

Symposium of the UNESCO Chairs in the field of Human Rights, Peace,
Democracy and bioethics

Developing stronger partnership and cooperation together

Road map

The UNESCO Chairs in the fields of Human Rights, Peace, Democracy, Tolerance and Bioethics, gathered in Bergamo on 3 and 4 March 2011, agreed on the specificity of their mission (1) and, in order to assume their responsibilities at best, decided to develop a list of commitments for cooperation (2) and to identify ways for strengthening the capacities and institutional recognition of their network (3).

1. Mission of the UNESCO Chairs

The participating UNESCO Chairs recognize as their mission to:

- Pursue research and teaching activities with a view to bringing forward the ideals of UNESCO within their own universities and broader settings, in cooperation with public and civil society actors;¹
- Collect and produce within their universities and areas of action knowledge, expertise and expectations and to transmit/communicate their findings to UNESCO thus contributing to the sharing of knowledge and the acknowledgement of their cultural diversity;
- Develop international cooperation and network notably with other UNESCO Chairs focusing on the same areas of action.

The participating UNESCO Chairs in the field of Human Rights, Democracy, Peace, Tolerance and Bioethics also consider that they should:

- Observe and analyze, in an interdisciplinary manner, all the « paths of the effectiveness » of human rights, from the gathering of information on violations and best practices to the elucidation and dissemination of the content of human rights standards and the development of measures of implementation ; and
- Direct their four-fold mission of research, teaching, proposition and advocacy on a human rights based approach, so as to ensure not only the mainstreaming of human rights but also the fundamental goal of their action, namely to broaden understanding and respect for human dignity and a culture of peace.

The Chairs are conscious that this commitment – to act in favor of genuinely participative democracies in which all persons can take part in the development and sharing of knowledge – is confronted by numerous obstacles dependent upon diverse contexts.

¹ See document 176EX/10 "The new strategic orientations of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme", adopted in April 2007 at the 176th session of the Executive Board. This document focuses on the creation of a new generation of UNESCO Chairs and of networks more closely related to the objectives and priorities of the UNESCO, such as defined in the project 34C/a and 34C/5, and that fully play their role as think tanks and as bridge-builders between the academy and civil society, between the results of research and political decisions.
www.unesco.org/en/university-twinning-and-networking/strategy/

The 20th anniversary of the launching of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme in 2012 will be an excellent opportunity to present, explain and thus better entrench the mission of the Chairs. The members of this network are resolved to contribute to this occasion.

2. Cooperation commitments: an added value

This comparative mission, both intercultural and critical, gives the Chairs an added value and a responsibility that they intend to respect by engaging in cooperation in the fields of research (2.1), teaching (2.2), proposition and advocacy (2.3).

2.1. In the field of research

Ethics and Human Rights

Each human right, or group of rights, grows as an integral part of an ethical environment that includes, apart from human rights as fundamental norms, a philosophy and a particular ethic shared by the stakeholders of the field concerned. It is proposed to systematically develop the links between ethics and human rights, especially in the field of bioethics.

Chairs involved:

Human Rights-Based Approach and Ethics of Development

Drawing upon the extensive work and experience of the UN system in this regard², the Chairs will develop an argument on a “human rights-based approach” (HRBA), to development, both of individuals and societies³, and explore the practical implications thereof in conformity with the basic principles of universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights. The outcome of these activities should be relevant for the context in which the Chairs operate and particularly with respect to development and democratization strategies.

The Chairs propose to make a contribution on this theme for the 20th anniversary of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, Austria 1993).

Chairs involved :

The right to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits/ The right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications

One gains precious insight when considering access to arts and to sciences as two constituent elements of cultural life, as is done in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): under what conditions and to which extent can each individual really access these cultural resources? Arts and sciences have been so far very narrowly interpreted and understood. As opposed to the Universal Declaration, in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), they are separated into the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications (REBSP, art. 15.1 b) and the right to take part in cultural life (art. 15.1 a), both of which have remained largely underdeveloped. Hence, the aim would be to show that initiation to esthetics and shared

²See *Frequently asked questions on a human rights-based approach to development cooperation* (www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf) and the *Human Rights-Based Approach and the UN system* (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001469/146999e.pdf>).

³ See the *Document of Bergamo*, adopted in 2007 - <http://www.data.unibg.it/dati/bacheca/1043/49127.pdf> - as well as a first draft of an argument, presented at the XIIIth Francophonie Summit in Montreux in October 2010 : Synthesis document 19 of the Observatory of diversity and cultural rights, <http://www.unifr.ch/iiedh/assets/files/DS19-ABDH.pdf>.

creation, as well as awareness and desire for observation and research, curiosity for fundamental knowledge about the environment, one's own body and social issues, are vital for each person and for each community. A conference on this theme could be organized this year, in partnership between UNESCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (especially within the mandate of the Independent Expert in the field of Cultural Rights), and the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF), amongst others.

Departing from the work that UNESCO has already coordinated and conducted with respect to the REBSP⁴, the Chairs will also attempt to further the understanding of the content of this right and the corresponding State obligations, as well as identify through research effective remedies to promote their implementation. It is important to deepen the analysis of the interrelationship between this and other human rights, with emphasis on rights within UNESCO's fields of competence.

Chairs involved:

The right to education, and especially to Human rights education

The effectiveness of the right to education is challenged by discrimination that persists - or even grows - in many countries, particularly in contexts of crisis and conflict. The aim is to contribute to the definition of relevant indicators to measure the effectiveness of this right. Special attention should be given to dimensions of availability, accessibility, adaptability and, acceptability (quality of contents), as well as to existing complaint mechanisms and the consideration of alternative remedies. The analysis will focus on the nature of States' obligations towards the right to teach and educate on human rights.

The Chairs propose to:

- Create a working group on human rights education to develop contents and methods, examine existing teaching materials and develop further tools ;
- Orient their work on possible collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on the right to education inter alia on: justiciability of the right to education, quality of teachers' trainings, violence in educational settings, freedom of education, etc ⁵; and
- Contribute to the second phase (2010-2014) of the World Program for Human Rights Education which focuses on higher education and human rights training for various professional groups, to the follow-up of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights education and training that will be put before the Human Rights Council in March 2011 and that is expected to be adopted by the UN General Assembly in fall 2011.

Chairs involved:

Observation of the effectiveness of cultural rights

The observation of all cultural rights is a major issue for the clarification and protection of the rights which are in the field of the UNESCO mandate, especially the right to education and the right to take part in cultural life. The aim is to identify violations as well as best practices that help to understand the nature, obstacles and challenges that are raised in relation to cultural rights.

The Chairs propose to develop and share their observations and methodologies, particularly in consideration of the second phase of the work of the ARADESC network dedicated to the right to take part in cultural life, under the coordination of the UNESCO Rabat Office.

⁴ See the outcome of the experts' meeting on the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, convened by UNESCO in 2009 (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001855/185558e.pdf>)

⁵ See the issues in focus on the website of the Rapporteur : www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/rapporteur/issues.htm [March 2011].

Special attention could be paid to the close links between the rights to information (freedom of expression), to education and access to heritage.

Chairs involved:

2.2. In the field of teaching

Methods to teach the HRBA

The UNESCO Chairs strive to develop specific teaching on the HRBA that includes, in an interdisciplinary and intercultural manner, the relations between ethics, the rights of each individual and the links to his/her environment, but also benefits from other approaches related to gender, age, migratory realities, keeping also in mind other grounds of discrimination. To that end, the Chairs commit to:

- Observe and evaluate the needs and the resources already available;
- Encourage the integration of this approach in the teaching of other disciplines / departments of their respective universities;
- Work towards more effective human rights teaching throughout the whole educational chain, from primary school onwards;
- Compare their teaching aimed at professional groups (professional ethics and deontology), public actors and civil society;
- Encourage exchanges between the Chairs of existing materials /tools in this field, linked to the extent possible to the more relevant professional activities, while taking into consideration the specific challenges of each context; and
- Include impact evaluation in their HRBA teaching programs.

Chairs involved:

Include bioethics in the human rights training provided by the Chairs

The aim is to demonstrate the coherence of bioethics and human rights and their importance in the cultural and political spheres, as affirmed in the UNESCO instruments.

The Chairs propose to develop and exchange their methods, taking into consideration the diversity of their cultural environment, to develop modules for the training of trainers, as well as for professional groups, and to provide such teaching/training in their universities on an interfaculty basis.

Chairs involved:

2.3. In the fields of proposition and advocacy

Follow-up of recommendations

Ensure, as much as possible and in collaboration with relevant civil society actors, the follow-up to the UN treaty monitoring bodies and UPR recommendations, inter alia by: participating in the drafting of 'shadow reports', disseminating recommendations, following up on the consideration given to them by public, private and civil actors; and following up on the country visits of Special Rapporteurs, contributing to the gathering of information (parallel reports) and addressing their recommendations.

Chairs involved:

3. Strengthening and recognizing the network's capacities

In order to fulfill their mission, the Chairs are committed to developing the capacities of their network (3.1.) and consider that this added value should be clearly recognized and supported by the UNESCO, their universities and the national and international public institutions (3.2).

3.1. Strengthening capacities

In order to reinforce the cooperation capacities of the network, to optimally benefit from the complementarities of their work and to ensure the best possible solidarity while giving consideration to the diverse and sometimes very difficult situations, the Chairs are committed to:

- Structure their network in thematic and /or regional units, identifying specific responsibilities of its members; the Chairs that accept responsibility in a certain field could constitute the bureau of the network; more specifically, the Spanish speaking Chairs decide to create an Ibero-American network and to diffuse a newsletter on a regular basis.

Chairs involved: Uruguay, Mexico, Brazil,

- Open their network to other institutions and organizations that share their goals;
- Ensure a better interconnection between their web sites;
- Encourage exchanges for teachers, researchers and advanced students' ; and
- Organize ongoing/continuous training programs between the Chairs (perhaps in the form of a summer school/academy).

3.2. Institutional recognition and clarification of partnerships

In order to be able to fulfill their mission, the Chairs ask:

UNESCO to:

- Associate systematically the network with the development of its programs and to examine the standard partnership agreement (UNESCO – university) with the aim of eventually ensuring better recognition of the Chairs' mission⁶;
- Search together with the network, for better ways to benefit/valorize the contributions of the Chairs and to ensure a better visibility and interaction on the SHS web site, which could take the form of special portal that, if possible, provides a mapping of Chairs' resources and ongoing activities ;
- Organize, or facilitate, the organization of regular meetings between the Chairs and the SHS, on a periodicity still to be determined, with aim of clarifying mutual expectations and adapting the road map;
- Provide systematically to the Chairs the specific/relevant periodicals/journals and publications issued by UNESCO;
- Support the Chairs in search for joint funding that will allow them to pursue their activities ;
- Integrate the activities of the Chairs' network into the meetings with UNESCO Member States concerning human rights' policies, democratic governance, peace and bioethics, and to request when appropriate the expertise of members of the network in these activities ;
- Include on the agenda of relations between UNESCO and its member States the

⁶ Cet engagement et plusieurs autres ci-dessous figurent dans le Document 176EX/10, cité plus haut.

activities of the network ; and

- Ask UNESCO Member States to associate the UNESCO Chairs with their National Commissions, at least on a consultative basis.

Hosting universities to:

- Recognize/value the mission of UNESCO Chairs within the respective universities and provide them with stable human, structural and financial resources necessary to fulfill it.

Relevant national authorities to:

- Recognize/value the mission of the UNESCO Chairs in their relations with UNESCO;
- Ensure participation of UNESCO Chairs in the work of National Commissions, of national human rights institutions and of any other non-jurisdictional mechanism for the protection of human rights or of ethics' commissions in relevant fields ; and
- Provide them with the necessary means and support them in searching for joint funding so that they are able to carry out their activities in partnership with concerned professional groups and different civil society actors.

Regional organizations :

- notably the European Union, to reserve within the framework of the funding foreseen for the « European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights » (EIDHR), an action for the concerted activities of UNESCO Chairs on international research and teaching.

Adopted in Bergamo, March 4th 2011