

ULPGC FOR AFRICA

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UNIVERSITY OF LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA (ULPGC) CONTRIBUTION TO AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EUROPEAN FUNDS

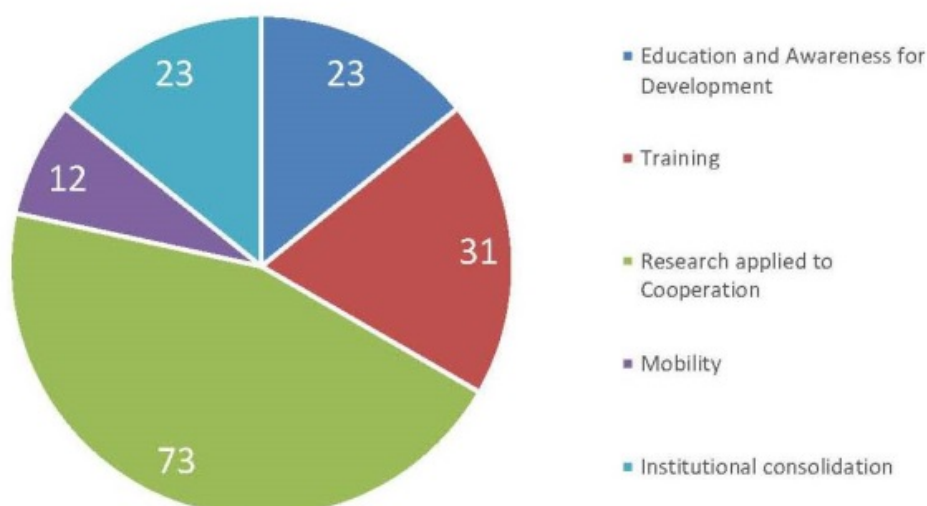
The University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (*ULPGC*) has always been known for its evident wish to contribute to the development of its neighbouring countries and in particular, to the social sectors most in need of support, in order to improve their living conditions and thus prevent people from being uprooted from their place of birth. This wish is expressed through a series of actions carried out within the scope of cooperation with African countries close to the Canary Islands. In this regard, *ULPGC* has aligned its strategy with those defined by the Canary Islands Government, which attached great importance to relations with West African countries such as Senegal, Mauritania or Cape Verde or North African countries such as Morocco or Tunisia.

Public higher education entities are a key factor in the development of the societies to which they belong and those that they educate. For this reason, *ULPGC* cooperates and works with other universities and education centres from different member countries.

ULPGC has its own University Centre of International Cooperation for Development (*CUCID*), which operates within this area of international cooperation, through supporting, promoting and setting up activities for institutional consolidation, training, education and awareness, applied research, technical assistance and the execution of cooperation projects in various African, Asian and Latin American countries.

CUCID, which is structurally related to the Canary Islands Foundation Science and Technology Park of *ULPGC*, was set up in 2006 to promote, support and execute university cooperation and solidarity activities. During all this time it has become consolidated as an active agent in international cooperation for development.

Since its creation, and thanks to the national, regional and international projects in which it has taken part, *CUCID* has managed 35 million euros through some 162 projects in more than 37 countries, in conjunction with more than 100 universities. In turn, one of the objectives of *ULPGC* is the training of students and teachers or clerical and service personnel in the area of cooperation and solidarity, paying special attention to accessibility in all aspects, and to sustainability and equality for all human beings. For this reason, *CUCID*'s activities are divided up into the following areas:



One of *CUCID's* objectives is to promote knowledge, critical thinking and curiosity about other realities, in order to intensify solidarity and cooperation in Canary Island society with respect to developing countries by organising diverse activities such as exhibitions (photography, videos or art exhibitions), talks, seminars, school workshops, participation in the *Canary Islands Solidarity Week, International Volunteer Day* and dissemination in news media.

Likewise, *ULPGC* is interested in the academic training area, with a view to spreading the culture of cooperation and solidarity through the creation of the University's own programmes, the introduction of optional subjects, doctor's degree courses, initial/specific volunteer training programmes and continuous training programmes. Furthermore, *ULPGC* implements joint programmes with other universities or non-profit organisations.

ULPGC also encourages student, teacher and clerical/service personnel mobility through different mobility projects and programmes with other countries (outside the EU). These scholarships allow for the recognition of credits and the development of training or research activities in associated universities. As an institution that is committed to training people who are competent, educated, responsible and altruistic, *ULPGC*, through its own and external funds, promotes international volunteer activities by means of different programmes that are open to all students or new graduates who wish to participate in stays of between 1 and 6 months in different countries, not only to learn about the life there and the culture and real-life situation of these countries but also to exchange knowledge and experience.



Almost 200 international volunteers and *ULPGC* students have been deployed within the framework of the *ULPGC* international volunteer programme.

On the other hand, the university community in general and teachers and researchers, in particular, take part in two basic types of international cooperation projects: research projects applied to cooperation and institutional consolidation projects.

The *Research Applied to Cooperation* area is focused on encouraging the participation of the university community in projects set up in other countries, mainly in Africa and Latin America, thus making it possible for the knowledge of the university community, through its teachers and researchers from more than one hundred research groups and Research Institutes, to generate projects that will have a positive impact on the societies of the countries in which the projects are set up. For this reason, actions are carried out in this area in which the needs of the beneficiaries coincide with the specific objectives of the researchers. Consequently, these projects aim to offer a response to the challenges that developing countries must face, above and beyond those with a strictly university-related scope, promoting their sustainable and human development.

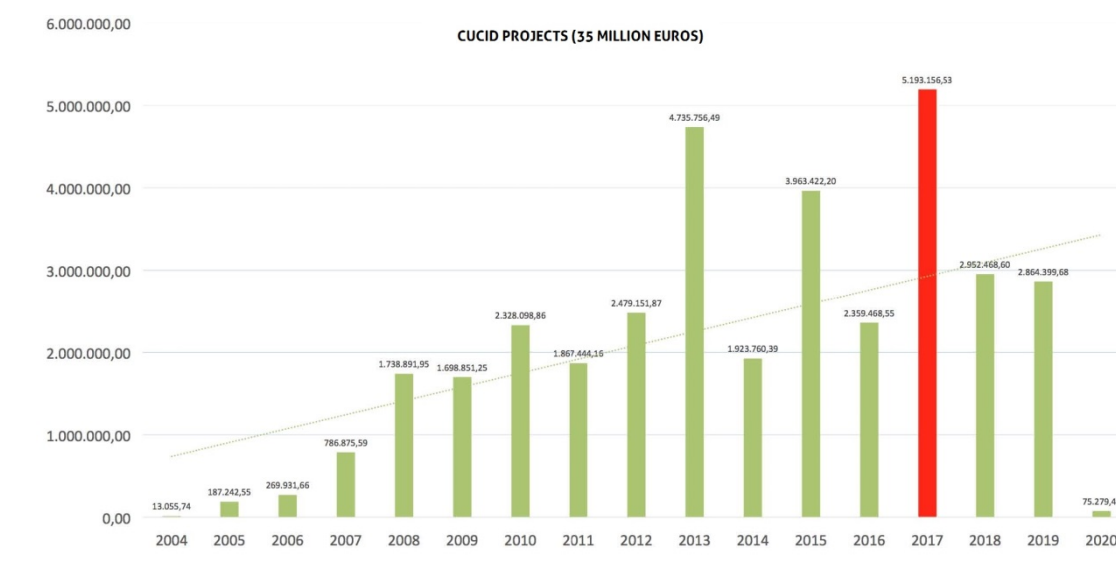
To facilitate the participation of the university community in those projects, *ULPGC* offers advice during the whole cycle in the following areas: design, formulation, search for finance, economic and technical management and rationale. All the above is aimed at fostering the participation of teachers, students and clerical and service staff in cooperation projects in developing countries, mainly in Latin America and Africa, which are funded by national and international official entities and programmes (INTERREG V-A Spain-Portugal MAC Cooperation Programme (Madeira-Azores-Canary Islands) 2014-2020, AECID, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, etc.).

The second type of project implemented by the University Centre is that related to institutional consolidation areas. The development and consolidation of university systems is of vital importance to guarantee endogenous, sustainable growth based on knowledge and innovation in society. In this regard, the capacities of *ULPGC* are channelled and used for the institutional consolidation of higher education and research centres in developing countries, in order to strengthen these centres by providing them with institutional and administrative support and developing programmes that will help them improve the training they provide to their staff.

Thanks to its extensive panel of experts in a wide variety of subjects, *ULPGC* is in a strategic position to provide strong, powerful support in implementing international cooperation activities and acts as a highly specialised partner in all manner of technical or training projects. Currently, these projects form a part of and are funded through the European Commission's ERASMUS + programme in its Key action 2: Strategic Associations within the scope of education, training and youth and Skill development in higher education.

The activities carried out by *ULPGC* with these countries have been implemented with the aid of European and other funds, which have made it possible to allow certain lines of research and projects to emerge from the boundaries of university laboratories and be converted into real actions with an effective impact on the quality of life of citizens. For this reason, special emphasis is placed on those related to consolidating cooperation networks and establishing agreements with international institutions and entities that will permit the social transformation of these countries and their impoverished regions.

We present below the activities of *ULPGC* related to cooperation projects. These projects are grouped in accordance with their respective areas of reference.



1. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYABILITY

Firstly, we should say that *ULPGC* is a member of the *African Network of Excellence for Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (INSTART), which aims to improve the knowledge triangle by promoting an efficient innovation philosophy in higher education and setting up innovative modes of association and interaction between universities, businesses and society in the Southern Mediterranean Region (MED). The consortium is formed by four universities and one science and technology park from different EU member states (Spain, Portugal, Italy and Poland) and 12 universities from Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, with the support of social interlocutors such as chambers of commerce, networks and associations from these MED countries. Through training in entrepreneurship and support for science and technology parks provided by the countries participating in the project, the aim is to improve employability in the university communities involved, and also improve the services offered by member universities within the scope of employability.

One basic objective pursued by the projects subscribed by *ULPGC* and neighbouring African countries is that of improving the employability prospects for the inhabitants of these countries. In this regard we should mention two projects currently under way: ECOTOUR, which aims to promote eco-tourism in the eco region of Western Africa (as well as in Macaronesia) as a sustainable activity, through the development of tourist activity and NAUTICOM, which has the aim of creating a network of sports marinas and small nautical businesses in Macaronesia and Mauritania, in order to improve the nautical tourist sector and convert it into a different type of production sector. Both these projects are subsidised by the European Union through the Interreg Territorial Cooperation Programme MAC 2014-2020. Along the same lines, the Saloum Delta project funded by AECID, aimed to activate endogenous resources in this part of Senegal in order to promote ecotourism and improve living conditions through sustainable development.

2. EDUCATIONAL AREA

In recent years, *ULPGC* has taken part in many projects focused on the higher education area. On one hand, we should mention two projects set up between 2013 and 2016, CEMITED and UPINOVA, with the Ibn Zohr University in Agadir, Morocco. Both these projects have sought to establish cooperation between both universities and in projects for development, as well as in R&D projects. This has made it possible to improve the standard of teaching and services offered by the Moroccan university. Both projects were possible thanks to European funds, specifically, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and within the framework of the Spain - Cross Border Cooperation Programme (POCTEFEX).

On the other hand we should mention the SEMACA project, also set up between 2013 and 2016, in which *ULPGC*, together with the University of La Laguna, has worked to consolidate the universities of Senegal, Mauritania and Cape Verde, through the exchange of experience in terms of research and training. This project was included in the Madeira-Azores-Canary Islands (MAC) Cross Border Cooperation Programme, with ERDF funds.

Other projects set up within this educational area are based on granting scholarships to students from different African countries to allow them to study at state-run universities in the Canary Islands. European funds have made it possible to increase and strengthen the actions of the Canary Island Government in this area, such as the Canary Island Africa Scholarships mobility project, set up for the purpose of training graduate and postgraduate students, and teachers from four African countries (Senegal, Cape Verde, Morocco and Mauritania) at *ULPGC*.

Similarly, through the EU Interreg III-B Programme, two academic training projects were set up. One of them, ATENEA, awarded 18 scholarships to postgraduate students from Morocco, Senegal and Cape Verde, while the FORPROTEUN project offered training in the Canary Islands for three months to vocational and university teaching staff from Cape Verde.

Another project along the same lines is UNetBA, led by *ULPGC* and funded by the European Commission, through the Erasmus+ Programme. This project awards 258 mobility scholarships to

university students from North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) to study at European universities, and 20 European university staff places. In particular, the project included students from the Tindouf Refugee Camps. The studies include subjects such as economics, business, tourism and education techniques.

Another project is PHWB, the participants of which include the UK, Spain and Greece, which aims to consolidate the training of teachers in the healthcare sector, and thus improve the education of students. It is funded by Erasmus+. And another is the UNICAH project, which has as its common goal the creation and consolidation of a collaborative network between universities from Spain, Italy and France, with the mission of improving and establishing common guidelines for university vocational studies within the scope of International Cooperation for Development and Human Aid. This project is funded through the European Commission's ERASMUS + programme in its Key action 2: Strategic Associations.

3. HEALTHCARE AREA

Another area in which *ULPGC* operates in Africa is the healthcare area.

One of the projects currently under way is UNIZAMBEZE, for the training of medical staff from different departments of the University of Mozambique, to provide them with the necessary skills and methodological tools they need to exercise as doctors in their country. The project is funded by *ULPGC*, by Canary Island entities operating in the public and private sectors and by the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

Within the above healthcare scope we should also mention the CARDIOSEN project (2012-2016), which was set up to improve the quality of life for patients with congenital heart disease in Senegal and the Canary Islands, through scientific and technical cooperation between Gran Canaria and this African country. It was funded by the ERDF through the Madeira-Azores-Canary Island (MAC) Cross Border Cooperation Programme. Likewise, the CARDIOMAC project has the objective of improving early diagnosis and treatment of congenital heart disease in Senegal and in Cape Verde. It is also funded by the European Union but through Interreg MAC 2014-2020. Lastly, the MACbioldi project aims to create a common ICT platform to improve training and medical care in Cape Verde, Mauritania and Senegal. This project is also funded by the Interreg MAC 2014-2020 Programme.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Other projects on which *ULPGC* is currently working are related to Macaronesia and most of them have to do with technological activities. One such project is ADAPTARES, which is based on the reuse and efficient use of water. Another project entitled ECOMARPORT aims to improve environmental management in the ports of Macaronesia. The mission of the MACBIOBLUE initiative is to promote the production of micro and macro algae (blue biotechnology). PERVEMAC II is targeted at farming, with the objective of improving food safety and implementing responsible and sustainable agriculture. MACAROFood aims to promote a more adequate use of fishing resources and attach value to local marine products for the tourist industry. MARCET has grouped together centres that specialise in monitoring cetacean species in order to optimise knowledge and infrastructure and operate associated tourist activities in a sustainable manner. The objective pursued by MARISCOMAC is to foster a more adequate use of fishing resources. Finally, ISLANDAP has the mission of consolidating R&D in sustainable aquaponic production adequate for the specificities in the Macaronesian region and the creation of a multidisciplinary team to promote sustainable primary production, revaluation of bio resources, biotechnology, the circular economy concept and education in these areas.

All these projects are funded by The European Union through the Interreg MAC 2014-2020 Programme.

5. ACTIVITIES IN OTHER GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

ULPGC also cooperates in projects set up in developing countries apart from Africa. In this respect, it currently participates in six projects to improve education in Asian countries, all of them funded by the European Commission's ERASMUS + programme in its Key action 2: Institutional consolidation in higher education.

One such project is REVET, an initiative to improve veterinary studies in Asian universities in Cambodia, China, Indonesia and Vietnam. Another project is MIND, in which fifteen universities take part, five from European and ten from Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), to support the central Asian educative reform through the creation of Youth Centres in the universities taking part. By doing this, *ULPGC* aims to promote university entrepreneurship and increase the level of innovation and technology in social and economic development. The purpose of another project known as ROAD is to consolidate the local development strategy of public officials from Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, by improving their skills through the creation of on site and online training courses and offering advice and recommendations for sustainable development. The CANEM II project has the mission of allowing 135 nationals from Central Asia from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to access five European universities and attend graduate, master, doctoral and post-doctoral courses in the areas of Economics, Business and Tourism, in addition to five people from the academic and clerical areas. Similarly, TIMUR offers 145 scholarships to national candidates from Uzbekistan who want to study and/or conduct research in the participating European universities. Lastly, *ULPGC* is a member of IMPAKT, a mobility project organised by a consortium of 20 higher education institutions, eight of them European and 12 Asian. The programme promotes an exchange between 215 people, including students and staff from the University in both regions (Asia and Europe).

On the other hand, in the American continent and also through Erasmus+ and its Key action 2: Institutional consolidation in higher education, *ULPGC* leads the PONCHO project, which seeks to foster the internationalisation of Latin American universities, with the objective of improving the quality of their services and the employability of their graduates.

The projects described above have materialised into specific actions, based on *ULPGC's* wish to obtain channels of finance, with a view to allowing a public institution whose mission is to improve its environment in which it operates to dedicate its achievements in research and its human and technical strengths to improving the quality of life for people. This will doubtless contribute to preventing the uprooting of these people, who are forced to abandon their cultures and ways of life in order to find a way to survive.

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