Global Communiqué on Sustainability, Knowledge and Democracy: Invitation

On September 2010, eight international networks supporting community university engagement across the world gathered to participate in the first Global Video Dialogue on *Enhancing North-South Cooperation in Community-University Engagement*. These networks were as follows: Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios, Commonwealth Universities Extension and Engagement Network, Global Alliance on Community Engaged Research, Global University Network for Innovation, Living Knowledge Network, PASCAL International Observatory, Participatory Research in Asia, and the Talloires Network, and actually these networks compose the Big Tent Group.

The idea of the global video dialogue was to share and discuss the role and perspective of each network, tensions and challenges faced, and ways in which such networks can work together to make an impact on complex issues affecting local, national and international communities. As an outcome of the meeting the Global Communiqué on the *"Enhancement of North-South Cooperation in Community University Engagement"* was released.

The Communiqué is a call to action that proposes seven principles for strengthening community engagement trough higher education institutions, combining the collective knowledge, global connections, skills and resources to address the myriad of social, economic, cultural, health and environmental challenges in different regions. The Communiqué was widely disseminated by throughout the Big Tent Group which actually represents about 5,000 higher education institutions and civil society groups.

On October 2011, the Big Tent Group of regional and global community engagement networks held their second global video dialogue. The focus of this second global dialogue was a "Future Scenario for Community University Research and Engagement".

After this second global dialogue a Communiqué on "*A Scenario for Community-University Engagement in 2030*" was released. The communiqué urges universities around the world to set out a range of measures to sustain university engagement with communities to respond to important global phenomena, associated with the emerging citizens' movement, demands for post-secondary education, and for deep societal transformation in many areas of social and economic life to address issues of sustainability, poverty and social justice.

Actually the Big Tent Group is preparing the third global dialogue to discuss how universities and communities can work together to make the transition to a sustainable world. Following the same methodology for previous meetings the Big Tent Group is drafting a Communiqué on Sustainability, Knowledge and Democracy. The objective is to support the next United Nations Conference on

Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and the commitment of higher education institutions on this topic.

The drafting will be discussed following the questions:

According to many, the technological potential for a transformation towards a sustainable society is available. Business and financing models for the transition exist, and the political instruments needed for a climate-friendly transformation are known. In the interest of moving the forward, we need more interaction between politics, society, science and the economy. Can we move from the slow lane to the fast lane?

1. How can Community University Research and Engagement Partnerships contribute to environmentally sustainable economic and social development in the transformation of our societies?

2. How can knowledge and education be drivers of the transformation process?

The final communiqué will follow international norms for policy and advocacy declarations and agreements and will be addresses to a wide range of policy targets including of course the participant networks and institutions.

If you are interested on being part of this debate go to the on-line platform PERARES Debate. Click on 'all debates' and find "Big Tent III Sustainability, Knowledge and Democracy". **The discussion is open from April 24 to May 11, 2012.**

The release of the Communiqué on Sustainability, Knowledge and Democracy will be linked to the 5th International Conference of the Living Knowledge Network in Bonn, Germany May 9-12. Intensive consultation will take place during the conference and the final will be read at the final closing session.

Background documents:
German Advisory Council on Global Change:

GUNI Report Higher Education in the World 4