NORTH-SOUTH KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIPS: PROMOTING THE CANADA - LATIN AMERICA CONNECTION

Centre for Intercultural Communication (CIC), University of British Columbia, Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios (CEBEM)

FINAL REPORT

August 26, 2008

_____

This Final Report covers the period January 2007 - August 2008. Project's targets are indicated in italics followed by a description of results.

_____

TABLE OF CONTENT

SUMMARY

The general objective of this project was to design, test and demonstrate a model framework that enable collaborative N-S and S-S learning in support of communities of practice and knowledge networks, integrating pedagogical approaches, information resources, and communication tools based on ICTs. The objective was reached in important degree. The model framework was created as planned including a Portal in the web, data bases (information), a newsletter system (communication), and the delivery of virtual courses for professional development (training) (http://ccd-ckd.cebem.org). The test was conducted for a six-month period – from December 2007 to August 2008. The model gives access to information about Canadian universities, centres, and specialists working on Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC); Canadian cooperation and key projects in the region; and, a newsletter and a data base on virtual libraries. The substantive focus of the project was on four themes: intercultural relations; virtual education; regional, territorial and local development; and human and social development. A similar activity was initiated in LAC in order to provide similar information with the purpose to promote activities in partnership. Unfortunately, it was not possible to reach the objective of training graduate students in Canada because of shortage of funds.

The website has received over 23,000 visits from its opening and the number continue to increase. Marketing of virtual courses was done by using the website and the demand obtained was fully satisfactory. 63 professionals were trained. The interest and participation of additional Canadian university research centres were attained, including the Centre for Intercultural Communication (CIC), the International Secretariat for Human Development (ISHD), and the Centre for Development area Studies (CDAS). The evaluation workshop conducted after the first year of operation served to expand the number of partners in Canada and LAC and confirm that the main assumptions of the project were correct: need to give information in order to create interest for mutual North-South cooperation, need to give access to a website integrating diverse sources of information in order to facilitate easy mutual knowledge, and need to focus on the delivery of short virtual courses for professional development and updating.

The main difficulty has been the complexity of tasks. This has demanded a period of learning larger than expected by the project's team about how to dealt with data bases in diversity of institutions, how to circulate and reach audiences, how to synthesize information for newsletters, how to improve the use of learning platforms for short virtual courses, and how to identify and overcome institutional barriers for cooperation by using ICTs.

Products include a series of four virtual courses on Virtual Education, a Portal, organization of data bases on diverse types of Canadian and LAC sources of knowledge, a regional newsletter, and the training of 64 professionals on fundamentals of education online. Outcomes include more visibility of Canadian research and training resources in the LAC region; the partners (CIC and CEBEM) obtained experience on partnership development and CEBEM improved its experience with learning platforms, and CEBEM, CIC and other Canadian new partners decided to continue activities for a Phase II.

1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall and specific project's objectives were the following:

1.1. <u>Overall Objective</u>

"To design, test and demonstrate a model framework of processes, resources, and tools that enable ongoing collaborative N-S and S-S learning in support of individuals, communities of practice and knowledge networks, integrating pedagogical approaches, practices, resources, and tools based on ICTs."

1.2. <u>Specific Objectives</u>

"a) To test, analyze and document different modes of collaboration with respect to designing, exchanging, adapting and delivering short-term non-degree online courses;
b) To create a Portal as a supporting structure that provides the space, opportunity, tools and resources for the activities of the community of practice and knowledge network;
c) To create a virtual library and electronic publications in support of online courses and information sharing and dissemination;
d) To provide short-term working and learning opportunities for students; and
e) To document the experience and systematize the model, framework and tools developed and used in the project, and assess possibilities of continuity and sustainability."

The general objective was reached in important degree. The model framework was created as planned. The model combines data bases (information), a newsletter system (communication), and delivery of virtual courses for professional development (training). The test was conducted for a six-month period – from December 2007 to August 2008. The model was tested through creation of a Portal in the web and the following activities:

(1) gathering, organizing and giving easy access to information about Canadian universities, centres and specialists working on Latin American and Caribbean development issues. Information covered their research and educational activities on four focus themes selected for the project: intercultural relations; virtual education; regional, territorial and local development; and human and social development. A similar activity was initiated in LAC;

(2) gathering, organizing and giving easy access to information about Canadian key projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), networks, cooperation agencies, and newsletters. A similar activity was initiated for LAC;

(3) providing summary information about the Canadian cooperation in LAC;

(4) providing summary information on sources of knowledge existing in the productive sector in Canada and LAC.

Results of the test were positive. The website has received over 23,000 visits from its opening and the number continue to increase. The marketing of Virtual courses was done by using the website and the demand obtained was fully

satisfactory. Besides, the interest and participation of additional Canadian university research centres were attained. As expressed in the annual previous report, despite differences in terms of geographic distance, culture, and institutional practices, Canadian institutions like the Centre for Intercultural Communication (CIC), the International Secretariat for Human Development (ISHD), the Centre for Development Area Studies (CDAS) and CEBEM were able to work together, exchange information, and advance in mutual learning about common interests.

The evaluation workshop conducted after the first year of operation served to expand the number of partners in Canada and LAC and confirm that the main assumptions of the project were correct: the need to give to information in order to create interest for mutual North-South cooperation, the need to give access to a website integrating diverse sources of information in order to facilitate easy mutual knowledge, and the need to focus on short virtual courses for professional development and updating.

The main difficulty has been the complexity of tasks. This has demanded a period of learning larger than expected by the project's team about how to dealt with data bases in diversity of institutions, how to circulate and reach audiences, how to synthesize information for newsletters, how to improve the use of learning platforms for short virtual courses, and how to identify and overcome institutional barriers for cooperation by using ICTs. There was only one specific objective that could not be reached – *To provide short-term working and learning opportunities for students in Canada.* The reasons were that no graduate students with the appropriate experience, skills and knowledge about the CIS's new learning platform could be found, and the shortage of funds and CIC's staff time to train candidates.

2.   PROJECT ACTIVITIES

2.1.   E-learning: Theory, Practice and Systematization

2.1.1. Advertising courses

A)   *"CIC and CEBEM will subscribe to each other's course distribution lists and send each other information about current and prospective courses".*

CEBEM and CIC exchanged information about courses with potential mutual interest and gave each other the opportunity to explore their learning platforms. Courses were identified in two focus themes: (a) intercultural communication and international development, and (b) local, regional and territorial development (see list of courses in Table 1). This exchange was useful but insufficient. It was necessary to experiment with participation of an observer in one of CEBEM's courses.

CIC found difficult the closer examination of other CEBEM's courses in order to conclude about whether or not to adapt them for its own training purposes due to (1) lack of proficiency in Spanish and (2) insufficient project funds to cover translation, services of a proficient consultant and / or time of CIC staff members.

TABLE 1   CIC – CEBEM COURSES OF MUTUAL INTEREST

CIC Courses

CID500: Introduction to International Development 9 *weeks online, with a 1-week break*
This course offers an overview of international development, the various organizations working in this field, and some key international development issues.

CID610: Introduction to International Health and Development *6 weeks online*
This course uses an issue-based learning approach to examine problems relevant to international health care management. It prepares participants to develop an interdisciplinary approach.

CID611: Issues in International Health Delivery *6 weeks online*
This course continues to explore international health issues by looking at the needs of specific population groups and situations: women and children, displaced people, individuals affected by natural and manmade disasters and aboriginals.

CID612: Project Planning and Proposal Writing *7 weeks online*
The course provides participants with the skills necessary for planning and writing project proposals in the field of international development.

CEBEM Courses

CEBEM DESLEG01 Legal Skills for the management of protected areas 7 weeks.
This course is about legal skills required for the management for protected areas and legal issues regarding in-situ conservation.

CEBEM RANARG01 Andean Regimen for Accessing Genetic Resources
(Decision 391 CAN) 6 weeks
A course about principal legal instruments applicable to assessment of genetic resources in the Andean area, including the International Convention on Biological Diversity.

CEBEM INTSAS01 Introduction to Social Analysis Systems (SAS) 6 weeks
A course about a research model for social action, collaboration frameworks, analysis of the multiple social and natural factors that intervene in the social action, and the role of stakeholders.

CEBEM CPDSAS01 Community Forestry Development: Inputs from Social Analysis Systems.
10 weeks
A course about instruments to face challenges in the field of Community Forestry Development.

CEBEM ORDTER02 Territorial Organization for Development (2nd. Version) 6 weeks
Introduction to knowledge and analysis of territorial organization as a factor of development promotion.

CEBEM DESLOC06 Local Development 6 weeks
Introduction to topics of local development and how to obtain a strategic territorial view for a balanced use of internal and external resources. Examination of links between local development and decentralization processes.

CEBEM SILCOM01 Community Forestry and Agricultural-Forestry Systems 6 weeks
Interdisciplinary discussion of use of natural (forestry, cattle and agricultural) and productive (economic, social, and environmental) resources. Emphasis on a community and participatory perspective and use of methodological tools.

CEBEM SIGEAM02 Environmental Management Systems 6 weeks
Analysis of environmental management systems, components, implementation, and verification of corporate management reports.

B) *"CIC and CEBEM will create the appropriate space on their websites in order to advertise each other courses."*

CIC advertised CEBEM's courses and included a link to CEBEM's website in the homepage of CIC's Certificate in International Development. "Our North-South partnership with Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios (CEBEM) in Bolivia is currently underway with a grant from the International Development Research Centre. For more information about CEBEM, click here (http://www.cebem.org/)"

CEBEM included in the section "Otros Cursos" (Other Courses) in the home page of its website a link to CIC's Certificate in International Development (see (http://www.cebem.org/).

2.1.2. Foundation Courses

"A first step will consist of putting together a set of foundation courses pertaining to e-learning. They will include:

- *Introduction to e-learning: CEBEM will take the lead and CIC will provide feedback in this process. Once there is general agreement on the outline, the common areas and the areas specific to each centre, CEBEM and CIC will draft the course each in its working language, and according to its own e-Learning platform, procedures and processes.*

- *Designing online courses and facilitating online Courses: The project team will first explore whether such courses exist already and to what extent they are relevant. CEBEM and CIC will determine the best way to design them. Each institution can take the lead for one course, and the other can provide feedback; each institution will finalize the course according to its own procedures and processes."*

2.1.2.1 Background

Exploration about existing courses on e-learning was conducted in Canada and Latin America. There are online academic and non-academic courses about online education in Canada but none was found for short-term training. The situation was similar in Latin America where there are online graduate programs but very few aimed at short-term training about that topic. In the cases found, the content was considered not well fitted to needs of university professors. Given this situation, a series of four courses about online education were produced. Three courses were produced by CEBEM in Spanish and one course by CIC in English (see Table 2)

2.1.2.2 Production of courses

The three courses produced by CEBEM were: What is Virtual Education?, How to develop an Online Course, and Tools for Production of Online Courses. The first course has been delivered twice and the second course one time so far. The third course will be delivered on September 2008.

TABLE 2   FOUNDATION COURSES

Course 1: What is virtual education?

This introductory course that will provide participants with the conceptual, theoretical and practical basis of online education.

Course 2: How to develop an online course

This course will provide with the basic elements for the production of online courses. Topics include the characteristics and difficulties of online teaching, strategies for the production of online courses and evaluation methods.

Course 3: Tools for production of online courses

This course will pursue learning of technological tools that are used for preparation of online courses: ICTs and e-learning (online platforms and its functions); multimedia contents (HTML, graphics, sounds, audio, video); and educational technology (m-learning, chat, video conference, among others).

Course 4: How to facilitate an online course

The goal of this course is to provide participants with the knowledge and skills to effectively facilitate an online course. This course will be piloted in early 2008.

CIC produced the fourth course of the series. The course entitled "How to Facilitate an Online Course" was put online in order to test and make changes. In April 2008 CIC piloted parts of the course in the annual CIC facilitator orientation program. However, a full pilot of the course did not take place due to time constraints. CIC has identified facilitators in the North for the course offering in early 2009. Currently it is looking for facilitators in Latin America.

2.1.2.3 Marketing.

An online question about interest in the series of courses was introduced in the Portal. The question was in Spanish as only CEBEM's courses were available at the time: "¿Está usted interesado en los cursos básicos?" 308 responses were received, 307 "Si" (yes) and 1 was "no".

The marketing of courses was conducted through a call made by using CEBEM's newsletters (see section 2.2.3). Applications were subject to a selection of students on the base of professional profile, interests, and purpose expressed for taking the course.

2.1.2.4 Profile of students

Profile by nationality and type of professional (see Tables 3 and 4):

TABLE 3   PROFILE OF STUDENTS BY NATIONALITY

Course	Course 1 Version 1	Course 1 Version 2	Course 2	Total
Bolivia	10	11	18	39
Perú	6	2	1	9
Argentina	3			3
Colombia	1	1		2
El Salvador	1			1
Canada	1			1
France	1		1	2
México		1		1
Costa Rica		1		1
Paraguay		1		1
Ecuador			2	2
Italy			1	1
Total	23	17	23	63

8 students out of 23 that participated in course 1 did participate also in course 2.

TABLE 4   PROFILE OF STUDENT BY TYPE OF PROFESSIONAL

Type of professional	
Director / Coordinator / Advisor NGO	20
Researcher	1
University professor / administrator	21
School Director	2
Independent professional	12
Government official / program	4
CEBEM / CIC member	3
Total	63

Most students were professionals with executive or advisory positions in NGOs and government organizations, and university professors or administrators.

2.1.2.5 Delivery of courses

The process of course delivery was as follows:

a. Course 1 was delivered by CEBEM on January 7, 2008
b. Course 2 was delivered subsequently by CEBEM on May 12, 2008
c. A second edition of course 1 was delivered by CEBEM on April 28, 2008
d. Course 3 was produced but not delivered by CEBEM. The course will be delivered on September, 2008
e. Course 4 by CIC was produced but no delivered. The course will be delivered in the first semester of 2009 under the modality of pilot course.
f. Courses 1, 2 and 3 charged a fee. The possibility to have a partial scholarship – covered with project's funds – was opened in some cases. CIC

will not charge during the pilot offering of Course 4, but will determine costs for later offerings.

2.1.2.6 Evaluation

<u>Evaluation by External Observer</u>

CIC hired a consultant, Lynne Cruz, an specialist on virtual education, as observer of the first course delivered by CEBEM – What is Virtual Education – in order to get familiar with CEBEM's pedagogy. The idea was that CEBEM would do the same regarding CIC courses. Unfortunately, it was not possible due to lack of time by CEBEM's staff. Lynne Cruz gave the following recommendations:

A.   Course content:

It would have been helpful to receive a detailed document prior to starting the course which outlined course content, expectations, grading, assignments, group projects, deadlines, extra reading, etc. so students knew what to expect during the course. Since information was embedded within a sitelet, it was easy to miss important course content or messages because there were so many pages of information to click through. Overall the content was very interesting and valuable.

B.   Online Format

It would have been helpful at the beginning of the course, to have access to the Moodle manual and to include a video clip or tutorial on how to use Moodle. In addition, setting specific time for students to participate in an online Chat would be valuable since it was difficult to know when and how to Chat. It would also be valuable to explore the use of Blogs, which were not used in the course.

C.   Confidentiality

It would be great to explore the use of introductory videos to bring more warmth and vitality to the course through getting to know each other beyond photos and text on the screen. This is particularly helpful if the course does not have a face-to-face component. In addition, a short note about confidentiality could be posted up front in the course so that students area clear about expectations in this area.

D.   Student and Facilitator Interactions

It may be useful to include a maximum length of postings so that there is a better balance in responses. This may avoid the problem of some people posting lengthy answers to the questions and possibly leaving little for others to say because so much has been said already. It would have been interesting to view other students' assignments if they were willing to share these with the rest of the class. Even if the entire assignments were not shared with the class, it would have been interesting to see a list of proposed online courses that classmates were working on. I recommend

that the facilitators continue to be encouraging and responsive, and as personal as possible by using the names of the students in their postings.

E.   Conclusion

CEBEM's course "What is Online Education?" fosters the acquisition of knowledge about online learning through discussions on issues, group projects, and individual assignments. It also cultivates ideas on how to overcome the challenges and demonstrates successful ways of doing this in its own online course. The course also provides opportunity for educators to develop a detailed outline of their own online course and to gain feedback on their practical projects.

Moodle is an excellent platform for the course, however, because it operates like a sitelet, the layers of information and the need for navigation through the sitelet cab be confusing to students. Because of this, it is important to supplement the sitelet with thorough training on Moodle as well as provide a document that thoroughly outlines the content and expectations for the course.

In order to meet these recommendations, the following actions were taken:

A.   Course content:

Difficulties to navigate in the platform – as indicated by the observer – are due to lack of familiarity of students with hypertext. To help to overcome this problem a document « Informacion sobre el Curso » was included in the first edition of course 2 and second edition of course 1. The document gives information about general and specific objectives of the course, content, expectations, activities, group project activities, and deadlines.

B.   Online Format

A User's Manual on Moodle has been included in all courses. Besides, all students are given a short training on the use of CEBEM's Virtual Campus before each course.

C.   Confidentiality

Use of videos has been discarded due to technical limitations of Internet connectivity in the region. The best option has been to ask for a photo of each participant and provide a profile about personal characteristics.

A short note about confidentiality has been posted in each course as follows:

"El CEBEM, los docentes y los tutores se comprometen a no facilitar a terceros la información personal de los usuarios que esté registrada en la base de datos del sistema. Los exámenes o trabajos generados por los participantes del curso no serán entregados o mostrados a ninguna persona sin autorización expresa de los mismos. Las expresiones,

opiniones y reflexiones volcadas en los foros de debate como en las tareas del curso serán tratadas con la misma política de confidencialidad y con los principios del copyright".

D.   Student and Facilitator Interactions

Tutors began to monitor discussions in the next courses in order to avoid repetitions. Sharing of assignments has been introduced also as a practice in the courses.

<u>Evaluation by Students</u>

Students attending the first two courses were asked to give their opinion about various aspects of the courses. Results of this evaluation follow (see Table 5):

TABLE 5   EVALUATION OF COURSES BY THE STUDENTS

	Course 1 What is Virtual Education 1st Edition Percentages				
	Poor	Adequate Complete Useful	Very Adequate Very useful	Excellent	No response
Content	6	78			16
Adequacy Applicability		44	39		17
Usefulness of activities		33	50		17
Knowledge of professor			6	78	16
Supervision by professor		11		72	16
Supervision by Tutor		39		44	17

Evaluation made by 18 over 23 students

	Course 1 What is Virtual Education 2nd Edition Percentages				
	Poor	Adequate Complete Useful	Very Adequate Very useful	Excellent	No response
Content	6	89			5
Adequacy Applicability		78	17		5
Usefulness of activities		44	50		6
Knowledge of professor		22		72	6
Supervision by professor		33		61	6
Supervision by Tutor	11	39		33	17

Evaluation made by all 17 students

	Course 2 How to Develop an Online Course Percentages				
	Poor	Adequate Complete Useful	Very Adequate Very useful	Excellent	No response
Content	9	74			17
Adequacy Applicability		35	48		17
Usefulness of activities		30	52		18
Knowledge of professor		9		74	17
Supervision by professor		17		65	18
Supervision by Tutor		39		39	22

Evaluation made by all 23 students

Results were considered positive. Improvements will be pursued particularly regarding supervision and usefulness of courses.

2.1.2.7 Future of the series

Regarding technical aspects, an Introductory Guide open to public and requiring no tutor, is under production. This will avoid the introductory week added so far to all courses. Production of a guide to CEBEM's virtual campus – with description of responsibilities of tutors and students and terms of confidentiality – will be also produced. Further use of different applications of Moodle platform continues under consideration. The practice of pre-selection of applicant students will be pursue in the future because it rendered excellent results in term of commitment, interaction and participation.

The series of courses on Virtual Education will continue to be offered by CEBEM as a part of its regular courses. However, adaptation by Canadian partner institutions will be explored in order to reach the Anglophone and Francophone audiences in Canada and elsewhere.

2.1.3. Substantive Courses

"CIC and CEBEM will collaborate in order to increase the number of courses available to their respective audiences. The substantive areas of focus will include territorial development, international development, and inter-cultural relations. In order to avoid duplication wherever possible, they will survey one another's courses for potential material to translate or adapt. They will also survey, as deemed appropriate, courses existing elsewhere that could be adapted for online delivery.

New courses will be developed only when existing relevant courses cannot be identified. "

2.1.3.1. Adaptation / Translation of CIC and CEBEM courses

CIC and CEBEM examined their lists of courses with the purpose to identify courses with potential mutual interest (see Table 1). Some courses to be adapted or translated were selected. However, the decision about what courses to

translate or adapt for CIC's or CEBEM's own purposes was postponed until further exploration of potential demand could be done through the Portal and its Newsletter. To this purpose, a short questionnaire was included in the Portal. http://ccd-ckd.cebem.org/pages/_campus/index_eng.php

The Portal's Newsletter was used also to inquire in Canada and Latin America about interest for taking CEBEM's and CIC's courses. See in the newsletter section: "Professional Development by CEBEM and CIC" http://ccd-ckd.cebem.org/pages/newsletter_eng.php

Questions online in English and Spanish were addressed to audiences in Canada and LAC respectively. Results (December 4, 2007 – August 9, 2008) follow:

1. Are you interested in CEBEM courses? (6 responses)

    - 83.3% - Yes, I have no problem in reading Spanish (5)
    - 0% - Yes, but I need a bilingual tutor (0)
    - 0% - Yes, but I do not understand Spanish (1)

2. Are you interested in CIC courses? (3 responses)

    - 100% - Yes (3)
    - 0% - No (0)

3. ¿Está usted interesado en los cursos básicos (Virtual Education series)? 308 responses

    - 99.7% - Sí (307)
    - 0.3% - No (1)

5. ¿Está usted interesado en los cursos del CIC? 139 responses

    - 19.4% - Sí, no tengo problema con leer en inglés (27)
    - 17.3% - Sí, pero necesito tener un tutor bilingüe (24)
    - 63.3% - Sí, pero no comprendo inglés (88)

These results indicate:

a. A need to provide more visibility to CEBEM's courses in Canada. The current mailing list is mostly concentrate in the LAC audience. More exposure to CEBEM's courses using information in English could raise more interest in Canada. This result is also useful for the marketing strategy of courses to be offered by other LAC partners.

b. There is interest in LAC about CIC courses even if they were delivered in English. Therefore, it is a matter to give more visibility to these courses, and facilitate consultation and payment. Translation of courses to Spanish or use of bilingual tutors could expand significantly the clientele. This is also a useful result for the marketing of courses to be offered in LAC by Canadian partners.

c. The interest on courses on virtual education was dominant.

2.1.3.2. New substantive courses

CIC developed a new substantive course entitled "Evaluation in International Development". The content was developed by an outside consultant Zack Gross and reviewed by CIC program manager. The course will be put online in latter part of 2008 and offered in early 2009.

CEBEM and ISHD at York University agreed to produce an online short course on Gender and Development. Lic. Natasha Loayza has prepared an outline for discussion with ISHD on the base of materials produced by ISHD and IDRC. (http://www.yorku.ca/ishd/GENDERGS/GR.TOC.htm) The course is expected to be delivered the second semester of 2008.

The Centro de Estudios en Relaciones Internacionales de Rosario (CERIR), University of Rosario is preparing another online course on "International Relations and Development in Latin America". The course will be delivered in coordination with the recently created Escuela Virtual de Relaciones Internacionales (EVRI).

2.1.3.3. Regular courses

CEBEM is currently advertising in the Portal the following courses:

- Area: Local, regional y territorial development

    a. Program on Community Forestry Development (CEBEM / CESU-UMSS)

    This program is supported by IDRC-CANADA and the Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios - Universidad de San Simon (CESU-UMSS). The program delivers courses on natural resources management and improvement of quality of community life. It is under execution the course "Andean Regime for Accessing Genetic Resources (Decision 391 CAN)" 2nd version. Duration: 6 weeks. http://www.desarrolloforestal.org

    b. Program on Environmental Management (CEBEM / CESU-UMSS)

    Course on "Environmental Auditing". This course gives basic knowledge on what is environmental auditing, its components, and reach. Duration: 9 weeks. http://gestionambiental.cebem.org

    c. Program on Local Development (CEBEM / CLAEH / CESU-UMSS)

    Courses of this program are aimed at professionals, technicians, local authorities, and social actors, whose activities are related to generation of public policies and creation conditions for development at the local level. http://desarrollolocal.cebem.org . Most current courses were:

    - Local Development (9th. Edition) – June 16, 2008

- Territorial Organization for Development (7th. Edition) – June 9, 2008
- Measurement of Local Economy (2nd. Edition) - June 30, 2008
- Formulation of Plans for Soils Use (2nd. Edition) - February 25, 2008
- Introduction to Social Analysis Systems SAS² (3rd. Edition) - February 18, 2008

- Area: Intercultural relations

  CEBEM's courses are delivered within the framework of Project "Intercultural Conflicts: a democratic regional proposal from Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia", funded by the European Commission. The project is executed by the Civil Volunteer Group of Italy, the Instituto de Estudios Ecuatorianos, the Centro de Estudios Regionales Andinos "Bartolomé de las Casas" and CEBEM. Two courses have been delivered (http://conflictosinterculturales.cebem.org/virtual/campus.php):

  - Indigenous Rights (1st. Edition) - July 28, 2008
  - Indigenous Territories (1st. Edition) – June 23, 2008

  CIC's courses on the same topic are delivered within the framework of the *Certificate in Intercultural Studies* and *Certificate on International Development* (http://cic.cstudies.ubc.ca/cis/index.html). This program is one of the first of its kind in Canada. Unique in its delivery and content, it has attracted participants from across North America, Asia, Latin America, Australia and Europe.

- Area: International Relations and Development

  CIC's online courses are delivered within the framework of the *Certificate in International Development* (http://cic.cstudies.ubc.ca/cid/index.html. CIC has advertised in the Portal the following courses:

  - CID500 Introduction to International Development (CIC-UBC) 9 weeks
  - CID610 Introduction to International Health and Development (CIC-UBC) 6 weeks
  - CID611 Issues in International Health Delivery (CIC-UBC) 6 weeks
  - CID 612 Project Planning and Proposal Writing (CIC-UBC) 7 weeks

2.2. The Learning Framework: Latin America-Canada Portal

2.2.1. Portal Technical Characteristics

"A Portal will be built using server-side dynamic technologies. For instance, the Portal will provide a student with means to review demonstration courses, register to formal ones, interact with other students, search the virtual library for various types of information, and so on. It will allow users to access information through finding tools or by following links provided in newsletters and online courses.

In the initial stages of the Project, a priority task will be to develop a visual design fitted to the various services the Portal will make available.

A description of the Portal's contents will be accessible in the initial page in Spanish, English and French. All major sections will be announced in both English and Spanish, while the contents of every section in its structure will be kept in their original language in order to avoid costs of language translation and publication delays."

2.2.1.1 Production

A first version of the Portal was produced and opened as private website in early September. A consultation to 80 professionals in Canada and Latin America was conducted in order to assess its presentation, content, and operation.

The consultation did not produce many comments. In general terms, the Portal was assessed as a positive contribution and a very well structured website. There was no comment indicating that the initiative duplicated other efforts or did not fill important gaps. However, some important deficiencies were noted:

- The idea of a "structuring mechanism" combining information, training, and communication tools, aimed at promotion and dissemination of knowledge products was not well captured by academics.
- The initiative appeared to be too open, needed of more conceptual specification or needed to fill some theoretical gaps, for example, to have a focus on gender. There was the impression of insufficient focus and a need to concentrate on few specific topic(s).
- The criteria for the initial selection of themes, institutions or programs were not clear; the exploratory, experimental and preliminary character was not captured well.
- There was concern about the number of Newsletters distributed by CEBEM.
- The initiative did not seemed aimed at conducting research activities.
- There was need to modify the list of training programs in the theme Human and Social Development.
- There was need to re-structure the area on Cooperation.
- The opportunities that the Portal and Newsletter can open to research and training programs were not well perceived.
- There was need of careful editing, particularly in English.
- There was not a French version.

Some actions were taken in order to meet most critical comments:

- A focus on four themes was made more explicit.
- Explanatory texts in the Portal were reviewed.
- English language was edited.
- Training programs included in the focus themes were reviewed.
- Presentation of data was reorganized.
- A synthetic Newsletter was produced by CEBEM.

Changes were completed by mid January 2008. To meet other comments required more development of the Portal, expansion of the number of institutions to be included, and further consultations. To this last purpose an Evaluation Workshop was organized in March (see section 5.1.)

The Portal was officially opened to public on December 4, 2007 (see: http://ccd-ckd.cebem.org/index_eng.php). The original criteria for its design and operation were applied as planned. However, production of the Portal took more time than expected. Among the reasons were:

- The design required the development of four prototypes in order to adjust colours and structure to the Portal objectives.
- The gathering of information for the different components of the Portal was a cumulative process that implied incremental changes in sections and subsections. This sort of process required continuous discussions and introduction of changes until a final structure for the Portal was attained.
- Successive reorganization of information was needed when changes were made in sections and subsections.
- Design of common format and structure for presentation of information about Canada and Latin America demanded additional analysis as needs and interests are not the same.
- The writing of texts required several revisions in order to accommodate changes in sections and subsections.
- Texts were developed in Spanish. Translation to English and editing required additional time.
- Additional investigation was needed in order to decide about how to build searching mechanisms in the Portal.

2.2.1.2 Main characteristics

a. All main titles and descriptions are in English and Spanish. Materials are in the original language. Production of a French version is pending.

b. The Virtual library section gives access to CEBEM's virtual library and provides links other virtual libraries.

c. The Virtual Campus section has links to CIC and CEBEM learning platforms.

d. The Portal has the following main areas: who we are, virtual library, online education, newsletter, and forums. Other areas are: top history, news, and services.

e. The Portal gives information about the following type of resources in Canada and Latin America: graduate studies, research centres, development projects, networks, cooperation resources, productive sector, directories, newsletters, and publications.

f. There are four focus themes: Virtual Education; Local, regional and territorial development; Intercultural Relations; and, Human and Social Development. Additional information is given in most disciplines. Inclusion of International Relations, and Gender and Development as another two focus themes is under consideration

g. A small number of Canadian universities and institutions are presented with information about their research centres and Latin American experts. They are University of British Columbia University, University of Calgary, York

University, Carleton University, University of Ottawa, McGill University, Simon Fraser University, University of Quebec at Montreal, Toronto University, University of Alberta, Laval University, Dalhousie University, and Memorial University of Newfoundland & Labrador. This number will be expanded gradually.

h. Information in the four focus themes regarding promotion and development agencies, training programs, research centres, journals and newsletters, and networks is given for Canada and Latin America. In the case of Canada the data is for the above-mentioned universities and additional universities and institutions will be added gradually. In the case of Latin America information is given by country.

2.2.1.3 Visits to the Portal

Weekly reports of visitors to the Portal between December 4, 2007 and July 31, 2008 gave the following results (see Table 6):
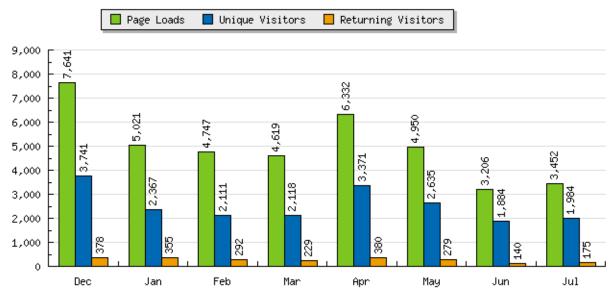
1. Total one-time visitors: 20,211 (monthly mean: 2,526)

2. More than one time visitors (those who entered to the website two or more times): 11% en el period

3. Origin of visitors per region (percent):

59.8 - South America	2.7 - Europe
29.8 - North America	0.6 - Asia y Oceania
6.6 – C. A. & the Caribbean	0.4 - Africa

4. Origin of visitors per country (percent)

Bolivia	37.50	Costa Rica	0.63
Peru	9.13	Dominican Rep.	0.50
Ecuador	3.13	El Salvador	0.50
Mexico	5.25	Uruguay	0.50
Colombia	5.13		
Argentina	4.75	United States	1.13
Chile	1.88	Canada	7.63
Venezuela	1.75	Spain	1.38

These results reflect the fact that most of the current mailing list is concentrated in LAC and particularly in the Andean region. There is need to expand the mailing list to the rest of the region and North America. The data base already compiled on Canadian experts and research centres will be used to this purpose.

TABLE 6   VISITS TO THE PORTAL. DECEMBER 2007 – JULY 2008

2.2.1.4 Demand for the Portal's Services

A question was introduced in the Portal and the Newsletter in order to explore demand for services that could be provided by the Portal: "Which one of the following services you would like to receive from this Newsletter and Portal? / ¿Cuáles de los siguientes tipos de servicios le interesaría recibir de este Boletín y del Portal?"

Results over a 166 responses (December 4, 2007 – August 9, 2008) were the following:

1. Announcements on Education / Training Courses

    -   49.4% Announcements on Graduate Courses
        Anuncios de Postgrados (82)
    -   65.7% Announcements on Virtual Graduate Courses
        Anuncios de Postgrados Virtuales (109)
    -   71.7% Announcement on short Virtual Courses
        Anuncios de Cursos Virtuales cortos (119)

2. Announcements on Research Contests

    -   60.8% Calls / Announcements
        Llamados / Convocatorias (101)
    -   66.9% International Calls for Project Proposals
        Llamados internacionales para la presentación de Proyectos (111)
    -   65.7% National Calls for Project Proposals
        Llamados nacionales para la presentación de Proyectos (109)
    -   66.9% Calls for Consulting Services
        Llamados a Consultorías (111)

20

3. Advertising Services for your organization related to:

- 53.0% Conferences in Latin America, Canada, USA, EU, and other regions
  Conferencias A.L, Canadá, USA, UE, y otras regiones (88)
- 53.0% Conferences on Latin American productive sectors
  Conferencias del sector productivo en A.L. (88)
- 62.6% Job Announcements
  Anuncios de puestos de trabajo (104)
- 60.2% Search for Project Partners
  Búsqueda de socios para Proyectos (100)
- 49.4% Search for Internships, Field Work, Visits
  Búsqueda de lugares para internados, trabajo de campo, visitas (82)

Results indicate there is interest for receiving all proposed services with no particular strong preference.

2.2.1.5 Data Bases

The methodology for data gathering and storage was gradually developed. Descriptors had to be redefined several times in order to fit characteristics of the information. Further changes will be necessary, as this process will continue. Advances permitted to consolidate a good base of information and experience.

A guideline was prepared for the search of data in each focus theme for Canada and Latin America. Topics to be searched were:

- Institutions devoted to promotion and development
- Graduate training programs
- Research centres
- Government agencies
- Journal, magazines and newsletters
- Networks
- General information sources

Results of this work are presented in the Portal for each focus theme. An exception was made in the case of Canadian research centres and experts with interest in LAC in which case the complete spectrum of disciplines were explored, irrespective if they were working or not in the four focus themes. The reason for this exception is that it was decided to have a completed perspective of Canadian resources so future themes or sub-themes could be developed more easily. Data are presented in Tables 7 and 8.

For the case of Canada data were introduced for 83 graduate programs working in the four focus themes of the project, 428 research centres in 46 disciplinary fields, 49 networks, 8 newsletters, and 134 Canadian experts in LAC. This information was obtained from the 13 Canadian universities mentioned before. Therefore, there is still an important amount of information to be added to these figures once all Canadian universities will be explored.

For the case of LAC, the search concentrated around the four focus themes of the Portal and it was conducted by country. There is still extensive work to be conducted before arriving to complete figures. Therefore the following figures are quite preliminary: 191 graduate programs, 20 networks, 23 newsletters. The exploration about LAC experts in the four focus themes is a pending task.

The data so far gathered has been organized according to WINISIS (CDS/ISIS tool - graphic version for Windows) descriptors that facilitate diverse types of searches. This is an ECLA program designed for storing and retrieving bibliographical data and conducting diverse types of searches. Documents will continue to be added using this system.

CEBEM is also gathering and updating information on its data base of institutions, professionals and researcher from universities in Latin America and Canada. This data base uses MySQL, a relational flexible and speedy management data base that allows combination of data from different tables upon request.

TABLE 7   **NUMBER OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS, RESEARCH CENTRES, NETWORKS, AND NEWSLETTERS BY FOCUS THEME AND DISCIPLINARY FIELD. CANADA AND LATIN AMERICA (LAC)**

	Canada	LAC
Graduate studies	**83**	**191**
Human & Social Development	15	45
Intercultural Relations	27	10
Local, Regional, Territorial Development	28	73
Virtual Education	12	82
Research Centres	**428**	
Accounting	2	
Animal Sciences	4	
Agriculture	1	
Biology	20	
Business Administration / Management	9	
Chemistry	7	
Communication	12	
Computer Sciences	6	
Earth Sciences	4	
Economics	25	
Education	27	
Energy	1	
Engineering Sciences	8	
Environment	18	
European Studies	2	
Fine Arts	6	
Forestry	1	
Gender	10	
Globalization	4	
Health	86	
History	7	
Human Rights	4	
Humanities	5	

	Canada	LAC
Information	9	
Interdisciplinary Studies	18	
International Studies	6	
Language	7	
Latin American Studies	2	
Law	17	
Library Sciences	1	
Literature	4	
Marine Studies	2	
Mathematics	13	
Military Studies	1	
Physics	6	
Political Sciences	9	
Risk Studies	2	
Social Development	19	
Social Work	1	
Space Sciences	4	
Technology	38	
Theology	1	
Tourism	3	
Transportation	2	
Urbanism	4	
Water	3	
Networks	49	20
Directory of Experts	**134**	
Agriculture / Environment	5	
Anthropology	11	
Arts	1	
Architecture	1	
Biology	3	
Business	3	
Canadian Studies	1	
Community Development	4	

Earth Sciences	1
Education	3
Economics	6
Engineering	1
Hispanic Studies	10
Forestry	1
Geography	20
Health Sciences	7
History	11
International Development	1
Land Studies	1

Literature	1	
Planning	3	
Political Sciences	13	
Public Health	3	
Sciences	5	
Social Work	1	
Sociology	12	
Tourism	1	
Urbanism	1	
Women Studies	4	
Newsletters	**8**	**23**

TABLE 8 NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TYPES ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE FOUR FOCUS THEMES

Theme	Intercultural Relations		Local, Regional & Territorial Development		Human & Social Development		Virtual Education	
Region	Canada	LAC	Canada	LAC	Canada	LAC	Canada	LAC
TYPE OR ORGANIZATION								
Promotion and development	9	21		36	1		3	
Training and research		-						
Training	27	10	28	73	15	45	12	82
Research		9	5	17	24	3	5	
Government		5		11	7	13	1	2
TYPE OF ACTIVITY								
Magazines and newsletters	3	14			1	3	4	6
Networks	7	9				4	3	8
Information sources	6	9				2	1	
Services							5	8

2.2.2. E-Learning Platforms

"Each partner institution will maintain its own e-learning platform. This will avoid costs in training or licensing issues, while allowing the current state-of-the-art available technology to be improved on the basis of accumulated experience."

CEBEM decided to use the Moodle learning platform for delivery of its three courses about online education. The reason was that many students taking those courses would develop their own programs in open code platforms. Therefore they should be familiar with the general philosophy behind that type of platforms instead of CEBEM's platform, which was created early to fit CEBEM's courses. Different Moodle tools were used to perform communication, organization and evaluation tasks. The platform created by CEBEM will continue to be used with other CEBEM's coursers – such as the courses of the Local Development Program.

2.2.3. Virtual Library

"*The following activities will be carried out:*

- *"Preparation of a guideline for identification of knowledge sources on the theme of each demonstrative course."*

- *"Discussion about course contents with the Canadian and/or Latin American professor(s) who will deliver the demonstrative courses."*

"The database will focus, at the beginning, on Canadian and Latin American knowledge products of interest to the four focus areas, such as key policy instruments, key state-of-the-art-reviews, major publications, newsletters, websites, databases and other electronic libraries. It will also include information on Canadian and Latin American experts and networks; programs and courses; and organizations, events, and other activities of interest to the project."

"CEBEM will take the lead, expanding its existing database and indexing information supplied by both CEBEM and CIC according to existing standards. The Portal Manager will ensure that the database is accessible for input by CIC, while the Librarian will index and enter all documents, and work with CIC to arrive at a common set of cataloguing fields."

"The virtual library will be available to all course participants, and to the public at large. CIC will explore interface and/or any conditions, restrictions or support from UBC Library; CEBEM will ensure direct access to Virtual Library by CIC staff and visitors."

CEBEM's Documentation Centre organized its online library using ISIS Program, an ECLA program designed for storing and retrieving bibliographical data and conducting diverse types of searches. Documents will continue to be added using this system in a variety of topics such as Social Sciences, Political Science, Local Development, Public Policies, Sustainable Development, Environmental Sciences and Intercultural Affairs, among others.

CEBEM is also gathering information and updating its data basis on institutions, professionals and researcher from universities in Latin America and Canada. Data have been gathered so far for websites of 5 university virtual libraries in Canada and 60 online university libraries in LAC. This data base will continue to be expanded and used for announcing to virtual libraries in Canada and LAC the publication and location of documents, books, theses, etc.

Coordination between CIC and CEBEM for arriving at a common set of cataloguing fields and to ensure mutual inputs by CIC and CEBEM is a task still pending.

2.2.4. Dissemination Tools

"A Newsletter will be produced and distributed by e-mail. To this purpose: mailing lists of RIADEL, RIDELC, and REDESMA's newsletters, and lists of Canadian institutions and experts prepared during the exploratory phase will be used.

CIC will identify potential users and sources of information among Canadian individuals, institutions and networks".

Three activities were conducted by CEBEM:

a. Production of an English version of CEBEM's website. The purpose was to facilitate communication with audiences in Canada, North America and other regions.

b. Creation of a section for Newsletters in the Portal:

   http://ccd-ckd.cebem.org/pages/can/newsletters_eng.php

   This section will be a base for giving the following service indicated in the Portal:

   "This Portal is open to requests for announcements about newsletters and subscriptions. Requests will also be included in the Portal's newsletter. Circulation of newsletters to the Latin American region from other institutions may be done on a reciprocal basis. "

c. Creation of the Portal's Newsletter:

   Creation of the Portal's newsletter required preparation of various models. The first issue of the Newsletter in English and Spanish was circulated in December 4, 2007 at the time of the public opening of the Portal. However, the fact that CEBEM was circulating also other newsletter raised the need to move towards a synthetic newsletter. Thus, "CEBEM – NOTICIAS / NEWS" was created.

This newsletter includes news from other CEBEM's newsletters: REDESMA, RIPPET, Intercultural Conflicts and SAS as well as news relevant to the project and the Canadian audience. Access to the Newsletter is given in the Portal: http://ccd-ckd.cebem.org/pages/newsletter_eng.php This free biweekly newsletter has become a virtual space that links institutions and individuals on the based of their thematic interests in areas such as sustainable development; environment; local, regional and territorial development; virtual education; public policies; social sciences; and intercultural affairs. So far the following issues have been delivered:

Year 1 Number 21 – August 7, 2008   Year 1 Number 10 - March 5, 2008
Year 1 Number 20 – July 23, 2008   Year 1 Number 09 - February 20, 2008
Year 1 Number 19 – July 9, 2008   Year 1 Number 08 - February 7, 2008
Year 1 Number 18 - June 25, 2008   Year 1 Number 07 - January 23, 2008
Year 1 Number 17 - June 11, 2008   Year 1 Number 06 - January 9, 2008
Year 1 Number 16 - May 28, 2008   Year 1 Number 05 - December 19, 2007
Year 1 Number 15 - May 14, 2008   Year 1 Number 04 - December 12, 2007
Year 1 Number 14 - April 30, 2008   Year 1 Number 03 - November 28, 2007
Year 1 Number 13 - April 16, 2008   Year 1 Number 02 - November 14, 2007
Year 1 Number 12 - April 2, 2008   Year 1 Number 01 - October 31, 2007
Year 1 Number 11 - March 19, 2008

3.   PROMOTION STRATEGY

"The promotion strategy will be a collaborative effort coordinated by the Project Coordinator. A significant part of the promotion effort will be through the Portal itself and through the various individuals, institutions and networks of CIC and CEBEM.   The strategy will be as follows:

a) *The Newsletter will be an instrument for regular alert, possibly on a monthly basis, in collaboration with other Canadian newsletters.*
b) *The Newsletter will be a mechanism to give exposure to demonstration courses.*
c) *Newsletters produced by international organizations, NGOs and universities circulating in Canada and Latin America will be asked to collaborate.*
d) *A number of relevant professional associations, associations of municipalities, and private sector organizations in Canada and Latin America will be contacted for advertising the courses and the Portal's facilities.*
e) *The training of a number of young professionals on the basics of online learning and how to produce short-term online courses will create a minimum group of interlocutors. Course delivery will be in itself an opportunity for promoting, on the base of concrete examples, options for knowledge partnerships.*

3.1   Marketing Plan

A Marketing Plan was prepared to promote the project and Portal. Lists of specialists and institutions to be consulted were prepared. It was decided to use a short list of persons for a Pre-Opening phase in order to avoid premature exposure of the Portal and have the opportunity to make corrections and adjustments.

After the Pre-Opening phase, the Opening phase began with the official publication of the Portal's website on December 04, 2008. All CEBEM's mailing lists were used in order to promote as much as possible the project. Data about visits and response to the announcement of the series of foundation courses on virtual education indicated that the strategy was in a good track. Further improvements will be made in order to have better identification of specific audiences by topic, type of activity, and interests.

3.2.   Collaboration of other institutions

Collaboration of other Canadian institutions was obtained during the life of the project. The International Secretariat for Human Development (SHD) at York University and the Centre for Developing Area Studies (CADS) at Mac Gill

University decided early to support the project, share their institutional logos with the project, and collaborate with inputs for the focus themes and the virtual library. Discussions with other potential collaborating Canadian centres started. These contacts materialized later on with expressions of interest and commitment to participate in a Phase II.

Other institutions from Latin America joined also the project: the Centro Superior de Estudios Universitarios – Universidad Mayor de San Simón (CESU – UMSS), the Centro Latinoamericano de Economia Humana (CLAEH), the Centro de Estudios de Relaciones Internacionales de Rosario – CERIR (Universidad de Rosario, Argentina), and the Centro de Estudios de la Universidad (CEDU) de la Universidad Autonoma del Estado de México.

Finally, discussions were held in Mexico City (August 18-19, 2008) with representatives of RIPPET and Universidad Autonoma de Manizales, Colombia, in order to coordinate participation of Canadian institutions in the next VIII Conference of RIPPET to be held in Manizales, Colombia, in May 2009. The purpose of this participation will be to promote partnerships between Canadian and Latin American training and research programs on regional and local development. The idea is to devote half a day of the conference for presentations and discussions about co-production of courses, contribution to common data bases, participation in newsletters and virtual journals, and exchanges within the framework created by the project.

3.3. Presentations in Canada

CEBEM in coordination with CUSO organized a Speaker's Tour in four cities across Canada, and participated in the international session of the 2008 Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) Conference, "Waves of Change: Building People-Centred Economies" (May 21-25, 2008). The tour was funded by IDRC.

The Speaker's Tour, entitled "Forum on Knowledge Partnerships: Canada - Latin America", was a great success. It started with a presentation in Toronto on May 20th at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), in collaboration with the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC) at York University. This was followed by presentations at CUSO's offices in Ottawa on May 26, and by two presentations in Montréal: the first on May 28th at the Department of Political Science of the Université du Québec à Montréal; the second, on May 29, at the Centre for Developing-Area Studies (CDAS) of McGill University. The final presentation of the tour was in Québec city, on May 30th, at the Ministère de Relations Internationales of the Quebec Government.

José Blanes, CEBEM's Executive Director, was the main speaker at these events. Mario Torres, the project's Coordinator and CEBEM's representative in Canada, accompanied him. Blanes presented the multiple facets of the work of CEBEM and demonstrated its role in the creation of North-South and South-South partnerships among academic institutions and community education associations. He provided examples of CEBEM's publications and "virtual courses". Brochures in English and French were prepared with information about CEBEM's projects. A special emphasis was put in this project and another

project named "Social Observatory on Governance" that has been conducted with CUSO.

The tour was also an opportunity to meet with representatives from CCEDNEt, CDAS (McGill), CERLAC (York), ISHD (York), OISE (UT), and CSCD (SFU) and discuss about their interests to participate as partners in a Phase II of this project. The tour was very successfully. It permitted to give exposure to CEBEM, the project, and explore opinions, interests, and specific commitments from potential Canadian partners.

4. TARGET AUDIENCE AND BENEFICIARIES

"The foundation courses will be destined primarily to the individuals who produce, facilitate or monitor courses in the context of each institution, and to individuals wishing to engage in online learning. Other substantive courses will attract different prospective students, according to their needs and interests. These courses will be advertised and made available to CIC's and CEBEM's regular clients, and to a wider public, through each institution's networks, thus building up an extensive network of potential clients and users.

The exploratory study that preceded this project identified the following categories of potential beneficiaries:

a) *Latin American and Canadian professionals and technicians;*

b) *Educators,*

c) *Graduate students and young professionals,*

d) *Private sector groups,*

e) *Government agencies,*

f) *NGOs, development agencies and other civil society organizations."*

The mailing list used by CEBEM includes potential beneficiaries of the project except made of private sector groups, which are few so far but more are expected to be added in the near future. The current number of 131,000 subscribers to CEBEM newsletters has approximately the following distribution: one third are Bolivians, other third includes subscribers from South America, Central America and Mexico, and another third are subscribers from Europe, USA and Canada – in this last case there is a significant expansion. It is under discussion creation of sub-lists for Spanish and English speaking subscribers. One difficulty has been the existence of spam and black lists that has made difficult to expand towards Canada and elsewhere. For this reason, it has been considered to add subscribers by invitation.

No evaluation of has been made about benefits obtained by the audiences of CEBEM's newsletters. One indication that the project has rendered benefits is the demand for the series of courses on virtual education. The reiteration of visits (around 2,200 or 11%) in a 6-month period may be another indication that the project is perceived as useful. Assessment of the newsletter will be done in the near future. To this purpose information coming from the users is being collected.

5. LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND OPERATIONAL ISSUES

"CIC and CEBEM partnership will serve as an opportunity to connect its students and wider audience with new ideas, contacts and opportunities not currently available to them.

CIC will systematize its experience regarding, e.g. processes of N-S collaboration involving different languages, integrating voices from and experiences from the South (given its emphasis on intercultural relations); understanding e-learning in different contexts and cultures; also an opportunity to reflect upon its own experience.

CEBEM is interested in developing standards for quality and relevance of internet-based pedagogy, in collective knowledge construction, and in accessing Canadian sources of information and expertise and in sharing its own experience and resources. It will systematize its experience with respect to e-learning as well as the experience of N-S collaboration in knowledge building within a "learning community"; it is also interested in finding out how perspectives from other regions are incorporated in the various online courses.

The Project Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that both centres document their experience in terms of what they want to learn from the collaboration, and for providing an overall systematization of the experience. Assistance by an external evaluator will be examined.

Funds will be requested to IDRC six months before the end of the project for a workshop to distil what both partners have learnt and to conduct a facilitated participatory evaluation.

1. CIC and CEBEM will conduct research on results of the learning experience and operational issues as represented by courses, the Portal, and the Newsletter. To this purpose, the project will conduct on-going evaluation of courses on the basis of the students' evaluation of each course, results obtained, and consultation with participating experts and programs. A guideline with topics and questions will be prepared to this purpose. Tracer studies of participants 3-6 months after course completion, to document any concrete uptake and application, will be considered as a complementary option.

   a. Results of these activities will be inputs to produce a discussion document."

5.1. Evaluation Workshop

5.1.1. Organization

An evaluation workshop: "Cooperacion, Conocimiento y Desarrollo" was held in La Paz, Bolivia on March 21-23, 2008. The objectives of the workshop were:

1. To present the achievements of the project
2. To discuss the major problems and challenges faced by the project
3. To discuss key pedagogical issues related to e-learning with invited academics
4. To discuss about the next steps in relation to the end of this project
5. To prepare a draft agenda for a possible next phase of the project.

A selected list of people and institutions from Canada and Latin America were invited to this meeting. A CIC senior manager participated in the workshop in La Paz along with CEBEM staff.

A Memory of the Workshop was prepared and circulated to all participants for comments and final suggestions. The following topics were included:

- Presentation
- Objectives
- Topics for discussion
- Results to be reached
- Background of the project
- Presentation of main results so far obtained
- Main topics commented
- Indications of possible collaboration by the participants
- Vectors of the project's matrix
- Conclusion

5.1.2. Results

These were 3 days of intense debate and exchange. CEBEM presented the achievements of the project in relation to its four key dimensions: presentation, promotion, communication, and creation of (new) knowledge. While there was common agreement about the need to further explore the niche of the project (supporting North – South and South – South collaboration and strengthening e-learning for professional capacity of development practitioners throughout the region) more clarification about the project's identity (or rather the criteria used to limit the scope of such a broad initiative) was indicated as needed. To respond to this conclusion, a review of the technical and conceptual framework was initiated and a preliminary response was given at the end of the workshop. As one follow up activity, a explicit presentation of the technical and conceptual areas and their criteria were added to the Portal (see Who we are http://ccd-ckd.cebem.org/who/index_eng.php)

A brief description of possible collaboration that other potential partners in Canada and beyond would be ready to bring into this project follows:

a. CDAS at McGill University: Working papers for the Virtual Library, collaboration of graduate students, collaboration for production of virtual courses. Topics of interest: democracy, indigenous people, gender, civil society.

b. CSCD at Simon Fraser University: human resources, identification and co-application to funding sources, collaboration for marketing in Canada, Mexico and Bolivia of courses on topics of community economic development; collaboration from the Program on Latin American Studies at SFU for publication of research results; participation in the courses on virtual education. Topics of interest: community economic development, sustainable development, social participation, citizenship, virtual education, indigenous development.

c. CERLAC at York University: contribution of documents for the virtual library, time and knowledge of graduate students, participation of students in courses on virtual education, facilitate access to studies about the region existing in Canada and LAC, use of the Portal for disseminating knowledge produced by CERLAC. Topics of interest: democracy, social participation, extractive industries and social relations.

d. PUC Virtual at Universidad Católica de Perú (PUC): collaboration for production of courses, analysis of virtual education issues, exchanges for theses preparation. Topic of interest: virtual education.

e. FLACSO Virtual at FLACSO, Buenos Aires: human resources, support for promoting in the region discussion about virtual education, production of courses, contribute to the virtual library, give inputs for data bases, promote exchange of students, identify professors for specific topics. Topics of interest: virtual education, decentralized cooperation, gender.

f. CLAEH: collaboration for production of graduate training and virtual courses for professional development. Topic of interest: study of the link between virtual education and territorial social processes.

g. Fundación PASODEHU (Ecuador): human resources with knowledge on adult education, collaboration for reviewing virtual education courses. Topics of interest: migration and development, local development.

h. CESU (UMSS): to continue current collaboration with CEBEM. Topics of interest: interculturality, mining and energy, local economic development, citizenship and democracy.

i. Agrupación Análisis Real-Latinoamérica (AR-LAT): collaboration for production of short courses for municipal officials. Topics of interest: local and municipal planning, measurement of local economy.

In general terms the workshop was very successful. It permitted to test the main assumptions of the project, give an opportunity to discuss in depth about its advances, opportunities and risks, and awake the interest to participate from new Canadian and LAC partners. The project appeared to be in good track. However, it was necessary to be cautious about its limits. Two strategic characteristics were very clearly remarked: the virtual nature of all its activities, and the search of effective ways to bring knowledge that permit professionals to update and development knowledge. The workshop was also opportunity for discussions between CIC and CEBEM about possible plans for a Phase II.

5.2 Lessons Learned

CIC and CEBEM could obtain along the life of the project some important lessons. A summary of them follows.

5.2.1 From CIC's perspective:

- *Underestimation of time needed for the project.* This project, especially at the initial stages, took a while to get wrapped around. The workload turned to be more than expected in relation to regular CIC job responsibilities. A lesson learned from this is that how much time would be spend on this project, was underestimated.

- *Start small before implementing something bigger.* It is important to start small (e.g. pilot something) before implementing something bigger (e.g. developing a course).

- *Expressing concerns from the beginning to be sure to be in the same page.* There have been times during the project where misunderstanding of what should be done and who should do produced frustration.

- *It is important to participate in research projects of mutual benefit.* It has been challenging to work on this project by the CIC member of the research team given other work at the centre. What has helped in this process though, is knowing that there is evident benefit to CIC from this project.

- *Need of funds to look in depth at each other's courses.* One of the areas in which no much time have been spent, is looking in depth at each other's courses. One of the drawbacks and limitations was the amount of project funds allocated to CIC. Much of the money went to CIC salary and benefits.

- *It is useful to participate in other's courses.* Through the participation in CEBEM's foundation course, "What is Online Learning?", CIC learned that CEBEM's online learning pedagogy is similar to CIC's pedagogy. This helped CIC understand how CEBEM's courses work and allowed CIC to explore the option of looking at their existing courses to count as credit in CIC's Certificate in International Development – which will be done in a possible Phase II.

- *Proficiency in other's language is necessary.* CIC learned that much more could have been done in this project if the CIC staff person implementing this project was well versed in Spanish. Considering this and the possibility of a Phase II component of the project, CIC sought to hire someone with Spanish skills who could manage this project, given the maternity leave in mid-July of the person implementing this project. Not only did CIC hire someone with Spanish skills, they hired someone from Bolivia. Spanish proficiency in the Canadian institution is indispensable because translation of teaching materials is expensive and not necessarily needed for initial examination purposes.

- *Participation of CIC staff.* It has been valuable to include more CIC staff in this project, at a consultation level. This allowed for more ideas and better brainstorming when thinking things through. Two of the senior staff have been included in the project and the manager implementing this project has been able to rely on them for their advice.

5.2.2   From CEBEM's perspective

- *Flexibility to understand partner's needs and concerns.* CEBEM and CIC had different experiences that required special attention for understanding the other partner's needs and concerns. Flexibility in adjusting to the other partner demands or requests is key in order to build a good working relation.

- *Adjustment to unexpected workload.* The experimental character of the project demanded more time than originally planned for all team members. This is not unusual in projects of experimental character, particularly during the initial stage.

- *Take advantage of opportunities as they emerge.* Opportunities appeared along the project development created by the project's implementation itself – new partners, new sources of data, new themes. Experience indicated that it is better to be open to new options than to be restricted to a few ones.

- *Learning others language for easier intercultural communication.* Experience indicates that intercultural communication is easier when others language is understood.

- *Innovation requires persistence and patience.* Innovation is a process that requires persistence to convince others about the goodness of the innovation. It also requires patience because it cannot be expected that others will fully understand at first sight a project aimed at innovation.

- *South easier to convince than North.* Institutions in the South perceived more easily the usefulness of the project. Institutions in the North showed sort of lack of confidence in an initiative coming from a Southern centre. This situation is understandable given the asymmetric relations that exist between North and South.

- *Assessing market needs on the base of interaction with users.* CEBEM used its recurrent contacts with students, professionals, specialists, local officials, and operators of projects, as well as the evaluation of its courses in order to have an idea about professional development needs. This strategy has proven to be valid and reliable when standard marketing methodologies are not amenable to assess emerging or not well-articulated needs.

6. RISKS

"Most professors that have indicated interest to participate do not have previous experience with online education. To face this risk the following will be done:

- *CIC and CEBEM will give direct advice to professors and assistants for production of demonstration courses.*
- *Basic training will be given*

Marketing of Portal clusters of knowledge sources, and demonstration courses may be insufficient. To face this risk the project will rely on the most extensive possible use of resources such as existing newsletters, the Latin American network of graduate

programs on territorial development, and the associations of professionals and universities in Canada, the Andes, and Latin America."

<u>*Sustainability of Experimental /Pilot Collaboration*</u>

While many of the elements of this project exist to a certain point within each institution, this project focuses on collaboration, sharing, and mutual learning. At the end, each institution can take away and build upon the experience alone or with other partners. They may also define areas in which it is both desirable and possible to continue the collaboration. And so the measure of success will not be whether or not the partnership survives, but in what each partner can integrate into its ongoing work.

The project will be deemed successful in the extent to which the partners have learned how better to meet the learning needs of the audiences they have identified, how better to practice online learning, and the level of partnership between CEBEM and CIC.

The Portal will need to be subsidized initially with donor's grants, as CEBEM does not count on enough resources. During the initial operation of the Portal other support modalities will be explored such as:

- *Association with Canadian institutions that may contribute with funding.*
- *Cost recovery through the selling of documents and access to data banks.*
- *Commercial advertising on the basis of traffic and flow of visits to business links"*

The risk due to lack ok knowledge on virtual education by professors could not be assessed because all professors that participated in the delivery of courses had previous experience with virtual education methodology.

The risk of sustainability in financial and institutional terms was faced with important results. Thus, regarding the costs of the series of courses on virtual education a cost recovery of around a 30% was obtained by CEBEM. Additional recovery could be possible with more deliveries per course.

Regarding institutional sustainability, the Evaluation Workshop, as indicated before, was an opportunity to attract the attention and collaboration of additional Canadian and LAC institutions. Additionally, CIC has taken some specific steps. It has hired in July 2008 a new manager of the CIC Certificate in International Development who will oversee the remaining activities of the project and work on the Phase II proposal and implementation. The new manager, Adriana Paz Ramirez, is from Bolivia. Her Spanish skills and contextual experience will be an asset to a possible Phase II of the project. Tasneen Damji, former manager – who will be on maternity leave until next July 2009 - oriented the new manager about Phase I and possible Phase II, wrote a draft proposal in consultation with CIC senior managers, and negotiated CIC proposal for a Phase II with the project Coordinator.

In the case of CEBEM, the research team has enhanced its experience significantly. Addition of another specialist on ICT's is under consideration to face demands that will be presented by a possible Phase II.

In general terms, the prospects for sustainability are positive. However, subsidy for this sort of initiative will be necessary in the short to medium term even if cost recovery and more institutional collaborations are obtained.

7. SUMMARY OF EXPECTED PRODUCTS AND OUTCOMES

7.1. Products

a) *"A set of three pedagogical tools (foundation online courses related to e-learning): introduction to e-learning; designing online courses; and facilitating online courses;*

Four virtual courses on Virtual Education were produced.

b) *A Latin America-Canada Portal that provides the structure and environment for a knowledge building community;*

The Portal for the model framework was produced and open to public. Further development is required in order to reach a more mature product. Current version has still an exploratory and experimental character.

c) *Virtual library and dissemination tools;*

Virtual library activities are well underway. The newsletter was produced and several issues were circulated to a wide audience.

d) *Two or three online courses related each one to territorial development, inter-cultural relations, and international development;*

Preliminary identification of CEBEM and CIC courses to be translated or adapted was done. An exploration of potential demand was conducted with positive results for CIC. CEBEM's courses continue to be demanded in LAC as usual.

e) *A discussion document on the learning experiences and operational issues based on on-going monitoring and evaluation of courses, project activities, and the project as a whole".*

This document was replace by the organization of an evaluation workshop and preparation of materials and a final Memory.

7.2. Outcomes

a) *"The Latin America-Canada Portal will be functional, allowing access to shared resources, including a virtual library, dissemination tools, discussion groups, demonstrations, and online courses;*

The Portal is under operation and may give information about Canadian and LAC sources of knowledge to visitors across the region and elsewhere.

b) *The partners will have tested a strategy for North–South partnership through e-pedagogy, information and communication sharing and dissemination;*

The partners obtained a valuable experience. CIC wishes to continue the activity on the base of a larger initiative. CEBEM with CIC and other Canadian partners developed a proposal for a Phase II to be submitted for funding to IDRC

c) *The partners will have a more solid theoretical understanding of e-learning and will have gained or increased their skills in delivering online courses;*

CEBEM improved its experience with learning platforms. It has begun use of Moodle as a new instrument.

d) *A number of Canadian and Latin American professionals, technicians and administrative personnel will have upgraded or complemented their knowledge and skills through online courses;*

63 professionals were trained in virtual education. However, it was not possible to reach the objective to train graduate students in Canada as CIC was short of funds.

e) *The partners will have documented and analysed the experience of delivering online courses."*

This analysis was done during the Evaluation Workshop with participation of other Canadian and LAC experts

8. THE RESEARCH TEAM

The research team was made up by:

Mario Torres Ph. D. Sociologist and Social Demographer was the Project Coordinator. He shared the coordination with Jose Blanes M.A. Sociologist, CEBEM's Director.

Tasneem Damji, Master of Public Health collaborated as project manager for CIC. Adriana Paz Ramirez, journalist and social communicator replaced her in the last two months.

Other members of the team at CEBEM were:

Manuel F. Rebollo, Systems Analyst, Server Operator and Programmer. Graphic designer. He has a diploma in University Education.

Marcelo Pinto, Master in Software Engineering, Diploma in Objects Analysis and Design, Diploma in Knowledge Engineering, Diploma in Macromedia Tools, Diploma in Higher Education, Diploma in Design and Development of Web pages.

Amelia Garrett, Biologist. Academic Coordinator, Tutor - Second version of Course 1: What is virtual education?. Project Assistant in charge of gathering, organization and storage information.

Diego de la Quintana, Biologist, Academic Coordinator, Tutor - First version of Course 1: What is virtual education? and second version of Course 2: How to

deliver an online course. Currently working as a coordinator for the Sustainable Development and Environment Network (REDESMA) and in charge of its by-weekly information newsletter and its quarterly Virtual Scientific Journal.

Sara Pinzi, Agronomy Engineer. Course Professor and Facilitator. In charge of preparing contents for Course 1: What is virtual education? and Course 2: How to deliver an online course.

Natasha Loayza, Sociologist. Expert on Gender and Development Issues. National Coordinator for LIDERA Program. Professor in charge of preparing the Gender and Human Development Course jointly with the International Secretariat for Human Development - York University.
Marta Cabeza, Diploma in International Relations, Master in Integration and International Development. Expert in multimedia content and integration issues with the European Union. Virtual Education Program Coordinator, Course Professor and Facilitator.

Selva Escalera, Communication, Newsletter Coordinator.