

## **Global Alternatives Confluence**

Minutes Descrecimiento-Degrowth conference (Mexico city, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018)

**Moderator:** Gustavo Esteva

Objectives: What are the next steps? What kind of confluence?

- Already existing alternatives, not theories
- Post-patriarchal, capitalism, nation-state

What to do now? The initiative starts now.

### **Interventions:**

- Federico Demaria: "The need for GAC in the current conditions of the world"
- Alex Jensen: The role and place of GAC in the alternatives world"
- Brototi Roy: "Vikalp Sangam: The Indian experience with the confluence of alternatives"

### **Issues to be discussed**

1) What criteria/principles of eligibility? What yes or what no?

Against/Questioning state, patriarchy, and capitalism

e.g. systemic alternatives

2) What structure? What mechanisms (formal / informal)?

Open, democratic, flexibles. But not everyone

e.g. Not like Wikipedia: everybody contributes, but central committee

3) What are the added values?

- Mutual learning with respect for diversity
- Solidarity and mutual support
- Collective visioning

4) Next steps

### **Dialogue**

Joachim Spanenberg: Concern with urgency of the ecological crisis. How to get enough power to change the world?

David Barkin: How radical are those alternatives?

Miriam Lang: Global ecological dictatorship because of urgency (Andreas Malm)? No, because it leads to more destruction. Need to change our strategies. Build people's to people relations.

Manu: Power is essential, what theory of change? How do we envision change happening?

Gustavo Esteve: How can we connect the Zapatistas with other groups? Offer solidarity? What is the theory of change of the Zapatista? How do they seize power? But we could focus, what is the value of connecting alternatives around the world?

Dianne Rocheleau: What kind of change? We need to foster the sharing of imagination. Cross-pollination. E.g. Zapatistas, Via Campesina,... We are open, but not everyone can come.

Evita: Confluences, not conferences. Social Forum should be part of it. How do we connect grassroots organizations? How do we create connections, beyond the conferences. E.g. encounters

Gustavo: The GAC is not to compete with the World Social Forum. We acknowledge its value, we want to be linked with it, but how do we link? Once we define the GAC, we shall see how to connect with World Social Forum.

Y: Sharing experience of the Zapatistas. Escuelita Zapatista, last encounter. Those who visited, lived with Zapatista family for one week. International encounter of women (8000 women). :Proibido pensar? (April, forbidden to think?): two issues. 1) We learned from previous encounters, discuss next steps. 2) "Never Mexico without us". □ "Us without Mexico" (abolish the state). Horizons of people, beyond national boundaries. No more flags and national attempt. We can learn from these experiences?

Diana: Ongoing experience with networks. How do we connect them? How do we connect/network/weave small beautiful small initiatives? Fractal structure. Global eco-village network.

Fernanda, Mexico- The only thing possible for me was the euro-centric, but then I have been going to the Zapatista events since it started in 1994, and came to know of the possibility of this other way of living. Now that I hear, how can we do it, our skin wasn't as brown as their.....but their wisdom is so much deeper than our white skin. We need to look at the real past, going beyond racism etc. There are no objects in the zapatistic language. They believe in biocentrism. In the next steps, we need to go back and really know .....

Pamela, Mexico- We have a beautiful set of encounters (with Diana)- in local and national and international scale. I have a vision of having an alternative confluence with many many subjects, and councils, and leaving it to them to know how to do that. To believe we know how to do it- local people, indigenous people. Having a global alternative confluence guided with different councils with different subjects...where you built proposals with collective intelligence and we learn that as long as you have about 5 indigenous representative, they reply in all their networks. We have to make it glocal.

Ortiz, Mexico- For the World Social Forum....people are the people you see in the mirror. So all these other different experiences are invisible and unconnected. So, if you want to make something to built them together, you have to connect all these different alternatives together. I am a part of the coalition, with more than 400 organizations. All with the same objective of change----we have never met. We haven't been able to meet. We have the strategy to empower and help the struggle of the people. To strengthen ourselves so we can do that. We need to change radically- we

unfortunately have no power. The power is with the few transnational companies with coalition with the governments etc. The power we have is in the networks. We try to have influence in the policies. The money we need to grow experiences, is the money of the people, but it is in the state. So, this is super difficult, as the system takes away everything. Eg.- our members go in big meetings, some people pay for them, not everywhere- we have internships, documentation of cases etc. Many small activities to integrate- not only big conferences. Very interesting what can be done this way. We are working in promoting these changes, support resistances and human and environmental rights violation, and exercise concrete changes. 71 in Vancouver is when this coalition started. And not to have this vertical structure. There is no central money or control. Every organization looks for funding in the coalition.

Enrique- The experience of nomadic culture- young people of latin America going from one town to another, and working. And they don't have money for anything, and they just share around the fire in ecovillages, poor neighbourhoods, and the music- bomba estero, feminas etc. So there is an incredible wisdom here. We need to be nomadics, people going from one experience to another, without money. And the second thing is that we tend to not able to see each other- transition to Zapatista to edgrowth. In VeraCruz I went for a meeting of dub people- I found people from the poor neighbourhood and they have these small places where they play music and share resistances, etc. Thousands of young people from MMA, all around the cities. There are all these different structures. Thirdly, we need to inter-pollinate, and share these experiences. We need the culture of dialogue. We need to learn how to communicate in different ways- to share patterns, dance, paint etc. Finally, I would like to call it a carnival, and not a confluence- including different worlds, and making a nomadic world. From the principle sacred authority to nomadic etc.

Claudia- To document this confluence, and in which way we are building this knowledge—not only logical, but emotional and relational. Putting much more the tools of knowledge building.

Federico- First- we have discussed on the alternatives and the elibility criteria, the structure, the mechanisms, the added values etc. What is next? We are ambitious in meetings, and then whats next.

- UK- How is technology socially constructed, this is something I am interested about. What I would propose is that there are many experiences of people using things that aren't meant to be used that way. If you have enough people around you, mailing lists, UK Geographers for Latin America....so lets take advantages of the technology. And would gladly volunteer for something.
- Sara, German – Why did you come up with this initiative in addition to this degrowth ideas?
- Gustavo- Some people connected with the degrowth are the people connected here. It is not the same thing. There is no real connection between the degrowth conference and the other movement.
- Alex- It is not the same, but it is connected.
- Gustavo- This is a different initiative.
- Miriam- Degrowth is one stream of radical thought. There are some people who have connected with other streams of thoughts, which also work. This alternatives

confluence is a sort of idea to bring all these together, not in a theoretical way but in a practical way. It englobes degrowth, but goes beyond it.

- In this conference, the practice side doesn't really appear, but it is there.
- Diana- The same purpose , but with different names. One of the proposals would be to generate more spaces for sharing knowledges. Eg providing virtual spaces, eg I have done this, what has and hasn't worked. I admire what you do in Unitierra, and the Zapatista, and my context is very different, so we need to change the way of looking at things.
- If we are so sick of war, we have to stop thinking of fighting against something. We cant fight the big system, but rather making visible all the small beautiful stuff, so that all the bad things would lose power. So observing our own pattern of seeing. The need for celebrating and sharing is so important. We can pass years without even knowing each other. So learning how to embrace diversities, and other ways of communicating. I would like to offer from Casa Latina, one of our strong point is the social technologies- knowing how to organize and have effective meeting- from sociocracy and dragon dreaming, agile tools. I can provide training of social technologies to be more effective.
- Collaborative work is awesome, but is exhausting.
- Many activities, it won't be a conference- we will have a wide varities of things, and a different space. This would maybe be an encounter
- Local- using social media, technology, keeping it horizontal, keeping it simple and humble, celebration is important.
- You come to share, you come to create, you come to celebrate. So if we could create such spaces- it would be avery different event.
- Gustavo- write a very brief manifesto, and have consultation, and then ask specific movements to join them. It is not just big names, but very humble and real organizations, and say that they want then. And once they have these , we need to learn from all the organizations etc.
- Manu- They have a fantastic website- Vikalpsangam- in terms of what stories to share. In practical terms, just creating visibility for all these experiences and then linking them up. Website should be a useful start.
- Gustavo- We will have local, regional, national and then we see what happens.
- Get infiramtion, weekly newsletters etc. Getting the stories together. If there are these institutions which can do it and share.
- Manish- The intergenerational dialogue from the sangam. And after the gathering, people from different initiatives went to each other's place. These gatherings are very powerful.
- Gustavo- We are believing more in really interacting and connecting. I want to make explicit, we won't create an organization with a central committee. We will try to find ways which are horizontal – we need people who are against patriarchy, anti capitalist etc. We will be selective but very open and democratic.