Why an International School

The major UN summits of the last twenty years have enabled, for the first time, all the countries of the world to agree on objectives and values to guide their actions towards peaceful, equitable and environmentally sustainable development (Millennium Platform). Progress in this direction requires profound change in the organization of society, especially so as to overcome the dynamics of exclusion that prevail everywhere. However, the conceptual and operational instruments currently available to governments and social actors are inadequate because, for the most part, they are linked to the very ideologies and values that need to be changed.

For this reason governments and social actors committed to implementing the Millennium Platform are looking for new tools to understand the complex and contradictory dynamics of development, so that it can be planned and managed in new ways.

Many public and private actors and associations share the idea of creating an International School of policies and practices that are in line with these new goals and values. This idea was first put forward in a meeting between Edgar Morin and a group of experts who inspired many of the experiences implemented in different continents which used a territorial approach to development (starting with the United Nations PRODERE Programme in 1989).

This approach is based on the active role of local communities, on enhancing local natural, human and historical resources, on integrating different sectoral contributions and the participation, without exception, of all social actors. It is an approach rooted in specific local cultures and realities, but aimed at building a wide network of international exchanges, in a spirit of reciprocity and promotion of common interests for local, national and international development centred on meeting human needs and peaceful cooperation.

The KIP-UN Initiative and the creation of the International School

An International school of knowledge and know-how can only be set up through a participatory process, one which involves the best practices of government offices, education centres, universities and social actors in different countries. The KIP-UN Initiative is designed to help coordinate this process over the next two to three years. It will end with an international conference to draw conclusions from the preparatory activities carried out in conjunction with local, national and international partners and to formalize the establishment of the School.
The KIP-UN Scientific Committee

The process of setting up the International School will be led by the Scientific Committee, chaired by Edgar Morin, created in 2004 through a framework agreement between UNESCO, UNDP, UNIFEM and UNOPS. More recently, the Committee has also worked with ILO, UNEP and WHO. It is an independent body that supports United Nations agencies in identifying and disseminating the conceptual and operational tools most in line with the Millennium Platform. The KIP-UN Scientific Committee draws on an international network of research and training facilities, benefiting from the advice of experts and personalities from the worlds of science, culture and cooperation.

Activities

The KIP-UN Initiative activities prefigure the work of the School. In particular, it promotes the following country projects, with the participation of all interested stakeholders.

Projects for the production and dissemination of knowledge
These projects help to systematize the acquisitions of innovative experiences and produce the conceptual tools needed to improve understanding of the dynamics of development and guide action in accordance with the Millennium Platform and needed reforms. Such projects include the organization of conferences, symposia, thematic days, cultural campaigns, exhibitions and international competitions; they include the production of documents, publications, periodicals, web pages and electronic libraries. The main product of these projects is the International Manual.

The network of laboratories of change
The Laboratories are consolidated experiences of integrated or thematic territorial development. Working in collaboration with universities and research centres, they offer a permanent and structured environment for visitors, students, researchers, experts, teachers and other stakeholders interested in participating in activities and extracting from them indications to disseminate nationally and globally. The School will set up an international network of these Laboratories, which will include innovative and strategic projects and will offer an environment for research and knowledge production geared towards change in line with the Millennium Platform.

Training and higher education
The school will organize projects which, at the request of national and local governments and social actors, provide permanent professional development courses and advanced courses for development managers (intensive courses, exchange of experiences, training-of-trainers, study tours and similar activities). The School will also promote university courses for future development professionals and researchers in collaboration with universities interested in developing curricula more in line with the Millennium Platform and linked to concrete local development experiences. Such university programmes would link the specific realities and cultures where they are located with the international debate on the future of everyone.

The KIP-UN initiative and the International School aroused interest and support when presented: to the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Miguel d’Escoto on September 9, 2009; to France’s National Assembly in Paris, during a conference given by Edgar Morin on 14 October 2009; to a group of European Members of Parliament in Brussels on 4 May 2010; in the Cairo Forum on territorial knowledge on 4 June 2010; in Dakar, as part of an international conference on decentralized cooperation on 4 and 5 December 2010; in Tirana, as part of the international meeting on decentralized cooperation and European integration on 13 and 14 January 2011.

The International Manual
In his book The Way, published in 2011, Edgar Morin reflects on and maps out actions for a better future. He notes that in all countries there are already many experiences of change that are little known and which often remain isolated. Morin suggests carrying out an in-depth survey to make them better known, and promote the dissemination of quality innovations. The KIP-UN Initiative aims to implement Morin’s suggestions. Its main cultural output will in fact be an International Manual, produced though a permanent process of consultation with the most advanced experiences in all fields. It will be a living handbook because it will be systematically enriched by contributions from actors involved in change and because it will be used in all the countries participating in the International School network.
### Innovative strategic projects

To satisfy requests from national and local governments, the School will develop projects to support reforms in line with the Millennium Platform, fine-tuning solutions and working methods which can then be disseminated. These projects enhance partnerships between public and private actors and associations, in particular at regional and local level. In this framework, action-research is also promoted to systematize practices, so that they may be disseminated nationally and internationally, and innovative methodologies and technologies can be experimented.

### Examples of strategic projects

- **The Mediterranean University of Crafts Project** involves designing territorial development plans based on enhancing traditional local crafts and knowledge, which are networked and supported by specialized training courses;
- **The project supporting Guatemala's national policy for local economic development** involves the dissemination of LEDAs and centres for the promotion of women's enterprises (CSEM) in all interested departments;
- **The project supporting Albanian national mental health policy** involves shutting down mental hospitals and promoting social enterprises and cooperatives to integrate vulnerable groups in the country’s economic sectors.

### Working tools

The KIP-UN initiative guides the process of creating the International School. It has established agreements with programmes managed by United Nations organizations, which, given their long experience, constitute its essential tools.

#### The ILS LEDA programme

Set up in 1998 by ILO, UNDP and UNOPS, provides technical assistance related to local economic development. In particular, it supports the creation, functioning and networking of Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs).

#### The IDEASS programme

Set up in 2001 by ILO, UNDP, UNIFEM and UNOPS, identifies and disseminates innovations that can contribute to quality territorial development. It helps establish partnerships between the authors of innovations and interested interlocutors in different countries.

#### The SIP service

Set up in 1991 by UNDP and UNOPS, works to promote and support decentralized cooperation partnerships between regional and local communities in Europe and interested countries. More than 400 such international partnerships have been established, mobilizing thousands of public and private actors.

#### The UNIVERSITAS programme

Launched in 2001 by ILO, UNDP and UNOPS, promotes research and training for human development. It organizes intensive international courses for development actors, in collaboration with universities of different countries and interested public administrations. It promotes research for the systematization of innovative practice and publishes such work in its journal Universitas Forum.

### Local Economic Development Agencies

LEDAs are territorial services, managed by associations of local public, private and non-profit actors, whose mission is to support businesses, enhancing local resources and capacities and integrating vulnerable groups into economic activity. More than 60 LEDAs are operating in different countries, supported by ILSLED (www.ilsleda.org).

### IDEASS and its website

To learn about the innovations promoted by IDEASS and its current activities, please visit the website www.ideassonline.org. This site, with visitors from over 115 countries, is an important instrument of the International School's permanent cultural campaign.

### Tools for knowledge dissemination

UNIVERSITAS publishes the electronic journal Universitas Forum (www.universitasforum.org) and administers an electronic library of texts on human development: www.hdrnet.org.
The School as a result of the participation of all interested stakeholders

All development and international cooperation actors can be part of the process of creating the International School: national governments, local governments, international organizations, foundations, universities, NGOs, associations, social economy actors.

In the process of setting up the school the aim is to capitalize on the knowledge gained from the experience of territorial development and expand the network of experiences that are coherent with the Millennium platform.

Another aim is to provide a reference point for the many universities of the North and South that wish to profoundly renew their teaching, both by helping to build an organic body of development knowledge, going beyond the specialized and fragmentary knowledge that currently prevails, and linking theoretical work more closely to practical territorial experiences and to prospects for future work.

To participate, interested actors can contact the KIP-UN initiative and develop one or more projects within its framework.

KIP-UN Initiative

The KIP-UN Initiative involves a set of programmes, projects, action plans and activities aimed at setting up the International School. Each participating organization may choose their own methods of managing and implementing the projects agreed with the KIP-UN Initiative, specifying the activities it intends to carry out nationally or internationally: strategic projects, projects for the dissemination of innovations, laboratories of change, publications, cultural events, professional development courses, university programmes, action-research, seminars and other events.

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The KIP-UN Initiative website, www.kip-un.org, containing all useful contacts, will be activated in the first half of 2011.

The Secretariat of the KIP-UN Initiative is provided by the participating international programmes.
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