

**LATIN AMERICA SOLIDARITY CENTRE
STRATEGIC PLAN 2012 – 2015
Extended to 2016**

PREAMBLE

Our Vision

LASC believes in a Latin America and an Ireland based on equality, social justice and an equal realisation of cultural, social, political, civil and economic rights for all human beings.

Our Mission

LASC's mission is to expose and challenge the current injustices in Latin America and in Ireland, through public awareness raising, development education, information exchanges and campaigns in solidarity with the people of Latin America who are resisting oppression and are struggling to create a fair and inclusive society.

Our Analysis

LASC recognises hindrances and obstacles to the fulfilment of its vision. LASC recognises and seeks to challenge the uneven and unjust concentration of wealth, land and political power in the hands of a few; the persisting infringement of the rights of indigenous peoples; the submission of the rights of the people to the economic interests of the minority, including both multinational companies and national private companies; the continuing tradition of military and police violence as a response from the governments to the demands for social change; the intrusion of foreign powers into Latin American countries' national affairs and the widespread acceptance of neo-liberal political and economic policies.

Our Ethos

LASC works for real social change in Ireland and Latin America. We believe that peace, justice and equality for all can come only through the genuine participation of everyone in society's decision making processes. Thus, we encourage the opening of the traditionally exclusive political systems of Latin America to new forms of participatory and direct democracy, and we oppose the long tradition of foreign intervention in Latin American affairs.

LASC, while campaigning for the respect of everyone's basic human rights, focuses primarily on people that experience oppression, exploitation, disadvantage and marginalisation.

LASC activities and projects will reflect its mission and vision.

STRATEGY

April 2012 – March 2015

AIM

The aim of LASC's Work Programme 2012 - 2015 is to promote and facilitate mutual solidarity with grassroots movements towards social justice with a special focus on strengthening communities in Latin America and Ireland in the face of external threats.

OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1: Development Education and Awareness Raising

To promote critical understanding of the elements which strengthen communities in the face of external threats as a precondition to the existence of strong social solidarity in Latin America and Ireland and to provide tools for action

Priorities in this area

Target Group	Specific Objective
Youth sector	That LASC brings Latin American issues and a global angle to the youth sector in order to increase its capacity to be in solidarity with Latin America in general and with Latin American youth in particular.
Community groups/ educators (incl. community gardens, organic farmers, Travellers, rural communities, migrant workers)	That they feel empowered through gaining a critical understanding of how communities in Latin America are tackling global threats. That LASC contributes to the strengthening of communities in Ireland and Latin America by enabling mutual learning
General Public	That they increase their knowledge and understanding of Latin American issues and become more active in LASC or other organisations.

LASC's APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

- Development Education will help LASC learn about, and raise

awareness of, issues linking Latin America and Ireland, as we understand that the mechanisms that create inequality and oppression are global ones.

- LASC’s Development Education activities will support participants in exploring the links between the global and the local and it will provide them with opportunities for action, including the possibility of participating in LASC campaigns
- LASC’s development education initiatives will include critical analysis of the macro and micro systems and structures that affect and link the people of Latin America and Ireland.
- LASC believes in an educational process that places the learner at its centre. Therefore, LASC will use participatory methodologies in all education activities to promote the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to develop an active, aware and informed constituency for change.
- LASC will provide a wide range of education opportunities in both formal and informal settings, which will be set out in the Operation Plan.

OBJECTIVE 2: Solidarity, Research, Media, Networking and Lobbying

To engage and support LASC members and target groups in expressing their solidarity with the people of Latin America with a focus on strengthening communities both in Ireland and Latin America.

Priorities in this area

Target Group	Specific Objective
Youth	That LASC brings Latin American issues and a global angle to the youth sector in order to increase its capacity to be in solidarity with Latin America in general and with Latin American youth in particular.
Communities groups / educators (incl. community gardens, organic farmers, TUs, Travellers, rural communities, migrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct link between comm.-groups in Irl & LA • Exchange of Experience & Ideas between groups in Irl & LA • Gain in terms of expertise for both • Better mutual knowledge • Commitment to LASC • LASC improves its knowledge of Irl & LA

workers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical understanding on LA experience relevant to Irl • Understanding on how local issues are linked to global issues • Anchoring global justice issues in local ones • Build a relationship based on two way communication and ongoing support
General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical understanding of global justice, LA and local • To build links between individuals and like-minded community based groups both in Irl and LA
Network Partners (LA, Irl, EU)	That we form 2-way relations that strengthen each others' campaigns
Local and alternative Media	That LASC raise public awareness through establishing relations with a number of media outlets
Decision makers in Ireland / EU	That they be aware of LA justice issues and shape policies accordingly

LASC'S APPROACH TO CAMPAIGNING AND SOLIDARITY

LASC is primarily a campaigning organisation.

Campaigning is a tool to bring about changes in the attitudes, policies and practices of individuals and institutions. As such, it has identified goals, targets and projected outcomes, which should be in harmony with the ones of the people in Latin American and Ireland we choose to support.

LASC's solidarity is an expression of empathy and common purpose with the popular movements that in the countryside, slums, poor communities, workplaces and educational centres struggle for social justice, equality and genuine freedom. This empathy is demonstrated through active engagement as equals with these popular movements in Latin America and Ireland and we rejoice with them in their achievements. Our actions must be led by them, responding to needs identified by individuals and communities, especially ones that experience poverty and marginalisation.

We recognise that our activities are not taken only "on behalf of" oppressed people in Latin America and Ireland, as we understand that a fairer, more egalitarian world is better for everyone: materially, psychologically, morally and spiritually, enabling us all to achieve our full potential as human beings and as moral agents. But we acknowledge the huge opposition that we face from privileged sectors that benefit from the current injustice, and for this reason, our solidarity goes primarily to people who experience oppression and exploitation.

Solidarity

LASC will promote solidarity between the people of Latin America and Ireland.

LASC will welcome those who wish to work in solidarity with people resisting oppression in Latin America and Ireland

Research

LASC will carry out secondary research in order to

- understand the elements that make communities resilient and what role that resilience plays in bringing about change.
- identify the opportunities for solidarity actions.

LASC research will inform LASC Development Education work by linking the global to the local and drawing parallels between Latin America and Ireland.

LASC research will inform the production of:

- development education resources for youth and adults
- short, clear and effective messages for LASC campaigning, media and lobbying work
- campaign actions accessible to LASC's target groups

Media

LASC will engage with the local and independent media as a route to the national media.

LASC will aim at building and maintaining consistent, year-round relationships with the media.

Networking

LASC will strengthen and expand its links with Latin American grassroots movements working towards building resilient communities and achieving social justice and it will be guided by them in its solidarity and educational work.

LASC will also work with like-minded European and Irish partners in order to contribute to the creation of a radical movement for global justice, and to share resources, research and skills needed for the solidarity and educational work of LASC and its partners.

Lobbying

LASC will lobby decision makers on some of the issues that pose external threats to communities in Latin America and Ireland such as displacement of communities, environmental damage, monoculture, workers rights,

biofuels, agricultural subsidies, free trade agreements, lack of biodiversity, multinationals' control of natural resources, pressure from international financial institutions, extractive industries, etc.

OBJECTIVE 3: Members' Outreach and Activism

To increase the number of people active in LASC and contributing to its campaigns by

- facilitating deeper involvement and participation of LASC members and activist in its work.
- increasing the overall level of LASC membership.

Priorities in this area:

Target Group	Specific Objective
Participants in LASC DE, Campaign and Cultural activities	That they become active members of LASC.
LASC members	That LASC increase the opportunities and spaces for them to become more active in LASC
LASC volunteers	That they become LASC members
Activists and general public outside Dublin	That they become active with LASC, preferably as members
LASC partners	That LASC establishes a formal, long term relationship with them and: - obtains their support for LASC campaigns - engages them in solidarity w/ L. America
LASC Affiliated groups	That LASC establishes a long term relationship with them and obtains their support for LASC campaigns
Latin American community in Ireland	That they become active with LASC, preferably as members
People interested in Latin America	That they become active with LASC, preferably as members
People travelling to Latin America	
Strategic individuals	That they contribute to LASC development and work with their specific skills

LASC will explore creative approaches to its campaigning and education work in order to engage the public in general and its members in particular.

LASC will devise additional forums where its activists can have active decision-making roles in shaping solidarity actions within LASC campaigns and where they can explore the possibilities for creative campaigning.

LASC will create additional opportunities for involvement at different levels of the organisation.

LASC will facilitate a deeper engagement of regional members by increasing its presence outside Dublin.

LASC will seek to engage Irish groups interested in issues tangentially related to community resilience (e.g. food movements groups) so as to promote activism by bringing a local focus to LASC work and a global angle to their work.

OBJECTIVE 4: Organisational Development

To strengthen LASC’s visibility, accountability and capacity to fulfil its mission of solidarity with Latin America and deliver its programme effectively and independently.

LASC has identified the following organisational development needs and will make a priority of addressing them in the next three years:

Organisational Need	Response
To protect existing funding and seek new funding sources	To strengthen relations with existing donors and initiate relations with new donors.
To increase the number of LASC’s members & supporters (both individuals and organisations)	To seek different ways to involve them, including enhancing the level of participation and ownership.
To be resourced by sufficient staff	To seek funds in order to make staff full time
To enhance skills and effectiveness of committee, staff and committed activists	To devise a training programme addressing the different training needs
To enhance internal communication within the organisation	To improve the use of existing channels of communications within LASC
To ensure the organisation learns from its experience	To continue implementing the monitoring and evaluation strategy
To enhance organisational accountability and transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve compliance with equality and employment legislation • To implement staff policies and

	transparent procedures for recruitment and procurement
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TRANSVERSAL APPROACH: Culture for Action

LASC will use Latin American cultural action as a cross-cutting theme in its different areas of work

- as a development education tool
- as a tool for social change
- as a way to involve activists in public actions

LASC will involve its members and activists in devising cultural activities to develop its educational and solidarity work. When appropriate, LASC will bring its cultural actions to activists’ forums such as Bloom.

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND LASC

- LASC values cultural diversity and engages in activities and actions which raise real awareness of Latin American cultures.
- LASC recognises that Latin American cultural expressions bring a vitality and creativity which will enhance its public campaigns and offer routes of participation to additional audiences.
- LASC wishes to reflect the true multi-faceted nature of human experience in Latin America and celebrates the expression of the resilience and survival of its peoples.
- LASC will engage with cultural actions which are consistent with and feed into the campaigning and development education work.
- LASC recognises that, for many people, cultural activities provide a non-threatening, open first point of contact with Latin American issues.
- LASC endeavours to use modes of cultural expression such as songs, murals, theatre of the oppressed and other new methodologies as tools for change.