

THE CONTRIBUTION OF CERLALC AND CRESPIAL TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Aymara man playing a traditional Bolivian charango



Regional Centre for Book Promotion in Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLALC)

<http://www.cerlalc.org/>

The Regional Centre for Book Promotion in Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLALC) is an intergovernmental agency that paves the way for the development of reading societies. For this purpose, its actions seek to encourage book production and circulation, reading and writing, and the protection of intellectual creations. In this regard, it provides technical assistance in the formulation of public policies, generates knowledge, disseminates specialized information, develops and boosts training processes, and promotes concerted action and cooperation opportunities.

By the end of the 1960s, various studies by international agencies revealed that access to books and reading were directly related to national development. That is why UNESCO suggested that the international community should establish regional agencies to assist governments in formulating book and reading policies. As a result of this initiative, CERLALC took up this mission for Latin America and the Caribbean in 1971 in Bogotá (Colombia). Its current membership includes all Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Iberian-American and Caribbean countries. Portugal became the latest country to join the Centre in 2005.

The Executive Committee met in Bogotá on November 14, 2012. UNESCO recalled that the Millennium Development Goals will be reviewed in 2015, when they will be named Sustainable Development Goals and a number of meetings, especially which of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), were being organized under this process, highlighting the increasing economic importance of culture and its role in identity formation and dialogue in many countries.

Following the UNESCO proposal to CERLALC recognizing the role of books in transmitting knowledge and helping improve the situation of vulnerable social groups, the President of the Executive Committee announced the unanimous decision to fully endorse the criterion that the book industry is a key element for economic and human development of societies.



Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPIAL)

<http://www.crespial.org/>

The Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPIAL) was established in February 2006, following the Incorporation Agreement signed by UNESCO and the Government of Peru in Paris. Its objective is to promote and support safeguarding and protection actions for the vast intangible cultural heritage of Latin America and the Caribbean. Its purpose is to contribute to the formulation of public policies in the countries of the region, on the basis of the identification, enhancement and dissemination of their living culture. These actions will help enrich cultural diversity in Latin America and are in keeping with the spirit of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003).

The Centre is an international, autonomous institution at the service of UNESCO Member States, in charge of supporting Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) safeguarding activities in Latin America countries wishing to cooperate with it. Its action guidelines are summarized as follows:

- Strengthen integration and coordination between Member States as a fundamental step for the safeguarding of the regional ICH;
- Promote civil-society participation in safeguarding ICH and its sustainable development, within a framework of respect for cultural diversity; and
- Become a reference centre for the formulation and promotion of ICH safeguarding policies.

CRESPIAL has 13 focal points in the following member countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

The 7th Meeting of the Management Board of CRESPIAL was held on November 5-6, 2012, in Caracas (Venezuela), where the UNESCO strategy was presented seeking to recognize culture as an essential pillar for sustainable human and economic development. The representatives of CRESPIAL Member States endorsed UNESCO initiative at relevant international forums and stressed that ICH safeguarding is a key factor for regional development. **C&D**