



**OIDEL**

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



**ACTIVITY REPORT  
2024**

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# ABOUT OI DEL

This activity report aims to give you insight into OI DEL's work in 2024. Although not exhaustive, it gives an account of our main achievements in the promotion of a full realization of the right to education.

For 40 years now, OI DEL has worked for the promotion of education as a fundamental human right. OI DEL 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.

OI DEL is a non-governmental organization specialized 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

Dear friends and collaborators,

OIDEI is a non-governmental organization specializing in the right to education and freedom of teaching, with consultative status at the United Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe.

Our goal is the full recognition of educational rights and freedoms in all countries, ensuring the participation of civil society and parents in education.

In recent years, our activity has remained steady, while the challenges we face continue to grow. The preparation of this annual activity report offers us a valuable opportunity to pause and reflect on the road we have traveled, as we continue our mission on the threshold of OIDEI's 40th anniversary.

Among the many achievements of 2024, we would like to highlight two in particular:

First, this year was marked by the release of the fifth edition of the Freedom of Education Index. This report has helped to shed light on this fragile freedom in forums such as the IBE-UNESCO and the Spanish Congress of Deputies, among others detailed in this document.

Second, we are pleased to celebrate the successful organization of the 2nd Summer University: Human Rights and Education, held in collaboration with the Human Rights Clinic of the Notre Dame University Law School and the ERDIE department of the Université de Genève.

In the following pages, you will find a detailed overview of our activities, including our work in international forums, publications, and training programs.

Thank you all for accompanying us on this shared journey.

IGNASI GRAU  
Director OIDEI





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## 1. ADVOCACY

### 1.1. United Nations

#### 1.1.1. Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council (HRC) is the main intergovernmental body of the United Nations responsible for addressing human rights issues. It meets regularly three times a year at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

Regarding the right to education, the Human Rights Council debates thematic reports (such as the right to education, cultural rights, and human rights education), country reports, and adopts resolutions of significant political relevance.

Below is a summary of the work carried out by OIDEL within the framework of these sessions.

##### 1.1.1.1. 55th regular session of the Human Rights Council Geneva (Switzerland), March-April 2024

The 55th session of the Human Rights Council began with a high-level debate featuring prominent figures such as António Guterres, UN Secretary-General; Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Santiago Peña Palacios, President of Paraguay, who participated via a video message.

Guterres emphasized the link between peace and human rights, highlighting the importance of the right to education, especially in terms of access for women and girls.

In this context, OIDEL contributed to discussions related to education and the rights of minority groups through an oral statement focused on strengthening the right to inclusive and equitable education. OIDEL also closely followed debates on the rights of the child, underlining the importance of ensuring the right of parents to choose education in accordance with their convictions.



Josyane Zingg  
Advocacy and Training Officer  
OIDEL



António Guterres UN Secretary-General at the 55<sup>th</sup>  
regular session of the Human Rights Council

#### **-Oral statement during the General Debate under Item 3 of the 55th session: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural.**

Josyane Zingg, Advocacy and Training Officer at OIDEL, spoke to highlight the importance of educational pluralism. While our pluralistic society forms one human family, each culture has its own unique history and follows different paths in the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness.

For this reason, a one-size-fits-all education system, where everyone receives the same education without regard for cultural and social differences, is insufficient to ensure true educational pluralism that respects the identity and values of each culture.



She also referred to a recent publication developed by OIDEL in collaboration with CEU–CEFAS, titled “Freedom of Education Index Correlations with Selected Indicators 2018.” The study concludes that engaging and trusting families and communities in building free and pluralistic education systems has a positive impact on both academic performance and social equity.

OIDEL called on the international community to recognize and trust parents as key actors in shaping national education

### **–Other parallel events and resolutions of the 55<sup>th</sup> session.**

OIDEL followed and contributed to several resolutions, including one on the rights of minorities and another on the rights of the child. We endorsed the oral statement of another NGO on the right to development.

#### **1.1.1.2. 56<sup>th</sup> regular session of the Human Rights Council**

*Palais des Nations, Geneva (Switzerland), 18th June–12th July, 2024*



Of the three regular annual sessions, the June session is the most important for OIDEL, as it places the strongest emphasis on education.

During this session, key resolutions on the right to education are negotiated, and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education presents her report.

### **–Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education.**

Following the presentation of the report by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Farida Shaheed, OIDEL organized a private meeting with her and the NGO Platform on the Right to Education. The objective was to explore how civil society can effectively support her mandate. The discussion focused on her latest report on academic freedom and offered valuable insights into her upcoming initiatives, including planned country visits and the preparation of her next report on artificial intelligence, which will be presented to the General Assembly in New York.

OIDEL also took an active part in two side events organized by UNESCO and the Special Rapporteur: one on academic freedom and another on the right to early childhood education. While the first event delved deeper into the content of the report on academic freedom, the second highlighted the long-term benefits of access to early childhood education, such as higher lifetime earnings, greater social inclusion, and improved learning outcomes in later stages of life.

### **–Other side events and resolutions of the 56<sup>th</sup> session.**

During this session, close attention was paid to resolutions related to education and family rights. OIDEL reaffirmed its commitment to human rights in the field of education and actively participated in the informal negotiations of the Resolution on Human Rights Education and Training, advocating for the inclusion of a cultural approach.

Additionally, we contributed to and participated in a side event organized by the International Office of Catholic Education (OIEC) entitled “Paralysis of the Education System: The Case of Haiti.” This event aimed to highlight and address the deteriorating educational situation in Haiti, exacerbated by the security crisis and the proliferation of armed groups.



### 1.1.1.3. 57th regular session of the Human Rights Council

Geneva (Switzerland), 9 September–11 October 2024

During the 57th session, OIDEL actively participated in discussions on the protection of children's rights, the role of education in promoting peace and tolerance, and the rights of families within the educational context.



María Sol Caballero  
Alumna of OIDEL's Second Summer University

#### **-Oral Statement during the panel on quality education for peace and tolerance for all children.**

During this panel, María Sol Caballero, representing OIDEL, emphasized the importance of children understanding their own identities. She pointed out that this understanding is key to developing skills such as negotiation and dialogue. She stressed that children from minority groups, when their identities are denied, are more vulnerable to isolation and manipulation.

Promoting a sense of belonging and valuing diversity contributes to an education that fosters peace and tolerance in our pluralistic societies.

#### **-Oral statement during the General Debate on the protection of the right to education.**

OIDEL representative Josyane Zingg highlighted that ensuring children's rights begins with building pluralistic education systems. Referring to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, she underscored the right of parents to choose their children's education.

While progress has been made since 2016, she pointed out that many families still face financial barriers to exercising this right. Zingg also raised concerns about growing polarization around educational pluralism, citing countries like North Korea, Cuba, Afghanistan, and North Macedonia, where educational pluralism is actively denied. This, she argued, reflects how some governments use education as a tool to suppress individual freedoms, making it all the more urgent to defend educational freedom. Her statement was based on data from the Freedom of Education Index 2023.

#### **-Panel on State obligations and the role of the family in the promotion of human rights.**

In the context of Human Rights Council Resolution 54/17, Josyane Zingg reaffirmed OIDEL's commitment to educational pluralism and parental rights. She emphasized that parents must be able to choose their children's education and stressed that the right to education fundamentally belongs to the child. Families, she noted, play a crucial role in making this right effective and must be supported in fulfilling that responsibility.



Josyane Zingg  
Advocacy and training officer  
OIDEL

#### **-OIDEL's ongoing commitment to education and human rights.**

Throughout the five-week session, OIDEL actively engaged in key resolutions related to education and family rights, reaffirming its dedication to human rights in the educational sphere and highlighting the essential role of families. OIDEL also played an active role in the informal negotiations on the Human Rights Council Resolution on Education and Training, promoting a cultural approach that respects and reflects diverse perspectives.



#### 1.1.1.4. Universal Periodic Review of Norway.

*Geneva (Switzerland), April–November 2024*

Kristne Friskolers Forbund (KFF) is the Norwegian Association of Christian Independent Schools. It represents around 150 Christian educational institutions across Norway, including primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges. Founded in 1988, KFF advocates for the rights and interests of christian schools and actively participates in educational policy discussions.



*Audun Raen Secretary General of Kristne Friskolers Forbund and Josyane Zingg Advocacy and training officer at OIDEL*

In 2023, the Norwegian Parliament passed a law that restricts the approval of independent schools if they are deemed to have a negative impact on public schools. This regulation has led to the rejection of several applications and, in practice, grants local authorities a veto power that limits the establishment of non-governmental educational institutions, undermining Norway's international human rights commitments.

In response to this situation, OIDEL, together with Kristne Friskolers Forbund (KFF) and seven other NGOs, submitted a report to Norway's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), highlighting the law's implications and offering recommendations to safeguard the right to education.

The 4th of November, during Norway's review, both the Permanent Missions of Netherlands and Thailand presented OIDEL's recommendation before the Human Rights Council. This international support marks a significant step forward in defending educational freedom and serves as a key instrument to advocate for reforms to Norway's Independent Schools Act.

#### 1.1.1.5. Collaboration and follow-up on the visit of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education to the United States.

*United States 29th April–10th May 2024*

The Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, invited by the U.S. administration under President Joe Biden, conducted an official visit to the United States to assess both the strengths and challenges in the implementation of the right to education.

During her visit, the Special Rapporteur met with civil society representatives, academics, government officials, and policymakers. Farida Shaheed traveled to Washington, D.C., as well as the states of Indiana and Colorado.

OIDEL closely followed the visit and facilitated her engagement with several education experts, including Ashley Berner (Director of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy), Christy Wolfe (Senior Vice President at the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and a member of OIDEL's Executive Committee), Leslie Hiner (EdChoice), and Nicole Garnett and Diane Desierto (University of Notre Dame). The Special Rapporteur also visited charter schools in underprivileged areas of Indiana.

The 6<sup>th</sup> of May, the Global Human Rights Clinic at the University of Notre Dame hosted a seminar in Indiana with the Special Rapporteur to introduce her to the work of non-governmental actors. The Director of OIDEL was invited to participate in this session by the university.

The report from this visit will be published and presented at the 59th session of the Human Rights Council, scheduled for June 2025.



*Farida Shaheed  
Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education*



## 1.1.2. Subsidiary Bodies of the Human Rights Council

### 1.1.1.1. Social Forum

#### **-OIDEI Advocates for Public Funding of Non-Governmental Education at the United Nations Social Forum.**

*Geneva (Switzerland), 31st October–1st November 2024*

The Social Forum is an annual meeting convened by the Human Rights Council. It provides a unique space for dialogue among civil society, Member State representatives, and intergovernmental organizations on a theme selected by the Council. This year's focus was on the contribution of development financing to the advancement of human rights for all.

During her intervention, Josyane Zingg, representing OIDEI, emphasized the connection between funding, development, and self-determination in the context of defending freedom of education. She argued that public funding of non-governmental education is essential to guarantee the right to self-determination, particularly for minority groups.

She highlighted that, according to the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development, the right to self-determination is inherent to the right to development. In the field of education, this principle is reflected through the freedom of education. Therefore, if States are truly committed to development financing, they must also be committed to financing educational pluralism.

### 1.1.2.2. Forum on Minority Issues

#### **-Participation in the United Nations Minority Issues Expert Panel.**

*Geneva (Switzerland), 28th–29th November 2024*

The Forum on Minority Issues is a key platform for dialogue and cooperation on the rights of national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities. Held annually, the Forum brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including States, regional organizations, NGOs, academics, and experts.

At its 17th session, held in November 2024, discussions focused on current challenges and best practices to strengthen the representation of minorities in public life, with the aim of advancing effective solutions for their inclusion and participation.

OIDEI's Director, Ignasi Grau, was invited to speak on a panel dedicated to the representation of minorities in education, alongside Jacqueline Hatch, Co-Director of the Refugee Educational Lab (REAL), and David Smith, Professor at the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Glasgow.

The panel explored how education can support students from minority backgrounds and the importance of involving these communities in shaping education policies. In his remarks, Ignasi Grau stressed that while much attention is often given to how minorities are represented, it is even more critical to ensure that the so-called "common" content does not conflict with the ethos of the communities exposed to it. He emphasized the need for minority groups to be actively involved in shaping what is considered common, so they can fully and equally participate in shared societal values and symbols.

The panel was followed by an interactive dialogue, where civil society and State representatives raised additional concerns regarding minority representation in education, particularly around mother tongue instruction, exclusion and discrimination, and the lack of meaningful consultation in public education policy.



### 1.1.3. UNESCO

#### 1.1.3.1. UNESCO World Conference on Culture and Arts Education.

*Abu Dhabi (UAE), 13th–15th February 2024*



*Josyane Zingg  
Advocacy and training officer OIDEL*

The UNESCO World Conference on Culture and Arts Education (WCCAE) brought together ministers, UN agencies, and UNESCO partners, including OIDEL, to share best practices and innovative ideas in the field of cultural and arts education. All sessions and side events were organized in alignment with the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education, which was officially adopted on the final day of the conference.

Speaking during the thematic session titled “Quality and Relevant Lifelong and Life-wide Learning, through and with Cultural Diversity”, Josyane Zingg, on behalf of OIDEL, emphasized the value of diverse forms of cultural education as meaningful modes of learning throughout different stages of life.

She also highlighted the central role of parents as transmitters of contextual and meaningful cultural education, especially during the early years of a child’s development. For this reason, she stressed the importance of involving families in all stages of the decision-making processes that shape Cultural and Arts Education policies.

#### 1.1.3.2. 4th Geneva Dialogue on human rights in relation to the right to education.

*Geneva (Switzerland), June 2024*

The fourth edition of the Geneva Dialogue on Human Rights took place at the International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO), with the right to education as the central theme.

The event was co-organized by the Swiss Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO, L’Université de Genève, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the REGARD network.

More than 40 experts from the United Nations, NGOs, academia, and the private sector gathered to analyze current trends and propose strategies to address key challenges such as privatization, digitalization, and crisis situations affecting education.

Representing OIDEL, Ignasi Grau actively participated in the discussions, where he underscored the essential role of parents in the full realization of the right to education.

Ashley Berner, a member of OIDEL’s Executive Committee, also contributed by highlighting the need to integrate pluralism as a structural element within educational frameworks.



*Working session  
during the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Dialogue on Human Rights*





### 1.1.3.3. 1st UNESCO Forum on Private Supplementary Tutoring.

Paris (France), 28th–29th October 2024

UNESCO headquarters hosted the forum “Private Supplementary Tutoring: A Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue for the Common Good”, which focused on the growing phenomenon of private supplementary education.

Throughout the event, participants emphasized that private tutoring should not be viewed solely as a problem, but rather as a symptom of systemic shortcomings and insufficient funding for non-governmental schools. In its intervention, OIDEL highlighted the link between educational quality, equity, and affordability for families.

Among its proposals, OIDEL stressed the need to invest in strengthening education systems by hiring qualified teachers, updating curricula, and improving resource allocation. The organization also underlined the importance of implementing regular national assessments to identify learning gaps and reduce reliance on external tutoring, as well as the urgency of reinforcing parental engagement in collaboration with schools and public authorities.

## 1.2. European Union

### 1.2.1. European Parliament

#### 1.2.1.1. Seminar at the European Parliament: “Educational Pluralism: A pillar for freedom of education.

Brussels (Belgium), 14th February 2024



A critical event on the role of freedom of education in strengthening democracies was held at the European Parliament. Co-organized by OIDEL, EMIE, CEU–CEFAS, ECNAIS, and the European People’s Party (EPP), the seminar brought together policymakers, educators, and key stakeholders from the education sector.

The discussions focused on the need for a legal framework that supports diverse educational models, curricular autonomy, and fair public funding for all schools.

Gonzalo Sanz-Magallón (CEU-CEFAS) presenting the report “Freedom of Education Enhances Equity and Reduces Economic Inequality”

During the event, studies were presented showing a positive correlation between greater educational freedom, higher life satisfaction, and a more equitable distribution of wealth.

OIDEL’s Director Ignasi Grau, emphasized that freedom of education is essential for cohesive democracies, referencing the study “Freedom of Education Enhances Equity and Reduces Economic Inequality”, developed by CEU-CEFAS in collaboration with OIDEL.



Working session with MEP Isabel Benjumea (EPP)

### 1.2.2. “New Direction” Academy.

Dublin (Ireland), 16th–19th September 2024



From left to right: Dan Pitt, Research Fellow at the University of Buckingham; Ignasi Grau, Director of OIDEL; and Patrick Coyle, Vice President of Young America's Foundation.

OIDEL participated in the New Direction Academy, organized by New Direction, the think tank of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR). This four-day event brought together a new generation of students eager to engage with innovative ideas in culture, politics, economics, and fundamental rights.

The Academy featured high-level speakers and experts addressing key contemporary issues, with topics such as, educational freedom in Europe, Europe's place in the world, European conservatism after the elections

During this year's Academy, OIDEL took center stage to present the Freedom of Education Index 2023, offering valuable insights into the state of educational liberty across Europe. Ignasi Grau, representing OIDEL, also moderated an engaging debate, alongside Patrick Coyle, Vice President of Young America's Foundation, and Dan Pitt, Research Fellow at the University of Buckingham. The discussions were lively and thought-provoking, focusing on the challenges and opportunities for educational freedom in Europe.

## 1.3. Council of Europe

### 1.3.1. Symposium on “Education, Citizenship, Subsidiarity” Organized by UMAEC.

Strasbourg (France), 27th May 2024



Josyane Zingg while presenting the Freedom of Education Index 2023.

This symposium brought together participants to discuss the role of NGOs within major international institutions, such as the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, UNESCO in Paris, the European Union in Brussels, and the United Nations in Geneva, through the lens of the principle of subsidiarity. OIDEL was invited to speak on the topic of freedom of education in Europe.

Representing OIDEL, Josyane Zingg addressed the status of educational freedom in Europe, highlighting its basis in international law, parental rights, and state obligations, as set out in Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Drawing on data from the Freedom of Education Index 2023, she presented examples from countries like the Netherlands and Belgium, where comprehensive public funding for non-governmental schools, including teacher salaries and infrastructure, ensures that all families can exercise their right to choose their children's education without financial barriers.



## 1.4 Presentations of the Freedom of Education Index 2023

This report, developed by OIDEI and FUNCIVA in collaboration with UNIR, makes a significant contribution to the global analysis and promotion of educational rights and freedoms. With inputs from over 50 experts across multiple disciplines, it offers strong academic and methodological foundations.

Grounded in Article 26.3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms parents' prior right to choose their children's education, the Freedom of Education Index presents a global snapshot of educational pluralism based on research conducted over ten months in 2023.

The study covers 157 countries. While only six (including Cuba, Eritrea, North Korea, and Afghanistan) do not recognize educational freedom in their national laws, 101 countries offer some level of constitutional protection, either through parental choice, explicit recognition, or support for non-governmental schools.

Globally, there has been a moderately positive trend toward recognizing this freedom since 2002, especially in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, increasing political polarization persists, particularly around public funding, school regulation, and homeschooling.

### 1.4.1. International School Choice and Reform Conference.

*Madrid (Spain), 4th–7th January 2024*

This year, this conference was held in Madrid rather than its usual location in Florida. As part of this global academic forum, focused on school funding, educational choice, and parental concerns, OIDEI presented the preliminary findings of its latest report.

The event provided a valuable opportunity to compare research insights and engage in dialogue with academics and civil society representatives from around the world.

### 1.4.2. "Brussels Considerations" meeting.

*Brussels (Belgium), 30th January 2024*

The "Brussels Considerations" meeting brought together representatives of evangelical Christian schools for a space of dialogue and exchange. OIDEI participated alongside organizations such as the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and Christian Concern (United Kingdom).

### 1.4.3. General Assembly of the European Committee for Catholic Education (CEEC).

*Bergen (Norway), 26th–27th April 2024*

The European Committee for Catholic Education (CEEC) convened its national member associations to share experiences and discuss the common challenges facing Catholic education in Europe. The CEEC represents educational institutions from 27 countries.



Ignasi Grau  
Director of OIDEI





#### 1.4.4. Official presentation at the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO) with the Permanent Mission of Thailand.

Geneva (Switzerland), 8th May 2024

The UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO) in Geneva and OIDEL co-organized the official launch of the fifth edition of the Freedom of Education Index (FEI). This latest edition of the Index was developed by OIDEL, FUNCIVA, and UNIR. The event was co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Thailand. This report offers a global analysis of how freedom of education is recognized and implemented.

The event gathered international education experts and high-level representatives. H.E. Ms. Usana Berananda, Ambassador of Thailand, opened the session, followed by a presentation of key findings by Ignasi Grau and Josyane Zingg of OIDEL. Contributions were also made by Svein Oesttveit (IBE-UNESCO) and Pradeep Wagle (OHCHR).

#### 1.4.5. Universitat Internacional de Catalunya

Barcelona (Spain), 14th June 2024

Freedom of education as a human right was the central theme of the seminar organized by the Faculty of Education at UIC Barcelona, where the Freedom of Education Index 2023 was presented. The event provided an academic space for reflection on the role of educational pluralism within international human rights frameworks and its application in contemporary school systems. Among the attendees was the current Regional Minister of Education.



Enric Vidal, dean of UIC, introducing Ignasi Grau, director of OIDEL.

#### 1.4.6. National Charter Schools Conference with EdChoice and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS).

Boston (USA), June-July 2024

The National Charter Schools Conference (NCSC) is the largest event dedicated to charter schools in the United States. Representing OIDEL, Ignasi Grau emphasized the importance of diverse and innovative educational environments. He participated in a panel alongside Robert Enlow (EdChoice) and Robin Lake, Director of the Center on Reinventing Public Education, discussing the challenges and opportunities of the charter school model.

Ashley Berner, a member of OIDEL's Board of Directors, also took part in the event. She presented her book "Educational Pluralism and Democracy", sparking thoughtful discussion on how to ensure educational diversity while upholding democratic principles.

#### 1.4.7. Spanish Congress of Deputies.

Madrid (Spain), 1st October 2024

In collaboration with Fundación Civismo and Fundación Ciudadanía y Valores (FUNCIVA), the Freedom of Education Index 2023 was presented at the Spanish Congress of Deputies.



From left to right: José María Beneyto (FUNCIVA); Teresa Martínez and Ignasi Grau (OIDEL); Nacho Martín (PP); Albert Guivernau (Civismo); and María del Mar González Bella (PP).

The event was chaired by Members of Parliament Nacho Martín Blanco and María del Mar González Bella, who welcomed over 120 attendees.

## 1.5. Other events

### 1.5.1. Participation in the Global Home Education Exchange (GHEX) Forum.

*Manchester (United Kingdom), 11th–13th July 2024*

Home educators, policymakers, and researchers gathered in Manchester, UK, for the first in-person Global Home Education Exchange (GHEX) conference since 2018.

This landmark event served as a vital platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among global leaders in home education. OIDEL was invited to participate, presenting key findings from the Freedom of Education Index 2023 and contributing to two seminars.

The forum brought together representatives from over 20 countries, enriching discussions on the status of home education across diverse legal, cultural, and political contexts. Topics included research, leadership, advocacy, and support for homeschooling families.

### 1.5.2. Participation in the 103rd Annual General Assembly of the European Committee for Catholic Education (CEEC).

*Strasbourg (France), 14th–15th October 2024*

The 103rd General Assembly of the European Committee for Catholic Education (CEEC) brought together Catholic education leaders to reflect on the challenges and opportunities related to freedom of education.



*From left to right: Ignasi Grau, director of OIDEL, Louis-Marie Piron, Secretary General of CEEC, and Paul Meany, President of CEEC.*

Within this framework, OIDEL presented its international advocacy work at the UN, UNESCO, and European institutions, with a particular focus on the Freedom of Education Index 2023. OIDEL also announced the upcoming edition of its Summer University, an international forum on human rights, education, and public policy.

Participants visited the European Parliament, where they engaged in dialogue on the European Union's role in protecting educational diversity and democratic values. OIDEL reaffirmed its commitment to continued collaboration with CEEC to keep educational freedom at the forefront of the global agenda.



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# TRAININGS

## 2.1. “Human Rights and Environmental Rights” in collaboration with the Universidad de los Hemisferios.

Geneva (Switzerland), 2nd–5th April 2024



*The students of the 'Human Rights and Environmental Rights' course*

OIDEL collaborated for the first time with the Universidad de los Hemisferios (Quito, Ecuador), in the 2024 Human and Environmental Rights course, aimed at master's students in law.

The initiative combined academic sessions, institutional visits, and hands-on experiences within the international human rights system.

Participants explored key topics such as freedom of expression, artificial intelligence in education, and the rights of Indigenous peoples, engaging directly with representatives from the UN, UNESCO, and other organizations.

They also visited the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the UN and took part in a simulation of the Universal Periodic Review, deepening their understanding of fundamental rights protection.



*The students of the 'Human Rights and Environmental Rights' course with Ana Luiza Massot Thompson-Flores, Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva (center).*

## 2.2 Summer University “Human Rights, Education, and Sustainability” – 2nd Edition in collaboration with the Global Human Rights Clinic of Notre Dame Law School and the ERDIE department at the Université de Genève.

Geneva (Switzerland), 18th–21st June 2024



*The students of the 'Human Rights, Education, and Sustainability' course with Luis Ribolzi, Special Rapporteur on the right to Education and Leslie Hiner, Vicepresident of Legal Affairs of EdChoice (center).*

With the aim of strengthening the defense of the right to education from a human rights perspective, the second edition of the Summer University was held, organized by OIDEL in collaboration with the ERDIE department at the Université de Genève and the Global Human Rights Clinic of Notre Dame Law School. The course brought together 27 participants from various countries, equipping them with tools to promote this right in their local contexts in alignment with international frameworks.



Throughout the program, expert-led sessions addressed UN protection mechanisms, the role of civil society, educational pluralism, human rights education, and global citizenship. Participants also visited key institutions such as IBE-UNESCO and the Human Rights Council, gaining first-hand insight into international decision-making spaces.

A highlight of the course was a private session with Farida Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, which offered participants a unique opportunity to engage directly with a key figure in the international human rights system.

## 2.3 “Governance and Working Methods for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda” – 5th Edition, organized in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair on Democratic Citizenship and Cultural Freedom at the Universidad de la Rioja, Spain.

Geneva (Switzerland), 16th–18th September 2024



Ignasi Grau  
Director of OIGEL



Josyane Zingg  
Advocacy and training officer OIGEL

In collaboration with the UNESCO Chair on Democratic Citizenship and Cultural Freedom at the Universidad de La Rioja, a training program was held for public sector representatives on the 2030 agenda from a human rights-based perspective. Participants explored key topics such as children's rights, freedom of education, and climate change, while engaging with international institutions including the Permanent Mission of Spain to the UN, strengthening their understanding of mechanisms for the protection of fundamental rights.

## 2.4 Human Rights and Global Security, in collaboration with the Universidad de Extremadura.

Geneva (Switzerland), 29th October–1st November 2024

OIGEL resumed its collaboration with the Universidad de Extremadura (Spain) to deliver specialized human rights training for members of the region's security forces. The course addressed topics such as road safety, child labor, use of force, racism, and the prevention of torture, linking local security practices with international human rights frameworks.



The Participants of the course Human Rights and Global Security, in collaboration with the Universidad de Extremadura



The Participants of the course Human Rights and Global Security, in collaboration with the Universidad de Extremadura

Participants also visited the United Nations Palace in Geneva, strengthening the connection between their daily work and the universal principles of human rights.



# PUBLICATIONS

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## 3.1. OIDEL publications

### 3.1.1. Freedom of Education Index 2023



Cover of the Freedom of Education Index 2023

This report, developed by OIDEL (International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education) and FUNCIVA, in collaboration with the Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (UNIR), represents a significant contribution to the analysis and promotion of educational rights and freedoms at the global level. The research involved more than 50 leading experts from diverse fields, reinforcing its multidisciplinary nature and academic robustness.

It is worth noting that the study is based on Article 26.3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: “Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.” This reference underscores the central role of parents in educational decision-making, aligned with the principles of freedom of education and respect for human rights.

The Freedom of Education Index is the result of ten months of research carried out in 2023 by an international and multidisciplinary team.

Its goal is to provide a clear and updated picture of the state of educational pluralism worldwide, while also encouraging public debate on the importance of this right for the development of future generations and the strengthening of freer, more diverse societies.

The study analyzes 157 countries. Of these, only six, including Cuba, Eritrea, North Korea, and more recently, Afghanistan, do not recognize freedom of education in their national legislation. In contrast, 101 countries offer some form of constitutional protection, whether by explicitly recognizing this freedom, guaranteeing parents' right to choose their children's education, or allowing the operation of non-governmental schools.

Globally, there has been a moderately positive trend since 2002 towards the formal recognition of freedom as a dimension of the right to education, particularly in regions such as Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the study also identifies growing political polarization around the interpretation and implementation of this freedom, reflected in debates over public funding, minimum standards for different types of schools, and the recognition of homeschooling.

## 3.2. Other publications

### 3.2.1. “To what extent can parental rights be limited by ‘Minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State’?”.

Article on Taylor & Francis Online, 9th October 2024

In this article, Ignasi Grau explores one of the most complex questions in today's education debate: Can the State impose minimum standards that limit parents' prior right to choose their children's education?. Through a rigorous analysis of international human rights instruments, the article examines the legitimate boundaries of state authority and offers a reasoned defense of educational pluralism.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0161956X.2024.2407246>

### 3.3. DIGITAL CONTENT

#### 3.3.1. "Analysis of the Freedom of Education Index 2023", conversation with Ignasi Grau and Miguel Rodríguez Blanco.

YouTube, 9th July 2024



From left to right  
Ignasi Grau Director of OIDEL and José María Beneyto, Director of FUNCIVA.

What does the Freedom of Education Index 2023 reveal about global educational pluralism? In this conversation, Ignasi Grau and Professor Miguel Rodríguez Blanco explore the report's key findings, their political relevance, and the implications for national education systems. A valuable tool for understanding the current state of educational freedom. The debate was moderated by José María Beneyto, director of Fundación Ciudadanía y Valores (FUNCIVA).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tv2LvJXrCmE&t=3135s>

#### 3.3.2. "Freedom of education around the world", conversation with Ignasi Grau and Ramón Expósito.

YouTube, 1st November 2024

From a comparative perspective, Ignasi Grau speaks with Ramón Expósito about the progress, challenges, and tensions surrounding freedom of education internationally.

The discussion highlights good practices as well as persistent barriers preventing many families from fully exercising this right.



From left to right  
Ignasi Grau Director of OIDEL and Ramón Expósito

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsxpyWYxj84A&t=1402s>

#### 3.3.3 "In Spain, families enjoy a considerable degree of educational freedom", interview with Ignasi Grau

Magisterio, 5th November 2024

In this interview published by Magisnet, Ignasi Grau analyzes the Spanish context, noting that families in Spain enjoy a high level of educational freedom compared to other countries. However, he warns of political pressures that could threaten this right, particularly regarding public funding and the recognition of school pluralism.

<https://www.magisnet.com/2024/11/ignasi-grau-oidel-en-espana-las-familias-gozan-de-bastante-libertad-de-ensenanza/>



# OIDEL TEAM 2024



*Ignasi Grau  
Director*



*Josyane Zingg  
Advocacy and training officer*



*Teresa Martínez  
President*



*Claire de Lavernette  
OIDEL representative to the  
Council of Europe*



*Josep-Manuel Prats  
Secretary General*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Dear friends and collaborators,

As you will see in this activity report, 2024 was another year full of initiatives and engagement. I can say that the entire OIDEAL team made every possible effort to ensure that educational pluralism and a human rights-based approach remained central to international discussions.

This would not have been possible without the support and dedication of many individuals.

First and foremost, we would like to express our deep gratitude to all our partners and collaborators. Without their support, we would not have been able to reach so many forums or carry out the work we do. We are truly thankful for the growing trust in this shared project, which allows us to continue promoting freedom in education.

Secondly, our sincere thanks go to the members of OIDEAL's Executive Committee, who in recent years have shown exceptional commitment to our work and mission. Their support, guidance, and expertise have given OIDEAL fresh momentum during this exciting new chapter.

Lastly, we would like to thank the entire OIDEAL team who accompanied us throughout 2024. We assure all readers that the team's dedication to the mission of this organization is clearly reflected in the pages that follow.

With heartfelt gratitude,

The OIDEAL Team



OIDEI Kyoto Building c/o COE, Chemin du Pommier 42, 1218 Le Grand Saconnex, Suisse



+41 22 789 29 49



<https://www.oidel.org/>



[oidel@oidel.org](mailto:oidel@oidel.org)