

What Impact does *100K Strong in the Americas* have on Academic Collaboration and Exchange Opportunities?

Key Messages

10th of June 2021

3 Levels of Impact

Student Development

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
Skills Development
Future Mobility & Trajectories

Higher Education Institution (HEI) Development and Growth

Internal Growth & Development
External Partnership and Sustainability

Donor-Partner Engagement and Benefits

Institutional and Strategic Benefits
Perceived Beneficiary Impact

Data Collection *(5 months)*

- HEI survey
 - 57 LAC HEIs
 - 59 U.S. HEIs
- Donor-partner survey
 - 12 donors
- 4 focus groups
 - 2 student focus groups (LAC/U.S.)
 - 2 HEI focus groups (LAC/U.S.)
- 8 interviews
 - 4 regional government donors
 - 4 private sector donors



Student Development: **100K as a Catalyst**

100K-funded programs as catalysts for...

1. **Future academic and professional collaborations**
 2. **Professional exploration and practical training**
 3. **Increased mobility and interest in global issues**
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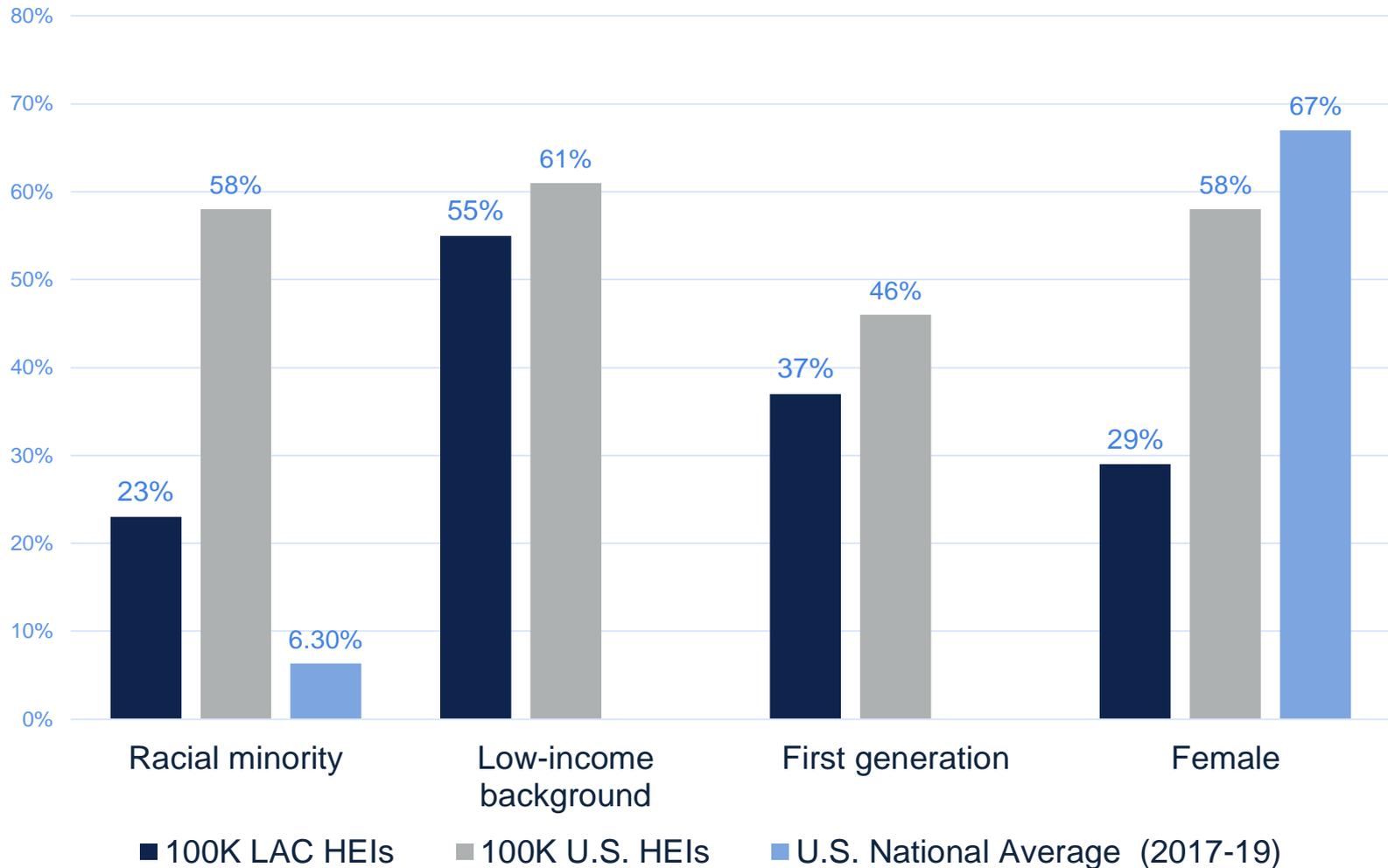
“This trip really sparked my interest in ecological restoration and providing resources for all. I saw the connection between the health of the environment and the health of the people, especially in places that we consider less developed, and it really opened my eyes to what engineering looks like for the majority of the world.”

- Environmental Engineering Student from the U.S.

“With this type of programs, **we become like lanterns**. The first time that I had the opportunity to study abroad, I became a local phenomenon at my university. And people would come up to me, and they would ask, how did you do it? And **you realize that you can share your light with others and motivate the people around you**, so that they see that it is not impossible, that you don't need to be special.”

- **Chemical Engineering Student from Mexico**

100K Cohort Demographics



Source: Compiled by IAD based on survey data, with disaggregated data from IIE's Open Door reports 2017-2019.

100K cohorts are **consistently more diverse** than the overall student population in their institutions

Remaining Challenges

U.S.

- Insufficient student interest
(competing regions, priorities)

LAC

- Focus on language ability
- Visa restrictions

HEI Development & Growth:
**Strengthening Institutional
Capacity and Building
Lasting Partnerships**

Within institutions, 100K Innovation Grants fostered...

1. Internal Growth and Leadership Buy-in

- New study abroad procedures and program areas (*small HEIs*)
- Increased institutional funding (*larger HEIs*)

2. Increased Collaboration across departments and colleagues

*“The [100K grant] **pushed us to collaborate** with a variety of departments and offices within the university, from accounting to research departments; laboratories that we had to visit; and even local communities.”*

- LAC HEI Representative

“For us, this has been the difference between doing and not doing study abroad at all in our college. This year we didn’t have a 100K grant [...] but we were still going to lead the trip to Argentina and continue the work with our partners. It was huge for us, because we did it the first year and then we got the grant again the second year, so the administrators were pressured into continuing the program on year three. So now it’s become this conversation, again.”

- U.S. Community College Representative

Externally, 100K Innovation Grants facilitated...

1. New lasting partnerships

- Over 70% of HEIs signed MOUs with their partners

2. Continued joint research and academic collaborations

Remaining Challenges

- Program sustainability after single funding cycles
(especially for smaller HEIs)

Donor-Partner Engagement
and Strategic Benefits:
**Advancing Hemispheric
Partnerships**

Donor-partners' motivations to contribute

1. The opportunity to promote **key topics** in donor's industries or agendas
2. 100K's focus on **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
3. **Externalizing management of funds**

*“We really liked the idea of it being a competition, because that way, we could provide opportunities to vulnerable students. **For us, that is the very objective, supporting students who could not otherwise have access these kinds of programs.** [...] Considering the enormous database that the 100K Innovation Fund has, it seemed very interesting to us.”*

- Private Sector Donor-partner

Key strategic benefits for donor-partners

1. **Increased access to the academic sector across the hemisphere**
2. **Strengthened bilateral relations with USG**
3. **Positive impact on the public policy discourse around hemispheric relations**

On perceived grantee impact:

“Seeing [the grants] reach corners of the country that never thought this could be done, that was very gratifying.”

“[Our] institutions are acquiring increasingly better skills to collaborate with U.S. institutions [...] We believe that this kind of collaboration tools produce extraordinary results. The institutions have really taken advantage of these grants and **the benefits have multiplied.**”

- **Regional Governmental Partner**

Recommendations
**Addressing Bottlenecks and
Building on Existing Strengths**

1. Continue to connect 100K with State Dept. programs in order to address barriers to student participation

- Integrate State Dept. foreign language learning programs (for U.S. & LAC), fellowships and/or professional development pipelines as optional add-ons to the 100K experience.
- Further streamline visa processing and travel requirements for LAC students.

2. Strengthen alumni networks for HEIs and students

- **Promote and expand the functions of the current Innovation Network (*e.g. theme-based meetings and collaborations*)**
- **Build alumni database and create student-level membership in Innovation Network**
- **Leverage strong brand identity and name recognition to build inter-group affinity and strengthen connections post-grant cycle**

Student perspective:

“I didn’t really know much about the 100K initiative, it seemed like the schools were the ones that dealt with it. Maybe they could craft more of a student experience, so that more students know there is something out there encouraging international exchange and communication.”

HEI perspective:

“A 100K alumni network would be interesting. I still maintain a very close working relationship with [LAC HEI], it’s evolved to include other aspects such as publication on immigration, and we’re still interested in exploring other collaboration opportunities.”

3. Create an *Innovation Fund* donor network

- A larger and inclusive network for higher education-focused social action
- Foster new connections and collaboration opportunities
- Promote as feature for prospective donors

*“I believe that encouraging the network of 100K donors to **design projects and collaborate with each other** could be very interesting. There is a whole network of very important contacts. We are really interested in **utilizing this existing network to promote new ideas, projects and dialogues.**”*

- **Private Sector Donor-Partner**

4. Consider multiple-year funding cycles

- Offer multi-year grants to support institutional capacity building and program sustainability.
- Targeted to small HEIs or those without a study abroad office.

“Thanks to the relationships we built, we have had additional opportunities to fund programs. We achieved sustainability in our partnerships only because there was a second cycle [of funding] and the spectrum of beneficiaries was much greater”

– **LAC HEI Representative**

5. Expand skills development opportunities beyond short-term academic exchanges

- **Mentorship or internship programs between partner-donors and student participants.**
- **Expand eligibility criteria to include non-formal workplace training or more specific skills development programming.**
- **Actively engage partner-donors in (a) participant selection and (b) theme specification.**

“To do this, **we have very solid channels and they work very well for us.** In this case [100K], we didn’t do it because that would require us to **have a much more active role** in the competition, defining what we’re looking for and the criteria for selecting candidates [...] If we were to have this greater commitment, we would like a more active role.”

“I think it could look something like finding talented youth in Latin American universities who were going to do an intensive summer program in high tech topics, for example, [or topics] that would be complementary to our work.”

- Private Sector Donor-Partner