



*Theories and practices to implement circular and ecologically oriented economic systems and build a fairer society*

**Talks between Europe and South America**



University of Ferrara



UC Chile



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



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Innovation for Sustainable Development Network



# LOOKING FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

## Theories and practices to implement circular and ecologically oriented economic systems and build a fairer society

During the last 100 years, South America has given the world some of the most important lessons in integral development.

As José Mujica, President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay from 2010 to 2015, recalled, the small country began to implement the first policies of universal public assistance at the beginning of the 20th century. In contrast to Western countries, where this kind of policy only materialized in the form of so-called Welfare after the Second World War.

In the 1940s, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), with Raúl Prebisch, brilliantly promoted reflection on the structural character of Latin American underdevelopment, and in the early 1960s, different Latin American intellectuals offered the original reflections known as Dependency theory to the economic discipline. At the dawn of the new millennium, South America presented the Buen Vivir concept, revolutionizing the traditional idea of economic development.

During the first two decades of the new millennium, it seemed that South American countries had finally found the way to deal with some of their structural problems: a fairer Chile that was also less oriented to raw materials exportation; an Argentina that seemed capable of overcoming the convulsions caused by financial imbalance; a Brazil that was beginning to overcome its geographical, social and economic dualism; a Colombia that appeared capable of resolving the longest civil war ever known; a Peru that won the title of Latin American country

with the greatest economic growth of all the region; and, for the first time, countries like Ecuador and Bolivia were on their way to revolutionary self-determination based on universal messages like Buen Vivir and Pacha Mama. However, faced with fifteen years of significant changes and advances, today South America is once again the scene of severing tensions. The revolts that erupted in Ecuador, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru between 2019 and 2020 have revealed the need for radical economic and social change in the region. In Brazil, the Presidency of Jair Bolsonaro has led to a severe political crisis, concerning both social equity and ecological issues; in Argentina, the financial crisis seems to have returned to the center of the stage, and only Uruguay seems to maintain a satisfactory political, social and economic balance.

On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, two decades after the creation of the European Union, Europe has not been able to prove itself capable of promoting and implementing a robust and shared foreign policy. The old continent, which still bears an enormous colonial debt with Africa and Latin America, has proved incapable of economically and commercially strengthening the historical ties. For the most part, Portugal, Spain, and Italy, the three European countries with the greatest historical and cultural relations with Latin American countries, seem indifferent to developing new and fruitful relations across the Atlantic. The same Union model, which Europe has always considered positive and indispensable for constructing lasting international

peace, has proved to be imperfect, continually weakened by internal contradictions and national selfishness, aggravated by the 2007 financial crisis. Few efforts have been made to defend the extraordinary system of Welfare State and universal provision of basic services (education, health, social security) that has characterized European welfare since the end of the Second World War, encouraging the affirmation of dangerous social dynamics of exclusion and marginalization of the most vulnerable.

Today, as the world is called to confront an unprecedented pandemic, an ecological and social crisis, which also affect democratic systems, the principles of justice and the dynamics of civil coexistence, there are many questions that need to be answered: what role does South America play, and will it play, in the international arena? What new conceptual models are emerging in that part of the continent that can contribute to overcoming the crisis? How might such models be received and valued by the rest of the world? What geopolitical and economic relations can be reimagined between Europe and South America?

During these four meetings, we will discuss these questions by moving within a framework of innovative development models that are rooted in the integral world visions that characterize Latin American indigenous peoples. These world views inspire conceptual models based on an idea of civil economy, on a culture of common goods, prompting innovative ideas such as the circular economy applied to agroecological practices, and pioneering experiences such as “Ciudad Posible”.

Among these models we cannot fail to mention the Buen Vivir that is based on the idea of social cohesion and the active participation of individuals and communities in decisions relevant to the construction of a shared destiny and happiness.

This concept, so deeply linked to American indigenous cultures - historically marginalized and exploited, but still living in a symbiotic relationship with Nature - seems to have the capacity to offer more balanced and environmentally friendly models of life. A model that seems suitable to both urban Latin American societies and those of other continents, in particular Europe, where the concept of

wellbeing, connected to welfare, remains strongly link and limited to material benefit.

Today, however, in the face of increasingly dehumanizing and unjust globalization, it seems important to juxtapose the concept of Buen Vivir with that of integral development, an innovative system that puts at the core not consumption, but Nature and human being who is part of it. This model is based on a coordinated set of political, social and economic actions, based on the promotion of personal dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity. This vision presents the goal of improving conditions for full individual and collective development, contributing to the creation of a human climate of mutual trust that pays special attention to the problems of those at a disadvantage, in accordance with an environmental conservation perspective.

On this basis, in the symposium, we will try to outline an articulated picture of what is meant by integral and innovative development, collecting analyses, theories and experiences carried out in different contexts in South America and Europe. The current pandemic and climate change remind us every day that the time has come to give new meaning to the terms economic and social development, redirecting national and international efforts to build a more inclusive future, which is fair and ecologically oriented.

Together with all of you, we hope to develop a stimulating space to contribute to the collective effort that awaits us as humanity.

<sup>1</sup> By innovative development models, we mean forms of social and community organization that transcend the market's centrality, based on the existing cultural multiplicity and more respectful interactions among human being, nature, and Buen Vivir of the communities. These principles are valid in local and rural communities as well as in urban groups or competitive enterprises.

**First day (Eng/Spa) - June 16, 2021- 15:00 18:30 – Rome time**

## **INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT AND *BUEN VIVIR***

Innovative Principles, Visions and Patterns for Reorienting National and International Policies Towards Sustainable and Fairer Development

The current pandemic has shown the importance of radically rethinking the current century's dominant economic and social model. A paradigm shift is necessary, although it is difficult to imagine concrete alternatives that are valid across borders. Therefore, the objective of this meeting will be to discuss possible alternative models, some of which have emerged in Latin America, and which are based on an idea of society that places the human being and Nature at the center of public and community action.

Our purpose is to collectively build a space for lasting and always evolving bi-regional dialogue between Europe and Latin America, aimed at projecting innovative models based on the principles of el Buen Vivir and integral development.

**Second day (Eng) - June 23, 2021 - 15:00 18:30 – Rome time**

## **TOWARDS INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT: KEY ACTORS AND ROUTES**

Market, Institutions and Civil Society: Tasks for the Realization of a More Equitable and Ecologically Oriented Paradigm

Along human history, different actors have set out to imagine a divergent and possibly better world: some of the great religions, the Renaissance or humanist utopias, parties, and political organizations during the 19th and 20th centuries. In this new millennium, it seems that every aspiration to live a full and thoroughly dignified life that is also lived with respect for Nature is sacrificed and expendable in the face of economic utilitarianism and global capitalism. While it seems true that economy has its laws, it is also true that the mechanisms that govern it are modifiable, while the mechanisms that govern Nature are not, unless it is at the cost of disasters and imbalances to the detriment of all living beings.

The purpose of this day of study is to begin to discuss the roles and tools that the market, the institutions - territorial, national and international - and the civil society have had, and should have, in the transition towards new ideas of society; a society that puts the human being and the planet that hosts us together with all other living beings at the center of all its public and private action, as well as at the center of the knowledge sector.

**Third day (Es) - June 30, 2021 - 15:00-18:30 – Rome time**

## **INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE**

Agricultural and Cultural Resistance in South America Facing International Market, Institutional and Climate Crisis Pressures

Latin America has always been considered the cradle of global food biodiversity, and its natural resources have enormous potential to respond to the future demand for food of its own populations and elsewhere in the world. In fact, the region has been a promoter agroecology, food security, food safety and food sovereignty. Interesting to note is the vision of Buen Vivir with a comprehensive territorial approach that recognizes the intimate link between the territory and its inhabitants.

In this third meeting, we want to focus on pioneering experiences in Latin America and Europe aimed at creating communities that live following alternative paradigms based on the harmony between production, environment, culture, and society.

The objective is to become acquainted with projects that have been developed by diverse communities who restore strength and dignity to the land, allowing those who work it to defend their right of access to food in adequate quantity and quality - as shown, among others, by the determined promotion of agroecological practices and local agri-food systems - fully respecting food sovereignty and protecting them from international and corporate interests.

## CLOSING THE CIRCLE: INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT, AGROECOLOGY AND CIRCULARITY

Latin American and European future challenges.

In Europe, the new Circular Economy Action plan has created a thriving environment for transforming the economy and the manufacturing sector. Since the year 2015, in Latin American, a large number of regional and national forums have been discussing the prospects and opportunities that a circular economic model can bring to the economy, mostly focusing on similar issues to those discussed in Europe with an attention to key extractive industries (e.g. mining), manufacturing and waste management.

However, the European-centred vision of circular economy may not sufficiently address the challenges of social justice, inclusiveness, poverty alleviation, and resilience of the natural ecosystems. There is a need to critically review the mainstream and technocratic vision of Circular Economy and embrace behaviours and cultures learning from Latin American local communities that still live in harmony with Nature, and recover traditional habits and practices which were the daily norm among the majority of European families only fifty years ago.

### SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

- **Francisco Alburquerque Llorens:** Coordinator of the scientific committee of the Territorial Development Network of Latin America and the Caribbean
- **Fernando Diaz Lopez:** Director of Innovation for Sustainable Development Network - [inno4sd.net](http://inno4sd.net) (Principal consultant and researcher at Technopolis Group, Research Fellow at SEEDS & Associate Professor Extra-Ordinary at Stellenbosch University)
- **Gianfranco Franz:** Full Professor of Policies for Sustainability and Local Development, Università di Ferrara
- **Sergio Moreira:** SEBRAE's former CEO
- **Caterina Rondoni:** Ph.D. student in Environmental Sustainability and Well-being -
- **Gonzalo Valdivieso:** Assistant Professor Campus Villarrica, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

## **PARTNERS**

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