



## Inventory Tool for Higher Education Civic Engagement

### Part One:

### Clarifying the institution's historical and mission-based commitments to its host society

#### 1. Mission and history

#### ¿How the origins and development of your institution incorporate commitments to the development of the region and locality?

The origins of [Universidad Metropolitana](#) go back to the year 1964, when a group of professors of other universities decided to create a private university. The project also included a group of business men, with the leadership of Eugenio Mendoza. Created by presidential decree, as a non profit public institution privately administered. Academic activities started on October 1970 with the following faculties: Arts and Sciences, Engineering and Management, with 202 students. After a short period of functioning in a rented building downtown Caracas, and thanks to the contribution of Pius Schlageter who donated the land, the institution started building the actual Campus at the eastern part of the city.

The words of Eugenio Mendoza, one of the founders, interpret the civic commitment and social responsibility of the Universidad Metropolitana with the country and its people since the beginnings:

*"It is not enough to create industries and employment, it is also necessary to create and support programs of social responsibility and give and share our experiences and our resources with other institutions of higher education." (December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1974)*

*"Professional practice should not be oriented exclusively to personal benefit; on the contrary, it has to make itself evident through a deep and constant spirit of duty and service to others and a constant concern facing the amount of needs that the country is facing." (October, 22<sup>nd</sup> 1976 on first commencement day)*

#### 1.1 What relevant objectives are set for the institution in its founding document (charter or equivalent)?

The objectives are the following:

- *Higher education teaching will be inspired in a clear spirit of democracy, social justice and human solidarity. Respect for the truth, human dignity and freedom will be a priority in all manifestations of university life.*
- *Intellectual capacities and moral behavior as well as the willingness to work are considered essential qualities to be a member of Universidad Metropolitana*

## Mission of Universidad Metropolitana

*To graduate professionals known for their higher ethical level, solid general education, strong leadership competences and capable of team work, mastering a second language and with a strong commitment with the development of productive sector and society as well as society.*

## Vision of Universidad Metropolitana

*To strengthen the institution as a higher education institution, known for the competitiveness and general education of its students, acknowledged by the quality and pertinence of their intellectual and technical production,*

*[ In Spanish: Fortalecer la UNIMET como institución universitaria reconocida por la competitividad y formación integral de sus graduados, destacada por la calidad y pertinencia de su producción intelectual y técnica, por el valor que le asigna a la conducta ética de sus miembros y por los esfuerzos permanentes y el compromiso para responder a las cambiantes realidades del entorno nacional e internacional]*

### **1.2 What relevant expectations are held by those who fund your work and support it (including politically)?**

The most significant expectations held by those who support the work at Universidad Metropolitana are to continue being a non profit private university that offers a public service with private management. The budget structure relies mainly on tuition fees and the institution does not receive financial support from government offices. The institution centers its academic process on student learning, research and extension and community activities in different areas of knowledge within the context of a scientific-social and human approach, always aimed at serving society at large. Learning processes as well as management of the institution are based on a strong spirit of democracy, social justice and human solidarity.

### **1.3 Which external groups are represented ex officio and de facto on the institution's governance or senior management bodies? How are relevant individuals chosen and how do they see their roles?**

The external groups represented on the management and governance of the institution are the following: the academic sector, business-related or entrepreneurial sector, the mass media sector, the professional sector and industrial sector. The persons chosen to direct the institution are elected because their life trajectory is aligned with the fundamental strategic components of the institution, and their deep engagement with transforming the environment and the socioeconomic context of the country. The academic managers of the institution see their roles embedded in a great responsibility towards student's education –young and adult- emphasizing the practice of these values:

- Honesty
- Academic Excellence
- Tolerance and respect for human dignity and diversity
- Social inclusion
- Team work
- Service attitude

- Fostering innovation

All values are considered as core values of a life in democracy

**1.4 To whom does the institution regard itself accountable for its civic mission? For example, is there a “stakeholder group” such as a University Court, and if so, how does this work?**

Primarily, the institution regards itself accountable for its civic mission, to the students and professors who together share and build knowledge through learning processes and research and then acts extending the knowledge and expertise to the community. It also regards itself accountable for its civic mission to the support staff. The Higher Council (Board of Directors), the supreme governance corps agrees and promotes this civic mission.

The Higher council is made up of 24 members as follow: people acknowledged by their civic engagement commitment with education and country's life in different dimensions, academic authorities and representatives of professors and students.

**1.5 Are civic engagement and social responsibility objectives (as defined by answers to question 1.1 above) specified in the institution's strategic plan? If so, how, and with what indicators of success?**

There is a specific area of the institution's strategic plan where it states its civil engagement and social responsibility summarized in the promotion of knowledge building and praxis of social responsibility. Recently, there is a process of defining some indicators that could give us a measure of the achievement of these goals, among them (on a year basis):

- Number of professors involved un civic engagement activities, social responsibility and social capital building
- Number of students involved un civic engagement activities, social responsibility and social capital building
- Number of undergraduate thesis dealing with subjects related to social capital building, social responsibility and civic engagement
- Number of events (congress, seminars, symposiums, etc.) dedicated to these subjects
- Number of lectures, conferences, speeches, presentations, nationwide or international in which the professors ands students present research on social capital, social responsibility and civic engagement
- Number of publications (books, manuals, booklets and handouts) related to these subjects

**1.6 Have changes over time in the institution's composition or status (e.g. mergers, acquisitions, large scale contracts) affected the engagement agenda? If so, in what manner?**

Structural changes overtime in the institution's composition have positively affected the engagement agenda because it has walked together with the development of social responsibility:

- widening academic offer including subjects in social capital, human development and life planning; all processes aligned with community and society needs
- a careful process of expansion to other cities within the country, where the institution preserves its main campus located in the capital but has opened offices and graduate and extension programs in the west, east and center areas of the country

## **Part Two: Identifying how engagement informs and influences the institution's range of operations**

### **2. Balance of activities**

**The following questions investigate how your institution's pattern of activities reflects a civic engagement social responsibility agenda**

#### **2.1 Give a brief assessment of the chief economic and social needs of your region and or locality. Include a description of the main sources of this information**

Our institution is located in the most eastern side of Caracas, capital of the country, in Miranda State, with a large and populated urban area called Petare. In the same highway axis, are two large cities: Guarenas – Guatire, followed by an area called Barlovento, which population has a strong African tradition (see map included as annex).

<b>Chief economic needs of our region or locality</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Source of information</b>
Deficient economic situation of a significant percentage of population in the area surrounding the institution. Lack of stable job offers, high inflation rates, increased living costs, etc.	Urgent need of stable employments offers; population work in non formal economy, inadequate and insufficient family income.	Research done by students of the institution during their community service practices, data published by Venezuelan reliable poll companies (Datos, Hinterlaces), some data derived from UNDP sources
Precarious security systems nationwide and statewide. Higher threats to life, urban and rural violence: a culture of violence lay down in many environment of national life.	Data collected from information exhibited in mass media	Non systematic research done by students who analyze the news (printed, by radio or TV)
People in poor communities are deprived of adequate housing and facilities (Light, water, education, health)	As noted in constant request before governmental offices responsible for providing these services	Statistics published in newspapers, research done by Instituto de la Vivienda of Universidad Metropolitana, and data collected by the program Master in Urban Design, also from the web page of Ministry of Housing of República Bolivariana de Venezuela

Unhealthy urban and rural spaces, weakness of local government actions concerning waste disposals	Visits made by professors and students during the mandatory program of students community practices and social responsibility actions	As revealed through the experiences of social capital building at the institution.
Health services barely reach a minimum percentage of poor population. Population with little or non existent information about most common diseases and how to act when facing them.	Information derived from verbal testimonies of people living under poverty conditions in the surrounding neighborhoods: Petare Norte and Barlovento	In Barlovento, professors, students and leaders of the communities made a participatory evaluation and processed the results
Low quality of education due to poor teacher training, difficulty of places at secondary level and higher dropout rates, mainly in the poorest families. Curricula out of context, with contents extraneous to the children and young people.	Focus groups conducted by professors and students, with teachers of elementary and secondary education, during community practices	It was a special activity developed by a group of professors and students of the institution as part of the project Building Bridges, carried out by the institution, co-financed by Andean Corporation.
Politic polarization	As experienced by students, professors and administrative support persons in their daily life activities.	Talks with stakeholders involved in the activities of the institution and as reflected by mass media.

**2.2 How does the institution's teaching profile (by subject and level and including continuous professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning) reflect the needs of the local community and region? To what extent does the curriculum incorporate relevant features of the following:**

- a. Structured and assessed work experience and/or work-based learning**
- b. "service learning"; and/ or**
- c. prior or concurrent informal work experience**

These three aspects are taken into consideration when adult students submit their admission's request, and have a weight in the decisions of admission and the requirements, either to undergraduate and graduate studies

**2.2.1. How can representatives of the local and regional economy and community influence curriculum and other choices?**

- Career and curriculum planning for undergraduate studies, as well as graduate and community service studies take into consideration local,

regional and national economy and community needs emphasizing the practice of lifelong learning strategies, entrepreneurship training and social capital building.

- As a matter of fact, the government passed a law on community service for students of higher education last year, and [our institution had that type of program for over 5 years prior to the law](#), therefore congress people and deputies came to acknowledge about the details of the program in order to enrich the practical and conceptual scopes of that law ([Ley del Servicio Comunitario del Estudiante de Educación Superior](#)). During the period 2002-2006 more than 1.420 students have accomplished community service, approximately 550 students during the first semester 2007.
- Development partnerships: the Instituto de Formación Empresarial – [INFOEM](#) (an entrepreneurial educational institute) is actually carrying out a program on education for small entrepreneurs in the area of “Producción limpia” within ecoefficiency frameworks (See Annex 2). This Institute also has an office that offers help to people who want to become their own employers.
- There is an undergraduate program designed to teachers from public schools who want to have a degree on education, that people interested in having an educational degree can follow while working, called “Profesionalización en Servicio”

Our institution is in constant interaction with our economic, social, educational and natural environment.

- The institutions analyzes and makes periodical reviews of the different curricula in order for them to be pertinent and provide answers to the multiple needs of our country, mainly education inequity and social exclusion due to poverty.
- We have opened new careers as result of market studies that point out the need for specific type of professionals, as it happened with Psychology.
- Four years ago the institution, through community service activities learned that there were a significant number of teachers in our influence area who did not have a degree, therefore a program of *In Service Training* was designed and approved and last may we had our first commencement. The population attended by this program is men and women of low income status who work as teachers in public schools, and needed a higher education degree. The program is designed under principles of adult education and lifelong learning concept and praxis.
- The institution also has a program of Certificates at undergraduate as well as graduate level in order to deepen knowledge and practice of students in different themes related to their careers. Two examples are the “Diploma in Development Project Management” and “Learning Disabilities and impaired development.”
- The institution has carried out projects on social capital building in communities whose inhabitants live under poverty developing, as referred above
- During 2003-04-05-06 and currently 2007, different areas of the institution have been involved in community education and training of a significant number of communities in: participatory project design, management and evaluation, new educational methodologies for elementary education, entrepreneurship, environmental programs, etc.

**2.3. What proportion of the institution's research activity is directed towards the need of the local and regional economy and society?**

The proportion of research activity directed towards the need of local and regional economy is about 40%

**2.3.1. How can representatives of the local and regional economy and community influence research priorities?**

Representatives influence research priorities mainly through the demand of courses and traineeship programs where the university gets in touch with business, cultural organizations, government organizations, etc.

**2.4. How would the institution describe its service objectives (i.e. its commitments to business and the community)?**

**2.4.1. How can representatives of the local and regional economy and community influence activities in this area?**

Community service is one of the main strategic objectives of the institution; it is a transversal axis of learning and action that permeates the curricula. We constantly have representatives of different institutions of society invited to come and talk or lecture to our students, as well as are involved in actions that benefit the environment, since our goal is to have the university open to all.

The government of the institution is integrated by entrepreneurs, business people, and representatives of big industries in the country who promote institutional values, and whose participation allows the institution a permanent contact with regional and local economy.

**2.5. Using as a proxy an estimate of staff time (academic and support), how far is engagement in each of the areas outlined in this section (teaching, research and service) directed towards:**

- A. Large business and industrial interest (including global and national organizations present in the region);**
- B. Small and medium size enterprises**
- C. Other public services (e.g. education, health, social services)**
- D. The voluntary sector, community groups and NGO's; and**
- E. Cultural and artistic organizations?**

Area	Teaching %	Research %	Service %	Total %
A. Large business and industrial interest (including global and national organizations present in the region)	40%	30%	20%	100%
B. Small and medium size enterprises	25%	65%	10%	100%
C. Other public services (education, health, public services)	65%	20%	10%	100%

D. The voluntary sector, community groups and NGO's	20%	45%	35%	100%
E. Cultural and artistic organizations	30%	35%	30%	100%

[A matrix summing to 100% as the total staff effort involved in civic engagement, might be helpful]

**2.6. Does the institution have any other policies (e.g. on environmental responsibility, equality of opportunity, recruitment, procurement of goods and services) which can act positively or negatively on the region and the locality?**

In the last few years the institution has developed important activities concerning environmental responsibility, through formal education programs and activities carried out in the Avila, a mountain that is one of the boundaries of the institution. (See Annex 3)

**Part three: Describing how the institution is organized to meet the challenge of civic engagement and social responsibility**

**3. The following questions seek to understand how your institution organizes itself and deploys its resources (including human resources) to meet civic objectives.**

**3.1. Does the institution have specialized services to meet civic and related (e.g. web-based resources, business services, help-desk, formal consultancy and related services)?**

**3.1.1. If so, do these operate at a central or a devolved level, and if both how do the levels relate?**

The services operate distributed within the institution network, as follows:

- The institution is a member of [Global Development Learning Network](#) (GDLN) promoted by the World Bank
- We are a member of INFOEM (explained above)
- The School of Psychology offers counseling to communities close to the institution
- The Office of Social Training in charge of student's community services

**3.2. Does the institution have either dedicated or shared services which are community facing (such as libraries, performance or exhibition spaces, and sports facilities)?**

The institution has two art exhibition places open to the public, one library and sport facilities where children from nearby communities play sports. It also has a music program that operates on Saturdays, open to the community

**3.3. On what terms and with what frequency and volume of uptake is the institution's campus or campuses accessible to the community?**

- The art exhibition places are open from Monday to Friday, 9 am to 4 pm



- The library is open from Monday to Friday, from 7:30 am to 9 pm; Saturdays from 8:00 am to 7 pm and Sundays from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm
- The sport camp is available for the community 3 days a week from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm
- Music and theater activities on Saturdays, 9 am to 12m

### **3.4. What arrangements are made for the security of the members, guests, and property of the institution?**

The institution has a security system, a well coordinated plan, a security manager and a group of well trained people dedicated to preserve the security of the members, guests and properties of the University

## **Part Four: Assessing the contribution of staff, students and external partners to the engagement agenda**

### **4. People**

**The following questions will help to describe how policies and practice involve members of the institution including staff at various levels, students and formal partners in achieving goals related to civic engagement and social responsibility.**

#### **4.1. Who takes primary responsibility for the institution's work in civic engagement and social responsibility as defined in response to question 1.5 (above)?**

The President (Rector) of the institution takes primary responsibility in the plans, programs, projects and activities concerning civic engagement. There are two offices that carry out specific projects aimed at building social capital, civic engagement and social responsibility: an office that deals with professors and students and an office whose function is to design programs that involve students and professors in projects and activities related to civic engagement. This latter office is in charge of the projects and theoretical foundations of social responsibility, but the praxis and specific activities have become a responsibility of faculties, staff and students, including the support of management offices. This means that social responsibility is a key subject that permeates in a transversal manner all the institution. Prior to a recent law on social commitment approved by the government, the Universidad Metropolitana was developing projects on capital building, in a very successful way, acting as counselor for the deputies that made that law, as was stated before.

#### **4.2. Does the institution's policy for student recruitment have a local or a regional dimension? If so, how is this determined and what impact does it have on the make-up of the institution community?**

The dimension of the recruitment has been country wise since the beginning of the institution, although most of its faculty, students and administrative support people come from the state cities and local communities. There are no specific guidelines concerning state or regional proportions.

The institution has recruitment systems that promote different dimensions of inclusion, as follows having two concepts intertwined: flexible capabilities and social inclusion.

The admission of students has 4 entries:

- Identifying flexible capabilities, structured as follows: the institution has a period in which the students admitted learn general subjects. This is the first step where recruitment is made through these processes: an admission course of 8 weeks, an admission test made one day and evaluation of competences, mainly for adults, where the University recognizes a prior formation level that makes the student-to-be capable of being admitted. Students are therefore admitted in 4 groups:
  - First: can take all subjects in the curricula of first semester
  - Second: Have to take mathematic prior to some subjects in the curricula
  - Third: Have to take language prior to some subjects in the curricula
  - Fourth: Have to take mathematics, language and some instrumental subjects prior to initiating their careers

Social Inclusion: there is a program of educational solidarity where secondary students, been admitted through the process above mentioned but been unable to pay for the tuition fees, are admitted enjoying a scholarship given by the institution. The results of this program have been highly successful, concerning student's academic performance.

**4.3. To what extent are civic engagement and social responsibility objectives built into contractual terms for:**

- a. Senior managers
- b. Academic staff, and
- c. Support staff (including the specialized staff referred to in question 3.1 above)?

Civic engagement and social responsibility in the institution are a result of a sensibility training process, but are not built into contractual terms, they are voluntary.

**4.3.1. Can achievement against such objectives positively influence decisions on promotion and re-grading?**

Up to now achievement objectives of civic engagement are not binding towards promotion and re-grading

**4.4. Reflecting on the answer to the question 2.2 (above), how far is the student body engaged in the economic and cultural life of the community through formal requirements?**

The student body has gone through a slow process of involvement in the economic and cultural life of the community, but since March 2007 there has been an intensive activity of involvement provoked by political crisis and threatening of civic liberties. The formal requirement of involvement comes from the Law of Community Services, active since 2006.

**4.5. What proportion of the student body (for example, postgraduate or post-experience students) is concurrently in full-time local or regionally-based employment?**

The proportion of student body in full-time local or regionally-based employment is 80%

**4.6. What encouragement is there for members of staff to undertake aspects of community service (e.g. service on board of other organizations, pro bono advice, elected political office)?**

Recently a decision of the Academic Board decided to give an award to professors dedicated to the promotion of social responsibility and civic commitment as well as community service.

**4.7. What is the extent of student volunteering in the community, and how is this organized? Does it attract?**

- A. formal support (e.g. timetable concessions, payment of expenses); and/ or**  
**B. academic credit?**

There is a group of student that for over 4 years have worked as volunteers taking care of neglected non human animals, mainly dogs and cats.

There is a group called Volunteers Unimet, who work at a children's school in a poor community of Petare Area

**5. Part Five: Monitoring achievements, constraints and future opportunities for civic engagement and social responsibility**

**The following questions seek to understand and how your institution sets objectives and targets for civic engagement and social responsibility monitors and evaluates achievements and communicates both their intentions and related activities.**

**5.1. Has the institution undertaken any survey research to test internal and/or external interest in and proposals for the civic engagement and social responsibility agenda? If so, please summarize results.**

- There have been several undergraduate thesis that deal with the subject of social responsibility
- The Agenda is carried out by the President of the institution and there have been two international seminars with attendance of 1.800 and 790 people in each, that deal with the relationship between social capital, sustainable development, democracy and civic engagement.
- A recent national law regarding research projects and programs on civic engagement has actively promoted the involvement of higher education institutions and different academic units of the institution have designed projects and placed them on the web page of the Universidad Metropolitana, so business people and entrepreneurs can offer financial support. These projects can be seen at our portfolio : [http://www.unimet.edu.ve/locti/UNIMET\\_Portafolio-LOCTI.pdf](http://www.unimet.edu.ve/locti/UNIMET_Portafolio-LOCTI.pdf)
- The Banco de Desarrollo ([BANDES](#)) a governmental office is interested in the Sustainable Development Project Diploma and has asked for an in-company program
- We have a productive relationship with the Banco de Venezuela, Grupo Santander and [UNIVERSIA](#) portal.

**5.2. What steps does the institution take to consult upon and publicize its civic engagement and social responsibility agenda? [It may be helpful to review such publications as Annual Reports, newsletters and alumni communications]**

- We are currently producing booklets and handouts that communicate our civic engagement activities (see sample)
- Our web page has information about some of our programs in social capital building, social responsibility and civic engagement: <http://www.unimet.edu.ve/capital-social/capital-social.html>
- The seminars and conferences are publicized in mass media, either through the press or radio interviews.

**5.3. What do you regard as the level of public confidence held at national, regional and local level in the overall performance of your institution? What steps can be taken either to maintain or improve this level?**

Our institution has a well built status on the community at national as well as regional and local level from an academic point of view. Since the actions of social commitment became a strong strategic component, around 8 years ago, the public confidence and recognition of this competence has grown stronger and today, in the words of a student from a public university:

*“When it comes to working with communities, with local governments and people, the students that know most how to do it are the ones from the Metropolitana University” (the comment was made at a meeting of different university leaders in the context of student questioning of a government decision of not giving permit to go on working a private network station).*

On the other hand, the state government has established a dialogue with the University and we count a significant number of national, regional and local staff in our academic programs; which in a politically polarized environment like the one prevailing in Venezuela, tells about the confidence in our curricula.

As a final step, please highlight your institution top two contributions to the global inventory of higher education civic engagement and social responsibility. These highlights will in particular be shared with the membership of the Talloires Network in an effort to share experiences of successes and create a portfolio of best practices.

First contribution: to promote at a national and international level social responsibility commitment of higher education institution with Latin American Region and beyond.

This goal has been possible through the establishment of a social responsibility net with:

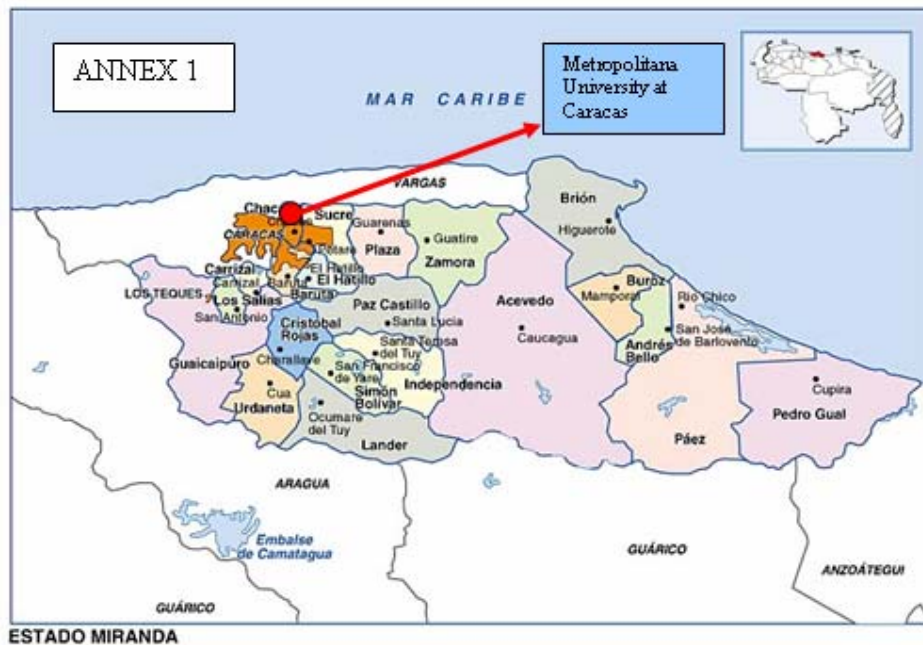
- Multilateral organizations like the Interamerican Development Bank –[IADB](#) (support for an academic program on Project Management for Sustainable Development), the Andean Corporation- [CAF](#) (agreement of partial financial support for a social capital project located at the influence area of the institution, in a poor rural community of African American tradition; the [World Bank](#) (through winning a proposal to work with women in prison);

the OEA (participation of professors of the University as teachers of social responsibility and social capital)

- Latin American Organizations like the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales ([ILDIS](#)) supported by the [Friedrich Ebert Foundation](#) of Germany (producing analytical and theoretical contents on educational inclusion in Venezuela), the Instituto de Planificación Social ([ILPES](#)) from Chile and Colombia, whose professional staff forms part of the professors of the academic program on Project Management for Sustainable Development.
- Local Non Governmental Organizations, like The [Mead Institute](#) of Venezuela, [El Centro al Servicio de la Acción Popular- CESAP](#), [Sinergia](#)
- Communities in general, but mainly the following:
  - Barlovento: Tacarigua de La Laguna, Belén, Las Casitas –Juan Vicente Ferrer, Valle La Cruz y Río Chico
  - Petare Norte: 12 communities, mainly in Barrio Metropolitano

Second contribution: expanding and enrichment of social and community participation methodologies in order to promote new visions of democracy and sustainable development through:

- Designing community projects where there is a different vision of people participation following conceptions of the UNDP, [Bernard van Leer Foundation](#), World Bank and Inter American Development Bank concerning the need to empower people so they can own and rule their lives, make their own choices, and choose the life they have reason to value considering the expansions of opportunities and freedoms to act as such. In these projects the concept of stakeholder is widened in a way that the design, management, execution and evaluation of the projects involve all, university and community, as experts.
- Introducing our professors, students, academic managers and support staff to the need for empowerment as a means to build a new democracy together, through active citizenship through the Program on Sustainable Development Project Diploma



ANNEX 2: INFOEM (Development partnership)

**ACTUALMENTE ESTAMOS DESARROLLANDO EL:**



**"PROGRAMA DE DESARROLLO DE TALENTOS  
EMPREENDEDORES PARA LA FORMACIÓN DE  
MICRO Y PEQUEÑAS EMPRESAS DE  
PRODUCCIÓN MÁS LIMPIA"**

ANNEX 3

