



C L A A

Coalición por la Libertad
Académica en las Américas

GUIDELINES

For Policies and Actions on
Reception for Educators
risk in Latin Latina in

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Coalition for Academic
Freedom in the Americas

Initiative

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UDEM

Date of publication October
2025



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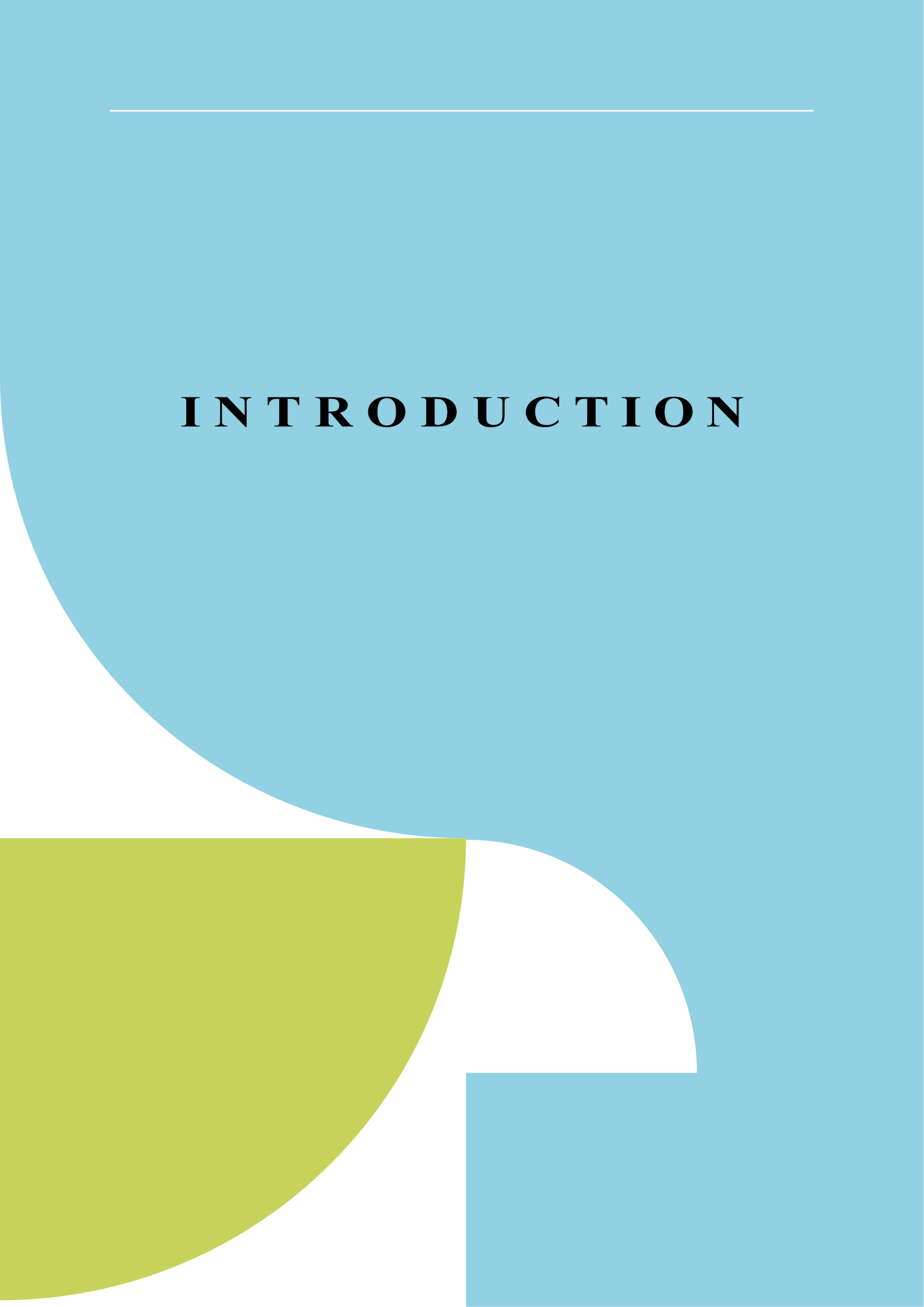
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INTRODUCTION



A The guidelines presented here are intended to guide, mainly educational institutions, in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies and practices that promote academic freedom.

and monitoring of policies and actions aimed at welcoming educators¹ who face persecution, harassment, and other forms of violence due to the exercise of their professional, academic, or educational activities. It recognizes the role of educators in promoting democratic, equitable, and inclusive societies, as advocated in documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which guarantees the right to education in Article 26, and the UNESCO Report on Education for the 21st Century, which highlights the strategic role of educators in training critical, informed citizens committed to values of justice, equality, and participation. Based on this, this document establishes guidelines to ensure support, protection, and the creation of the necessary conditions for teaching and research in safe environments free from persecution, allowing for the continuity of their educational and professional trajectories.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also reiterates this perspective, especially Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)², which emphasizes the need to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education, underscoring the role of educators as central agents in achieving these goals. In this sense, several international organizations highlight that education and the work of its professionals are essential tools for the consolidation of democratic societies. Thus, in order to think about the construction and strengthening of these more just societies, it is imperative to reflect on who these professionals are and in what historical, social, and working conditions they have developed their work.

The concept of educators adopted by international organizations goes beyond the transmission of content, as it conceives teachers as agents of change who influence the ethical, social, and political development of students and society in general. In this context, teachers from all educational segments—including higher education institutions—play a pa-

¹ In this document, we consider educators to be professionals who work in teaching or research.

² UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) aims to "ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." Available at: <https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en>. Accessed on 01/20/2025.

essential, as they not only disseminate specialized knowledge, but also influence the critical training of future leaders, scientists, and active citizens. Their role in educational spaces encompasses the promotion of a culture of critical thinking, innovation, and the defense of human rights. Precisely because of their active involvement in educational processes that seek to have a significant social impact—whether through critical research, the promotion of inclusive projects, intercultural dialogue, or the linking of academia and communities through the production of socially referenced knowledge—these professionals have been the targets of various types of attacks and pressure in the exercise of their functions.

These attacks take many forms, ranging from harassment, attempts at censorship, symbolic violence, and other interferences in the daily lives of these professionals, to more macro-level actions involving policies promoted by governments, social groups, political and religious organizations that undermine the freedom to teach, research, and disseminate knowledge. In many cases, these initiatives have contributed to the creation of a systemic environment of persecution that undermines academic autonomy and the transformative role of teaching. This situation has manifested itself in various contexts

in Latin America, presenting common patterns in the experiences of educators, despite the social, political, economic, historical, and cultural differences of each country. In this sense, thinking about the protection and reception of these educators represents an urgent and fundamental response to a reality that compromises both academic freedom and the consolidation of democratic societies.

By suggesting concrete measures for welcoming educators, this document seeks to safeguard the human and academic rights of educators who have been working in contexts of political, social, or cultural vulnerability. As such, it seeks to strengthen networks of solidarity and cooperation at the national and international levels. The specific objectives therefore include promoting safe environments for teaching, fostering the preservation of academic freedom, and creating reintegration strategies that allow educators to continue their work in the critical training of individuals and the strengthening of communities.

As detailed throughout the text, the persecution of educators has had a direct impact on the erosion of academic freedom and, consequently, on the quality of higher education in the Americas. Thus, this document is addressed

institutions and organizations so that they can actively commit to building safe educational spaces that promote rights and welcome teachers. In this context, it proposes to coordinate initiatives involving the following actors:

- Universities and educational institutions at various levels of education, especially in Latin America.
- Authorities and managers of public education policies.
- United Nations agencies such as: UNESCO Brazil, UNESCO Latin America and the Caribbean, and the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (ISEALC/UNESCO).
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the fields of education and human rights.
- Support networks for education professionals, scientific associations, and unions.

It is hoped that the policies and actions suggested in these guidelines will serve as a link between institutions and initiatives committed to the defense and promotion of academic freedom. In this sense, it is hoped that as more higher education institutions take on this commitment, it will be possible to build an integrated network that promotes the recommendations described here in a collaborative manner. To this end, we have identified the following as important points of support in this integrated international network

The latter, in particular, has developed a prominent role in the region through the distribution of scholarships to academics at risk, the preparation of annual reports on violations of academic freedom, and the publication of reports on the situation of academics at risk in the region. The latter, in particular, has played a prominent role in the region by distributing scholarships to academics at risk, preparing annual reports on violations of academic freedom in various countries, and coordinating services aimed at protecting and preserving the human rights of these educators.

This coordination is especially crucial in the context of Latin America, where challenges to academic freedom are often intertwined with the precarious nature of teaching work. In many regions, educators face adverse conditions, such as insufficient salaries, inadequate infrastructure, and political pressures that limit pedagogical autonomy. By proposing a model of reception, the guidelines presented here aim not only to protect persecuted educators, but also to draw attention to the systemic structures that contribute to the vulnerability of teachers working in academic environments marked by historical and contemporary inequalities.

1.

E D U C A T O R S

**In Latin America: Between job insecurity and
challenges to academic freedom**

A Teaching is recognized by the International Labor Organization (ILO) as a profession fundamental to development of societies, but also as one of the most challenging in terms of working conditions today. Studies such as those by Paparelli (2010), UNESCO and ILO (2008), Siniscalco (2002), and Ryder (2012) indicate that, regardless of the level of education, modality, or type of institution (public or private), there are common factors that negatively affect the teaching profession. Among these, the social devaluation of the profession, lack of motivation, and long working hours stand out, which have contributed significantly to the physical and emotional exhaustion of educators. Teaching, researching, and disseminating scientific knowledge has become an exhausting activity, with profound impacts on the physical and mental health and performance of these professionals. In Latin America, these problems are amplified by contexts of inequality and low investment in education. In addition, in recent years, the profession has faced systematic attacks and persecution, further aggravating the situation in the region.

The data presented on the health of educators, the precariousness of teaching work, and the growing disinterest in teacher training are already part of the main analyses and publications that seek to address this problem.

and the growing disinterest in teacher training are already part of the main analyses and publications that seek to address this problem. According to the UNESCO report (UNESCO, 2023), teachers are fundamental to ensuring quality education, the goal of SDG 4. In this sense, it is with concern that this international organization presents the progressive disinterest in the teaching profession, projecting a shortage of educators for the future.

This scenario regarding the teaching profession and the lack of interest in training future educators is alarming throughout Latin America. In Brazil, for example, according to a report released by Agência Brasil, by 2040 the country could have a shortage of 235,000 teachers. Although the data in the report focuses on basic education, it allows us to reflect on the difficulties of being an educator in the Latin American context, where critical education, especially public education, has been constantly attacked in the process of weakening democracy, placing teachers as enemies to be attacked and fought (Passos & Mendonça, 2021).

The transformative role of teachers in defining the future of education

³ Available at: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/educacao/noticia/2022-09/em-2040-brasil-podera-ter-carencia-de-235-mil-professores-diz-estudo> . Accessed on 01/15/2025.

education, highlighted by the International Commission on the Futures of Education (2021), highlights four main issues to be addressed in order to rethink teaching and the teaching profession: redefining teaching as a collaborative profession; recognizing that professional development is a lifelong learning journey; mobilizing public solidarity to improve teachers' working conditions and status and promoting their participation in decision-making and public debate on education, providing them with support to improve the status and working conditions of teachers. In this same vein, we highlight the recommendations of the high-level panel on the teaching profession, convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN). This document presents a plan on how to support and transform the teaching profession, understanding it as a driver of social change for a better world⁴.

Identifying support and autonomy as fundamental elements in the teaching profession, this document considers that the inclusion of systematic persecution of educators, authoritarian contexts, and attempts to curtail the freedom to teach, learn, and research are new essential elements for thinking about the educational framework in the Latin American region. In this sense, it is believed that this text can contribute to new reflections on the work of educators in the region in the context of attacks on academic freedom, as well as analyses that connect the challenges imposed by the local situation with the importance of designing and developing policies and actions to support educators at risk in Latin America.

⁴ The full document is available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2024/02/teaching-profession-recommendationsteaching-profession-recommendations/>

1.1 Reception and protection of human rights defenders: challenges and perspectives for educators

PTo address this issue, it is essential to briefly introduce the concept of protection policies and analyze its evolution in the global context, with an emphasis on Latin America. These policies and actions are aimed at individuals and groups who are comprehensively and on various fronts dedicated to the defense and promotion of human rights. Activists, collectives, and organizations working in this area play an essential role in strengthening democracy, the rule of law, and the justice system, as well as combating inequalities and fighting for the effective protection of the fundamental freedoms of individuals and peoples.

However, given the fragility of democratic institutions, human rights defenders who confront political and economic powers and violators are increasingly vulnerable to different forms of violence. This violence disproportionately affects

disproportionately affect groups such as the black, indigenous, LGBTQIAPN +, and women populations, highlighting the intersectional nature of the problem.

The reception of so-called human rights defenders⁵ has increasingly become an essential measure to protect individuals and groups who, due to their work in defense of fundamental rights, face persecution, threats, and violence. This type of protection seeks to ensure the physical, emotional, and professional safety of these individuals, allowing them to continue their activities in a safe environment. Reception measures may include legal and psychological support, temporary or permanent relocation, and integration into new communities, often with the support of academic networks or international organizations.

In 1998, after the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders⁶ recognized the need to protect people engaged in the promotion of human rights, shelter programs began to take shape. In this movement, which has been more intense in recent decades, the following stand out

⁵ The feasibility study conducted in 2021 with funding from Protect Defenders, the Research Group on Technology, Education, and Culture (GPTEC/IFRJ) developed the idea that educators are human rights defenders from the perspective that the teaching profession is committed to promoting human rights and dignity, as provided for in Brazilian educational documents.

⁶ Statement available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-human-rights-defenders/declaration-human-rights-defenders-different-languages> . Accessed on 01/15/2025.

mainly shelter programs that promote temporary relocation for persecuted defenders. Most of these initiatives are based in Europe, as shown in the following map⁷.

Refuge programs for human rights defenders around the world.

65 programs surveyed. More than 50% of these are located in Europe.

Source: Relocation platform for human rights defenders.

The study developed by the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Rio de Janeiro - IFRJ, in 2021, identified that there is a concentration of organizations and higher education institutions that work with these temporary shelter policies in countries in the global north. The survey was conducted using the Human Rights Defenders Relocation Platform⁽⁹⁾ which at the time had 65 programs, of which 32 were based in Europe and only seven in the Americas. It is also noteworthy that of these seven, only one was located in Latin America, the Colombian program Somos Defensores.

Figure 1: Image created by the IFRJ Project in 2021.



⁷ Information at <https://eutrp.eu/> . Accessed on 01/15/2025.

⁸ <https://portal.ifrj.edu.br/educadores-defensores> Accessed on 01/15/2025.

⁹ <https://eutrp.eu/> Accessed on 15/01/2025.

One of the main obstacles faced by beneficiaries of international protection in Europe is the language barrier. Of the 65 programs, only five had Spanish as their official language and none included Portuguese. Thus, according to the research findings, the hegemony of English as the language of reception ultimately limits who can be accepted into these programs, impacting defenders from Latin America in particular. It should be emphasized that without proficiency in the language, defenders are often unable to even apply for a hosting process, and even when this becomes possible, there are several difficulties in adapting that are amplified by significant cultural differences that stand out at a time of great fragility marked by imposed change and the urgent need for protection.

Another relevant point highlighted by the study was the fact that the platform has programs aimed at journalists, environmentalists, defenders of indigenous peoples, and those working with LGBTQIAPN+ issues, but only three programs directly serve academics and educators: 1- The Council for Academics at Risk (CARA), which offers two types of scholarships: Scholarship Program (persecuted and disenfranchised academics from around the world) and CARA Scholars at Risk UK Uni-

versities Network (collaboration between 104 universities that make up the Network to promote and defend academic freedom and provide practical support for academics); 2- the Institute of International Education (IIE), a consortium with different countries that organizes and funds scholarships for threatened and displaced academics at partner higher education institutions around the world, and 3- REAGAN-Fascell Democracy Fellows, USA, which welcomes activists, academics, and journalists for democracy on five-month scholarships. and journalists for democracy on five-month fellowships.

It is worth mentioning that this information refers to programs that are part of the Human Rights Defenders Relocation Platform and that, therefore, actions such as those developed by Scholars at Risk (SAR) are not listed here. Still on this subject, it is important to highlight two experiences of hosting defenders that are not specifically focused on educators, but which, because they are based at universities, offer an interesting perspective. These are the programs at the University of York and the University of Dundee, both in the United Kingdom, whose practices open up opportunities to consider future collaborations in the academic sphere for the protection of human rights defenders.

It is important to note that the lack of programs for educators

is largely linked to the fact that they are not yet identified by many organizations working with human rights as defenders, which has made it difficult for them to access these programs. In addition, existing programs welcome academics and university professors, excluding teachers who work in basic education and who have suffered enormous pressure and harassment in the political and educational context of Latin America.

1.2 Educators are human rights defenders

N Latin America, shelter programs began to be implemented recently and more broadly in the 2010s, in response to growing violence against human rights defenders, journalists, and social leaders in the region. Many of these programs are developed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international networks operating in the region, such as Front Line Defenders, Scholars at Risk, and Protection International, which began operating in the region, offering support in collaboration with local governments and universities. It should be noted that the work of these organizations in the region often involves the relocation of defenders, i.e., moving them to another country, almost always in Europe. This brings us back to the issue raised in this

text about the language and cultural barrier. In addition to international initiatives, countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Mexico have created specific protection mechanisms for these vulnerable populations. Colombia, for example, has a long history of threats against human rights defenders and has implemented the National Protection Program for Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, and Social Leaders, which offers comprehensive support including escorts, physical protection, and relocation assistance. In Mexico, the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists provides protection measures to threatened individuals and groups, including support for internal displacement. Costa Rica is recognized as one of the countries that offers refuge to human rights defenders in high-risk situations, functioning as a "safe transit country." In Brazil, there is the Protection Program for Human Rights Defenders, Communicators, and Environmentalists (PPDDH), which helps activists in risky situations by offering legal assistance, physical and psychological security, and relocation in extreme cases.

These are some examples of recent measures that complement the work of international organizations and networks such as Front Line Defenders, which provides emergency assistance, such as financial resources and support for relocation, as well as international *advocacy*, and Amnesty International, which works to protect defenders through campaigns, mobilization, and support in urgent cases.

These initiatives also include the development of protocols and the formation of platforms and new networks for the protection of Latin American defenders. For example:

These initiatives also include the development of protocols and the formation of platforms and new networks for the protection of Latin American defenders. For example:

1. Platform for the Protection of Defenders and Journalists - connects

human rights defenders and journalists in situations of risk with reception and support networks in the region.

2. Protection Guide for Human Rights Defenders 2021 - publication with strategies, protocols, and protection measures.

3. Esperanza Protocol - the first international tool, developed from an initiative by the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), to respond to threats against human rights defenders.

However, many of these initiatives, still in their infancy, are scarce and have few resources to sustain themselves in these territories. Furthermore, they are not yet able to meet the vast local demand for shelter in the Americas, especially in Central and South America, where this need is deeply connected to the historical, social, political, and economic context of the region. Added to this is the fragility of the democratic systems in these countries, observed, among other ways, in restrictions on social participation, including popular demonstrations, and in political violence, a phenomenon on the rise in several states in the region.

restrictions on social participation, including popular demonstrations, and political violence, a phenomenon on the rise in several states in the region. In 2022, for example, the year of the last federal election in Brazil, 26 cases of political violence were identified every 26 hours (Source: Political and Electoral Violence in Brazil: 2020 to 2022), which illustrates the regional situation involving extreme political polarization, hate crimes directed at defenders, and the rapid growth of political violence.

According to a report by Amnesty International (2023/2024 edition of the global report "The State of Human Rights in the World"), the Americas continued to be one of the most dangerous regions in the world for human rights defenders. Black people, indigenous people, and women in particular remained at particular risk in the region. In countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico, those working to protect land and the environment faced increasing threats and risks. In addition, governments and non-state actors in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela used various tools, such as harassment, stigmatization, criminalization, and murder, to prevent human rights activists from carrying out their essential and legitimate work.

The data and information presented in the Amnesty International report unfortunately only reaffirm a political situation that has worsened in recent years. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the principal and autonomous organ of the Organization of American States (OAS), which is responsible for promoting human rights in the region and acting as an advisory body to the OAS on the subject, also indicated that violence against human rights defenders in Latin America has intensified in recent years, placing the region among the most dangerous for these activists. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), between September and December 2023, there were

54 murders of human rights defenders, including educators, in addition to 69 other cases throughout the year. Other organizations have warned, through their reports, about the risks faced by defenders in the region. These include *Oxfam* (report "El riesgo de defender"), *Global Witness* (Silenced Voices), and *Human Rights Watch* (HRW) (World Report 2024).

It should be noted that the issues identified above, for which defenders are murdered and abused in the Americas, are part of the education programs of the signatory countries to human rights treaties that provide for inclusive education that promotes gender diversity and human rights.

Thus, as they comply with these teaching programs, educators act directly as human rights defenders in these regions, also becoming direct targets of such attacks. In this scenario, the freedom to teach, learn, and research, as one of the fundamental pillars for building a just and democratic society, has also been under attack, and with it, those who embody the practice of teaching and research in their bodies. It is from this understanding that this document brings together reflections and contributions that explore how these pillars are being challenged, especially in the context of political and economic crises in the region.

According to the dossier organized by Mendonça and Figari Layus - Human rights and the freedom to teach, learn, and research - in 2024, attacks on educators have taken various forms. From persecution, aggression, and harassment on social media or in public spaces to threats and physical assaults, including serious human rights violations, such as the freedom to teach, learn, and research. According to the authors: "Such attacks have damaged entire education systems, jeopardizing the quality of teaching and research, and limiting spaces for dialogue in society to think, question, and share ideas."

Given this situation, it is worth highlighting Brazil's recent experience, in which a study conducted by the IFRJ and published in the booklet *Educators are human rights defenders* indicates that 96.8% of the 837 questionnaires completed across the country affirm that it would be important to create a shelter program for persecuted educators. This statement is in line with alarming data from the same survey, which points to a Brazilian scenario in which 76.8% of the educators participating in the survey also stated that the Brazilian situation has affected/is affecting their physical and/or mental health. Thus, when asked about education and human rights, 98% said they consider the issue important, yet 82.1% feel threatened to address the issue in the current scenario. Regarding the demands for support programs, the survey revealed that 91% of respondents stated that they would like to have legal advice, and 90.4% would like psychological support.

In addition, 61.3% consider it important to receive some training in digital security (IFRJ, 2021). In light of these data and numerous other studies on teacher persecution, the National Observatory on Violence against Educators (ONVE) was created in 2023, an extension project linked to the Faculty of Education of the Fluminense Federal University (UFF) that brings together researchers from various teaching and research institutions. Among the objectives of the project is to promote the exchange of experiences and practices related to the protection of educators and students from violence and discrimination.

to the Faculty of Education of the Fluminense Federal University (UFF) that brings together researchers from various teaching and research institutions. Among the objectives of the observatory are:

- 1) Investigating the systematic persecution of educators,
- 2) Combating persecution and censorship against educators, and
- 3) Developing protocols for welcoming educators¹⁰.

The creation of specific programs to welcome Latin American defenders working in education is crucial, considering the context of violence and instability that many face. Protecting them ensures that voices essential to building a stronger and fairer democracy continue to be heard.

Although there are few initiatives in the region aimed at educators, it is undoubtedly necessary to highlight the work of Scholars at Risk (SAR), an international network that supports teachers and researchers at risk by offering temporary shelter opportunities at safe universities. Through SAR, partner universities receive threatened academics, allowing them to continue their teaching and research activities in safety. There is also Amnesty International's Academic Freedom Committee, which develops campaigns

¹⁰ <https://onveuff.com/> Accessed on 01/15/2025.

and specific actions to support persecuted academics, with a focus on Latin American countries. The National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) develops support programs for threatened academics, especially those from armed conflict contexts. There is also the Front Line Defenders Emergency Fund, which provides immediate financial assistance to threatened professors and researchers for protection or temporary relocation, and the Universities Rescue Fund (URF), which offers financial and logistical support to academics at risk, including assistance in moving to another country and resuming their activities in safety.

Once again, the embryonic nature of some of these initiatives, the scarcity of programs in relation to the demand in the region, the issue of the hegemony of the English language, and barriers to access are significant obstacles. However, the greatest challenge is the failure to identify educators as a priority target audience for actions to welcome and protect human rights defenders. This issue is especially problematic considering that, according to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, education plays a fundamental role in guaranteeing and promoting all human rights. Educating for rights is urgent, and as such, teachers are the target audience for both threats and violence, as well as for the reception of defenders.

In this perspective, the Third Regional Conference on Higher Education (CRES 2018), held in Córdoba (Argentina) in June 2018, adopted a Declaration and an Action Plan 2018-2028 and, at the same time, made a commitment to hold a follow-up meeting five years later (CRES+5). The purpose of this meeting was to promote a participatory process aimed at highlighting the progress achieved, identifying remaining challenges and emerging issues, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. In addition, the Third Regional Conference on Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean ratified the agreements reached in the Declarations of the 1996 Meeting in Havana (Cuba), the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education in Paris (France), and the 2008 Regional Conference on Higher Education in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) in 2008, and reaffirmed the postulate of Higher Education as a social public good, a human and universal right, and a duty of States. Based on these agreements, there is clear international recognition and commitment to protect education and its professionals, urging the establishment of effective mechanisms to guarantee this.

As highlighted throughout this text, the global context is increasingly one of repression and persecution of critical voices, human rights defenders, artists, and journalists. Attentive to this situation, organizations and international

have invested in creating reception programs aimed at these professionals. However, Latin American academics and educators continue to have few specific reception options and difficulties in fitting into the reception profile of other programs. There is alarming data on the resurgence of violence against educators in the region, as presented in the reports of Scholars at Risk Free to Think⁽¹¹⁾ over the last five years. These reports show how academics and university students have faced frequent and widespread attacks on their academic freedom and the autonomy of the higher education institutions where they work. In contexts of political instability, censorship, or repression, many educators become targets of persecution because of their professional work in defense of democratic values and human rights. These situations have a profound impact on both education professionals and the education system as a whole, especially the target audience, students, thus compromising free thought and the right to quality education.

As mentioned earlier, even with all the reports and information indicating worrying data on the situation of educators in the region and reaffirming the enormous demand for protection mechanisms

protection mechanisms and policies aimed at welcoming these professionals, local initiatives to promote these policies are still in their infancy. In this sense, the exercise of thinking about possible guidelines and strategies for welcoming persecuted educators points to some questions such as: what is the relationship between welcoming educators and building a democratic education? Is it possible to ensure freedom to teach, learn, and research in contexts of insecurity and self-censorship for educators? What is the relationship between academic freedom and the reception of educators? What principles should guide higher education organizations and institutions that work to defend these educators?

¹¹Reports available at: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/advocacy/>. Accessed on 01/27/2025.

2 .

P R I N C I P L E S

For the protection of educators at risk



Democratic education is education that promotes equality, respect for diversity, active participation, and critical thinking, valuing human rights and citizenship as fundamental principles. In this context, welcoming persecuted educators is essential to uphold these values, since these professionals are the ones who drive pluralistic debates and transformative reflections inside and outside the classroom. Ensuring their safety and freedom means preserving learning spaces in which students can question, dialogue, and build knowledge in an environment that rejects censorship and oppression. Thus, protecting educators is protecting the very essence of democratic education, ensuring that it continues to be an instrument of emancipation and strengthening of democratic societies.

To this end, it is necessary to implement policies that guarantee the physical and psychological safety of professionals, in addition to strengthening educational institutions as spaces for plurality and democratic resistance. Academic freedom cannot be sustained without recognizing the value of critical thinking and without guaranteeing that educators can perform their role without fear of reprisals. Thus, ensuring this freedom also involves facing the challenges of the era of disinformation, in which *fake news* spreads rapidly, eroding

eroding trust in institutions and polarizing public debate. Although advances in artificial intelligence offer powerful tools for the dissemination of knowledge, they also increase the risks of large-scale manipulation, with the creation of highly sophisticated false content. Combating these phenomena requires integrated efforts to foster critical dialogue, develop analytical thinking skills, and promote media literacy from the earliest stages of education.

It is essential to reinforce the social commitment to education as a universal right, not only as access to information, but as empowerment to discern truth from falsehood in a complex digital environment. Furthermore, protecting those who teach and research is essential, as they are the foundation of just and inclusive societies, providing the intellectual and ethical tools necessary for citizens to face the challenges of disinformation. By guaranteeing freedom of thought and expression, an environment is cultivated where knowledge flourishes and strengthens democratic values, even in the face of contemporary technological complexities. It should be noted that by valuing teaching and research based on the concept of academic freedom, the right to education of students is also defended, since this will ensure access to content without prior censorship,

and information that is critical to their education and the development of critical thinking.

The systematic persecution of educators, often fueled by misinformation and discourses that disparage the role of critical teaching, has led to the worrying phenomenon of self-censorship among teachers and researchers. Under pressure from public, judicial, and political attacks, many educators feel compelled to avoid topics considered sensitive or controversial, even if they are included in teaching programs and are fundamental to citizenship education and the construction of a pluralistic and informed society. This self-censorship is not only an individual limitation, but a reflection of educational environments that have become hostile to open debate and the exchange of ideas. When teachers fail to address complex issues—such as social inequalities, human rights, climate change, or even the historical foundations of democracy—the impact on students' education is profound. Consequently, these students are deprived of a comprehensive education that prepares them to critically face the challenges of the contemporary world.

Furthermore, self-censorship breaks the social contract that should exist between education and society: the commitment to educate free, questioning citizens who are aware of their role in

strengthening democracy. A restricted educational system is incapable of fulfilling this function. It is therefore crucial that higher education institutions, civil society, and the education systems themselves mobilize to protect educators against these pressures and attacks. It is necessary to create spaces of intellectual safety and promote policies that reaffirm academic freedom, ensuring that education continues to be a transformative force towards a more just, inclusive, and resistant society.

Academic freedom ensures, among other things, that educators can teach, research, and express themselves through scientific dissemination without fear of retaliation or censorship, while welcoming offers support to threatened professionals, creating conditions for them to continue their work safely. In contexts of repression and insecurity, welcoming becomes an indispensable tool for preserving the autonomy of educators and protecting their essential contributions to society. Thus, welcoming educators at risk is a way of strengthening academic freedom, ensuring that education continues to play its transformative and democratic role.

Therefore, it is necessary to reaffirm some guiding principles for promoting this welcoming and, consequently, defending academic freedom:

- **Awareness:** attacks on educators impact the right to academic freedom and the full exercise of university autonomy and require an institutional response.

The violation of the right to academic freedom and the full exercise of university autonomy related to violence against educators is still not very visible in the academic community. The development of policies, protocols, and practices to welcome educators who suffer violence and persecution promotes recognition of the problem and highlights its collective and institutional nature, far beyond an individual problem.

- **Confidentiality:** guaranteeing privacy and security for those involved.

In an increasingly connected world, it is urgent to reflect on the threshold between publicizing complaints and exposing victims. Numerous studies on violence are categorical in stating that silence does not protect the victim, but rather **t h e** aggressor. However, it is necessary to ensure the privacy of the abused person, distinguishing the act of violence, which must be reported and exposed, from the victim who needs to be protected, if possible by keeping their name and image confidential.

Addressing the issue of confidentiality in the context of the persecution of educators refers to a reality in which the victim sometimes has to live with their aggressor throughout the trial process. In this sense, it is urgent to have institutional guarantees that the victim will not be revictimized **a n d** exposed through: confrontations in the presence of their aggressor, repetitive testimony, disclosure of data such as name and image. Confidentiality is an essential pillar for ensuring the privacy and safety of educators who report censorship, harassment, or persecution. By protecting sensitive information, an environment of trust is created that encourages reporting without fear of reprisals. This guarantee is particularly important in contexts of repression, where the disclosure of personal data can intensify threats or retaliation. In addition, confidentiality helps to protect both whistleblowers and the investigation process, strengthening the integrity of investigations and the effectiveness of reception and protection measures.

It is essential that higher education institutions create channels and protocols that enable these reports to be made in a welcoming and confidential manner, ensuring that those involved have their identities preserved and are protected from retaliation. In addition, it is equally crucial that external organizations working in the field of human rights

and academic protection, also develop support structures, considering that, in many cases, higher education institutions themselves can be promoters of harassment or persecution. This integrated approach not only encourages educators to report violations, but also strengthens the protection network, ensuring that investigations are conducted independently and that effective measures are taken to protect the rights and dignity of education professionals.

- **Care:** ensuring policies and practices of care in the treatment and monitoring of cases of harassment of educators.

Care and support are generally treated as private matters and are therefore often overlooked, as if they were not part of an institution's responsibility in dealing with the people who make up a given organization. This document deals specifically with care and support in relation to persecuted educators, understanding that, in general, in carrying out their work of educating, they act to problematize the world, seeking

solutions through teaching, research, and outreach. In this sense, they are in constant contact with social demands, seeking to solve them.

Historically, the task of educating has been approached as exclusively vocational, primarily performed by women, and consequently not viewed as professional. Although this view has changed significantly, it cannot be synonymous with abandoning institutional care through public or private policies that ensure the care and support of educators in cases of persecution. The view of care as public policy has gained new ground in the political debate in several countries. One example is the National Care Policy implemented in Colombia. Also, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) highlights the centrality of this debate by stating that the care society is a fundamental part of the structural transformation of our societies⁽¹²⁾.

In Brazil, the recent National Care Plan¹³, approved in December 2024, is one example of new policies in this area. However, it is understood that the idea of care

¹² <https://www.cepal.org/pt-br/artigos/2023-sociedade-cuidado-mundo-melhor#:~:text=A%20CEPAL%20afirma%20que%20a,potencial%20de%20revitalizar%20as%20economias>.

¹³ More information available at: <https://www.gov.br/mds/pt-br/noticias-e-conteudos/desenvolvimen-to-social/noticias-desenvolvimento-social/presidente-lula-sanciona-a-politica-nacional-de-cuidados#:~:text=O%20cuidado%20como%20direito%20%2D%20A,a%20elabora%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20de%20pla-nos%20locais>. Acesso em 27/01/2025.

data cannot be restricted to the field of health. Therefore, in the guidelines presented here, we propose an invitation to think about care from the perspective of guaranteeing academic freedom. We start from the premise that political mechanisms and institutional flows need to have more humane, welcoming protocols that are committed to care, especially in cases of victims of persecution and/or violence.

Care policies are fundamental in the treatment and monitoring of cases of faculty persecution, requiring practices that respect the dignity, rights, and safety of affected educators. In this sense, it is important that higher education institutions adopt precise and humanized protocols, offering psychological, legal, and professional support, in addition to creating a safe environment that encourages reporting and protection of those involved. Governments, in turn, have a responsibility to implement public policies that promote protection mechanisms, including shelter and relocation programs for educators at risk.

Civil society organizations play an essential role in providing emergency support, *advocacy*, and independent monitoring, especially in contexts where higher education institutions or governments may be involved in persecution.

higher education institutions or governments may be involved in the persecution. One example is Protect Defenders¹⁴, a mechanism for human rights defenders in the European Union, which has a platform of shelter programs but does not focus on academic freedom. There are also UN monitoring systems and regional initiatives in the Americas, which, in our view, require greater dialogue aimed at a collaborative and intersectoral approach to ensure that educators can continue their work in conditions of safety and respect.

- **Integration:** generate programs/measures for labor and social integration.

The integration of educators at risk in academic and social contexts is essential to ensure their full recovery and reintegration, as well as to preserve their contribution to the advancement of knowledge and the formation of critical citizenship. Higher education institutions and organizations should promote actions such as welcome programs, opportunities for academic relocation, and ongoing support. These initiatives should include not only logistical support, but also the strengthening of solidarity networks and the creation of spaces where these educators can resume their teaching, research, and

¹⁴ <https://protectdefenders.eu/>

academic outreach. These actions foster respectful environments of integration that reaffirm a commitment to education that values diversity, human rights, and democracy.

It is essential that these initiatives facilitate educators' access to resources to continue their research, teaching, and academic production, such as virtual platforms, libraries, funding, and international collaboration. This ensures their contribution to knowledge despite adversity and facilitates their academic and social reintegration. This comprehensive approach recognizes their fundamental role as agents of change and resistance.

- **Intersectionality:** understanding that persecution and violence occur differently based on the diversity of bodies and sexual orientation of the teaching segment.

Intersectionality, a concept developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw and expanded upon by authors such as Patricia Hill Collins, offers an essential lens for understanding how different systems of oppression—such as sexism, racism, homophobia, and transphobia—interact, creating unique experiences of discrimination for marginalized groups. In the formal educational environment, this perspective is fundamental to understanding how women and LGBTQIAPN+ people are disproportionately affected

in a disproportionate manner. These populations face everything from everyday microaggressions to explicit attacks in a space that, although it should be one of learning and emancipation, often reflects the structural inequalities of society.

Patricia Hill Collins (2021) highlights the importance of understanding these oppressions as part of a "matrix of domination," in which different axes of inequality intersect, configuring specific forms of marginalization. In the academic environment, women—especially black, indigenous, and peripheral women—and LGBTQIAPN+ people face institutional barriers that limit their professional advancement and devalue their intellectual productions. Those who take critical positions or address issues that challenge conservative norms are often targets of persecution, hate campaigns, and attempts to silence them, especially in contexts of growing political authoritarianism. Feminists and LGBTQIAPN+ teachers who promote discussions about diversity and human rights face delegitimization that questions their competence and seeks to marginalize them even further.

CLAA has developed a specific protocol for addressing violence directed at educators, women, and LGBTQIAPN+ people in universities. This protocol aims not only to create mechanisms for reporting and protection, but also to foster

a university culture that recognizes and values diversity, as well as incisively addressing structural inequalities in academia. Inspired by the principles of intersectionality and social justice, the protocol reinforces the ethical commitment to protect educators, ensuring that the university remains a democratic space capable of fostering critical thinking and social transformation. It thus affirms the right of all marginalized groups to fully participate in the construction of knowledge.

An intersectional approach is essential for institutional policies to recognize that persecution and violence against educators are not homogeneous experiences, but are influenced by factors such as gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status. **Women**, Black people, Indigenous people, LGBTQIAPN+ people, and other historically marginalized groups face forms of violence and harassment that often combine multiple and interlinked forms of discrimination. In this sense, it is essential that higher education institutions and organizations working in this area develop policies that are sensitive to these differences, offering adequate support

targeted to the specific needs of each teaching segment. This includes the creation of safe spaces, representation in decision-making processes, and close monitoring of the particularities of each case, ensuring that the reception is effective, equitable, and respectful of the diversity of bodies and identities present in the educational environment.

- **Secularism:** Secularism in public education is an essential principle for democratic education, academic freedom, and university autonomy.

Secularism stands out as one of the guiding principles for promoting a welcoming environment and for the uncompromising defense of academic freedom. According to the Observatory of Secularism in Education (OLE)⁽¹⁵⁾ secularism is not only the separation between religion and the State, but a structuring principle for guaranteeing public education that respects diversity and promotes equality. In this sense, secularism acts as one of the fundamental principles for the creation of a welcoming and free educational environment, in which no approach to any subject is restricted by religious orientation.

¹⁵The Observatory of Secularism in Education is made up of teachers and students, activists for state secularism who develop, gather, and disseminate positions related especially to secular public education. More information is available at: www.ole.uff.br.

The OLE emphasizes in its publications that secularism in public education is essential to ensure that all people, regardless of beliefs, values, or worldviews, are respected and treated equally. This means ensuring that the educational space does not privilege or disqualify any religious or philosophical view. Instead, secularism creates the conditions for pluralistic, respectful, and critical dialogue, in which all perspectives can be discussed from the perspective of scientific knowledge and democratic principles.

Based on this concept, secularism protects academic freedom by preventing religious interests from interfering in research, teaching, and the educational curriculum. Thus, it ensures that teachers and researchers have the autonomy to explore topics considered sensitive or controversial without fear of censorship or persecution. This university autonomy is vital for the advancement of knowledge, the development of a critical society, and the construction of an inclusive educational culture.

In addition, the OLE points out that secularism is a pillar for welcoming students in all their diversity. In a secular educational space, no belief is imposed, and students are encouraged to reflect on different perspectives in an open and respectful manner. This environment favors the strengthening of

critical thinking and a sense of belonging, essential elements for building a transformative and inclusive education.

Therefore, secularism, as defended by the Observatory of Secularism in Education, is more than just an organizational norm; it is a principle that guarantees equity, autonomy, and plurality in the educational space. Incorporating secularism as a core value of public education is essential to strengthening academic freedom and building societies that value justice, democracy, and respect for differences.

- **Respect and promotion of human rights:** guaranteeing a university environment that recognizes and respects all human rights and the cross-cutting principle of non-discrimination.

The promotion of human rights in education implies recognizing the dignity and fundamental rights of each individual, respecting their identities and ensuring their freedom of thought and action in the exercise of their profession. Therefore, educational institutions, governments, and organizations involved in education must adopt policies and practices that not only protect but also actively promote the rights of educators as part of a broader commitment to a more equitable and democratic society. This involves protecting these professionals against any form of censorship, harassment, or persecution, creating conditions for them to perform their role fully and without fear of reprisals.

professionals from any form of censorship, harassment, or persecution, creating conditions for them to perform their role fully and without fear of reprisals. Ensuring freedom of expression, respect for diversity, and the professional autonomy of educators is essential for building a safe and democratic academic environment.

Guaranteeing freedom of expression is indispensable for educators to be able to carry out their activities autonomously, free from censorship, intimidation, and persecution. Freedom of expression in the educational space is not only an individual right, but also a necessary condition for the advancement of critical thinking, the production of knowledge, and the formation of citizens who are engaged and aware of their rights and duties. Recognizing and protecting this freedom ensures that the academic environment remains a pluralistic space where ideas can be debated and knowledge can be built collectively.

Similarly, respecting diversity and ensuring professional autonomy are fundamental elements for the promotion of human rights in education. Respect for diversity includes valuing different cultures, perspectives, and identities, creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment. For teachers to be able to act fully in this context, it is essential that they have professional autonomy, being able to perform their duties with independence and ethical commitment, without external interference or pressure. Policies that promote these values are essential to protect human rights in education.

Policies that promote these values are essential to protect human rights in a broad sense, reinforcing education as a tool for social transformation and resistance to democratic setbacks.

• **Guarantee of Institutional Responsibility:** commitment by higher education institutions to monitor and support their educators in the face of persecution arising from their work.

Education International Latin America (IEAL) has been an active defender of the labor rights of education professionals and the fundamental principles that underpin free, inclusive, and quality public education. Among these principles, academic freedom occupies a central place, as it guarantees educators the right to teach, research, and express ideas without fear of reprisals or external interference. This right not only protects educators, but is also essential for the development of critical citizenship and the promotion of democratic and just societies.

Academic freedom, as emphasized by IEAL, is fundamental to resisting attempts at censorship, ideological or political impositions that seek to restrict the professional autonomy of educators.

or political impositions that seek to restrict the professional autonomy of educators. In Latin America, a region historically marked by periods of authoritarianism, the defense of this right is especially urgent, as threats persist such as the criminalization of critical teachers, government interference in school curricula, and efforts to delegitimize educational spaces as places of reflection and social transformation.

In this context, IEAL promotes actions to strengthen academic freedom through awareness campaigns, the development of inclusive educational policies, and the promotion of international standards that protect educators from growing threats. Furthermore, it reinforces that academic freedom is not a privilege of teachers, but an indispensable condition for students at all levels to have access to an education that promotes critical thinking, pluralism of ideas, and active participation in democratic life.

From this perspective, academic freedom guarantees education workers the autonomy to conduct their teaching activities, allowing for the free development of thought, teaching, and learning among students. Therefore, it is imperative that all conditions be guaranteed so that the

the content to be covered is proportionate and promotes an education that reflects different realities.

Thus, it is essential that universities, schools, and other educational organizations be committed not only to academic training but also to the safety and well-being of their professionals and that they engage in the defense of academic freedom. This perspective was recently validated and strengthened at the 10th World Congress of Education International, whose resolutions point to a commitment to building paths that ensure the right to democratic and uncensored education⁽¹⁶⁾.

- **Sustainability:** development of policies and programs with lasting impact.

The commitment to sustainability implies building mechanisms that transform the policies proposed in these guidelines into something continuous and not ephemeral. It is common for a lack of financial and/or human resources to result in the discontinuation of important actions over time. In this sense, it is crucial that, from the outset, actions to welcome educators at risk are designed in such a way as to anticipate and guarantee their permanence over the years.

¹⁶ <https://www.ei-ie.org/es/item/29022:resolutions-from-education-internationals-10th-world-congress>

Another important point about sustainability is to reflect on the future we envision for society. In his book entitled *“Tomorrow is not for sale,”* indigenous leader, environmentalist, and philosopher Ailton Krenak reminds us that the economy is an activity invented by humans and depends on us (Krenak, 2020. P.10). Remembering this fact means understanding that economic arguments cannot be limiting in the face of human demands that herald future problems for our society, such as disenchantment with the teaching profession, reflecting concerns about the lack of labor in education, an issue already announced by UNESCO in its 2023 report.

The sustainability of policies and programs to welcome persecuted educators is essential to ensure a lasting impact that transcends emergency responses and provides a solid foundation for rebuilding the professional and personal trajectories of these professionals. Sustainable policies must be planned with a long-term focus, prioritizing the creation of structures that offer continuous support, such as institutional protection networks, stable funding, and mentoring programs. These initiatives should include partnerships between governments, universities, civil society organizations, and international agencies, ensuring financial and human resources that guarantee their viability and expansion over time.

In addition, sustainability requires constant monitoring and adaptation of these policies to the emerging needs of educators, considering the specific contexts of each region or situation of persecution. This includes incorporating technologies that facilitate communication and remote training, promoting academic mobility, and establishing evaluation mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of the actions implemented. A sustainable approach should also value the integration of these professionals into local or international educational systems, promoting their active reintegration into academic and social life so that they can contribute significantly to their communities and perpetuate the values of freedom, diversity, and human rights in their practices.

3.

WHAT DO WE RECOMMEND

to the institutions and organizations to which this document is addressed?

Acting as a coalition that seeks to unite efforts to promote academic freedom in the Americas, CLAA, through of publishes

The purpose of this document is to share an analysis of the risks faced by educators in the region and suggest ways to address them. It presents a number of approaches that can be adopted by higher education institutions individually, collectively, and/or in an integrated manner.

3.1. Where to start? Structural recommendations to ensure support for educators at risk

- **Create institutional protocols:** in cases of persecution of educators, it is common for these professionals to be unaware of the procedures to be followed to report the violence they have suffered and request support from their respective higher education institutions. In this sense, it is essential to create clear and transparent institutional protocols that guide the procedures to be followed by both victims and the assistance team.

- **Defining clear responsibilities and ombudsman channels:** another important point is the creation and/or definition of the sectors and channels responsible for recording, attending to, and monitoring cases of harassment, thus outlining a path in which the victim will not need to constantly recount the violence suffered, thereby avoiding a process of revictimization.

and monitoring cases of persecution, thus tracing a path in which the victim will not need to constantly recount the violence suffered, thus avoiding a process of revictimization. In this sense, institutional protocols must pay attention to the confidentiality and efficiency of internal communication among the sectors involved in the process of receiving and supporting persecuted educators.

- **Team training:** it is essential that higher education institutions train technical and academic teams to deal with the particularities of receiving educators at risk. Training should be practical, based on real cases, so that the team can analyze and apply appropriate procedures and evaluate their consequences. It is essential that the authorities of educational centers participate in this training on welcoming, since the effectiveness of the program depends on their institutional commitment. Directors, coordinators, and senior staff must have the capacity not only to support internal procedures but also to act with knowledge in public statements on cases of persecution. It is recommended that this training be collaborative among higher education institutions, facilitating the exchange of experiences and the integration of actions. That said, CLAA is well positioned to act as a facilitator in creating institutional bridges that enable these collaborative spaces.

• **Raising awareness in the academic community:** just as important as creating a policy to welcome educators at risk is its widespread dissemination in the academic community. By publicizing these actions, the institutional commitment to monitoring cases becomes clear, indicating to academics that they are not alone and also informing potential aggressors that they will be held accountable for their actions. In this way, raising awareness in the academic community is directly linked to the process of informing/communicating what harassment of educators is, including informing them of institutional commitments and national and international documents promoting rights, diversity, and democracy, discerning freedom of expression from cases of attacks and harassment of differing opinions. To contribute to this process, it is essential that the communications departments of higher education institutions carry out information campaigns on this topic.

• **Monitor and evaluate:** the success and effectiveness of institutional policies is directly linked to the ability to identify and resolve necessary adjustments throughout the process of implementing actions. As presented by the Mercosur Institute of Public Policy on Human Rights (IPPDH, 2014), public policies need to be thought of as a continuous cycle that includes the stages of formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

and evaluation. It is of utmost importance to create mechanisms, spaces, and moments that monitor and evaluate the reception policy throughout its implementation. It is crucial to involve the various actors in the shelter policy in its monitoring and evaluation, i.e., both educators who are persecuted and served by the shelter policy, as well as the action team and the academic community in general. Monitoring can be done through anonymous questionnaires, focus groups, roundtable discussions, etc. The key is to ensure a space for active listening that seeks to promote continuous adjustments and improvements in the welcoming policy.

3.2. What can be done? Suggestions for actions to be developed by institutions

• **Psychological and legal support network:** it is clear from various studies on the current phenomenon of persecution of educators that it is essential for the institution to which the professional is linked to provide legal and psychological assistance to deal with trauma and legal issues related to persecution. The growing persecution of educators highlights the urgent need for a psychological and legal support network dedicated to these professionals. This type of network is essential to protect the rights of educators, safeguard their mental health, and ensure the continued full exercise of their freedom to teach. Depending on the situation of each Higher Education Institution (HEI), this network can be built internally or in collaboration with other HEIs, expanding the capacity to provide assistance and enabling distancing in cases of internal persecution in which it is necessary for the professionals involved to distance themselves from the context.

From a legal standpoint, a support network can offer specialized assistance to guide educators facing unfair accusations, administrative proceedings, or even lawsuits motivated by distorted interpretations

of their teaching practices. Lawyers specializing in human and educational rights can act in defense of these professionals, ensuring that due process is respected and protecting them from institutional or individual abuse. This support can also include preventive guidance, with the development of materials that inform teachers of their rights and legal limits in the exercise of their profession, helping to reduce the impact of legal threats.

In the psychological sphere, the need for support is equally pressing. Constant pressure, self-censorship, and fear of reprisals can generate high levels of stress, anxiety, and, in more severe cases, depression among persecuted educators. A psychological support network can provide individualized or group care, helping these professionals deal with the emotional impacts of persecution. In addition, collective strategies, such as conversation circles and support groups, can promote the strengthening of connections between educators, creating a sense of solidarity. It is important to note that psychological support should be provided using a psychosocial approach, which takes a broad, ethical, and political view of activism and support for human rights defenders. The goal is not to individualize, pathologize, or psychologize the defender, but rather to understand them in their sociopolitical context.

It should be noted that within the scope of a Reception Policy, it is essential that this assistance be familiar with the issue of persecution of educators, thus enabling better handling of the case. Once again, collaborative and networked action by institutions can contribute to the optimization of personal and financial resources.

• **Offering scholarships and research grants:**

after suffering some type of persecution or attack, it is advisable to ensure that the victim has time to rest and recover, as implemented in the programs mentioned in item 2 of this document. Given the nature of higher education institutions, it is believed that offering scholarships and research grants so that academics at risk can be temporarily relocated to another HEI is a very productive approach. However, in order to ensure the well-being and recovery of the persecuted educator, it is essential that the temporary relocation takes place within the framework of a broader reception policy.

well-being and recovery of the persecuted educator, it is essential that the temporary relocation occurs within a broader reception policy.

It is also important to emphasize that these are not traditional academic programs with exhaustive work plans; the main objective of these scholarships is the reception and recovery of the victim, with an emphasis on those who need to temporarily leave their countries/regions of origin or higher education institutions due to risk and/

or trauma suffered. In this sense, it is desirable to build a collaborative network between various higher education institutions which, with the support of CLAA, could enable the institutional reception of educators who need temporary relocation, as well as identify funding sources for the scholarships.

As a short-term development of the guidelines presented here, we invite HEIs in the region to collaborate in the creation of a pilot plan to welcome persecuted educators in the Americas, putting into practice the principles described in item 2 of this document. In a collaborative manner, a small group of universities could develop activities for reading, writing, rest, and recovery, formulate selection criteria for those who could be welcomed, and raise funds for the implementation of such scholarships.

• **Continuing education spaces:** based on the implementation of a Policy for Welcoming Educators at Risk, the HEI will contact professionals who may need to learn new skills, such as digital security to prevent intrusions in virtual academic environments, or even the welcoming policy team, which, when dealing with cases, requires training in various topics such as race, gender, diversity, human rights, legal and psychological aspects, among others.

To meet this demand, it is possible to develop a continuing education platform with virtual, hybrid, or in-person courses, seminars, and workshops that strengthen the skills of educators and teams involved in Welcome Policies. In order to optimize efforts and costs, such a platform can be developed collaboratively among the higher education institutions that are signatories to this document.

- **Encouraging intercultural dialogue, integration, and linguistic welcoming:** inspired by the cultural richness and diversity of the Americas, we recognize that the creation and implementation of effective Welcoming Policies by each Higher Education Institution (HEI) has the power to promote inclusive and collaborative environments. These policies, developed in dialogue with CLAA and other regional initiatives, should value the cultural, academic, and pedagogical experiences of educators, students, and other members of the academic community from different countries of the American continent.

The potential of intercultural dialogue lies in strengthening ties between peoples, exchanging knowledge, and overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers. In this context, valuing each individual's identity and creating spaces that promote mutual respect are essential for consolidating solid and sustainable regional integration.

A crucial aspect for the success of this integration is linguistic acceptance. Expanding opportunities in Spanish and Portuguese allows people from different cultural backgrounds to feel more comfortable and integrated, while promoting the learning and appreciation of the majority languages in the Americas. Through language courses, cultural events, and accessible teaching materials, it is possible to enrich educational processes and broaden the perspectives of those involved.

In this sense, the proposal to create a pilot plan among HEIs in the Americas for welcoming students through scholarships is an important step forward in this endeavor. Concrete mechanisms must be created to promote opportunities for persecuted educators who speak Spanish and/or Portuguese.

- **Partnerships with international organizations:** the formation of strategic partnerships with international organizations, such as UNESCO, MERCOSUR, and other entities of global, regional, and local relevance, plays a fundamental role in the consolidation and expansion of Welcome Policies in higher education institutions. These collaborations have the potential not only to broaden the reach of initiatives, but also to provide essential technical, financial, and methodological support for their implementation and long-term sustainability. UNESCO,

for example, with its strong presence in education, science, and culture, can provide global guidelines, training programs, and teaching materials aimed at promoting academic freedom. Its international collaboration networks also open up opportunities for HEIs to share good practices, strengthen academic and cultural exchange, and develop projects that integrate the global and local dimensions of education.

On the other hand, MERCOSUR, as a regional bloc, offers a strategic context for strengthening cooperation between countries in the Americas, especially in the integration of educational and language policies. Through its academic mobility programs, such as the Regional Academic Mobility Program in Accredited Courses (MARCA), and initiatives focused on higher education, MERCOSUR creates a favorable environment for the development of joint actions that promote bilingualism, inclusion, and the appreciation of regional cultures.

International collaborations also expand the possibilities for research and innovation, allowing HEIs to develop studies on the impacts of Welcome Policies and identify more effective strategies to promote inclusive educational environments. With the support of international organizations, it is possible to establish a

virtuous circle where the exchange of experiences, continuous funding, and the dissemination of good practices fuel the growth and consolidation of these policies.

4.

A F I R M A R

**Academic freedom: an invitation to walk
together**

A Protecting educators at risk is a responsibility that transcends borders, requiring collective commitment and global solidarity.

The role of educators in training critical, conscious citizens committed to human rights and social justice is fundamental to the construction of a democratic education. When these professionals are attacked and/or persecuted, whether for their pedagogical approaches, their freedom of expression, or their political and social positions, it is not just an attack on individuals, but an assault on the values that underpin democracy itself.

Universities, as privileged spaces for knowledge, reflection, and social transformation, have the potential to lead this cause. They must be protagonists in the defense of academic freedom, in the promotion of a pluralistic environment, and in the protection of their members, especially those who, through their pedagogical practices, seek to educate citizens capable of questioning, debating, and transforming reality. The role of universities goes beyond the production of technical **a n d** scientific knowledge; they are committed to contributing to the formation of a more just, egalitarian, **a n d** democratic society. This commitment is materialized in the protection **a n d** support of educators

who are persecuted for exercising their role of educating in a critical and inclusive manner.

From this perspective, Christian Laval, Pierre Dardot, Paulo Freire, and bell hooks understand that education is a political act that seeks to empower individuals to recognize their rights, question oppressive structures, and assume their role as agents of change, and they are an inspiration in the conceptions of democratic education. For Laval **a n d** Dardot (2016), education must break with neoliberal logic, which reduces human relations to competition and the market, promoting instead the "common," that is, values and practices that prioritize solidarity and **t h e** collective good. Paulo Freire (2019) complements this view with his pedagogy of dialogue, which places the learner as an active subject in the construction of knowledge, in a horizontal relationship with the educator.

Bell hooks (2017) broadens this perspective by bringing intersectionality to the center of the discussion, the need to integrate the struggles against racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression into educational practice. In her work, hooks advocates for an engaged education that recognizes the classroom as a space for resistance and transformation, where historically marginalized voices can be heard **a n d** valued. For hooks, teaching is also an act of love,

in the sense of creating welcoming and emancipatory learning environments, in which knowledge is connected to the experiences lived by students.

These concepts help us to perceive and reaffirm educators as defenders of human rights because their practices transcend the simple transmission of school content, being a commitment to social transformation and the construction of a society based on equity, justice, and human dignity. Thus, by practicing critical and committed education, educators promote the essential values of human rights, such as equality, freedom, respect, and dignity. They combat social, racial, and gender inequalities while strengthening people's ability to claim their rights and actively participate in the construction of a democratic society. In this sense, they not only teach but also act as guardians of the principles that underpin the struggle for human rights in all spheres of life.

In short, the defense of academic freedom and the welcoming of educators at risk are central issues for the preservation of a democratic and pluralistic education, essential for the construction of a just and egalitarian society. Universities, as privileged spaces for critical reflection and innovation, must position themselves as uncompromising defenders of the freedom of teaching and academic autonomy.

of freedom of teaching and academic autonomy. Protecting persecuted educators is not only a matter of guaranteeing the dignity of individuals, but also of preserving the fundamental principles of education as a universal right. Academic freedom is the foundation upon which quality education is built, capable of questioning and transforming power structures, creating a learning environment where diversity of thought is respected and valued.

In this sense, welcoming educators at risk should be seen as an act of resistance, which reinforces the integrity of the academic space and ensures that knowledge continues to be produced and transmitted free from external pressures. Universities have a strategic role in promoting this welcoming environment, offering not only legal and psychological support, but also establishing a network of solidarity that safeguards freedom of expression and thought. In doing so, they ensure that education remains a space of freedom, creativity, and criticism, essential for strengthening democracy. By protecting educators and academic freedom, we are investing directly in building a future in which the values of justice, equality, and respect for differences are increasingly consolidated.

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