



## VII International Human Rights Education Conference

### RECORD

The VII International Human Rights Education Conference (IHREC) took place Santiago de Chile on December 12-15, 2016. The event was hosted by the Faculty of Law of the University of Chile, through its Outreach Program and its Human Rights Center.

Over the four days of the Conference, around 185 participants arrived from 25 different countries, including: Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, United States, Canada, Taiwan, New Zealand, Philippines, Australia, India, Poland, United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Italy, South Africa and Nigeria.

### Opening Ceremony and recognition of Cecilia Medina, who was named Professor Emeritus

The conference started with an “Opening Ceremony and recognition of Cecilia Medina, who was named Professor Emeritus”, which took place in Casa Central of the University of Chile on December 12. **Professor Davor Harasic**, Dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of Chile, began the Conference by welcoming the panelists and the IHREC community to Chile. The founder of the IHREC, the **Hon. Sev Ozdowski**, dedicated some words to the history of the IHREC and to the significance of this Conference for the Human Rights Education. The inauguration Ceremony continued with words from **Lorena Fries**, Undersecretary of Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, who spoke about the State’s commitment to Human Rights and Human Rights Education. During the inauguration **Dr. Cecilia Medina** was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus. Dr. Medina

expressed her gratitude and received the recognition of the others guests. Finally, the vice-president of the University of Chile, **Prof. Rafael Epstein Numhauser**, said recognized Dr. Cecilia Medina's long and important career in human rights and reaffirmed the University of Chile's commitment to promoting Human Rights Education.

The inauguration and the bestowal ceremony ended with a reception in Casa Central, financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Thematic panels**

On December 13 and 14, between the 9:00 and 18:30, the Conference was broken into thematic panels and Conference Presentations (*posters*). The content of the Conference is summarized below, according to the issues discussed.

In many ways, human rights education begins in the classroom, at different levels of education. Two panels and Conference Presentations about the **formal education systems** addressed different problems detected in the teaching and school curriculum across diverse countries, educational systems and social contexts. The first panel was moderated by **Fernando Ríos** from the Ministry of Education and had as a Special Guest Speaker **Enrique Azúa**, Head of the Education Department of the National Human Rights Institute. The second panel was moderated by **Nicolás Aldunate** from the Ministry of Education. Among the participants, there was a consensus that human rights education has to begin in the early education and must include information about human rights norms, the international system of human rights protection and an analysis of the local human rights violations. Participants shared and compared different educational human rights education programs and talked about the current geopolitical context of increased xenophobia and authoritarianism.

This global context also influenced the two panels about **Multiculturalism and human rights education**. These were moderated by **Pablo Aranda** from the Public Criminal Defender's Office and **Paloma Abbett de la Torre Díaz** from the National Human Rights Institute. The Special Guest Speakers were **Sev Ozdowski** from the Western Sidney University, and **Liliana Galdámez and Valentina López Gallido** from the Human Rights Center of the Faculty of Law of the University of Chile. The panelists debated the conceptual frameworks that help us understand the reality of human rights education in the context of multiculturalism and outlined the common challenges that the multiculturalism presents for human rights and human rights education. It was explained that the diversity created by the migrants and different races, ethnicities, and indigenous communities, compel us to find new strategies to ensure that the human rights of all society members will be respected. Panelists presented different case studies and lessons that can expose some of the myths that affect minority groups and reveal the conditions faced by some

groups, such as the immigrants in Chile. Similarly, panelists emphasized the need to find creative tools for the HRE could spread the empathy for these groups.

The Conference participants reiterated that the lack of the HRE is a transversal problem, not only in the education of children and young people, but also in the **professional training** across almost all professions. There were two panels dedicated to this topic, with the moderation of **Myrna Villegas** from the Human Rights Center of the Faculty of Law of the University Of Chile, and **Alejandro Soto** from the Research Office of the Supreme Court and a special guest presentation from **Claudio Grossman**, Dean of the Washington College of Law of the American University. Panelists presented pilot programs that look to incorporate HRE in the formation of a wide range of professions. The presentations explained that human rights issues do not exist outside of these professions, but are rather an integral part of most areas. The panelists identified some transversal challenges and proposed different tools, such as, for example, technology or the use of international human rights monitoring mechanisms, that could help us to address these challenges.

Regarding the **Judiciary and HRE**, panelists explained that the judicial systems of many countries have incorporated a human rights perspective into their decisions only very gradually. **Claudio Fierro** from the Public Defender's Office moderated this panel and **Haroldo Brito**, Minister of the Supreme Court of Chile, was the Special Guest Speaker. Panelists analyzed this process of incorporating human rights norms and discussed the problems stemming from the lack of human rights training of judges and the institutional factors that could inhibit the application of human rights norms. Participants emphasized the role the judiciary in implementing the human rights protections guaranteed under law and the impact of the fact that the majority of judges still lack education and training in human rights.

The panel about **Transitional Justice and HRE** focused on the real challenges of a transition process from an authoritarian regime to a democratic system that respects human rights, particularly with regards to the institutional structures within the State and the training of State agents. **Paloma Abbett de la Torre Díaz**, from the National Human Rights Institute, moderated this panel and **Juan Pablo Mañalich**, from the Faculty of Law of the University of Chile, was the Special Guest Speaker. During the presentations, panelists debated about the problems related to the increasing demand for respect for human rights and for justice. The papers made new comparisons between the experiences of different countries (for example, Taiwan and Chile) and panelists discussed the importance of access to the truth in this process.

During the IHREC, participants recognized that although the international legal system has expanded the vision about human rights to include more than the civil and political rights, many traditional education systems have yet to incorporate the **economic, social and cultural rights**. This panel was moderated by **Lea Sarles Newfarmer** from the Human

Rights Center of the Faculty of Law of the University of Chile. The panelists presented on the right to education, dignity, health care, equal access to opportunities and to a clean environment, and they explored different conceptual frameworks and case studies that highlighted the need to create innovative education programs. There was a consensus about the problem that many countries only focus on “civic education”, leaving out other human rights than are often violated.

The IHREC had two panels dedicated to the topic of **HRE for General Public**. These panels included presentations of **Francisco Estévez Estévez**, Director of the Memory and Human Rights Museum, and **Marguerite Feitlowitz** from Bennington College as Special Guest Speakers, and were moderated by **Roberto Morales**, President of the Board of Directors of Amnesty International, and **Juan Pablo Crisóstomo** from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There was a consensus that in order to create and strengthen cultures that respect human rights, human rights education must go beyond the classroom and the professional training, it must happen in educational spaces that are incorporated into other physical and cultural spaces in cities.

Panelists presented diverse experiences to explore how information about human rights can be made accessible to the **general public** and agreed that it is the role of the State and its institutions to preserve and promote the memory of past violations and introduce human rights norms to the society. Participants debated about the different paradigms that can be used to analyze and learn from a historical memory and emphasized the importance of preserving of historical memory and connecting that preservation to the human rights struggles of today to promote the human rights and reveal abuses of power. Participants also discussed the way that art and literature can give victims an opportunity to share their experiences, which can then help to construct a collective narrative about the society’s experience of the human rights violations. They also discussed how to address violations using art and the literature, rather than only relying on either forensic description or historiography, explaining that broadening the approach to historical memory can contribute a more integrated perspective to the understanding of what happened.

During the IHREC participants reiterated the view that the issue of **gender**, women’s rights and LGBTQ rights are transversal and require specific training and education programs. The panel on gender was moderated by **Diana Maquilón** from the Undersecretary of Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. The panelists identified some of the biggest challenges to achieving total gender equality in different contexts and talked about different HRE experiences and the lessons that could be learned from each. The issue of gender and the legal and cultural obstacles that inhibit gender equality was discussed across almost all of the panels, as well as during the closing ceremony, which emphasized the need to prioritize gender equality in education.

## Documentary Films

Both days closed with the exhibition of human rights documentaries: “Héroes fragiles” by Emilio Pacull and “Habeas Corpus” by Claudia Barril and Sebastián Moreno, which were provided by the Memory and Human Rights Museum.

## Visits to the Memory Sites

On December 15, participants went on a group visit to two “memory sites”, which are dedicated to the memory of human rights violations that occurred under the civilian-military dictatorship that ruled Chile from September of 1973 until March of 1990. The visit started in the Museum of Memory and Human Rights, where participants went on tours in English and in Spanish. The visit concluded with a donation ceremony of a little copper pigeon, donated by **Sev Ozdowski**, who received the pigeon from a political prisoner in 1986, in a Chilean jail. The pigeon was made a group of political prisoners who asked Mr. Ozdowski to share the injustices he had seen in Chile with the rest of the world. **Francisco Estévez**, Director of the Museum, welcomed the participants, thanked Mr. Ozdowski for the donation and led a conversation with the group about their impressions of the Museum and their reflections about the Chilean experience compared to their countries. The visits ended with a tour of the Villa Grimaldi Park for the Peace where the participants saw the site and listened to a detailed presentation of the historic and political context of the repression that took place there. The tour guide explained the difficulties of recovering the information and documentation regarding the acts that took place in the park and the challenges to speaking openly about the violations that occurred more generally. The visit concluded with a conversation about the current obstacles that suppress access to the truth and the justice and the violations that are still happening in Chile, under a democratic government.

## Closing Ceremony

The Conference ended with a closing ceremony. This began with greetings and words of congratulation from **Drew Dainer** in representation of the Australian Ambassador in Chile, Mr. Timothy Kane, who reaffirmed the commitment of Australia to promote HRE and spoke of the importance of the Conference, which has been supported by the Australian government since its beginnings in 2010. Then, in representation of the *Red de Equipos de Educación en Derechos Humanos* (REEDH), **Juan Henríquez Peñailillo**, talked about the importance of the HRE for the creation of a human rights culture and a democratic society and how important is to unite forces to make more progress.

The ceremony continued with a panel discussion, moderated by **Sev Ozdowski**. This panel included **Aura Patricia Bolivar**, **Marguerite Feitlowitz**, **Mab Huang** and **Tania Penoci**, who all offered their reflections about the VII IHREC. They agreed that there are problems stemming from the lack of programs focused on human rights education. There was a

consensus that it is the State's obligation to provide high quality HRE and that civil society organizations have a fundamental role in the promotion of HRE. The floor was then opened to all participants to discuss pending challenges in different countries and the experience or more interesting aspects of the Conference. Participants referred to the work that still remains to be done on the issues of gender, the environment and strengthening of civil society expressed their appreciation for the work of the Human Rights Center and the Faculty of Law of the University of Chile, who were congratulated for the success of the Conference.

The ceremony concluded with the reflections of **Ian Hamilton**, EQUITAS's Director, who greeted the participants of the Conference and invited them to take part in the VIII International Conference in Human Rights Education that will take place in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, between November 30 and December 3, 2017.

Finally, **Myrna Villegas**, Director (s) of the Human Rights Center, closed the ceremony by thanking the participants of the Conference and discussing the importance of their contribution to HRE.

The ceremony ended with a cocktail provided by the Ministry of Education.

## Sponsors of the VII International Human Rights Education Conference (IHREC)

They are the Ministry of Education of Chile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, the Public Criminal Defender's Office and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy.



## Supporters of the VII IHREC

They are: the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights of Chile, the Judicial Power of Chile, Public Defender's Office, Amnesty International, National Human Rights Institute, the Australian Human Rights Council and Western Sydney University.

