

The future of Ibero-America: RIBER 2017

From 22 to 25 March, the Ibero-American Prospective/Foresight/Futurist Network (RIBER: Red Iberoamericana de Prospectiva) met in Monterrey, Mexico. This network was formed in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in 2015 and in 2017 summoned the annual meeting of its members for the third consecutive year. RIBER was originally formed by academics and prospective and foresight experts from several Latin American and Spanish nodes of the Millennium Project. This event was attended by experts from several countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela. There were also additional virtual participants who connected from Brazil, Ecuador, Portugal and the USA. The members of this network met one more year to talk about strategic issues which are fundamental to creating the future of the region towards the achievement of the Millennium's challenges.

On this occasion, some of topics considered included aspects of work and technology scenarios by the year 2030 and 2050, the future of happiness measurement, the future of competency-based education, the challenges of Latin America to 2050; new ideas about foresight methodologies, the importance of prospective consultancy, the presentation of projects and advances in studies on the future of fossil fuel energies and the disruption of alternative energies; the uniqueness and the new post-human era based on artificial intelligence, longevity extension and ideas of immortality, research and entrepreneurship networks of member countries, foresight and complex systems, innovation laboratories and futures research, the State's challenge in Latin America in terms of institutions and limits, among many other issues of interest to economic and social development.

In my opinion, this year's meeting was very productive, not only because of the even closer relationship between researchers and experts from different countries but also because of the creation of a common regional space where challenges of our nations were measured facing a dynamic and highly changing world, a world without borders but ontologically uncertain and complex. The coming wave of changes impose challenges on Ibero-America and the world in at least fifteen thematic areas, or Global Challenges as defined by The Millennium Project: sustainable development and climate change, water, population and resources, democratization, global futures and decision making, globalization and technological information, wealth and poverty, health, education and learning, conflict resolution, improving women's status,

international organized crime, energy, science and technology, and global ethics.

The future success of prospective in Ibero-America will depend on the dissemination and appropriation of the knowledge generated in the network in the different social levels of our countries, in the effective link between researchers, experts, institutions and decision-makers, and it will also depend to a great extent on incorporating of all Latin American countries into development projects, involving the most important universities and more strategic companies in the area of influence, consolidating multinational transdisciplinary projects and advancing concrete actions that will definitely contribute to building a better future for our societies.

Since the area of influence of this Prospective Network is so ambitiously broad, and considering that working to alleviate the enormous inequalities and gaps that exist between its member countries, it is an immense challenge to face. The main challenge for Ibero-America in the future is cooperation, to understand the problems of member countries as common problems that must be solved immediately without discretion or elitism because time does not wait, and the wave of disruptive changes will either drown us or will bring us afloat.

I think the best thing about the RIBER Prospective Network focused on our region is its potential influence, since its members are convinced that they can be agents of change, advancing a better future for our countries from the present days. The teamwork initiatives of researchers, experts, academics and entrepreneurs from different disciplines allow articulate people with different cultures in the elaboration of a common vision of the future. But the effort does not end there, the cycle is closed and will only be efficient when we define with clarity the actions that we must carry out together to draw the future that we want to live in, with the idea of happiness that best suits our needs and cultures, and the most important step will undoubtedly be how to effectively implement this change. The challenge is great, it is ideal for dreaming but much better for acting.

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Lucio Henao's summary video of RIBER 2017 activities in Monterrey:
<http://play.smilebox.com/SpreadMoreHappy/4e4455794d6a63344d4464384d5441304d6a63304f5441780d0a>