



Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos: 20 years

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Summary

The objective of this article is to review 20 years of history of the *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos* from its beginnings as DEHUIDELA in 2009. This is achieved through a descriptive analysis based on information gathered from the reports presented annually to IDELA, from each published journal number and its website. The article proposes that this publication is born as an effort of the *Instituto de Estudios Latinoamericanos* (Institute of Latin American Studies) (IDELA) to support the *Human Rights Program*, as well as an opportunity to develop various themes that will stimulate the students of the Institute in their research topics. Starting with a new effort in 2009, the journal takes a step to become an indexed scientific publication whose main focus is the publication of works related to human rights as perceived from various disciplines and approaches. It is concluded that the work input over the years has made the *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos* a quality print and electronic publication that contributes to the dissemination of knowledge of human rights in Latin America from within the *public university*.

Keywords: Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos; Scientific publication; IDELA; Human rights.

Resumen

El objetivo del presente artículo es reseñar 20 años de historia de la *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos*, desde sus inicios como DEHUIDELA en el 2009. Para lograrlo, se realiza un análisis descriptivo con base en la información recabada en los informes presentados anualmente al IDELA, en cada número de la Revista y en la página web de esta. Se propone que esta publicación nace como un esfuerzo del Instituto de Estudios Latinoamericanos (IDELA) para apoyar el programa de Derechos Humanos, así como una oportunidad para desarrollar diversas temáticas que estimularan al estudiantado del Instituto en

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sus orientaciones de investigación. A partir de un nuevo esfuerzo en el 2009, la Revista da un paso para convertirse en una publicación científica indexada, cuyo eje central es la difusión de estudios vinculados con los derechos humanos desde diversas disciplinas y enfoques. Se concluye que la labor desarrollada a lo largo de los años ha logrado que la *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos* sea una publicación impresa y electrónica de calidad que aporta a la difusión del conocimiento de los derechos humanos en América Latina desde la universidad pública.

Palabras clave: *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos*, publicación científica, IDELA, derechos humanos.

Introduction

This paper aims to review part of the 20-year history of the *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos* (RLDH) (translated as *Latin American Journal of Human Rights*) since its inception as *DEHUIDELA*, in 2009, a project that has been part of the vision of the *Instituto de Estudios Latinoamericanos* (IDELA, the Institute) (translated as *Institute of Latin American Studies*) of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (FPL-UNA) at the Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica (UNA). For this, a descriptive analysis has been carried out based on the information collected in the reports submitted annually to IDELA in each issue of the Journal and on its website.

The *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos* represents a door to the socialization of knowledge from UNA, it is a milestone in the commitment of this university to contribute to the development of knowledge. It is a contribution of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters to participate in the dissemination of knowledge in accordance with its mission of creating, disseminating and benefiting from cognition, as well as promoting “the links and interrelationships between that knowledge, so that the human community...reach higher stages of social and material coexistence.” (Misión FFL, 2017). In addition, it focuses on the mission of the Institute (IDELA) in the promotion of respect for human dignity, and in the construction of a more just, free society respectful of the human rights.

Moreover, it is framed within the areas of study of IDELA which are linked to the situations and realities pertaining to human rights in Latin America, all while simultaneously representing for IDELA a field of challenges and commitments in the formation, awareness creation, dissemination, experiences and promotion of human rights. In this way, the Institute acquires special importance in the promotion of human rights in the context of education, research and extension, inside and outside the domain of the university. In this sense, it is important to highlight that the Journal is part of IDELA’s mission aimed at contributing “to the process of building a Latin America, appreciated as a unit in cultural diversity, addressing the creative from an objective reading and a vision of our reality”

(IDELA, 2017, paragraph 1) and as a potentiating space of academic efforts committed to this process, with the purpose of contributing to the “cultivation of a logic of Latin American historical thinking that deepens into the knowledge of the reality of the Latin American peoples and propels significant social transformations from a sense of critical learning.” (IDELA, nd, paragraph 3)

Given this panorama, the Journal is aligned to be an academic, formative, cognitive, informative, critical analysis and dissemination tool as well as a participatory space to share the contributions of critical, analytical and promotional endeavors and as a showcase for the recognition of humans rights in Latin America.

About the origins: DEHUIDELA

The *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos* emerged in 1999 under the name of *Human Rights-IDEA* known by its acronym as *DEHUIDELA*, as part of the project “Systematic Modules in Human Rights” established in IDELA. Marta Morera, at that time an academic at the Institute, had the vision to initiate this project to support the Institute’s postgraduate programs: Master’s Program in Human Rights and Peace Education, Master’s Program in Latin American Studies and the Bachelor’s Degree in Latin American Studies, as well as extension and research programs. For who had this idea, a publication in the realm of human rights would be an opportunity to develop various themes capable of stimulating the student body in their research orientations.

The publication of that moment had as core objective to search in specialized technical sources issues pertaining to human rights to gather information, which, once systematized, would give way to the publication of two products, namely, a *Module* (which is the first version of the *DEHUIDELA* journal) and an *Anthology*, thus, the initiative would generate educational purpose publications to strengthen the teaching, research and extension areas of the Institute.

The information was compiled based on two criteria: relevance and periodicity, with the possibility of repeating themes in order to expand and update them. During the first 9 years, publications were carried out as monothematic anthologies referring to human rights and as *DEHUIDELA*, which were also monothematic booklets on human rights. These were distributed in various documentation centers throughout Latin America and aroused interest in the various addressed topics.

Two *DEHUIDELA* and an anthology were published annually. The monothematic publications covered various topics among which can be mention: the rights of people of African descent, migrants, women, people with disabilities, education in human rights, girls’ access to education; child labor, women and sex work, among others.



Thus, it can be said that *DEHUIDELA* began as the first periodical publication in a public university in Costa Rica that particularly addressed the issue of human rights since 1999.

With the changes occurring in the Latin American context, the transformations linked to information technologies and IDELA's interest of influencing Latin American reality through the dissemination of scientific knowledge, in 2009 IDELA commits to a new process for the publication to become a scientific journal in the field of human rights. This renovation began under the Editor-in-Chief and Director, Evelyn Cerdas Agüero, an academic of the Institute. This is how the publication changes its name to *DEHUIDELA: Human Rights Journal* (name with which 2 issues were published, namely: issues No.17 and No.18) and later to *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos* (starting with the 2009 issue No.19, onwards)

The first era: *DEHUIDELA*

In the first 9 years of the journal as *DEHUIDELA*, from 1999 to the first semester of 2008, 16 issues were published, 2 per year (with the exception of the year 2000), in print format under the editorial leadership of Marta Morera Salas up to issue No.13, and under Evelyn Cerdas Agüero for issues No.14 to No.16. These numbers corresponded to a compilation of texts linked to specific subjects of human rights with the mention of each of the authors.

The first numbers were composed of 6 sections, namely: *introductory article*, this included an article on the theoretical and philosophical foundation of human rights; *IDELA and human rights*, with texts regarding the Institute's *Human Rights and Peace Education Program*; *organizations working for human rights*, dealt with texts that incorporated the work of governmental and non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights; *Directory for human rights*, this section provided a list of electronic addresses where more information could be sought on the subject matter; *thematic articles on human rights and news and documents on human rights*, these last two sections included news and documents related to the specific theme of a given journal issue.

Starting from issue No.17, the Journal changes its name to *Revista de Derechos Humanos* (translated as *Human Rights Journal*) and subsequently to *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos*, in which the previously published sections were no longer incorporated, but only offered original articles and not texts compiled from websites; additionally, from this number onward, monothematic

publications were dropped. The following table shows the themes of published numbers during the first 9 years:

Table 1
Themes covered in DEHUIDELA from 1999 to 2008

Theme	Number	Year	Date
Various themes	1	1	January-April, 1999
Various themes	2	1	May-July, 1999
Education, work, health and human rights	3	1	August-October, 1999
International humanitarian law	4	2	August-October, 2001
Migration and human rights	5	2	November-December, 2001
Environment and human rights	6	3	January-December, 2002
Rights of civilians at war	7	4	January-December, 2003
Human rights of health patients	8	5	January-April, 2004
Human rights and democracy	9	5	May-December, 2004
Afro-descendants	10	6	January-June, 2005
Food security	11	6	June-December, 2005
Right to culture	12	7	January-May, 2006
Right to work of the elderly	13	7	June-December, 2006
Right to education	14	8	January-June, 2007
Human rights education	15	8	May-August, 2007
Education of girls	16	8	2008
Human Rights Journal	17	9	January-June, 2008
Human Rights Journal	18	9	July-December, 2008

Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos: A scientific publication

As of 2009, the Journal begins a period of transformation to become part of the scientific journals of Costa Rica and Latin America, specialized in the subject of human rights. Thus, the objectives of the Journal focus around opening a space for reflection, discussion, critical analysis and proposals in the area of human rights from the perspectives of different disciplines with emphasis on Latin America; also, to disseminate the works and contributions in areas related to human rights carried out by IDELA, the academic and student population of UNA, as well as people and organizations that work on the issue of human rights in Costa Rica and Latin America.



In this way, the Journal has specialized in the publication of works whose central axis is human rights as seen from various disciplines and approaches, a responsibility that is assumed through the establishment of a series of quality criteria and rigurocity that allowed the Journal to seriously position itself as a periodic and scientific publication contributing from within the *public university*.

As of 2009, work has focused on promoting a process that would allow the publication to be characterized by quality, for which it was necessary to establish a quality management system backed by editorial guidelines relative to presentation, management and content, elements that afforded scientific rigor. In addition to a series of elements of international format and standards, among which the ISSN for the printed version (ISSN: 1659-4304) and electronic version (EISSN: 2215-4221) can be mentioned, the Journal is reinforced by an Editorial Board constituted by five members, an International Board with seven members and the editorial seal of the Editorial Universidad Nacional (EUNA) (The Universidad Nacional Press).

Over the years, the Journal has improved and achieved greater visibility as a consequence of dissemination work, institutional activities, distribution of the printed version, involvement in web networking systems and the implementation of UNA's Portal of Academic Journals starting in 2014 which hosts the journal's website (<https://www.revistas.una.ac.cr/derechoshumanos>). The Portal has been an opportunity for the transition of the Journal from its print to the electronic version; hence the Journal meets the quality criteria of an electronic publication. It is partially open access and offers full-text download.

In addition, it has been constantly sought to improve and include criteria conducive to becoming part of directories, databases and indexes. This is how the Journal has been incorporated in the following indexes: DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals, <https://doaj.org/>) and Latindex (Sistema Regional de Información en Línea para Revistas Científicas de América Latina, el Caribe, España y Portugal-Regional Online Information System for Scientific Journals of Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal, <https://www.latindex.org/latindex/inicio>); directories: CIRC (Clasificación Integrada de Revistas Científicas-Integrated Classification of Scientific Journals, <https://www.clasificacioncirc.es/>), OEI-CREDI (Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos-Centro de Recursos Documentales e Informáticos; Organization of Ibero-American States-Center for Documentary and Computer Resources, <https://www.oei.es/historico/ori.htm>), IBSS (International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, <https://www.proquest.com/products-services/ibss-set-c.html>); databases: ERIH PLUS (<https://dbh.nsd>

uib.no/publiseringskanaler/erihplus/), Actualidad Iberoamericana, (<http://www.citrevistas.cl/b2.htm>), JournalTOCs-The latest Journal Tables of Contents (<http://www.journaltoCs.ac.uk/>), Journals for Free (Directory of open access journals, <http://www.journals4free.com/>), MIAR (Matriz de Información para la Evaluación de Revistas- Information Matrix for the Analysis of Journals, <http://miar.ub.edu/>), OAJI (Open Academic Journal Index, <http://oaji.net/>), REDIB (Red Iberoamericana de Innovación y Conocimiento Científico-Ibero-American Network of Innovation and Scientific Knowledge, replaces E-Revist@s, <https://www.redib.org/>), SHERPA/ROMEO (publisher copyright policies and self-archiving, <http://sherpa.ac.uk/>), CIRC (Clasificación Integrada de Revistas Científicas-Integrated Classification of Scientific Journals, <https://www.clasificacioncirc.es/>), Sicultura (Sistema de Información Cultural de Costa Rica-Cultural Information System of Costa Rica, <https://si.cultura.cr/>); search engines: Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/>), Google Analytics (<https://analytics.google.com/analytics/web/provision/#/provision>), BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, <https://de.base-search.net/>); internet portals: UNA's Portal of Academic Journals (<https://www.revistas.una.ac.cr/>), Portal de Portales Latindex (<http://www.latindex.ppl.unam.mx/>), WorldWideScience.org (Nota: este es el nombre del portal y al mismo tiempo es el dirección web); repositories: RAI-UNA (Repositorio Académico Institucional de la Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica-Institutional Academic Repository, <https://www.repositorio.una.ac.cr/>) (Nota: sugiero usar el nombre formal como lo indica el sitio web), Repositorio Nacional de Costa Rica-Kimuk (Costa Rica National Repository-Kimuk, <http://kimuk.conare.ac.cr/>) and LAReferecia (<http://www.lareferencia.info/es/>).

It is important to note that the upsurge of the Journal is due to the work of the technical and editorial team, the support of the Editorial Board, the collaboration of peer reviewers and authors and to EUNA; additionally, to the support provided by IDELA in maintaining active the project for 20 years, as well as the endorsement and accompaniment of UNA Directorate of Extension, to which the Journal was originally ascribed for many years, and currently to UNA Vice-rectory of Research.

About the publications 2009-2019

From 2009 to the first semester of 2019, 12 volumes of the Journal have been published, 22 numbers of which 1 is an extraordinary number (Migration Trends) and another is a double number. These 22 numbers include a total of 233 texts, of which 220 are articles, 9 poems and 4 reviews. From this data it is also extracted that 46 of the published texts are co-authored by two or more authors.



Regarding authorship, 283 authors have participated, 169 are women and 120 men as denoted in Figure 1. The publication having a greater number of female authors corresponds to Vol.29 No.1, 2018 with 79% and Vol.23 No.2, 2012 with 14 authors, representing 78% of all the issued texts; followed by Vol.25 No.2, 2014 with 62%; Vol.26 No.1, 2015 with 62%; and Vol.30 No.1, 2019 with 58% and 11 authors in Vol.24 No.1-2, 2013 equivalent to 52%.

The publications with the greatest number of male authors are Vol.22 No.2, 2011, with 61%; Vol.26 No.2, 2015 with 50% and Vol.22 No.1, 2011 with 54%.

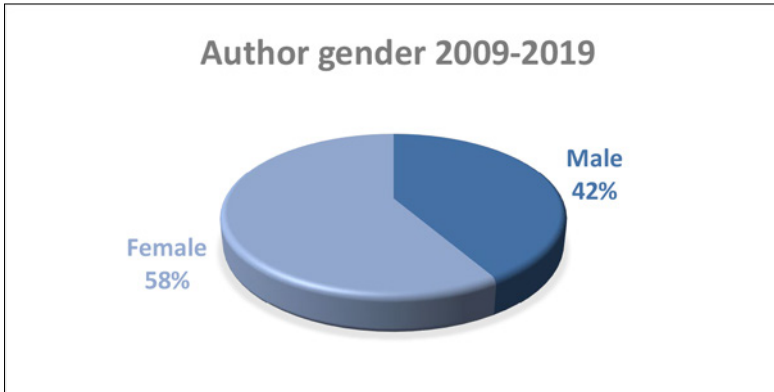


Figure 1. Journal’s author gender participation expressed as a percentage. Source: Own elaboration.

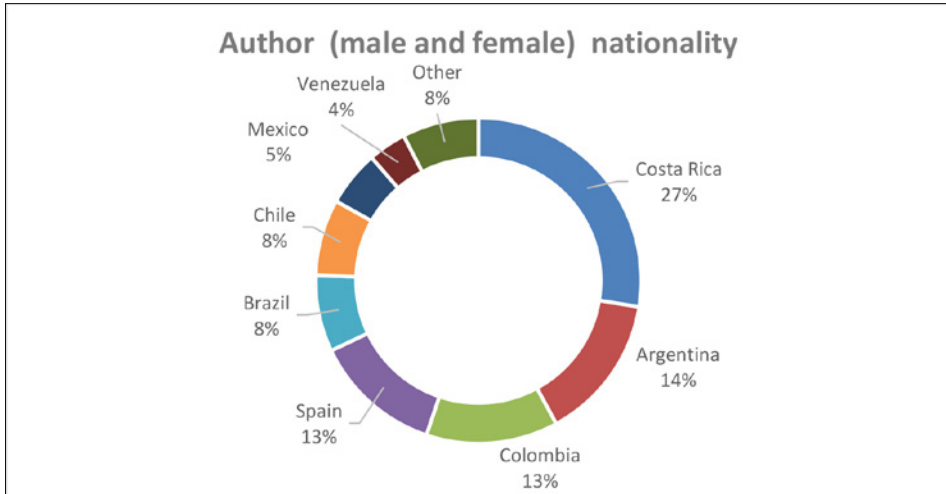


Figure 2. Journal’s author country of origin expressed as a percentage. Source: Own elaboration.

The female authors are from Latin America and Spain; 28% from the Journal's editorial country Costa Rica (80) and 72% from elsewhere, namely: Argentina (42), Colombia (38) and Spain (37), Chile (22), Brazil (22), Mexico (16), Venezuela (11) and other countries (22) like Peru, Uruguay, Ecuador, Paraguay, Guatemala, Italy, Nicaragua, Panama, Germany, Poland, Bolivia and Puerto Rico. Figure 2 exhibits the percentages of authors (male and female) per country of origin for the publication period 2009-2019.

Regarding the institutions of affiliation of the authors, for those who provide this information approximately 220 belong to universities and the remaining 69 are distributed among NGOs, Ministries of Justice, research groups, IIDH, CONICET, FLACSO, CONACYT, human rights commissions, secondary school institutions, as shown in Figure 3. Concerning to the authors' disciplines of provenience it is important to emphasize that some hold several academic degrees, however, they are assigned a specific profession without forgetting to mention the others. In general, it can be said that the professions of the authors are mostly within the areas of law, education (as university academics) and international relations; and in fewer cases psychology, communication sciences, human rights, social sciences, Latin American studies and sociology.

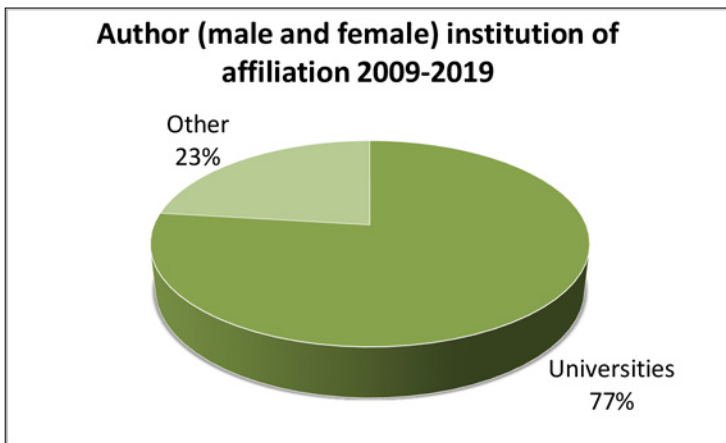


Figure 3. Journal's authors affiliation. Source. Own elaboration

Journal thematic

The texts published in the Journal have as their central axis the subject of human rights covering various perspectives linked to this field. Texts with theoretical or legal approaches are included which do not refer to specific study populations;



it also consists of case studies, didactical or extension experiences and research results. The themes of the published works mostly concern migrants, children and indigenous people, to a lesser extent women and youth, and even less so to other groups such as the elderly, Afro-descendants, incarcerated women, people with disabilities and university student body groups. Thus, it becomes important to consider the need to promote the reception of texts dealing with those populations having a lesser degree of participation or excluded.

Additionally, the texts deal with issues related to specific countries. It can be mentioned that the majority of texts that include countries as subjects of study refer to 4 main countries: Argentina, Costa Rica, Colombia and Mexico; followed by Venezuela, Chile and Brazil, as well as those referring to the region of Central America and Latin America in general; also, other countries are treated to a lesser extent such as Ecuador, Guatemala, Cuba, Uruguay, Puerto Rico, United States and Spain, and two regions: Europe and Africa. The latter is tied to the nationalities of the authors: just as the concentration of pertaining themes are from Argentina, Costa Rica and Colombia, so is the origin of the authors.

About the Journal’s visits distribution and statistics

The *Revista Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos* is distributed in its printed format in 57 documentation centers in 13 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, in addition to the United States, Germany, Spain, Belgium, England and France.

In its electronic format, the Journal is open access (*Creative Commons* license BY-NC-ND: *Creative Commons Reconocimiento-NoComercial-SinObraDerivada 3.0 Costa Rica License*) and available online at UNA’s Academic Journals institutional internet portal (<https://www.revistas.una.ac.cr/>); this has facilitated the collection information via Google Analytics’ “Visitor Statistics”.

With respect to the number of visits 199,339 have been counted from 2011 (the year in which the Journal portal project was launched) to 2019, of which 22% (43,763) originate from Costa Rica and 77.7% (154,804) from other countries, mostly Argentina (31.53%), Mexico (19.35%) and Colombia (11.64%) (Figure 4).

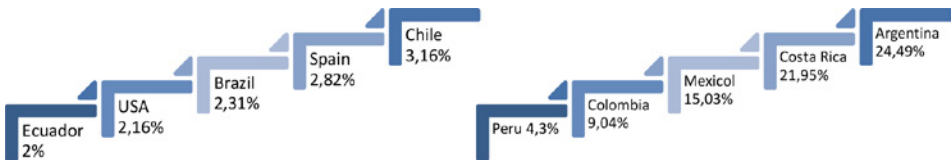


Figure 4. Journal’s visits by country. Visitor statistics by Google Analytics, 2019.



The following table shows the Journal’s annual visits in its electronic version from July 2011 to December 2019, with 2018 being the year of greatest traffic; the escalating traffic trend can be appreciated throughout the years, also the table compares the yearly visits among other countries and Costa Rica.

Table 2
Yearly visits to the electronic version of RLDH

Year	Number of visits	Country	Percentage
2011	2,316	Costa Rica	42.8 %
		Other	57.1 %
2012	10,074	Costa Rica	37.2 %
		Other	62.2 %
2013	15,918	Costa Rica	36.8 %
		Other	62%
2014	13,451	Costa Rica	25.9 %
		Other	73.8 %
2015	19,931	Costa Rica	28.9 %
		Other	70.4 %
2016	15,486	Costa Rica	24%
		Other	75.4 %
2017	21,692	Costa Rica	19.7 %
		Other	80.2 %
2018	39,855	Costa Rica	13.5 %
		Other	86.4 %
2019	37,050	Costa Rica	11.7 %
		Other	88.1 %

Note: Data from Google Analytics’ “Visitor statistics”, 2019.

It is important to highlight that the visits to the Journal’s website imply downloads of each of the articles as well as visualization of these without downloading, differentiating statistics are currently unavailable. Noteworthy of mention are the readings and downloads made from the aforementioned repositories, in addition to the dissemination of the printed version distributed throughout various documentation centers.



The contribution of the scientific Journal from within the *public university*

It is important to consider that scientific journals, by merit of their characteristics, constitute channels of information and dissemination of knowledge of great importance, in this case a periodic publication in the field of human rights disseminates knowledge in this area in addition to promoting research and critical reflection by virtue of the great visibility it holds.

The Journal as a form of scientific communication helps voice the knowledge generated within the *university* and, of it with society, in a dialogue of indispensable cognition to be disseminated and promoted. Thus, scientific communication is, according to Córdoba (2010), at the heart of science, so that knowledge must be communicated to generate new forms of insight, new research ideas and contributions to improve reality in the area of human rights from within the *university*.

In this manner, it can be said that the scientific journal is a space that enhances communication to generate critical thinking, a way of claiming the right to information, knowledge, science and culture. According to Román (2001, as cited in Córdoba, 2010), there are three reasons why the scientific journal is cataloged as a vehicle for science: it certifies the quality of the texts it communicates, it offers authors legal protection (copyrights) and archives the information to facilitate consultation; all the above processes that are supported by the *university*. In this sense, the university is contributing to an essential venture of scientific publication, which “ensures the scientific heritage of humanity and favors the generation and application of knowledge” (Córdoba, 2010, p. 58).

It is also a contribution to society made by the *public university*, which is not only constituted as a space for the confluence of ideas, knowledge and proposals, but also a space for participation, freedom of expression and thought; it embodies a space of inter and multidisciplinary knowledge. Hence, it not only plays a leading role in the dissemination of the academic, extension and research work carried out by the editing university, but also incorporates other Latin American universities, giving greater visibility to the work carried out at the university level in the area of human rights.

In addition to this, it is important to mention that the scientific publication is constituted as a space through which the *public university* can approach society to publicize its work in extension, research and teaching; and vice versa, society can disseminate knowledge, criticisms and proposals about reality.

Conclusion

IDELA as an institute that advocates human rights from within the *public university*, has promoted the Journal since 2009 and over the years has made it into a prestigious and quality publication which, besides being a space that allows for the diffusion of the academic work of universities in Costa Rica, has transcended borders to be embedded within the dynamics of change. This change has motivated to the dissemination of information so as to make it more accessible by prompting its evolution to the realm of open access electronic formats, which helps to consolidate the right to the access of information and knowledge dissemination as part of the great gear of freedom of expression in Latin America.

It is important to mention that the role played by public universities in Latin America is of great importance for the debate of ideas, decolonization, critical thinking, research and new proposals, which is reflected when contemplating the contributions that are published in the Journal, mostly, from the academic arena. Likewise, the contribution from different countries and different perspectives enriches the ways in which reality is viewed, and is not limited by a merely endogenous vision of the country in which it is published.

The Journal faces many challenges as there are many roads to travel, it is worth mentioning that it is necessary to join efforts, since, although many of the authors mention their work as being part of a dissertation or formation process within a master's or doctorate program, it is necessary to encourage the presence of texts authored by undergraduate students; of similar importance is the participation of primary and secondary school teachers. Likewise, it is important to highlight the need to expand publications covering fields of study in other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, especially due to the lack of thematic engagement stemming from Caribbean and Central American countries (with the exception of Costa Rica); similarly, plurality is sought in South America to expand to other countries besides the predominant Argentina and Colombia.

Dissemination should be strengthened, so that the Journal's website visits are extended to other countries so as to seek further collaborations, from other latitudes, to truly form a human rights perspective in Latin America.



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