Abstract

On the tenth anniversary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Peru, IEP, the Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (UARM), and the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (IDEH-PUCP) joined forces to revisit the breakthrough and challenges on truth and memory in the TRC. Regional conferences were held in order to give voice to the worst affected regions on the sociopolitical processes of the TRC, and artistic exhibitions and performances were organized to draw public interest. The partners also hosted a seminar on Transitional Justice more generally, in order to create a dialogue on the effectiveness of TRCs in strengthening democracy, and transitional justice in terms of inequality, poverty, and exclusion. The seminar was further used as an opportunity to engage key stakeholders on violence in Peru and policy-based mitigation strategies, and a book was published based on the themes presented.

On The Matching Funds

In 2011 the Think Tank Initiative established the Matching Funds program as another source of financial support. These funds support efforts by TTI-funded think tanks to achieve their long-term objectives, and also promote peer learning and collaboration.
COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

The project was led by IEP, in collaboration with the Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (UARM), and the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (IDEH-PUCP).

WHAT THEY DID AND WHY

In recognition of the tenth anniversary of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report, a seminar entitled “The Policies of Transitional Justice” was organized by IEP in collaboration with UARM and IDEH-PUCP. The goals of the seminar, which was held in Lima from August 20-22, 2013, were to take stock of the progress made in Peru over the last ten years; identify what work still remains to be done in the areas of justice, government reform and victims’ rights; and critically reflect on truth commissions more generally as models for transitional justice and their effectiveness in consolidating the democratic process.

The event was publicized mainly through social networks. In addition, posters were printed and invitation cards were sent out to institutions such as embassies, universities, members of Congress and other public figures. An email account was also set up to answer questions and requests.

During the seminar, a team from the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) broadcasted the event live over the Internet. This was complimented by coverage given on social networks (Facebook and Twitter) by the IEP and IDEH-PUCP communications teams.

RESULTS

The seminar was a huge success. Public reception was very positive. Between 200 and 250 people attended in person each day. In addition, approximately 400 people per day were able to follow the seminar live and direct via the ICTJ’s web-broadcast.

Not only were renowned national and international experts in attendance, IEP and its partners also succeeded in involving the government. The Ministry of Culture provided the room for the keynote speeches and the Minister herself inaugurated the event. The keynote speeches were delivered by Juan Méndez, a United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, and Elizabeth Jelin, an eminent specialist in the area of memory and repression in Latin America. Participating on the panels were international experts in the areas of human rights, violence and memory, including Leigh A. Payne from Oxford University, Christiane Wilke from Carleton University in Canada, Steve Stern from the University of Wisconsin and Emilio Crenzel from the University of Buenos Aires. In addition, the list of participants included many noteworthy Peruvian and Peruvianist intellectuals, ex-CTR officials, representatives of organizations formed by affected people such as the Never Again Citizens Movement. Participation by such a diverse and eminent group of individuals ensured the exchange of ideas was of the highest of levels.

The seminar, as well as interviews with the panellists, were extensively covered by the country’s most important media outlets: in newspapers such as El Comercio and La República, on Peruvian radio programs and on other Internet news portals such as Espacio 360, La Mula, Spacio Libre and others.

Ten years after the delivery of the TRC’s Final Report, the high level of participation at the seminar and extensive media coverage shows the great interest that still remains in issues related to domestic armed conflict, and on the need for clarification of the facts and critical reflection on the country’s recent and current history. In this sense, the seminar represented a significant advance in placing the topic more decisively on the public agenda.
NEXT STEPS

A video of the panel presentations and keynote speeches is currently being edited and will be posted on IEP’s webpage so that an even larger number of academics, students and interested members of the public can be reached.

For the organizing institutions, the seminar represented a unique opportunity to consolidate cooperation networks. The presence of international experts provided an opportunity to strengthen existing academic exchange networks and to create new ones. Members who were involved in the seminar’s organization continue to meet periodically to work on publishing the papers that were presented and to prepare an agenda for future joint research based on the most critical issues and questions raised during the event.

The seminar also highlighted the need for providing more conceptual and methodological training among youth interested in making future contributions to the field. Proposals on how to address these training and knowledge gaps are now being formulated.

For the IEP, the seminar was an opportunity to reinforce its commitment to democratic consolidation in a post-conflict society, which is one of its core areas of interest. Media coverage of the event and participation by the Ministry of Culture are a testament to how effectively the IEP engages with and is heard by the public and the highest decision-making levels of the Executive Branch.