

THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUING OR DISAPPEARING

In 1974, already 45 years ago, several notables of the science of the Americas conceived the creation of an institution that would unite all the associations for the progress of science from the countries of our region. They very likely thought that their initiative, the Interciencia Association, would withstand the blow of time and the adversities that the individual associations would encounter in their path. The goal of the new entity was to promote the cooperation among our scientific communities and their integration.

Two years later, in 1976, the first issue of the *Interciencia* journal came to light. At the time, they most probably thought, again, that this initiative would resist the ravage of time and the difficulties that the journal was to face.

The idea of establishing the Journal of Science and Technology of the Americas stemmed from the felt fact that the mainstream journals of the time, and particularly those from the USA, did not encompass adequately the establishments and the communities of scientists in Latin America and the Caribbean. The notion of a trilingual journal dedicated to the diffusion of the science made in, or pertaining to, our countries took hold, under the auspices of the *American Association for the Advancement of Science*. It was conceived as something similar to the prestigious journal *Science* but focused on the region, maintaining high standards of quality and rigorosity, edited and printed in a regional context.

In its beginnings and for more than 10 years the new journal, established in Venezuela, relied on the joint funding from this country and another one of the founding countries, Mexico, up to the point when the latter stopped financing it. During another 25 years it was the government of Venezuela, initially through direct contributions and thereafter through grants from the science and technology promotion organisms, who provided most of the funds required to cover production costs, complemented by eventual grants from associations for the advancement of science, foundations or governments of other member countries of the Interciencia Association. For the last 10 years, the journal depends more and more upon the contributions that can be provided for its maintenance by

the institutions where the authors of published papers belong, or the grants given to them for their research.

The reluctance shown by some institutions, usually universities, when requested to make such contributions is considerable and difficult to understand. On the one hand, these institutions require from their researchers to publish in recognized, indexed journals and, on the other hand, they profit from such publications, since they use them to justify and obtain funds from their governments or to increase the tuition and fees charged to those studying in them.

The spectacular plunge of the economy, together with the growing political polarization that have taken place in Venezuela has resulted in that the aforementioned contributions, which had always been conceived as being voluntary, are ever more important, up to the point of becoming indispensable.

Such a situation, most certainly, was not foreseen by those who conceived almost half a century ago the creation of this medium for the diffusion of scientific knowledge. Much less could they have foreseen that the lack of ink and paper, as well as that of basic services, added to an uncontrollable inflation, could make it impossible to continue in what had been a prosperous and stable country, with institutions and a community of scientists with a prominent participation in the regional sphere, which led to the need to move the production of the journal outside its frontiers.

The survival of *Interciencia* and the continuation of its publication has become extremely labile and the risk of its disappearance increase with the passage of time. The support from institutions in Chile, its new headquarters, becomes more uncertain with time, turning more difficult its continuity and the regularity of its publication.

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