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VERTEBRALCUE WORKING MEETING

Heredia, 21st, 22nd, 23rd June, 2009

Minutes Meeting

The second meeting of the VertebralCue Project took place in Costa Rica from the 21st to the 23rd June, 2009. All partners of the network were present except FLACSO-Argentina, the Universidad Autónoma de Asunción, the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos and the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (see Annex 1: List of participants). In the first case, the representative of FLACSO suffered health problems just the night before the departure and did not have enough time to invite another member of the same institution. In the case of the Peruvian partners, because of visa problems, they were in no position to attend the meeting.

By a way of introduction, the general impression is that the meeting was a success, both in terms of the quality of the presentations and the participation of most members, if not all, in the conference debates.

A second element which we believe is equally important refers to the consolidation of the group as a working network in which every participant felt at ease and eager to participate and contribute to its overall functioning.

After this brief premise, this report will follow the points indicated in the agenda's meeting (see Annex 2).

REGISTRATION

21st June, 2009 - Afternoon

Members of the network met at 5 PM of June 21st for registration and a welcoming address by the Rector of Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica (UNA), Dr. Olman Segura Bonilla.

WP2 - State of Art Report Objectives, Methods and First Empirical Information

22nd June, 2009 - 9:30 AM

The meeting of Monday morning, following the indication of the agenda, begun with the presentation of Carlos Álvarez Bogantes (UNA). He introduced the main issues to be discussed during the meeting, making reference to their relevance within the overall project objectives.

Within the framework of the WP2, the first intervention dealt with “patterns for the presentation of cases”. After a brief review of the guidelines circulated in advance (see Annex 3), emphasis was placed on the collection of information from all partners, on the quality of this information in order to contribute to the State of Art Report on academic cooperation assigned to WP2. At the same time, this report should be an important input for the construction of ALCUE Units.

Taking into consideration the difficulty in obtaining a complete universe of cases, the impossibility of designing a representative sample and the heterogeneity of the collected material -both in terms of quality and content- it was proposed the use of the Weberian ideal type methodology, which consists in drawing from the empirical cases a variety of dimensions that can constitute a case of best practice.

The general criteria for selecting the dimension to be included in the ideal type are:

- 1- Quality of the outcomes
- 2- Visibility
- 3- Participation and reciprocity
- 4- Sustainability
- 5- Transferability and applicability
- 6- Impact

To these criteria, which were already stated in the Guidelines (see Annex 3), an additional one should be included that has to do with empirical evidence that supports strategies of converging interests among participating institutions in cooperative endeavours. In the intense debate that followed, an agreement was reached on accepting the ideal type methodology with the suggestion of including more than one ideal type of best practices of academic cooperation, in order to consider the specificity of particular disciplines and subjects, as well as the different kind of member institutions.

Following this introduction, three empirical cases were presented: the first one, on individual cooperation experiences by Universidad Central de Chile (see Annex 4); the second one, on institutional co-cooperation, by Universidad de Granada (see Annex 5);

and the third one on systemic cooperation by Universidad Antonio Nariño (see Annex 6).

A) Universidad Central de Chile:

After a brief introduction about the main features of the institution and its institutional strategy, a synthesis of the most relevant aspects of the individual cooperation experience was presented (professor, student and researcher mobility; joint degrees, etc.). The empirical evidence presented resulted from the analysis of 12 individual or group experiences, one institutional experience and one systemic experience. The results were presented in terms of good practices and lessons learned.

Dimensions of good practices:

- *Visibility and organisation:*
 - o The majority of the cases (67%) do not have a formal organisational structure.
 - o About 75% of the experiences have a website.
- *Participation and reciprocity*
 - o The quality of the outcomes and the possibility of enjoying mutual benefits from them are positively related to the level of involvement of the partners.
 - o At the same time, working in groups and networks promote the sustainability of the experiences.
 - o This type of cooperation experiences depends more on contacts among individuals than on institutional relationship.
 - o Informal networks have shown better results than structured ones.
- *Sustainability*
 - o The participation of experts in the design and development of the projects has positively contributed to their sustainability.
- *Transferability and applicability*
 - o Mature projects can be more easily transferred to other contexts.
 - Some tools can facilitate transference:
 - Workshops, seminars, courses.
 - TICs.
 - The participation of experts.
- *Impact*
 - o The impact of the experience is greater when:
 - the key participants remain in the project;
 - the project is sustainable.
 - it enjoys institutional support.
 - Networks are well organised.

Some factors were considered as critical from the assessment of the individual cooperation experiences. Among them:

- For mobility projects: the knowledge of a second language.
- Human resources: there is a high rotation and a lack of full-time employees.
- Complicated norms and administrative rules.
- Lack of sustainable funding for the projects.
- Characteristics of the economic, social and cultural environment where the project has to be implemented have to be taken into account.

Some non-anticipated risk factors have been also mentioned in the presentation:

- Problems with diffusion of information negatively affect the access of stakeholders to the outcomes of the projects.
- Changes in rules concerning international cooperation;
- Changes in national and international situation.

B) Universidad de Granada:

This presentation was mainly devoted to the description of the main features of the internationalisation strategy of the Universidad de Granada, especially concerning cooperation activities carried out with Latin America.

The following facts were identified as critical in order to maximise the impact and sustainability of these activities:

- people involved in the project should:
 - o be motivated and interested in cooperation;
 - o have experience in the areas covered by the project;
 - o fulfil language requirements.
- the project should enjoy institutional support from all the partners;
- mutual confidence among member institutions should prevail.
- the project should have a sustainability and a quality plan.
- the knowledge of socio-political environment of each partner.
- the project should have adequate and sustainable financing.

C) Universidad Antonio Nariño:

The presentation focused on the experience of the *Red Orion*, which is a global network of Latin American and European universities and NGOs located in Argentina. A brief description of the activities of the network followed:

- Student and teachers mobility;
- Conferences and seminars;
- Research projects;
- Online academic courses;
- Virtual library.

Two points of this presentation could be considered as best practices for development of the VertebralCue network and should be highlighted:

- Red Orion was born as an ALFA project (originally called *Consortio Orion*) but, after two years, its members decided to create a formal network that has sustained its activities for more than ten years. Therefore, it represents a case of good practice concerning sustainability.
- It has developed good relationship with various external stakeholders, such as local and national governments (especially in Spain), NGOs and research centres, and other networks, such as the Coimbra Group and Maison du Pays du Cone Sud.

Following the three presentations, an intense debate developed around the asymmetry problem, the differential power position in ALCUE common space of higher education institutions from Latin America and EU and the need to promote Latin American integration between academic institutions as a pre-condition for bi-regional integration. Norberto Fernández Lamarra (UNTREF) objected that the reforms of higher education in Europe and their extension to other regions had two main purposes: 1) attracting

more students from non-Europeans countries and; 2) strengthening European university competitiveness with respect to United States in order to produce changes in the traditional pattern of student recruitment. He also suggested that the reform and the credit system which go into the direction of Anglo-Saxon procedures are a step forward in the achievement of these objectives. At the same time, he stressed that by undersigning the project aimed at creating the ALCUE common space of higher education Latin America simply expresses a good wish, since the actual fragmentation of higher education of Latin America is an obstacle to move towards bi-regional integration.

He concluded his intervention by raising three additional points: 1) the importance of UNESCO-IESALC in the promotion of the ENLANCES programme among Latin America governments in order to achieve deeper integration of their higher education systems; 2) the organisation of the second World Conference of Education to be held in Paris where, according to him, one of the crucial themes would be the definition of education either as a public good or as a private commodity, adding that if this last vision would prevail, the World Trade Organization would incorporate education as a marketable good; 3) the Bologna process which, if applied in Latin America without taking into consideration both local and systemic realities, could increase fragmentation. He concluded that although Latin American and Caribbean countries should learn from the European process, they should not copy it. In fact, he maintained that they should ask European countries to help the region to build its own common space of higher education.

A different issue was raised by some partners concerning the lack of attention provided by Vertebralcue to the participation of the student body. On a different level, Patricia Desimone (UACH) intervened suggesting that we should systematise the definition of key concepts such as “internationalisation”, “mobility” and “relationship with society”. According to her, it would help in creating a common language for the project.

This first debate concluded with two interventions: Claudio Dondi (Scienter) agreed that the participation of students was important. He pointed out that in the VALUE project, that preceded Vertebralcue, the European Federation of Students participated as a stakeholder group and a survey was conducted to enquire about the perception of Latin America students about academic institutions in Europe. Considering the points raised by Lamarra, he suggested that Vertebralcue and ENLACES do not have conflicting aims but instead they both strive for the same goals.

Two presentations dealing with the nature and functions of academic networks followed this debate. The first one on the Latin America experience (UNIBO, see Annex 7), the second one on the European one (Scienter, see Annex 8).

In both presentations, emphasis was given to the important role that networks played in increasing the awareness about the necessity of academic cooperation in the effort of reaching a higher level of modernisation and integration of higher education institutions.

A second point that was highlighted refers to some differences that were observed when comparing Latin American and European networks, such as the significant institutional differences in integration schemes within which networks operate in the two areas. In the case of Latin America, as it is well known, regional integration processes are not as developed as in the case of Europe, raising some difficulties in the relationship between existing networks and corresponding governmental structures. Another point raised by the presentations had to do with different financial support and the sustainability of the networks that suffered the same limits, briefly depicted above.

The morning session was concluded by a presentation on “Cooperation for Education and Science: Challenges for Latin America” by Ernesto Villanueva (UNQ) (see Annex 9). The most important points raised by this intervention had to do with the asymmetries between academic institutions in Latin America and Europe, which reflected themselves upon the pattern of academic cooperation. A second issue pointed out by the presentation had to do with the fact that strong imbalance between financial sources in both regions affected the nature of bi-regional cooperation.

The presentation highlighted conceptual and empirical problems related to the asymmetry between EU actors and their counterparts in Latin America:

- a) It underlined the need to change the prevailing vision about relations between the two regions. He proposed an approach oriented towards strategies aimed at pursuing common interests, following the principle of “win-win” in order to overcome power asymmetries.
- b) It is necessary to consider South-South synergies and integration practices. How can cooperation within existing networks be deepened? How can difficulties regarding the use of some key terms be overcome?
- c) It proposed to move from conceptualising cooperation in terms of “aid” towards a new concept in terms of “horizontal cooperation”. However, this type of cooperation would not be possible if the particular characteristics of the involved countries as well as their financial endowment are not taken into account;
- d) Another important problem that should be tackled is related to the orientation of policies aimed at promoting higher education: should they focus on engineers or, instead, on doctors? How can we bring about a virtuous circle between scientific cooperation and education? The translation of academic knowledge into practice is not possible without considering asymmetries between regions and contexts and without taking into consideration different disciplinary areas.

In the following discussion, the debate dealt mainly with the question of asymmetry because, if accepted as a general premise, it would render problematic any form of institutional academic co-operation. A way out of this dilemma was achieved by the emphasis that some partners put on designing structures of bi-regional co-operation which, well aware of the risk posed by asymmetries, would emphasise strategies of concrete converging interests and rewards that would equally benefit the institutions involved in cooperation. This change in orientation would imply that the statement “Latin America is an opportunity for Europe” should be rephrased as “the relationship between Latin America and the European Union is an opportunity for both regions”.

WP2 - Changes towards New Orienting Rules for Higher Education

22nd June, 2009 - 14:30 PM

Facing the challenges and opportunities introduced by new rules for higher education two papers were presented by UNIBO. The first one addressed the question of public policies in Latin America concerning the issue of educational convergence; the second one dealt with the Bologna Process and the Erasmus Mundus programme in Europe.

The first paper presented during session by José María Ghio was on “The adoption of public policies in Latin America concerning the theme of educational convergence” (see Annex 10). The author raised four main issues:

The first point was related to the need to analyse the educational dimension as a particular aspect of the broader context of State-Public Policies. During the last fifteen years, in Latin America, public policies were mostly focused on restructuring and adjusting economic programmes. The educational reform –and, particularly the academic reform- was not part of the central agenda. In the field of higher education, the main topics were related to the certification of university programmes through the creation of specific agencies devoted to provide quality assessment. In most countries, these agencies are playing a major role in a convergence tendency for quality standards and evaluation criteria.

The second one concerns the role and capabilities of our academic systems to have some influence on public decision-making in issues related to higher education. The fact that the agenda on this question has been mainly driven by international institutions makes it necessary the development of new institutions in our regions capable of working on these themes.

The next point stressed the need to face some deficiencies of the system, both from the point of view of public regulatory agencies and of cooperation networks. Even though, different models and agencies has been creating to control the quality of higher education systems during the last years, the significant increase in the number of higher education institutions -a trend that is expected to continue in the near future- make it clear that there would still be a lot of ground to be covered. But, in order to increase its regulatory capacity, the weaknesses of the public sector in Latin American countries have to be addressed.

The last point referred to the need to consider our project in terms of its capacity to contribute to the solution of these problems. In order to assure sustainability, cooperation in higher education should involve external stakeholders to open the university system to its social environment.

The last presentation of this session was made by Barbara Venturini (UNIBO) on "The Bologna Process and the State of the Art Report" (see Annex 11).

Two main questions were raised by the presentation:

1. What is the contribution of the Bologna process to the task of creating a common space of higher education between Latin America and European Union?
2. How should we consider European programs on academic cooperation, mobility, research and other experiences within the State of the Art Report?

The major steps in the evolution of the Bologna process were briefly reviewed, concluding that it can suggest four dimensions to be taken into consideration by the VertebralCue project:

1. The role of each actor and its interests in the different stages of the project.
2. The basic principles of the European system, such as harmonisation, autonomy, modernization and social cohesion may not be shared by Latin America but could still be thought as points of reference. Given the pressures exerted by students as well as by the current economic crisis, special attention should be paid to the social dimension and the relationship between education and employment.
3. The need to consider the concept of competitiveness within bi-regional integration patterns.

4. The need of Vertebralcue to encourage academic cooperation through the promotion of synergies with other programs dealing with mobility and research.

The Rector of UNA concluded the session by proposing a first prompt publication of a report which underlies the specificity of the Vertebralcue project in its contribution aimed at building a common space of higher education between Latin America and Europe.

WP3 – Meeting with stakeholders

22nd June, 2009 - 3:45 PM

Claudio Dondi introduced the session with a presentation about some orienting guidelines concerning: 1) the meeting with stakeholders; and 2) the reports that should be written about them. Concerning the first issue he pointed out that those meetings must address the following points:

- a) an overall presentation of the project;
- b) the identification of the needs of stakeholders;
- c) a presentation of the functions of the Units, with particular interest in the promotion of cooperation with the private sector, given the traditional difficulty for establishing articulation between university-society.

The reports on these meeting should address the following points:

1. Basic information about the meeting (list of participants, date, place);
2. Minutes of the meeting;
3. Results achieved during the meeting.

After the introduction made by Dondi five experiences of meetings with stakeholders held by member institutions were presented:

Universidad de Loyola (Bolivia) (Annex 12)

Two Basic questions guided the meeting the university held with stakeholders:

- a) How can the Alcue Unit be integrated into the university?
- b) How can better mechanisms of communication be developed?

Objectives to be reached by the ALCUE Unit:

3. To involve authorities of the Delegation of the EU and cooperation international agencies located in the country;
4. To involve key actors and local organisations;
5. To exchange experiences with stakeholders;
6. To promote teaching mobility and exchange of professors;
7. To carry out shared actions with stakeholders;
- a) To launch new post-graduate programs;
- b) To develop TICs applied to higher education.

The following weaknesses were detected:

1. It is difficult to establish communication with stakeholders;
2. It is difficult to design and implement instruments to monitor projects;
3. Problems with sustainability and dissemination of the outcomes of the projects;
4. The definition of clear thematic areas is difficult.

Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (México)

This institution conducted a preliminary online research in order to identify the various types of stakeholders with different interests that could be somehow related to the activities of ALCUE Units. This activity -that was carried out in collaboration with the other Mexican partners involved in the project- pursued the following specific objectives:

- 1) To develop a website capable of providing visibility to the project and of supporting the electronic survey;
- 2) To construct a database of stakeholders;
- 3) To measure the degree of involvement of stakeholders in cooperation activities carried out both in Latin America and the EU.

Data obtained from the survey is being processed.

Asociación Colombiana de Universidades y Universidad Antonio Nariño (Colombia) (see Annex 13)

The presentation was divided into two sections:

- 1) *Internal stakeholders*: taking advantage of the five meetings organised to prepare the World Conference on Education to be held in Paris information was sent by e-mail.
- 2) *External stakeholders*: the presentation of the project to stakeholders was postponed until a clear definition was reached of what ALCUE Units would offer to them. Instead, online consultation with potential stakeholders was launched, taking care of avoiding the raising of false expectations about the project.

University of Graz (Austria) (see Annex 14)

After a brief introduction about the role the university play within the Coimbra Group and a comment about the importance of this network for its cooperation strategy, three points were addressed.

- 1) *Internal stakeholders*: a brief description of the various activities carried out with significant counterparts of the university was made.
- 2) *External national and international stakeholders*: a first survey on ministries, public authorities, networks, etc. was carried out.
- 3) *Integration of Vertebralcue into the activities of the academic institutions*: it was suggested that Vertebralcue should be included within the projects developed by each member of the consortium in order to favour its integration within their institutional practices.

Special attention was paid to the difficulties to make our project visible to all stakeholders. It was proposed to create a website with the objective of making the information accessible to all those that might be interested.

Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (Argentina)

The main objectives of the meeting were:

- 1) to present the aims of the project to stakeholders;
- 2) to strengthen links with the environment;
- 3) to identify weaknesses of the academic cooperation.

A basic question was asked: ¿how can stakeholders participate in Vertebralcue activities?

A brief description of the main activities followed (all Argentinean partners participated in the meeting). Stakeholders were divided into two groups: a) Educational area; and b) the rest of stakeholders (production, public sector, etc.).

The meeting held in Buenos Aires in June focused on the first group. It was attended by representatives of three ministries, international organisations, research institutions, and some of the most important public and private universities. The meeting counted on the participation of experts in cooperation.

The main conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- Good receptivity and disposition to collaborate was expressed by stakeholders;
- Problems arose regarding the lack of an agenda;
- The presence of people with different interests made interaction complex, so that it was recommended to carry out meetings with different kind of stakeholders.
- It was pointed out that a previous consultation in order to identify the profile and interests of stakeholders would have been necessary.
- It was pointed out the need to better define and present the nature and functions of ALCUE Units.

After the presentations, Claudio Dondi suggested that online consultation would be a good idea and that exchanging information with partners that already implemented it (Mexican and Colombian institutions) would be advisable.

It was suggested that an online survey should address a core of questions that should be common to all partners. It was also pointed out that the objectives of such a survey should be clearly specified.

An issue that was raised by most presentations, and that was intensely debated, had to do with the difficulty of presenting clearly the nature and functions of the ALCUE Units to stakeholders, considering the fact that they are still in the process of being conceptualised, designed and implemented (a task that will be accomplished in the second year of the project).

As a general response to this difficulty some members maintained that the relationship with stakeholders needs to be gradually built over time in order to establish a working alliance to carry out activities that clearly meet some of their needs (see the following discussion about the structure of ALCUE Units, where some partners suggested that in order to consolidate the relationship between the academic institutions and

stakeholders, some of them should be included in the advisory board of the ALCUE Units).

It was also suggested to keep in mind the list of functions of the ALCUE Units already agreed upon during the kick off meeting held in Buenos Aires. So far the orienting ideas are:

- 1) ALCUE Units represents a new paradigm aimed at articulating different geographical areas. For example: to increase and deepen the relationship between education and productive structure with the involvement of national and local governments as well as regional and international agencies.
- 2) ALCUE Units should connect demand and supply of key and strategic knowledge, for example, through observatories, virtual libraries on key themes, etc.
- 3) ALCUE Units should contribute to build groups or communities concerned with the diffusion of methodologies and experiences of innovation in curricula.
- 4) Channels for student and professor mobility should be developed.
- 5) Best practices and lessons learned should be recorded.

In the debate that followed a crucial question was raised: what are the criteria that should guide the selection of stakeholders?

Some participants suggested that it would be difficult to identify general criteria and that it would be preferable for each institution to analyse and contact the stakeholders that each institution considers to be most interesting for its activities.

Other partners noted that representatives from the public sector showed more interest than those from the private one. This fact was interpreted as the reflection of the existing divorce between academia and society. In general, it was suggested that the heterogeneity of academic actors, with their different interests and expectations, made it difficult to find concrete answers at this early stage of the project.

Finally, it was agreed by all members that Vertebralcue and the ALCUE Units should be a space for the access to knowledge.

WP4 – ALCUE Units

23rd June, 2009 - 9:30 AM

The session was chaired by Norma Rondero (UAM). Firstly, based on the agreements reached during the kick off meeting held in Buenos Aires, she reminded the participants about the nature and functions of ALCUE Units. Secondly, she raised some questions that should be taken into account during the discussions that are to be held within each working group:

- a) ¿Should partners reach an agreement over minimal requirements that all ALCUE Units have to fulfill or, instead, in order to respect institutional heterogeneity of the network, no requirements should be established?
- b) What are the minimal structural requirements necessary for the establishment of an ALCUE Unit?
 - i. Physical and Virtual infrastructure;

- ii. Position in the organizational structure.
 - iii. Funding scheme;
 - iv. Human resources;
 - v. Formal norms and procedures;
 - vi. Dissemination programme;
 - vii. Monitoring and evaluation instruments and procedures.
- c) The following factors should be taken into account when constructing an ALCUE Unit:
- i. State of the art report (WP2);
 - ii. Strengths and weaknesses (learning from both successful and unsuccessful previous experiences);
 - iii. The fact that ALCUE Units integrate a bi-regional network should be taken into account.
- d) In order to define the main activities that should be carried out by an ALCUE Unit it is necessary:
- i. To identify those capabilities that are best developed within each institution.
 - ii. To take into account demands from stakeholders.
- e) In what fields should ALCUE Units carry out their activities?
- i. Exchange and mobility;
 - ii. Joint Research;
 - iii. Technical services;
 - iv. Technological innovation;
 - v. Continuous learning (postgraduate studies, courses, workshops).
- f) What kind of relationship should be established with stakeholders?
- i. A classification of the different kind of relationships should be carried out;
 - ii. Co-financing, sale of services and exchanging of projects could be carried out with stakeholders.
- g) How could ALCUE Units gain influence on the formulation of public policies?
- i. To acquire visibility among key relevant public and private actors.
 - ii. Stakeholders with the capacity to influence the decision-making process should be identified;
 - iii. Alternative solutions to the problem of academic and development cooperation should be proposed.

In order to focus the discussion on a limited set of issues, an agreement was reached on the fact that each group should mainly devote attention to the following questions:

- a) Minimal requirements for the formal creation of the ALCUE Unit;
- b) Characteristics of the working plan for the development of the ALCUE Units.

Reports of the working groups

Working Group 1. Rapporteur: Beatriz Peluffo (UCCH)

- a) Formalisation: A minimal structure supported by institutional authorities must be established. Major bureaucratic structures should be avoided. It must have sufficient autonomy and flexibility in order to operate both in academic cooperation and development activities.
- b) It should be directed by a recognised and prestigious authority. An internal statute should be drafted, containing working procedures and the role of stakeholders within the project. There should be three levels of coordination: a chairman with a board of directors, an advisory board (stakeholders would participate at this level, and executive unit).
- c) Functional areas. Three areas were proposed for the development of different functions:
 - a. Academic cooperation: teaching, research, extension and diffusion.
 - b. Cooperative relationship between university and society.
 - c. Activities aimed at strengthening the Vertebralcue network – observatories.
- d) Partners from the same country should coordinate their activities.

Working Group 2. Rapporteur: Patricia Desimone (UACH)

- a) A fundamental principle must be established: centralisation and articulation of social and academic information on cooperation activities. This constitutes the articulating principle of the ALCUE Units.
- b) Minimal structure:
 - a. Technical Secretariat;
 - b. Advisory board (stakeholders);
 - c. Technical committee.
- c) Functions:
 - a. Advise for Networks building;
 - b. To propose concrete objectives for thematic Networks;
 - c. To define the subject matter of thematic areas.
- d) Functions of the ALCUE Units: observe, articulate and facilitate processes of cooperation.

Working Group 3. Rapporteur: Vera Solis (Universidad Centroamericana)

The Group discussed the institutional-organisational development. Two different stages were considered to be important: during the first year, internal service functions within each institution would be a priority; from the second year, external actions at national level would be carried out.

ALCUE Unit must:

- be located close to high institutional levels of decision-making in connection with the rectorate office of the institution.
- be associated with the institutional cooperation office of each institution.
- rely on academic activities carried out within each institution.

Functions:

ALCUE Unit should be a connecting link with cooperation activities. In addition, it will perform diffusion tasks, supporting involved actors and generating debates and research projects that should bear upon public policies. They should also try to develop connections with other ALFA III projects.

This working group points out some pending issues:

- Financing;
- Defining minimum common elements to specify the nature of ALCUE units.

The following common points among the three working groups were highlighted:

- 1) Specific structure for ALCUE Units in each member institution should be located at a high level in the decision making structure.
- 2) Connecting strategies with the academic sector within each institution in support of external activities.
- 3) The ALCUE Unit structure should involve stakeholders.
- 4) Consulting and technical bodies could be part of ALCUE Unit.
- 5) Different functions must be specified: internal (teaching, research and extension); external (services); those related to the strengthening of the Vertebralcue network.

WP10 – The instruments of the project

23rd June, 2009 - 2:30 PM

During the last session some instruments related to the management of the network were presented.

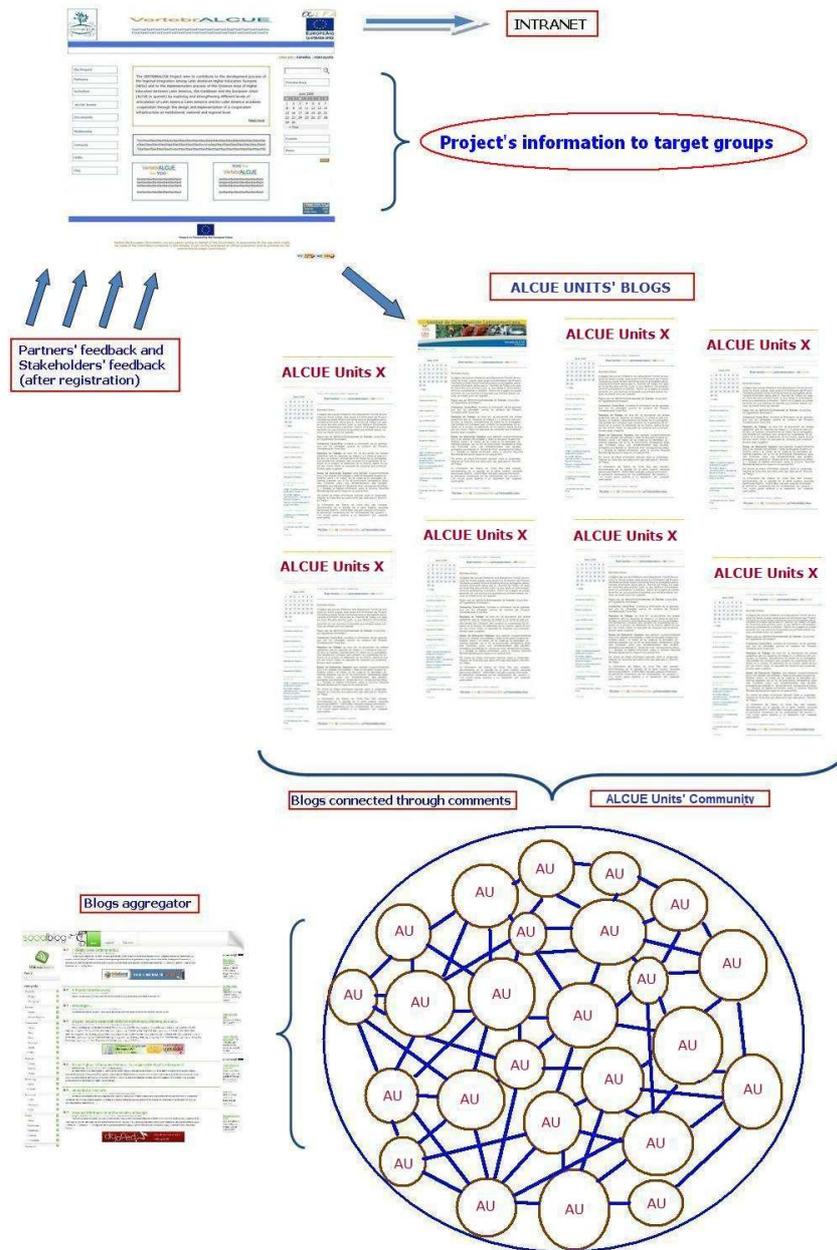
Firstly, Unibo informed all the partners that a draft of the Quality Plan and the Evaluation Plan would be circulated among institutions that take part in WP10 in order to exchange opinions and deliver a final version by the 22nd July and the 15th August respectively.

Secondly, Unibo presented the structure and functions of the Intranet of the network (see Annex 15), that will be used to carry out communication within the member institutions as well as with the European Commission.

Thirdly, Scierter presented the structure and main functions of the Vertebralcue website whose first version will be online by the end of July 2009 (see Annex...). The website will be firstly published in two of the three languages of the Project, namely Spanish and English, while the Portuguese section will be implemented afterward due to the necessary time for translation.

Scierter also underlined the importance of the integration of the different communication tools developed (or to be developed in the future) by the Project, namely:

- a. Sharepoint intranet (internal communication) and mailing list;
- b. Main website (external communication towards international stakeholders);
- c. ALCUE Units' blogs/websites (external communication towards local stakeholders and knowledge sharing among Partners through web 2.0 tools);
- d. an aggregator (optional) which could contain all the contributions published in the AU's blogs in one single website.



Scienter underlined the major importance of the Partners' collaboration in developing the website by providing the information needed for the Partners' pages and the other sections which will require to be implemented constantly with updated info (news, events, documents, media, etc).

Once the logo has been decided (by July 15th) and the Project website's header and footer will be ready, these elements will be sent to each Partner in order to develop the ALCUE Units' blogs following a common editorial line.

Finally, Scienter presented the Communication Strategy Plan Matrix which will be used to effectively plan the communication activities of the Project and will also help the ALCUE Units to plan theirs, in the second year of the Project.

Comm. Level	Target audiences	Aims	Key messages	Feedback required	Tools	Timeline
External	A					
External	B					
External	C					
External	D					
External	E					
External	F					
External	G					
External	H					
Meso	A					
Meso	B					
Meso	C					
Meso	D					
Internal	A					
Internal	B					

In the discussion that followed the presentations, emphasis was put on the importance of these instruments that will significant contribute to establish a fluid communication both among partners and with stakeholders.

Conclusions and future activities

23rd June, 2009 - 4:00 PM

In the concluding plenary session some of the major points agreed during the meeting were reviewed and a general consensus was reached about the development of a chronogram for future activities which are presented as follows.

WP	What	Who	Expected delivery (2009)
WP1	Minutes of the Working meeting	UNIBO	By 15 th July
	Final version of the Quality Plan	UNIBO	By 22 nd July
	Final version of the Evaluation Plan	UNIBO	By 15 th August
	Choice of the members of the Advisory Group	PCG	By 15 th July
WP2	Revision of templates, especially those aspects concerning qualitative evaluation of the cooperation experiences.	All partners	By 15 th July

	Completing chapters of the State of Art Report	UNIBO SCIENTER	By 30 th August
WP3	Reports of the meeting held with stakeholders	All partners	By 30 th July
WP4	Workplan of the ALCUE Units	All partners	By 30 th August
WP10	Choice of the Vertebralcue logo	All partners	By 10 th July
	To send institutional description to Scierter	All partners	By 10 th July
	Website of Vertebralcue online	Scierter	By 30 th July