

Perceptions of European higher education in third countries

A study carried out by the Academic Cooperation Association

Country Report Mexico

I Executive summary

The present country report starts with a short survey on the Mexican Higher Education System, followed by a detailed summary of the qualitative interviews held with an important number of stakeholders: Rectors and Vice-rectors, Heads of international Offices of public and private universities as well as officials of government institutions (Ministry of Education (SEP), the National Research and Technology Council (CONACYT) and the National Association of Universities (ANUIES)). In addition, at the *EuroPosgrados – European Higher Education Fair* in Mexico City about 30 interviews with parents of students interested in studying abroad were collected. Besides the qualitative interviews, a dozen facilitators at 8 (4 and 4) selected public and private HEI's and 4 High Schools ("preparatorias") collected roughly 1700 paper based student's questionnaires and 270 teacher's questionnaires. The results of this survey are included in the general report. With 10.000 flyers, 300 posters and links on websites the participation in the online-questionnaire was also promoted.

About 2.4 million students are enrolled in more than 3000 HEI's. Roughly only 10 % of them are comparable with universities in the European sense, i.e. the quality standards vary considerably, especially at the private institutions. Two thirds of the students attend public universities, one third private ones. In general, research is done only in state universities and research institutes, and in very few private institutions. Comparing with other OECD countries, the number of researchers and graduate and (especially) doctoral students is low.

Due to the population growth, the Mexican HE System is expanding vigorously. Almost all important HEI's realize strong efforts towards internationalization.

The experience gained in the survey and the personal interviews reveals that Mexican students, but also university and government officials are keen to deepen the dialogue with EU universities and interested in learning more about the study and research programs offered. Despite the fact that US-universities are the traditional "number one" counterparts, in the last years (especially after 9/11) the European option grew considerably in importance. The main reasons for considering EU universities as an interesting option are:

1. The quality and prestige of European academic titles;
2. Historical reasons: longstanding close cultural and academic relations (with Spain, France etc.)
3. Security, life style, cultural and linguistic diversity;
4. Pragmatic reasons like less expensive tuitions in most European countries;
5. The European integration process;
6. The attempt to diminish the economic and political dependency on the United States, or at least to compensate it on the cultural level.

There are also some arguments which play against Europe:

1. The brand of a Common Space of European Higher Education is quite new and not yet well established.

2. There are considerable differences in the prestige and quality (at least in the perception of Mexican students) of the well established Central and Western European universities and the “newcomers” in the European Union.
3. Recognition of a European academic degree may be more difficult than an academic degree from the US.

Still, there are also strong reasons for Mexicans to consider the United States the first option:

1. Longstanding cooperation programs with many universities;
2. The well established rankings and the worldwide prestige of the top American universities;
3. Better (or more rigidly) structured curricula, which make academic integration easier for students accustomed from secondary school to be guided thoroughly;
4. An important number of Mexican students have already relatives in the United States;
5. To counteract the security-driven, often considered “unfriendly” migration policy of the government, important US-universities seem to make growing efforts to attract top students of Mexico and offer favorable conditions to Mexican scholarship organizations (including joint financing efforts).

Therefore, to benefit from the new and growing openness from Mexican students towards a European academic option, it is necessary, among others,

- to strengthen information campaigns (i.e. Higher Education Fairs);
- to continue or expand financial help (i.e. scholarship programs);
- to improve the study and research facilities;
- to negotiate and assure the mutual accreditation and recognition of study programs
- to be more flexible concerning migration regulations.

II Country information

1. General information on the country

Key Figures¹:

Total Population	106,202,903 (July 2005 est.)
Annual Population growth rate	1.17% (2005 est.)
GDP per capita	\$6,506 (2005 est., IMF World Economic Outlook, April 2005)
GDP – real growth rate	4.1% (2004 est.)
GDP	617,9 billion US-Dollar (2005 est., IMF)

The United Mexican States is a federal republic in Middle America, consisting of 31 states and 1 federal district.

Mexico is with its over 100 million inhabitants the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world and the second most populous country in Latin America after Portuguese-speaking Brazil. About 70% of the people live in urban areas. Current estimates claim that the population of the area around Mexico City is about 18 million (it is estimated that the population will reach 20 Million in 2015).

The Spanish conquered the territories, which today form Mexico, in the early 16th century and dominated the country for almost 300 years (“Virreinato de Nueva España”). After a long fight the colony gained its independence from Spain in 1821. Almost 100 years of political and social unrest lead to severe problems, which erupted in the revolution of 1910. Only seven years later, a new constitution stopped the civil war.

The PRI (“Partido Revolucionario Institucional”; Institutional Revolutionary Party) was formed in 1929 and controlled the Mexican national parliament for 71 years. Since the 2000 presidential elections the PAN (“Partido Acción Nacional”; National Action Party) is governing the country. The Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD, “Partida de la Revolución Democrática”) is of growing importance.

The demographic indicators show an increase of the population over the last 5 years from 97,483,412 million (2000) to 106,202,903 million (July 2005) inhabitants. During the last years, the annual population growth has been slightly decreasing.

Mexico, a free market economy, is defined by the World Bank as a country of middle income. The level of development in the regions of the country is very different. It is estimated, that 40% of the population lives below the poverty line. Ongoing problems are low real wages, underemployment and unemployment (together almost 25%), unequal income distribution and the disadvantages of the Amerindian population in the Southern states.

Economically, Mexico is still very much dependent on the United States. 75% of foreign trade of Mexico is with the US, and it has increased since the signing of the NAFTA

¹ CIA: The World Factbook. Mexico, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/mx.html>, 03.07.2005

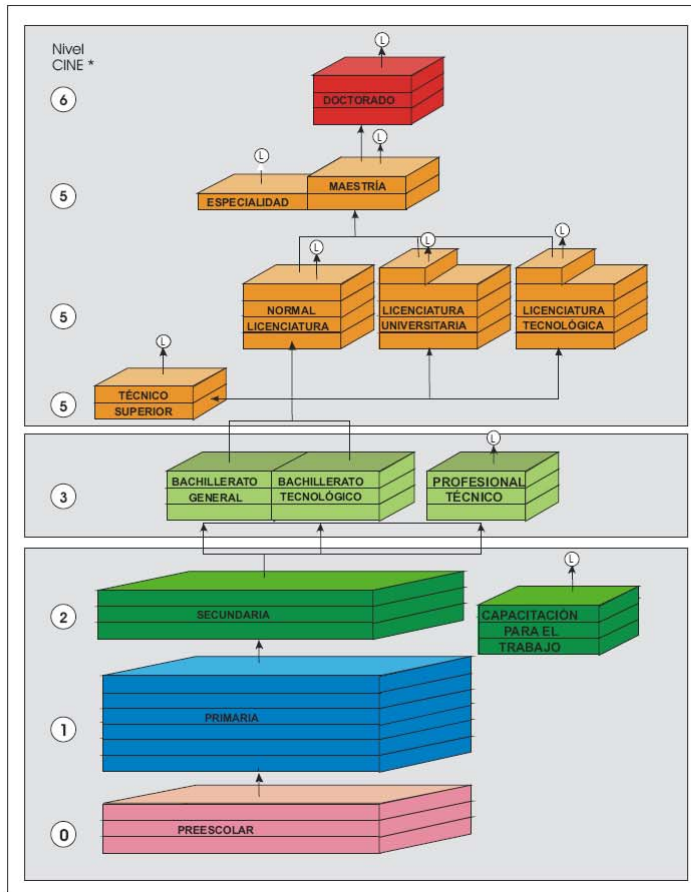
treaty in 1994. Just recently a development towards more economic and political independence is visible which is, for example, expressed through a free trade agreement with the European Union.

2. Short overview of the (higher) education system

Key figures:

Number of secondary school pupils (Bachillerato):	2,936,100 (ANUIES, 2003)
Number of students in higher education institutions in general:	2.23 Million (ANUIES, 2003)
Growth rate of students in higher education (1993-2003)	5.6
Number of students by level:	
professional schools/ tecnico superior	67,100 (ANUIES, 2003) (3.1%, SEP)
normal Bachelor/Licenciatura	166,900 (ANUIES, 2003)
Licenciatura (universitaria, tecnológica y normal)	1,865,500 (ANUIES, 2003) (90.7%, SEP)
Postgraduate (total)	139,600 (ANUIES, 2003) (6.2%, SEP)
Postgraduate by level:	
Especialización:	30,600 (ANUIES, 2003)
Master	98,200 (ANUIES, 2003)
PhD	10,800 (ANUIES, 2003)
Primary to secondary transition rate (%)	93% (UNESCO, 2005)
Number of higher education institutions:	4,294 (SEP, 2002)
National expenditure on education in general:	501,214.2 Million of Pesos (49,938 Mia \$US)
Public expenditure on education in general:	393,827.5 Million of Pesos
as % of GDP	5.6% (SEP, 2004)
as % of total government expenditure	27.1% (SEP, 2004)
Participation of the population in education at all levels	31.4 Million (30.1% of total population)
	77.5% Primary and Secondary schools
	11.0% High Schools
	7.4% Higher Education
	4.1% professional training
People enrolled in institutions of Higher Education by age group 19-23 years	21.4% of the population
Transition High School – Higher Education	83.5% of all High School graduates

Mexican Educational System



Equivalencias del Sistema Educativo Nacional con la clasificación internacional normalizada de la educación

Source: SEP: Sistema Educativo de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Principales Cifras Ciclo Escolar 2003-2004

Education is one of the government's highest priorities. The education budget has increased significantly in recent years; in real terms, funding of education has increased by almost 25% over the last decade. Education in Mexico is being decentralized from federal to state authority in order to improve accountability. Although educational levels in Mexico have improved substantially in recent decades, the country still faces many problems. 8% of the Mexicans are illiterate, among the indigenous people this percentage can rise up to 40%.

The government of President Fox aimed at increasing the expenses for education from now 6.2% to 8% of the GDP and for science and investigation from now 0.43% to 1% of the GDP till the end of 2006, but these goals will not be achieved during the Fox administration.

The Education System comprises different types of education:

- initial education (0-4 years)
- basic education (5-14 years, kinder garden, primary and secondary school)

- special education
- higher education
- general education for adults
- and vocational training

The best Mexican universities can definitely be compared with those of European countries. But the lack of funds is significantly higher. 2.3 million students are enrolled in approximately 4,500 institutions of higher education. Compared to the increase of enrolment there is less emphasis on the formation of scientifically highly qualified persons. Only 1,400 doctoral degrees are awarded annually. However, this number is growing.

The national education system comprises governmental institutions and social institutions in charge of giving educational service and of preserving, transmitting and contributing to the growth of Mexican culture.

A major legal problem is that Mexico has no ministry for higher education, research and science. Higher education is hence trapped between the ministry of education (which focuses on primary and secondary schools) and the National Council of Science and Technology, CONACYT, which concentrates, as its name says, on technology and does not cover but a segment of the entire academia. Its scholarship programs show priority to the fields of science and technology. This leads to a situation where scholarships are not easily granted in fields which do not promise a certain "return on investment".

The criteria for the selection of scholarship applicants have become stricter. The minimum average qualification of applicants was set at 8.5 (out of max.10). Besides, students have to show a basic command of the language of the destination country, in case it is not an English-speaking country.

There is a slowly growing consensus in Mexico that only persons who are duly qualified should be allowed to become university teachers. Therefore, the Ministry of Education (SEP) set up the PROMEP Program which aims at increasing substantially the ratio of university teachers with master or PHD-title.

Until the 70s key persons in society and politics had studied at prestigious public universities like the UNAM or the IPN. In the last decades the education of the economic elite shifted more and more to some of the private universities. These have gained more importance in education for the upper class and the qualification of second row key persons in the economy.

Secondary schools:

Presently Mexico ranks below average in the Pisa Study

At all levels, the school system focuses – no matter if private or public schools – mainly on repetition and learning. Knowledge management, social competences, soft skills and independence are not particularly fostered. Many students even at the end of their academic degree show difficulties to handle the abundance of knowledge that characterizes an information society. This will most likely lead to problems when Mexican high school graduates start studying at European universities.

There is a big difference between private and public secondary schools.

Public schools often have little material and poorly paid teachers; teachers are well organized in labor unions and on occasions for months on strike. Additionally, the public sector is characterized by political demands and statements, such as introducing English compulsory courses in primary schools, which are neither supported by funds

nor the necessary political will. This leads occasionally to an extraordinary wide gap between the claimed achievements and the real situation.

It can be assumed that more than 95% of foreign language teaching in Mexican secondary schools concentrates on English. In many secondary schools the choice of a foreign language is exclusive, meaning that every pupil can only learn one foreign language. This makes multilingualism an almost unknown phenomenon in Mexican schools. But also many Mexican students show a poor command of the English language, which is a structural handicap when thinking of Europe as a potential study destination.

At private schools usually English is taught starting at elementary level or even kindergarten. There is a small number of private secondary schools and high schools such as the Japanese schools, the Swiss school, the German schools, the French school etc. where up to four languages are being taught. It seems the Mexican elite send their children to these schools not because - but in spite of these languages being taught. There is an enormous variety of quality standard from rather poor to excellent private schools, so that a general conclusion cannot be established.

In simple terms the basic difference between private and public schools is the teacher's salary. Good teachers therefore often shift from public to private schools.

Students from public schools normally attend public universities. Students from private school have another perspective of the world. Some of them have been able to travel to other countries and have been in touch with other cultures. They usually speak English fluently, some even another language.

Foreign languages at universities:

It has generally been understood in Mexican universities that emphasis should be placed on teaching English. A large number of subjects require compulsory a certain degree of language proficiency in one or – less often - in two languages. Unfortunately, even students of international relations and subjects alike are not supposed to learn three or four languages. Students themselves narrow their choices even further by deciding for the easiest language to learn in case the proficiency obligation is defined as English plus one. Thus, in most universities the departments of Italian and Portuguese are almost the size of the department of French. All language departments together do not even equal the English department. The quality of language teaching reflects repetitive structures as mentioned above for secondary schools.

The preparation of language teachers at Mexican universities is marked by an exaggerated “scientificism” (future language teachers study subtleties of psycholinguistics but hardly learn the terminology of grammar), as well as a general lack of practical aspects. However, all over Mexico there are only 13 programs for the training of teachers of French, at the beginning of 2005 one such program for Italian and one for German have been established - for the entire country. For Portuguese, for example, that is taught by approximately 2,000 teachers, there is no special training available.

A student who decides to learn a language has serious difficulties to accumulate more than 300 hours in his entire career. Access to language courses is very restricted. Since students at universities hardly ever get beyond the level A2 of the European Reference Framework and since at many universities these very students are being given a diploma that states that they master the language, for most of them it is a shock to realize how far they really got when they are confronted with B2 or C1 proficiency requirements. This is not the case for English however.

Higher education:

➤ general description

There are three academic degrees which are normally awarded in Mexico. The first academic degree is the „licenciatura“, comparable to the French “license”. The average duration of study for this degree sums up theoretically to 4 years. It can be observed however that many students even after having passed all their classes in 3 to 4 years need another 1 to 4 years to write their thesis and to obtain their final certificate/degree documents. Most students start working in a job after having passed the last exam and before writing the thesis. There is even a legal term for these not yet graduated persons, which is “pasante”. Writing a thesis in a “licenciatura” program most often is not limited by a temporal framework as is the case of Europe. A recent development, starting from the private universities, is the large scale offer of “licenciatura” degrees without having written any thesis, not even a “tesina”, which would be comparable to any term paper in Europe. All those students have hence never experienced the writing process itself, not to mention research and the management of the abundance of literature in a foreign language.

Academic Qualifications awarded are:

- “licenciatura” = first degree (theoretically 8 – 9 semesters)
- “especialidad” = special courses (1-2 semesters)
- “maestría” = Master (theoretically 2-4 semesters)
- “doctorado” = doctorate (theoretically 4-6 semesters)

➤ Postgraduate programs

Not untypical for Mexico is thinking of postgraduate studies rather late in life.

There are ample offers of postgraduate degrees in Mexico, which are very unequally distributed. Mexico City hosts the large majority of academic offers, each of the 31 federal states having a public university “in the province” where high quality teaching can be found. Furthermore, a few dozen institutes of high level research are distributed all over the country.

The number of postgraduate programs in Mexico has increased continuously during the last 20 years. In certain fields there are high quality programs available. The general situation of libraries and laboratories, however, cannot always compete with western standards.

The Mexican government plans to develop the postgraduate offers further. In many programs, especially in the so called professional programs, generally little research is done.

The growth rate of the undergraduate degree levels (5.0) is low in comparison to the growth rate of the studies at doctorate level (17.2) and the master level (12.1). (ANUIES, 2003) This has its reason basically in the very small number of doctorate degrees turned out per year (1,100-1,400 doctorates per year, est.), where already a little growth shows impressive percentages. (for details on postgraduate studies see the annual report of CONACYT “Informe general del Estado de la Ciencia y la Tecnología 2004”, p. 40-61, Mexico 2004).

There are exceptional cases of students who have already finished a master-degree being not older than 24 to 25 years. The average may be around 30; with not uncommon cases being high up in their 40s. It is not a common practice to go for a

postgraduate degree. There is comparatively little financial incentive to pursue a postgraduate career, as the Mexican labor market often depends more on the prestige of an institution than on the students capability.

On the other hand, the first academic title is already considered an achievement so that a higher status cannot easily be obtained by a postgraduate degree.

➤ Distribution over different subject areas

The student population in areas like Agro Science and Health Science has been decreasing over the last 30 years, whereas the population in the areas of education, humanities and engineering has increased significantly. (ANUIES, 2003). The most commonly chosen careers are law, business administration and industrial engineering.

➤ Role of private providers of higher education

There are twice as many university students enrolled in public universities than in private universities.

University students (“licenciatura”) distribution (ANUIES, 2003):

Public universities: 1,244,942 students (66.8%)

Private universities: 620,533 students (33.2%)

Public universities often are faced with serious financial problems and a dense bureaucratic administration. These facts lead in the past 20 years to the foundation of expensive and fast growing private universities, which are mostly oriented toward the US-American model of a private higher education institution.

Private universities play an important role. Some of them are preparing the students with a high quality of education. They offer student facilities, that public universities not always are able to provide, like specialized labs, teachers, partnerships with foreign universities. They generally prepare students to positions in management. Their role is also to provide students with opportunities for better jobs and possibilities for an international career. Employing companies and enterprises view the role of these institutions as providers of people well prepared, people who are internationally competitive.

The entire frame of this question is defined by the NAFTA Treaty. The NAFTA Treaty allows US-American investors to buy Mexican institutions of higher education. It can be assumed that with the deepening of the NAFTA procedure during the next years more and more US-American - and probably Australian and British investors - will buy renowned Mexican institutions of higher education.

Within the legal framework of the WTO where education is going to become a tradable commodity, Mexico has few chances to resist foreign capital. Some Mexican universities already now are owned by foreign companies.

➤ Tuition fees, financial support

Almost all institutions of higher education have tuition fees. Whereas these fees in the public universities are only symbolic (1.5 Cent/semester) at the private institutions of higher education considerable amounts can be reached.

Some examples of fees are:

- Tec de Monterrey, Mexico City, 52,000 MXN (approximately 4,500 US-Dollar) /semester (6 subjects) (They have a scholarship loan system)

- Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, 52,801 MXN/ Semester (ca. 4,591 US-Dollar, they have scholarships)
- UdLA, Universidad de las Americas, Puebla, 70,000 MXN/ Semester (ca. 6,086 US-Dollar, for 45 units studied in one semester, also scholarships)
- Unitec 17,000 MXN/ Semester (ca. 1,478 US-Dollar, for 6 subjects)
- UVM, Universidad del Valle de Mexico, Mexico City, 31,000 MXN /Semester (ca. 2,695 US-Dollar)

To these costs one has to add up a long list of additional expenses such as 300 Euro for the parking lot for a student, books, etc.

Most of the private universities have scholarships and loan systems.

Providers of scholarships are the national government (scholarships and research grants by the i.e. CONACYT only at the master- and PhD level), higher education institutions (scholarships by the UNAM), banks (credit system of the Bank of Mexico) and credits by the universities.

3. Internationalization of (higher) education and student mobility

Key figures

Number of outgoing students Per Level Destination countries	no figures available
Number of incoming students Per level Countries of origin	no figures available
Students studying abroad with scholarships (postgraduate studies) CONACYT report, 2004, p. 142f.	2,386 students 1,995 (Master), 385 (Doctorate), rest for post doctorate
Destination countries (CONACYT) as % of all student with scholarship for abroad:	
USA	31.8%
UK	25%
France	15.1%
Spain	12.7%
Canada	7.2%
Others (Germany, Australia, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Japan, Russia, Switzerland and 23 other countries)	8%
International Cooperation Agreements (CONACYT)	60 agreements with more than 32 countries
Areas of cooperation as % of total	26% engineering

cooperation agreements	24% physics, mathematics 12% biology, chemistry 8% health sciences 8% social sciences 7% “ciencias exactas” 15% others
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➤ legal obstacles for studying abroad

The main legal problem of Mexican students for a career abroad is the very fact that the first academic degree so far awarded does not fit within any of the major degree frameworks in North America nor in Europe nor in the interesting academic destinations in Asia. Although discussions to reform the Mexican academic system and to reform the “licenciatura” have already begun, this process may take decades.

Students who cannot procure a full scholarship have to show at the respective consulate of the European country chosen an amount of approximately 13,500 Euro for the first year in order to get their visa. This amount, taking into consideration exchange rates and local salaries, is a major obstacle for Mexicans to come to Europe, except for those who have affluent parents. However those, who have affluent parents hardly study in Europe anyway – they prefer to study at prestigious US-American universities.

The recognition of school or academic titles often is a complicated procedure and does not follow rules which would necessarily be understood in Europe. A high school degree i.e. will not be accepted until all the documents of every year of the high school are handed in. It is not sufficient to show that one has passed an exam. One has to proof that he did as many years as the Mexican system requires for this particular step. As deeply rooted as corruption, is the culture of distrust. Consequently official European documents, even documents from public universities, are in general not accepted without additional proof.

Although Mexico lists more than 2,500 institutions (including different campuses or “planteles” of one HEI) of higher education, hardly more than 200 to 250 would be considered universities in Europe. A countless number of private institutions (locally called “little duck schools”) offer one degree only and under doubtful circumstances. Whoever graduated from one of these institutions which are not known or recognized by European standards is holder of an academic title with a doubtful academic future.

➤ The situation of incoming students in Mexico

The demand for the internationalization of education is increasing. Still there are very few incoming students, who often are seen by private universities as “cash cows” and as a guarantee for tuition free exchange places abroad for own students. The own Mexican students keep paying their tuitions in Mexico when studying abroad – often at public European universities where they do not pay tuition fees anyway. In some public universities there is surprisingly little interest in incoming students. There are hardly any facilities to make incoming students start their term comfortably; in fact most incoming students do not even know whom to approach to solve their problems getting started. Even students who come with a governmental scholarship from European countries have to pay heavy fees for every course charged in dollars. Even worse for incoming students is the situation if they do not speak already fluent Spanish. The national university for example keeps them on a separated compound, where Mexican students do not have access and charges high fees for every language course. This is

probably an anti-colonial attitude, but proves a heavy restriction for future internationalization.

Often, internationalization strategies are implemented in the university development plan. The number of exchange programs with foreign universities is growing.

Being part of the NAFTA free Trade Zone and being the only member of NAFTA which has signed an economic, scientific and cultural agreement with the European Union, Mexico is developing into an important economic hub between North America and Europe. The fast growing rates of direct and indirect investment from Europe in Mexico seem to be a clear proof of the development for the years to come. For the time being Mexico's unilateral economic, political and cultural dependency on the USA is overwhelming. This makes experiences abroad in other countries than the USA of little interest for the mainstream students, but attractive for nonconformist groups.

It can be expected that the unilateral dependency on the USA will not change in any foreseeable time and this will steer the mass of Mexican students to the USA.

In 2004, an important agreement between the so called macro-universities of Latin America was signed. In the framework of this agreement, and with financial support of a European Bank, an important number of undergraduate students – about 1000 scholarships a year - will have the opportunity to have a study period in another Latin American Country, although in statistical terms the mobility of students in Mexico still remains very low, at least at the public universities (below 1 or 2 % of the undergraduate population).

➤ main destination countries

Main destination countries on the American Continent will be the USA and Canada. Due to the neighborhood with the United States and the economic dependency of Mexico this traditional supremacy of North America as academic destination will probably not change dramatically. With millions of Mexicans living in the US, many students have an easy opportunity for cheap housing with relatives already living there.

Spain, France and the UK are traditionally the favorite destination countries in Europe for studying abroad, Spain especially for those who want to avoid language problems

4. Marketing activities

➤ The role of private and public agencies in supporting and advising students for study abroad programs

The Mexican government through the National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT) is carrying on an important effort to strengthen the Human resources in the field of research. And the Ministry of Education (SEP) has a special scholarship program fostering postgraduate studies for university teachers. CONACYT runs once a year a Higher Education Fair for Graduate and Postgraduate Courses. Not only national universities participate, but also foreign HEI's and agencies which have a cooperation agreement with CONACYT. The Bank of Mexico offers a special loan program to pursue master or PhD-studies abroad. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also offers a number of scholarships, normally on the basis of reciprocity with a foreign country.

Some smaller private agencies also offer a limited number of scholarships or loans.

A growing number of universities have recently started to set up international offices. This process is still under way and, for example, the second largest campus of the national university UNAM with 18,000 students still does not have an office. Even where these offices exist, many formally set up university cooperation programs do not work well because the European administrators from the international offices sign these programs without having holders of academic chairs sufficiently involved in the administrative and political decision making process, who would fill then such a program with life. There is an ongoing misunderstanding on the Mexican side where bureaucracy is everything: the idea that the mere celebration of an exchange program at rectoral or vice-rectoral level already makes it work in Europe. This of course is not the case.

European University professors looking for counterparts to establish exchange programs in Mexico on the other hand, are faced with the problem that Mexican university professors have even less decision power than the European colleagues. Well working programs therefore would need to be backed on the European side by university professors, but on the Mexican side by the administration offices. This is a structural misfit. An important aspect of Mexican universities to understand and plan study abroad programs and alike is the fact that most Mexican study programs exist without a directly responsible university professor. Instead of an academic head of department like in European universities the corresponding structure in Mexico would often be a commission composed by several frequently changing members of very different academic standing. Tutors and faculty very often do not have any experience of having studied abroad themselves.

There are certainly private agencies that supply interested students with all kinds of required documents. But these agencies have not really an advisory function. Private agents have recently begun to organize fairs where costly degrees such as MBAs are offered. This does fortunately not interfere with the European fairs.

Students interested in a stay abroad have to procure the necessary information individually at education fairs, at foreign embassies, cultural institutes and the offices of foreign exchange services as far as they exist in Mexico (of the 25 EU members only very few are present with a cultural institute or an office of foreign exchange service like France (EduFrance), Germany (DAAD), Italy (Istituto Italiano di Cultura) and UK (British Council)).

- Marketing activities by European and non European organizations and their impact

During the last few years a number of education fairs have been inaugurated. Whereas the US, United Kingdom and Australia are already present in that market for a long time, other European countries just started in 2001 to organize educational fairs once a year. Fortunately, most European countries cooperate today in Mexico in a European education fair where the main burden is carried by Germany, France and the Netherlands, and where especially smaller countries or new member states such as the Czech Republic or Hungary have the highest benefit since they independently would not be able to organize fairs themselves. Great Britain runs an own fair and therefore participates only with an institutional booth of the British Council. All participating countries are invited to bring university professors and or administrative staff of international offices to the fair. It has been observable that the Mexican public is far more interested in talking to professors than to officers because usually students come with well prepared questions.

Due to the very short history of these European fairs – so far only 3 have been organized – and due to the fact that the fairs profile has been changed twice, it is not possible to state anything about the fairs effects in the long run. It can be observed

though that in the Mexican public there is a wide gap between those who are just curious and in need of basic marketing material and those who are already well informed and try to address rather specific topics. Especially the latter group has shown a considerable dissatisfaction with the very general marketing material that was provided on the last fair because this can also be consulted in the Internet. The definite focus on postgraduate programs which has been given to these European fairs in Mexico for the first time in 2005 has dramatically lowered the number of visitors and at the same time defined their profile far better. It must be hoped that this common effort will be backed systematically from Europe and that these fairs can be hosted with a reliable frequency. It would even further improve the fairs quality if the European staff would be more numerous and better prepared.

This European education fair has been used not only to approach an interested public among the students but also to provide a meeting and discussion space with representatives of Mexican universities and the national association of Mexican universities itself.

Some of the European countries maintain offices of academic exchange in Mexico. Their efficiency depends to a large degree on the creativity, the effort and the perseverance of the individual representative. Marketing of educational products has only recently begun to become a concern for many European countries.

US-American universities are certainly years - if not decades - ahead of European universities in regard to their marketing and customer orientated politics including all the problems entailed. The marketing campaigns of countries like the USA and Canada – HE Fairs and Information Offices in the Embassy and in Consulates - are very successful in attracting students who can afford the high tuition fees in those countries. Their programs and universities are considered to be very prestigious and efficient in learning and teaching methods. European universities also have a very high reputation, but the academic system seems less structured and learning forms seem not to be as efficient.

Europe as a common academic space is a new product that has not yet been adequately placed. Taking into consideration the very short history of this common space this is not surprising at all. As our interviews revealed on all levels from students, through parents, professors and even staff from international offices, the ignorance about the most basic facts often is blatant. Information input for example on a common European internet platform, well structured, attractive, up to date and intelligent would be a good start for information politics in this regard.

III Implementation of the survey

Target institutions and institutional facilitators

The target institutions were selected by the following criteria:

- Importance in the educational sector
- Regional distribution
- Size, and
- Type.

Most of the selected institutions are within the greater Mexico City Area, Puebla, and Guadalajara. This reflects to a certain degree the centralized character of Mexico's institutions of higher education. It may have caused a certain bias as far as the so called "province" is even less informed than the little informed central regions. We think however that the encountered problems and shortcomings are structurally similar.

We selected 4 High schools and 8 Universities, each of different size but of importance for the regions Mexico City, Puebla, and Guadalajara. At each university we chose a facilitator, mostly graduate students and staff of international offices, whom we trained beforehand. These facilitators were also bound by contract and debriefed.

Besides the selection of high school and university students in the named institutions we carried out interviews with students at fairs.

Four High Schools and 8 universities were selected.

High Schools

- Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, Mexico City (public)

104,554 students, The largest and most important public high school system in Mexico. This High school is legally part of the National University and its school-leavers normally can enter without additional exams the UNAM. Therefore the ENP is a particularly important high school.

By and large the same applies to the high school system which is integrated in the largest federal technical university, the IPN. Therefore this high school was chosen too.

- IPN – Bachillerato Tecnológico Bivalente, Mexico City (public)

No statistics found. The most important and prestigious public technological High School System in Mexico.

To contrast the two large public high schools with a well established private one, we chose another high school which is integrated legally but now into the private university ITESM.

- Tec de Monterrey – Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Campus Mexico City (private)

27,175 students, 7 High school Programs in 34 cities of the Mexican Republic, The most important and prestigious private High School in Mexico.

The fourth chosen high school is public again, but located in the second largest city in Mexico, Guadalajara, with approximately 6 Million inhabitants. It is the high school incorporated in the public university UdeG, University of Guadalajara.

- UdeG – Sistema de educación medio superior Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara (public)

ca. 25,000 students, The most important system of high schools of the University of Guadalajara in and around Guadalajara (second largest city after Mexico)

Universities

Among the thousands of HE institutions in Mexico only a few hundred could be labeled universities and again among those a minority is of excellence, large and with some systematic connections to study abroad programs.

Furthermore we chose smaller but renowned private universities which already have decades of a history of their own to allow for setting up international relations. These universities are the UDLA (Universidad de las Américas) and the UPAEP (Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla) in Puebla and the IBEROAMERICANA and ULSA (Universidad Lasalle) in Mexico City.

- UNAM – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (public), Campus Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico City

It is the biggest public university in Mexico and number one in research. The university has different campuses in the City and in different regions of the country. It has 138 undergraduate programs (“Licenciatura”), 38 postgraduate programs (“Doctorado”, “Maestría”) and 13 faculties. 143,405 undergraduate students, 18,987 postgraduate students and 40,306 academic staff were counted in 2004.

- IPN – Instituto Politécnico Nacional (public), Campus Mexico City

The IPN was founded in 1936. Its education focuses on education in mathematics-physics (*físico-matemáticas*), medicine-biology (*médico-biológicas*), Engineering, social science and administration. It has 9 educational centers, 18 research centers, 59 undergraduate programs, 106 graduate programs (30 specialization, 55 master programs, and 21 doctoral programs). 77,965 undergraduate students and 4,632 graduate students were enrolled in 2003. (Statistics 2003, ANUIES-Report)

- IBERO – Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City (private)

The IBERO (a private university run by the Jesuits) was found in 1943 (1952 officially). It has 37 undergraduate programs, 29 postgraduate programs, 18 departments and 2 research institutes. In 2004 there were enrolled 9,283 undergraduate students and 2,608 graduate students (Statistics 2003, ANUIES Report).

- UAM – Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico City (public)

The UAM was founded in 1974. It has 3 campuses in Mexico City. Education focuses on basic Sciences and Engineering, Social Sciences and Humanities, Sciences and arts for design, Biological and Health sciences. 41,189 undergraduate students and 1,614 graduate students (Statistics 2003, ANUIES Report)

- UDLA - Universidad de las Américas, Puebla (private)

It was founded in 1940. Programs: 39 undergraduate programs, 27 master degrees, 2 PhD programs, 143 research projects (Engineering, biology, chemistry, social sciences), 182 international agreements, ca. 8,300 students

- UdeG- Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara (public)

It has 13 university centres in the Mexican State of Jalisco, over 60 undergraduate programs, over 50 master programs and over 24 PhD programs. There were 63,831

undergraduate students and 4,295 graduate students enrolled in 2003 (Statistics 2003, ANUIES Report).

- UPAEP- Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla, Puebla , Mexico (private)

Founded in 1973, 23 undergraduate programs (in different areas like management, engineering, social sciences and humanities, natural sciences, design, etc.), 14 master programs (mainly in management and engineering), 12 PhD programs (mainly in management and engineering), 9 specialization programs (mainly in health), 11 international and 21 national academic exchange agreements

Statistics 2003 (ANUIES Report): 6,318 undergraduate students, 621 graduate students

- ULSA – Universidad La Salle, Mexico City (private)

Founded in 1962, 13 universities in 10 states of Mexico with ca. 11,000 students

Facilitators

Institution	Name
Escuela Nacional de Preparatoria	Guadalupe Díaz ana_guadalupe_z@yahoo.com.mx
IPN High School	Maria de los Angeles
High School Tec de Monterrey	Josef Minikus je_minikus@hotmail.com
High school Guadalajara	Athziri Moreno athizir@corp.udg.mx
IPN	Alejandra Alvarez ale_aa_2000@yahoo.com
UNAM	Guadalupe Díaz ana_guadalupe_z@yahoo.com.mx
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UDLA	Rodolfo González ua014313@mail.udlap.mx
UdG	Athziri Moreno athizir@corp.udg.mx
IBERO	Mariana Salazar marianasal@hotmail.com
UPAEP	Mónica Ramos intercam@upaep.mx
ULSA	Dr. Angel Guevara aarg@ulsa.mx

Promotion of the survey (flyer, links on DAAD-Website)

The online-survey was promoted by links to the DAAD-, NUFFIC and EduFrance-Website, by flyers and posters that were distributed by the institutional facilitators in the selected and other institutions of higher education and high schools. Additionally the DAAD-Team had a special booth at the annual higher education fair “Euro Posgrados”, organized by the DAAD, EduFrance and NUFFIC, where the online-study was

announced, questionnaires were filled in and further questions concerning the study were answered.

10,000 Flyers were distributed and 300 posters placed in universities, at high schools and at the fair.

In total we reached thus approximately a number of 10,000 students by flyers; the real number of people knowing about the study cannot be estimated. Additionally, teachers announced the study in universities not integrated in the study per se.

A great effort was made repeatedly to get the information about the survey to teachers of language courses of European languages. Additionally, the national board of foreign language associations (Asociación de profesores de idiomas, API) communicated the survey to the different national associations of language teachers in Mexico, most importantly French, German, Italian, and Portuguese. Only the national association of teachers of English in Mexico (MEXTESOL) did not cooperate.

The paper-survey was promoted by the institutional facilitators (11 facilitators) at 4 High Schools and 8 Universities. Due to the strict organization and instruction of the facilitators the questionnaires were delivered in time and with a feedback quota of well over 85%.

Problems encountered and their impact on the study

This report contains lots of information that cannot easily be found in public sources, and it draws heavily on conversations with decision makers in the field. It may be particular to the Mexican situation that even knowing decision makers is not enough as long as one doesn't know them well and personally. Information is distributed often in an informal way and not documented. Considering these facts, we found ourselves confronted often enough with answers that were rather politically geared than exhaustive, rather general than detailed and rather vague than critical. Without the necessary structural, systemic and political background knowledge it would not have been possible to frame the interviews and their results in an adequate setting. In the Mexican political culture, it is not common to mention difficulties and admit deficiencies. This restricts the choice of regional staff for this kind of projects.

The questionnaire being relatively long and most of the invited participants without any experience in filling in questionnaires, we observed a growing lack of enthusiasm towards the end of the process of the filling in. The filling in needed preferably to be monitored and supervised to assure a proper reading of the questions, proper thinking of an answer and the proper crossing of a box. Reading instructions seems not to be a very well developed habit in Mexico, which concurs with the fact that important information is normally not written down. Thus, we had a certain amount of questionnaires not valid for evaluation.

High school students lack at a certain age the necessary seriousness and patience for filling in larger questionnaires. If this is being done in groups it can lead to less serious answers, and we had to observe on occasions certain group dynamics that lead to a hostile consideration of the questionnaire, mobilizing nationalistic ideology among the high school students. The general question whether one would like to study in Europe was occasionally perceived as implying deficits in the Mexican higher education system, the question itself being thus part of an imputed colonial discourse.

IV Interview results

1. Higher Education Experts

- Dr. Luis Gil Cisneros, Director of the department for the strengthening of postgraduate studies of the National Council of Science and Technology (Director para el Fortalecimiento del Posgrado, CONACYT)
- Guillermo Morones Diaz, Director of the Section of International Cooperation of The National Assembly of Universities in Mexico (Director de Cooperación Internacional de ANUIES)
- Dr. Eugenio Cetina Vadillo, General Director of the Department of Higher Education at the Mexican Federal Ministry of Culture (Director General de Educación Superior Universitaria, SES, SEP)

As can be seen by the titles and ranks of the interviewees, we tried to choose stakeholders closely linked to the HEI's in Mexico. In their different fields, The National Council for Science and Technology, the Ministry and Assembly of Universities, the three persons hold influential positions.

We sent the questionnaire to the interviewees beforehand in order to give them the possibility to prepare themselves, and to have figures and data at hand. Some interviewees, with whom we could not arrange appointments for interviews answered the questions in written form.

1.1. General View of Internationalization, Student Mobility, and its Role in Education Policy

Generally, the internationalization and augmentation of student mobility is considered of very high importance for the national education policy. It has acquired also high relevance during the last 10 to 15 years, both on federal and state governmental levels and on the inter-institutional university level. Different political activities and initiatives reflect this interest in internationalization.

Internationalization strategies are implemented in the national Program for Education 2001-2006. It plays an important role for the development of national institutions of higher education as well as for the integration of the system of higher education in Mexico. Internationalization also corresponds to another aim of the national strategy for strengthening education: that is to improve the quality of higher education and the coordination of the whole Mexican system.

In the long run the aim is to create collaboration on the education sector among equals: "The fundamental aim is to create collaboration among equal partners in projects of investigation and the training of scientists and technicians." (Dr. Gil, CONACYT). Therefore, not only the number and quality of exchange programs has to be augmented, but also the frame in which this collaboration will take place has to be defined and created – meaning at the same time, that in order to have more international cooperation in the future, the quality of national education has to be improved in order to receive international recognition. Sending Mexican students abroad is one measure to reach this goal.

Another interest may be the flexibilization of the structures of the Mexican educational system and the opening of institutional structures for enabling future cooperation. As this is visioned by Guillermo Morones (ANUIES):

“Basically, I think that what one is looking for is the improvement of the quality of Mexican higher education, but there are as well aspects with regards to the flexibilization of the structures of Mexican education, which are very rigid, the opening of Mexican universities by the establishment of cooperation with counterparts in foreign countries and with other social agents.” (Morones, ANUIES)

The national policy of scholarships thus argues with a very high interest in national questions: Sending students abroad to receive at a later stage very well educated people who can integrate their knowledge and skills in what is officially considered an improvement of the situation of Mexico.

Furthermore, an aim is sending students abroad mostly for graduate and postgraduate studies to prepare future university teachers with an international profile.

An equally important aim is to receive especially well trained technical staff for the state enterprises and para-statal companies (PEMEX, oil industry).

In the case of Mexico the application of almost all usual measures can be observed. Their intensity and quality varies a lot though.

The most frequently applied measures to turn into practice these principles are:

- scholarship programs for Mexican graduate students (CONACYT, ca. 3000 funded students a year),
- Other scholarship-programs by PROMEP (SEP) for graduate studies abroad and in Mexico, especially for university teachers .
- establishment of bilateral cooperation agreements,
- specific programs for the cooperation in the field of scientific-technical investigation and formation of medicals,
- invitation of foreign institutions to exhibit and take part in national fairs of graduate and postgraduate studies,
- exchange of information with educational agencies in other countries,
- establishment of strategic alliances
- joint research projects in Mexico and abroad
- Mobility and student exchange programs
- development of alliances between prestigious Mexican and foreign education institutions
- Networks of cooperation between institutions and academic body
- Inter-institutional cooperation agreements in the field of student mobility
- Assurance of the mutual accreditation and recognition of study programs (mainly undergraduate programs)

The quoted measures seem in comparison with the Mexican reality very much formulated as aims and do not reflect the actual situation.

The General Director of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education underlines the importance of establishing mechanisms for the recognition of study credits even with the further aim of an integral equivalence of programs. Taking into account that the most important Mexican Universities are autonomous and cannot be forced by the Ministry into structures of recognition this seems a very ambitious aim.

CONACYT plays a leading role in the internationalization of students and researchers, being focused mainly on technical programs. ANUIES, the National Assembly of Mexican Universities, supports the politics of CONACYT by promoting its programs, organizing national and international meetings of national and international rectors and bringing together rectors of Mexican universities systematically with representatives from other countries. In the strategic plan of ANUIES (2000) to reform Mexico's higher education system three major policies were proposed: governmental financial support for international collaborative programs, greater autonomy to facilitate credit transfer and mutual accreditation among institutions, and the creation of a network of institutions involved in international collaboration.

National scholarship programs are only one way of financing student mobility. As confirms the director of ANUIES, Morones: "At institutional level, I think that Mexican universities have developed internationalization activities like exchange of students and researchers, in occasions supported by external programs, but I think the major part of this mobility is basically funded by the institutions own means and in the case of the students, by their own funds." (ANUIES, Morones)

Regions

The most important regions for university cooperation programs are North America, Europe and South America. For political and language reasons Canada plays an important role in the Mexican academic world. The majority of students within a short term exchange program (1 Semester or one year) will study in North American countries like the USA or Canada (region Quebec).

Whereas most of the international cooperation takes place with North American and European universities, the exchange with Central America and the Caribbean (Cuba) is less intense but focuses more on teacher's mobility and professional education of teachers. If there were a larger number of universities in Central America and Caribbean this would certainly lead to more intense exchange. The only countries with a solid academic standing are Cuba and Costa Rica.

Student exchange programs are established with Latin American Countries like Colombia, Argentina and Chile.

It has to be differentiated between exchange programs and Mexican students going abroad as free movers. The European country countries receiving most Mexican students are UK, France and Spain: Spain for the language, France for tradition and the UK for its successful aggressive marketing of good quality courses. It would be difficult, however, to call this an exchange because there are very few French and hardly any British students in Mexico. The observable movement cannot be really described as exchange since it is a mere one way phenomenon.

The mobility from Mexico to Europe can be described as follows:

"But also Europe plays an important role for student mobility, mostly Spain, where a number of programs have been developed within the framework of an interuniversity cooperation program and which until a few years ago allowed the mobility of a significant number of Latin American students. France today plays an important role mainly in the field of student mobility of engineering students going to technical

universities in France and a few other programs such as language teaching.” (Morones, ANUIES)

It is interesting to note that none of our partners mentioned the fast growing systematic academic exchange with China. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico (SRE) has an own department for academic affairs. Its director, who studied in Europe, has traveled recently to China to offer the Chinese government large numbers of scholarships for Chinese students to come to Mexico. Whether Mexican students will ever go to China, is so far doubtful. Even more doubtful is, whether the Chinese government would invite them.

Advantages

The advantages of a study abroad period generally dominate the disadvantages:

- The acquisition of experience of working and doing research in international teams
- working on cutting edge topics
- Knowing different working styles and international standards
- Access to laboratories and other working facilities
- Knowing other models of teaching
- sharing the experience with fellow students in Mexico and generate a more demanding learning environment in Mexico
- cultural learning, tolerance and appreciation of cultural styles and differences
- expanding and differentiating the margin of criteria of evaluation and judgment
- language acquisition
- learning about different role models and behavior

The disadvantages for the student mobility are mostly seen in formal aspects of the recognition of the certificates and the credits on both sides, in the foreign country and in the Mexican educational system, and in the danger of an accelerated brain drain to other countries.

Thus, f. e., are mentioned:

- no recognition of the level, of the credits and the field of study in both Mexico and the foreign country
- not enough local support by host universities

But also aspects of adaptation to the new environment play a major role, because the stay abroad is mostly the first opportunity to live apart from the family, even at a rather advanced age. For cultural, financial and security reasons Mexican students well up to their 30s live with their parents. Accordingly, mentioned were:

- difficulty to adapt to the foreign country, to its academic system and problems of academic performance
- culture shock

The disadvantages or risk for the home country (Mexico) would be the facts

- that students study a career that does not meet and does not correlate with national demands and necessities and
- that it will lead to a brain drain if students will continue the stay abroad outside of the framework of a national exchange or scholarship program

The brain drain to the US is seen as the major problem:

“The risk of brain drain in Mexico exists, especially in an economy that does not generate a sufficient number of qualified jobs which would allow offering attractive employment to all the graduates from Mexican universities. At the same time, the major part of the Mexican students abroad study at universities in the USA, a country whose labor market is still in an expansive growth cycle and attractive and luring the talents of other countries away, for qualified and non-qualified jobs.” (Morones, ANUIES)

The preoccupation of the interviewees with brain drain shows the predominance of the USA in their thinking. The pattern of behavior for studying abroad is rather different when studying in Europe than when studying in the USA. Whereas it is normal not to come back from a stay in the USA, it is normal to come back from an academic stay in Europe. This pattern of behavior is part of a larger scheme in which living abroad is understood as means of living better and making more money as long as abroad is the USA. Within that scheme in which the USA based Mexican who sends home money is a well established figure, the academic mobility is only a minor aspect. The brain drain into the USA is further fostered by the presence of roughly 20 million Mexican compatriots and the omnipresent availability of Mexican food, Mexican music and culture in general.

Additionally, the brain drain will lead to a continuing technological dependence on other countries: “In fact, the possibility that the graduates accept jobs outside their own country is potentially a disadvantage for Mexico, as it is as well a certain susceptibility for a technological dependence on the educating country.” (Cetina, SEP)

The main obstacles or barriers for studying abroad are seen in the lack of information on study programs abroad, the lack of language skills and the lack of knowledge about the foreign educational system and its scientific culture. Furthermore, it is the conservative mentality of Mexican students and their lack of willingness to take risks that lead to the fact, that studies abroad are not very appreciated as a general and professional education.

The lack of language skills will remain an obstacle, unless it is an obligation to study a foreign language, unless the training of language teachers is professionalized and unless foreign languages are offered at secondary schools.

The lack of knowledge on financial resources can probably be characterized as a lack of informal knowledge more than formal knowledge. Even though a number of institutions that offer scholarships, have set up detailed homepages explaining all the HOWs and WHENS, the mere existence of financing possibilities is unknown to many and the way in which the programs are administrated seem somewhat strange to many Mexicans. Financial support in Mexico is very often bound to political favors and based on social networks. Support systems that work on the basis of qualification, and are neutral and fair, are somehow anti-systemic in Mexico.

At this moment there is no empirical or systematic information on students who studied abroad and their integration in the Mexican job market available.

Once a stay abroad is realized and the students return to their home country, they will have more chances on the job market and in the scientific system. Generally, the

experience of a study abroad period is highly valued, because not only the language skills have improved considerably but also the cultural knowledge has broadened. For the academic career it is important for networking on international level, for introducing other methods and styles of teaching. But the continuing internationalization of professional careers has not yet turned into practice in Mexico.

1.2. Financial Support Schemes

Financial support by the government:

Financial support includes for Mexican students scholarships, loans and financial credits. Scholarship Programs are mainly offered by the CONACYT (The National Council of Science and Technology) and SRE (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The larger public universities may have some bilateral agreements.

For Foreign Exchange students there are offered scholarships by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mostly for students from Latin America and the Caribbean, for undergraduate and graduate studies (Paraguay, Bolivia, San Vicente, and Central America) and for African, Chinese and European students.

Academic level and area of studies

Most students who plan going abroad wish to do graduate studies (Masters Degree) or – less often – doctorate studies. Even though presently students are still offered scholarships for masters programs, the tendency of most scholarship awarding institutions is to abandon the master's level and to confine the financing to the doctorate level only. As long as the real time to finish completely the first degree program is as long as it is today this will create a conflict with the age limits in many cases.

It is hard to say what the preferred areas really are, because the students who show up looking for information mostly know already that mainly technical and administrative programs are being subsidized. We cannot judge how many students of other programs from philosophy to theoretical physics and from medicine to linguistics would like to go abroad, but knowing that they will not find financial support anyway, never approach any institution where they would be statistically registered. Judging by the students who finally show up for advising it seems that the preferred areas are engineering, technology, natural sciences, mathematics and administration.

The National Council of Science and Technology has defined 5 strategic areas (special program science and technology 2001-2006) for financing students' mobility, which are Biotechnology, Material Science, Information and Telecommunication, advanced manufacturing processes and applied science and technology for social development.

Students of other disciplines (except Master of Administration and Finances) are supported when they are accepted by foreign institutions and programs of excellence. Criteria for the selection of students who are financially supported by national scholarship programs are the quality of students' performance and the prestige of the sending and the host institution.

Role of governmental financial support schemes

Mexico is a country which is characterized by an enormous gap between the financial means of about 1 Million very rich and 100 Million not rich people. Whereas for children of the rich families financial support schemes are totally irrelevant (but nonetheless

occasionally are sought after), for 90% of the population such support schemes are of utmost importance as their families often would not be able to finance their children's career or even stays abroad.

1.3. The Role of the EU as a Study Destination

The EU as study destination is very attractive because its strengths are seen in the quality of higher education, the prestige of obtained academic levels in the home country and in the job market, the security, life style and cultural diversity and tolerance and its lingual diversity. Pragmatic reasons would be that European countries are considered to be less expensive than the US and that the migration to Europe is easier and less humiliating than to the US.

As Morones stated, the EU is a role model for political integration and cooperation for Latin American countries: "Another, very important factor is the humanitarian aspect, considering the EU provides a framework in which the countries play an important role for a more just regional integration." (Morones, ANUIES)

The major weaknesses of the European Union are seen in the many languages spoken there, the presumed high living costs and the presumed lack of scholarships and financial support.

Another problem is the heterogeneity of levels, certificates and titles that are not always acknowledged as equivalent with Mexican titles, above all the (Spanish and French) master title compared to the Mexican "maestría". Mexican master degrees are often not acknowledged as equal, so that students in order to study for the doctorate have to study one more year. Additionally, there is not enough information on the characteristics of the titles and levels of study obtained in Europe. Many of the statements of our interviewees reflect rather experiences from the last 15 to 20 years where a large number of academic titles in every European country made Europe not a manageable academic space as such.

The differences between the member states are perceived as high. The interviewees considered it important to have rankings in order to plan cooperation programs and student exchange. There is good knowledge on study programs of the UK, Germany, France and Spain, therefore the quality of studies in these countries can be judged well. Spanish titles are perceived as less valuable, above all on master's level. Great Britain is perceived as quite expensive, but with programs of excellence. The available information on study programs and conditions is unevenly distributed. Of the 25 member states of the European Union only 4 or 5 are commonly known as academic destinations. Those countries maintain exchange services in Mexico, whereas most other countries from the EU do not maintain any other exchange service in Mexico, some of them do not even have an embassy in Mexico. Therefore, the small members and more so the new smaller members have difficulties distributing information about their academic system in Mexico. Knowledge about the new EU-members seems very limited in Mexico, even among decision makers.

Future of student exchange between Mexico and countries of the European Union

There is a high interest in a closer academic exchange between Mexico and the EU in the field of education, but there is a need to better plan the establishment of those cooperations – therefore more information on programs and universities of excellence and more attractive financial support schemes are needed.

Dr. Gil emphasizes the importance of the history of students' exchange:

“Exchange with European Universities has a tradition that reaches back to the 1950s and has shown not only general positive effects but has significantly contributed to the constitution of the first generation of academics in the modern Mexican mass university. [...] The cost factor nonetheless [the exchange rate Mexican peso-Euro] has begun to slow down the intensity of exchange and academic mobility.” (Gil, CONACYT)

Dr. Cetina states with regard to student exchange: “The principal countries of the European Union are among the most favored ones according to what we expect.” (Cetina, SEP)

It will be difficult to establish mutual exchange programs and to attract foreign students to study in Mexico, if there is at the same time an increase of possibilities for European students to study in European countries. Morones states:

“The Mexican universities happen to find interest and flexibility on the side of the European universities for the development of different cooperation projects. In that regard I think there is an important potential of participation on either side, even more though since the European Commission offers a number of instruments to foster cooperation in addition to the bilateral treaties established between universities or the bilateral treaties between governments. In terms of student exchange there is certainly a great interest among the Mexican universities for exchanging students with European counterparts, but the perspective of a major growth of these movements depends mainly on that there be more European students interested in coming to Mexico. And it is not easy to make that European students become interested in studying a term or a year at a Mexican university as long as in Europe they have Programs like Erasmus that provide great facilities and help for realize such stays abroad within Europe itself.” (Morones, ANUIES)

Future cooperation will focus on countries already known for good academic programs, like France, Spain, the UK, the Netherlands, Italy and Germany or it will extend to Scandinavian countries. The cooperation with other countries will remain marginal, even though there is potential for more cooperation.

The European programs ALBAN, ALFA, Tuning, Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus often are not known, even not among representatives of the exchange bureaucracy and even less within universities. Therefore, there is a high interest in receiving information on the Bologna-Process and on all usual programs, as well as specifically on accreditation and recognition of graduate studies. Credit recognition is to a certain degree under way with the start-up meeting of the UEALC project (formation of common academic standards between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Guadalajara, Mexico, in April 2005).

1.4. Future Development of Student Mobility

Student exchange will increase because there is more information available, competitive education is growing and studies and working experiences gained in foreign countries are more accepted. Preferred study destinations will be the US, Canada, Spain, France, Germany and Scandinavian countries. There will be an increased interest in Australia and Asia.

The interest in Mexico as potential study destination will grow, when exchange programs become of more mutual character and the legal regulation will be more flexible.

There will be an increase of students from Central and South America.

European and North American students will be mainly interested in studying humanities, cultural studies, archaeology and biology in Mexico. There is also a constant high interest in the practical experience of students of medicine from Europe.

As measures of quality assurance will be established in Mexican universities (ISO 9000), and as the programs will be gradually accredited, and as these things finally will become known in Europe, according to Morones, a couple of programs of Mexican universities will become more attractive to foreign students.

Mexico being geographically for now and ever the very closest neighbor of the United States, most academic questions are measured by US-American standards. This will remain so, and European decision makers have to keep in mind that European standards, even if they would be better and worldwide renowned, will not be the first choice of measurement. Mexico has signed the NAFTA-Treaty which includes the education sector; in concordance with the WTO regulations. This means that Mexico will not liberate itself from a massive US-American influence in any foreseeable time.

2. Rectors / Vice-Rectors / Directors of International Relations

Rectors or Vice rectors of Universities

- Dr. José Morales Orozco, S. J., Rector of Jesuit University Universidad Iberoamericana, Ciudad de México
- Mtro Itzcoatl Tonatiuh Bravo Padilla, Executive Vice rector, Universidad de Guadalajara (UdG), Guadalajara, Dra. Yocelyne Gacel, Directora General
- Dr. Arturo Lara López, Rector, Universidad de Guanajuato, and Dr. Sergio Arias Negrete, Director of International Relations, Guanajuato
- Dr. Eduardo Guzmán Sanz, Director of International Programs at the Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Monterrey, Vice rector for International Relations, Monterrey

Directors of International Offices

- Mtra. Catherine Fanning, Vice director for Student exchange, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City
- Joan Landeros, Director International Office, Universidad La Salle, Mexico City
- Dr. Ana Esther Gutierrez, Director International Office, Tec de Monterrey, Campus México, Mexico City
- Lic. Thomas Buntru Wenzler, Director of International Programs, Universidad de Monterrey, Monterrey
- Sandra Llamas, Director of International Affairs, Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, Mexico City

2.1. Internationalization Strategy

Most institutions have an explicit internationalization policy.

In recent years most universities, public and private, have started to develop internationalization strategies beyond the already existing programs. Internationalization is not new for Mexican universities as it has been common practice in the field of research already for decades. As a tool to foster competences among the students and as an integrative part of the planning of study programs however it is new. Higher education institutions have understood that exchange programs require a good presentation of the own academic quality as well as the assurance of such quality. Therefore, they are assessing and documenting their institution's quality as a first step towards internationalization, or are at least planning to do so. This policy is accompanied in many Mexican universities by a revised information policy that now

counts with an own infrastructure (recently set up International Offices etc.) and which starts to develop internal information policies and channels.

Cooperation agreements have been signed during the last few years with many countries and many different universities, although many agreements only exist on paper. The language program for a systematic exchange has not been resolved yet. Internationalization strategies so far have underestimated the necessity of building up or expanding the universities language centers systematically. Although incoming students mostly have a good command of Spanish, outgoing students still struggle with the language barrier. It is seen by many rectors as an urgent necessity to establish beforehand a strategy for language acquisition. Another need seen by the rectors is the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of internationalization as it happened so far, and an analysis of the desired degree of internationalization of the Mexican universities. Both studies are in some cases planned to feed into a central coordination for future internationalization.

Planned measures are the campaigns at international level for promotion of university and academic exchange, establishing contact for international cooperation, bilateral agreements on academic cooperation and the internationalization of curricula. The elaboration of indicators and indices for internationalization strategy (student mobility, professors mobility, mobility of administrative staff, number of agreements, number of cooperation projects), the promotion of student mobility, the promotion of international academic cooperation as well as the improvement of service and infrastructure for international students are seen as equally important.

At private universities the internationalization of curricula is far more developed. Students have to acquire international experience. Measures at private universities to foster internationalization are bilateral agreements, contact with grant giving organizations like CONACYT, with exchange services like the DAAD, attendance of seminars and conferences.

The biggest universities offer as many as 18-20 languages at their language centers, smaller ones only 3-5. They are mainly English (43%), French (20%), Italian (18%), Portuguese (7%), German (6%), Japanese (1.5%), Nahuatl (1%), Russian (0.4%), Chinese (0.3%), Greek (0.2%), Arabic (0.1%), Otomi (0.1%) and Spanish as a foreign language (statistics from the Department of Foreign Languages UNAM, Campus Acatlán; students enrolled in languages classes annually: over 10,000 students. There are more language classes which have not been considered here, such as Latin, classic Greek and others. The Language centre is the largest all over Mexico.)

In most universities, the action at central level is very vague. It consists mainly in giving impulses to internationalization at universities as well as to participate actively in international reunions.

Not at all universities there is a specific amount defined for internationalization. (UGTO 0.2% of total budget, which is little.) It is mainly used to support students, administrators, professors, language acquisition, visits of other institutions, attention to visitors, international academic fairs and promotion of student mobility.

2.2. Student Mobility: Support Structures and Patterns

All universities participating in the study seem to have administrative units responsible for student mobility. This does not yet imply that these units are dealing exclusively with student mobility. We were told that the central level of the university would focus on negotiation of agreements and negotiating the capacity of the exchange program, whereas at faculty level information of the students was the main point mentioned. We were not always able to confirm these declarations of good will in the universities' reality. Some professors, especially colleagues who have studied abroad themselves

make individually great efforts. Viewing the total university nonetheless, this is a minor contribution.

It is seen that the foremost tasks will now be the strengthening and support of international activities of professors, researchers and administrators.

The promotion of information on academic exchange of services is seen as another urgent task and it is planned to give especially professors and researchers who are planning an exchange in the future more personalized attention. The strengthening of student exchange programs does not seem a priority, though funds may be assigned for possible incoming students in a real exchange program.

Social and cultural activities for international students are with very few exceptions not even considered as well as coordination and legal advising for migration, work and social security for incoming students. Mexican universities usually do not have student housing or cafeterias which could be compared to European standards, making daily life for incoming students a continuing adventure.

The annual rate of students who go abroad is low throughout Mexican universities, outside the cities and the big private universities it is extremely low. For instance in the University of Guadalajara (UdeG) it is less than 1%. In the University of Guanajuato (UGTO) it is 1% (120 a year, advanced level), under 1% (3 a year, high school); under 1% (110 a year, undergraduate level) and under 1% (6-10 a year, graduate level).

There are usually fewer incoming students than outgoing students. The incoming students make roughly 0.05% of the Mexican student population. An exception would be the Tec de Monterrey, a very prestigious private university.

The majority of the undergraduate students going abroad do so within an agreement, either with the university abroad or with some public agency from abroad. Graduate students often go as free movers and are financed through scholarship agreements (SRE, SEP, CONACYT), loans, grants or they are self-financed.

Very few students go abroad at undergraduate level. Most of the outgoing students are graduate students, some are PhD students. Subjects that are most demanded are Engineering, Technology, international business, Social Sciences and Architecture.

Student exchange programs and/or cooperation agreements have been signed with the USA, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Costa Rica and Colombia, as well off the American continent with France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and in Asia Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Korea.

2.3. Views on Student Mobility

The rectors see the main advantages of a full degree or a study period abroad equally in academic specialization and in soft skills. They mention knowledge of culture, improving language skills, working in a multicultural context, acquisition of new skills like communicating, decision taking, knowing other perspectives and attitudes, taking risks and being active and a better estimation of own capacities and potentials on the side of the soft skills. And learning to analyze and synthesize, specialization in field of study and a subsequent competitiveness on the job market on the other side.

Possible disadvantages are brain drain, the disintegration of family structures in Mexico and that the acquired knowledge may not be implemented productively in Mexico when returning home.

The main obstacles for the students are problems of financing their stay abroad, of acquiring language skills still at home, their low academic performance, lack of information, mental barriers.

Most rectors see the end of the first full degree (i.e. "licenciatura") an appropriate moment for going abroad for one or two semester. For whole degree programs though they suggest only the graduate level (i.e. "maestría", "doctorado").

Asked how chances of students could improve through mobility, the rectors state higher salaries and chances to become employed faster, as students may be seen to be more flexible and adaptive.

2.4. The Role of the EU as a Study Destination

The EU is very important for student mobility within exchange programs. For example 70% of all students of the University of Guadalajara who study abroad within an exchange program go to Europe. Preferred countries are Spain, France and the UK.

The vice rector of this university states: "Europe is by far more important than the USA. France and Spain are very important. In second place the UK. In a tradition that reaches back many years Europe is seen rather as a mother continent and with which communication reaches a better understanding than with the USA:" (Bravo Padilla, Vice rector UdeG)

Perceived strengths of the EU are its high quality of education, the fact that degrees are generally accepted due to the homogenization of study programs and degrees/levels, the availability of scholarships and financial support, its rich and diverse culture, security, and the better life style.

Weaknesses are seen in tendencies of nationalism, high living costs and the danger of no accreditation or acceptance of Mexican degrees. The advantage of USA as a study destination would be, that many students have family there.

New member states may have a very good educational system, but since they are not very well known in Mexico there may be problems with the acknowledgement of their degrees, as is supposed by the rectors. But they estimate that with the integration of the educational market differences will disappear.

There is a general agreement on the fact that academic cooperation between Mexico and EU-Member states will increase, because of a general tendency of internationalization in Mexico and a corresponding high demand of new cooperation partners. But as was mentioned various times, cooperation will focus on old member states of the EU, above all Spain, France, UK, Italy and Germany.

2.5. Information about Higher Education in the European Union

There is little knowledge on models and systems of higher education in Europe, except of the UK, France, Germany and Spain. Information sources are direct contacts and personal experience. Erasmus Mundus, Socrates, Tempus, ALFA were mentioned as known programs, but there exists only a rather general idea of these programs. But information politics in this regards should be improved, as well as providing information on scholarships and term duration of study programs. Supposedly there is no information deficit among rectors and directors of international offices.

3. Parents

29 Parents were interviewed at the fair **EUROPOSGRADOS**, 22nd and 23rd of April 2005 at Mexico-City by three facilitators and partly under the supervision of the organizer.

3.1. Background Information of the 29 Families

One or two, three up to four children (2.3 Children average); while there was a number of families with one child, a surprising number of families had three children, one even four.

Age group: Parents accompanied their children who mostly had enrolled in "Licenciatura"-programs and were 17 through 27 years old. (Average 22.5)

Gender: a clear female majority (66% female), masculine minority. It may be nevertheless, that the number of young persons attending the fair was more on equal terms, but that daughters involve their parents more in the decision making than sons, and hence bring them to a higher percentage to an education fair.

Current Level of education: enrolled in or terminating the first full degree "licenciatura" (70.5%)

Family member studying abroad?: 15 no, 15 yes, (countries: 4 USA, 3 Canada, 3 Spain, 3 France, 2 UK, 1 Italy, 1 Austria, 1 Germany) This distribution seems to reflect with a surprisingly high degree of truth the actual balance of students abroad.

Family member living abroad?: 15 no, 10 USA, 3 France, 2 Spain, 2 Germany, 1 Italy, 2 Latin America

Idea: 15 family wish, 14 child's wish. These percentages somehow contradict later given information where the role of the child is promoted to a more prominent status.

Areas looked for: 8 MBA, 7 engineering, 2 communication, 2 Human Resources, 1 Insurance, 1 Financing, 1 language, 1 Computer Science, 1 Education, 1 biology, 1 Art, 1 Humanities, 1 Psychology, 1 International Relations, 1 Tourism, 1 Music

Level aimed at abroad: 1 non degree language course, 10 Bachelor, 1 non degree special training, 24 masters, 0 doctorate

Financing: 20 parents, 12 scholarship, 4 student (6 cases co-financing between parents, bank, student and/or pretended scholarship expected)

We found it surprising to what a degree of truth the background information of only 29 families reflects the Mexican situation as a whole. If we had interviewed ten times more families, the percentages would have been very similar, since they correspond strikingly to figures from other sources and other surveys.

3.2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Study Abroad

Advantages for the students:

About one third of the asked parents assume plainly that Europe offers a higher academic level and better academic quality than Mexico does and a similar percentage expects better opportunities in the labor market for their children when studying abroad.

Less than half of the parents expect for their children specific goals to be reached such as "get to know new technologies" be in an environment with "better technology", "better opportunities" and an intensive "exchange of ideas and knowledge" or a

“different vision of the subject of study”. Some parents expect a “more complete training” with a “high acceptance at an international level” when graduating finally.

A considerable number of individual statements nonetheless referred to soft skills and the growth of maturity, stating an academic stay abroad would “make him feel autonomous in another country”, help to a “better personal development” that the aim was to “live with people from another culture” to “acquire self confidence”, “learn another language” and even “widen his culture”, “grow to be more independent” and “experience to be on his own”. They expect the “challenge will help her to develop better”, they want to see their children “growing mature in every respect” with a “better knowledge of the world” and even “getting to know himself” or “get rid of inferiority complex”. Repeatedly they stated as an aim that their children must “turn independent”, gain “another world view” and “widen horizons of knowledge” or “widen vision of the human being, learn about its cultures and customs”. This can be done in Europe as “Europe is peaceful in comparison with the USA”.

Advantages for the families:

The families see advantages for themselves mainly in (4) “better job opportunities for child”. It is important to them – though not an advantage as such – to feel (4) “pride of the child’s performance” or (3) “satisfaction of having a son abroad” and (2) “satisfaction with giving our child the best opportunities” Most “advantages” seen by the families are of the kind “satisfaction” about the child being “better prepared for the future” and “develop well and realize her dreams”, or simply the parents see as an advantage for the family that a child that studied abroad can “enable future generations of his own family to study abroad too”. A few times indirect advantages were mentioned such as “get a better academic level for our child”, “intellectual growth of our children” and an expected “better living standard” for the child.

This question regarding advantages for the families caused problems since many agreed “the advantages are only for the children”.

Disadvantages:

Whereas many parents agreed that there be no disadvantages, (4) the most commonly mentioned specific disadvantage is the distance, and children studying in Europe are considered as (4) “far away from family and home”. This has to be seen in comparison with a stay in the USA where one can simply board a bus and take a ride home – even if it lasted longer than a flight from Europe. “Parent’s worries”, “missing the child” and “preoccupied not seeing them” are important factors that reflect a possible lack of maturity among even older Mexican students. It may to a certain degree be a structural bias, having asked those students at the education fair who came with their parents. Had we asked parents whose children look independently for information, we might have gotten different answers.

A number of expected “disadvantages” are clearly related to the age of the students: “children leave home at a risky age” and a supposed “lack of confidence” are related to the fear of the availability of drugs and the fear that “the child may lose its orientation”, and, more general: “distance, being alone, drugs”. A general preoccupation concerning the financial effort (3) is conceived as a disadvantage, too. The ultimate fear, fostered by the experience of Mexicans going to the USA, is that their “child may not return to Mexico”.

Considering the preoccupying security-situation in Mexico, it is not surprising, that this topic is seen as a problem everywhere. Parents see as possible disadvantages of a stay in Europe: “possible security risks”. On the other hand, some parents knew to

judge that better and saw no disadvantages, “taking into consideration the current Mexican situation” but a “lack of security in the USA and Mexico”. As far as the administrative procedures are concerned, some parents fear “problems with the legal recognition of foreign degrees in Mexico” after return.

Obstacles:

Regarding the obstacles there is an interesting double bias to be observed among Mexican parents. Of those who sensed real obstacles at all, the majority (7) referred to “economic problems, financing”. Most of them not only assume that any stay abroad must be as expensive as a stay in the USA, but also assume that Europe is particularly expensive, where often the opposite is the case.

Another obstacle, frequently mentioned (4) is that the child “doesn’t know the language”. Many, however, do explicitly formulate: “no obstacles”.

3.3. Host Country and Host University

Country considered as a possible host:

It must be assumed, that the education-fair in Mexico-City itself as the location of the interviews caused a certain bias, since up to date there are far more students going to study in the USA, Canada and France than to Germany. On the other hand, countries such as Austria, which had a strong benefit from the fair, would hardly have been mentioned more than once, had they not been present at the fair. At our survey, it was mentioned Germany 15, Spain 14, France 12, UK 8, Italy 6, Netherlands 5, Austria 3, Canada 3, USA 3, Australia 2, Belgium 2, Switzerland 1, Sweden 1, Hungary 1. The figures established above (under point 1, Family background), seem far more convincing. The tilt results, regarding the figures for the USA and Canada may of course result from the fact that the data was generated on a *European* education fair, too.

Criteria for decision making:

Two types of criteria can be observed: specific and very general ones. The general criteria are not really criteria at all: “fulfillment of expectations” or (2) “finding safe countries” does certainly not indicate specific European countries or exclude others.

More specific are criteria such as (3) “language” or “Spanish language”. Mostly the criteria do not so much refer to a country but to a particular university such as (2) “academic level” or “academic quality”. They may even be as specific as a particular program: “find the desired program”, “finding prestigious universities with a well designed program and student’s dormitories”. Some would go wherever they get the financing arranged: “obtaining a scholarship” is such a criterion.

How important is the quality of the higher education to parents?

The quality of higher education is generally considered important. Frequently it is supposed (4) to be in Europe “certainly higher than in Mexico”; even “anything is better than Mexico” or “far higher quality than any Mexican university can offer” and “it has to be better than in Mexico”. This low estimation of own higher education is quite typical for Mexico.

It is widely supposed that a high quality education leads to “better jobs” and “higher prestige” as well as to “better personal development”. The quality of higher education is

seen “not important” concerning the country choice, but indeed important for choosing the university” and this results in the demand “European university must have good programs, and a good level”.

Only one family held a clearly different view: “More important than the quality is that the child has the chance to get know a different (wider) world”

How important are acceptance and prestige of a foreign academic degree?

As so often in these surveys, the answers tell a lot about Mexico and little about Europe or even Mexican knowledge of Europe. Typically Mexican seem two points that were made frequently with regard to acceptance and prestige of a foreign academic degree:

(I) Everything is better abroad (this attitude is commonly called “malinchismo” in Mexico)

(II) As long as the institution has a high prestige, the actual performance is of little if any matter.

Most frequently (6) was the opinion “acceptance and prestige are very important as it leads to better job-opportunities” and even (4) “prestige is the guaranty” or (3) “prestige of title brings better chances on the labor market” and hence is prestige (3) “very / fundamentally important”. Opinions such as “a foreign title will open many doors” or “a foreign title brings more money” reflect what some parents call: “In Mexico prestige counts”. Consequently it is “very important because future job and salary will depend on this” and being from abroad “It could even be accepted if it wasn’t of any good quality in Mexico” because parents seem to agree widely that “due to Mexican deficiencies a European degree will guarantee better studies”.

Some parents seem determined to argue the other way around: There are a few (1) “Prestige is not important at all” and (1) “prestige doesn’t matter“, or a little softer „doesn’t matter a lot; important is the environment to develop a mature personality”.

Study- and living-costs: How much money do you dispose of to finance your child?

There is a little coherent position between expecting the very best education without having necessarily the brightest children but wanting everything for granted. Of those who demand academic excellence from any university for their children, the most (6) “would have to look for a scholarship” or find that (3) “costs are definitely a hindrance”. Only two families state “child would have to live in austere conditions because this is what can be afforded” and another two “the stay needs to be economic”. Others find that “Living abroad is expensive” and that “Money is an important factor” so that “If we obtained a scholarship it would be less difficult”. There seems nonetheless little idea about the scholarships as frequently the idea of a split scholarship or “half a scholarship” popped up. As if it was easier to obtain a partial scholarship or mixed financing. The question rises occasionally “would it be cheaper as an exchange?” but the general opinion is: “Parents would make an effort”. In a few cases families were not very advanced in the process of gaining information: “We have not yet looked for information about expenses” whereas in other cases the child had already “applied for a scholarship”. The general feeling was “Living costs are important because we can only support a certain amount” and “If we obtained a partial scholarship parents would pay the difference”. Specific amounts were not mentioned except for one family that stated: “We can afford 600, - € per month”. In only one case the child was supposed to make an effort too: “Child is prepared to work, too” and for a few happy ones (3) “Money is no hindrance”. We got the impression that many of the students where money doesn’t matter, study in the USA or in the UK.

Living standard and security

Security is a dramatic daily concern in Mexico which has overtaken Colombia in the kidnapping business last year and is now the most dangerous country with regard to kidnapping worldwide. As most of the victims are young (because young people easily run higher risks) parents generally are very, very preoccupied and project their fear onto any other place as well. Hence the rather Mexican result that it is most important (9) "that our child is in a safe country" and the hope that Europe is (6) "less risky / far safer than Mexico". Mexicans are best informed about Spain (the daily *El País* is available in all major Mexican cities) where terrorism is a longstanding problem. This may be the reason for which some think that "Europe is not safer than Mexico" or that "Europe is a little safer than Mexico". Most of the parents do agree nevertheless security and living standards are "Very high standards in comparison with Mexico" and "Europe has a total security". Many parents expect "a better living standard" for their children and feel: "Europe is safer, better educated"

Lifestyle, culture, tolerance, multicultural society

Lifestyle, culture, tolerance, multicultural society are considered (4) important or (3) very important and parents expect their children to be able to (3) adapt and to need to (2) compare / develop. Overall they are (4) "expecting better lifestyle than in Mexico" and therefore "will choose the host country for its culture". It was said that "European lifestyle is better for our children" and that "our children are delighted with the different culture" and even "this will benefit our child".

Lifestyle is considered (4) "not important" and in one case, somewhat isolated it is warned: "it is important our child doesn't deal with guns or drugs". This sounds very much like an US-American experience.

Language to speak in the chosen country:

The language question is a difficult point. Fortunately the largest number of opinions stated (8) "no problem". Very few parents can affirm: "child speaks a few languages"

Many feel the necessity, stating "it will be very important to learn the language in order to make friends" and "if our child doesn't learn the language it will remain isolated" or "if he doesn't learn the language he will not be able to relate to the people he lives with" as well as "only knowing the language our child will be able to communicate with the people" and less specific "it is important to learn another language" "language is important indeed" or at least: "may in some cases be important". This means most likely that none of the referred children speaks any foreign language, except for some English.

Some parents have restricted their search to a country whose language their child speaks for one reason or another: "no problem as long a Mexican child studies in Spain" and "needs to be German". Some part from the erroneous belief that languages will automatically be learned once one is in their country, hoping: "child wants to speak English and learn another language", or "the language is only considered a problem at the beginning".

A few extreme cases are: "the language is a barrier that keeps him at home" and on the other hand: "she will learn whatever language necessary". Blatant ignorance expresses itself with "we don't care: our child speaks English" and "language is not important", "we don't think that language is of any importance", stating some wisely:

“our child wants to study abroad but doesn’t know any language but his mother tongue; therefore he needs to study in Spanish”.

What about your child being far away from home?

By far the majority does not regard the distance as terrible. Otherwise they would probably not have attended such an education fair. The distance is considered (14) “not a problem”, (2) “our child will adapt” (2) “more an advantage than a disadvantage”, or (2) „this will be a challenge“ and (2) „the distance can be accepted“. Some think “being away our children will learn to be themselves” and “that is good for his development”. Since the child “will be able to stay in contact with the family” it is considered a manageable “sentimental problem”. After all: the distance is more than compensated by what one can experience there”.

In case you mentioned more than one country for a possible stay: which would be the first choice and why?

It is in most cases (7) “Spain for the language” and than quite specifically “Germany because of German industry in Mexico” or “Belgium because we know more about it”, or “France for the language” even “The Netherlands for being a country of law and tolerance” and “Italy because the daughter wants to study gastronomy” respectively “UK because our child speaks some English” etc.

Either there is a particular reason, or it is (2) “the country where they offer the special program the child wants to study”; just in two cases it is no answer.

Outside Europe there are some mentions such as “Australia because there the chances to get a job are higher” or “Canada for being so close to Mexico” and “the USA for being so close and having good programs”.

Which criteria or specific characteristics do you have in mind, thinking of your child’s future university?

Clearly most of the parents (7) expect: “must offer the program the children are looking for” or “must offer the desired program with good services at a low costs”, somewhat eager: “must be a university of the highest possible academic level” and knowing one’s children’s limitations: “must be a university of high prestige but easy to get in”. Considering the poor standards of many Mexican universities some demand: (2) “must be a real university by formal criteria and internationally recognized” respectively (2) “academic excellence” and (2) a mix of “academic reputation, prestige, language and facilities” or simply “a good and safe university where she gets a scholarship” and even more demanding: “a university where he gets a scholarship for tuition and housing”.

Only a few parents state (2) “no consideration – this is our children’s decision” or have (6) “not yet decided”.

Reputation?

As the USA is so close where differences in the reputation are so big, it is not surprising that half of the parents (12) find reputation “is (very) important” and others (5) “is very important, because it is the reputation that will later be the reference” or at least (3): “as we don’t know the country, the reputation is very important”. One family knows what they want: their children’s university “should be worldwide renowned”.

A surprisingly high number (7) does consider the reputation “not so terribly important”.

Tuition fees?

Tuition fees are considered by more than half of the Mexican parents (16) “(very) important” and another large group states (11) “important factor that requires planning” or (5) “fees must be within a payable range”. Many plan already (3) “we are looking for a scholarship” or they fear (3) “high tuition fees could be a serious hindrance”, hoping to reduce the problem: “we are looking for a public university”.

Only a few consider (4) “tuition fees would not be a problem” – these few could be the well informed ones who know the fees will not be that high often.

One family exactly states “must not exceed 3700, 00 Euro per annum” and generally “costs are expected to be very high”. Some parent’s opinions show a preoccupying lack of realism. They wish the world’s best university at a yearly tuition sum that would not cover even a month’s tuition at such a university. In addition, they never ask, whether their children would be able to enter such an intellectual competition successfully anyway ... Some parents admit this bias right away by stating that their children should attend a top university but where they have no problems to get in. This is a typical Mexican view, where the rich sometimes negotiate the entrance into prestigious private universities. It cannot be seen a serious demand, of course.

Help and advice easily to foreign students available

Apparently the availability of advice and help to foreign students is of utmost importance to their parents. It is considered (18) “very important” by some (5) “must give confidence and a good introduction” Only two state “we have already obtained lots of help and advice”.

Isolated opinions are (1) “not important” and (1) “help does not exist”. A specific question that never turned up again was here: worried about racism – would there be help?”

Availability of appropriate student’s housing

Equally the availability of student’s housing is seen (10) as “very important” and related (4) with security aspects: “parents would be less preoccupied if child had a safe place at student’s housing facilities” Some parents (4) “don’t care”, but others (3) wish “the housing should be located at the campus or nearby.” Student’s housing is by some (2) “considered the very best option” and “as important as good food” where the housing “is very important and has to be inexpensive”. It is “important for safety reasons” and therefore “housing has to be safe”, even better if “housing should be located at the campus or nearby - child must not leave campus”. One family finds, it would be “great if there was student’s housing”

Availability of scholarships

Many parents seem to shop around for scholarships on higher education fairs, as half of all the parents confirmed (13) the availability of scholarships “is very important” or / and (10) it is “crucial because parents cannot afford the whole sum themselves”. A scholarship (3) would be “of great help” and some are already “looking for half a scholarship [sic]”.

Some parents though state it is “not of any importance – parents will pay anyway”.

3.4. Information about higher education in the European Union

What about your knowledge about higher education in Europe?

As the majority of those who answered this question were the fathers (and as men rather say anything wrong than nothing), this question reveals the ignorance about Europe as a study destination. Instead of talking about their knowledge about higher education in Europe, the vast majority said something – very generic or even wrong – about Europe.

Only seven families answered the question. The answers were (2) “has no knowledge” or (2) “has only very general information” and “cannot really judge because is little informed” respectively “has so far only looked for information from Spain”.

More specifically one family informed that they had “information so far gathered mainly on the German and the British Higher Education Fairs”.

Which are your sources of information about higher education in Europe?

Clearly internet with 22 out of 29 families dominates as a source today. On the second rank (5) we find our Education Fairs and (5) Newspapers and Journals. Less information was gathered (4) at the Mexican universities and two families each confirmed having received information (2) through talks with people, relatives, colleagues, superiors and (2) with parent’s friends. In one case it was the parent’s own experience and in one case the sources were Embassies and / or exchange services. There was one case where someone in the family had studied abroad and is a source.

Less important seem publications and marketing material, radio programs and TV-programs. Of surprising little impact seem to be the children’s friends.

Did you encounter any problems in obtaining of information about higher education in Europe?

Basically nobody reported problems in obtaining information as of now. (24) Mexican families stated “no problem (yet)” Some families reported no problem, because “the search for information is done by child” or they were “just starting to gather information – so far no problems”.

Two cases reported trouble “we did not find the necessary information to come to a decision” and “no real problems but the distribution of information could be better”.

Is there any particular point on which you could not get information at all?

As there seemed no general information problem, it was not possible either to isolate single problematic spots. The majority simply stated (14) “no” or (3) “has not looked for information so far” respectively (2) “no, but we just started looking for information”.

A typical Mexican problem was noted though: “outside the greater Mexico-City area it is very difficult to get information”.

Thematically it was noted that in isolated cases not enough information had been found on new programs, on accommodation of the students, on exact data about costs, on a

highly specialized training. Often these problems could be language problems as most the detailed internet-sites are available only in the national languages.

3.5. Comparison of EU Higher Education with other destination countries

Comparing the EU with other countries such as the USA, which are European **strong** points?

In comparison with the USA – which is the obvious comparison if one is in Mexico - Europe is seen strong (5) on culture and languages, and is supposed (4) to have a better academic level. Europe is generally (3) more stable in different aspects and (3) Europe has less drug addicts than the USA. It was said that Europe (2) has better planned programs and (2) wide and well conceived study programs. Generally it stands for (2) Culture, lifestyle, intellect – all better in Europe and even (2) Europe produces better results (better graduates) than the USA. It is to some extent known that (2) It is less expensive to study in Europe than in the USA.

Individual opinions were among others: Europeans are more farsighted; From Europe it is easier to relate to other countries; Europe has culture; Europe has interesting technologies; Europe is safe; Europe has prestige; Students in Europe are more mature; It is easy to get into Europe; European public universities are very good; In Europe there is not such a discrimination; Europe is less aggressive and not belligerent; In the USA it is not easy to obtain scholarships.

Comparing the EU with other countries such as the USA, which would be European **weak** points?

The most important weak point from the Mexican perspective is that (10) Europe is far away; Many however think Europe has (6) no weak points; or maybe (4) the costs and as already said: (2) Europe is far away and speaking other languages.

It may be the constant information about Spain and the ETA in Mexico that leads to judgments such as (3) Europe is not safe – there are terrorists.

Some parents didn't quite see their children's point in studying in Europe, stating that (2) Europe is partially immoral and losing its values and that (1) Europe gets old.

There will not be an easy remedy for all longings as one family criticized: "one cannot pay with Mexican pesos in Europe" and others found the main weakness of Europe is: "Not all the Europeans stand up against the USA – that is a weak point!"

What would you suggest we should do to make Europe more attractive in Mexico?

Very clearly the public opinion supports our own findings at this point. The largest number of answers simply stated (11) "do more marketing and promotion!" and some added (5) "more promotion and even more scholarships" or (3) "more education fairs, more promotion" asking for (3) "more specific information / information of higher quality", too.

Suggestions made were among others: (1) Begin already at secondary schools with your information; (1) You need more offices and facilities in Mexico; (1) More information outside greater Mexico-City area; (1) Make better use of the media for your promotion; (1) More information in the Universities; (1) Allowing foreign students to work in Europe; (1) Inform better about existing cooperations between Mexico and

Europe; (1) Give us more money – we are third world people; (1) Give us more opportunities.

One family thinks they have no suggestions, because “you are doing well”.

3.6. The Role of Parents in the decision process

What is your role as parents in the process of finding a university for your child?

It is certainly difficult to extract from all the statements that assure total support to the children in the presence of the interviewer the more serious utterances. (7) Parents promised “helping with moral and financial support; others (6) “helping with information”, some (4) with “general help” or with (4) “total support” or at least (1) “logistic help”.

Only two families admitted their participation in the decision as such (2) “we take part in the decision making” and two promised (2) “helping where the child wishes help”.

To what degree do you follow your child's wishes?

More than half of the families (15) promised to follow their children's wishes totally. The others expressed some conditions such as (2) “as long as his decision go along with the family, they will be supported” or (2) “as far as I can”. Similar the parents: “as long as his decisions go not against himself or against the society we completely back them”.

More critically sounds (2) “I always consider my child's viewpoint” or in case of conflict “I would try to help her see other options”.

There was one limitation in time: “I shall follow her wishes until she finishes her first degree” and one claimed act of tolerance: “I do not influence my child's decisions”.

What is other person's importance in advising your child (teachers, education staff, etc.)

The teacher's role is seen mainly (8) in “giving information on options”, and in (4) “motivate to keep searching for the new”. A few parents (3) find that “teachers have a little influence – they do not care” Teachers are most frequently mentioned: a total of 20 among 29 Mexican families. Individual statements are: “teachers help the child a lot”; “teachers can revise study projects” and “teachers are role models – they studied abroad themselves” and therefore “teachers have an enormous influence.”

Important seem to some parents (3) friends and (2) superiors, too, just as the university is an important ambience. Two families (2) have “no idea” about other persons and one family is sure: “there is no other important person.”

Who takes finally the decision?

More than two thirds claim presently (22) that the final decision will be taken by the child. In the other cases, the family (3) decides, child with parents (2) decide or in two cases (2) the parents will decide.

V Conclusions and recommendations

The EU as study destination is very attractive for Mexican students. Its strengths are seen in the quality of higher education, the prestige of obtained academic levels in the home country and in the job market, the security, life style and cultural diversity and tolerance and its lingual diversity. Pragmatic reasons would be that most European countries are considered to be less expensive than the US and that the migration to Europe (since 9/11) is easier and less humiliating than to the US.

European Higher Education, as far it is perceived as “European” in terms of a single quality, is considered to be prestigious and highly valued in the Mexican educational system.

This because of several reasons: First of all due to historical reasons there is a strong connection to Spain as the “mother land”. Scientific-historically spoken there is also a traditional relationship with France, where most of the Mexican scholars from humanities were educated and scientifically socialized. Therefore, favorite destination countries are Spain, France, the UK (because of its language, successful marketing activities and academic quality) and Germany.

Europe as an entire educational space is more a matter of humanitarian values and models of social interaction political integration and cooperation, which is seen as an alternative to the hegemonic and unilateral politics of the US and often functions as a role model for a Latin-American political and economical integration.

Strive for more political and economic independence from the US can thus be expressed in future by an inclination to learn from European models of political interaction on all societal levels. Certainly, this has its foundation in a strong geopolitical thinking. This was reflected as well in the interviews with the representatives of the Mexican higher education politics as well as decision makers in higher education institutions. Talking of Europe as a common space they mentioned above all its role as an alternative political model.

This of course is not the case with the students or more so their parents. Here, the reasons for an interest in Europe as a potential study destination are more pragmatic. If Europe is valued above pragmatic reasons it would be for its rich cultural diversity and the interesting life style. But more important are the factors of the lower living and tuition costs and yet established academic connections.

The main advantages of a full degree or a study period abroad are seen equally in academic specialization and in soft skills. I.e. it was mentioned the increase of knowledge of culture, improving language skills, working in a multicultural context, acquisition of new skills like communicating, decision taking, knowing other perspectives and attitudes, taking risks and being active and a better estimation of own capacities and potentials on the side of the soft skills. And learning to analyze and synthesize, specialization in field of study and a subsequent competitiveness on the job market on the other side.

But compared to the educational system of the US European education systems would be still considered second place.

This fact may have its reasons in the less rigidity of the education and teaching, the lack of guidance for beginner students and thus the perceived lack of efficiency in learning at many European universities. It is especially difficult for Mexican students to follow self-directed a study program which can be seen more as an ample offer of possibilities to learn than a strict canonical curriculum of musts to learn. Since knowledge management, social and methodical competences, soft skills and independence are not particularly fostered at Mexican schools and universities this will

for Mexican students studying in Europe most likely lead to problems of adaptation and a less successful study progress than in a rigid educational system. There is still little knowledge on the heterogeneity of learning and teaching styles in Europe itself, where for instance the Scandinavian models are most different from the German, French or Spanish scientific and academic culture.

Possible disadvantages of a study in the EU are brain drain, the disintegration of family structures in Mexico and that the acquired knowledge may not be implemented productively in Mexico when returning home. The main obstacles for the students are problems of financing their stay abroad, of acquiring language skills still at home, their low academic performance, lack of information, mental barriers.

A structural handicap for Mexican students can be monolingualism that is experienced at Mexican public schools, the lack of well educated language teachers and the mostly poor command of foreign languages of graduates from these schools. On the other hand, if graduates from public schools have a good command of foreign languages they must be exceptionally talented, gifted and with a strong perseverance that they can develop language skills under such circumstances.

Most students would go abroad for a master degree, a few for a doctorate. Since it is not a common practice to go for a postgraduate degree in Mexico and since there is comparatively little financial incentive, it can be assumed that only highly motivated students would apply for a scholarship program for postgraduate studies abroad.

Another problem for Mexican students is the recognition of the Mexican academic degrees and more so the recognition of the degrees awarded abroad. Besides the problem of obtaining visa, the biggest obstacle for Mexican students studying abroad is to show not only the financial means to study abroad but actually to have it.

Other structural problems are the weak support of students who want to study abroad on the national level, short deadlines set by the scholarship awarding institutions and a deficient information politics at university levels where some public universities do not even have an international office. Well working exchange programs would need to be backed on the European side by university professors, but on the Mexican side by the administration offices.

Often, Europe is considered to be more expensive than it actually is. There is little knowledge on prices, tuition fees in different countries and living costs.

It is hard to say what the preferred areas really are, because the students who show up looking for information mostly know already that mainly technical and administrative programs are being subsidized. We cannot judge how many students of other programs from philosophy to theoretical physics and from medicine to linguistics would like to go abroad, but knowing that they will not find financial support anyway, never approach any institution where they would be statistically registered. Judging by the students who finally show up for advising it seems that the preferred areas are engineering, technology, natural sciences, mathematics, social sciences and administration.

The characteristics of a possible European brand and instruments of a possible campaign in this specific context

Speaking about the characteristics of a possible European brand mark one has to distinguish between the actual image of Europe and that which can be used for marketing purposes and the areas where exists false or little knowledge and which need more information politics from European side.

Images that can be referred to are the diversity of culture, the possibility of cultural learning and the language plurality. Europe can also be promoted as a space where

learning about different role models and behavior without the social force of becoming European is possible.

On the other hand there are certain needs to show a realistic picture of European reality in academic and social life. There exist many misunderstandings and false information. In order to increase the attractiveness of Europe as a education space and to correspond to the needs to Mexican students following measures would have to be implemented.

Information politics

It is very important to provide detailed, specific information on financial support, living costs, tuition fees and advisory in the destination country.

At the same time it would be helpful to show the growing importance of international and interdisciplinary profiles of new master and doctoral programs in Europe and to show measures of qualification by rankings of academic programs that would serve for students looking for a continuing study abroad and for academic staff planning cooperation programs.

Of utmost importance is to show means of financial support (on a European level), and information on the availability of scholarships.

Furthermore, it would motivate more students to study in Europe if they would get information on specific details on the effects of the Bologna-Process within Europe and for national education systems in Europe and the advantages of joint degree programs. The promotion of a common European internet platform with national corners could facilitate this information process.

For university rectors and other decision makers, the flexibilization of the European education systems as a possible model for Latin American integration can be demonstrated.

It may be important to show equality in the educational offer, not superiority. If the last would be the case, only people with a clear strive to increase their prestige within the national status system can be attracted, this certainly will often be seen as a betrayal of a nationalist commonality feeling. In order to attract critical and idealistic people it is necessary to be very sensitive in arguing with prestigious symbols that would show national or "cultural" superiority (i.e. cleanness, safe world without problems, luxurious housing and social environment). More effective would be to show – if that can be shown – a certain discursive culture of problem solving, self criticalness, democracy and civil power, social and political fairness, willingness to cooperate on all social and political levels, taking serious concerns and without exotism of people from "developing" countries, and, since in Mexico national pride is not considered to be evil, to show pride and critical self confidence concerning national achievements. In short terms, it has to be shown that "you can learn from us" but also that "we can learn from you".

Academic level

On the academic level, the direct academic contact with university professors beforehand on fairs abroad and in the host country should be assured, i.e. by designing a personal academic mentor for each foreign students and tandem programs in host universities.

In order to compete with US-American academic offers it would be important to demonstrate efficiency in learning and teaching methods (especially of Scandinavian, British and Netherlands education systems, so far), and to show the excellence and

advantages of traditional education systems like Germany and France on the other hand.

If students do not study within a joint degree program, it may be attractive to organize exchange weeks with European partner universities.

Orientation should be provided during the process of the adaptation to the different scientific culture (tutoring), as well as a special support and advise for a better academic performance (advise by people who understand the cultural aspects of possible academic failure).

The possibility of attending language classes for free would be helpful. Furthermore it can be suggested to learn the language of a neighbor of the host country during the study abroad period.

Since diversity is perceived as enriching it could be demonstrated how the plurality of working styles and forms of negotiating academic viewpoints creates scientific progress.

The strong interconnection and collaboration among different European academic institutes and universities is perceived to be attractive. Strengthening and support of international activities of professors, researchers and administrators should be encouraged.

The integration into programs of university didactics and teaching methods could be of high interest in order to gain new ideas for teaching and learning styles and thus help to improve the Mexican education system in the future.

The same could be valid for planning the professional education of teachers or administrative staff in exchange with European countries (following examples like the Fulbright exchange for administrative staff etc.).

It is of utmost importance to negotiate and assure the mutual accreditation and recognition of study programs (mainly undergraduate programs).

Social level

Since many Mexican students fear social exclusion while studying abroad and since the cultural and social factor matters a lot, in order to attract students European countries should demonstrate possibilities and models of integration of foreigners into the society, especially of academically high professional foreigners.

Attachment to the host country can be created through special integration programs for international students. It is very important to facilitate the application and organization of housing and provide orientation during the first weeks of university life (tutor system).

To become an idea of the diversity of European countries, which is very attractive for Mexican students, travel throughout Europe, i.e. special fares on tickets etc., should be facilitated.

Network building and increasing social status by providing symbols

European countries should assure the keeping of strong connections with and further support of the foreign students after returning to their home countries, i.e. through Alumni Networks, continuing integration into academic institutions, cooperation with cultural institutions and academic service institutions of the host country in the home country.

For future politics it may be important to enhance the “real” exchange, meaning attract more European students for a study abroad period in Mexico. That means that

European partner universities have to be more demanding towards their Mexican partners concerning the organization of academic and social life of incoming students, especially in order to “move” Mexican bureaucracy and facilitate the administrative process.

Symbolic means have to be created in order to show the prestige of the degree awarded in Europe which can be used as symbols of status in the home country, i.e. excellence in the layout of the diploma and in the ceremony.

It must be discussed on both sides that the academic career abroad will meet national demands or increase the quality of a national career, i.e. improve the status and power in national decision making processes.

Mexican partners could be attracted by showing the possibility of improvement of and increasing international recognition with increasing international exchange, meaning the advantages of international cooperation on university level.

VI Annex

1. List of interviewees and their positions

Higher Education Experts

- Dr. Luis Gil Cisneros, Director of the department for the strengthening of postgraduate studies of the National Council of Science and Technology (Director para el Fortalecimiento del Posgrado, CONACYT)
- Guillermo Morones Diaz, Director of the Section of International Cooperation of The National Assembly of Universities in Mexico (Director de Cooperación Internacional de ANUIES)
- Dr. Eugenio Cetina Vadillo, General Director of the Department of Higher Education at the Mexican Federal Ministry of Culture (Director General de Educación Superior Universitaria, SES, SEP)

Rectors / Vice-Rectors / Directors of International Relations

Rectors or Vice rectors of Universities

- Dr. José Morales Orozco, S. J., Rector of Jesuit University Universidad Iberoamericana, Ciudad de México
- Mtro Itzcoatl Tonatiuh Bravo Padilla, Executive Vicerrector, Universidad de Guadalajara (UdG), Guadalajara, Dra. Yocelyne Gacel, Directora General
- Dr. Arturo Lara López, Rector, Universidad de Guanajuato, and Dr. Sergio Arias Negrete, Director of International Relations, Guanajuato
- Dr. Eduardo Guzmán Sanz, Director of International Programs at the Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Monterrey, Vicerector for International Relations, Monterrey

Directors of International Offices

- Mtra. Catherine Fanning, Vice director for Student exchange, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City
- Joan Landeros, Director International Office, Universidad La Salle, Mexico City
- Dr. Ana Esther Gutierrez, Director International Office, Tec de Monterrey, Campus México, Mexico City
- Lic. Thomas Buntru Wenzler, Director of International Programs, Universidad de Monterrey, Monterrey
- Sandra Llamas, Director of International Affairs, Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, Mexico City

2. Parents interviews

29 parents, interview protocols separately

3. Facilitators

Institution	Name
Escuela Nacional de Preparatoria	Guadalupe Díaz ana_guadalupe_z@yahoo.com.mx
IPN High School	Maria de los Angeles
High School Tec de Monterrey	Josef Minikus je_minikus@hotmail.com
High school Guadalajara	Athziri Moreno athizir@corp.udg.mx
IPN	Alejandra Alvarez ale_aa_2000@yahoo.com
UNAM	Guadalupe Díaz ana_guadalupe_z@yahoo.com.mx
UAM	Claudio García Ehrenfeld cge1@hotmail.com Daniel Sefami es: danielsefami@att.net.mx
UDLA	Rodolfo González ua014313@mail.udlap.mx
UdG	Athziri Moreno athizir@corp.udg.mx
IBERO	Mariana Salazar marianasal@hotmail.com
UPAEP	Mónica Ramos intercam@upaep.mx
ULSA	Dr. Angel Guevara aarg@ulsa.mx

4. List of Higher Education Institutions

4 High Schools

Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, Mexico City (public)

IPN – Bachillerato Tecnológico Bivalente, Mexico City (public)

Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Mexico City (private)

UdeG – sistema de educación medio superior Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara (public)

High School Monterrey (private)

8 Universities

UNAM – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Campus Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico City (public)

IPN – Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Mexico City (public)

IBERO – Universidad Iberoamericana (private)

UAM – Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico City (public)
ITESM- Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Campus Monterrey (private)
UDLA- Universidad de las Américas, Puebla (private)
UdeG- Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara (public)
UPAEP- Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla, Puebla , Mexico (private)
ULSA – Universidad La Salle, Mexico City (private)
UANL – Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, Monterrey (public)

High Schools

- **Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, Mexico City (public)**

Founded in 1868

System of 9 UNAM High Schools in Mexico City

104,554 students

Source: <http://dgenp.unam.mx/>

- **IPN – Bachillerato Tecnológico Bivalente, Mexico City (public)**

Founded in 1936

System of IPN-High Schools (1 Centre for technical studies, 15 centres for scientific and technological studies in Mexico City and the *Estado de México*)

For careers in engineering and technical studies

No statistics found

Source: www.ipn.mx

- **Tec de Monterrey – Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Campus Mexico City (private)**

Founded in 1943

System of Tec de Monterrey High Schools in 34 cities of the Mexican Republic

7 High School Programs

27,175 students

Source: <http://www.itesm.mx/sistema/cprep.html>

- **UdeG – Sistema de educación medio superior Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara (public)**

Founded in 1994

System of high schools of the University of Guadalajara in and around Guadalajara

General high schools and technical high schools

44 schools

103,156 students

Source: <http://www.sems.udg.mx/>

Universities

- **UNAM – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (public), Campus Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico City**

It is the biggest public university in Mexico and number one in research. The university has different campus in the City and in different regions of the country.

138 undergraduate programs (Licenciatura)

38 postgraduate programs (Doctorado, Maestría)

13 faculties

Statistics 2004 (UNAM-Website):

143,405 undergraduate students

18,987 postgraduate students

40,306 academic staff

Source: www.unam.mx

- **IPN – Instituto Politécnico Nacional (public), Campus Mexico City**

The IPN was founded in 1936. Its education focuses on education in mathematics-physics (*físico-matemáticas*), medicine-biology (*médico-biológicas*), social science and administration.

9 educational centres

18 research centres

59 undergraduate programs

106 graduate programs (30 specialization, 55 master programs, 21 doctoral programs)

Source: www.ipn.mx

Statistics 2003 (ANUIES-Report):

77,965 undergraduate students

4,632 graduate students

Anuario Estadístico 2003, ANUIES (Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior)

- **IBERO – Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City (private)**

The IBERO (a private university) was found in 1943 (1952 officially).

37 undergraduate programs

29 postgraduate programs

18 departments

2 research institutes

Source: www.uia.mx

Statistics 2003 (ANUIES Report):

9,283 undergraduate students

2,608 graduate students

Anuario Estadístico 2003, ANUIES (Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior)

- **UAM – Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico City (public)**

The UAM was founded in 1974. It has 3 campus in Mexico City. Education focuses on basic Sciences and Engineering, Social Sciences and Humanities, Sciences and arts for design, Biological and Health sciences.

Source: www.uam.mx

Statistics 2003 (ANUIES Report):

41,189 undergraduate students

1,614 graduate students

Anuario Estadístico 2003, ANUIES (Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior)

- **UDLA- Universidad de las Américas, Puebla (private)**

Founded in 1940

39 undergraduate programs

27 master degrees

2 PhD programs

143 research projects (Engineering, biology, chemistry, social sciences)

182 international agreements

ca. 8,300 students

Source: <http://info.pue.udlap.mx/conoce/udlacifras.html>

- **UdeG- Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara (public)**

Founded in 1698, is the 2nd oldest in Mexico, and 4th oldest in North America.

13 university centres in the Mexican State Jalisco

over 60 undergraduate programs

over 50 master programs

over 24 PhD programs

Statistics 2003 (ANUIES Report):

63,831 undergraduate students

4,295 graduate students

Source: www.udg.mx

Anuario Estadístico 2003, ANUIES (Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior)

- **UPAEP- Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla, Puebla , Mexico (private)**

Founded in 1973

23 undergraduate programs (in different areas like management, engineering, social sciences and humanities, natural sciences, design, etc.)

14 master programs (mainly in management and engineering)

12 PhD programs (mainly in management and engineering)

9 specialization programs (mainly in health)

11 international and 21 national academic exchange agreements

Statistics 2003 (ANUIES Report):

6,318 undergraduate students

621 graduate students

Source: www.web.upaep.mx

Anuario Estadístico 2003, ANUIES (Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior)

- **ULSA – Universidad La Salle, Mexico City (private)**

Founded in 1962

13 universities in 10 states of Mexico

ca. 11,000 students

source: www.ulsal.mx

5. Literature

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<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/mx.html>, 03.07.2005

CONACYT: Informe General del Estado de la Ciencia y Tecnología, 2004.
México

SEP, Sistema Educativo de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Principales Cifras, Ciclo Escolar 2003-2004, Mexico 2004

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