

A study jointly conducted by Colombia, El Salvador and Mexico, showed that in the region to do research is still a complex challenge. The lack of resources and training remain as the biggest problems.

"Challenges in the formation of a Latin American community in Education and Research" is the name of a study carried out by Urdimbre, community that was supported by COMCLARA during its birth period (2010-2011).

The study, which includes a comparative analysis of the management, development and context of the technology for research in the universities that are members of Urdimbre – community made up of 13 institutions from 7 countries in Latin America -, was conducted by three researchers of Urdimbre: Clemencia Camacho from the Politécnico Gran Colombiano (Colombia), Blanca Ruth Orantes from the Technological University of El Salvador, and Dora Luz González Bañales from the Technological institute from Durango (Mexico).

"Semi-structured interviews were applied by using email for data collection. One of the results shown was that in most institutions, the management of research is carried out by research and post-graduate directors", explained Blanca Ruth Orantes, research director of the Technological University of El Salvador (UTEC), in the analysis published on the web site of the Salvadorian NREN (RAICES), of which this institution is an active member.

Orantes added that in relation with the total size of the institution, some entities have a very little research staff. The lack of doctors is an important extra problem that must be added to the complex situation exposed.

"Other analysed variables were the resources and incentives to foster research development, we found that most research is financed by own resources, very few projects are funded by national and international donors. As for incentives, only few institutions have some sort of awards or bonuses", said Orantes.

The entities that participated in the study revealed that the main obstacles that are confronted by the investigative work, are that the training programmes are not sufficient to train researchers; a doctoral degree is considered as a must in order to get best results and have the required competencies to develop projects to present to international collaborators and donors. "Because of the lack of motivation and / or vocation, academics don't do research, and though the post graduate area is where more research should be carried out, in some of

To perform research is still difficult and complex in Latin America

Written by Ixchel Pérez

Friday, 06 January 2012 19:48 -

the entities this level does not represent a strategic accis", said Orantes.

"In short, there is a lack of a research culture that goes beyond the paradigm that identifies research with something difficult and complex; the management and leadership of a community or a network must be held by members of different countries, in order to generate a sense of belonging and commitment of the researchers, that must be combined with management and the required level of maturity to present projects to those donors that can fund research. That is key to the sustainability of an academic community", concluded the Salvadorian researcher.