



ACTIVITY REPORT 2021

Activity Report: 2021

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INTRODUCTION

OBREAL Global is an association which unites members and partners across continents with a shared **vision**, to build sustainable South-South-North cooperation based upon reciprocity, mutual knowledge transfer, and a commitment to common global challenges. This vision is one that has evolved since the association's creation in 2006, where it first concentrated on Latin America – Europe relations. Primarily uniting higher education institutions and associations as well as research organisations, the vision of the association has grown and been shaped, responding to global trends and the need for more dynamic inter-regional partnerships.

2020/21 has been a period tremendous activity and growth in which, in the midst of a global pandemic, OBREAL Global "Chapters" in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, India and Africa have been established and consolidated, each of which is driven by member institutions and has defined its own needs and priorities. While these Chapters are intended to be the building blocks of the association, the inter-connectivity of them, and 'inter-regional' agenda remains OBREAL Global's core business. In the course of 2021, OBREAL Global launched a number of actions to promote inter-regional dialogue on key issues of common interest, namely on core themes as agreed by the Chapters: Internationalisation of learning, digitisation, international research management and the role of universities in local development, to name a few.

The following is the first Annual Activity Report that OBREAL Global has published, which takes stock of the plethora of actions that OBREAL Global has taken with members and partners, notably in three principles areas: Knowledge Production, Capacity Building and Inter-regional Policy Dialogue.

MISSION, VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

Throughout the course of 2021, OBREAL Global has taken strides in the promotion of its reformulated mission, defined values and objectives:



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Mission

Promote dialogue and synergies between the governmental, academic and social sectors, taking into account the specificities and heterogeneity of each region of the world;

Build inter-regional, South-South-North and global bridges to enhance development in the higher education and research sectors specifically through multi-regional collaborative projects.

Vision

Facilitate and achieve sustainable South-South-North cooperation based on reciprocity, mutual knowledge transfer and commitment to common global challenges.

Underpinning this are four values, which form the principles by which the association engages in knowledge production and projects: Innovation, Inclusiveness, Diversity and Sustainability:



ACTIVITIES 2021

INTERREGIONAL DIALOGUES

A novelty in OBREAL Global's activities, the association launched two types of activities for inter-regional dialogue in 2021, the first '*OBREAL Global in Focus*', a series of online events, and the first installment of *OBREAL Global Inter-regional Dialogues*, targeting India and South America. These initiatives were directly linked to the need to a) develop, with members, more self-funded activities, b) promote inter-regional dialogue linked to the OBREAL Global project portfolio, and c) exploit virtual spaces which the pandemic imposed. They also served as a means to promote specific projects that OBREAL Global has undertaken and discuss their policy implications.

OBREAL GLOBAL IN FOCUS 2021

Between 10 March and 10 April, OBREAL Global and its members launched the first edition of "OBREAL Global in Focus", a programme of virtual events and activities aimed at higher education and research institutions around the world. This was dedicated to the theme "*Charting a course for South-South-North cooperation*". It featured discussions and presentations of the activities of OBREAL Global's regional Chapters in Europe, South America, Central America, the Caribbean, India and Africa and highlighted a number of OBREAL Global projects. It also structured a broader discussion on trends in higher education and research and promoted South-South-North cooperation approaches.

This series of events was very well attended, registering 4159 people with 1268 live viewers. [Recordings](#) of all sessions are available on the OBREAL Global website.

OBREAL Global in Focus 2021 culminated with the annual edition of the "SIU AIU Annual Conference on Internationalisation of Higher Education (IHE 2021); organised by Symbiosis International University, Pune City and the Association of Indian Universities, with the support of the India Chapter of OBREAL Global. It was deemed important to bring global attention to and attendance in IHE 2021, and further internationalise this flagship Indian higher education conference.





OBREAL Global in Focus 2021 Sessions

Kicking-off OBREAL Global in Focus 2021 - Charting the course for South-South-North cooperation and beyond | 10 March 2021

This webinar provided an introduction to OBREAL Global's mission, especially that of promoting and facilitating South-South-North cooperation in the higher education and research sectors. It also introduced the events and activities sponsored by OBREAL Global in Focus 2021, framing the activities with a keynote speech and a panel discussion in which OBREAL Global members from different regions participated.

Europe and Africa in strategic partnership: What's new in higher education? 11 March 2021

OBREAL Global is currently coordinating the consortium implementing the HAQAA2 initiative of the European Commission, within the framework of the partnership between the European Union and the African Union. HAQAA stands for "Harmonisation, Accreditation and Quality Assurance in African Higher Education". This event provided important updates on the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and its contribution to higher education integration on the African continent, in line with the priorities set by the African Union. It featured the success and progress of the HAQAA initiative, which builds capacity in quality assurance in Africa, towards commonly agreed standards.

Modularisation and flexibilisation of learning: Skilling and Reskilling in the global context | 12 March 2021

This session tackled a transversal theme of OBREAL Global's activity portfolio, one that is of particular relevance to the skills agenda in many countries: Flexibilisation of learning. It examined this through the lens of modularisation and also micro-credentials, both tools that HE systems and HEIs can use to face the demands of a society that requires dynamic competences and technological as well as soft skills. The webinar examined this from a global perspective and explored concrete cases from the US, Sweden, India and Latin America, regarding the current approach to and



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the potentials limitations of modularisation and micro-credentials in pursuit of the flexibilisation of learning.

Challenges for higher education reform in South Africa. Public launch event of the HERE-SA project | 16 March 2021

What are the current challenges for teaching and learning in South African universities? How can more coherent and effective approaches to work-based learning, entrepreneurship education and teaching be achieved in the face of the Fourth Industrial Revolution - 4IR - and how can a more fluid dialogue between university practice and policy-making be achieved? The HERE-SA project, funded by the Erasmus+ CBHE programme and coordinated by THENSA (the Network of Technology based Universities in South Africa) and OBREAL Global, explores these very questions, establishing a network of experts in higher education reform in South Africa. This event was the public launch of the project, which provided an insight into the current higher education environment in South Africa, as well as the opportunities that the project will provide for both the development of South African higher education and EU-South Africa university cooperation.

Structure, organisation and management of university research: Exchange of good practices and collaboration | 18 March 2021

As part of its cooperation with the EU-LAC Foundation and together with the CBHE Erasmus+ project 'Mimir Andino', coordinated by the Association of Colombian Universities (ASCUN), OBREAL Global co-organised this webinar with CSUCA - the Central American University Council - and the aforementioned partners. It drew from the lessons learned in the Mimir Andino project, related to the role of research capacity in regional universities and the importance of universities in research ecosystems, and placed emphasis on university research management in the Central American context. It was part of a series of online events the CSUCA has promoted in the run-up to the Central American University Congress in June 2021.

Perspectives and challenges for the University role in Local & Regional Development | 23 March 2021

This event, organised in the framework of the Erasmus+ CBHE 'Vita Global' project, featured a panel with representatives from universities and industries from Mercosur,

Western Cape (South Africa) and Porto (Portugal), all part of the Vita Global consortium. These representatives offered a perspective on regional and local development strategies and discussed how teaching, learning and research are articulated around these strategies in various sectors. They also explored the concept of "outreach" or the university's "third mission" in Latin America, Europe and South Africa, and how it relates to universities' local development mission. Vita Global is a truly inter-regional project, with partners in Latin America, South Africa, the EU and Georgia.

Innovation of teaching and learning and the relationship to quality assurance | 25 March 2021

Part of the cooperation agreement with the EU-LAC Foundation and in support of the Central American University Congress, organised by CSUCA, this event explored current challenges, strategies and practices for innovative teaching, and the role of quality assurance systems in incentivising teaching innovation. Speakers from Latin America and Europe provided contrasting perspectives and identified further capacity building needs for Central American universities. The event built upon the important precedent of the HICA project (2015-2018), a structural project under the Erasmus+ CBHE programme.

Joint study programmes for regional integration: Perspectives from the Caribbean | 26 March 2021

Universities Caribbean aims to foster a single Caribbean voice for the university sector in the region, connecting it with global partners to address common challenges related to climate, health, security, cultural heritage and resilience. The association, which chairs the OBREAL Global Caribbean Chapter, is currently engaged in a project to develop regionally focused curriculum that draws on the strengths and diversity of Caribbean universities and promotes Caribbean identity. OBREAL Global, EU-LAC Foundation and Universities Caribbean organised this event to explore the issue of joint study programmes and regional cohesion/integration.

Trends in digitalisation and internationalisation: Perspectives from South America | 29 March 2021



The opportunities and challenges offered by digitisation in higher education are numerous; A profound assessment must be conducted on the needs the university sector has and how to build capacity, both for teaching staff and for administrative and technical staff in universities. This event was organised by the South American Chapter of OBREAL Global in parallel to a series of focus groups in Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil dedicated to exploring university capacity building needs for online teaching and learning, and specifically how to harness it for international collaboration.

CONSOLIDATING SOUTH-SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE

Responding to the expressed interested of the Chapters to launch thematic, targeted dialogue series between specific regions, OBREAL Global launched the first edition of [OBREAL Global Inter-Regional Dialogues](#) between 8 October and 10 December. This was organised by the Brazilian Association of Higher Education - FAUBAI -, Symbiosis International University of India, the South American and Indian chapters of OBREAL Global and was supported by the Higher Education section of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry - FICCI.

This series of online events included four sessions in which internationalisation and cooperation in higher education was discussed with partners from South America and India. The objective was to establish new bridges between regions and continents that go beyond traditional cooperation patterns and facilitate new projects and initiatives relevant to the wider political and economic cooperation.

[Recordings](#) of the different sessions of these international dialogues can be found on the OBREAL Global website.

The intention was to repeat this series in 2022, offering a new focus to two of the regions in the OBREAL Global membership with expressed interest to cooperate.

India-South America Interregional Dialogue Sessions

Opening and Introduction to the Indian and South American dialogue on Higher Education followed by Session 1 - Higher Education internationalisation: India and South America | 8 October 2021



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In the first part of this session, university associations from South America and India briefly presented the main objectives of this dialogue series and the importance of establishing permanent bridges between India and South America in higher education and research.

The second part focused on high-level discussions on the importance of higher education and internationalisation in India and South America and purported that relations between the two regions could be built upon previous BRICS efforts and address the current development needs of both regions/countries.

Session 2: Strategies, institutional challenges and approaches to the internationalisation of higher education institutions in India and South America | 14 October 2021

This session continued the discussion of session 1, offering institutional perspectives from India and Brazil on the issue of internationalisation of higher education. It explored opportunities for India and South America to enhance their academic cooperation (mobility, etc.) and to share concrete institutional experiences in relation to internationalisation strategies. It identified priority themes and perspectives relevant to India and South America.

Session 3: Internationalisation of the curricula: New ways of enhancing South-South-North cooperation | 19 November 2021

This session discussed how flexibilisation and modularisation of curricula can be seen as an opportunity for higher education institutions in South America and India, as a means to realise their internationalisation strategies. The first part was dedicated to the system-level incentives and barriers to curriculum flexibilisation and presented recent experiences in South America and India. The second part focused on institutional perspectives and examples on how learning offers are designed, shaped and organized.

Session 4: Internationalisation through joint research strategies and programmes | 10 December 2021

This session focused on discussing the role that joint research has played in the international strategies of Indian and South American universities and how it can be enhanced to increase cooperation between the Indian and South American research systems. It explored the role of joint doctoral supervisions and joint doctoral programmes, and how they can boost cooperation between the two regions.

OBREAL GLOBAL REGIONAL CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

INDIA CHAPTER

The OBREAL Global India Chapter, constituted in May 2020 and chaired by Simbiosis International University, has primarily targeted internationalization of Indian higher education for its strategy. The Chapter launch coincided with a new Indian strategy for the internationalization of the HE sector, and is hence timely. The core objectives were defined as:

- 📍 Promoting South- South- North dialogue with associations of Higher Education organisations of different regions with a view of sharing common issues and good practices so as to be able to find solutions and appropriately influencing policies of respective countries.
- 📍 Building bridges between different regions based on national priorities
- 📍 Appreciating and adopting structures for good governance of the various regional associations
- 📍 Adopting a synergetic approach to collaborative projects to promote digitisation and thereafter conduct impact studies.
- 📍 Forging partnerships with industry associations

Amongst the specific activities of the Chapter in 2021 were:

India-LAC Cooperation in Edu 4.0 | 7-9 July 2021

[India-LAC Cooperation in Edu 4.0](#) offered a platform for educational partnerships between universities/institutes/education service providers (both online and offline) from both regions. This was framed within the inter-regional dialogue objectives of the Chapter.

November Edition of the FICCI Education Wrap | November 2021

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry - FICCI -, and in particular the FICCI Higher Education Team, publishes the FICCI EduWrap, a quarterly newsletter focusing on different topics related to the Higher Education sector. The theme of the November 2021 edition was Internationalisation in Higher Education and includes [articles by OBREAL Global's Director of Strategy](#), Dr Nicolas Patrici and the President of the Indian Chapter of OBREAL Global, Chair of FICCI's Higher Education Committee and President of Symbiosis International University, Dr Vidya Yeravdekar.

The work of the Chapter has also included the contributions to *OBREAL Global in Focus* and to and to the first *OBREAL Global Inter-regional Dialogue Series*.

CENTRAL AMERICA CHAPTER

Chair by CSUCA, the Central America builds on a long history of cooperation. The Chapter was inaugurated through a series of webinars, jointly organized by OBREAL Global, the EU LAC Foundation and CSUCA. The webinar series took place from 18 March to 20 April and was divided into two parts: the first two webinars (18 and 25 March 2021) took place as part of *OBREAL Global in Focus 2021*.

- ⌚ The structure, organisation and institutional management of university | 18 March 2021
- ⌚ Innovation in teaching and learning processes and quality assurance | 25 March 2021

The other two webinars (13 and 20 April 2021) took place independently.

Generating, promoting and applying research results | 13 April 2021

The purpose of this virtual seminar was to promote the exchange of visions, experiences, good practices aimed at [strengthening Central American regional](#)

collaboration and bi-regional collaboration between Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean in this field.

Regional academic harmonisation: The role of qualifications | 20 April 2021

Regional integration of higher education continues to be an important policy priority in different parts of the world, driven by different forces, and gating different policy options. This forum explored the following questions:

- 📍 Where is the Central American Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MCESCA) now and how is it used at university and system level?
- 📍 How do Central American integration dynamics compare with other regions? For example, how have the objectives of the Bologna Process evolved with respect to harmonisation and what can Central America learn?

The forum was an exchange of information, visions and experiences on qualifications frameworks (achievements, challenges and opportunities for the future). In addition, from a European perspective, the panel will offer a reflection on the Bologna Process and the Rome 2021 Ministerial Summit.

These four webinars served as preparatory events for the IX Central American University Congress. They gathered a total of 1055 live viewers and 2116 people registered.

This first event series led the Central American Chapter to define a workplan with three main areas of intervention:

1. Training and capacity building in internationalisation of the curriculum and internationalisation at home, and innovation in teaching.
2. Preparation and submission of Erasmus Plus projects, notably on teaching innovation and also on climate change and environmental sustainability and well as open science and scientific capacity.
3. Inter-regional dialogue and capacity building linked to Open Science

2.2.3 SOUTH AMERICAN CHAPTER

Co-chaired by ASCUN and AUGM, the South America Chapter was extremely active in 2021. It defined a work plan that targeted primarily two key issues:

1. Capacity building related to the internationalization and digitalisation of learning
2. Data collection on higher education trends in Latin America

In line with the first issue, the online dialogue events were organized, as well as focus groups in five South American countries, which culminated in a report citing trends as well as capacity building workshops for participants of the focus group and the constituencies of the associations involved in the Chapter. This has constituted, in many senses, the first OBREAL Global 'self-funded' project and inspired a follow-up initiative with the Central American Chapter.

Webinar Series - Trends in Curriculum Internationalisation and Digitisation: Perspectives from the South and from the North - From 2 to 11 June 2021

These webinars aimed at presenting and discussing, from a cross-regional perspective, the main trends on the internationalisation of the curriculum and the digitisation of learning. It was held together with the Brazilian (ANDIFES), Chilean (CRUCH), Colombian (ASCUN) and Mexican (ANUIES) associations of rectors and universities, the Association of Universities of the Montevideo Group, LINED of the University of Mar del Plata in Argentina, the Universidad Veracruzana in Mexico, FAUBAI (Brazil) SARUA (South Africa), CSUCA (Central America) and SIU (India) and with the participation of OBREAL Global partners EUA (Europe) and EAIE (Europe). It had 1197 people registered for both events.

Recordings of the events are available on the OBREAL Global website.

The future of internationalization: Challenges from the South and from the North |11 June 2021

The webinar offered a discussion on the challenges and concrete possibilities of South-South-North collaboration. It featured presentations and visions from Europe,

Africa, Latin America and cited specific opportunities within the framework of the internationalisation of higher education as it is being re-defined in different parts of the world.

South America Chapter Focus Groups

The South American chapter of OBREAL Global worked designed a data collection strategy to assess trends in Internationalisation of the curricula and digitisation in South America. The associations of rectors and universities of Brazil (ANDIFES), Chile (CRUCH), Colombia (ASCUN) and Mexico (ANUIES), the Association of Universities of the Montevideo Group with the technical support of LINED of the University of Mar del Plata in Argentina, the Universidad Veracruzana of Mexico and the OBREAL Global secretariat in Barcelona conducted a series of focus groups in Peru, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil and Mexico in order to probe this theme and generate opinions and experiences from university faculty.

📍 Focus groups in Argentina and Uruguay

Two focus groups with representative panels from Uruguayan and Argentinean HEIs: one composed of specialists in the field of international university relations and the other composed of representatives from the academic areas of the same institutions.

📍 Focus groups in Colombia and Peru

Core focus areas 1) Digitalisation and Globalisation of the Academic Offer 2) Internationalisation of the Curriculum.

📍 Focus groups in Brazil

The first and second focus groups focused on Digitalisation and virtualisation of the academic offer and the third on Internationalisation of the curriculum.

📍 Focus groups in Chile

Two focus groups were held. The first was dedicated to the digitalisation and globalisation of the academic offer, the second to the internationalisation of the curriculum,

South American Chapter Workshops: Institutional Management and Professional Practice of Curriculum Internationalisation: the case of COIL

Following the focus group exercise, the South America Chapter organised a [workshop on COIL methodology](#) that took place in two sessions on 4 and 9 June 2021. This workshop aimed to provide the basic theoretical and practical elements for the [management of international online collaborative learning strategies](#) to the staff of offices of internationalisation, curriculum design, educational innovation or equivalent, of higher education institutions.

2.2.4 CARIBBEAN CHAPTER

Chaired by Universities Caribbean, the Caribbean has started to take shape in 2021, with some initial activities. The intention is to consolidate the work plan in 2022 set up a Caribbean chapter work group which will drive the agenda and articulate with other Chapters.

Amongst the activities have carried out have been a webinar on Joint programmes and regional collaboration, as described under OBREAL Global in focus, as well as the planning for the submission of an Erasmus+ Capacity Building project on employability for Caribbean challenges, which has been delayed for the 2022 call.

The EU LAC Foundation has also expressed support for this Chapter, co-organising the following event:

Latin America and the Caribbean and the Future Horizon Europe programme | 23 November 2021

This [seminar](#) focused on the potential of Horizon Europe for Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and discussed the accessibility of information and the need to build technical and administrative capacities to participate efficiently in it.

2.2.5 AFRICA CHAPTER

Though incipient, the OBREAL Global Africa Chapter organised several activities in 2021 which will provide a framework for a concerted work plan in 2021. This Chapter is largely underpinned by the HAQAA2 initiative, described in the project section of this report, which paved the way for concerted MoUs between OBREAL Global and African regional partners and associations.

Spring 2021 edition of the Forum's magazine for EAIE

The Spring 2021 edition of the Forum's magazine for EAIE members includes an [article](#) co-authored by Elizabeth Colucci (OBREAL Global) and Nico Jooste (SARUA and co-chair of the African chapter of OBREAL Global) on the importance of South-South North higher education partnerships, and specific examples being championed by SARUA.

Regional and South-South-North Collaboration guiding future internationalisation | 28 May 2021

OBREAL Global supported this [colloquium](#) on the internationalisation of higher education, organized by SARUA on one of the key priority areas of the Chapter.

Priorities and potential projects: The new Erasmus+ programme | November 2021

OBREAL Global organized and info/discussion meeting for members and partner in Africa related to the newly launched Erasmus+ programme and the opportunities presented for Africa. The budget for the new programme (2021-2027) has more than tripled for Sub-Saharan Africa. OBREAL Global explained the priorities of the new programme and moderated a dialogue whereby African members and partner could brainstorm project ideas. This meeting was the precedent for the preparation of six project applications that OBREAL Global supported and co-developed with partners in Africa under the 2021/22 call.

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS



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Regional Chapter Chairs' Meeting - 11 May 2021

The Chairs of the different Regional Chapters of OBREAL Global (India, Africa, South America, Central America and the Caribbean) met to exchange knowledge and perspectives related to the internationalisation of higher education. They also started planning preparatory activities for the UNESCO World Conference to be held in May 2022.

OBREAL Global General Assembly – 9 April, 2021

At the [2021 OBREAL Global General Assembly](#), University College Cork (Ireland), Universidade Federal ABC (Brazil), Universidade Federal de Goias (Brazil), Associação Brasileira de Educação Internacional -FAUBAI- (Brazil) were accepted as new members of the association. The new structure of regional Chapters was also ratified, in addition to ratifying the organic positions, such as the presidency and vice-presidency.

All OBREAL Global member institutions positively assessed the results of the first series of OBREAL Global in Focus and explored the results of the projects in which OBREAL Global is involved and made progress in the creation of internal cooperation mechanisms to further develop initiatives and projects that promote inter-regional dialogue.

Meeting of European partners and members of OBREAL Global - 25 November 2021
This [meeting](#), the first physical/hybrid meeting of the association since the start of the pandemic – was hosted by University College Cork in Cork, Ireland. As a precaution and in view of the travel difficulties that still persisted, the meeting was held in a hybrid format.

The meeting was intended to present to European partners and members the current activities and priorities of OBREAL Global and explored the different opportunities for interregional cooperation that the association provides. The Chapter chairs attended virtually and exchanged ideas regarding their priorities and the ways in which they desire to cooperation with European counterparts. In addition, the new Erasmus+ programme was presented and participants discussed the opportunities to prepare and propose projects together.



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NEW MEMBERS AND AGREEMENTS

NEW MEMBERS

EUROPE

Germany

TU Berlin

Ireland

MUNSTER TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

University College Cork

France

UNIVERSITÉ DE BORDEAUX

Czech Republic

Mendel University

AFRICA

Burundi

Universidad de Burundi

LATIN AMERICA

Espacio ENLACES - *Espacio Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Educación Superior*

Brazil

Universidad de Minas Gerais

Associação Brasileira de Educação Internacional -FAUBAI-

Universidade Federal de Goias



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Universidade Federal ABC

JOINT WORK PLAN WITH THE EU-LAC FOUNDATION

The European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean Foundation (EU-LAC Foundation) and OBREAL Global have sealed their willingness to cooperate in 2021 by signing a [framework agreement](#) that establishes the basis for the development of programmes and activities of mutual interest. The agreement, among other activities and actions, entails the joint organisation of seminars, workshops and publications, with the aim of strengthening the historical and contemporary links between the two regions, recognising the evolution of relations between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the development of the countries that make up the bi-regional community.

PROJECTS IN BRIEF

MIMIR ANDINO

MIMIR ANDINO (Modernization of Institutional Management of Innovation and Research in the Andean region and Latin America), is a project co-funded by the European Commission, within the framework of the Erasmus + CBHE program (capacity development in the field of higher education by its acronym in English). With a duration of 3 years, the Mimir Andino project is designed primarily to help and encourage partner universities in South American (and specifically Andean) countries to better understand the status quo of their research management approaches, from performance and Evaluation up management structures and effectiveness.

The project developed a research management model that will help partner universities to achieve their research and innovation objectives with respect to national and regional development. The model takes into account European practices and maps the environment and existing research activities as well as policy contexts



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and investments. It helps the South American partners to identify areas of change, improvement objectives and a trajectory to excel in regionally relevant research. The project is coordinated by ASCUN with partners/OBREAL Global members in Colombia, Chile, Peru, Italy, Sweden and Spain.

Amongst the project activities of 2021 was the organized of an online event series open to facilitate dialogue between leaders in research management- **Cafés con Mimir Andino**, these events, held from June to August 2021, dealt with strategies to promote research and innovation in universities and generate ideas around the implementation of the research and innovation management model. A total of five dialogues were held. Each session featured an expert or specialist from Europe and/or Latin America, who shared reflections and practices. Each session was moderated by a leader in R+i management associated with the project, together with a group of rectors and vice-rectors associated with the Mimir Andean Project, who entered into a conversation with the expert on the specific topic.

- ⌚ [Research and Public Investment Expertise: Impact, Accountability and Community | 15 June 2021](#)
- ⌚ [Second event: Communicating research: university and public opinion | 29 June 2021](#)
- ⌚ [Third meeting: Communicating research: university and public opinion | 13 July 2021](#)
- ⌚ [Fourth session: Management and information systems for the institutional development of research in Universities | 27 July 2021](#)

HAQAA2

Harmonisation of African Higher Education, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) is an initiative that has been established to support the development of a harmonised quality assurance and accreditation system at institutional, national, regional and Pan-African continental level. It is funded by the European Union Commission, in the context of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. Phase one ([HAQAA1](#)) was implemented from 2016-2018. HAQAA 2 (2019 – 2022) is intended to build upon, upscale and promote the results of HAQAA1.

OBREAL Global currently coordinates this contract with the Association of African Universities, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and

the German Academic Exchange Service. The partnership also relies on six regional strategic partners: SARUA (SADC), NAQAAE (Northern Africa), IUCEA (East Africa), CAMES (francophoine Africa), CNAQ (Mozambique), ANAQ-Sup (Senegal).

2021 was a busy year for the initiative despite the ongoing constraints of the pandemic. The following provides some highlights:

Task Force ASG-QA (African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance)

The ASG-QA Working Group has carried out an evaluation of the quality assurance agency review process and methodology that was developed and piloted in HAQAA1. A report has been produced in three languages, including recommendations to enhance and improve agency reviews. The working group is now developing a user's guide for the ASG-QA.

Policy-Data Development Team

A team of experts - the "Policy Data Development Team" - has been set up and is mapping the status of higher education data collection in African regions, leading to recommendations on a coordinated and coherent process for future African HE data collection, starting from the African regions and suggesting a methodological approach.

Technical Working Group for the Set-Up of the Continental Agency/'PAQAA'.

The Technical Working Group for the implementation of the Continental Agency/'PAQAA' has been formally constituted and endorsed by the African Union Commission. The group has met 11 times virtually, in addition to several parallel meetings between members. It proposed four scenarios for the eventual set-up of the agency, examining its functioning and governance.

HAQAA2 Webinars

- 📍 Europe and Africa in strategic partnership: What's new in higher education? 11 March 2021



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- 📍 Quality Assurance Webinar in Online Teaching and Learning including assessment | 31 May 2021

CESA Higher Education in Focus 2021 - 6 May to 29 June 2021

This [series of online events](#) primed the development of a coordinated approach for data collection in Africa, rooted closely in the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and the structures surrounding it. It was organised by AAU, with the support of OBREAL Global and in close collaboration with the CESA Higher Education Sub-Cluster coordinators, through the HAQAA2 initiative. The events, which [examined the different priority themes of CESA's Higher Education cluster](#), had a common thread linked to data collection for policy formulation. This series of events fed into the AAU General Conference in July 2021, where a session was dedicated to HAQAA2 and the PDU concept was presented to the African Vice Chancellors.

This series of events attracted a great deal of interest from the African higher education community, with 1148 people registering and 1136 following the different sessions live.

- 📍 Towards the Development of a Continental Database for Effective Policy Formulation on CESA (HE) Initiatives | 6 May 2021
- 📍 Preparing Higher Education Students for a Complex World: Exploring the Fluidity of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Post-COVID | 12 May 2021
- 📍 Expert Consultative Roundtable on Transitioning from Distance Learning and E-learning in Higher Education in West Africa | 20 May 2021
- 📍 Strengthening personal, leadership development and work readiness of graduates in African universities | 26 May 2021
- 📍 Industry-Academia Collaboration and Technology Transfer in Africa | 10 June 2021
- 📍 University Leadership and Management in the Era of COVID-19 | 29 June 2021

AfriQAN Workshop Series - Quality Assurance, teaching and learning in the context of COVID 19: Towards African continental collaboration - 16 September 2021

In an attempt to build on its existing quality assurance initiatives and experiences, the CNAQ, as Chair of AfriQAN (the African Network for Quality Assurance), organised

together with OBREAL Global, coordinators of the HAQAA2 initiative, a workshop on quality assurance in the context of COVID-19 in African higher education. It brought together staff from national and regional regulatory bodies, Quality Assurance Agencies (QAAs) and higher education institutions.

HAQAA2 Cohorts of the IQA Training Course

Four groups of the HAQAA2 training course on IQA have been implemented virtually. They have involved more than 100 quality assurance professionals from various institutions in Africa and trained them in institutional auditing ASG-QA, change management and the pan-African policy framework. This action was primarily coordinated by DAAD in cooperation with regional strategic partners.

Call for participation in agency reviews and consultancy visits

A call for participation in agency reviews and consultancy visits was launched and nine countries/agencies that requested to participate were approved. Four virtual training events on self-assessment against the ASG-QA have been organised for staff of selected agencies and other invited agencies.

VITA GLOBAL

Vita Global – OBREAL Global trademark ‘multi-regional’ project (coordinated by University Roviri I Virgili) funded under the Erasmus+ programme, unites a unique consortium that brings together universities from diverse and mostly non-urban regions in South America, Georgia, Europe and South Africa and allows these universities to map and compare their contribution, via teaching and research, to local development and local economies.

It embeds the development of modules in specific disciplines – viticulture, wine tourism, sensory analysis, wine marketing and sustainability – into wider staff training exercises, so as to foster deeper ‘North-South-emerging country’ strategic partnerships in teaching and learning.

2021 was dedicated to further developing and preparing the piloting of six international study modules. A number of public webinars were also organized to promote the project, including presentations at the ACE International Congress of Enology and Cava (5 November 2021) and webinars with local industry in the partner



regions and countries. Vita Global also continued to probe a discussion on flexibilization of learning, as featured in OBREAL Global in Focus.

HERESA

Inspired by the European Union funded network of 'Higher Education Reform Experts' (HERE) in European neighborhood countries, HERE SA, coordinated by THENSA with the support of OBREAL Global, intends to launch and sustain a similar network at the national level in SA, which could be eventually extended to all HEI in the sector. The network is comprised of individuals that were strategically selected given their roles in overseeing and guiding teaching and learning at their institutions, and potential to be catalysts for change in the HE sector. The HERE SA project trains and capacitates these individuals to enable them to advise their institutions and the sector on holistic higher education development to meet labour market and societal needs. The project also supports teaching and learning reform in South African Universities of Technology, especially as it pertains to Work Integrated Learning, Competence Based Learning and Entrepreneurship Education.

EQUAM LA

EQUAM LA is an Erasmus+ project that aims to advance the Latin American Higher Education Space in areas such as recognition of degrees and credits across borders by reinforcing and connecting quality assurance systems for higher education, in which universities and QA agencies are key partners and drivers. It is coordinated by the University of Murcia and includes a number of OBREAL members and partners in Colombia, Argentina, Nicaragua and Panama. Amongst the activities taken forward in 2021 has been a webinar series, aimed at a more global audience.

Quality assurance and micro-credential recognition: from concept to practice in Colombian higher education | 7 December 2021

The Colombian Association of Universities - ASCUN - in collaboration with OBREAL Global in the framework of the Equam La project organised a [webinar](#) with the title "Quality assurance and recognition of micro-credentials: from concept to practice in Colombian higher education".



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The objectives of the event were:

Share international definitions and applications of the concept of micro-credentials at university level and generate a better understanding of how the term is applied in practice.

To address university managers who are at different stages of progress with regard to micro-credentials and to share challenges, approaches and concrete experiences with regard to micro-credentials. What are the strategies behind them? Who are they targeting and why?

Examine practices in Europe in relation to quality assurance of micro-credentials and their respective recognition across institutions and countries and in the labour market.

NEPREV

The NePRev project is designed to adequately address the needs of the Tunisian consortium partners who have raised concerns such as current curricula that do not effectively respond to labour market expectations and are not prepared to respond to industry's demand for NPR.

The aim is to design and develop a joint Master's programme open to Tunisian, European and African participants. The Master is a two-year multidisciplinary programme (120 credits) offering the opportunity to specialise in three different disciplines: "Industry 4.0", "Renewable Energy", and "Management of innovation & entrepreneurship". Further objectives are to strengthen the role of Tunisian universities in connecting with their socio-economic environment.

In 2021 the consortium has worked on the design and development of the Master in the Next Production Revolution and of the teaching laboratory in NPR. The next step is to pilot Master in NPR.

PRICNAC

PRICNAC (Promotion of Research, Innovation and Digital Culture in Central Africa) is a project funded by the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and



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the European Union under the ACP Innovation Fund. The four-year project aims to strengthen research and innovation capacities in Central African countries through the consolidation of innovation ecosystems, productive synergies, entrepreneurship, digital technology and innovation policies in favour of sustainable development and poverty reduction.

PRICNAC is launching a programme of third party projects or micro-projects implemented by small local networks which will be integrated immediately into the larger PRICNAC network. This network will serve as a community for the sharing of practices and the strengthening of professional links.

The micro-projects will bring together different stakeholders (educational institutions and research centres, companies, national and local public administrations, chambers of commerce, business organisations, trade unions, NGOs) at the local level. 12 projects will be financed during the first phase of the project. Afterwards, some micro-projects may receive additional funds for their continuity and consolidation of their impact. The maximum amount of funding will be 150,000 euros per project over 10 to 14 months.

SUCCESS

The EU ERASMUS + SUCCESS project aims to connect universities and industry by improving the educational system in the direction of entrepreneurship, creating new job opportunities and better exchanging of practical knowledge from industry to educational institutions in order to ultimately reduce the youth unemployment rate and stop the trend of active labor force departing from our country.

The project involves 16 partner universities, chambers of commerce, companies, and development agencies from countries in the region and Europe. The OBREAL Global member International Burch University is the project coordinator, and the project also includes Džemal Bijedić University, the University of Tuzla and the University of East Sarajevo from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Apart from BiH, universities from Serbia, Albania and Montenegro are also participating in the project, as well as European partners who will share their knowledge and experience: UAS Kempten from Germany, University of Lublin from Poland, and OBREAL Global a University Association from Spain.



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In 2021 the project has mapped existing models of cooperation between universities and the business community through the analysis of best practices in EU countries and the region. European universities will share their knowledge and experience, while universities in BiH and the region will begin implementing these practices in the coming years. This process will result in the network of regional partnerships between universities and companies and lead to the modernization of the education system.

ONLINE HE

OnlineHE supports Higher Education Institutions to reach out to marginalized groups by adopt e-learning for teaching and learning. Via the development of the outputs, HE faculty will be educated, empowered, and will be given tools, proposed framework and training opportunities to build their capacity and be able to design, develop and offer online courses to university students and adults in extend (cross-sectoral priority). This way, by supporting and promoting e-learning in HE, there will be opportunities for all for flexible learning adapted to the learning needs of learners (fully online or blended). Learners would be able to learn anywhere and anytime and attend HE courses and programmes despite any difficulties that might face or encounter.

In 2021 the ONLINEHE consortium has already concluded the first intellectual output which consisted in developing a toolkit which will support users on how to adopt a strategy for teaching online in Higher Education. During this output, partners engaged in a review of the current eLearning practices used to teach online in higher education courses of various disciplines, developed tools to support educators in Higher Education, and focused on the collection of best practices identified certain approaches that proved useful as illustrated in related literature following the established recommendations. As a consequence this output will lead to the development of a training program to a group of people composed of HE staff, researchers, practitioners, adult educators, learning designers, and university support staff. This will conducted in 2022.