DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE INNOVATION PROCESSES AND CO-EVOLUTIONARY UNIVERSITY-SOCIETY APPROACHES IN BOLIVIA

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Abstract

This study is part of a worldwide debate on inclusive innovation systems in developing countries and particularly on the co-evolutionary processes taking place, seen from the perspective of a public university. The increasing literature that discusses how innovation systems and development can foster more inclusive and sustainable societies has inspired this thesis work. Thus, the main problem handled in the research concerns the question how socially sensitive research practices and policies at a public university in Bolivia can be stimulated within emerging innovation system dynamics. In that vein, empirical knowledge is developed at the Universidad Mayor de San Simón (UMSS), Cochabamba as a contribution to experience-based learning in the field. Analysis are nourished by a dialogue with the work of prominent Latin American scholars and practitioners around the idea of a developmental university and the democratization of knowledge. The reader will be able to recognize a recursive transit between theory and practice, where a number of relevant concepts are contextualized and connected in order to enable keys of critical interpretation and paths of practices amplification for social inclusion purposes established. The study shows how, based on a previous experience, new competences and capacities for the Technology Transfer Unit (UTT) at UMSS were produced, in this case transforming itself into a University Innovation Centre. Main lessons gained in that experience came from two pilot cluster development (food and leather sectors) and a multidisciplinary researchers network (UMSS Innovation Team) where insights found can improve future collaborative relations between university and society for inclusive innovation processes within the Bolivian context.