

Building the Orinoquia region longed for by the voices from the territories: a view regarding the region's future

The *Visión de Visiones 2030* project (*Voces de los Territorios* - voices from the territories) emerged as a proposal for collective participation and construction regarding the multiple economic development interests and initiatives facing the Orinoquia region, thinking about the resulting changes in social and cultural processes and the demand for ecosystem services. It has involved the participation of 3,000 social actors representing civil society, leaders and institutionality, as well as regional and national experts (Caro-Caro *et al.*, 2015); it has adopted a novel approach to territoriality, including sustainability in terms of respect for life. Concepts such as human well-being (MEA, 2005) and good living (Jiménez, 2013) have been underscored during such constructive process, the different and plural rationalities coexisting in the region have been recognised and work has progressed in line with the precept of the region's integral development based on the sustainable management of its biodiversity and organised around its vital resource -water. The above constitutes the framework for *Visión de Visiones 2030 - Voces de los Territorios*, having human talent as a reference condition, emphasising its growing nature and highlighting quality.

The forgoing has been formalised in the consensus route map following five strategic guidelines: 1) water and biodiversity, determinants for territorial development, 2) regional intelligence and shared territorial political project, 3) alternative and integral development, 4) governance and institutionality for constructing territorial peace and 5) territorial organic reorganisation.

Various aspects of *Visión de Visiones* as a platform and process thus have great significance. It awakes interest and appropriation regarding local and regional aspects given the convergence of knowledge resulting from the broad range of actors participating in the prospective phases, in essence, translating the voices from the territories. Regarding the regional level, it is in harmony with the advances outlined in the plan for the Orinoco micro-watershed (IAVH, 2103) in terms of water as the driving force for governance and ordination; it comes during decisive planning moments, such as the formulation of departmental development plans (2016-2019) and adjustments to territorial ordering schemes at municipal level. It complements Colombian agendas such as the 2014-2018 national development plan (DNP, 2015) in which topics such as the environment, agroindustry and human development have been selected for the region called the Llanos (the Eastern Plains). It is coherent with many of the objectives regarding sustainable development identified as spheres of critical importance (people, prosperity, peace, and alliances) and coincides with the same time-frame (2015- 2030). It also highlights sustainable economic development and the construction of societies living in peace as guarantors of social wellbeing (ONU, 2015; PNUD, 2015).

Regarding the *Visión de Visiones'* plan for the sustainable development of the Eastern Plains region, it is worth highlighting the Universidad de Los Llanos' academic efforts which have led to training 31 leaders (MSc sustainable environmental management programme), producing multidisciplinary knowledge through an initiative by the state company Ecopetrol aimed at providing pertinent responses to notional collectives, local knowledge and the socio-environmental and political realities of all the people living and settling in the Orinoquia region. This represents explicit proof of local capacity to want, think and dream about territories and territorialities, thereby agreeing on and prospecting their future, regarding real areas of experience and within a scenario of globalisation and negotiating peace in Colombia. This has arisen from historical reading, failed attempts at handling natural resources (though some were successful) and evaluating territorial planning exercises, especially exercising their autonomy and conceivable self-management. Arias *et al.*, (2012) have stated that this is the moment to motivate creativity aimed at thinking about alternative development.

This particularly applies to strategic planning (Regional Intelligence and the Shared Territorial Political Project) because it connects and provides an outlet for any petition prioritised by the voices from the territories regarding the need for increasing and strengthening regional human capital and establishing a dialogue of knowledge, understood as that stated by Lef (2014) as being, "... a meeting of modern and traditional knowledge, implying their articulation and ways of settling their differences through mutual understanding, even of the hybridisation between modern and traditional knowledge guided by translators."

Consequently, the formation and functioning of the Regional Intelligence System for Colombia's Orinoquia region (RIO) (Wills, 2015) have been aimed at coordinating institutional actors (i.e. universities, research centres and private companies) with the territory's organised communities and ancestral communities to boost the production of pertinent and relevant knowledge, to discuss it and regional appropriation, followed by the corresponding disclosure throughout the whole of society in Colombia's Orinoquia region. This system agrees with Souza's statement (2012) that, "... each model of society has a model of communication and a model of education aimed at constructing it. Constructing "developed societies" requires "communication for development" and "education for development"."

RIO becoming tangible under the leadership of the Universidad de Los Llanos will constitute an eloquent indicator of the Regional Intelligence strategy's praxis. From an institutional point of view, it will enable Orinoquia society to see the conjunction of missionary functions as being tangible regarding human talent formation, research (with the consolidation of the triad of innovation, science and technology) and social projection, by amplifying and strengthening knowledge management, its translation to and application in the non-academic world, in decision-making and regarding local conflict resolution.

Explicitly for Unillanos, more than just its duty to be a public entity, it must respond to the voices from the territories as they accept the university as their own, the representative spokesperson for their expressions and knowledge and as standard bearer in inter-sector and inter-institutional alliances regarding regional and national matters. A considered invitation is thus extended to all previously-mentioned interested stakeholders for constructing a regional intelligence system to be led by the Colombian Orinoquia region's Institute of Environmental Sciences (Instituto de Ciencias Ambientales de la Orinoquia Colombiana ICAOC) and the active participation of contest of the institutional academic community.

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