

Dafna Feinholz

Bioethics and Ethics of Science Section, UNESCO



Dafna Feinholz has a PhD in Research Psychology (UIA Mexico) and a Master in Bioethics (Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain).

She was the Head of the Reproductive Epidemiology Department at the Mexican National Institute of Perinatology, and the Research and Planning Director of the Women and Health Programme, at the Ministry of Health (Mexico). She successively occupied the posts of Academic Coordinator of the National Commission of Human Genome at the Ministry of Health; and the Executive Director of the National Commission of Bioethics, achieving a more independent legal status for the National Bioethics Committees, co-drafting the mission of the NBC, which was defined as promoting a bioethics culture and providing the necessary elements to society and decision makers, to understand the ethical issues and how to approach them, rather than producing decisions.

Among the achievements are also drafting the first national guidelines for Research Ethics Committees and Clinical Bioethics Committees, training their members, and promoting the law at the Parliament that is currently in vigour, and that has established and differentiated both types of committees. She is the founder of FLACEIS (Latin American Forum of Ethics Committees in Health Research) and was the Chairperson (2000-2006). She was an Invited member of the international expert group, TDR-WHO: Drafting and translating Operational Guidelines for Ethics Committees. She was Mexico's representative at the meetings of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee to discuss the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights.

Since September 2009, Dafna Feinholz is the Chief of the Bioethics and Ethics of Science Section, within UNESCO Social and Human Science Sector. In this capacity, she leads different activities aiming at reinforcing capacities of Member States to manage bioethical challenges and to identify the ethical, legal and social implications of cutting-edge science, emerging technologies and their application for sustainable development, and promoting awareness raising and public debate.