

IBERO-AMERICAN PROGRAM
FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF
SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

YEARS.....



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PROGRAM
FOR THE
STRENGTHENING
OF SOUTH-SOUTH
COOPERATION**



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**MARÍA BELÉN
BOGADO**

**-
CHAIR OF PIFCSS
INTERGOVERNMENTAL
COUNCIL**

It is an honor for Argentina to chair the Intergovernmental Council on this tenth anniversary of the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS by its Spanish acronym). Ever since its origins to the present date, the Program has gone through different stages, evolving in terms of its membership, its volume of work, its convening power and its capacity to relate to countries' processes, providing tangible results for its members.

Putting things into perspective, I am convinced we have been able to develop a model cooperation platform, which has remarkably contributed to the strengthening and visibility of South-South (SS) and Triangular Cooperation (TC) in Ibero-America. In these 10 years, we have made progress to define common positions on international cooperation, to strengthen cooperation offices' and key stakeholders' capacities, to improve knowledge management, data registering and reporting, and to design instruments, methodologies and strategic documents on this matter.

Nonetheless, and above all, I would like to stress that, throughout these years, we have managed to develop networking both at the political and at the technical level, based on friendship, mutual trust and professional expertise. In my opinion, this network represents PIFCSS' greatest asset for the future.

This document is the result of a collective effort that, as the different initiatives that take place in PIFCSS' framework, was developed in a collaborative manner, committing to joint building and considering the voices of all the different stakeholders which take part in Ibero-American cooperation's ecosystem. Each different section, in its own way, tries to account for the role PIFCSS has played in the evolution of SS and TC in the region. Much of the history of this evolution is summarized throughout these pages.

The coronavirus crisis certainly means new challenges and opportunities ahead. One of the crisis greatest lessons is that no country can walk alone; we face common problems and it is therefore necessary to develop coordinated responses and intensify international cooperation in its various forms. In this sense, SS and TC are called upon to continue playing a decisive role in these challenging times and to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are confident that PIFCSS will be an important player in this challenge and that it will contribute to the search for creative approaches and solutions for SS and TC's strengthening for many years to come.



**MARÍA
ANDREA ALBÁN**

**-
SECRETARY FOR
IBERO-AMERICAN
COOPERATION.
IBERO-AMERICAN
GENERAL
SECRETARIAT (SEGIB)**

Throughout this last decade, the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS) has consolidated as a key instrument to understand the evolution that South-South Cooperation (SSC) in our region has gone through. PIFCSS originated from Ibero-American countries' political will to respond to the need to strengthen capacities to do more and improved SSC, which was evident at the end of the first decade of this century.

In fact, in 2007, the issuing of the first edition of the Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America, associated with collaborative and regional work, revealed some of the challenges Ibero-American countries faced. Part of these challenges were related to the need for human resources training, the design of a shared conceptual and methodological framework, the improvement of data registering and reporting capacities, the development of national information systems, and the search for and the creation of a space which facilitated debate and the development of common positions on cooperation.

The Program's first lines of action, which were later modified according to new necessities, account for this spirit to face the region's challenges in terms of development cooperation in general and of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in particular. Ever since it was launched in 2010, as well as the Report, the Program represents a way to implement SSC in itself and is also a valuable SSC instrument. Its evolution is the result of its capacity to face challenges through the exchange of experiences and mutual capacity strengthening among national institutions responsible for international cooperation, scope which has now broadened to sectoral institutions and local governments. All these stakeholders take part in a cooperation ecosystem which strength lies in its diversity.

Today's world, hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, faces one of its worst multidimensional crises in recent history. In light of this situation, the international cooperation system is also displaying significant transformations, including in terms of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, which have also evolved. The Program has undergone subsequent changes, as has the report's content. These impact on the Program's new Medium-Term Strategy, agreed hardly a year ago; its objectives and lines of action are different from the original ones and are adapted to new challenges.

We are pleased to perceive that, in spite of these relevant changes, the spirit of the Program has not been affected. In this tenth anniversary and as part of the solution to the crisis, we must precisely appeal to the spirit of joint work and to the search of shared solutions which have characterized PIFCSS for over a decade.



10 YEARS OF CAPACITY BUILDING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

The Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS) originates in a mandate of the 17th Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Santiago de Chile, in 2007, and its Action Program. It was approved at the 18th Summit in San Salvador, in November 2008, with the objective to “Strengthen and boost Horizontal South-South Cooperation, contributing to the quality and impact of its actions, as well as to broaden the scope of associated good practices”.

The Program was launched during the first semester of 2010, through the implementation of Line of Action number 1, Education and Training, which included training activities on international cooperation, especially focused on South-South Cooperation (SSC), to contribute to capacity development in Ibero-American countries’ technical cooperation offices. This line of action also focused on the implementation of both remote and face-to-face seminars, courses and workshops, complemented by the structured exchange of experiences in specific areas.

One of the Program’s first steps consisted in identifying human resources training needs within the national cooperation institutions of its member countries. These needs were outlined as a challenge for SSC in the first Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America, together with the design of a shared conceptual and methodological framework, of a referential nature and to be adopted voluntarily. This process meant emphasizing mutual training and capacity building, based on the exchange of knowledge and experiences as training methodologies.

ONE OF THE PROGRAM’S FIRST STEPS CONSISTED IN IDENTIFYING HUMAN RESOURCES TRAINING NEEDS WITHIN THE NATIONAL COOPERATION INSTITUTIONS OF ITS MEMBER COUNTRIES

It is worth to highlight that from 2010 to date, more than 60 activities have been carried out to strengthen key SS and Triangular and/or Trilateral Cooperation¹ stakeholders’ capacities. More than 1,100 Ibero-American officials have participated in these training courses. In addition, nearly 230 Ibero-American officials have developed their capacities by participating in the four editions of the “Diploma on International Cooperation with an emphasis on SSC” coordinated by PIFCSS together with the Ibero-American countries and different institutions of academia.

More than 60 activities have taken place among Ibero-American countries’ institutions in the framework of the Structured Mechanism for the Exchange of Experiences (MECSS by its Spanish acronym). These exchanges have significantly contributed to the strengthening of SS and Triangular Cooperation’s management, through mutual learning for the development of public policies and instruments. This has fostered a constant dialogue which allows for results’ follow-up and sustainability.

In terms of knowledge management, more than 20 working documents have been developed in the framework of research activities and as a result of the design of methodologies to improve these cooperation modalities’ management. Another of the Program’s most remarkable achievements was the Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SIDICSS by its Spanish acronym), through which countries report information on SS and TC initiatives, basis on which the Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America is developed.

¹ Brazil understands the term “Trilateral Cooperation” to be more appropriate when referring to cooperation developed among three international stakeholders. In this sense, the information contained in this document referring to Brazilian cooperation with two or more international partners should be read as “Trilateral Cooperation” instead of “Triangular Cooperation”.

DURING THESE YEARS, PIFCSS HAS MANAGED TO COORDINATE AND CONSOLIDATE THE JOINT WORK BETWEEN IBERO-AMERICAN COUNTRIES BY PROMOTING PRINCIPLES SUCH AS HORIZONTALITY AND EQUITY

During these years, PIFCSS has managed to coordinate and consolidate joint work between Ibero-American countries by promoting principles such as horizontality and equity, which are essential for SSC and to advance the achievement of common objectives. During this period, the Program's contribution to the countries has been supported by clear guidelines and it has been based on necessities that were identified through participatory processes. Its main lines of action, detailed in the 2020-2023 Medium-Term Strategy, have been defined through the same participatory process. These lines of action relate to institutional strengthening; the promotion of multi-stakeholder partnerships for development; education and training; the alignment of SSC initiatives, projects and programs with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the strengthening of triangular cooperation; SS and TC's report, measurement and evaluation; and Decentralized South-South Cooperation.

In this tenth anniversary we are also able to celebrate the fact that, through the different initiatives that have taken place within PIFCSS' framework, we have achieved to build a network of contacts that serves as a real bridge between Ibero-American countries. This way, a knowledge space has been generated for people in the region whose work is related to SS and TC to meet, favoring collaborative dialogue, exchange and capacity building, which represent an exercise of SSC in themselves.

In other words, a community of SS and TC in Ibero-America has been built, around which PIFCSS member countries' technical teams and officials have developed a sense of unity in terms of objectives, challenges and collaboration towards

common goals. This fact should be specially stressed, as it constitutes a created heritage that transcends the Program itself and that has been possible thanks to sustained support and effort throughout all these years.

PIFCSS, together with the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), have supported, to a large extent, Ibero-American countries' SS and TC and its promotion, visibility and positioning in the international scenario, by coordinating common strategies and methodologies which are outlined in the Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America, as a reference document in the matter.

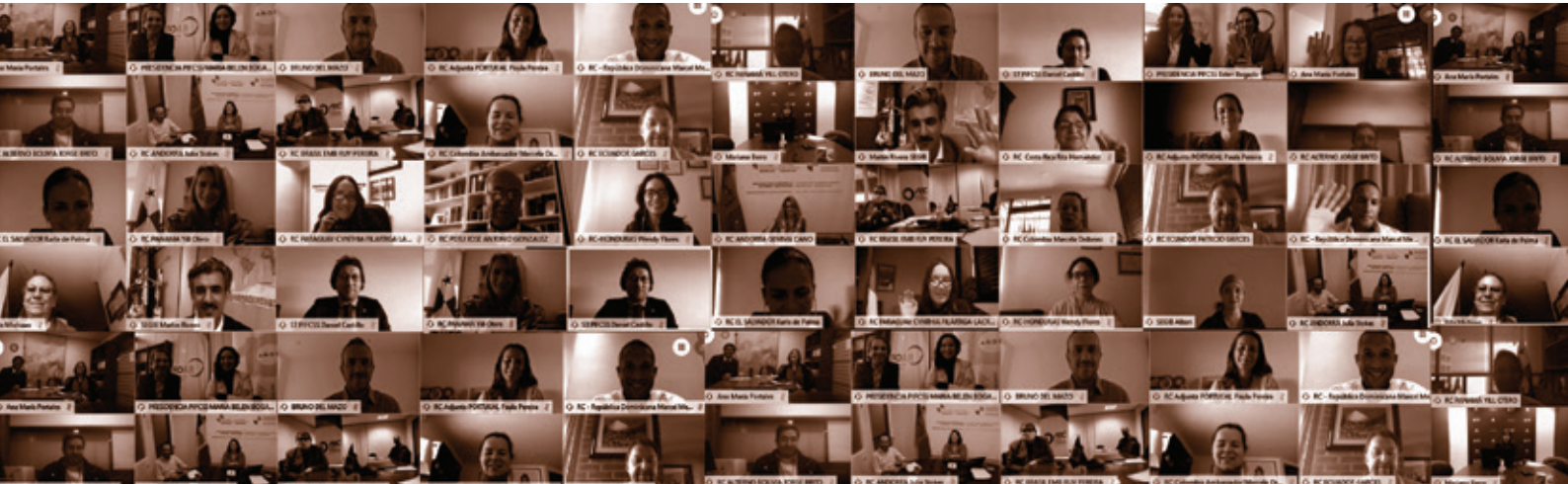
This capacity is internationally acknowledged since PIFCSS has played an important role in this context in terms of SS and TC promotion, through a significant contribution to conceptualize these modalities, by defining criteria and good management practices and by systematizing the region's efforts during this last decade.

We are currently facing new challenges which await a response from international cooperation. All countries must act, according to our national capacities, to keep our commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, even in the context of COVID-19 pandemic's negative impacts.

In this context, the Program is celebrating its first decade promoting actions to support and strengthen its member countries' updated cooperation management capacities. Such efforts involve essential knowledge exchange among those of us who are dedicated to promoting and strengthening SS and TC in Ibero-America.

A COMMUNITY OF SS AND TC IN IBERO-AMERICA HAS BEEN BUILT, IN WHICH (...) A SENSE OF UNITY HAS BEEN DEVELOPED IN TERMS OF OBJECTIVES, CHALLENGES AND COLLABORATION TOWARDS COMMON GOALS

PREPARED BY THE HEADS OF COOPERATION OF PIFCSS INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL MEMBER COUNTRIES.



"Workshop de metodología ODS"
Santo Domingo, 2018

"Seminário sobre modelos institucionais"

Guatemala, Septiembre 2012

"Seminario Agenda 2030 y territorio en Iberoamérica"

Buenos Aires, 2018

"Taller: Monitoreo, seguimiento y evaluación en CSS"
Antiguo Custatlan, Abril 2015

"Taller Metodología referencial de valorización de la CSS"

México, 2017

"Taller: Gestión de la Cooperación Triangular"
San Salvador, Diciembre 2012

"Reunião do Conselho Intergovernamental"

Andorra, 2019

"Seminário parcerias público-privadas"
Ciudad de México, Diciembre 2014

"Foro de Alto Nivel ECOSOC"
New York, Julio 2016

"Workshop em Valorização da CSS"
Cartagena, 2016

"Taller: Construyendo la Guía de Gestión de la Cooperación Triangular"
Bogotá, 2014

"Encuentro Multiculturalidad y Género"
Panamá, Octubre 2014

"Taller: SIDI CSS e Informe"
Lima, Octubre 2017

"Diplomado en Cooperación Sur-Sur"
Madrid, 2018

"Taller sobre Articulación de Actores"
Chile, 2013

"Taller: sobre Cooperación Triangular"
Asunción, Octubre 2019

"Segundo Diálogo LAC-DAC"
Paris

"Encuentro PIFCSS-CPLP"
Lisboa, octubre 2019

"Workshop Coperação Descentralizada Sul/Sul"
San José de Costa Rica, Junio de 2016

"Taller: Construyendo Estrategia del PIFCSS"
La Habana, 2019

"Encuentro Post-Busan"
Montevideo, Abril 2012

THE EVOLUTION OF SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN IBERO-AMERICA AND THE RELEVANCE OF PIFCSS: A DECADE OF VIRTUOUS SYNERGY

SSC HAS SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGED DURING THE LAST DECADE AND PIFCSS IS A KEY PLAYER IN THIS CHANGE PROCESS

South-South Cooperation (SSC) has substantially changed during the last decade and the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS) is a key player in this change process within the Ibero-American region. Towards the end of the first decade of this century, when national cooperation authorities conceived this Program, the situation of SSC was quite different from today's. In a way, PIFCSS was created to develop its mandate in a different context than the one it would face later on. Its capacity to adapt would therefore be a distinctive feature from the very beginning.

In 2007-2008 the context of Development Cooperation was defined by the Millennium Agenda and the MDGs, which were only halfway through its implementation process. Official Development Assistance (ODA) played a leading role in development cooperation, due to its financial volume and to the diversity of donor countries with presence in the region. The main issues dominating the international discussion on international cooperation were determined by the debate on "aid effectiveness", stirred by the Paris Declaration and the Busan High Level Forum, and by the increasing exclusion of several "middle-income" countries from the lists of countries eligible for ODA. Public institutions, mostly state offices at the level of central governments (Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Agencies, other related Ministries) were the main, almost the only stakeholders considered throughout all the process of official development cooperation, both as recipients and as emerging SSC "providers".

This was the context in which PIFCSS was created. The Program's objectives were initially conceived to (i) strengthen national institutions which coordinated international cooperation; (ii) promote the adoption of agreed regional positions in different debate fora; (iii) contribute to the development of information, monitoring and evaluation systems; and (iv) identify, systematize and replicate good practices, lessons learnt and successful experiences. These objectives were definitely ambitious, but they have achieved outstanding levels of implementation and substantial results. Thus, it is worth stressing at least two successful strategic dimensions.

First of all, the extraordinary progress made reveals in the fact that the technical teams of national institutions responsible for international cooperation have become exceptionally solid and professional in terms of their technical capacities, which has an impact both on their work at the national level and also on their interaction at the regional level. Second, it is also important to highlight progress made on conceptualization, data registration, information systematization and the generation of knowledge in the framework of the joint work between PIFCSS and SEGIB for the development and annual issuing of the Report on South-South

THIS COMBINATION OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND TECHNICAL WORK, OF CAPACITY STRENGTHENING TO IMPLEMENT SSC, BUT ALSO TO ANALYZE IT (...) IS ONE OF THE PROGRAM'S MOST APPRECIATED FEATURES

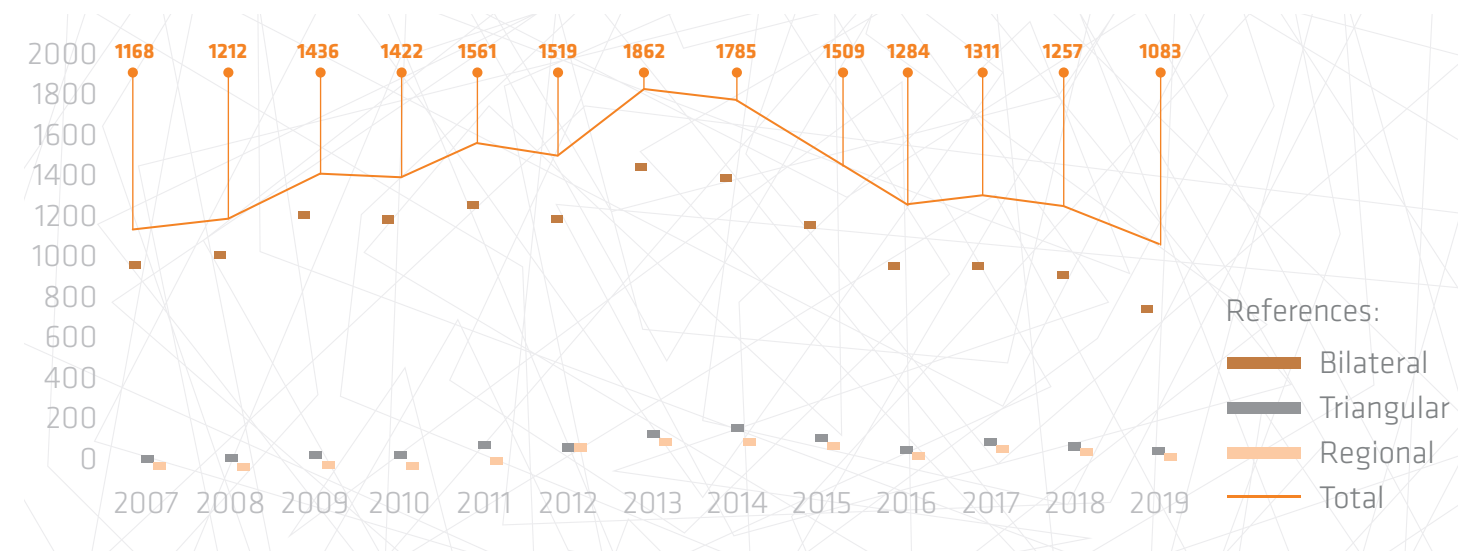
More than
9,000
Initiatives of Cooperation

Cooperation in Ibero-America, which is a unique example to other regions.

This combination of political leadership and technical work, of capacity strengthening to implement SSC, but also to analyze it, systematize it, report it and, ultimately, to strategically think to improve it, is one of the Program's most appreciated features, especially valued by its member countries and by experts and organizations outside the region which are familiar with its activities.

The following are some global figures on how South-South and Triangular Cooperation have evolved in the period since the Program was conceived (2007-2008), when its activities began (2010), and up until today.

Graph 1. South-South Cooperation initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated, by modalities. 2007-2019. in units.

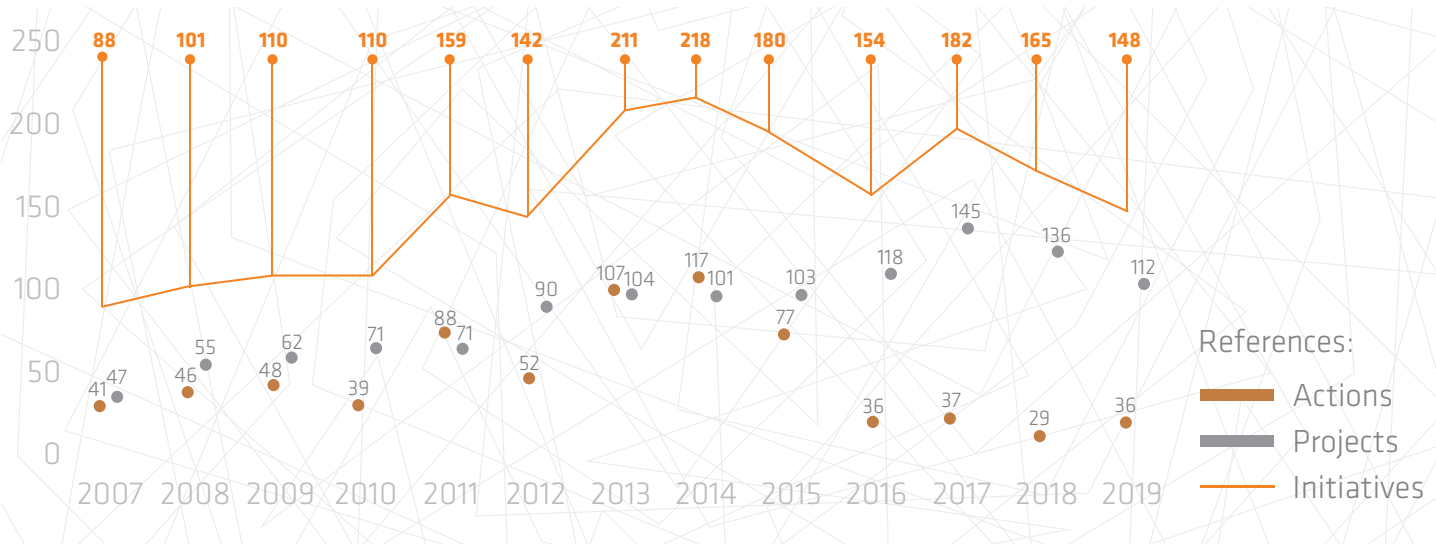


SOURCE: SEGIB, 2020.

As graph 1 portrays, SS and TC have kept a remarkable strength during this whole decade. In aggregated terms, more than 9,000 initiatives have been implemented, considering projects and actions. Bilateral Cooperation accounts for nearly 7,400 initiatives, Triangular Cooperation for almost 1,300 and Regional Cooperation for slightly under 500.

Generally speaking, this cooperation is mostly identified, negotiated, designed, implemented and reported by the technical teams of national institutions responsible for international cooperation and by national sectoral institutions, where these cooperation capacities are located. These stakeholders are precisely the protagonists and main beneficiaries of the Program’s training and capacity strengthening activities.

Graph 2. Triangular Cooperation initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated. 2007-2019. in units.



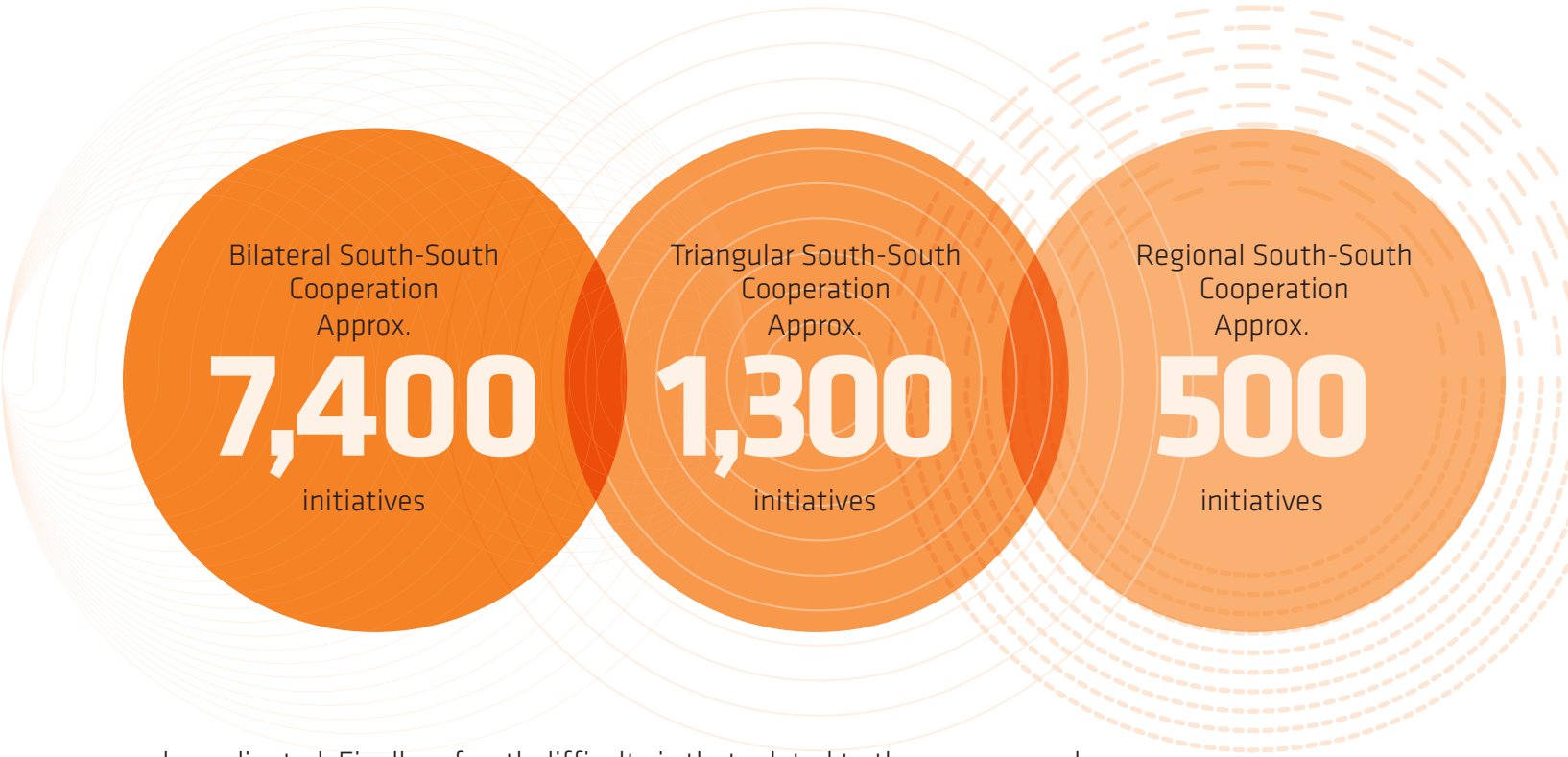
SOURCE: SEGIB, 2020.

Triangular Cooperation projects have remained above 100 for the past 7 years. In aggregated terms, if we consider Projects (of a larger scale) and Actions (of a smaller scale), these figures have surpassed, some years, the limit of 200 triangular cooperation initiatives developed by the countries of the region. This has required a permanent capacity to innovate, to generate abilities to address new working mechanisms, different implementation, monitoring and reporting instruments, apart from adapting to the complexities which negotiation and management entail, both aspects which the Program has significantly contributed to generate and/or strengthen.

MORE THAN 9,000 INITIATIVES CONSIDERING PROJECTS AND ACTIONS. BILATERAL COOPERATION ACCOUNTS FOR NEARLY 7,400 INITIATIVES, TRIANGULAR COOPERATION FOR ALMOST 1,300 AND REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR SLIGHTLY UNDER 500

After this decade, and considering the context of SSC which was briefly described at the beginning, the current situation features some complexities that determine a much more dynamic and complicated scenario than that of the beginning of this century, when the Program was launched. In addition to the usual difficulties recipient countries have in terms of cooperation management, the also complicated process to identify and conceptualize our capacities to provide technical assistance and, thus, to make South-South cooperation truly horizontal, must also be considered.

Furthermore, a third complexity arises: the way in which the diversity of national and international stakeholders that take part in the whole process of development cooperation, in its different stages and dimensions, can be coordinated. Relevant and legitimate stakeholders such as ministries, local governments, agencies, universities, civil society organizations, among others, must be included



and coordinated. Finally, a fourth difficulty is that related to the new comprehensive visions of development defined in 2030 Agenda, which are broad and multi-dimensional.

Sectoral national institutions are overwhelmed when addressing this Agenda; hence, they require very specialized technical capacities to design and implement cooperation projects in new areas and with new instruments. PIFCSS has demonstrated a valuable ability to adapt and continuously contribute to its member countries’ capacity strengthening to face all those combined complexities. In addition, the Program has become a regional platform where SSC national authorities jointly determine which capacities should be strengthened within their respective technical teams. These teams will be working with each other, and collective training will enable the generation of a network of contacts, of personal bonds, and the development of a common world view which may not coincide in detail but which is, in essence, shared. This is a particularly unique and valuable aspect to be highlighted about the Program’s first decade.

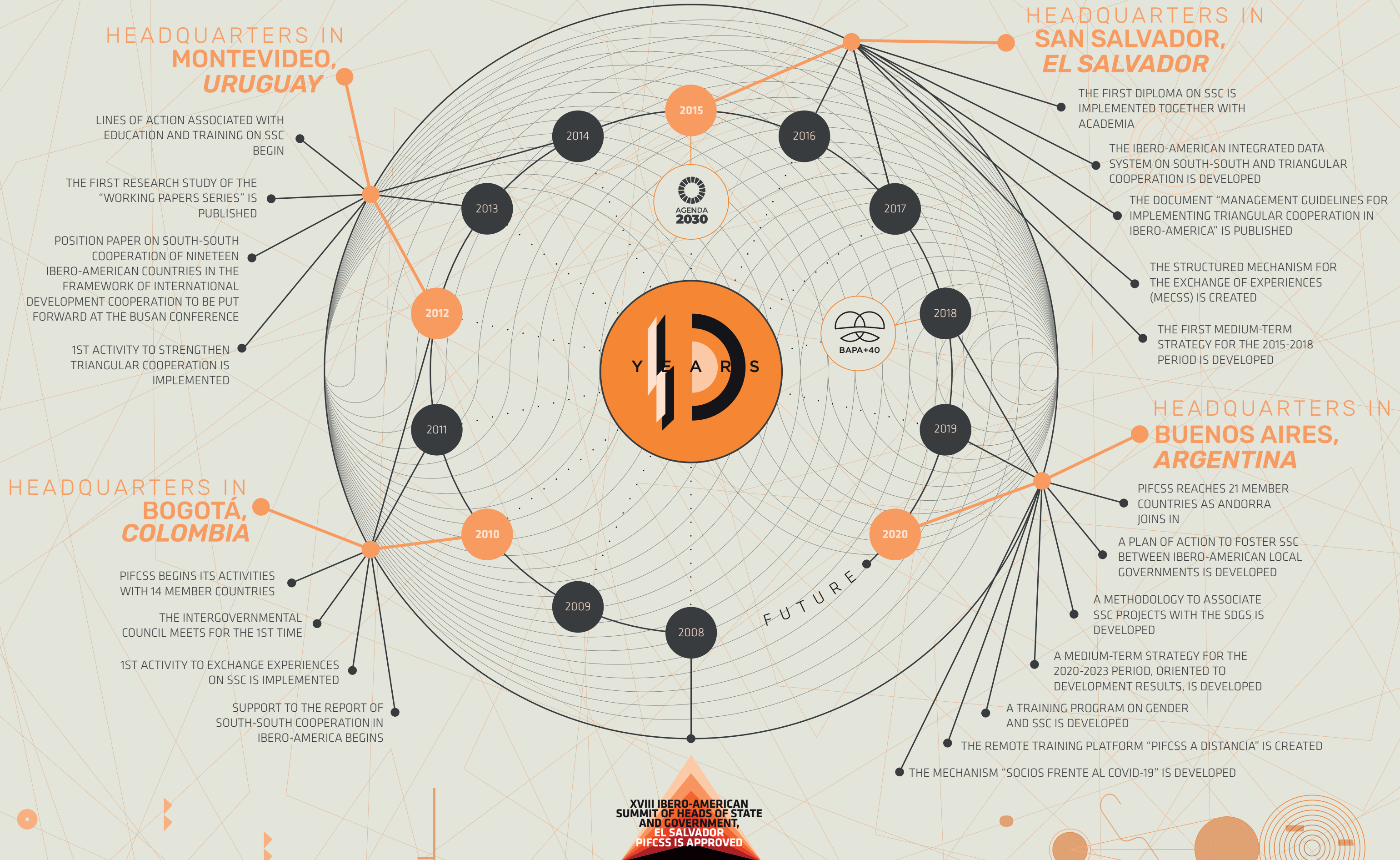
Lastly, in this turbulent 2020, it is impossible not to refer to the exceptional and critical context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its impact is being of cruel proportions. However, Ibero-American countries have broad experience in facing severe crises. The more united, the faster we will recover. For those who believe it is necessary to build a better normality - better is much more important than merely new - collective action instruments such as PIFCSS, which strengthen multilateralism, must be preserved and enhanced with the essential commitment of all.

MARTÍN RIVERO ILLA

CRISTINA XALMA

SEGIB

PIFCSS MAJOR MILESTONES



THE HISTORY OF A SHARED PROJECT: PIFCSS IN THE MEMORIES OF ITS PROTAGONISTS

EVER SINCE ITS ORIGINS, PIFCSS REPRESENTED A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE (...) THEY ALL EXPRESS PRIDE AND JOY; A SENSE OF BELONGING AND A COMMON VISION ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS MADE SINCE ITS CREATION

The history of the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS) is determined by its capacity to build and consolidate a community within which diverse experiences and perspectives live together but where its participants find a way to work their differences in pursuit of a common goal: building a space to strengthen cooperation between the countries of the region.

This text, as the Program, has been developed based on the testimonies and memories of many of the protagonists of this history. It intends to integrate these perspectives, putting a high value on the different visions and taking a close look at the different stages that the Program has gone through in these 10 years.

Its origins

Ever since its origins, PIFCSS represented a unique experience which distinctive features define the memories of its protagonists. Their statements match. They all express pride and joy; a sense of belonging and a common vision on the achievements made since its creation.

For those who started the Program, it is clear that the work done laid solid foundations and a path that still endures. According to Claudia Aguilar, El Salvador's Head of Cooperation in the 2009-2013 period, "the creation of the Program, together with other initiatives such as the Report of South-South Cooperation serve, at the political level, to position the region's experience and vision on this specific cooperation modality and to break with traditional schemes [...] Regionally, and in benefit of its member countries, PIFCSS fostered the exchange of experiences and debates on cooperation's conceptualization and practices. We agreed on some minimum standards, on which, many years later, our joint work is based".

The key seems to be appropriation; the empirical confirmation of the possibilities to build together, in spite of the differences. This hypothesis appears to be confirmed by SEGIB's Planning Director in the 2007-2012 period, José María Vera: "The Program could be more or less perfect according to cooperation's usual standards and its logical framework. What is certain is that it was based on real needs and that it had the explicit commitment of those who were its main stakeholders. They owned it, they governed it."

Indeed, protagonists' testimonies universally suggest some kind of foundational mystique related to commitment, to the spirit of collaboration, to the conviction that a space of their own was being built.

When recalling the Program's first years, Enrique Maruri, Colombia's Head of Cooperation in the 2008-2011 period, remembers that "The Program also symbolizes good team work and a generation of Ibero-American Heads of Cooperation who found the appropriate mechanisms to collaboratively work, in spite of their own ideological and conceptual differences and their governments' political trends and positions".

That foundational experience imbues the entire history of PIFCSS. New generations, such as Wendy Fabiola Flores, Honduras' current Head of Cooperation, reaffirm the positive assessment of this joint work and insist on emphasizing that "confidence prevails in Ibero-American Cooperation and among the member countries to horizontally coordinate cooperation actions. The Program is a space where we share common challenges and we know a strengthened regional institutional framework is there to support us."

These values and procedures do not distinguish between Latin-American or European countries, and include SEGIB's officials. As Julia Levi, Argentina's Head of Cooperation in the 2007-2011 period states, this distinguishing feature has prevailed throughout its history in terms of "Latin-American colleagues' strong commitment and the work of SEGIB's officials, who accompanied us with the necessary credit and freedom to do a job which brought only joy as a result of sharing an experience that, for all of us, was foundational and promising."

Its development

Throughout these ten years, PIFCSS has been able to design and develop the necessary strategies and skills so as to build a community that has distinctive features.

According to Noel Gonzalez Segura, Mexico's Head of Cooperation in the 2016-2019 period, from the strategic point of view "PIFCSS represents a platform for the development of a common position to address emerging challenges in the international context. It facilitates coordination to reach common perspectives and positions both within the region, as well as regarding other stakeholders, such as the European Union, and in global multilateral frameworks, such as the United Nations."

According to Inocencio García, Head of Cooperation of the Dominican Republic in the 2012-2019 period, all this was possible since the Program has been able to consolidate a network of Heads of International Cooperation which "main distinctive feature is that they acknowledge and respect the diverse cultural systems and the timings in which dif-

THE DIFFICULTIES THE REGION DEALS WITH PLACE PIFCSS FACE TO FACE WITH A NEW HORIZON OF CHALLENGES AND WITH THE CREATIVE TASK OF DEVELOPING A SERIES OF ANSWERS TO INTERPRET CURRENT TIMES

ferent Ibero-American countries' institutional frameworks develop. This means they are respectful of national sovereignties."

This strategy has allowed to move towards common positions and work agendas, enabling the development of tools that contribute to SS and TC's methodological soundness. This facilitates, from other perspectives, the consolidation of a regional profile. According to Andrea Vignolo, Uruguay's Head of Cooperation in the 2014-2019 period, "PIFCSS has built a conceptual and methodological heritage on SS and TC which is a global reference and that has enabled the development of a community of practice in the Ibero-American space, consolidating countries' capacities to provide and receive SS and TC, prioritizing them as essential modalities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in the International Development Cooperation System."

As alleged by Brazil's current Head of Cooperation, Ruy Pereira, this flexibility in its approach also results in an operating model "that favors the proposal and the implementation of actions with a regional scope, based on the voluntary participation of SEGIB's member countries [...]" Thus, Ibero-American cooperation stands out for its flexibility and its horizontal approach, contributing to the region's socioeconomic development in an inclusive and sustainable manner."

Its future

The history of PIFCSS is one of pride and joy, but the future features great challenges for Ibero-America and for the Program. According to Gonçalo Teles Gomes, Portugal's Head of Cooperation in the 2016-2019 period, "the greatest challenge will be to contribute to inequality reduction, finding the best way to fight against the consequences of the pandemic and to support the economic recovery of the Ibero-American space."

In this context, it is necessary to call upon the Program's history, to cling to the pride of being part of it and commit to the development of common agendas which enhance collaboration among countries and tackle the different needs. The difficulties the region deals with place PIFCSS face to face with a new horizon of challenges and with the creative task of developing a series of answers to interpret current times.

THIS TEXT IS BASED ON THE STATEMENTS OF DIFFERENT PIFCSS PROTAGONISTS

BEHIND THE SCENES: DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT

The Program has a Technical Unit (UT by its Spanish acronym) to make everything work. A team made up of a hard-working, relentless, and determined group of people, who overcome management challenges and make countries' decisions materialize. The history of the UT and its transformations and lessons learnt, is also part of the Program's history.

The Technical Unit is an essential part of PIFCSS success since it works to complement both the technical and the strategic roles and to transform the different decisions into operational work plans. Given the Program's working dynamic, the implementation of the different lines of action requires a constant dialogue between UT's team members and Ibero-American countries' focal points. This way, contact networks and mutual trust are created, both key aspects for the success of each activity.

It was originally conceived to rotate from country to country together with the Program's Secretariat (currently the Intergovernmental Council Chair). Although walking this path was not a simple task, the decision was not arbitrary. The rotation of the Intergovernmental Council Chair and, above all, of its Technical Unit, results in virtuous effects of various kinds: it allows member countries to participate in a more active way so they are able to enhance, according to their own characteristics, the Program's working mechanisms. Over time, this rotation also distributes management efforts and the economic costs which the Program's administrative structure represents. Given that the Program's management is nourished not only by employees hired for specific purposes but also by official employees of the countries' national institutions responsible for cooperation, hosting the UT is also a priceless opportunity that leaves installed capacities.

Throughout these ten years, PIFCSS changed its headquarters 4 times: from Colombia to Uruguay, then to El Salvador and from there to Argentina. In these rotation processes, it was necessary to learn how to identify the necessary conditions and requirements for its setting, how to organize handovers, how to build an institutional memory regardless of the people who are part of the UT, and how to plan in the medium term in order to take more strategic actions.

During its first decade, the Technical Unit has evolved in order respond to countries' needs. It has improved its management strategies and mechanisms, standardized its procedures and broadened its duties. The rapid reaction to the enormous challenges posed by the pandemic is proof of the huge adaptive capacity it attained as a result of the path followed during these first ten years.

THIS TEXT IS BASED ON THE STATEMENTS OF UT'S FORMER MANAGERS AND PIFCSS CURRENT TECHNICAL SECRETARY

A DECADE OF ACTION. A MESSAGE OF UNITY

The Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS) began its actions in 2010 with a clear message: “unity within diversity”. In addition to cultural and social variety, different political expressions, development models and forms of international participation coexist in the region. The unity within this diversity revealed through an increasingly vigorous South-South Cooperation (SSC), both in terms of this modality as through the establishment of a common regional agreement towards a more inclusive, equitable and effective global governance. The Program consolidated exchange practices, but also developed a shared vision, positioning the region in the international context.

Those were times of unity in wealth: an economic crisis which epicenter was the developed world, a favorable cycle of rising commodity prices, strong economic growth, poverty reduction, expansion of the middle classes, and a greater international presence through regionalist strategies and assertive foreign policies. Ibero-American countries’ contribution to SSC also benefited from the renewed momentum which the Millennium Goals symbolized. Throughout one decade, 7,375 programs, projects and actions were developed, prioritizing health, agriculture and livestock and government institutions, and 350 experiences with Asia, Africa and the English-speaking Caribbean were implemented. Not only union but also results.

In this process, PIFCSS joined and enhanced the concept of “unity within diversity” though a formula which could be called “active collective intelligence”: a combination of exchange of knowledge and learning, mechanisms for the creation of co-operation offices within its member states and the systematization and diffusion of information on initiatives between Ibero-American countries. Nevertheless, countries’ shared commitment to dedicate more and better institutional, financial, technical and human resources to development cooperation has been the backbone. There is no possible coordination without institutions and resources.

These ten years display a history of political, conceptual, technical and institutional contributions. These lessons not only contributed to reinforce multilateralism, dialogue in international organizations and to strengthen the United Nations System, but also sealed the foundations for unity. In 2011, PIFCSS’ 19 member countries put forward a common position at the Fourth High Level Forum held in Busan and at the 2012 Development Cooperation Forum. This posed a substantial challenge in terms of establishing agreements; something that unfortunately could not be achieved for BAPA+40, in 2019, within another political and economic regional scenario. However, PIFCSS’ institutional and political positioning increased through its active participation in spaces and platforms in which SSC is addressed and through its wide relationship with other stakeholders and developing regions. When there was no union, the Program was a lifeline.

REGARDLESS OF THE CONTEXT, PIFCSS HAS GAINED RECOGNITION AS A REGIONAL PUBLIC GOOD

Regardless of the context, PIFCSS has gained recognition as a regional public good. At the global level, it works to shape an international development cooperation system that leaves the traditional distinction between donors and recipients behind for good; at the regional level, it promotes multi-stakeholder dialogue and integration; and, at the institutional level, it contributes to strengthen international cooperation systems and agencies. Meanwhile, at the technical level, its workshops focused on methodologies have been key inputs for SEGIB’s reports and have also served as inspiration for the First African Report on SSC; on the political front, its powerful voice added substance to the debate in international organizations on “development in transition” and the use of GNI per capita as a graduation criteria for aid allocation. If the 2030 Agenda considers development to be multi-dimensional, the answer is simple: coherence.

Nowadays the context is different: scarcity in emergency. The COVID-19 pandemic will lead to the largest contraction of the economic activity in the region’s history, with an exponential growth of poverty and social inequalities. These aspects are added to existing problems such as growing conflict and political polarization in the region, a greater external vulnerability due to a negative trend of capital outflows, the demographic and housing crises in urban areas, the socio-ecological crisis and economies which are increasingly returning to the production of primary products. A pandemic crisis and a regional crisis within a crisis in terms of development and globalization. It resembles a matryoshka doll.

The pandemic accelerates it all. Demographic, territorial and environmental unbalances are intensified and feed off great inequalities. New digital gaps add to already existing social inequalities. One third of the region’s population has no internet access, 30% has no smart phones, 40 million households are not digitally connected, 32 million children are not able to access remote education and 80% of employed people cannot perform remote work. Who should be prioritized today? Vulnerable groups: women, rural and indigenous populations, disabled people, unemployed young people, children, older adults and digitally illiterate people. The underlying issue is to fight against inequalities, but also to be able to change life habits and transform cities into healthier, more resilient and sustainable places. The great challenge ahead for SSC is to avoid the risk of returning to the old normal.

In the words of the poet Mario Benedetti, “When we thought we had all the answers, suddenly, all the questions changed”. This phrase summarizes the complex and pressing challenges SSC faces nowadays. This means, without further ado, shifting from technical exchanges into embracing coexistence and joint action to address growing regional and global risks. The message which ten years ago aided the Program’s consolidation “unity within diversity” was not lost, but transformed. Today, the slogan could be “unity within diversity and adversity”. Like the phoenix, SSC has the opportunity to reinvent itself based on three “M’s”: enhance initiatives’ Multi-dimensional, Multi-stakeholder and Multi-level nature, in line with global efforts to overcome this “crisis within a crisis”, or, as the poet Rilke teaches, “turn your wall into a step”.

THE MESSAGE WHICH TEN YEARS AGO AIDED THE PROGRAM’S CONSOLIDATION “UNITY WITHIN DIVERSITY” WAS NOT LOST, BUT TRANSFORMED. TODAY, THE SLOGAN COULD BE “UNITY WITHIN DIVERSITY AND ADVERSITY”

**PAULINA
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SYSTEMATIZING CAPACITIES, KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING AT THE SERVICE OF IBERO-AMERICAN SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

SSC, based on guiding principles and specific institutional frameworks, enables developing countries to work together in different areas through horizontal and participatory schemes. This allows them to create and strengthen their own capacities, in order to gain greater visibility on the international scenario.

Activities where countries meet promote three key elements which definitely contribute to the exercise of SSC: capacity building, knowledge exchange, and technical training for teams which work is associated with this modality.

These inclusive and institutionalized environments in favor of interaction and

debate among member countries' officials allow experience sharing, generate joint learning and facilitate the design of innovative strategies that boost SSC activities which are implemented at the territorial level.

In this way, and by favoring this interaction, discussion and professionalization of its technical teams in terms of horizontal and triangular cooperation, the Program promotes intergovernmental collaboration at the service of regional SSC. The exchange of knowledge, the systemization of information, the identification of good practices, the creation of methodologies and the communication of achievements provide Ibero-American SSC with its own identity, and its strengths are put forward in various global fora.

In short and facing its first 10 years, PIFCSS is posi-

tioned as the main Spanish/Portuguese speaking intergovernmental space which mission is summarized in the systematization of knowledge, capacities and the permanent training on this matter. This, altogether, strengthens Ibero-American SSC and, therefore, the Global South as a whole.

JUAN PABLO PRADO LALLANDE,
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TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN IBERO-AMERICA

TC has evolved in terms of its practice in recent years. Programs and projects prove that part of its political dimension is transformed into technical actions and has social and structural results. This modality, systematized by SEGIB and PIFCSS, accounts for the areas of development on which its practice has become more sophisticated.

Apart from having the capacity to consolidate SS and North-South Cooperation principles, it must be stressed that horizontality, demand-driven approaches, ownership and participatory design have increased through TC. In addition, there is an adherence to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is considered as a roadmap through which triangular cooperation can promote knowledge sharing, the ex-

change of experiences and development instruments, working methodologies, inter-institutional communication and coordination, in the framework of a mutual learning process based on identified local callings and needs.

PIFCSS' contribution to the definition of triangular cooperation projects' criteria and implementation mechanisms, reveals the importance of information systems, channels to communicate results, management, monitoring and evaluation capacities, as well as of coordination between stakeholders. Although shared costs is still an aspect that needs to be improved, flexibility to manage technical and financial resources contributes to address the challenges that identifying local callings and needs entail.

Finally, in addition to strengthening previous

bilateral relationships between development partners of the South, through TC, the most developed partner supports the integration of working methods and results' follow-up and communication. It also contributes to the strengthening of non-governmental stakeholders and project management committees, as well as of focal points' capacities.

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LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS: KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

A large number of stakeholders enrich the different modalities through which international development cooperation is implemented. Local and Regional Governments (GLRs by its Spanish acronym) stand out in terms of SS and TC given their wide work experience within international networks and in partnerships, as well as in paradiplomacy and cooperation interventions.

GLRs' participation in important international networks and platforms such as Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos (United Local Cities and Governments), Unión de Ciudades Capitales Iberoamericanas (Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities), Mercociudades and PIFCSS, among others,

facilitates the creation of spaces for convergence and cooperative action. Indeed, part of their acknowledgment as local and international sustainable development agents is the result of decades of political activism and technical networking. For this reason, GLRs are currently called upon to implement the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Addis Ababa Agenda on Financing for Development.

GLRs implement SS and TC at the local and sub-regional levels, through decentralized and cross-border modalities. In the usual practice, this contributes to strengthen their institutional and management capacities in the framework of their competences. In addition, over the years, it has allowed these stakeholders to be better positioned in



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS AND IBERO-AMERICAN COOPERATION

From exchanges between cross-border communities to political activism organized together with international organizations and fora, South-South Cooperation has always involved various stakeholders, different from national governments.

Article 31 of BAPA+40 outcome document acknowledges the value of multi-stakeholder partnerships and calls upon member states to create enabling environments to boost knowledge and other resources for SS and TC in a more inclusive manner.

However, the worsening of the global crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic makes diversified participation in SS and TC even more urgent. Specifically,

civil society organizations, businesses, trade unions, universities, traditional communities and social movements must be included in SS and TC at two levels: at the beginning of the process, by connecting partners and sharing knowledge developed in practice through the design and implementation of policies and activities and, at the end, by monitoring and evaluating results in an independent and participatory manner.

This way, multi-stakeholder partnerships ensure SS and TC shared practices are at the service of an inclusive and human rights-based development, as agreed in the 2030 Agenda. They also guarantee these modalities consider alternative definitions of development and well-being, which integrate human fulfillment and planetary health.

Given this necessity, PIFCSS

has established the promotion of multi-stakeholder partnerships as one of its priorities for the next few years. To this end, it will have to use its capacity for dialogue and coordination, so the broad experience of cooperation promoted by non-state actors within its member countries can stand out.

LUARA LOPES
ARTICULAÇÃO SUL, BRASIL



THE DEBATE ON SSC IN IBERO-AMERICA'S MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Forty years after the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (1978), there is still a broad and necessary debate on SSC's measurement and evaluation. Various approaches seem to coexist, mainly as a result of the lack of a common definition on this cooperation modality and its measurement and reporting parameters. This, however, does not diminish the urgent need for accurate evidence to document its many achievements, its contributions to the SDGs, its weaknesses, as well as to enable extensive accountability in terms of SSC which is being implemented.

Ibero-America stands out in the Global South due to its contributions at the technical and methodological levels. Different countries

have led and shared national relevant efforts to design instruments that allow them to continue building an increasingly comprehensive path. This goes from calculating SSC's monetary value, to measuring its qualitative value (processes) and even evaluating SSC initiatives (results). In this case, the lack of qualitative and quantitative information and the subsequent evidence continues to be one of the countries' main challenges.

However, this issue transcends the national level and sub-national, regional and international platforms have dedicated to contribute to this important debate. As a result, SEGIB, through the SSC Report, has become a unique experience of the Global South in terms of the generation of information. At the same time and given the importance of SSC in the Global Development Agenda,

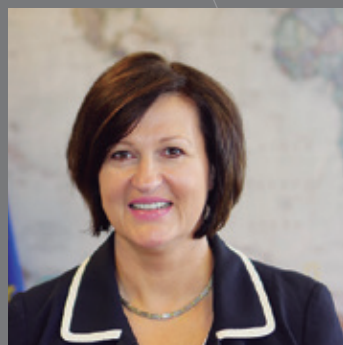
the 21 member countries continue to make progress towards joining efforts to strengthen their capacities to register and report (institutional level), to generate indicators, build consensus, exchange experiences and develop new knowledge assets (instrumental level) within the framework of PIFCSS.

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PIFCSS IN THE WORDS OF ITS MAIN PARTNERS



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CHRISTOF KERSTING

DIRECTOR, REGIONAL FUND FOR TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN LATIN-AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, GIZ

It is an honor for me to be celebrating PIFCSS' tenth anniversary. A space that has certainly become, in its short but intense history, the greatest reference for SS and TC in the Latin-American region.

In recent years, PIFCSS has exceptionally combined a double role: at the political level, positioning the importance of these working methods in the agendas of its 21 member countries; but also at the technical level, generating all kinds of debates and exchanges from which the international community as a whole has benefited.

The European Union is therefore privileged to have PIFCSS as a strategic partner in the region. Our firm commitment to Triangular Cooperation (TC) has been nourished by the knowledge of its team. We share the need to work on the basis of concepts such as ownership, trust, flexibility and the shared search for solutions, all of which are key for the innovative cooperation structures in which the different partners come together to provide adapted responses within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

To many more years to come!

In this first ten years PIFCSS has undoubtedly contributed to support and promote cooperation between countries, to design methodologies and instruments and to strengthen the capacities of institutions responsible for cooperation and other key stakeholders in Ibero-America.

Latin-America and the Caribbean is one of the most active regions in the implementation of South-South Cooperation projects. According to the Ibero-American General Secretariat, more than 1,300 projects were executed in the region, only in 2019. In recent years, Triangular Cooperation has been gaining ground, complementing and adding value to South-South Cooperation as it enables developing countries to access to more resources, experiences and capacities. The outcome document of the Second United Nations High Level Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40, Buenos Aires, 2019), recognized Triangular Cooperation's catalytic role and the crucial importance of its effective implementation.

In the context of COVID-19, cooperation among countries that come together to help each other respond to their social and economic impacts is more relevant than ever. We encourage PIFCSS to continue its work and offer UNDP's full support for the region to continue reaping benefits.

At the OECD's Development Co-operation Directorate, we are advancing policy dialogue with countries and organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean to foster better partnerships for better development co-operation. This is why we are very pleased to have established a strong and trusting partnership with the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Co-operation over the last 10 years.

The PIFCSS is unique as an intra-regional platform that fosters consensus on issues of great interest for achieving the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. We greatly value the expertise, analysis, practical tools and knowledge sharing that the PIFCSS provides on South-South and triangular co-operation. We collaborate in the Global Partnership on Effective Triangular Co-operation, together with other partners around the globe, and we have successfully worked for a greater recognition of triangular co-operation at the Second UN High-level Conference on South-South Co-operation (BAPA +40). We trust that this is just the beginning and that more decades of collaboration are to come – congratulations for the 10th anniversary of this remarkable Program!

Congratulations PIFCSS!

The Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin-America and The Caribbean joins the list of compliments on PIFCSS' first ten years.

We are grateful for many moments of reflection, valuable contributions and multiple collaborations in the activities of the Regional Fund implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

PIFCSS certainly has a significant role in Triangular Cooperation's progress in Latin-America and the Caribbean, especially in terms of coordination and in the development of institutional capacities of offices dedicated to SS and TC, as well as in the systematization of good practices. The document "Management Guidelines for implementing Triangular Cooperation" should be highlighted as an important milestone as it portrays systematized experiences of great value. It has contributed to debate on principles and definitions in the region and beyond. PIFCSS encourages constant reflection, as it has recently done in terms of the challenges to identify and design TC projects.

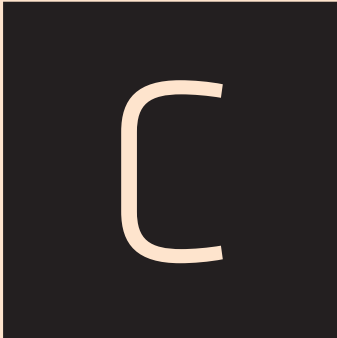
We are very pleased to continue this fruitful exchange with PIFCSS to jointly consolidate TC, also in the next ten years.



PIFCSS: A PLACE TO WORK AND MAKE FRIENDS

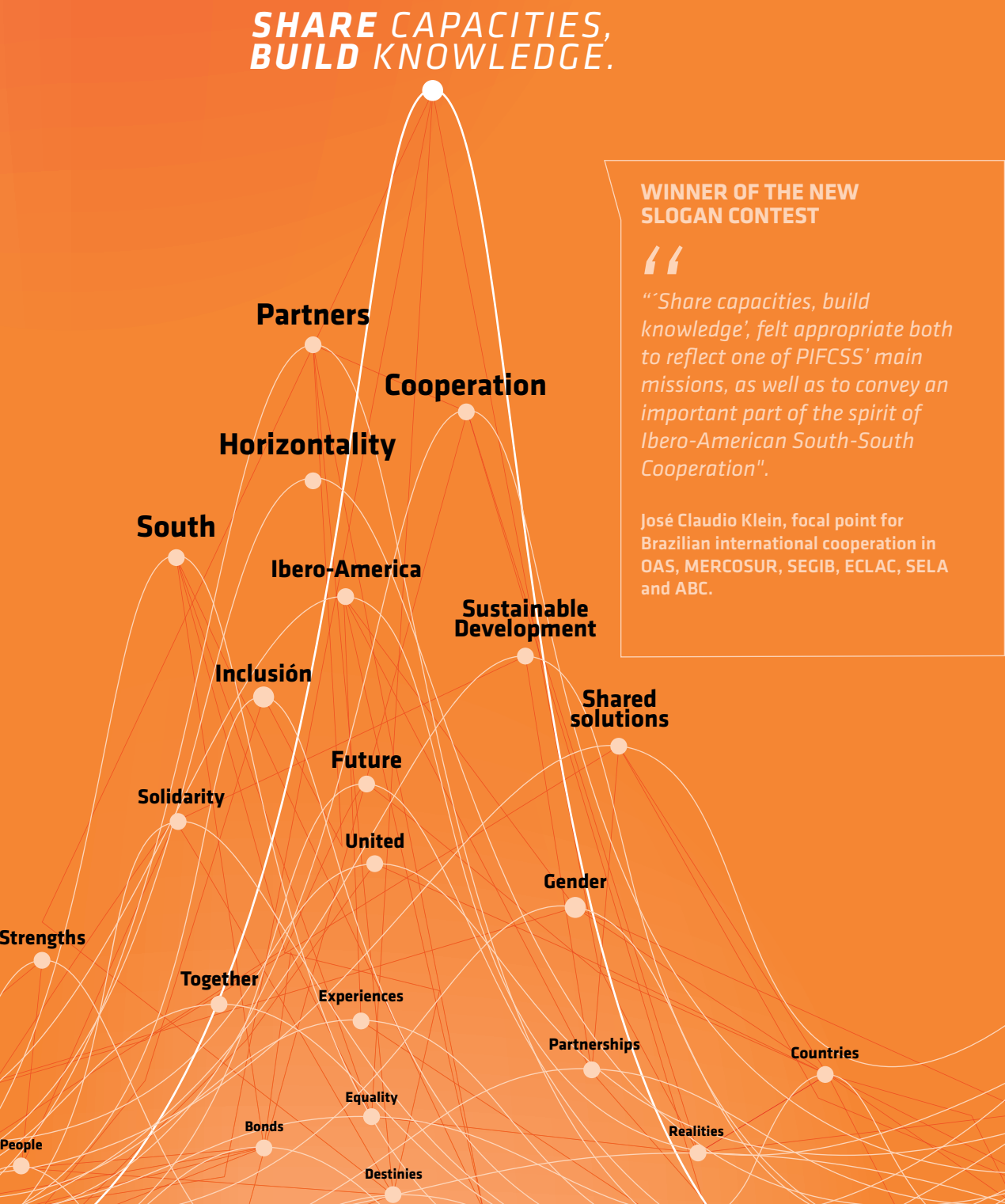


IBERO-AMERICAN
PROGRAM FOR THE
STRENGTHENING
OF SOUTH-SOUTH
COOPERATION



“A slogan for PIFCSS”

On its tenth anniversary, PIFCSS made an open call to the Ibero-American community to propose a slogan that reflects the Program's nature, values and work. The following diagram shows ideas and terms which mostly repeated in the different applications and it highlights the selected slogan.



PIFCCSS

YEARS



IBERO-AMERICAN PROGRAM
FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF

**SOUTH-SOUTH
COOPERATION**





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