

SLAS Climate Action Plan

Overarching Vision

As the research of many SLAS members has shown, the climate emergency is catalysing social, political and economic change in Latin America. The effects are felt most acutely by groups who are already marginalized by class, ethnicity, gender and place. Over the past half century, SLAS has analysed these changes, drawn attention to ways of alleviating the impact of the climate crisis, and debated and rethought the relationship of Latin America to the rest of the world.

During this period, the number of SLAS members travelling between Europe and Latin America for research and conferences has grown considerably. Latin American Studies is a thriving, multifaceted collection of disciplines, with a supportive, engaging research culture. At the core of its increased visibility in the UK is the expanded access to international travel that opened up at the end of the twentieth century. We all know that the average length of SLAS members' research trips has shrunk thanks to the increasing availability and relative affordability of air travel. It is right and timely that SLAS and its members should consider the effects of their day-to-day working lives on the environment, and that we identify, propose and adopt ways of limiting our carbon footprints and conducting our business in more sustainable ways.

As the representative organisation of one of the UK's most globally engaged disciplines, SLAS aspires to lead the way in articulating and embodying the changes that can be made. And indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic has been a game-changer in forcing us all to use more digital tools to meet and travel less, if at all. We need to learn from what has been achieved during the pandemic in terms of lessening of greenhouse gas emissions, and continue to use those new methods of working in the future.

There should be no doubt that this is the beginning of a challenging journey for Latin American Studies in Europe. Not only are we asking how we can encourage and incentivise sustainable travel and working, but we also need to consider and explain what a carbon-neutral Latin American Studies discipline would look like in 2030.

In our research and teaching, SLAS members already discuss the environmental effects of European conquest of the Americas through history, and the relationships between changing landscapes, cultures and identities in Latin America in the present. The next step is to think about how we can apply this to our working practices, our systems and processes. SLAS therefore proposes the following initiatives:

Research Culture

- SLAS encourages members to consider the climate emergency when planning travel as part of research grant applications. Such considerations might include exploring possibilities for employing local researchers, holding virtual meetings, considering overland routes, flying less often and staying abroad longer. However, we also recognise that these possibilities are not always practicable and that other responsibilities, such as caring duties, must also be taken into account in making these decisions.
- Applicants for grants awarded by SLAS will be asked to note how they have considered the climate impact of their proposed research activity or event in their application.
- Members are asked to consider alternative modes of dissemination and networking (including digital resources and methods, e.g. webinars) that do not involve only presenting in person at international conferences. SLAS commits to running training in these methods, at its conference, through regional seminars and online, in order to achieve practical outcomes.
- SLAS will promote engagement with the broader research community (home institutions, funding agencies) in seeking approval of funding requests that reduce carbon emissions (e.g. selecting overland travel within Latin America that is more expensive and time-consuming than flying). The Climate Action Plan coordinator will act as a source of tailored advice for members.

SLAS Meeting and Conference Arrangements

- We propose holding a physical SLAS conference every two years, rather than every year, in order to immediately halve our conference-related emissions. SLAS will endeavour to select physical conference venues that have good track records in addressing their own climate impacts, through reference to relevant resources (e.g. <https://peopleandplanet.org/university-league>).
- SLAS committee members are encouraged to participate in meetings virtually, avoiding significant UK-based travel for two- to three-hour meetings. Two or three committee meetings per year will be entirely

virtual. Where travel is unavoidable, options other than flying are encouraged.

- Virtual participation in conference panels will be accepted and facilitated wherever possible.
- The SLAS conference and committee meetings should offer vegetarian and vegan food only, unless special dietary requirements preclude this. Alternatives to dairy milk should be offered for tea and coffee.
- Single use plastic should be avoided at events.
- SLAS conference organisers will be encouraged to consider all aspects of sustainability in relation to conference organisation and to share this information with delegates (e.g. recycling of conference waste, not providing a conference bag, minimising physical copies of conference programme).
- A dedicated workshop will be held at the 2021 SLAS conference to discuss the Climate Action Plan and provide a forum for members to suggest further changes.