

# Human Rights Advocates Program

## 2012 Program Report

Institute for the Study of Human Rights  
Columbia University



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# 1 Introduction

“ *We are not alone in our battle for human rights.* ”

2012 Advocate Rachel Wambui Mburu, Kenya

The 24th year of the Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) at Columbia University continued the Institute for the Study of Human Rights’ commitment to strengthening the skills, knowledge and networks of proven grassroots human rights leaders.

The HRAP curriculum comprises academic coursework, skills-building workshops and networking opportunities with the human rights, academic and donor communities, primarily in New York City and Washington, D.C. Through a very competitive selection process, 9 human rights advocates were selected from 265 applicants. The 2012 Advocates came from Bosnia, Kenya, Liberia, Nepal, Palestine, Rwanda/USA, Sierra Leone and Uganda (2) to share and deepen their expertise on a number of issues including HIV/AIDS, disability rights, peacebuilding, democratization, genocide, incarceration and transitional justice.

HRAP alumni were involved with many facets of the 2012 program. Several HRAP alumni agreed to interview applicants for the 2012 Program. In addition to interviewing a number of strong applicants, 2009 Advocate Elsadig Elsheikh led a workshop on negotiation and communication and 2011 Advocate Lana Ackar led the Advocates in examining the role of gender in their work. 2010 Advocate Bakary Tandia of African Services Committee in NYC led a workshop series on how the 2012 Advocates could maximize their time in the program. While in New York City to attend the Clinton Global Initiative, 2008 Advocate Peter Mulbah of Liberia held individual and group meetings with the 2012 Advocates.



## 2 The Advocates In Their Own Words

We asked the Advocates to share with us what inspired them to work in human rights. Following each account are details on each Advocate's participation in the 2012 HRAP.

### Kemal Pervanić

Co-founder and Director

Most Mira

Prijedor, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Even though he spent seven months in two concentration camps, including the infamous Omarska, during the war in Bosnia, Kemal Pervanić says, "I am lucky because I survived. I don't want my suffering to be in vain."

Kemal founded Most Mira (Bridge of Peace). It was during a return visit to his native Prijedor in Bosnia that Kemal said he realized, "Kids born after the war do not know more than what their parents tell them." He elaborates: "The violence that swept across the Prijedor municipality has left its mark, with a deeply divided community living in religiously segregated

areas, unable to re-establish old friendships or make new ones across these fault lines, and struggling with high unemployment and a stagnant local economy. Children are being educated in a segregated system, with little opportunity to meet with children from other backgrounds in order to challenge the nationalistic assumptions surrounding them in their daily lives."

He explains the organization's response to the realities on the ground: "Most Mira's approach to this crisis is to organize an art festival, using art as a means which bridges local ethno-religious rivalries. Arts cross the boundaries that divide these children, and through arts they can learn that diversity is something to celebrate and embrace, not be afraid of, and that working with the 'other' can be enriching and rewarding. This ultimately leads the beneficiaries to learn the values of mutual understanding, friendship and tolerance, the basic foundations of human rights."

Since its founding, Most Mira has organized a total of three summer arts festivals for the youth of Prijedor. The most recent festival attracted 500 children

from northwestern Bosnia. Kemal credits Most Mira's strategy for the enthusiasm shown by the community: "Our strategy has been to quietly penetrate the society which is ridden with hate, fear and distrust among ordinary people, by introducing participatory methodology in our work with schools through the arts, which represent building blocks in reconstruction of lost trust. To openly confront local people about human rights violations would only cause

suspicion of our motives. Our project has created the feeling of ownership among our beneficiaries, it has created the feeling of trust among their parents and the majority of their teachers, and it has begun to recreate the feeling of community."

*By Stephanie V. Grepo, Director, Capacity Building, ISHR, Columbia University*



## Faculty Mentors

### Monisha Bajaj

Associate Professor of Education  
Department of International & Transcultural  
Studies, Teachers College

### Sandra Schmidt

Assistant Professor of Social Studies  
Arts and Humanities, Teachers College

## Classes

Building Peace After Conflict, School of  
International and Public Affairs  
The Law of Genocide, School of International and  
Public Affairs  
Transitional Justice, School of Law

## Networking

### New York City

Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation  
Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law  
Columbia University, Harriman Institute  
Facing History and Ourselves  
International Center for Transitional Justice  
International Coalition of Sites of Conscience  
International Crisis Group  
International Peace Institute  
Kids Creative  
New York Peace Institute  
Open Society Foundations, Public Affairs  
Sperry Fund

“ I don't want  
my suffering  
to be in vain. ”

## Washington, D.C.

Advisory Council for Bosnia & Herzegovina  
 Advocacy Project  
 Alliance for Peacebuilding  
 American University, School of International  
 Service  
 Freedom House  
 Fund for Global Human Rights  
 Georgetown University  
 Initiatives of Change  
 National Endowment for Democracy  
 Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human  
 Rights  
 United States Institute of Peace  
 United States State Department, Bureau of  
 Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

## Speaking Engagements

*Through Arts to Peace: The Story of Bosnian  
 Peacebuilding and Reconciliation at the Grassroots  
 Level.* Sponsored by the Harriman Institute,  
 Columbia University.

*How We Live Our Lives: Personal Reflections of a  
 Genocide Survivor.* Sponsored by the Max Kade  
 House, University of Kentucky.

*On Forgiveness and Reconciliation: A Personal  
 Reflection.* Sponsored by the School of  
 International Service, American University.

*An Evening with Columbia's Human Rights  
 Advocates.* Sponsored by the Columbia  
 University Club of D.C.

*Introduction to 2012 Human Rights Advocates  
 Program.* Sponsored by Professor Andrew  
 Nathan, School of International and Public  
 Affairs, Columbia University.

*Human Rights Panel Discussion featuring Sabrina  
 Mahtani and Kemal Pervanić.* Sponsored by  
 Michael Silverman, Kane Street Synagogue.

*The Earth Institute Fellows Symposium: Meeting  
 the Challenges of Sustainable Development in  
 a Changing World.* Sponsored by the Earth  
 Institute, Columbia University.

*Human Rights Work.* Sponsored by Dr. Zelma W.  
 Henriques, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.



Tonderai Chikuhwa, Special Advisor to the SRSO on  
 Sexual Violence in Conflict, spoke to an audience of  
 advocates and Columbia University students how the office  
 engages complementary mandates at the UN to promote  
 the prevention of mass atrocities.  
*Photo provided by Tiffany Wheatland.*

## Rachel Wambui Mburu

Program Officer

Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Culture  
 Nairobi, Kenya

After finishing her secondary education, Rachel Wambui Mburu moved in with her grandmother who lived in one of Nairobi's largest slums. There she witnessed violence against women on daily basis.

“Every day, I saw women become victims of gang rape and sexual assaults. I saw girls who did not go to school. I wondered what I could do to help them,” explains Rachel. In 2004, Rachel joined the organization called Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Culture (4C-Trust). She has been leading the organization's Citizens Education and Peace Program, which designs and leads capacity building and awareness raising activities. “We do our best to make sure that our activities are based on community needs. For some groups, we provide an overview of women's rights while at other times we focus on issues specific to our participants such as property issues or violence against women,” explains Rachel.

She credits her years in the field with her ability to develop initiatives that promote gender equality. “In encouraging women's rights, we must identify and involve

gender-responsive men who will denounce the submissive position of women in our society,” says Rachel.

While participating in HRAP, Rachel said she was surprised to learn that so many initiatives exist to build the confidence of girls from an early age. “I want to initiate similar activities for school girls as raising them as leaders can be a solid ground for their future active role in Kenyan society.” She said she plans to do this through Mwamko Trust, an organization she co-founded.

The greatest value of HRAP, according to Rachel, was the opportunity to learn from her fellow Advocates. “We found out that we have the same problems. That recognition made us more firm in pursuing our goals as we realized that we are not alone in our battle for human rights,” says Rachel.

*By 2010 Advocate Lana Ackar of Bosnia*

## Faculty Mentor

**Jenik Radon**

Adjunct Professor of International and Public  
 Affairs

School of International and Public Affairs,  
 Columbia University

## Classes

Transitional Justice, School of Law

Human Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, Barnard College

Human Rights and Development Policy, School of International and Public Affairs

## Networking

### New York City

Community Voices Heard

Global Fund for Women

Global Network of Women Peacebuilders

Human Rights Watch, Africa Division

International Center for Transitional Justice

International Peace Institute

Legal Momentum

Open Society Foundations, International Women's Program

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security

Sperry Fund

Women Environment & Development Organization

### Washington, D.C.

Advocacy Project

Fund for Global Human Rights

Institute for Policy Studies

International Republican Institute

International Women's Democracy Center

National Democratic Institute

National Endowment for Democracy

Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

“ We are not alone in our battle for human rights. ”

United States Institute of Peace

United States State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

World Bank, Inspection Panel

## Speaking Engagements

*Introduction to 2012 Human Rights Advocates Program.* Sponsored by Professor Andrew Nathan, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*Human Rights Advocates Panel Discussion featuring Sabrina Mahtani, Sulakshana Rana, Primah Kwagala Namudiba. Rachel Mburu and Lucy Talgeih.* Sponsored by Professor Rainer Braun, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*Talk on Gender and Peacekeeping featuring Rachel Mburu and Dr. Nadine Puechguirbal.* Co-sponsored by Professor Maxine Weisgrau and the Gender Policy Working Group, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.



## Marayah Louisa Wychen- Munah Fyneah

National Director

Coalition of Political Parties Women

Monrovia, Liberia

When Marayah Louisa Wychen-Munah Fyneah realized that her gender was precluding her from participating in the

work of her political party, she decided to make changes. “We had a section for women in the party, but it was useless. We had no voice,” explains Marayah. She gathered women from various political parties and founded the Coalition of Political Parties Women in Liberia in 2003. The main idea Marayah had in mind was to educate women about their rightful roles in the political life of Liberia.

“It is extremely difficult for a woman to be a part of political life anywhere in the world,” explains Marayah. “Today, in most countries, we have parallel systems of men and women being active in politics. It is unacceptable to have women isolated from men through different groups or committees in decision-making bodies.”

Marayah highlights the challenges activists face due to short-term funding possibilities. “To change the hearts and minds of people, you need years,” she explains. “If we want to see different patterns in political life in Liberia, we must work continuously on improving the participation of women, not just in numbers but in quality as well.”

While in HRAP, Sheila Platt’s workshop on stress and trauma made her realize and understand the importance of mental health for activists. Marayah appreciated the

opportunity to learn about editorial writing and social media in human rights work. She sees social media as one of her priorities in the future. “Knowing that people from the other part of the world will be able to read about our work gives me additional strength to speak more loudly about my country’s concerns,” explains Marayah. “Furthermore, learning about the progress that other countries have made reminds me about the work that we still have to do. I know it won’t be easy but I won’t give up,” she says.

*By 2011 Advocate Lana Ackar of Bosnia*

### Faculty Mentor

**John L. Hirsch**

Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs

School of International and Public Affairs,  
Columbia University

“ We must work continuously on improving the participation of women, not just in numbers but in quality as well. ”



## Classes

Elections & Political Development, School of International and Public Affairs  
Seminar in Sexuality, Gender, Health, and Human Rights, Mailman School of Public Health

## Networking

### New York City

Equality Now  
Global Fund for Women  
Global Justice Center  
Global Network of Women Peacebuilders  
Human Rights Watch  
International Peace Institute  
Legal Momentum  
NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security  
Open Society Foundations, International Women's Program  
Sperry Fund  
Women Environment & Development Organization

### Washington, D.C.

Advocacy Project  
Council for a Community of Democracies  
Fund for Global Human Rights  
Institute for Policy Studies  
International Republican Institute  
International Women's Democracy Center  
National Democratic Institute  
National Endowment for Democracy  
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

United States Institute of Peace  
United States State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor,  
Vital Voices Global Partnership  
World Bank

## Speaking Engagements

*Introduction to 2012 Human Rights Advocates Program.* Sponsored by Professor Andrew Nathan, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*Human Rights Advocates Panel Discussion featuring Sabrina Mahtani, Sulakshana Rana, Primah Namudiba, Rachel Mburu and Lucy Talgeih.* Sponsored by Professor Rainer Braun, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*An Evening with Columbia's Human Rights Advocates.* Sponsored by the Columbia University Club of D.C.

*Political Participation and Community Development in Liberia: A Discussion with 2008 Advocate Peter Mulbah and Marayah Louisa Wychen-Munah Fyneah of the Human Rights Advocates Program.* Sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University Students for Human Rights, Human Rights Studies MA Graduate Student Council.

*Gender and Liberia.* Sponsored by the Gender Policy Practicum, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*Development Dialogue: Liberia Today.* Co-sponsored by the Columbia University Partnership for International Development and the Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University.

## Sulakshana Rana

Program Coordinator

Saathi

Lalitpur, Nepal

Sulakshana Rana works as a program coordinator for a non-governmental, non-profit organization called Saathi (meaning 'friend' in Nepali), which was established in 1992 to address the contemporary challenges Nepali women face. Sulakshana oversees the trafficking and migration program and works with women and girls in the adult entertainment sector. She documents emerging trends and patterns in this sector and works to create a basis for linkages to unsafe migration, trafficking and health consequences.

Sulakshana says that HRAP allowed her to "gain a better perspective on the work being conducted by different organizations on trafficking, sex workers rights and prostitution. Meeting the organizations in person and interacting with them assisted in understanding the accomplishment and challenges we as women rights activists face in our work." She adds that the program has helped her to "build networks with people doing similar work. HRAP has given me the space to reflect on the success and gaps in the work I am doing and helped me gain

a better vision of how I would want to carry forward the work now."

*By 2009 Advocate Elsadig Elsheikh of Sudan/USA*

## Faculty Mentor

### Carole Vance

Associate Clinical Professor of Sociomedical Science  
Mailman School of Public Health  
Director, Sexuality and Health Track

## Classes

Gender and Livelihoods, School of International and Public Affairs  
Seminar in Sexuality, Gender, Health, and Human Rights, Mailman School of Public Health  
Issues in Rural Development, School of International and Public Affairs

## Networking

### New York City

Clinton Global Initiative  
Equality Now  
Global Fund for Women  
Global Network of Women Peacebuilders  
International Peace Institute  
International Women's Health Coalition  
Open Society Foundations, International Women's Program  
Sakhi for South Asian Women  
Sperry Fund



“ HRAP has given me the space to reflect on the successes and gaps in the work I am doing. ”

### Washington, D.C.

Advocacy Project  
Ayuda  
Break the Chain Campaign, Institute for Policy Studies  
Center for Health and Gender Equity  
Fund for Global Human Rights  
National Endowment for Democracy  
Polaris Project  
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights  
United States Institute of Peace  
United States State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor  
Vital Voices Global Partnership  
Washington, D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force  
Women Thrive Worldwide

### Speaking Engagements

*Gender-Based Violence: A Panel Discussion featuring Sabrina Mahtani, Lydia Nakiganda and Sulakshana Rana.* Sponsored by ISHR Graduate Student Council and Columbia University Students for Human Rights.

*Introduction to 2012 Human Rights Advocates Program.* Sponsored by Professor Andrew Nathan, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*Human Rights Advocates Panel Discussion featuring Sabrina Mahtani, Sulakshana Rana, Primah Kwagala Namudiba, Rachel Mburu and Lucy Talgeib.* Sponsored by Professor Rainer Braun, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*An Evening with Columbia's Human Rights Advocates, Panel Discussion.* Sponsored by the Columbia University Club of D.C.

*The Earth Institute Fellows Symposium: Meeting the Challenges of Sustainable Development in a Changing World.* Sponsored by the Earth Institute, Columbia University.



## Lucy Geries Talgeih

Women's Project Coordinator

Wi'am: Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center  
Bethlehem, Palestinian Authority

Lucy Geries Talgeih's interest in human rights is deeply rooted in her family history. She was intrigued by the 1967 war, which claimed the lives of her grandfather, her uncle and an aunt. She grew up with the burning desire to know why they were

killed and why the Palestinians live under occupation. Her search for answers led her to volunteer for Wi'am: Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center where she is now the Women's Project Coordinator. Through her work at Wi'am, she learned about the war and subsequent occupation. Lucy reports that her mother's "harsh" life also led her to fight for justice and equal rights for all. She says that her mother was always eager to serve others at the expense of her own rights. "I did not want to live her life," she says. "I used to rebel against her when she

asked me to do things for my two brothers. The feeling that my voice will not be heard is something that can kill me."

Lucy recalls a time when she was filled with ideas of nationalism and revenge. She credits the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi for the evolution of her thinking. "I was deeply inspired by Gandhi who said, 'An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind,'" recalls Lucy. That reflection led her to understand that revenge was not the right answer to the struggle for justice and freedom. She says human rights are the key to mutual respect. She stresses, "Human rights are the most basic need after food."

She had other opportunities to build her character and hone her experience as a

human rights advocate. Her work as a school counselor during her school years greatly helped strengthen her skills. That position gave her the opportunity to advocate on behalf of students to ensure that their needs were being met and their rights respected.

Lucy speaks with great passion about the rights of women. Disturbed by the life experience of her mother, she strongly advocates for women's fundamental rights: "Their voices should move from passive to active. It is very important that they be involved in conflict resolution as well as in decision-making processes which have the potential to affect their lives." She stresses the importance of education as a source of empowerment.

Her determination to pursue her work to advance human rights is stronger than ever. In 2009, she co-authored "A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of the Palestinian Suffering" (<http://www.kairopalestine.ps/>), which offers the perspective of Palestinian Christians on the Palestinian struggle. Even though her commitment to her work is very strong, she says, "Sometimes it is very difficult when your hands are tied—you may feel depressed." She attributes her ability to continue her work to the support of people around her. Her mother who was initially against her involvement in human rights is now her staunchest supporter.

*By 2010 Advocate Bakary Tandia of the USA*

“ *Their voices should move from passive to active.* ”



## Faculty Mentors

### Lila Abu-Lughod

Joseph L. Bottenwieser Professor of Social Science and Gender Studies

Department of Anthropology; Institute for Research on Women and Gender

Columbia University

Director of the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference

### Katherine Franke

Isidor and Seville Sulzbacher Professor of Law

Director, Center for Gender and Sexuality Law

Columbia Law School

## Classes

Transitional Justice, School of Law

Human Rights and Development Policy, School of International and Public Affairs

## Networking

### New York City

Global Fund for Women

Global Network of Women Peacebuilders

International Center for Transitional Justice

International Peace Institute

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security

Open Society Foundations, International Women's Program

Sperry Fund

### Washington, D.C.

Advocacy Project

Alliance for Peacebuilding

Fund for Global Human Rights

Fund for Peace

Gender Action

International Republican Institute

United States Institute for Peace

National Democratic Institute

National Endowment for Democracy

Peace X Peace

Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

United States Institute of Peace

United States State Department

Vital Voices

## Speaking Engagements

*Introduction to 2012 Human Rights Advocates Program.* Sponsored by Professor Andrew Nathan, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*Human Rights Advocates Panel Discussion featuring Sabrina Mahtani, Sulakshana Rana, Primah Kwagala Namudiba, Rachel Mburu and Lucy Talgeih.* Sponsored by Professor Rainer Braun, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*An Evening with Columbia's Human Rights Advocates, Panel Discussion.* Sponsored by the Columbia University Club of D.C.

## Eugenie Mukeshimana

Executive Director

Genocide Survivors Support Network  
Rwanda/USA

Anger made Eugenie Mukeshimana a human rights advocate. Before she left Kigali for the USA, Eugenie said she decided not tell Americans that she was from Rwanda. She explained, "I didn't want them to think I had killed people during the genocide."

On a full university scholarship to The College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York, Eugenie said she had to identify her homeland when instructors took attendance for the first time during the semester. "They couldn't pronounce my name and asked me to do it," she recalls. "When I spoke, they would ask about my accent and I would tell them I came from Rwanda." Expecting a reaction, she said, "I was shocked. No one's expression changed. No one leapt up. The instructors just proceeded to the next name on the roster."

Her first year at university in the USA passed without anyone asking her about her experience in Rwanda. "How did 800,000 people die and no one asked me, 'Why?'" she said she asked herself repeatedly during the year. She decided to ask her instructors if she could fulfill her assignments by using Rwanda as her frame of reference. It was at that point, she said, "My instructors started asking me

to stay after class to ask me questions." By the end of the semester, her instructors had raised the topic of the genocide in Rwanda during class time and her fellow students started asking her for more information. She began to receive invitations to speak to other classes. "That is how I began my career as a public speaker," she says.

In 2010, she founded the Genocide Survivors Support Network, which, she says, "helps genocide survivors rebuild their lives and use their voices to contribute to genocide prevention." Eugenie said she purposely decided not to limit her organization's purview by calling it the Rwandan Genocide Survivors Support Network. She said that while she works primarily with people from the Great Lakes region of Africa, she has worked with Sudanese refugees.

When asked how she as a survivor of the genocide in Rwanda is able to work regularly with other genocide survivors, she quickly answers, "I realize I am fortunate. There was someone waiting for me in the USA when I arrived. I had a scholarship. I had a home to go to. A lot of survivors have to live next door to perpetrators of the genocide. I have been comfortable for the past decade.

"The majority of the survivors I work with were under 10 years of age when the Rwandan genocide happened. I was 23. I had experienced what it means to be raised by a family. I feel an obligation. Some of

the survivors who have been able to move forward energize me to help someone else to experience joy and to know they are not alone.”

**Eugenie was the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Advocate in the 2012 HRAP.**

*By Stephanie V. Grepo, Director of Capacity Building, ISHR, Columbia University*

## Faculty Mentor

### Jack Saul

Assistant Professor of Clinical Population and Family Health

Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

Director of the International Trauma Studies Program

## Classes

Gender and Livelihoods, School of International and Public Affairs

The Law of Genocide, School of Law

## Networking

### New York City

Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation

Clinton Global Initiative

Global Fund for Women

Global Network of Women Peacebuilders

Human Rights First

Human Rights Watch

International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

International Peace Institute

New York Peace Institute

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security

Sperry Fund

### Washington, D.C.

Advocacy Project

Church World Service

Enough

Fund for Global Human Rights

National Endowment for Democracy

National Immigration Forum

Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

United States Institute of Peace

United States State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

Women's Refugee Commission

## Speaking Engagements

*Introduction to 2012 Human Rights Advocates Program.* Sponsored by Professor Andrew Nathan, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*The Deferred Action for Undocumented Young Immigrants: Context & Perspectives.* Co-sponsored by the Columbia University Institute for the Study of Human Rights and the Columbia University Partnership for International Development.

*Immigrant Resettlement: A Panel Discussion.* Sponsored by Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights Columbia Law School.

*Presentation on the 1994 Genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda: A Personal Narrative.* Sponsored by Professor J. Paul Martin, Barnard College.

“ How did  
800,000  
people die  
and no one  
asked me,  
'Why?' ”





## Sabrina Rajan Mahtani

Executive Director

AdvocAid

Freetown, Sierra Leone

Sabrina Rajan Mahtani links her work advancing the rights of women in Sierra Leone’s criminal justice system with the imprisonment of her father when she was a teenager. Born and raised in Zambia, Sabrina says her privileged upbringing was no match for the unjust imprisonment of her father.

Sabrina moved to Sierra Leone after its civil war ended to work for the UN. The plight of female prisoners in Sierra Leone—where there is no formal government legal aid program—led her to co-found AdvocAid. With staff lawyers and a trained network of

women paralegals, AdvocAid provides legal advice and assistance to girls and women in conflict with the law. Through radio and television dramas, illustrated booklets and other outreach tools, AdvocAid endeavors to raise women’s awareness of their rights. Sabrina and her team even aim to reform and strengthen the justice system by offering capacity building workshops to justice-sector professionals.

Sabrina says she has learned to be patient while working to effect positive changes. “Being part of HRAP was wonderful as I met other human rights activists who face similar challenges. Sometimes we have to fight for a long time to make the changes we want to see but, from Palestine to Uganda, human rights activists are making a difference. This has strengthened my resolve for my work. HRAP gave me an opportunity to reflect on my work and enriched me with new ideas and connections for how to advance my work in the future and to share knowledge and new ideas with my team in Sierra Leone,” says Sabrina. “Thanks to the HRAP I feel strengthened to continue pursuing AdvocAid’s mission, especially through our advocacy work. I am even more determined to pursue my next goal of establishing a scholarship and capacity building scheme for female law students in Sierra Leone that would help women who are interested in providing legal services for their fellow women.”

“*Sometimes we have to fight for a long time to make the changes we want to see but, from Palestine to Uganda, human rights activists are making a difference.*”

*By 2011 Advocate Lana Ackar of Bosnia*

## Faculty Mentor

### Brett Dignam

Clinical Professor of Law  
Columbia Law School

## Classes

Major Debates in African History, Department of Anthropology

Oral History, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

## Networking

### New York City

Clinton Global Initiative

Global Fund for Women

Human Rights Watch, Africa Division

John Jay College of Criminal Justice

International Center for Transitional Justice

International Peace Institute

Legal Momentum

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security

Open Society Foundations, International Women's Program

PCI-Media Impact

Sperry Fund

### Washington, D.C.

Advocacy Project

American University, Washington College of Law

Fund for Global Human Rights

Georgetown University Law Center

International Center for Research on Women

National Endowment for Democracy

Our Place

Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

United States Institute of Peace

United States State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

Vital Voices Global Partnership

## Speaking Engagements

*Gender-Based Violence: A Panel Discussion featuring Sabrina Mahtani, Lydia Nakiganda and Sulakshana Rana.* Sponsored by ISHR Graduate Student Council and Columbia University Students for Human Rights.

*Introduction to 2012 Human Rights Advocates Program.* Sponsored by Professor Andrew Nathan, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*Human Rights Advocates Panel Discussion featuring Sabrina Mahtani, Sulakshana Rana, Primah Kwagala Namudiba, Rachel Mburu and Lucy Talgeih.* Sponsored by Professor Rainer Braun, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*The Earth Institute Fellows Symposium: Meeting the Challenges of Sustainable Development in a Changing World.* Sponsored by the Earth Institute, Columbia University.

*An Evening with Columbia's Human Rights Advocates, Panel Discussion.* Sponsored by the Columbia University Club of D.C.

*Human Rights Panel Discussion featuring Sabrina Mahtani, and Kemal Pervanić.* Sponsored by Michael Silverman, Kane Street Synagogue.

## Lydia Jacenta Nakiganda

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

Rakai AIDS Information Network (RAIN)

Kalisizo, Uganda

“Human rights is what reason requires and conscience demands. We need to use human rights if we want to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS” says Lydia Jacenta Nakiganda.

Lydia explains: “I fight for the rights of People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). That fight involves combating stigma and discrimination. When an open and supportive environment exists, PLWHA will be able to access treatment, care and support. They will be more likely to seek testing to know their status, thereby enabling them to take measure to prevent transmission to others.”

Lydia credits HRAP with helping her to develop a deeper understanding of human rights: “HRAP has changed my understanding of human rights and provided a platform for me to think and to strengthen my commitment to human rights.” She says, “HRAP has taught me to inform people in the simplest terms possible” via campaigns, op-eds and other advocacy tools.

Reflecting upon her HRAP experience, she concludes, “I now feel more responsible

than I was before...to work more actively with a better focus and strategy.”

*By 2008 Advocate Peter Mulbah of Liberia*

## Faculty Mentor

### David Hoos

Senior Implementation Director, International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs  
Program Director, Multicountry Columbia Antiretroviral Program

Assistant Professor of Clinical Epidemiology  
Mailman School of Public Health

## Classes

Human Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, Barnard College

Law, Policy and Human Right, Mailman School of Public Health

Seminar in Sexuality, Gender, Health, and Human Rights, Mailman School of Public Health

## Networking

### New York City

Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health

Global Fund for Women

Health Global Access Project

Human Rights Watch

International Peace Institute

Keep a Child Alive

Sperry Fund

VOCAL NY

## Washington, D.C.

Academy for Educational Development/FHI 360  
Action Aid  
Advocacy Project  
Catholic Relief Services  
Centre for Development and Population Activities  
Freedom House  
Fund for Global Human Rights  
International Center for Research on Women  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
National Endowment for Democracy  
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights  
United States Institute of Peace  
United States State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

## Speaking Engagements

*Gender-Based Violence: A Panel Discussion featuring Sabrina Mahtani, Lydia Nakiganda and Sulakshana Rana.* Sponsored by ISHR Graduate Student Council and Columbia University Students for Human Rights.

*Introduction to 2012 Human Rights Advocates Program.* Sponsored by Professor Andrew Nathan, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.

*Growth of the Human Rights Movement in Africa Case Study: NGOs in Sub Saharan Africa.* Sponsored by Professor J. Paul Martin, Barnard College.

“ Human rights is what reason requires and conscience demands. ”



## Primah Kwagala Namudiba

Program Officer  
Center for Health, Human Rights and  
Development  
Kampala, Uganda

Primah lives in a community where everyone is affected by HIV/AIDS. The quality of health care, however, is far from adequate. Part of the problem is the lack of access to information of the services that are available, but also the inability to hold service providers accountable to people. The desire to see people go out to seek and receive basic health care when they need it is what pushed her into human rights. She wants to see positive change in the lives of people in the community she lives in. That cannot happen if “we choose to stay silent.” She asserts, “Human rights work offers me the space to demand for what is rightfully ours.”

As a first-born girl child in a patriarchal society where entitlements such as inheritance, land rights and higher education are a “privilege,” Primah knows what injustice means. Because of her passion for justice and equality, all throughout her school days she sought leadership positions for the purpose of speaking out for marginalized students at school including those who couldn’t afford a change of school clothes, physically disabled students and students with HIV.

Primah says she learned to engage policy and law makers in dialogue to bring about change in her society. “It is not always because they want to hurt us,” she said, “but they need to be educated on what should be done.” According to her, dialogue has changed the person she is and shaped her vision for a free world. She believes that there is hope. When she goes to work, she sees positive change in the communities as a result of her work. Because of her lobbying and advocacy, she has been able to ensure that medicine is always available at healthcare facilities in her community. She said, “Saving lives makes me want to do more every day.”

She pointed to corruption in her country as a big challenge. Funds for medicine are very often misused or, in some instances, reported lost. “It makes my heart bleed,” she says. The delays in the justice system in Uganda also trouble her. When litigating or doing advocacy for a case in court for years, it makes clients lose hope in the search for justice. In her opinion, “Justice delayed is justice denied.” For her, the government should always find a way to quickly deal with human rights cases.

Reflecting on HRAP, she said that she could not wait to go back to apply her newly acquired skills. She credits Robert Levy, U.S. Magistrate Judge of the Eastern District of New York, who mentored her while she was in HRAP, for inspiring her to become a

judge in her country. “By attending hearings and participating in meetings with court personnel,” she said, “I have now a solid understanding of the American justice system.” In her view, becoming a judge can enable her to advocate for policy change from within.

*Interview by 2010 Advocate Bakary Tandia of the USA*

“ Saving lives makes me want to do more every day. ”





## Faculty Mentor

### Judge Robert Levy

Adjunct Professor of Law  
Columbia Law School

## Classes

New Media and Development, School for  
International and Public Affairs

Law, Policy and Human Rights, School of Public  
Health

## Networking

### New York City

Clinton Global Initiative

Equality Now

Global Fund for Women

Global Justice Center

Health Global Access Project

Human Rights Watch, Africa Division

International Peace Institute

International Women's Health Coalition

Sperry Fund

### Washington, D.C.

Action Aid

Advocacy Project

Center for Health and Gender Equity

Centre for Development and Population Activities

Disability Rights Initiative, Open Society  
Foundations

Freedom House

Fund for Global Human Rights

Global Partnership for Disability and Development

International Center for Research on Women

National Endowment for Democracy

O'Neill Institute

Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human  
Rights

United States Institute of Peace

United States State Department, Bureau of  
Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

## Speaking Engagements

*Introduction to 2012 Human Rights Advocates  
Program.* Sponsored by Professor Andrew  
Nathan, School of International and Public  
Affairs, Columbia University.

*Human Rights Advocates Panel Discussion featuring  
Sabrina Mahtani, Sulakshana Rana, Primah  
Kwagala Namudiba, Rachel Mburu and Lucy  
Talgeih.* Sponsored by Professor Rainer Braun,  
School of International and Public Affairs,  
Columbia University.

*An Evening with Columbia's Human Rights  
Advocates, Panel Discussion.* Sponsored by the  
Columbia University Club of D.C.



The Advocates visited The Sperry Fund which has generously supported HRAP for many years.  
Photo provided by Tiffany Wheatland.

# 3 Workshops

HRAP organizes a number of skills-building workshops to help the Advocates succeed in their advocacy efforts. The Program deeply appreciates the time—which always goes beyond the scheduled hours—that the workshop instructors devote to the Advocates.

## Editorial Writing

Willow Duttge

In this four-part workshop, Willow Duttge instructed the Advocates how to compose effective op-eds in support of their

human rights advocacy goals. Each Advocate had the opportunity to compose their own op-ed, which provided them the chance to hone the skills of crafting a well-supported, well-written argument and tailoring their messages to specific audiences and publications. Each Advocate also practiced thinking critically as a writer and reader by responding to each other's articles through written critiques and in-class dialogue. Willow herself uses these skills, honed over

The 2012 Advocates attended a six-part workshop series at HRW.



10 years as a reporter, copywriter, and editorial strategy consultant, in her work helping organizations express themselves with strength and clarity to any audience.

## Effective Presentations

Stephanie V. Grepo, Columbia University

The Advocates learned how to make concise and effective presentations on their work. Stephanie V. Grepo, Capacity Building Director of the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University, encouraged the Advocates to provide constructive feedback to one another in a supportive environment.

## Ethics and Compliance

Michael Silverman, Columbia University

Michael Silverman, Adjunct Associate Professor at School of International and Public Affairs, led three workshops on the broader issues of managing organizations to meet their respective compliance and ethical challenges. Michael has held various offices specializing

Diederik Lohman of HRW teaches a workshop series on Research, Documentation and Writing.



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.

### 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.

### Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming

Lana Ackar, PRAVNIK

During the workshop led by 2011 Advocate Lana Ackar, the Advocates discussed the relevance of their work in the field of gender equality as a part of human rights activism. Through analysis of articles

and tools used by media, the Advocates explored methods of intervention when issues of socially constructed roles have to be addressed. The Advocates also looked at international gender equality standards and advocacy tools that they can use in their daily work. They did a practical exercise, followed by a peer review, on how to include gender perspective in different projects they do in order to increase the effectiveness of their work and contribute to promotion of gender equality. Lana is the co-founder of PRAVNIK (LAWYER), located in Sarajevo.

### 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

T.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.

### 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. He also facilitated discussions in which the Advocates shared what they learned in the various courses they attended while in HRAP. Tandia is a case worker and policy advocate at African Services Committee in New York City.

### Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

Elsadig Elsheikh, University of California-Berkeley

2009 Advocate Elsadig Elsheikh, Researcher and External Relations Specialist at The Haas Institute for a Fair & Inclusive Society, University of California-Berkeley, presented an interactive workshop on negotiation and conflict resolution geared toward human rights work. The Advocates worked on critical aspects of effective communication skills that help them to acquire better tools to engage their advocacy within and beyond their communities. Through mapping the conflict theories, role plays and discussion, the Advocates used real-life scenarios drawn from their own experiences.

### Oral History

Nicole Pombier Berger, StoryCorps

A graduate student in the Oral History Masters of Arts program at Columbia and a staff member in the Education Department at StoryCorps, Nicole Pombier Berger offered a two-part workshop on using oral history tools to advance human rights work. The first workshop focused on a discussion of what oral history is, and drew on Advocates' experiences to illustrate the power and challenges of the form. In the second workshop, the Advocates reflected on case studies to identify characteristics of good oral history projects and raise



Professor Rainer Braun led a panel discussion featuring the Advocates.

important questions about oral history tools and human rights work, and worked in pairs to conduct peer interviews.

### 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.

### Research, Documentation, and Reporting

Diederik Lohman and Jane Buchanan, Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch Senior Researchers Diederik Lohman and Jane Buchanan 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, Trauma, and 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 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

Jeremiah Drake, Riverside Church

Over two sessions, 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. Advocates learned about the main aspects of Theatre of the Oppressed: Forum Theatre, Image Theatre and Invisible Theatre in addition to a newly emerging branch, Aesthetics of the Oppressed.

### Video Advocacy

Rose Anderson and Jackie Zammuto, WITNESS

The Advocates travelled to WITNESS in Brooklyn, where they participated in a 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. Rose Anderson and Jackie Zammuto discussed the vital role that video can play in advocacy campaigns without great expense or the involvement of video professionals.

## 4 Support

The Institute for the Study of Human Rights is very grateful to the following for their financial support of the 2012 Program:

Arcus Foundation  
The Harriman Institute at  
Columbia University  
Dr. Zelma Henriques, John Jay  
College of Criminal Justice  
Open Society Foundations,  
International Women's Fund  
Sperry Fund  
Anonymous Donors

The Advocates got to know one another during a series of outings during orientation week.



The Institute for the Study of Human Rights is very grateful to the following HRAP alumni who kindly interviewed candidates for the 2012 HRAP:

2007 Advocate	John Caulker, Sierra Leone	2010 Advocate	Azra Smailkadic-Brkic, Bosnia/USA
2008 Advocate	Peter Mulbah, Liberia	2011 Advocate	John Mwebe, Uganda
2009 Advocate	Evalyne Achan, Uganda	2011 Advocate	Lana Ackar, Bosnia
2009 Advocate	Akinyi Ocholla, Kenya	2011 Advocate	Salima Namusoby, Uganda
2009 Advocate	Elsadig Elsheikh, Sudan/USA	2011 Advocate	Colins Imoh, Nigeria
2010 Advocate	Nagla Ahmed, Sudan	2011 Advocate	Abu Tunde, Nigeria
		2011 Advocate	Nadia Bazan, Colombia

The Advocates used Low Library as a central meeting point.



## 5 HRAP Administration

### Stephanie V. Grepo

Director, Capacity Building

Stephanie joined ISHR in August 2008. From 2000 to 2007, she was seconded by the U.S. Department of State to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the world's largest regional security organization. Stephanie organized elections and developed multi-ethnic experiential education programs in Kosovo; implemented confidence-building projects in the former crisis region of Macedonia; worked on return and integration issues and led a field office of 10 staff in central Croatia; and served as the youth and education advisor in Serbia. As an international observer for the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, she observed elections in Bosnia (2010) and Georgia (2012). Stephanie earned a master's degree in human rights from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in 2000. Previously, she worked as an editor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her volunteer experience with resettling Bosnian refugees in Boston in the early 1990s led her to work in human rights.

### Tiffany Wheatland

Program Coordinator

Tiffany returned to ISHR in 2012 to coordinate logistics for the third time for HRAP. As the 2012 Program Coordinator, Tiffany built upon the relationships she had established in the past with HRAP partners to organize logistics for workshops, schedule networking meetings and prepare the master schedule for the five-day trip to Washington, D.C.

Tiffany's previous experience includes a consultancy with UNFPA, teaching English and math to refugee women and children at the Liberian Refugee Camp in Ghana and coordinating networking efforts at the Arcus Foundation. She holds the BA in International Affairs and Political Science from the University of Iowa and the MA in International Affairs from The New School.

# 6 Institute for the Study of Human Rights

The Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR) was established in 1978 at Columbia University as the Center for the Study of Human Rights. In spring 2010, Columbia University elevated CSHR to the level of an institute. ISHR is committed to its three core goals of providing excellent human rights education to Columbia students, fostering innovative interdisciplinary academic research and offering its expertise in capacity building to human rights leaders, organizations and universities around the world.

ISHR (then CSHR) was the first academic center in the world to be founded on an interdisciplinary commitment to the study of human rights. This remains one of our most distinctive features. We recognize that human rights research must transcend traditional academic boundaries, departments, and disciplines, reaching out to practitioners so as to address the ever-increasing complexities of human rights in a globalized world. ISHR's emphases on interdisciplinarity, engagement and globalism draw from and complement the strengths that have long characterized intellectual life at Columbia.

The Advocates spend the majority of their time on the Morningside Heights campus.



## ISHR Staff

**Irene Atamian**, Business Manager  
**Elazar Barkan**, Executive Director  
**Jillian Carson**, Program Assistant  
**Kristina Eberbach**, Director, Education  
**Yasmine Ergas**, Associate Director  
**Danielle Goldberg**, Coordinator, Peace-building and Rights  
**Stephanie V. Grepo**, Director, Capacity Building  
**Matthew Heaphy**, Associate Research Scholar, International Criminal Court Program  
**Joe Kirchhof**, Coordinator  
**Ariella Lang**, Director, Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability  
**J. Paul Martin**, Senior Scholar  
**David L. Phillips**, Director, Peace-building and Rights  
**Maya Sabatello**, Director, Disability Rights in Society Program  
**Liz Ševčenko**, Director, Guantánamo Public Memory Project  
**Elsa Stamatopoulou**, Director, Indigenous Peoples' Rights Program  
**John Washburn**, Adjunct Research Scholar, International Criminal Court Program  
**Janine White**, Program Coordinator

# 7 Comments from HRAP's Partners

*One of the longest-standing annual trainings that we conduct is with the Columbia Human Rights Advocates Program. We look forward every year to meeting and engaging with the participants, learning from their diverse expertise and experience, and discussing with them how video can best be used for*

*human rights. The Advocates this year were participatory, outspoken, and insightful and offered critical and relevant questions around the ethics, effectiveness, and safety of using video for change. The training with HRAP is a valued partnership that we look forward to having for many more years to come.*

Rose Anderson  
Program Coordinator  
WITNESS

*Engaging with the Advocates to help them strategize and produce op-eds that would further their advocacy was an honor and an inspiration. They posed thoughtful questions that kindled vibrant discussion; they put great time and care into writing ambitious and well-composed articles; and they enthusiastically responded to each other's work. Their contribution added great depth, complexity, and vitality to the workshop.*

*This was my first time working with the Human Rights Advocates Program. I learned a great deal from the Advocates' curiosity and*

The Advocates learned about slavery in the US during a private tour of the New York-Historical Society. Here they view The Slave Auction by John Rogers.

*expertise, and I hope that the workshop will contribute to their success, in communicating their critical missions to audiences who have the power to help them make change.*

Willow Duttge  
Editorial Consultant

*The participants I have met from HRAP are consistently among the most impressive young practitioners in the field. They come with real experience and the ambition to make a difference. I always enjoy the opportunity to interact with them, year after year.*

Theodore Feifer  
Senior Program Officer  
Academy of International Conflict  
Management and Peacebuilding  
United States Institute of Peace

*The Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala or Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation (fafg.org) and The Sperry Fund were delighted to host the 2012 Advocates to have a discussion about the 1982*

*Dos Erres Massacre in the Peten region of Guatemala and the effort to uncover the truth about this horrific event. Oscar Ramirez, a survivor of the massacre, Fredy Peccerelli, executive director of FAFG, and Attorney Scott Greathead, who is representing the survivor, and is also a trustee of Human Rights First and The Sperry Fund, made presentations and answered questions. The struggle to achieve justice and human rights under often dangerous and difficult conditions is a common thread in the work of the Advocates and it was an empowering experience for all to*

*share experiences and learn from each other. Opportunities such as this where advocates can meet first-hand human rights leaders are a valuable part of the HRAP program. We are honored to have participated this past year.*

R. Scott Greathead  
Partner

Wiggin and Dana LLP and Director  
The Sperry Fund

*The Human Rights Advocates Program makes an important contribution to the Columbia community and to NGO dialogue. Our interactions with the Advocates reflected their intelligence and commitment to their work, resulting in excellent experiences with learning in both directions. It is evident that HRAP sends their participants back to their work, often under dangerous circumstances, inspired, informed and reassured.*

Matthew Heaphy and John Washburn  
International Criminal Court Program  
Institute for the Study of Human Rights  
Columbia University

*Kemal and Eugenie shared with me the ways they promote peace in their communities. I hope to have such meaningful exchanges with future participants in the Human Rights Advocates Program.*

Brad Heckman  
Chief Executive Officer  
New York Peace Institute

*This year I had the absolute pleasure of working with the Human Rights Advocates Program. It was very obvious to me how*



*dedicated Stephanie Grepo is to her students and how hard she works to provide a diverse learning environment for them. During the activists' visit to the New-York Historical Society, we had a rich and engaging discussion about the slavery in New York, and how slavery impacted the city of New York. Their passion for human rights was evident through their questions and comments. I look forward to collaborating with the Human Rights Advocates Program again.*

Stephanie Johnson  
Educator  
New-York Historical Society

*One of the reasons we began publishing the Journal of Human Rights Practice in 2009 was a wish to create a new forum for sharing the insights and experiences of innovative national and local human rights practitioners whose work does not always receive the global attention it deserves. My continuing association with the Human Rights Advocates Program over the past few years has become an invaluable part of ensuring we keep in close contact with that vital constituency of groundbreaking practitioners and learning more about how their work is continually challenging and changing how we think about our profession. As in previous years, it was a huge pleasure to meet and talk with the 2012 Advocates and to invite them to become future contributors to the Journal of Human Rights Practice. Having already published two contributions from past*

*Advocates in recent years, I felt certain that we would again be receiving articles in the future from members of this dynamic and committed group of individuals. To spend even a short time with the 2012 Advocates was to have one's conviction in the bright future of human rights activism renewed!*

Brian Phillips  
Co-Editor  
Journal of Human Rights Practice  
(Oxford University Press)

*What a powerful presentation by your 2012 Human Rights Advocates! They did a fantastic job of putting a face to human rights issues. There is a lot of do in the area of human rights and many of the students who heard their message were touched and inspired (if not changed forever) to doing more. Please continue to bring this wonderful program to our classrooms, schools, campuses and universities and anywhere that will open its doors to your Advocates! It is without question, a program that definitely should be scaled up around the world.*

Lucia Rodriguez  
Director of the Global MDP Secretariat  
Columbia University

*We were honored to collaborate with the 2012 Advocates. Through multiple dynamic presentations, the Advocates engaged in discussion with Columbia graduate students across disciplines on critical human rights issues. The Advocates brought an incredible depth and breadth of knowledge to each topic, from gender rights in Liberia to*

*immigration reform in the US. The Advocates' wisdom, experience and passionate call to action undoubtedly had a great impact on everyone involved. We look forward to collaborating with next years' advocates!*

C. Mae Smith  
Co-President  
Columbia University Partnership for  
International Development

*Sabrina and Kemal moved many members of our Congregation. Their presentations were unassuming and powerful and let us understand not only their human rights work but their personal journeys as well. We in the audience understood our personal stake, as Jews and Americans, in the upholding of human rights everywhere. Sabrina's and Kemal's presentations*

Stephanie Johnson, an educator with the New-York Historical Society, led a private tour for the Advocates.

*underscored the importance of solidarity—of understanding that violations of personal dignity anywhere are an affront to all of us. They are making a difference in challenging and overcoming engrained prejudices and long, historic animosities. Thank you for bringing these Advocates to our community.*

Rabbi Sam Weintraub  
Kane Street Synagogue

*I was very pleased to be able to include Ms. Marayah Fyneah in the first session of the Gender Policy Practicum. She presented a comprehensive and very compelling presentation on the challenges facing advocates and organizers working to increase Liberian women's political participation.*

Maxine Weisgrau  
Associate Adjunct Professor  
School of International and Public Affairs  
Columbia University







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