

Human Rights Advocates Program

2009 Program Report

Center for the Study of Human Rights
Columbia University



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1 Introduction

The 21st year of the Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) at Columbia University continued a long tradition of strengthening the skills, knowledge and networks of proven grassroots human rights leaders.

Academic coursework, skills-building workshops and networking opportunities with the human rights, academic and donor communities, primarily in New York City and DC, make up the HRAP curriculum. Through a very competitive selection process, nine human rights leaders were selected from 199 applications. The 2009 Advocates came from Afghanistan, Georgia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Nepal, Thailand, Uganda and the USA

to share and deepen their expertise on a number of issues including good governance, sexual- and gender-based violence, conflict, the rule of law, harm reduction, LGBT, marginalized communities and transitional justice.

Several innovations marked the 2009 HRAP. Approximately two months before the Program started, the Advocates were given access to a



The 2009 Human Rights Advocates from left to right: Mary Akrami, Karyn Kaplan, Florencia Ruiz, Anna Kirey, Nazibrola Janezashvili, Akinyi Ocholla, Evalyne Achan, Elsadig Elsbeikh and Ambika Paudel.

password-protected site. The site contained information on recommended classes, the biographies of their faculty mentors and the Program calendar. They were also able to indicate their travel preferences and to provide documentation in support of their visas. The site contained syllabi (and homework assignments) for their first skills-based workshops. Throughout the course of the Program, the site was regularly updated with assignments. The Advocates also used the site to report on their networking visits. The Advocates were able to access one another's reports thereby making it easier for them to share information.



Tiffany poses with some handicrafts from Uganda.

The 2009 HRAP also encouraged the Advocates to reach out to high school students interested in human rights. More than 20 students from North Warren Regional High School in Blairstown, NJ, visited Columbia University for a working lunch with the Advocates.

At the United Nations Association of the USA on Human Rights Day, the Advocates spoke to NYC high school teachers and students about their work.



The Advocates, their faculty mentors, CSHR staff and other friends of HRAP attended a luncheon at Faculty House.

2 Skills for Human Rights Advocacy

The Program organized a number of skills-building workshops and courses to help the Advocates succeed in their advocacy efforts. This year, the Program welcomed several new workshop instructors to the Program and continued to work with long-standing partners such as Human Rights Watch.

Campaigning to Build a Human Rights Culture

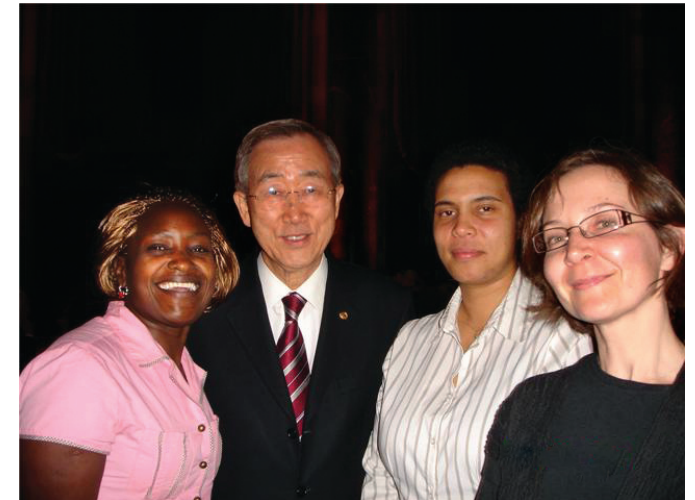
Through this workshop, Ana M. Polanco, the Managing Director of Organizing at Amnesty International USA, shared her organization's approach to its priority campaigns in 2009. The Advocates learned the key elements of organizing, which can make campaigning a powerful tool for organizing communities and building leaders. Ana encouraged the Advocates to see themselves as teachers and learners working together to advance the idea of organizing, building leadership and ultimately using campaigns as an effective tool for winning human rights victories.

Dealing with Difficult Situations and Communicating Effectively with Impact

Some of this year's Advocates took advantage of courses offered by the Learning and Development Unit of Columbia University's Human Resources.

Ethics and Compliance

Michael Silverman, Adjunct Associate Professor at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), spoke with the Advocates on the broader issues of managing organizations to meet their respective compliance and ethical challenges. Michael has held various offices specializing in strategic planning, program management, compliance and policy development in both the public and private sectors. He presented the Advocates with his book, *Compliance Management for Public, Private or Nonprofit Organizations* (2008), McGraw-Hill, New York, New York.



Evalyne, Akinyi and Stephanie met UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the UNA-USA's annual gala in November 2009.



Prof. Michael Silverman spoke to the Advocates about ethics and compliance.

Fundraising

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.

Holocaust & Human Behavior and Historical & Contemporary Realities of Immigration

For the first time, Human Rights Advocates were offered the opportunity to take workshops at Facing History and Ourselves, an international educational and professional development nonprofit organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice and anti-Semitism in order to promote

the development of a more humane and informed citizenry.

How to Build a Fundraising Board

Through this course offered by the Foundation Center in NYC, Advocates learned to engage their board members with an action plan to accelerate their fundraising outreach.

Human Rights Advocacy Tools

Through a multi-part workshop, Jo Becker, the Advocacy Director for Children's Rights at Human Rights Watch, and the Advocates discussed the components of an effective advocacy strategy, including goals, objectives, targets, methods and the role of external factors in achieving advocacy goals.

Leadership

William B. Eimicke, the founding director of the Picker Center for Executive Education at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, discussed the study of leadership with the Advocates. He looked at leadership as it affects individual and organizational performance and as a set of skills that can be learned. Bill offered the Advocates examples from his experiences as the deputy director of strategic planning for the Fire Department of New York, director of fiscal studies for the New York State Senate, assistant budget director of the City of New York, and deputy commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

Negotiation and Communication

In this interactive workshop offered by Consensus, a negotiation, conflict resolution and peace building consulting firm, Advocates learned a framework for thinking differently about negotiation, primarily by focusing on creating value. The Advocates worked on critical communication skills that help keep the dialogue going, even when what is being discussed is very challenging. In role plays and discussion, the Advocates used real-life scenarios drawn from their own experiences.

New Media

Anne Nelson, the SIPA professor who teaches "New Media and Development Communications," held two sessions with the Advocates. She focused on the implications of new media technologies in developing countries, especially as they affect women's issues.

Oral History

The Advocates received training in oral history research and methodology through the Columbia University Oral History Research Office.

Policy Advocacy

Thomas R. Lansner, Adjunct Associate Professor at SIPA, introduced skills in policy advocacy media and public presentation through instruction, discussion and participation.

Research, Documentation and Writing

Human Rights Watch Senior Researchers Lisa Misol and Diederik Lohman offered 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 Management

A psychiatric social worker and consultant to the United Nations on the support of emergency relief workers, Sheila Platt offered a two-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

Over a two-day period, 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

The Advocates travelled to WITNESS in Brooklyn, where they attended a two-day workshop. WITNESS staff discussed the vital role that video can play in advocacy campaigns without great expense or the involvement of video professionals. The Advocates also learned about The Hub, which is WITNESS' video community for human rights, where videos can be uploaded, watched and shared.

3 Coursework

Advocates participate in at least two courses at Columbia University as part of the Program. Advocates may also improve their English language skills through courses at Teachers College. The 2009 Advocates audited the following classes:

- Colloquium in Feminist Inquiry (Barnard)
- Gender Justice (Law School)
- Gender Sexuality and Law (Law School)
- Global Health, Human Rights and Ethics (Law School)
- History and Reconciliation (School of International and Public Affairs)
- Human Rights and Development Policy (School of International and Public Affairs)
- Human Rights and the Question of Culture (Law School)
- Introduction to Community Organizing (School of Social Work)
- Issues in Rural Development (School of International and Public Affairs)
- Law, Policy and Rights: Exploring Rights-based Approaches to Health (Law School)
- Major Debates in the Study of Africa (Anthropology Department)
- New Media (School of International and Public Affairs)

- Oral History Theory and Method (Graduate School of Arts and Sciences)
- Transitional Justice (Law School)
- Women and Health (Barnard)



The Advocates and Stephanie did some sightseeing between workshops.

4 Networking

The Human Rights Advocates Program organizes individual and group meetings with human rights, donor, and other relevant organizations, primarily in NYC, for the Advocates to exchange information, expand their networks and explore the possibility of partnerships and funding. In early November, the Advocates travelled to DC for three days of networking. The 2009 Advocates met with a total of more than 100 organizations, including the following:

New York City-based Organizations and Institutions

- A Letter to the Stars
- ACT-UP

- AIDS-Free World
- American Jewish World Service
- Amnesty International USA
- Arcus Foundation
- Asia Catalyst
- Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
- Barnard Columbia Rape Crisis/ Anti-Violence Support Center
- Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture
- Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
- Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs

- Center for Constitutional Rights
- City University of New York, Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society
- Consensus Group
- East-West Management Institute, Inc.
- El Museo del Barrio
- Global Fund for Women
- Global Justice Center
- Global Information Network
- Health GAP (Global Access Project)
- Hispanics in Philanthropy
- Housing Works
- Human Rights First



Lisa Misol and Diederik Lohman of Human Rights Watch led a workshop on Research, Documentation and Writing.

Human Rights Watch, Africa Division
 Human Rights Watch, Americas Division
 Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Division
 Human Rights Watch, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Rights Division
 Immigration Equality
 Institute for Philanthropy
 Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility
 International Center for Advancement of Addiction Treatment, the Baron Edmond de Rothschild Chemical Dependency Institute
 International Center for Transitional Justice
 International Coalition of Historic Sites of Conscience
 International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
 International Network for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

International Senior Lawyers Project
 International Service for Human Rights
 International Women's Health Coalition
 Inter Press Service News Agency
 Irene Diamond Fund
 Levi Strauss Foundation
 M·A·C AIDS Fund
 National Development and Research Institute, Center for Drug Use and HIV Research
 National Economic and Social Rights Initiative
 New York City AIDS Housing Network
 New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project
 New York University, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice
 New York University, School of Law
 NiteStar

Open Society Institute, International Women's Program
 Open Society Institute, International Harm Reduction Development Program
 Open Society Institute, Justice Initiative
 Open Society Institute, Public Health Program
 Prospect Hill Foundation
 Sylvia Rivera Law Project
 The Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies
 The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center
 The New York Times Company
 The People's Movement for Human Rights Learning
 The Riverside Church of New York City
 Tinker Foundation, Inc.
 United Nations Foundation
 United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food
 Upstream Consulting
 V-Day
 WellSpring Advisers, LLC
 WITNESS

Washington, D.C.-based Organizations and Institutions

Academy for Educational Development, Center for Civil Society and Governance
 Advocacy Project
 American Bar Association



At the end of the workshop on campaign advocacy, the Advocates celebrated with Ana Polanco of Amnesty International USA.

American University, Peacebuilding & Development Institute
 amfAR – The Foundation for AIDS Research
 Center for Health and Gender Equity
 Center for International Environmental Law
 Chemonics
 Child Labor Coalition
 Conrad and Scherer, LLP
 Counterpart International
 Different Avenues



The Advocates met with teachers, students and UNA-USA staff after their presentation to mark Human Rights Day.

- Due Process of Law Foundation
- Essential Action
- FAO Liaison Office for North America
- Freedom House
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Fund for Global Human Rights
- Global AIDS Alliance
- Global Giving
- Human Rights Campaign
- Institute for Policy Studies
- International Center for Journalists
- International Center for Research on Women
- International Food Policy and Research Institute
- International Labor Rights Forum
- International Rights Advocates
- International Women's Media Foundation
- Latin American Working Group
- National Democratic Institute
- National Endowment for Democracy
- National Security Archives, The Mexico Project
- Office of Senator Russell Feingold

- Open Society Institute – Washington D.C.
- Organization of American States, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
- Physicians for Human Rights
- Prevention Works
- Public Citizen
- Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
- The Fund for Peace
- The Global Fund for Children
- The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation
- TransAfrica Forum
- United States Agency for International Development, Office of Transition Initiatives
- Vital Voices Global Partnership
- Wallace Global Fund
- Washington Office in Latin America
- Women for Women International
- World Bank Inspection Panel
- World Movement for Democracy



SIPA Adjunct Associate Professor Rainer Braun and his children posed with Evalyne.

Other Organizations and Institutions

- Cara-Care
- Facing History and Ourselves
- Harvard University, Carr Center for Human Rights, Human Rights and Social Movements Program
- Korekata AIDS Law Center

5 Outreach

While participating in HRAP, the Advocates share their expertise and knowledge with audiences at Columbia University and beyond.

Panels, Talk, Brownbags and Interviews Featuring the Advocates

2010 Elections in Sudan and the Peace Process in Northern Uganda by Evalyne Achan. Sponsored by Fund for Peace.

An Overview of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Movement in Kenya: The Case of Minority Women in Action, a Nairobi-based Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Organization by Akinyi Ocholla. Sponsored by Institute of African Studies, Columbia University.

Bridging the Gap in Drug User Treatment and Treatment Not Torture with Karyn



Evalyne, Florencia and Akinyi learned about video advocacy at WITNESS.

“The Bird” by Akinyi.



Kaplan. International Drug Policy Reform Conference hosted by Drug Policy Alliance.

Challenges of the Return Process in Post Conflict Northern Uganda by Evalyne Achan. Sponsored by Institute of African Studies, Columbia University.

Compulsory Treatment Presentation by Karyn Kaplan. Sponsored by Drug Policy Alliance and others.

Conflicts Related to Land in Uganda by Evalyne Achan. Sponsored by Grassroots Policy Network, the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

Current State of Human Rights Issues in Afghanistan, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan by Mary Akrami,

Nazibrola Janezashvili, and Anna Kirey. Sponsored by Harriman Institute, Columbia University.

Human Rights Advocacy by Akinyi Ocholla, Ambika Paudel, Elsadig Elsheikh, Karyn Kaplan, and Mary Akrami. Sponsored by International House.

Human Rights Day Presentation for NYC School Teachers by Evalyne Achan, Mary Akrami, Nazibrola Janezashvili, Karyn Kaplan and Florencia Ruiz. Sponsored by the United Nations Association of the United States of America.

Human Rights Defenders and Freedom of Association: A Panel Discussion by Mary Akrami. Sponsored by Human Rights First, the International Service for Human Rights, and the Norwegian Mission to the United Nations.

Human Rights Documentation Training for School of Public Health Students by Karyn Kaplan. Sponsored by Skills, Experiences, and Resources for Conflict and Health Working Group, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University.

Humanitarian Intervention: Policy and Critique by Elsadig Elsheikh. Sponsored by Professor Joanne Csete, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University.

Informal Microfinance System in Uganda by Evalyne Achan. Sponsored by Rural Development Class, Columbia University.

Integrating Gender Concerns in Peace-building Work by Evalyne Achan. Sponsored by the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

Interview with Columbia Spectator, Florencia Ruiz.

Interview for International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

20th Anniversary Film, Karyn Kaplan. Sponsored by In the Life Studios.

Interview with Inter Press Service, Akinyi Ocholla.

Interview with National Public Radio Weekend Edition, Mary Akrami.

Interview for the School of International and Public Affairs' web site, Karyn Kaplan.

Interview with students from Mailman School of Public Health Class at Columbia University, Karyn Kaplan.

Kenya and Kyrgyzstan Roundtable with Anna Kirey and Akinyi Ocholla. Sponsored by Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Advocacy in Central Asia by Anna Kirey. Sponsored by Gays and Lesbians in International

and Public Affairs and the Human Rights Working Group, Columbia University.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Activism for Queer Awareness Month by Anna Kirey and Akinyi Ocholla. Sponsored by the Undergraduate Human Rights Program, Columbia University.

Nepali Immigrants and Responsibilities Towards the Country by Ambika Paudel. Sponsored by Adhikaar.

On the Divestment Efforts of the Sudan's Divestment Campaign by Elsadig Elsheikh. Sponsored by Corporate Social Responsibility Committee, Columbia University.

Presentation on Human Rights Advocacy to Students from North Warren Regional High School (NJ) by Evalyne Achan, Mary Akrami, Elsadig

Elsheikh, Nazibrola Janezashvili, Anna Kirey, Akinyi Ocholla, Ambika Paudel and Florencia Ruiz. Sponsored by the Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University.

Presentation on Minority Women in Action by Akinyi Ocholla. Sponsored by Barnard College.

The Problem of Child Soldiers and Nepali Politics by Ambika Paudel. Sponsored by Human Rights students at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

Process and Challenges in the Implementation of the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan by Evalyne Achan. Sponsored by Fund for Peace.

Roundtable Meeting and Presentation on Tullow Oil, International Finance Corporation by Evalyne Achan. Sponsored by Fund for Peace.

Second International Expert Meeting on HIV Prevention for Men Who Have Sex with Men, Women Who Have Sex with Women, and Transgenders: "Moving from Intentions to Action" by Anna Kirey. Sponsored by HIVOS and Schorer.

Social Justice Activism by Akinyi Ocholla, Evalyne Achan and Elsadig Elsheikh. Sponsored by Global Information Network.

The Last Glory by Evalyne Achan. Sponsored by Human Rights Studies, Undergraduate Program, Barnard College.

The Nation-State, the State Apparatus, and the Violence in Darfur by Elsadig Elsheikh. Sponsored by Institute of African Studies, Columbia University.

The Nature of the Human Rights Work by Evalyne Achan and Elsadig Elsheikh. Sponsored by Grassroots Policy Network, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

User Activism and Drug Addiction Theories at National Development and Research Institute by Elsadig Elsheikh. Sponsored by National Development and Research Institute.

Women's Issues in Afghanistan and Uganda – A Brown Bag Presentation by Mary Akrami and



Stephanie, Kristina and the Advocates squeezed in a quick visit to the National Geographic Museum during the DC trip.

Evalyne Achan. Sponsored by the International Women's Program, Open Society Institute.

Women Loving Women: Lesbian Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Organizing in Central Asia by Anna Kirey. Co-sponsored by the Center for European and Mediterranean Studies and the Network of East-West Women at New York University and the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, City University of New York.

Talks and Events attended by the Advocates at Columbia University

Transitions and Transformations in Africa: The Cases of Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, and Rwanda.

Center for Digital Research and Scholarship: An Open House.

Crime, Insecurity, and Fear in Mexico.

Crisis and Resistance: Northeast Socialist Conference.

Talk by Janie Chuang: Rescuing Trafficking from Ideological Capture: How Prostitution Reform Debates Have Shaped U.S. Anti-Trafficking Policy.

Talk by Professor Afsaneh Najmabadi: Sex-in-Change: Configurations of Sexuality and Gender in Contemporary Iran.

Feminist Legal Theory Workshop with Katherine Franke.

Talk by Kerry Rittich: Modeling Informal Labor Markets: Exit, Exclusion, and Paradoxes of Flexibility.

Gender, Peace, and Security Conference.

Lecture by Lydia Cacho: Los Demonios del Eden: Gender, Violence & Activism in Mexico.

Gender and Sexuality Law Program Luncheon.

Maximizing Your Leadership Impact.

Meeting of Georgian Students' Association.

Panel Discussion on Social Choice and Individual Values featuring Amartya Sen.

The Edward Said Memorial Lecture.

The Moral Risk of the International Courts: The Rights of the Abused.

Working Your Degree.

I loved the Program and will always be an advocate for it!

—Karyn Kaplan

The Advocates attended the following other events

2009 Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice Holiday Appreciation Party. Sponsored by Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.

African Cultural Hour. Sponsored by International House.

African/Italian/Pakistani/Indian Cultural Hours. Sponsored by International House.

Azerbaijan: Basic Freedom Under Attack. Sponsored by Open Society Institute.

Conference on Disabilities Convention. Sponsored by the United Nations.

Darfur Crisis: A Discussion with Mahmood Mamdani and Ali B. Ali-Dinar. Sponsored by Brooklyn For Peace (Darfur/Africa Committee). Cosponsored by The Peace & Social Action Committee of the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

Davis Project for Peace Information Meeting. Sponsored by International House.

Discussion on Modern-day Slavery. Sponsored by The Veritas Forum-Exploring True Life.

Discussion and Reception with Dr. Geert-Jan Alexander Knoops. Sponsored by Human Rights Watch.



CSHR Director Elazar Barkan with Dr. Carol Vance who mentored Anna.

Fall Fiesta. Sponsored by International House.

Fambul Tok: Community Healing in Sierra Leone. Sponsored by Richardson Rogers & Associates and Global Information Network.

Honor Killings: Murder in the Name of Honor Book Launch and Discussion. Sponsored by the International Women's Program and Middle East and North Africa Initiative at the Open

Society Institute, the Global Fund for Women, the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, and Oneworld Publications.

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission Panel at the UN. Sponsored by International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and the Swedish Mission to the United Nations.

Making Business and Doing Good. Sponsored by Museum of the Jewish Heritage.

Moving Walls. Sponsored by Open Society Institute.

Whistle-Blowers: A Conversation with Daniel Ellsberg and John Dean. Sponsored by Open Society Institute.

Surgeries in Search of Disorders: Intersex and Circumcision in American History. Sponsored by Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, New York University.

The Task and Implications of Decriminalizing Homosexual Sex in India. Sponsored by the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, New York University.

UNA-USA Annual Gala Dinner. Sponsored by United Nations Association of the United States of America.

Decriminalizing Homosexual Sex. Sponsored by the United Nations.



The Advocates met Marselha Gonçalves Margerin, the Advocacy Director at the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights in DC.

6 Faculty Mentoring

The following Columbia University faculty mentored the 2009 Advocates.

Elazar Barkan

Professor and Director of the Human Rights Concentration, School of International and Public Affairs

Director, Center for the Study of Human Rights

Mentored Florencia Ruiz

Joanne Csete

Associate Professor of Clinical Population and Family Health, Mailman School of Public Health

Mentored Karyn Kaplan

Jennifer Hirsch

Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health

Co-Director, Interdisciplinary Research Methods Core, HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioral Studies

Co-Director, Developmental Core; Co-Director, HIV and Reproductive Health Working Group, Columbia Population Research Center

Mentored Akinyi Ocholla

Jacqueline Klopp

Assistant Professor, School of International and Public Affairs

Mentored Evalyne Achan

Susan Lob

Adjunct Lecturer, School of Social Work

Mentored Mary Akrami

Lincoln Mitchell

Arnold A. Saltzman Assistant Professor in the Practice of International Politics, School of International and Public Affairs

Mentored Nazibrola Janezashvili

Frances Negron-Muntaner

Associate Professor, English and Comparative Literature

Director, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race

Mentored Elsadig Elsheikh

Anya Schriffrin

Lecturer, School of International and Public Affairs

Director, International Media and Communications

Mentored Ambika Paudel

Carol Vance

Associate Clinical Professor of Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, and Dept. of Anthropology

Mentored Anna Kirey

7 Support

We are very grateful to the following for their financial support of the 2009 Program:

- Arcus Foundation
- General Service Foundation
- Open Society Institute, International Women's Program and Public Health
- Sigrid Rausing Trust
- Sperry Fund
- Whitney M. Young Memorial Foundation Endowment

The Human Rights Advocates Program presents us with the real issue of the day—how to build a global grassroots movement with so many critical human rights issues at stake.

—*Ana M. Polanco*



The Advocates met Cary Alan Johnson, the Executive Director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

8 HRAP Administration

Stephanie V. Grepo

Stephanie V. Grepo, Director of Capacity Building, served with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe throughout the Balkans from 2000 to 2007. She worked on elections and civic education in Kosovo, co-developed confidence-building projects in the former crisis region of Macedonia with international partners including UNHCR and USAID, facilitated refugee return and civil society development in Croatia, and created multi-ethnic educational opportunities in Serbia. She earned a master's degree from the Fletcher School.

CSHR Staff

- Elazar Barkan, Director
- Yasmine Ergas, Associate Director
- J. Paul Martin, Senior Scholar
- Stephanie V. Grepo, Director, Capacity Building
- Kristina Eberbach, Program Coordinator
- Irene Atamian, Business Manager
- Joe Kirchof, Assistant Program Officer

Kristina Eberbach

A 2008 graduate of the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, Kristina Eberbach is the Coordinator of CSHR. Her interest in human rights in conflict and transitional contexts led her to pursue research and programmatic work in Kenya, The Netherlands, Uganda, and South Africa.

Tiffany Wheatland

Tiffany Wheatland, HRAP Program Assistant, joined the Center as an intern in January 2009. She was asked to join the Center as salaried staff to assist with the 2009 Human Rights Advocates Program. She is pursuing a master's degree in international affairs at The New School.



Evalyne said farewell while Yasmine, Zori, Andy and Stephanie looked on at the closing ceremony.

9 Comments

Comments from the 2009 HRAP Participants

Through the training on video advocacy at WITNESS, I learned how my organization can document its work and experience. —Evalyne Achan

The best things I have learned from this Program have been time management and patience. By attending classes at Columbia University, I have gained the courage and strength necessary for me to fulfill my wish to study law. I am also very grateful to my faculty mentor, Sue Lob, for the time she gave to me. —Mary Akrami

The thing I appreciated most about the Program was the team at CSHR. Everyone was extremely helpful, willing to accommodate us and ready to assist. You guys rock. —Elsadig Elsheikh

Several of the contacts I made through meetings organized by HRAP will have a longer-term impact on my organization and me. The Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society at the City University of New York invited me to apply to their International Fellows Program. The Academy for Educational Development told me about their



The Advocates and Stephanie return to their hotel in DC.

internship Program, which I also hope to join in the future. My organization may be able to benefit from the experience of a Fellow from the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at NYU and an expert volunteer from the International Senior Lawyers Project. —Nazibrola Janezashvili

I want to thank the staff involved in working so hard to make our experience so phenomenal and so rich. This was the most important part. I loved the classes and mentorship. (Dr. Joanne Csete was Karyn's faculty mentor.) This is another core part of the Program that was an extraordinary privilege – to be in an academic environment in the midst of the other workshops and meetings – very stimulating. I think the Program depends in part on our own initiative and commitment, so it's as good as we all make it. Overall, the people participating in the Program were wonderful and I enjoyed learning about the diversity of rights issues they champion. I loved the Program and will always be an advocate for it! —Karyn Kaplan

The courses that I am taking on research methods are helping me improve the methodology I will use on an upcoming research project. The workshops offered by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International helped me to understand the importance of political/international environments and strategizing in advocacy. My favorite workshop was the one on stress management for human rights professionals because it helped

me to acknowledge the stressful environment I work in. I will share the information I got from this course with my colleagues back home. —Anna Kirey

HRAP is a smörgåsbord. Every time I take a bite of the Program, I get something different but equally tasty. I have learned so much from my fellow Advocates. Anna is a 'mirror' of me—she works on similar issues but in a different part of the world. Ambika has shown me that even a young person can be ambitious and strong. Florencia has taught me to remember that looking back is as important as looking forward. —Akinyi Ocholla



Florencia, Akinyi and Nazibrola visited many different tourist attractions.

The International Center for the Journalist and Media Foundation suggested that I apply for a Fellowship. The International Labor Rights Forum, International Center for Research on Women and Child Labor Coalition were all very positive about working with my organization. —**Ambika Paudel**

The networking opportunities organized by HRAP are crucial to my organization's work. The knowledge I gained through my three courses will be very helpful for my academic development. It is difficult to address which workshops were the most useful for me because I benefited from each one of them. For instance, Sheila Platt's workshop on stress management for human rights professionals was very useful for prompting me to think about my needs as a person in addition to the needs of those I serve. Through her workshop on Campaigning to build a human rights culture, Ana Polanco of Amnesty International USA offered us incredible ideas on how to conduct campaigns. —**Florencia Ruiz**

Comments from HRAP's Partners

A meeting with the participants of the Human Rights Advocates Program provided our staff with a unique opportunity to discuss LGBT rights with representatives of a broad set of social justice organizations. Women's rights, environmental rights, minority rights and anti-poverty specialists—sectors with which we are trying to form useful and practical

alliances. There were some eye openers. We didn't see eye-to-eye on everything. And there is still much work to do to build a broad based social justice movement. But dialogues such as the one we held with the HRAP are an important part of that work. —**Cary Alan Johnson**, *Executive Director, International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission*

As researchers at Human Rights Watch, we have been privileged to co-teach a course for the Human Rights Advocates Program. We are continually impressed by the quality of the human rights defenders that the Center recruits each year. The course is always a two-way street: we help them hone their research methodologies, and they share with us the inspiring work they do in their countries. —**Diederik Lohman and Lisa Misol**, *Senior Researchers, Human Rights Watch*

The Human Rights Fellowship presents us with the real issue of the day—how to build a global grassroots movement with so many critical human rights issues at stake. The program fellows are incredibly equipped, bringing

HRAP is a great way for human rights leaders from around the world to interact with other people who possess different ways of looking at the world.

—*Jeremiah Kyle Drake*



The Advocates during the workshop on The Theatre of the Oppressed.

diverse perspectives on their work. I learned so much from them and I hope this program challenges US organizers to really think about new methods and possibilities for organizing around human rights over the next decade. I respect and applaud the program fellows for the tremendous work that they do and the real challenges they represent in organizing communities around all human rights. As Americans, we have a great deal to learn from different movements around the world. —**Ana M. Polanco**, *Managing Director of Organizing for Amnesty International USA*.

The 2009 Advocates were an inspiring group, as well as highly skilled and experienced. Their passion for their work and strengthening human rights was consistently apparent during class discussion. There is no doubt that the Human Rights Advocates Program provides a fantastic opportunity for participants—especially the valuable networking meetings with prospective donor organizations based in the United States. At the same time, I learned a great deal from the advocates about human rights issues in the countries where they work. I'm confident that after four months in New York the Advocates will have an even greater impact once back home. —**Erik Detiger**, *Founder, Philantropia Inc.*

My students were really thrilled by the unforgettable experience of meeting the Advocates. Some of them even feel that their lives have changed or impacted in a meaningful way. For example, Audrey Nass, a senior, told me that she felt a new meaning in her life after meeting the Advocates, especially Mary Akrami of Afghanistan. Audrey reported feeling energized and fully aware that there is a vivid world and life outside of her bucolic village and she is determined to go the extra mile emulating those Advocates that just surpass her by only a few years in age. All of us think of the Advocates as brothers and sisters joined in the common goal of defending human rights. —**Gualdo**

Hidalgo, *Teacher of World Languages, North Warren Regional High School, Blairstown, NJ.*

HRAP is a great way for human rights leaders from around the world to interact with other people who possess different ways of looking at the world. During a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop at the Riverside Church with the 2009 HRAP group, in which the topic was the torture of journalists, the advocates seemed pleasantly surprised that not all Americans agreed unquestioningly with U.S. foreign policy and attitudes regarding human rights issues. This quickly led to a true openness and a creative solidarity in ways that were both educational and enjoyable for everyone involved. I, too, learned much from the varied backgrounds and life experiences of the Advocates and we all discovered, in a very personal way, the viewpoints, ideas and behaviors of people from a multiplicity of cultures. This unique opportunity to come together, combined with the overall pedagogy of the HRAP Program, represents an optimum learning and sharing experience. —**Jeremiah Kyle Drake**, *Education Ministry of the Riverside Church in the City of New York.*



Elsadig and Akinyi took a break during their workshop at Amnesty International USA.

10 2009 Advocate Biographies



Evalyne Achan

Winrock International, Gulu, Uganda

Evalyne recently joined Winrock International, a nonprofit organization that empowers the disadvantaged, increases economic opportunity, and sustains natural resources. She previously worked for CARE International and the Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development. She has experience with issues of conflict, good governance, civic education, sexual and gender-based violence, human rights programming and protection. Evalyne holds a Bachelor of Law (2001) from Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda and a diploma in Conflict Transformation and Peace Building from the School for International Training in Vermont (2006).



Mary Akrami

Executive Director, Afghan Women Skills Development Center, Kabul, Afghanistan

Mary is the executive director of the Afghan Women Skills Development Center, which is the first women's shelter in Kabul, Afghanistan. She saw a need for such a shelter when a woman was arrested after being accused of disrespecting her father-in-law. Although the woman was found innocent, she was afraid to leave the jail for fear of how her family and society would react to the incident. Mary realized that others like this woman need a safe place to go. Today the shelter also takes in runaways and women released from prison who do not feel safe returning home. The shelter's staff provides legal advice, literacy classes, psychological counseling, and basic skills training. While reintegration of the shelter's residents into society has remained a major challenge, Mary and her team continue to explore different avenues to realize this goal. Through their efforts, they now have the support of religious and social entities.

Under Mary's leadership, several women at the shelter have made the virtually unprecedented move of denouncing their abusers publicly and filing court cases against them. Notwithstanding the threats she has received, she refuses to be intimidated and remains committed to her work. In celebration of International Women's Day 2007, the U.S. Department of State recognized Mary, along with nine other women, with the Award for International Women of Courage. This is the first Department of State award that pays tribute to emerging women leaders worldwide and offers a unique opportunity to focus on transformational diplomacy in the field of international women's issues.

Elsadig Elsheikh

Research Associate, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Columbus, Ohio

Elsadig joined the staff at Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University in 2008 as a research associate for the international program, where he focuses on the racial/ethnic dimensions of various conflicts around the world. Before joining the Kirwan Institute, Elsadig worked with various grassroots and advocacy organizations in the areas of internally displaced persons, indigenous populations, human rights, immigration, anti-racism, and social mobilizations in Sudan, Greece, Colombia and the United States. VDM Verlag Dr. Müller recently published Elsadig's book on Darfur entitled, *Darfur: Domesticating Coloniality, The Failure of the Nation-State Model in Post-colonial Sudan* (2008). Elsadig earned a Master's in Social Justice and Sustainable Development (2008) and a graduate diploma in Conflict Transformation Across Cultures from the School for International Training in 2007. In 2005, he was awarded a Bachelor's in Political Science & International Studies from The Ohio State University and prior to that he studied international relations at Panteion University in Athens, Greece. Originally from Sudan, Elsadig is now a U.S. resident.





Nazibrola Janezashvili

Project Director, Article 42 of the Constitution, Tbilisi, Georgia

Nazibrola began her work with Article 42 of the Constitution in 2004 as a lawyer on cases litigated in the domestic courts and investigating court rulings about bankruptcy laws. Since then, she has directed projects and workshops at this NGO, including the project “Strategic Litigation in the Caucasus,” which involved collaboration with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and sought to create a network of human rights lawyers in Georgia.

In addition to working with Article 42 of the Constitution, Nazibrola has facilitated training courses in human rights with the British Council of Georgia and volunteered as an observer to the 2008 Presidential Election in Georgia. A member of the Georgian Bar Association, she earned her law degree from Tbilisi Humanitarian Institute in 2002. She has also received training certification from the International Summer School of Management in Limbazi, Latvia, as well as a grant from the Open Society Georgia Foundation and the Lane Kirkland Scholarship from the Polish-American Freedom Foundation. She participated in the 20th International Summer School on Human Rights organized by the Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. In 2009, Nazibrola received financial support from the Polish-American Freedom Foundation for the project “Georgia at Present: Society, Culture and Traditions.” She organized a photo exhibition about Georgia named “People within the Conflict Zone” in Warsaw.



Karyn Kaplan

Co-Founder, Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group, Bangkok, Thailand

In 2002, Karyn co-founded the Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group (TTAG) with her partner Paisan Suwannawong, a leading advocate for Thai people living with HIV/AIDS. Karyn, a U.S. citizen, has lived in Thailand since 1988, working on HIV and human rights issues both in Thailand and internationally. Karyn worked in New York as an HIV and human rights officer at the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), a position she held for three years. Prior to her work at IGLHRC, Karyn worked for the Department of Evaluation and Research at Gay Men’s Health Crisis. She is a member

of the Health Global Access Project.

Karyn has published articles in *Health and Human Rights*, a journal published by the Harvard School of Public Health, and numerous other publications. This year, she published a book with the Open Society Institute entitled, *Human Rights Documentation and Advocacy: A Guide for Organizations of People Who Use Drugs* (2009). In March 2009, Karyn and Paisan received the John M. Lloyd Foundation AIDS Leadership Award for their HIV/AIDS advocacy work. Karyn earned a Bachelor’s in French and English Literature from Tufts University.

Anna Kirey

Senior Advisor, Labrys, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Anna has been involved with women’s and human rights organizations in Kyrgyzstan since 2000. Anna is a co-founder and past executive director of Labrys, an LGBT organization. She currently serves as a senior advisor to Labrys. Under Anna’s leadership, Labrys has become a strong grassroots organization working for the empowerment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and advocating for their rights at both the national and international level. In the past two years, Anna has participated in NGO delegations to the UN, lobbied for initiatives related to sexual orientation and gender identity, and presented reports about the situation of LGBT people in Central Asia. Anna has contributed to various research projects on violence against women, LGBT rights, and civil society in Central Asia. As a researcher with Kartini Network for Women’s/Gender Studies in Asia, she is currently collecting the oral histories of women loving women and transgender people in Central Asia. Anna received a Bachelor’s degree in Journalism with a minor in International and Comparative Politics in 2003 from American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. In 2004, she graduated from the United Nations-mandated University for Peace in Costa Rica with a Master’s in Gender and Peace Building. Anna is currently completing a Master’s thesis in the international social work program at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.





Akinyi M. Ocholla

Finance and Communications Officer, Minority Women in Action, Nairobi, Kenya

Akinyi has volunteered at Minority Women in Action (MWA), a Kenyan organization for lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex women, since 2006. As MWA's (volunteer) finance and communications officer, she helps coordinate the organization's activities related to health, outreach, advocacy, general administration, and resource mobilization. Before joining MWA, Akinyi volunteered with Hawa Artists, a women's art organization, and organized exhibitions for artists in Nairobi. She also helped women living in Turkana (a district in northwest Kenya) improve their skills in weaving and clay modeling. Akinyi is an artist whose works have been exhibited in Kenya, Italy, and the United Kingdom. She was awarded a Master of Science in Meteorology from the University of Nairobi in 2004. Born in Sweden to a Swedish mother and a Kenyan father, Akinyi now lives and works in Kenya.



Ambika Kumari Paudel

Advocacy and Publication Team Leader, Conscious Media Forum, Kathmandu, Nepal

Ambika works for Conscious Media Forum (CMF) as a team leader for the Advocacy and Publication department. Since 2004, Ambika has worked to enhance the participation of Dalits, women, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized communities in the development process by improving their access to and control over resources. Ambika is responsible for publication- and advocacy-related tasks that focus on health, HIV/AIDS, and women's rights issues. She is also responsible for editing the in-house magazine, *The Campaign*, and for organizing networking opportunities that build support for other human rights and civil society organizations. Before joining the staff at CMF, Ambika interned as a reporter and assistant program producer for Radio Sagarmatha, the first independent community-based public radio station in South Asia. She now facilitates informal discussions on issues related to globalization and public health.

Ambika has researched social status access to resources and other related human rights issues in the most marginalized communities of Nepal including Badi, Chepang, Majhi, and Sonaha. She has conducted

qualitative research on issues pertaining to HIV and violence against women. She has also researched the sexual and reproductive health rights of female workers in the garment industry following the expiration of the Multi Fiber Agreement and the consequent elimination of quotas. Ambika has contributed to *Violence Against Women and HIV Cause and Consequence: Case Studies on Intersection of Twin Pandemics* (a collaboration between CMF and ActionAid Nepal) and *Reporting on HIV & AIDS: A Manual for Media Persons and Feminisation of HIV* (a collaboration between CMF and ActionAid/Irish Aid). She is a member of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists and Asian Peoples Alliance for Combating HIV & AIDS. In 2007, Ambika earned a Bachelor's in Sociology and Journalism from Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, Nepal, and she is currently pursuing a Master's of Sociology.

Florencia Ruiz Mendoza

Researcher, Social Movements Historical Research Center, Mexico City, Mexico

The Social Movements Historical Research Center was created by a group of researchers, journalists, historians, and human rights activists in 2006 in response to their dissatisfaction with the findings of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Social and Political Movements of the Past and to the minimal amount of attention paid to the period in Mexico's history known as the "dirty war." The Center focuses on historical research related to the Mexican government's actions during the country's "dirty war." At the Center, Florencia writes articles, lectures, and partners with other NGOs that work on the issue of forced disappearances in Mexico. She is also responsible for networking with NGOs around the world that work on issues of transitional justice. She has developed the work of the Center by raising funds for and supporting projects that promote transitional justice. She earned a Bachelor's in History in 1998 from the National Autonomous University of Mexico.



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