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Public Universities and Public Value: Linkages for Territorial Development, Experiences of State Distance University and National University of Costa Rica

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to answer the research question: how can public universities in Costa Rica generate public value that contributes to equitable and sustainable territorial development? This is a way to improve the contribution to human development of the different substantive roles of public universities (extension or social action, research, teaching and student life), where the new forms of conception of science in the framework of Open Science and the long Latin American tradition of university extension require a clear orientation towards the generation of public value, an approach to which public universities are developing policies aimed at increasing social impact and territorial linkage.

The concept of public value has been taken from an approach of the capacity of the State, in this case public universities, to direct their work, through the provision of their educational services, towards the preferences and needs of citizens in order to improve their quality of life. In the same way, it is related to the satisfaction of current and future human needs related to life through the efforts of people in an organised way, thus guaranteeing the right to access opportunities.

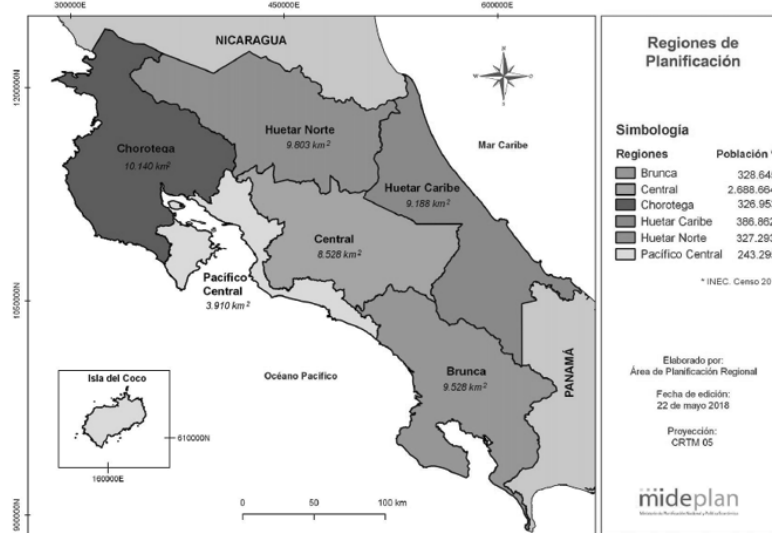
The public value generated by universities unfolds in an environment of social, interinstitutional and intersectoral networks of actors, as well as territorial elements such as power relations, multiplicity of interests and local dynamics to meet national and territorial development needs, which allow linking higher education and science with public policies and decision-making at different territorial scales to promote the notion of local development.

Finally, the paper presents the conceptualisation and experiences of the Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED) and the Universidad Nacional (UNA) of Costa Rica, through documentary and bibliographic analysis, and the systematisation of the experiences of the academic practice of two territorial linkage strategies.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to answer the research question: how can public universities in Costa Rica generate public value that contributes to equitable and sustainable territorial development? This is a way to improve the contribution to human development from the different substantive tasks of public universities (extension or social action, research, teaching and student life), where the new forms of conception of science in the framework of Open Science and the long Latin American tradition of university extension require a clear orientation towards the generation of public value, an approach to which public universities are developing policies aimed at increasing social impact and territorial linkage.

Map 1. Costa Rica's regions of planning



Taken from www.mideplan.com

Public universities in Latin America play a historical role in teaching, research and university extension in favor of what is now known as sustainable human development, allowing different social strata to have access to quality higher education, generating knowledge with social relevance, and also contributing to vulnerable populations in solving problems.

Costa Rica has consolidated a higher education system composed of five public universities: the University of Costa Rica (1947), the Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica (1972), the Universidad Nacional (UNA, 1973), the Universidad Estatal

a Distancia (UNED, 1977), and the Universidad Técnica Nacional (2008). In particular, the UNA and the UNED responded to contexts in which greater democratization of access and scope of higher education was sought.

The UNA was based on Darcy Ribeiro's idea of a "necessary university" with a strong social vocation, and the UNED on distance learning models that took advantage of social communication and flexible methods to include people who did not have access to regular university education. In both cases, the admissions models have prioritized access to students from different regions of the country.

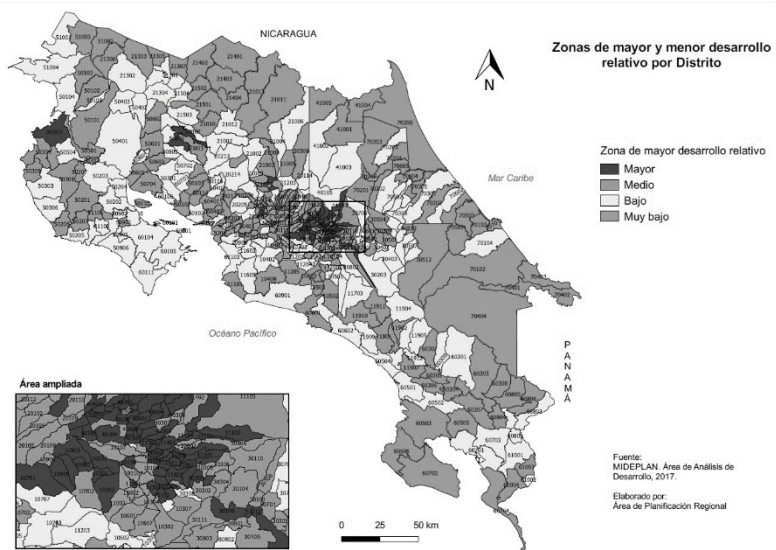
However, research and extension have a different complexity than traditional teaching, so they have developed other strategies to get closer to the regions and their needs. Our central question is: How can public universities in Costa Rica generate public value that contributes to equitable and sustainable territorial development? It is framed in the context of the fiscal reform that affects the finances of the Costa Rican public sector, as well as the global pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, in which universities have a greater demand to participate in decision-making in the midst of questions about budgets and university autonomy.

The university organization is facing drastic changes in the way it relates to communities and decision makers. In order that these changes lead to an improvement in the contribution to human development of the different substantive tasks of public universities (extension or social action, research, teaching and student life), where the new forms of conception of science, in the framework of Open Science and the

long Latin American tradition of university extension, require a clear orientation towards the generation of public value, an approach to which public universities are developing policies aimed at increasing social impact and territorial linkage.

In Map 1 it shows, as a general context, how Costa Rica is socio-economically organized in 6 planning regions, as follows: Brunca, Central Region, Chorotega, Huetar Caribe, Huetar Norte and Central Pacific. This is the reference to the territorial organization for de University's campuses and regional centers. In contrast, Map 2 shows that it is the districts in the peripheral regions that have the lowest relative development. This is a justification for the need to prioritize the contribution of universities to sustainable human development in these regions.

Map 2. Relative development in Costa Rica's districts



Taken from www.mideplan.com

Theoretical and methodological perspective

The concept of public value, which is specific to the public function of government, is usually defined as the social relevance of services, results, trust, and legitimacy of state action, i.e., the value that citizens place on state institutions to the extent that they satisfy a public need or problem. This value, however, "...must go beyond a focus on monetary impacts and must include social benefits perceived by citizens." (Conejero Paz, 2004, p. 35), leaving aside the more economic and individualistic views of wealth as a generator of both public and private value, but assuming a financial role in the relationship of goal achievement and resource management, from a democratic deliberation point of view (Moore, 2014).

The Contraloría General de la República (CGR) comments on public universities in Costa Rica:

Any public institution, including state universities, is called to generate public value for its clients in the services it provides. In this context, this public value is generated not only in terms of its impact on students, but also in all the other activities carried out by the universities, such as research, action and social extension, among others (Contraloría General de la República, 2019: 7).

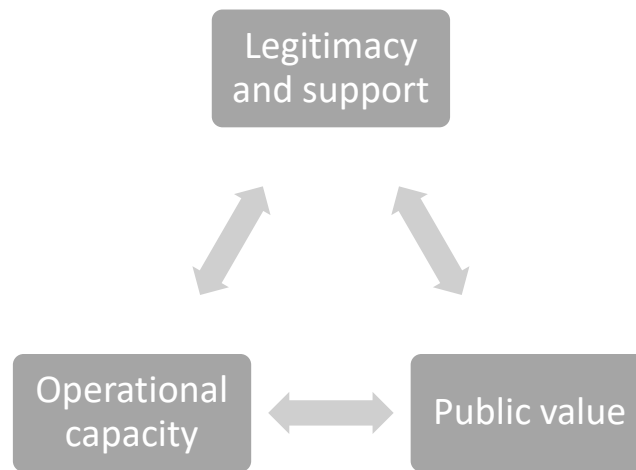
State Universities, as decentralized institutions with a unique character in the entire state environment and responsible for the development of higher education, have their services linked to their substantive areas, i.e. teaching, research and extension/social action. For this reason, the generation of a planning process such as this one becomes transcendental to improve the results and their public value in the face of the new needs of society and the State.

For Moore (1998: 297, cited by Conejero Paz, 2014), the public sector needs to increase its value through:

- Increasing the quality and quantity of activities for each resource used.
- Reducing the costs, in terms of money and authority, used to achieve the current level of productivity.
- Making public organizations capable of identifying and responding to the aspirations of citizens.
- Improve the impartiality with which public organizations carry out their mission.
- Increase their capacity to respond and innovate on an ongoing basis (p. 37).

What is integrally visualized, within the so-called strategic triangle (Moore & Khagram, 2004, p. 3, taken by Conejero Paz, 2014, p. 37):

Figure 1. Strategic Triangle



Taken from Conejero Paz, 2014, p. 37

Where a relationship is observed between the public value generated, in this case by the research and extension in addressing social needs through the construction of knowledge in the strategic areas presented above, but, also in relation to its internal research capabilities and the legitimacy and support of the environment and its regional stakeholders to develop socially relevant research.

In the same way, it is important to bring up the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science, since as a reference it establishes the importance of:

Open participation of social actors [which] refers to the expanded collaboration between scientists and social actors beyond the scientific community, giving access to the practices and tools that are part of the research cycle and making the scientific process more inclusive and accessible to the whole of society that is interested in it, based on new forms of collaboration and work, such as crowdfunding, collective production and scientific volunteering.

He adds that this collaboration aims to

...to develop collective intelligence to solve problems, in particular through the use of transdisciplinary research methods, open science provides a basis for the participation of citizens and communities in the generation of knowledge and for a strengthened dialogue between scientists, policy makers and specialists, entrepreneurs and community members, giving a voice to all stakeholders in the development of research that is compatible with their concerns, needs and aspirations.

The concept of territory implies the set of actors and agents living in the territory, its social and political organization, its culture and institutions, and its surroundings. It is a fundamental subject (or stakeholder) of development because it encompasses the different dimensions of development, namely institutional, cultural and political development, economic development, environmentally sustainable development, and social and human development (Madoery, 2012, on IFCMDL, 2014, p.4).

Territory can be divided according to its use and appropriation, therefore it is important to consider the following concepts: administrative territory, political-institutional territory, community territory or symbolic environment, economic territory, geographical territory and territory as habitat (IFCMDL, 2014, p. 5).

Although the exposed definition of territory is close to a logic of social construction that manifests itself at different levels of spatial scales, it allows us to enter the logic of the territorial approach by highlighting the territorial actors as the center of the analysis. That is, the object of its attention are the social relations that shape the territory, the relations that have turned the surface of the planet into a territory and continuously modify it (Jiménez and Morales, 2018, p. 25).

If we understand the territory as a social appropriation that is under constant construction, the territorial analysis directs attention to the social relations that cause a configuration of attributes that involve multiple actors, residents or not of the territory under analysis. To this end, the territorial approach is oriented towards the study of:

...the actions of the agents are not limited to the scope of their level. In fact, local agents influence and are influenced by national agents [...] to explain local impacts it is necessary to consider global strategies and national interests and, conversely, when analyzing global strategies, national interests and local impacts should not be forgotten. (Gutiérrez, 2001: 95 and 96, in Jiménez and Morales, 2018, p.25)

The territorial approach offers a perspective focused on the study of the social relations that shape the territories (Jiménez and Morales, 2018, pp. 26-27). That is, the actors, regardless of their interests, objectives and residence, their relationships and interactions become necessary to achieve an analysis of the territory that allows understanding of the context in which educational processes (research and university extension) are developed by public universities, being these, local actors (residents) when there is a headquarters in the place or external (non-residents) when they contribute to the development of the territory "from outside".

Jiménez and Morales comment that:

Every stakeholder involved in a process that concerns a territory, regardless of whether he or she is a resident of the territory, must be considered in the task of explaining the web of relationships that configure it. Stakeholder matter because through their relationships they structure the territories, not only because their actions express a certain orientation or intentionality. The results generated by the analysis of the relationships between actors, residents, and non-residents, offer valuable information to understand the evolution of territories and promote associated management processes, that is, territorial development (Jiménez and Morales, 2018, pp.26-27).

From the territorial approach, it is considered relevant to keep in mind that it is not limited to studying only the processes of construction of territorial development, its task is broader, to consider how territories are configured and evolve from the relationships established by multiple actors, residents and non-residents of those territories, even if these do not aim to build their development (Jiménez and Morales, 2018, p.28).

Faced with the logic of the territorial approach, public universities must be in a constant analysis of the territories in which educational processes are developed, to know the realities and contexts to be an actor (external or local) that promotes equitable and sustainable territorial development.

Methodologically, the work is carried out from a vision of systematization of experience, which is a concept of Latin American origin that has many ways of being defined, as stated by Jara (2018), for the purposes of this work we circumscribe ourselves in the classic one of Sergio Martinic, which understands it as a:

...process of reflection that aims to order or organize what has been the progress, the processes, the results of a project, seeking in such dynamics the dimensions that can explain the course assumed by the work done (1984, quoted by Jara, 2018: 57).

That is to say, it is a technique of knowledge construction referring to action, which

Unlike the processes of systematization of information that attempt to organize it, hierarchize it, etc., in the systematization of experiences it is intended to order, process and make communicable the knowledge acquired in these. We conceive systematization as the reconstruction and analytical reflection on an experience, through which what happened is interpreted in order to understand it. Therefore, it allows obtaining consistent and sustained knowledge, communicating it, confronting the experience with others and with the existing theoretical knowledge, and thus contributing to an accumulation of knowledge generated from and for the practice (Barnechea García & Morgan Tirado, 2010: 102-103).

The paper presents the institutional experience of UNA and UNED in the practical reconceptualization of the territorialization of research and university extension. First, it presents the socio-historical context in which it was developed, summarizing the actions resulting from the process, understanding that these actions are still evolving, and briefly reflecting on the lessons learned and the future of the initiatives.

Map 3. UNED regional campuses



Taken from www.uned.ac.cr

UNED Institutional Context

The Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED), from its creation until today, has had the vocation to work in a territorialized way in different aspects, an example of this is the deconcentration of its educational services through 37 campuses and 2 subcampuses throughout the Costa Rican territory. In addition, during the first decade of this century, the two University Congresses discussed proposals for the territorialization of educational services.

From 2019 to 2022, the university has built and approved a policy, a dictum and a model that have reinforced the idea of managing its substantive tasks from a territoriality approach that allows generating an educational offer that meets the needs of the Costa Rican population and communities, which, in turn, allows the generation and perception of institutional public value.

In May 2019, the "Institutional Policy for the Integral Development of the University in the Territory" was approved by the University Council in session 2733-2019. It aims to develop a strategy that links the University to the territories and communities where each campus is located, as well as the coverage of educational services must be linked to the social and cultural reality of the country, taking advantage of the knowledge created and recreated by their own experiences, to be included in academic activities and student life. In addition, it establishes the UNED approach in the territory as a deconcentrated strategy in its daily work in extension, teaching, research, student life and administrative management (p.8-11).

In May 2019, the "Institutional Policy for the Integral Development of the University in the Territory" was approved by the University Council in session 2733-2019.

This policy proposes a new role for the university campuses in the dynamics of the territory in which they are located, as well as in the identification and constant monitoring of the social, economic, political, and environmental context. In other words, they are presented with a local actor approach, understood as that entity or leader, public or private, that generates or can generate some relevant action in the development dynamics of a locality. In other words, it is not just any citizen who lives in the territory, but who has the capacity to influence public policies (Arocena, 1997 / IFCMDL, p.1 2014).

In accordance with this policy, and in response to the internal need to strengthen the University's extension processes, the opinion on the creation of the Vice Rector's Office for Extension and Territorial Linker was approved in the 2020 session 2814-2020. This document establishes the principles of extension in UNED, guidelines for interaction in the University Extension subsystem (which makes a proposal for networking and territorialized work) and guidelines for the operation of the Vice Rector's Office.

In the opinion, a proposal is made for a university extension system (see Figure 1), in which the generation of spaces for socialization, coordination and intra-institutional articulation is proposed to respond to the educational demands of citizens, especially those in vulnerable situations. Are proposed:

- University extension nodes: these are working spaces formed by academic units that carry out extension processes, linked by thematic affinity or target population to promote collaborative work at the central campus level, as well as to encourage the participation of external interlocutors to the university for the articulation of strategies. By 2023, six nodes will have been formed: Territorial Governance, Productive Connections, Employability, Environmental Sustainability, Cultural Diversity and Identities, and Inclusive Educational Communities.
- Territorial Extension Nuclei: deconcentrated spaces that integrate the set of extension initiatives or processes in the territories of influence of each campus. Academic units can participate in them, as well as the student sector, local actors and agents. Their purpose is to promote and facilitate educational offers based on the identification, analysis and multisectoral contributions to the various agendas.¹
- Regional Extension Networks: made up of the set of university offices, staff of the Vice Rector's Office, located in the same national planning region and whose purpose is to provide strategic guidance to the extension processes, projects or initiatives developed in that geographical area.²

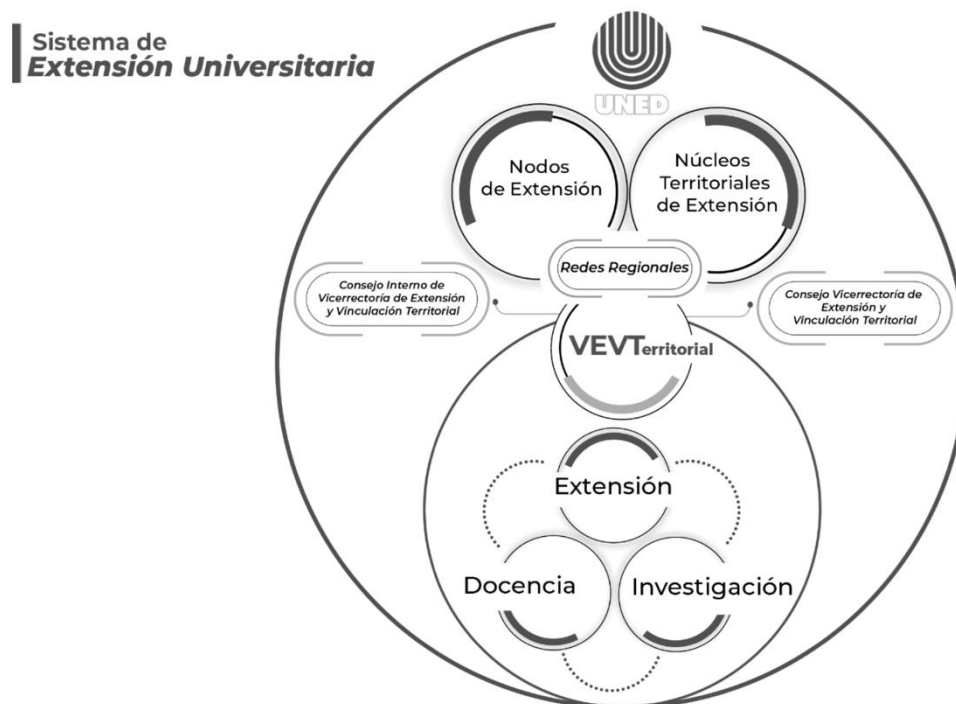
Of these spaces it is relevant to mention the first two: nodes and nuclei, since these are the ones that have been developed since the year 2021 in the case of the former, and since the year 2022 the nuclei have been incipiently activated from the experimental processes of Territorial Agendas, developed jointly by the University Extension Directorate³ and the territorial campuses.

¹ They take up and implement the aspiration of the institutional policy for the integral development of the university in the territories by indicating that "Each UNED campuses will serve as a dynamic core of academic activity in the territory in which it is located". Likewise, it will be a mechanism and space that, as indicated in the CU 2657-2018 agreement for the development of a territorial linkage strategy in the UNED, "(...) enable, from the territories of influence of the university campuses, the identification of development priorities and their corresponding institutional programming and budgeting, so as to enhance both the relevance of university services and the linkage of the different academic units" (University Council, 2020, p.44).

² They contribute in the operationalization of the "Policy for the integral development of the University in the Territory". agreement 2733-2019, which proposes "a process of regional rearticulation of the university headquarters, constituting regional networks" (...) "the strengthening of regional networks of joint and collaborative work of the UNED in the territory and in harmony with a new structure that will be linked to the corresponding technical authority" (University Council, 2020, p.45).

³ The Directorate of University Extension is the body that brings together the extension actions and projects at UNED. The Vice-Rector of University Extension and Territorial Linker is currently in the process of being discussed and approved by the University Representative Assembly, which has an opinion approved by the University Council in 2020.

Figure 1. Proposed University Extension System of the Universidad Estatal a Distancia, Costa Rica.



Taken from opinion on the creation of the Vice Rector's Office for Extension and Territorial Liaison, 2020, p. 43.

On the other hand and the same dynamics of the policy and opinion mentioned above, in session 2896-2022, the University Council approves the "Strategic Model of Territorial Linkage", as a proposal designed to enhance the development of territorial linkage processes of the UNED, taking into account administrative and academic aspects with the intention of transferring and legitimizing the institutional Mission and Vision in the communities of Costa Rica (University Council, 2022, p.1-29). This model is a complement to the Policy approved in 2019 and brings with it a series of concepts and guiding actions for the university sites.

Territorial Agendas: a territorial linkage strategy ⁴

The experimental processes of Territorial Agendas have started since 2021 and are initially developed from the Directorate of University Extension (DIREXTU), through the four extensionist partners, with a component of support from the University Offices that cover the selected cantons and districts. However, the purpose is that the branches lead the process of identification, management, development, and evaluation of this strategy with the support and advice of the UNED extension system.

The Territorial Agendas are conceived as a flexible and adaptable institutional educational strategy that enhances the articulation of university activities (teaching, extension, research and student life) in the identification, prioritization, attention and evaluation of the capacities and conditions required in a given territory, community or town in a participatory manner with the citizens of the place, public institutions

⁴ This section is based on the contributions of Javier Ureña Picado (2022), Yorleny Chavarría Bolaños (2023), Tatiana Villalobos Quirós (2023), Xiomara Araica Acuña (2023), Heidy Chaverri González (2023) and Martha Herrera Pérez (2023).

and social and community organizations; with the objective of promoting equity and social mobility, particularly of persons or groups that are in situations of vulnerability that truncate their human development⁵.

The Territorial Agendas are an additional instrument of the University Offices together with the University Extension System, for the detection of educational demands of a community or town that according to the information collected (both from public institutions, municipality, university offices, community organizations, communities and towns) and analyzed in a participatory manner; constitute an input for UNED decision-making on the development priority or priorities of a given place, with the purpose of mobilizing and investing resources in terms of a public value that contributes multidimensionally (economic or productive, socio-organizational, political, socio-cultural, socio-environmental) to enhance people's capacities to respond to community challenges defined with actors and agents of the territory.

It is necessary to highlight that a Territorial Agenda identified or for the purpose of detection must start from the principle of articulation with other local actors, where each objective: institutional or organizational, becomes a common goal that comes to respond to the requirements of communities, peoples and territories, contributing from the various areas of work of each actor for the achievement of these common objectives.

A territorial agenda is characterized by:

- The identification of educational needs in each community, town, or territory (research-action process).
- Participatory construction strategy, involving all sectors and groups present in the territory.
- Determines the areas that the community needs to improve, implement, and make inroads, to contribute to the improvement of people's living conditions.
- Constructs solutions with the main local actors from the site; to situations that have limited the development of the communities.
- Prioritizes the attention and construction of more pertinent extension services for territorial development.
- Prioritizes geographic spaces, specifically districts with lower social development indexes⁶.

Development of the Territorial Agendas strategy

The first step for the development of the territorial agendas is based on a research process that takes as a reference the context of the territories: cantons, districts, and communities, as an essential element to delimit the strategy of Territorial Agendas; since the work and involvement in the educational processes is promoted as a priority to the populations that are in situations of social vulnerability. For this reason, it is necessary to compile information on the territory to try to detail and focus the work on those places or communities whose social, economic, and political dynamics require educational support for their strengthening⁷.

⁵ This concept is in the process of institutional validation, with the first venue for presentation being the 27th World Congress on Political Science 2023 held in Argentina.

⁶ The Social Development Index prepared by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica is used for this purpose.

⁷ Costa Rica is characterized by a political-administrative division that goes from provinces to cantons, from cantons to districts and from these to a communities and neighborhoods, but only for the provinces and cantons are there

In some cases, it is necessary for the UNED to build data and generate information based on research, previous work with the community or work sessions with local people, interviews with experts on the situations of the community or district, as well as with local authorities that allow access to knowledge of the territory to be worked on.

For example, Table N.1 shows some examples of public institutions and data that collect and support the construction of a territorial context within the framework of the Territorial Agendas:

Table 1. Examples of external institutional data for the construction of a territorial context.

<i>Institución pública</i>	<i>Información estratégica</i>
National Women's Institute (INAMU)	Data on gender violence, women in vulnerable situations.
Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce (MEIC)	Data on micro, small and medium enterprises
Law Enforcement	Data on domestic violence, apprehended persons, and crime in general
Costa Rican Institute on Drugs (ICD)	Data on drugs: persons arrested, quantities of drugs seized per district, weapons seized.
Judicial Investigation Organism (OIJ)	Data on reports of thefts, vehicle thefts, robberies, assaults, and homicides at the district level.
Mixed Institute for Social Assistance	Data on people in situations of economic and social vulnerability.
National Child Welfare Agency	Data on situations of violence and mistreatment of children.
Municipalities (local governments)	From the social promotion office or the unit related to road maintenance they have information on leaders in the communities, as well as in the plans they make diagnoses (in some cases participatory) of the districts and communities.
Rural Development Institute	Data on rural communities and development project needs.
Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy	Social Development Index.
National Directorate of Communal Development	Information on development associations.
National Institute of Statistics and Census	General provincial information on unemployment, underemployment, and informal economy. From the 2021 census data, we will have more demographic information and housing status, among others.

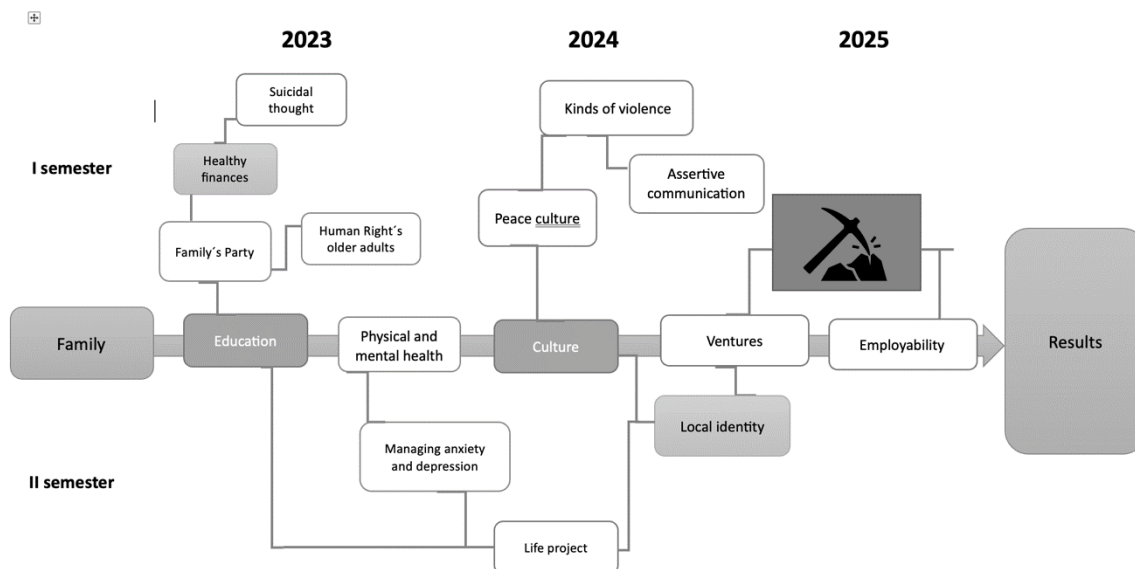
Prepared by the authors based on a review of the websites of the public institutions, 2023.

After conducting the research process, validation processes are generated with local actors and agents, as well as with community organizations and citizens of the selected community or town to validate the findings, as well as to generate new information that allows working on a work route for a period of two

periodic measurements that provide a snapshot of some socioeconomic conditions and the territorial context. However, constant data on districts, communities and neighborhoods are not institutionally constructed. The exception to the rule is the Social Development Index prepared by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), which covers both cantons and districts, and is a valuable instrument for decision making in the Territorial Agendas to try to establish within the municipalities, those districts that according to this measurement, are considered to have low social development.

to three years. The following graphic is an example of a work route constructed and validated in a participatory manner.

Figure 2. Example of a working route Territorial Agenda Grecia: Tacaes and Puente de Piedra



Prepared by Yorleny Chavarría, 2023.

As can be seen in the sample work path, the core theme of the training processes is the reinforcement of the family from a contemporary notion, with priority given to young people, older adults, and women, without neglecting educational actions related to new masculinities for male fathers. The central themes would be education, mental and physical health, culture, entrepreneurship, and employability, from which sub-themes are derived, which would be the training that would be carried out during the year.

Each territory has its own characteristics and has its own political, social, economic, and environmental dynamics, which means that static molds or models cannot be applied from one place to another, but that one must be imaginative and flexible to use different techniques and tools for the identification of training needs relevant to the development of the territories.

As a third step, after building and validating the work route with the people of the territory, an activity is carried out in the selected places with the heads or representatives of the different academic units that make up the Directorate of University Extension, so that they know the training proposal and are committed to mobilizing resources for the attention of this. This institutional strategy is considered innovative because it promotes collaborative and articulated work between the different units of the UNED and local actors and agents for the promotion of territorial development.

The following table shows some of the actions carried out in the four pilot processes of Territorial Agendas.

Table 2. Actions for the construction of methodologies for the identification of Territorial Agendas

<i>Acción</i>	<i>Explicación</i>
Bibliographic review	At the cantonal level there are several documents that are relevant to analyze, starting with indexes such as: *Cantonal Human Development Index.

	<p>*Social Development Index *Cantonal Competitiveness Index *Social Progress Index</p> <p>On the other hand, the following can be analyzed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipal development plans: cantonal local human development plan, five-year road plan, solid waste management plan, among others. - The government programs of the mayor's office on duty. - The plans of the territorial rural development councils. - The plans of the cantonal councils of institutional coordination or any other network or space of institutional articulation. - Institutional plans with territorial presence - Work proposals and projects of development associations.
Previous work of the headquarters or academic unit	<p>Each process executed by the headquarters or any academic unit that carries out university extension or research processes, has a final report that regularly has recommendations for possible parallel actions or continuity.</p> <p>For this to be an effective action, it is necessary that all academic units and units that carry out processes in the territories share, coordinate and co-manage from the beginning with the headquarters that have competence for geographical coverage.</p>
Participation in institutional or public-private articulation spaces.	<p>In their role as local agents of development (based on the regulations approved in recent years), the branches are geared to participate in different spaces of institutional articulation or public-private alliances that may allow them to access knowledge of projects or processes of other institutions or the local government where there is the possibility of UNED's participation in training processes.</p>
Working spaces with communities	<p>This is a relevant action in the whole process, both in the identification, design, programming, and execution of the different educational activities.</p>
Proposals for attention by one or more public institutions.	<p>The university campuses participate in different spaces of institutional coordination at the municipal or regional level where projects or actions of other public institutions are presented in which they can identify or assist in the development.</p>
Meetings with experts and local authorities	<p>Municipal authorities and experts on various topics are sources of information that can allow the university campuses to have a notion of the territorial context, as well as strategies that allow the articulation with local agents and actors, as well as with the inhabitants of the territory.</p>

Own elaboration based on the experimental processes of Territorial Agendas in Grecia, Corredores, Talamanca and Heredia, 2023.

Examples of Territorial Agendas

As mentioned above, four pilot processes have been developed in different parts of the country, primarily in those municipalities with low social development⁸. These places are as follows:

Table 3. Territories in which pilot processes are implemented.

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>District(s)</i>	<i>Position in the Social Development Index</i>
Corredores	Laurel	429
Grecia	Puente de Piedra	175
	Tacares	145
Talamanca	Cahuita	418
Heredia	San Francisco	97

Prepared by the authors based on information contained in the Social Development Index, 2023.

As can be seen in Table N.3, two of the selected places are considered to have low social development in the 2017 Social Development Index (Laurel and Cahuita), two in intermediate positions (Puente de Piedra and Tacares) and only one in places where the quality of life is high compared to the others. However, in those places that are in intermediate or high positions in social development, work is done to identify those communities that have social problems that generate situations of vulnerability in people. For example, in San Francisco, the focus is on the community of Guararí, which has social and economic characteristics that cause inequalities that foster situations of vulnerability.

Each of these Territorial Agenda processes has had its own dynamics of construction and management, since they work in conjunction with the university campuses present in the territory, as well as with public institutions, community organizations and local people who have their own local dynamics and interests.

Table N.4 shows two of the four processes mentioned, based on the themes, target populations and annualized work routes that were built in the territories with the participation of the different local actors and agents. Only the cases of Corredores and Grecia are presented as examples to contextualize the strategies of Territorial Agendas.

Table 4. Experimental processes of Territorial Agendas.

<i>Proceso</i>	<i>Poblaciones objetivo</i>	<i>Temáticas</i>	<i>Vinculaciones externas</i>	<i>Periodo de ejecución</i>
Corredores: Laurel	Children and adolescents	Digital Literacy	Local Government	2023 - 2025
		English	Ministry of Public Security	
	Women	Soft skills	National Women's Institute	
		Older Adults	Civic participation	
	Culture		Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	
	Consumption of illicit substances	Institute of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency		

⁸ According to the Social Development Index 2017. 483 districts are analyzed, with position 1 being the district with the highest and 483 with the lowest social development.

		Active aging	Senior Citizens Association	
		Healthcare	Ministry of Justice and Peace	
Grecia: Tacares y Puente de Piedra	Children and adolescents	Educational backwardness	Local Government	2023 - 2025
		Culture of peace	Ministry of Public Education	
	Women	Alternative conflict resolution	Ministry of Health	
	Older Adults	Psychological first aid	Council of the Young Person	
	Men	New masculinities	University of Costa Rica	
		Life project	Ministry of Public Security	
		Cultural identity	Wem Institute	
		Employability	Grecia Public Library	

Prepared by the authors based on the contents of the documents Matrix for planning territorial agendas, 2023.

In the case of Laurel in Corredores, the process for the definition of the Territorial Agenda began with the participation of the University of Corredores in different institutional coordination spaces at the municipal level, such as the Cantonal Council for Institutional Coordination (CCCI), where relevant information is presented for the formulation of projects and accompaniment and active participation in activities of other participating public institutions, promoting coordination between state entities to address social problems that impede the quality of life of the local people (Villalobos, 2022, p.1-10).

In the case of Tacares and Puente de Piedra in Grecia, this process was born from the historical work of the University of Palmares with the local government, generating a synergy that allowed the articulation with other public institutions and the establishment of a care network called: Family Support Network, in which all the institutions mentioned in Table 4 participate (Chavarría, 2023).

The formation of an institutional network in the case of Grecia demonstrates an initial result of institutional impact of the UNED at the territorial level by bringing together state entities around the territorialized attention to social problems that affect the human development of the residents of these two districts.

As a final point, for these processes we are in the process of developing impact evaluation indicators to determine how much UNED contributes to the social mobilization of people in vulnerable situations, being this a tangible public value, since it has generated educational processes with social relevance, possible future results, generation of bonds of trust with the local people and legitimacy of state action with the intention of satisfying the problems found in the territory.

UNA institutional context

The UNA, as part of its renewal process, held its IV University Congress between 2012 and 2013, which had as one of its objectives the construction of a new Organic Statute, which was approved in 2014 and entered into force in 2015. It transformed the Academic Vice Rector's Office into the Vice Rector's Offices for Research, Counseling and Teaching. Another change was the desire to strengthen the University's

territorial presence, with greater decentralization and presence in the regions. Thus began the process of developing new University policies in these areas.

Then, in 2018, it was, the Institutional Policy for Regional Development (2018, UNA Gazette 19-2018), this policy

...arises from the need to strengthen the University's regional development through the initiatives of the regional centers, in coordination with the faculties, centers, academic units and stations, in order to consolidate a relevant, interdisciplinary and integrated academic offer that strengthens regional, territorial and local development.

The work of the regional university will have a positive impact on social practices and public policies that directly affect the integral well-being of the society and the environment in the region.

The National University, in accordance with its principles, values and statutory purposes, proposes strategies and participatory methods that allow the involvement of the various social, political and economic forces to consolidate the institutional and social strengthening in the regions, in order to respond to the needs of development and transformation of society, considering the inclusion of vulnerable sectors in the benefits of progress.

And it should be highlighted, which seeks to:

- Promote the development of regions through progressive transformative actions, based on the analysis of regional realities to define institutional and regional development plans.
- It articulates academic activities, together with other regional actors, to generate knowledge and develop capacities that contribute to the quality of life of the inhabitants, on the one hand, formalizing alliances with state, public and private, national and international entities for an integrated regional substantive action; and on the other hand, integrating development efforts of programs and projects between the headquarters and academic units and other university instances.
- It includes the participation of students in decision-making through various mechanisms that affect the University's work in the development of the regions.

Likewise, the University Research Policy (Official Gazette No. 1-2018), which defines university research as

...a process of generating relevant, pertinent, systematic and innovative knowledge of the university's work, which is complemented by the various areas of institutional substantive action, with the participation of disciplinary and multidisciplinary teams, and the construction of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. It responds to the needs of development and transformation of society, especially of vulnerable populations, as well as to the principles, values and statutory purposes.

And they encourage:

- Research in the various fields of knowledge in a healthy human being.
- Lines of research with social relevance in each field of knowledge, in planning, projects and postgraduate programs.
- Special recognition of research done by women and young people, including TFG.
- The involvement of academic and administrative staff and students in research.

- The articulation with the areas of substantive action and organization of the internationalization of research.
- To promote the creation of academic networks and working teams.
- The link with communities, political, public and private sectors to promote development and good governance.
- Integral evaluation of research in each field of knowledge.
- Institutional, structural, working conditions and different resources for research.
- The mobilization of knowledge, with communication, transfer, innovation, policy incidence and social and scientific impact.
- The preservation of research results, products and processes.

These new policies, together with a new pedagogical framework and an extension policy, led to new forms of organization for the new Vice Rector's offices. Historically, research has been developed mainly from the central headquarters of the UNA, which is a challenge to comply with the territorialization proposed in the new institutional priorities. The strategy that has been designed and is being implemented, as will be discussed below, is presented below.

UNA Strategy for territorialization of research

Map 4. UNA's regional centers and campuses



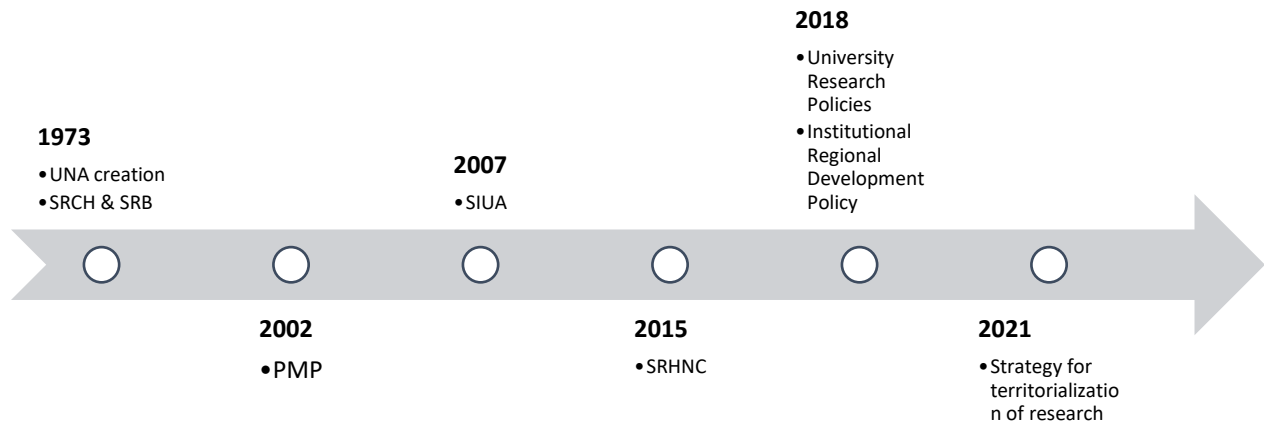
Taken from www.una.ac.cr

Historically, the UNA was founded in 1973, transforming the Escuela Normal Superior and the Escuela Normal de Costa Rica "Omar Dengo" into the Heredia Campus, while the Escuela Normal de Guanacaste and the Escuela Enseñanza Normal de Pérez Zeledón became the Chorotega and Brunca Regional Centers, respectively. The Inter-University Headquarters was created in 2007 by CONARE, with the participation of all the affiliated universities. While the SRHNC is born in the framework of the XXXI Anniversary, where regional needs were diagnosed, which concluded that this area of

the country requires more influence from the UNA. Likewise, we see how it is in 2018 that the new policies for research and regional development is approved, as previously commented.

In this sense, as shown in the previous illustration, the UNA has 8 university campuses distributed in 4

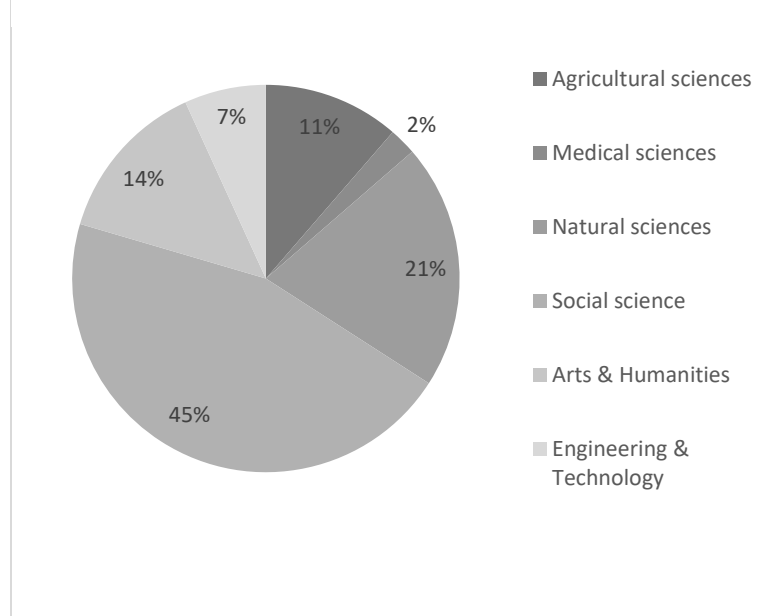
Figure 2. UNA regional centers and policy creation



Created by authors

locations: Headquarters, Heredia (Central Region), composed of Omar Dengo Campus and Benjamín Núñez Campus; Inter-University Campus (SIUA⁹), Alajuela (Central Region); Regional Campus Huetar Norte y Caribe (SRHNC¹): composed of Sarapiquí Campus; Regional Campus Brunca (SRB¹): composed of Coto Campus and Pérez Zeledón Campus; and Regional Campus Chorotega (SRCH¹): composed of Liberia Campus and Nicoya Campus. In addition, there is a presence in the Central Pacific Region with the Pacific Marine Park (PMP¹) and two biological stations coordinated by the School of Biological Sciences (ECB¹) at Headquarters.

Chart 1. Projects developed by the regional centers by area of science



At present, driven by regional and research policies, and in the context of fiscal reform and the global pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, research for policy-making has been strongly stimulated by the policy-making system, while at the same time scientific activities have been challenged by some sectors and political and economic interests.

To operationalize the policy, with a vision of academic and scientific management of research, a Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) System of the UNA is organized to bring together the different services, processes, resources and people involved in the development of the Vice Rector's Office of University

Taken from Monge Hernández et. al., 2023.

⁹ For its acronym in Spanish

Research at the UNA. One of its transversal axes is the territorialization of the substantive action of research.

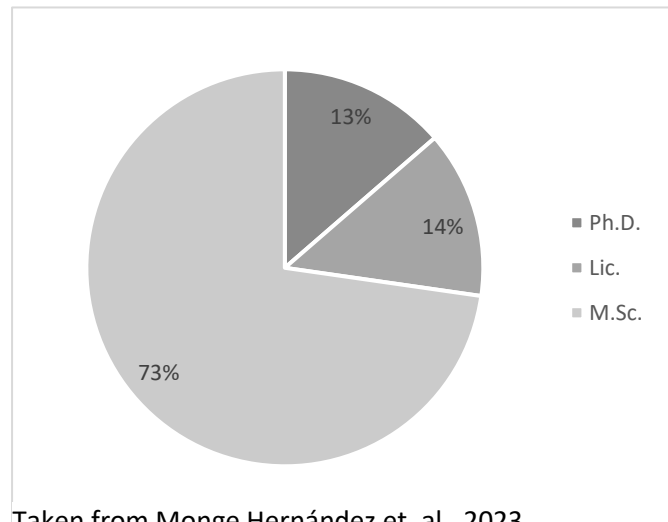
This entails the challenge of linking the research executing entities with the regional centers, whose characteristics must be taken in a coordinated way, but independently, in each region of the country. Reasons that prompted the creation of the Commission for Strengthening Research at Headquarters, with representatives of all territorial instances and the VI, for the construction of a strategy for the territorialization of research, which consists of three main actions:

Diagnostic of the situation of RDI at regional centers

First, an evaluative diagnosis was made of the research history of the sites and academic units in the regions, which shows strengths in areas such as social sciences and natural sciences, and less so in engineering and technology and medical sciences.

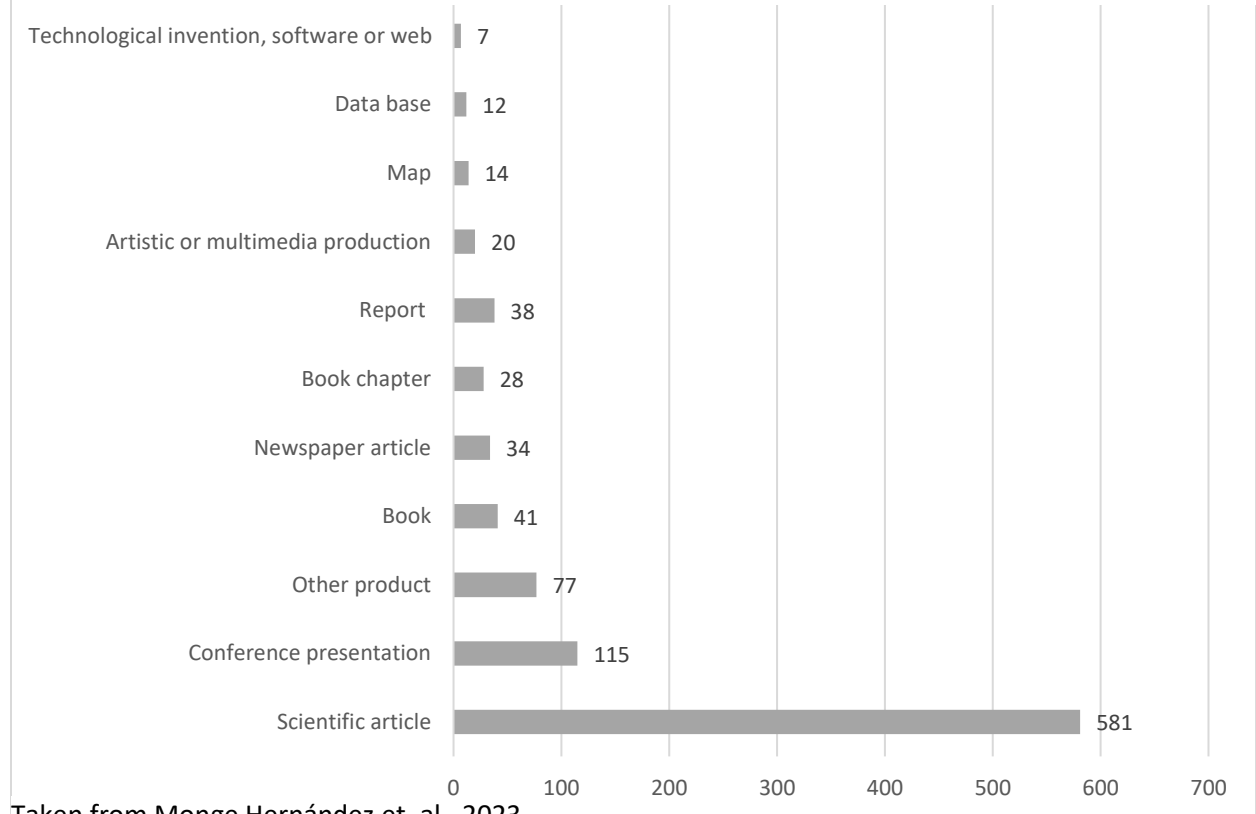
Similarly, the staff of all the sites were interviewed in order to characterize their scientific profile, which shows, for example, that the great majority of them have a Master's degree, and to a lesser extent a

Chart 2. Academic degrees of regional center staff



Taken from Monge Hernández et. al., 2023.

Chart 3. Scientific production of UNA regional centers



Taken from Monge Hernández et. al., 2023.

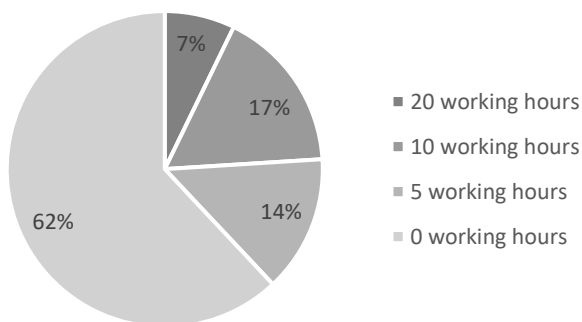
Bachelor's degree and a Doctorate; and that there is a need to increase the number of research days, since more than half of the people do not devote hours of their working day to research.

The main needs identified are:

- Number of people with doctoral and postdoctoral academic degrees.
- Scientific and technical equipment.
- Number of research funds and conferences.
- Links with research institutes at central universities.
- Training in project management.
- Use of spaces for intersectoral collaboration with communities and decision-makers.
- Deconcentrating of administrative procedures and management.

Research plans for each regional center with a focus on public value

Chart 4. Workday dedicated to research at regional centers



Taken from Monge Hernández et. al., 2023.

The planning of research at each site has been carried out with a prospective approach, that is, the anticipation of the future from the point of view of scenarios, in accordance with the following methodological path.

The first step is an analysis of the state of RDI in each regional center, taking into account the context, the actors and the research trajectory, using techniques such as actor mapping and bibliometric techniques for scientific production. Secondly, a proposal of public value is generated, with participatory construction of lines of research that have the purpose of "...generating new and socially relevant knowledge in relation to the thematic field object from which it starts" (Agudelo Cely, 2004. p.6).

The research lines should be contextualized on the basis of a set of problems. In this way, a field of knowledge can be approached in a collaborative and interdisciplinary manner, and a solution to a problem affecting a region or a social group can be contributed, in accordance with the expectations and interests of the actors involved.

The lines of research contribute greatly to the full development of academic productivity, oriented to characterize the production of knowledge based on the detection of real needs and the solution of problems, in order to produce impact in the educational and social contexts with a vision of the future. (Universidad Nacional Sede Regional Brunca, 2021, p. 5, free translation)

In this order, the lines have scientific and organizational functions (Menandro, 2003 and Puertas de García, 2008), as far as the scientific ones are concerned:

- Delineate the boundaries of the field of research knowledge.
- Defines the direction or what will be studied in each context.
- Defines the theoretical orientation that serves as a reference.

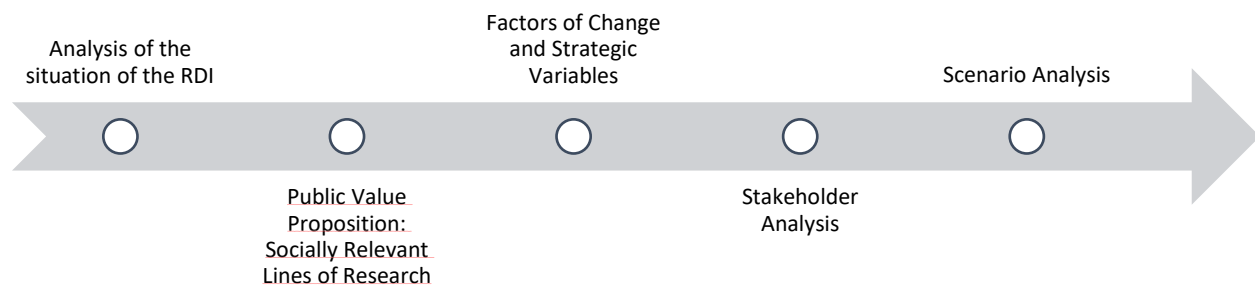
- Establishes appropriate procedures for research.
- It stimulates the economic investments destined to the research.

And as for the organizational ones:

- It articulates the projects of different actors.
- Facilitate the integration and continuity of team efforts.
- Strengthen the links between researchers and the institution.
- Strengthen the links between researchers and society.

Thirdly, based on this analysis of the RDI and the value proposition of the lines of research, a prospective planning is carried out with a scenario approach based on the models of Michel Godet with elements of scientific prospecting; the identification of strategic variables with tools such as MICMACS, for the construction of hypotheses and future scenarios; an analysis of interrelationships with actors is also carried out with the MACTOR tool; to finally determine the betting scenario that will guide the programming of actions.

Figure 3. Prospective planning methodology



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As we can see, there is a complementarity between prospective planning and lines of research, in that both seek to organize actions over time, oriented towards institutional and/or collective goals, the first organizing means and objectives, and the other specific to research.

With the benefit of hindsight, the application of prospective analysis, in light of its many applications in business and public administration, has helped to stimulate collective strategic thinking and communication within organizations, to improve internal flexibility in the face of environmental uncertainty, to better prepare for possible disruptions, and to reorient decisions according to the future contexts in which their consequences are likely to occur. (Godet, 1993: 39, free translation)

Thus, it is understood that these actions, goals, and objectives are also an institutional and collective construction by the people who are part of it, and in analysis of the capabilities and needs of the environment in which the organization operates.

With this vision, the lines of research have been built or redesigned in a participatory manner with each regional headquarters, with more than 15 lines per headquarters, as shown below:

- Ecosystem services analysis and monitoring.
- Transboundary studies and migration impacts.

- Strengthening organizational capacity for community development.
- Tourism planning management.
- Gender equality in science and technology.
- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation.

Regional research committees

In order to promote the good operationalization of the plans and lines of research, it is necessary to have a space for coordination between these regional planning and inter-sectoral and territorial organization instances, which allow the dynamization of the lines of research of the regional centers and link them with other research in the regions carried out from the UNA headquarters. This is why the Regional Research Tables are proposed.

The concept of "Working Committees" comes from the project management disciplines, where it is understood that (González Cornejo, 2015):

The Working Committee concept is based on the premise that it is an instance of coordination, management and control of projects, where a dialogue is generated between the different parties involved. In other words, it is also defined as an audit and evaluation, in order to look for shortcomings and solutions. Therefore, to give rise to the configuration of diagnoses and analysis for the making of atingent and contingent decisions.

In this sense, the Regional Research Committee are regional working groups in the areas of influence of each campus and PMP, with the objective of generating a regional strategic agenda between the campuses and university staff of the Chorotega, Brunca, Central Pacific, North Huetar and Caribbean regions, with academic units of the Omar Dengo, Benjamín Núñez and Interuniversity campuses. Through the:

- Integration of regional actors with the headquarters and instances of the National University for the development of research lines with a territorial approach, in accordance with the national planning regions.
- The dynamization of the research plans of the regional offices, among the executing bodies, actors and other areas of substantive action.
- Propose ways to articulate new research initiatives between campuses.
- Channel research needs and opportunities with input from the Regional Observatories and regional actors.

Likewise, the Working Committee, as a working method, implies the agreement of the actors involved in terms of practices, tools and controls based on technological tools), for example, special coordination meetings, alert messages, special reports, among others (González Cornejo, 2015), around the fulfillment of its objective of constituting a strategic regional agenda between campuses and university instances.

There are a total of six committees: Chorotega Regional Committee, North Huetar Regional Committee, Caribbean Huetar Regional Committee, Central Pacific Regional Committee and Brunca Regional Committee.

Each research committee is organized in a dynamic and adaptive manner according to the needs and opportunities for knowledge, taking into account public and private actors and social organizations. They are configured as a space for intersectoral meetings, whose regional strategic agenda between headquarters and university instances, must be susceptible to measurement and follow-up, with the assignment of responsibilities, collaboration roles, resources and objectives that allow the follow-up of the project based on the Prospective Research Plan and the associated Lines of Research of each

headquarters, as well as other project developed by institutes and schools of the headquarters or any other instance that develops it in a particular region.

Therefore, the functions of the committees are:

- Search for actors and alliances to develop research initiatives.
- Prioritize and follow up on strategic topics, facilitating and identifying appropriate projects in accordance with the regional research plans and agendas.
- Create spaces for the exchange of research experiences and accountability in the region, with other UNA executing agencies, universities and other entities.
- Maintain coordination relationships with decision makers in the regions.
- Build a network of research collaborators linked by strategic theme.
- Democratize knowledge by disseminating and publishing research results and products in order to contribute to the legitimacy of the Regional Offices and to keep the regions informed.

Its management mechanisms are:

- Regional Strategic Agenda between Headquarters and University Bodies.
- Follow-up of prospective research plans
- Interaction with regional observatories
- Accountability and space for public policy advocacy at the regional level.

Finally, the strategy presented aims to be dynamic, adaptable to the context, with direct participation of the academic staff of the sites, and with a long-term vision of the future based on the generation of public value through lines of research.

Conclusions

The paper presented two experiences of public universities in Costa Rica, in their quest to improve their territorial presence in the peripheral regions of the country, through planning models based on the generation of public value in a territorialized manner to the needs of regional stakeholders.

On the one hand, the UNED Institutional Strategy Territorial Agenda is a working methodology, in an experimental phase, aimed at identifying the educational needs of districts with less social development, for the generation of educational processes that allow people, both individually and collectively, to build capacities and develop skills to find employment or develop their entrepreneurship, to promote social-community organization and citizen participation in decision-making spaces on public policies, as well as the rescue of cultural identity as a driver of territorial development.

This Territorial Agenda strategy also aims to improve the coordination and articulation of UNED's internal units that carry out university extension activities, as well as in the gestation of a territorialized educational offer adapted to the conditions of the territory and relevant to the promotion of territorial development that contributes to the social mobilization of people in vulnerable situations. In other words, it is the generation of a systemic educational approach that makes it possible to direct institutional resources towards a relevant educational offer that promotes human development, which we consider to be the public value of UNED.

The experimental processes in the municipalities of Corredores and Grecia are incipient processes with great potential for improvement, but their beginning in 2023 has generated some initial results at the

territorial level in the generation of institutional alliances that mobilize resources in an articulated way to address different social problems.

On the other hand, the UNA experience seeks to reverse the historical centralization of research that exists in the institution, offering a priority in the search to strengthen the research conditions and capacities of each regional center.

The strategy has three main elements: the general diagnosis of the conditions of each site for the development of research and the needs of human resources; the prospective planning of research lines in each regional site with a 15-year vision of the future; and finally, the construction of regional working committees that dynamize these plans and the articulation between local governmental, productive and social actors, together with the central research centers of the university.

The implementation has shown a great interest on the part of the staff of the regional centers, as well as the institutional and social stakeholder of the regions, to be able to develop research with social relevance, based on the needs of the regional contexts.

This includes the necessary orientation of resources and internal collaboration of the university to carry out, above all, the lines of research, taking advantage of the current resources, and to propitiate the bases for growth in decentralization and increase of new financial, human and material resources to consolidate the strategy.

To answer our central question, how can public universities in Costa Rica generate public value that contributes to equitable and sustainable territorial development, from the systematization of experiences, we can note that the generation of regional strategies that take into account:

- Coordination between the university office, regional centers and campuses.
- Identification of social needs contextualized.
- Punctualize actions according to capacities.
- Articulation with the various stakeholders.
- Define the role of the university in the region.

Finally, it is important to consider that both strategies face the challenge of cooperation with each other and with the rest of the country's public university system, primarily, a topic that this joint paper seeks to initiate but will be promoted within the instances of inter-university coordination within the CONARE and its regional cooperation spaces such as the Órgano de Coordinación Interuniversitario Regional (OCIR) and the presence of universities in governmental and extra-governmental cooperation spaces for the development of the regions. And cooperation with the Central American university system, secondarily, on relevant cross-border issues such as migration, trade, and Central American integration.

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