GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING THE EDUCATIONAL OFFER ON CRIMINOLOGY AND PUBLIC SECURITY, APPLIED TO SOUTH AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

SuCCESS

Strengthening Criminology Teaching
Fortaleciendo la Enseñanza en Criminología
Fortalecendo o Ensino da Criminologia

I. THE SUCCESS PROJECT

SuCCESS: Developing and improving the higher education offer in criminology and public safety in South American countries. The SuCCESS project is a collaboration between European and South American universities for the exchange of experiences, knowledge transfer and curricula improvement in the areas of criminology and public safety.

II. DETECTION OF CRIMINOLOGICAL TRAINING NEEDS

The SuCCESS Project presented the results of the first part of the project, the first main output entitled "Needs analysis and preparing the soil: Analysis of training needs in Criminology and Public Safety in Latin America.". University Miguel Hernández (UMH) led this activity.

<u>Its objectives were:</u>

1 To identify the training needs of the academic staff of South American universities in order to create or improve higher education offers in criminology and public security.

2 To define in each South American university the specific higher education offers in criminology and public safety that will need to be created or improved and at what levels of study.

3 To deepen the analysis of the needs for the improvement of higher education offers in criminology and public safety.

4 To promote the transfer of knowledge from European universities in the field of criminology and public security to South American universities, through a learning mobility program.

This last objective was adapted due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Thus, two other objectives were elaborated and achieved:

- To identify in the European Universities teams, the competences and strong aspects in terms of research/knowledge production in Criminology;
- To help defining a mobility plan for the execution of study programs of the South American teams, in the European Universities.
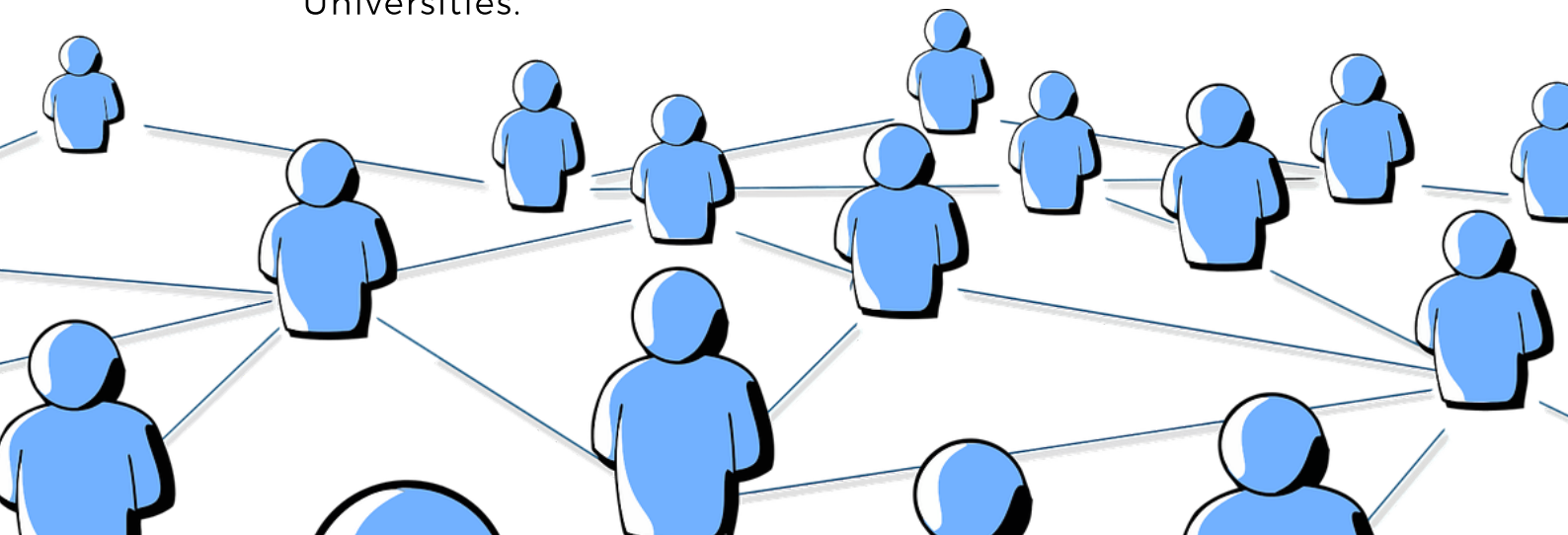
Once the data collected **using questionnaires, nominal groups and a needs justification report,** had been compiled and analyzed, **the matching strategy was applied.**

This strategy consisted of establishing a relationship between the needs identified in each of the South American partner universities and the knowledge and educational offer of the European universities in Portugal and Spain. **The aim was to establish a set of objectives and well-founded guidelines on how the mobility plan, which is part of the second part of the project, should be carried out.**

III. GUIDELINES

Guidelines and suggestions for other higher education providers in Peru, Brazil, and Colombia, and in any neighboring country, to undergo a modernization process of their educational offers

In order to build a guide that would jointly strengthen the knowledge and training needs detected in the South American universities, following the needs analysis, a methodology was designed to establish a relationship between the training needs detected in the South American universities and the competences of the European universities, with the aim of obtaining objective criteria that would facilitate the selection of destinations in the next phase of the project, which refers to the mobility plan.

The methodological process that was carried out was the following:

A. PROCEDURE

The relationship between the training needs detected in the Latin universities and the competences that the European universities have, in order to propose a program studies to be implanted through the learning mobility plan, **was carried out based on what is known as "matching" strategy (a procedure developed by UMH especially for the project).**

Specifically, we can distinguish the following phases in the procedure developed:

1. Distribution to European partners of the standardized survey of macro competencies and specific training competencies with a twofold purpose:

- Evaluating training in specific competencies
- Establishing a ranking of preferences or affinity with each of the macro-competencies

2. Once the data had been collected, the link between South American and European universities was defined on the basis of the application of "Matching", as follows:

$$\text{Matching D1.2} = \frac{\textit{Training Capacities (UEu)}}{\textit{Specific training needs (ULat)}} \times \frac{\textit{Macrocategory preferences (UEu)}}{\textit{Total macrocategories}} = (0, 1)$$

- **Educational capabilities (UEu)** = Total number of specific capabilities in each macro-category at each European university. (0, maximum number of specific capacities in that macro-category).

- **Specific training needs** = Number of specific training needs of each Latin university included in the 3rd and 4th quartile (professional questionnaires); (0, maximum number of specific skills in that macro-category).

- **Macrocategory of preference (UEu)** = 14 = macrocategory of highest preference, 0 = macrocategory of lowest preference.

- **Total macrocategories = 14** (Criminological Theories, Specific Forms of Crime and Violence, Prediction, Prevention and Treatment of Crime and Offending, Victimology, Research Methods in Criminology , Statistics, Public Security Policy, Criminal Policy and Conflict Resolution, Law, Delinquency and Juvenile Justice , Criminal and Legal Psychology, Sociology of Law and Violence, Social Anthropology, Forensic Medicine and Forensic Sciences).

B. INSTRUMENTS

Based on an exhaustive review of both the scientific literature on needs assessment and an in-depth analysis of the training competences of European universities with higher education curricula in criminology and public safety, the methodology implemented for data collection consisted of three different techniques:

- **Questionnaires**
- **Nominal groups**
- **Needs assessment report for each of the Latin universities that participated in the study**

Questionnaires

Three ad hoc questionnaires were developed for each of the South American partner universities. These questionnaires were adapted by the South American partners themselves according to the socio-cultural context of their country.

The questionnaires were applied to:

- **Professionals working in related areas**, such as police officers, judges, public security managers, and more.
- **University professors** of the South American institutions involved.
- **Students from the different Latin American universities**, in order to get to know the institutions structures and training needs.

These questionnaires analyzed different variables. The professional's questionnaire explored specific competences, university internships, and institutional competences. The student's questionnaire focused on institutional competences (human resources, material resources, functional resources) and personal competences.

Nominal Groups

7 nominal groups with criminology and public security professionals were implemented in the partnership countries (i.e., Brazil, Colombia, and Peru).

In the case of SUCCESS, the research question that structured the different nominal groups was:

Considering objectives such as preventing or controlling crime, or even offering effective treatment to offenders and/or victims of violence, what training needs have you identified in your professional field?

The procedure used for the development of the nominal groups followed the following steps:

1. Silent generation of ideas. Individually they had to write down 3-4 ideas related to the question.

2. Pooling of ideas. Starting with one participant, each participant briefly presented one of his or her ideas, taking care not to repeat those that had appeared previously.

3. Discussion and clarification of the idea. Each of the ideas generated was treated one by one to be clarified: similar ideas were grouped, reformulated, or divided into several ideas.

4. Voting and ranking. Individually and anonymously, each participant selected what in their opinion were the 5 greatest constraints and scored them from 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum), giving a different score to each one.

Needs Justification Report

The South American partners were asked to prepare a needs report in which the following aspects were investigated:

1) Need for the training programme

2) Adequacy of the teaching staff

3) Degree of labor insertion

4) Area of influence

EXAMPLE: TRAINING PROPOSALS FROM EUROPEAN PARTNERS FOR THE MOBILITY SCHEME OF SOUTH AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

As part of the development of training guidelines for the strengthening of teaching in criminology, the teams from the European partner institutions were asked to introduce themselves and explain their main competences, especially in terms of scientific knowledge production.

Afterwards, each of the universities designed a series of training programmes in criminology and public safety that seeks to respond to the needs identified in the first part of the project and that is part of the mobility strategy.

Portuguese Catholic University

- Gender, Crime and Imprisonment
- Juvenile Delinquency and the Juvenile Justice System
- Victimology and Restorative Justice
- Migrants, Refugees and Human Rights
- Psychoactive Substance Use in Recreational Settings

University of Minho

- Criminal Legal Science and Criminology
- Restorative Justice and Criminal Mediation
- Economic Criminal Law
- Offender intervention and risk assessment
- Criminal justice, culture and society
- Sentencing

University of Porto

- Experimental criminology
- Youth Violence Risk Assessment Social and Developmental, Community and Situational Violence Prevention
- Intervention strategies in juvenile delinquency
- Drug policies and their impact

Castilla la Mancha University

- Sex, Gender and Criminology
- Victimology
- Delinquency and Juvenile Justice
- Criminal Law
- Research methodology in criminology
- Qualitative research methods and techniques

University of Granada

- Cybercrime and cybersecurity
- Techniques and methods of investigation in criminology
- Criminal investigation: criminalistics and forensic anthropology
- Victimology

Miguel Hernandez University of Elche

- Fundamentals and applications of the nominal group and the delphi method
- Experimental designs in criminology
- Sentencing in criminology: its application in the criminal justice system
- Assessment of regulatory effectiveness and compliance
- Digital technologies, cyberspace and crime
- Uses and techniques of crime mapping

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The innovation of the SuCCESS project lies in the design and implementation of a multilevel needs identification methodology that has been able to detect the singularities not only of each of the participating institutions, but also of each country (especially from the application of the Nominal Group technique).

In this sense, in view of future initiatives to improve the training offer in criminology in other South American university institutions, **SuCCESS contributes with a methodological proposal that we believe should be at the basis of any decision-making process that truly seeks to respond to the complex reality and the multiple singularities of a sociocultural nature.**

In the same way, **these guidelines share our way of understanding the dynamics of training of trainers in cooperation with other institutions,** in our case between South American and European universities, through the development of webinars that reflect the interests of European criminology, as well as procedures to adjust these mobilities to the training needs identified and the training capacities available.
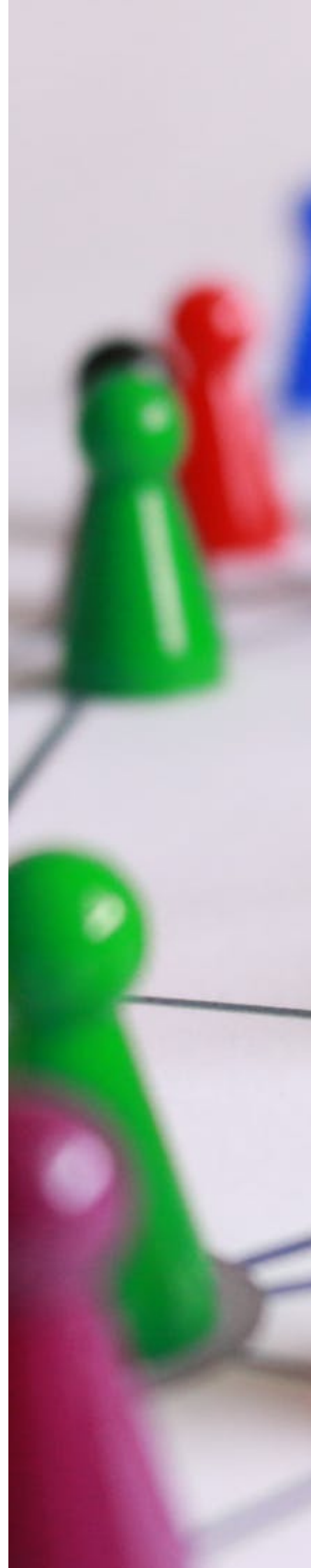
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