

UNIVERSIDAD DE LOS ANDES
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES Y EDUCACIÓN
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS MODERNOS

DEL ABSTRACTO MUNDO DE LAS IDEAS AL CONCRETO MUNDO DE LAS
ACCIONES: UNA DOBLE EXPERIENCIA PROFESIONAL EN EL CAMPO DE
LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS

VALENTINA ROMERO SILVA

Mérida, mayo 2010

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GOING FROM THE ABSTRACT WORLD OF IDEAS TO THE CONCRETE
WORLD OF ACTION: A DOUBLE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE
FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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Informe final de Pasantías presentado por la Br. Valentina Isabella Romero Silva
como requisito parcial para optar al título de Licenciada en Idiomas Modernos

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- Dirección: Bulevar Panteón, puente Trinidad a Tienda Honda. Edif. Centro Plaza Las Mercedes, PB. Local 6. Caracas, Venezuela

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INTRODUCTION

A final report of the internship is a requirement to achieve a Bachelor's Degree in Modern Languages. The present report offers a description and an assessment of all the tasks undertaken, activities carried out and experiences I lived during the time I spent working in the Venezuelan Program of Education-Action in Human Rights (Provea, by its Spanish acronym). Beyond accomplishing a formal requirement, the purpose of this report is to reflect on the application of the techniques and knowledge learned during my major.

Taking into account my double professional option in Translation and International Organizations, I decided to do my internship in a place where I could use all the knowledge acquired in both options and put them into practice through a real experience in the working environment. Bearing this in mind, the best host institution was the Venezuelan Program of Education-Action in Human Rights (Provea), a renowned non-governmental organization (NGO) specialized in the defense, promotion and education on human rights and the respect for the exercise of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESC Rights) (PROVEA, 2008).

For twenty one uninterrupted years of hard work, Provea has fought for the dignity and the restoration of the integrity of Venezuelan people regardless of their ethnicity, sex, social class, creed or political affiliation; people who are ignored by the State and who turn to this NGO looking for legal advice and assistance as well as a place to make visible their situation in the eyes of the community (Uzcátegui, 2009).

Provea is located in Caracas, but its sphere of action covers the whole country. It is also known all over the world for its work on human rights. Actually, it has strategic cooperation agreements with national and international allies. Due to this situation, Provea required a translator in order to maintain the recognition, the visibility and the support abroad. A Modern

Languages student with training in Translation and International Organizations was the best option to fulfill the needs of Provea (M. Alvarado, personal interview. November 18, 2009). I earned my place in the Institutional Internship Project and among the members of the Monitoring, Investigation and Diffusion (MID) Program of this organization.

During my internship, I supplied technical support in the field of languages and I was responsible for the translation of all the information that the MID Program and Provea needed such as press releases, articles and pieces of information, among others.

The present report is structured in four main sections and all the information contained within is presented in a descriptive and reflective way. In the first section, a brief description of the Profile of the Host Institution is given including the history, mission, vision and structural organization of Provea. In the second section, the Nature of the Internship is described. This section contains all the tasks and activities I carried out during my internship period. The third section corresponds to the Reflection Essay which contains a critical analysis of my work experience in terms of my professional and personal growth.

The last part of the present report is the Conclusion; where I give my critical assessment based on the work experience I had. In addition, I include some general recommendations and suggestions both to Provea, the Host Institution, and to the School of Modern Languages at the University of Los Andes in order to improve their work performance and their internship program.

PROFILE OF THE HOST INSTITUTION

Twenty one years ago, the defense of human rights was not something new in many Latin-American countries, but this was not the case of Venezuela. Three committed human rights activists decided to change this fact: Ligia Bolívar, Dianorah Contramaestre and Raúl Cubas were their names (See Appendix 1). They started working on human rights at the local level, creating a civil society organization in order to promote and defend the respect to the exercise of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESC Rights) in the country (Uzcátegui, 2009).

In October 1988, The Venezuelan Program of Education-Action in Human Rights (Provea) was created as a non-governmental organization (NGO), independent and autonomous from political parties, religious institutions, international organizations or any government agency. Since then, Provea has carried out activities for the defense, promotion and education on human rights. The purpose of all these actions is to benefit the victims and potential victims whose human rights are violated or not guaranteed by the State, through the promotion of the protagonism of these victims and potential victims and the full realization of their rights (PROVEA, 2008).

In addition, this NGO seeks to promote the consolidation of existing initiatives in the field of human rights and to develop its own programs of defense, education and dissemination of knowledge on human rights, as an arena for organized groups. Its aim is to provide the necessary elements in order to defend the rights of these individuals; encouraging their organization and autonomy, accompanying them in the legal conflicts with practices that combine the use of legal and extra-legal mechanisms (M. Alvarado, personal interview. November 18, 2009).

Provea is located in downtown Caracas, but its sphere of action covers the whole country. It also represents Venezuela in discussion and coordination forums on ESC Rights internationally. Actually, it has strategic cooperation agreements with national and international NGOs and other allies. Among the list of those that work with Provea, we find: human rights NGOs, national and international; social development organizations; academic groups specialized in social research; political groups and mass media with real commitment to human rights; State institutions responsible for human rights promotion and defense; and human rights intergovernmental organizations including the following (T. Hernandez, personal interview. November 18, 2009):

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- Broederlijk Delen
- International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development
- Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)
- Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO)
- Dienste in Übersee (DÜ)
- Embassy of Australia
- British Embassy
- Embassy of Finland
- Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- National Fund for Science, Technology and Innovation (FONACIT by its Spanish acronym)
- Norwegian Fund for Human Rights
- European Foundation for Human Rights and Tolerance
- Ford Foundation
- Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IHR)
- Katholische Zentrastelle für Entwicklungshilfe e.V. (KZE)
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- Maryknoll Lay Missioners (MKLM)
- Misereor
- Operasjon Dagverk - Teaching for freedom
- Project Counselling Service
- Talitha Koum
- Terre des Hommes
- Trocaire
- Merck Company Foundation
- UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)
- European Union (EU)
- ALBOAN
- Inter-American Platform for Human Rights, Democracy and Development (PIDHDD by its Spanish acronym)
- Open Society Institute

Provea has a multidisciplinary working team that merges professionalism and knowledge with values such as: social sensibility, vocation, empathy, solidarity, respect, frankness, communication, companionship, friendship, creativity, discipline, commitment, cohesion, collective intelligence, personal and collective growth.

From a comprehensive perspective, Provea is organized in three programs:

★ **Monitoring, Investigation and Diffusion:** this program carries out activities of documentation, research and dissemination of the human rights situation in Venezuela as well as promotion of public politics and legislation in favor of human rights. In order to accomplish its mission, the MID Program executes three main projects: 1. Documentation; 2. Monitoring on ESC Rights; 3. Legislative lobbying on ESC Rights.

★ **Exigibility on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:** The main tasks of this program are the promotion and education on human rights and activities of support, advice and assistance to social groups in legal and extra-legal defense of their rights, before national and international institutions. The Exigibility Program executes two main projects: 1. Education and strengthening of groups on ESC Rights; 2. Integrated assistance to cases.

★ **Management and Institutional Development:** This program is responsible for management of the budget, obtaining the support and resources that provide funding for Provea, and basically run the organization. The Management Program executes two main projects: 1. Budget and project management; 2. Management and general service. This program is also in charge of the Institutional Internship, a minor project.

These programs have been approved by the Provea Assembly. Nevertheless, the staff have some autonomy in their decisions, actions and projects, but they are interdependent because they have a mission and an aim in common.

Provea Assembly is composed by the associated members and two representative members of the Consultative Council:

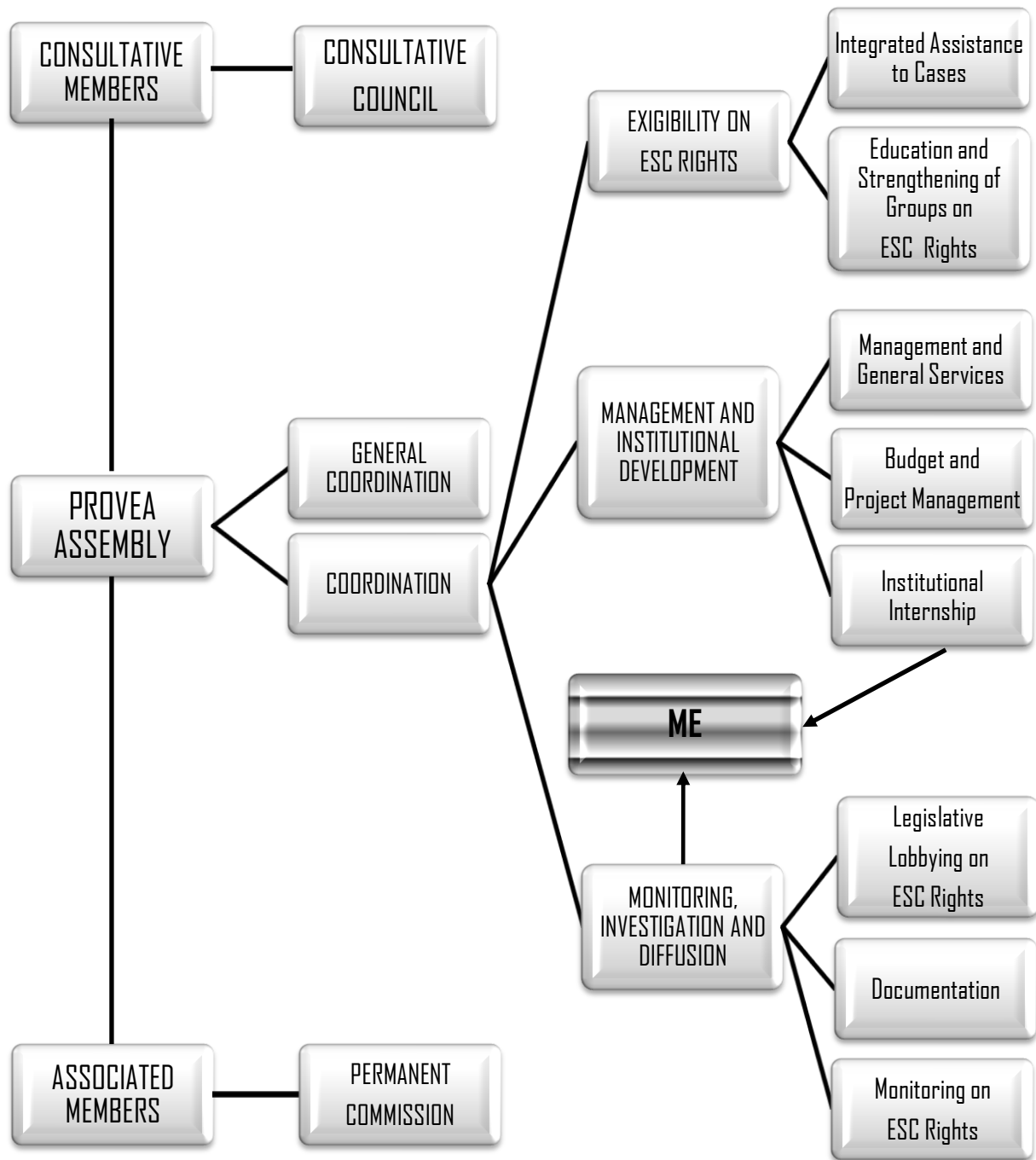
★ **Associated Members:** they are 23 remarkable human rights activists who were part of the Provea working team and have been familiarized with the organization from within. They form the Permanent Commission.

★ **Consultative Members:** they are 8 prominent human rights defenders who form the Consultative Council. They are former employees of Provea but they have been working longer for the organization and have a renowned career.

Both, the associated and the consultative members have shown real commitment and dedication to human rights and to the organization, this is the main reason why they have a place in the Assembly (T. Hernandez, personal interview. November 18, 2009).

During my internship, I worked as the official translator of Provea. In the formal structure, I participated in the Institutional Internship Project of the Management and Institutional Development Program. However, I belonged to the Monitoring, Investigation and Diffusion Program in practice. Actually, I was supervised and guided by the Head of the MID Program, Mr. Rafael Uzcátegui.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



NATURE OF THE INTERNSHIP

As I mentioned above, I was assigned to the Management and Institutional Development Program because I participated in the Institutional Internship Project. However, I was part of the Monitoring, Investigation and Diffusion (MID) Program in practice (See Appendix 2). I was under the supervision of the Head of the MID Program, Mr. Rafael Uzcátegui. As a member of this program, and the only trained translator of Provea, I was responsible for the translation of all the information that the MID Program and the organization needed in terms of press releases, articles, news, and pieces of information, among others.

Since I started my internship in Provea, I was considered a professional. The first day of the internship, I had a meeting with my direct supervisor, Mr. Uzcátegui. He gave me some guidelines for my performance inside the organization; he introduced me to the rest of the employees and assigned me a desk in the library and a computer with Internet access (See Appendix 3). I had my own space and, more importantly, access to online dictionaries, search engines and other tools which helped me with the documentation about human rights terminology and issues related to the texts assigned, and all the stages of the Translation Process: analysis, transfer and rearrangement. I noticed that some of the other interns had to share their computers while I used mine alone. To me, this simply indicated that the organization was aware of the importance of my work.

Tasks and activities carried out:

★ Translation of press releases

Provea has an important place in Venezuelan society and abroad. As a civil society actor, people expect this organization to take a stand and send out its opinion about relevant events that take place in the country which involve human rights, especially ESC Rights issues or those related to any of the campaigns and programs promoted by Provea.

I was in charge of the prose translation (from Spanish into English) of the press releases emitted by Provea. I translated five press releases about different topics including a campaign against impunity, the attacks on journalists from the newspaper chain *Cadena Capriles* (See Appendix 4), a campaign in favor of the right to protest, the lack of guarantees for workers of human rights organizations, and the concerns of Provea about the situation of human right defenders and democracy in Venezuela.

★ Translation of pieces of information to the website

During my internship, I participated in the revamping process of the organization. As part of this process the webpage of Provea was changed. The MID Program was in charge of this task and they asked me to translate (from Spanish into English) some pieces of information such as general information about Provea and sections referring to its mission, vision and overall objectives (See Appendix 5).

★ Translation of articles and pieces of information

The MID Program is responsible for the monthly bulletin *Derechos Humanos y Coyuntura*, which approaches the reality of the country from a human rights perspective.

This program is also in charge of the Digital News Section of the webpage which shows an important overview of relevant events taking place in the field of human rights.

In some cases, the information and articles came from international sources and they were written in English. In order to understand and publish them, the MID Program asked me to translate these articles and pieces of information into Spanish (direct translation). Some of these translations included the following: an article from *The Economist* about the new Education Law (See Appendix 6); an invitation from Åbo Akademi to participate in the intensive course on Justiciability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; an article from the International Press Institute (IPI) about the visit of the IPI Press Freedom Advocacy Mission to Venezuela; and the Abstract of the photographic essay *Capitolio*.

★ Translation of the **Context and Assessment** section of the Annual Report 2009

One of the main projects carried out by Provea is the Annual Report about the situation of human rights in Venezuela. This report is the most emblematic and important work of this organization and the reason why Provea is recognized around the world. The Annual Report is a thorough investigation about the progress, backward steps and demands in the implementation of public policies related to the 19 rights evaluated in the publication.

The Head of the MID Program is usually the coordinator of Provea's Annual Report. So, Mr. Uzcátegui was appointed coordinator of the Annual Report 2009. Since he was my supervisor, he asked me to translate (from Spanish into English) the **Context and Assessment** section of the report (See Appendix 7), which is a kind of summary and evaluation of this publication.

★ Summary of the Chapter **Actions taken before international institutions**

This is one of the last chapters of the Annual Report. This chapter presents an investigation about the situation and progress of all the actions taken in order to protect and defend human rights in Venezuela, as well as the cases submitted for the review of international institutions.

Mr. Uzcátegui considered that I had a good command of grammar, wording and language in Spanish, for that reason he asked me to do the summary of one of the chapters of the Annual Report 2009. He let me choose the chapter in which I would work. I decided to write the summary about the **Actions taken before international institutions** (See Appendix 8), because this one was related to the international system of human rights, which I had studied in a couple of courses related to one of my professional options (*Dinámica de las Organizaciones* and *Organizaciones Internacionales*) and I had always thought it was an interesting and fascinating topic.

★ Other activities

Due to the fact that I had taken two professional options during my degree (Translation and International Organizations), the idea of my internship in Provea was to explore both fields. Because of the needs of Provea, the main task I had to carry out was the translation of the documents mentioned above. However, I had the opportunity to work in other activities such as supporting the monitoring process, supporting the organization and logistics of the Annual Report press conference and the Annual Report presentation (See Appendix 9) and hosting activities during those two events. I also collaborated with and participated in some sessions of the MID Program annual planning and a couple of sessions of the strategic planning evaluation of the organization.

REFLECTION ESSAY

When I started my internship I was excited about it because this experience would be the last step to obtain my degree but at the same time, the first step to start on my professional life. I already knew that it would be a real challenge. I decided to do my internship in a place where I could develop new skills and abilities, but in an environment directly related to my professional options in order to put into practice all the knowledge acquired at the university. I wanted a professional enriching experience in which I could grow as a person and as a professional; and I believe I reached that goal.

I have to confess that, at the beginning of this experience, I felt very nervous since I was not sure how this internship would work for me. I have friends who felt overwhelmed with the work they had to do or disappointed about the expectations they had and the reality they confronted. I could not stop thinking about this the first day I went to Provea. However, Mr. Uzcátegui, my supervisor, and the rest of the staff made me feel more than welcome and they treated me as a professional. So, it was easy to forget all my fears.

I started to work at Provea on September 1st, and it was a busy day because the day before this NGO had published a controversial press release about the right to protest and how it was being violated in Venezuela. Although Mr. Uzcátegui had a lot of work to do and interviews to give, he was able to find time for me. He gave me some guidelines for my performance and also introduced me, one by one, to the whole staff of Provea. He also assigned me a desk in the library and my first assignment: a direct translation of an article from *The Economist* about the new Education Law (August 20, 2009). This article was not long and did not contain complicated terminology.

At the end of the day, the first task of my internship was done and my supervisor and I had a meeting. First, we set my schedule and, because I was able to choose, I decided to work from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This was a flexible schedule bearing in mind that going from my house to Provea involved riding the bus and the subway across the city for more than 45 minutes, and I did not want to be under stress or in bad mood every day because I was late to work.

During this first meeting, I had the opportunity to express my concerns and expectations about the tasks and assignments I would carry out. I told Mr. Uzcátegui that I was willing to work not just in translation but in other activities such as lobbying. He was very receptive with all I had to say, not just in that first meeting, but during the time I worked with him. Unfortunately, I was never able to participate in any lobbying activity because the Legislative Lobbying on ESC Rights project was new in Provea and the person who would work in this area was a new member of the staff too. She had to adapt herself to the dynamics of the organization; then define the function, aim and strategies of this project, and three months and a half were not enough for that. I think that this is the only regret I have about my internship experience.

The second assignment I had was prose translation of two press releases about the right to protest. These two translations were more difficult than the first one because they contained sophisticated terminology. To accomplish this task, and the others that came later, I needed to familiarize myself with the language of human rights as much as possible because it is impossible to translate a text if you do not understand the content of it.

Due to the fact that I studied about human rights in *Dinámica de las Organizaciones*, one of the subjects prescribed for International Organizations, I knew an important part of the context and some terminology, but this was not enough. I had to keep learning as well as to put into practice my background and the knowledge I had acquired on translation during my studies.

These two press release translations required extra time and effort because I had to carry out a long process of documentation. I had to consult many different sources and collect information in order to learn about it. But at the end, all this was worthwhile because I was learning and all that knowledge was in my mind. The result, I spent less and less time at the documentation step, saving effort and making the translation process more efficient.

My translation process

First of all, the analysis, which means the reading and comprehension of the original text I had to work with. As I mentioned above, the key to achieve this is the documentation, an essential step in translation to get the real meaning of the original text. Documentation should not be underestimated. The subject *Documentación y Terminología* made me realized that documentation is the base of a top-quality translation, which is always my goal.

Second, transfer of data, which means decoding the message. In other words, the information is transferred from the original language into the target language, respecting the parameters of both languages. At this stage, I used tools like monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, thesaurus, glossaries, acronym finders, grammar books and some websites which are really useful and helped me a lot. Most of the time, I used search engines and online resources because they were readily accessible, handy and convenient. Another key strategy was to make my own glossary about human rights. I learned this strategy while taking the subjects *Traducción Científica/Técnica* and *Traducción Legal/Académica*; the idea was to make a data base with the specific terminology of every translation in order to save time and effort. It was really useful.

Last but not least, I performed the restructuring. This is the step in which I edited and revised the information. The restructuring is carried out in order to improve the final result, to make the translation as idiomatic as possible and correct according to rules and usage of the languages involved in order to have an impeccable translation. According to Nida, a translation should stimulate in a reader the same mood, impression or reaction that the original writing sought to stimulate in its first reader (Nida, 1964, pp. 156,164).

Searching for opportunities

I would like to point out that as the Provea's Annual Report presentation approached my work load decreased until I had no work to do because all the staff focused their attention on activities related to the report. Thus, I could have taken it easy and do nothing but wait for my supervisor to give me another assignment, but that was not the case. I could not sit and wait because I hate to feel useless. Besides, if I wanted to learn as much as possible and make the most of my work experience I could not waste my time. So, I decided to be proactive and search for opportunities to keep myself busy.

Accordingly, I was able to participate in different activities: supporting the monitoring process, which means searching the daily newspapers to find news related to any of the 19 human rights analyzed in the Annual Report or introduce the information contained in newspaper articles into a data base program called Documanager. Carrying out activities related to Public Relations, such as supporting the organization and logistics of events related to the Annual Report and hosting activities during those events. The Public Relations activities allowed me to meet people from other NGOs, journalists, ambassadors and diplomatic staff, political actors and other civil society actors. The experience was very rewarding. It gave me the opportunity to participate in the edition of the subtitles of one documentary produced by the Jesuit Refugee

Service/Venezuela. I also participated directly in the Annual Report by writing the summary of one of its chapters, which was an honor for me.

Academic growth

Provea also gave me the opportunity to grow not only at a professional level but also at an academic level. During my first week in the NGO, I received an introductory workshop on Documanager, the data base program used in the Documentation project as well as in the Monitoring on ESC Rights project in order to save all the information compiled and used in the Annual Report. I also participated in a workshop on conflict regulation with an expert who came from Spain to facilitate this workshop for the staff of Provea. This was a great and valuable experience, both as a person and as a professional because I learned useful strategies to avoid, manage and use, in a positive way, the conflicts which constantly surround our life. Basic photography for human rights activists was another interesting workshop I participated in. I learned the basic concepts and techniques about photography focused on human rights. The facilitator was the well-known photographer Nelson Garrido.

The opportunity I am most grateful for is the three month training course on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESC Rights). This course was addressed to the human right defenders and people concerned with human right issues, since the main idea was to educate these trainees to become multiplier agents. It was a small group formed by people from other NGOs, a couple of lawyers and some members of labor unions. There were two other members of the staff of Provea but I was the only student. Although we all had different backgrounds, we fit into the group and contributed with different perspectives and opinions which enriched the experience (See Appendix 10).

Going from the abstract world of ideas to the concrete world of action

What I enjoyed the most of my work experience was how I went from the world of ideas into the world of action. It was very exciting to see how all the theories, concepts and approaches I had learned at the School of Modern Languages became real as they were used in life. Especially those I had learned in the courses on International Organizations, which could seem distant if you do not have contact with the world of the organizations, because those of Translation were more practical or easier to see during the translation process or in the final products.

For instance, I had learned about the strategic planning process, its theory and its parts. For that reason, it was wonderful to participate in the annual evaluation of the strategic planning of Provea as well as the evaluation and design of the strategic planning of Monitoring, Investigation and Diffusion (MID) Program. To live these processes from within an organization was a profitable opportunity. Another great experience I was able to live was related to *cohesion*, a concept used in organizational theory that I had always thought about as powerful, because I think that motivated employees who are identified with the organization and who have a sense of purpose can channel their effort toward the pursuit of the goals and the results that managers and the organization itself want to reach. To see first-hand how *cohesion* works, its effects and benefits in a working environment made me feel like a scientist that proves a theory or a doctor who performs her first surgery. During my course of studies, I also learned and read a lot about the horizontal management, a modern approach to organizational structure. In Provea, I was able to learn more about this type of management such as simple strategies to make horizontal management possible and successful. These three experiences are just a few examples of the wonderful journey I made from an abstract world of knowledge to a concrete world of practice.

I have to confess that it has been hard to summarize everything I learned, every skill I developed, every task and activity carried out and every experience I lived during my internship. I am really grateful for having had this opportunity which has been both challenging and enriching, and which has made me grow. It was the best opportunity to work in a renowned organization with such friendly and committed people who were always willing to help me and make my work experience pleasant. During this time I proved myself, I proved my abilities and capacities, my skills and knowledge and I am satisfied with my performance. I always did my best. The host institution placed its trust on me, I respected it and demonstrated responsibility and professionalism with the organization and with myself, looking after my future reputation as a professional. I realized the importance of having solid basis in order to develop a successful career. Without any doubt my internship at Provea is something to remember.

CONCLUSION

My internship in the Venezuelan Program of Education-Action in Human Rights (Provea) represented one of the most exciting, challenging and enriching experiences I have lived. Besides, it was one of the most important learning processes I have experimented as a university student, future professional and as a human being.

To find this internship was not an easy task, but it was worthy. Provea was not just the right place to put into practice and further develop my knowledge, taking into account my double professional option (Translation and International Organizations), but also the perfect place to mature as a professional and as a person, through a real experience in the working environment. This institution opened a new world of possibilities for me.

During the development of the work experience, I realized the importance of being well prepared and having an excellent grounding in order to fulfill the expectations of both the host institution and the School of Modern Languages, apart from my own expectations. In addition, I had a bigger responsibility because I was the first student who carried out her internship in Provea, so I was paving the way not just for me, but, hopefully, for other students who will follow it. I took this as an exciting challenge, I did my best. Now, I look back and I feel proud of myself and of my performance.

Throughout this experience, I also learned the importance of some values such as: humility to ask for help when it is necessary; honesty to recognize my own limitations; pro-activity to not wait for somebody to guide my steps; responsibility to accomplish and carry out the tasks as a professional without expecting anyone to remind me what to do; efficiency to always do my best in order to obtain top-quality results; patience to carry out all the steps involved in the translation process; punctuality and organization to coordinate all the activities I

carried out and have the translations ready on time; constancy and courage to confront problems and difficulties involved in the complex and competitive world of translation.

On the one hand, my time as an intern in Provea made me realize the difficulties, subtleties and nuances of the translation world, but it also made me fall in love with it. On the other hand, I was able to see into practice all the theories about organizational behavior and strategies I learned in some of my university courses. It also made me realize that the human right theories and issues are not just labels or abstract ideas, they are something real and present in our daily life; I fell in love with this too.

The most important thing I was able to appreciate is that I do not have to give up on neither of my professional options in order to fulfill my expectations about the other; they can complement each other. I learned about myself; my strengths and weaknesses. This experience was very helpful to obtain a wider vision about the attitudes and aptitudes I need in order to carry out my future career and to face the professional world with success.

I can not conclude this report without thanking the trust my tutor placed on me and all the help and orientation she gave me in order to obtain the place in the Institutional Internship Project of Provea. I would also like to thank the big opportunity this organization gave me, and all those people who, in one way or another, taught me something because even the details have a story to tell and every person has something to teach, something that will make us grow.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After my work experience and after having explored the professional environment, I would like to present some suggestions to the Host Institution, Provea. In addition, as a Modern Language student, I would like to present some recommendations to the academic institution responsible for my occupational training, the School of Modern Languages of the University of Los Andes in order to ease the way for other students, letting them profit from my experience, and also to improve the work performance of these two institutions and their internship programs.

Recommendation to the Host Institution:

Provea should:

- ★ Make the most of all the potential, skill and knowledge of its interns and other employees. This organization invests time and money to improve the abilities and capacities of its employees and it does not take the most of them by discarding the most important of all its resources: the human capital.
- ★ Continue to offer internship opportunities for Modern Languages students because it is an excellent institution to learn and practice through a work experience. This organization and the School of Modern Languages should become allies through an internship program agreement which would be beneficial for both institutions.

Recommendation to the School of Modern Languages of the University of Los Andes:

The School of Modern Languages should:

- ★ Continue making efforts to provide help and orientation to students before their work experience, through information about internship opportunities and the potential host institutions. It is very important that students develop their internship in a place that allows them to learn and practice their major and also the professional option in which they are trained.
- ★ Continue encouraging the students to take the mini-internship first (requirement prescribed for the subject *Redacción de Informes y Monografías*) and get a wider vision of the next level, the internship. Through this experience students can learn about their strengths and limitations, and find out which department or field of work they are interested in, which one they have the best performance in and which one is the best for them. The mini-internship makes the search for an internship less difficult because students have a previous experience in the work market; they get to know themselves and it also helps to build their self-confidence. These are important issues when people are looking for a job.
- ★ Continue teaching the subject *Redacción de Informes y Monografías*, since it is an excellent way to learn in practice the correct way to carry out an important part of the internship, the written part, which has a strict format that all students have to master.
- ★ Adequate the profile of the Modern Languages graduates to the real expectations and possibilities of students, and more importantly, to the real demands of the work market in order to adapt it to the social environment we live in.

For example, it would be very useful to teach at least one subject which provides experience and knowledge in prose translation because this translation is the most popular in the Latin-American market, but it requires competence, abilities and techniques that should be taught during the major.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: The human rights activist founders of Provea



Ligia Bolívar



Dianorah Contramaestre



Raúl Cubas

Appendix 2: The Monitoring, Investigation and Diffusion (MID) Program



The Head of the MID Program, Mr. Uzcátegui



The staff of the MID Program

Appendix 3: My work station



Me, working at the library

Appendix 4: Translation of press releases (sample)



Provea condena el ataque a los periodistas de la Cadena Capriles

El Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos (Provea) condena enfáticamente las agresiones contra 12 periodistas de la Cadena Capriles por presuntos simpatizantes del Ejecutivo Nacional ocurrida el 13.08.09 por ser una acción que atenta contra el legítimo derecho a la protesta y la libertad de expresión de los venezolanos y venezolanas.

Reporteros y fotógrafos de Últimas Noticias, El Mundo y Líder se encontraban repartiendo volantes para expresar su opinión acerca del artículo 50 de la Ley de Educación, en su legítimo ejercicio del derecho a la protesta social, tras lo cual fueron atacados por un grupo de personas.

Acciones como las acaecidas en el centro de la ciudad ponen en evidencia, una vez más, la necesidad de acabar con la impunidad que reina contra las agresiones sufridas por los periodistas, cualquiera sea su tendencia política o medio de comunicación en el que laboren, con la finalidad de evitar más episodios violentos y resguardar la integridad física de los trabajadores.

Provea hace un llamado a:

La **Fiscalía General de la República** para que investigue y castigue a los responsables de las recientes agresiones contra los trabajadores de la Cadena Capriles y otros profesionales de medios de comunicación, sentado un precedente positivo para evitar la repetición hechos violentos que atentan contra la libertad de expresión y evitar el fortalecimiento de la impunidad.

A los **órganos garantes de la seguridad ciudadana** para que ofrezcan las garantías para el ejercicio del derecho a la manifestación pacífica, a todos por igual.

Al **Ejecutivo Nacional y la sociedad**, que deben sentar las bases para que la discusión entre las distintas tendencias políticas se realice con respeto y tolerancia, evitando las agresiones verbales y físicas como medio para expresar sus opiniones.

Original



Provea condemns the attacks on journalists of the newspaper chain *Cadena Capriles*.

The Venezuelan Program of Education-Action in Human Rights (Provea, by its Spanish acronym) condemns firmly the aggressions occurred on August 13, 2009 against 12 journalists of the newspaper chain *Cadena Capriles* by alleged government supporters. These actions attempt against the legitimate right to protest and to freedom of expression of Venezuelans.

Journalists and press photographers of *Últimas Noticias*, *El Mundo* and *Líder* were handed out pamphlets to express their opinion about the article 50 of the Education Law, exercising their legitimate right to social protest, and they were attacked by a group of people.

Actions like these occurred in the city downtown show up, once again, the need for ending up with the prevailing impunity against aggressions suffered by journalist, regardless their political tendency or the media outlet they work for, in order to avoid more violent events and to protect the physical integrity of employees.

Provea appeals to

The Attorney General, to investigate and penalize the responsible for the recent aggressions against employees of the newspaper chain *Cadena Capriles* and other media professionals, setting a positive precedent in order to avoid the repetition of violent events which attempt against freedom of expression and the strengthening of impunity.

Agencies responsible for public safety, to offer the guarantees to exercise the right to peaceful protest, equally for everyone.

The State and the society, to lay the foundations for discussion between the different political tendency in respect and tolerance, avoiding verbal and physic aggressions as means to express their opinions.

Translation

Appendix 5: Translation of pieces of information to the website (sample)

Acerca de Provea

Somos una organización no gubernamental, independiente y autónoma de partidos políticos instituciones religiosas, organizaciones internacionales o gobierno alguno, que tiene como fin la promoción y defensa de los derechos humanos, en particular los derechos económicos, sociales y culturales.

Provea busca promover la consolidación de iniciativas ya existentes y desarrollar programas propios de defensa, educación y difusión de los derechos humanos, como una instancia solidaria de orientación a sectores organizados. Su objetivo es brindar los elementos necesarios para la defensa de los derechos de estos sectores, estimulando su organización y autonomía y el acompañamiento de conflictos jurídicos con prácticas que combinen el uso de mecanismos legales y extra-jurídicos.

Provea está conformada por un equipo multidisciplinario de trabajo que llevan a cabo los diferentes programas aprobados por la Asamblea, compuesta por miembros asociados y dos representantes del Consejo Consultivo.

Misión

El Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos (Provea) es una organización no gubernamental especializada en la defensa y promoción de los derechos económicos, sociales y culturales (Desc), que tiene como fin la plena realización de los derechos humanos y el respeto al Estado de Derecho, en el marco de una sociedad democrática y participativa. Toda acción que lleva a cabo Provea busca beneficiar a las víctimas o potenciales víctimas a las que el Estado no les garantiza o les viola sus derechos humanos, propiciando su protagonismo y la concientización de sus derechos.

Desde una perspectiva integral y multidisciplinaria Provea realiza labores de:

- * Documentación, investigación y difusión de la situación de derechos humanos en Venezuela.
- * Promoción y educación en derechos humanos.
- * Apoyo, asesoría y asistencia a grupos sociales en la defensa jurídica y extra-jurídica de sus derechos, ante instancias nacionales e internacionales.
- * Promoción de políticas públicas y legislación favorable a los derechos humanos.

Visión

- * Provea aspira a contribuir en la creación de una sociedad democrática, participativa y justa, que se desarrolle en el marco de un Estado democrático que garantice la efectiva vigencia de la justicia social y el pleno respeto de los derechos humanos.
- * Fundamenta su acción en la Declaración Universal de Derechos Humanos, los instrumentos y declaraciones internacionales y regionales de protección y promoción de los mismos, las disposiciones contenidas en la Constitución y normas nacionales coherentes con los derechos humanos.
- * Asume la visión integral e interdependiente de los derechos humanos.
- * Es independiente y autónoma de partidos políticos, grupos económicos, instituciones religiosas, organizaciones internacionales o gobierno alguno.
- * Reivindica el respeto a la autonomía de las organizaciones y grupos destinatarios y sujetos de su acción.
- * Cree en la práctica interdisciplinaria y solidaria, respetuosa de la democracia interna, el pluralismo y la transparencia de gestión.

Original

About Provea

We are a non-governmental organization, independent and autonomous from political parties, religious institutions, international organizations or any government, whose purpose is the promotion and defense of human rights, especially economic, social and cultural rights.

Provea seeks to promote the consolidation of existing initiatives and to develop its own programs of defense, education and dissemination of human rights, as an instance of orientation for organized sectors. Its aim is to provide the necessary elements in order to defend the rights of these sectors, encouraging their organization, autonomy and accompaniment of legal conflicts with practices that combine the use of legal and extra-legal mechanisms.

Provea is a multidisciplinary working team that carries out the different programs approved by the Assembly, which is composed by Associated Members and two representatives of the Consultative Council.

Mission

The Venezuelan Program of Education-Action in Human Rights (Provea, by its Spanish acronym) is a non-governmental organization specialized in the defense and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights (ESC rights) whose purpose is the full realization of human rights and the respect of the State of Right, in the framework of a democratic and participative society. All the actions carried out by Provea seek to benefit the victims and potential victims whom the State does not guarantee, or even violates, their human rights, promoting their protagonism and the realization of their rights.

From a comprehensive and multidisciplinary perspective, Provea carries out activities such as:

- * Documentation, investigation and dissemination of the human rights situation in Venezuela.
- * Promotion and education on human rights.
- * Support, advice and assistance to social groups in legal and extra-legal defense of their rights, before national and international institutions.
- * Promotion of public policies and legislation in favor of human rights.

Vision

- * Provea aspires to contribute to the creation of a democratic, participative and a just society, which develops in the framework of a democratic State that guarantees the effective validity of the social justice and the full respect of human rights.
- * It bases its action on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international and regional instruments and other declarations that protect and promote human rights, the resolutions of the Constitution and national regulations consistent with human rights.
- * It assumes a comprehensive and interdependent vision of human rights.
- * It is independent and autonomous from political parties, economic groups, religious institutions, international organizations or any government.
- * It claims the respect for the autonomy of the organizations and groups addressed and subject to their action.
- * It believes in the interdisciplinary and supportive practice, respectful of internal democracy, pluralism and transparency of management.

Appendix 6: Translation of articles and pieces of information (sample)

Venezuela's education "reforms"

Venezuela's dubious education reforms

A hastily passed education law is part of the president's plan to take control of all aspects of Venezuelan society

Aug 20th 2009 | CARACAS | From *The Economist* print edition



THE first time Hugo Chávez made a serious attempt to reshape the Venezuelan education system, the resulting political battle contributed to the coup that in 2002 briefly ousted him from the presidency. A new education law, shoved through parliament on the night of August 13th after minimal debate, already has the opposition talking of civil disobedience.

The government claims that the law will overcome centuries of exclusion, at last giving the children of the poor equal access to education. But its critics argue that it fails to deal with the key causes of inequality—low-quality teaching, crumbling buildings and widespread truancy in state schools. Whereas Mr Chávez's Ecuadorean ally, Rafael Correa, seems sincere in his drive to raise educational standards (see next story), the focus of the Venezuelan leader's reforms is on ensuring the intrusion of politics at every level. Mariano Herrera, an educationalist, predicts that the result will be greater inequality, not less.

Teaching is to be rooted in "Bolivarian doctrine", a reference to Mr Chávez's ill-defined Bolivarian revolution—supposedly inspired by Simón Bolívar, a leader of Latin America's 19th-century independence struggle. Schools will come under the supervision of "communal councils", indistinguishable in most places from cells of the ruling socialist party. Central government will run almost everything else, including university entrance and membership of the teaching profession.

Couched in vague terms, the law acquires coherence when seen against the president's professed intention to establish revolutionary hegemony over Venezuelan society. In a 2007 campaign on a referendum on constitutional change, Mr Chávez lectured a bemused public on the writings of Antonio Gramsci, an Italian communist who died in 1937. In essence, Gramsci said that to eliminate the bourgeois state one must seize the institutions that reproduce the dominant class's thought-patterns.

The three most important of these institutions, the president noted, were the church, the education system and the mass media. Among the iniquitous doctrines with which they poisoned the minds of the masses, he argued, were representative democracy, the division of state powers and alternating government.

Original (first page)

“reformas” en la educación de Venezuela

La dudosa reforma de educación de Venezuela

Una Ley de Educación aprobada a toda prisa forma parte del plan del presidente para tomar el control de la sociedad venezolana en todos los aspectos

20 de agosto de 2009 | CARACAS | Tomado de *The Economist* (edición impresa)



La primera vez que Hugo Chávez hizo un intento formal para reformar el sistema de educación venezolano, la batalla política derivada contribuyó al golpe que en 2002 lo apartó brevemente de la presidencia. Una nueva Ley de Educación, aprobada por la Asamblea Nacional en la noche del 13 de agosto después de un muy breve debate, ya tiene a la oposición hablando de desobediencia civil.

El gobierno afirma que la ley vencerá siglos de exclusión, que por fin se ofrece un acceso igualitario a la educación a los hijos de los pobres. Pero sus detractores argumentan que fracasa al lidiar con las causas fundamentales de la desigualdad --la baja calidad de la enseñanza, las instituciones en ruinas y el absentismo generalizado de las escuelas públicas. Mientras que el aliado ecuatoriano del Sr. Chávez, Rafael Correa, parece sincero en su intento por elevar los estándares de la educación (vea el siguiente artículo), el enfoque de la reforma del líder venezolano está en asegurar la intrusión de la política a todo nivel. Mariano Herrera, pedagogo, pronostica que el resultado será una desigualdad más grande y no una menor.

La enseñanza está por ser enraizada en la “doctrina bolivariana”, una referencia al mal del Sr. Chávez -definido como Revolución Bolivariana --supuestamente inspirada por Simón Bolívar, líder de la lucha independentista del siglo XIX en Latinoamérica. Las escuelas estarán bajo la supervisión de los “consejos comunales”, muy difícil de distinguir en la mayoría de los lugares de las células del partido socialista del gobierno. El gobierno central controlará casi todo lo demás, incluyendo la entrada a la universidad y la pertenencia a la profesión docente.

Expresada en términos vagos, la ley tiene coherencia cuando es vista contra la intención confesa del presidente de establecer una hegemonía revolucionaria sobre la sociedad venezolana. En la campaña del referéndum constitucional de 2007, el Sr. Chávez dio una conferencia a un público estupefacto basada en los escritos de Antonio Gramsci, un comunista italiano que murió en 1937. En esencia, Gramsci dijo que para eliminar el Estado burgués se debía confiscar las instituciones que reproducen los patrones de pensamiento de la clase dominante.

De estas instituciones, las tres más importantes, señaló el presidente, eran la iglesia, el sistema de educación y los medios de comunicación. Entre las malvadas doctrinas con las cuales ellos envenenaban la mente de las masas, argumentó, están la democracia representativa, la división de los poderes del Estado y la alternancia del gobierno.

Translation (first page)

Desde la perspectiva de los derechos humanos, en el lapso abarcado por este Informe, el contexto nacional se caracterizó por cuatro aspectos esenciales: dos eventos electorales que ratificaron que el país se encuentra electoralmente dividido en dos grandes bloques, con predominio de partidos afines al gobierno; indicios de regresividad en varios programas y políticas sociales gubernamentales; mayor visibilidad de la ineficacia del Gobierno en la gestión pública; incremento de la protesta social y de la criminalización de la misma.

1. El país continúa fraccionado en dos grandes bloques que pugnan por controlar espacios de poder

Durante los meses de noviembre de 2008 y febrero de 2009 se desarrollaron dos importantes contiendas electorales que se caracterizaron por el respeto a las reglas de la convivencia democrática mostrado por los distintos actores políticos y por una amplia participación ciudadana. El 23.11.08, se eligieron gobernadores y alcaldes con una holgada victoria de las fuerzas políticas liderizadas por el presidente Chávez, quienes obtuvieron 17 de las 22 gobernaciones en disputa¹. La oposición, sin embargo, avanzó electoralmente al ganar cinco gobernaciones y la Alcaldía Metropolitana. Logró además una significativa victoria en casi todos los centros urbanos de mayor población. El 15.02.09, la ciudadanía acudió nuevamente a las urnas para pronunciarse a favor o en contra de una enmienda a la Constitución que permitía la reelección continua en todos los cargos públicos de elección popular. Nuevamente las fuerzas del Gobierno obtuvieron una victoria con una diferencia de un poco más de un millón de votos². Cabe destacar que en las dos jornadas, el Gobierno hizo uso abusivo de todo tipo de recursos del Estado y -contrariando la Ley del Estatuto de la Función Pública³- desplegó en las instituciones públicas abundante propaganda electoral, todo esto bajo la conducción de funcionarios de alta jerarquía. Sin embargo, los dos procesos eleccionarios se caracterizaron por una amplia y cívica participación de la población y el respeto a los resultados emitidos por el árbitro electoral, y pese a que en ambas coyunturas se reactivó la fuerte polarización, se registraron pocos incidentes violentos.

Los resultados demostraron que más de cinco millones de venezolanos y venezolanas se oponen a las propuestas políticas del Gobierno. Una cifra que no debería despreciar ni subestimar el Gobierno. El dato es importante, si se considera que las fuerzas políticas que detentan el Poder se empeñan, usando diversas instituciones del Estado, en cerrar espacios a la disidencia para que a través de los mecanismos institucionales se exprese y manifieste sus puntos de vista y propuestas, como se verá más adelante.

La confrontación entre Gobierno y oposición en su lucha por ganar espacios en la estructura del Estado y obtener el apoyo de la ciudadanía, se realizó con un intenso discurso y un uso abusivo de propaganda por parte del Gobierno que reivindica el socialismo como la alternativa para el futuro inmediato del país. Mientras, las fuerzas de oposición recurrieron con frecuencia a un anacrónico discurso anticomunista y carente de una agenda social propositiva capaz de conectarse políticamente con las aspiraciones y reclamos de las grandes mayorías populares.

From the perspective of human rights, during the space covered by this Report, the national context was characterized by four essential aspects: two electoral events which ratified that the country is divided into two big blocs in the electoral field with the predominance of the parties related to the government; signs of regressiveness in several governmental programs and social policies; greater visibility of the inefficiency of the Government in the public management; the increase of the social protest and its criminalization.

1. The country continues divided into two big blocs that fight for control the power structures

During November 2008 to February 2009 it were developed two important electoral battles characterized by respect for the rules of democratic coexistence showed by the different political actors and through a wide citizen participation. On 11.23.08, there were elected governors and mayors with a comfortable victory of the politic forces led by President Chávez, who won 17 of the 22 governorship in dispute¹. Nevertheless, the opposition made a progress in the electoral field winning 5 governorships and the Caracas Metropolitan Mayoralty. It also achieved a significant victory in almost all the urban centers with higher population. On 02.15.09, the citizens went again to the ballot boxes to vote in favor or against to an amendment to the Constitution, which would make possible the continuous re-election in all the public offices elected by vote. Once again, the forces of the government obtained a victory with a difference of about one million of votes². It is worth to mentioning that in the both processes, the Government made abusive use of all kind of State resources and –against the Public Service Statute Law³- placed abundant propaganda in the public institutions, all of this under the leadership of the high government employees. However, the two electoral processes were characterized by a wide civic participation of people and the respect for the result emitted by the electoral arbitrator, even though both juncture revived the polarization, it were registered just few violent incidents.

The results proved that more than five millions of Venezuelans are against to the political proposal of the Government, a number that should not be scorned or underestimated by the Government. This number is important, considering the fact that the political forces that hold the Power insist to close the spaces for the dissidence to express its point of view and proposal through the institutional mechanism, using different State institutions, as it will be shown later.

The confrontation between Government and opposition in their fight for winning spaces in the State structure and obtain the support of the citizens was carried out with an intense speech and a abusive use of propaganda by the Government which restores the socialism as the alternative to the immediate future of the country. On the other hand, the opposition forces often appeal to an anachronistic anticommunist speech which is devoid of a propositive social agenda which can connect politically with the aspirations and demands of the great popular majorities.

Appendix 8: Summary of the chapter Actions taken before international institutions

Gestiones ante Organismos Internacionales

"Toda persona tiene derecho, en los términos establecidos por los tratados, pactos y convenciones sobre derechos humanos ratificados por la República a dirigir peticiones o quejas ante los órganos internacionales creados para tales fines, con el objeto de solicitar el amparo a sus derechos humanos. El Estado adoptará, conforme a procedimientos establecidos en esta Constitución y la ley, las medidas que sean necesarias para dar cumplimiento a las decisiones emanadas de los órganos internacionales previstos en este artículo".

Artículo 31 de la Constitución de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela

- » El Estado venezolano no suscribió ni ratificó instrumentos de protección de los derechos humanos. En particular resalta la abstención de depositar ante la Secretaría General de la OEA el instrumento de ratificación del Protocolo a la Convención Americana sobre Derechos Humanos en Materia de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales (Protocolo de San Salvador).
- » Las autoridades del Estado venezolano mantienen un lineamiento de continuo cuestionamiento hacia los órganos de los sistemas de protección internacional de los derechos humanos y de descalificación de su labor y de sus representantes.
- » El Tribunal Supremo de Justicia desató la sentencia de la Corte Interamericana en el caso Apitz Barbera, Rocha y otros, al declararla "inejecutable" y solicitó al Ejecutivo Nacional que proceda a denunciar la Convención Americana sobre Derechos Humanos "ante la evidente usurpación de funciones en la que ha incurrido".
- » El agente del Estado venezolano para los derechos humanos en el sistema interamericano insistió de modo explícito en que Venezuela no invitará a la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH) a una visita in loco hasta tanto el órgano interamericano de protección no pida de manera formal excusas por su actuación durante el golpe de Estado de 2002, insistiendo igualmente en la remoción del cargo del Secretario Ejecutivo de la Comisión, el embajador Santiago Cantón.
- » La Relatora Especial para la Libertad de Expresión de la CIDH, Catalina Botero, y el Relator de las Naciones Unidas para la Libertad de Opinión y Expresión, Fran La Rue, emitieron un comunicado conjunto mediante el cual manifestaron su profunda preocupación por el deterioro de la situación del derecho a la libertad de expresión.
- » En el informe 2008, la CIDH volvió a incluir a Venezuela, por cuarto período consecutivo, dentro del capítulo IV, como Estado que merece particular atención.

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Esta publicación llega sus manos gracias a: Unión Europea, Katholische Zentralstelle für Entw

Appendix 9: The Annual Report



Annual Report press conference



Annual Report 2009



Annual Report presentation

Appendix 10: Workshops and training course.



Basic photography for human rights activists



Training course on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESC Rights)



Training course on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESC Rights)