

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

2015

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES PROGRAM



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1 INTRODUCTION

You have taken my mind far.

2015 Advocate Benson Khemis Soro Lako, South Sudan

Hearing those words from Benson during the networking trip to Washington, D.C., in October 2015 underscored the impact the Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) has been having on participants since it was founded at the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University in 1989.

The 2015 cohort—which represented the 27th class of HRAP—hailed from Albania, Australia, Belarus, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Kenya, Myanmar, South Sudan and Turkey. (Out of concern for their safety, two participants asked not to have their names or countries published in this report.)

While in HRAP, the Advocates attended graduate-level courses, strengthened their skill set through workshops led by staff from organizations including Human Rights Watch and WITNESS, consulted with their faculty mentors, and networked with the human rights, academic and donor communities, primarily in NYC and Washington, D.C. They shared and deepened their expertise on a number of issues including LGBT rights, the security and rights of children in armed conflict, refugee rights, trauma, transitional justice, and indigenous peoples' rights.

Together, the 2015 HRAP cohort of 13 advocates examined their advocacy efforts, developed new projects, identified new partners, wrote grant proposals, and prepared plans to transfer what they had learned through HRAP to their colleagues, organizations and movements back home. They are now members of the HRAP alumni body, which has 299 advocates in 84 countries.



Advocates consistently point to the peer-to-peer learning that takes place within the group as one of the highlights of HRAP.

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THE ADVOCATES IN THEIR OWN WORDS

We asked the Advocates to answer the question, Why are you a human rights advocate? Following each Advocate's reply are details on the Advocate's experience in the 2015 HRAP.

HAKAN ATAMAN

Project Coordinator

Médecins Sans Frontières/Helsinki Citizens' Assembly

TURKEY

In 1977, an ultra-nationalist paramilitary group organized a bomb attack in front of the Pharmacy Faculty of Istanbul University. In this attack, seven students were mur-

dered and more than 40 students were seriously injured. Eleven years later, Saddam Hussein committed crimes against humanity on March 16, 1988, in Helebce, northern Iraq. On that day, his warplanes bombed Helebce with chemical weapons. At least 5,000 civilians—the majority

of whom were children, women, and older people—were slaughtered and an additional 7,000 people were injured. And so my story began two years after the Helebce Massacre.

filiated with the Izmir War Resisters Association and supported the conscientious objectors living in Turkey. I participated in an Amnesty International Turkey initiative in 1996. As a volunteer, I was selected as the campaign coordinator of Amnesty International Turkey during its 2000-2002 campaign against torture, formally known as "Take a Step to Stamp out Torture." As a teacher, I worked to raise awareness about human rights. Since 2012, I have been working for Syrian refugees through the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly in Istanbul. Additionally, I am a project coordinator of The Psychological Support and Primary Health Care services for Syrian Refugees living in Kilis, Turkey, which is technically and financially supported by Médecins Sans Frontières. The prevention of conflict, discrimination, and violence including torture and ill-treatment, are main issues for me.

Hakan Ataman was the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Memorial Fund Advocate in the 2015 HRAP.

If anyone asks me why I work for human rights, my answer is that I listen only to the voice of my conscience.

dered and more than 40 students were seriously injured. Eleven years later, Saddam Hussein committed crimes against humanity on March 16, 1988, in Helebce, northern Iraq. On that day, his warplanes bombed Helebce with chemical weapons. At least 5,000 civilians—the majority

When I was a university student in Ege University based in Izmir, my friends and I organized a series of peaceful protests around Turkey on March 16, 1990. After that, I faced some difficulties in Turkey, but I continued to work for human rights in Turkey and elsewhere. I was af-

FACULTY MENTOR

Jack M. Saul

Visiting Professor of Professional Practice, Department of Psychology, The New School

CLASSES

International Human Rights Movement

International Perspectives on Peacebuilding and Human Rights

Nationalism and Contemporary World Politics

NETWORKING

New York City

Amnesty International USA

Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation

Bellevue/NYU Survivors of Torture

Doctors Without Borders

International Center for Transitional Justice

International Refugee Rights Initiative

Journal of Human Rights Practice, Oxford University Press

New York Peace Institute

StoryCorps

The Sperry Fund

Voices of September 11th

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict

Washington, D.C.

Center for Victims of Torture

Open Society Foundations

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"The Syrian Crisis and Refugees in Turkey," sponsored by the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

"The Syrian Crisis and Refugees in Turkey," sponsored by The New School



HRAP Panel Presentation in the Introduction to Human Rights course with Andrew Nathan, ISHR, Columbia University

Roundtable with Columbia University's Human Rights Advocates, sponsored by International House, New York

SANDRA CREAMER

Legal Officer

Queensland Indigenous Lawyers Association

AUSTRALIA

I am a Wannyi/Kalkadoon Indigenous woman from Australia. I am involved in human rights because as an Indigenous woman, I have witnessed the struggles that Indigenous peoples are experiencing in the world. There are over 370 million Indigenous peoples in the world, yet we are amongst the poorest people and we are the invisible people.

I have always worked with Indigenous peoples, in schools and in welfare organisations. I am now an

believe that it is important to translate the language of law so that Indigenous peoples can understand it for their benefit.

In advocating for Indigenous women, it is important that they are always included in consultation and negotiations. When women are included, it is then a collective voice from a community group. Indigenous women also need respect for their views and opinions—for Indigenous women and children have

Indigenous peoples are struggling to live in a world that is suppressing our culture. We will continue to lose our language, land, culture, and identity because this suppression promotes one way of living in the world. Society cannot have one way of living; we need many different languages, cultures, and identities.

If we do not receive support because no one is hearing our voices, as discrimination and the doors of opportunity continue to close, where will we be in the future? We will be one world, one language—and the traditional knowledge of how to maintain the earth will be lost. Cultural identity is of profound importance for the diversity of the world and to maintain the earth. Indigenous peoples will not just be the invisible people—we will become a memory. This is why I am a human rights advocate.

There are over 370 million Indigenous peoples in the world, yet we are amongst the poorest people and we are the invisible people.

academic and legal officer and have worked in the legal arena for more than 15 years. I started as the Indigenous Community Liaison Officer with Legal Aid Queensland working with Indigenous women and children who were victims of crime. I also conducted legal information workshops and assisted in cases of racial discrimination and family law. It was during this time that I went to University to get my law degree and to educate Indigenous peoples on their rights, so that they can learn how to challenge laws and policies affecting their communities. I also

the right to live in a safe environment and be free from any forms of violence.

One of the biggest issues that Indigenous peoples face is forced assimilation in regards to their land. Indigenous peoples are being forced off their lands by mining companies, land acquisitions by governments, internal county conflicts, and climate change to name a few. Indigenous peoples need their land because it is how their values and identities are embedded—for the land is their heritage.

FACULTY MENTOR

Elsa Stamatopoulou

Director, Indigenous Peoples' Rights Program, ISHR, Columbia University

Adjunct Professor, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, and the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University

CLASSES

Indigenous Peoples' Rights: From Local Identities to the Global Indigenous Movement
Issues in Rural Development

NETWORKING

New York City

Amnesty International USA

International Center for
Transitional Justice

International Funders for
Indigenous Peoples

Journal of Human Rights Practice,
Oxford University Press

New York Peace Institute

NGO Committee on the UN
International Decade of the
World's Indigenous Peoples

StoryCorps

The Aurora Project

The Sperry Fund

Tribal Link Foundation

UN Permanent Forum on
Indigenous Issues, Secretariat

UN-REDD Programme,
Engagement of Indigenous
Peoples and Civil Society

UN Women, Entity for
Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of Women

Washington, D.C.

Indian Law Resource Center

International Center for
Research on Women

National Endowment for Democracy

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

United States Institute of Peace

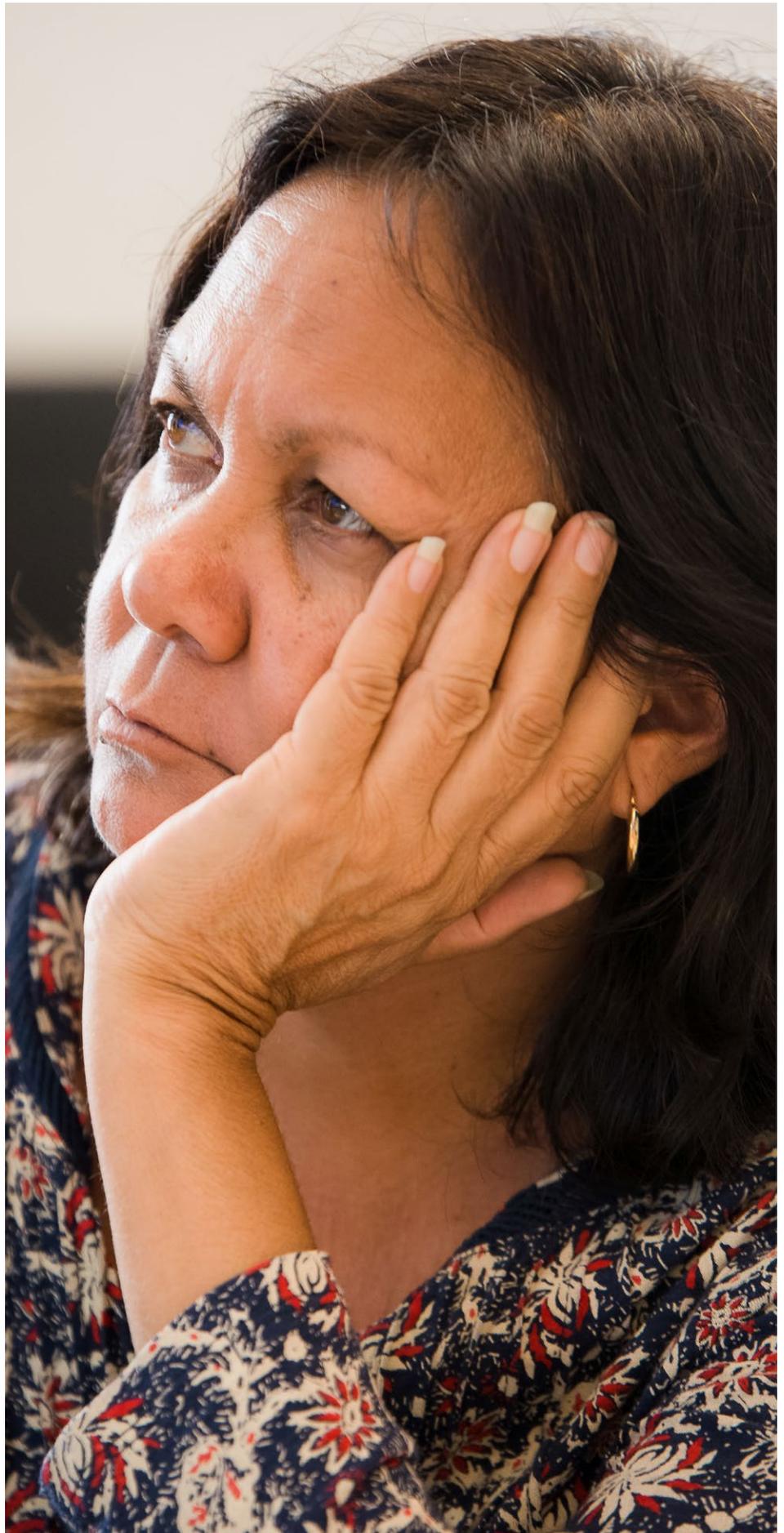
Vital Voices Global Partnership

World Bank Inspection Panel

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"The Stolen Generation: A
Screening of Rabbit-Proof
Fence and Discussion on the
Treatment of Aboriginal Peoples
during the White Policy Era of
Australia," hosted by ISHR and
the Human Rights Graduate
Group, Columbia University

Roundtable with Columbia
University's Human Rights
Advocates, sponsored by
International House, New York



LOUISA ESSENDI

Program Officer, Capacity Building

Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya (GALCK)

KENYA

By age fifteen, I had faced the first 'consequence' of being a lesbian with threats of disownment from my community. At this point in my life—just like thousands of young LGBTI persons coming to terms with their sexuality in a homophobic society—I didn't understand why people who I'd grown up with could threaten me with hate and disownment for being who I am. Not until I was a young adult in my first years at university did I start to understand what human rights were and that I am entitled to them. This was due to the lack of civic education on human rights in the primary and secondary school curriculum in Kenya.

Like thousands of other LGBTI persons in Kenya, I was discriminated against on numerous occasions because of my sexual orientation. These events brought me to a space where I felt that I had to do something, I had to learn how to counter the hate that sexual minorities face in Kenya. I realised that I had a strong passion to speak on behalf of those who were suffering in silence, and that by using human rights as my language of choice was the best tool I could use.

While participating in voluntary initiatives at LGBTI grassroots organisations, I came to hear about the suffering of many sexual minorities and the need for unafraid people to stand up and amplify the voices of those suffering silently

in fear. In my early days of hearing about the human rights violations in the LGBTI community, I channeled my disbelief into outrage toward the perpetrators. Why did society impel thousands of families to abandon their own children? How could those who are meant to protect all Kenyans be the perpetrators and supporters of such hate? How many human rights violations have occurred so far? These common reactions are completely justified; however, simply demanding the answers to these questions alone will neither protect the human dignity of LGBTI persons nor future victims of human rights violations. Members of society and governance at all levels must agree to a need for change, and support its enactment. This is the core principle of human rights dialogue.

All these occurrences brought me to ask myself, How can I be most useful to my society? My belief was, and still is, that human rights advocates are responsible for communicating with all members of their societies, especially the marginalized. I have since fully committed myself to educating LGBTI persons about human rights and to amplifying their voices in spaces where change can be made with regard to law, social attitudes, and traditional values. Furthermore, I am committed to using human rights to influence equality and to end the discrimination and violence currently facing LGBTI people in Kenya.

"To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity."
—Nelson Mandela

FACULTY MENTOR

Theodorus Sandfort

Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences (in Psychiatry), Division of Gender Health and Sexuality, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University
Research Scientist, HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioral Studies, New York State Psychiatric Institute

CLASSES

Gender Justice
Narrative, Health and Social Justice

NETWORKING

New York City

American Jewish World Service
Amnesty International USA
Arcus Foundation
Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
Human Rights Watch, LGBT Rights
International Center for Transitional Justice
Journal of Human Rights Practice, Oxford University Press
LGBT Community Center
New York City Anti-Violence Project
New York Peace Institute
Organisation of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS
SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders)

*Like thousands
of other LGBTI
persons in Kenya, I
was discriminated
against on numerous
occasions because of
my sexual orientation.*

StoryCorps

The Sperry Fund

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Center for Health and Gender Equity

International Center for

Research on Women

National Endowment for Democracy

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

United States Institute of Peace

Vital Voices Global Partnership

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"Creating Change from Within:

A Discussion with Human
Rights Advocates from Kenya,
the DRC, and South Sudan,"
sponsored by ISHR and the
Institute for African Studies,
Columbia University

"Human Rights in Africa,"

sponsored by Naomi Moland
and Garnett Russell, Teachers
College, Columbia University

HRAP panel presentation in the
Introduction to Human Rights
course with Andrew Nathan,
ISHR, Columbia University

Roundtable with Columbia
University's Human Rights
Advocates, sponsored by
International House, New York



ELINA K. HORO

Coordinator

Adivasi Women's Network

INDIA

I learned in my childhood that rights are never given. As the second of four children, I learned about survival of the fittest. I have applied this lesson to all aspects of my life.

I experienced discrimination in the family, at the community level, in religious institutions, and at the work place because of my gender, ethnicity, and class. Instead of accepting discrimination, I have always found alternatives.

From the time I became aware of these discriminatory ideologies and attitudes, I started raising my voice strategically. The first step was to seek a strong network with other

from within. It's with passion that I seek to empower Adivasi women because the outcome also gives me a sense of empowerment.

When I first got information about HRAP, I thought this was exactly what I needed. For me, joining HRAP was like turning the impossible into a reality because each part of the program has had a deep impact. The best element of HRAP is that it connects us with other advocates and gives opportunities to impart the knowledge and experience of diverse human rights advocacy efforts. When I return home, I'll pass on the knowledge and information both practically and theoretically.

Instead of accepting discrimination, I have always found alternatives.

women who have had similar experiences or concerns. By taking a preventive approach through various activities such as awareness raising, capacity building, and skills development, I have started to address the issues of gender-based violence faced by the Adivasi (Indigenous) women, focusing more on their strategic needs to strengthen them

FACULTY MENTOR

Elsa Stamatopoulou

Director, Indigenous Peoples' Rights Program, ISHR, Columbia University

Adjunct Professor, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, and Department of Anthropology, Columbia University

CLASSES

Indigenous Peoples' Rights: From Local Identities to the Global Indigenous Movement
Issues in Rural Development
Gender Justice

NETWORKING

New York City

Amnesty International USA
International Center for Transitional Justice
International Funders for Indigenous Peoples
Journal of Human Rights Practice, Oxford University Press
New York Peace Institute
NGO Committee on the UN International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples
StoryCorps
The Sperry Fund
Tribal Link Foundation
UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Secretariat
UN-REDD Programme, Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Civil Society
UN Women, Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Washington, D.C.

Indian Law Resource Center
International Center for Research on Women
National Endowment for Democracy
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
United States Institute of Peace
Vital Voices Global Partnership
World Bank Inspection Panel



SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"The Self Governing System of Adivasis in India" presentation in the Indigenous Peoples' Rights course with Elsa Stamatopoulou, Center for Ethnicity and Race, Columbia University

"The Situation of Adivasi Women in Central India" presentation in the Rural Development course with Pratima Kale, SIPA, Columbia University
Panelist, "Moral Courage: How to Live and Lead in a Diverse

World," with Irshad Manji, International House, New York
HRAP panel presentation in the Introduction to Human Rights course with Andrew Nathan, ISHR, Columbia University

ELVIS HOXHAJ

Project Manager/Art Project Coordinator

Alliance Against LGBT Discrimination (Aleanca)

ALBANIA

Sometime during the years of my adolescence, when trying to understand aspects of my life that Albanian society had forgotten to include in its school curricula, I was also trying to find people who were exploring the same issues.

When I met a group of young people who called themselves "The Alliance Against LGBT Discrimination," I instantly felt that it was only natural for me to work with them since they had the same questions and they were doing something to answer them.

Now six years have passed and we have done a lot, but for some reason I cannot find a way or a strategy to summarize those achievements point by point—it has all flowed naturally. Nonetheless, it has a core set of questions really similar to the ones that we had from the beginning:

What does it mean to be part of a community?

What are your duties and the responsibilities when you undertake to speak for people who need to delegate their voice because of violence?

What are the ways to give power to this voice, day by day, so that it takes shape in a way that in the end can speak for itself?

How do you stay true to these ideals when you are surrounded by organizations that in the process of "professionalization" have lost contact with the community they are supposed to represent?

I have been criticized time after time for not speaking out about the difficulties of my community in Albania, but the answer is obvious to me: The problems of the LGBT commu-



The biggest achievement is being in this program, where I've had the time, chance, and luck to meet fearless people from all over the world with whom—maybe for the first time in my life—I understand what it means to be a citizen of the world, to transcend boundaries, come together, and try to answer these questions.

nity in Albania are similar, if not the same, as the problems that every LGBT community comes across in every corner of the world. It has a mix of socio-economic status, a backwards history, communism, liberal democracy, corruption, and ignorance.

The solutions, however, are different; they are local and each community has them. That is why these questions are so important and why they should not be taken for granted at the risk of alienating our community. It is not our duty to give voice to the LGBT community—that only opens new problems. Our only duty is to create ways and tools for the LGBT community to come together and speak. They must be able to speak clearly, loudly, freely, and intransigently.

In my context where people love to talk for and about others, working with artistic expressions has helped much more than having innumerable conferences where everybody—except the LGBT people themselves—talks about the needs of "the poor and violated" LGBT people. In the space that art creates, you can find the answers to the questions that I pose above, and in the best case you can create new questions. In my experience, the people who follow the conference circuit do not come to the art exhibitions.

Through this piece, I might be missing the opportunity to expose all "the personal achievements" of my work, but this does not matter.

The biggest achievement is being in this program, where I've had the time, chance, and luck to meet fearless people from all over the world with whom—maybe for the first time in my life—I understand what it means to be a citizen of the world, to transcend boundaries, come together, and try to answer these questions.

When I return to Albania I will continue to do what I have always done: To make the constant effort to stay true to my community and my principles.

Thank you, my dearest friends Anastasiya, Benson, Elina, Hakan, Gigi, Sandra, Sylvain, Swe Zin, Kyi Pyar and Yupar. A special thank you to Stephanie, Professor Sayantani Dasgupta and Professor Theodorus Sandfort.

FACULTY MENTOR

Theodorus Sandfort

Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences (in Psychiatry), Division of Gender Health and Sexuality, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University
Research Scientist, HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioral Studies, New York State Psychiatric Institute

CLASSES

Gender Justice
Narrative, Health and Social Justice

NETWORKING

New York City

American Jewish World Service
Amnesty International USA
Arcus Foundation
Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
Human Rights Watch, LGBT Rights International Center for Transitional Justice
Journal of Human Rights Practice, Oxford University Press
LGBT Community Center
New York Peace Institute
SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders)
StoryCorps
The Sperry Fund

Washington, D.C.

Amnesty International USA
Human Rights First
National Endowment for Democracy
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
United States Institute of Peace
World Bank Inspection Panel

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"The LGBT Movement in Albania: Art, Politics, and History," sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Human Rights and the Harriman Institute, Columbia University

"The LGBT Movement in Albania: Art, Politics, and History," sponsored by Spectrum (student group at SIPA), Columbia University

HRAP panel presentation in the Introduction to Human Rights course with Andrew Nathan, ISHR, Columbia University

YUPAR NYI HTUN

Tutor

East Yangon University

MYANMAR

My name is Yupar Nyi Htun and I am a member of the Department of Law at East Yangon University in Myanmar.

During life as a student, our teachers didn't talk about human rights and they even refrained from saying the words, "human rights." As a result, we don't know what human rights

are and we don't know that we have the right to claim them. I began learning about human rights this past March when human rights education was introduced by the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University. Since then, I became interested in participating in the project to promote human rights education in Myanmar.

I have seen lots of human rights violations in my country, and I want to do something for the people suffering as a result.

Human rights education is needed for our country because if the people know their rights they can take action to demand their rights. Education is the best way to give others knowledge about human rights. As human rights educators, we can teach about human rights not only to our students, but also to our community.

I have seen lots of human rights violations in my country, and I want to do something for the people suffering as a result. At the same time, I also suffered human rights violations in my life. For example, when I was a child in my school there were only three teachers for every one hundred students, and many students dropped out of school because they needed to work for their families. Many people in my community also faced discrimination for their beliefs; I wish to live free from fear and to help those in similar situations. In order to build a peaceful community, we need to make the whole community aware of human rights.

I think I should do something for my country that would try to resolve issues suffered by the people of



The Advocates attended a six-part workshop on research, writing and documentation at HRW.

Myanmar. So I chose to be a human rights educator and, in this way, I can teach human rights to students and my community. I am also going to share human rights education with my colleagues. I wish to teach not only the theory but also how to demand human rights practically, including through clinical education. I hope our members of the Department of Law can produce human rights lawyers for our community.

In the Human Rights Advocates Program, advocates working for human rights in their activities motivate me to work as a human rights educator. I want to defend people suffering from human rights violations and I want to educate students wanting to protect the rights of the Myanmar people.

FACULTY MENTORS

Risa E. Kaufman

Executive Director, Human Rights Institute

Lecturer-in-Law
Columbia Law School

Andrew J. Nathan

Class of 1919 Professor of Political Science

Department of Political Science,
Columbia University

Andrew A. Scherer

Adjunct Professor of Architecture,
Planning and Preservation,
Graduate School of Architecture,
Columbia University

Policy Director of the Impact
Center for Public Interest
Law, New York Law School

CLASSES

Introduction to Human Rights

International Human Rights
Movements

NETWORKING

New York City

Advocacy Lab

Amnesty International USA

Committee to Protect Journalists

Freedom House, Freedom on the Net

International Center for
Transitional Justice

Journal of Human Rights Practice,
Oxford University Press

New York Peace Institute

Scholars at Risk Network

StoryCorps

White & Case LLP

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"A Discussion on Human Rights in Myanmar," hosted by the Institute for the Study of Human Rights and the Human Rights Graduate Group

ADDITIONAL TRAININGS

Library Workshop on
Digital Research

Teachers' Lounge,
"Stereotype Threat"

Teachers' Lounge, "Documenting
Inclusivity"

Teachers' Lounge, "Inclusive
Assessment"



ANASTASIYA ILYINA

Editor

European Radio for Belarus

POLAND

I have not once asked myself why I am interested in human rights. At the beginning of my experience, I was an activist with a human rights organization in Belarus. Today, I am journalist. While it may seem that I am no longer involved with human rights, the media in my country does not have freedom of speech—this is a human rights violation. In Belarus, there are a number of human rights violations.

Upon reflection, I can say that my belief in religion has led me to human rights. It is not possible to remain on the sidelines when the world has injustice, inequality, humiliation, violence and the death penalty. I hold a deep conviction that the protection of human rights is a collective task. Respect for human rights is an indicator of the maturity of the state. We must search for mutual understanding and put the needs of others above our own.

It is not possible to remain on the sidelines when the world has injustice, inequality, humiliation, violence and the death penalty.



The 13 participants in the 2015 HRAP represented 10 countries.



FACULTY MENTOR

Jack Snyder

Robert and Renée Belfer Professor
of International Relations
Department of Political Science
and the Saltzman Institute
of War and Peace Studies,
Columbia University

CLASSES

Global Media: Innovation &
Economic Development
Nationalism and Contemporary
World Politics
Transitional Justice

NETWORKING

New York City

Amnesty International USA
East-West Management Institute
International Center for
Transitional Justice
Journal of Human Rights Practice,
Oxford University Press
New York Peace Institute
StoryCorps
The Sperry Fund

Washington, D.C.

American Civil Liberties Union,
National Prison Project
National Endowment for Democracy

Open Society Foundations

PACT, Belarus Program

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

United States Institute of Peace

World Bank Inspection Panel

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"Belarus After October 11, 2015:

Lessons of the Past, Challenges
for the Future," sponsored by
the Harriman Institute and the
Institute for the Study of Human
Rights, Columbia University

Roundtable with Columbia

University's Human Rights

Advocates, sponsored by

International House

BENSON KHEMIS SORO LAKO

Civic Engagement Officer

Community Empowerment for Rehabilitation and Development (CEFoRD)

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

I decided to think positively about my future and started to work in service for communities.

The dark days of the Sudan from the 1880s until 2011, when the southern part of the Sudan separated and became independent, explain why I try to provide an atmosphere that can be favorable for all citizens to freely and constructively rebuild the hopes once lost and the future that has been left bare.

It's no wonder that among the many Sudanese people who have undergone hardships that I am among those born in the war, brought up with it, and to age with it. For the years of my life in exile (Uganda and Zaire, now the DRC) had been full of uncertainties. My career as an activist is due to what I went through and what other Sudanese at the camps went through, too. I decided not to commit suicide because it would not have benefitted anyone. As a child, I had to take a stand to address both social and economic conditions to improve my liveli-

hood. My life as an orphan—even when I decided to go back home to South Sudan—was something that could not be imagined. I decided to think positively about my future and started to work in service for communities. I am a co-founder of Community Empowerment for Rehabilitation and Development (CEFoRD), which has the mission to create a "well-empowered, united and peaceful society" with youth as the primary target: the participatory approach we use is for both the educated and the non-educated.



The Advocates prepare work plans on how they will transfer what they learn in HRAP to their organizations back home.

FACULTY MENTORS

Amir H. Idris

Chair and Professor
Department of African and
African American Studies,
Fordham University

Pratima Kale

Adjunct Professor
School of International and Public
Affairs, Columbia University

CLASSES

Issues in Rural Development
Transitional Justice

NETWORKING

New York City

Amnesty International USA
BRAC USA
Crisis Action
Fordham University, African
and African American
Studies Department
International Center for
Transitional Justice
Journal of Human Rights Practice,
Oxford University Press
New York Peace Institute
Open Society Foundations,
Africa Regional Office
StoryCorps
The Sperry Fund
UNICEF

Washington, D.C.

ENOUGH Project
National Endowment for Democracy
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
United States Institute of Peace
Voices for Sudan
World Bank Inspection Panel

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"Creating Change from Within:
A Discussion with Human
Rights Advocates from Kenya,
the DRC, and South Sudan,"
sponsored by ISHR and the



Institute for African Studies,
Columbia University
"Creating Change from Within"
presentation in the Human
Rights in Africa course with
Naomi Moland and Garnett

Russell at Teachers College,
Columbia University
"Youth and Poverty" presentation
in Rural Development course
with Pratima Kale at SIPA,
Columbia University

KYI PYAR LINN

Tutor

University of Yangon

MYANMAR

Most of the people in Myanmar do not even know they have rights and do not understand the question, What is human rights? I am from a country with many human rights issues and we have yet to know the true taste of freedom. We are like fish that survive in a tiny lake not really knowing what is happening around the world. Because we don't know how to take action to demand our rights, I want to teach these skills as a human rights educator.

Recently, I had the chance to participate in the Human Rights Advocates Program at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights and its University Human Rights Education in Myanmar project. I have gained many benefits, skills, and knowledge—not only in an academic context, but in a practical one as well. These skills will help me contribute to the development of human rights in my country. For example, the research,

interviewing, and critical thinking skills I gained through workshops were very useful. In my courses, I have gained knowledge that I have never learned before, such as the activities of NGOs, and the skills to teach human rights to others.

As such, human rights education is very important because it can be used as a tool for people to make change. When people are mindful and educated about human rights,



The Advocates enhance their skills through hands-on workshops such as the one on video advocacy at WITNESS.



they can take action to demand their rights, changing their views, attitudes, and practices in the process. Educators can influence the country, not just within the classroom, but through their day-to-day interactions and behaviors.

When I return back home, we will keep moving in the direction of human rights. We can train people to be human rights lawyers, helping them to know how to solve problems, such as which methods to use and which ones are ineffective. In this way, we can prevent human rights violations and future conflicts.

People have different names and different ways of life, but from the perspective of human rights, they are

all the same. We can't deny someone their individual human rights—there should be no discrimination or bias against anyone.

FACULTY MENTORS

Andrew J. Nathan

Class of 1919 Professor of Political Science
Department of Political Science,
Columbia University

Andrew A. Scherer

Adjunct Professor of Architecture,
Planning and Preservation,
Graduate School of Architecture,
Columbia University
Policy Director of the Impact
Center for Public Interest
Law, New York Law School

CLASSES

Introduction to Human Rights
International Human Rights
Movements

NETWORKING

New York City

Advocacy Lab
Amnesty International USA
Committee to Protect Journalists
Freedom House, Freedom on the Net
Human Rights Watch, Asia Division
International Center for
Transitional Justice
Journal of Human Rights Practice,
Oxford University Press
New York Peace Institute
Scholars at Risk Network
StoryCorps
The Sperry Fund
White & Case LLP

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"A Discussion on Human Rights
in Myanmar," hosted by ISHR
and the Human Rights Graduate
Group, Columbia University

ADDITIONAL TRAININGS

Library Workshop on
Digital Research
Teachers' Lounge,
"Stereotype Threat"
Teachers' Lounge, "Documenting
Inclusivity"
Teachers' Lounge, "Inclusive
Assessment"

*When people are
mindful and educated
about human rights,
they can take action to
demand their rights,
changing their views,
attitudes, and practices
in the process.*

SWE ZIN OO

Assistant Lecturer
University of Mandalay
MYANMAR



I have been teaching at the University of Mandalay for 10 years. Before 2010 in Myanmar, human rights topics were never taught or discussed. Although some rights, such as fundamental rights and child rights were discussed in constitutional law and in children's law, they were not discussed from a human rights perspective.

Myanmar has received international attention and pressure for various human rights issues and violations. Since the dawn of our democracy, there have been many undemocratic practices infringing on fundamental human rights at the very core of democracy, such as freedom of belief, freedom of religion, freedom of thought, and non-discrimination. While some human rights violations are due to government neglect of its responsibility, some issues have arisen because of people's misunderstanding and disrespect for others' rights.

From witnessing and experiencing what is happening in my country, I realize that we need to learn and teach human rights in Myanmar. In my opinion, we need human rights education for (at least) two reasons. First, we need to educate people about their own rights and the respect for others' rights. Secondly, to do so, we need to train human rights advocates and academics to be able to educate the public at large. As an academic working for a university, my aim is to introduce and teach hu-

From witnessing and experiencing what is happening in my country, I realize that we need to learn and teach human rights in Myanmar.

man rights courses at universities in Myanmar. Universities are the main institution where we produce essential human resources for the country.

Furthermore, as part of the University Human Rights Education in Myanmar project, I participated in a three-day training at Yangon University and in an online course provided by the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University. To be able to teach human rights courses, the project aims to train junior faculty members in the Department of Law and the Department of International Relations. As a member, I am very glad that I was chosen among the trainees to join the Human Rights Advocates Program together with advocates from various regions around the world. The program gave me the opportunity to share experiences and learn about the activism and work of advocates who are engaging in a variety of human rights issues.

Overall, the program has equipped me with knowledge and several skills for future human rights work. First, my participation in several

workshops in various international human rights organizations was key. Among them, I was especially interested in the Human Rights Watch workshops where we solved hypothetical situations based on real human rights cases. We learned how to identify and prioritize human rights issues through fact-finding, using interviewing strategies to deal with various interviewees such as victims and government officials.

The workshops and courses I took also improved the research I am currently engaging in and helped me develop new ideas for future human rights related research. Finally, I will use the network that I established here in furtherance of collaboration between those institutions and my home institutions. By using the network, we can produce human resources and develop the capacities which are needed to develop human rights education in Myanmar.

The skills and knowledge I learned here will be very invaluable for educating, teaching, researching and promoting human rights, and through spreading awareness will contribute to building a peaceful society in my country. I thank ISHR very much for its contribution to the development of human rights education in Myanmar and for giving me such a fruitful opportunity.

FACULTY MENTORS

Sarah Knuckey

Faculty Co-director
Human Rights Institute,
Columbia Law School

Andrew J. Nathan

Class of 1919 Professor of
Political Science
Department of Political Science,
Columbia University

Benjamin Hoffman

Clinical Teaching Fellow
Lecturer in Law
Human Rights Clinic,
Columbia Law School

CLASSES

Introduction to Human Rights
Economic, Social and Cultural
Rights in Policy and Practice

NETWORKING

New York City

Advocacy Lab
Amnesty International USA
Freedom House, Freedom on the Net
Human Rights Watch, Asia Division
International Center for
Transitional Justice
Journal of Human Rights Practice,
Oxford University Press
New York Peace Institute
Scholars at Risk Network
StoryCorps
White & Case LLP

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ADDITIONAL TRAININGS

Library Workshop on
Digital Research
Teachers' Lounge, "Building
Community in the Classroom"
Teachers' Lounge,
"Stereotype Threat"
Teachers' Lounge, "Documenting
Inclusivity"
Teachers' Lounge, "Inclusive
Assessment"
Center for Teaching and Learning,
"Feedback and Grading:
Designing Effective,
Efficient Strategies"

SYLVAIN WARUZI

Director of Programs

IMPACT

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

I am from the South Kivu province of Uvira in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since 2012, I have been the Program Director at IMPACT, an NGO based in Uvira. At IMPACT, we work to protect children who are being exploited at mining sites in Uvira and Fizi, and strive to hold accountable those who are engaged in the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

I grew up in a family of seven. My hometown was greatly affected by the war in 1996 and 1998. Hundreds of thousands of people fled the country and hundreds of children were forced to become soldiers. With

many people killed and countless others arrested and tortured, others simply disappeared.

With my family, we fled to a refugee camp in Tanzania where we spent almost four years. In the camp, I

heard thousands of people tell the same stories of rape, killing, maiming, looting of villages, and child recruitment. Those stories, along with those from my own experience, shaped my life and my views of humanity and the world.

I continue to believe that my community and my country need young activists like me to continue fighting for human rights, justice, and peace.



Many Advocates make lifelong friendships through HRAP.



Upon returning to my hometown four years later I saw the destruction and desperation, as well as the hope of the people. I then decided to help my neighborhood with recovery efforts led by many young people. One of the efforts included mobilizing parents and children to rebuild badly destroyed houses and schools; answering the call helped to shape my humanitarian experience.

Furthermore, my becoming an activist has been a way for me to give back to the community that I grew up in. Another blessing has been my family's support as I earned a university degree. I continue to believe that my community and my country need young activists like me to continue fighting for human rights, justice, and peace.

FACULTY MENTOR

Pratima Kale

Adjunct Professor
School of International and Public
Affairs, Columbia University

CLASSES

Issues in Rural Development
Transitional Justice

NETWORKING

New York City

Amnesty International USA
International Center for
Transitional Justice
Journal of Human Rights Practice,
Oxford University Press
New York Peace Institute
StoryCorps
The Sperry Fund

Watchlist on Children and
Armed Conflict

Washington, D.C.

National Endowment for Democracy
PACT, DRC Program
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
United States Institute of Peace
World Bank Inspection Panel

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"Creating Change from Within:
A Discussion with Human
Rights Advocates from Kenya,
the DRC, and South Sudan,"
sponsored by ISHR and the
Institute for African Studies,
Columbia University

"Human Rights in Africa,"
sponsored by Naomi Moland
and Garnett Russell, Teachers
College, Columbia University

3 WORKSHOPS

The Advocates attend skill-building workshops aimed at enhancing their advocacy skills. HRAP deeply appreciates the time—which always goes beyond the scheduled class time—that workshop instructors devote to the Advocates.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION TRAINING

Brad Heckman

New York Peace Institute

The New York Peace Institute has provided conflict resolution and mediation training to thousands of individuals from all walks of life. Brad Heckman has championed mediation and peacebuilding in more than 25 countries. Before becoming New York Peace Institute's founding CEO, he served as Vice President of Safe Horizon and International Director of Partners for Democratic Change.

DOCUMENTATION

Pamela Graham

Columbia University

The Center for Human Rights Documentation and Research at Columbia University holds an extensive collection of archives of human rights NGOs. Director Pamela Graham discussed the collecting program and the process of working with NGOs to preserve their records. She noted the value and importance of preserving the record of human rights advocacy. The CHRDR is also developing the Human Rights Web Archive, an online resource that captures and preserves the websites of human rights organizations and blogs. Graham demonstrated

the HRWA and discussed the issues associated with preserving this information, and encouraged advocates to consider contributing their websites to this collecting effort.

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS

Stephanie V. Grepo

Columbia University

The Advocates learned how to make concise and effective presentations on their work. Stephanie V. Grepo encouraged the Advocates to provide constructive feedback to one another as they learned to hone their presentations.

FOUNDATION GIVING

John Hicks, CFRE

J.C. Geever, Inc.

Columbia University

A fundraising consultant with extensive experience helping nonprofits build successful grant seeking programs, John Hicks offered a workshop to help participants better understand how to communicate effectively with U.S. foundation donors, build networks, and apply for grant support for projects.

FUNDRAISING

Erik Detiger

Philantropia, Inc.

With more than a decade of experience working in the field of international philanthropy and fundraising,

Erik Detiger provided the Advocates with an overview of concepts and strategies in international fundraising. The workshop focused on fundraising from institutional donors and individuals.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND YOGA

Janine White

Rutgers University - Newark

Janine White introduced the Advocates to thinking about the intersection of yoga and human rights. They practiced experiencing inner peace and building a sense of community, while learning techniques for self-care to help sustain their human rights work. A graduate of SIPA and a certified yoga instructor, Janine has promoted peace building through the arts in Bosnia and working with youth and internally displaced persons in Georgia.

HUMAN RIGHTS SKILLS AND ADVOCACY

Jo Becker

Human Rights Watch

Jo Becker, Advocacy Director for the Children's Rights Division at Human Rights Watch, frequently represents Human Rights Watch before the media, government officials and the general public on issues including child soldiers, abusive child labor and juvenile justice, her primary areas of expertise. In her workshop,

Advocates explored broad-based human rights campaigns, the use of the media, and advocacy with UN bodies, the U.S. government and the private sector (corporations).

INTERVIEWING

Thomas R. Lansner
Columbia University

Thomas R. Lansner provided basic skills and tips for preparing and presenting positive and proactive media and public appearances that promote the Advocates' messages.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUNDATION CENTER

Susan Shiroma
Foundation Center

Susan Shiroma, a senior librarian at the Foundation Center, offered the Advocates a comprehensive look at the resources available through the Foundation Center's online resources and libraries in New York City and around the globe.

MAXIMIZING YOUR TIME IN HRAP

Bakary Tandia
African Services Committee

2010 Advocate Bakary Tandia helped the Advocates to maximize their time in HRAP. He described the U.S. government system through the lens of advocacy and presented resources available to advocates in the USA. Tandia is a case worker and policy advocate at African Services Committee in New York City.

ORAL HISTORY

Andrew Wallace
StoryCorps

As the Manager of StoryCorps Out-Loud, Andrew Wallace oversees a multi-year initiative to document and preserve voices from LGBTQ individuals and activists across the

USA. Andrew shared with the group the evolution of StoryCorps, examples from the OutLoud program and tips for how the Advocates can start oral histories projects back home. HRAP bought each Advocate a copy of *Listening Is An Act of Love: A Celebration of American Life From The StoryCorps Project*.

OUTREACH IN TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Refik Hodžić
International Center for Transitional Justice

Refik Hodžić, Director of Communications at the International Center for Transitional Justice, provided the Advocates with an overview of the role of outreach in implementing transitional justice measures.



Louisa and Swe Zin practiced newly learned filming techniques learned at WITNESS.

RESEARCH, DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING

Diederik Lohman

Jane Buchanan
Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch Senior Researchers Diederik Lohman and

Jane Buchanan led a six-part workshop on Research, Documentation and Writing. The workshop covered the conceptualization of a research project, interviewing victims and witnesses, interviewing perpetrators and accomplices, and writing.

STRESS, TRAUMA & RENEWAL

Sheila Platt
Community and Family Services International

A psychiatric social worker and consultant to the United Nations on the support of emergency relief workers, Sheila Platt offered a full-day workshop on understanding stress, trauma and renewal from the perspective of human rights workers. Advocates reflected upon their own experiences and learned how to care for themselves while they care for others.

THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

Jeremiah Drake
Riverside Church

Jeremiah Kyle Drake of the Education Ministry of The Riverside Church in The City of New York introduced the Advocates to Theatre of the Oppressed, a forum of participatory theatre.

VIDEO ADVOCACY

Bukeni Waruzi
WITNESS

The Advocates travelled to WITNESS in Brooklyn, where they participated in a two-day workshop on the effective use of video advocacy as a complement to traditional approaches to human rights advocacy. Advocates learned the ways in which stories, visual evidence and personal testimony can be used as part of a human rights advocacy strategy to inform policy.

4

FALL 2015 HRAP EVENTS

September

8th

12:10 pm - 1:10 pm

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE QUALITY OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN INDONESIA

2003 Advocate Usman Hamid, Indonesia



THIS KIND OF LOVE

Film Screening and Q&A with filmmaker Jeanne Hallacy and 2003 Advocate Aung Myo Min, Myanmar

September

9th

12:10 pm - 1:10 pm

October

22nd

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

THE SYRIAN CRISIS AND THE REFUGEES IN TURKEY

2015 Advocate Hakan Ataman, Turkey



RECONCILIATION IN WAR-TORN COMMUNITIES, THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS AND EBOLA

2007 Advocate John Caulker, Sierra Leone

October

28th

12:10 pm - 1:20 pm

October

28th

12:10 pm - 1:20 pm

BELARUS AFTER OCTOBER 11, 2015 LESSONS OF THE PAST, CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

2015 Advocate Anastasiya Ilyina, Belarus



A CONCENTRATION CAMP SURVIVOR'S RETURN HOME TO BOSNIA

A Screening of the Documentary Pretty Village with Filmmaker and Protagonist
2012 Advocate Kemal Pervanic, Bosnia

November

3rd

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

November

4th

12:10 pm - 1:20 pm

THE LGBT MOVEMENT IN ALBANIA ART, POLITICS, AND HISTORY

2015 Advocate Elvis Hoxhaj, Albania



THE STOLEN GENERATION

A Screening of Rabbit Proof Fence and Discussion on the Treatment of Aboriginal Peoples
2015 Advocate Sandra Creamer, Australia

November

9th

6:00 pm - 8:30 pm

November

30th

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

CREATING CHANGE FROM WITHIN CIVIC EDUCATION AND CAPACITY STRENGTHENING TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

2015 Advocates Louisa Essendi, Kenya; Benson Khemis Soro, South Sudan; Sylvain Waruzi, Democratic Republic of the Congo



5 SUPPORT

The Institute for the Study of Human Rights is very grateful to the following for their financial support of the Advocates in the 2015 Program.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA

ARCUS FOUNDATION

FORO INTERNACIONAL DE MUJERES INDÍGENAS

HARRIMAN INSTITUTE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE-BUDAPEST

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION-TURKEY

THE SPERRY FUND

WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR. MEMORIAL FUND



The 2015 HRAP was the program's 27th class.

6 HRAP ADMINISTRATION

STEPHANIE V. GREPO

Stephanie V. Grepo joined ISHR as the Director of Capacity Building in 2008. During her tenure, she has increased the number of female participants, secured funding to create openings in the program for LGBT and disability rights advocates, and encouraged HRAP alumni—who can be found in 84 countries around the globe—to cooperate across class years and geographic boundaries. She has advised alumni on their work ranging from youth empowerment in South Sudan and Bosnia to capacity building for indigenous peoples to advocacy around prisoners' rights in Nigeria.

With the OSCE from 2000 to 2007, Stephanie developed multi-ethnic experiential education programs in Kosovo; created a grants program to support confidence-building projects in Macedonia; worked on return and integration issues and led a field office of 10 staff in Croatia; and served as the youth and education advisor in Serbia. She has observed elections in Bosnia and Georgia. A part-time lecturer at the New School, Stephanie has led graduate-level practicums with clients including the International Rescue Committee. She earned a master's degree from The Fletcher School. Her volunteer experience with resettling refugees through Catholic Charities led her to work in human rights.

CAROLINE FIDAN TYLER DOENMEZ

Caroline Fidan Tyler Doenmez was the 2015 HRAP Program Coordinator. She earned her master's degree in the Human Rights M.A. program of the Institute for the Study of Human Rights. Her master's thesis focused on sexual violence against indigenous women in Canada. A graduate of Smith College, Caroline has taught at the Dublin School, assisted with conflict resolution workshops as a Program Assistant with the Cyprus Friendship Program, conducted research for the Global Campaign for Peace Education newsletter, and interned at UN Women.



The Advocates visited WITNESS and StoryCorps in Brooklyn.

7 ISHR STAFF

RANDI AHO

Program Coordinator

IRENE ATAMIAN

Business Manager

ELAZAR BARKAN

Director

KRISTINA EBERBACH

Director, Education

STEPHANIE V. GREPO

Director, Capacity Building

GERGANA HALPERN

Program Coordinator

ARIELLA LANG

Director, Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability

RACHID MURAD

Program Coordinator

DAVID L. PHILLIPS

Director, Peace-building and Rights

AMAL QADEER

Program Coordinator

ANDREW RIZZARDI

Program Coordinator

ELSA STAMATOPOULOU

Director, Indigenous Peoples' Rights Program

JOHN WASHBURN

Adjunct Research Scholar, International Criminal Court Program



The New York Peace Institute offered a day-long workshop on conflict resolution and mediation.

8

RECENT ALUMNI NEWS



2010 Advocate Agnes Atim Apea (above left) of Hope Development Initiative (Uganda) won the country prize for agriculture presented by CEO Global.



In September, **2003 Advocate Usman Hamid** gave a talk at Columbia entitled *Social Media and the Quality of Freedom of Expression in Indonesia: Evidence from the Field*. A student activist during the protests that toppled the Suharto regime, Usman became the coordinator of KontraS, the Commission for Missing Person and Victims of Violence. A co-founder of the Indonesian Branch of change.org, he is currently a MPhil candidate at the Department of Political and Social Change at the Australian National University.



AJWS honored **2005 Advocate Alejandra Ancheita** (above right) during its 30th Anniversary Gala held in NYC in November. Alejandra is the founder of ProDESC, a human rights NGO based in Mexico City that defends the rights of migrants, workers and indigenous communities in Mexico by fostering the enforcement of and accountability for their rights on a systematic level.



Congratulations to **2008 Advocate Dr. Roger Luhiriri** of the DRC who was admitted to the Penn Master of Bioethics program.



Congratulations to **2013 Advocate Maria Eugenia Carrera** of Guatemala on the birth of her beautiful son!



2011 Advocate Huda Shafiq of Sudan received the Master's in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis (USA).



Nearly 70 students attended the screening of *This Kind of Love* about 1993 Advocate Aung Myo Min of Myanmar. When asked how he has managed to sustain himself after all these years of fighting for human rights in his country, Aung Myo Min said, "Hope. I've never lost hope."



2013 Advocate Sylvester Uhaa (above left), the Executive Director of CURE-Nigeria, shared a photo from a recent UN fact-finding mission to Maiduguri, Borno State, to monitor places of detention.



Congratulations to 2011 Advocate Elvis Mbembe Binda of Rwanda who received the PhD in Law from Utrecht University in the Netherlands.



2007 Advocate John Caulker of Sierra Leone screened a documentary about his organization Fambul Tok and gave a talk entitled *Reconciliation in War-Torn Communities, The Power of Forgiveness and Ebola*.



Congratulations to 2011 Advocate Salima Namusobya, honored by the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria on Human Rights Day. Salima is the Executive Director of the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights, which is based in Kampala, and an expert member of the Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.



Dr. Theodorus Sandfordt of the Mailman School of Public Health has mentored many HRAP participants over the years. He recently visited one of his former mentees, 2014 Advocate Esther Odhiambo, who has been named the Director of PEMA-Kenya.

9 TESTIMONIALS

It is always a delight to have human rights advocates from HRAP in my Narrative, Health and Social Justice seminar. The students bring a wealth of on-the-ground activist experience to our classroom conversations about the politics of representation, and about the connections between story, voice, body, and justice. From issues of trauma and memory to those of national level surveillance, from gender policing by the medical establishment to the ways that public health campaigns can play into imperialist agendas, HRAP advocates are able to connect theory to



Elvis Hoxhaj at Human Rights Watch.

praxis and are invaluable resources for the Columbia University graduate and undergraduate students who take the class alongside them. In fact, my other students have told me explicitly how much they cherish the presence of the HRAP participants in the class—as fellow learners, as teachers, and as active witnesses and agents of international social justice.

Sayantani Dasgupta

Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics
Faculty, Program in Narrative Medicine
Columbia University

Faculty, Health Advocacy Graduate
Program and Fiction Writing Program
Sarah Lawrence College

My meeting with the Human Rights Advocates was a wonderful opportunity to share our work at StoryCorps with a new and attentive audience. While our work is limited to a domestic context, the Advocates saw our work through a global lens. I personally benefitted from the questions posed by and conversations with the Advocates and was challenged to think about my own work in new ways. This event brought a valuable perspective to our organization and we would gladly host again.

Andrew Wallace

Manager, StoryCorps OutLoud

On November 29th, The Riverside Church of New York City had the privilege and pleasure of hosting a reception to honor Elvis Hoxhaj, a

participant in the 2015 HRAP. The reception was arranged through a particularly fruitful collaboration between Maranatha: Riversiders for LGBT Concerns and Theatre of the Oppressed Uptown (TO). TO is also housed at The Riverside Church and, for the past seven years, has been conducting participatory theatre experiences for HRAP participants. Jeremiah Kyle Drake is both a Maranatha officer and the founding head of TO Uptown. The reception, which was sponsored also by the church's Education Commission, was well attended.

Mr. Hoxhaj spoke about LGBT oppression and activism in his homeland, answered questions that covered a wide range of issues, and enjoyed informal conversations. Maranatha and congregants in the larger Riverside Church learned a great deal. This reception led Jeremiah and me to represent Maranatha and TO to the entire 2015 HRAP cohort at Columbia's farewell reception for the group.

We reinforced our special relationship with Elvis Hoxhaj and also discussed LGBT issues with Louisa Essendi. We offered to arrange housing for both of them whenever they visit the United States in the future, and we issued a special invitation to each of them to attend Pride Week next June as Maranatha's guest. We all agreed to stay in touch. To establish such global relationships is always difficult and always fruitful.

Meeting and brainstorming with Mr. Hoxhaj, Ms. Essendi, and the other Advocates was an invaluable experience that will surely yield rich rewards for LGBT people in the future.

Mary Biggs, Ph.D.

Convener, Maranatha: Riversiders for LGBT Concerns, The Riverside Church of New York City

As always, it is a great experience when I have discussions with the HRAP participants. I learned firsthand about [2015 Advocate] Anas-tasiya Ilyina's radio reporting about the rights situation in Belarus and [2014 Advocate] Iulia Marcinschi's one-man-band operation covering every imaginable local rights issue in Moldova. It is a privilege for me and for Columbia to give them an opportunity to place their impressive efforts in the broader context of the global human rights efforts.

Jack Snyder

Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Relations, Department of Political Science, and the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies
Columbia University

As always, it is fantastic having the Advocates in the community. I had a lovely meeting with Benson this week prior to his travel back home to South Sudan. The Advocates are truly impressive and make such an impact on the community.

Olivia Des Chenes

Assistant Director of Programs & Resident Life
International House

Sometimes in academia the question that comes to mind is, What difference can we make on the ground? What is our relationship to and impact on the 'real' world? Those of us working in the field of human rights

are eager to see academia play its role in changing the world for the better. HRAP is a program that makes many of us feel how much academia can do to support the people who struggle on the ground, for the human rights of women, indigenous peoples, LGBT, persons with disabilities and so many others. It is with excitement, respect, and a deep sense of solidarity that our Columbia community meets the advocates every year. They bring their firsthand experiences and their visions for a better world. They enrich our community with their presence and, while learning from each other, they receive from us the opportunity for long-term reflection, a time of enriching respite, so they can continue their struggle when they go back, renewed and certain that they have now made many new friends, including Columbia faculty, staff and students. Having been the mentor for the indigenous advocates at HRAP, I know that they have cherished their semester at Columbia, and my students and I have learned a lot from them.

Elsa Stamatopoulou

Director, Indigenous Peoples' Rights Program, ISHR

Adjunct Professor, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race and
Department of Anthropology
Columbia University

I was privileged to interview 2013 Advocate Absolom Shalakh from PeaceNet Kenya's headquarters in Nairobi for my class "Conflict, Social Networks and Communications Technology" in the MS Program on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution. In the interview, he responded to questions posed by my students on his organization's online platform for tracking and responding to

violent incidents throughout Kenya. Although it was not as dynamic and powerful as the presentation that he gave in person when he was in residence at Columbia, it very much impressed the students and was an excellent way to kick off a discussion. I look forward to cooperating with Absolom many years into the future on this and related issues.

Ted Perlmutter, PhD

Visiting Lecturer, M.S. Program in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

The Human Rights Advocates Program gives The Sperry Fund an opportunity to support proven human rights activists from the continent of Africa. Every year we are impressed by the range of activists selected and quality of the resources offered to them.

R. Scott Greathead, Esq.

Director, The Sperry Fund
Partner, Wiggin & Dana



Sandra Creamer at Human Rights Watch.

mobilize **confidence** *strategize* **CONNECT**
impact *policy makers* advocate *PARTNER* cooperate
exchange share **RECORD** *interview* research
lobby organize theoretical *DEEPEN* *linkages* *analyze*
broaden *global* *learn* writing **unique** campaign *collaborate*
solidarity *aware* *witness* strengthen *media*

HRAP



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Photography by Raymond Liang
Layout by Blue Sky eSolutions