



Charter of Principles of the Popular University of Social Movements

NOTE: The UPMS Charter of Principles gathers together the contributions of all UPMS participants since the idea was first launched at the 2003 World Social Forum. It is particularly indebted to the contribution both of the organizations integrating the technical secretariat and of all those participating in the UPMS workshops that took place in Córdoba (Argentina), Medellín (Colombia), Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Porto Alegre (Brazil), and Aldeia Velha - Casimiro de Abreu (Brazil) (under the 2012 Peoples Summit), as well as of all the participants in the meetings on the UPMS carried out in Caracas (Venezuela), Roma (Italy), Utrecht (The Netherlands), Mumbai (India), Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Nairobi (Kenya), Dakar (Senegal). It was prepared by the working groups created in the 2012 Thematic Social Forum, namely the Coordinating Committee ("Panel of 28 January 2012") and the Charter and Methodology Committee. This version includes amendments discussed at the UPMS meeting held in Lima in 2014

1 - The Popular University of Social Movements (UPMS) is an initiative in self-education for dignity and social emancipation. It aims to serve as a space for intercultural political training that promotes interknowledge and self-education with the dual aim of increasing mutual understanding amongst movements and organisations, and making possible coalitions among them, as well as joint collective actions.

2 - The UPMS is an open meeting place for reflexive thinking, the democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action for local, national and global entities and social movements opposed to the domination of the world by capitalism, colonialism, racism and patriarchy, and the human suffering caused by the injustice, exclusion, discrimination, domination and oppression which this creates.

3 - The UPMS public is composed of activists, leaders of social movements and members of non-governmental organisations and civil society associations, in addition to academics, intellectuals and artists who support the struggles of movements and organisations working for emancipatory social transformation.



4 - The UPMS functions by means of a network of interactions dedicated to promoting the ecology of knowledges and intercultural translation amongst social actors who, in different regions of the world, are fighting to make another world possible, using a wide range of knowledges, world views and collective practices. The aim is for broader, more closely linked and more global collective actions to emerge from the ecology of knowledges and intercultural translation, without ever compromising the identity and specific character of each movement, struggle and/or context.

5 - UPMS specific mission is inter-thematic and inter-cultural. It is inter-thematic since it aims to foster encounters and dialogue amongst movements/organisations with different agendas and struggles in order to facilitate alliances and links among actors (for example, feminist, workers, indigenous, *quilombola*, afro-american, religious, student, ecological, rural, urban and other movements); inter-cultural because it aims to create mutual understanding between the cultures and narratives of the different struggles, and between their different principles, mobilising concepts and guidelines for social change.

6 - More specifically, its main objectives are:

a) To overcome the separation and hierarchy between academic and popular knowledges and between theory and practice, promoting regular encounters between those who mobilise popular, traditional and indigenous knowledge and are primarily dedicated to emancipation and social transformation, and those who mobilise academic knowledge and are primarily dedicated to theoretical production.

b) To promote reciprocal, supportive and cooperative understanding between movements and organisations working in different thematic areas or in the same thematic area but stemming from different contexts, cultures of struggle and mobilising principles and concepts.

7 - There are various dimensions to the work of the UPMS:

a) Its activity takes form in self-organised workshops, run in accordance with the methodological options (see methodology document at www.universidadepopular.org);

b) The UPMS also organises assemblies, actual or virtual, particularly under the different world social forums and other spaces of convergence of social



movements and organizations to bring together those involved in order to enable them to engage in dialogue, make assessments and define guidelines.

c) On the initiative of UPMS activists, other activities are possible, provided that they respect the Charter of Principles and the spirit of the methodological guidelines for workshops.

8 – The initiative for these activities comes from movements and organisations, whether they have taken part in previous workshops or not, provided that they follow the methodological guidelines and respect this Charter of Principles. Proposals for any activities linked to the UPMS must be submitted to the organising body of the UPMS (see site) for assessment.

9 - All UPMS activities are free, and there is no payment for participation in workshops.

10 - The UPMS does not award degrees or diplomas. It only provides certificates of attendance for those who take part in workshops.

11 - Compliance with the methodological guidelines and respect for the Charter of Principles are both conditions for remaining associated with the work of the UPMS.

12 - The UPMS has a virtual head office, its webpage and is dedicated to the storage and processing of the UPMS memory and archive. 13- Anyone organising and taking part in workshops in accordance with this Charter of Principles and the methodological guidelines is considered to belong to the UPMS.

14 - The UPMS is a collective asset and cannot be appropriated by anyone. The UPMS may enter into partnerships with institutions (including popular education institutions, other popular universities, public bodies, and extension departments of conventional universities) which identify with the objectives, Charter of Principles and methodological guidelines of the UPMS and aim to help organise workshops within the sphere of their activities.

15 - The UPMS was created within the sphere of the World Social Forum (WSF), on the basis of its guiding principles. The UPMS Charter of Principles is closely linked to the WSF Charter of Principles, and processes related to the UPMS must therefore respect the WSF Charter of Principles (<http://www.universidadepopular.org/site/media/documentos/WSF - charter of Principles.pdf>)