This works in my place!
WOP Sustainable Leader Program: Latin America

PROGRESS REPORT 2019

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1-Rationale, goal, and objectives

The United Nations has established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/) to achieve a better and sustainable world for all in 2030. The Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP) discipline, with the support of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), can help to achieve these goals, especially those related to "no poverty", "good health and well-being", "gender equality", "decent work" and "innovation". In fact, WOP research and practice is increasingly interested in these topics (e.g., Lyness & Judiesch, 2014; Tokar & Kaut, 2018).

In general, human development and quality of life have improved around the world. The recent Human Development Report of the United Nations (UN, 2018), covering the period from 1990 to 2017, showed that people with low human development fell from 60% (3 billion) of the global population to 12% (926 million). Nevertheless, conflicts and high levels of poverty and exclusion persist in our societies. Inequality is an important obstacle because it is able to reduce global human development by one fifth, and it is especially negative for countries that have a low or medium human development level. Gender inequality also remains as an important obstacle. In fact, average human development is 6% lower for women than for men, and gender gaps are especially negative if women live in countries with low levels of human development. With the current rate of change, over 200 years will be necessary to close the gender economic gap in the world. Of course, inequality is not restricted to economic differences, it also exists in education, health, voice, access to technology, etc. In addition, inequality gaps can stimulate extremisms and hinder opportunities for a sustainable and inclusive development (UN, 2018).

These positive and negatives aspects of human development coincide with a world that is changing rapidly. Western societies maintain an important influence but modernization is increasingly present in other regions of the world. Contrary to the assumption that modernization is associated with Westernization, the higher rates of economic growth were not observed, during the last decades, in Western countries (Inglehart & Welzel 2010). Additionally, the knowledge economy has been extended to developing countries. Globalization and development of information and communication technology are mutually reinforced. Access to internet in developing countries rose 4,000% from 2000 to 2010 (UN, 2010). This development of internet and technology not only permits the circulation of business opportunities but also ideas, knowledge, innovation, values about education and other facets of the life, democratic participation, health services, etc.

This new world creates both challenges and opportunities to achieve a better life for all. The modernization and knowledge society require highly educated citizens and workers who could be open to values related to democratic participation and the achievement of a sustainable and inclusive world. However, it is possible that the dialogue between Western societies and other regions lacks a **contextualized approach**. A real dialogue requires the consideration and respect of particularities, cultural values, and history of countries. In other words, dialogue between countries could be characterized, considering a contextualized approach, as the dissemination of best values and achievement of a better life for all but considering the context where this goal is

translated to specific strategies and practices. If contextual factors are not considered, efforts can produce limited positive consequences.

Regarding the WOP discipline, main WOP theories, methodologies, intervention models, and tools have been designed and implemented focusing the attention on developed countries. In his Presidential address to IAAP members, Bernhard Wilpert (Wilpert, 2000) argued that the mainstream Western psychological tradition has been developed within a culture and it is difficult to transport it to a different cultural context. He also claims for a Psychology that considers the contextual and local embeddedness of behavior.

The present project focuses on the Latin America region, although it could be implemented in the future in other regions. In the Latin America region there are critical challenges both at social (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2017) and economic level (Banco de España, 2018). In addition, Psychology in the region has evolved with some particularities that are not so present in the mainstream Western psychological tradition. It is especially remarkable a collectivism approach where, for example, social and health problems of individuals and groups are faced with collective strategies that are based on social and historic characteristics of the region (e.g., Wiesenfeld & Sánchez, 1991).

Therefore, the contribution of WOP to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals should consider, to be effective, contextual factors of the region. The motto of this project (**This works in my place!**) reflects this idea. Accordingly, **the main goal of the current project is the identification, through the participation and dialogue with WOP leaders in the region, of relevant contextual factors that give inputs (challenges, opportunities, barriers) to WOP (strategies and practices) in achieving Sustainable Development Goals**. This general goal is broken down into four objectives:

1-To identify the contextual factors of Latin America region that are associated with the achievement of a better life for all. Contextual factors refer to local cultural aspects, particular history, hopes and any other facet of the region that can facilitate or hinder the achievement of a better life for all. We define here a better life as the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations, focusing the attention on "no poverty", "good health and well-being", "gender equality", "decent work" and "innovation".
2-To identify how contextual factors of Latin America region can facilitate or constrain the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.
3-To select and cooperate with a group of WOP leaders in the Latin America region who participate in the diagnose of contextual factors as well as in the identification of WOP strategies and practices that can facilitate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.
4-To prepare a report with the identification of critical contextual factors in Latin America region; and the description of relevant WOP strategies and practices for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in the region.

2-Project steps

The project has four main steps, as shown in Figure 1, describing a circle that starts and finishes with the Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations as the core of the proposal. **The first step** (starting point of the project) is the set of Sustainable Development Goals. Of them, the project focuses on five: "no poverty", "good health and well-being", "gender equality", "decent work" and "innovation". The selection of these goals is based on their connection to the WOP discipline. In other words, actions associated with research and practice of WOP are more related to these goals than to the others established by the United Nations. Nevertheless, during the implementation of the project we will have an open-minded attitude to check if other Sustainable Development Goals could be facilitated through the WOP discipline.

Figure 1. The Circle of the WOP Sustainable Leader Program

Using the rationale of the project and the Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations, we contact and invite WOP leaders from Latin America. We try to have as many countries represented as possible. This is the **second step** of the project. To participate in the project, two requirements are needed: a) they are in relevant positions in universities, companies, NGOs, etc.; and b) they know not only the Latin America region but also Europe and/or USA (e.g., they have studied a Master or Ph.D. in USA and/or in a European country). In addition, we want a balance between juniors and senior scholars and/or practitioners to mix the experience of seniors and possible "fresh" ideas of juniors. We also want to have a gender balance. Although our main focus is to achieve the participation of WOP leaders, we are flexible and, if other non-WOP profiles (e.g., a policy maker) can contribute to the project, we can offer one or two vacancies to them within the group of participants.

The **third step** corresponds to actions to be done with the help of WOP leaders. Two Workshops are organized and implemented. The first one was already done in Europe

(Turin, Italy, May 2019) and conclusions are discussed in later sections of the current progress report. This Workshop was dedicated to the analysis of contextual factors. Conclusions of this Workshop mainly have a descriptive character. The first Workshop includes the identification and analysis of contextual factors. The second Workshop will be in México (Cancun, 2020), during the Centennial Congress. Based on previous information elaborated in the first Workshop, participants will analyze and propose strategies and practices, associated with the WOP discipline, to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and considering contextual factors. Each Workshop has three steps: a) pre-Workshop (initial analysis of information); b) Workshop (team work where participants interact and group dynamics are organized for the analysis and for providing conclusions); and c) post-Workshop (preparation of a report with the main conclusions).

The main outcome of the project is dissemination (**fourth step**). First, an initial version of conclusions will be presented in a public session during the ICAP Congress (Cancun, México 2020). Second, two reports are expected: the present progress report (2019) after the first Workshop; and the final report (2021) after the ICAP Congress in Cancun that will be held in December, 2020. The rationale of the final report is to explain how the WOP discipline can help in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, but considering the contextual factors of the region: in this case the Latin America region. Therefore, the reports are conceived as an input for the IAAP and United Nations, focusing the attention on the particularities of the region and how the contextual factors should be considered in WOP research and practice in order to design effective strategies and actions. In other words, how "**this works in my place**". Additionally, the reports and the methodology underlying the project can be shared with the other IAAP divisions to facilitate, if feasible, its use and adaptation to other initiatives.

3-First Workshop: Participants and procedure

Division 1, IAAP Officers organized and coordinated the first Workshop (Turin, Italy, May 31, 2019). Seven WOP leaders from Latin America participated (3 women and 4 men). They were from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. As mentioned above, there were three stages in the organization and implementation of the Workshop. First, a pre-workshop activity was done. Participants received some documents about the analysis of the social and economic situation of Latin America. They also received by e-mail a document (tool) to collect their perceptions about relevant contextual factors in Latin America for achieving UN goals. In this tool, officers provided the definition of contextual factor in the project: "any political, social, economic, and cultural factor that characterize the Latin American Region, acting as facilitator or obstacle for the achievement of UN goals". We asked them to give five contextual factors for each of the five UN goals considered: "no poverty", "good health and well-being", "gender equality", "decent work" and "innovation". We informed them that a short sentence is expected for each contextual factor. Division 1 Officers urged participants to combine positive (facilitating the achievement of UN goals) and negative (hindering the achievement of UN goals) contextual factors. We also provided some examples that could describe another region (Europe) (e.g., "Low investment, compared to Asia and USA, on innovation related to the 5-G technology") to facilitate the understanding of the expected task.

The second stage was the Workshop itself. Officers coordinated group activities for three hours. The main objective was to analyze and categorize the contextual factors provided by participants during the pre-workshop activity. Other factors, that could emerge during group activities, could be added. The expected outcome is the identification of contextual factors, relevant to achieve UN goals, that describe the situation in the Latin America region.

Finally (third stage), categorization of contextual factors is distributed among seven participants in order to confirm, correct, and/or add any useful information that was not present in the initial version of the information provided in the current report.[1] Officers were responsible for the preparation of the different versions of the progress report.

4-First Workshop: Contextual factors

In the following subsections we describe the contextual factors that participants proposed for each of the five UN goals considered. A general overview is shown in Table 1 (see Appendix 1).

4.1. *No poverty*

Participants indicated the existence of relevant **macro-economic issues** related with "no poverty". In general, the region has a number of important constraints in order to achieve the "no poverty" UN goal, such as: high dependency on the USA dollar as a reserve of value; high levels of external debts; lack of "anti-cyclic" policies; low reinvestment of non-Latin America companies in the region; need for more investment from abroad and elimination of incentives for investment from USA; persistence in government crisis; limitation on access to financial markets; external financial oversight; recurrent economic crisis and recessions; unstable currency; and high inflation rates. As a consequence, the Latin America region is especially sensitive to economic shocks that affect vulnerable people negatively; produce excessive dispersion and inequality in incomes; erode long-term poverty reduction policies; and reduce salaries in some sectors (e.g., government employees). There are relevant differences between countries in the Latin America region. Some countries are able to show some continuity in achieving decent macro-economic indicators (e.g., growth domestic product) such as Chile, Colombia, and Perú. By contrast, other countries have the risk to persist in a negative pattern (e.g., Argentina, Venezuela).

Participants also mentioned some **micro-economic issues**. In some countries (e.g., Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay) there are programs of economic help to reduce the poverty of families. However, the access to funding opportunities for ventures (e.g., micro-loans) and education is limited in general.

Regarding **education**, participants informed about positive aspects such as the existence of high-quality public universities in the region; creation of free and universal education systems in some countries; and access to education services through information and communication technology. Nevertheless, the education level of the population is relatively low, and the quality of schools is better in the private sector than in the public one in some countries of the region (e.g., Chile, Mexico). Participants also mentioned

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[1] Officers are not responsible for the opinions, described and categorized for the current report, that participants provided.

the existence of an imbalance between education and wealth. That is, education of vulnerable groups is not transferred to adequate opportunities as professionals. They remain in blue collar jobs or in informal family business (e.g., taxi drivers, food stall).

Participants indicated that the **social policy** has improved significantly: the social and employment budgets of Latin America governments have doubled in the last 20 years; and big global corporates tend to have initiatives to improve social inclusion of an important of part of the population. However, some relevant challenges remain in the region: despite the effort, social budgets of governments are much inferior compared to the OECD (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and European countries; social deprotection persists; there is a lack of coordinated initiatives by corporations and governments to stimulate the social mobility of people (movement of people within or between social strata) which is inter-wined with race and ethnicity; some groups (e.g., indigenous) are not considered in some social inclusion initiatives; and there is no adequate support (neither private nor public) to the high entrepreneurial spirit that exists in the Latin America region.

Environmental aspects were also relevant for participants. There is a focus on the market of natural resources (e.g., corn, soy beans, copper, petroleum) which is widely subjected to price fluctuations. In addition, there is a high vulnerability to natural disasters, especially in Central America and Caribbean countries. This has a negative financial impact on the government, companies, and the general population (e.g., poverty), requiring important efforts to achieve recovery after each disaster.

In general, participants had a negative view of **political issues** in the Latin America region. They perceive a negative spiral in some countries through which populist governments perpetuate over time (although negative spirals may be also present in no-populist governments). Maintaining people below the "poverty line" is a way to make vulnerable groups dependent on governmental social support and achieve their votes, especially in a situation of unchecked inflation. In addition, organized crime is present in the government work structures (e.g., hospitals, police force, judicial power) of some countries of the region, and it (organized crime) is the unique possibility for employment in some rural areas. Finally, the political instability is high and conflicts tend to be strong within countries.

Participants also stressed **corruption**. They perceive that the corruption culture is sometimes present in all social structures. In some countries, corruption is based on impunity and lack of judicial force. One of the consequences of this culture is the lack of correspondence between fiscal pressure and public services. That is, taxes are not transferred to important services to avoid poverty such as social security, education, and health.

4.2. *Good health and well-being*

Participants referred to the **health care access**. They mentioned positive aspects such as the increasing generalization of the universal health service; a greater focus on health and well-being in organizations; and the development of some technological hubs in medicine (e.g., in Brazil for surgery). Participants also stressed the access to a relatively good food, compared to that of USA and Canada. The sugar and other lobbies are no so strong as in North America, preventing sugar from being artificially added to a wide

range of products. Although obesity is high in some countries (e.g., Mexico), it is relatively low (although it is growing) compared to other regions (North America, Asia, and some countries in Europe). Finally, mental health is not perceived as a stigma in Latin America, as it is in North America, facilitating the access to professional help.

Positive aspects of **preventive health** were also mentioned. In some countries (e.g., Brazil, Chile) there is more and more pressure to reduce the consumption of tobacco and to avoid driving under the effects of alcohol. For example, Brazil has reduced tobacco consumption by 50% over the past 20 years. Smartphones are also useful to assess symptoms and to give information about primary prevention. However, participants indicated that hospitals are inadequate and understaffed, and primary care and prevention are virtually no existent. Sometimes, there is a lack of access to prevention actions (e.g., providing nutritious food to avoid the existence of undernourished populations). Finally, the access to healthy food is limited due to its high price.

Participants in the Workshop indicated the existence of **working conditions** that are negative for health and well-being. The working day has increased during the last 20 years, with an estimation of 44 hours per week on average plus hours of public transportation. Only few days per year are dedicated to official holidays and personal time off. Negative stress is associated with the high number of hours worked. The high inequality in the region, and corruption and lack of trust in institutions, also impacts on well-being negatively. Finally, and compared to European countries, there is less focus on prevention and management of work-related psychosocial risks.

Regarding **regulation and law**, participants showed a negative view. As a response to financial crisis, some governments have changed laws reducing the protection of workers and cutting worker health benefits. There are no policies to promote free time of workers (for cultural, recreational, sports activities, etc.) as part of human growth and well-being. Finally, there is a need for a more strict legislation to avoid pesticides in the areas where people live, including the urban areas (e.g., "Gliphosate" as a known carcinogenic prohibited in other regions around the world).

Participants also stressed **demographic trends**. There are important migration processes within the region (e.g., from Colombia and Venezuela to Chile and Costa Rica; from Venezuela, Colombia and Bolivia to Brazil; from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to Mexico) and international (e.g., from Afghanistan and Syria to Brazil). These processes have positive facets because they increase pluralism and diversity of the host countries. However, they produce, coupled with the existence of an older population in some countries, a challenge for the access to healthcare services and for the pension systems.

According to participants, an important problem associated with health and well-being is related to the **urban planning**. Despite being the most urbanized region in the world (with over 80% of the population living in cities), there is no long term urban sustainable planning, creating problems related to the capacity of water grids, sewerage infrastructure, etc. There are other problems associated with lack of a correct urban planning: there is no consideration of current and future demographic trends (e.g., aging of population) and how living in cities will affect quality of life of people; deficient public transport infrastructure to access in a safe and timely manner to work; problems

of health and quality of life associated with traffic problems, time spent (between 3 and 4 hours per day) in public transportation to work and, consequently, few hours of sleep; traffic jammed cities; environment problems (noise, no spaces for children, violence) that create high social stress; and insecurity. In addition, high environment contamination is also mentioned as an important problem. Many families live in ghettos around a polluted source of water (e.g., "Río Reconquista", "Riachuelo" in Buenos Aires, etc.). Similarly, lack of efficient industry controls and functioning of regulation bodies facilitate the rise of population in contaminated areas.

4.3. *Gender equality*

During the Workshop, participants argued that the **gender gap** (with inequality against women in terms of salary, access to the labor market, etc.) is still generalized in the Latin America region, together with other types of inequality (e.g., based on discrimination towards some ethnic groups). For example, they indicated that local organizations are not very interested in reducing the gender gap (e.g., by facilitating the incorporation of women into the labor market). Nevertheless, in some countries, feminism and women's rights activism is on the rise (e.g., Argentina, Mexico). These movements could create a good starting point for a discussion about gender equality.

Leadership positions remain predominantly occupied by men. Participants indicated that the rate of women in power has increased. However, that rate is still not representative of the population ratio nor of the high university student female to male ratios. This may be due to the difficulties in overcoming traditional cultural female/male stereotypes. Discussion in the media regarding gender roles and gender identity is a positive factor, because the programs presented by the media and the information presented by the press could challenge traditional gender stereotypes. In addition, and given the barriers for women reaching a managerial role, many women are deciding to start their own small and medium-sized enterprises and micro-ventures.

Participants interpreted that inequality against women is based on predominant **cultural values** in the Latin America region. There is a male-oriented culture ("machismo") that is transferred to the policies, practices, and behaviors. In some countries, this culture is supported by the roman catholic tradition of the region, with legislation proposals influenced by "faith-based" principles that violate the principle of separation of church and state. Many Latin American countries still embrace "traditional" values, in which the man is the primary breadwinner, and women are only seen as responsible for the upbringing of children. However, increased poverty is forcing to challenge this cultural value, as women must now also become the breadwinner as well. In addition, and despite the predominant traditional culture, participants stressed the positive impact of preventive programs and laws (e.g., laws that require employers to have policies and protocols for protecting an employee that is threatened or approached violently by a significant other at their place of work) related to the prevention of workplace harassment, school bullying, and domestic violence.

One of the most negative facets of gender inequality is **violence** towards women. Participants indicated that this violence is a strong trend in the Latin America region. One indicator is workplace and sexual harassment which still runs rampant. In the majority of cases, women are the primary targets. The violence dehumanizes women at work. Women are highly vulnerable in an insecure environment; for example, they must

commute in early, dark, and lonely hours to work and educational centers risking their own safety. Participants interpreted that one important reason underlying the high level of violence and sexual harassment is impunity with scarce regulation dedicated to prevent, protect, monitor, and punish the violence against women.

Human resources management practices also hinder the achievement of gender equality, according to participants in the Workshop. In the Latin America region, flexible work hours, telework, and other arrangements aimed at facilitating work-family balance are the exceptions, rather than the norm. This situation, in combination with the social pressures to conform to gender role stereotypes, reduce the opportunities of women to occupy more than one social role. There is a tendency to introduce the gender perspective mainstreaming in government bureaucratic structures, but in a theoretical rather than an actions-oriented way.

4.4. *Decent work*

According to participants, **precarious work** is generalized in the Latin America region. In several countries, many labor laws were re-designed during the 1990s and have never been revised since. These labor laws were made primarily with the interest of the employer in mind. The situation hinders the achievement of decent work: unemployment, difficult access to unemployment insurance; low minimum wage in relation to high cost of living; low average salaries in general; companies over-rely on outsourcing limiting the quality of work; the public agenda is apathetic for well-being, but also for performance (e.g., excessive bureaucracy); low benefits, in general, associated with jobs; and a lot of part-time jobs. In addition, there is a lack of talent management and strategic view in companies; the public policy is oriented to cover basic needs, but not to achieve equity and sustainable performance; and there is a high level of work stress.

Participants informed that another obstacle in achieving decent work is the importance of **informal economy** in the Latin America region. More people work in informal (57.1%) than in formal work (42.9%). The former contributes with the 22.7% of GDP and the latter with the 77.3% (source: inegi.org.mx). This translates in lack of social security and retirement plans for more than half the economically active population. The poverty in the region and the excessive taxation (labor cost) drives the use of informal work agreements (employees have no choice and employers cannot afford to pay all work-related taxes). Public policies are necessary for these workers as well, taking care about their income, adequate legislation, health insurance, and retirement.

A negative view of **employment relationships** was also shared among participants. Hierarchical culture and obedience values predominate in the region. Abusive supervision is more generalized than in other regions. In addition to (or in response to) the questionable labor unions, management in Latin America tends to conform to the traditional "leader"/"manager" role stereotype, that is, a boss highly directive, profit-driven, and uncompassionate towards their employees. There is an increased labor union influence but, whereas elsewhere labors unions might seem a contextual factor that contributes to decent work, in Latin America the labor unions leadership tends to be increasingly destructive (e.g., personal interests predominate over the social contract). Labor union demands attempt against the profitability of small and medium-sized enterprises and promote withdrawal behaviors in their members (sabotage, voluntary

absenteeism, free-riding), which are known negative predictors of high-quality employment.

Diversity was reported by participants regarding **regulation and law**. In some cases, there are positive efforts. For example, the Chilean recent legislation efforts in areas such as psychosocial risks ("*Protocolo de vigilancia de riesgos psicosociales en el trabajo",* Ley 16.744), persons with disabilities ("*Ley de Inclusión Laboral" N°21.015*), and union labor ("*Reforma al Sistema de Relaciones Laborales", Ley N°20.940*). Other examples are the law to protect individuals with disability in Brazil, within both private (art. 8º da Lei n. 7.853) and public (art. 37, VIII da CF) organizations, and the "Ley Federal del Trabajo" in Mexico that stresses decent work and balance between productivity and social justice. By contrast, the situation is not so positive in other countries. For example, financial crisis (e.g., Puerto Rico) have produced negative changes in the law. Despite the positive regulation efforts, some constraints (related to the bureaucracy, corruption, impunity) hinder the applicability.

Participants reported lack of **high-end technological infrastructure**. In general (it varies across countries), there is a lack of high-end technical infrastructure, which prevents from investing in developing highly-skilled workers and difficult the generalization of decent work. For example, in the south of Argentina, "technology" firms are just assembly lines which parts, made in south-Asia, are assembled. The Latin America region is still the "Granary of the world" and not the "Supermarket of the world" nor the "Computer store of the world."

The participation of Latin America region in **assessing and monitoring data about decent work** is low, according to participants. More specifically, there is inconsistent or low participation in multinational studies on decent work. In addition, there is low participation in multinational organisms promoting: a) the monitoring of relevant labor-related indexes (e.g., OCDE) associated with decent work; and b) the creation of third-party (independent) organizations that monitor such indexes.

4.5. *Innovation*

Participants stressed a number of positive aspects associated with the **private-public collaboration** in the Latin America region: There is an incipient volume of projects between organizations, universities, and governments to promote and develop science and technology and an entrepreneurship culture in general; there are research councils (e.g., CONICYT, CONICET, CNPq, CAPES, FAP, CONACYT) with few but highly renown scientific centers generating high quality research (e.g., Instituto de *Investigaciones Médicas Mercedes y Martín Ferreyra*, Argentina; *Centro de Medición MIDE UC*, Chile); more and more efforts -from legislation, Government, non-profit organizations, and education institutions- to promote innovation and the development of new businesses and investments; and increased governmental efforts to promote entrepreneurship (e.g., the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism of Chile created CORFO, an agency that aims to support entrepreneurship while strengthening human capital and technological capabilities). Despite these efforts, participants indicated the lack of adequate funding to support innovation, research, start-ups projects, etc.

Participants also informed about positive aspects in terms of **human capital**. Whereas most studies tend to focus on the social inequality in the Latin America region, there is a vast wealth of qualified labor that could be used to develop knowledge-intensive areas. For example, in Argentina given the double-digit inflation rates, many software coding firms are exporting their services to foreign clients, and thus having the possibility to pay first-world salaries. Additionally, there is a high potential economic impact of technology clusters addressing the use and transformation of natural resources. There is a hardworking, resourceful, agile, and creative problem-solving workforce. In fact, global companies report that people in countries in the Latin America region can "do more" with "less" compared to their North American and European countries. They are particularly resourceful in terms of problem-solving and decision-making. Participants also argued that crisis, natural disasters, and necessity of people are the "mother" of innovation in the Latin America region. Latin Americans seem to battle the structural poverty that their countries suffer by activating their entrepreneurial skills. Starting small and medium-sized enterprises is for many a valid alternative to a precarious job.

Regarding the **sustainable economy**, participants reported that, paradoxically, a positive aspect of the region's underdevelopment is that many virgin niche markets are growing fast. For example, as a result of the energy shortages in Argentina, the administration is investing heavily in renewable energy sources (wind, solar, etc.). This new "green economy" has the potential of generating several supporting industries, and thus create new jobs. A similar interest in the sustainable energy exists in other countries such as Puerto Rico. In addition, and as a result of the massive social inequality, social enterprises are growing in Latin America. Unlike traditional ventures, which aim mostly to generate profit, a social enterprise seeks to make a profit but also improve the social context as a result of their activities. For example, companies that hire and train individuals from marginalized sectors; or that rely on locally sourced goods, etc. The next step in social entrepreneurship is the rise of "regenerative organizations," which end goals is not only to improve the social context but also to develop a production process that enhances the ecological environment.

Despite this positive view, participants informed about relevant **barriers** that limit the innovation in the Latin American region: The low level of English language competence is an obstacle (e.g., publishing scientific and technological advances in international journals is difficult); there is a lack of a sustainable culture of innovation over time because the focus is on short-term performance and goals rather than the long-term innovation impact; limited access to internet in some areas; innovation is associated with "hard" sciences, whereas it is very limited for "soft" sciences; there is a high "culture-centric" approach that ignores mutual learning related to the interaction with other cultures; extant difficulties for leveraging technology to promote innovation in business; and efficiency problems because hardworking (e.g., Mexico is the country that works more hours according to the OECD ranking) is not transferred to productivity that could produce innovation.

A main problem is Latin America is the low **investment in research and development** (R&D). Investment in R&D is below the recommended percentages and the patent process is quite complicated and there is no support for it. Unlike other regions where R&D is a strategic priority, R&D is not valued nor protected in Latin America, according to participants. R&D is always one of the first areas that are "cut" when the systematic economic crises occur. Despite a few initiatives, there is almost no economic

support from the public sector to retain talent and prevent the inevitable "brain drain" that results from such lack of support. In this way, only the uneducated population remains, reinforcing the populist cycle.

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APPENDIX 1. CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS.
GENERAL OVERVIEW. (FIRST WORKSHOP)

United Nations Goals	Contextual Factors
No poverty	- Macro-economic issues - Micro-economic issues - Education - Social policy - Environmental aspects - Political issues - Corruption
Good health and well-being	- Health care access - Preventive health - Working conditions - Regulation and law - Demographic trends - Urban planning
Gender equality	- Gender gap - Leadership - Cultural values - Violence - Human resources management practices
Decent work	- Precarious work - Informal economy - Employment relationships - Regulation and law - High-end technological infrastructure - Data about decent work
Innovation	- Private-public collaboration - Human capital - Sustainable economy - Barriers - Investment in research and development