

Editorial Note

Innovation Management, Knowledge Transfer, and University–Business Linkages in Latin America: Insights from the iN4iN LATAM Chapter 2025

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The economic, technological, and social transformations unfolding across Latin America are profoundly reshaping expectations for higher education institutions (HEIs). Beyond their traditional roles in teaching and knowledge production, universities are increasingly called upon to serve as strategic actors within innovation ecosystems, territorial development, and engagement with the productive sector. In this setting, the conference Fostering Innovation Management and University–Business Linkages at Higher Education Institutions – iN4iN LATAM Chapter 2025, held in Lima, Peru, served as a key space for academic dialogue and applied reflection, bringing together researchers, university managers, and professionals to critically examine the advances, limitations, and opportunities of innovation management and university–business collaboration models in the region.

The articles collected in this volume reflect this transition across multiple analytical scales— institutional, territorial, organizational, pedagogical, and behavioral. Taken together, they construct a coherent narrative that underscores the need to move beyond linear models of technology transfer toward more complex, collaborative, and impact-oriented approaches which address social, economic, and environmental challenges.

The volume opens with the contribution by Martínez, Rocabado, Cong, Ansari, and Alabarca, discussing sustainability challenges from the perspective

of individual decision-making mediated by digital platforms. Through a gamification-based approach applied to airline ticket purchasing, the study highlights the permanent gap between pro-environmental attitudes and actual consumer behavior. This contribution is particularly relevant to the university innovation agenda, as it proves how behavioral design—grounded in cognitive psychology and behavioral economics—can be embedded into concrete technological solutions that encourage more responsible decision-making. The article goes beyond this specific case and offers important implications for education in responsible innovation, and knowledge transfer toward digitally enabled tools with measurable social impact.

Building on this emphasis on applied impact, the article on the knowledge transfer strategy of the National Technical University (UTN) of Costa Rica, authored by Alvarado Barrantes and Sáenz León, provides an in-depth institutional perspective on how a regional public university can structure a comprehensive transfer policy aligned with its social and territorial mission. The study shows that knowledge transfer cannot be reduced to isolated mechanisms, but rather requires clear governance structures, internal capacity building, adequate incentive systems, and consistent evaluation frameworks. This case exemplifies one of the cross-cutting messages of the iN4iN LATAM 2025: without explicit and sustained institutional

strategies, university–business linkages tend to remain fragmented and lose impact over time.

The pedagogical and formative dimension of innovation is addressed by Ranco Kraaijenbrink, who examines the challenges of human-centered education in the era of artificial intelligence. Drawing on a case study based on experiential learning, the author offers a critical reflection on the growing reliance on automated tools in educational and professional contexts. Within the framework of university–business collaboration, this work offers key insights: sustainable innovation depends not only on technological proficiency, but also on the development of human capabilities such as critical thinking, informed decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving. The article resonates strongly with discussions held in Lima about employability, ethics, and holistic education in digital environments.

From a more structural perspective, the contribution of Pablo Barriga on innovative impact indicators for university–industry collaboration addresses one of the most persistent gaps in innovation ecosystems: impact measurement. The article challenges the dominance of traditional metrics—such as patents and licenses—and proposes a multidimensional framework that integrates inputs, processes, and socioeconomic outcomes. This article is particularly relevant for Latin American contexts, where many linkage initiatives generate social and organizational value that is not adequately captured by conventional indicators. Barriga’s framework provides conceptual and methodological tools to strengthen institutional decision-making and accountability toward funders and public policy stakeholders.

The territorial dimension of university–business linkages is further explored by Merlin Patricia Grueso Hinestroza and Aglaya Batz, who analyze the socioeconomic contributions of these collaborations from a territorial perspective, drawing on case studies from Colombia. The article reinforces the notion that collaboration models must be context-sensitive and locally grounded, rather than uncritically rely on frameworks imported from other regions. The evidence presented demonstrates that impact depends on the ability to articulate diverse actors, foster co-creation, and respond

to concrete territorial needs. This perspective aligns closely with discussions at the event regarding inclusive innovation and regional development.

In a complementary line of inquiry, the contribution developed in the context of the University of Leipzig on process-oriented Living Labs and technology transfer introduces an advanced approach to university–business collaboration based on structured co-creation. Through the DDI framework (Diagnosis, Design, Implementation), the article demonstrates how collaboration with startups and small and medium-sized enterprises can strengthen real organizational capabilities, moving beyond traditional models of knowledge transfer. This contribution is particularly relevant for Latin America, as it offers a methodology adaptable to different levels of institutional maturity and resource availability.

The volume finds conceptual closure with the critical reflection by Aglaya Batzon on the contemporary role of universities within Latin American innovation systems. Through an analysis of technology transfer offices, patent data, and collaboration dynamics, the article highlights structural tensions between global orientation and responsiveness to local demands. This contribution serves as an integrative framework for the volume, emphasizing that the future legitimacy of higher education institutions will depend not only on their capacity to generate knowledge, but also on their effectiveness in placing that knowledge at the service of social and productive development within their territories.

Taken together, the works presented and discussed during the iN4iN LATAM Chapter 2025 in Lima, Peru, converge on a clear conclusion: innovation management and university–business linkages require systemic, context-aware, and impact-oriented approaches. Overcoming fragmented models, strengthening institutional capacities, rethinking education, and developing more appropriate metrics are not isolated tasks, but interconnected dimensions of a shared challenge. This volume seeks to advance that debate by offering evidence, analytical frameworks, and experiences that support Latin American universities in consolidating a more active, relevant, and strategic role within their innovation ecosystems.