU) to carry out the "Industrial Outreach Program in Mexico" (IOPM) in which engineering students from Queretaro are selected to study a semester abroad in WVU, and then in the summer, WVU students travel to Queretaro to work with Mexican students in local companies.

UAQ and WVU decided to evaluate the IOPM in order to learn if and how the program can expand and replicate in other disciplines and contexts. As a result of the process, the IOPM's leaders are more aware about the importance of formalizing and extending their alliances, getting international accreditation and introducing faculty courses in English to facilitate student mobility. However, tasks and responsibilities continue to be centralized and private companies have not invested financial resources in the program, restraining its expansion.

Universidad de Guanajuato (UGTO) – Guanajuato, Mexico

UGTO's offered its Summer Research Program for the first time to international students, including three new services: Spanish language courses; cultural immersion activities; and service learning activities in which students could volunteer. UGTO also partnered with the University of Arizona to send five Mexican students to the latter's Summer Research Program.

UGTO has more than tripled the number of international students that participate in its summer program. It has maintained the services introduced during the grant, and offers new types of scholarships for national and international students. However, there have been complaints from North American students on the quality of the services: miscommunication between academic mentors and students; lack of information on English on how to register to the program; and delays on the Spanish course.

Universidad EAFIT – Medellin, Colombia

EAFIT's goal was to counteract the negative effects on student mobility of the DOS travel warning for Colombia by offering a positive experience to U.S. students. To achieve this, EAFIT proposed a marketing plan and offering 40 study and research scholarships. In addition, the university would hire a mobility advisor dedicated exclusively to incoming students.

The scholarships were open to any U.S. HEI, but most of the students they received were from their U.S. partner, Purdue University, due to a very low response rate from their marketing campaign. Other innovations were successful: the university implemented English engineering courses; increased the staff of their IIRR Office; signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a new partner university; and received visits from interested U.S. institutions to discuss mobility opportunities.

Universidad Intercultural Maya de Quintana Roo (UIMQRoo) – Quintana Roo, Mexico

UIMQRoo aimed to build relations with ten U.S. HEIs that shared its intercultural approach. They proposed: 1) to train staff members of the International Office to improve their organizational skills; 2) to send 20 students and 10 professors to the U.S. for one semester; 3) to receive 20 U.S. professors interested in doing research and 30 U.S. students to study for a whole semester or take summer courses. To achieve these goals, the university incorporated TOEFL, GRE and GMAT courses to improve the students' chances to be admitted in a U.S. HEIs as well as a "Summer Welcome" program for international students.

UIMQRoo sent 19 students from a low socio-economic background to the U.S. The university signed 11 new agreements, thanks to the new connections that were made through regional workshops and the help of PoA. This was a significant achievement, since mobility was low before receiving the grant, mainly because of lack of financial resources amongst the students and in the institution.

Due to security issues, UIMQRoo struggled to interest U.S. HEIs in sending professors and students for longer periods of time. Incomplete information⁶ suggests that there have been no sustainable effects. At the end of the grant, the university's president left office, and the new president discontinued support for the International Office as well as the mobility initiatives launched by the prior administration.

⁶ Evaluators were not able to contact the new administration; the information is from the prior coordinator, who is no longer working in the HEI.

Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) – Quito, Ecuador

USFQ aimed to attract North American STEM students through five innovations: 1) introduce the LOERI (“The Latitude Zero: Ecuador Research Initiative”) program which would allow participants to work with a faculty mentor on a science and engineering research project; 2) integrate the curriculum of USFQ’s STEM courses taught in English to those of their U.S. partners to ease credit transfer between institutions; 3) offer five scholarships for the LOERI program and eight for outgoing Ecuadorian STEM students; 4) implement marketing strategies; and 5) create a web-based data management system to collect and manage enrollment data.

USFQ associated with five U.S. HEIs whom which the university had already an established relationship. During the pilot, USFQ received five U.S. students and sent eight Ecuadorian students with financial need to take a STEM study abroad program to a variety of U.S. HEIs. Because of the innovations, USFQ signed eight new MoUs through LOERI. The program responded well to student feedback. During the first phase of the LOERI program, students reported that some academic mentors were hard to reach; the International Office responded by discontinuing the participation of these professors in the program.

The LOERI program is still in place and receives three times more applications than in its first year. Until 2015, USFQ had not been able to expand the number of scholarships or to find resources to continue supporting USFQ students to participate in similar research programs abroad.

Universidad Santa Maria la Antigua (USMA) – Ciudad de Panamá, Panama

USMA aligned with the University of Arkansas (UofA) to establish a long-term action plan to increase student mobility between both institutions. The institutions’ proposal focused on carrying out week-long site visits for administrators and staff from the IIRR Offices to each campus, and training workshops on procedures, reducing barriers, funding and communications for student mobility. In addition, UofA held two short-term study abroad pilots and a Business Seminar in Panama in which USMA participated.

During the grant period, USMA received a group of ten U.S. students and involved two UofA honor students to do research internships. To build institutional capacity, USMA developed a guide for incoming students, a sample syllabus for tailored research projects, and four different models for short-term mobility programs.

Unfortunately, the grant did not have sustainable effects due to lack of support from the HEI president. The IIRR office reports a “lack of political will,” since no new investments have been put in place in favor of student mobility. USMA’s IIRR Office restructuring plan developed under the grant was never put in place, and although Panamanian HEIs had their own stand for the first time in the 2016 NAFSA workshop, the USMA IIRR Office was not granted resources to participate. As a result, USMA is not participating in a local network of Panamanian HEIs that promotes the country as an academic destination.

Universidade Federal de Viçosa (UFV) - Minas Gerais, Brazil

UFV’s goal was to double its number of U.S. incoming students through four activities: 1) introduction of undergraduate classes in English; 2) a six-week long free Portuguese language program for U.S. students and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) training courses for faculty; 3) an ambassador program to match up UFV and foreign students; and 4) organizing visits for U.S. delegations. During the competition, UFV partnered with four HEIs (University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Purdue University, Iowa State University, University of Kentucky and Texas A&M University).

Between April 2014 and March 2015, UFV received 75 U.S. students and 381 UFV students went to the U.S. In 2014, 20 UFV faculty members received specialized training through the “*Content and Language Integrated Learning*” (CLIL) program, offered by the University of Queensland (Australia). Initial courses taught in English in 2014 received low demand, but results improved significantly in 2015, when Introduction to Programming enrolled 37 students, and a short program on Nutrition and Food Engineering enrolled 20 U.S. students and 40 UFV students. Moreover, 1,440 UFV students were benefited with free English classes and around 10,000 TOEFL ITP places were offered. The costs of the exams were covered by the Brazilian government as part of the CSF program. Unfortunately, the CSF program has been discontinued by the new government, limiting UFV’s ability to sponsor future South to North student mobility and access to TOEFL exams.

The innovations had a sustainable impact in UFV. EMI was formally introduced and the ambassador program attracts new volunteers who implement mobility services: orientation to the university campus, explaining academic procedures, and helping to find adequate housing. This year, there were 80 volunteers.

Despite the heterogeneity of the ten winning proposals, the stakeholders that participated in their design and implementation are mainly agree on the benefits from participating in the program. The next section describes these benefits and sheds light on the difficulties the grantees have faced on the road towards sustainability.

III. FINDINGS

Analyzing the effects of the 100K program’s first competition entails two challenges. First, as some of the interviewees stressed, it is difficult to discern what changes that the winning HEIs experienced were product of the competition considering the small size of the grant and that there were different actors involved in internationalization efforts before the 100K. To avoid attribution problems, this evaluation examines what contributions the pilot has made; i.e., how the 100K program has influenced direct and indirect changes on its grantees.

In second place, the evaluation found that the contribution of the competition surpasses the time period in which the HEIs received the grant. Therefore, this section divides the pilot’s results into three distinctive stages (pre-funding, implementation and post-funding) to facilitate assessment. It also differentiates the effect the pilot had on the HEIs’ capacity from the effect on the students. Finally, it presents the different barriers LAC HEIs face to achieve higher levels of student mobility.

3.1 RESULTS FOR THE WINNING HEIS

As shown in Annexes 1 to 3, more than half of the winning HEIs achieved sustainable results vis-a-vis the objectives in their proposals. Eight out of ten institutions fully implemented all the proposed innovations. A year after the grant ended, three HEIs reported to have continued all the innovations, and three partially maintained them. The competition’s goal was capacity building, and the grants stimulated positive results in increasing political support and engagement in student mobility, catalyzing new investments, identifying institutional needs and weaknesses, developing skills to improve services for international students, and increasing or strengthening partnerships between HEIs. It was understood that in most cases the capacity-related innovations were laying the foundation during the grant period for future increases in student mobility, and results in this indicator were as expected. Only UGTO achieved an increase directly related to the innovations in the 100K grant, three HEIs maintained the average number of students they received the year the grant period started, while in the remaining

HEIs the number decreased, for internal reasons in three cases, and due to external factors in three cases.

Prefunding outcomes

Creation, formalization, and strengthening of partnerships

The competition required LAC HEIs to associate with at least one U.S. HEI to compete, and thus pushed HEIs in LAC to reach out and in some cases, forge new commitments. IFSEMG and UIQMRoo partnered with institutions with which they did not have any prior tie. FAE, EAFIT and TEC aimed to strengthen and formalize cooperation agreements with partner universities that were weak or had lapsed. The other five cases added innovations to their existing partnerships.

Box 2. Solidifying a consortium for student mobility in Queretaro

The 100K program pilot served as an incentive for HEIs from Queretaro to identify strengths and weaknesses and to consolidate relations and assure resources funding that before the grant were mainly supported by affinity connections between representatives from the participant institutions and industry.

In 1997 the WVU launched the “Industrial Outreach Program in Mexico” (IOPM) which consisted on sending engineering students who are close to graduation to Queretaro – Mexico’s industrial hub- to participate in internships during the summer. During the program, the U.S. students are assigned teams in which they have to interact day-to-day with engineering students of eight local universities and develop real-life projects that companies assign to them, helping students enhance their professional competitiveness while learning to live and interact with peers from another cultural background.

Throughout the program’s existence, the WVU and the HEIs in Queretaro have worked with 21 companies and five research centers that offer internship opportunities to the students. Moreover, the program is supported by Queretaro’s Council for Science and Technology (CONCYTEQ). At the beginning, CONCYTEQ signed an agreement with WVU to support the program with small stipends for local participants in the program and some local expenses. In 2013 the council upgraded the agreement with WVU to grant scholarships for the best engineering students from Queretaro’s participating universities so they could study one semester abroad at WVU. To select the students, CONCYTEQ also finances a 60-hours math course that all candidates have to take. As Angel Ramirez - CONCYTEQ’s director- states, the IOPM is “an example of inter-institutionality”.

In spite of the long history of CONCYTEQ supporting the program, before the 100K program there was no formal agreement between the council and most of the participating HEIs. This situation represented a risk as the program could lose CONCYTEQ’s support if its director changed (Interview with Victor Muciño). The 100K program was taken as an opportunity by the IOPM’s coordinators to formalize the HEIs partnership with CONCYTEQ and secure its long-term assistance (Interview with Gonzalo Macías). Consequently, CONCYTEQ agreed to support the IOPM with a fixed amount of one million Mexican pesos each year (Interview with Angel Ramirez).

Investment and engagement of authorities

The nature of the competition required the grantees to think outside the box and seek for ideas on how to strengthen the HEIs’ main areas in charge of promoting student mobility; in nine out of ten cases⁷ the

⁷ The only exception was the “Industrial Outreach Program” in Queretaro (Mexico) which was managed by Victor Muciño from the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Faculty of the University of West Virginia (UWV), Gonzalo

International Relations (IIRR) Office was at the center of the process. In six cases, authorities were reported to be actively involved in the implementation of the innovations⁸, and in eight cases faculty members from other departments were involved in the design of the innovations, creating new collaboration opportunities among departments.

During the elaboration of the proposals, the ten HEIs agreed to commit financially to their implementation, with some outstanding examples. The financial investment of two of the HEIs matched the grant. UGTO and EAFIT investments were nearly double the PoA grant, and UFV spent more than USD 90,000 of its own resources by the end of the grant period.

Apart from financial counterpart support, HEI staff developing the innovation proposals received the support of their institutions' academic and administrative authorities in different forms, including staff time and human resources. Four IIRR Offices were granted extra budgets to hire assistants and consent to spend work hours developing the proposal.

Development of professional skills

Writing and processing the proposal was a challenge for five of the grantees, and the process built their capacity. Although the HEI staff had experience writing scientific projects, they were not familiar with the type of proposal in this competition, with writing in English, and with the documentation and processes demanded by DOS. They recognized that the assistance from the staff at PoA and their U.S. partners shortened the learning curve and helped them develop the necessary knowhow on grant proposals and international funding for student mobility, which some now share with their peers at international conferences.

“You Americans are born with a grant proposal template in your mind (...) Understanding the mindset of submitting proposals. In Brazil, to ask for money is sinful; you are acknowledging that you are poor. U.S. people consider this as natural. We don't know how to write it, how to support the request with arguments (...). The skills we learned in the process were 100%. Lessons learned everywhere” (Interview with Areta Galat).

Implementation outcomes

Increased number of international students

In total, 30 MoUs were signed among all winning HEIs to put the innovations in place. However, these innovations did not necessarily translate in the short term into increasing student mobility. One grantee (UGTO) reported increases in the number of international students they receive a year after the grant ended. For others, the political and economic scenario of 2015/2016 was not favorable, especially in Brazil. During this period the value of the U.S. dollar rose, dissuading LAC students from traveling abroad. In Brazil, the Zika virus, the closure of the government's study abroad program, the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff and the spread of social protests had a strong negative impact on mobility figures both to and from the U.S. In 2016 FAE did not receive U.S. students and in UFV, the number of Brazilian students that went to the U.S. dropped from 50 to zero⁹.

Macias from the Engineering Faculty of the Universidad de Queretaro (UAQ) and Queretaro's Science and Technology Council (CONCYTEQ).

⁸ In the cases of UFV and USFQ, the involvement of authorities was not addressed in reports and interviews.

⁹ More information on the effect of Brazil's current scenario on HEIs can be found in Annex 4.

Establishment of new models and services for student mobility

The 100K provided the grantees the support to test strategies and structures to expand student mobility in their institutions. These projects can be divided into four types: 1) academic and professional opportunities that add value to the study abroad experience; 2) improvement of language proficiency amongst both visiting students and LAC faculty; 3) modernization of study abroad processes; and 4) visiting student services.

1) Academic and professional opportunities that add value to the study abroad experience: This type of project aimed to provide students with innovative courses (TEC, UFV, IFSEMG-Iracambi Research Center, EAFIT), research opportunities (UGTO, USFQ and EAFIT) and internships (UAQ and EAFIT) to enrich their academic experience and résumés. The grant enabled the establishment of new technologies and partnerships inside HEIs, among partner universities and with third parties in order to design, fund and put in place the activities. **These seven grantees have continued to support the implemented innovations and are investing in new activities inspired by the results from the 100K program, suggesting that this is the type of innovation with the greatest sustainable impact.**

In this type of project, three models that added value stood out as the ones with the highest potential for sustainability due to the potential to recruit paying students. First, HEIs agree that the most effective way to attract U.S. students is to introduce faculty-led courses in English in which U.S. and LAC students can interact with each other and improve their language skills (in the case of LAC students) while completing the credits towards their degrees. Currently, seven grantees are in the process of implementation or already executing faculty-led courses in English, as well as some co-taught and joint courses that include site visits to partner U.S. HEIs. In the case of EAFIT, the IIRR Office translated 40% of the undergraduate courses' syllabi into English. This effective practice expedited course validation for both national and international students.

Box 3. EMI programs in Brazil

Three Brazilian grantees have taken steps forward introducing English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in their institutions. The goal is to design and offer faculty courses in English. This demands to invest time and resources to study the type of courses students need, train professors and organize joint activities between U.S. and LAC students. In the case of FAE in Curitiba, the university is planning to launch ten courses in 2017 that students from any faculty can take (Interview with Simone Wien). Meanwhile, the UFV has partnered with Iowa State University, Texas A&M and Kentucky University to design four joint courses. The initiative has been very successful as the demand of UFV students for these courses doubles the places available, and the IIRR Office has been invited to present its mobility model at national conferences (Interview with Vladimir Oliveira Di Iorio). Likewise, the Iracambi Research Center is planning to compete in a new round of the 100K program to formalize joint courses with a research component with U.S. institutions (Interview with Binka Le Breton).

The second “added value” innovation is getting international – not just U.S. partner – accreditation for the LAC HEIs’ degrees. Currently, it is a 100K competition requirement that academic credit be mutually ensured between partners. Two winners from the first competition, UAQ and FAE¹⁰, went a step further in this regard and attributed their initiative to 100K support and activities. UAQ authorities from the Engineering Department invested in getting the ABET international accreditation to facilitate the validation of courses and credits between UAQ and U.S. universities. Similarly, FAE initiated the process

¹⁰ TEC is also in the process to get international accreditation for their Engineering Department, but the HEI started the process before the 100K program grant.

to get the AACSB accreditation for its Business School. According to FAE's MBA coordinator, the idea emerged from a NAFSA meeting attended by FAE representatives.

The third "added value" model is the adaptation of mobility programs to academic calendar differences between North and South. IFSEMG and TEC are adapting their short programs to breaks in the U.S. academic calendar. TEC created a new job position exclusively to manage short programs, and also has begun to offer summer programs in January so that both U.S. and Southern Cone students can enroll. As Patricia Montañó, a representative of this HEI, states: *"We are moving away from the from the traditional [mobility] scheme to broaden our mobility opportunities"*.

Although all three types of these innovations are promising, some challenges were identified in practice. In UGTO and USFQ, where joint research programs were offered, language and time constraints limited the interaction between faculty mentors and students (for more information see Box 1 and Annex 6). Likewise, courses that include students from other cultures require adequate staff preparation to integrate them in class dynamics. Another complication arose in EAFIT and IFSEMG/Iracambi Research Center, where some professors refused to adapt their courses to the needs of U.S. students for cultural identity and political reasons.

2) Improvement of language proficiency amongst both visiting students and LAC faculty: Short course innovation strategies had mixed results, because the time period does not allow for meaningful gains in fluency. Among the five HEIs that included Spanish, English or Portuguese language courses in their proposals, only FAE focused its innovation on a language program. Language courses have been shown to be effective to help international students gain the necessary skills to immerse themselves into a new academic experience. However, two of the HEIs (UIMQRoo and EAFIT) offering complementary language courses reported a high percentage of absenteeism. FAE's program was successful in generating students' interest in exploring different cultures. But, HEI representatives agreed that the program was too basic and short-term to have a meaningful benefit for students' language skills (Interview with Rogerio Tomas; Interview with Lydia Schwalb)¹¹. Another complicating factor is that several HEIs, including FAE, have a language center that receives a constant flow of paying students. Any innovations should build on, and not replicate, these existing structures, and adapt when they target a different population of students.

3) Modernization of internal study abroad processes: EAFIT, USFQ and USMA designed strategies to improve their internal processes, marketing plans (including digital advertising), data management systems, and availability of North-South staff exchanges. Although EAFIT's IIRR Office adopted new marketing strategies, this was not sufficient to overcome the barrier posed by the U.S. State Department travel warning (for more information see Box 4 and Annex 7 on EAFIT). Similarly, USMA drafted a restructuring plan for their IIRR Office. Nonetheless, the staff was not able to implement it due to lack of institutional support.

4) Visiting student services: Eight of the grantees included new student services with the aid of the grant. In five cases, the 100K program stimulated new structures so students can successfully adapt to the new cultural environment. In UGTO, FAE, EAFIT, the emphasis was on U.S. students only while IFSEMG and UFV aimed to benefit both inbound and outbound students.

Besides language courses, these services comprised cultural activities, mentoring programs and the extension of pre-departure orientation sessions to deliver more thorough information on what students

¹¹ For more information, see Annex 4 on FAE.

should expect abroad, what the HEIs expect from them, the problems they might face and the procedures to apply for exchange opportunities.

Postfunding outcomes¹²

The evaluation found significant evidence of HEIs' ongoing efforts to expand student mobility after receiving the 100K grant. Informants recognize these sustainable results as arising from and building on the 100K program support. With a few exceptions, grantees have taken steps forward in the growth and diversification of investments, and continue to strengthen their capacity through expansion and consolidation of contacts and institutional relations, enrichment of programs offered, and preparation of their staff to welcome international students.

Partnerships strengthened and new MoUs signed

For many, the program acted as a trial run in which the partnering HEIs assessed their compatibility and strengthened their trust in each other. Significantly, in three cases the strengthening of ties helped to dismantle some negative preconceptions that U.S. HEIs had about Latin America, their LAC partners, and the quality of their services (Interview with Brother Gregory Janaut; Interview with Liliana Gómez; Interview with Víctor Muciño).

After the grant period, six grantees have maintained their partnerships and are working in new projects together. Five grantees reported having accomplished eight agreements to co-create new mobility programs and double degrees¹³, and to apply together to funding competitions, including new rounds of the 100K program.

Increased awareness of institutional strengths and needs

Four grantees¹⁴ reported that the 100K program improved their understanding of the U.S. students' profile, including their needs and desires. The pilot encouraged HEIs to identify deficiencies (such as the lack of courses in English, housing options, and monitoring systems to track the progress of students and MoUs), which of their strengths could be capitalized on and how they could improve and expand their services and mobility programs.

Increased investment in student mobility

Positive results during the prefunding and implementation stage of the pilot encouraged authorities from seven HEIs to increase their investment in internationalization and student mobility. Three IIRR Offices have permanently expanded their staff – creating new positions to expedite their services. In UGTO and IFSEMG, authorities have committed for the first time to fully fund the innovations that were introduced with the grant. The financial engagement of these HEIs shows that the program has influenced authorities to recognize the benefits of investing in student mobility and to establish internationalization as a priority.

“The benefit is not only to bring students or professors. Today we acknowledge, the community acknowledges that internationalization is key. That is the most lasting impact. Especially in Latin America

¹² Data comes from eight HEIs, since post-funding data was not available from UIMQRoo and USFQ.

¹³ A double or joint degree is when two HEIs agree to grant students university degrees from each institution (each degree on a different subject) for completing a curriculum that was designed by the HEIs involved. The HEIs can be in different countries and they can require the students to take courses in both institutions. In some cases, professors from the involved HEIs travel to their partner institution to teach. In the latter case, students do not need to study abroad to get both certifications. This modality saves time for students interested in getting two degrees.

¹⁴ FAE, EAFIT, UAQ and USMA.

where internationalization is seen as something very expensive. They say that it is to 'travel for the sake of traveling'. Now it is seen as an investment" (Interview with Wagner Belo).

Visibility and improvement of institutional image

Eight HEIs identified increased institutional visibility as one of the most significant benefits from the 100K grant. In four cases, the IIRR Offices earned recognition among faculty members and their peers from other universities, who ask for their advice to apply to similar grants. The competition has added value to these offices and increased their participation in decision-making and institutional policy processes.

In addition, nine HEIs reported having received the recognition of the U.S. Embassy in their countries, which has pleased HEI authorities as a sign of prestige and publicity for their institutions. The support of the Embassy and of U.S. organizations such as DOS and PoA is perceived as a "seal of approval" that confirms the quality of their institutions. As Gonzalo Macias from UAQ stated, *"It [competing in the 100K program] is not about the money. The grant is very small. It is about the dissemination of our work. The fact that they [PoA and DOS] identify us as a winning institution; that is the main gain"*.

Engagement with student mobility HEI networks

PoA and the 100K program had a pivotal role in facilitating the introduction of the winning HEIs to spaces of discussion on student mobility and broadening their contact networks. During the grant period, the winning HEIs were invited to participate in international workshops convened by NAFSA. These workshops represented unique opportunities for them to share their breakthroughs and learn about good practices in student mobility. They also served as a platform to meet and have face-to-face interactions with representatives from other institutions.

Authorities from seven HEIs continue to support their IIRR Offices to attend events on internationalization and six of them are covering travel expenses so representatives can attend international conferences and fairs. PoA continues to facilitate meetings between them and U.S. HEIs, and has invited representatives from at least five of these HEIs from the first competition to evaluate current proposals for the 100K program and to participate in NAFSA's annual conferences. In Brazil, IFSEMG has gone a step further as the HEI now shares its best practices in student mobility through FRONTIER, a network with 41 Brazilian federal institutions (Interview with Wagner Belo).

3.2 THE 100K BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

Although the data on benefits for students is incomplete, some larger trends are apparent. Seven¹⁵ out of ten HEIs inquired about benefits to students and sought feedback on needs for improvement. Evaluation methods included surveys, and five also conducted interviews and/or asked students for testimonies and reports. Besides the quality of the services and innovations, the surveys aimed to track if the participants experienced any changes in their understanding of other cultures, their skills to engage with people from different cultures, and whether they gained a more global perspective on their careers. IFSEMG, USFQ and TEC in particular reported a significant increase in the students' acceptance of pluralistic educational environments, their ability to deal with situations in which they are out of their comfort zones and their proficiency in a non-native language.

Participation in the mobility programs often incited students' interest in learning about other cultures. Even when students were not able to travel, they spoke of benefiting from the day-to-day exchange with foreign peers and from webinars offered by the partnering HEIs. In the case of FAE's Portuguese

¹⁵ There is no data from student surveys in the cases of UFV, USMA and UIMQRoo.

summer program, its U.S. partner (Siena College) noticed a dramatic impact on their students' enthusiasm for international mobility; they continued exploration of other study abroad programs after visiting Brazil.

"We saw a higher rate in longer study abroad experiences. Almost half of the students went abroad after the program. They thought 'I can do this. I can survive and thrive in a different environment'. They went to Spain, Costa Rica, Belgium, Denmark. That was incredible. You don't see that. Sometimes they go abroad and that was it. They don't want to do it again. This is what you hope for; for them to begin developing a love for [other] cultures" (Interview with Brother Gregory Janaut).

Several students that were interviewed for the evaluation noted that participating in the mobility programs boosted their appeal in the labor market. The grant innovations exposed U.S. and LAC students to new professors, research laboratories, and work methodologies. Other students reported that they broadened their professional networks for future research, study and job opportunities. (See Annex 8 on a former student experience).

"It improved my overall resume. I put I was a 100K recipient and I noticed that the call back ratio increased. In job interviews I always get asked about my experience [in Colombia]. I know I am ahead of the other candidates" (Interview with a student from Purdue University, 2016).

"I used the experience to apply to [a] Fulbright [scholarship]. They saw my desire to understand more the Brazilian culture. I am going back to Brazil to teach English as a Foreign Language for ten months at a university. A language teacher from FAE helped me writing an evaluation on my performance (...) I knew I wanted to apply to the scholarship before going to FAE, so I told the professor and she said she would help me (...)" (Interview with former student from Siena College, 2016).

3.3 BARRIERS FOR STUDENT MOBILITY IN LAC

Stakeholders agree that there are four main barriers that stand out as the most prominent and recurrent whenever LAC HEIs develop a student mobility policy or program.

- 1) In first place, there is the language barrier between LAC and the U.S., which is a greater barrier for U.S. students. Throughout LAC, university students are highly motivated and given incentives to study English as a second language. For instance, in three of the winning HEIs – that are also private universities – it is mandatory for students to achieve a high level of proficiency in English in order to graduate¹⁶.

The language barrier to receiving U.S. students is stronger for Brazilian HEIs because Portuguese programs are much less common in the U.S. than Spanish ones. Moreover, there is a perception among LAC HEIs that U.S. students are not willing to learn a second language and that they prefer to travel to English-speaking countries.

"They want to come to Brazil but they don't have the culture of learning a second language (...) Only Iowa University has a Portuguese program and they don't send many students. Their Portuguese is too basic and they can't follow classes." (Interview with Alessandra Todd).

¹⁶ TEC, EAFIT and USFQ.

- 2) A second obstacle is the preconception in the U.S. of LAC as a poor and insecure region, which is compounded by the travel warning U.S. State Department has imposed over several LAC countries over the years, especially Mexico and Colombia. U.S. universities and insurance companies generally are not aware that the travel warning does not always apply to the whole country, but only to specific regions. Therefore, LAC HEIs struggle to persuade U.S. institutions into trusting them with their students. As one of the Mexican interviewees noted, this travel warning reveals conflicts in U.S. policy, because it is provided by the same entity that founded the 100K program pilot (DOS).

Box 4. The effects of the travel warning in Colombia

One of the grantees most affected by the U.S. travel warning is EAFIT in Medellin, Colombia. Because of the history of violence produced by the internal conflict since the 1960s, Colombia is perceived as an unsafe country to visit. However, the travel warning does not apply to the whole country as cities like Bogota, Cali, Barranquilla, Cartagena and Medellin are exempt from this tag (Department of State, 2016).

Aware of the negative image Colombia has, EAFIT's IIRR Office decided to invest into creating a marketing plan that included a media campaign to advertise scholarships that were being offered as part of the 100K program. The office sent print material to 156 U.S. institutions through mail. Unfortunately, only eight HEIs replied from which four directly said they could not offer the scholarships among their students because of the warning. Staff members observe that, unlike European institutions, U.S. HEIs have a deep fear of building relations with Colombia. These worries are reinforced by internal mandates that hamper agreements.

"But, when you see the mobility institutional frameworks, you find that there are no facilities. For example, the insurance policies in U.S. HEIs does not allow them to send students to countries with travel warning. [T]here are many representatives that do not know Colombia. In Denver there was a representative that said that he denied a faculty mobility agreement with Colombian professors because the university could not send them here. I told them: 'Yes you can'. As a country we need more strategies to build a different image on the country" (Interview with Marcela Wolff).

Worries about security even affect their partner, Purdue University. Purdue has chosen Colombia as the country that the university will partner with for the coming years and it is the only place outside the U.S. where Purdue has an office. In 2015, Purdue planned to send 350 students from the marching band to play in Medellin's Flower Festival. However, 80 students did not travel because their parents would not give them permission to travel to Colombia (Interview with Liliana Gomez).

Diminishing the reservations U.S. HEIs have over security in Colombia is still the main barrier to receiving U.S. students in EAFIT. Nonetheless, the IIRR Office hopes that the government's efforts to accomplish a peace agreement will help turn things around.

- 3) A third limitation is the cost of student mobility programs. Apart from the travel and living expenses, students need to be able to cover the expenses of their tuition in the institution they want to visit. This represents an extreme difficulty for LAC students because the cost of tuition in the U.S. can reach thousands of dollars per semester. Without an agreement for a tuition waiver or support from their national government or their HEI, this high expense discourages LAC students from choosing a mobility program in the U.S.

- 4) The fourth and final barrier is the difference in the academic calendars between the North and South. In first place, semesters and summer periods in the South Cone do not coincide with those from the North. This pushes the study abroad exchanges to offer mainly shorter programs over summer or winter breaks. Semester- or year-long programs can cause students to lose a semester of credit in their home institution if they travel. A former U.S. student that participated in IOPM commented on this,

“One of the main difficulties to promote the IOPM in the U.S. is how the engineering study plan is designed. If you do not take the courses you are supposed to take in each semester you are left behind. The curricula is designed so courses come one behind the other...” (Interview with Alexis Robertson).

U.S. students prioritize those programs that offer courses that fit their study plans and that have the necessary accreditation to ensure that their institutions will acknowledge the number of credits they take abroad. In order to have successful mobility programs, these demands need to be taken into account.

These barriers reveal that student mobility dynamics in the Americas are influenced by cultural, political, economic and institutional structures that ultimately shape how education is delivered in each context. However, the evaluation found that eight out of ten of the winning HEIs were able to experience positive breakthroughs and pilot their own solutions to these challenges.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Most of the LAC HEIs receiving this first round of 100K grants gained enough capacity and political support within the HEI to achieve sustainable growth in the resources devoted to student mobility and higher priority in the HEIs’ internationalization policies. In seven cases, the grant acted as a positive stimulus to continue to develop partnerships, services and study abroad initiatives for both North- and South-bound students. Nevertheless, there were limitations found in these gains: low diversification of funding sources and partnerships, fears about the region’s safety and security, and internal power dynamics that limit the HEIs’ capacity to increase mobility numbers.

Following the proposed logic model for the 100K program (see Figure 1 in p. 4), this section summarizes results among these 100K LAC grantees, focusing on the objective and outcomes that are expected to contribute to the impact and goal of the program. However, the evaluation did provide partial evidence on contributions to both the impact and the goal:

IMPACT: Expanded preparation of Western Hemisphere post-secondary students to have the language, experience and cross-cultural skills necessary to be successful global leaders in the 21st century workforce

The findings noted promising but partial data on the expected benefits for students from study abroad; 100K monitoring and evaluation systems are planned to collect more complete data in the future.

GOAL: Expanded access to & engagement in study abroad programs among Western Hemisphere Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for a larger and more diverse body of students

The findings indeed show expanded engagement among HEIs, either through new MOUs or through increased support within the grantee HEI. Nonetheless, the focus of the competition was capacity development to enable increased mobility, and these partnerships did not always translate immediately into a sustainable growth in the number of ingoing and outgoing students. In 2016, only UGTO reported

having increased the number of international students it received as a consequence of the partnerships and innovations implemented through the grant.

The following subsections explore the chief lessons from this first competition on how small financial contributions can best promote sustainability and capacity building for student mobility, on PoA's role in assisting the grantees to reach the expected outcomes, and on the remaining challenges for these LAC HEIs in promoting study abroad.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increased sustainable exchange and cooperation partnerships among Western Hemisphere HEIs

The program was effective in promoting LAC and U.S. HEI partnerships to implement the proposed innovations. When the grant period ended in 2015, a total of 30 new MoUs had been signed. By 2016, six of eight¹⁷ LAC HEIs had maintained their initial partnerships and five continued seeking new agreements, although at a lower rate than before.

In most cases, formal partnerships facilitated reductions in tuition costs and secured additional financial and human resources to improve the management and overall quality of student mobility programs.

Sustainability of the innovations is a key challenge, that is, the ability of the HEIs to maintain and expand the innovations without the aid of the 100K. Three HEIs continued the grant-funded innovations, while another three were able to partially sustain them. What factors enabled the innovations to survive the end of PoA funding? The evaluation identified four effective practices:

- High counterpart investment from grantees: Three HEIs whose counterpart funding surpassed the amount received from the grant have scaled up their initiatives (UGTO, IFSEMG, UFV). Once the 100K program ended, UGTO and IFSEMG committed to cover all expenses to keep the innovations working. These resources can come in different forms: financial, in-kind, staff time, additional staff and consultants, scholarships, etc.
- Lowering tuition costs: The cost of study abroad programs is a significant barrier for LAC students. The HEIs with most sustainable mobility programs such as UAQ and UGTO have been able to negotiate tuition waivers and create scholarships for their students for mobility opportunities.
- Working with diverse international partners: Starting a new service or program with one U.S. HEI can help an HEI secure students for the first pilot study abroad experiences. However, especially when the institution is from a country with travel warning, as shown in the case of EAFIT, UAQ and FAE, other U.S. HEIs are not apt to be receptive to a partnership, and the LAC HEIs becomes too dependent on their U.S. partner, restraining the expansion of the study abroad program to the capacity of the partner to send students to LAC. The experiences of USFQ, UIQRoo, UFV and UGTO suggest that opening mobility programs to diverse HEIs (former and potential new partners), investing in promotional activities, and working in consortiums is an effective strategy to attract more international students and expand student mobility.
- Enabling students to progress towards their academic and professional goals: The fear of getting behind in their career path discourages many students from studying abroad. Initiatives that clearly moved them forward have been sustained after the grant period and/or increased the demand from international students (UGTO, UFV, IFSEMG, USFQ and UAQ). These innovations focused on an academic subject and provided courses, as well as research and internship opportunities, to enhance students' academic and professional CVs and trajectories.

¹⁷ No information on post-final report results from UIMQRoo and USFQ.

Moreover, offering academic courses for credit in English was a well-received strategy to attract U.S. students afraid to fall behind in their credits as well as to prepare their own students to follow classes in English to prepare for study abroad. In addition, three HEIs are working on international accreditation to expand their potential for partnerships for student mobility.

The negative cases of failure to sustain the innovations reinforce these findings. For example, entrusting or isolating internationalization activities to the IIRR Office only is a symptom of low investment, and made it difficult to offer academic benefits to incoming students. Other failures to follow these good practices entailed negative consequences for the capacity of the HEIs to replicate, enlarge and diversify mobility innovations, as shown in the cases of UIQRoo and USMA, and in a lower extent, EAFIT, TEC and FAE.

OUTCOME 1: Increased investment by HEIs, LAC governments, & private sector in new effective strategies and models for study abroad, including human, financial, and in-kind resources

Student mobility requires a long list of expenditures for HEIs to make sure international students get a high quality education and that they are able to navigate safely in another culture and country. Investment of an applicant's own resources in study abroad initiatives is essential in the 100K competition criteria, given the relatively small size of the 100K grants. These investments are a strong signal of institutional engagement on making study abroad a permanent and accessible service.

The evaluation found that a year after the 100K pilot ended, **seven grantees increased their budget for internationalization activities, four have expanded their IIRR Office's staff, and seven continued to fund dissemination and capacity-building activities on study abroad. These results are evidence that the 100K grant had a positive effect on leveraging the level of engagement of winning HEIs in student mobility.**

What drives institutions to invest in innovations in student mobility for the long-run? The evaluation identified three grantmaking practices that were important factors in enabling these small leveraging grants to produce significant results:

1. Setting conditions on the use of the grant: The competition guidelines request cost-sharing from the applicants and restrict the grant's use exclusively to the innovations. These "leveraging" guidelines push grantees to mobilize the necessary resources to design innovations and build institutional infrastructure to benefit an increasing number of national and international students. According to Marcela Wolff from EAFIT, *"It [the program] stands out because, although it gives us resources It demands that you invest. It aims for the creation of sustainable models"*. However, some informants criticized the program's decision to allow winners to allocate a percentage of the grant in travel expenses. For them, the size of the grant can only cover the expenditures of a small number of students, undermining the ability to make the needed investments to increase student mobility sustainably.
2. Creation of strategic alliances inside HEIs: The seven cases that achieved ongoing internal support involved their authorities as well as faculty members in developing the proposal to increase the chances that the HEIs would continue to invest in student mobility. Deans and professors had constant contact with international students, especially those involved in research at the host HEIs. These students can serve as a network in the future of international contacts for the HEIs to build on to facilitate future partnerships. Involving various areas and leaders inside the institutions also makes it easier to disseminate the

achievements of the mobility initiatives and to have an influence on the campus culture to increase student mobility in the future.

3. Publicity for their institutions: HEIs representatives perceived the exposure for the winning HEIs to U.S. government institutions and international conferences as a “vote of confidence” that earned their institutions a higher level of visibility in their states and countries. This publicity has been a key incentive for HEIs to sustain the innovations and has also served to spread the word among fellow HEIs who want to follow suit and apply to the program.

OUTCOME 2: Increased capacity of LAC and U.S. HEIs to develop and administer effective study abroad programs

The results show that most of the winning LAC HEIs increased their capacity, developing new management skills, innovating in their study abroad services and establishing student mobility in their institution’s agenda. As analyzed in section III, the different stages of the 100K competition entailed diverse learning opportunities for the winning HEIs. During the pre-funding stage, six grantees reported having become more knowledgeable on how to prepare proposals to request for international funding. Once they were selected as winners, eight grantees established new programs, courses and services for international students, five introduced language proficiency courses, and three explored strategies to improve their internal processes. In the post-funding stage, five HEIs reported having a better understanding of needs and gaps on their services, and one HEI disseminated information on their study abroad program in a national network of educational institutions.

During Competition 1, three elements boosted the grantees’ capacity-building process:

1. Autonomy and freedom for trial and error: The program respected the heterogeneity of the cohort and allowed each grantee to explore their own solutions to the barriers LAC institutions face to promote student mobility in the continent. The 100K acted as a laboratory for innovations in which HEIs had to rapidly adapt to the program’s short time-frame to create, fund and put in place their projects.
2. Flexibility and availability of PoA staff members for technical assistance: A significant majority of the grantees stated that PoA staff members were a key support resource. Not limiting themselves to an oversight role, PoA representatives ensured fluid communication with LAC HEIs so that grantees could seek their advice and guidance at any stage of the program. This institutional openness was crucial in times of crisis in which grantees encountered problems such as visas and U.S. government administrative processes (for examples, in the cases of IFSEMG and TEC). Grantees came out of these episodes having learned how to deal with these processes and viewing PoA as an ally with whom they shared the same goals.
3. Workshops: One of the program’s most commented benefits was participation in regional workshops on internationalization and student mobility as effective venues for networking and learning, and half stressed the importance of continue participating in them. However, only FAE implemented mobility solutions learned at the workshops. Informants pointed out that the workshops showcase diverse cases, but these are not always applicable to their HEIs. This challenge does not undermine the value grantees give to these events.

Remaining challenges and suggestions to address them

Grantees agree that, although the monetary contribution they received was minor, the 100K grant acted as a seed to generate interest, form or strengthen partnership, and put into place innovations to

enhance student mobility. LAC HEIs now face the challenge on how to move on, consolidate and expand the introduced innovations. In this post-funding stage, the grantees have encountered three challenges.

The first challenge relates to the diversification of U.S. partners. Some grantees were overly dependent on longstanding U.S. partners and vulnerable to any economic or political downfall their partner might encounter, affecting the sustainability of their innovations. Getting more partners on board is easier said than done. As described earlier, fears on security and economic issues, plus the cultural differences like the language, reduces the attractiveness of LAC as an academic destination. Some informants noted that convincing U.S. HEIs to visit LAC institutions is a difficult task. In their experience, U.S. HEIs see LAC institutions as a source of postgraduate students rather than as potential partners for bi-directional student mobility, making their relationship a one-way street. To change this dynamic, LAC HEIs need to travel and/or make key improvements to their marketing, both of which require additional investment that some HEIs, especially small and public ones, are not in the position to make.

A second challenge is gaining local sources of funding. With the exception of UAQ, grantees have not engaged the private sector as a possible funding source, even when the visiting students are involved in projects that directly benefit companies, and there were no examples of engaging local foundations. On the other hand, various LAC countries have public entities that grant scholarships for postgraduate education abroad and that over the last years have introduced mobility grants for North-bound undergraduate students, facilitating significant increases in student mobility. CSF in Brazil (although this one is right now under a restructuring process) and the Alianza del Pacifico between Chile, Colombia, Peru and Mexico are prime examples of such large-scale government programs. Advocating with LAC governments to support their innovations as a host for international students could represent an alternative path for grantees to attain additional funding sources.

The third and final challenge are the power structures inside LAC HEIs. IIRR Offices rarely have a place in decision making spaces within universities, even if there is an internationalization policy in place. Some IIRR representatives stated that they frequently encountered miscommunication issues and conflicts of interest with faculty members who arrange their own mobility agreements and bypass the procedures IIRR Offices have installed for MoUs. This situation makes it harder for these offices to organize processes and coordinate HEI-wide mobility efforts. In this round, UIMQRoo and USMA were negatively affected by conflicts between the project leaders and the universities' presidents. As a result, their mobility projects were abandoned in spite of showing positive results. These issues demonstrate the importance of engaging authorities and diverse academic areas to assure the continuity of mobility initiatives.

Suggestions emerged from the evaluation for PoA to help LAC ex-grantees address these challenges. The suggestions for the first two challenges support the key role of PoA's support for regional networking and learning.

To broaden U.S. partnerships: This cohort of 100K grantees expressed a general desire for PoA to help them attract more exchange partnerships with U.S. higher education institutions. Several suggested that PoA facilitate meetings and other contacts with U.S. institutions, and cover the participation fees of ex-grantees in regional and international events. A common theme on this topic was the suggestion that PoA increase efforts to improve perceptions among U.S. HEIs of the legitimacy of LAC HEIs, so that student mobility to LAC is seen as beneficial and safe. One informant suggested improving the functionality of the "Meet the Winners" pages on the website as a helpful boost to the perceived legitimacy of past and current grantees. The practice of involving ex-grantees as judges in 100K competitions was perceived as a positive contribution to perceived legitimacy.

To improve sustainability and gain local sources of funding: PoA could invite ex-grantees to regional workshops with targeted sessions that focus on sustainability strategies. This group of 100K grantees was not successful in securing counterpart support from local companies, even when the student mobility research projects or internships clearly benefited the companies, as in the case of UAQ. PoA private sector partners could sponsor one or more sessions on joint HEI-private sector engagement focusing on sustainability -- lessons learned from strategies to secure counterpart funding from local partner companies.

To ensure ongoing support from power structures inside LAC HEIs: Certification of support and proof of involvement of the higher authorities in applicant HEIs should continue to be a key criterion in the 100K competitions.

To include follow-up activities for former grantees: PoA could offer capacity-building activities to former grantees, providing tips and lessons on sustainability to maximize the impact of the initial grant investment. The program's recruitment strategies for workshops and webinars could also include HEIs' authorities and professors. This approach could contribute to make capacity-building for sustainable mobility programs an area of interest for a more diverse group of actors inside HEIs.

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