

**FOR THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND
FREEDOM OF EDUCATION**

UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES

ACTIVITY REPORT

2023



OIDEL

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ABOUT OIDEL

This Activity Report aims to give you insight into OIDEL's work in 2023. It is not exhaustive, but rather gives an account of our main achievements in the promotion of a full realization of the right to education. For almost 40 years now, OIDEL has worked for the promotion of education as a fundamental human right. OIDEL seeks to achieve this promotion through its participation in discussions on this issue before international organizations, the development of research, and the organization of various training events. OIDEL is an NGO specializing in the right to education and freedom of education with consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe.



Consultative status at
the United Nations
Economic and Social
Council (ECOSOC)



Consultative status at
the United Nations
Educational, Scientific
and Cultural
Organization (UNESCO)



Consultative status at
the Council of Europe



INTRODUCTION

There is no ordinary year for OIDEL, and this one has been no exception. The Chariot of Apollo moves faster than usual, and the virulence of these times allows us to see clearly how far we have come.

Writing the introduction to this activity report is a good opportunity to review the current situation. It allows us to realize what we have done right, the challenges of the future, and express our thanks to those who have made this project possible.

Our annual report for 2023 is impressive in terms of the number of international meetings and events we have attended, seminars we have organized, training courses we have run and research we have carried out. There are many points I would like to highlight among the work we have done, but if I had to choose two, they would be the symposium on the theme of “identity in education”, co-organized with UNESCO at the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, and the first edition of the Summer University on the right to education. We hope that this second initiative will become a regular feature in the years to come.

This activity report refers to international discussions on the role of the family in education, which are attracting growing interest, diplomatically speaking. Meanwhile, the role of civil society and communities in building pluralist education is the subject of much controversy. These issues, unsurprisingly at the heart of the news this year, provide us with a framework for action in the coming years.

We conclude with words of gratitude. This has been a year of significant changes, three of which are worth mentioning. The first two major changes took place within OIDEL's board. President Diego Barroso and Secretary General Ángel Sánchez handed over the mandate to Teresa Martínez and Josep Manuel Prats. We would like to thank them for their years of dedication and support during a complicated period, particularly after Alfred's death. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Mayca San Andrés for her commitment and tenacity, without whom OIDEL's mission would not have been possible over the last two years.

Ignasi Grau

OIDEL General Director



1 - ADVOCACY

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1.3.3 Conference on "Freedom of education in Spain - Where we are and where we should be" Sevilla - (Spain)

1.3.4 General Assembly of Swiss Catholic Schools – Zurich (Switzerland)

1.3.5 Symposium on the origins of international education and on the birth of the International School of Geneva – Geneva (Switzerland)

1.3.6 International Workshop on Educational Pluralism in Latin America and the Caribbean: legal overviews and the role of faith-based actors – Santiago de Chile (Chile)

1.3.7 Seminar by Geneva University on "Localizing, decolonizing or globalizing the curriculum" – Geneva (Switzerland)

1.3.8 Conference: "The Culture of Pluralism and Inclusion in Education – The integration of European values in the Albanian educational system." – Tirana (Albania)

1.3.9 100th CEEC General Assembly - Vilnius (Lithuania)



1.1 ACTIVITIES IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

1.1.1 UNITED NATIONS

◆ HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (HRC)

The HRC is the principal intergovernmental body of the United Nations with the capacity to discuss the various issues relating to human rights and situations requiring special attention. It meets 3 times a year in the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Among the discussed subject related to the right to education are thematic reports (right to education, rights in the field of cultural rights, human rights education...), as well as country reports.

The following is a summary of the work carried out by OIDEL at these meetings.

52ND REGULAR SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Geneva, March 2023

Find here a summary of all the activities OIDEL carried out during the 52nd regular session of the Human Rights Council that took place from the 27th of February to the 4th of April.

Annual Debate on the Rights of the Child, March 10

The 2023 Annual Debate on the Rights of the Child focused on children's rights in the digital environment. In his oral statement, Ignasi Grau referred to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that parents have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child in accordance with his or her evolving capacities. Grau underlined that most parents want the best for their children, which is why they should be considered the main allies in the protection of children's rights in the digital world.

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, March 15

The latest report of the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights focuses on the cultural rights of migrants. Josyane Zingg took the floor on behalf of OIDEL to draw attention to the cultural rights of migrant children. Although they live in a host country, these children are the bearers and continuers of the history of their people. In order to grant cultural rights to these children, the education they receive must give them access to their own cultural framework, which is why parents must be free to choose their children's education according to their own convictions and identity.



Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children, March 16

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children devoted her report to violence against children in the digital environment, focusing on prevention. The report overemphasized the role of children in their own prevention, without specifying age. Mayca San Andrés, on behalf of OIDEL, recalled recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, published by UNESCO, on the use of digital media for each age group and pointed out that these recommendations can be useful when working with parents.

General debate on the promotion and protection of all human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, March 17

The General Debate was held for a day and a half, with broad participation by States and more than two hundred NGOs. Given the striking tendency to talk less and less about families, due to their imperfections, Mayca San Andrés took the floor to recall that, in fact, families have been and continue to be a pillar for the realization of human rights. She, therefore, called on the international community to make families matter again in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights.

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, March 23rd

OIDEL's last statement at this session of the Human Rights Council was made by Ignasi Grau during the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues. Once again OIDEL drew attention to the fact that families or parents were not mentioned even once in the recommendations of the 15th session of the Forum on Minority Issues. The argument behind this the relevance of this mentions is that besides a few exceptions, parents are the primary advocates for minority children, therefore, if we advocate for the rights of minority children, we must place families and communities as cornerstones in the policy decision-making process.

Co-signing of declarations and follow-up to various resolutions

OIDEL signed the oral statements of other NGOs on the right to development and on human rights education. In turn, a number of NGOs co-signed our five oral statements.

Throughout the five weeks of the Human Rights Council session, OIDEL followed several resolutions.



53RD REGULAR SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Geneva (Switzerland), June 2023

During the 53rd session of the HRC, OIDEL organized a meeting of the NGO Platform on the Right to Education (RtE), took the floor during the interactive dialogue with the new Special Rapporteur (SR) on the RtE, and actively participated in the informal consultations on the RtE. Additionally, OIDEL's director, Ignasi Grau, took the floor during the interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert (IE) on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) and was invited as a panelist to one of the side events.



La Rapporteuse Spéciale Farida Shaheed pendant la séance de questions-réponses.

Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education

During this session of the HRC, the new Special Rapporteur, Farida Shaheed presented her first report. As this year marks the 25th Anniversary of the mandate, the report analyzes the key achievements and challenges of the past 25 years and the emerging issues that will be addressed in the near future.

As the coordinator of the NGO Platform on the Right to Education, OIDEL organized a meeting with the SR to pose questions, make comments and have a discussion on the report. Ms. Shaheed also shared her planned country visits (Hungary and Finland) and the topics of her future reports (teachers, curriculum and assessment, academic freedom, and safety).

Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education

The report on the RtE was presented on the 27th of June during the interactive dialogue with the SR on the RtE. OIDEL was the first NGO to take the floor. Josyane Zingg, on behalf of OIDEL and 6 co-signing NGOs, expressed her appreciation for the SR's openness to collaborate with civil society. Ms. Zingg highlighted that in times of uncertainty and turmoil, governments tend to control speech and content and, in the field of education, they tend to restrict the space between authorities and children. This affects non-mainstream groups in particular. Therefore, Ms. Zingg raised the question, "How can we build trust among the different actors of the educational community?". Ms. Shaheed answered by saying, "I think you can only do that if all the actors present believe that peaceful, inclusive societies benefits all of us and promotes human rights for all."



Interactive Dialogue with the IE on SOGI

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The report presented by Victor Madrigal-Borloz examines the intersection between freedom of religion or belief and protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In the report, the IE on SOGI suggests that new obligations should be imposed on faith-based institutions (including schools) such as “diversity-oriented education [and] comprehensive sexual education”. OIDEI’s director, Ignasi Grau, took the floor to ask, “With what has been stated in this report, what autonomy is left for faith-based institutions?”

Co-signatures

OIDEI has co-sponsored one Oral Statement that was read during the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education and another one delivered during the interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity.

Side Event “Education for All”

OIDEI director, Ignasi Grau, was invited as a panelist to the side event “Experience-sharing on the Promotion of the Right to Education for All” organized by the Permanent Mission of Thailand. Among the panelists were also Sihasak Phuangketkeow (President of the Human Rights Council in 2011) and Yao Ydo (Director of UNESCO-IBE).

Reflecting on the conception of the right to education after WWII, Mr. Grau highlighted the trust of the international community in the human being. They were so confident in human nature that they acknowledged parents as the first educators, instead of the State. This led to Article 26.3 of the UDHR stating, “Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.” But where did this confidence and trust go? Mr. Grau explained the reasons for the decrease in trust and made suggestions on how this trust can be re-established.

Informal Consultation of the Resolution on the Right to Education

OIDEI followed the informal discussions of different resolutions and was particularly active in the informal discussions on the right to education where we advocated for a common good approach throughout the discussions.

From left to right: Ignasi Grau (OIDEI), Sihasak Phuangketkeow (President of the HRC) and Yao Ydo (UNESCO -IBE) during the side -event.





Josyane Zingg (OIDEI),

54TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Geneva (Switzerland), September/October 2023

Between the 11th of September and the 13th of October of 2023, the 54th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council has taken place, with contributions of OIDEI in relation to Human Rights' education; the protection of economic, social and cultural rights against the inequalities rising from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the digital revolution.

During the multiple sessions, and in a general manner, OIDEI has emphasized the role of the family and the cultural aspects when protecting the rights of the population, in particular those of children.

Oral statement During the Interactive Dialogue on OHCHR's Work on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in COVID-19 Recovery

As representative of OIDEI, Josyane Zingg has taken the floor to express OIDEI's concerns in relation to the regression of the realization of the right to education as a consequence of a multiplicity of factors, including the COVID-19 circumstances.

At the same time, Ms. Zingg highlighted the indispensable role of families when protecting the Right to education, stressing the evidence of their trustworthiness and reliability. Therefore, in addition to the new social contract presented by the Secretary-General, between governments and society, OIDEI has demanded an increase of the public institution's trust in parents.

Oral Statement During the General Debate item 3 on the Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

In this Oral statement, Mayca San Andrés, as the representative of OIDEI, has underlined the importance, on this fifth phase of the World Program for Human Rights Education, of including those sectors of society that had been excluded during the last four phases of the program.

Moreover, OIDEI's aims to focus on the cultural approach to education as a Human Right have been showcased. In this sense, culture, race and religion of each person would be taken into account, searching for the respect of the multiplicity of identities that coexist in today's society.

Human Rights Council Panel Discussion on Cyberbullying against Children

The report presented during the roundtable of the Human Rights Council on cyberbullying against children outlines the developmental opportunities that digitization offers to children, but also acknowledges the various dangers associated with the digital world. In this way, it recognizes the negative impact of cyberbullying and the need to protect children against its increasing expansion, as well as the necessity of implementing the Declaration of the Rights of the Child at all levels.

OIDEL contributed to this discussion by emphasizing the importance of considering the role of parents as allies in this challenge. Similarly, it encouraged studying the intersectionality of the bullying problem with other issues linked to digitization.

Informal Consultations on Draft Resolutions

During the five-week sesión of the Human Rights Council, OIDEL followed several resolutions, including three on education and one on the family.

◆ HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: SUBSIDIARY BODIES

FIFTH INTERSESSIONAL MEETING ON HRC AND AGENDA 2030

Geneva (Switzerland), January 19

Once a year, the OHCHR calls for an “Intersessional meeting of the Human Rights Council on Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda”. This year, the meeting was titled “Overcoming multiple crises: realising the SDGs through a human rights enhancing economy” and focused, among others, on SDG 17 which foresees multi-stakeholder partnerships for the achievement of all SDGs, including SDG 4.



SDG 4 wants “quality education”. Josyane Zingg took the floor on behalf of OIDEL to explain that no homogeneous approach will lead to “quality education” for all. Instead, education has to be adaptable to the cultural background of the child. Therefore, in multi-stakeholder partnerships for the achievement of SDG 4, parents and communities play a crucial role. They must be included and listened to, and trusted in decision-making processes concerning education.

We also noted that such partnerships for the achievement of SDG 4 have to be dynamic. Since communities are always changing and in constant dialogue with each other, a multi-stakeholder partnership in education has to be continually evolving as do the stakeholder communities.



Mayca San Andrés (OIDEL)

OHCHR WORKSHOP ON INEQUALITIES IN PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Geneva (Switzerland), February 6 - 8

From February 6th to 8th, the OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) organized a three-day workshop to bring together key stakeholders to discuss practical ways to improve and strengthen the promotion and protection of economic, social, and cultural rights in the context of combating inequalities in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

The meeting consisted of a high-level opening session, followed by six roundtable discussions and a closing session. In the six roundtable discussions, initial presentations by panelists were followed by interventions from permanent missions and civil society. OIDEL participated with two oral statements in the second and fourth sessions.

The second session encouraged participants to critically reflect on the progress, challenges, and future of economic, social, and cultural rights. Josyane Zingg, on behalf of OIDEL, explained the advances and challenges in the future of the right to education. She emphasized an increase in trust towards parents - by States - during the pandemic and its subsequent decline, problematic from a human rights perspective.

Mayca San Andrés intervened on behalf of OIDEL in the fourth session, whose theme was "Investing in social spending and addressing inequalities to advance towards greater realization of economic, social, and cultural rights." She welcomed and reaffirmed resolution 49/19 adopted by the Human Rights Council and its emphasis on the important role of civil society in promoting the realization of the right to education.

SOCIAL FORUM OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Geneva (Switzerland), November 2 - 3 November

The Social Forum of the Human Rights Council is an annual meeting with the aim of promoting a dialogue with contributions from civil society, representatives of member States and intergovernmental organisations.

Each annual meeting focuses on a different topic related to social cohesion based on social justice, equity and solidarity and approaching globalisation from a social dimension.

This year's Social Forum focused on the Contribution of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) to the promotion of Human Rights, Including in the Context of Post-Pandemic Recovery. OIDEL participated by submitting two oral statements.

Oral Statement during the Interactive Dialogue on "the Triple Planetary Crisis: The Contribution of STI and Science-Based Decision-Making to the Rights of Present and Future Generations".

In this oral statement, Claudia Verdesoto as representative of OIDEL, points out the multiple threads in relation to digitalisation for the development and protection of children's rights. Simultaneously, she highlights the importance of parents when protecting the rights of children, describing their role as indispensable.

OIDEL encourages the international community to take into account families' concerns and interests by referring to article 5 of the UN Covenant on the Rights of the Child.

Oral Statement during the Interactive Dialogue on "the Challenges and Risks from New and Emerging Technologies - STI and Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Democracy and Development".

As representative of OIDEL, Josyane Zingg expresses one challenge that is sometimes not fully considered when talking about new technologies: the little accountability required of big tech companies when they distribute screens to children.

Moreover, Ms. Zingg stresses the importance of maintaining a holistic approach when analysing and looking for possible solutions to this problem, requesting the international community to demand responsibility and accountability from the said companies.



◆ UNESCO

SYMPOSIUM: “RETHINKING OUR FUTURES TOGETHER: IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION”

Paris (France), May 24

This symposium was co-organized by OIDEL and UNESCO and took place on the campus of the University of Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne. The event was introduced by Ms. Christine Neau-Ledu, President of the University, Mr. Gwng Chol Chang, Chief of the Section for Educational Policies of UNESCO, and Ignasi Grau, Director of OIDEL. Ms. Neau-Ledu welcomed everyone to Sorbonne University and invited the speakers to reflect on the link between identity and coexistence. Mr. Chang thanked OIDEL for organizing this symposium and welcomed all speakers. Mr. Grau emphasized that identity allows us to find answers to existential problems of a moral nature, belonging, and solidarity. If we do not reflect on how education becomes a tool for belonging and if we denigrate those that exist, the new generations will look for these references on the internet and at the margins of society.

The first round table “Identity and education: what are we talking about and what is the link between the two?” was moderated by mathematician and former Sorbonne president, Mr. Georges Haddad moderated this panel. The speakers were Mr. Gwng Chol Chang, Chief of the Education Policy Section at UNESCO, Mr. Kishore Singh, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Mr. Enrico Letta, former Italian Prime Minister and Mr. Giuseppe Tognon, Professor at LUMSA and former Minister of Higher Education in Italy. Mr. Chang emphasized that quality education is education that is responsive to the needs and dispositions of the child. As stated in article 5 of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, “all persons are entitled to quality education and training that fully respect their cultural identity”. Without diversity in education, this goal cannot be achieved.

Mr. Singh spoke about the crisis of humanity and values and its impact on educational policies. A reflection on identity in education requires a reflection on values.

Mr. Letta reflected on key notions for a holistic consideration of identity as a flexible and changing reality. Thus education must necessarily take into account coexistence, polarization, the role of the teacher, and the characteristics of the learner. Furthermore, in the current world, we have to take into consideration social networks and the digital space.

Mr. Tognon concluded the first panel by reflecting on the role of knowledge and ignorance in the construction of identity.

From left to right: Giuseppe Tognon (Professor at LUMSA), Georges Haddad (Professor at Sorbonne University), Enrico Letta (Former Prime Minister of Italy), Gwang Chol Chang (UNESCO) and Kishore Singh (Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education).



The second panel was entitled “Clues to think about identity in education in a plural world?”. Claire de Lavernette, OIDEI representative to the Council of Europe, moderated this panel. The speakers were Conrad Hugues, director of Ecolint, the first international school in history, Arja Krauchenberg, former president of the European Parents Association, and Pierre Marsollier, delegate general for political relations at the General Secretariat of French Catholic Education.

Mr. Hugues emphasized how diversity and interculturality are experienced naturally at Ecolint and he proposed listening to students as a cornerstone of this success.

Mme. Krauchenberg pointed to the paradox of using the plural in discussions about identities, diversities, and pluralisms, while we refer to education in the singular. She also emphasized the importance of adapting education to the needs of the child and the central role of the family and parents as the interlocutors of these needs.

Mr. Marsollier noted the importance of distinguishing between student identity and school identity. In this sense, the approach to identity must go beyond neutrality.

In his closing speech, OIDEI director Ignasi Grau referred to the former director of OIDEI, Alfred Fernández, who had a great passion for the topic discussed at the symposium. Grau thanked all the speakers for their contributions and concluded by recalling Alfred’s quote, which presides over the OIDEI offices: “A denial of education is a denial of humanity”.

42ND SESSION OF GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO

Paris (France), November 7 - 22

The General Conference of UNESCO takes place every two years and is responsible for outlining programs, budgets and electing Executive Board Members, as well as appointing the UNESCO’s Director-General. Member and Associated States, non-Member State observers, International Organizations and NGOs gather to shape UNESCO’s policies and core strategies. In this 42nd Session of the General Conference, some of the special meetings included “(Re)thinking the commons, Acting Together”, Education for Peace or the Youth Forum.

Draft Revised 1974 Recommendations

During the session, the Education Commission gathered from the 8th to the 11th of November. For the Commission’s meeting, the Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay submitted a draft of the revised Recommendation of 1974 about “Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”. The purpose of this revision was to update the 1974 Recommendations taking into account global and educational transformations to align the text with the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education and to integrate education’s role in promoting human rights, fundamental freedoms, global peace, international understanding, and sustainable development.



OIDEI, represented by Josyane Zingg, engaged in the discussion around the revision of the 1974 Recommendation by highlighting the lack of reference to parental rights. The protection of parental rights and the recognition of their responsibilities are vital for the realization of the right to education, also when it comes to education for international understanding, cooperation, and peace. The new recommendations were approved with unanimity of the Member States.

Additionally, OIDEI took the opportunity of the General Conference to have a constructive meeting with the Education Policy Section at UNESCO, resuming past relations and opening new dialogue and cooperation opportunities.

OIDEL'S PARTICIPATION IN UNESCO'S FORMAL DIALOGUE ON THE INITIATIVE ON THE EVOLVING RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Paris (France), December 14

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As part of our ongoing commitment to advocating for the rights and freedoms in education, OIDEL actively participated in the UNESCO's Formal Dialogue on the Right to Education, held on 14

December 2023. This significant event, organized in collaboration with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education and the OHCHR, marked a vital contribution to the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 63rd anniversary of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education. Hosted at UNESCO Headquarters and online, the dialogue brought together a diverse group of country representatives, education experts, youth, and various stakeholders. The aim of the future was to think the next steps from a human rights perspective regarding the right to education.

At this forum, OIDEL emphasized the importance of addressing the educational needs of cultural non-mainstream minorities, including indigenous peoples. Recognizing the increasing diversity of our world, the director of OIDEL highlighted the necessity for education systems that respect and cater to different cultural backgrounds and moral convictions. Our intervention focused on the critical role of pluralistic education systems where parents have the freedom to choose an education aligned with their cultural and moral values. Ignasi Grau stressed the importance of acknowledging non-state entities' rights to establish non-governmental schools, as recognized in major international human rights conventions.

A significant point of Grau's intervention was the concern over equitable funding. OIDEL emphasized that without access to public funding, families from non-mainstream minorities, particularly those with limited income, face barriers in choosing an acceptable and adaptable education for their children. Referencing the policy-oriented research paper discussed at the event, we expressed concerns over recommendations that could lead to increased inequity, particularly affecting non-governmental schools, such as faith-based institutions or those offering education from unique cultural or pedagogical perspectives.

Citing examples from the Netherlands, Slovenia, and recent resolutions from the EU Parliament, OIDEL underscored the importance of legal frameworks and financial support for all categories of schools, including not-for-profit private schools.

This event served OIDEL to advocate for accountability and clear legal conditions for non-state schools but cautioned against policies that limit funding access and, consequently, educational choices for low-income minority families.





From left to right: Jakub Dvorak (ECNAIS), Rodrigo Melo (ECNAIS), Nuno Melo (MEP of EPP) and Ignasi Grau (OIDEL).

1.1.2 EUROPEAN UNION

EMIE ANNUAL MEETING AND POLICY EVENT ON THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Brussels (Belgium), May 31

EMIE (European Meeting of Independent Education) is an informal European network that brings together organizations and actors from civil society concerned with educational pluralism. Its annual meeting aims to improve communication and share best practices among different stakeholders collaborating in the defense of educational freedom in Europe.

During the annual meeting, two common challenges affecting European non-state schools were highlighted: lack of funding and state interference in the curriculum, often with an ideological agenda. For example, in Cyprus, there are non-state schools that receive no state assistance, placing the entire burden of children's education costs on their parents. The same situation exists in Italy, where the number of students in private schools has declined from 20% to 7% in recent years. In these places, educational freedom is considered a privilege rather than a right. Conversely, independent schools in the Netherlands have a different experience as they are fully subsidized by the state. However, this entails increasing demands from the government to change the curricula of private schools, posing a significant challenge to educational freedom in that country.

In the afternoon, a political event titled "The Role of Independent Schools in the Future of Europe" took place in the European Parliament. This event was jointly organized by the European People's Party, OIDEL, ECNAIS, and EMIE. The hosting MEP, Nuno Melo (Portugal), opened the event by reminding that children are the parents' offspring, not the state's. In the same panel, Rodrigo Melo (ECNAIS) pointed out that with 20 million students in independent education, they constitute a minority in Europe, but an important one. Ignasi Grau (OIDEL) added that, although education is not a competence of the EU, it is impacted by decisions made in different EU mechanisms that affect national education policies. Jakub Dvorak (ECNAIS) concluded the first panel with an insightful case study on Czech independent schools. The second panel consisted of MEP Michaela Sojdrova (Czech Republic), MEP Victor Negrescu (Romania), Andrei Frank (LLL), and Martyn Rawson (ECSWE), who discussed the contribution of independent schools to commitment, well-being, and achievements for all in the EU.

CONFERENCE: THINK TANK CENTRAL - ADVANCING FREEDOM

Madrid (Spain), September 21 - 22



From left to right: Anna Wellisz, Ignasi Grau and Cynthia Bader

OIDEL has been invited to participate in the annual meeting of New Direction, a Think Tank linked to the Parliamentary Group of Conservatives and Reformists of the European Parliament. This year it took place in the facilities of the CEU San Pablo University in Madrid.

In this third edition of the meeting, the traditional conventional panels were replaced by round tables, in order to maximise the participation of all attendees. The topics discussed included cultural issues, the security of a free society, and the education of the next generation.

On the first day, Ignasi Grau, Director of OIDEL had the opportunity to briefly present OIDEL's mission and projects during the Coalition Lunch. The following day, OIDEL moderated the round table on education in which the following speakers participated: Cynthia Bader (CEB Teaching and Learning), Gonzalo Sanz-Magallón (CEU-CEFAS) and Anna Wellisz (Edmund Burke Foundation). In his introduction, Ignasi Grau presented the challenges and possibilities in Western debates regarding academic freedom. The focus of the discussion was the US initiatives in the field of educational freedom. Questions were raised about their transferability to Europe and how they would benefit parents as the cornerstones of educational policies.

The event allowed OIDEL to have interesting exchanges with various experts. In addition, several foundations and think tanks linked to political parties showed great interest in OIDEL's Freedom of Education Index.



1.2. EVENTS ORGANIZED

JOINT CEU-CEFAS – OIDEI REPORT PRESENTATION: 'FREEDOM OF EDUCATION IN THE WORLD: ENHANCING FACTORS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH EQUITY'

Madrid (Spain), December 12

Comparing data from various previous editions of OIDEI's Freedom of Education Index with other indicators, such as the rule of law or other liberties, economics professors Gonzalo Sanz-Magallón and Oriana Zurga published the report 'The Freedom of Education in the World: Enhancing Factors and Relationship with Equity'.



Ignasi Grau (OIDEI),

Interestingly, the report found that freedom of education, when accompanied by public resources, is a powerful tool for reducing inequalities and increasing social cohesion. Gonzalo Sanz-Magallón presented the findings of this research project at the Aula Magna of the University CEU San Pablo of Madrid.

The event was opened by the General Director of the San Pablo CEU University Foundation, Javier Tello, who reminded attendees of his institution's commitment to the right and freedom of education. Next, the director of OIDEI, Ignasi Grau, spoke to emphasize the importance of such work in the development of educational policies.

The colloquium was followed by a debate moderated by José María Moya, the director of the newspaper *Magisterio*. Participants in this debate included the president of CECE (Confederación Española de Centros de Enseñanza), Alfonso Aguiló; the general secretary of Escuelas Católicas España, Luís Centeno; and the president of the European Society and Education Foundation, Miguel Ángel Sancho.



Javier Tello (President of CEU Foundation)

1.3. EVENTS IN WHICH OIDEL HAS PARTICIPATED IN

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE AND REFORM CONFERENCE (ISCRC)

Fort Lauderdale (USA), January 13 - 16

The ISCRC is probably the most important gathering of scholars interested in freedom of education. Hundreds of scholars and other stakeholders from around the world discuss for four days the latest research and important events. OIDEL was represented by our president, Diego Barroso, and our director, Ignasi Grau.

Mr. Grau together with professor TJ d'Agostino organized a conversation around the critical subject "The Battle of our Children's Minds: A Comparative exploration of Debates on Parents' Rights, Children's rights and Human Rights". We showed how cultural, philosophical, and anthropological changes have influenced the conversation on parental rights, both on the national and international levels.



Ignasi Grau during his presentation.

Moreover, we suggested frameworks for educational discussions to help overcome the current polarization, for instance, in the cultural approach. The presentation was followed by vivid discussions with the audience.

Through this conference, we received new perspectives and a fresh understanding of the challenges of parents around the world. And we got to meet and connect with other civil society organizations focused on the freedom of education.

The next edition of this conference will take place in January 2024 in Madrid.

CONFERENCE ON THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE SCHOOL

Barcelona (Spain), March 2

The Universitat Abat Oliba and the Sindicat de Pares have organized at the headquarters of the university a conference to talk about the right to choose school.

The conference was divided into three parts. First, Dr. Ada Garriga made a speech presenting the general framework of the right to education and parental freedom. Dr. Garriga made a general review of the human rights framework, going through the international and European human rights instruments, reviewing the Spanish constitutional framework, reviewing the Spanish legislation and ending with its implementation in the Catalan framework.





From left to right: Mònica Nadal (Fundació Bofill), Josep Manuel Prats (FAPEL), Pere Poy (moderator) and Miquel Mateo (FECC) and Ignasi Grau (OIDEL).

Secondly, there was a round table moderated by Pere Poy. Ignasi Grau (director of OIDEL) participated in this round table, together with Miquel Mateo (FECC), Josep Manuel Prats (FAPEL) and Mònica Nadal (Fundació Bofill). Ignasi Grau's presentation consisted of the implications of education being a human right, in its aims and implementation, showing that parents are an essential pillar of its full realization. The round table was followed by an exchange of ideas among the different speakers.

Finally, the last round table consisted of a debate in which representatives of a significant part of the parties with parliamentary representation participated.

CONFERENCE "FREEDOM OF EDUCATION IN SPAIN - WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE SHOULD BE"

Seville (Spain), March 16

OIDEL participated in the session organized by CEU-CEFAS and the San Pablo Andalucía Foundation entitled "Freedom of education in Spain - Where we are and where we should be". The session took place at the headquarters of the San Pablo Andalucía CEU Foundation in Seville. The speakers at the session were Ignasi Grau, director of OIDEL, and Jesús Muñoz de Priego Alvear, a lawyer specialized in Education Law. The event was introduced by the Academic Secretary of CEU-CEFAS and closed by the National Councilor of the ACdP Federico Jiménez Cisneros.

The director of OIDEL presented from a theoretical and human rights perspective why it was explicitly recognized parents in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, why this recognition is still relevant today and what is the nature of this right. Ignasi Grau also explained why, in view of the current challenges, freedom of education is still relevant.

The presentation of the lawyer Muñoz de Priego focused on the growing challenges to this freedom in Spain. For OIDEL this meeting was interesting as it allows us to strengthen our collaboration with the CEU Foundation and CEU-CEFAS in particular.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SWISS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Zurich (Switzerland), May 29

Upon becoming a member of OIDEI this year, the Swiss Catholic Schools invited us to their general assembly in Zurich to present our organization and the freedom of education from an international perspective. The 44 members and associated members of Swiss Catholic Schools are Catholic institutions and organizations of upbringing and education in Switzerland and Liechtenstein.



Josyane Zingg during the presentation.

After explaining our work in detail, Josyane Zingg first explained the main international instruments, giving special attention to those relevant to Switzerland. In that context, she also introduced the Freedom of Education Index (FEI), a major research project of OIDEI. Second, she explained the main challenges we currently see in freedom of education discussions, namely privatization and the autonomy of the child.

The presentation was received with great interest and stirred lively conversations. We thank the Swiss Catholic Schools for their invitation and for deciding to support us in our efforts of promoting and protecting the right to education and freedom of education.

SYMPOSIUM ON THE ORIGINS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND ON THE BIRTH OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF GENEVA.

Geneva (Switzerland), April 1 - 2

Next year marks the 100th anniversary of the International School of Geneva, better known as ECOLINT. ECOLINT is the first international school in the modern world. Its creation goes hand in hand with the establishment of the League of Nations and the arrival of international civil servants in Geneva. That school, which started with 8 students and three professors, now has three campuses around Geneva with thousands of students from different backgrounds. Among its most illustrious students is, for example, Indira Gandhi.

The symposium on the origins and future of international education and the birth of the International School of Geneva began with a historical presentation of the school by Alejandro Rodriguez-Goivo (Archivist of the School's Foundation). It was followed by sessions on ECOLINT's participation in the construction of the International Baccalaureate or the influence of the New Education and its pedagogues in the beginnings of ECOLINT. Among the speakers were Michael Aeschliman, Joost Raessens, Federico Ferretti, Conan de Wilde, Ian Hill, and Conrad Hughes.



OIDEL's director Ignasi Grau made a presentation on the future of education in a world dominated by artificial intelligence and the immediacy of technology. Grau's presentation served to encourage ECOLINT to claim an education based on knowledge and trust in the educational community, including parents.

WORKSHOP: EDUCATIONAL PLURALISM IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: LEGAL OVERVIEWS AND THE ROLE OF FAITH-BASED ACTORS

Santiago of Chile (Chilie, May 9 - 10

The Pontifical Catholic University of Chile organized a two-day workshop on "Educational Pluralism in Latin America and the Caribbean: comparative legal overviews and the role of faith-based actors". Its purpose was to show, comment and discuss the results of the research projects carried out by the UC Law and Religion Center in conjunction with the School of Law of the University of Notre Dame (USA) and the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, led by Professors Nicole Stelle Garnett (Notre Dame) and Ana Maria Celis (UC Law).

The meeting was attended by 20 professors and/or professional experts in the areas of law and education from 12 countries in the region. It was an interdisciplinary and interreligious activity, since the Catholic, Evangelical and Adventist Churches also participated.

Ignasi Grau, director of OIDEL, was invited as an expert to present the nature of the discussions around educational pluralism in international organizations. Grau showed how despite strong protection of parental rights in legally binding treaties, these rights were being emptied of content through soft law initiatives. The purpose of this session was to provide adequate information on the areas of legal regulation of parental rights; religious freedom and equality and non-discrimination; autonomy; public funding, religious classes, among others, in Latin American and Caribbean countries. In this sense, part of OIDEL's role was to bring an international perspective to the different discussions.



Central of the PUCCh campus where the colloquium took place.



SEMINAR: “LOCALIZING, DECOLONIZING OR GLOBALIZING THE CURRICULUM”

Geneva (Switzerland), 7 June

The University of Geneva, in collaboration with ERDIE (Équipe de Recherche en Dimensions Internationales de l'Éducation), Abdou Moumouni University and the Chizzolini Foundation, successfully organized a seminar on the topic of “Localizing, decolonizing or globalizing the curriculum” on June 7, 2023. OIDEI (Organisation Internationale pour le Droit à l'Éducation et la Liberté d'Enseignement) actively participated in this event, which took place at the University of Geneva.

The seminar was introduced by Mrs. Gandolfi, President of the Chizzolini Foundation, who presented a project in Niger to create a school that values African culture and indigenous values.

Mr. Maulini, Director of the Institut Universitaire de Formation des Enseignants at the University of Geneva, then spoke about the tension between universalism and localism in education. He raised questions about the content taught in schools and its relevance to students' needs, as well as the need to share common knowledge to inform debates and address global challenges.

Next, Mr. Sagayar and Mr. Adamou, from Abdou Moumouni University in Niger, spoke about the need to rethink education from an African perspective. They emphasized the importance of collective work and shared vision in rethinking education. They also emphasized the role of educational consultants in building the capacity of teachers in the field.

Immediately after, Mr. Akkari, Professor of International Dimensions of Education at the University of Geneva, mentioned his involvement in writing the book “Repenser l'éducation : alternatives pédagogiques du Sud” (2021). He addressed the issue of intercultural translation and the importance of not colonizing concepts by translating them from one culture to another.

Mr. Dasen, Honorary Professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Geneva, then presented the book “Repenser l'éducation : alternatives pédagogiques du Sud” and stressed the importance of decolonizing minds and knowledge, as well as other publications on education in Africa. He questioned the relevance of international education policies to local cultural realities.

In the roundtable discussion that followed, Mr. Mounkaila, a lecturer in Geography at the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Abdou Moumouni University in Niamey, Mr. Rizzi, a collaborator of the Chizzolini Foundation, Mr. Grau Callizo, Director of OIDEI, and Mr. Ignace, Editor-in-Chief of the Globethics Foundation in Geneva, discussed their actions on globalization, decolonization, or relocalization of knowledge in education. The roundtable underscored the importance of reconciling the local and the global in education and promoting stakeholder participation in education policy making and identity formation. Mr. Grau Callizo emphasized that for quality education that respects the dignity of each individual, it is essential to take cultural identity into account and listen to stakeholders, especially parents.

Comments from the audience underscored the debates about identities, norms, and the construction of meaning, as well as the importance of rethinking the values taught in schools to reflect cultural diversity and promote the participation of all.



CONFERENCE: “THE CULTURE OF PLURALISM AND INCLUSION IN EDUCATION – THE INTEGRATION OF EUROPEAN VALUES IN THE ALBANIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM”

Tirana (Albania), December 6

The main purpose of this conference organized by Albanian Catholic Education (KKEKSH) was to address the challenges education faces in Albania from a European perspective. The country has a need to develop legislative tools and a political culture that encourages greater openness and transparency in order to achieve a more inclusive education system. The conference sought to vindicate educational pluralism not only for Catholic schools but also for diverse religious, philosophical and educational options present in Albania.

The event was opened by the Archbishop of Tirana-Durres, Monsignor Arjan Dodaj, followed by interventions by the President of the Albanian Parliament, Mrs. Lindita Nikolla, and the National Coordinator of Albanian Catholic Education, Sister Teuta Buka.



As a speaker at the event, Ignasi Grau, director of OIDEL, compared educational pluralism in Albania with that of other European Union countries. Grau stressed that constitutional recognition of freedom of education and public financial support for parents to choose their children's education are common practices in the EU. The presentation emphasized that providing spaces of trust for citizens, including in the field of education, is essential feature of democracy

Other prominent speakers included Albania's Deputy Minister of Education, Mrs. Nina Guga; Professor Jan de Groof; UNICEF Albania's Director of Education, Mrs. Ermelinda Gjocaj; and Soft Tulip's Director, Mr. Eric Bloemkolk.

OIDEL took this opportunity to exchange challenges and opportunities at the international level with various leaders in Albanian education.

100TH CEEC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Vilnius (Lithuania) April 21 - 22

The CEEC (European Committee for Catholic Education) brings together all the European national associations of Catholic education. The CEEC meetings serve to reflect on common challenges the schools are facing and to discuss shared educational experiences.

OIDEL has been working closely with the CEEC for many years. We are regularly invited to CEEC meetings to present updates on current international discussions on the freedom of education and the rights of parents. This time we took the opportunity to also present OIDEL's upcoming projects.

The visit to Lithuania served to deepen our understanding of the challenges and opportunities of educational freedom in Lithuania. Catholic schools serve more than 13,000 students in this country and receive state funding for teachers' salaries and management costs.

2 - TRAININGS

2.1 SUMMER UNIVERSITY "HUMAN RIGHTS, EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABILITY"	23
2.2 GOVERNANCE AND WORKING METHODS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LA RIOJA	24



2.1 SUMMER UNIVERSITY "HUMAN RIGHTS, EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABILITY"

Geneva (Switzerland), June 12 – 14

The Summer University "Human Rights, Education and Sustainability" was organized by OIDEL in collaboration with ERDIE - University of Geneva. The aim of the course was to promote dialogue, share knowledge and empower participants to make a sustainable contribution to the promotion of human rights through education. The program included a variety of sessions, workshops and roundtables led by renowned experts in the field.

The first day was devoted to understanding how the main international human rights mechanisms work. Experts from the UN such as the OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) or the BIE-UNESCO (International Bureau of Education - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) led various sessions. At the end of the day, the group visited different places in Geneva.



Participants of the Summer University "Human Rights, Education and Sustainability".

The second day's sessions focused on various aspects of the right to education, covering a variety of topics such as education in emergencies, children's rights, educational pluralism, and early childhood care, education in the Global South. On the final day, participants had the opportunity to attend a workshop explaining how informal discussions on draft resolutions take place at the UN. The workshop was led by a senior human rights advisor from the Permanent Mission of Israel. This interactive session provided valuable insights into the processes and dynamics involved in shaping international human rights initiatives. The course concluded with a tour of the UN Archives and a visit to the Palais des Nations, the headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva.

The course was attended by civil society representatives as well as master's students and doctoral students. Based on the positive feedback from participants, we can confirm that they gained valuable insights into the intersection of human rights, education, and sustainability and strengthened their commitment to a world where human rights are respected, quality education is available to all, and sustainability is a priority.

OIDEL hopes to organize a similar training next year.



2.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN LA RIOJA

Geneva (Switzerland), September 25 - 27

In this training we have made special emphasis on the tools, both practical and theoretical, necessary for the implementation of Agenda 2030. The execution of sustainable practices involves everyone. This year, in the fourth edition of the collaboration between the Government of La Rioja, the UNESCO Chair of the University of La Rioja, and Oidel, members of La Rioja's public sector have come together in Geneva to discuss a Human Rights approach to the Agenda 2030.



The topics discussed ranged from public-private collaboration and youth rights to the protection and defense of indigenous peoples. Some of the questions raised included the effect of artificial intelligence on the education system and the negotiations of a treaty regarding pandemics, among many others. Candidates visited Spain's Permanent Mission in Geneva where they had a chance to talk to the Ambassador and the UN Human Rights Council.



Participants of the training "Implementation of the 2030 SDG in La Rioja".



3 - PUBLICATIONS

3.1 OWN PUBLICATIONS 25

3.1.1 *“Repenser nos futurs ensemble: Identité, diversité et droit à l'éducation”* – in collaboration with UNESCO.

3.2 PUBLICATIONS IN SCIENTIFIC AND GENERAL JOURNALS 26

3.2.1 Cuadernos CEU CEFAS- Libertad de enseñanza y retos educativos – Capítulo: Los padres, un pilar para un pleno reconocimiento del derecho a la educación – Ignasi Grau

3.2.2 Revista Latinamericana de Derecho y Religión – Capítulo: “El pluralismo educativo: desafíos y discusiones internacionales. Las nuevas tendencias de soft-law”- Ignasi Grau & Mayca San Andrés



3.1 OWN PUBLICATIONS

25

3.1.1 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

SYMPOSIUM: "RETHINKING OUR FUTURES TOGETHER: IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION"

Paris (France), May 24

The conference "Rethinking our futures together: identity, diversity and the right to education" on May 24, 2023 at the University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, was organized by OIDEL in collaboration with UNESCO.

This conference focuses on the notions of identity and education, exploring their respective natures and examining the links between them. In addition, it evokes innovative perspectives aimed at rethinking how identity and education are conceptualized in a plural world.

The symposium is opened by G. C. Chang, head of UNESCO's Education Policy Section. He supports the right to education, integrating various forms of learning and promoting a new social contract. Following this, I. Grau, Director General of OIDEL, addressed issues related to education and concepts of identity, highlighting in particular their importance for children.

In the first round table, G. Haddad, K. Singh, E. Letta and G. Tognon discuss the connection between education and identity. Current educational challenges are examined. The digital divide and commoditization are discussed, and an inclusive approach is advocated. The current educational model is called into question, underlining the importance of recognizing human diversity.

During the second round table, C. Hughes, P. Masollier and A. Krauchenberg discussed diversity and inclusiveness in education, the need to reconcile diversity and universality, and the importance of thinking about education in the plural, with cooperation between stakeholders to adapt education systems to today's challenges.

These sessions diversified perspectives on the key themes of the symposium.



3.2 PUBLICATIONS IN SCIENTIFIC AND GENERAL JOURNALS

3.2.1 CEU CEFAS NOTEBOOKS

LIBERTAD DE ENSEÑANZA Y RETOS EDUCATIVOS – CAPÍTULO: LOS PADRES, UN PILAR PARA UN PLENO RECONOCIMIENTO DEL DERECHO A LA EDUCACIÓN – IGNASI GRAU

Autumn

The fifth issue of the CEFAS Notebook brings together papers from the education conferences held in Seville and Valencia over the past academic year.

In this issue, we find the papers "Parents, a pillar for full recognition of the right to education", which analyzes the legal recognition of freedom of education in international instruments and its relevance to understanding the tensions in current discussions on education.

You can consult the full report in Spanish at the following link:

<https://cefes.ceu.es/wp-content/uploads/Cuadernos-CEFAS-05-OK.pdf>



3.2.2 LATIN AMERICAN JOURNAL OF LAW AND RELIGION

VOL. 9 NÚM. 2 CAPÍTULO: “EL PLURALISMO EDUCATIVO: DESAFÍOS Y DISCUSIONES INTERNACIONALES. LAS NUEVAS TENDENCIAS DE SOFT-LAW”- IGNASI GRAU & MAYCA SAN ANDRÉS

December



The article presents the nature of discussions concerning educational pluralism in international bodies. After a wide-ranging discussion of the protection of parental rights to education in legally binding treaties, new initiatives likely to create soft law and redefine the content of human rights - and not just the right to education - in pursuit of new interests, or what are often referred to as "new rights", are outlined. The article offers an international approach to what is now a global phenomenon.

You can consult the full report in Spanish at the following link

<https://ojs.uc.cl/index.php/RLDR/issue/view/3013>



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Acknowledgements

Dear friends and partners,

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all those who have made our projects and initiatives possible over the past year. Your generosity has been the essential pillar supporting our actions, and your commitment strengthens our determination to work for the right to education and freedom of education worldwide.

Thank you so much for your invaluable support.

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