

Latin American Oral History Network

Rubén Kotler, Universidad Nacional de Tucumán, Argentina and Mariana Mastrángelo, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina

On December 1, 2010, the Latin American Oral History Network (RELAHO for its Spanish acronym) was formally announced. Its stated goal is to foster the exchange, discussion, production, and circulation of oral history within Latin America. The Network is not a professional association, but rather a federation of associations. This means that there is no individual link to RELAHO but rather its affiliates are national oral history associations, research groups, local memory associations, or school projects. The basic idea of the Network is not to repeat the tasks of national or international groups, such as COHA or IOHA, but rather to complement their efforts by easing the circulation of information, making it easier to be part of the practice and world of oral history.

The RELAHO was set up after many discussions between Latin American oral historians at different conferences. However, as this was not enough, the key issue was whether Oral History in Latin America had achieved a critical mass that made a network necessary. In 2010 the Brazilian Oral History Association held its conference in Recife, Brazil. The then ABHO President, Regina Guimaraes Neto, hosted a discussion on the creation of a regional network. With support of the Argentine and the Mexican Oral History Associations, RELAHO was organized bringing together groups in Chile, Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Colombia, Puerto Rico, El Salvador as well as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina.

Information is shared through a web page (<http://www.relaho.org>). Since information is power, the site's goal is to publish all the information sent to it pertaining to Oral History; thus, the democratizing of information implies that individual links should not be restricted. As such the network will ease contacts, information, and discussions between practitioners of oral history throughout Latin America and the world.

The website includes the usual features, such as tabs for information on meetings, conferences, and congresses, and publishing news. It also includes a listing of oral history archives in Latin America, and the email addresses of associations, research groups, projects, and even individual practitioners of oral history. An important feature is that there is a virtual library of articles, books, and interviews. It also has links to oral history sites, digital journals, bibliographical news, and a photo gallery (especially of the conferences in Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia of the last two years). Perhaps one of the more interesting sections of this site is the one challengingly named "Debates." Currently there is a lively debate going on whether there is such a thing as a Latin American Oral History. Another interesting service brought by RELAHO is the

tab *Cuéntame cómo fue* (Tell me how it was). This is a series of interviews with practitioners of oral history, much in line with what has been so successfully done by the COHA.

Thus, the RELAHO is a forum for discussion, communication, and information on all issues dealing with memory, orality, and the practice of oral history in Latin America. As such it has almost no limits and no restrictions, and all can participate. One limitation is that of language: it only accepts items in Spanish and/or Portuguese.

RELAHO has three site administrators. For Central and North America the administrator is Gerardo Necochea Gracia; for Brazil it is Robson Laverdi; and for South America (Spanish speaking) it is Rubén Kotler.