

University in society: new societal responsibilities and challenges.

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What kind of universities do we want in the CELAC-EU space in 2015?

University is a key actor for sustainable and inclusive development, both at local and international level. It's the best space for innovation and knowledge management which owes be in perpetual movement.

By consulting the charters of some big and small universities of the CELAC-EU space, we find a model of "Citizen University", active on a territory and at the service of the community. Nevertheless, in the light of the multiple and diversified academic experiences of teachers, researchers and students, three questions immediately occur:

- What do universities understand when they claim to commit their institutions to take into account the social, cultural, economic and environmental issues ? Do they include these directly in their teaching and research activities or do they relegate them to a "third mission" specially dedicated to the relations with the outside world ?
- What are the most active universities regarding societal interaction? Some are more "active in the city" than others. At first sight, those are public universities with solid management contracts or small provincial universities that are closer to their respective communities. But there are obviously other models.
- How to approach and manage the relations with the territory, this space of multiple actors where, on one hand, concrete expectations are addressed to the local university and where, on the other hand, exist significant assets of "other knowledges " as those of the popular or native tradition?

The university as social player is facing challenges such as the consideration of how to take on board the cultural specificities of its direct territory (in particular the " other knowledges ") and the answers to be brought regarding access of the largest number of citizens to knowledge for contributing to sustainable development. And beyond, it confronts with the challenge of the necessary internationalization of the university, with exchanges of views and experiences at the global level, so opening the territory and its actors to international perspectives.

This implies that the university goes out of its walls, " gets a breath of fresh air " of powerful interaction with public authorities, economic circles and associative networks. It supposes that it covers also the territories of native communities, of disadvantaged districts or even prisons for examples. Not only with the aim of sociological analysis, but overall for providing to these groups adequate knowledge and technologies able to interact and give worth to their specific knowledge and cultures.

All these issues will be discussed in our workshop during the Academic Summit of 2015 in Brussels.