

ULAC MANAGEMENT REPORT

2021–2025



Unión Latinoamericana de Ciegos (ULAC)

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Latin American Union of the Blind (ULAC)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 2021–2025 period marked a phase of reconstruction, institutional strengthening, and advocacy for the Latin American Union of the Blind (ULAC). Following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ULAC restructured its institutional framework, expanded partnerships, and repositioned its voice in regional and global forums, focusing on four strategic pillars: Representation, Institutional Strengthening, Sustainability, and Knowledge Management.

This cycle culminated in a key institutional milestone: in October 2024, a new leadership was elected, with Lic. Gladys Díaz Benites assuming the presidency of ULAC, accompanied by the renewal of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. This transition initiated the 2025–2028 strategic update, building on the progress achieved.

2. GUIDING FRAMEWORK AND HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH

- **ULAC Statutes (2016 Reform) and General Regulations (2022)** as the foundation for internal governance.
- **Human rights-based approach** aligned with the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** and universal accessibility standards (WCAG for web content).
- Promotion of the **Marrakesh Treaty** to ensure access to reading materials for blind and low vision persons.
- Inclusion and accessibility principles in line with the **World Blind Union (WBU), United Nations, UNESCO, and CERLALC**.

3. RESULTS BY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE (2021–2025)

3.1 Representation

Objective: Enhance the advocacy capacity of ULAC and its member organizations in decision-making spaces.

Key achievements:

- Participation in multilateral forums: **OAS** (General Assembly, CEDDIS), **ECLAC** (SDG forums), **UN** (CRPD), **Global Disability Summit**, and the **Ibero-American Disability Program**.
- Regional engagement with disability and human rights networks (RIADIS, thematic networks); strategic links with **IBSA** (inclusive sports), **CERLALC/OMPI** (Marrakesh Treaty).
- Public agenda 2025 with institutional declarations (Social Justice, Labor Day, Web Accessibility, Guide Dogs, Albinism, Elder Abuse), reinforcing inclusion, accessibility, and the principle of “Nothing about us without us”.

Results:

- Greater visibility and recognition of ULAC as a regional ally in blindness and low vision.
- Key messages on digital accessibility, decent employment, integral rehabilitation, and political participation integrated into the public agenda.

3.2 Institutional Strengthening

Objective: Deepen knowledge, strengthen, and connect organizations of the blind and low vision across the region.

Key achievements:

- Launch of the **ULAC Leadership and Training Platform**.
- **“Our Voices”** (2025): a series of diagnostic dialogues with affiliates from 19 countries to map capacities, challenges, and needs.
- **Academic agreements (2025):** with Technical Universities of Nuevo León and Tamaulipas (accessible tech and AI training), and **UNAM-FES Aragón** (accessible English training), with scholarship support via **OAS**.
- Active engagement of **Specialized Secretariats** (Education, Rehabilitation, Employment, Technology, Gender, Youth, Elderly, Human Rights, Sports & Culture) through campaigns, workshops, regional meetings, and policy advocacy.
- Support for **Youth FOAL** and **Ágora Programs**, and assistance to countries on Marrakesh Treaty implementation.

Results:

- More connected and capable regional network of organizations.

- New educational and professional development opportunities through formal partnerships.

3.3 Sustainability

Objective: Ensure the administrative, financial, and operational sustainability of ULAC and its affiliates.

Key achievements:

- Professionalization of the **Technical Office** (technical secretariat, communications, accounting); regularization of administrative and banking procedures.
- Development of a **Financial Procedures Manual**; standardization of approval, execution, and recording processes.
- Creation of a **new accessible website**, aligned with **WCAG**, managed internally.
- Resource mobilization (matching funds) and diversification of technical and financial partnerships, especially with **FOAL**, including climate change and disability initiatives.

Results:

- Greater transparency and governance; enhanced capacity for management and accountability.
- Modernized digital and administrative infrastructure serving the regional network.

3.4 Knowledge Management

Objective: Position ULAC as a technical, political, and ethical reference on visual disability.

Key achievements:

- Publications and re-launches: **Rehabilitation Manual** (with ICEVI Latin America), **Unified Mathematics Code**, and **Braille teaching guides** (2025 plans in Spanish and Portuguese).
- Development of a **web-based repository** and accessible content (audio, video, documents) with editorial planning and affiliate participation.
- **Marrakesh Treaty mapping, climate change guides, and educational radio dramas** (ES/PT).
- Intersectional campaigns (gender, youth, elders, diversity, indigenous peoples) emphasizing digital accessibility.

Results:

- A consolidated documentary and educational heritage for the region, aligned with accessibility standards and the CRPD.

4. ANNUAL MANAGEMENT TIMELINE (2021–2025)

2021

- Institutional and administrative reorganization; communication incorporated.
- Participation in M-EnAble (accessible technology); regional representation initiatives.
- English training for Executive members launched via university partnership.

2022

- Attendance at **Global Disability Summit** (including youth component); regional cooperation in Costa Rica with **RIADIS** and other networks.
- Engagements with affiliates in Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, and Cuba; progress with IBSA (inclusive sports).
- Legal and financial normalization in Uruguay; strengthening of the Technical Office.
- Co-development of Rehabilitation Manual (with ICEVI and FOAL); adult education initiatives launched.

2023

- Thematic network consolidation (Gender, Youth, Elders, Rehabilitation, Technology).
- Marrakesh Treaty promotion; actions on tiflotechnology and Braille.
- Strategic planning and 2024 event preparation initiated.

2024

- **IX Latin American Congress of Blind Persons (Lima)**; adoption of the **Lima Charter** as a programmatic reference.
- **Election of Gladys Díaz Benites** as President; renewal of the Board and Executive Committee.

- Conclusion of 2021–2024 cycle; evaluation of progress and lessons learned.

2025

- Launch of the **2025 Action Plan** and **2025–2028 Strategic Plan**.
- Implementation of “**Our Voices**” diagnostic dialogues.
- Signing of academic agreements (UT Santa Catarina, UT Tamaulipas, UNAM-FES Aragón); OAS scholarships reinforced.
- Campaigns and declarations: Social Justice (Feb 20), Labor Day (May 1), Web Accessibility (GAAD), Guide Dogs (April), Rehabilitation (Mar 23), Albinism (Jun 13), Elder Abuse (Jun 15).
- Launch of the new website and educational content on Braille, Marrakesh Treaty, and climate change.

5. GOVERNANCE AND TRANSITION (OCTOBER 2024)

- Leadership renewal with the election of **Gladys Díaz Benites (President)** and full rotation of the **Board of Directors and Executive Committee**.
- Emphasis on inclusive and transparent governance; stronger engagement of **Specialized Secretariats** and **National Representations**.
- Start of the **2025–2028 cycle** with monitoring mechanisms, an indicator matrix, and an annual reporting structure.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The 2021–2025 period leaves ULAC with strengthened institutional capacities, greater regional and international advocacy, and enhanced digital and administrative infrastructure.

The network of affiliated organizations was reinforced, academic and technical partnerships expanded, and the voices of blind and low vision persons were amplified across public agendas.

The 2024 transition marked the beginning of a new phase focused on deepening representation, sustainability, strengthening, and knowledge management—ensuring continuity and long-term vision.



For the 2025–2028 cycle, ULAC aims to consolidate institutional autonomy, broaden cooperation frameworks, deepen technical support to affiliates, and position itself as a continental leader in **accessibility, education, rehabilitation, and decent employment.**