



**Universities & Civil Society in Defense of Human Rights:
The Latin American Challenge**

A conference organized by
The RedLEIDH Project
(Red Latinoamericana para la Educación e Investigación en Derechos Humanos)

February 24-25, 2010 - Bogotá, Colombia

Report prepared by
Emily Heenan and Patrick Ray

CERLAC Colloquia Paper

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Abstract

This report summarizes the main themes, as well as the individual panel presentations, of a conference held in February 2010 at the National University of Colombia in Bogotá, Colombia. The event marked the closing of the RedLEIDH Project (Red Latinoamericana para la Educación e Investigación en Derechos Humanos, Latin American Network for Human Rights Research and Education), bringing together the institutions and universities that were directly involved with the initiative, as well as other activists and academics working on human rights issues. The main themes that emerged were: 1) the disparity between the formal acknowledgment and the actual realization of human rights, 2) the importance of education to the protection of human rights, 3) the significance of the State to human rights, 4) and the lack of coordination that often exists between the diverse groups involved in the struggle to promote and defend human rights.

Introduction

This conference, held in February 2010, marked the closing of the RedLEIDH Project (Red Latinoamericana para la Educación e Investigación en Derechos Humanos, Latin American Network for Human Rights Research and Education). RedLEIDH, a project led by York University's Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC) and Osgoode Hall Law School, is an interdisciplinary network. It is principally comprised of the following institutions and organizations: la Asociación de Universidades Confiadas a la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina (AUSJAL), el Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), el Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos (IIDH), and el Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales Alternativos (ILSA). The objectives of the project were to: 1) advance human rights education in Latin America, 2) support research and capacity building in the region, 3) and facilitate the establishment of common solutions based on existing and new institutions and affiliations.

The conference brought together the various institutions and universities that participated in the initiative, as well as other activists and scholars working in the field of human rights. Participants came from countries throughout the Americas (Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela). The conference consisted of two types of panels: those that primarily reflected upon and evaluated the RedLEIDH Project, and those that highlighted the current human rights situation in Latin America in general. The two-day conference provided a rich overview of the accomplishments of the RedLEIDH Project, and served as a catalyst for future partnerships and projects.

Over the course of the conference several themes emerged: 1) the disparity between the formal acknowledgment and the actual realization of human rights, 2) the importance of education to the protection and advancement of human rights, 3) the significance of the State to human

rights, and 4) and the lack of coordination that exists between different groups struggling to promote and defend human rights.

There are two main sections to this report. Section one provides a general overview of the principle themes of the conference. These generalizations were made taking into account all the participants' contributions, and therefore are not representative of any individual panelist's work or perspective. The first section concludes with a summary of the recommendations offered by panelists on how to move forward and advance human rights in Latin America. Section two provides a brief summary of each presentation, highlighting the principle ideas and observations of each. This format was purposefully selected to provide those interested in human rights issues, particularly in Latin America, with a comprehensive summary of the major themes of the conference, as well more specific details of individual panelists' work to facilitate future contact and/or collaboration.

Section I: Thematic Summary

Formal Recognition vs. Actual Realization of Human Rights

The first theme to surface in the conference was the contrast and frequent disjuncture between formal acknowledgment of human rights and actual respect for these rights. Despite the shift in recent decades from authoritarian regimes to formal democracies in many countries of Latin America, panelists argued that many of these democracies lack the will and/or the mechanisms to ensure that the human rights of their populations are upheld. For instance, in the first panel speakers observed that certain constitutional reforms have been implemented that formally recognize the importance of human rights, but these reforms lack specific measures to address previous and current human rights abuses and guarantee that rights will be respected. In the same vein, presenters noted that many governments in Latin America lack the capacity to safeguard legally enshrined rights. More specifically, presenters attributed this failure to uphold human

rights policies to the contradictory stance adopted by many states, whereby the importance of human rights are discursively acknowledged, but in reality the economic priorities and neoliberal policies of the government supersede, and in some cases are actually directly implicated in, human rights abuses.

In the second panel, speakers noted that the same phenomenon is occurring in the university setting. One of the discussants suggested that universities are automatically assumed to be progressive spaces where respect for human rights can thrive, and yet the reality is often quite the opposite because most regional universities lack mechanisms by which to bring to justice the perpetrators of human rights abuses that occur on campus. Further, it was suggested that the competitive nature of universities and the culture this competition breeds is not conducive to producing citizens respectful of human rights.

Similarly, participants in the third panel, which focused on the educational programs of the RedLEIDH Project, suggested that the isolated classes, programs and specializations in the universities of the region that include human rights content often amount to little more than token acknowledgment. The discussants argued that human rights education must become compulsory in all programs if education truly is to realize its transformational potential and contribute to building a society that respects human rights. One of the participants argued that legal frameworks and university doctrines are not enough- what is required is compulsory human rights education. This view garnered considerable consensus, with one contributor suggesting that token programs and classes with low enrollment and funding will accomplish little. Further, it was argued that formal policies can easily be manipulated, ignored and sidestepped, if the content is not prioritized and considered imperative by the majority of society. The panelists agreed that education is the best vehicle for producing norms to ensure that formal acknowledgments translate into the actual realization of human rights.

However, in subsequent panels, several participants noted that human rights education does not necessarily lead to social change or public outcries for the respect of human rights, where such developments would challenge existing power relations. One of the panelists

noted that, while the legal discourse on human rights has been useful to many struggles, it has borne little fruit in court. He suggested that much more than education is needed to change the priorities of government and the judiciary in many Latin American countries. Similarly, another participant representing a small community argued that the members of his community are well aware of their rights, but have no recourse when it comes to protecting those rights against the abuses of paramilitary and guerilla forces. Thus, while officialdom in countries like Colombia have formally recognized human rights for over thirty years, many of the people in these countries still experience an absence of safeguards to ensure that their rights are actually respected. Many discussants lamented the fact that, so long as the political elites of Latin American countries act primarily on behalf of big business and foreign interests, they are unlikely to prioritize human rights. A parallel was drawn, in this regard, between Latin American political forms and the region's current human rights situation: although a formal democratic structure exists, genuine democracy is hardly a reality in many of the countries of the region.

The discussants in the final panel, on Canada's role in the advancement of human rights in Latin America, touched upon the contradictory nature of Canada's foreign policy. It was argued that Canada has been a strong advocate of human rights on paper, with the government's stated goals being to promote democracy, good governance, human rights, poverty reduction, and environmental sustainability. However, in practice these goals often have been trumped by other concerns, such as economic interest. One participant observed how the Canadian government's support for mining companies known for human rights abuses and its pursuit of Free Trade Agreements in the region indicate that human rights are at most a secondary concern. Furthermore, some argued, Canada's support for the adoption of voluntary, vague and ineffectual Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) codes by companies operating in the region amounts to little more than a token and cosmetic gesture. Finally, one contributor argued that Canada's contradictory stance on human rights is manifest at home as well: government funding to various human rights organizations has been discontinued, and the

ruling Conservative party has been meddling in the affairs of the previously autonomous non-governmental organization Rights & Democracy.

The Role of Education in the Protection and Advancement of Human Rights

Considering the inconsistency with which human rights policies are actualized in many countries throughout the world, all the panelists emphasized the importance of human rights education and capacity building as a means to improving the situation.

Further, participants argued that fundamental to this whole discussion is the fact that, within the broader right to education, access to human rights education is a right unto itself. This fact was emphasized primarily in the human rights education panel. Speakers in the same panel also asserted that such education should not consist merely of the memorization of rights. Rather, all panelists spoke of the need for a *transformational* form of education, one that fosters the establishment of new social norms and principals based in human rights law. More than raising awareness, human rights education must be context-based and relevant to the daily lives of those participating, they argued.

With regard to its incorporation into existing curricula, participants commonly held that human rights education should be integrated into all subject areas, at all levels of education, and should not merely be covered in “Human Rights” units or add-on activities. Other panelists, though, went beyond this and called for a transformation of the educational system itself, observing the various ways the existing system contributes to a continuing disregard for fundamental human rights (for example, in the exclusivity of access to university, and by normalizing and reproducing rather than challenge the status quo). They argued that a more transformational form of popular education could play a valuable role in challenging the power dynamics that contribute to human rights violations, and underlined the importance of including local forms of knowledge and experience in educational initiatives aimed at improving human rights standards.

Although participants agreed that human rights education must do more than inform people about related laws, many nonetheless

emphasized the need to better inform and raise awareness among the general public. Panelists noted that it should not be taken for granted that all people fully understand their rights, though this is a necessary pre-condition to their being able to claim them.

Some panelists focused on the particular importance of human rights training for government workers and public servants, especially those in the legal and judicial system, to foster in them a much-needed sense of broad social responsibility. Other panelists stressed the importance of such training for medical personnel as well as members of the military establishment. Exemplifying the utility of this form of sensitization among professional classes, representatives of legal clinic programs described the experience students gained working in human rights law, and how these positive experiences influenced their formation as future lawyers and their conception of human rights.

The State’s Role in Producing Human Rights Setbacks and Advancements

Although many panelists focused on civil society actors, much discussion also centered on the role the state should play in the realization and protection of human rights. Participants stressed the need for civil society organizations to engage with and pressure their governments to ensure not only *de jure* human rights policies, but also their *de facto* implementation. Panelists argued that the state should not be sidestepped; even though many regional states may not currently be fulfilling their proper roles in this regard, it is ultimately the state that must be held responsible for the well being of its citizens and the protection of their rights.

It was repeatedly recognized how human rights continue to be neglected by many governments in the name of securitization, or the “war on terror.” Many panelists discussed the way in which protest has been increasingly criminalized in many countries, under the rubric of national security. This has led to an increase in the violation of the rights of those deemed ‘criminals’, as well as a general constriction of civil liberties for the population at large. Participants argued that the very state responsible for protecting its citizens’ rights is often directly involved in the

infringement of those rights. Once again, panelists highlighted the importance of education and training, maintaining that the situation can only be improved by changing the norms and values of citizens and – crucially - by providing appropriate training to those in positions of relative power, such as government workers, military personnel and those within the legal system.

Participants in the final discussion explored the economic context of human rights violations committed, condoned or ignored by the state. In light of the numerous free trade agreements between Latin American countries and Canada, panelists argued that in many nations the principle rights guaranteed by the state are those of investors and big business. Panelists observed not only the weak political will of Latin American states, but also the contradictory policies of the Canadian government. While on the one hand, the Canadian government proclaims an extensive human rights mandate, in fact, economic interests dominate its foreign policy. The role of Canadian mining companies in the ongoing conflict in Colombia, through their reported support of paramilitary and guerrilla groups, which has led to widespread violence and the displacement of thousands, was presented as a telling example.

The general observations made during this section of the conference were supplemented by real life accounts of human rights violations directly related to foreign investment in Colombia. In recounting stories of the vast number of forcefully displaced people in that country, and the grave conditions in which they now find themselves, participants emphasized how, contrary to the claims of the current Colombian government, the internal conflict persists.

Fragmentation and a Lack of Cooperation Among Human Rights Struggles

Another significant theme to emerge in the conference was the fragmented nature of human rights struggles. Several panelists noted the lack of coordination among initiatives, and suggested that for their shared agenda to be advanced, different groups need to engage in dialogue and to seek ways to unite their efforts.

Participants in the first panel suggested that some groups have too rigid a conception of human rights, which obstructs their ability to work

with others. They argued that a more flexible conception of human rights is called for, one that allows for greater solidarity. For instance, it was suggested that civil society groups working on human rights initiatives should avoid affiliations with radical groups that have little room for compromise in their agenda, to facilitate alliances with government offices and political parties. The danger of co-optation was also recognized, however, as something that must be continuously monitored and avoided.

Discussants in the second and third panels, both focused on education, touched upon the fragmented nature of the various disciplines and programs with human rights content. While the interdisciplinary nature of human right studies can be seen as a strength, they observed, it also implies that human rights as an academic discipline lacks focus and a central doctrine. Participants highlighted how the different institutions involved need to coordinate their efforts to a greater degree, share resources, and harmonize their curricula. Only by doing so will strong, credible programs will be established, they argued. The participants in the fourth panel, on the legal clinics supported by the RedLEIDH Project, highlighted how alliances with different institutions and sectors of civil society had been crucial to their successes. Without the support of universities, these clinics would have lacked resources and staff, and without the exposure provided by different partners there would have been little awareness of the work being done. However, one panelist observed that these clinics often work in opposition to the formal judicial system. She argued that to advance human rights, one must establish alliances with sympathetic individuals working within the formal judicial system.

In the fifth panel, the discussants highlighted how regional and grassroots human rights initiatives lack coordination. For instance, participants noted that Colombian civil society in general is extremely compartmentalized. One participant, from a small village in rural Colombia, argued that small grassroots movements can be internally divided by competing, narrow agendas. He argued that groups promoting human rights need to focus on common goals. Similarly, one of the discussants suggested that the legal discourse on human rights is a unifying factor for disparate

civil society organizations and movements, and its use should be promoted and amplified.

In the final panel, participants discussed efforts to reconcile the human rights initiatives of the Global South with those in the Global North. It was argued that broadening and deepening existing transnational alliances and ties of solidarity will be crucial to furthering human rights struggles in Latin America. One panelist observed that civil society organizations from the Global North play an integral role in helping build the capacity of their southern neighbors. However, it was also observed that the struggles in the Global North and Global South are very different, and arriving at a shared agenda could be difficult. Nonetheless, the conference itself was cited as an example of North-South dialogue on these issues. In fact, the RedLEIDH Project in general sought to establish just such coordination – within the region, and between it and countries of the North. In conclusion, several of the participants argued that, although the project was ending, the alliances formed and the ties of solidarity forged must be sustained and deepened- and similar relationships cultivated elsewhere.

Section II: Summary of Individual Presentations

Panel I: Achievements and Shortcomings in the Fight for Human Rights

Chair: María José Guembe (Argentina)

Panelists:

- Diana Avila (Peru): “Missing Pieces In the Defense of Human Rights.”
- Sofia Tiscornia (Argentina): “Reflections on Human Rights Education and Research”

Diana Avila opened the conference by outlining current human rights issues in Peru, but in so doing highlighted the trends and patterns throughout Latin America. She briefly touched upon specific advancements and set-backs for related struggles in Peru, such as the ongoing conflict with *Sendero Luminoso* and other groups involved in ‘terrorist’ activities, and the recent progress in bringing former president Fujimori to

justice for the violations committed by his administration.

Avila argued that the transition from authoritarian regimes to formal democracies in Latin America has not necessarily led to increased respect for human rights. In fact, she noted that in many instances the human rights situation has worsened with the process of democratization. For instance, racial discrimination against indigenous and black peoples has worsened in some cases, and the situation for most women has not markedly improved either. In addition, she suggested that protest and opposition have been stigmatized and transformed into punishable criminal acts, phenomena that are part and parcel with the criminalization of *difference* that plagues the region in general. On a related point, Avila asserted that human rights abuses against ‘criminals’ and within prisons are increasingly occurring and often unacknowledged. She also noted that youth and their activities in general frequently have been criminalized.

Considering that human rights violations continue to occur, Avila questioned whether democracy is a reality in Latin America. In fact, she directly blamed the state for certain human rights abuses, as certain security measures under the auspices of state-led initiatives like the ‘war on terror’ have directly resulted in violations.

Avila argued that the struggle to promote human rights has been greatly advanced by the involvement of social movements. However, she noted that the various human rights initiatives emerging from global civil society are fragmented. While noting the difficulties involved in coordinating these efforts, she stressed the importance of realizing that goal. According to Avila, encouraging dialogue between groups and building bridges between their initiatives will be instrumental in the human rights struggles of Latin America.

Sofia Tiscornia argued that significant strides have been made in addressing human rights abuses in Latin America, but stressed that there is much more to be done before these rights are fully realized in the region. For instance, she stated that certain constitutional reforms have been implemented in Argentina that formally acknowledge the importance of human rights, but that the reforms lack specific measures to guarantee them. In other words, human rights are discursively acknowledged and legally enshrined,

but mechanisms are lacking to ensure that they are actually upheld. However, she suggested that such reforms are nonetheless significant, and their importance should not be downplayed.

Tiscornia also highlighted the significant role of various civil society actors in defending human rights in Latin America. She noted that such groups were a significant source of resistance during and after the military dictatorship in Argentina. Moreover, she acknowledged the important role the transnational human rights movement has played, by shedding light on abuses, sharing resources and knowledge, and providing support and solidarity.

That said, she lamented that human rights have been treated as a peripheral issue by the administrations of both Néstor and Cristina Kirshner in Argentina. According to Tiscornia, civil society organizations need to continue to engage with and put pressure on their governments to ensure that these issues are prioritized. She stressed the important role certain civil society actors have in changing norms and available legal measures. For instance, she emphasized the role lawyers, researchers and activists can play in documenting case studies, witness reports and testimonies of abuses that can help establish important legal precedents for human rights cases. In fact, Tiscornia considered reforming the judicial system and producing legal precedents to be integral to advancing human rights in Latin America. Moreover, she noted that educators also have a pivotal role in increasing awareness of rights and abuses, which can lead to increased pressure on the government. She observed that it is only through the combined and coordinated efforts of multiple layers of civil society, in concert with the state, that adequate human rights policies and practices will be realized.

Panel II: Education and Human Rights

Chair: Pedro Enrique Valenzuela Grueso (Colombia)

Panelists:

- Ana Maria Rodino (Costa Rica): “Human Rights Education for Government Employees and the Formulators of Public Opinions.”

- Fabián Salvioli (Argentina): “Human Rights: The Pillars of New University Reforms.”

- Amanda Romero Medina (Colombia): “The Contributions of Popular Education to Human Rights: Experiences from the Field.”

Ana Maria Rodino opened the panel by stressing the importance of human rights education. Though her presentation was focused primarily on the education of members of civil society, state agents and public opinion formers, she emphasized that all people must be educated about these matters, as human rights issues affect society as a whole. Rodino explained that human rights education should not be restricted to any specific type of education, and that its nature should be shaped by context. The purpose of such education is much more than to raise people's awareness of abstract rights; it should translate these general concepts into everyday terms and lived experiences.

Although human rights education is essential for all sectors of society, Rodino explained that the training of government workers is especially important as it can facilitate the translation of international or regional norms into policies that will directly impact the lives of citizens. Rodino stressed that since political will is required for policies to be implemented, it is crucial that government workers at all levels possess a deep understanding of and regard for human rights, as well as a sense of duty to uphold them. Additionally, as public workers can also be subject to abuse, such education would better enable them to protect their own rights.

Rodino concluded by saying that human rights education is imperative, and must be instituted in all countries, even those where human rights abuses are not frequently documented and are not considered to be a major problem, as this context could change in the future. It should be a fundamental component of the training for all who work in the government and social services.

Fabián Salvioli built on these observations, arguing that education is potentially revolutionary and transformational. However, he also stressed the need to change the underlying logic and ideology of universities before that potential can be realized. He lamented that too often the university sector sees itself outside of real world struggles. According to Salvioli,

universities are also inaccurately portrayed as sanctuaries of reason and oases of safety, when they are often rife with the same discriminatory norms and human rights problems that plague societies in general. He suggested that universities are too often not considered part of the problem, and too easily assumed to be part of the solution.

Salvioli argued that the transformational potential of universities will only be realized if universities integrate human rights education into the curricula of all their programs (instead of just providing isolated programs and majors on the subject). He also suggested that the highly competitive nature of universities and the aggressive culture this competition foments can translate into graduates embodying those characteristics, which, in turn, eventually infiltrate the work force and society at large. Salvioli suggested that these characteristics, combined with a lack of human rights education/knowledge, are not conducive to the development of a society that respects and prioritizes human rights.

He called for the explicit integration of a human rights framework into the university sector and across curricula. In so doing, he argued, universities could fulfill their "revolutionary" and transformational role. In addition, professors and other university staff need to be trained in human rights, and mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that rights issues on campuses are dealt with properly, he affirmed. Salvioli closed by stating that to be part of a university is to be engaged with changing and shaping the future. He argued that if universities are not talking about human rights then they are not adequately fulfilling their role.

Amanda Romero Medina spoke about the important role popular education continues to play in the promotion and protection of human rights. She provided an overview of the development of popular education in Latin America, and then described some of her related experiences.

Tracing its origins to the 1960s, Romero highlighted how the development of this form of non-formal education has been influenced by the work of Paulo Freire as well as various Latin-American social theories, such as Liberation Theory (Gutierrez, 1971), Dependency Theory (Cardoso, 1973), Liberation Philosophy (Dussel, 1983), and Participatory Action Research (Fals Borda, 1999). Emerging in response to the brutal

dictatorships ruling many Latin American countries, the primary objective of popular education was the dispersion of knowledge about the principles, norms and procedures necessary for the promotion and protection of the human rights of people affected by political repression and persecution.

Referencing the work of Freire, Romero explained that central to this "education for liberation" is the belief that the "subjects" of education are the holders of rights, and possess valuable knowledge and know-how. The primary objective of popular education is to enable participants to become aware of the structural factors influencing their circumstances, and to foster the realization that they are capable of transforming these oppressive conditions. She described how this framework is centered on an accessible, context-based critique of existing hegemonic structures, through participatory methods that include the construction of collective memory and recognition of diverse forms of knowledge.

Romero also discussed the ways debates about collective action have changed over the years, with a growing emphasis on the importance of considering the aspirations and perspectives of "minority groups", such as people of diverse sexual orientation, indigenous communities and afro-descendants. She also described the influence that feminist discourse has had in reshaping the way human rights are defined.

To demonstrate the important role popular education can play in the promotion and protection of human rights, Romero highlighted three case studies from Colombia. In the first, she explained how popular education has been used by the indigenous communities in the Northern region of Cauca to foster peaceful, non-violent resistance strategies, by recovering ancient forms of knowledge as well as facilitating an interchange of knowledge between indigenous groups who have experienced similar conflict. The second case study focused on the role of environmental education in the protection of Afro-Colombian territories in the Pacific region. Finally, by discussing the inadequate way educational initiatives have been used to assist victims of forceful displacement, Romero observed that education per se does not necessarily lead to a solution; concrete action is also required.

Panel III: The Human Rights Education Programs of the RedLEIDH Project

Chair: Marco Lara Klahr (Mexico)

Panelists:

- Randall Brenes (Costa Rica): “The Expansion of Human Rights Education in Public Schools.”
- Carlos Eduardo Valdes Moreno (Colombia): “Human Rights Education for Key Situations.”
- Mariella Saettone (Uruguay): “The AUSJAL Diploma Program.”
- Ricardo Fava (Argentina): “The Difficulties of Supporting the Expansion of Human Rights Education for Public Universities.”

Randall Brenes' presentation was framed by the notion that the right to human rights education is a fundamental component of the broader right to education. Furthermore, this education is an essential condition for the effective exercise of human rights and democracy. Brenes defined human rights education as the real possibility for all people, regardless of their sex, nationality, ethnic origin or economic, social and cultural conditions, to receive good quality education that allows them to better understand and respect their rights and the rights of others, incorporating these values and attitudes into their daily conduct, as well as to understand the interrelation between human rights and government. He stressed that human rights education should not consist merely of the memorization of rights, but must be based on practical ethics, and therefore be transformational in nature.

In discussing the importance of such education in public policy, Brenes explained that it must be treated as an essential component of the formal education system, as human rights are not achieved merely through legal frameworks, but require a certain social consensus to convert these laws into actual/genuine ethical norms.

When considering the impact education has had on the conduct of people in Latin America, Brenes noted that the outcomes are contradictory. Positive outcomes include the increased awareness of and consideration for environmental issues, and the marked decrease in discriminatory behaviour based on ethnicity,

gender and religion. Simultaneously, though, the recognition and protection of other fundamental rights has deteriorated, with the acceptance and justification of these undemocratic developments based upon the purported need to maintain the strength and efficiency of the state. Brenes argued that such contradictory impacts demonstrate the political nature of human rights education, given that the behaviour of democratic citizens is not the result of genetics, but of a deliberate educational process.

Carlos Eduardo Valdes Moreno spoke of the epidemic of uninvestigated extrajudicial killings, and then outlined the way the Master's program in law at Santo Tomás in Colombia is training practitioners to make better use of forensic tools to expose grave human rights violations and reduce impunity. The Santo Tomás Master's program is one of five such programs supported by the RedLEIDH Project. Valdes argued that educating certain key areas of the public sector, such as medical personnel and forensics experts, is essential to ensuring that evidence of human rights abuses is available for cases that make it to court or are investigated in tribunals.

However, educating these practitioners to recognize signs of torture and other abuses is insufficient if unaccompanied by a more general education in human rights. For example, Valdes noted that violence has been so normalized in Colombia that a large portion of the population does not see many of the atrocities that occur as human rights issues. He closed by stressing again the pivotal role certain key sectors of the public sector can have in ensuring human rights abuses are recognized and that perpetrators are brought to justice.

Mariella Saettone provided an overview of the development of AUSJAL's Human Rights Diploma program at la Universidad Católica del Uruguay, which was supported by the RedLEIDH Project and co-founded by IIDH. Similar programs also now exist in Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia, Mexico and the Dominican Republic. She began her presentation by pointing out how important the process of reflection has been to evaluating a complex inter-university project like RedLEIDH.

Saettone situated the conception of the project in the work of Father Xabier Gorostiaga, who highlighted the role universities have as

institutions that promote human rights. Without discounting the traditional role of universities in the formation of professionals, Saettone emphasized that universities have a much greater social responsibility than the diffusion of knowledge. She mentioned that universities should expand their sphere of influence and action to civil society, as their work should facilitate not only greater understanding, but also solutions to the problems facing contemporary society. To this end, the objective of the Diploma program extends far beyond academic courses, as it aims to enable students to apply the skills and knowledge gained to their daily environments, thus influencing civil society and the state.

Initially, the Human Rights Diploma program was organized by the headquarters of the Iberoamerican University of Mexico, the Javeriana University of Colombia, the Rafael Landívar University of Guatemala, the Andrés Bello Catholic University in Venezuela, and the Catholic University of Uruguay, the latter working jointly with the Interamerican Institute of Human Rights in Costa Rica. Later, the Bonó Institute in Santo Domingo joined the project. With the overarching goal of increasing awareness of human rights to improve the quality of life in Latin American societies, the program allows students to focus on one of three areas: 'access to justice', 'citizenship participation' or 'human rights education'. Since the project covered a vast geographic area, online learning and correspondence education was essential.

Ricardo Fava touched upon the growth of human rights education in Latin America at the university level, noting that it is a recent phenomenon largely initiated by forces outside orthodox academia. He suggested that constructing human rights as a discipline in its own right has taken three main forms in the region: post-graduate certificate programs, specializations (majors, minors etc.) and Master's programs. As coordinator of the Human Rights Center at the National University of LANUS, which was supported by the RedLEIDH Project, Fava offered several observations regarding human rights education and research in Argentina, and in Latin America more generally.

He observed that human rights have traditionally been a subject covered by a wide array of disciplines, with very little dialogue or intermingling among them. There are various

conceptions of human rights, and as a result their study has no central doctrine or focus. As a field of study, it is interdisciplinary in nature, and has been shaped by the influences and efforts of various institutions, groups, and individuals. Further, Fava suggested that it has been shaped by a wide range of social, political, economic and historical factors, and the particular form of any given human rights program depends in large part on factors such as region, university size, and institutional ideological tendencies.

Fava argued that there are several challenges that the discipline of human rights faces that others do not. For example, he noted how academia is often criticized for the disconnect that exists between theory and practice, and the inability of academics and researchers to present solutions to real life problems. He argued that, more so than its disciplinary counterparts, the study of human rights exists at the crossroads of morality, rights, politics and policy. Fava suggested that many feel human rights is irrelevant as a discipline if it does not provide workable solutions; a criticism not as consistently or insistently leveled at more established disciplines.

On a related point, Fava lamented that many people come to university for personal and instrumental reasons that preclude an interest in the field: obtaining credentials that make them more employable or allow them to achieve a higher pay grade. While it is good that human rights programs exist, it is unfortunate that, due to practical considerations, few students are drawn to the discipline. Fava suggested that, as in the Master's program at LANUS, the study of human rights should include a balance between course work and research. At the same time, he pointed out that to conduct research requires theories, research methods, concepts and other markers of an established discipline. Human rights as a discipline, however, is still in the process of being constructed, and currently borrows heavily - though overly selectively, in Fava's opinion - from other disciplines.

Fava argued further that this emerging field of study needs to be truly interdisciplinary to be effective, as only the different epistemological and ideological lenses of the various pre-existing disciplines together can produce human rights policies and solutions that are relevant to different contexts around the world. Thus, it should draw

from a greater range of disciplines than it does at present. He closed by warning against allowing the discipline to be dominated by any single hegemonic perspective, while re-emphasizing the need to ensure the field contributes tangibly to on-the-ground struggles.

Panel IV: Public Interest Legal Clinics: Achievements, Difficulties and Ways Forward in the Fight for Human Rights

Chair: Federico Di Bernardi (Argentina)

Panelists:

- Beatriz Londoño Toro (Colombia): “Public Action Groups: Ten Years’ of Fighting for Human Rights.”
- Luz María Gil Comerma (Venezuela): “The Strengths and Future of UCAB’s Legal Clinic in Venezuela.”
- Francisco Cox (Chile): “Strategic Lawsuits: From the Classroom to the Courtroom (and Why Not Congress?).”
- Ana Lucia Maya Aguirre (Colombia): “Legal Consultations.”

Beatriz Londoño Toro discussed the Public Action Group (Grupo de Acción Popular, GAP) at the University of Rosario. This university program and its associated legal clinic serves local poor and marginalized populations, giving students the opportunity to gain experience in applying their legal expertise to the defense of human rights. Londoño explained that the approach to learning adopted by GAP is contrary to methods traditionally used in Colombia. To date, GAP has solved 114 cases, with an average of 11.4 cases per year considered to be of high social impact.

GAP works in the following areas: 1) investigation of constitutional abuses and public actions in defense of human rights and the public interest; 2) constitutional actions and other non-judicial mechanisms for the defense of human rights; 3) legislative lobbying in defense of human rights and their protective mechanisms, working to avoid regressive legislative proposals; and 4) workshops and other educational activities focused on human rights for affected communities.

Londoño explained how the legal clinic was extremely important to students of law, giving them valuable work experience in human rights. This program has also brought the university closer to local communities, as well as human rights leaders and defenders.

In her presentation, Londoño emphasized the importance of networks for human rights work. She described how the Internet has been extremely useful for forming and maintaining networks, as it has facilitated communication and collaboration between different universities and organizations. Londoño also stressed the importance of remaining in contact with official institutional organisms responsible for human rights, as it is imperative to reach judges and magistrates. Moreover, forming alliances is important for developing and sustaining the defense and investigation of human rights cases.

The clinic has been successful despite some major obstacles. The quest for funding and resources was described as a constant struggle. Furthermore, the work of the clinic has been limited as it is often working in opposition to, rather than alongside, the formal judicial system. The dominance of the formal system has served to limit the growth and development of the clinic’s work, and has prevented the emergence of new clinics in other universities. Lastly, due to the current political climate in Colombia, this type of work entails significant risks for the students and professors involved. New strategies and resources are needed to maintain and expand the important human rights work being done by legal clinics such as GAP.

Luz María Gil Comerma discussed the legal clinic at Andrés Bello Catholic University in Caracas, Venezuela, which began in 1990. During the 2004-2005 school year, the program was made mandatory for law students and began to focus specifically on human rights issues. The clinic serves the communities surrounding the university, in which much of the population is poor and underrepresented. Since its conception, the program has grown each year, having worked on approximately 58,000 cases to date. During the 2008-2009 school year alone, the program worked on 9,213 cases.

The legal clinic plays a significant role in the legal, practical and social formation of students in their final year of Law at the university, allowing them to develop their professional

capacities under the guidance of their academic supervisors. Gil explained that the program enables students to expand their learning outside of the confines of the classroom and to gain a better understanding of the realities of the society in which they will eventually practice. Students are exposed to the tension between the study of abstract norms, and their application to concrete cases. They are also given the opportunity to analyze legal cases using alternative methods, and produce reports based on actual findings.

The program also aims to contribute to community development through increased (and equitable) access to justice. Students are encouraged to be tolerant of diversity, and to exercise the utmost sensitivity and compassion regarding their clients' conditions of life. By participating in community development, students gain a greater appreciation of the social responsibility they have as lawyers.

Aside from legal training, the clinic also houses additional initiatives. The program has run workshops on subjects such as domestic violence and human rights, and has also organized conferences on laws protecting the rights of children and adolescents. Additionally, in an encouraging sign of growth, two defense lawyers who specialize in the rights of children and adolescents have been appointed to the clinic.

Francisco Cox, who runs a legal clinic in Santiago, Chile, reflected on the challenges faced by human rights activists in his country and by his legal clinic in particular. He argued that anything resembling activism, even the mere mention of the word, is considered taboo and assigned negative connotations in Chile. Further, Chileans, according to Cox, limit their conception of human rights to the abuses of the Pinochet regime, rendering other human rights issues invisible. He suggested that, to advance human rights in Chile, these issues must be addressed.

That said, while acknowledging that his legal clinic has not won a significant number of cases, it *has* managed to win a few high profile cases that may be of significant influence in the long run. He noted that their success in a case involving a transsexual who, with their help, was able legally to change names. They also helped a young Peruvian girl receive legal status as a Chilean. While they might seem insignificant, Cox suggested such cases have established important precedents and may eventually help to change

Chileans' limited conceptions of what human rights are.

In relaying his experiences from the clinic, Cox expressed his concern that many people downplay the importance of such clinics and consider them less important than other means of furthering human rights. He argued that the potential contribution of the clinic is extremely limited by the short period of time that students are involved. He suggested that, for legal clinics to be more effective, they need more permanent staff and the involvement of people who are truly passionate about human rights issues.

Ana Lucia Maya Aguirre discussed the legal consultations program run by the Latin American Institute for Alternative Legal Services (Instituto Latinoamericano para una Sociedad y un Derecho Alternativo, ILSA), which provides people who have been forcefully displaced from their homes with free legal aid. She explained that the work of this program is crucial, as many of the people with whom they work would have no other way of accessing the legal system due to their financial limitations. The program also provides human rights education, engages in data collection and statistical analysis, organizes and runs campaigns and information sessions, and provides information on its website.

Maya described how the program is extremely beneficial for the students who participate, providing valuable experience practicing human rights law. As many of the consultants are not actually lawyers, supervision from the university is essential. Maya explained that the program counts on an expansive network of universities and civil society organizations that help make their activities possible.

The program has helped thousands of the millions of victims of forced displacement in Colombia. In describing the program's achievements, Maya said that they have won numerous cases, and have also been successful in securing the active participation of the university. In a country where human rights workers are often persecuted, lack of protection from the state has continued to limit the work of the program. Furthermore, a lack of resources has made it difficult to follow up on cases once they have been completed.

Panel V: The Fight for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs)

Chair: Diego Morales (Argentina)

Panelists:

- Angel Libardo Herreño Hernandez (Colombia): “The Main Dilemmas.”
- Ana Lucia Casallas Murillo (Colombia): “A Social Movement’s Conception of ESCRs: COMOSOC’s Point of View.”
- Eliud Alvear Cumplido (Colombia): “A Case Study: The Community of La Pava.”

Angel Libardo Herreño Hernandez, based on his research at ILSA, opened the panel by outlining the broad range of struggles that are taking place across the region, underlining the link between human rights abuses and the current model of economic development. He presented eight case studies to demonstrate the diverse ways people have had their rights infringed upon by ‘development’.

Herreño remarked on the differences between human rights struggles in the Global North and the Global South. He noted that the struggle in the North has been (for the most part) a movement emanating from the middle class, whereas, in contrast, in the South it has tended to come from the grassroots. The human legal rights discourse has provided a platform upon which movements that have long existed have been able to re-articulate their grievances.

With a long history of struggle amongst disparate populations, many segments of Latin American civil society link human rights to culture and tradition, rendering their approach very different from that typical of the Global North. Herreño used the example of Cochabamba, Bolivia, where, because residents consider water to be inseparable from their culture and traditions, they rose up against a corporation that, by charging them for water usage, infringed upon their economic, social, and cultural rights.

In many ways, the language of human rights has allowed movements to sidestep the state in their appeals. However, while acknowledging how useful the legal discourse on human rights has been to many struggles, Herreño notes that bringing human rights cases to court has borne little fruit. He suggests this is largely due to the fact that the state often acts in the interest of large

corporations, which influences the outcome of related judicial processes. To advance the struggle further in the region, Herreño suggested that progress must be made in the ability to transform abstract, legally recognized rights into realities, a fact that is without question a function of concrete political power. He concluded that while the legal discourse on human rights has proven to be useful to some extent as a tool in struggles for social justice, there is a danger in reducing these struggles to legal demands since in many cases even successful court rulings mean very little to those with limited power to demand the implementation of their rights.

Ana Lucia Casallas Murillo, providing an assessment of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs) in Colombia, presented COMOSOC’s analysis of the current state of the right to freedom of expression, opinion and association in Colombia, as well as their recommendations on how to improve the situation. Casallas also shed light on whom COMOSOC believes to be the principle perpetrators of human rights abuses. She linked the respect of civil and political rights to the struggle for social and economic justice and outlined some of the proposals of COMOSOC’s campaign: “The right to express ourselves without losing our lives.”

She described how COMOSOC, a coalition of various social movements and organizations, emerged in response to the human rights crisis in Colombia, and how its members are working together to collectively construct alternative policies and solutions to the social and armed conflict. They are also fighting to uphold democratic principles and for the right of all Colombians to live a dignified life.

With the help of the RedLEIDH Project, COMOSOC has produced reports that highlight key cases of human rights abuses, such as violations against the right to freedom of speech, opinion, and association. By presenting various regional examples of violations against the territorial, social and political rights of Colombians, Casallas illustrated the negative effects on local populations being wrought by the economic policies of the Colombian government and by the naked pursuit of corporate self-interest. She further observed that leftist guerrillas, the military, and (more prominently) paramilitary forces, are all perpetrators of human rights abuses.

Casallas also argued that recent legislation and reforms to the health and social security sectors, along with previous neoliberal economic reforms, have created a social crisis. She outlined how the Uribe administration extended neoliberal market logic to health and social security through privatization. Casallas suggests these reforms will have detrimental effects on Colombians' right to health and social security, and only served to benefit those companies who will provide the newly privatized services. She outlined how COMOSOC, as part of the National Movement for Health and Social Security (Movimiento Nacional por la Salud y la Seguridad Social, MNSSS), is attempting to resist these measures by exposing the ills of the current model, constructing a New Model of Health and Social Security, mobilizing stakeholders and spreading relevant information. She closed by highlighting how concern for human rights is the single largest reason for mobilizing among civil society organizations in Colombia. For this reason, Casallas suggested that the discourse of human rights can function as a much-needed unifying factor for Colombian civil society organizations (CSOs).

Eliud Alvear Cumplido provided a chronology of human rights abuses that have taken place in the rural community of Las Pavas in the Department of Bolívar, Colombia. In 2003, 180 families were forced to flee from the region due to an increase in violence and paramilitary activity. Many of the families returned to the region in 2005, and sought legal ownership of their land. In 2006, the situation deteriorated and the families were forced to leave again when paramilitary groups returned, burning their crops, killing all livestock and threatening and robbing community members. His account described the way land in this region has been appropriated by paramilitary groups, and acquired by multinational corporations interested in natural resource exploration.

In addition to protecting human rights, Cumplido stressed the importance of protecting the environment and the 'rights of nature'. He explained that the people in Bolívar were able to sustain themselves prior to the appropriation of their land and the increased presence of multinational corporations. Giving examples such as the companies cutting down trees that were over 100 years old, Cumplido emphasized that the

destruction of the environment ultimately leads to the death of humans.

Cumplido explained that while human rights education is important, his experience has shown that the problem in Las Pavas is not that members are unaware of their rights, but that they have no recourse to protect these rights against the paramilitaries active in the area. He articulated the importance of international awareness of human rights issues, explaining that where there is more international attention, fewer human rights violations occur. Cumplido attributed this largely to the fact that rural people are often looked down upon or mistrusted, and their complaints or accounts of human rights violations are not taken seriously unless bolstered by international concern.

Although the presence of some multinationals has had negative impacts on local people, Cumplido explained that the presence of other, more socially responsible corporations has actually been beneficial. In looking for solutions, he stressed the importance of peaceful resistance and the unification of local people. In the case of Las Pavas, unity is made difficult by the constant state of fear in which the people have been living. He stated that for this reason, international support is all the more crucial.

Panel VI: Canada and the Advancement of Human Rights in Latin America

Chair: Viviana Patroni (Canada)

Panelists:

- Ricardo Grinspun (Canada): "Economic Relations Between Canada and Latin America: A Particular Perspective."
- Etienne Roy Grégoire (Canada): "Global Governance of the Mining Sector and Investment In Conflict Zones: A Lack of Coherence In Canada's Foreign Policy"
- Louise Casselman (Canada): "An Analysis of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and other FTA."
- Fray Omar Fernández Obregón (Colombia): "The Coalition Between Canada and Colombia: A Key to Political Success."

Ricardo Grinspun of York University provided a rich analysis of recent Canadian-Latin American economic relations, which he suggested have

always trumped other potential reasons for cooperation. He reviewed the historical development of the reigning inter-American system, which has come to blatantly protect and serve commercial interests. He noted that, while diverse and wide in scope, the multi-lateral and bilateral relations Canada has had with Latin American countries has always prioritized its trade and investment interests. The latter, Grinspun suggested, directly conflict with Canada's stated goals of promoting democracy, good governance, human rights, poverty reduction, and environmental sustainability.

Grinspun noted that between 1989 and 2001 Canada was a fervent promoter of hemispheric integration, and an active participant in the inter-American system. The country hosted events, most notably the Summit of the Americas in 2001, and took a leadership role in promoting democracy, human rights, poverty reduction, and free and fair elections in the region through the Organization of American States (OAS). However, there was a notable disconnect between Canada's discourse and its actions; on paper it touted human rights, democracy, and shared prosperity, but in practice showed little interest in diverging from its narrow concern for trade and investment opportunities. Grinspun suggested that Canada's active support, from 1998 to 2003, for a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) is evidence of its true priorities.

According to Grinspun, Canada's pursuit of an FTAA and a hemispheric regime favorable to investors and big business is dictated by several actors. He suggested that the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE), a powerful lobbying group, has remarkable influence over both the Liberal and Conservative parties. Also, conservative think tanks like CD Howe provide analytical support and justification for this sort of policy preference. He further suggested that widely consumed, corporate-owned media outlets, such as the *Globe and Mail*, have played a role in mobilizing decision-makers to support these initiatives. Finally, the personnel that staff and support the likes of NAFTA and the WTO, as well as the norms and logic established therein, provide the foundation for further support.

After talks regarding the FTAA were suspended in 2004, Canada sought to achieve the same ends through bilateral and sub-regional trade agreements made in the image of NAFTA. Since

2006, the Harper government has signed several bilateral trade agreements (for instance, with Colombia and Peru), and is actively negotiating others. It is the hope of the Canadian government that these agreements will establish the foundation for further expansion, and eventually lead to multilateral agreements. Canada has also sought out Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs), which are designed to protect the rights of investors and guarantee the liberalization of investment. Grinspun argued that these sorts of agreements are easier to obtain, as they focus on a single issue, and face less political opposition. By the end of 2009 Canada had 24 BITs, seven with Latin American countries (Argentina, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, Uruguay, Costa Rica a Peru). The Harper government wants to double that number in the next five years.

Grinspun suggested that these treaties, along with bilateral free trade agreements between Canada and countries with less negotiating power, provide huge opportunity for Canadian business. He argued that free trade agreements and other treaties based on neoliberal principles disproportionately benefit businesses in the Global North, to the detriment of Latin American countries. Grinspun closed by reiterating how Canada's pursuit of these types of agreements directly conflicts with its position on issues related to human rights, environmental protection and poverty alleviation, as neoliberal-inspired policies have proven to negatively affect these realms.

Etienne Roy Grégoire provided an analysis of the various ways that the mining industry has contributed to human rights abuses in Latin America, focusing particularly on Canada's complicity in abuses in Colombia. He also suggested that Canada's support for mining operations in Colombia, and its promotion of a FTA with Colombia, directly contradict its official human rights policy.

He argued that the mining industry has become increasingly transnational in nature, and that the largest mining companies have drastically increased their profit margins in recent years. The latter is largely the result of two factors: the price increase for precious metals due to increased demand in Asia, and the ability of mining companies to shift their activities to areas with the most accommodating regulatory environment. For example, due to increased environmental regulation in the Global North and the (often

forced) removal of regulations in the Global South, mining companies have significantly shifted their extractive activities southward. Not surprisingly, South America has witnessed an increase in mining operations, increasing its share of regional mining investment from 12% to 33% in recent years. At the same time, the lax regulations of the Toronto Stock Exchange, along with the provision of fiscal incentives, has resulted in over half of the major mining companies in the world basing their head offices in Canada. Canada has attracted the bulk of these mining companies through the provision of incentives, thus augmenting the pressure on government to continue to act in the interest of these companies.

Grégoire noted that Canadian-based mining companies have a huge presence in Colombia. He argued that the importance of these companies to its economy has prompted Canada to pursue a foreign policy towards Latin America that facilitates their drive for profit. Grégoire presented the proposed FTA between Canada and Colombia as a prime example of this, and suggested that this pursuit directly contradicts Canada's human rights policy, being that Colombia's human rights record continues to be one of the worst in the world.

More importantly, however, he argued that mining companies are actually contributing directly to human rights abuses in various ways when they operate in conflict-ridden areas, and that by supporting these companies Canada is also complicit. Grégoire referred to two case studies (in Sur de Bolivar and Magdalena Medio) presented in a report prepared by Mining Watch Canada, Inter Pares and Censat-AguaViva, which highlight the ways that Canadian mining companies are contributing to human rights violations in Colombia.

The controversial aspects of Canada's foreign trade policies and its support for mining companies have resulted in the Canadian government promoting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. The pursuit of such initiatives by companies has amounted to little more than a token acknowledgment that human rights abuses are occurring and need to be addressed; specific measures to end these abuses are lacking. In fact, promoting CSR has had the impact of appeasing opposition, by allowing mining companies to improve their image. Grégoire closed by arguing that Canada's foreign

policy is contradictory and lacks coherence, an issue that needs resolution if the country wishes to be a true champion of human rights.

Louise Casselman of the Public Service Alliance of Canada represented the Americas Policy Group, a working group that includes 40 Canadian organizations concerned with human rights in the hemisphere. She emphasized the need for new tools to address emerging realities and called for a moratorium on free trade agreements and the removal of NAFTA's Chapter 11 provisions, which undermine the state's right to protect its own citizens. She underlined, moreover, the fundamental need to examine the prevailing global economic model.

Casselman argued that the current global economic regime, and the space it accords to transnational capital, has decreased the space for all members of civil society- including in the Global North. She provided several examples of how civil society in Canada has been restrained, such as reductions in government provided funds for university students, the discontinuation of funds to NGOs such as KAIROS, and the meddling of the Conservative party in the affairs of the previously autonomous organization Rights & Democracy.

She suggested that while room to maneuver has become limited, there are still opportunities for resistance. Casselman noted that there are fractures in the system, and civil society organizations fighting for human rights and other causes need to appropriate existing programs and sources of funding from within.

Casselman closed by stating that she is encouraged by the unity and cooperation amongst different groups fighting for human rights, and argued that more of the same is called for if widespread respect for human rights is to trump the pursuit of profit in Latin America. She challenged civil society members from the Global North to bring the perspective of their Southern counterparts back to their own countries, and to help those at home understand their role in the human rights reality extant in the countries of the Global South. Finally, Casselman argued that Canadians are responsible for the actions of Canadian companies abroad, and need to hold them accountable for their contributions to human rights abuses.

Omar Fernández Obregón presented numerous insightful observations from his

experience of political activism as part of the Colombian civil society organization COMOSOC. Most notably, he commented extensively on the benefits and pitfalls of working in concert with Northern civil society organizations, a perspective informed by his own experience of working with Canadian organizations. The alliance between COMOSOC and certain Canadian civil society organizations was formed to address human rights abuses taking place in Colombia and to collectively resist the proposed Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Colombia. The alliance was originally intended to coordinate their efforts of resistance, to collectively develop strategies to address the factors found in both countries that contribute to human rights abuses, and to influence the formal policy-making process of both the Canadian and Colombian governments through dialogue and the production of 'new' knowledge. These efforts were facilitated by the RedLEIDH project through the provision of funds and other resources, which helped produce reports and case studies on the human rights situation of various groups in Colombia. The reports also illustrate the complicit role of foreign governments and multinational companies in the numerous human rights violations that have been committed in Colombia. The desire to confront foreign governments with this 'new' data is largely what prompted COMOSOC to enter an alliance with Canadian civil society organizations.

Obregón highlighted the internal and external obstacles confronted by the alliance. Most significantly, he observed that Canadian civil society possesses much less capacity and power to influence the decisions of its formal government than expected. Obregón was surprised to observe the lack of voice granted to civil society in Canada, along with the withholding of valuable and relevant information by the government. These were issues he has come to expect in Colombia, but not in Canada. Obregón noted that these phenomena demonstrate how neoliberal economic policies and the influence of big business affects civil society everywhere, not just in the Global South.

With this in mind, along with creating new alliances, he suggested that broadening and deepening existing relationships amongst civil society organizations from both countries is necessary to advance the fight for human rights in Colombia. He suggested that Northern civil

society organizations could play a key role by lobbying their own governments and trying to influence the decision-making process. Further, he argued that academics and other members of Northern civil society could play a pivotal role in helping transform Southern civil society organizations into political actors by empowering them to produce 'new' forms of knowledge. Although rife with their own difficulties, these forms of solidarity are essential for grassroots communities and organizations, helping them to realize their political capacity. He closed by inviting Canadian civil society organizations to maintain an ongoing relationship with COMOSOC.

Appendix I: Conference Programme

Universidad y Sociedad Civil en la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos – El Reto en América Latina

Conferencia de Cierre – Red Latinoamericana para la Educación e Investigación en Derechos Humanos
24 y 25 de Febrero, 2010

Universidad Nacional de Colombia – Edificio Postgrados de Ciencias Humanas - Bogotá, Colombia

Miércoles 24 de febrero

8:00-8:45 Inscripciones

8:45-9:00 Bienvenida **Jairo Estrada**, Director, Instituto Latinoamericano para una Sociedad y un Derecho Alternativos (ILSA), Colombia

9:00-10:45 Actividad 1: **Logros y Déficit en la lucha por los Derechos Humanos**

Dialogo Abierto

Diana Avila, Directora, Diálogo Sudamericano, Perú
Ausencias en la defensa de los derechos humanos

Sofía Tiscornia, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), Argentina
Reflexiones sobre la investigación y la docencia en derechos humanos

Moderadora: **María José Guembe**, Universidad Nacional de Lanús, Argentina

10:45-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:45 Actividad 2: **Educación y Derechos Humanos**

Panel

Ana Maria Rodino, Investigadora Universidad Estatal a Distancia y Consultora Educativa, Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos (IIDH), Costa Rica
La educación en derechos humanos de los agentes del Estado y los formadores de opinión pública

Fabián Salvioli, Director Instituto y Maestría en Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina
Los derechos humanos como pilares de la nueva reforma universitaria

Amanda Romero, Educadora, Colombia
Los aportes de la Educación Popular a los derechos humanos: experiencias desde el terreno

Moderador: **Pedro Enrique Valenzuela Grueso** Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia

12:45-2:00 Almuerzo

2:15-4:00 Actividad 3: Programas de Educación en DDHH de la RedLEIDH**Mesa Redonda**

Mariella Saettone, Programa de Diplomado en Derechos Humanos,
Univ. Católica del Uruguay

El programa de Diplomado de AUSJAL

Ricardo Fava, Universidad Nacional de Lanus, Argentina

El reto de la universidad pública en apoyar la extensión de los estudios en DDHH

Carlos Eduardo Valdes Moreno, Universidad Santo Tomás, Colombia

La educación en DDHH en contextos críticos

Randall Brenes S., Oficial de Programas, Pedagogía en Derechos
Humanos, Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, Costa Rica

La extensión de la educación en DDHH en las escuelas públicas

Moderador: **Marco Lara Klahr** Insyde, México

4:00-4:15 Coffee Break

4:15-6:00 Actividad 4: Clínicas de interés público y Consultorios Jurídicos: Logros, dificultades y propuestas en defensa de los derechos humanos**Panel**

Beatriz Londoño Toro Universidad del Rosario, Colombia

Grupo de Acciones Públicas: Diez años en defensa de los derechos humanos

Luz María Gil Comerma, Universidad Andres Bello, Venezuela

Proyección y fortaleza de la Clínica Jurídica de la UCAB en Venezuela

Francisco Cox, Universidad Diego Portales, Chile

Litigio estratégico - De las aulas a los tribunales (¿y por qué no el congreso?)

Ana Lucía Maya, Instituto Latinoamericano para una Sociedad y un
Derecho Alternativos (ILSA), Colombia

Exigibilidad de derechos humanos de las víctimas del desplazamiento forzado desde los consultorios jurídicos

Moderador: **Federico Di Bernardi**, Universidad de La Plata, Argentina

Jueves 25 de Febrero**9:00-10:45 Actividad 5: Lucha por los Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales****Panel**

Angel Libardo Herreño Hernández, Instituto Latinoamericano para una
Sociedad y un Derecho Alternativos (ILSA), Colombia

Los principales dilemas actuales en los procesos de exigibilidad jurídica y política de los DESC en América Latina

Ana Lucia Casallas, Movimiento Nacional por la Salud y la Seguridad Social, miembro de COMOSOC, Colombia
Una visión de los DESC desde los movimientos sociales, enmarcando de esta forma la COMOSOC

Eliud Alvear Cumplido, Profesor, Comunidad de Las Pavas, Colombia
Estudio de Caso: Comunidad Las Pavas

Moderador: **Diego Morales**, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), Argentina

10:45-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:45 **Actividad 6: Canadá y el avance de los DDHH en América Latina**

Panel

Ricardo Grinspun, Centro de Investigaciones para la América Latina y el Caribe (CERLAC), York University, Canadá
Canadá, el libre comercio, y los derechos humanos

Louise Casselman, Grupo de Orientación Política para las Américas, Consejo Canadiense para la Cooperación Internacional, Responsable del Fondo de Justicia Social de la Alianza de Servicio Público, Canadá
El rol de la sociedad civil canadiense en la promoción del desarrollo basado en los derechos

Fray Omar Fernández Obregón, Coalición de Movimientos y Organizaciones Sociales de Colombia (COMOSOC), Colombia
Trabajo en coalición Canadá - Colombia, una clave para el trabajo de incidencia política

Etienne Roy Grégoire, Coordinador - Eje Gobernanza Cátedra C.-A. Poissant de Investigaciones sobre Gobernanza y Ayuda para el Desarrollo Universidad de Québec en Montreal (UQAM), Québec
Gobernanza global del sector minero e inversiones en zona de conflicto: desafíos para la coherencia de la política exterior canadiense en las Américas

Moderadora: **Viviana Patroni**, York University, Canadá

12:45-1:00 **Palabras de Despedida**

Mariella Saettone, Asociación de Universidades Confiadas a la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina (AUSJAL)

Appendix II: Participants' Information

Universidad y Sociedad Civil en la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos – El Reto en América Latina

Conferencia de Cierre – Red Latinoamericana para la Educación e Investigación en Derechos Humanos
24 y 25 de Febrero, 2010

Información biográfica

Bienvenida

Jairo Estrada

Colombiano. Economista. Ph.D. en Ciencias Económicas de la Hochschule fuer Oekonomie de Berlin. Candidato a doctor en Historia de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Profesor del Departamento de Ciencia Política. Coordinador de la Maestría en Estudios Políticos Latinoamericanos – Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Director ejecutivo de ILSA.

Actividad 1: Dialogo Abierto

Logros y Déficit en la lucha por los Derechos Humanos

Diana Ávila

Sofía Tiscornia

Argentina. Doctora en Antropología Social por la Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA). Es Directora del Equipo de Antropología Política y Jurídica – Sección Antropología Social – Instituto de Ciencias Antropológicas – Facultad de Filosofía y Letras - UBA, es Profesora Regular Asociada del Departamento de Ciencias Antropológicas de la UBA. Es miembro de la Comisión Directiva del Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS) y directora del área de investigación del organismo. Dirige programas de investigación subsidiados por la Universidad de Buenos Aires y por la Agencia de Ciencia y Tecnología de la Nación; es coordinadora de programas de investigación e intercambio académico en su especialidad, con centros de postgraduación de universidades del Brasil; ha coordinado programa de investigación sobre violencia policial y derechos humanos, en convenio con el Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS) y con organismos del estado local. Ha participado como organizadora, conferencista y panelista en numerosos eventos científicos nacionales e internacionales. Ha publicado libros y numerosos artículos científicos en revistas de la especialidad en el país y en el extranjero.

María José Guembe

Argentina. Investigadora y docente del Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Nacional de Lanús. Anteriormente coordinó el Programa Verdad y Justicia del gobierno argentino, se desempeñó como Subsecretaria de Derechos Humanos del Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires y dirigió el Programa Memoria y Lucha contra la Impunidad del CELS (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales). Graduada en derecho en la Universidad de Buenos Aires y Magíster en Derecho Internacional de los Derechos Humanos por la Universidad de Notre Dame, Estados Unidos. Ha publicado numerosos artículos sobre la verdad, la justicia, la reparación y la memoria.

Actividad 2: Panel

Educación y Derechos Humanos

Ana María Rodino

Argentina-costarricense, Doctora y Master en Educación (Universidad de Harvard, USA), Master en Lingüística (Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica) y Licenciada en Letras (Universidad de Rosario, Argentina). Además tiene estudios especializados en producción de radio y televisión educativa. Ha sido docente, investigadora y autora de numerosas publicaciones científicas y didácticas en los campos de la sociolingüística, pragmática y lingüística aplicada; semiótica y comunicación masiva; producción de materiales educativos (escritos, audiovisuales y electrónicos), y educación en derechos humanos y ciudadanía democrática.

Actualmente se desempeña como catedrática e investigadora de la Universidad Estatal a Distancia, UNED, de Costa Rica y como consultora principal de educación para el Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, IIDH, institución a la que está asociada desde 1992. Es miembro del Consejo Asesor del Programa Interamericano de Educación en Valores y Prácticas Democráticas de la Organización de Estados Americanos y del Informe Estado de la Educación Costarricense, del Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, el Consejo Nacional de Rectores y la Defensoría de los Habitantes de Costa Rica.

Fabián Salvioli

Argentino. Director del Instituto y la Maestría en Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina, profesor titular de Derecho Internacional Público en la misma Universidad, Miembro del Comité de Derechos Humanos de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas.

Amanda Romero-Medina

Colombiana. Actualmente candidata al Doctorado en Educación de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, de Colombia. Miembro fundadora del movimiento de derechos humanos, ha desarrollado un trabajo de educación desde finales de la década del 70, y ha sido investigadora en áreas como derechos económicos, sociales y culturales, refugio y desplazamiento forzado, ayuda humanitaria, y las relaciones entre género, infancia y adolescencia y conflicto armado. Ha desarrollado un trabajo sobre derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas y jurisdicción especial indígena; educación en emergencias; derechos de los Pueblos Afrodescendientes y lucha contra el racismo. También trabajó como responsable del área psicosocial del Proyecto de Atención a Víctimas de desaparición forzada, masacres y ejecuciones extrajudiciales de CHF internacional.

Pedro Enrique Valenzuela Grueso

Colombiano. Politólogo de Florida International University, USA. Estudios de posgrado en Ciencias Políticas, University of Pittsburgh, USA. Ph.D. en Investigación en Paz y Conflictos, Universidad de Uppsala, Suecia. Profesor Titular, Facultad de Ciencias Políticas, Universidad Javeriana. Director de la Especialización en Resolución de Conflictos, Universidad Javeriana. Temas de investigación: Conflictos armados, Construcción de paz desde la base, Procesos de paz.

Actividad 3: Mesa Redonda

Programas de Educación en DDHH de la RedLEIDH

Mariella Sætonne

Uruguay, Abogada- Docente de Derecho Público en la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de la República. Docente de Derechos Humanos en la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad Católica del Uruguay. Coordinadora General del Programa Interuniversitario en Derechos Humanos AUSJAL- IIDH.

Desempeñó funciones en las Defensorías de Oficio del Poder Judicial. Actualmente es Magistrado del Ministerio Público y Fiscal del Uruguay.

Ricardo Fava

Argentino. Antropólogo (Universidad de Buenos Aires). Diploma de postítulo en Derechos Humanos y procesos de democratización (Universidad de Chile). Candidato a Magister en Antropología Social (IDES, Instituto de Desarrollo Económico y Social y UNSAM, Universidad Nacional de San Martín). Coordinador del Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Nacional de Lanús. Desde 1999 hasta 2008, fue integrante del Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS).

Carlos Eduardo Valdés Moreno

Médico Cirujano de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia con especialización en Antropología Forense de la misma universidad, diplomado en genética forense, con amplia experiencia en docencia universitaria de pregrado y postgrado e investigación en el campo de las ciencias forenses, aplicado al manejo técnico-científico de la escena del delito, especialmente en investigaciones de conductas relacionadas con violaciones a derechos humanos e infracciones al DIH. He desempeñado funciones como servidor público en la Fiscalía General de la Nación durante trece años, siete de ellos como Jefe de la División Criminalística a nivel nacional. Actualmente me desempeño como coordinador de la Unidad de Derechos humanos de la Dirección Nacional de Investigaciones Especiales de la Procuraduría General de la Nación. Autor de varios artículos y libros relacionados con la investigación en la escena, metodología de la investigación criminal y en temas medico-legales, entre otros.

Randall Brenes

Costarricense. Licenciatura en Derecho por la Universidad de Costa Rica, con estudios especializados en derecho internacional de los derechos humanos por la Universidad de Oxford (Inglaterra). Master en Administración de Negocios por el Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica. Oficial de Pedagogía en Derechos Humanos del Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos -IIDH, donde ha trabajado por catorce años en la ejecución de proyectos vinculados a capacitación, asistencia técnica y producción de materiales para la educación en derechos humanos en América Latina y el Caribe. Profesor invitado en distintas universidades. Ha participado en la producción de diferentes investigaciones, publicaciones y materiales didácticos en temas de educación, derechos humanos, democracia y promoción de la transparencia. Miembro del Comité Editorial de la Revista Interamericana y Europea de Derechos Humanos.

Marco Lara Klahr

Mexicano. Periodista en temas de violencia y derechos ciudadanos desde hace 29 años, egresado de la UNAM, se desempeña como reportero de investigación de Efekto TV, director de minimedia otromexico/contenidos para medios, coordinador del Proyecto de Violencia y Medios en Insyde, y consultor de Justice Initiative. Su libro más reciente, en coautoría con Francesc Barata, es Nota(n) roja. La vibrante historia de un género y una nueva manera de informar (Debate, 2009). Recibió el Premio Nacional de Periodismo en 2009 y 2000.

Actividad 4: Panel

Clínicas de interés público y Consultorios Jurídicos – Logros, dificultades y propuestas en defensa de los derechos humanos

Beatriz Londoño Toro

Colombiana. Abogada de la Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, con Doctorado en Derecho en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid y Especialización en Derecho Constitucional y Ciencia Política del Centro de Estudios Constitucionales de Madrid. Profesora Titular de la Universidad del Rosario, Directora del Grupo de Investigación en Derechos Humanos y del Grupo de Acciones Públicas (GAP) de dicha Universidad. Con amplia experiencia Institucional y docente, publicaciones y ejercicio profesional en Derecho Ambiental,

Acciones Constitucionales Derecho de Interés Público y Derechos Humanos Movimiento Nacional por la Salud y la Seguridad Nacional

Luz María Gil Comerma

Venezolana. Abogada en ejercicio y docente universitaria, con estudios de formación para la Carrera Judicial, especializaciones en Acceso a la Justicia, el área de Mediación y en Derecho Procesal. Ex Consultor Jurídico del Ministerio de Justicia y ejerce actualmente la Dirección de un Escritorio Jurídico desde el año 1999 y la docencia en Clínica Jurídica en la UCAB desde el año 1997.

Francisco Cox

Chileno. Educación: Columbia University School of Law. LLM Mayo 1999 - 2000. Universidad Diego Portales. Licenciado en Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales. Noviembre de 1995. Premios: Human Rights Fellow de Columbia University Law School. James A. Ellkins Prize in Constitutional Law, Columbia University Law School, otorgado a los dos mejores alumnos de Derecho Constitucional de 1999-2000. Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar por excelencia académica. Parker School of Foreign and Comparative Law Achievement Award.

Ana Lucia Maya

Colombiana. Abogada de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Especialista en Derecho Constitucional de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Investigadora del Instituto Latinoamericano para una Sociedad y un Derecho Alternativos (ILSA). Coordinadora de la Red Derecho y Desplazamiento. Ex - abogada de la Comisión Colombiana de Juristas. Ex - consultora del Programa de Iniciativas Universitarias para la Paz y la Convivencia y de la Asociación Nacional de Diarios Colombianos. Fue Auxiliar Docente de Derecho Laboral Individual y Colectivo.

Federico Di Bernardi

Abogado. Secretario del Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata. Profesor de Derecho Internacional Público en la Universidad Nacional de La Plata, y Profesor de Sistemas Internacionales y Nacionales de Derechos Humanos en la Maestría en Derechos Humanos y Políticas Sociales de la Universidad Nacional de San Martín. Ha sido consultor del Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, del Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo y del Programa de Fortalecimiento del Sistema de Derechos Humanos de la Comisión Europea.

Actividad 5: Panel

Lucha por los Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales

Angel Libardo Herreño Hernández

Colombiano. Licenciado en pedagogía de las ciencias sociales de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional; Abogado de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia y especialista en derecho constitucional.

Ana Lucía Casallas Murillo

Colombiana. Líder social del Movimiento Nacional por la Defensa de Salud y Seguridad Social (MNSS) en Colombia, miembro del Comité Distrital de Derechos Humanos (de Bogotá) y de la Plataforma Colombiana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo.

Eliud Alvear Cumplido

Colombiano. Ideólogo de la Comunidad de las Pavas. Profesor Lic. en Educación Física Recreación y Deportes. Nacido en este mismo lugar. La comunidad de las Pavas hace parte de un pequeño caserío que se encuentra en el Municipio de el Peñón al sur del departamento del Bolívar. Este caserío se llama Buenos Aires y las Pavas está a 6 metros del caserío.

“Un día cualquiera me nació la idea por sacar estos campesinos adelante porque creo que ellos siempre han tenido la razón y se que algún día alguien les ayudara a retornar allí con la frente en alto. Las Pavas es una hacienda que fue de un testaferro del extinto narcotraficante Pablo Escobar Gaviria el cual era sobrino de Jesús Emilio Escobar Fernández (testaferro). Desde el asesinato del Ministro de Justicia Rodrigo Lara Bonilla en 1984, la dejaron abandonando y los campesinos comenzaron a cultivar allí desde ese entonces.

Hasta el año 2003 no se dio ninguna interferencia por parte de nadie y desde el 2004 comenzaron los primeros desplazamientos por parte de los paramilitares, en varias ocasiones. En el 2008 sucedió un milagro de Dios ya que pedíamos una inundación que sacaran a los palmeros y así sucedió porque ese mismo año llegó esa inundación y ellos les tocó salir y al mismo tiempo salió una resolución de extinción de dominio que los campesinos habían solicitado al INCODER Cartagena desde el 2006 para verificar si era cierto lo que los campesinos estaban allí y comprobaron la verdad.

En el 2006 una incursión paramilitar desplazó masivamente a más de 100 familias. Este grupo quemó un gran número de vivienda no permitiendo recolectar sus cosechas producto de su gran esfuerzo ni animales de crías por lo cual tenían de allí su sustento. La llegada de la inundación de 2008 y la resolución de extinción los animó a realizar el retorno pacífico a la hacienda el 15 de Enero de 2009 sin violencia alguna porque queremos demostrar que sin armas y sin violencia se pueden lograr reclamar los derechos de las personas más vulnerables.

Después de todo esto, sufrieron tantos estos campesinos porque le violaron todos sus derechos en todos los sentidos y ellos solo lo que buscan es volver donde solo allí pueden encontrar su sustentos. Fue así como el 14 de julio de 2009 fueron desalojado de la manera mas vil que se conozca porque no les importó que allí se encontraban niños y mujeres en estado de embarazo y quedando a la deriva. El alcalde del Municipio de el Peñon se dejó sobornar por el abogado de las palmeras y junto con la policía, ejército y smat casi nos masacran, si no cedemos.”

Diego Morales

Argentino. Abogado, director de litigio y defensa legal del CELS. Estudios de postítulo en la Universidad de Chile. Docente de la Clínica jurídica de derechos humanos de la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de Buenos Aires-CELS. Profesor en la Maestría "Derecho Penal del Mercosur", de la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de Buenos Aires. Profesor invitado en las Universidades Iberoamericana de México, y la Universidad de Santo Tomas, en Colombia. Ha dictado cursos de formación en litigio en derechos humanos, litigio y derechos humanos de los migrantes en diversos centros de estudios y formación auspiciados por Naciones Unidas. Ha escrito artículos sobre derechos sociales y su exigibilidad, derechos humanos de migrantes y refugiados, acceso a la justicia, entre otros temas.

Actividad 6: Panel

Canadá y el avance de los DDHH en América Latina

Louise Casselman

Canadiense. Ha participado en la defensa de los derechos humanos y laborales por varias décadas. Ha trabajado en varias organizaciones laborales y sindicatos canadienses. Actualmente se desempeña como oficial responsable del Fondo de Justicia Social de la Alianza de Servicio Público de Canadá. Una parte importante de su trabajo ha sido la investigación y el desarrollo de relaciones e intercambios entre trabajadores latinoamericanos y canadienses. Louise también colabora con la Red Internacional sobre Mujeres y la Minería (RIMM), con sede en Bolivia. Esta Red representa a organizaciones de mujeres indígenas, ecologistas y trabajadoras formales e informales en el sector minero. También ha apoyado con su trabajo a organizaciones de trabajadores del azúcar, maestros y pueblos indígenas en las Américas.

Ricardo Grinspun

Canadiense. Profesor de economía y miembro del Centro de Investigaciones para la América Latina y el Caribe (CERLAC) en York University, Toronto, Canadá. Se especializa en temas de economía política, desarrollo y comercio internacional, e integración hemisférica. Ha sido director del CERLAC y ha dirigido

varios proyectos internacionales de desarrollo. Ha publicado ampliamente, y su último libro es una colaboración sobre el tema de la “integración profunda” en la América del Norte.

Fray Omar Fernández Obregón

Colombiano. Religioso franciscano de la orden de hermanos menores. Director de la Comisión Interfranciscana de Justicia, Paz y Reverencia con la Creación. Actualmente vive en Ciudad Bolívar, sector muy marginado de Bogotá con cerca de dos millones de personas. Fundador y Miembro del Equipo Coordinador del movimiento Continental de cristianos por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad que ha impulsado diferentes acciones en el Continente frente al impacto negativo en nuestros pueblos de los acuerdos comerciales y la militarización. Miembro de la Secretaría Política de la Coalición de Movimientos y Organizaciones Sociales de Colombia COMOSOC que actualmente realiza una campaña de incidencia política frente al impacto de los Tratados de Libre Comercio y su impacto en los derechos humanos.

Etienne Roy Grégoire

Quebecense. Estudiante en la maestría en ciencias políticas en la Universidad de Québec en Montréal. Es también coordinador del eje de gobernanza e investigador en la Cátedra C.-A. Poissant de Investigaciones sobre Gobernanza y Ayuda para el Desarrollo de la UQAM. Ha trabajado varios años en el campo de los derechos humanos en América central y ha realizado recientemente investigaciones sobre los impactos de proyectos de inversión extractiva en zonas de conflicto en Colombia.

Viviana Patroni

Canadiense. Profesora en el Departamento de Ciencias Sociales en York University (Toronto, Canadá). Entre el año 2000 y 2007 sus funciones incluyeron también la dirección del Centro para la Investigación sobre América Latina y el Caribe (CERLAC) de la misma universidad. Como directora de CERLAC trabajó en la creación y consolidación de varios programas de cooperación con universidades y organizaciones de la sociedad civil en la región y en Canadá. Su trabajo académico se ha enfocado en la experiencia de desarrollo en América Latina, los cambios en las relaciones entre el estado y el movimiento sindical durante los últimos veinte años y el surgimiento de nuevas formas de sindicalismo en la Argentina. Su trabajo más reciente incluye también un interés en el impacto que las compañías mineras canadienses han tenido en diversos sectores y comunidades en América Latina. Desde el año 2004 ha servido como co-directora de la Red Latinoamericana para la Educación y la Investigación sobre Derechos Humanos, un proyecto que cuenta con financiamiento de la Agencia Canadiense de Desarrollo Internacional.

Palabras de Despedida

Mariella Saettone

Uruguaya. Abogada. Docente de Derecho Público en la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de la República. Docente de Derechos Humanos en la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad Católica del Uruguay. Coordinadora General del Programa Interuniversitario en Derechos Humanos AUSJAL- IIDH. Desempeñó funciones en las Defensorías de Oficio del Poder Judicial. Actualmente es Magistrado del Ministerio Público y Fiscal del Uruguay.