

## A makeshift editorial

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In recent years, the journal *SOSTENIBLE?* has focused on a number of topics of great interest—typically in single issues dedicated to a single theme—such as Globalisation, Biotechnology, Africa, Agendas 21, Democracy and the Ethics in Science and Technology. Perhaps, then, it was high time that we focused directly on the main topic that underlies and guides our work and mission: sustainability.

For the first time, and possibly due to the subject at hand, we have also endeavoured for the articles in this issue to be written by individuals who make up the UNESCO Chair of Technology, Sustainable Development, Imbalance and Global Change at the Technical University of Catalonia, rather than by outside specialists. These people include the lecturers and students in our Master's programmes, and especially those lecturers and students involved in the doctoral programme on Sustainability, Technology and Humanism, which is coordinated by our UNESCO Chair. These are people who form part of and promote the research groups launched by the Chair, which have already begun to bear fruit in the form of articles such as these, and in a number of recently-defended doctoral theses and others that are still underway.

Thus, to tackle the topic of sustainability in this issue of *SOSTENIBLE?*, we decided to request the collaboration of two of the many work groups that have already been launched through the Chair, along with the assistance of Roman Folch, a distinguished specialist and currently the President of the Board of Trustees of the Technical University of Catalonia.

The first group, curiously, is made up of lecturers. It is an odd amalgam of a philosopher, an engineer and an economist, who together analyse the historical causes and the origins of the unsustainability the world is faced with today. They do not overlook the economic causes of unsustainability, which are the focus of a second article, and the series concludes with a third article addressing the crisis of the traditional concept of growth-based development and the need for a truly sustainable model of development. In the articles that follow, doctoral students in the process of researching and writing their doctoral theses were invited to focus on the conceptual relationship between

sustainability and sustainable development, which is followed by a presentation of tools for measuring sustainability.

The first article, "The cultural origins of unsustainability", clearly evinces a philosophical point of view that prefers Descartes to Bacon or Galileo with regard to the origins of modernity, possibly born with the revolution of modern science in the 17th century. Some readers may hold that this is an overly humanist—and even ideological—view of history, entwined with a certain nostalgia for the past that smacks of the reactionary philosophy that "the former days were better than these" Nevertheless, a thorough reading both of this first article and of the two that follow (written, of course, by the same authors), gives us a broader view of what sustainability represents for the people at the UNESCO Chair who contribute to *SOSTENIBLE?* This cultural and humanist view is complemented by an economic—rather than an economist's—view, presented in the article "Oikonomia vs. Chrematistics: the basis of the contradictions of modern development", and is rounded out in the last of these three articles, "Sustainable developments", with a vision for the future that is oriented towards sustainable development.

"Sustainability and sustainable development: a model to empower" discusses the current traditional understanding of the paradigm of sustainability and defends the necessity of a multidisciplinary background for taking on a topic of such scope and interest to society at present.

The next article, "The implications of sustainability", written by Ramon Folch, focuses on sustainability's global reach and the internationalisation (and not just in economic terms) that it requires. Folch begins by focusing on the examples of water and energy, and goes on to analyse the commitments that arose out of the Kyoto Protocol and the inevitable consequences that will be had by sustainability, and even on culture itself.

To round out such a general view, it was inevitable that we would have to include a methodological overview of how to set about measuring sustainability. Antequera and González, researchers at the Chair's Sustainability Observatory, show us the importance of sustainability indicators as key tools in a management system and give us a quick overview of the results of a recent project undertaken by the Observatory on the Development, use and efficiency of sustainability indicators in the international sphere. This represents a potential example—and even an indicator—of the type of work that is done at the Observatories of UNESCO Chair of Technology, Sustainable Development, Imbalance and Global Change at UPC.

As always, *SOSTENIBLE?* complements its contributors' opinions with a list of bibliographic and Internet resources, compiled by Miquel Puertas and Pep Torn.

Thus, with this issue of *SOSTENIBLE?*, we hope to provide an insight into the activities carried out by the Chair with regard to our main focus: sustainability. Without a doubt, we will return to this topic in the near future with further demonstrations of the results of the Chair's research groups.