CHAPTER 6

Avoiding Marketisation: An Exploration of Universities' Social Responsibility in Mexico

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1 Introduction

The social commitment of universities has accompanied them from the moment of their creation. Currently, the consequences of the decisions taken by our society have become more relevant due to the global impacts of local actions. This scenario forces universities to contribute to the formation of citizens aware of the repercussions or impacts of their acts.

University social responsibility must be understood as the institution's commitment to disseminate and implement knowledge and a set of values in professional training, research, innovation and social projection; all of these focused on solving social problems (Arana, Duque, Quiroga, &

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Vargas, 2008). Accordingly, a university institution of quality which is not relevant in its social environment cannot be conceived as such (Sánchez, 2011).

However, particularly for emerging countries, resource limitation is an issue which universities frequently face. As a result, university marketisation, defined in this chapter as the way a university needs to increase its sources of income to sustain activities, can be a priority which puts at risk core activities. These can be considered of social relevance and can be used to measure the social impact of universities. Examples are: (1) enrolment, (2) areas of knowledge, (3) plans and study programmes, (4) links with productive sectors, and (5) the flow of repercussions and transformations which occur in society.

The chapter is aligned with the framework of the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, formulated by the United Nations (UN). It is a new vision presented for the next 15 years which includes a commitment to improve learning outcomes by strengthening inputs, processes, and the evaluation of the results of the performance of the substantive functions. This improvement is achieved by three substantive areas found in universities: teaching, research, and extension areas, which define the work of academics.

As a result, this chapter will analyse the universal social responsibility characteristics in universities of an emerging economy such as Mexico. This context is interesting because the institutional characteristics in which universities are immersed are not balanced, especially in terms of social scope and financial access. Considering this, our goal is to understand how universities deal with the concept of universal social responsibility while at the same time, increase their income.

Accordingly, this research represents a reflection on how public universities fulfil their role of serving society in emerging countries. We conceptualise and describe how universal social responsibility has become a common practice to correct failures caused by the initiatives of neoliberal governments.

This chapter is structured as follows: first, we analyse the role of the university in society from a historical context. In the second section, we explain how universities in Mexico, particularly public, manage their budget and how this is intrinsically related to its mission. The third section presents how the universities diversify income and how this privatisation influences the concept of universal social responsibility. Next, we describe what the universal social responsibility concepts ideally constitute and how

this might not be the case for universities dealing with budgetary challenges. Finally, we conclude with some ideas on the future evolution of the universal social responsibility concept in emerging economies.

2 The Historical Role of Universities

The university model had its origins in the European region in the early thirteenth century, where knowledge was concentrated in a niche of the population, especially linked to religion (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). 'Cathedral schools' was a term which schools of education linked to the clergy, particularly the Catholic Church, received. Regarding the constitution of these schools, knowledge was restricted to society, including disciplines of the Roman school such as grammar, rhetoric, dielectric, astronomical, arithmetic, geometry, and music. These were considered by Christian doctrine as the seven liberal arts, including areas such as law, medicine, and theology, the latter being the most popular and prestigious (see Fig. 1).

According to the literature, the first schools recognised as universities are Bologna (Italy), Oxford (England), and Paris (France), where under an ecclesiastical authorisation process, the incorporation of people from different nations was allowed (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). The purpose of these universities was the organisational improvement of the Christian

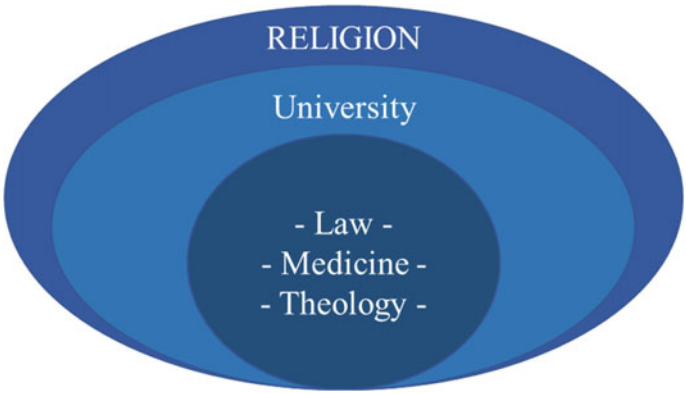

Fig. 1 Base model of university education (*Source* Authors)

community and not so much the search for the resolution of everyday problems of society (see Fig. 2).

Until the early nineteenth century, the university was considered necessary for social development, and resulted in two models for training professionals. The first model focused mainly on the development and practice of the chosen discipline. The second model encouraged (to a certain degree) the ability of a person to exercise his/her skills (Nicolescu, 2018).

This model of the university was transitory until the eighteenth century where the scientific and cultural revolution took place. The state was in charge of some academies where architects, engineers, and some lawyers were formed. It was at the end of the century when the university moved towards a detachment from Catholic doctrine, emerging from this transformation the interest of the state for social and scientific needs (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). Therefore, disciplines of interest such as geography, physics, mathematics, and administration were added.

In the case of Latin America, the presence of universities begins with the Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico (currently UNAM, 1551), San Fulgencio (Central University of Ecuador, 1586) and the National University of Córdoba (Argentina, 1613). Given the religiously based situation, the universities were administered by Jesuits, who retained the

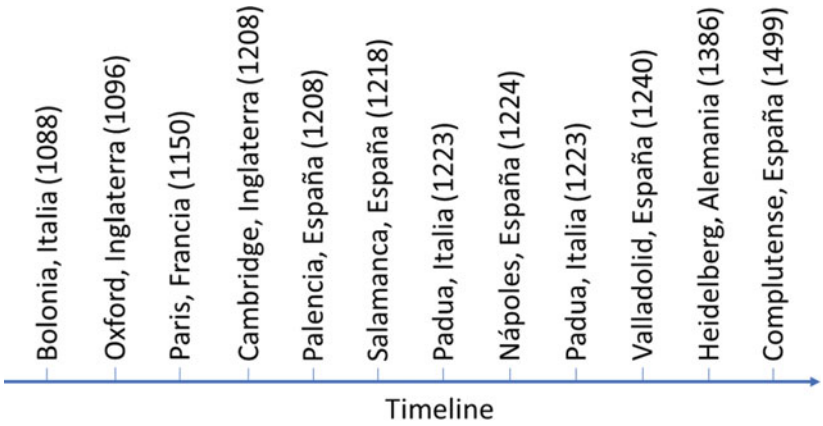

Fig. 2 Appearance of the first European universities (*Source* Authors)

tradition of including Christian doctrine in the professional preparation of students.

In the twentieth century, society demanded greater openness to education with state support, with the participation of public and private institutions (González & López, 2016) increased. In the American context, mathematics and physics grew in importance, as a consequence of World War II (1939–1945), which was aided by the 'brain drain' from other countries. This resulted in a concentration of many multinational scientists, numerous awards, and international prestige at institutions such as Harvard University (see Fig. 3).

The unstoppable changes which arise in society, seen from technological, economic, and environmental perspectives, among others, have been of great interest to universities and their way of structuring models with the objective of producing professionals with the capacities to face social issues. Seen as a need for change, a series of worldwide events of annoyance with traditional systems have been cited through strikes and demonstrations against both academic and governing authorities (Campillo, 2015).

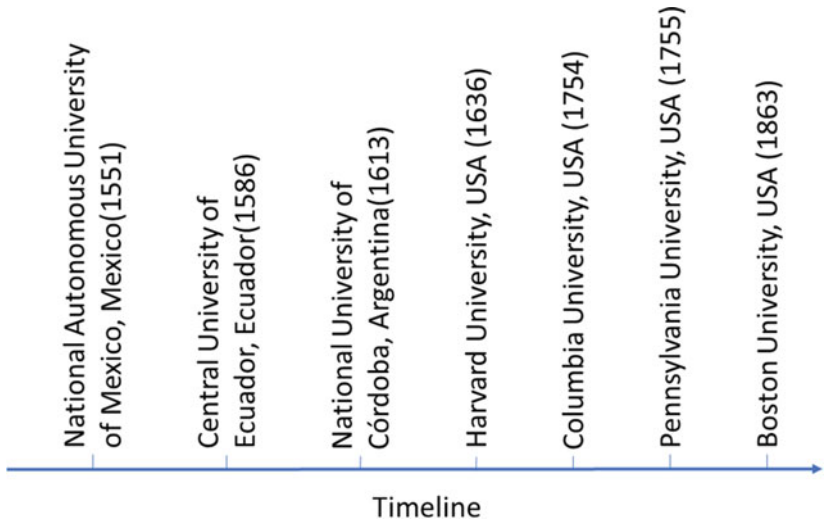

Fig. 3 Universities in North America and Latin America (*Source* Authors)

This form of expression has allowed important transformations for the challenges of the twenty-first century, where freedom of expression and social responsibility play an important role in favor of educational quality (González & López, 2016; López, 1999). In this way, private sector universities have gained strength, as they are linked to different productive sectors. In the case of public universities, a decrease in state funds has triggered other educational institutions to arise and meet the demand not met by public universities.

Currently the literature shows the technological area as the main axis of change which is characterised by the systematisation of processes and the constant search for efficiency. The goal today of universities is to generate knowledge and be able to transmit it. Darin (2015) emphasises the model called 'cyberculture', where new information and communications technologies (ICTs) can guarantee access to education. It is where each society and the different styles of government reflect and acquire these tools in universities, promoting a growth model by seeking equal benefits in society.

3 The Operating Budget of Public Universities

According to the Ministry of Public Education in Mexico (SEP), public universities are created by decree of local congresses, under the legal figure of decentralised public bodies. These state institutions develop the functions of teaching, generation and innovative application of knowledge, and also extension and dissemination of culture.

For the substantive functions of public universities in Mexico to be achieved, there are support programmes which seek to promote the realisation of projects to support the quality of higher education. These include the professionalisation of academic staff, the strengthening and diversification of the educational offer, the improvement of the relevance of higher education, the linking of the university to the industry and social sectors, the dissemination of culture, the internationalisation of higher education, and the promotion of comprehensive training. In the international context, particularly for Latin America, the resource destined to education is hardly enough to achieve these objectives, so the state universities rely on practices to obtain resources which move away from the perspective of university social responsibility.

According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007), for example, the fulfilment of the extension function requires that universities set aside

their profitable activities in order to raise extra-budgetary resources. In this case, we shall face a discrete (or not so discreet) privatisation of the public university. To avoid this, extension activities must have as a priority objective, democratically endorsed within the university, solidarity support for the resolution of social exclusion and discrimination problems, so that the excluded groups are given a voice.

A study by the Center for Economic and Budgetary Research (CIEP, 2016), identifies that the different forms of education financing in the countries, in addition to international sources, can be classified into three levels: central (national) government, regional government (province, state, departments, etc.), and the local government (municipality, district, among others). In this same order of ideas, some patterns can be identified in the forms of financing which go beyond national borders. Johnstone (2004) identifies four sources of financing which in each country have their own combination: government resources from tax collection, family expenses for the payment of tuition fees, student credit, and institutional donations. As the literature generated during the period shows, the main debate revolved around the responsibility which corresponds to the state and the costs which must be borne by students and families.

According to Altbach (2007), however, in many countries nowadays a smaller part of the budget of public universities come from government sources. As a result, they must generate their own income from tuition fees, research, consulting, commercial companies, and other sources. This privatisation has meant that the traditional aims of the university have begun to be ignored—most of which do not produce immediate income—to give more importance to other activities which have the potential to produce income. The commoditisation of higher education is closely related to privatisation. Thus, the functions of the university are increasingly conditioned to market forces. The services which can produce income are valued and receive support, while the fields which produce little income receive less attention or are even discarded. Tuition fees are an example of market forces in action. More and more academic institutions charge tuition fees, which in many cases are increasingly high, and, sometimes, students pay different fees.

Since the economic development of the regions depends on the efforts invested by the institutions which produce and disseminate new scientific-technological knowledge, then they would have to focus on the business world creating more wealth while exploiting that knowledge. Therefore,

public academic institutions which pay an increasing share of their costs do so by increasing tuition fees, marketing more and selling their services to the market (Geiger, 2004; Kirp, 2004).

The provision of public resources, as a point of interaction between the modern university and society, and the autonomy granted to the former, through the state, were the basis of the material conditions for the survival of educational institutions for many decades. It included the necessary independence from the state and relative isolation from the market. Both the granting of resources, without established requirements for the provision of goods or services and without a requirement for accountability, as well as the legal, organisational, and administrative autonomy of universities, were based on an implicit relationship of trust between society and institutions of higher education (Trow, 1996).

The new profile of universal social responsibility has been commonly called 'relevance' and is reflected in the design of educational policies which tend to stimulate greater correspondence between the environment and the fundamental objectives of universities (Herrera, 2008). This coincides with the notion of public good as a key factor for [financing] higher education and is directly related to the functions which academic institutions can play in society (Altbach, 2008).

Thus, accountability is a new reality originated by the size and complexity of academic institutions and systems. The entities which finance higher education—usually government authorities—require information on the management and performance of the academic world. This requires an additional level of management as well as an unprecedented collection of data on all aspects of the university environment.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider that according to the OECD (2019), Mexico does not have a common legal framework which fully regulates the higher education system. The Higher Education Coordination Act of 1978 provides the basic guidelines for coordination between state and federal governments in higher education, but the competency responsibilities regarding universities and the procedures for coordinating their activities are not clearly described. Mechanisms are needed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies and practices in higher education in order to improve results and relevance to the labour market, which would directly influence the establishment of universal social responsibility policies.

4 Privatisation Trends in Higher Education

The acceptance of the sustainable development goals in education has given space to an unprecedented demand for higher education where demand exceeds supply. In many emerging economies the demand for higher education surpasses by 20–50% the seats offered by public institutions (Bjarnason et al., 2019). According to this report, it is predicted that demand for higher education will exist for over 262 million students by 2025. This figure is expected to grow as the academic sector matures, especially in emerging economies at the expense of education quality.

Western education systems are going through a phase of homogenisation. Educational reforms are more and more alike (Díez, 2017) as time goes by. Education content is now focusing more on acquiring basic abilities to face the highly changing actual labour market while leaving aside knowledge used to understand and improve the world. This space is filled by private universities, which frequently offer only highly demanded courses where they may charge a premium. Furthermore, these institutions do not promote research and therefore cannot be considered as institutions generating quality knowledge.

According to The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) one of the strongest trends in higher education around the globe is the growth of private/non-government providers in response to the strong demand for access to higher education and the need for a greater diversity of curricula (Bjarnason et al., 2019). A large part of this demand will be covered by for-profit or not-for-profit private institutions, working individually or through partnerships. In theory, full privatisation of education, where the state disengaged entirely from providing education, constitutes a violation of the right to education.

Government funding is failing to satisfy the growing demand for higher education allowing the participation of non-government providers. Beside the fact that they are providing just the basic knowledge needed to be competitive, the education system worldwide is falling in privatisation schemes (Díez, 2017). Government policies of strong cuts to resources for education are being established, thus decreasing funds for school libraries, books for students, laboratories, computer hardware and software, internet connections, staff cuts, scholarships, and in-support programmes which are aimed at groups with greater educational needs.

In addition to being responsible for funding cuts, public education institutions are sometimes seen as ineffective in their operation, wasteful, lacking in performance and quality of services to citizens (Torres-Santomé, 2016) which lead the public to accept the privatisation of education.

Figure 4 shows enrolment in private schools in Latin America by income quintiles. Private schools are chosen mainly by high-income students.

Private education is often seen to be of higher quality, more flexible, responsive to students' needs and much more efficient in the use of economic resources. But this is not always true. Consider Ilumno, a private company which considers itself a strategic ally for education institutions, which for 15 years has promised to expand access to higher education in Latin America. Ilumno, with headquarters in Miami, Florida, is partnered with more than 100 hundred universities in the world, where 70 of those are public universities in the United States. The core value promise of Ilumno is to help universities gain larger income through student enrolment and retention for online courses. However, a large amount of negative comments can be found on social media and the news.

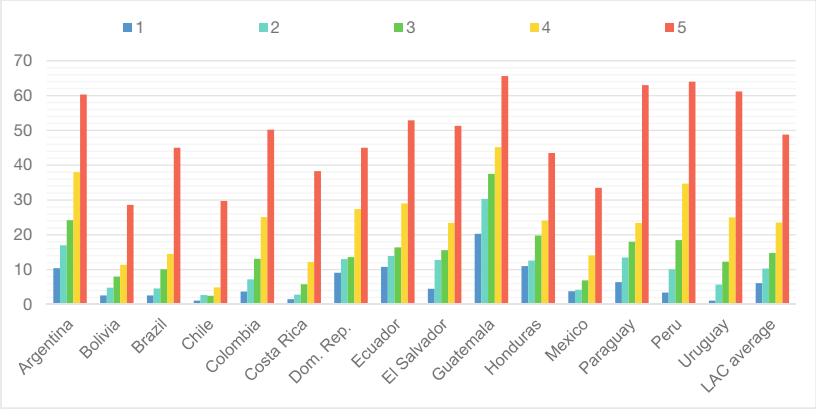

Fig. 4 Enrolment in private schools in Latin America 2017 (*Source* Own elaboration based in OECD/CAF/ECLAC [2018], Latin American Economic Outlook 2018)

Ilumno followed what other economic groups have done in the education sector: affiliating universities around the world to their education and economic model. The main economic international groups participating in the higher education market are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Main economic international groups for higher education

	Ilumno (Previously known as Whitney Group)	*Laureate*	*Vanta (Previously known as Apollo Group)*	*Kroton*
Origin	USA	USA	USA	Brazil
Presence	USA, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Panamá, Chile, Brazil	Brazil, Honduras, Chile, Peru, Mexico, USA, Canada, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Malaysia and Australia	Brazil, Mexico, Australia, United Kingdom, Chile and South Africa	Brazil
Affiliated universities	100 including 70 public universities in USA	27	3 main subsidiaries: BPP (20 locations), FAEL and Open Colleges (online)	7 universities with 113 campuses
No. students	200,000	875,000	Near 800,000	1 million
Scholarships	None	$750,000	None	More than 40,000 a year
Social responsibility programs	None	• Certified B Corporation • Laureate Student Ambassador • Free medical services • Global days of service • International Youth Foundation	• Think global act local	• Pitagoras foundation • Inclusion and diversity as principles • Combating greenhouse effect and water waste • Corporate governance

Source Authors

Table 1 shows that all four economic groups have been successful in the higher education market. The economic model they propose is based on changing the scope of researcher-learner for a service provider-customer relationship. The optic change from student to customer leads to market terminology, where universities are more competitive and measured in terms of profitability (e.g. cost-effective, financial goals), branded education, student enrolment, retention and graduation rates. At the base of these mechanisms, customer satisfaction.

The view of higher education as a product or service which can be bought has some cultural, intellectual, and pedagogic consequences. For example, students' acceptance of responsibility in their education process as co-producer of knowledge is critical. Programmes and courses are seen as successful when they attract large numbers of students and consequently are profitable. Courses which are not of interest to a number of students may be eliminated. Finally, the imitation of management models leave a large number of graduates burdened by unpayable debts.

These economic groups are indeed privatising education. Privatisation in the case of higher education implies the reduction of the state's role in providing resources, subsidies, and regulation meaning a decentralisation of governmental control and the increase of entrepreneurial activities within institutions (Kwiek, 2017). Privatisation, therefore, increases education institutions' reliance on neoliberal market mechanisms.

Educational privatisation does not always involve transferring full ownership of public schools to private hands, but there is greater participation of private agents in the provision and financing of educational services. Thus, privatisation in the field of education is the result of the implementation of diverse and complex mixed provision and financing schemes which tend to integrate the private and public sectors, and which entail the redefinition of the functions and responsibilities traditionally assumed by the state.

Among most common actions recognised by UNESCO (Bjarnason et al., 2019) to promote education privatisation in a public–private partnership the following are found:

- Charter schools: publicly owned institutions managed by a private entity with state funding. Providers of service are paid a fee or receive state subsidies for every student. Schools remain free to students.

- Education vouchers: coupons given directly to families so they can choose the private or public school which best suits their educational preferences rather than the public school nearest to them. This strategy aims to encourage competition between schools.
- Government subsidies or outsourcing to private schools: government purchases education services from private schools through subsidies, sponsorships to students, or by contracting places where there is a shortage in public schools.
- School infrastructure partnership: the private sector provides capital to finance the education project. The government establishes a contract in terms of service level requirements, in order to turn over the newly constructed facility to a private company which will operate until the end of the contract period.
- Tax incentives for consumption and/or the provision of private education: government grants tax exemption to parents who decide to enter their children in private universities.

On the other hand, state public schools in Mexico generally work as independent units, autonomous, and therefore many have limited resources to implement high-quality professional development schemes (OECD, 2010). Therefore, there is a disparity in the resources available to schools in rich communities and poor communities.

For some, public and private education are increasingly blurred. The appearance of fee-paying students in the public sector, however, seems to be the turning point (Kwiek, 2017).

To address this deficiency, state public universities, especially in emerging economies rely on cost-sharing to face shortage from government funding. Cost-sharing is conceptualised as drifting from the dominant dependence of governments to a growing reliance on parents and students (Kwiek, 2017).

Public universities in emerging markets charge for enrolment, academic degree, books, food, etc. For instance, in Mexico, tuition fee for attending a public university costs around USD 1500 for the whole degree. Even though it is low compared to private institutions where enrolments go from USD 6000 to 47,000, it means a heavy load for a country where the minimum wage is USD 156 a month (STPS, 2019; Universia, 2017).

Given that in Latin America only 30% of the population have access to higher education (Ilumno, 2019), tuition fees and financing mechanisms become necessary to afford higher education. Even though in emerging

markets, less than 1% of young people use loans to finance their university (Calvo, 2018).

Loans which are provided by financial private institutions and which offer to cover students' full tuition are deposited directly to the university. Loans must be paid in a similar period to that of the study programme. That is, if the programme lasts three years, the student will have three additional years to pay off the loan. Governments sometimes offer credit options to students. This loan does not generate commission and the students start paying one year after graduation. However, in a mixed system, governments sometimes promote the intervention of financial institutions, which charge monthly interest (around 10% in the case of Mexico) and allow up to nine years to pay (CONDUSEF, 2019).

Privatisation processes might be either endogenous, offering non-essential services run by external companies (food, training, and enrolment, for example), or exogenous, where schools are directly managed by private companies, as mentioned earlier. Accordingly, besides tuition fees, the commercialisation of education leads public universities to profit-making and trade, where entrepreneurship is encouraged at all levels. Central administration in public universities frequently instruct their faculty and school directors to think in ways of generating income for their units. Research professors are asked to list a series of marketable services which can be offered for a fee. Professors may have a selling quota of those services distracting them from their main role in education and the generation of high-quality learning.

Finally, school boards in this management model scope need to have real power or influence over important aspects of the new education scheme; as well as enough information, training, and transparency (OECD, 2010).

Social responsibility programmes, however, might return some of the positive attributes of quality education. Table 1 shows that Laureate and Kroton have proven financial success while simultaneously engaging with the community inside and outside the organisation. Social responsibility might be the vital lifeline which leads universities to accomplish their primary goal of positively impacting society and at the same time they attain economic goals. Their social programmes are well established and attract more students who want to have an impact in their world.

5 The Current Role of Universal Social Responsibility

The economic conditions of a country and its population have a strong impact on the quality of education and vice versa. Despite the long-standing tradition of universities serving society, economic shifts along with demographic changes have led higher education into a marketisation path. Private but also public universities have had to strive to find new ways to finance growth and assure the quality of their programmes. Public universities have faced subsidy cuts from the government (their traditionally main sponsor) which has made them charge for some of the services offered putting at risk their contribution to the community.

Access to quality education in all its population sectors ought to be the initial premise for its assurance. Mexican public universities, in this study, represent a promise of economic and social development.

An institutional programme applying the concept of university social responsibility, considers social responsibility as the set of ethical, social, and environmental implications for the advancement of knowledge. Public universities recognise that science, technology, and society are topics of research and learning which require urgent attention by themselves and thus narrow the gap between scientific production, reflection, and ethical practice. It thus seems appropriate to henceforth promote universal social responsibility as a means to continue serving society in a more marketised environment.

The integration of universal social responsibility in higher education requires a change in values and norms. Thus, social responsibility educates for global-locality, democracy, citizenship, and interculturality. Universities train the citizens of the future therefore, this training must be based on personal, public, and global ethics as well as civic commitment.

5.1 The Characteristics of Public Universities

'Glocalisation', the global–local relationship, is an indissoluble relationship where the world system acts on and imposes conditions in local development. For this, processes must be considered in the development and strengthening of the public universities. Likewise, university social responsibility requires, from a holistic point of view, the articulation of the different departments of the institution in a project of social promotion which includes ethical principles as well as equitable and sustainable

social development. All this with the intention of producing and transmitting responsible knowledge to contribute to the formation of equally responsible citizens and citizen professionals (Vallaeys & Carrizo, 2006).

Thus, universal social responsibility acquires importance in the promotion and formation of citizenship, due to the social function which public universities have in the construction of democracy contributing to the common good.

The main characteristics of public universities (SEP, 2019) are:

1. Have a Mission and Vision.
2. Own regulations.
3. Organisation and internal control manuals.
4. Training and teacher update programme.
5. Educational models focused on learning, based on problem-solving, credit systems, support and development of ICT with systems which foster innovation, creativity and emphasis on interdisciplinary thinking.
6. Quality assurance systems.
7. Institutional programme of university social responsibility.
8. Relevant study and knowledge generation programmes.
9. Monitoring of graduates.
10. Internationalisation programmes.
11. Linking, technology transfer, and patenting programmes.
12. Equity and inclusion programmes.
13. Code of ethics.
14. Institutional programme for sustainable development.

The integration of the universal social responsibility into the dynamics of training in higher education requires a change in values and a transformation of its normativity, educating for 'glocality', democracy, citizenship, and interculturality. The universities which develop an institutional programme of social responsibility include elements such as the declaration of a code of institutional ethics, a normative framework, and the establishment of regulation towards transparency, the defence of human rights, sustainability, and civic participation.

5.2 The Role of Social Responsibility in Universities

It is well known that the world is evolving at a very fast pace. As Kotler (2019, p. 14) states, 'we are living in VUCA times—characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity'. The fourth industrial revolution is providing human beings with a plethora of opportunities, but also with many challenges. The same robots, artificial intelligent developments and digital tools which nowadays are used to help individuals to achieve better results at home, school, or work, are also the ones which provide windows of opportunity for new forms of crimes, frauds, or misuse of private information. And while some people are amazed by the possibilities which technology offers to improve the quality of life, we must acknowledge the risks of this new revolution. Technology has changed consumption patterns, the time an individual devotes to work and leisure, and even how a person cultivates skills and develops his career. It has even been suggested that the revolution could yield greater inequality in an already unequal society (Schwab, 2016). The gap between those who have knowledge and skills, and the ones which lack them might get even bigger, leaving governments and institutions with a big challenge. To alleviate poverty, take care of the environment, and provide quality education and appropriate healthcare to everyone are only some of the tasks which must be embraced in order to reduce inequalities.

To provide solutions, in 2015 the United Nations presented the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Within the agenda, some of the main goals include the empowerment of vulnerable people and the provision of inclusive education at all levels (UN, 2015). It seems that to comply with this new agenda, public and private universities must get involved and participate actively; particularly in emergent nations like Mexico, where economic, social, and educational inequalities are common.

And even though the main role of universities is to educate, the need to design and implement social responsibility programmes to attend the 2030 Agenda is in order to properly comply with universities' main stakeholders: the students (Kouatli, 2019).

As mentioned earlier, universal social responsibility refers to the institution's commitment to disseminate and implement a set of knowledge and values in professional training, research, innovation, and social projection, all these activities must be focused on solving social problems (Arana et al., 2008).

According to the World Economic Forum 65% of today's children will work in jobs which do not exist just yet (WEF, 2016). This means that colleges and universities must be prepared to attend to not only current students, but also future stakeholders. In order to do that, universities must offer new programmes and services, and remain relevant for the younger generations, who are faced with many options to study a career and earn a degree. They can choose between a community college, a private university, a public university, travel abroad to study, or opt for an online school. They can even decide not to go to college and learn on their own by using the many tools available on the Internet. So, what ought universities to do differently to appeal to future students? How can universities contribute to the United Nations' Agenda for 2030?

The new generation of students is driven by specific motivating factors. Their values and social concerns are different than those of previous generations, as well as their learning processes (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). They were born in a new era, with digital devices easily available, and they are used to automation. Their mindset is also different, as well as their concerns. Today it's common to find what Deloitte calls the 'non-traditional student' (part-time students, older students, younger students, students with different academic backgrounds, etc.). While older students sometimes must juggle family, work responsibilities, and school, the younger generations present a different scenario (Fishman & Sledge, 2019). They are easily attracted to, and distracted by, technology, prefer videos and podcasts over traditional books, learn by playing games, and have grown accustomed to ongoing multitasking and instant communication. They want to express their individuality and are very pragmatic. They want not only to learn about cultures and values, but to discover and unveil the truth behind everything (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

As students, they prefer to learn based on a hands-on style and not in a linear fashion. Instead of taking notes, they prefer to make videos or podcasts to share their ideas. Since they are always connected to their devices, they seek immediate feedback, and require access to forums to express their ideals, values, and proposals in order to make changes towards a common good (Feiertag & Berge, 2008; Mohr, 2017).

Compassionate and open-minded, young kids are not only worried by the environmental, economic, and social problems they see on the news, but are taking those issues into their own hands and are actively involved in the development of apps and new gadgets; as well as becoming advocates for the causes of their interest (Leyva, 2019).

This new generation thus presents a big challenge for universities. Children are participating at science fairs at a very young age and not with home-made projects. They are presenting their ideas to detect cancer at early stages, fight global warming or build prosthesis for wounded people. Therefore, if universities want to attract the new generation of students they need to evolve and innovate. Good universal social responsibility programmes ought not to only seek to provide solutions to current problems but anticipate—even predict what the future holds, in order to design strategies and tactics aimed to prevent future—and unknown problems.

As UNESCO (2014) suggested, higher education ought to allow the formation of reflective, critical, responsible, and creative citizens who are actively involved in their knowledge-building process. Given that younger generations see themselves as activists who want to build a better world both for themselves and future generations, we believe that universities have fertile soil to implement disruptive social responsibility programmes, in which students can be involved as the main actors.

Nowadays, students are already getting involved in volunteer programmes, using social networks, and digital technology to share information and knowledge. Universities then, could take advantage of this trend to create novel content, educate, and habilitate underprivileged citizens, older individuals, and illiterate people with the help of this wave of influencers and youtubers (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

6 Conclusion

Most universities were founded with a social purpose in mind. To educate individuals and help them become good citizens lies within the goals of those institutions engaged not only with teaching and research, but also with the well-being of the communities in which they offer their services. And although in their mission statement most universities declare their commitment to society, in their quest to grow and attract more students, some might have lost their initial vision and instead dedicate their resources and efforts to become a good business. We believe that universal social responsibility provides the balance for those institutions without losing their initial vision. They can become partners with society and help the community address environmental, cultural, social, and economic issues.

To predict how universal social responsibility will look in a decade or two would be inaccurate, and even irresponsible. We believe that at least, for nations like Mexico, universal social responsibility needs to become a holistic activity designed to serve many stakeholders, grounded in the reality of each community and aiming to serve students. Therefore, universal social responsibility needs to evolve from nice words written within universities' mission statements to real integrated programmes within |transversal curricula. Such universal social responsibility programmes are basic to teach students ethical values, and at the same time provide them with skills and tools which will help them make a real difference in their communities.

As suggested by URSULA (2018), it is important that universal social responsibility programmes take into account the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. With the 17 goals, universal social responsibility might become more relevant and provide real solutions for current problems. Countries like Peru have specific laws which regulate universal social responsibility programmes, but unfortunately, that is not the case for other countries, like Mexico, where universal social responsibility programmes are optional (URSULA, 2018).

Following Carroll (2008) who identified the four basic social responsibilities of any institution, we suggest several tasks which could be addressed by universal social responsibility programmes.

One of the first tasks within universal social responsibility is to eliminate the economic barriers students face when they decide to enroll in a higher education programme. Even though most public universities are government-funded, scholarships, and grants are needed to help students pay for fees, housing, food, books and tools, and other related expenses (Tauginienė & Urbanovic, 2018).

A second task includes the design of programmes with a strong ethical core which will in turn result in citizens, leaders, and employees with strong values, aware of the needs of their communities, with a vision to solve them, and equipped with tools to implement real actions for economic, environmental, and social problems. Universities also ought to offer short-term programmes to provide individuals with tools and skills needed to face the constant changes in the workplace. This would help them to avoid being laid off for not having the new qualifications required by the evolving environment.

Third, conscious citizens need to be aware of the reality of their communities, and to learn first-hand of the problems their fellow citizens face. We believe that a good volunteer programme might provide both the insights and motivation needed to design innovative solutions for daily problems.

Fourth, design transformative research programmes to use science and technology to tackle current problems with novel solutions; as well as forecast future scenarios which could lead to innovations which contribute to enhance humanity's well-being around the world.

Fifth, acknowledge that social responsibility is no longer a domestic topic. Citizens from different countries all over the globe are aware of the environmental, social, political, ethical, and economic problems which we as human beings face. Therefore, universal social responsibility programmes and practices ought to be designed to tackle bigger issues. We must evolve from a domestic mindset to a cosmopolitan mindset (Kotler, 2019). After all, we are interconnected and one small action in Mexico, like throwing plastic into the ocean, for example, might have fatal consequences in faraway lands like Australia. At the same time, we can also try to learn from the best practices implemented in other nations to reduce the learning curve.

Sixth, measure the performance of universal social responsibility programmes. Emick (2016) suggests a 'five R' programme to show the linkages between universal social responsibility and key areas of the institution. The five R's are: Revenue, Reputation, Recruitment, Retention, and Relationships. By measuring the overall performance of universal social responsibility practices, universities can not only calculate the impact of universal social responsibility, but also identify new opportunities and improve current practices.

Seventh, join forces and collaborate with other institutions and stakeholders. Universal social responsibility is a demanding and challenging task that requires many hands and different minds working towards a common goal.

Finally, we believe universal social responsibility practices and programmes must be reflexive and self-critical. Universities must try to identify and predict the possible outcomes (both negative and positive) of their activities. They also must assess the ethical dilemmas and social implications which are sometimes present when launching an innovation to the market. Researchers and scientists need to remember that science and technology ought to be used to improve and enhance the quality

of life of all human beings, while at the same time be respectful of the environment and other living species.

Public Universities in Mexico have the pending task of aligning their efforts to develop transversal public policy focused on the inclusion and non-discrimination of citizens to receive training in their classrooms, these actions would directly impact the measurement of the impact of their social responsibility.

It seems then, that the universal social responsibility will not disappear, at least not in the near future. What we forecast is that universal social responsibility must evolve, develop new models and adapt to a new generation of stakeholders, and provide solutions to the many needs of a world in constant change and evolution. Let us not forget that universities already have the knowledge, partnerships, infrastructure, and people to create purposeful programmes aimed to train, empower, and educate internal and external stakeholders, in order to create a better world. It is just a matter of getting to work on the matter.

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