

# IESALC

# Annual Report

# 2023



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### 2023

#### UNESCO – a global leader in education

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners and responding to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.



#### The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



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# Introduction

The [UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (IESALC) is a specialized agency within the United Nations system dedicated to enhancing higher education. Through its biennial work program and budget, approved by the [UNESCO General Conference](#), IESALC strives to contribute to the improvement of higher education in Member States, aligning with the objectives of sustainable development.

In 2023, IESALC has been at the forefront of promoting change in higher education policies at both national and institutional levels through three key elements: political dialogue and consensus-building via international regulations and recommendations, dissemination of evidence and data to inform public policy discussions, and capacity building for all higher education stakeholders.

As a catalyst for political dialogue and consensus-building, IESALC has played a pivotal role in advocating for international regulations and recommendations that support quality and sustainable higher education. This has involved participation in international conferences, preparation of reports and recommendations, and collaboration with international and national organizations to strengthen higher education. For instance, IESALC has actively contributed to the follow-up of the Third World Higher Education Conference, organized by UNESCO, by helping to develop recommendations and policies aimed at improving higher education.

Moreover, IESALC has been instrumental in disseminating evidence and data to inform public policy discussions related to higher education. This has encompassed the publication of reports and studies that analyze trends and challenges in higher education, as well as the presentation of data and statistics reflecting the current state of higher education in the region. As an example, IESALC has published a report that examines the situation of higher education in the Latin America region, including trends in enrollment, quality of education, and employability of graduates.

Lastly, IESALC has focused on building capacity of representatives from all higher education stakeholders in 2023, including students, professors, institution administrators, and policy leaders. This has involved organizing courses and workshops to train stakeholders on topics such as sustainable higher education, quality of education, and employability. For example, IESALC has conducted a workshop on sustainable higher education, featuring international and local experts, and providing participants with practical and theoretical training.



[UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)



[UNESCO General Conference](#)

# Policy Dialogue

UNESCO IESALC has made significant progress in promoting policy dialogue and partnerships in higher education throughout 2023. **The institute's efforts have focused on achieving the entry into force of the [2019 Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean \(2019\)](#) (RC), establishing a framework for its implementation, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders to address critical issues in higher education.**

One of the primary objectives of IESALC's policy dialogue and partnerships teams has been to promote the speedy signing and ratification of the 2019 Regional Convention. By leveraging the opportunities presented by meetings convened by IESALC, the teams have worked towards securing the support of Member States, ultimately leading to the entry into force of the RC. This milestone achievement sets the stage for improved quality and comparability of studies, diplomas, and degrees of higher education among ratifying states.

**To ensure the effective implementation of the RC, IESALC has outlined and adopted a strategy that includes the establishment of a dedicated Committee.** The institute has convened the Committee for its first ordinary session, during which the 2023-2024 work plan was presented and fully endorsed by the newly appointed Committee. The second session focused on presenting the initial results of the work plan's implementation,

**One of the primary objectives of IESALC's policy dialogue and partnerships teams has been to promote the speedy signing and ratification of the 2019 Regional Convention.**

demonstrating IESALC's commitment to translating policy into action. Another key objective for IESALC in 2023 has been the constitution of an organization around the Buenos Aires Convention, including the establishment of a network of recognition centers from the region. This initiative aims to create a functional organization that can effectively implement the objectives of the Convention, promoting regional cooperation and facilitating the recognition of qualifications.

In addition to its work on the RC, IESALC has provided technical assistance to Member States, such as Costa Rica, in revising legal texts related to the recognition and equivalence of university degrees and titles granted by foreign higher education institutions. This support underscores the institute's role as a trusted partner in shaping higher education policies at the national level.

**IESALC, once again, has championed stakeholder engagement in the preparatory process of the [Follow-Up Meeting of the Regional Conference of Higher Education \(CRES+5\)](#).**

**By providing logistical and technical support, the Institute has empowered stakeholders to have greater control over the conference's planning and execution, fostering a more inclusive and participatory approach to policy dialogue.**

As in former occasions, IESALC has contributed to making of this meeting the higher education event with the largest attendance in the region. By providing logistical and technical support, the Institute has empowered stakeholders to have greater control over the conference's planning and execution, fostering a more inclusive and participatory approach to policy dialogue.

Looking ahead, **IESALC has identified several areas for further policy dialogue and partnerships.**

These include **promoting South-South cooperation** in higher education, **greening higher education, transforming higher education as part of the United Nations Transforming Education Summit follow-ups**, and **empowering youth as leading agents of change in higher education.**

By fostering collaboration among countries in the Global South, IESALC seeks to share best practices, pool resources, and address common challenges in higher education. The institute's focus on greening higher education reflects its commitment to promoting sustainable development and aligning

**To support this process, IESALC developed a historical and advocacy document that was widely disseminated within the region, with 341 downloads and 1,207 consultations.**

the sector with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Finally, by empowering youth as leading agents of change in higher education, IESALC aims to amplify the voices and actions of young people and ensure that their perspectives contribute to policy decisions and shape the future of higher education in the region.

## Key achievements

### Regional initiatives

The UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) has made significant progress in **promoting policy dialogue and partnerships** throughout 2023. The institute's efforts have focused on the **ratification and implementation of the Buenos Aires Convention, the preparation for the CRES+5 conference, and the establishment of a network of recognition centers in the region.**

One of the key achievements of IESALC in 2023 was the entry into force of the Buenos Aires Convention, a crucial step towards improving the recognition of higher education qualifications in Latin America and the Caribbean. To support this process, IESALC developed a **historical and advocacy document** that was widely disseminated within the region, with 341 downloads and 1,207 consultations. The institute also organized various sensitization activities to promote the signing and ratification of the Convention, including virtual and in-person events in Spain, Venezuela, and Mexico.



In April 2023, **IESALC hosted the first session of the Committee for the Buenos Aires Convention in Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay.** This meeting brought together representatives from the six ratifying countries and approximately 10 observer countries from the region. The Committee elected its members, approved the Rules of Procedure, and adopted the Convention's Implementation Plan for 2023-2024. IESALC played a crucial role in the preparation and execution of this meeting, drafting the necessary documents, issuing invitations, and providing logistical support.

Another significant achievement in 2023 was **the establishment of a formal network of recognition centers in the region, the CINALC.** This network, which includes centers of 19 countries, aims to operationalize the precepts and obligations subscribed by State Parties of the RC, **to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices related to the recognition of HE qualifications.** IESALC has been actively involved in the coordination and support of this network, contributing to the strengthening of regional cooperation in this area.

In addition to these efforts, IESALC was actively engaged in the preparation for the CRES+5 conference, a follow-up to the 2018 Regional Conference on Higher Education, organized with the support of the Government of Brazil. The institute supported the organization of preparatory

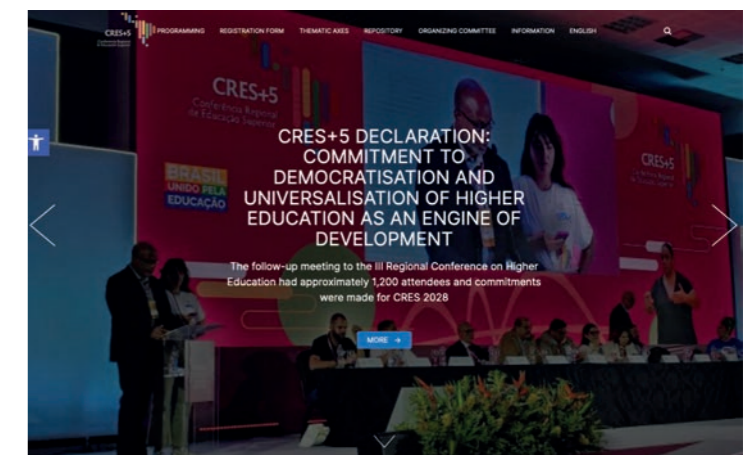
meetings in Cordoba (Argentina), Puebla (Mexico) and Asunción (Paraguay). IESALC also provided support to the working groups covering all the thirteen Axes of the conference, facilitating public consultations and contributing to the refinement of the texts and proposals, as well as the final Declaration. More information on the CRES+5 can be found in the dedicated conference website: <https://cres2018mas5.org>

### International initiatives

**The institute has established over 60 new partnerships across all five UNESCO regions,** collaborating with various UNESCO teams, UN agencies, Member States, institutional partners, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

**A notable partnership was formed with the Global Student Forum (GSF),** which involved a three-layer collaboration for systematic youth engagement and leadership in higher education decision-making. UNESCO IESALC reserved an Observer seat in the Governing Board for GSF delegates, assigned Youth Advisors for major projects, and committed to co-designing institutional strategies for youth integration. In December 2023, **UNESCO IESALC signed a MoU for the South-South University Cooperation Network "Greening-with-STI (Science, Technology and Innovation)" Pilot Project,** which was

**IESALC provided support to the working groups covering all the thirteen Axes of the conference CRES+5.**





launched during COP28 in Dubai – an interagency cooperation with the United Nations Office of South-South Cooperation and a multilateral project involving higher education institutions from four Global South regions. **The project aims to promote higher education institutions' contributions to SDG13 and facilitate innovation exchanges and solution transfers among Global South contexts.**



UNESCO IESALC also **co-organized the “Greening higher education: Transforming competences and practices” session at COP28**, attended by 90 participants in person and online. **The event highlighted the roles and responsibilities of higher education in achieving the SDGs**, with a focus on integrating sustainability competencies into degree programs and sharing best practices.

On the International Day of Education 2023, UNESCO IESALC organized a high-level and in-person event at the United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ), **attracting 600 participants and launching Global Mapping on student innovation in learning**. On International Women's Day, **UNESCO IESALC organized a fireside chat to explore intersectional challenges and innovative solutions for female participation in higher education**. On World Youth Skills Day, **UNESCO IESALC collaborated with the UN Youth Office on the Youth-Led Innovation Festival** in presenting how higher education transforms to achieve the future that young people want.

The institute also participated in the **2023 ECOSOC Youth Forum**, organizing a side event on **South-South Dialogue with 608 participants and forming an official delegation to amplify the role**

**of higher education in decision-making**. During the SDG Action Weekend, **UNESCO IESALC hosted a high-level and in-person side event at the UNHQ, emphasizing the importance of partnerships in achieving the SDGs** and promoting the dynamic role of civil society in driving progress. **The institute also participated in the YOUNGA 2023 session, focusing on the future of education and the pivotal role of youth in shaping a new social contract.**

**UNESCO IESALC conducted two sessions during the Misk Global Forum 2023** in Saudi Arabia, attended by 60 participants. The sessions focused on youth innovation in transforming education, digital learning, and equipping students with necessary skills.

**The Young People on Transforming Education Project (YPTEP) investigated youth engagement in innovative learning**, conducting a global mapping of 227 cases from 42 countries and organizing intergenerational dialogues across all UNESCO regions. The project directly impacted 2,013 people through surveys, thematic dialogues, and five regional dialogues across all UNESCO regions.

In Nigeria, **UNESCO IESALC implemented the Innovation to Transform Education Training (ITET Nigeria), a capacity-building component of the United Nations Global Youth Initiative that UNESCO IESALC leads on the “Policy and Project Implementation Skills”**. The program included a targeted survey, a dialogue with Nigerian youth on EdTech, and an on-site training in Lagos with 50 participants.

Finally, **UNESCO IESALC established the BIBO Network**, engaging approximately 90 young people as co-creators and partners in transforming education. The network, initiated at the 2023 ECOSOC Youth Forum, has actively involved youth in various activities throughout the year.

# Capacity Development

Through its capacity development initiatives, UNESCO IESALC aims to strengthen the competencies of higher education institutions and all agents linked to education, enabling them to transform society and build a sustainable and equitable future. In 2023, UNESCO IESALC's capacity development activities have been strategically aligned with the Institute's strategic directions and the Value Streams outlined in the UNESCO **IESALC Strategic Plan 2022-2025**. The primary objectives of these initiatives are as follows:

- 1. Fostering dialogue and exchange of best practices:** UNESCO IESALC supports national higher education systems and their institutions through a platform for dialogue and the sharing of good practices to drive regional progress in higher education and, consequently, favoring the strengthening of the right of HE and its accessibility to all. By facilitating these exchanges, the Institute seeks to strengthen the right to higher education and promote its accessibility to all.
- 2. Promoting knowledge democratization and inclusive societies:** UNESCO IESALC is committed to promoting the democratization of knowledge and fostering more inclusive societies. By incorporating gender equity perspectives into the design and implementation of all its programs and projects, the Institute contributes to the creation of fairer and more equitable educational environments.
- 3. Guiding university governance teams towards sustainability:** UNESCO IESALC provides knowledge, technical assistance, and solutions to support the implementation of sustainability principles within universities. By helping



governance teams understand the opportunities offered by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the steps required to align with the 2030 Agenda, the Institute promotes the incorporation of sustainability principles through governance, management, and university culture.

- 4. Promoting active teaching and learning:** UNESCO IESALC encourages the adoption of active teaching and learning approaches that reinforce the autonomy and independence of teachers and students. By leveraging technologies as support tools and promoting innovation and research, the Institute aims to strengthen the digital skills of teachers, students, and technical staff in the 21st century. The promotion of hybrid models further supports lifelong learning opportunities.
- 5. Empowering agents of change:** UNESCO IESALC strives to empower teachers and students to become agents of change by promoting initiatives that foster equality, respect for the environment, and poverty eradication. By equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills, the Institute contributes to the creation of a more sustainable and equitable society.

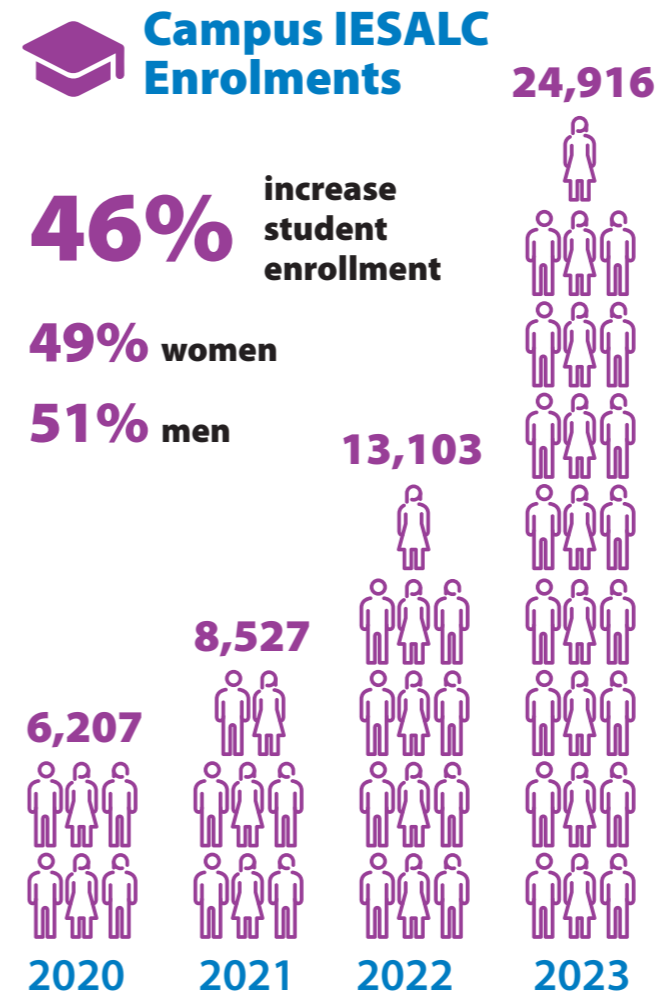
## Key achievements

In 2023, the institute's efforts have focused on enhancing its digital learning environment, the **Campus IESALC**, and delivering **targeted training programs to strengthen higher education institutions' abilities to address the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century**. In 2023 we've reached **24,916 total learners worldwide** with **100,780 training hours offered**, and more than 730 mentoring hours developed with experts and more than 15,348 certificates issued, with an average satisfaction of 4.85 out of 5. The geographical distribution of our users can be seen in the following map, where 93% come from Latin America and the Caribbean, 5% from Europe, 1% from Asia and Oceania, and 1% from Africa. The countries with the highest number of registered users are Peru (29%), Mexico (12%) and Argentina (10%).

One of the key achievements of IESALC in 2023 was **the design of a competency framework for higher education in Latin America and the**

**Caribbean**. This flexible and contextualized tool serves as a guiding framework for capacity building in the region, aligning with pre-existing frameworks from UNESCO and other relevant organizations while addressing the specific needs and challenges of the region. **The framework encompasses five dimensions of knowledge: Learning and Teaching, Management and Governance, Social Leadership, Research, and Quality Assurance.**

To support the implementation of this framework, IESALC has updated its course catalog, **offering a wide range of open courses in four languages: Spanish, French, English, and Portuguese.** The institute has also migrated its learning management system (LMS) to the latest version of Moodle (4.1), introducing new features and implementing a chatbot for technical assistance and course suggestions. **These enhancements have contributed to a significant increase in 46% student enrollment on the Campus IESALC total learners worldwide, which 49% are women and 51% men.**



## Top 10 2023 Open courses and seminars

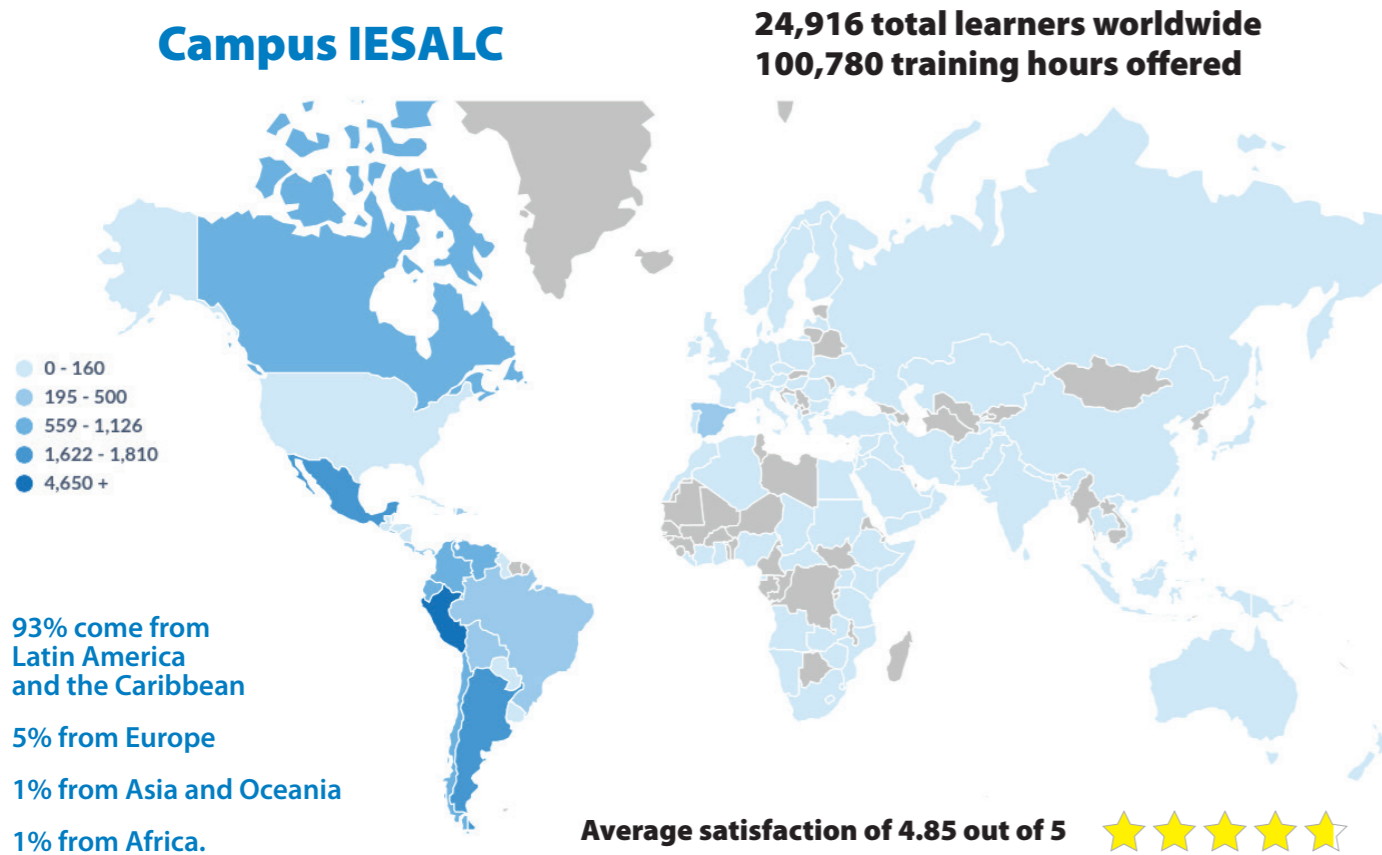
		Enrolments
1	ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence in higher education	5981
2	Competency-Based Learning and Rubric and Portfolio Assessment: Outcome Assessment	853
3	Teacher leadership strategies for improving learning and classroom climate	680
4	Virtual assessment tools: quizzes, checklists, and rubrics	509
5	Problem-Based Learning	461
6	Pedagogical Design Tool and cards	426
7	Trends in education for sustainable development and global citizenship	390
8	Design of virtual repositories	389
9	Flipped learning in higher education	367
10	Keys to virtual training: active learning and ICT integration	358

During 2023 Campus IESALC training developed new programs, increasing the training catalog in 28 courses and seminars. The chart above shows the Top 10 open course demanded by enrolments.

In September-October 2023, **IESALC delivered a blended course titled "Sustainable University Governance and Leadership: Road to the 2030 Agenda."** This 80-hour program, designed for higher education rectors, presidents, and senior managers, aimed to guide university governance teams in understanding the opportunities offered by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the steps required to implement them in response to the 2030 Agenda. The course began with a face-to-face phase in Madrid, Spain, where participants engaged in collaborative work sessions, visited leading universities, and signed an institutional commitment to the alliance of universities for sustainability. The subsequent 8-week virtual

phase included training sessions, mentoring, and the development of institutional roadmaps for sustainability. **More than 50 academic leaders from 6 universities and 8 LAC countries have been trained to redesign their Strategic Plan and a roadmap with concrete activities aimed at achieving the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda and incorporating the SDGs into the university's strategies, policies and plans.**

**IESALC also provided technical assistance to the Technological University of Uruguay (UTEC) through a course on pedagogical design and education for sustainable development in September-October 2023. This 8-week program, tailored to UTEC's distinctive organizational structure, aimed to strengthen the skills of 40 teachers in implementing a culture of sustainability and integrating it into the curriculum.** Participants worked in teams,





supported by specialized mentors, to foster social and collaborative learning. We also developed a consultancy with the aim of implementing Sustainability into the university strategy.

In April-May 2023, **IESALC collaborated with several international partners to deliver the ESD Bootcamp, a 50-hour program supporting university teams in designing curricula for online and blended learning through transformative pedagogies.** The program, offered in English and Spanish, focused on strengthening global citizenship and key concepts of sustainability. During 2023, 45 teachers from 15 universities from Asia, Latin America and Europe, implemented Education for Sustainable Education (ESD) UNESCO Competencies Framework into a 20hs module activity.

**IESALC also provided technical assistance to the Enrique Guzman y Valle National University of Education in Peru from September to December 2023.** This collaboration aimed to consolidate virtual methodologies and strengthen teaching skills necessary for designing, developing, and evaluating learning sequences in non-traditional university environments. The program included rendering consultancy and technical assistance to build up the technological model, virtualizing 30 courses, adapting existing educational models, and providing expert pedagogical guidance. The program impacted in more than 280 teachers, 50 academic directors and 11 leaders.

In April-September 2023, **IESALC participated in the “LAB Quality That Unites Us” project, co-**

**financed by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA).** This program aimed to strengthen mutual trust between institutional actors in the Latin American and Caribbean Higher Education Space, with a clear commitment to progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **200 participants from 56 universities and 11 quality agencies from 16 LAC countries engaged in training and innovation activities addressing key issues such as quality assurance systems, academic integrity, and research evaluation.** At the end of the program a publication was made based on the data of the participants who, through their internal reflections, their shared learning, their needs and expectations, have been contributing over almost a year of work, and within the activities of the “LAB. Quality that unites us”, the basis that constitutes this diagnosis. **Background, Current Diagnosis and Perspectives on the Quality of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.**

Finally, in February-April 2023, IESALC collaborated with the Ibero-American Development Bank (IDB) and Metared X (an initiative of the Santander Bank) to deliver an entrepreneurship course for 30 rectors of Ibero-American universities. This self-study program, developed on the IDB learning platform, aimed to promote entrepreneurship in universities by familiarizing university leaders with best practices and boosting universities' impact into entrepreneurial ecosystems.

**IESALC participated in the “LAB Quality That Unites Us” project, co-financed by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA).**



# Evidence and Data in Support of Policymaking

**Central to IESALC's evidence and data initiatives is the Higher Education Policy Hub**, a comprehensive platform encompassing eight distinctive initiatives designed to inform and guide higher education policy. **The Hub's flagship initiative, the Policy Observatory, was successfully launched in late 2023, providing a wealth of data and analysis to support evidence-informed decision-making.** Complementing this initiative are the Data Portal, Policy Briefs, Policy Insights, the Policy Network, the Policy Forum, Policy News, and Policy Talks, each contributing to a holistic understanding of the higher education policy landscape and its challenges.

Alongside the Policy Hub, IESALC has embarked on several targeted research projects addressing critical issues in higher education. The **SET4HEI tool** and website, launched in 2023 in its beta version, aims to assess and support higher education institutions' contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The final version is expected to be launched in July 2024. **This initiative is bolstered by the expansion of IESALC's publications on the**

**topic, further highlighting the vital role of higher education in achieving the SDGs.**

**Gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) have also been a primary focus of IESALC's research efforts.** The GBV research project aligns with IESALC's commitment to **promoting gender equity in higher education and contributes to the achievement of SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 4 (quality education).** By generating evidence on the prevalence and nature of GBV in higher education institutions (HEIs) and developing tailored guidelines and recommendations, IESALC supports policymakers and HEI managers in creating safer, more inclusive learning environments.

In addition to the GBV research, **IESALC has undertaken a project assessing women's participation and representation in higher education in selected African countries.** This initiative generates gender-segregated data on enrolment, retention, decision-making bodies, leadership positions, working conditions, and

**The SET4HEI tool and website, launched in 2023 in its beta version, aims to assess and support higher education institutions' contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The final version is expected to be launched in July 2024**





success, particularly in STEM fields. By providing evidence and insights to policymakers, HEI managers, and civil society, the project seeks to foster societal change and promote gender equality within the tertiary sector.

**IESALC's research and foresight team has also focused on the right to higher education (RTHE) and the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalization processes on higher education.**

These projects contribute to the institute's strategic objectives of making knowledge on higher education policies available as a global public good and strengthening HEIs' capacities for innovative and more efficient delivery. By holding knowledge-sharing events and providing policy guidelines, IESALC promotes networked advocacy and capacity development, further enhancing the impact of its research.

The synergies across the objectives of IESALC's evidence and data activities are evident in their shared commitment to promoting sustainable development, ensuring the right to quality higher education, and fostering evidence-informed decision-making. Through their diverse yet complementary initiatives, these teams collectively contribute to the realization of IESALC's strategic directions and key value streams, ultimately working towards a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future for higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## Key achievements

**In 2023, UNESCO IESALC made substantial strides in advancing evidence-based decision-making and policy development in higher education.** The institute's flagship initiative, the **Higher Education Policy Observatory**, was successfully launched on December 13, 2023, marking a significant milestone in the institute's efforts to support evidence-informed higher education policies.

**This comprehensive database encompasses information on 146 national higher education systems, featuring over 40 indicators derived from approximately 150 variables, totaling an impressive 22,000 datapoints.** The observatory's launch webinar, which focused on the Latin America and Caribbean region, attracted more than 200 participants and featured a high-level policy panel with representatives from Uruguay, Brazil, and Jamaica.

Complementing the observatory, UNESCO IESALC expanded its policy-oriented publications.

**A notable Policy Brief on gender equality in academia, published on International Women's Day, garnered over 400 consultations and 100 downloads within three months.** The institute also initiated a series of Policy Insights, with the inaugural piece on free public higher education released in December 2023.

The institute made **significant progress in promoting sustainability in higher education through the launch of the SET4HEI** (Sustainability Evaluation Tool for Higher Education Institutions) initiative. **This comprehensive tool, based on 400 indicators across the 17 SDGs, attracted over 4,500 unique visitors to its dedicated website within four months of its launch.** The accompanying self-assessment modules on Campus IESALC were accessed by approximately 500 users, demonstrating the tool's immediate impact and relevance.

**UNESCO IESALC's commitment to addressing global challenges was evident in its publication on higher education's contribution to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and its ongoing research on SDG 8, conducted in collaboration with IE University students.** These efforts underscore the institute's role in bridging academic research with practical policy implications.

The institute demonstrated leadership in exploring the implications of artificial intelligence for higher education. Its **"ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence Quick Start Guide", available in four languages, garnered over 106,000 views, becoming one of UNESDOC's most consulted documents and highly cited in mainstream literature.**



The follow-up publication, **"Harnessing AI in HE: A Primer for HE stakeholders," attracted more than 20,000 consultations.** UNESCO IESALC's expertise in this area was further disseminated through numerous webinars and presentations, reaching over 16,000 education stakeholders across multiple countries and regions.



In its ongoing commitment to promoting the right to higher education, **UNESCO IESALC commissioned 15 national case studies and organized nine regional and thematic consultations.** These efforts involved academics,

activists, higher education leaders, policymakers, students, and youth representatives from around the world, contributing to a robust global dialogue on this critical issue.

The institute also made significant contributions to understanding and addressing gender-based violence in higher education. **A pilot survey conducted across Latin America and the Caribbean gathered 131 responses from students and staff identifying as women.** The resulting infographics were viewed over 1,400 times, and a webinar on International Women's Day attracted 178 participants, including high-level representatives from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Paraguay.

Lastly, **UNESCO IESALC advanced its research on women's participation in higher education and STEM fields in nine Southern African countries.**

The preliminary results of this study were presented at two high-profile UN events: the CSW67 sessions and the 8th UN Science, Technology, and Innovation Forum, enhancing the visibility of this crucial research and fostering international dialogue on gender equity in higher education.

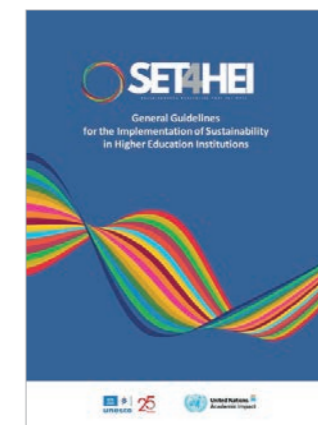
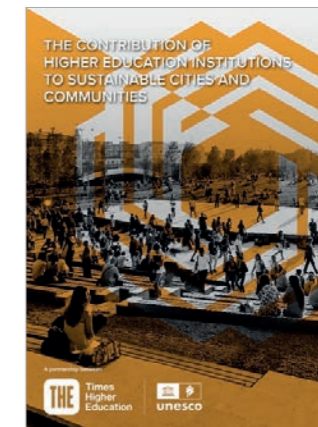
# Our Publications



In 2023, UNESCO IESALC reaffirmed its commitment to producing and disseminating high-quality research and analysis on higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. The institute released a comprehensive catalog of 63 publications, including translations to Spanish, English, French, Portuguese and Russian, covering a wide range of topics crucial to the development of higher education in the region from a comparative perspective, based on evidence and with recommendations and guidelines for the formulation of governmental and institutional public policies. **These publications spanned several key thematic areas, with a significant focus on the right to higher education**, which accounted for 37 of the year's releases. Other important themes included **the futures of higher education, higher education's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, digital transformation, higher education policies, academic mobility and internationalization**. The institute also published three reports related to the Regional Conference on Higher Education (CRES 2018), continuing to disseminate its outcomes and implications.

Among the notable publications was **"Regional and thematic consultations on the right to higher education,"** which laid out a roadmap for promoting international consensus on this critical issue.

The report **"The contribution of higher education institutions to sustainable cities and communities"** and **"General guidelines for the implementation of sustainability in higher education institutions"** provided valuable insights into how universities can support SDG 11. In response to the rapidly evolving technological landscape, IESALC released **"ChatGPT and artificial intelligence in higher education: a quick start guide,"** and **"Harnessing the era of artificial intelligence in higher education: a primer for higher education stakeholders"**, offering practical guidance for institutions grappling with these new tools.





The Institute has undertaken significant initiatives to promote SDG 5 (Gender Equality) in higher education. The Institute published two key documents addressing gender inequalities in higher education institutions:

■ **Supporting women participation in higher education in Eastern Africa**



■ **The representation of women in academia and higher education management positions: policy brief**



These publications examine the root causes of gender inclusion gaps, offer recommendations, and share best practices for breaking the “glass ceiling” in academia.

Additionally, **UNESCO IESALC launched the Policy Insight Series, a collection of concise digests tailored for policymakers and researchers interested in global higher education trends.** Each Policy Insight:

- Explores a specific indicator from the HE Policy Observatory
- Presents key findings related to higher education governance
- Considers future directions for research and policy across countries and global regions

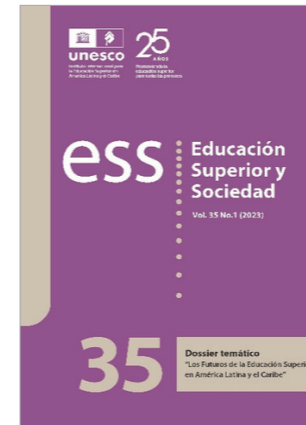


This series aims to provide accessible, evidence-based insights to inform decision-making in higher education policy at national and international levels.

**The institute’s flagship publication, the Educación Superior y Sociedad (ESS) journal, released two compelling issues in 2023, comprising Volume 35.** These issues continued to showcase cutting-edge research and analysis on higher education in the region, maintaining the journal’s reputation as a leading forum for academic discourse.

**These reviewers, affiliated with higher education institutions, research centers, and UNESCO Chairs from across the region and beyond, ensured the high quality and relevance of the published works.**

**The first issue of 2023, titled “The futures of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean,”** featured 20 articles from 46 authors representing 10 countries in the region, as well as Spain. This issue demonstrated the journal’s commitment to linguistic diversity, with articles published in Spanish, English, and Portuguese.



Notably, it also included an article translated into Quechua, reflecting the journal’s dedication to inclusivity and representation of indigenous voices.

**The second issue, focused on “Higher Education in the Digital Age,”** brought together 22 articles from 40 authors, with strong representation from women scholars who authored 27 of the pieces. This issue expanded the journal’s geographic reach, including contributions from Russia alongside seven Latin American and Caribbean countries and Spain. Continuing its tradition of linguistic inclusivity, this issue featured an article in Nahuatl with a Spanish translation.



**Both issues of the ESS journal underwent a rigorous peer-review process, involving 58 and 85 evaluators respectively for the first and second issues.** These reviewers, affiliated with higher education institutions, research centers, and UNESCO Chairs from across the region and beyond, ensured the high quality and relevance of the published works.

The thematic dossiers in each issue provided in-depth exploration of critical topics. The first issue’s dossier on the futures of higher education included 12 articles from authors representing 14 institutions across seven countries in the region. The second issue’s dossier on higher education in the digital age presented 10 articles, offering diverse perspectives on this timely subject.

Through these publications and the ESS journal, IESALC has reinforced its position as a key source of knowledge and analysis for the higher education community in Latin America and the Caribbean. By addressing pressing issues, fostering dialogue, and maintaining a commitment to diversity and inclusivity, these works have made significant contributions to evidence-based policy-making and institutional development in the region’s higher education landscape.

The publications and documents produced by IESALC in the year 2023 had an approximate number of 27,251 downloads and 111,336 consultations from the UNESDOC Digital Library.



# Celebration of IESALC's 25th Anniversary

**UNESCO IESALC celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2023.** The institute organized a comprehensive one-week program to commemorate a quarter-century of promoting higher education as a catalyst for positive change in Latin America and the Caribbean. This celebration not only highlighted IESALC's achievements but also reinforced its commitment to fostering dialogue and collaboration in the higher education sector.

**The anniversary program was designed to position UNESCO IESALC as a key voice in the international higher education arena, foster dialogue among stakeholders on regional challenges, and promote intergenerational exchange on the future of higher education.** Through a series of five webinars, 14 video presentations, and an interactive timeline, the institute engaged a wide audience of educators, policymakers, and students from across the region and beyond.

The celebration kicked off with a virtual talk by Stefania Giannini, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, who shared insights on future trends in higher education and UNESCO's contribution to the field. This inaugural webinar, which included the premiere of an institutional video about UNESCO IESALC, drew significant attention with over 600 page views and more than 800 YouTube views.

Subsequent webinars delved into crucial topics such as the challenges facing higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, both regionally and in the global context. These sessions featured prominent speakers, including members of IESALC's Governing Board, as well as government representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela. The webinars turned out to become an excellent forum for in-depth discussions on issues ranging from the impact of digital transformation to the role of higher education in achieving sustainable development goals.



One of the highlights of the celebration was a webinar focusing on the futures of higher education in the region and the world.

This forward-looking session, which garnered over 1,000 views, brought together members of university networks to discuss emerging trends and challenges. It was complemented by video presentations featuring the voices of young higher education leaders, who shared their visions for the sector's future.

Throughout the anniversary program, IESALC showcased its rich history and diverse activities through a series of video presentations. These included a retrospective of the institute's 25-year journey, highlights of its capacity development achievements, and an overview of key projects such as the initiative on young people and transforming education. The institute also used this opportunity to spotlight its work on critical issues like the right to higher education, artificial intelligence in education, and women's participation in higher education.

The celebration concluded with a touching video titled "Meet its people," in which the IESALC team reaffirmed their commitment to the institute's mission and to achieving quality higher education for all. This personal touch underscored the dedication and passion that has driven IESALC's work over the past 25 years.



In total, the anniversary events attracted 1,509 registered participants, garnered 2,555 views on YouTube, and generated 3,107 page views across various platforms. This impressive engagement demonstrated the wide-reaching impact of IESALC's work and the strong interest in its vision for the future of higher education in the region.

As IESALC looks ahead to its next quarter-century, the 25th anniversary celebration served not only as a moment of reflection on past achievements but also as a launching pad for future initiatives. By bringing together diverse voices and perspectives, the institute reaffirmed its role as a catalyst for innovation, collaboration, and progress in higher education across Latin America and the Caribbean and beyond.

## Web site and social media

An analysis conducted by the UNESCO IESALC Communications team revealed that the Institute's website, [www.iesalc.unesco.org](http://www.iesalc.unesco.org), attracted 423,000 unique users during the year under review. The site experienced its highest surge in traffic between April 16 and 22, coinciding with the inaugural Meeting of States Parties to the New Regional Convention for the Recognition of Studies.

Analysis of the visitor acquisition channels reveals a diverse yet strategically optimized traffic pattern. The overwhelming majority of new visits, approximately 397,000, originated from organic search results. This was followed by 115,000 visits via direct URL entry, indicating strong brand recognition for UNESCO IESALC. Referrals from external websites and social networks accounted for 32,000 visits.

An analysis of the website's most popular content reveals a significant interest in artificial intelligence, particularly ChatGPT. The article announcing the launch of the start-up guide garnered 24,000 views, while the calendar entry for the launch event attracted 18,000 visits. These figures underscore the growing relevance of AI in the education sector.

Notably, the Spanish and English homepages also demonstrated substantial traffic, with 31,000 and 19,000 visits respectively, highlighting the Institute's bilingual reach.

## Social Media Update

UNESCO IESALC's presence on X (formerly Twitter) boasts a substantial following of 17,433 users. On the professional networking front, LinkedIn has proven to be a significant channel for the Institute's outreach. By the end of 2023, the UNESCO IESALC LinkedIn profile had amassed 7,274 followers, with a remarkable growth of 2,061 new connections in the final quarter alone.

The most impactful LinkedIn post of the year announced the launch of the preliminary version of SET4HEI (Self-Assessment Tool for Higher Education Institutions) on September 18. This publication garnered impressive engagement metrics:

- 16,439 impressions (views)
- 717 clicks
- 429 reactions

With 14,000 and 3,962 followers respectively, the metrics for Facebook (FB) and Instagram (IG) revealed significant audience reach and engagement across both platforms.

Reach:

- [Facebook \(UNESCO IESALC\)](#): Estimated reach of 47,300 unique users
- [Instagram \(@unesco.iesalc\)](#): Estimated reach of 6,100 unique users

Visitor Engagement:

- Facebook: 10,300 visits
- Instagram: 3,500 visits

### UNESCO IESALC's YouTube channel

[\(@iesalcunesco\)](#) demonstrated remarkable growth in 2023. The channel garnered 69,540 visits,

representing a 109% increase from the previous year. Notably, subscriber growth was even more impressive, with 1,800 new subscribers added—a 200% surge compared to the prior period.

Two videos on UNESCO IESALC's YouTube channel garnered exceptional attention: the ChatGPT webinar focusing on artificial intelligence in higher education attracted 1,148 views, while the #CMES2022 webinar secured 1,556 views. These figures highlight the community's keen interest in cutting-edge topics and significant events in higher education.

In terms of content dissemination, UNESCO IESALC's strategy for the year 2023 included the distribution of 129 newsletters, reaching a total of 1,828,198 recipients. The trackable population demonstrated an impressive open rate of 23.38%, surpassing the cross-sector average of 21.89% for that year. Newsletter subscriptions saw significant growth, increasing from 6,287 to 8,087 subscribers. This represents an acquisition of 1,800 new subscribers from a total contact list of 24,353.

## 2023 Year in review

### Multimedia

**423K**  
Web users

**727K**  
Views

**2,2M**  
Event count

**415K**  
New users

**1,3K**  
Daily users

### Social Media

**17,433**  
Twitter / X followers

**7,274**  
LinkedIn followers

**14,000**  
Facebook followers

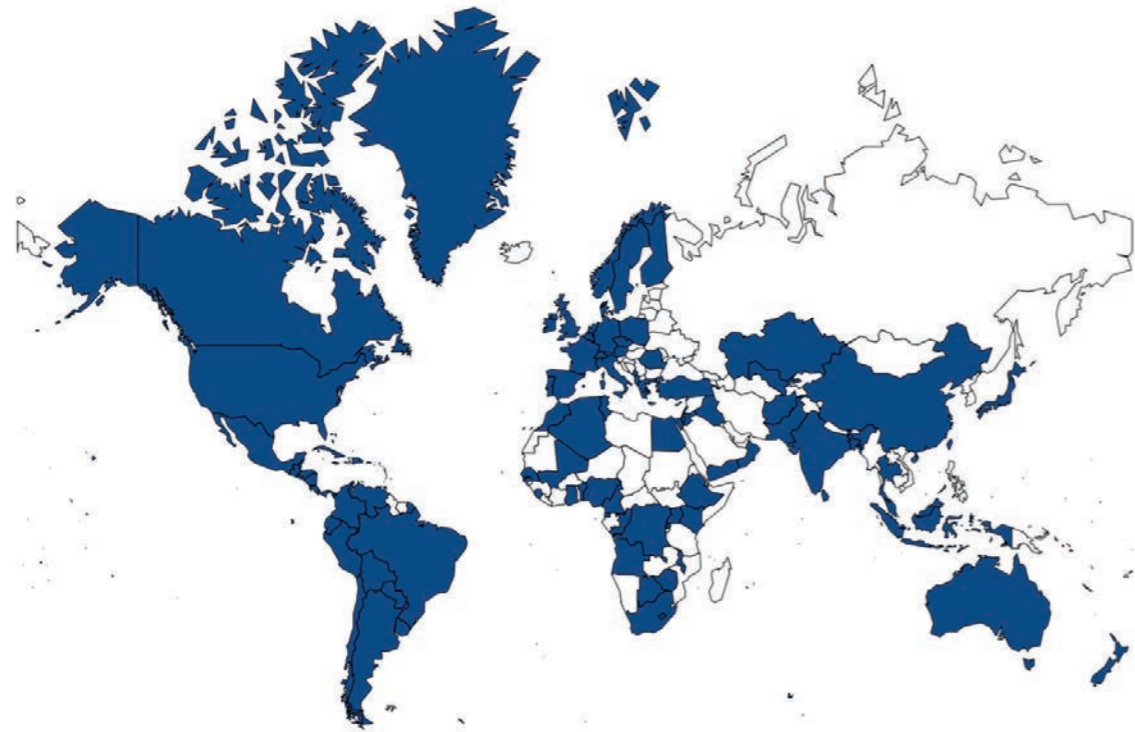
**3,692**  
Instagram followers

**8,087**  
Newsletter subscribers



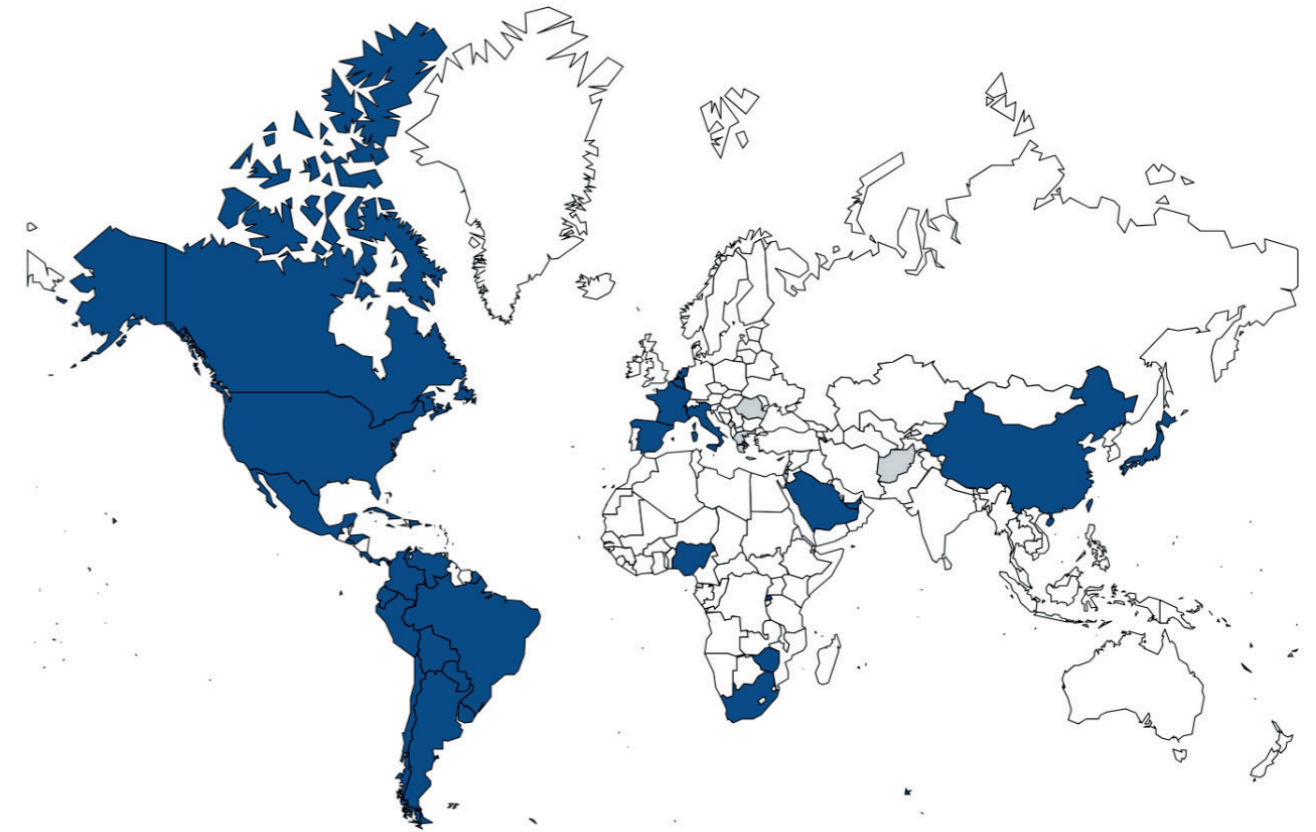
# IESALC on the map

## Countries that have participated in IESALC events



- |             |                                  |           |             |                       |                     |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Afghanistan | Cameroon                         | Ethiopia  | Jordan      | Norway                | South Africa        |
| Albania     | Canada                           | Finland   | Kazakhstan  | Oman                  | Spain               |
| Algeria     | Chile                            | France    | Kenya       | Pakistan              | Sri Lanka           |
| Andorra     | China                            | Germany   | Lebanon     | Panama                | Sweden              |
| Angola      | Colombia                         | Ghana     | Lesotho     | Paraguay              | Switzerland         |
| Anguilla    | Costa Rica                       | Greece    | Macao       | Peru                  | Thailand            |
| Argentina   | Curaçao                          | Grenada   | Malawi      | Poland                | Trinidad and Tobago |
| Australia   | Czech Republic                   | Guatemala | Malaysia    | Portugal              | Tunisia             |
| Austria     | Democratic Republic of the Congo | Honduras  | Maldives    | Puerto Rico           | Turkey              |
| Bangladesh  | Denmark                          | India     | Mali        | Republic of the Congo | Uganda              |
| Barbados    | Dominican Republic               | Indonesia | Mexico      | Romania               | United Kingdom      |
| Belgium     | Ecuador                          | Iraq      | Montenegro  | Rwanda                | United States       |
| Belize      | El Salvador                      | Ireland   | Morocco     | Saint Kitts and Nevis | Uruguay             |
| Benin       | Equatorial Guinea                | Israel    | Netherlands | Saint Lucia           | Uzbekistan          |
| Bolivia     |                                  | Italy     | New Zealand | Senegal               | Venezuela           |
| Botswana    |                                  | Jamaica   | Nicaragua   | Sierra Leone          | Yemen               |
| Brazil      |                                  | Japan     | Nigeria     |                       | Zimbabwe            |

## Host countries to events in which IESALC has been involved



- |                |                        |                |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Arabia Saudita | Ecuador                | Países Bajos   |
| Argentina      | El Salvador            | Panamá         |
| Bélgica        | Emiratos Árabes Unidos | Paraguay       |
| Bolivia        | España                 | Perú           |
| Brasil         | Estados Unidos         | Re. Dominicana |
| Canadá         | Francia                | Rwanda         |
| Catar          | Honduras               | Serbia         |
| Chile          | Italia                 | Sudáfrica      |
| China          | Jamaica                | Uruguay        |
| Colombia       | Japón                  | Venezuela      |
| Costa Rica     | México                 | Zimbabue       |
| Cuba           | Nigeria                |                |



# Credits Annual Report 2023

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Miriam Alpizar Santana

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## TEAM

### Director

Francesc Pedró

### Policy analysis and research

Mathias Bouckaert

Eglis Chacón

Flavia Colus

Issouf Coulibaly

Kelly Davis

Ana Evelyn De Ita Varela

Franziska Enichlmayr

Adrian Estrela Pereira

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Teodoro Pearce

Jose Antonio Quinteiro Goris

Débora Ramos Torres

Giulia Ribeiro Barao

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Fernando Cantor

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Zulay Gómez Marín

Francisco Antonio Losapio Rojas

Sara Maneiro

Neus Pasamonte

Yeritza Rodríguez Ruiz



25  
YEARS

Promoting Higher  
Education for All

# IESALC

## Annual Report 2023

### Promoting Higher Education for All

The UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) is one of UNESCO's key education-focused institutes and the only one in the United Nations system with a specific mandate for higher education. Taking a holistic and integrated intersectoral and cross-sectoral approach to higher education, IESALC provides support to Member States through policy-driven and action-oriented research and publications, capacity development, training, advocacy and networking.

In 2023, IESALC has been at the forefront of promoting change in higher education policies at both national and institutional levels through three key elements: political dialogue and consensus-building via international regulations and recommendations, dissemination of evidence and data to inform public policy discussions, and capacity building for all higher education stakeholders.



info-IESALC@unesco.org



iesalc.unesco.org



@unesco\_iesalc



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@unesco\_iesalc



@unesco.iesalc