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**DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES<sup>1</sup>**

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**A NEW RESEARCH  
ASSESSMENT TOWARDS A  
SOCIALY RELEVANT  
SCIENCE IN LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

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## Considering

That the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) - through the *Latin American Forum for Research Assessment<sup>1</sup> (FOLEC)* is promoting and developing a process of revision of the ethical and political meanings of research assessment systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as their procedures and methodologies; supported by the conviction that knowledge is a right and that it is necessary to strengthen a scientific ethic of commitment to social justice, equity and common goods, together with knowledge production practices based on collaboration and solidarity, which are enhanced with open science to make visible the diversity of knowledge matrices and promote the dialogue of knowledge in Latin America and the Caribbean, and with the rest of the world.

That the *UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017)<sup>2</sup>*, argues that any policy adopted by countries in science, technology and innovation, should be an explicit part of the integrated effort of nations to create a more humane, just and inclusive society, in favor of the protection and greater welfare of its citizens, present and future generations.

That *the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science (2021)<sup>3</sup>* promotes removing obstacles and reviewing the incentives of research assessment systems to encourage responsible practices towards quality science, recognizing the diversity of research results, activities, and missions.

That the new recommendations of the *International Open Access Declaration BOAI20<sup>4</sup>* point out the damage caused by commercial control of research assessment indicators, journal-based research metrics, journal rankings, and journal business models that exclude authors for economic reasons (APC), and recommend reforming research assessment practices, abandoning elements that discourage open access, such as the Journal Impact Factor.

That there is a growing consensus on the need to incorporate new research assessment practices that encourage open access in diamond journals and repositories, since they do not exclude authors for economic reasons, and allow peer review to focus more on the quality of the research than on the journal where it is published.

That recently DORA<sup>5</sup>, the International Science Council (ISC)<sup>6</sup> and the Global Research Council (GRC)<sup>7</sup> have published guidance documents and developed initiatives, with which CLACSO cooperates in relation to responsible research assessment practices.

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<sup>1</sup> This Declaration was approved by the XXVII Ordinary General Assembly of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), held in Mexico City on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and agreed upon by the participants of the Plenary of the International Seminar of the Latin American Forum for Research Assessment (FOLEC), at the 9th Latin American and Caribbean Conference of Social Sciences of CLACSO, held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022 in Mexico City. Latin American and Caribbean Conference of Social Sciences of CLACSO, held on 10 June 2022 in Mexico City. The document also includes contributions from CLACSO member centers and is part of the Series FOR A TRANSFORMATION OF RESEARCH ASSESSMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN of the Latin American Forum on Scientific Research (FOLEC-CLACSO), which can be consulted at: <https://biblioteca-repositorio.clacso.edu.ar/handle/CLACSO/3348>; <https://biblioteca-repositorio.clacso.edu.ar/handle/CLACSO/3351>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.clacso.org/en/folec/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000263618\\_spa.locale=en](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000263618_spa.locale=en)

<sup>3</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949.locale=en>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/boai20/boai20-spanish-translation/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://sfdora.org/read/>

That one of the legacies of the COVID-19 global health crisis has been the promotion of different initiatives and pronouncements against commercial barriers that limit access and participation in relation to scientific information and in favor of science as a common good.

That the systems of scientific and research assessment in their current state present different distortions in the meanings and practices that they stimulate in their communities, as well as a special difficulty for the social sciences, humanities, and arts, due to their style and formats of writing or expression, as well as to the widespread use of the English language and the peripheral condition of the publications of the region.

That the *Proposal for a Declaration of Principles: a new academic assessment for a science with social relevance in Latin America and the Caribbean (2020)*<sup>8</sup> prepared by CLACSO gathered the contributions and initiatives of the Network of Member Centers of the Council.

### **THE LATIN AMERICAN FORUM ON RESEARCH ASSESSMENT (FOLEC-CLACSO) DECLARES THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:**

Based on the recent documents of CLACSO, the international science organizations mentioned in the considering, and the new requirements of open science, it is necessary to adapt research assessment policies and processes in Latin America and the Caribbean, taking into account these international precedents and open science principles, to establish their assessment criteria, according to specific contexts, contemplating different research profiles, diverse alternatives and intervention instruments both in terms of funding policies and in the accreditation of institutions, and, in the field of practices involving the people who evaluate and are evaluated in their teaching, research, extension and/or linking activities, among others.

Therefore, the Latin American Forum for Research Assessment (FOLEC-CLACSO) supports the following principles and proposals:

#### *On the aims of assessment*

1. The main objective of research assessment is to guarantee the development of quality and socially relevant science; ethical, respectful of human rights and committed to the construction of just, democratic, and egalitarian societies.
2. Adaptation to the current stage of open science is needed, through new assessment policies that give priority to the qualitative assessment of research, respecting national states autonomy to determine their own assessment criteria, according to their specific contexts, contemplating different research profiles, various alternatives and instruments

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<sup>6</sup> <https://council.science/actionplan/evaluating-science/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://rori.figshare.com/articles/report/The\\_changing\\_role\\_of\\_funders\\_in\\_responsible\\_research\\_assessment\\_progress\\_obstacles\\_and\\_the\\_way\\_ahead/13227914](https://rori.figshare.com/articles/report/The_changing_role_of_funders_in_responsible_research_assessment_progress_obstacles_and_the_way_ahead/13227914)

<sup>8</sup> <https://biblioteca-repositorio.clacso.edu.ar/handle/CLACSO/3353>

of intervention both in terms of funding policies and in the accreditation of institutions, and in the field of practices that involve the people who evaluate and are evaluated in their teaching, research, extension and/or linking activities, among others.

3. Scientific knowledge is a collective construction, so it is essential that research assessment gives adequate weight to teamwork and its different forms of organization and construction.

### *On the assessment processes*

4. It is essential to regain control of the academic and research community over the assessment processes and indicators, to review the assessment policies based on the incentives for publishing with impact factor, since it affects the local autonomy of the agendas while they also discourage open access good practices and social interaction of scientific research. We adhere to the DORA Declaration, which recommends to assess research on the quality of the work rather than on the basis of the journals in which it is published<sup>9</sup>.
5. The indicators of published output to be used in the assessment processes should include: a) in the case of journals, those indicators produced by regional indexing services (Latindex Catalogue, Redalyc, SciELO, among others), as well as indicators from national indexes of quality journals, to counter WoS and Scopus; b) in the case of books and book chapters, those that inform the peer review process as part of the ongoing process of strengthening the practices of academic and university publishers; c) In the case of other research productions, those indicators available in the repositories and platforms where they are reported.
6. The notion of "impact" of scientific research should be broadened to include the "social relevance" of knowledge, with specific definitions for the social sciences, humanities, and arts, which produce crucial contributions to any democratic society that values diverse cultures, multiple knowledges and interdisciplinary dialogues.
7. It is essential to recognize, in collaborative and participatory research processes, the contribution of knowledge provided by social actors outside the academic sphere linked to the topics being researched, as well as the knowledge of traditionally excluded communities such as indigenous peoples and afro-descendants in the region, preventing any type of cognitive extractivism, promoting the dialogue of knowledge and the co-production of knowledge, as well as their autonomy and self-determination.
8. Writing in English does not confer a merit per se superior to publications in other languages. Multilingualism favors the development of socially relevant research and

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<sup>9</sup> <https://sfdora.org/read/>

contributes to sustaining cultural diversity. We endorse the Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication<sup>10</sup>.

9. Assessment processes should be evolutionary, self-reflective, transparent, and participatory, promoting mechanisms that encourage dialogue and mutual learning, and ensure continuous improvement, not only for the scientific community but also for citizens, including social and community referents in its development.
10. Consider peer review as part of the researcher's activities and as a relevant contribution to the scientific and academic community, promoting and rewarding the highest quality and integrity in its development.
11. It is essential to guarantee the representation of women and diversities in the assessment systems and processes, in a minimum of parity and in research priorities and their themes; in the same way, it is also desirable to move towards a universal system of citations and bibliographic references with gender perspective, which makes visible and hierarchizes the production of women in academic and scientific fields.
12. Attention should be paid in the early stages of academic and research careers to the problems of inclusion that originate in inadequate assessment practices, as well as to provide support to those who are starting out so that they can incorporate good evaluative practices and become potential agents of change.

#### *On the information systems and indicators*

13. Information systems at science and technology public agencies and research funding institutions should reflect the career of researchers and teachers doing extension, linking and social intervention along with those who are training, as well as the complete scientific production of each university and country, respecting the diversity of institutional and disciplinary cultures and their diverse means of communication.
14. The citation indicators extracted from the databases limited in their geographical, linguistic and disciplinary scope should not be considered a valid measure to carry out comparison of scientific production between individuals, institutions or countries. It is necessary to promote the creation and the use of databases which reflect both the production disseminated in international repositories as well as that which is included in regional and local databases.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.helsinki-initiative.org/>