

## *INTERCIENCIA*, AN ORPHAN JOURNAL

*Interciencia*, the journal that succeeded to be punctually published for 45 years and has become the fundamental activity of the Interciencia Association, is orphan. Because of its conformation and the way in which it has been conducted, the Association to which the journal belongs lacks the resources that would allow it to cover the production costs. Its members, the associations for the advancement of science in the countries of our region and, in some cases, the national councils of science and technology, do not have an economic nor other incentive in belonging to the Association and even less in patronizing the journal.

The consequence of such a situation is that for already more than ten years, when the scientific and technological program vanished, and with it the possibility to access grants in Venezuela, *Interciencia* has had to procure its survival through institutional agreements and fee collection. The agreements are sometimes accompanied by autonomy problems, they always reach termination, and its maintenance depends upon the financial situation of the institutions with which it is agreed. Collections are the result of a policy that is contrary to the inalienable desideratum, on the one hand, to be an open and free activity for the readers that look for the published material, which should be always of an open access and, on the other hand, to exclusively include material on the basis of its pertinence and quality, always subjected to verification through a transparent and formal process of peer review of the highest qualification and never dependent upon the paying capacity of the authors. The adverse circumstances resulting from the current pandemic and the global economic difficulties are not auspicious for a solution that allows to obviate the problems that overwhelm the publication.

While researchers benefit from publishing in recognized journals, and in some countries they receive bonuses that

depend on their publications, the institutions dedicated to scientific research, which in our region are almost exclusively the universities, are the largest beneficiaries of these publications. The size of their budgets is largely determined by the number of papers that their researchers generate, as well as is the accreditation that in many cases is required of them in order to offer courses and degrees, and to carry out the corresponding teaching. The grants that finance research activities in the science and technology area are approved, to a large extent, on the basis of the career and productivity of the applicant.

The endeavor that these institutions assume the responsibility to defray the costs of publication of *Interciencia* has met with meager success and their administrative structures lack the needed flexibility to do so. The strategy of requesting authors to procure from the authorities of the institution and from their research funds the respective contribution also has not yielded results in many cases. The only way to exert some pressure for this to take place has been to delay the appearance of the accepted papers, something we consider inconvenient for all parts involved and, above all, questionable, as it is contrary to the principle that once a paper is accepted it should be immediately published.

It is obvious that the scientific journals should dwell within professional associations or at institutions with the capacity to cover production costs, including the required personnel. As things are, the total independence from external, extra-academic factors that has been an aim of *Interciencia* all along its existence does not seem to be a reachable situation in these times of multiple difficulties.

MIGUEL LAUFER  
Editor