The Congress was co-organised by the Letter of Peace addressed to the UN Foundation and the University of Barcelona. There were 500 registrations and more than 60 experts from different disciplines participated. During the conference 63 papers were given.
Creating a peace congress in the context of a crisis might not seem urgent or a priority; as if we were to plant a tree when there is a fire to be put out. But your response to the call of the congress demonstrates that peace is a primary task.
Dr. Boutros Ghali
UN Secretary General (1992-1996). President of the UNESCO Panel for Democracy and Development (PIDD)

Dr. Federico Mayor Zaragoza
Director General of UNESCO (1997-1999). President of the Culture of Peace Foundation

Ms. Laura Folch & Mr. Lito Iglesias
Cellists

The inauguration was attended by speakers and experts: 60 international experts including university professors and lecturers, mediators, journalists, representatives of organisations and members of civil society took part in the articulation of the key themes and the working groups.
The Congress
Historic Building of the University of Barcelona
24th and 25th April 2012

The Congress sessions were structured into plenary sessions, parallel sessions of the six working groups and the reading of papers. During the plenary sessions, there was a presentation of the expert groups' work, shared with each keynote speaker and developed over the previous year. In the working sessions, divided into key themes, the experts and participants exchanged opinions, perspectives and possibilities for working towards peace, using the proposed text as a thematic base. Enrolled institutions were also given the opportunity to present papers reporting on their work and field experience in relation to various peace initiatives.

Dr. John Paul Lederach
Expert in mediation and the construction of peace

Dr. Manuel Reyes Mate
Professor of Research at the Institute of Philosophy, CSIC

Dr. Michele Sorice
Professor of Political Communication and Media Studies at LUISS University, Rome

Dr. Lü Longgen
Professor of International Studies at Beijing University, PR. China

Dr. Enrique Dussel
Professor of Ethics at UNAM, Mexico. Coordinator of the Association for Philosophy and Liberation.

Dra. Adela Cortina
Chair of Ethical and Political Philosophy at the University of Valencia.

The way in which we work is very short-sighted. I believe in short term solutions to crisis but action (in the mediation of conflicts) must be nested within a medium to long term strategic framework with a vision to the horizon of constructive change.
Working Groups
Historic Building. 6 Parallel Sessions
Papers
Historic Building. 6 Parallel Sessions
Another planned activity that took place during the Building Peace in the 21st Century Congress included a visit to the Sagrada Familia. There was a sense of the temple’s real interculturality, everyday it receives thousands of tourists who visit Barcelona from all over the world. During the visit, it was mentioned that Antoni Gaudi himself worked for the construction of peace and that it was the desire of the Catalan architect to contribute to the fellowship between Spain and America, an intention that became reality when he made a donation to a Chilean project more than 80 years ago.
The Rector of the University of Barcelona chaired the closing ceremony of the 1st International Congress on Building Peace in the 21st Century in the Paranymph Auditorium of the University of Barcelona. During the closing session the congress’ conclusions and the Barcelona Manifesto for Peace were presented recognising the proposals and suggestions made by the congress experts. The digital “Dontknow” platform was also presented offering a web space to share thinking and knowledge for peace and helping with decision-making. Finally Carlos Gabriel Gómez was announced as the next candidate for the International Congress on Building Peace in the 21st Century in Bogota in the spring of 2014.