



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Social and Human Sciences Sector

Teaching philosophy

IN LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN

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Teaching philosophy

**in Latin America
and the Caribbean**

Background

On 8 and 9 September 2009 in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic hosted the High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean, co-organized by the State Secretariat for Education of the Dominican Republic, the State Secretariat for Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Dominican Republic, the *Global Democracia y Desarrollo* Foundation (Dominican Republic), the Permanent Delegation of the Dominican Republic to UNESCO, the Dominican National Commission for UNESCO, the *Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo* and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The meeting was inaugurated by H.E. Ms Ligia Amada Melo, Secretary of State for Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Dominican Republic, and by H.E. Mr Melanio Paredes, Secretary of State for Education of the Dominican Republic. It gathered some fifty participants, among whom the representatives of eight countries from the region: Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Uruguay.

The meeting was also attended by many philosophers, inspectors and philosophy practitioners, at primary and secondary levels and in higher education, as well as members of philosophy associations.

This publication was elaborated by UNESCO's Secretariat on the basis of a study published in 2007 under the title *Philosophy, a School of Freedom - Teaching Philosophy and Learning to Philosophize: Status and Prospects*. It collects the debates and discussions of the Santo Domingo meeting, reflected in text boxes, which allowed UNESCO to update and complete the data and challenges that had been initially put forth.

A series of regional recommendations, elaborated and validated by the participants in the meeting, are addressed to Member States, to National Commissions for UNESCO, to philosophers and to UNESCO. The complete text can be found in pages 52-56 of the publication.

A Santo Domingo Declaration on the teaching of philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean was adopted unanimously by the participants, projecting their common convictions and full adherence in favour of promoting philosophy and its teaching.

The Social and Human Sciences Sector of UNESCO, together with the UNESCO Montevideo Office would like to express their deepest gratitude to:

- The Dominican authorities for their steadfast support and their warm hospitality;
- The representatives of the participating Latin American and Caribbean countries for their engagement and active participation;
- The philosophers, experts and representatives of philosophy associations and institutions for their substantial and constructive contribution to the debates.

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Message

It is an honour for the Dominican Republic to be holding the high-level meeting on philosophy teaching in Latin America and the Caribbean in conjunction with UNESCO. We are delighted to welcome ministerial representatives from around the region, as well as experts in education and philosophers who work to promote philosophy.

This meeting provides the opportunity to explore in more depth our visions and experiences of philosophy teaching in our countries, with an emphasis on the importance of philosophy in the development of a critical vision of reality in our children and young people. It is therefore a unique opportunity and a vital instrument to empower them as individuals, as well as to strengthen and develop values and attitudes that, like tolerance and respect for others, are an inherent part of democratic culture.

We recognize philosophy teaching as an ideal way of teaching citizens to be capable of critically interpreting reality for the purposes of exercising their rights and tackling the challenges of building a society with more justice, solidarity and dignity for human beings in the twenty-first century, as well as building the knowledge society on firm and consensus-based foundations. With this in mind, the Dominican Republic Government is committed to promoting the role of philosophy as an important means of achieving this objective.

As well as helping to increase our understanding on this topic, we also hope that this event generates new ties among our nations, thereby facilitating the consolidation of new partnerships with our Latin American and Caribbean brethren. We intend to promote ongoing cooperation with all of you, with the aim of making the most of new synergies and opportunities.

Lastly, we extend our thanks to our national partners for their efforts in making this meeting a success, and to UNESCO for trusting us to organize this great event. It is our pleasure to take on this responsibility and challenge. We hope to provide fertile ground for the intentions behind this meeting in favour of philosophy, as a prerequisite for the development of critical thought among citizens and the promotion of ethical values.

H.E. Ms Ligia Amada Melo
**Secretary of State for Higher Education,
Science and Technology
of the Dominican Republic**



H.E. Mr Melanio Paredes
**Secretary of State for Education
of the Dominican Republic**



Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, June 2009

Foreword

UNESCO is dedicated to the promotion of education and culture throughout the world, and promotes philosophy and critical thinking. Through this work, the Organization contributes to the formation of independent individuals, capable of sustaining a critical vision of themselves and their environment.

Drawing on the value of philosophy as an essential resource for understanding reality, UNESCO supports its promotion in Member States. UNESCO thus endeavours to achieve freedom through pluralistic exchange of ideas and critical debate.

With this vocation, the Organization decided to promote the reintroduction of philosophy into classrooms, lecture halls and other centres of education. UNESCO therefore seeks to advocate the importance of philosophy in dealings with educational policy-makers.

As a result, the Executive Board of UNESCO requested the drafting of an Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy. On 28 February 2005, the Strategy was presented to the UNESCO sectors, as well as to organizations, education agencies and experts from the world of philosophy.

The Strategy, which aims to link intersectoral programmes, is based on three main pillars:

- philosophical dialogue concerning world problems;
- teaching of philosophy; and
- promotion of philosophical thought and research.

As part of these efforts, the study *Philosophy, a School of Freedom - Teaching Philosophy and Learning to Philosophize: Status and Prospects* was produced. The work was published in 2007 and makes a crucial contribution to the implementation of the Intersectoral Strategy to promote philosophy.

Through the Strategy, UNESCO wants its Member States to make a commitment to the established goals. With this in mind, it organized the high-level meeting on philosophy teaching in Latin America and the Caribbean, which provided the opportunity to reach a consensus on actions to promote philosophy.

During the two days of discussions, ministerial representatives, philosophers and educational experts described the situation in their countries in terms of philosophy teaching. This document summarizes this process. We hope that its content provides an overview of the exchanges that occurred around this UNESCO proposal.

As a result, this publication describes the specific situations of teachers' experiences of teaching philosophy. This makes it possible to compare experiences and the challenges of the changing reality as it stands.

Lastly, we hope that this document provides an opportunity to enrich the Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy, the dissemination of critical thinking and ethical values, and to promote ongoing cooperation among nations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Faxas', written in a cursive style.

H. E. Ms Laura Faxas
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Delegate of the Dominican Republic to UNESCO
June 2009



Preface

Creating UNESCO was in itself a philosophical undertaking

Let us look at the history of our Organization. It witnesses to the fact that philosophy has always been at the heart of UNESCO's action. So it is that, since UNESCO was founded, this organic bond has manifested itself in the existence of a programme devoted to philosophy and to the promotion of its teaching. Philosophy is understood here as working for peace, UNESCO's primary and fundamental mission. Indeed, building lasting peace requires thoroughgoing and renewed reflection on the very foundations of the action to be undertaken, which in turn call upon most creative and diverse philosophical convictions.

The teaching of philosophy is undeniably one of the keystones of a quality education for all. It contributes to open the mind, to build critical reflection and independent thinking, which constitute a defence against all forms of manipulation, obscurantism and exclusion.

The Memorandum on the philosophy programme of UNESCO announced as early as 1946 that, '[it] is not enough to fight against illiteracy. It is still necessary to know what one is going to have people read'. This reflection, philosophically significant in its own right, conveys a powerful and relevant message that applies, and will continue to apply, to today's and tomorrow's educational dynamic.

Since 2005, UNESCO's Member States have been intent upon strengthening the Organization's philosophy programme through, on the one hand, the adoption by the Executive Council of a three-faceted Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy comprising philosophical dialogue facing world problems, the teaching of philosophy, and the promotion of philosophic thought and research; and on the other hand, the proclamation by UNESCO's General Conference of a World Philosophy Day and the inclusion of a reminder of the inherent bond between philosophical reflection and analysis and the building of peace placed in the Organization's Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013.

Philosophy, a School of Freedom, the study on the state of the art of the teaching of philosophy in the world, published by UNESCO in 2007, represents a major milestone in the implementation of the Intersectoral Strategy on Philosophy. Based on the results of a worldwide qualitative and quantitative survey, addressed to Ministries of Education, National Commissions for UNESCO, philosophers, researchers, experts, teachers, educationalists, UNESCO Chairs in Philosophy and any other UNESCO privileged partners in the field, this unprecedented work describes what exists, but also, and especially, deals with key questions and, as much as possible, provides proposals, innovative ideas and orientations.

UNESCO's ambition is now to go one step further by involving the maximum number of concerned and committed Member States in providing durable support for philosophy within the educational system, both formal and informal. Within this framework, high-level meetings on the teaching of philosophy were organized in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in June 2009, for Latin America and the Caribbean; in Tunis, Tunisia, in May 2009, for the Arab region; in Manila, Philippines, in May 2009, for Asia and the Pacific; in Bamako, Mali, in September 2009, for African Francophone countries; and in Port-Louis,

Republic of Mauritius, in September 2009, for African Anglophone countries. The principal objective of these high-level encounters was to engage in concerted action with UNESCO's Member States so as to accompany them in the formulation of policies favouring the teaching of philosophy.

To this end, Member States have been invited to perform a diagnosis that is as thorough as possible of the crucial questions concerning the teaching of philosophy at national level, as well as suggestions for action that would deserve to be implemented.

By means of this publication, UNESCO wants to contribute to deepening the debate going on by putting forward a certain number of facts, practices having proven their worth and live questions raised by the teaching of philosophy notably in the debates and discussions that took place in the Santo Domingo meeting in June 2009. We are convinced that combining the preliminary diagnoses performed at national level and UNESCO's specific contribution during each of the regional meetings will lead to a promising synergy. The ultimate goal will be to facilitate the establishment of national action plans, especially through strengthened regional co-operation.

We are most delighted to see the joint efforts undertaken by UNESCO and Member States in favour of the teaching of philosophy.



Moufida Goucha
Chief of the Human Security
Democracy and Philosophy
Section (UNESCO)



Pierre Sané
Assistant Director-General
for Social and Human Sciences
(UNESCO)



Teaching philosophy at

pre-school and primary levels

Quality basic education is education that does not perceive schools as places for the mere transmission and assimilation of knowledge, but as places for questioning and as “the best time to learn to learn”.¹ The Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century presided over by Jacques Delors stated in 1996 that “it is at the stage of basic education (which particularly includes pre-school and primary school teaching) that attitudes towards learning are forged that last all throughout one’s life”.²

For several years, Philosophy for Children (P4C),³ or more broadly the idea of introducing Philosophy in Schools and of developing philosophical inquiry has inspired growing curiosity and enthusiasm throughout the world because it fills a major gap in education today. Indeed, the importance of stimulating reflection and questioning at the youngest age, and doing so within the framework of basic quality education, is increasingly recognized. Even though learning to philosophize at the pre-school and primary levels has not yet been developed in Latin America and the Caribbean, this region can contribute to enriching this innovative approach constantly undergoing experimentation.

Learning to philosophize in schools for a quality basic education

The idea of learning to philosophize in schools assumes that a child only fully blossoms in school when encouraged to take active, deliberate steps to seek to respond to the questions about existence they raise at a very early age. Children are actually perceived as being ‘spontaneously philosophers’ by virtue of their extensive, radical existential questioning. The idea of learning to philosophize in schools has given rise to very diverse experiments throughout the world in order to try to take this philosophical uniqueness of children into account.

So it is that certain countries make the most of opportunities for discussion and debate about philosophical themes in the classroom and others are rethinking the teacher-student relationship in a way that appeals to the pupils’ intellectual curiosity.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there already exist several important initiatives in the field of philosophy for children, both in terms of specific experiences in school classes and in terms of establishing institutions or associations that work for the promotion of new practices in this field. A number of Latin American countries, for example, have centres that work for the promotion of philosophy for children and, according to UNESCO’s Study, initiatives in favour of philosophy for children exist in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Paraguay.

These measures, scattered as they are, are contributing in their way to the reflection of education experts, who stress that “confrontation, through dialogue and exchanging arguments, is one of the tools necessary to education in the 21st century. [...] More than ever, the essential role of education seems to be to confer upon all human beings the freedom of thought, judgment, feeling and imagination that they need to make their talents blossom and also retain as much mastery of their destiny as possible.”⁴

1 *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, Paris, 1996, p. 131.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

3 This term was first coined by Matthew Lipman. See in this publication, “Practices that are tried and true”, p. 19.

4 *Learning: The Treasure Within*, op. cit., pp. 101-103

UNESCO makes a resolute commitment to encourage learning to philosophize in schools

Teaching and learning philosophy for children had already been the object of a UNESCO study in 1998,⁵ which had then stressed that it was possible, and even necessary, to present philosophical principles in simple language accessible to young children. Reflection upon this matter went still further in UNESCO's new 2007 publication, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*,⁶ which takes into account discussions currently underway on the subject of learning to philosophize in schools and formulates the principal live questions which, in themselves, constitute suggestions for reflection that altogether shed light on the forms of education we want for our children. What is at stake with learning to philosophize in schools concerns the very meaning we wish to lend to tomorrow's schools, which will have to be places that foster thinking for oneself, reflective citizenship, and the blossoming of the child. If education in general must provide children with "the maps of a complex world in a perpetual state of agitation", philosophy can probably be the "compass enabling one to navigate" in that world.⁷

The impact of philosophy on children might not be immediately appreciated, but its impact on tomorrow's adults could be so considerable as certainly to make us feel astonished at having refused or marginalized philosophy for children up until now.

Live questions

Is educating children in philosophy possible, is it desirable?

Ethical and psychological questions often come up when philosophy for children or learning to philosophize in schools is brought up.

Are children ready to reflect at such a young age?

During the different stages of their psychological development, children naturally raise questions of a philosophical nature. And since they ask questions, at times anxiously so, it is preferable to accompany them in their questioning and to reassure them with regard to the different questions about existence.

There is also the assumption upon which philosophy for children is based that exhorts us to demystify childhood and look at reality, since many children experience very difficult situations, regardless of their social milieu or the state of development of their country. To confront this situation, one can resort to learning philosophical reflection in which rational thinking enables one to understand an existential experience and acquire distance with respect to the emotions felt. This work is all the more operative within the context of the classroom since it is collective. It in fact enables each and every person to experience being drawn out of their existential solitude and become aware that their questions are those of each and every person, which is reassuring and produces feelings of participating in a shared human condition helping one grow in community.

5 Philosophy for Children, Meeting of Experts, Report, Paris, UNESCO, 26-27 March 1998.

6 UNESCO, *Philosophy a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001541/154173E.pdf>

7 *Learning: The Treasure Within*, op.cit., p. 91.

Box 1 - What is at stake with the learning to philosophize in schools

1) Thinking for oneself

Being a matter of existential, ethical, aesthetic questions, thinking for oneself presupposes a reflective process that formulates problems, conceptualizes and argues rationally. Beginning to learn this as early as possible means guaranteeing awakening enlightened reflection on the human condition in children.

2) Educating for reflective citizenship

Learning to think for oneself develops freedom of judgment in future citizens, protecting them from ideological indoctrination and persuasive advertising. Teaching philosophizing through the debating of ideas encourages confronting others with reason while aiming for the truth, an ethical and intellectual requirement of genuine democratic debate.

3) Helping the child's development

Learning how to reflect is important for the construction of the personality of children and adolescents. It is an opportunity for them to experience that they are thinking beings, which strengthens their self-esteem and helps them grow in humanity by experiencing disagreement in discussion in peaceful coexistence. This, in turn, raises the threshold of tolerance with respect to others and prevents violence.

4) Facilitating the mastery of language and speech

Verbalizing in order to think develops cognitive- and socio-linguistic capabilities. By working on the development of their thought, children work on the need for precision in language.

5) Conceptualizing the philosophizing

Practicing reflection with children calls for a redefinition of philosophizing, for a conceptualization of its beginnings, its nature, and the conditions for it.

6) Developing a theory of teaching philosophy adapted to children and adolescents

Theories about teaching philosophy are also brought into question. One cannot teach philosophy to children in big lecture halls, with major works or essay writing. But, one can theorize about their learning to reflect on their relationship to the world, to others and to themselves, by means adapted to their age group.

Michel Tozzi,
Professor Emeritus in Education Sciences,
University of Montpellier 3, France

What about their lack of scientific knowledge?

There is also the question of knowing whether children can engage in reflection without having the scientific knowledge necessary for reflection. The objection that is often made to philosophy for children is based on the argument that one always philosophizes as an after effect of constituted knowledge, in order to go back to the knowledge one has and understand the process in which it was built up. According to that paradigm, philosophy is placed at the end of the course of study.

This argument displays contempt for the scientific processes integrated as early as primary school by children, upon which they may reflect with the help of the teacher, especially when the methods are active ones, by working on the process and not only on scientific findings to be learned and memorized. Indeed, answering philosophically significant questions for children to which science cannot respond, such as ethical questions, keeps them from thinking for themselves. These questions are ones to which the children themselves will have to find their own answers in the course of their lives and by evolving in their own reflection. So, although one must not answer for them prematurely, one must, however, accompany them as they go along in order not to leave them defenceless. This is the role of teachers at school – supporting them in this searching, by proposing situations to them in which they are going to develop tools for thinking that will enable them to understand their relationship to the world, to others and with themselves, and to orient themselves in these terms.

A matter of approach and pedagogy

Within the framework of philosophy for children, it is appropriate to speak more about learning to philosophize than merely about teaching philosophy. The traditional model of teaching philosophy is based on what is called the transmission model. As for the way in which learning to philosophize in schools is practiced, this involves a new pedagogical approach, that of a teaching-learning process that places the pupil at the heart of the learning dynamic.

Indeed, since it is a matter of young children, who naturally cannot understand a purely theoretical course, learning to philosophize in schools fits in with a paradigm that is more problem-oriented and more focused on a logic of learning. It is thus the cultivation of questioning and not of answering that is aimed at in this case. Most of those practicing this support the idea of leaving the answers open, in order to keep up the exploration of possible solutions. How, therefore, does one transmit philosophical 'not-knowing' if not by continuing to circulate it as a desire? That implies two fundamental attributes on the part of the teacher: on the one hand, modesty with respect to possessing truth; and on the other hand, the requirement regarding the desire for truth, where the status of the 'discussability' of the remarks allows for a cooperative, shared and non-dogmatic quest for knowledge.

The pupils are therefore principally placed in the foreground in their role of actors rather than recipients. In this case, the process of learning to philosophize in schools is principally based on the discussional approach, in contrast to the institutionalized approach where the expository aspect for the most part prevails (as is the case at secondary and university levels). Of course, discussion as the way to learn to philosophize can generate some reservations on the part of advocates of traditional teaching, for whom classroom discussion would be a superficial pedagogical method, while the teacher's course would still remain the norm.

However, discussion is understood here as being an interactive process within a group, an interaction surrounding a specific subject, where the intellectual responsibility would reside with the teacher. Many dimensions of this discussion may be philosophically oriented, knowingly the very nature of the subject dealt with often formulated in the form of questions; and the manner in which pupils are going to infuse this questioning through rational and not just emotional approach. Besides, discussion is only one of the possible forms of learning, which does not exclude written work or traditional courses.

More generally, the pedagogical approach underlying learning to philosophize in schools requires the necessary conditions for bringing philosophical reasoning by and for children into play. Social psychology and the sciences of education often have recourse to the idea of the 'Pygmalion effect'. The teachers, confident about the success of what they are doing, will create the material conditions necessary for practicing philosophy, and the pupils, finding that teachers have faith in their abilities, will see their self-confidence and their personal self-esteem grow.

A matter of teacher training

Another important aspect requiring adapted action concerns the low level of philosophical training of primary school teachers. In fact, non-institutional training is left to volunteers and is often provided in a private context, or even by associations. Finding teachers without actual philosophical training, or who only studied philosophy at secondary level, the first reaction would consist in proposing to provide them with academic training. This teaching would, however, have its limits, because having knowledge is not enough to train skills. It is entirely a matter of having the teachers learn to philosophize, and not only learn philosophy, for them to awaken children's minds to reflective thinking. It is the whole question of a theory of learning to philosophize that is raised for teachers, as well as for the children themselves.

The appearance of a new subject in primary school should, therefore, lead the institution to introduce into the educational system – both in initial and in-service training – a consistent education of teachers in specific required practices in line with the objectives pursued by the programmes.

Several initiatives exist in favour of teacher-training in the practice of philosophy for children in a number of countries of Latin America.

The first experiences of P4C took place in Chile when, in 1978, nuns from Maryknoll applied Matthew Lipman's programme in several communities. Many training sessions have been organized in universities during the past several years, including seminars on Philosophy and Childhood, Philosophy and Education, etc., particularly at the Faculties of Philosophy and Humanities at the University of Chile, the University of Serena and the University of Concepción. The latter also plans to open a postgraduate programme in P4C.

In Argentina, the practice of P4C exists since 1989 in a private school in Great Buenos Aires. The Argentinian centre for P4C was created in 1993 at the University of Buenos Aires. In addition, Lipman's programme have been translated and published, and other materials, assembled in collection editions, have also been published. The experiences in private schools are still predominant, although several Secretariats for Education, such as in the town of Catamarca, support experiences in other schools as well as the training of teachers.

Box 2 – Learning to philosophize at primary school in the Lux Mundi Community, Dominican Republic

In the basic levels from 1st to 6th year of education, the Lux Mundi Educational Community implements the following:

- Philosophy for children;
- Development of communicative abilities and complex thinking;
- Reading programme comprising children's classics and contemporary works (with an accent on Dominican authors).

By this, we favour a type of thinking that is analytical, creative, critical, organized, curious, open, enterprising, respectful and plural. We thus exercise cognitive abilities such as observation, classification, analysis, synthesis, interpretation, etc. Through this, the child is stimulated to express his/her opinions sincerely and respecting the positions of others, in order to learn to become a mediator in conflicts.

The method we use is called ECA, developed by Ángel Villarini. It concentrates on the exploration, conceptualization and application in years 7 and 8. Added to the curriculum for these years are the reading programme of classics and contemporary works for children, and the critical and reflective reading programme. The Think Art Programme is also introduced at these levels.

María Amalia León, Academic Director of Secondary Education
Jocelyn Peña de Escoto, Director of the Philosophy for Children Programme
High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean,
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
8 and 9 June 2009

In Uruguay, in co-operation with the working group of the University of Buenos Aires, work related to P4C began in the 1990s. The Uruguayan Centre for Philosophy with Children was founded in 1994. Several experiments have been carried out in schools in Uruguay. The most significant is a programme at the Shangrila state school under the responsibility of Marta Córdoba. P4C methods are also used in independent schools, for children from three to fifteen years of age. P4C has also been introduced in the Philosophy of Education Programme at Uruguay's teacher education institutes.

Practices that are tried and true

Ever since its foundation by Matthew Lipman in 1974, the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), a pioneering institution as concerns Philosophy for Children, has given rise to several movements and practices throughout the world. Today, one thus finds a variety of models for teaching children to philosophize at pre-school and primary levels.

The Lipman method

This method is recognized as being the one that has most influenced the development of Philosophy for Children in the world. When it was created, the Lipman programme was the only systematic philosophy programme for the 6-16 age group. It was therefore a model for many other countries, which translated and appropriated it.

Box 3 – The teaching material for the Lipman method

Whether it is a matter of an innovation to be introduced or to be strengthened, of experimentation to begin, or in progress, or yet the institutionalization of this type of practice, learning to philosophize in primary school can be greatly facilitated with the help of teaching material that already exists or is yet to be created. Several options are possible after the fashion of what many countries have been doing, namely:

- 1) Translating Lipman's novels into the language of the country, as well as the manuals he designed for the teachers, with many complementary proposals for discussions between and with the students;
- 2) Adapting the content of Lipman's novels to the local culture, by transforming certain episodes in a way that makes them more meaningful for the culture, traditions and context of the country concerned;
- 3) Writing new 'Lipman-style' novels, conceived in terms of the same objectives for engaging in the same process, but rooted in the specific culture of the country concerned;
- 4) Producing new supporting material on the basis of Lipman's material – such as albums with pictures, comic books, or other audio-visual materials.

Lipman's seven novels

- *Elfie*, 3 volumes, 1988
- *Kio and Gus*, 1986
- *Pixie*, 1981
- *Mark*, 1980
- *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, 1974 and 1980
- *Suki*, 1978
- *Lisa*, 1976.

Adapted from the publication *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007, p. 23

In contrast to the Cartesian tradition, for which childhood is the place and time of prejudice and error, Lipman hypothesized that children are capable of thinking on their own once a method adapted to their needs is employed. The method that he developed includes instruction material that is consistent, useful to all teachers who have not received philosophical training. Lipman wrote seven novels (see Box 3) taking into account the major philosophical questions and the age of the children, and covering the entire course of study from nursery school to the end of secondary education. Each of the novels is accompanied by a teacher's manual, which consolidates what is learned in the discussions and supports what the pupils and teacher do with diversified exercises which are suggestions, and not obligations, thus leaving the teacher completely free to use initiative. This method counts at least three well-established strong points: first, cultivating questioning in the schoolroom by relying on the questions of the children themselves; second, proposing written supporting material that is both narrative, in order to facilitate the children's identification with the characters and situations, and has highly anthropological content; third, setting up a place in the classroom organized for speaking and exchanging ideas about human problems, where the speaking is democratically shared, but with a critical requirement for which the duty of argumentation is the counterpart of the right to express oneself.

Michel Tozzi's 'democratic-philosophical' method

This method pursues goals close to those pursued by Lipman, but proposes a structured democratic mechanism, assigning specific functions among the pupils, and philosophically oriented intellectual requirements (problem solving, conceptualization and argumentation). Practice is enriched by coordinating debates about the interpretation of a text (literature for young people) and philosophically oriented discussion, as well as by the use of myths as a basis for reflection.

Even if the themes of the discussions vary, the mechanisms remain practically the same: the questions that are the object of the reflections have come from the life of the classroom. The children form a circle. The mechanism is set up through the assigning of various different functions: the *chairperson* oversees the exchanges by recalling the rules of functioning; the *reformulators* explain in their way what they have understood about what has just been said; the *synthesizer* sums up the progress of the exchanges; the *scribe* notes the important ideas he has isolated on the blackboard; the *discussants* ready themselves to participate in the exchanges by giving their opinion; the *observers* have chosen not to participate in the discussion, in order to help a schoolmate make progress in their speaking; the person running the group (generally the teacher) endeavours to develop recourse to the intellectual demands of philosophizing. Organized in this way, this discussion among peers initiates the children both to reflecting philosophically and to practicing living together as citizens.

Oscar Brenifier's Socratic method

This method harks back to Socratic maieutics, with significant guidance of the group by the teacher with a view to progressive, logical reflection, on the basis of questions, reformulations and objections. This method has generated a substantial amount of internationally published teaching material.

It is the teacher who guides the class with demanding intellectual requirements. Faced with a question, a pupil proposes an idea that others must reformulate in order to assess whether they have understood it

well. If not, reformulations must continue until the idea is understood by everyone. Then, the speaker asks if anyone disagrees with this idea and why. Pupils reformulate the objection until everybody understands it. Then the teacher asks the group to respond to this objection, etc. The progress of the group's ideas can be followed on the blackboard in accordance with a methodical, rigorous process.

Jacques Levine's method

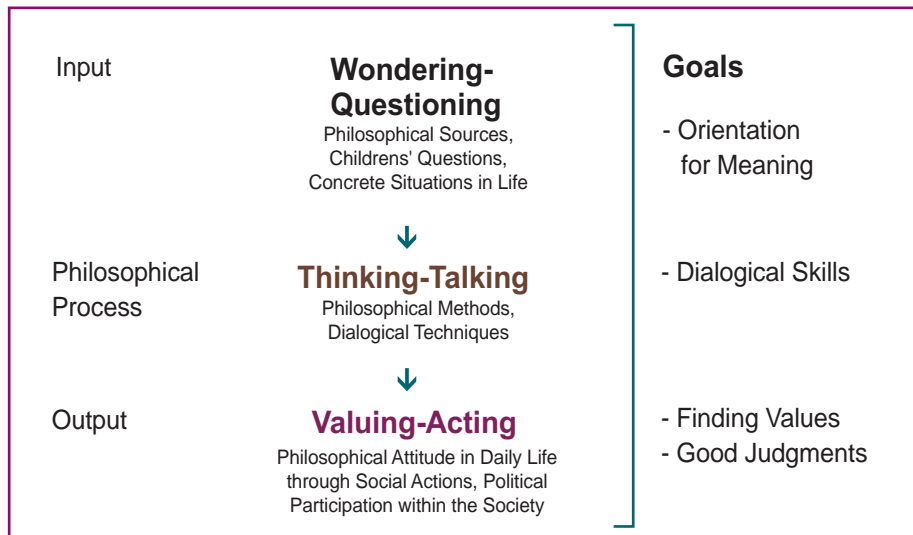
The objective of this method is to foster the development of the children's personality by anchoring it in their condition as thinking beings, by having them experience their ability to comment on a fundamental question that people, including themselves, face. As early as 1996, Jacques Levine formulated a set of practical and research guidelines based on his experience as a developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst. This approach is put into practice as follows.

First, the teacher tosses out a subject or a question of interest to mankind and to all children (for example, growing up), expressing an interest in finding out the children's opinion. The teacher then voluntarily remains silent.

Second, children are asked to express their opinions about this topic for about ten minutes. They thus become the author of their own thought, no longer expecting a right answer from the teacher. The session is recorded.

Third, in the presence of their peers, the group listens to the tape for ten more minutes, which the children can interrupt whenever they want so as to express themselves again. By means of this exercise, the conditions of psychological possibilities of constructing autonomous thinking are worked out so as to allow the individual to become aware that he/she is thinking in connection with others, but remains nevertheless distinct from them. The children undergo a community experience that binds them together in a common culture of shared oral expression. This confers on each of them a feeling of being both serious and pacified.

Children philosophize



UNESCO, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, p.31

Teaching philosophy at

secondary level

Teaching at secondary level corresponds to a moment of profound change in an individual's life, that is, adolescence. The evolution-revolution that occurs during this period has significant consequences to be taken into account in education. During adolescence, one's relationship to the world, with others and with oneself sets into motion a process of structuring and problematic reconstructing, along with its questioning, fears, joys and suffering. In addition, one's perception of others changes by becoming a determinant factor in the way one sees oneself and reacts. Adolescence is therefore a propitious time for philosophical questioning.

Teaching philosophy at secondary level should thus find a legitimate place in the educational system.

To that end, it is necessary to restore the place of teaching philosophy, often the first to be sacrificed in comparison to literature and history which generally benefit from a solid anchoring in the cultural identity of the different countries. It is also necessary to restore the place of the human sciences in general, which they continue to lose to the benefit of scientific and technical fields. As secondary education has a tendency to become increasingly technical in an overall context of pursuing economic growth, it is fitting to envisage development in terms of all its dimensions: ethical, cultural, social and human.

In what follows, the principal questions concerning philosophy teaching at secondary level are set out and some possible responses are presented for the purpose of contributing to the future formulation of appropriate policies on the subject.

Overview

A historical and cultural context in favour of philosophy

The survey carried out by UNESCO in 2007⁸ highlights the strong presence of Latin America in the international philosophical scene. This phenomenon is due mainly to two reasons.

Firstly, a great cultural and linguistic homogeneity facilitated teaching in general, and particularly that of philosophy. In fact, putting aside the Caribbean countries that are not Spanish-speaking – countries where the official languages are English, French or Dutch, the Iberian languages are spoken in most of them, namely Portuguese in Brazil, and Spanish in the majority of the other countries in the region. Thus, although French, English and Dutch are also spoken, we can say that the *lingua franca* of continental Latin America is Spanish.

Secondly, the strong historical influence of the Catholic Church has long been in favour of philosophy. For the Church, which has always considered education as one of its principal attributes, philosophy constitutes, still today, the essential precondition of theological studies. The programme of Catholic secondary education thus traditionally grants a great place to philosophy. As for public education, it has remained attached to the humanities, classics, general knowledge, and there too philosophy finds its place quite naturally.

⁸ UNESCO online Questionnaire on the state of the art of philosophy teaching, whose results are published in the UNESCO Study Philosophy, a School of Freedom, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001541/154173E.pdf>

As it will be seen, this situation that may be considered as preferred, has changed a lot. More recently, philosophy has often been contested, and has disappeared from the programmes of secondary education in certain countries. Currently and according to the results of the UNESCO survey, philosophy is taught in the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela. In Central America, with the exemption of Mexico, philosophy seems to be absent from most of the school curricula. Limited information is available for the other countries of the region.

Varied and contrasted situations

The diversity of national traditions, the economic inequalities from one country to another and, in a country, from one area to another, have immediate effects on secondary education as a whole. The place of philosophy varies according to whether education is public or private – and within private, depending on whether the establishments are religious or secular – or depending on whether students follow an education that is literary, scientific or technical. In Mexico, for example, although scientific education is prioritized, philosophy is still learnt up until *liceo* primarily in two fields, logic and ethics.

To explain the diversity of situations, it is still necessary to take into account the specificity of philosophy, which has led to a contestation of its place in the curriculum particularly in the last decades. If nobody envisages removing the teaching of literature, history, mathematics or the modern languages, this is not the case for philosophy, which has been removed for the most diverse reasons (by military dictatorships, for example, or more recently in the name of liberal ideology and professionalization).

Just a few examples suffice to illustrate this global problem. In Peru, despite strong protests by teachers, the teaching of philosophy was withdrawn from the curriculum in 2002, criticized as being a Western mode of expression without any national roots. The partisans of sciences, from their perspective, accused it of not distinguishing itself from literature. Two years after this governmental decision, the Peruvian philosophical community manifested openly in favour of re-establishing this discipline in schools, notably through the Declaration of Arequipa, the name of the city that hosted the national conference on philosophy in December 2004.

In the Dominican Republic – as in other countries that, guided more by economic prosperity than education, move towards decreasing the number of disciplines at secondary level – the suppression of philosophy was decided for the reason of transversality: philosophy could be found in a transversal way in other disciplines such as history, literature or civic education, for example, and for this reason it was not necessary to leave it as a separate subject matter. This initiative had the foreseeable consequence of the suppression of philosophy. An experience like this, which is far from being the only one, clearly shows that the indispensable condition for the teaching of philosophy to retain its place in educational curricula is that philosophy be considered as an integral discipline that requires to be taught as such, as a coherent ensemble of knowledge and of moral and scientific interrogations.

Box 4 - Excerpts from the Arequipa Declaration

Assembled at Arequipa Peru for the Sixth National Colloquium on Philosophy, we declare:

- That philosophy constitutes a consubstantial part of the fundamental heritage of human reason;
- That our philosophical vocation is a vocation for humanity, its history and its problems;
- That in the face of the expansion and consolidation of mass consumption, we hold that it is necessary and urgent to stimulate among our youth a culture of the philosophical mind that will enable future citizens to build a general understanding of humanity and the world;
- That philosophy enables the training of the critical mind and freedom of thought, and promotes reflection on humankind and its destiny;
- That it is indispensable to strengthen and enhance the status of philosophy teaching in Peru by redefining its core objectives and by outlining rules, adapted to the reality of each region, for the diversification of the curriculum;
- That it is necessary to institutionalize the fundamentals of a tradition of the teaching and learning of philosophy in Peru. To this end, the universities and educational institutions should organize academic events and exchanges.

We decide:

- To proclaim philosophical education for young Peruvians as an urgent priority for the veritable national education of future Peruvian citizens;
- To demand that the Peruvian government give new support to the teaching of philosophy in our country's educational institutions, and that it not be diluted in other subject areas or be let simply to disappear from the current curriculum;
- To express our concern, in the face of the weak interest manifested by the Peruvian government, for the strengthening and reinforcing of philosophy teaching;
- To recommend that Peruvian universities and educational institutions, as well as the Peruvian Philosophy Society, come out publicly in support of the necessity and urgency of philosophy for young Peruvians;
- To draw the attention of the national philosophical community to the necessity of creating a tradition of research into and reflection on the teaching and learning of philosophy in Peru, as occurs in other countries in America and the world.

In Philosophy: A School of Freedom
Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007, p. 80

Challenges

What place for philosophy in quality teaching?

It is absolutely necessary to stress that teaching philosophy aims at training people to think independently and at a critique of knowledge, rather than the passive assimilation of it. Two main questions that emerge from UNESCO's Study enquire on the place of philosophy and its links with the other subjects taught.

On the one hand, one of the main challenges is not to confuse teaching philosophy with teaching civic education, ethics, or religion, whose respective goals are by nature different. In other words, it is a matter of granting philosophy its full place and its autonomy. Philosophy has its own requirements and methodology for educating about the values and ethical principles indispensable for peace and democracy to set in durably.

On the other hand, as a genuine asset for quality education, philosophy must be conceived of as enabling people to think about knowledge acquired all throughout their secondary education, within a dynamic of complementarity with the other subjects. Teaching philosophy must thus inspire concrete interdisciplinary reflection that in turn develops the criteria for asking questions about knowledge acquired in other fields. The increasing specialisation, if it is the indispensable condition of the progress of sciences and technology, equally produces highly undesirable effects. The division of intellectual labour indeed leads to the same results as the division of manual labour: the hypertrophy of an organ to the detriment of all the others and an indifference to the world as long as there is no shortage of work. Thus, it is important to simultaneously develop the overall spirit, and to recall the need to rise up from a point of view that is unifying, synthetic, when it is also a question of understanding the world as well as to direct one's actions. The philosophy course will therefore be a privileged meeting space for various types of knowledge, providing a coherence formulated by the whole of education through the practising of dialogue based on the desire to interrogate.

Furthermore, in an era characterized by a crisis of values, it is very difficult for a young person to take a step back from the present moment to examine without haste, calmly, objectively, peacefully and make a thoughtful decision that takes into account long term consequences. Today, where many lines were crossed, when they did not disappear, the knowledge of the principal responses that were proposed by philosophy for the great questions about human life offers to the young a means by which to judge the models of behaviour and the values that are proposed to them.

What approaches for teaching at the secondary level?

Among other things, the UNESCO Study relayed the opinions of many professors pleading for a critical, relevant reshaping of programmes. Indeed, in an age of rapidly accelerating globalization, the traditional manner of teaching philosophy has reached certain limits. Would it not be appropriate to establish new approaches that, while presenting certain ideas and concepts, would open the way to broader debate? Must one, and if yes, how does one 'revolutionize' or reform the ways and means of teaching philosophy?

Box 5 - “Philosophy today” - the case of Mexico

By the end of 2008, the Mexican Government carried out an integral reform of the Higher Secondary Education (RIEMS). [...] After several considerations among which was the necessity of unifying the *bachillerato*, four basic disciplinary fields were determined: Mathematics, Experimental Sciences, Social Sciences, and Communication.

This had three relevant consequences for us: firstly, the field of Humanities disappeared; secondly, the philosophical disciplines disappeared, making them aleatory; thirdly, these disciplines became part of the “transversal competences”.

The authorities estimated that the transfer of Philosophy to the “transversal competences”, where there were no disciplines, placed it where it belonged.

In other words, by sending the philosophical disciplines to the transversal competences, Philosophy became diluted in a superficial and occasionally contradictory characterisation.

Through the process responsible for rejecting philosophy by virtue of its uselessness, its teaching was reduced to a minimum in some educational systems, while in others it disappeared or was superseded by courses such as Building of a Civic Society, or Ethics and Values.

After the news of this reform had spread, various philosophical associations issued criticisms and recommendations to which the authorities paid no attention. Consequently, on 18 March 2009, these associations united in a coordinating organism named Philosophical Observatory of Mexico (OFM), producing an incendiary document on the contradiction between the philosophical community and the governmental decision. Also, this document suggested the creation of a Humanities field and the re-establishment of the following disciplines: Ethics, Logic, Philosophy, and Aesthetics.

This document was supported by all the philosophical and scientific associations in Mexico, as well as by members of the Directing Committee of the FISP, emeriti professors, all schools, faculties and institutes of Philosophy, and over a thousand teachers and students of this subject. Never had a similar phenomenon occurred in the midst of the Mexican philosophical community, whose philosophical conceptions had traditionally divided it. This struggle lasted for two months in the media and reached its zenith with the triumph of the philosophical community when the National Council of Educational.

It is encouraging to see that the philosophical movement of the OFM had such an effect in lifting once again the enthusiasm for philosophy: an audience out there exists that is interested in a renewed philosophical approach, as it is clearly shown in UNESCO’s Study *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*. The philosophical community has the obligation to demonstrate that its disciplines and conceptions are part of the most urgent problems and necessities of man and society.

Carlos Vargas Lozano, Deputy Professor, *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana*, Mexico
High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean,
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 and 9 June 2009

In a study of the Organization of Ibero-American States devoted to the curricula of philosophy at secondary level in 18 Latin American countries in 1992,⁹ it appeared that, 'where philosophy is still taught, the education process emphasizes the history of philosophy rather than philosophy itself'. Too often, in fact, philosophy is taught in a pompous, even pedantic way, by summoning up the great names of the history of philosophy. This way of teaching tends to discourage students and to deaden their interest in the field. While teaching philosophy undeniably fundamentally involves a presentation of the history of ideas, it cannot be limited to that. In that case, would it not be appropriate to develop new methods oriented also toward the knowledge underlying the theories of the major philosophers from Plato to Sartre in such a way as to stimulate or create genuine philosophical reflection in the students? Also, the programmes should be up to date if philosophy wants to effectively help the young to face the various challenges that await them in their adult life. The great paths around which the diverse possible options are articulated seem to be the following:

- The choice between a conceptual, systematic approach and a historic approach. Among the two, the first is usually prioritized, because it deals better with problematization, whereas the second risks requiring more memory.
- The relationship with the new knowledge and in particular with human sciences, and most notably sociology. The richness of the history of philosophy is such that professors are often tempted to remain anchored in the past. If it is true that one of the functions of philosophy is to develop a feeling of historical continuity and that there is nothing more formative than reading the great classical authors, philosophy also builds itself on what it is not and must open itself to the present to integrate the principal assets of the human sciences.

The teaching methods must certainly be adapted to different contexts and the most varied audiences, while keeping in mind that philosophy teaching is supposed to educate free, aware, responsible citizens and not necessarily philosophers. Philosophy teachers surely sometimes find themselves defenceless before listeners unaccustomed to analysis or uncomfortable with abstract subject matters that can seem dull by definition.

Finally, the question of traditional types of evaluation should also be dealt with, and especially the preponderance of written exercises such as essays. Why not, for example, envisage taking oral participation throughout the year into consideration when it comes to evaluation, and not just written work? It is fundamental to envisage means of evaluation other than just the written exercises often deemed to be the means, by excellence, of expressing rational thought. Students must be brought to freeing themselves from the commonplace ideas and reflexes they possess in order to reason fully and autonomously without for all that reciting a lesson. These criteria of evaluation should make it possible for the students to know what they can question and put aside all arbitrary feelings.

⁹ *Análisis de los currículos de Filosofía en nivel medio en Iberoamérica*, OEI, 1998.

Box 6 - Teaching philosophy at secondary level - the Uruguayan experience

Some strong points are:

- A long tradition in philosophy teaching;
- The subject is included in the common nucleus of teaching at secondary and higher levels, for all branches. This position in the curriculum highlights the role of Philosophy in the building of basic knowledge;
- The introduction of methodological changes in its teaching: tackling topics starting from their problematization, articulating interdisciplinary contents, etc.;
- Recent updates of the programme's contents: the work carried out in the programme commissions hand in hand with representatives of teachers, specialists and other figures, is particularly relevant;
- The kind of evaluation that seeks the articulation of knowledge and the productivity of the student (argumentative essays, oral presentations, etc.) is maintained;
- A good percentage of qualified teachers and continuous efforts towards a constant up-date and permanent training.

Nevertheless, philosophy teaching is also threatened by three factors: the weight of market society's demands, the attempts to reduce the space of philosophy by reforms of the curriculum and the danger of the weakening of philosophy teaching in the classrooms.

Weak points:

- Difficulties in the integration of pedagogical changes in the scenario of an education in crisis: loss of the meaning of education, teachers' malaise and routinization;
- An important toll of desertion and student failure;
- New generations that access education carrying other codes and interests, coming from educational spaces that responds to the logic of institutions created in other contexts and for other purposes.

Points to work on:

- Increase the support given to teachers in processes of permanent training and reflection on their practices;
- Promote the training of teachers on the basis of both theories and practices, which reflect the contexts of reality;
- Take into consideration the experiences of philosophy for children developed in some primary level institutions and promote their expansion;
- Strengthen the spaces for coordination between philosophy teachers and those of other disciplines;
- Strengthen education through postgraduate programmes.

Anay Acosta, General Inspector, Ministry of Education of Uruguay
High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean,
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 and 9 June 2009

What kind of teacher education?

The training of teachers should be one of the major concerns of those responsible for education. In the case of philosophy, where it is taught, the situations are very varied. Sometimes, it is not required that the professor has a diploma in philosophy, and the subject can be taught by someone who has studied another discipline, such as law, for instance. In the small establishments where there are not enough students in philosophy, the philosophy course is often entrusted to history professors, or to professors of literature. It is evident that in these conditions, the quality of the teaching is somewhat poorer.

The specific nature of philosophical reflexion and knowledge requires a particular competence of the teacher. Everything must thus be done so that, before finding him/herself in front of the class, the professor of philosophy has received the best preparation possible. The teaching is not worthy of its name without competent professors, and the training of the teachers cannot be emphasized enough. Accordingly, a continuing education for teachers could be envisaged for example through a set of thematic sessions organized for philosophy teachers, or periodic updates.

Another major difficulty is that the secondary education represents only one professional outlet for graduates in philosophy, and not always the most enticing one. This situation leads partly to a gap between the number of professors of philosophy and that of philosophy graduates. In addition, a coherent and complementary link is missing between, on the one hand, the training offered at university level and, on the other hand, the need for teachers at secondary level.

Resources and instruments of work for the use of students

If the teaching of philosophy is to bear its fruits, students must be given the means by which to work by themselves and do the exercises that are request. It is needed that the works they are asked to read be accessible to them without too much difficulty. The materials for the teaching of philosophy, such as school handbooks, teaching tools and instruments, should always take into account the public they are addressing as well as the problems which necessitate philosophical reflection, on the basis of concrete examples taken from everyday experience. This way, the students can be lead to question the notions of going beyond oneself, consciousness, etc. Philosophy, taught through this type of flexible medium, can thus give the students the opportunity to think, to compare, and in particular to project themselves in relation to their concerns.

In a more global manner, it is necessary to create or develop libraries or information centres in the schools. Not only is it essential to develop an appreciation for reading, and to make quality school handbooks available to both teachers and students, but moreover, an initiation of the use of new technologies seems particularly urgent. It is a question of teaching the students how to search for sources or critique on the Internet, but it is also a question of making them aware of the traps of these new technologies (legal copying-and-pasting, uncontrolled information considered as truthful, etc.). Against this technocratic vision that would like to make an economy out of classrooms, it is necessary to point out the obvious that a computer cannot replace a professor.

Finally, the teaching of philosophy must also adapt itself to the documentary resources available in the school. In this respect, Uruguay has developed a participatory approach to teaching philosophy whereby the course is focused on the structural problems, taking into account the interest of professors and students alike as well as the accessibility of documents. Up until now in fact, professors have been asked to transmit, in a short period of time, a considerable sum of the most diverse information. It sometimes happened that they could not cover all aspects for subjects where the school did not have the necessary educational material. In consequence, the importance or interest of the subject could not be realised by neither the students nor the teacher. It is therefore not beneficial to tackle a question if the corresponding basic educational materials are absent; conversely, it is advised to make the best of the materials that are available in the school.

The new programme that is now suggested thus shares the interests of professors and students alike. It is prepared jointly, taking into consideration the accessibility of working instruments and allows for a time for reflection, dialogue, research and deepening. Thanks to this liberty, the professor can work conveniently, in accordance with the socio-cultural context in which he/she is, and develop critical thought and self-criticism. This flexibility, insofar as it takes into account the particular concerns of the young and of the material reality specific to each school, supports the development of the educational reality of different student populations that exist in the country.

Suggestions for possible action

There is a great variety of means of transmitting a taste for philosophizing and awakening interest and curiosity for this field. Latin America and the Caribbean is a region where innovative practices, when it comes to teaching philosophy, can be engaged in using the rich human and intellectual potential underlying each country's educational system to the best advantage.

Strengthen the place of philosophy in schools

- Accord a full, complete, autonomous place to philosophy. In doing so, a complementary and interdisciplinary approach in relation to other disciplines can be envisaged.
- Reintroduce philosophy where it has disappeared from the programmes. It indeed constitutes an incomparable tool for the shaping of citizens.

Initiate innovative approaches

- Foster creativity and innovation with regard to methods of teaching philosophy. To this end, draw in particular from the store of innovative practices developed for learning to philosophize, such as according value to oral expression in the evaluation process, the use of philosophically-oriented discussion, etc.
- Support the exchange, diffusion and circulation of knowledge and practices relative to the teaching of philosophy at intra-regional and international levels.

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- Optimize the production of philosophy teachers' and students' manuals and textbooks through a permanent search for quality. This requires incorporating innovative teaching methods and taking into account challenges facing philosophy teaching in Latin America and the Caribbean.
 - Conciliate philosophy and the different cultural aspects of teaching.

Conceive adequate training for philosophy professors

- Accord value to specializing in philosophy in order to ensure specific professional opportunities, knowingly to ensure that philosophy teaching posts at secondary level are filled by faculty members who are specifically trained for that function.
- Guarantee the training of philosophy teachers at primary level that combines both a didactic and pedagogical content and a specialization in philosophy.
- This training could be sustained and updated with relevant in-service training.

Teaching philosophy in

higher education

The hybrid nature of university teaching – a mixture of teaching/educating and research – is all the more at work in the area of philosophical studies since they do not in general have other institutional places where they can develop. University teaching does not only contribute to the shaping of characters and building up human beings in their multiple dimensions – cognitive, emotional, moral, cultural or social. It is above all intent upon putting students in a position to produce new knowledge and making them capable of reacting to the incessant transformations that the coordination of knowledge experiences within different cultures.

Philosophical knowledge is taught at universities in the form of research methods, categories, concepts, criteria of valid argumentation and more or less formal structures enabling people to construct physical, historical, moral and rational worlds. Whether it is a matter of educating educators, of nurturing historical culture, of learning universal structures of reasoning or of building up the culture of tomorrow's teachers-researchers, it is definitely the presence of technical knowledge of the field and of a properly philosophical savoir-faire that sets university teaching apart and is the basis of all its relevance. Moreover, in the countries where philosophy is taught in the schools, the dynamic between the secondary school teachers and those in higher education constitutes an essential asset in the philosophical educational process.

It is worthwhile noting that it is not a matter in this part of dealing with the question of actual philosophical research, but of teaching philosophy at university level. Even though it is obvious that the university structure encompasses the research component, that will be the subject of a separate UNESCO study, since the issues involved there are nonetheless of a distinctly different nature from that of actual university teaching.

Overview

In the Latin American and Caribbean countries where philosophy is mainly taught in Spanish or Portuguese, there exist, on a regional scale, between 800 and 850 universities or institutions of higher education, public and private. Among these, there are both secular and denominational institutions. The teaching of philosophy is characterized as much by the systematic study of the great historical waves of thought – ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy, etc. – as by the variety of the fields of study – logic, philosophy of sciences, epistemology, morals and ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, etc. The intellectual richness of the Latin American philosophical communities is well known, as well as the many occasions for exchange and co-operation between these philosophers and the rest of the world. Indeed, despite all kinds of structural difficulties, the teaching of philosophy seems to receive a certain amount of attention by public authorities as well as specialized associations.

The Spanish or Portuguese speaking Latin American countries whose institutions of higher education are considered in this publication are the following: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela. In the Caribbean, the presence of philosophy at university depends on the priorities of each country. In Barbados, the teaching of philosophy is part of specific curricula, and there even exist courses on art philosophy in the framework of the pedagogical training of primary school teachers of visual arts. In Trinidad-and-Tobago, there exist modules of Introduction to Philosophy in the Department

Box 7 - Philosophy teaching at university level - the Peruvian experience

One of the major tasks of philosophy pending in our milieu, and perhaps the main one, is to clarify our gaze. Usually, this task is executed in response to the perspectives provided by the global power centres. We must then define the presuppositions that build up our perspectives and options in life.

Philosophy, as a radical reflection, must process the themes of our horizons of understanding, remaining attentive to our historical and cultural roots. It would be suitable to explore this orientation and, may the outcome of this be satisfactory, to recommend its teaching. What I have previously stated could then gain considerable relevance and vitality.

In Peru, we perceive a renewed interest in understanding these horizons which, originating in our native cultural cradles, continue to act in the idiosyncrasy of our peoples and sustaining their greatest realisations. This philosophical orientation impregnates the academic world, albeit it not having been officially incorporated in the formal curricula, and refers to the most lively philosophical debates in our milieu.

Now, when we find ourselves in a moment in history where the limits and traps of modern culture are clearly perceivable, the discussion of its horizons of understanding, hegemonic at a global scale, could certainly gain depth through the interaction with alternative horizons of understanding, such as those taking place in our native cultural origins.

This interaction, equivalent to the development of an intercultural Philosophy, would thus stimulate the critical comprehension of the world in which we live. It would also promote the recognition of its limits and possibilities; our creativity and sense of responsibility.

In Latin America, it would be suitable to pay close attention to the peoples' mentalities and their ontological and axiological presuppositions.

Zenón Depaz, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, *Universidad de San Marcos*, Lima, Peru
High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 and 9 June 2009

of History of the Faculty of Social Sciences of University of the West Indies. In Haiti, there exists an excellent College of Higher Education.

A characteristic which seems common to all countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is the fact that the teaching of philosophy is very frequently linked to a department of philosophy or social sciences, where it cohabits with the studies in history, literature and linguistics. It is not very frequent in other regions that philosophy is taught in departments of social sciences.

Box 8 - Setting and analysis of the problem: deficiency in the teaching and learning of critical thinking in the Dominican Republic

The students who get to the university classrooms ignore philosophical thinking. They show little depth in their points of view, handle abstractions poorly, lack inquisitive curiosity. Their ability to debate is very low. They frequently show conformist attitudes, usually react with naivety to the stimuli coming from the media and, in general, their points of view and incitations are not always rational.

This shows a strong lack of logic, of critical ability, of skills for judgement and expression, as well as certain limitations in originality and creativity.

An investigation carried out at the Universidad INTEC reveals that the students who reach the university campus show a deficit in theoretical and practical knowledge in the understanding and production of argumentative texts essential for their academic work, which considerably affects their professional and academic achievements as well as their personal development. Effectively, this creates stagnation in the development of their critical and scientific thinking and a deficiency in the understanding of scientific theories, a result of the absence of metatextual and critical reading. The lack in argumentation and sustaining of thesis or opinions, in which processes of critical and argumentative thinking are involved, is an obstacle for the ability to maintain individual thinking.

[...]

The teaching of concepts, doctrines, figures, schools, and dogmas has become paramount. Paradigms and ideologies which, instead of favouring a genuine exercise of critical thinking, generate apathy and lack of interest, causing the rejection and confusion of students.

The Dominican society, as it is the case with most emerging societies, is developing by facing the apparent dilemma of resolving the specific problems of a pre-modern society, or the challenge of adhering to the concert of modern nations.

It has been argued that the problems of under-development are solved through the development of science and technology, prioritizing the education on these principles, marginalizing the activity which Jean-François Revel named: 'the useless knowledge'. However, scientific and technological practices imply certain mental habits and a type of critique inherent to Philosophy: the examination of fundamentals.

Luis O. Brea Franco, Excerpt from the Report on UNESCO's Participation Project
"Development of Critical Thinking in Philosophy Teaching".
High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 and 9 June 2009

Challenges

Philosophy studies and then what?

In the universities and institutions of higher education where philosophy is taught, this subject matter is far from occupying the first place in the choices of the students, who tend to give priority to courses in medicine, law, psychology, biotechnology, data processing, management, etc. The problem is that philosophy is often considered as not being very apt to contribute to economic and scientific progress. It is as if economic development might display contempt for philosophical reflection. Philosophy also suffers from the redeployment of resources to satisfy other priorities, especially those of the applied sciences and industrial research. This gives rise to the thought that, for public opinion, economic development can ignore philosophical reflection. However, it is undeniable that the ability to reflect on the meaning of development or of science requires particularly a competence of the students in philosophy, and many professions in various fields can judiciously benefit from this competence of reflection.

It is true that, compared to other degrees of higher education that are specialized from the beginning of the studies and that can be found in very technical fields, the degree in philosophy offers more of a large range of professions going beyond the fields of study specific for philosophy. In this respect, training in philosophy, contrary to other more specialized disciplines, is a general training where methodical interrogation and doubt are developed, in such a way that philosophy graduates are able to adapt to very different professional contexts. Thus, there is an apparent paradoxical situation where graduates of philosophy with a Master's degree find jobs more easily than those who have a diploma in a very specialized technical field.

That being said, teaching remains the principal career path for the students in philosophy, even if in these last years there has been a certain diversification of the job opportunities. Thus in Mexico, the graduates with a Master's degree in Philosophy at the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana* in Mexico, *Unidad Iztapalapa*, regarded as the best in the country, devote themselves mainly to teaching, generally at secondary level (*Educación media superior*). But an important part of graduates in philosophy, including in Latin America and the Caribbean, also occupy professions in fields that are sometimes very far from philosophy, such as management positions in institutions or companies. Ultimately, as in the other areas of the world, the majority of philosophy graduates manage to find a job that corresponds to the training and education they received, even if it may take longer than for other types of careers.

Human resources above all

It is important to give thought to the ties and interaction between secondary and higher education, particularly from the angle of professional opportunities and on-going education for philosophy teachers. Porosity between the two levels seems endangered today in many cases. This was further communicated by respondents of the UNESCO survey¹⁰ who emphasized the fact that in countries

¹⁰ UNESCO online Questionnaire on the state of the art of philosophy teaching, whose results are published in the UNESCO Study *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001541/154173E.pdf>

where secondary education no longer furthers subsequent development of university careers, teaching personnel often seem to lack motivation.

Moreover, according to the 2007 UNESCO Study, the low wages of the teachers and the attraction of young students towards other fields of study are the two main issues which can eventually endanger the teaching of philosophy at the various levels of education in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.¹¹

Innovative, varied written resources

Libraries and, for the last twenty years, new information technologies have been fundamental resources for professors and students of philosophy. The testimonies collected in the UNESCO Study published in 2007 emphasize delays in the actualization of the documentary resources in the university libraries in the region, since these are often produced in Europe or in the USA. However, the production of works at regional level progresses, and the network of university libraries in the area largely contribute to the diversification of the documentary resources, and make them immediately available.

In this respect, the *World Communication and Information Report 1999-2000* affirms that in Latin America and the Caribbean, “it is the university libraries and research which best succeeded in being constituted in networks of cooperation and which profited from the greatest international support. [...] The vertiginous increase in the use of the Internet in the area definitively strengthens the cooperation between the libraries of these countries.”¹² An important initiative for the setting up of a network of university libraries took place within the framework of the project of Inter-University Scientific and Technical Information Network of the Southern Hemisphere (RedHUCyT), launched by the Organization of American States (OAS) since 1991. It aimed at equipping the university libraries with computer materials and at setting up a network of their documentary resources at regional and international levels. More and more countries of the area today are part of this network by constituting their national networks and by connecting them to the others. The connection of the libraries to the Internet enables them, for example, to use the CompuServe Global Data Communication in order to connect to the OCLC Network (Online Computer Library Center), of which the online catalog (WorldCat) accounts for more than 1,525,707 titles in Spanish and 304,811 in Portuguese.

These advances will be all the more advantageous as the connectivity of the Latin American universities does not cease to grow, giving access to a multitude of information, including in the field of philosophy. However, a methodology of searching for information on the Internet should be taught to students, in order to guarantee their access to reliable academic resources. Thus, the studies in philosophy cannot, at this stage, make the best of the traditional documentary resources acquired by the libraries, such as the traditional monographs, the periodicals, or the proceedings of international symposia of philosophy held throughout the world.

¹¹ UNESCO, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, 2007, p. 138.

¹² UNESCO, *World Communication and Information Report 1999-2000*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 1999, p. 281.

Philosophy: Agora for public debate

One of the major roles of university, and of philosophy teaching at this level, is to foster the debating of ideas in order to advance the state of knowledge. In these debates, what is political or, in other words, issues related to the evolution and future of the *polis*, has a very significant place. But, for philosophy to be a genuine agora for public debate, academic freedom must be guaranteed at university.

However, the problem in many countries in the world is to arrive at an adequate conception of the ties uniting philosophy, politics and academic freedom. The danger arises when political regimes or systems claim the right to impose on teachers-researchers and students certain forms of obedience, or even of political fidelity, thus reducing philosophy teaching to a mere means of dissemination of an ideology. This is the case, for example, when oaths of fidelity or political orthodoxy are periodically imposed on academic communities. Political constraint also concerns the prohibition that is still found in many circumstances to include certain subjects in the teaching programmes, or yet again the imposition upon a country's researchers of a philosophical orthodoxy to which they are expected to conform.

These are just some of the hypothetical situations that may interfere with freedom of research, of teaching and learning of the academic community and students, especially when their field, philosophy, is specifically based on constantly questioning certainties. There exists also a more subtle form of pressure on teachers and students, difficult to detect, and which several researcher-teachers have denounced. This pressure is caused by the political climate that becomes established within a scholarly community taking the form of self-censorship on the part of the members of this community, particularly where politically sensitive or controversial subjects are concerned.

Academic freedom remains under threat on a number of different fronts, in particular those related to the radicalization of cultural and religious identities or traditional practices. It is also subject to various types of political conditioning, to increasing pressure to answer to economic considerations and, in a somewhat subtler manner, to the creation of academic climates that have an effect on how professors and researchers carry out their professional activities. By virtue of its general nature as a theory concerned with different forms of knowledge, philosophy today seems particularly vulnerable to these external pressures.

What is the current place of philosophy in Latin American and Caribbean universities ?

There are some major questions that are the subject of current debates in various universities in the region that shows which particular place philosophy occupies in these institutions. Some of these questions are the following:

1. The political role of philosophy in the history of Latin America;
2. The conception of the role of university in connection with the increasing demands of short-term effectiveness and results;
3. The concern of giving to all the opportunity to have access to philosophical studies.

1. For various countries of Latin America, like El Salvador, Uruguay and Venezuela, the 2007 UNESCO Study shows that professors and students insist on the political scope of the teaching of philosophy and the repressions and successive reconsiderations that they knew between authoritarian regimes and the return to democracy. In Argentina in particular, a country which occupies a considerable place on the international scale of philosophical work, the presence of many philosophical groups still testifies to this diverse political commitment. A correspondent from El Salvador affirmed that 'in the armed conflict during the 1980s, philosophy ceased being important because it was perceived as a subversive instrument.' This is a statement which can apply, *a contrario*, to many other countries, where the process of democratization saw a spectacular resumption of registrations at Faculties of Philosophy and Arts (*Filosofía y Letras*) and Faculties of Social Sciences, where courses of philosophy are generally taught. The close link between philosophical thought and politics also appears in the call for 'national thinkers' in philosophical teaching in several universities of the region, as well as in the tendency to strive to create the memory of a 'Latin-American philosophy' or national philosophies. Mirroring the nationalisms which cross Latin America periodically, this tendency is also attested, among other things, in the presence on a continental scale of chairs of Latin American thought such as in Nicaragua and Cuba. It involves teaching that is most often considered as a part of the theoretical streams of 'situated philosophy' or 'situated universalism', represented particularly well on the South American continent. Thus, in a study carried out in 2003 on the way in which the pupils and students of Costa Rica perceive the teaching of philosophy, the authors announce that 'in the universities, the students often quote national authors'.¹³
2. In some countries of the region, a debate takes place on the role and the purpose of the university in the evolution in society. Through this, there is an entire reflection on the meaning of education in general. Two visions are in competition on this question. The first perceives the university as a place which has to propose a range of trainings that will be as large as possible, including both trainings that are specific and professional and trainings of a more general character, such as philosophy. The view here is that the role of the university – and more particularly, of public universities – is to stimulate in-depth discussions on all fields of knowledge, including general questions such as the shaping of the citizen of tomorrow, the methods for developing critical thought, or the transmission of the values and the standards of the democratic life. This view often considers that philosophy teaching is part of the incontrovertible training to think critically and to exercise a spirit of tolerance. Thus, as the Colombian philosopher Monica Jaramillo-Mahut affirmed on the occasion of World Philosophy Day 2004 at UNESCO, 'to claim the right to public education, especially in the social and political context which Latin America knows today, it is to claim the right to philosophy, to democracy and to peace; it is to proclaim the need for a creative spirit able to deploy all the essential resources in order to pursue jointly social equity'.¹⁴ The second vision perceives the university as a place of training, strictly adapted to the job market, in order to produce concrete and measurable results in the immediate future. So it often happens that priority is given to 'basic training', oriented towards specific professional outlets, to the

13 Álvaro Carvajal Villaplana and Jacqueline García Fallas, *¿Cómo perciben los estudiantes universitarios la enseñanza de la filosofía, según sus experiencias en la educación diversificada costarricense?*, Instituto de Investigación para el Mejoramiento de la Educación Costarricense, 2004. <http://revista.inie.ucr.ac.cr/>

14 Monica Jaramillo-Mahut, "La Philosophie en Amérique latine : de l'imitation à la pensée créatrice", in *Existe-t-il une philosophie latino-américaine, Actes de la Journée de la Philosophie à l'UNESCO*, Paris, UNESCO, 2004, p. 85.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001460/146021fo.pdf>

detriment of other subjects that are perceived as less practical. This usually is philosophy.

In this current debate, the philosophy professors of various universities often make an important contribution in terms of reflection on the model of the individual and the citizen that the university, and consequently society, intend to shape. Sometimes this debate goes even beyond the university framework, and also touches secondary education.

3. Echoing the current problems of equal access to education, including higher education, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean face the question of the place of women and minorities in teaching in general, and the teaching of philosophy in particular. This question arises also in terms of access to teaching as university professors. In philosophy, as in practically all the other disciplines, women have historically been put aside. However, not only does philosophy support that there exists only one human space and that each individual is universal, it also tries to show it in a rational way. It follows that no negative discrimination is acceptable and that, on the contrary, reflections should be committed to thinking of measures in favour of women and members of minority groups in the teaching of philosophy at universities.

Teaching philosophy and interdisciplinary approaches

In practice, the teaching of philosophy is oriented according to two main axes: on the one hand, the thorough study of great historical waves of thought (ancient, medieval, modern, contemporary philosophies, etc); on the other hand, the systematic study of concepts, gathered around broader themes (logic, philosophy of sciences, metaphysics, morals, aesthetics, political philosophy, etc). Thus, the dynamics of the teaching of philosophy very often creates a constant dialogue between the literary disciplines (the 'humanities'), sciences and arts, which the majority of the other disciplines do not see as an objective. In this context, it appears very profitable to create synergies between the various disciplines of knowledge, so that the knowledge of various fields is thought in a coherent and complementary manner. Whatever the field (science, law, medicine, engineering, fine arts, etc.) the impact of philosophy on university education is undeniable. In consequence, the best way of reinforcing it is to introduce it into the programmes of other disciplines or to develop it further where it is already present.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there are initiatives which try to apply the principle of interdisciplinarity by articulating the teaching of philosophy and various, including technical, disciplines. In Guatemala, for example, the UNESCO survey reveals that most of the efforts currently carried out in favour of the teaching of philosophy concentrates on higher education in the following way: both the state university *Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala* and the 9 private universities consider the possibility of establishing a philosophy course or studies; moreover, other specializations, such as medicine, the administration of companies, legal and social sciences, political and social sciences, also include philosophy courses, according to the speciality concerned (for example, philosophy of intercultural education, political philosophy, philosophy of regional integration in Central America, philosophy of law, and others). In the eminently technical careers, it is considered important to reinforce the field of philosophy, as it is the case in architecture, engineering, agricultural and environmental sciences, in particular having in mind the human right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment. We insist on the necessity for all the careers of the 'diversified cycle' to take into account the field of philosophy and that, for those which do so already, such as the *magisterio*, to improve it and update it.

Box 9 - Philosophy teaching at university level - the Argentine experience

The challenges for the teaching of philosophy at university level in Argentina are:

1. Assist the training of secondary school philosophy teachers.
2. Avoid the narrow limits of academic institutions. This has three levels:
 - a) Seeking new audiences;
 - b) Attaining the necessary rigour to constitute a mechanism of transformation in the discernment of historical and cultural realities and their horizons of understanding;
 - c) Finally, avoiding the hermetical nature of academia means that philosophy should remain philosophy. That is to say, that it remains a vital exercise for one's spirit. This requires the transformation of the individual exercising it, not only in order to deepen the critique, but also to open up or prompt the opening of new horizons of understanding.

It is necessary to revise the specific corpus of philosophy, in the sense of inserting it further into a philological perspective, which will thus link it more closely to the historical experiences responsible for its origin, and those in which it is read today.

It is urgent to face the bio-political manipulation in order to reflect on life in its most basic and genuine sense.

3. Incite a greater connection with Latin America at two levels: a) formal and informal connections of academic circulation; and b) thematic connection: reflecting on Latin America and its current risks and challenges.
4. Encourage a greater opening to the diversity of discourses and rationales. That is to say, making use of the constituting passages of the act of philosophizing as a transit through plastic arts, music, religion, literature, poetry, popular experiences and traditions of wisdom, such as the experiences of the native peoples of America.
5. Philosophy must not renounce to reflecting on the university. Philosophy rightfully takes the responsibility of being at the centre of public politics. One could say that renewing the philosophical vocation involves facing a certain 'opting for life or joining the party of the suicidal', a common dichotomy of our cynical societies, who have condemned the youth to the flagellation of consumerism.

Dr Carlos Ruta, Rector, *Universidad de San Martín*, Buenos Aires, Argentina
High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 and 9 June 2009

Moreover, it appears difficult and reductive in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean to want to absolutely limit the teaching of philosophy to texts or authors who would be recognized as truly philosophical, in a purely academic mode, because oral culture, myths, or tales are also likely to be examined from a philosophical perspective. The interdisciplinary approach would make it possible to address without *a priori*, the various forms of knowledge that are culturally and epistemologically different. This approach is all the more grounded today as the centres of cultural studies also represent a place of philosophical research that is as important and as rich as the philosophy departments. This widening reflects a desire of interdisciplinarity that many researchers share, and plays an increasing role in the organization of research and academic teaching. The examples of the ethno-philosophy in Africa, the reflection on neo-Confucianism in China and East Asia, the dialectic interplay between religion and secularity in the West, or the articulation between philosophical rationality and Indian values, illustrate the cultural significance of any philosophical reflection.

It goes without saying that this interdisciplinarity is not to be confused with the concept of 'transversality'. Transversality characterizes knowledge or values which are found or are transmitted such as they are in various disciplines. Interdisciplinarity, on the contrary, implies the uniting of competencies specific to various fields of knowledge in order to face an intellectual or practical challenge. Thus, one can say that transversality is unaware of what is interdisciplinarity, and it is this term which is currently used in several countries of Latin America to characterize the teaching of philosophy in order to reduce it, and even to remove it.

Box 10 - Philosophy teaching at university level - the Bolivian experience

The Bolivian government promotes a transformation of the educational system. With this purpose, it drafted a new curriculum in 2006 with the participation of various institutions and social organisations.

In a collective effort, a diagnosis was elaborated. Thus, a debate was incited on the following topics: the meaning of education for the peoples, the content of philosophy teaching at schools and the use of education for the individual.

Among other considerations, the participants in this process agreed on the necessity of broadening the teaching of philosophy. In this context, an academic-social debate took place, characterised by its inclusivity.

From this sprang a new curricular structure of the educational system, from primary to higher education. Four principal fields were defined:

- Cosmos and Thinking.
- Community and Society.
- Life and Territory.
- Science and Technology.

These fields articulate the areas of knowledge, and are distributed by teachers, parents, and students.

Philosophy is addressed as Philosophy and Cosmovisions, it is present at primary, secondary, and higher levels, as well as in training for teachers. Based on the new educational models, there is an intention to train professionals and develop philosophy, not only as classical philosophy, but also as practical attitude, as values or modes of thinking, as a sense of community. This last point is particularly emphasized, finding its basis in culture and taking into consideration cultural diversity.

Juan José Queiroz, Secondary Education Director General, Bolivia
High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 and 9 June 2009

Suggestions for possible action

It is fundamental to take these challenges into account, to study the suggestions for action, and to see to what extent it is possible to implement the educational policies deriving from them.

Protect academic freedom

- Safeguard the principle of academic freedom.
- Ensure that it is actually respected by preventing anybody external to the dynamic of scientific exchanges from laying claim to setting priorities for research, judging the relevance of the discussions, or placing limitations on the range of the field covered.
- Support research and philosophical teaching with a view to strengthening the place of philosophical communities, while leaving them free to develop in accordance with a maximal diversity of approaches and thematic, methodological and conceptual choices.

Promote philosophy as an autonomous field

- Encourage the creation and/or the strengthening of autonomous philosophy departments within institutions of higher education with a view to promoting philosophy as a field per se.

Favour interdisciplinary studies

- Develop an interdisciplinary approach to teaching philosophy.
- Favour the exchanges between philosophy professors of Latin American and Caribbean universities and the rest of the philosophical community worldwide, in order to benefit from existing experiences in this respect.

Strengthen human resources

- Encourage the creation and/or strengthening of philosophy departments in terms of human resources and budget so that they may provide valid opportunities for philosophy graduates.
- Support partnerships with the public and private sectors with a view to promoting professional opportunities for philosophy students.
- Ensure durable, systematic interaction and collaboration between secondary school teachers and university professors, especially through in-service training, joint research projects, or teacher assistance, with a view to guaranteeing the faculty's motivation.

Consolidate documentary resources

- Work to create networks with publishers, or more broadly with the private sector, in order to ensure the acquisition of recent philosophical publications by Latin American and Caribbean university libraries.
- Encourage the creation of digital portals for the acquisition and distribution of scholarly information in the field of philosophy.

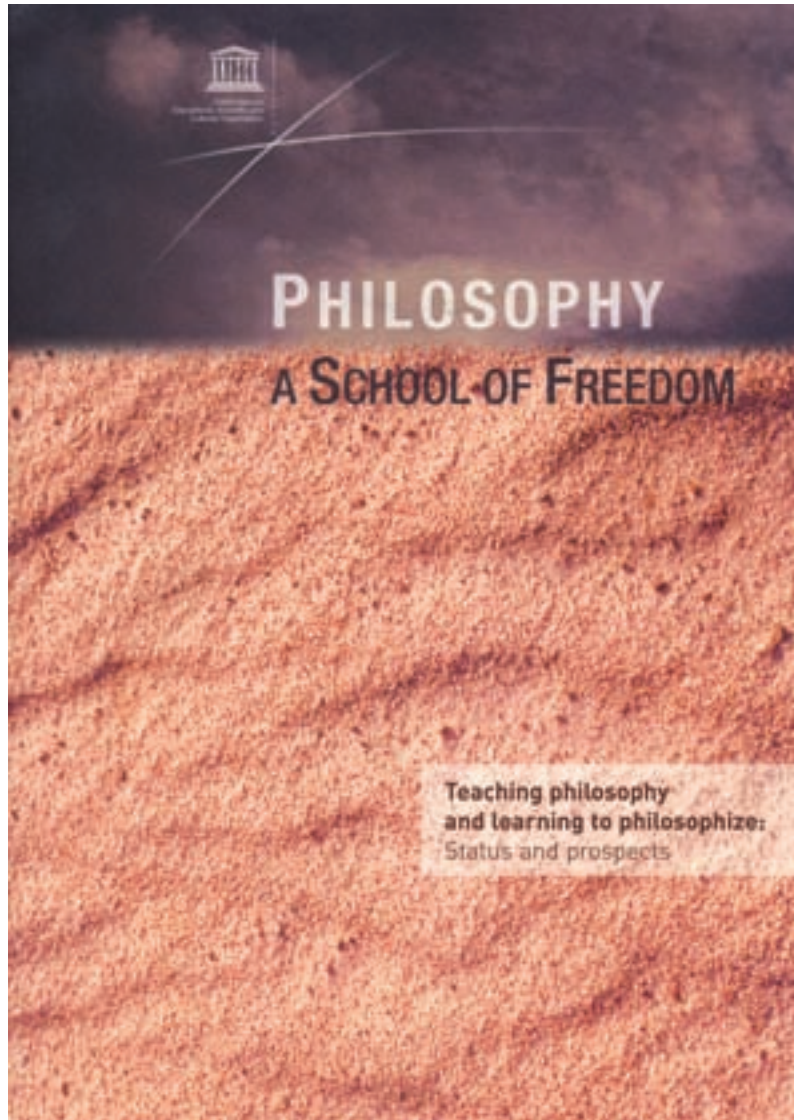
Conclusion

Philosophy is a most useful tool for training a critical mind and responsible attitudes. Philosophy is not impromptu. It is above all a kind of *savoir-faire* that requires responding to its own requisites and confronting the necessary challenges for its implementation. It is a field built up all throughout one's life; childhood, adolescence and adulthood, in an interdependent fashion, be it within an institutional framework or not.

Philosophy teaching must be supported energetically and insightfully, infused with new manners of teaching, transmitting and sharing, just as it must also integrate the legacy of the past, without being imprisoned by it, and take other modes of thought into account, all the while constructing its own identity for today and tomorrow.

Teaching philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean must endorse its full role of stimulating people to the free exercise of thinking – critical, responsible thinking –, just as it must contribute to the construction of peace and the promotion of sustainable development. The emergence of citizens fully conscious of their role, of their responsibilities and the stakes these represent is an asset in face of challenges that arise.

Envisaged from the perspective of a quality education, philosophy for everyone, at all levels of instruction, is becoming a necessity in today's world. For this to be realized, a decision must be taken at the highest political level, targeting an educational policy formulation that integrates philosophy into an overall process of reform.



UNESCO Publishing, 2007

Recommendations for the reinforcement of the teaching of philosophy

in Latin America and the Caribbean

High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean - Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 and 9 June 2009



Recommendations

A global tendency has sought to reduce, and even suppress Philosophy from primary, secondary, and higher education, as well as from the cultural and social life of many states. The mere existence of Philosophy in society is in danger.

This is taking place, paradoxically, while humanity faces serious problems and challenges in current times, problems of economic, political, social, cultural and ecological nature: Philosophy is today more necessary than ever.

On this note, taking into consideration the Declaration of Paris for Philosophy¹, according to which:

- Every individual must have the right to devote his time to the free study of philosophy, under any form and in any place in the world;
- Philosophy teaching should be maintained or expanded where it exists, introduced where it does not yet exist, and designated explicitly as 'philosophy';
- Philosophy teaching ought to be taught by qualified and specifically trained teachers, and not be conditioned by economical, technical, religious, political, or ideological considerations;
- While remaining autonomous, philosophy teaching ought to be linked, as far as possible, to academic or professional training in all fields.

Taking into consideration UNESCO's Intersectorial Strategy on Philosophy (adopted in 2005)², which stipulates that Philosophy develops the intellectual tools to analyze and understand key concepts such as justice, dignity and freedom, by building capacities for independent thought and judgment, by enhancing the critical skills to understand and question the world and its challenges, and by fostering reflection on values and principles;

Recalling that Pillar 2 of the Strategy urges UNESCO to encourage the teaching of philosophy in all countries, notably through the development of policy recommendations on the teaching of philosophy

1 Quoted in the Intersectorial Strategy on Philosophy, 171 EX/12, UNESCO's Executive Board, Paris, 2005.

2 Ibid.

teaching at primary, secondary and university levels, as well as a comprehensive curriculum development which would include the teaching of different philosophical trends as well as comparative philosophy;

Relying on the results of the Study published by UNESCO in 2007, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom - Teaching Philosophy and Learning to Philosophize: Status and Prospects*³;

Aware of the necessity to confront the challenges arising from the teaching of philosophy in the states of Latin America and the Caribbean;

Pleased with the prospect of an Interregional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy that UNESCO shall organize in the near future, aiming to share the results of the regional consultations;

We, the participants in the High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 8 and 9 June 2009, celebrate this initiative by UNESCO which has allowed us to exchange ideas and experiences, as well as to unify criteria and efforts in favor of philosophy and its teaching in the region.

We encourage:

1. The Member States of the region to:

- Develop an articulated type of teaching philosophy which takes into consideration historical references, text analysis, methodological approaches, and makes reference to issues of vital importance, not only for the individual, but also in an effort to contribute to the potential development of the society to which he/she belongs and to foster awareness of the new challenges that humanity faces today;
- Promote the teaching of philosophy as *paideia*, as the knot articulated around values and around the student's personality, thanks to the exercise of philosophy as a 'school of freedom';
- Encourage interdisciplinarity between philosophy and other subjects and provide conceptual and methodological tools to elaborate a constructive philosophical critique of the current state of teaching;
- Elaborate programme directions and historical references present in the thought process, which are necessary for the refounding of the teaching-learning of philosophy and humanities at all levels of education;
- Reassert that philosophical education builds free and thinking minds, capable of resisting the different forms of propaganda, fanaticism, exclusion and intolerance. This contributes to peace and prepares each one to take into their own hands the task of resolving the major questions arising from today's problems. Philosophy is also the best theoretical instrument to promote human rights, as well as the rights to cultural, confessional and gender differences;
- Promote where it does not exist and strengthen where it already exists, a dialogue between Western philosophy and the visions, values and cultural traditions from the nations of the region;
- Officially adhere to the interest and the importance of the teaching of philosophy as an explicit and autonomous subject;

3 UNESCO, *Philosophy, a School of Freedom*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2007

- Elaborate a National Action Plan on the teaching of philosophy at all levels of education, in order to present its results at the Interregional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy that UNESCO shall organize in 2010, and which shall permit the interested states to share their prospects and projects;
- Reintroduce philosophy where it has disappeared from the programmes and strengthen it where it still exists. Indeed, philosophy constitutes an incomparable tool of civic education;
- Promote initiatives on learning to philosophize at primary level;
- Widely foster critical thought and philosophy in the different social groups through all possible means;
- Create, for each Member State, the necessary mechanisms to diffuse and execute the agreements attained here, as well as to follow-up all national initiatives.

2. UNESCO, whose work to defend and promote philosophy internationally has been extraordinarily positive, to:

- Pursue its strategy in the promotion of philosophy teaching at all levels of formal and informal education;
- Intensify its initiatives with the aim of establishing links and creating networks between philosophers, teachers and students, male and female, from the different regions of the world;
- Pursue and reinforce its actions in favor of a philosophical reflection that is open and accessible to the general public, especially through the celebration of World Philosophy Day;
- Identify, preserve, highlight and promote the philosophical heritage of the region and of each country;
- Pursue its role as a place for exchange regarding philosophy teaching, through the celebration of regional events;
- Support particularly the states who may wish to set up a program of regional exchange between universities and training centers in order to reinforce the skills of philosophy teachers.

3. UNESCO's National Commissions to:

- Support particularly the states that may wish to take part in the formulation of national policies on philosophy teaching in primary, secondary and higher education;
- Support the continuous training of philosophy teachers;
- Advise Member States to elaborate national policies in favor of the introduction of philosophy teaching in the educational programs and to strengthen it where it already exists;
- Assist, when possible, in the implementation of national policies in favor of the introduction of philosophy in the educational programmes;
- Encourage the creation, strengthening and expansion of the UNESCO Chairs in Philosophy;
- Support the implementation of pilot initiatives in philosophy teaching, particularly concerning the learning to philosophize at primary level;
- Assist Member States in publishing research works, texts and anthologies with a philosophical content from authors from the region, in order to highlight and diffuse the intellectual heritage of the different nations and cultures.

High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 and 9 June 2009



Declaration

We, the participants in the High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized by UNESCO, the State Secretariat of Education, the State Secretariat of Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Dominican Republic, held in Santo Domingo, on 8 and 9 June 2009.

- Highlight the fact that philosophy teaching stimulates open-mindedness, civil responsibility, understanding and tolerance;
- Insist on the fact that philosophical education, encouraging independent criteria, reflection, the ability to reject various types of propaganda, of fanaticism, of exclusion and intolerance, contributes to peace and incites people to assume their responsibilities regarding the great questions of the world today;
- Confirm that the encouragement of philosophical debate in education and cultural life represents a prime contribution to the shaping of citizens by exercising their ability of judgement, essential in every democracy.

Consequently, committing ourselves to do all that we can within our institutions as well as in our respective countries in order to achieve these objectives, we state the following:

- Philosophy teaching must be maintained or expanded where it already exists, be introduced where it is not yet present and be named explicitly by the term 'philosophy';
- The promotion of the philosophical heritage of each country must be unrestricted and free; this heritage must be consolidated and broadly disseminated in philosophy programmes;
- Political and multicultural dialogue, which includes local and/or native cultures, must be encouraged and reinforced both at regional and interregional levels in order to promote human rights and the moral autonomy of each person.

We, the participants in this solemn meeting in the Dominican Republic, are grateful to the Dominican people and to its honorable ministerial representatives and university students for the reception they gave to this meeting, as well as for the diffusion necessary to make its resolutions known worldwide.

This Declaration was unanimously adopted by the Meeting's Assembly on 9 June 2009, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Annexes

Addresses Participants

Address by H.E. Mr Melanio Paredes, Secretary of State for Education of the Dominican Republic

Delivered on the occasion of the Opening ceremony of the High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 June 2009

**Honoured guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

First, I should like to welcome the Secretary of State for Higher Education, Science and Technology (SEESCYT), Ms Ligia Amada Melo; the Chief of UNESCO's Human Security, Democracy and Philosophy Section, Ms Moufida Goucha; the distinguished international guests; the representatives of both State Education Departments and the other participants who have honoured us with their presence.

The aim of this meeting is to exchange opinions and experiences on education policy-making in the area of philosophy teaching at national and regional levels.

During the two days of the meeting, we will assess the main objectives and challenges relating to philosophy teaching in Latin America and the Caribbean. We will analyse and share our experiences, lessons and prospects in terms of the present and immediate future.

Ever since this meeting was first mentioned, the community of philosophers in the Dominican Republic has been actively mobilized, particularly around the discussion of the role of philosophy in the processes of teaching and learning, as well as its importance for understanding scientific and cultural complexities.

Given the aim of this event, both Education Secretaries held an interministerial workshop. The workshop participants agreed on guidelines for the strengthening of philosophy teaching in secondary and university education, as well as the role of science.

At present, philosophy cuts across the Dominican education programme. It is taught in various disciplines, finding strength in approaches that draw on humanism, diversity, critical capacity and the search for truth and meaning in life, which are present in the philosophical principles underlying the Dominican education system.

As a result, the State Education Department (SEE) remains steadfast in its aim to reinforce philosophy teaching in the second cycle of basic education and in secondary education.

It thus endeavours to raise humanist awareness and develop critical thought among citizens so that they will understand, participate in and contribute to the transformation of social development processes, with emphasis on the values of justice, dignity, equity, solidarity and human rights.

To achieve this, we plan to devise and produce, in the medium term, a body of philosophical material. This will be integrated in an explicit and interdisciplinary way, taking account of the curriculum content of social sciences in basic and secondary education.

This goal will require, *inter alia*, the strengthening of training for teachers in this area, as well as the production of specialized texts.

It should be pointed out that, during the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1930-1961), philosophy ceased to be a radical reflection of life and society and became an academic responsibility in the Dominican Republic.

The 1995 curriculum was intended to remedy this situation. However, it did not create the conditions for teachers to teach using an epistemology that enabled them to understand the complexity and validity of the very knowledge they were promoting.

Both basic and secondary education lack an adequate strategy to facilitate the integration of elements of philosophy into the teaching of various areas of knowledge.

Nevertheless, there is a considerable amount of content that meets this description. These include values, nature, society, culture, rights, knowledge of truth, conflicts, belief, lifestyles, science, technology, freedom, curiosity, solidarity, tolerance, criticism, identity, social thought, and so on.

On the basis of the foregoing, we intend to strengthen the teaching of philosophy in basic and secondary education. The aim is to promote critical thought among citizens so that they can understand, participate in and transform social and development processes at work in the Dominican society.

This requires paying special attention to teacher training. Yet, although the challenge is great, we are ready to rise to it because we know that we can continue to strengthen philosophical perspectives and critical thinking.

Lastly, I hope that our foreign guests enjoy their stay in our country. We are honoured to welcome you to the Dominican Republic.

Address by H.E. Ms Ligia Amada Melo, Secretary of State for Higher Education, Science, and Technology of the Dominican Republic

Delivered on the occasion of the Opening ceremony of the High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean - Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 June 2009

**Honoured guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

First, I should like to convey my warmest greetings to the Secretary of State for Education, Mr Melanio Paredes; the Chief of UNESCO's Human Security, Democracy and Philosophy Section, Ms Moufida Goucha; the Minister Counsellor of the Permanent Delegation of the Dominican Republic to UNESCO, Ms Acsamary Guzmán; the Chancellor of the Catholic University of Santo Domingo, Father Ramón Alonso; The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD), Mr Rafael Morla; the philosopher Mr Luis Brea Franco; as well as the other academics and officials present.

The State Department for Higher Education, Science and Technology (SEESCYT) is hosting this significant initiative from the UNESCO philosophy section to promote the teaching of philosophy in all countries. In conjunction with the State Education Department (SEE), we have supported and helped set up the team responsible for discussions and conclusions to promote the development proposed by UNESCO and considered necessary by us.

In many ways, philosophy makes it possible to develop critical thinking in individuals, so that they may be freer, more able to make decisions and participate conscientiously in society through an interest in the problems of humanity. There can be no proper professionals without a humanistic training.

In this sense, our wish to reinforce the teaching of philosophy in this country is reflected in the Dominican curriculum. Its philosophical basis includes epistemological, teleological and axiological dimensions. These are then used as a basis for defining the type of person that we wish to train, in accordance with the curriculum for each level of education.

However, it should be pointed out that, despite the intention of the Education Act and the theoretical foundations of the curriculum, it was not possible to reinforce the teaching of philosophy. At present, philosophy is simply a cross-cutting theme, as conceived in the curriculum designed and approved in 1995.

As a result, SEESCYT has provided all possible support for the UNESCO initiative. We are therefore committed to continuing to work with UNESCO in this connection.

We want to take steps for philosophy to be taught in secondary education. SEESCYT and SEE are currently working together on teacher training. I have a personal investment in the effort for more Dominican universities to offer philosophy degrees; we want to motivate our young people to dedicate themselves to the study of philosophy.

A programme must be developed for this purpose. The programme must include strategies for making philosophy into a subject and for developing a culture of philosophy. Bringing philosophy to young people is a challenge to which we must rise, and to which I am committed.

Today more than ever, in a tumultuous society with many restrictions, we must force ourselves to provide young people with an education that will enable them to make a stand in the world so that they may feel more secure. Philosophy plays a vital role in this process.

This meeting therefore offers an opportunity to take forward what has been started by UNESCO. I reiterate the commitment of SEESCYT to provide all its support for this initiative and also for SEE for the proposed change in curriculum and teacher training.

List of participants in the High-Level Regional Meeting on the Teaching of Philosophy in Latin America and the Caribbean - Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 8 and 9 June 2009

Host country – Dominican Republic

1. H.E. Mr Melanio Paredes

Secretary of State for Education, Dominican Republic

2. H.E. Ms Ligia Amada Melo

Secretary of State for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Dominican Republic

3. Ms Nikaully Vargas

Secretary-General of the Dominican National Commission for UNESCO

4. Ms Acsamary Guzmán de Aubry

Minister Counsellor, Permanent Delegation of the Dominican Republic to UNESCO

Representatives of States from the Latin America and the Caribbean

Argentina

5. Mr Carlos Ruta

Rector, San Martín University, Buenos Aires

Bolivia

6. Mr Juan José Quiroz

Director-General, Direction-General for Secondary Level Education

Cuba

7. Ms Lucrecia Miriam Egea Álvarez

Director-General, Philosophy Department, Ministry of Education

8. Mr Pedro Alfonso Leonard

Deputy Counsellor, Ministry of Education

Jamaica

9. Mr John Ayotunde Isola Bewaji

Coordinator of the Philosophy Section, Department of Languages, Linguistics and Philosophy
University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Mexico

10. Mr Gabriel Vargas Lozano

Deputy Professor, Metropolitan Autonomous University

11. Mr Jorge Martínez Contreras

Deputy Professor, Metropolitan Autonomous University

Nicaragua

12. Mr Juan Bosco Cuadra

Deputy Professor, Ave María University, Managua

Peru

13. Mr Zenón Depaz

Dean, Faculty of Philosophy, San Marcos University, Lima

Uruguay

14. Ms Anay Acosta

Inspector General, Ministry of Education

Dominican participants

Secretariat of State for Education

15. Ms Ana Rita Guzmán

Subsecretary of State

16. Mr Vernon Cabrera

Subsecretary of State for International Relations

17. Ms Susana Michelle

Subsecretary of State for Pedagogical Technical Affairs

Secretariat of State for Higher Education, Science and Technology

18. Mr Lorenzo Vargas

Subsecretary of State

19. Mr Lorenzo Jorge

Director of Programmes and Evaluation

20. Ms Mery Rosa García

Postgraduate Director

Dominican National Commission for UNESCO

21. Mr Julián Valdés

Programme Supervisor

National Council for State Reform

22. Mr Marcos Villamán

Director-General

Global Democracia y Desarrollo Foundation

23. Ms Farah Paredes

Centre of Social Research

Academy of Sciences of the Dominican Republic

24. Mr Alejandro Arvelo

Coordinator of the Philosophy Department

Dominican Association of Philosophy

25. Mr Julio Minaya

President

Banco de Reservas de la República Dominicana

26. Mr Luis Brea O. Franco

Director of the Culture Department

Antillean Salesian Library

27. Mr Jesús Hernández

Director

Lux Mundi School

28. Ms María Amalia León

Academic Director – Secondary Education

29. Ms Leonor de Bacalari

Academic Director – Primary Education

30. Ms Jocelyn López

Programme Director – Philosophy for Children

Centre of Studies Padre Montalvo

31. Mr Leonardo Díaz

Deputy Professor

Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra

32. Mr David Álvarez Martín

Dean, Sciences and Humanities Faculty

33. Mr Manuel de Jesús Rodríguez Pérez

Coordinator, Philosophy and Professional Ethics Department

34. Mr Padre Amable Fernández

Dean, Philosophy Faculty

35. Mr Lilliam de Brems

36. Mr Julio César Zayas

Coordinator, Bilateral Coordination

37. Mr Javier Elena Morales

Técnico Nacional Docente, Programmes Head-Office

38. Mr Luis Camilo Matos

Técnico Nacional Docente, Community Participation Head-Office

39. Mr William Mejía

Técnico Nacional, Secondary Level Education – Head-Office

40. Mr Juan Rafael Serrano

Técnico Nacional, Cults General Head-Office

Autonomous University of Santo Domingo

41. Mr Rafael Morla

Dean, Humanities Faculty

42. Mr Francisco Acosta

Director, School of Philosophy

43. Mr Víctor Encarnación

Director, Pedagogical School

44. Ms Lusitania Martínez

Research Professor, School of Philosophy

Catholic University of Santo Domingo

45. Father Ramón Alonso

Rector

UNESCO

46. Ms Moufida Goucha

Chief of the Human Security, Democracy and Philosophy Section, Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

47. Ms Ferial Ait-Ouyahia

Programme Specialist, Human Security, Democracy and Philosophy Section, Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

48. Ms Susana María Vidal

Regional Consultant for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO Office in Montevideo

