**RETENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBE: WHERE ARE WE HEADED?**

The retention in Higher Education (HE) in Latin America & the Caribe (LAC) has important social and economic effects for both, students and society (ALFA-GUIA Project, 2013; CINDA, 2006). The International Organizations are important agents that tensions and encourages research in the región, in the same direction promotes governamental agreements in topics such as equity and inclusion (CHIEPS/NIFU, 2015b, Ferreyra et al, 2017; OCDE, 2009; OCDE, 2016). Based in the mentioned studies these topics has raised importance, which has been complemented by the increasing importance of international rankings (Shangai; Times Higher Education; Quacquarelli Symonds), and also, in a local level, by the accreditation of degrees and universitary institutions.

The concerns of the rankings and accreditacion agencies for the retention demands to increase efforts as in this work, which aims to collect and report the specificities of the phenomena in LAC. Considering that contextual and institutional contingencies of educactional systems differs from those observed in developed countries. Because of that this work aims to answer the question of: Which are the elements that supports and justifies the students retention in LAC?

LAC’s current situation, according to a study of the World Bank (Ferreyra et al, 2017), mentions that in HE: 1) Exists an explosive increase in enrollments, it duplicates the regular rate of new students. 2) The average rate of retention is 46%, with important differences in the region from one country to another. 3) There is a new profile of students, which was subrepresented formerly.

Therefore, this essay outlines the recent data about retention in LAC, that is, how is it defined in this context, how it delineates the deliberation on how to guarantee that students are retained in HE, in an equitative and socially inclusive system (Espinoza, González & Latorre, 2009).

**Key words:** Student retention, Higher Education, Essay.

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