

GUIDE ASSOCIATION: CONCLUSIONS FROM THE VII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, GUATEMALA

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The VII International GUIDE Conference *Cultural Identity in the Midst of Global Modernization: The Role of Distance Education*, was held in the Central Campus in Guatemala City of the Universidad Panamericana (UPANA) the April 10-11 2014.

Participants were 350 from 41 different countries. Central America and the Guatemalan community of educators and researchers welcomed and attended this international event with open arms, sharing their first-hand experience as well as their thirst for knowledge. All 14 public and private universities in Guatemala sent their representatives to the conference, as well as the neighbouring El Salvador and Honduras.

During two days, the conference featured 78 presentations in plenary sessions as well as other sessions dedicated to topics such as the role of distance education in developing countries and in the global and local workplace, quality assurance, technological and pedagogic innovation and the application of OERs and MOOCs in formal education.

The main theme of the Conference, *Culture in the Midst of Global Modernization: The Role of Distance Education*, offered many occasions for critical analysis and discussion of the current concept of culture as part of the processes of modernization and globalization, as well as the value of diversity as an institutional and symbolic feature of human societies. Guatemala, a country full of contrasts, many of which result from the combination of various historical, mythical, and religious heritages, was the ideal location to highlight the need to promote an effective integration and a peaceful balance among tradition and culture, present and future, modernization and technological innovation.

Through its educational activity and social outreach, UPANA University reaffirmed the importance of using digital media as an instrument to transmit knowledge and traditional values to Guatemalan citizens and to the new generation of youths and adults, represented by a mix of ethnicities.

Despite the opposition of traditional academia, participating universities from all over the world agreed on the need to improve online education as a tool for expanding educational opportunities for all and equalizing access to technology. Institutional involvement in teaching, learning and scientific research was considered the driving force in innovation and growth, supporting change in the traditional modes of education and transmission of knowledge.

The advancements of information and communication technologies (ICT) provided new opportunities for sharing information, resources, and experiences, accelerating the rate of progress in science, technology and innovation and promoting sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

The conference provided many points of reflections and analysis on how social networks, open educational resources, MOOCs and other digital tools affect traditional ways of learning and how both universities and students can take advantages of them. In the work environment and more formal learning settings, the potential of technology has been recognized in offering a challenging environments and a variety of pedagogical experiences promoting autonomy, creativity, knowledge systematization, collaboration and self-esteem.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

VIII GUIDE conference and V Seminar on Education and Communication, Aracaju, Brazil, 19-21 November 2014

The VIII International GUIDE Conference *Science and Technology, Management and Quality: the future of higher education in Brazil and around the world*, will be held on November 19-21, 2014 at the Universidade Tiradentes (Aracaju, Brazil), leader University in Brazil for traditional and on-line education.

The conference intends to promote critical discussion on the main trends of global e-learning development, with particular attention to technology, management, research and quality. Pedagogical, methodological and quality aspects related to the e-learning practices will be analyzed to explore innovation and technology outcomes in different areas of knowledge in the context of higher education and corporate training.

The VIII GUIDE conference is organized in conjunction with the 5th edition of the Seminar on Education and Communication promoted by the University of Tiradentes, together with the Education, Communication and Society Research Group and Distance Education Center. The seminar's main objective is to join researchers, professors, graduates and post-graduates coming from Brazil and other countries to foster discussion and exchange on the relation between Education and Communication, focusing on the use of ICT, mobile devices and social and technical networks in teaching and learning.

The event's Organizing Committee is composed by members of the School of Education of the University of Tiradentes and of the Education, Communication and Society Group of Researchers (GECES), registered in the list of the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

