

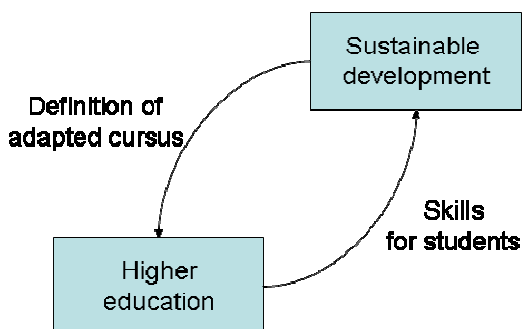


Academics without Borders USF-AWB Universitaires sans Frontières

Quarterly newsletter, 9, March 2013

Territorial intelligence, sustainable development and higher education

More and more people talk about territorial intelligence: it is similar to "business intelligence" applied not to business but to the organization of a city, of a region and of a territory. In Wikipedia, one of the definitions asserts that territorial intelligence is defined "*on one hand, as a set of approaches, methods and tools from the business world, which are adapted to the need of the economic development of a territory. It would be more precise to speak about territorial economic intelligence; on the other hand, it is a body of knowledge, skill and expertise in a territory — so, concept of collective intelligence —, that would design the future of territory according to the more classical approach of local development. But in the same time, it must bring a culture of technological and economic watch and strategy that too often was missing*". In relation with higher education systems, it is not simply to give notions of sustainable development to the students, but overall to propose entire fresh programs and syllabi dedicated to this objective.

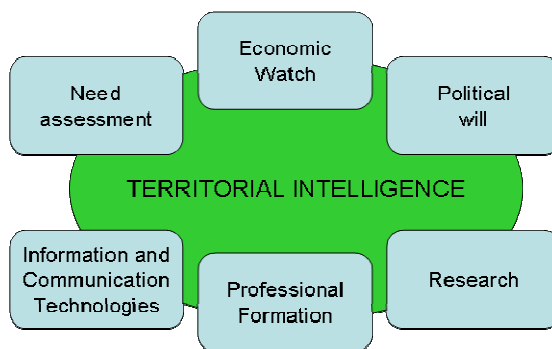


Too often, one can see universities proposing education not adapted to the local socio-economical context: the courses too often are designed and constructed only starting from the competences of professors, competences sometimes obtained elsewhere or in the past; but those are not indeed congruent with local realities; it is the case of many Masters in certain countries that teach obsolete knowledge, i.e. "old-fashioned things". Several reasons are identified, namely:

- the absence of lifelong formation for the professors,
- the absence of exhaustive need assessment for the territory,
- the absence of vision at mean- and long-term,
- and even if the analyses show salient needs, local professors are not able to create professional formations in these sectors.

It is possible to quote for example the case of food

processing which is an important industrial sector in our daily-life, but very few formations at Bachelor and Master levels are offered while the needs are immense.



From the research point of view, the issue is similar: sustainable development implies that investigations must be targeted to the improvement of living conditions. Would it be reasonable to develop research in tropical diseases at the North Pole? About ten years ago, we had met a rector of an Algerian university that had the project to develop research on chip design while this country did not possess – and does not yet possess – essential infrastructure in electronics and in precision mechanics!

Finally in territorial intelligence approaches, it would be great to take account not only of executives education, but also of research programs with their outcomes in the sustainable development. ■

Robert Laurini
President of USF-AWB.

General assembly

In accordance with the statutes of the association "Universitaires sans Frontières - Academics Without Borders" and after the general assembly held January 18, 2013, the following officers were elected as for the three subsequent years to come:

- Robert Laurini, president,
- Paul Rousset, vice-president,
- Alain Jouandeau, treasurer,
- Roger Chapuis, secretary.

Do not forget to pay 30 Euros for your annual subscription. See the website for the detail. ■