

CIDES *Plus*

**International Center for
Sustainable Development**

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Ciudad del Saber
Ciudad del Saber
City of Knowledge

CIDES is an International Organization established as such by the Government of Panama by Executive Decree No 2 dated April 11, 2005.

This diverse international network of organizations in the areas of businesses, academics research, International cooperation,, governmental and non governmental entities, generates and disseminates knowledge for decision making matters in economic development and environmental conservation, by benefiting the decision makers at governmental, businesses and community levels.

Its operational structure is composed of a General Assembly, its Board of Directors, a Scientific Technical Committee, the Advisory Board and the Executive Secretariat.

CIDES News...

Discover 500 years of Panamanian history in a three-part lecture by some of the most dynamic scholars in the field: Alfredo Castillero Calvo (CIDES-City of Knowledge, Panama), Aims McGuinness (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee), and Julia Greene (University of Maryland, College Park). This program is being organized by the Smithsonian Latino Center and the History Department of the University of Maryland, College Park. For program description, please check <http://latino.si.edu/newsevents/>.

Message from the Chairman of the Board of Directors

Knowledge in times of Crisis

What do the present financial and the environmental crises have in common? Both are manifestations of one and the same crisis, provoked by actions and endeavors that have negatively interacted with nature's inherent ability to sustain life, on one hand, and with the capacity of human beings to sustain the quality of life of its own species, on the other. This is rooted in the erroneous concept that from times past humans have been prevented from having a sense of belonging to the planet they share more than to the communities they live in. Businesses, consumption patterns, the economy, physical structures, technology and organizations, while having produced significant increases in the standards of life of our developed world, they have also contributed significantly to this crisis.

The crisis is ecological because it has to do with the system of Earth and its economic, social and environmental relations, but at the same time it's an ethical crisis because it doesn't match the care we must have towards our home: the Planet. It is ironic that we only assume our Planet to be our Home whenever we design a global economy, which up to now has only proven to be environmentally and socially unsustainable. In other words, the biospheric and anthropocentric requirements that allow us to sustain life, have been severely mutilated

This crisis has multiple manifestations that, in a certain way, prevent us from recognizing the relationships that exist between them. Poverty, inequalities and social exclusion are, largely, manifestations of the way we have developed our economies. At the same time, they are also, the detonator of an environmental deterioration we also share with the privileged groups of our society in reason of their excessive consumption of resources and goods and their uncontrolled accumulation of wealth. Financial crisis on the one hand, environmental crisis on the other, and in the middle a social crisis of enormous proportions: are these perhaps manifestations of the civilization crisis affecting us today?

CIDES has taken on this challenge from a knowledge management perspective. For this, its Technical Scientific Committee has assumed its most important role as a think tank, by parting from the analysis of the situation and its prime forces and then set forth to seek out possible management strategies, considering, from a global viewpoint, the complexity of the relations between natural ecosystems and ecosystems created by man.

Collaborations:

The City in Transition

Alvaro Uribe

The Metropolitan Region of Panama, in the heart of the transit zone, now holds somewhat more than half of the country's population within the central urban area of Panama and Colon, and it is becoming a true inter-oceanic city.

Getting to know our Associates



The mission of the Albatros Media Foundation is to provoke changes that will contribute towards making a more sustainable Latin-America. The foundation is dedicated to the production of innovative massive communication programs, of high impact content and focus on social and environmental issues. These programs are recognized for their highly informative content assuring visual excellently by using the latest in technology, therefore, exceeding their different audiences' expectations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

CIDES News...

International Planning and Urban Policies Seminar

On June 22nd and 23rd, an International Seminar on Planning and Urban Policies was organized by CIDES with the support of PRONAT, in conjunction with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policies at Cambridge, Massachusetts. This seminar was honored with the presence of a recently elect city Mayors, from most urban areas of the Republic of Panama, Planning Chiefs, Urban Agents, professionals from different central and municipal government institutions and NGO's. This seminar was considered to be the launching point for Lincoln Institute's Project for Latin America and the Caribbean whose goal is to develop workshops and seminars in order to train personnel in integrated land management practices, strength local institutions by empowering them with the necessary tools to contribute in creating knowledgeable work teams.



Article: The City in Transition (Continued)

This is to say, it is in a transition phase. And as in any urban transition, this one occurs between two other transitions, because change is a part of the genetic code of cities.

But, change towards what, and especially or spatially where to? The orientation of the expansion of the city may occur through voluntary planning measures (inclusion of the Canal areas, the creation of protected areas) or, more commonly, through the construction of communication arteries (highways). This has been the governing logic of industrialised nations where the highway network progressively imposed itself upon the territory and mobility imposed itself upon the geography. And so it happened in our own (country) as well but for other reasons: in light of the weakness in planning, the territorial transformation became subordinated to highway works and in Panama city, its primary instrument has been the ESTAMPA Plan of 1982, a Japanese product created after three years of the Canal Treaties going into effect in which the Japanese, most diplomatically, did not interfere much with the former Canal Zone and then recommend a road system with additions (North and South Expressways) which continued to converge on the centre (of the city).

This system, which has been in a saturation process ever since, primarily based on oriental vehicles – a sub-product of the ESTAMPA Plan,- is a permanent congestion generator a solutions for which are being attempted to this day through stop-gap measures such as double tiered roads and fly-over's. And yet, the emphasis on the centre –which favoured even more concentration of services and employment- left the urban periphery lacking everything, turned into an endless collection of bedroom communities within which informality and precarious formality alternate (suburbs without drinking water but which are flood-prone, are under-provisioned, with no sidewalks nor open areas, etc.).

To arrive at this point, the guidance of the blind market was also necessary. Some four decades ago, in fact, the authorities delivered the keys to the city when- in the middle of oil crisis of the 70's – they adopted "facilitation" of private investment in construction as a priority, based on the beneficial effect that this line of business has on the economy (employment, construction materials, equipment, etc.,) but forgetting that this was but a temporary measure. And so the authorities performed a sort of *strip-tease* with its regulations, regulations that they removed until they ended up in the buff: they abolished limitations on the area of any construction – which in the United States is known as *floor-area ratio* or is the relation between the surface of the land and what is to be built upon it – in the past a 250% maximum and which today is infinite; they eliminated the height conditions based on the width of the street, linking it to the density regulation... and they increased densities without changes to streets or infrastructure; they allowed changes to lot after lot which lay waste to the concept of a "zone"; they invented the bonuses and tolerances in order for more to fit where it already did not; they allowed 100% occupancy of the lot which means there is no longer an absorption surface and everything drains upon the streets or towards the storm drains, and this where they exist. Then, at the end of the *strip-tease*, instead of charging for the service, they picked up the check because they awarded a 20 year exoneration on property taxes for new buildings. Nevertheless, the real property clientele demanded more and so they created a law so delirious that no development project has been able to meet its conditions: 1000 residential units per hectare (the equivalent of some 5000 people) because we know not how to build functional buildings (of more or less 70 storeys). This is where the curtain came down.

In synthesis, today we have a central urban collection, the growth axes of which have been created by a primary road system of highways (the Inter-American from East to West and the Trans-Isthmian to the North) which is guided by the market, the same one that fed the recent housing boom and which proved that you can sell a whole bunch of apartments, and not be mindful of the architecture and being even less so of urbanism. Regardless, planning, which has been relegated to correcting the mistakes of the past instead of planning and configuring the future, is on the rebound: there was nothing to be done for it, what with the passage of Law No. 6 of 2006 (Territorial Organisation) the immediate enforcement of

CIDES News...

On Thursday, July 30th, CIDES's Technical Scientific Committee held a workshop that focused on the nature and scope of the actual world crisis in order to identify the motivating forces behind it, its main problems and work areas that could help define and guide the Committee's efforts.

CIDES News...

In joint collaboration CIDES and the Unit for the Development of Capabilities of the World Food Programme have agreed to create a work plan to establish a **Food Safety Strategy within the framework of Sustainable Development**. This work plan includes building a model project for food safety analysis, particularly in Central America that will allow the identification of objectives, strategies, actions and indicators that a particular plan should have if it wishes to incorporate the sustainable development angle.

CIDES News...

CIDES has accepted  the responsibility of elaborating the conceptual document **Strategies in Sustainability and Development**, to be presented before a Governmental Forum that will take place during EIMA 7

CIDES News...

Dr. Jorge Vanegas, a member of our CIDES network, was recently appointed



Dean of the College of Architecture at Texas A&M University. His areas of expertise include the environment and sustainability. His

academic focal areas include management, creativity, innovation and a business sense for architecture, engineering and the construction industry. CIDES wishes Dr. Vanegas success in these new endeavors and challenges.

Article: The City in Transition (Continued)

which consists of the creation of organisation plans in order to contribute to the correction of conundrums and to prevent greater idiocies, but also to begin the pre-configuration of urban expansion for the coming years.

According to David Mangin, winner of the 2008 French prize for urbanism, in the world of today the ideological and professional division of urban efforts is radical: infrastructure for engineers, products, typologies and the land for the developers, the leftover spaces within the road network for the landscapers and the façades for the architects. We can feel proud: we are in line with the world. Nevertheless, within this distribution of competencies, planning, as an unavoidable public function, must play the role of governor, even though merely in order to continue making the city a good business, since real property development knows no bounds, not even those that exist for its own self-conservation: and thus it becomes evident, evident within the great patio of Punta Pacifica, with its planned island appendixes, or in the festival of eyesores in Amador, or the plug that the Santa Maria Golf Club at Juan Diaz injects into the city's mobility as well as towards the East, the alleyway into which the most recent buildings of Punta Paitilla have crept.

Maintaining the city's profitability, along with the preservation of the environmental wealth which we have the good fortune of owning, may well be the primary arguments in order to move towards the creation of our own recipe, a recipe that even in the Third World, will lead us to become a first class city. We are close, we lack only political will.

Alvaro Uribe

Collaborations:

Professional Training and Sustainable Development

Rodrigo Tarté P.

The topic of professional training in the context of sustainable development cannot be addressed from a local perspective without first being analyzed from the viewpoint that they are a whole set of demands, problems and situations that affect society globally. In other words, it cannot be addressed without referring to the complex dynamics of the real world and of the interactions between their societies, their habitats, their productive systems and their forms of organization and government.

In his book published in 1995, *The Demon Haunted World*, Carl Sagan, astrophysicist and notable science communicator, while reminding us that the most crucial elements of global civilization we have constructed depend deeply on science and technology, also expressed that we have arranged it in such a way that almost nobody understands about science and technology, including - regrettably - those who make the political decisions. According to Sagan, this is a recipe for disaster, as is a mix of fuel and ignorance; it will some day explode in our faces.

There are important reflections to be had from a reality that has certainly not changed, at least not as far as this Century is concerned. But today, we are faced with a new reality, so much or more worrisome affecting global society in multiple ways, and it seems to threaten the foundations of our current civilization, reaching much further than our ignorance of science and technology matters.

Professional Training and Sustainable Development (Continued)

It's not so difficult to understand that the most important thing for all the inhabitants of this planet is that transformation of production methods and consumption patterns, must serve to construct a society where the quality of life, economic well-being, social equity and the respect for integrity of ecosystems, should be the norm for our economies because the preservation of life itself, depends on this.

What becomes even more difficult to understand is that in order to achieve this dream or aspiration it is necessary that our societies establish a balance between the requirements of the biosphere and its ecosystems *and* the requirements of human beings. It is not only a matter of understanding about science and technology but it is urgently becoming more important to understand ecology itself, not only as a science, but to also understand the interdependent relations between the economy, society and the environment.

Although the most crucial elements of our civilization depend on science and technology, the survival of this same civilization will depend on our knowledge of ecology. While this doesn't happen, we will continue to walk in circles around the unresolved divide between the need for economic growth and the need to protect the environment.

And as if this wasn't enough, today we have passed from a state of scientific-technological-ecological ignorance to what some have named economic illiteracy. Perhaps now, like in previous crisis's, we might find the opportunity to create a new educational model that will allow the development of a complete human being with enough knowledge of ecology to be capable of forging new foundations to sustain the civilization of the XXIst Century.

These new considerations will unquestionably require the total transformation of our education, the acquisition of new knowledge, and ways of adopting the changes. During this time of transition, it will be possible to imagine this educational transformation as the spur that will empower societies that should be absolutely capable of forging their own destiny.

Now then: what characteristics should this new education have? As any new paradigm, it will have to come from a mixture of imagination and a better knowledge of the way the real world works. But, if we are not aware that the real world is complex, not a linear system, where all actions, phenomena, processes, communities and ecosystems interact amongst each other and with others, in the context of what is actually one great global ecosystem, we will never be able to imagine what the new civilization will require.

Perhaps it isn't necessary to have a superior degree of knowledge about system dynamics to understand how the real world works. The interconnection of all phenomena, in a global context, is clearly visible in the financial crisis we face today. What is not clearly visible for the majority is just how these interconnections take place and which are the nodes in this jumble of networks, to which we must pay greater attention. No economy can exist in an isolated context, as neither can the sustainability of the development of a country or a region be conceived, independently of what might happen beyond its borders. Nowadays it's no longer possible to avoid the fact that the time to think and act globally has arrived and that we may no longer try convincing ourselves that we can continue acting locally while thinking globally. Such palliatives will not be of much good to the need of establishing the basis of a new civilization, although with this new education paradigm, we must begin acting on all local levels.

But this new education must be built based on a model of knowledge management that will integrate the need to educate with the need to investigate, the need to understand interdependent relations between the economy, society and the environment, the need to learn a trade or a profession, with the need to train individuals with ethical-ecological characteristics and, most essential, the formation of a whole society with such characteristics.

Seen in this light, it is almost obvious that the transformation of education will not be able to run independently of the formulation and implementation of strategies of sustainable development that, by definition, integrate all aspects of the economy, the needs and aspirations of society and our natural environment's safety.

Professional Training and Sustainable Development (Continued)

We now have the challenge of making obvious what in essence is the construction of a new model of development, whose sustainability will depend on linking education with all other strategies of productive management, so that knowledge becomes the support of this development we today call sustainable.

Such as transportation, communications, industry, agriculture, medicine, education, entertainment, protection of the environment, and even the democratic right to vote.

Rodrigo Tarte P.

Special Article... MBA in Environmental Business culminates in total success

On July 31st an MBA in Environmental Business, sponsored by the Louis Berger Group and ADEN School of Business came to a successful closure. Present at the graduation ceremony where important personalities such as Javier Arias, General Administrator of the National Environment Authority and Minister of Environmental Affairs of Panama; also present Prof. Jorge Arosemena, Executive Director of the City of Knowledge Foundation, and Dr. Rodrigo Tarte, Chairman of the Board of CIDES

This MBA was organized by INADEH and CIDES had the participation of 30 students, all possessing high level university degrees. For 130 hours, the students had the opportunity to learn and interpret concepts and acquire fundamental knowledge associated with management practices and the new green economy. During the course, the concept itself of "green economy" was challenged by the methodology followed which demanded great effort from all participants in reaching an adequate definition of the universal problem of sustainable development. Other aspects were also reason for profound reflection and discussion, such as the concept of natural resources and natural elements, with marked differences between each interpretation, all given from the perspective of environmental history and environmental economy; also between environmental goods and services and the value of these resources and of course, the concept of "environmental business" as is because the inevitable question: if all business is lucrative by definition, how can we make a profit and still conserve the environment when its over exploitation has played a major part in this same profit?

During the development of the MBA, the group was divided and eleven environmental business projects were elaborated, and worked on by each interdisciplinary group. These groups were formed taking into account the diversity of specialties of each member in the group, and also their coincidental interests. This way, the course contributed concepts, tools and theories that allowed the construction of each of the projects' technical environmental and financial structure. This work method produced excellent results, expressed for example in student's assistance that surpassed an average 85% throughout the course, and a grade point average that reached 90.6/100.

However, the most important aspect of his course was that it introduced new questions to old problems about conservation and development, and that instead of great answers, important questions were planted in the critical minds of the participants. For in the end, all good questions respond to good problem construction and these constructions will in turn allow us tomorrow to build great solutions to the problems our trying times demand.



Left to right: Javier Valverde - Regional Director (ADEN), Jorge R. Arosemena R. - Executive Director (City of Knowledge Foundation), Javier Arias - General Manager (ANAM), Rodrigo Tarte P. - Chairman of the Board (CIDES), Marcelo de la Rosa - Chief Executive Officer (The Louis Berger Group), Guillermo Castro - Academic Associate Director (City of Knowledge Foundation)



MBA Environmental Business Students

Project under development:

Latin-American program for Integrated Knowledge Management for Sustainable Development based on Multilateral Foreign Debt Swap

According to the General Secretariat of Latin America (SEGIB) a Latin-American program is composed of long or medium term actions, objectives and targets, that strive to achieve common goals in policies, strategies, lines of action and activities of the governments of a certain area of Latin America. Its main function is to strengthen the strategic options of each country in the aforementioned area and, by combining efforts, share experiences and jointly seek financing.

In this sense, the government of Panama, by initiative of the International Center for Sustainable Development (CIDES) at the City of Knowledge, prepared a proposal for the establishment of a fund for integrated knowledge management in sustainable development based on a multilateral swap of foreign debt between Spain and Latin-American countries. Most importantly, this fund has been conceived to address the needs and reach the objectives of the millennium and to effectively face the challenges of sustainable development.

The creation of this fund will imply a transcendental step towards the processes of managing sustainable development, from a significant increase in cooperation and the search and application of knowledge between participating countries, that will allow them to share, complement and integrate actions and experiences in the following areas to mention: water, energy, climatic change, health and nutrition, agriculture and productive systems, biodiversity and natural resources, cities and infrastructure, land management and human development.

As a space for interaction, this programme will offer participation to different regional and international organizations, with a presence in Latin America, for them to play a central role in the implementation of the activities of this initiative. Just to mention a few possibilities, for example, FAO could offer technical assistance and mobilize information and any technical information available on the subject of agriculture; UNEP could do their part on the subject of energy and climatic change; the Inter-American Biodiversity Network (IABIN) could do the same within their field of expertise and the IHP of UNESCO together with the collaboration of CATHALAC and the World Water Association (Latin American networks) in matters of water resources. Likewise, the World Food Programme (WFP) in matters of hunger and infant malnutrition; the Texas A&M School of Housing and Urban Development in the area of cities and infrastructure; and the Interdisciplinary Programme of Health from the Latin American Consortium for Education in Science and Technology (ISTEC) in the area of health.

What is being proposed, is that cooperation between nations within the framework of integrated knowledge management in the aforementioned areas and others that will be subsequently identified, be done taking into account the need to articulate the components' different management processes, through Latin American networks, that would allow the distribution of the results of such investigation. These components shall be: the development of integrated information systems; the development of integrated investigation systems, the development of integrated education systems, and the transfer and use of knowledge.

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