

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS
UNIVERSITY OF THE REPUBLIC URUGUAY

Annual Cycle on Education in Human Rights

The UNESCO Chair on Human Rights of the University of the Republic is an integral system of research, teaching, propagation and promotion of human rights at higher education level. It was created in February 2002 in recognition of the ‘**Permanent Seminar on Education for Human Rights**’ and as initiative dedicated to the Decade of the United Nations for Education in Human Rights, 1994 – 2004.

The UNESCO Chair has focused its activities on the implementation of the progressive interests of the society in the field of Higher Education. It specifically addresses the promotion of the acquisition process of Human Rights as a transversal axle of all university curricula contributing to the development of students’, graduates’ and teachers’ consciousness of a reality that requires the respect of the basic rights as well as the agreement to a firm compromise over the compliance with all of them. The Chair and the ‘Academic Department on Human Rights’ have developed relevant **activities** presented below.

1. FORMATIVE ACTIVITIES

❖ **ANNUAL CYCLE OF EDUCATION IN HUMAN RIGHTS**

This is the focal point of activities and takes place from May to December. It consists of eight meetings a month on current topics of Human Rights.. The two forms of participation are the ‘presenting’ and ‘semi-presenting’ mode. The latter is to allow people living in the countryside or in a foreign country to take part in an indirect way. The average of participants is 400 people. Students, university graduates, elementary and high school teachers, members of non-governmental organizations, policemen, lawyers, magistrates, and district attorneys form the large audience.

The followings topics belong, among others, to agenda of the cycle:

Right to education; International Penal Country Memory and truth; International mechanisms for the protection of Human Rights; Violation of Human Rights in Latin America; Rights of the Handicapped; Universal system of protection of Human Rights of the United Nations; The rights to life, to work, to education, to peace; Work discrimination of women in Latin America; Violation of the artistic freedom during the dictatorship; Human genome; Human dignity; Transgenic and human rights; Universal Declaration of Human Rights and obligations of man; Abortion and in-vitro fertilization.

❖ **WORKSHOPS ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

During the last academic year, the UNESCO Chair conducted the following Workshops:

- Ombudsman and Public Defence;
- New Dimension of Knowledge and Information to Exercise Democracy;
- Human Right to Peace;
- International Protection of Human Rights.

2. ACTIVITIES OF SENSIBILISING AND ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

❖ **1st ESSAY CONTEST ON HUMAN RIGHTS, 2003**

The UNESCO Chair invited to a contest among Uruguayan and foreign students on the topic “**Human Right to Peace**” with a view to provide support from the academic level for the educational development of all university students by encouraging the search and understanding of the democratic principles in their full compliance with of human rights, tolerance and peace.

❖ **PAINTING EXHIBITION: THE FORBIDDEN ART**

The exhibition took place around the 30th anniversary of the ‘Military Coup D’Etat’ in Uruguay. Its goal was to rescue the historic memory of the country trying to strengthen the feeling of national identity. The paintings exhibited were artistic works that could not be shown during the period of military dictatorship.

❖ **VISUALLY HANDICAPPED PEOPLE: AGREEMENT WITH THE BRAILLE FOUNDATION IN URUGUAY.**

The audio recordings of the different academic meetings of the Chair's cycle of education in human rights are an annual donation to the DEPARTMENT OF SPOKEN BOOKS OF THE BRAILLE FOUNDATION IN URUGUAY as a means of supporting blind students in Uruguay.

3. PUBLICATION

URUGUAY AND THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

It includes papers recalling the country's role in the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human rights and analyses its universality as well as influence throughout history. Contributions are made by Dr. Héctor Gros Espiell, Dr. Justino Jiménez de Arechaga, Dr. Fernando Urioste, and Dr. Marina Blengio Valdés.

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

It analyses the right to education and its protection from an interdisciplinary approach and in an international environment, highlighting the importance of education as a thorough interest of people. It includes contributions made by Dr. Héctor Gros Espiell and Dr. Jorge Broveto.

In an appendix, the following documents are presented: *Declaration of UNESCO Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance* (Third International Meeting, Stadtschlaining, April 2002); *Action Plan - UNESCO World Forum on Education* (Dakar, April 2002).

EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS FACING THE 21st CENTURY

It contains, *inter alia*, a paper of father Luis Perez Aguirre on Education in Human Rights and the *Declaration of Mexico on Education in Human Right* (December 2001). The first edition was donated to schools and public institutions of Uruguay.

HUMAN DIGNITY

These papers present a wide spectrum of this important value related to the rights of an individual. The Contributions were made by Dr. Héctor Gross Espiell, Dr. Jacinto Balbela, Dr. José Cagnari.

Annex: *Declaration of Human Rights* and *Declaration of Human Genome and Human Rights*.

WEB SITE OF THE UNESCO CHAIR: www.rau.edu.uy/universidad/ddhh

The Chair's Data Bank is a supporting system for study/teaching/research in human rights providing sources/tools/addresses/links at the level of the national and international academic community.

4. EXCHANGE AND ACADEMIC COLLABORATION

VISITS OF FOREIGN SPECIALISTS

The Regional Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Dr. Roberto Garreton, the Vice President of the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child, Marília Sardenberg, and the Training Director in Human Rights of the Human Rights Commission of the Mexican Federal District, Prof. Maria Engracia Rodriguez Moreleon, visited Uruguay invited by the Chair. They participated in the Cycle of Education in Human Rights and in other activities of the Chair, in connection with state institutions as well as non-governmental organizations and institutions.

5. INITIATIVES OF THE 'UNESCO ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT' IN HUMAN RIGHTS

CONVENTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

In March 2003, through a proposal of the UNESCO Chair on Human Rights, the Convention against discrimination in education, adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 1960, was further promoted at the law making level. Until now it has been partially approved, while it has received unanimous approval by the Chamber of the Senate. The report issued by the Committee of International Affairs of the Representatives' Chamber favored the approval on 6 August 2003, due to the fact that the document coincides with the cultural, historical and institutional tradition in Uruguay.

📄 **DECLARATIONS ISSUED BY THE ‘UNESCO ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS’ OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY** (www.rau.edu.uy/universidad/ddhh)

- DECLARATION “54th ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS” (adopted in December 2002)
- DECLARATION ON “THE RIGHT TO PEACE” (March 2003)

📄 With a view to the growing number of Latin-American countries ratifying the ‘Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ (El Salvador, 1988), the Chair’s coordinator, Dr. Valdes, elaborated a presentation on “*New Dimension for the International Protection of Human Rights – Challenges to Human Rights Education*”. The presentation is highlighting Article 13 of the Protocol making the provision that “Every individual has the right to education”, and adding immediately that education “... must be guided towards the full development of the human personality and of the sense of dignity and it must strengthen the respect for human rights, ideological diversity, basic freedoms, justice and peace.” This material is obtainable from the Chair’s web site.

Latest News from the UNESCO Chair

- **A different way of learning Human Rights:** *CD-ROM on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

The Chair published a CD-ROM on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a basis for a multi-media teacher training programme. Its modules provide unique facilities for learning about the Declaration, analysing its universality and general significance, and searching for its impact on the historical development at global and regional levels. The CD’s summary includes various background information, for example on the work of the UN Commission on Human Rights and its Working Group, and the adoption of the Declaration by the UN Assembly on 10 December 1948.

The CD presents and analyses the structure of the Declaration, the rights proclaimed in the document and related democratic principles, such as the indivisibility of all human rights. In this context, the integration of the Declaration into international and national law is elucidated. In addition, the links to the International Bill of Human Rights and the relations between the Universal Declaration and the two World Conferences on Human Rights, Teheran 1968 and Vienna 1993, are drawn on. Finally, the CD values the role of the Universal Declaration with a view to its 55th anniversary and underlines the future challenges for the international protection of Human Rights.

“Human Rights Review”

The UNESCO Chair initiated the periodic publication of a ‘*Human Rights Review*’ since December 2003. The first issue includes, *inter alia*, the following articles: *The European Charter in Human Rights. A Latino-American vision* (Héctor Gros Espiel); *Memory and rights* (Mariana Blengio Valdés); *Inter-American Opinion: The right of the child* (Ricardo Pérez Manrique); *Inter-American Jurisprudence* (Silvia Izquierdo). The Chair intends to disseminate the Review in all countries. Contributions are welcome and can be sent to the Editors’ Committee (via the UNESCO Chair).

First Competition in Human Rights - the Right to Peace

The UNESCO Chair called for a contest among Uruguayan and foreign students on the topic ‘Human Right to Peace’. This competition was created with the aim to promote human rights in Uruguay and foreign countries, giving students the chance to learn about and study human rights issues and to understand the democratic principles, such as the indivisibility of all human rights.

On 14 November 2003, the members of the Jury awarded the first prize to Christian Vidal, National University of Mexico. Honourable mention was made of Maria Noel Poey, University of the Republic Uruguay, and Emilce García, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Dr. Mariana Blengio Valdés
UNESCO Chair’s Coordinator