



Human Rights Advocates Program 30th Anniversary Report



@Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR)
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Acknowledgements

This publication was created to share the experiences of alumni of the Human Rights Advocates Program with aspiring human rights advocates around the globe.

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About the Editor

Stephanie V. Grepo has been the Director of Capacity Building at ISHR since 2008.

About the Institute for the Study of Human Rights

Established in 1978 at Columbia University, ISHR is committed to three core goals: providing excellent human rights education to Columbia students, fostering innovative interdisciplinary academic research, and offering its expertise in capacity building to human rights leaders, organizations, and universities around the world. The Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) is ISHR's flagship training program. Since 1989, HRAP has built the capacity of frontline human rights advocates through an intensive, semester-long program that consists of graduate-level coursework, networking, skill-based workshops, and faculty mentoring.



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Foreward

No one knows exactly how many human rights organizations there are in the world, but the number ranges in the thousands or even the tens of thousands. The United Nations has a registry of 24,000 civil society organizations, most of which are working on issues we would identify with human rights. Another source identifies 11,000 human rights organizations globally; even Wikipedia's "List of Human Rights Organizations," on each of which it has a separate entry, runs to the hundreds, with cross-references to other lists that cover indigenous rights organizations, LGBT rights organizations, and women's organizations.

The vitality of these organizations is the best possible refutation of the claim, so often made by rights-violating regimes, that human rights is just a Western idea. On the contrary, the people who make these organizations run are members of the societies they work in, just as local, real, and authentic as the oppressors they are struggling against—indeed, more so.

They are people like **Aung Myo Min**, the Executive Director of Equality Myanmar. He was a student leader in Burma's 1988 revolution and the first openly gay man among the democratic movement. He returned to Myanmar in 2013, after 24 years in exile to take up the struggle for LGBT rights.

The 2016 HRAP Advocates at Columbia University



... like **Samuel Kofi Woods II**, a Liberian journalist, academic, activist, and politician. Woods began his activism as the student president of his university and a leader of the national student organization in 1986. After the outbreak of civil war in 1989, he fled to

Ghana but returned to Liberia in 1991 to launch the country's most prominent human rights organization, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. In the midst of the war, he wrote and distributed reports of human rights violations. He also established a radio program that focused on publicizing arrests and extrajudicial executions and educating citizens about their rights. In 1994, he founded the Forefront Organization to document the human rights abuses of the Second Liberian Civil War. In 1998, Woods was threatened with prosecution for sedition because he exposed the use of forced child labor in the country. Woods, his family, and his staff faced threats from government authorities, many of his colleagues were murdered, and he was forced into hiding and exile on multiple occasions. After the civil war, Woods served as the Liberian minister of labor and the minister of public works.

... like **Delphine Djiraibe**, a senior human rights lawyer and chief attorney at the Public Interest Law Center, N'Djamena, Chad, which she founded in 2006 to provide Chad's poor with access to justice and to hold the Chadian government and extractive industries accountable for harm caused to local populations and the environment. In 1991, she co-founded the Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights and has succeeded in helping victims of former dictator Hissène Habré bring him to justice. Delphine also serves as president of the Peace and Reconciliation Initiative's Committee for Peace and Reconciliation, whose objective is to encourage dialogue among political actors, strengthen democratic practices, and promote the rule of law.

... like **Twesigye Jackson Kaguri** who founded the Nyaka AIDS Orphans Project in response to the devastating effects of AIDS in his hometown in southwestern Uganda. The organization provides free education to children who have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. In addition to two primary schools and a secondary school, it also operates two libraries, a farm and nutrition program, a medical clinic, two clean water systems, and a support program for the grandmothers who care for as many as 14 children at a time. Through the Nyaka AIDS Orphans Project, Jackson is currently providing services to 43,000 HIV/AIDS orphans in southwest Uganda.

... like **Aurora Corazon A. Parong**, who began her career as a medical doctor by training community health workers in marginalized Philippine villages, then later joined the Medical Action Group in Quezon City. She was an early advocate for economic, social, and cultural rights in the Philippines, contributing to the development of human rights modules on the right to health, the right to housing, the right to water and the right to food. She spent nine years as the Executive Director of the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines. She then served as the Director of Amnesty International Philippines for seven years before being appointed as one of the nine members of the Human Rights Victims' Claims Board, a quasi-judicial body tasked to evaluate claims and provide recognition and reparation to victims of human rights violations during martial law in the

Philippines. She has served as board member of PhilRights and the Philippine Coalition for the International Criminal Court.

And like **Kemal Pervanic**, a survivor of two concentration camps during the Bosnian war, who returned to his village in northwestern Bosnia 10 years after gaining asylum in the UK. He founded Most Mira (Bridge of Peace), which organizes arts programs for children of different ethnicities who normally wouldn't interact.

Each of these human rights defenders was inspired by the values of his or her own culture to struggle against state oppression, economic oppression, racial oppression, or sexual oppression. Many more could be named, working on a host of issues, not because of Western influence but because of their own commitment to justice.

They have another thing in common. Each of them came to Columbia University at some time over the past 30 years to participate in the Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) of the Institute for the Study of Human Rights. The program brings together

about a dozen advocates each fall semester for a rigorous and diverse 13-week training program in all dimensions of human rights advocacy, including international law, research methods, public speaking, networking, fundraising, and stress management. They devote their time to this program because their work is difficult and often dangerous. Founded in 1989, the program now has 310 alumni who come from 85 countries. Their courage is inspiring, and their accomplishments are extraordinary.

The goal of HRAP is to help each advocate become even more effective than he or she was before attending the program. This book seeks to deliver some of those same lessons to its readers, in the words of the advocates themselves. They share their expertise on how to plan and implement effective advocacy strategies, how to recruit and screen volunteers, how to work effectively with interns, how to motivate donors, how to build bridges between human rights and the values of local cultures, the recovery of others, and how to combine one's own psychic recovery from abuse with the recovery of others.

The advocates tell us that their experience in the Program has been formative. At Columbia, we have come to see that whatever they learn from us is dwarfed by the vast and rich body of learning that they bring to us from their work at home. Columbia faculty and students eagerly engage with the advocates during their stay on campus, and we always learn.

There is not enough room in this foreword to do justice to the scope of the work being performed by HRAP alumni. They have been recognized with accolades including the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award, the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights

*Stephanie V. Grepo, Director, Capacity Building, ISHR
Andrew J. Nathan, Chair, Steering Committee, ISHR
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Defenders, the Millennium Peace Prize for Women, the Right Livelihood Award, the Reebok Human Rights Award, and the Waislitz Global Citizen Award. They have served on The Elders, the International Commission of Jurists, and the World Organization Against Torture.

The group of advocates represented in this book have offered their thoughts on their work in honor of the 30th anniversary of the Human Rights Advocates Program. We are grateful to them for doing so. We hope that their reflections will inform and inspire many readers as they have informed and inspired us.

Guiding Principles

Human Rights as a Journey

Samuel Kofi Woods II
Liberia

The strength of young human rights advocates lies in their conviction and passion for justice. As a young student and youth activist of the 1970s, I was motivated by a deep conviction to change the conditions in my community, my country, and the world in which I live.

Our lives are sometimes changed forever by a random event beyond our control. It could be a bout with illness, the death of a loved one, false imprisonment, extra-judicial executions, or war. Such events can ignite our passion to make a difference. Some respond by becoming doctors with a determination to treat the illness that killed a mother or someone close. Whatever the motivation that leads one into the struggle for justice, respect for human dignity, and the pursuit of human rights, such motivation must be guided by the fundamental principles of universality.

Why universality? We are human beings. By our very existence, we have these rights.

No matter where we are on the globe and no matter what our color, creed, or religion, we are entitled to certain fundamental rights.



Our methodology must take into consideration the universal nature of what we do. This will provide the consistency, solidarity, partnership, and support for our cause.

We need to undertake strategies that ensure that our ideals and the philosophy that underlines our conviction are not personal and opportunistic. We must rise above narrow personal considerations.

We must define the thrust of our struggle and link it to the duties and obligation as well as rights that flow therefrom and how the duty bearers are violating those rights. To do this, we must first carefully define the issues that we wish to address. Once we know what it is that we wish to tackle, we can look to international, regional, and local laws to understand the prescribed obligations, rights, and duties.

Once the issues and the path to redress have been determined, the need for building institutions and harnessing the requisite capacity to plan and to bolster the response is a necessity. In most cases, the transition from personal ideals to collective action can be challenging. The need to build institutions to sustain our struggle can be daunting but it is essential to success. Institutions transcend us as individual advocates.

We human rights advocates sometimes see ourselves as messiahs and heroes rather than as ordinary people whose mission is to work with others to make a difference. We soon forget that our work is about sacrifice and service—not a parallel power structure that creates individual wealth, inflates the ego, and offers a job and/or a livelihood.

Success will come from building strategic alliances, partnership, and solidarity. Developing local, regional, and international alliances will expand our environment for safety and confidence. Mobilizing solidarity and building institutions make our ideals greater than ourselves. These approaches can be developed with individuals, organizations, and governments—local and international—that share our values and complement our struggle for justice and human rights.

In seeking solidarity and building partnership, we secure resources, logistics, funds, and expertise to achieve the desired results. We therefore take risk in challenging society and governments. Solidarity requires that we forge partnerships at all levels; share experiences, knowledge, and resources; and support one another. Education and awareness will convert but also create new streams of advocates and leaders committed to our ideals. Advocacy through information dissemination and documentation are essential.

However, there are the forgotten concerns of advocates. There are issues of loneliness, frustration, and disappointment. Advocates sometimes feel pessimistic.

Our families, friends, communities, and country sometimes ostracize us because of our principles and values. These issues can be addressed by forging strong partnerships and alliances.

My personal experience is a testimony to these concerns. At 12 years old, my journey started as a youth leader in the slums of Liberia when I volunteered in clean-up campaigns. It grew to consciousness to help change our conditions. I became a student leader working with other students to promote academic freedom and social justice. Later, we designed and developed institutions like the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, the Foundation for International Dignity, and the Liberia Law Society to address specific human rights issues. We worked with local and international institutions, individuals, and governments.

In 1998, I was forced into exile after years of threats, imprisonment, and fear. In exile with my family, I felt a bit lonely and sometimes frustrated about a world that appeared indifferent, complicit, and brutal.

Samuel Kofi Woods II is a Liberian journalist, academic, activist, and politician. Woods began his activism as the student president of his university and a leader of the national student organization in 1986. After the outbreak of civil war in 1989, Woods fled to Ghana but returned to Liberia in 1991 to launch the country's most prominent human rights organization, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. In the midst of the war, he wrote and distributed reports of human rights violations. He also established a radio program that focused on publicizing arrests and extrajudicial executions and educating citizens about their rights. In 1994, he founded the Forefront Organization to document the human rights abuses of the Second Liberian Civil War. In 1998, Woods was threatened with sedition for exposing forced child labor in the country. Woods, his family, and his staff faced threats from government authorities, many of his colleagues were murdered, and he was forced into hiding and exile on multiple occasions. After the civil war, Woods served as the Liberian minister of labor and the minister of public works. He attended the 1994 HRAP.

When I needed friends, I found I had many. This is why partnership building is essential. I obtained support from religious institutions, community leaders, friends, and allies beyond my community and borders. Some countries shared our ideals and demonstrated the commitment and political will to identify with our cause and offered me refuge.

In conclusion, let me state that we, human rights advocates, have set ourselves on a journey, not a destination. This journey did not begin and might not end with us. We are not heroes nor are we invincible. We are just ordinary people who have found a purpose in life and an opportunity to change our world into one where respect for human rights and human dignity will be upheld. I am an incurable optimist because our cause is just. We are not alone.

Whatever the motivation that leads one into the struggle for justice, respect for human dignity, and the pursuit of human rights, such motivation must be guided the fundamental principles of universality.

How to Build Spaces for Hope

Alejandra Ancheita Pagaza
Mexico

Background

1994 was a turning point for my country—and for me as well. I began to study law in 1994, the same year as the uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation in southern Mexico. The uprising would eventually lead to the historic exclusion of indigenous peoples in Mexico. It was also the same year that Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement with the United States and Canada, resulting in a decade of regression for the collective rights of indigenous peoples and workers in Mexico. In 2005, I started the Project of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ProDESC) to challenge violations of the rights of indigenous peoples and workers' collectives.



Contribute and Do Not Duplicate

During my participation in the Human Rights Advocates Program at Columbia University, I identified the contributions that I wanted to make while taking into account the work of other organizations in Mexico. I wanted to build a space to defend economic, social, and cultural rights and to ensure access to justice and the possibility for a decent life. ProDESC walks in the same direction as other organizations and collectives but without duplicating the work that is already been done for defending human rights.

Constructing the Collective

ProDESC's methodology is designed to construct collective power. We do this by strengthening the internal organization of the communities and collectives we work with as well as through legal defense of the rights that were violated.

Building Transnational Bridges

Collaboration and transnational solidarity are important tools for maintaining local processes with transnational relevance. We must publicize our cases at national and international levels to influence media narratives and public opinion.

Being Open to Learn

Curiosity is vital to learn about other social contexts. We must be open to observing what people from different latitudes do and how they solve situations.

Rigorous Defense

Access to justice is a structural challenge in Mexico. The defense of human rights may seem like a dead end. Nevertheless, we are convinced that access to justice is possible. We consider it essential to maintain and strengthen the security of human rights defenders and to generate links and networks with allies. Working in the defense of human rights cannot be solitary—it must be collective and shared.

Self-awareness and Consistency

Staying consistent in the defense of human rights requires listening to criticism from other actors and developing the capacity for self-awareness is fundamental for keeping us effective, genuine, and honest. We must remember that this work is not about ourselves but about others.

The Need for Self-care

Balancing work-life time is extremely important. Self-care also implies caring for the persons with whom we work learning to rest helps us and learning to collectively care for each other can build spaces of hope.

ProDESC walks in the same direction as other organizations and collectives but without duplicating the work that is already been done for defending human rights.

Alejandra Ancheita Pagaza, the founder and executive director of the Mexico City-based Project of Economic, Cultural, and Social Rights (ProDESC), is a lawyer and activist who leads the fight for the rights of the migrants, workers, and indigenous communities of her native country to raise their standard of living. Since founding ProDESC in 2005, Alejandra and her dedicated team have run strategic campaigns aimed at protecting the economic, social, and cultural rights of Mexico's most marginalized people. In 2014, she was honored with the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders. She attended the 2005 HRAP.

Taking A Wide View

Aurora Corazon A. Parong
Phillipines

Introduction

When we work on human rights issues, we often become engrossed in our work. The following principles can contribute to the advancement of human rights activism and advocacy.

The Universality of Human Rights

The universality of human rights is the cornerstone of international human rights law. First emphasized in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, the principle of universality has been reiterated in numerous international human rights conventions, declarations, and resolutions. We as advocates are obligated to subscribe to this principle. It must be imbibed in our very being. It is only then that we can help others to understand and live by this principle. The principle of universality is a guide to daily life for everyone.



Everyone Has Rights

People must know their rights to assert them. When their rights are violated, they can raise their voices. Everyone has rights and can therefore participate in human rights movements.

As advocates, we must take responsibility for empowering people by helping them to see their lives through a human rights lens. Human rights education imparts people with the knowledge necessary to recognize what is happening.

Movement Building

The advancement of human rights is not just the work of human rights activists, institutions, and organizations. We need large numbers of people working with us. It is our responsibility to educate, motivate, and welcome people to our cause. It is people working together for human rights who make a difference to change our world and transform it into a better one.

There is no single path for human rights advocacy.

Building Upon Earlier Methodologies

Human rights activism has developed over decades of struggles for human rights and justice. To conduct human rights advocacy, we must study approaches across multiple sources. Some we learn from the books. Some we learn from those who worked on human rights before us and from colleagues from other countries as sometimes we face similar issues and challenges. We develop new ways of working given changing situations and innovations that improve efficiency. We must embrace innovative new theories and approaches to our work. There is no single path for human rights advocacy. Each advocate can integrate lessons from human rights communities of practice into his or her individual approaches.

Indivisible and Interrelated

Human rights are indivisible and interrelated. This principle played a key role in a campaign my colleagues at Medical Action Group and I designed many years ago. We wanted to make critical medicines accessible to everyone who needed them. Since many people were using their income to purchase medicine, we had to learn about workers' rights and employer responsibilities. As we fought to lower the cost of the critical medicines, we needed to think about patents, property rights, and corporate accountability. We didn't always have the resources to work on these issues directly, but we identified and worked with partners who had the expertise. We collaborated with them to advance our campaign for health rights, specifically the right to have accessible essential medicines.

Aurora Corazon A. Parong began her career as a medical doctor by training community health workers in marginalized villages. She became one of the early advocates for economic, social, and cultural rights in the Philippines by contributing to the development of human rights modules on the right to health, the right to housing, the right to water, and the right to food. She spent nine years with the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines. She then became the director of Amnesty International Philippines. Most recently, she was appointed by the president of the Philippines as one of the nine members of the Human Rights Victims' Claims Board, a quasi-judicial body created in 2014 to evaluate claims and provide recognition and reparation to victims of human rights violations during martial law in the Philippines. She attended the 1996 HRAP.

The Nuts & Bolts

Advocacy Strategies and Ethical Considerations

Sylvester Uhaa
Nigeria

Stay true to your mission and remain motivated by the desire for change.

Background

Ten years ago, as a Jesuit seminarian, I was involved in prison ministry in Nigeria. On one of my routine visits to Benin Prison in Edo State, I was moved to tears when I came across an old woman praying in the prison chapel. I said, “Mother, why are you here?” She replied that she had been detained for an offense allegedly committed by her grandson who had not been apprehended. At that moment, I committed myself to ensuring that no one would be arrested for a crime committed by another person. I left the Jesuits and began my work as an advocate. Through my organization’s persistent advocacy, the arrest of one person in place of another was eventually prohibited in the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015.

Based upon the last 10 years of my efforts to defend the rights of people in prison, I would like to share with you the following reflections on the advocacy efforts my team and I have pursued at Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants-Nigeria (CURE-Nigeria).



Language

My choice of the words “people in prison” rather than “prisoners” is deliberate because the former illustrates that prisoners are people like us. The latter shows little to no connection between us and them—we are people while they are prisoners. In the same vein, the public-at-large now says “people with disabilities” rather than “the disabled.”

Advocacy Visits

Advocacy visits to government agencies may be difficult to arrange but they are worth the effort. They can provide a unique opportunity for engagement and networking. In a recent visit with the chair of the Senate Committee on Human Rights and Judiciary, he expressed the same concerns that we have with some provisions of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015. He asked us to make a submission to his office to help him initiate the process of amendment. What a way of fostering cooperation! For NGOs that want to build their network, advocacy visits are an excellent option. If well planned, they can build bridges, bring clarity, and foster synergy.

Letters

Letters can be an effective advocacy tool if the language is appropriate, the delivery is well-timed, and the right person is addressed. Above all, the letter must be based on facts, not assumptions. If the letter is talking about an issue that has been raised by another source, it is important to reference that source to protect your credibility. You need to research the issue, provide data, and offer recommendations. Make your message as clear as possible because an ambiguous message can lead to the wrong interpretation and garner a negative response. Keep in mind that the letter has the potential to build a bridge between you and the organization or person you are writing to. It also has the potential to build a wall. You may decide to make the letter public or private depending on what you want to achieve, but you must take that into careful consideration by examining the political, economic, religious, and even social environment you are

working in. If unsure about this, consult with others. Keep in mind also that your letter may be leaked to the public or filed so always say what is true, verifiable, and non-partisan—and what you can defend.

Press and Media Releases

One of the most important stakeholders in advocacy is the media, so learn how to use it. If used wrongly, the media messaging will have a devastating effect on your advocacy and credibility. Many organizations have died off as a result of this. Your message to the media most always be very clear and based on facts. You must select your words carefully to avoid giving the media room to fill in the gaps that you created. Provide most of the information and resist the push by the media to publish anything until you have your facts. We conduct investigations on human rights violations ourselves before we give the information to the media.

Consistency

Consistency has both an ethical value and an effective advocacy value. Ethically, it means that you are committed and can be trusted. This makes you a reference point. Shift your position on issues only if you have new information that demands a shift, not because you are alone or a minority voice. As an effective advocacy tool, consistency gives you an edge over those who come and go and those who are new. Consistency makes your message stick and be taken seriously. My position on prison construction, for example, is unpopular, but I have not changed it since 2011. Pretrial detention, which is my main argument against prison construction, remains high. Until these changes, my position will not waver.

My letter to President Goodluck Jonathan on this issue in 2013 led to the reversal of the government plan to construct new prisons. While the current government is building new prisons, the media is on my side. So, while I am not able to dissuade the current government from building new prisons without first alleviating the overcrowding in the existing ones, many people now agree with my position that building new prisons without first decongesting the existing ones does not make sense. Consistency is a mark of credibility.

Research and Surveys

Research-based advocacy provides concrete evidence and data, making your advocacy more reliable, credible, and dependable. Policy and decision makers rely on organizations that do research for their own work. Well-done research can make your organization stand out and attractive to policy and decision makers as well as to development and international partners. Even though CURE-Nigeria has been contributing to the U.S. Department of State Human Rights Report on Nigeria since 2011, we were not named in the reports until we conducted and published research surveys on women prisoners and children in Nigeria. The credible, verifiable, and evidence-based data in our surveys apparently caught their attention.

Ethical Considerations

In 2017, I was asked to name my greatest achievement as the founder and executive director of CURE-Nigeria. While the interviewer probably expected me to mention our provision of legal aid, training for justice actors, or establishment of libraries in prisons, I said my greatest achievement has been that I have never asked the Nigerian Prisons Service for a contract or any other kind of favor such as employment for a friend or relative. The NPS awards big contracts and recruits new staff regularly. Years ago, I was advised to register as a company so that I could get contracts from government agencies. When I thought about it at that time, I realized that the agencies I would be approaching for contracts are the same agencies that have responsibility for justice reforms and protection of human rights. If I started to ask them for contracts, I would have to turn away from any wrongdoing that we might detect. I refused to register as a company.

Conclusions

Stay true to your mission and remain motivated by the desire for change. These are critical to the survival of your organization as well as to the effectiveness of your advocacy. Many people, including donor agencies, perceive new NGOs as money-making ventures. The activities of some NGOs have given credence to this perception. The surest way to show that you are different is to stay true to your mission and demonstrate that you are not motivated by personal gain but by the desire to make change.

Sylvester Uhaa is the founder and director of Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE) in Nigeria, a chapter of International CURE. Under Sylvester's leadership, CURE-Nigeria has grown from a state to a national organization. In 2011, CURE-Nigeria hosted the 5th International CURE Global Conference on Justice Reforms. CURE-Nigeria has organized training workshops to build the capacity and skills of judicial officers and police on human rights, alternative dispute resolution, and restorative justice. In partnership with UNICEF, the National Human Rights Commission, and the Federal Ministry of Justice, CURE-Nigeria convened the the First National Conference on Child Justice in 2013. As a Commonwealth Scholar at Oxford University, he completed the master's in international human rights law. He attended the 2013 HRAP.

The Core of Advocacy is Strategy

Elvis Mbembe Binda
Rwanda

Introduction

Successful advocacy must have a clear strategy and employ effective tools while upholding certain ethical values. I would like to share with you some guidelines I have developed over the course of my work in Rwanda.

Advocacy Strategies

The core of advocacy is strategy. No matter how important your subject is, your efforts may end up being in vain if you do not have a clear and strong strategy. For an effective and efficient strategy to advance a specific human rights cause, the following considerations are crucial.

Master Your Subject

The first thing is to master the subject of your advocacy. If your advocacy is about the decriminalization of abortion in your country, you should speak directly with doctors about the procedure and its consequences on health, research court records related to abortion, and talk with those who had clandestine procedures. To understand what's at stake, it is vital to understand as many facets of the issue as possible, including compiling scientific and societal evidence regarding the topic. Statistics and quantitative evidence help to convince interlocutors that you are well-versed in the subject.



Know the Stakeholders, Both Allies and Opponents

Every society has leaders and followers, from small groups such as households to large, complex constituencies as a government. Effective advocacy requires identifying the thought leaders on subject, including both supporters and opponents. While you aim to build strong alliances with supporters, it is vital to understand the opposition.

Regarding abortion, one can investigate the basis of opponents' platforms. Is it religious, political, or anchored in their own life experience? Understanding opponents helps advocates to attune messaging to their interests and perspectives and to build bridges based on human-to-human connection. Human rights advocacy is a long process. Today's proponents may be tomorrow's opponents, and vice-versa. Advocates do not want to risk alienating today's opponents at the risk of building future allies.

Let's assume that after a successful advocacy campaign against the criminalization of abortion, your next battle is sexual harassment in work place. Some of the people who might have been against your advocacy for the decriminalization of abortion could support your new battle. If you did not consider their opinions as "legitimate" in the past, these stakeholders may be unwilling to work with you, even if they fully agree with you.

It is important to ensure that your interlocutors do not label you with a specific advocacy position and crucial to show dedication to advocacy without giving the impression that you are opposed to listening to others. In few words, it is about being firm on your stand without being rigid.

Understand the Society or the Target Group

When setting objectives for your advocacy, it is important to consider prevailing attitudes in the society or target group. Advocacy paths for decriminalization of abortion will differ according the given society's mindset. Advocates can learn about society or target groups' mindsets from public opinion, such as listening to public radio shows.

In a society where the majority is hostile to decriminalizing abortion, the topic may not be open for discussion. It would be imprudent to engage with the parliament about decriminalization. Instead, the first advocacy step should be to get people accept a debate about abortion. Your advocacy should create open spaces and platforms to facilitate discussion about the topic. It is only when the society has accepted to share their opinion on abortion and to tolerate contradiction that further action can be envisaged.

Personal Ethics and Accountability

Successful advocacy demands credibility and honesty. These are ethical values that any person doing advocacy should uphold. In advocacy, the messenger matters, sometimes more than the message itself.

The image that you create may prejudice the outcome of your advocacy. Advocates should never manipulate facts or statistics in favor of advocacy goals. You do not need to disclose any fact/statistic that works against your advocacy. As a core principle, you should not advocate for a cause that you do not believe in.

For instance, if you do not believe in the right of a woman to medically terminate her pregnancy, you should not raise awareness about decriminalization of abortion. In many third-world countries, NGOs tend to prepare and conduct advocacy on subjects brought to them by donors. While advocates require funding, some money may compromise your organization's or your own

credibility as an advocate, especially if you embark on a cause you do not believe in. You may end up contradicting yourself and compromising your credibility.

Honesty is something you owe yourself first. While your organization may accept funds to conduct a certain advocacy, you should reject any request to involve you in advocacy on a matter that conflicts with your personal beliefs. This does not mean that you should impose your beliefs and considerations on your organization in an effort to dissuade the others from taking up the advocacy. You—as an individual—should sideline yourself and allow your colleagues to go forward. Whatever your position in the organization, you should always bear in mind that your organization is not to serve your personal interest but rather it intends to work for public interest. Thus, the best interest of the organization must be the guiding principle when you are taking up an advocacy campaign.

As a core principle, you should not advocate for a cause that you do not believe in.

Elvis Mbembe Binda is the president and a founding member of Initiatives for Peace and Human Rights, which helps communities and individuals in Africa's Great Lakes Region achieve sustainable peaceful coexistence using human rights and good governance education. Through Avocats Sans Frontieres-Belgium, Elvis has assisted many minors and vulnerable persons before the courts in Rwanda. Elvis has also worked as deputy coordinator at Forum d'Echanges pour la Cohesion Sociale, and as human rights officer with Central Africa Youth Network, where he had the main task of raising awareness of the youth of Rwanda, Burundi, and Eastern DRC regarding their human rights as reaffirmed in national and international human rights instruments (such as the UN conventions on rights of the child, disabled persons, women, etc.). Elvis has been member of the Rwanda Bar Association and the East African Law Society. Elvis holds a PhD in law from Utrecht University (the Netherlands). He has been a lecturer at the School of Law at the University of Rwanda since 2007. He attended the 2011 HRAP.

Making A Plan

Betty Lee Odur
Uganda

Background

The Uganda Network on Law, Ethics, and HIV/AIDS (UGANET) is an NGO committed to the development and strengthening of policies and ethical responses to HIV/AIDS in Uganda. We pursue three strategies: advocacy and policy influencing, access to justice through the provision of legal aid, and mobilizing communities to drive their own change. Following are guidelines on what has worked for us at UGANET.

Effective Planning

Effective planning determines the outcome of the advocacy campaigns, involving a number of steps as illustrated in the five-step advocacy planning cycle:



Step 1: Identify the issue

This critical step must include people affected by the problem. Their input helps to define the problem that needs to be addressed. Questions that can guide you through this process include:

- What is the problem? Is it serious? Is it urgent?
- What are the effects of the problem? Who is affected by it?
- Does it exert a greater effect on certain groups? If so, who and how?
- What are the roots of the problem?
- What are the roles of policies and practices of the national government?
- Are the affected people and other stakeholders able to participate in decision making?
- Who has the power to bring about change? Government, policymakers, other stakeholders, churches, businesses, community leaders, traditional healers?
- Has this problem been addressed before? What was the outcome?
- What risks are there in getting involved in advocacy?
- What methods can be used to address the problem?

At the organizational level, it is always important to ask the following questions:

- What financial and human resources are available to do what needs to be done?
- How does this fit within the organizational strategy?
- How does this campaign fit within the organizational profile?
- Is your organization best placed to do this?

Step 2: Set Objectives

Setting objectives helps to provide clarity to the aims of the advocacy and assist in the planning for the advocacy activities. The objectives should follow the SMART formula:

- Specific--What exactly do you want to happen?
- Measurable--How will you know when you have achieved your goals?
- Appropriate--Is the effort appropriate to your vision, mission, and aim?
- Realistic--Is it realistic in relation to your potential capacity and experience?
- Timebound--Is your advocacy plan realistic to the timeframe?

Step 3: Identify targets

Human rights organizations must identify potential partners and opponents. It is important to determine what exactly needs to be done to influence target groups to effect change. Target groups can be defined as follows:

- **Group 1:** Those directly affected by the situation.
- **Group 2:** Those responsible for creating the situation or with formal responsibility for finding a solution, such as government, policymakers, and politicians.
- **Group 3:** Those concerned for the welfare of others and other interested groups, such as non-governmental organizations, church groups, business, and the media.
- **Group 4:** International players, such as donors and global NGOs.

It is helpful to understand internal hierarchies within targeted organizations. For example, advocates may begin to lobby the wrong government department before properly establishing who the appropriate government decision maker is. This may result in delayed advocacy work and yield no positive results.

Secondary targets, or “influencers,” are also crucial. These include the media, members of parliament, donors, faith leaders, traditional leaders, human right organizations, community leaders, etc.

The following questions can guide target research:

- Who are the organizations and communities that need to be targeted? What do they know about the issue? What is their attitude towards it? What influence or power do they have over the issue?
- Is the message clear enough to be understood?
- What level of government should the advocacy work target?
- What other actors will be able to influence them?

Step 4: Assess resources

Successful advocacy work requires human capital, funding, skills, and critical information. It is also important to differentiate between resources already available and will be needed in the future.

Step 5: Plan

Flexibility in planning is key. Advocacy activities can often have greater impact if they are timed to coincide with other actions or events that will help the advocacy work. For example, politicians may be willing to make bold statements during election times and this would be an ideal opportunity for the advocacy work.

When planning for an advocacy campaign, the following should be incorporated:

- Clear goals, objectives, and activities.
- Indicators for measuring activities.
- A timeline describing what you are going to accomplish and when.
- An identification of key stakeholders and how they are going to be incorporated in your strategy
- A clear division of labor letting all involved know what their job is
- A specific method of gathering and disseminating convincing information to reach the target audience
- A method of monitoring and mechanism for evaluating your progress
- A contingency plan if your strategies are ineffective

Advocacy Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Practice what you preach. This will support your credibility.
- Engage policymakers in ongoing dialogue.
- Focus on what is achievable.
- Praise local authorities when they follow through on their promises.
- Remember that policymakers are busy people and have many issues to think about. Help them to see how responding to the issues will help the community.
- Remember that cultivating relationships takes time.
- Hold institutions accountable. Expose inconsistencies between what has been promised and what is being done. Do this in a constructive manner.
- Team up with other organizations and activists who have relationships with local authorities.

Don't

- Be confrontational and accusatory. It only makes people act defensively.
- Stop trying—even if you have encountered resistance in the past.
- Expect immediate change. A lot of the time, progress will be gradual. Have patience.
- Only approach policymakers when you want to ask them for something. You need to cultivate relationships with them.
- Try to take all the credit for positive change in the community. Recognize that change is a group effort. Give people credit when it is deserved.

Betty Lee Odur leads the Kampala office of the Uganda Network on Law, Ethics, and HIV/AIDS, an NGO committed to the development and strengthening of policies and ethical responses to HIV/AIDS in Uganda. She earned a bachelor's of laws from Uganda Christian University in 2008 and a postgraduate diploma in legal practice from the Law Development Center in 2009. An enrolled Advocate of the High Court of Uganda and other subordinate courts, she is a member of the Uganda Law Society and the East African Law Society. She attended the 2016 HRAP.

The Role of Cross-Sector Partnerships

Carol Dyantyi
South Africa

Introduction

In the words of Nelson Mandela, “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way it treats its children.” In response to the plight of children who lost their parents to HIV/AIDS, I decided to become an agent of change.

In 2001, I met three children whose partially blind mother was terminally ill. One year earlier, they had lost their father to HIV/AIDS. At that time, our country treated HIV/AIDS-afflicted people as outcasts. Nonetheless, local newspapers covered the children’s story, seeking to raise burial funds for their mother. The children’s story led to increasing media coverage regarding the plight of children orphaned by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

We at the grassroots level witnessed these children’s hardships and decided to take action. I founded the organization Ika-geng Itireleng AIDS Ministry to assist these children. I chose to name the organization Ikageng because it means self-improvement in Tswana.



This movement demands all of me.

Pursuing Cross-Sector Partnerships to Get Our Work Done

Ikageng supports orphaned and vulnerable children. Based in Soweto, our organization uses a multi-faceted approach to ensure that children get assistance. We provide monthly food parcels, clothing, water, electricity, payment of school fees, uniform supplies, school transportation, and psychosocial support programs.

We have been able to provide this support thanks to partnerships we have formed with government stakeholders including the departments of basic education, social development, and health. With their assistance, we are able to offer HIV/AIDS testing, nutritional, and psychosocial support. Additional partners and donors help us to address other needs such as education. We pursue robust fundraising activities and are eternally grateful to our donors for their support.

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges we face is that the children are considered stateless and not eligible for services. We rely heavily on the Children's Act, 2005 to push the authorities on this issue. Funding is a constant issue. Donor fatigue around HIV/AIDS is a reality. Those of us on the frontlines need to develop a plan on how we sustain ourselves beyond donor support. Some expect NGOs to be run like businesses. It can be difficult to access training to develop these skills.

Looking Forward

Ikageng supports over 1,170 orphaned and other vulnerable children in 453 households. Every one of those lives matters—that is why we soldier on. We never stop looking for partnerships and funding to help as many children as we can while we constantly advocate for the rights these children have. This movement demands all of me. I remain committed.

Carol Dyantyi is the founder and director of Ikageng Itireleng AIDS Ministry, a South African community-based organization dedicated to children whose parents have been diagnosed with or died from AIDS. Known as “Mum” Carol, she has dedicated her life to advocating for the rights of all children in South Africa and providing them with the resources needed to live a fulfilling, healthy life. Carol holds a bachelor's degree in community development and leadership from the University of Johannesburg. She attended the 2014 HRAP.

Photo Credit: Keep a Child Alive



Confronting the Double Stigma of Disability and HIV/AIDS in Uganda

Michael Miiro
Uganda

Disabled people living with HIV/AIDS across Uganda suffer from social stigma. Yet, these stigmas can be most acute for persons with disabilities (PWDs) living with HIV/AIDS in rural Uganda. This harsh reality prompted my colleagues and me to start the Masaka Association of Disabled Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (MADIPHA) in 2009. We started with five members. By 2017, we had 387 members.

At MADIPHA, we adhere to a community-based model that addresses the PWD in his or her environment. We go to rural areas where PWDs face significant stigma and vulnerability. Our topics for discussion include the nature of disabilities and HIV/AIDS and sexual violence. We try to raise awareness on the various types of disabilities from mental illness to blindness to deafness. We aim to dispel the common belief that disabilities like epilepsy and mental illness are witchcraft.

Photo Credit: Disability Rights Fund



Most of our members, especially the women, report that they acquired HIV/AIDS through rape. They have been preyed upon by men who say that “a woman with a disability is only beautiful at night.” We have even learned of cases in which the parents of a woman with a disability will arrange for her defilement in a misguided effort to have grandchildren. We encourage those who have not tested positive to stay safe, while we link those who are positive with medical centres. While we condemn such activity during our workshops, we avoid exposing the victims publicly.

Although the subject of condoms remains taboo in Uganda, MADIPHA provides training on their use. The condoms we use in our trainings as well as those we distribute to our members are provided by the Masaka District Health Department. We also inform participants of the value of condom use to prevent unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. One of the most important things we tell them is to wear it correctly and use it effectively. We also urge them to seek advice on other family planning methods as a couple from the health workers.

We facilitate peer support clubs, which cover anywhere from three to seven villages per club. Our clubs are run by volunteers who are PWDs—with and without HIV/AIDS—and family members of PWDs. These members receive training on MADIPHA’s background, their roles, HIV/AIDS, disability, records management, and confidentiality.

We currently have a total of 20 clubs in Masaka. Every three months, we contact the chair of each club for an update. Since we cannot reach every area easily (due to lack of resources), we rely heavily on the peer support clubs to work with our target audience. Club members counsel PWDs, advise caretakers/ parents, identify new clients, and check that PWDs who are HIV-positive are taking their medications.

Our peer support clubs also organize community dialogues. In most cases, these are smaller gatherings held within the communities on Sundays. Attendees sit on the grass or in chairs that they bring. We use the local language which is Luganda. The head of the club leads the discussion which can range from the challenges that parents and PWDs face to why the government is neglecting PWDs. Attendees are able to speak openly in a safe and supportive environment.

MADIPHA continues to face hurdles. The stigma facing PWDs at all levels of society is great. Stakeholders who could make a difference refuse to address the issue seriously even though the vulnerability and suffering of PWDs is known.

The economic and psychosocial needs of children with disabilities living with and affected by HIV/AIDS are nowhere near being addressed. They require medical care and counselling in addition to standard needs such as tuition, uniforms, and materials.

Lastly, MADIPHA has faces funding gaps hence limiting our ability to respond to needs of PWDs living with HIV/AIDS and their families as they occurred. It worsens

with lack of means of transport to facilitate smooth running of field activities and to provide support to our volunteers running the peer support clubs and our members.

Michael Miiro is the technical advisor on HIV/AIDS, disability, and sexual and gender-based violence for the Masaka Association of Persons with Disabilities Living with HIV&AIDS. He has trained village health teams, health workers, and police in sign language, and held workshops about PWDs who are Living with HIV & AIDS as well as sexual- and gender-based violence against PWDs. He has worked with the local government on anti-poverty initiatives such as obtaining a grant for PWDs to start village and loan revolving groups, and giving PWDs goats, chickens, and vegetable and coffee seedlings to generate income. At the regional level, he worked with other stakeholders to lobby for changing policies that maintain exclusion and segregation of PWDs from society. Michael holds a post graduate diploma in community-based rehabilitation from Kyambogo University in Kampala and a bachelor's degree in adult and community education from Makerere University in Kampala. He attended the 2017 HRAP.

Navigating the Refugee Crisis in Serbia

Marijana Savic
Serbia



Atina's Approach to the Refugee Crisis

Atina-Citizens Association for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and All Forms of Gender-based Violence was founded in 2003 as a feminist civil society organization with the mission to fight trafficking in human beings and to support victims. For 16 years, Atina has been one of the most important actors in combating human trafficking in Serbia. Our organization has provided thousands of victims and at-risk persons with legal assistance, education, economic empowerment, safe shelter, gender-based violence case management, psychological support, and other services. During this period, Atina was the only provider of safe accommodation for human trafficking survivors in

Serbia. Many other actors, including Serbia's state institutions, relied on our organization to refer victims to our programs. In 2015, Atina established its first social enterprise, the Bagel Bejgl Bakery shop, to provide professional trainings and job opportunities for our beneficiaries. The successful bakery finances other Atina programs.

Since 2015, over one million people from Middle Eastern, Asian, and African countries have crossed the Balkans en route to Europe. In September and October 2015, up to ten thousand migrants passed through Serbia on a daily basis. Although the route officially closed in March 2016, refugees continued to arrive in Serbia.

Our country became a temporary home for approximately 4,000 refugees and migrants, residing in 18 state-run asylum and reception centers. Almost half of the refugees and migrants were women and children, and their specific challenges and needs were often overlooked. Furthermore, the protection system in place lacked the capacity to identify and support those who had been trafficked and exploited.

Atina identified a lack of gender perspectives in programming for the refugee crisis and responded quickly. We established mobile teams, meeting refugees and migrants where they were. We provided ad hoc and long-term support to thousands of refugees, particularly to the most vulnerable, including women and children who suffer from gender-based violence, exploitation, and human trafficking. All of our programming designed for human trafficking victims became available to refugee and migrant women and children. Through this approach, we successfully introduced a gender perspective to Serbia's comprehensive response to the refugee crisis, improved the position of refugees and migrants in society, and advocated for refugees' and migrants' rights.

Below, we share lessons based on our experiences of how a human rights organization can adapt to meet emerging challenges.

Support People Regardless of Official Status

Atina supports all people in need, regardless of their legal, official, political, or other administrative status. This policy traces back to our founding. We differentiate survivors by their needs, not by their formal

identification status. Throughout the refugee crisis, we reached out to refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, women, and children without any status or documents, unaccompanied minors, children with suspicious escorts, and others. The official system of protection presumes limited rights and adopts different legal approaches depending on the status of victims. We focus on meeting people's needs first and foremost. Many women and children refugees and migrants recognize Atina as a place to receive support regardless of legal status.

Focus on Individuals' Needs

Atina provides comprehensive individual long-term support to human trafficking victims. Individual case managers work with each beneficiary to develop a services plan tailored to that person's needs. Services include 24/7 crisis intervention, placement in a safe house or alternative accommodation, legal representation, health and psycho-social support, and support in education and employment. Atina developed this individual approach prior to the refugee crisis and adapted it to the new context for refugees and migrants.

Refugees and migrants come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In response, Atina developed a new approach: cultural mediation. Through cultural mediation, we can better understand beneficiaries' needs and respond in a culturally, gender-, and age-appropriate manner. Other organizations recognizing the benefits of this

approach, sought our assistance in capacity building for cultural mediation.

Serbia's current mechanism of protection adopts a patriarchal approach toward women refugees and migrants. State services include gynecological examinations and pregnancy monitoring. They do not consider women's overall mental and physical health nor are women informed of their rights. There is limited space for women to relax and come together outside of their role as "mothers."

Don't Wait for Others to Act

The refugee crisis placed great demands on the system of protection and state institutions. Facing new challenges, organizations lacked the knowledge and resources to provide immediate response. This response time lag potentially exposed refugees and migrants, especially women and girls, to additional risks.

Atina was able to respond to refugees' needs immediately by adapting our existing support activities to new realities. If a person was waiting on or facing challenges in accessing a medical examination, social assistance, or legal advice, Atina strove to get them to the right place. Atina monitored their access to services, aiming to minimize the risks and to prevent physical and psychological damage, violence, exploitation, and other criminal activities. By helping refugees and migrants

early, Atina aimed to prevent violence and challenges later down the road.

No system existed for identification, referral, and protection of survivors of gender-based violence. Atina trained professionals and activists from different organizations on how to put on "gender lenses," to recognize and react to situations of violence, to communicate with women and children in crisis, and to refer them if needed. We focused on helping other organizations to integrate a gender approach into their support for refugees and to recognize early signs that someone is in trouble.

A gender-sensitive approach recognizes that women's needs may differ from men's needs and that women may look for answers in a different way. Practitioners need to be sensitized to the gruesome things that occur to victims and recognize the need not to only look for cases of gender-based violence or human trafficking. Women also require a supportive atmosphere to share their experiences without fear. No one will approach an organization the first time and simply state: "Yes, I am a victim, I suffered such and such violence, I was raped there, and here I am now." The current environment can be very threatening and non-supportive—beginning with the criteria for establishing who is a refugee and who is not a refugee.

We focus on meeting people's needs first and foremost.

Both men and women face this challenging environment, yet there are differences in how women and men receive vital information. Men often hold information regarding refugee status and hold the power to share the information. Arriving refugee and migrant women are less educated, with limited opportunities to go to school. They previously lived in a traditional environment where they were not allowed to communicate with others, especially other men. They may not know another foreign language and must rely on whoever is leading the way –whether it’s a smuggler, a well-intentioned person, or an abuser who led them on their journey. We sometimes meet young girls—estimated to be 14-16 years old – who got married and pregnant on the journey. Yet, our system lacks a response for child marriages.

Evolve Existing Programming Models to Meet New Needs

Prior to the refugee crisis, Atina created local teams to fight human trafficking across Serbia. The teams were comprised of representatives of local NGOs that responded to local criminal activity and strengthened cooperation between national and local organizations. As refugees and migrants have found themselves in a “long stay” in Serbia, aka residency, we recognized the need to integrate them into local communities. We established six local support teams for refugees and migrants. These teams were comprised of representatives from local organizations hoping to build ties between local Serbians and the refugee population, to maintain activities designed for decreasing social distance, and to improve the overall position of refugees and migrants. Our work helped the integration of refugees and migrants, previously a taboo concept in public discourse, become more widely accepted.

Marijana Savic is the founder and director of Atina-Citizens Association for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and All Forms of Gender-based Violence. She founded Atina to aid survivors of violence, exploitation, and human trafficking in Serbia. She established the first safe house for victims of trafficking in the country. Atina expanded its focus to also provide psychosocial, legal, and medical assistance to women and children feeling war and persecution at home. She attended the 2018 HRAP.

The Impact of Financing Legislation on NGO Operations

Mulshid Muwonge
Uganda

Across Africa today, civic space is shrinking. Governments are creating legal instruments to limit the activities of human rights defenders (HRDs). These laws make it almost impossible to promote and protect human rights in Africa. HRDs are viewed as individuals promoting western interests, supporters of opposition groups, challengers to incumbent regimes, and even traitors and threats to public morality and national security.

This article focuses on the increasing use of Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter-Terrorism Financing (CTF) regulations as a means through which HRDs and their organisations are targeted. There are concerns over the effects on civil society organisations of recommendations made by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a policymaking and enforcement body initiated by the Group of 7. Their recommendations are focused on combating money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism. The FATF has adopted 40 recommendations, including Recommendation 8 (R8), which evaluates country compliance with these recommendations.



Recommendation 8 (R8) sets out a broad framework for regulation of the non-governmental organizations (NGO) sector to prevent abuse by terrorists. The premise is that NGOs are seen as being particularly vulnerable to abuse for the financing of terrorism in a number of ways that FATF R8 sets out such as by being a conduit for funds, by obscuring diversion of funds, and by being a front for terror organisations. The tarring of the entire sector is contrary to the evidence and has been criticised by the NGO sector. In addition, R8 has had numerous unintended consequences as several governments have tightened rules on the NPO sector beyond what is under R8.

The organization I work with, Defenders Protection Initiative (DPI), has embarked on several programs for civil society organisations in sub-Saharan Africa in general and Uganda in particular. These include:

- A multi-sectoral dialogue with Uganda's Financial Intelligence Authority of Uganda, compliance officers from local financial institutions, and civil society leaders to provide guidance on regulatory requirements.
- A residential training workshop with 30 civil society actors, including directors and finance officers of different organisations, aimed at understanding FATF and its impact on NGOs in Uganda.
- A three-day regional conference with NGO leaders from 13 African countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on the impact of FATF on NGOs.

DPI is also researching the impact of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing regulations on the operationalisation of NPOs in Uganda. The research aims to understand the awareness of NGOs on FATF and FATF-inspired legislation in Uganda.

Mulshid Muwonge is an associate consultant at Akijul (Enabling Change). He also manages special projects and strategic initiatives at Defenders Protection Initiative. He holds a MPhil in human rights and democratization in Africa from the University of Pretoria. He attended the 2016 HRAP.

Recognizing the effect of AML/CTF on the operations of NGOs, the following suggestions should be taken into account:

- 1) NGOs should seek knowledge on the existing legislation relating to money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism in their respective countries.
- 2) In most countries, NGOs are required to register with a Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU). Leaders should comply with the provisions of AML/CTF Laws at all times. Where possible, NGOs should establish dialogue with FIUs in their respective countries to facilitate a mutual understanding of the needs of civil society in comparison with the compliance requirements set forth by the regulator.
- 3) NGOs should also embark on the development of AML/CTF policies clearly defining the existing internal controls to ensure organisational integrity, financial transparency, and accountability.
- 4) Lastly, NGOs should adopt a risk-based approach to ensure protection against ML/TF. This process might include knowing the various beneficiaries of an organisation's activities as well as knowing the donors and partners.

Advocacy Do's and Don'ts from Bangalore

Chitra Balakrishnan
India

Background

This note outlines techniques, tools, ethical considerations, and strategies for advocacy work based upon my experiences as a founding member of the Alternative Law Forum in Bangalore (ALF).

In 1991, India's economy was liberalized after more than 40 years of state protectionism. Bangalore grew as information technology hub. State-owned enterprises were dismantled and replaced by private industries. A semi-skilled workforce from rural areas was replaced by knowledge industry workers. It was a period of considerable flux, characterized by job losses and a workforce struggling to survive in the face of new

developments. This decade also witnessed the consolidation of fundamentalist thought with the growth of the Hindu Right in India and in Karnataka, Bangalore's home state.

Against this backdrop, ALF opened in 2000. The primary goal was to serve marginalized communities in Bangalore with a human rights approach. The group's inspiration came from earlier generations of human rights law networks such as the Lawyers Collective, the Human Rights Law Network in Mumbai and Delhi, the work of human rights lawyers working on civil liberties from the 1970s onwards, and the local impetus from Samvada, an organization working with rural and urban youth to sensitize them



development and human rights. As a non-funded entity, our legal research work subsidized our litigation and advocacy work. Our program focused on three main areas: litigation, legal policy research, and advocacy, and capacity building through training.

The provision of legal aid services emerged as an offshoot of our initial programming. We staffed legal cells in the office of the department of disabilities and the Elders Helpline initiated by the Office of the Commissioner of Police in Bangalore City as news of our work reached new constituencies.

Our Advocacy Work

Some of the primary questions of advocacy work involve for what and for whom. Our advocacy efforts needed to be in harmony with organizational goals, thus the second question was important to us. Our advocacy focused on marginalized sections of society. While advocacy work can take many forms, all advocacy work is contextual. Strategies that work in a certain context may not work if conditions change. There is a need to be adaptable.

When we began, our advocacy work became possible due to strong civil society groups from a range of political ideologies (including the Left, women's groups, trade unions, an emerging sexuality minorities movement, and unorganized workers) that acted as pressure points. When we began our work, we believed that effective advocacy emerged from legal research that reflects marginalized voices. Civil society groups could leverage our work to apply pressure for change.

DO's

Building a Broad Base through Civil Society Alliances

While alliances must be built around issue-based advocacy, there is a much more fundamental task to create broad-based alliances for their own sake. This lends authenticity to one's work and opens up avenues of support from across a range of political dispensations on particular issues. Nurturing our links with the domestic workers' union, asylum dweller's rights group, and sexual minority groups created mutually supportive relationships.

Embracing the Many Roles of a Human Rights Lawyer

Effective advocacy comes not just from presenting lucid arguments in court but also from going out and understanding on-the-ground realities of petitioners. One of our early cases sought an intervention to prevent the government acquisition of agricultural land for an expressway. Our group participated in farmers' protests against the state's acquisition of land. A second case sought compensatory relief for workers of a reputed gold mining company who were being pressured into a voluntary retirement scheme. We attended trade union and civil society group meetings for the workers and visited workers' homes. Our work with petitioners provided vital insights and opened up opportunities for continued engagement outside of the court room.

Highlight Marginalized Voices

Incorporating voices of marginalized groups increased our organization's credibility. Our early work included a study of labor court and higher court decisions that affected workers. This research ultimately supported amendments to the Industrial Disputes Act by the Center for Worker's Management, an organization collaborating with the Second Labor Commission appointed by the Government of India. To conduct research, we reviewed court judgements and met with and recorded the narratives of leading trade union representatives, activists, and committed lawyers working on labor issues across a range of cities and locations. We conducted similar studies on the status of domestic workers and sanitation workers using carefully designed questionnaires and surveys. Our collated fact-finding reports were used at the national and international levels, including the International Labor Organization's work to draft the Convention for Domestic Workers.

Seek Local Funding

Funding for advocacy work is best mobilized from the people and civil society groups committed to social justice. With local donations, we paid for pamphlets and publicity materials. Refraining from using external funding for advocacy raises credibility and promotes accountability and transparency.

DON'T

Don't Take Away Local Ownership

The most sustainable advocacy model places affected people at the center of the process. We must enable them to take leadership at all levels of activity while still providing competent and sound back support in terms of legal opinions and drafting assistance. This would include activities such as leading meetings, decision making, and strategizing.

While advocacy work can take many forms, all advocacy work is contextual.

Chitra Balakrishnan co-founded the Alternative Law Forum, a pro-bono human rights law practice based in Bangalore to respond to issues of social and economic injustice. In 2004 she was named a Chevening Scholar. Based in Bangalore, Chitra is currently a research consultant for the Centre for Women and Law at the National Law School of India University. She is working on a research project that examines how law universities can encourage more students to provide legal aid to marginalized communities. Chitra attended the 1996 HRAP.

Keep It Local

Adapting to Your Community

Aehshatou Manu
Cameroon

As an educated Mbororo woman in Cameroon, I have an obligation to improve the lives of the indigenous peoples of Cameroon. Nomads dependent on traditional cattle rearing, the Mbororo living in Cameroon are estimated to number more than one million people—nearly 12 percent of the population of Cameroon—according to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. While the Mbororo live primarily along the borders with Nigeria, Chad, and the Central African Republic, they can be found in all 10 regions of Cameroon.

While I strive to adapt my trainings to the community in front of me, I face many challenges. In spite of concentrated efforts by

my organization, the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association, to educate the Mbororo over the past 25 years, the majority remains illiterate. I have worked in villages in which only a handful of people have attended primary school. Our culture prohibits me as a woman from speaking on certain topics—such as sex education and family planning—to audiences that include men. I must adjust the format of trainings according to local community norms. In some areas where it is inappropriate for me to lead a training, I have to downsize my training from a meeting format to work with only a few people at a time. I am constantly mindful of the local languages when entering a community—for example, speaking

in Bantu to a Baka community can be problematic.

We must work across multiple fronts to improve the lives of the Mbororo. In 2017, we founded a literacy program for women in the Centre Region, one of the 10 regions of Cameroon, to increase their independence. The program raised the women's confidence. Later in the year, they enthusiastically participated in a training program that highlighted the importance of participating in the elections in 2018.

At my organization, my primary areas of responsibility are the economic empowerment of women and issues surrounding the girl child. To stress the importance of education as well as the need for women to meet

their responsibilities as citizens of Cameroon, I always use the examples of our (few) female leaders in the Mbororo community. I even use myself as an example to encourage my young sisters to go to school and to continue to promote and protect the rights of indigenous people and to involve themselves in community well-being. Much still remains to be done in certain regions. While awareness raising and sensitization campaigns have helped to improve the situation, the nomadic way of life makes it difficult to attend school. For those who do manage to complete primary school, it is financially and logistically challenging for them to continue their education as secondary schools are usually found in the big cities.

We must work across multiple fronts to improve the lives of the Mbororo.

Aehshatou Manu is the advocacy and gender desk officer for Lelewal Foundation and the women's coordinator and women's wing president at the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association, both indigenous peoples' organizations in Cameroon. Her areas of expertise are women's and girls' rights, environmental issues, the economic empowerment of women, and girl child education. She earned a bachelor's degree in law at the University of Yaoundé. She attended the 2016 HRAP.



Making the Local Case for Our Rights

Esther Adhiambo
Kenya

Photo Credit: Jonathan Torgovnik



In 2015, I founded the Initiative for Equality and Non-discrimination (INEND) in Mombasa, Kenya, to bridge the gap between sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) and society at large. Our work is desperately needed in Kenya's coastal region where mobs have repeatedly attacked people based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. In at least six incidents between 2008 and 2015, mobs in the coastal counties of Mombasa, Kwale, and Kilifi attacked or threatened LGBT people and health workers serving the LGBT community without an adequate response from authorities. Politicians and religious leaders have even encouraged motorcycle operators to commit violence against SGMs.

Instead of focusing our sensitization trainings on the rights of those who frequent such clinics and the LGBT community, we work with the perpetrators of violence—mainly motorcycle operators and public transport operators—to highlight the rights accorded to all Kenyans by our country's constitution and laws. We have found it is easier to connect with our target audience by taking this focus instead of referring to regional and international human rights mechanisms.

In our introductory training, we highlight the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of Kenya. We look at Article 20 which clearly

applies to every person: "Every person shall enjoy the rights and fundamental freedoms in the Bill of Rights to the greatest extent consistent with the nature of the right or fundamental freedom." The language is straightforward and easy to understand. The lack of jargon makes it easy to explain during sensitization that all Kenyans include gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals.

We also highlight Article 27: "Every person is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law." We explain that even perpetrators of violence against the LGBT community are protected by the law. We use real-life examples to make the point. We stress that when it comes to arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention, everyone is vulnerable—not just the SGMs. We point to the detention and ethnic

profiling of Somalis, which the state claims are part of its efforts to combat terrorism. We have found people are more willing to become our allies when they realize that they too are vulnerable.

Human rights work evolves around the law. While I am not a lawyer by training, I have made sure to seek assistance from individuals and partners who are lawyers. We recruited an advocate of the High Court to serve on INEND's five-member board. When legal assistance is needed, we turn to her first.

She is well versed and has assisted in developing training material for many organizations including the Kenya Human Rights Commission and the National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. As the founder and executive director of INEND, I take very seriously my responsibility to read and study the local laws as well as regional and international laws so that I can continue to lead from a position of knowledge and understanding.

Esther Adhiambo has been in the Lesbian Bisexual and Queer movement for nearly a decade, having previously worked at Persons Marginalized and Aggrieved Kenya and now at the Initiative for Equality and Non-Discrimination (INEND). She attended the 2014 HRAP. Jeffrey Wambaya, who attended the 2016 HRAP, and Pepe Onziema, who attended the 2018 HRAP, serve on the INEND board.

Human Capital

Volunteers on the Frontlines of Your Organization

Delphine Djiraibe
Chad

Introduction

In 2007, I founded the Public Interest Law Center (PILC), the first organization of its kind to provide low-cost and pro bono legal counseling to poor Chadians. We focus on women who face issues including child custody, domestic violence, spousal support, rape, defamation, and wrongful termination. On the frontlines of our organization, we have more than 250 volunteer paralegals in 14 cities including N'Djamena, the capital of Chad. They provide low-cost and pro bono legal advice, alert us to cases that require more significant legal aid, and offer “know-your-rights” trainings to the communities we serve. I would like to share with you how we run our volunteer paralegal program, which is the backbone of our work.

Recruitment, Selection, Trainings, and the Final Exam

PILC works with women's groups, human rights organizations, and religious entities to identify suitable candidates. We ask them to propose candidates based on their ability to write and speak French, their interpersonal skills, and their location (they need to live in the communities we serve). We also strive for 80 percent of the application pool to be female since the overwhelming majority of our clients are women. Even though the position is a volunteer one, it is highly coveted because those who complete the training



pass the final exam become paralegals.

After a thorough review of the candidates, a subset is chosen to attend the trainings led by PILC staff who travel to each of the communities we serve. The 16-day training program is comprised of modules covering the following: human rights, women's rights, and children's rights; and the right to health, the right to education, and the right to a

healthy environment. Those who complete the training program are then given one month to prepare for the final exam, which is also held in each of the 14 communities we serve. The exam consists of presenting a case to a jury comprised of trainers, at least one judge, and a representative of the local administration. Based upon their performance during the “case,” the jury then decides who will join PILC as a volunteer paralegal. We hold a public ceremony for those selected. The ceremony is attended by representatives of civil, military, religious, and traditional authorities as well as civil society organizations and political parties. During the ceremony, the paralegals are charged in their roles as legal aid providers. They also sign a non-binding commitment to uphold their duties.

Training and Inclusion in PILC's Mission

Over the years, PILC has trained a total of 308 paralegals. As of 2017, 80 percent of those trained continue as PILC paralegals. PILC strives to integrate the volunteer paralegals into the organization's operations. Their work is regularly monitored by one PILC staff member. On a quarterly basis, PILC staff and experts travel to the field to assist and evaluate paralegals in their work.

Delphine Djiraibe is internationally recognized for her work as a human rights lawyer and chief attorney at the Public Interest Law Center in Chad, as well as co-founder of the Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights. She has been working on the Chad-Cameroon Oil and Pipeline Project since its inception and has been advocating social, economic, and environmental rights in Chad and for World Bank accountability and corporate responsibility in the disbursement of oil revenues. As a chief attorney at PILC and former president of the Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights, Delphine was part of the coalition that pursued the former dictator Hissène Habré and held him accountable. She attended the 1999 HRAP.

Paralegals are closely involved in the evaluation of PILC's work and the development of projects.

Acknowledgement of their Contribution

PILC paralegals are highly valued in their communities and they are in great demand. The judicial and traditional authorities even rely on them to settle some disputes.

Accomplishments

During the last 10 years, PILC paralegals have sensitized more than 15,000 people through their community trainings and provided legal advice to more than 2,000 people.

Challenges

Some paralegals have begun to demand compensation for their efforts. Until now, PILC has made available a small amount of money to buy telephone credits and to pay for local transportation costs as needed. While some paralegals have resigned, most of them say they like the work and are willing to fulfill their role on a voluntary basis. They say they are proud to be of service to their communities.

An intern should be integrated into the organization as well as supervised and mentored.

Working with an Intern

Chhing Lamu Sherpa
Nepal

When our organization, Mountain Spirit, began hosting interns, we faced a steep learning curve regarding how to plan for, host, and manage interns so that all involved benefitted.

With time, we adapted our approach to internships. In the summer of 2017, Stephanie Kim, a student at Columbia University, volunteered with us for nearly two months. Our organization discussed our expectations regarding the interns' responsibilities and planned her orientation, inclusion in society-at-large, and housing.

Our team's approach led to the most beneficial and effective internship experience to date. Below, we provide advice for inviting an intern to join your organization.

Consider Carefully the Possibility of Hosting an Intern

We recommend that your organization carefully consider in advance whether it should invite an intern to join the organization.

Can you devote staff time to an intern?

An intern should be integrated into the organization as well as supervised and mentored.



Staff time will have to be devoted to the intern so you must decide as an organization if this is feasible. Can one staff person be the intern's primary contact for the duration of the internship?

What do you want an intern to do?

Within the organization, decide what tasks you would like the intern to be responsible for as well as the outputs you'd like the intern to have produced by the end of the internship. It is very important to take into consideration the intern's skill set, your needs, and the time frame for the internship as you develop objectives for the internship. It is also very important to consider in advance any requirements the intern may have—especially if the intern is pursuing the internship for credit. Some schools allow their students to earn credit for their internships. You should know in advance how this requirement affects your plans for what the intern will do. We recommend you pursue internships in which you have the ability to communicate in depth with the intern in advance to make sure the fit is mutually agreeable.

Can you identify a suitable living arrangement for the intern?

Your organization should bear some if not all responsibility for identifying the intern's living arrangement for the duration of the internship. Can someone at the organization host the intern? Can you identify a reliable host family? All of our previous interns and volunteers were first-time visitors to Nepal.

We took it upon ourselves to identify suitable host families for our interns.

How to Find an Intern

Our most successful internship experience came unexpectedly from our pre-existing relationship with Columbia University. Our contact at Columbia advertised our internship posting and connected us with interested students. While our contact at Columbia conducted the first round of interviews, the final decision rested with our organization and the intern. In the past, we did not vet students, which resulted in disappointment. Our advice: be strategic. Consult with other organizations that may have hosted interns. Ask your international partners for advice and connections. Random inquiries did not work for us.

Before the Intern Arrives In-Country

Congratulations! You and the intern have agreed that a match has been made! Now what?

Calibrate your objectives to the intern

Now that you know who your intern is, make sure that the objectives your organization set earlier mesh with what you have discussed with the intern. Do you need to fine-tune your objectives for the intern? Does the intern have skills that might be better utilized to another assignment? It is best to think this through carefully before the intern arrives and to make adjustments.

Communicate with the intern

If there is a significant interval of time between the time you and the intern agree on the internship and the intern's arrival in-country, your organization should consider keeping in contact with the intern.

Our organization communicated on a weekly basis via email with our interns to keep them updated on what we are doing in the interim. This helps us to integrate the intern into the organization.

Consider carefully what kind of living arrangement can be offered to the intern

In our case, we arrange for the intern to live with a host family throughout the duration of the internship. It is incumbent on the organization to make sure the host family will provide the student with a suitable, supportive living arrangement. The organization should discuss with the host family any costs they may incur while the student is with them—such as food. In our case, we agree with the host family on the costs in advance and cover them. We also ask the host family to try and cook at least one dish from the intern's home country early on so that the intern feels at home and welcome. Find out dietary restrictions in advance so that host family is not surprised.

The Intern Is Here!

We have hosted interns for periods of at least eight weeks. From our experience, it is best to have a structured orientation for the intern to set the tone for the entire internship.

Pick up from airport and introduction to host family

The host organization should pick up the intern from the airport and introduce the intern to the family.

Hold a briefing for the intern with your staff

On the intern's first full day, we organize a briefing. We ask as many staff as possible to attend to welcome the intern, to explain their roles, and to provide an overview of what is coming up in the immediate days as well as over the course of the internship. We devote time to explaining security issues of concern such as theft and to providing some cultural information to the intern. From the beginning, we make sure the intern knows how to get in touch with their primary point of contact as well as other staff members.

Tips for the Duration of the Internship

Coaching and mentoring

The intern's supervisor or mentor should organize a formal meeting at least once a week to discuss the intern's progress as well as look at the overall internship. The supervisor should take primary responsibility for making the intern feel secure and comfortable enough to ask questions or talk about any difficulties. We also encourage the supervisor to promote an open-door policy so that the intern can feel comfortable talking to the supervisor outside of the meeting time.

Promote interaction with the community-at-large

What can you do to integrate your intern into the community that you serve? See if your partners and stakeholders will invite your intern to their meetings so that the intern can learn about the community-at-large.

Communicate with the host family

We communicate with the host family throughout the course of the internship. It is important that the family is informed in advance about any late nights the intern may have due to work. We never want our host family to be waiting for an intern to return home. We also stress to the intern the importance of communicating directly with the family about any personal travel or late nights.

Closing Thoughts

Our most recent intern experience was successful because we learned from earlier experiences. Among the many benefits an intern can bring, we have benefitted from having an intern who brought us a new perspective to our work, helped with social media and publications, and raised our organization's profile through speaking engagements we arranged for the intern. We wrote this article in the hope that other organizations will benefit from our experience.

Chhing Lamu Sherpa is the chair of Mountain Spirit, a human rights organization that defends the rights of rural communities in Nepal with a strong focus on supporting indigenous women.

She attended the 2016 HRAP.

Everyone You Meet Can Play a Role

Twesigye Jackson Kaguri
Uganda

As a child, I never imagined that I would build schools to educate orphans in my country. Growing up in the highlands of western Uganda, my family lived without electricity and water. My parents did everything possible to make sure that their five children attended school. They sold their livestock to buy us shoes and pencils, which we considered luxuries.

As my education created new opportunities for me in the USA, the HIV/AIDS epidemic devastated Uganda. The epidemic left one million orphans in an area the size of the state of Oregon. Two of those victims included my siblings. Every family had suffered loss due to the disease.

Even though I had made a life in the USA, I was responsible for my deceased brother's three children. During a trip home, many people asked me to help support children orphaned as a result of AIDS epidemic. I knew the best way to help them was to make sure they received an education. In 2002, I sought donors to build a school, but everyone I approached was reluctant. My former wife and I used our savings to build the first two classrooms. In 2003, we opened the Nyaka School with volunteer teachers and a dream to expand to a primary school.

Once I had photos of the school and students, fundraising became easier. I took a professional development course to learn

about the principles and techniques of fundraising or how to make the ask. I spoke to everyone I met about Nyaka. I was invited to join the Bloomington North Rotary in Indiana. This helped me to meet people who were interested in helping others. Rotary and church members, my main early supporters, were invaluable to scaling the Nyaka program.

I conducted networking and speaking engagements around the clock to ensure a steady funding stream for Nyaka. I learned that individual donors could be more generous than foundations, and I am indebted to several individual donors who believed in our dream and support me to this day. Under their guidance, we built Kutamba, our second primary school, and the Blue Lupine Library. Nyaka also succeeded due to local support in Uganda. In an area where churches run many schools, I made Nyaka non-denominational so that everyone is welcome. Annual fundraisers in Kampala brought national support for the school. Government officials, retired teachers, and business owners helped us along the way.

In 2010, I published my first book, *A School for My Village*, to spread the word about Nyaka. In 2012, I was recognized as a CNN Hero, followed by numerous invitations, awards, grants, and honorary degrees. With this recognition, I was able to quit my full-time job and devote myself to Nyaka. We built Desire Farm to provide food for the schools, opened the Mummy Drayton School Clinic to offer medical care to the community, and broke ground on a secondary school.

The construction of the Nyaka Vocational Secondary School is complete. Students from our first class graduated from university. We have 765 children enrolled in our system, and we are helping over 7,300 grandmothers provide for their orphaned grandchildren. Not everyone is a donor. Just like a sports team, Nyaka has a team owner, coaches, staff, players, volunteers, cheerleaders, and spectators. I involve everyone who is willing and able. Nyaka now has a volunteer or donor in every state of the USA—and on each continent. I attribute this to my willingness to tell the story of Nyaka to everyone I meet.

Photo Credit: Matt Stauble



I involve everyone who is willing and able.

*Twesigye Jackson Kaguri was born and raised in Uganda in the village of Nyakagyezi. A graduate of Makerere University, Kaguri co-founded the human rights organization, Human Rights Concerns, to help victims of human rights violations in Uganda and to educate the public about their rights. In 2001, he founded the Nyaka AIDS Orphans Project in response to the devastating effects of AIDS in his hometown. The organization provides free education to children who have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. In addition to two primary schools and a secondary school, Nyaka also operates two libraries, a farm, a nutrition program, a medical clinic, two clean water systems, and a support program for the grandmothers who care for as many as 14 children at a time. Since founding the project, Kaguri has also become an author. In *A School for My Village*, he shares how he came to build the first school and the struggles he faced during the first few years. In 2014, he published “Sitwe Joseph Goes to School,” a children’s book about a young HIV/AIDS orphan who dreams of going to school. When not visiting the schools in Uganda or working at his office in Okemos, Michigan, Kaguri travels the globe to speak with students and supporters about the organization. He was named a CNN Hero in 2012 and the winner of the Waislitz Global Citizen Award in 2015. Kaguri attended the 1996 HRAP.*

Joining a Movement Respectfully

Aung Myo Min
Myanmar

I was in exile for 24 years because of my commitment to human rights and equality. A few years ago, I was able to return to Myanmar and continue my struggle. When I returned, I felt both excitement and worry. I was concerned about how to continue my human rights work given the new political situation—a new government headed by civilians but backed by the military. Since I had spent the previous two decades in exile, I did not have many colleagues inside the country who would stand by me.

One of the first things I did when I returned home was to be clear with myself about what it was that I could contribute to the human rights movement and to the other activists. They did not know me well. Instead of telling them who I was and what kind of skills I had to offer, I tried my best to work with them and to contribute as much as I could to their organizations and the overall movement. I was able to contribute my experience with developing advocacy strategies and conducting human rights education to LGBT and women’s rights organizations. Seeing is believing, rather than talking and listening. After working together, the human rights activists inside the country came to know me and my skills. I learned how I could complement and enhance their work rather than compete with them.



Building a strong network is an essential part of your human rights advocacy work. Since Myanmar is a country with systematic human rights violations, we have many human rights issues to advocate. Due to the previous military government, it is not easy to build trust—even among the activists. However, the inclination to collaborate and coordinate was so strong that we were able to organically form a strong network. Given everyone’s enthusiasm, ideas, and propensity to talk, the network benefited from a facilitator who brought us together, linked our efforts and causes, and helped us to find consensus. The facilitators who have worked best have great concentration and active-listening and problem-solving skills and are fair. A good facilitator is able to set up a safe and trusted space.

Advocacy was a very new term when I returned to Myanmar in 2012. People had come to believe that street demonstrations and underground human rights movements were the only ways to challenge the government for change. This is what they had learned when there had been no space to engage with the government. As a small channel of engagement with the new government became possible, activists started thinking about other possible advocacy methods and strategies. We found it incredibly important and useful to work together to analyze the situation. When we achieved a common understanding of what it was that we wanted to do, we were able to plan strategically. Effective advocacy has no universal formula.

Based on experience, we have found that systematic planning made our advocacy is the most effective it could be. The art of advocacy is not taught through workshops alone. Advocacy issues need to be articulated in creative ways to inspire others and motivate action. While advocacy trainings impart tools, advocates must provide the spark. Creative, evidence-based advocacy works best. We have used theater and music as platforms to highlight human stories. Artistic performances can send a strong message to people by touching their hearts while strong evidence in the form of facts and figures informed by serious research can influence decision-makers.

Human Rights Education

Building Bridges After War

Kemal Pervanic
Bosnia and Hercegovina



I learned how I could complement and enhance their work rather than compete with them.

Aung Myo Min is a prominent human rights educator and activist who has spent many years advocating for LGBT rights and children's rights. He is the founder of the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma and the executive director of Equality Myanmar, which conducts human rights education programs to engender a culture of tolerance, peace, and dignity. Myo Min was a student protester in the 1988 uprising against Myanmar's military regime, and joined the Myanmar Students' Democratic Front. He spent 24 years in exile before returning to Myanmar in 2012. He attended the 1993 HRAP.

I was not born in a free society, but I never experienced any direct threats to my life. Growing up in the village of Kevljani in north western Bosnia in the former country of Yugoslavia, I never imagined that someday someone—let alone my neighbours and former schoolteachers—would try to kill me.

At age 24, I was stripped of my rights and detained in two concentration camps during the war in Bosnia. While held in the infamous camp called Omarska, I witnessed people disappearing day and night—as if they were fish, not humans. To bear witness to my fellow human beings killing one other for sport devastated my spirit and took away my understanding of humanity. I no longer trusted myself let alone anyone else.

I decided to do something about it because I could and because I cared.

Trust Yourself First

After my experience in the concentration camps, I understood that all human beings are capable of murder. I needed to recover from that trauma before I could think of starting a new journey. Without learning to trust myself again, I was unable to focus on reconciliation or peacebuilding with my former enemies. I had to fight against all kinds of nightmares for a long time before I got to the point of trusting my own thoughts again. Once I got to the point, I began to look around and saw that there were people I trusted—people I could approach to realize my work.

Know What Motivates You

During my first two post-war visits to Bosnia, I realized that the youth were the biggest victims of the recent war. Most of them were born after the war or were too young during the war to remember what happened. Their parents, teachers, and community and religious leaders were telling them untruths. With the wrong signposts, the future of our security was uncertain. I decided to do something about it because I could and because I cared. I wanted to help the young people to develop mutual understanding and respect for their own benefit and to safeguard us against future threats and acts of violence.

Recognize and Accept What Won't Work

Initially, I wanted the adults from my community to come together and share their stories—to rehumanize each other and eventually to reconcile. I came to understand that people were not ready to talk at

that time. While I was committed to making a difference, I did not want to impose my agenda on them. I started thinking out of the box.

Innovate—But with a Caveat!

Having realized that getting previously warring sides to talk was not possible, I started to think about pursuing social change without words. The arts could provide a safe neutral space where young people could create common experiences through practical action—and without political interference! The arts could also inspire the young people to unleash their imaginations and creativity through opportunities to write, act, sing, and dance. Through the arts, they could come to know and understand one another.

I took this new plan to two schools from previously warring communities. As luck would have it, the head teachers I approached understood that the arts as a path to mutual understanding and security.

In hindsight, my plan was too ambitious, I had wanted to start with the toughest cases. I was lucky in that these two head teachers understood that the long-term goal was reconciliation. I am not sure we could have continued our partnership with the schools had the first art camp failed. Realizing that I might have risked too much at the onset, I suggest it might be better to start with a modest pilot project to test the water first.

Luck, Faith, and Planning

This work is tough. Sometimes you can work for years and see no results. I worked with very little money for a long time and had to deliver projects on a shoe-string budget. Often times, I did not pay myself. I did not mind because I was not doing it for my own good. Operating in a highly volatile environment, I learned the importance of planning and preparing in advance. My reputation prior to the war counted for a lot—and I was careful to take care of it even as my responsibilities and dealings with many partners grew. I was a village boy with a solid reputation that grew as I brought highly educated people from England to Bosnia to work with me.

Looking Forward

The mistrust caused by the war continues to pervade all levels of life in Bosnia today. While some continue to accuse, others continue to defend what transpired. Very few people have been willing to meet somewhere in the middle, but I wonder if where they meet needs to change. Over one thousand children gathered under a big carnival tent as part of the annual week-long art camps we offered from 2009 to 2011. Since that time, more than 150 children and 20 teachers have attended our annual three to four-month theatre projects. The big red tent may not be the right venue for everyone, but the message that all are welcome to come and express themselves has been the right one for these children.

*Kemal Pervanic is the founder and executive director of Most Mira (Bridge of Peace) as well as an author and filmmaker. During the Bosnian War, he was held in two concentration camps, including the notorious Omarska. When the war ended, he moved to London. Ten years later, he returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina where he was alarmed to find misrepresentations of what had transpired in the country formally known as Yugoslavia. Determined to steer the youth of Bosnia-Herzegovina away from a future of division and hate, Kemal founded Most Mira to bring children of different ethnic backgrounds together through the arts. Kemal is currently working on his second documentary film. His first, *Pretty Village*, examines the effect of the Bosnian War on the residents of his village in north western Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kevljani. Kemal chronicled his wartime experience in *The Killing Days* (Blake Publishing Ltd., London, 1999). He attended the 2012 HRAP.*

Healing through the Arts in El Salvador

Carlos Santos
El Salvador



The arts have been a good tool for me as a survivor, for those who have experience torture, and for educating the public-at-large.

On my birthday, September 15th, most Latin American countries celebrate independence from Spain. As a child, many people told me that I was destined to be a patriot.

Just before my third birthday, El Salvador and Honduras briefly went to war. Though the Football War (La Guerra del fútbol) was brief, I have never forgotten my first sighting of the planes circling the sky. Nearly 50 years later, the images of those planes—now blurry and yellowed in my mind—return to me.

I discovered a passion for literature at a young age. I've been writing short stories and poems since elementary school. At the age of 11, I won my first contest in literature. I wrote about nature and love. As I grew older, my writing began to reflect what was

happening in El Salvador. Social movements began to protest the military dictatorship that had ruled El Salvador since the beginning of the century. Protesters flooded the streets, and the government responded with shrapnel. Every day I bore witness to hundreds of people dying in the streets. In 1980, the opposition called for an armed rebellion. The war began under the shadow of death. Hundreds of mutilated bodies were dumped in the streets, covering every corner of the country. With very few weapons, the guerrillas faced a powerful enemy who was supported by the USA.

At the age 16, I began to study theatre at the National Center of Arts, where liberalism was the norm. My studies and my peers helped me to gain new perspectives on what was happening around me.

The state-controlled radio and television called the rebels “traitors” and “our country’s bad children”—yet, I began to identify with them. Even though my birthday fell on the day of liberation, I no longer felt that my country considered me a patriot.

I began to write plays for a student theatre group. We presented the plays in schools, parks, and squares. One day we were captured by police, who identified themselves as members of the death squad. We spent one month in an underground cell. They accused us of being rebels and tortured us every day. I suffered all kinds of degradations. We were then sent to a prison that held a lot of political prisoners. We remained there for one year. During this time, I wrote plays and staged them inside the jail even as the police abused and threatened us on a daily basis.

When I left prison, I knew I had to leave El Salvador. It was well known that death squads hunted released political prisoners. I went to Mexico and studied at the university. I continued writing fiction, short stories, and plays. I won several literary prizes and contests. After four years in Mexico, I moved to Canada, where I lived for 20 years.

I returned to El Salvador in 2007 and began to work as a journalist. I realized that my experience was not unique—thousands

of Salvadorans had been adversely affected as I had been. I founded the Association for Survivors of Torture (Asociación Salvadoreña de Sobrevivientes de Tortura-ASST). Along with other artists who had survived torture, we decided to use the arts to educate the public about what had happened in our country and to help survivors of tortures and their families heal.

We have organized plays and art exhibitions all over the country. A few years ago, we toured the country with the exhibit “Nunca más en El Salvador,” which uses papier-mâché sculptures of people to show torture techniques used during the years of state violence.

The arts have been a good tool for me as a survivor, for those who have experienced torture, and for educating the public-at-large. I have written plays that are rooted in the stories of survivors. I have a lot of mixed emotions when I write. It is cathartic. The most emotional part for me has been the public’s reaction to my plays. One time, a mother thanked me. She said she had never wanted to know how her daughter had been treated in jail until she heard about my play. After seeing it, she finally understood what her daughter had endured, giving her understanding and finally closure.

Carlos Santos is the founder and president of the Salvadorian Association of Survivors of Torture, which provides psychological care to survivors of torture and their families and investigates human rights abuses. He is the creator of a webpage called the Yellow Book, which documents the names of victims of injustice and abuse by the state. Carlos has a degree in literature from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Through Scholars at Risk, he studied international law and human rights law at the University of York in 2013. He attended the 2016 HRAP.

Human Rights Education in Law Schools in Mexico

Carlos R. Asúnsolo Morales
Mexico

Even though Mexico has recently signed a number of human rights treaties and added a groundbreaking constitutional amendment in 2011 that recognizes the human rights protected in the international treaties signed by Mexico, the human rights situation in Mexico has never been more dire. In 2016, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights published a report documenting a wide range of abuses in Mexico, including: disappearances, extrajudicial executions, torture, and insecurity for women, children, migrants, human rights defenders, and journalists. The report concluded the situation in Mexico amounted to a “crisis of gross human rights violations.”

For those of us working at the Centro de Estudios sobre la Enseñanza y el Aprendizaje del Derecho (Research Center for the Teaching and Learning of the Law-CEEAD), the question is, how can we diminish the gap between this advanced regulation in human rights and the reality of millions of Mexicans? There is no easy answer to this question. We see it as a problem of effective implementation and application of the human rights constitutional reform. To break the cycle of impunity, a strong legal system that applies international standards on human rights is required.

The problem is that, as the United Nations



Council of Human Rights has pointed out, most lawyers, including those who work at the judicial branch, do not seem to routinely invoke international human rights law. This situation clearly reflects a form of cultural resistance which can be altered only through the provision of a sound legal education with an international human rights focus. The Special Rapporteur concludes that international human rights law should be an obligatory part of the curricula of all law schools.

At CEEAD, we see law schools as key partners in the task of reducing the gap between legal standards and reality. According to our data, more than 1,770 institutions of higher education offered law degrees during the 2016-17 academic year.

This means that Mexico has opened one new law school every week over the past 34 years!

Unfortunately for Mexico, the number of law schools does not correlate to the quality of education or legal practice.

Improving legal education hasn't been a priority for the Mexican government or universities. Legal education, including human rights, continues to be done in a traditional way—through lectures and the memorization of legal concepts. The curricula do not reflect the main changes to the Mexican legal system of the last 20 years, such as the human rights constitutional amendment and the incorporation of the international dimension. Only a small percentage of law schools have incorporated the contents of the constitutional reform.

Law schools are educating lawyers without the proper tools and knowledge to solve current problems societies are facing, especially when it comes to human rights issues.

To respond to this necessity, in 2015 CEEAD started the project Strengthening Human Rights Capacities in Mexican Law Schools with the main objective to contribute to the implementation of the human rights constitutional amendment in legal education.

CEEAD convened a working group of human rights experts from eight institutions of higher education (public and private); five public institutions, including the Supreme Court and state commissions of human rights; and three civil society organizations, including CEEAD, to develop a human rights education model for law schools to consider. In 2016, the group met a total of four times in Mexico City, as well as communicated electronically, to discuss ques-

tions such as: What is the best way to teach human rights in law schools? How many human rights courses should be in the curricula? What kind of extracurricular activities should universities organize? While the discussion was grounded in the Mexican context, we invited professors from Argentina and Spain for some sessions for the sake of comparison.

CEEAD's human rights team collected the outcomes of these meetings and developed a human rights education model for Mexican law schools to consider. The model includes a proposed curriculum of two human rights courses (with suggested syllabi), a teaching manual for law school professors, and a proposal for clinical education.

For me, the most important part of our work is teaching how to teach human rights. Using the teaching guide that we developed, we have been organizing workshops with law school professors to provide tools that can strengthen human rights education in the classroom. So far, we have trained more than 250 professors throughout the country.

CEEAD's model includes two human rights courses. Recommended for the first semester, *Contemporary Problems of Human Rights* aims to raise awareness among students about human rights issues. The second one, simply called *Human Rights*, covers the national and international dimensions of human rights.

For me, the most important part of our work is teaching how to teach human rights.

Finally, the model includes a practical education element based on the suggestion of the human rights clinic of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, which is a member of the working group on human rights education in legal education. While we do not suggest there is a single way to implement clinical education, the main objective remains engaging students in the practice of human rights.

The model is being implemented through workshops CEEAD organizes with members of the working group who still serve as advisors on the project and assist in other ways such as the workshops. The three objectives of the workshops are to raise awareness about the impact of the human rights constitutional amendment of 2011 on legal education, to provide teaching techniques on how to teach human rights and

Carlos R. Asúnsolo Morales is the human rights project leader at the Research Center for the Teaching and Learning of the Law. Carlos holds a master's in human rights from Universidad Carlos III de Madrid and a law degree and a master's in applied public management from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. He attended the 2017 HRAP.

implement clinical education, and to advise university officials on how to incorporate human rights content in their curricula.

Every law school is different, so we don't ask universities to fully incorporate as it is the educational model. We have to consider their specific circumstances and context in order to give an advice that can help them. Also, universities have to adapt the contents to their main interests.

By the end of December 2017, we organized a total of four workshops around the country, trained more than 200 law professors from a number of schools, and started the process of incorporating the model with five law schools.

Investing in the Youth, Investing in Our Future

Inna Hudaya
Indonesia



According to the United Nations website, "There are about 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24—the largest youth population ever." It is only natural that our young people will become leaders, actors for development and peacebuilding, and stewards of the earth. If we want them to realize their full potential, we need to invest in them and remove barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential. Youth face serious challenges including access to education, jobs, and healthcare. They are among the most vulnerable groups in terms of sexually transmitted diseases, mental health problems, unplanned pregnancies, early marriage, and maternal mortality.

The only way to predict the future is to create it. If we want a bright future, we must invest in young people, advocate for their rights, elevate their voices, and encourage their participation in all sectors of development. We at Samsara, the feminist organization I founded in Indonesia to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, recognize this and adhere to the following principles.

Meaningful Participation of Young People

Samsara relies on the participation of women and young people to ensure the success of its mission. Women and young people are involved in decision-making as well as designing, implementing, and monitoring programs. We have a youth quota for the organization and another for our board.

Diversity and Inclusivity

We ensure diversity among the youth at Samsara. We look at gender identity, sexual orientation, race, beliefs, and ethnicity. Through diversity, we challenge ourselves to be as effective and representative as possible. A variety of opinions and approaches enables us to connect with our beneficiaries.

Evidence-based Advocacy

Every person has a story, and every story is data. Listen to each story with your heart and use your knowledge to transform it into data. We at Samsara present data not only as

numbers but also as human stories. While data is powerful, it can sometimes be less meaningful when it comes as a number or a statistic, especially in countries where oral literature is far more familiar to the population. Data affects your way of thinking, but stories affect your emotions. At Samsara, we use a mix of both for more effective advocacy work. We transform the stories of women who use our services into data and stories. When we present our data at national and international conferences, we incorporate the human element too through case stories.

Linking, Learning, and Collaboration

If you want your advocacy efforts to have impact, you need to have allies and connect with intersectional issues. Thanks to technology, we are able to connect with people around the globe. Linking with and learning from other organizations at the national and international levels widens our perspective, improves our work, and enhances our advocacy. At Samsara, we have collaborated with similar organization in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Together, we initiated a Global Hotlines Meeting to share best practices, forge alliances, and develop a support network.

Raising and Highlighting the Voices of Young People

Put the faces and voices of young people on the frontlines of your work. Connect them

with the network, expose them to the media, and send them to meetings and conferences. As a feminist organization focusing on youth sexual and reproductive health and rights, we ensure that we have young women as media representatives.

Creative Communication Strategies

We adjust our language to the person or organization we are meeting with. For example, the language we use when meeting with government officials differs from the language we use with communities. While Samsara promotes women's bodily integrity and autonomy, we talk in terms of public health, economy, and women's participation in development when we meet the government. It's important to adjust the language of your message so that both parties can benefit.

Foster an Enabling Environment for Creativity and Growth

Samsara has created an enabling environment for creativity and growth. We provide opportunities for our staff to experiment with their ideas for the programs. We have a small budget for experimental programs. After two years of employment, we provide a three- to six-month break known as a floating period during which staff are allowed to take time off from work, move to another division, or work with another organization while their original position is guaranteed.

Self-care and Stress Management

Accept the fact that advocacy work is stressful and sometimes very frustrating. Our work is not only stressful due to the sensitive issues we are dealing with but also because most of us work more than eight hours per day for very little financial gain. Moreover, advocacy needs time to see progress—it's not short-term work. Sometimes our work can be undone due to the political situation.

We may have to start again from scratch due to a change in government. We have developed a self-care and burnout management program for our organization. Samsara believes that the well-being of the staff is crucial to the success of the organization. We created a Burnout Prevention Program which includes off-site recreational activities once a month, individual and group therapy sessions with a psychologist, and mandatory paid leave of five working days every three months. While every organization has different resources, it is important to create a safe space to talk and share your frustrations.

Inna Hudaya is the founder and director of Samsara, a feminist organization based in Indonesia that promotes body autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights. In 2007, she founded askinna.com, a website for women seeking abortion services in Indonesia. One year later, she set up Indonesia's first hotline for safe abortion information. With Samsara, she works directly with women at the grassroots level. Inna also established the SRHR (Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights) School in Yogyakarta and then expanded the program from Java to East Indonesia through the SRHR Satellite Program. In 2013, she received a fellowship from Ashoka. She attended the 2017 HRAP.

The only way to predict the future is to create it.

Promoting Youth Civic Participation in South Sudan

Benson Khemis Soro Lako
South Sudan

South Sudan has one of the world's youngest populations, with 74 percent of the total population below the age of 30. The country's young people face high rates of illiteracy, imprisonment, early marriage, drug abuse, and HIV incidence.

Community Empowerment for Rehabilitation and Development-South Sudan (CEFoRD-South Sudan) was founded in 2005 as a drama club immediately after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. We started the organization to inform young people about the need for their civic participation in South Sudan. CEFoRD places youth at the forefront, empowering them to become good citizens, building their capacities, and preparing them to take leadership roles in all sectors of the country.

We started with a small dream but scaled up rapidly. At the beginning, we relied on membership contributions for funding. International NGOs also supported us, thereby helping to sustain the organization. The positive reactions that our program received encouraged us in the face of persecution, arrest, and harassment.

We started in Yei County in Central Equatoria State. We eventually expanded to four counties. By 2014, we were working in five counties of Western Equatoria State. Our

work has received financial support from the Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa and the National Endowment for Democracy.

We have grown CEFoRD's programming through community forums, public lectures, radio debates, sports for peace initiatives, school debates, youth conferences, peace dialogues, and interfaith meetings. Our expansion has been driven by youth demand across South Sudan's states. We have expanded into new states, leveraging youth networks from our existing programming. We strive to create a space for youth to develop their skills so that they can eventually participate in governance processes and in other aspects of life in South Sudan.

We measure our impact by focusing on the number of young people participating in our programming. Since our establishment, we have reached as many as 25,000 young people. We collect testimonies and document positive activities that our youth are engaged in. For example, we keep track of our young people who have gone on to establish their own businesses or to pursue higher education. Some of them now hold high positions in the government while others are active in conflict mitigation.

In West Equatoria State, a youth participant in our programming is currently the youth leader of a newly created state. Another serves as director general in the Ministry of Youth Culture and Sports. Three participants now work as division administrators across three counties. They are ambassadors of our organization.

After the massive displacement that occurred in 2016, our work in Central Equatoria State is limited to Yei County. Many of the youth that we worked with in the past are now based in refugee camps in Uganda. These youth have established organizations and are building awareness throughout the camps on peaceful co-existence through participatory drama and music.

CEFoRD places youth at the forefront, empowering them to become good citizens, building their capacities, and preparing them to take leadership roles in all sectors of the country.



Benson Khemis Soro Lako is a co-founder of Community Empowerment for Rehabilitation and Development-South Sudan (CEFoRD-South Sudan), which has the mission to create a well-empowered, united, and peaceful society with youth as the primary target. He attended the 2015 HRAP.

Young People as Catalysts for Change in the Niger Delta

Colins Edozie Imoh
Nigeria

Background

While the Niger Delta region is an economic engine, it still has high levels of poverty, violence, and unrest. The Niger Delta's historic conflict stems from long-standing human and environmental rights abuses that impede the region's social and economic development. While an uneasy peace has prevailed since the 2009 amnesty declaration, militancy is on the rise and there is little change in the life of the common person.

Amidst an ever-increasing cycle of violence, there is a growing disillusionment with democracy, especially among the Niger Delta's youth. In response, the Centre for Human Development and Social Transformation

(CHDST) organizes human capital development workshops on conflict prevention, good governance, and peacebuilding. The workshops aim to develop strategies for preventing and managing conflict while promoting democratic practices.

Protect Our Future Project

CHDST's "Catch Them Young" philosophy seeks to teach the youth techniques for peaceful co-existence and dialogue. We address government programming gaps and facilitate the empowerment of young people as agents of change. The Centre organizes workshops on conflict resolution, peace education, democracy, governance, and human rights.

Interventions: Roundtables with Parliamentarians

In line with empowering young persons with knowledge and skills on democracy and good governance, CHDST organizes Roundtables with Parliamentarians. This initiative brings together young people between the ages of 11 and 19 with representatives from the House of Assembly. These young students, who will become future leaders, develop an understanding of and respect for the rule of law and civic responsibility. Young people emerge from the project as educated citizens engaging with diverse and competing perspectives—all in harmony with building strong democratic institutions.

Interventions: Youth Peace Camp

According to the UN Human Development Index, young people under the age of 15 constitute about 46 percent of Nigeria's total population. Research conducted by CHDST indicates that students in the Niger Delta are prone to violent behavior. The "Protect Our Future" project is based on the premise that if students know their right, they can be a powerful voice for promoting and sustaining democratic values and a culture of peace.

The project begins by examining internal school practices and creating forums to discuss student rights and responsibilities. CHDST also provides training on skills required for a functioning democracy (such as statue drawing, elections, and monitoring). Through such trainings, facilitators educate students about their role in electing their own representatives and leaders. Trained students form a network of peace clubs across schools to share ideas and involve more students. CHDST organizes a peace

CHDST's "Catch Them Young" philosophy seeks to teach the youth techniques for peaceful co-existence and dialogue.

camp during summer recess.

CHDST's peace camp brings together selected students from across Niger Delta states in a friendly atmosphere. Sessions consider four values of education: learn to know, learn to do, learn to be, and learn to live peacefully. CHDST uses a participatory approach, and the trained facilitators assist in interactive activities, workshops, and role-plays.

The project aims to teach young people the tenets of good governance, the rule of law, and peaceful living. It envisages using the peace camp/club experience as a vanguard to turn schools into democratic communities.

Testimonials from the Camp for Peace

I would like to conclude with testimonials from students who participated in CHDST's projects. Adolphus Amonoibuomi: "I see that the peace camp is not just for learning how to build peace but how to be a positive youth." Kaesor Barista: "I learned a whole lot and am using this opportunity to thank the sponsors of peace camp for giving me this privilege of being taught how a young person like me can help in peace resolution in the society." Udealor Chioma: "I thank the facilitators, the teachers, and sponsors for making it possible for us to be happy, stay healthy, and develop self-confidence to be able to defend ourselves in public."



Obubo Faith: “Peace camp has given me new ideas; it was so educational. I have learned how the youth can imbibe the culture of

peace. The camp was also competitive because of the debate. This brought new and useful ideas”.

Colins Edozie Imoh has worked in various youth-based organizations and was involved in the setting up of the Africa Network of Young Peace Builders, a continental initiative that joins the efforts of young people in more than 40 African countries for the purpose of building peace and actively collaborating in the search for the non-violent resolution of conflicts. He was awarded the Winston Fellowship in 2003 to attend the Summer Peace Building Institute of the Eastern Mennonite University in the USA. He holds a master’s in conflict transformation from EMU and an MPhil in environmental management from the University of Cape Town. In 2019, he completed a doctorate in peace education with a minor in research and measurement from the University of Toledo in the USA. His long-term goal is to establish a center in the Niger Delta, which will be involved in training, research, and advocacy in the areas of environmental and conflict management. He was a member of the 2011 HRAP.

Telling Your Story

The Power of Symbols

Bakary Tandia
Mauritania/USA



Introduction

The strength of human rights advocates lies in their moral integrity and in the strategies, techniques, and tools that they employ. Symbols are an important aspect of human rights advocacy. If used strategically and respectfully, they have the potential to unify and galvanize.

I am a proud co-founder of The Abolition Institute, an organization committed to combating slavery and human trafficking. We have relied on symbols to raise awareness about slavery and human trafficking. We leverage the symbolism of our annual award to help us to do our work with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Honor Role Models

The Aichana Abeid Boilil Award is named after the first woman rescued from slavery by our partner organization in Mauritania, SOS Esclaves. By naming the award after Aichana (pictured above), The Abolition Institute has turned her into a historical figure and a role model who has become an inspiration to many in bondage as she has become a hero in the struggle against slavery.

Symbols are an important aspect of human rights advocacy.

Recognize Activists and the Movement

We hold our annual awards ceremony on President Abraham Lincoln's birthday, February 12th, to recognize those who are carrying on his legacy by fighting modern slavery. Since our inaugural awards ceremony in 2014, we have recognized individuals for their work as modern-day abolitionists. Past awardees include former Illinois Lieutenant Governor Sheila Simon, who has worked diligently to clear the names of Illinois abolitionists convicted of the 'crime' of helping slaves to freedom; Carolyn Santos, a high school student who raised significant money and awareness for anti-slavery programs from her school, church, and community; and Majid Mustafa, a Muslim community leader in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood who put his own safety at risk to help law enforcement agencies bring to justice members of a powerful international human trafficking ring that was operating in 22 states in the USA.

Conduct Public Awareness Campaigns

Our annual awards ceremony doubles as a public awareness campaign around the issue of slavery. In conjunction with the ceremony, we organize speaking events with the awardees in academic, religious, and community

settings as well as conduct advocacy visits to legislators.

Expand Partnerships

We seize on the ceremony to create a networking space to build new partnerships, which are vital to the survival of any advocacy organization. The 2017 ceremony was held at the law firm of Latham & Watkins, which has worked with organizations worldwide to combat slavery and human trafficking for more than 25 years. The 2018 ceremony was held at the DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago, which is the only major independent institution in Chicago established to preserve and interpret the historical experiences and achievements of African Americans.

Organize Fundraising

The awards ceremony allows The Abolition Institute to raise funds to support its programs. Though the primary goal of fundraising seems to be the collection of funds, it is important to underscore that fundraising for the purpose of human rights is more than that: It is a great opportunity to educate the audience about the issue that led to the event.

Originally from Mauritania, Bakary Tandia is a human rights activist in the movement against slavery and racial discrimination. Tandia works as both case manager and policy advocate at African Services Committee in NYC. As a case manager, he assists clients newly diagnosed with HIV in accessing health care, housing, and supportive services that enable them to regain their health and build productive lives. As policy advocate, Tandia works to raise awareness of public health and human rights issues in the African community and to empower newcomers to understand and protect their rights as immigrants. He has extensive experience in community organizing, coalition work, and building strategic partnerships across diverse communities. He attended the 2010 HRAP.

Self Narratives and Documentation in Human Rights Discourse in Africa

Samuel Matsikure
Zimbabwe



Background

The LGBTIQ movement in Africa began three decades ago. After small pockets of activists emerged in South Africa, the movement spread throughout the continent. Despite draconian laws existing in many African countries, the LGBTIQ movement has gained traction and visibility in the past decade.

This has not been an easy road. Some young states have yet to embrace human rights. LGBTIQ persons remain marginalized from human rights discourse. Laws inherited from colonial legacies, such as 'sodomy laws,' remain in place. For some governments, these old laws protect Africanism from Western influence. Governments across Africa have also amended laws to curtail LGBTIQ rights, criminalizing advocates.

Narratives of same sex practices and diverse gender identities are evident in the African historical record, yet African governments continue to publicly deny these narratives. Today, most Africans can find LGBTIQ narratives in regional or international independent media, yet local publications often avoid these stories. Few local African writers have taken on same sex relationships, fearing a lack of market, censorship, or a lack of support from publishers. When these writers take on LGBTIQ subjects, they are negatively portrayed or stereotyped.

If only foreign writers express local narratives, local practices may be misinterpreted. Local people must write their own stories through their own understanding of the contexts, languages, and social nuances that shape their communities. LGBTIQ people must control their own narratives to shift the current perceptions that hinder the advancement of sexual minorities.

The Power of Ownership

LGBTIQ people and activists in Africa must write their own narratives, bringing to the fore their own understanding of sexuality, gender, and same sex practices. They need to own their narratives in social media, print,

television, and oral knowledge and information sharing. People who can identify with these localized narratives, language, images, and signs may change their perceptions of LGBTIQ persons and appreciate the universality of human rights that are inclusive in modern Africa.

The current discourse in Africa on human rights is divisive. People tend to align with a traditional ethos and religious practices that are acceptable to the majority at the expense of minorities. Ownership and control of these narratives and struggles can change the levels of acceptance, tolerance, and inclusion in Africa.

In Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, local perceptions changed once LGBTIQ people gained visibility in the media, even within public health discourse surrounding HIV. With more visibility for LGBTIQ people, these countries produced national HIV strategic plans that recognized these groups as vulnerable and acknowledged the importance of providing health care. Key populations health programs targeting men who have sex with men have been established. The recognition and inclusion of LGBTIQ people in South Africa's constitution brought a beacon of hope to neighboring states.

Telling Personal Stories through New Media

New media formats have transformed human rights reporting, documentation and self-expression in the past decade. LGBTIQ activists can record and share local experiences on sexuality, gender, coming out, dealing with families, human rights

violations and access to justice. This allows hidden stories of struggle, acceptance, and change to be heard.

GALA is an organization established in 1997 in South Africa. GALA aims to document the stories of LGBTIQ persons. Another organization documenting these stories is called None on Record in Uganda. These stories are not easily accessed in the public domain or bookstores across Africa.

Documentation and Evidence-Based Reporting

Human rights documentation has become a priority for LGBTIQ organizations in Africa. Human rights defenders can use both evidence-based documentation and expressive self-narrative to advance their work.

GALZ, an LGBTIQ association in Zimbabwe, has used both approaches in its advocacy work. GALZ has strengthened its evidence-building and reporting capacity in documenting human rights violations. GALZ will submit all future reports to Zimbabwe's Human Rights Commission, in an effort to spur action on cases and to improve the rights of minorities. The participation of GALZ at the UN has elevated its standing back home.

The violations reports produced by GALZ between 2011 to 2018 have enhanced its advocacy for social inclusion and to affect policy and law reform. GALZ has managed to harness the resiliency of community members to tell their lived realities through the spoken word during sensitization sessions with policymakers, health workers, religious and cultural leaders in Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

The role of the narrative in creating social change cannot be underestimated. In Zimbabwe, LGBTIQ persons living with HIV took to pen and paper as they expressed their struggles through a book entitled "Beyond the Differences: Men who have Sex with Men and Women who have Sex with Women Experiences with HIV and AIDS." Young

people contributed to a booklet entitled "Out in Zimbabwe: Narratives of LGBTIQ Youths in Zimbabwe." The youth booklet was launched at a gallery in Harare amongst civic groups and the public. A positive response greeted the initiative. More initiatives such as this one are needed if we are to change perceptions within communities and throughout societies.

LGBTIQ people and activists in Africa must write their own narratives, bringing to the fore their own understanding of sexuality, gender, and same sex practices.

Samuel Matsikure is the program manager at Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe. He has dedicated the past 16 years to working within LGBTIQ communities in a turbulent environment. He is a past chairman of African Men for Sexual Health and Rights, a regional coalition of 19 organizations working on health and HIV for men who have sex with men (MSM). He also served on the Global Forum on MSM and HIV now called M-PACT Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights. He earned a bachelor's of science with honors in sociology and gender development studies from Women's University in Africa. He holds diplomas in higher education from the University of Zimbabwe and in systemic family therapy from the Zimbabwe Institute of Systemic Therapy. He attended the 2016 HRAP.

Film: The Right Vehicle for My Advocacy Work

Musola Cathrine Kaseketi
Zambia



My Story

Film has the power to build or to destroy. As a director, I have witnessed lives change for the better and hope brought to the helpless.

As a little girl, I enjoyed acting and singing. I wrote and directed projects from primary school through college. Little did I know, I was being ushered into using art as a tool for human rights advocacy. While still a baby, I was disabled. As a child, I had no idea I had a disability. My family and friends saw me, not the disability. I only begin to see the disability in me after going to boarding school. The school authority treated girls with disabilities differently. They were lodged in the sick bay. Luckily, my mother advocated for me to be accommodated in the dormitories with the so-called “normal” girls.

When I was given an opportunity to recite a political poem I had written, “Namibia Shall Soon Be Free” to the first president of Zambia, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda. When I saw him shed tears, I realized that art can evoke emotions. I have been involved with film since 1999. Through this journey I have seen debates being provoked, lives change, confidence and hope gained. How?

Public Engagement

When people from the community watch our movies, we create a public space where viewers—including villagers and traditional leaders—meet as equals on common ground and discuss issues. In some communities where residents have entertainment through alcohol and fights, the screenings create community cohesion and a safe positive environment. People forget their differences while watching the movie, thereby creating a peaceful environment. Those who are lonely feel a sense of belonging to a family. In urban areas, viewers from all walks of life come together for the movies.

A community screening of the short films “Tuso-Help” and “Long Wait for Justice” were held in Muwishi village, located 19 km from Kabwe Central Province of Zambia. These films focus on mental illness due to gender-based violence and delayed court-cases in response to gender-based violence.

Nearly 500 villagers gathered at an old woman’s homestead to watch the film and engage in discussion. It was amazing to witness villagers themselves point out negative traditional aspects that need to be revisited because they promote GBV, abuse, early child marriages, and discrimination.

Representing Local Voices with Quality Film

Audiences respond positively to African stories told through good quality films made in Africa. They are proud to see that people they know are responsible for the films. Above all, viewers believe in the issues and energetically discuss how the films relate to their daily lives.

Public Awareness

Films have increased public awareness by telling stories that may have otherwise been unknown or not often thought about. Film provokes debate on issues that are difficult to discuss, especially in villages where it is unusual to discuss certain topics with all age groups around. Even old people talk about issues that are not often considered in public. The same old people, who say it is a taboo, open up and speak in public.

We raise awareness on disability, sex, and relationships. In most villages, you do not talk about sex in public. Women and girls with disabilities are not expected to love or to be loved. It is even worse to fall pregnant because in most communities they are less women. The discussion was based in the fact that they are human beings too and have feelings. It was a heated debate.

As a result of this discussion, we have been receiving reports, especially of sexual abuse, among girls and women with intellectual and mental health disabilities. We pursued one case, in which a 45-year-old HIV-positive man raped and impregnated a 13-year old girl with an intellectual disability. He was sentenced to prison for 18 years.

Film’s ability to raise awareness around a particular issue is critical in breaking the barrier for both individual change and broader social change. An 89-year-old woman from Isoka, about 1000 km from Lusaka, reflected on the impact:

“Our husbands in the name of respect for tradition have abused us long enough. I would not like my children and grand-children to go through the same. We do all the house chores, collect firewood, work in the fields and many more and maybe he is just chatting and drinking with friends. When comes home he beats you forgetting to serve salt alongside his nshima (similar to porridge), My community and I will fight and talk about negative abuse traditional beliefs.”

Social and Attitude Change

Social and attitude change is the ultimate goal of most of our issue-based films. Some of our audiences have changed their way of living or left the streets after watching our films. Some have become bearers of the message, spreading the information received. During the premiere of “Suwi,” a film with a sub-theme on disability, we brought persons with disabilities, including street beggars, to the theatre. Two weeks after the screening, a group of more than 30 women came to the office and announced that they wanted

to leave the street and required assistance to start new lives. Some of these women left the streets. They are women who now educate, defend, and promote disability rights.

Legislative Change

Audiences sometimes pressure legislators to change or to create policy after viewing issue-based films. Viewers have gathered themselves with courage and confidence to approach authorities. Two films, “Tuso” and “Long Wait for Justice,” have played a role in advocacy for changing legislation.

“Long Wait for Justice” focuses on issues of gender-based violence (GBV) faced by women with disabilities. The film helps to illustrate that the Anti Gender-Based Violence Act, 2011 does not address women and

girls with disabilities. This prompted the former Minister of Gender and Child Development, the Honorable Professor Nkandu Luo, to revisit the act.

The theme of “Tuso” is how GBV can lead to depression and other mental health issues. The Mental Disorders Act of 1951, a discriminatory piece of legislation, remains in place in Zambia. “Tuso” is shown at workshops, conferences, and high-level meetings of decision makers to continuously lobby for government to repeal the act.

When people relate to the movies that they watch, they take action, resulting in sustainable impact. Memories of what they see remain. For this reason, film remains the most powerful tool for my human rights advocacy.

Film provokes debate on issues that are difficult to discuss, especially in villages where it is unusual to discuss certain topics with all age groups around.

Musola Cathrine Kaseketi is Zambia’s first professional film director. Her first film, Suwi (“Faith”), which she wrote, directed, and produced, was released in 2009 and screened all over Africa, as well as in several European countries. Shortly after the release of Suwi, Kaseketi set up Women and Girls with Disability Rights of Zambia, a project to empower and improve the lives of women and girls with disabilities. Many of her films and documentaries address social issues affecting women and girls with disabilities. She is also the founder of Vilole (“View”) Images Productions, a nonprofit foundation that educates young Zambian filmmakers, started Zambia’s first international film festival, Shungu Namutitima (“Smoke That Thunders”), and is an advisor to the Zambia National Association for Disabled Women. The cause is personal for Musola—when she was 18 months old, a medical mistake damaged her left leg, leaving her unable to walk without difficulty for the rest of her life. Enduring mistreatment by her stepmother in her early life and by her community overall, Musola developed an incredible determination to succeed in spite of hardship. Musola attended the 2013 HRAP.

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