

Human
Rights
Advocates
Program
2022–23

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



HRAP 2022—23

CONTENTS

1	Introduction.....	3
2	The Advocates In Their Own Words.....	5
3	Workshops, Conversations and Lectures.....	45
4	Support.....	49
5	Testimonials.....	51
6	ISHR Staff.....	55
7	HRAP Administration.....	57
8	Alumni News.....	59
9	Mourning the Loss of 2016 Advocate Raoul Kitungano of the DRC.....	61

1

INTRODUCTION

The 2022–23 Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) marked the 34th iteration of the program. Founded in 1989, HRAP leverages the resources of Columbia University and those offered by NYC as a hub of NGOs and international organizations to provide human rights advocates like the advocate with Ethiopia with academic, skill-building, mentoring, and networking opportunities as well as a safe space to reflect, learn and grow. Through seminars, participation in University courses, and workshops led by staff from leading human rights organizations as well as meetings with policy makers and funders, advocates share their experiences, reflect critically on their work, and plan future campaigns.

356 advocates from 95 countries have participated in HRAP since 1989. The cumulative reach of HRAP participants is extraordinary: alumni have worked with organizations whose memberships range from the hundreds to the millions. They can be found at prominent human rights organizations, serving in their national governments and at the UN, and teaching at universities around the globe.

The 2022–23 cohort included 10 advocates from as many countries working on issues including LGBTQI+ rights, the rule of law, Indigenous peoples' rights, trauma, disability rights, youth development, and capacity building.

Building upon lessons learned during the previous programs held during the pandemic, the 2022–23 cohort attended skill-based workshops on a weekly basis over the fall semester. They traveled to NYC in January to participate in courses and engage with the Columbia University community during the spring semester. Throughout the entire program, they networked with organizations and participated in speaking engagements and conferences both on- and off-campus. This cohort was able to travel to Washington, DC, for a series of networking meetings and presentations. Many of them also attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

“Love and empathy are at the heart of my movement.”

ANONYMOUS ADVOCATE, ETHIOPIA, 2022–23 HRAP



2

THE ADVOCATES IN THEIR OWN WORDS



DAYANA BLANCO QUIROGA (she/her)

Coordinator

Warmi Shining and Uru Uru Projects

BOLIVIA

I am a human rights activist because it encompasses a collective perspective for a better future. My father always shares with me how difficult my grandfather expressed it was for indigenous peoples to walk by the city square; they were only allowed in determined places but couldn't enter the main square because it was only a place for "decent" people with good surnames, pretty clothes, beautiful shoes, not "abarcas" (traditional sandals of indigenous peoples). He expressed that from time to time, people joked about indigenous peoples smelling like llamas (our native animal). When I have conversations about my mother's academic dreams, some tears on her face start to fall. I hugged her with my grateful heart because she encouraged and supported me in pursuing higher education.

Although it was not possible to attend a university in the city, I studied in an Indigenous community where I connected with other Indigenous siblings. Even though years had passed since the time of my grandfather's stories, I can attest to how Indigenous women [continue to] face many barriers to attending university and have to fight against the assumption that our only role in life is to get married and care for household

chores. I was one of only two women graduating in my class. Moreover, because the university is located in an Indigenous community, we did not have libraries or computer labs. Sometimes, we had class outside because we did not have heat and the cold inside was so harsh. It was like having classes on the cold New York streets in the winter.

I faced all those challenges, but I also know how education transformed my life. The first thing I wanted after experiencing this transformation was to use this mighty weapon to serve my community sisters—to help them to overcome life's challenges through trainings and providing skills and tools to empower them.

The fight faced by my ancestors and women from my Indigenous community inspired me to become a human rights advocate to keep fighting for a better future. In Aymara, our native language, "Suma Qamana" means life with harmony. Life challenged me and made me appreciate and value the acknowledgment of our rights and, most importantly, respect others' rights.



“The fight faced by my ancestors and women from my Indigenous community inspired me to become a human rights advocate to keep fighting for a better future.”

Dayana Blanco Quiroga (she/her)

FACULTY MENTORS

Elsa Stamatopoulou

Director, Indigenous Peoples' Rights Program, ISHR

Adjunct Professor, Center for the Study of Ethnicity & Department of Anthropology

Sara Sinclair

Adjunct Faculty
Indigenous Oral Traditions and Anti-Colonial Oral Histories
Roots and Branches of Oral History
Oral History Master of Arts

CLASSES

Climate Justice
Indigenous Peoples Rights & Movements

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Climate Migration Symposium, Migration Working Group, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University

Indigenous Women for Human Rights and Social Justice, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, Columbia University

Presentation in Climate Justice, Columbia University

Between Neglect and Exploitation: The Case of Indigenous Communities in the Peruvian Amazon, Free the Slaves and ECLA, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

NETWORKING

NEW YORK

Amnesty International USA
Center for Economic and Social Rights
Ford Foundation
Front Line Defenders
International Network for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
International Service for Human Rights
Madre
Open Society Foundations Latin America and the Caribbean
PEN America
Plan International
StoryCorps
United Nations Development Programme-Latin America and the Caribbean

WASHINGTON, DC

Council for Global Equality
Free the Slaves
Global Fund for Children
International Social Service-USA
Latin America Working Group
National Endowment for Democracy
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Institute of Peace
Washington Office on Latin America

ELCA **FREE THE SLAVES**

**22nd Session
of the United Nations
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

**BETWEEN NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION:
The case of Indigenous Communities in the Peruvian Amazon**

Thursday, April 20 at 11am - 12:30pm EST

Church Center for the UN
8th Floor
777 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Opening Remarks: **Christine Mangale**, Director, Lutheran Office for World Community

FTS Report Presentation: **Dr. Giselle Balfour**, Heads of Programs, Free the Slaves

Respondents:
Melania Canales Poma, - Organización Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas Andinas y Amazónicas del Perú / Coordinación ECLAM Sur, Peru
Tania Pariona Tarqui, International Indigenous Women's Forum, Peru
Dayana Blanco Quiroga, Coordinator, Warmi Shining and Uru Uru, Bolivia
Moderator: **Maria Isabel Flota Ayala**, International Indigenous Women's Forum, Mexico

Closing remarks: Dr. Lanoi J. Parmuat, Executive Director, ENAI - Africa



Dayana and the advocates visited some of NYC's tourist attractions.



Dayana attended a talk at the Mailman School of Public Health on adolescent SRHR in Darfur refugee camps, Chad. She said she found many similarities with what indigenous women and girls face in her community in Bolivia.



2021-22 Advocate Aminatu Samira met the advocates while she was visiting NYC for CSW.

ANTONIA MOREIRA (she/her)

Head of Strategy

TRANSmoras Association

BRAZIL


I was born in a small city in the countryside of São Paulo, Brazil. My parents, Northeastern immigrants, worked tirelessly to provide me with the best education opportunities they could. Although I had a good life there, I remember how gender was central to many of my traumas. I was evidently a queer child, so my body carries some scars from that period.

I moved to Campinas at 18 to explore my identity and to feel free. In college, I co-founded my college's first LGBT collective. It was a space for us to assemble, form a community, and share intersectional experiences. However, something was still bothering me. I had an impulse to change my clothes and how I expressed myself to the world. At the end of 2017, one of my friends in the collective talked to me about TRANSmoras. Some months later, I would meet the founders of this influential collective that changed my identity's acknowledgment.

At TRANSmoras, I have always been called by female pronouns. They saw something so deep inside my soul that I couldn't access it before by myself. It took me four months to self-express Antonia after I met that collective. I usually say that TRANSmoras is a factory of new trans people. I learned that others like me don't have the same opportunities. When gender transitioning early in life, many of us are expelled from families, schools, and social circles of society. The streets are often the only place that welcomes you. Transphobia is so pervasive in Brazil that a travesti has a life expectancy of only 35 years.

I didn't know exactly what to do, but I knew that I had to join that group and do something about it. A significant part of being an advocate is doing your part to change a reality when you see that your work is needed. TRANSmoras was creating workshops in fashion and intended to expand its reach. The objective of our group became to transform that informal collective into a non-profit association recognized by the State. I played an essential role in shaping TRANSmoras' message, strategy, and fundraising approach. I spent five years helping transform TRANSmoras into a network for activists and artists.

Recently, the violent murder of a trans girl changed my relationship with advocacy. I had never talked with her, but I remember her from events. She was almost my age and studying at the best university in Brazil. No privilege we have, like going to college or having the support of our parents, stops transphobia and violence from happening. That case shocked me so much; it was so close to me, and her history was so close to mine. I started to think that I can't run for illusions—illusions of inclusion. I don't want to be included in a system that kills my sisters. I want real change. I want a new system that respects our rights and understands that Trans Rights are Human Rights.



“No privilege we have, like going to college or having the support of our parents, stops transphobia and violence from happening.”

Antonia Moreira (she/her)

FACULTY MENTOR

Tamara J. Walker
Associate Professor of Africana Studies
Africana Studies
Barnard College

CLASSES

Gender Justice
Serious Play: Oral History and the Art of Storytelling

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Transgender Rights Worldwide, Human Rights Working Group, Columbia University

Queer Perspectives from Brazil, Ethiopia and South Africa, International House

Global Activists: Promoting Rights and Health of LGBTQI+ Populations in Brazil, Ethiopia and Georgia, Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

Resident Panel for Human Rights: LGBT-centered stories from Various Cultural Backgrounds, International House



Jade and Antonia met with Mariam Gagoshashvili, Director of the International Fund at Astraea.

NETWORKING

NEW YORK

Amnesty International USA
Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
BrazilFoundation
Custom Collaborative
Ford Foundation
Front Line Defenders
International Service for Human Rights
International Trans Fund
Madre
Open Society Foundations Latin America and the Caribbean
Out in Tech
OutRight International
PEN America
SAGE
StoryCorps
United Nations Development Programme-Latin America and the Caribbean
United Nations Development Programme-LGBT
UNOPS
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

WASHINGTON, DC

Council for Global Equality
Free the Slaves
Global Fund for Children
Human Rights Campaign
International Social Service-USA
Latin America Working Group
National Endowment for Democracy
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Institute of Peace
Washington Office on Latin America

CAMBRIDGE, MA

Carr Center for Human Rights, Harvard University



Antonia visited the botanical garden in the Bronx.



The advocates interacted with students in classes and at speaking engagements such as this one with the TC Global Mental Lab.



The advocates met with staff at the Ford Foundation.

ANA MARIA BELIQUE (she/her)

Founder and Leader

Reconoci.do

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

As a Dominican of Haitian descent, I was born in a batey, a community around a sugar cane company where my parents and other Haitian migrants were brought to work as cane cutters. From a young age, I witnessed the injustice and the mistreatment that many of these workers were subjected to on a daily basis. The Dominicans treated these migrants as workers' arms with no basic living conditions in the bateys. I have seen how everyone believes they have the right to mistreat or deceive the Haitian workers sometimes just because they are undocumented, unable to speak Spanish or black. I started feeling uncomfortable with such an experience.

I grew up in a church that cared for the poor, migrants, and the most oppressed. This is where I learned about human rights. As I learned about Jesus' ministerial approach in the Gospel, I realized that as children of the Creator, we all deserve respect and dignity because God is always on the side of the oppressed. Upon careful reflection while reading the Bible through a justice lens, I started questioning myself daily: if we are equal before God and are all created by the same God, why do some seem to have rights that others do not? Why do some have opportunities and others do not? From there came my motivation to defend those who suffer at the hands of the powerful. I realized that being a Christian means defending people's rights, promoting dignity and respect, and creating conditions so that we can all enjoy life as human beings without distinction of sex, race, color, nationality, etc.

I wanted to go to university but I couldn't because my documents were suspended on the pretext that they were under investigation. The Dominican authorities wanted to inquire about my parents' immigration status when I was born. From 2005 to 2010, all children of Haitian immigrants born in the Dominican Republic went through this investigation process. As a result,

I went into a crisis and became indignant. I was paralyzed as it had become impossible for me to leave the batey and succeed in Dominican society. As a black woman, I struggled to move forward and, through education, break the cycle of poverty. I was prevented from doing so, not because of my physical or mental ability, but because of the racist measures of a State that for centuries has exploited the labor of my parents and grandparents. This same State now rejects us like nothing, to the point of removing the little that their descendants have, the right to nationality, to have documentation, and to economically better themselves through work. Faced with this situation, I told myself that I would not sit by idly, waiting for the State's goodwill. I decided instead, together with many other individuals unwilling to wait, to create a movement to frame our future. We overcame our fear and took to the streets, thus making visible the injustices of the Dominican state. Since then, I have been fighting for myself and every denationalized Dominican.



Ana spoke about her work at Baruch College.

“I decided instead, together with many other individuals unwilling to wait, to create a movement to frame our future.”

Ana Maria Belique (she/her)

FACULTY MENTOR

Frances Negrón-Muntaner
Professor of English and Comparative Literature
Founding Director of the Media and Idea Lab
Founding Curator of the Latino Arts and Activism Archive, Columbia's Rare Books and Manuscripts Library

CLASSES

Serious Play: Oral History and the Art of Storytelling

Advocating and Campaigning for Social and Economic Rights

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Black Women Empowered, Lehman College, CUNY

Calling for Transnational Solidarity: The Human Rights Movement in the Dominican Republic, CUNY Graduate Center

Parsley: Film Screening and Discussion, Marist College

From La Sentencia to a Transnational Hispaniola, Baruch College, CUNY

Presentation in Citizenship and Activism, Barnard College

Brief Reflection and Call to Action on the Reality of Dominicans of Haitian Descent in the Dominican Republic, Kairos Center For Religions, Rights and Social Justice, Union Theological Seminary

Discrimination and Denationalization of Dominican of Haitian Descent, Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute

Presentation on the children's book La muñeca de Dieula, Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project

Activism and Human Rights Defenders in the Dominican Republic, Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project

The Retreat: Birth Equity, Gender Equality, and Transnational Solidarity, National Birth Equity Collaborative

NETWORKING

NEW YORK

American Jewish World Service

Amnesty International USA

Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute

Center for Economic and Social Rights

Fordham University School of Law

Front Line Defenders

International Network for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

International Service for Human Rights

Madre

New York University International Relations Program

Open Society Foundations in Latin America and the Caribbean

PEN America

Plan International

Restless and Development

StoryCorps

United Nations Development Programme-Latin America and the Caribbean

Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

WASHINGTON, DC

Council for Global Equality

Free the Slaves

Global Fund for Children

International Social Service-USA

Latin America Working Group

National Endowment for Democracy

Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Institute of Peace



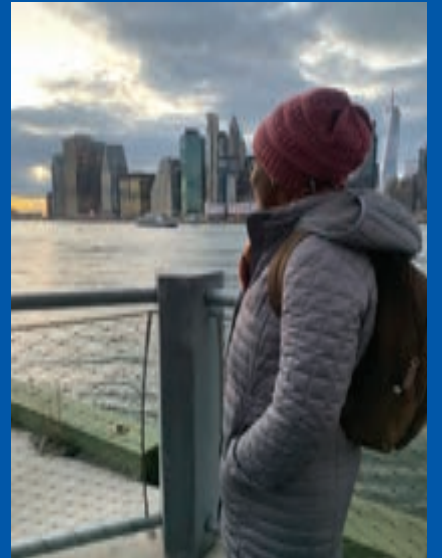
Ana provided students in Professor Jo Becker's class on Human Rights Skills and Advocacy with a real-life case study.



The advocates explored NYC.



ISHR marked the conclusion of the 2022-23 HRAP with a farewell lunch and ceremony.



The advocates visited the outer boroughs during their free time.

MARINE KAPANADZE (she/her)

Civil and Political Rights Program Director

Georgian Democracy Initiative

GEORGIA

I grew up in a small town in Georgia called Akhaltsikhe, where there was little opportunity for development due to a lack of afterschool activities, access to the Internet, youth projects, etc. When I look back on my childhood, I become slightly saddened that I did not have as many chances for advancement as children studying in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. However, thanks to the support of my parents and my own determination, I compensated for this lack of opportunity during my undergraduate studies in Tbilisi. Immediately after entering the university, I started to look for activities. I found a group of people willing to establish a debate club and joined them. Simultaneously, I began participating in the winter and summer schools, training programs, moot courts, etc.


I am more than sure that our childhood, the environment where we grow up, and our past influence our decisions. I don't think that it is a coincidence that I became interested in human rights. Reminding myself of my childhood wishes, I understand that I always wanted to resemble Mulan, the Little Mermaid, Pocahontas, and other characters who demonstrated strong determination and courage in tackling all of the obstacles they faced on their way to reaching their goals. I also experienced some bullying in my life from male children in early childhood and saw how others were bullied. Thus, the injustice happening around me motivated me to fight against it via advocacy and education.

After traveling around Western countries, I realized how essential it is for Georgia to develop to such a level that will allow all individuals to receive a high-quality education, pursue their dreams, and live with dignity. To achieve such conditions, Georgia needs to create

sufficient wealth and resources. Moreover, Georgia needs to strengthen its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, respect the rule of law, and protect basic human rights. This will be impossible without an adequate number of educated people who are sincerely willing to contribute to attaining prosperity for Georgia.

I have set a dual goal for myself: On one hand, I would like to be one of those people who will help transform Georgia's future into a better one. On the other hand, I intend to help raise such people via motivating and educating them. Working as a human rights advocate—more precisely as a human rights lawyer—helps me to achieve both goals. First, it enables me to advocate on behalf of different communities (LGBTQI+ activists, journalists, religious minorities, etc.) by using legal and non-legal tools and thus contribute to enhancing human rights standards in Georgia. Second, it provides access to different platforms for sharing my experience and knowledge to the younger generation, which ultimately facilitates the establishment of a pluralistic and solidarity-based society.

To conclude, I firmly believe that the way I have gone from finishing school in Akhaltsikhe to studying at Columbia University showcases my coherent and determined wish of being a prominent human rights advocate in Georgia and internationally. It also explains the reasons behind all of my endeavors, which are connected to my personal stories and the environment where I grew up.



“I don't think that it is a coincidence that I became interested in human rights.”

Marine Kapanadze (she/her)

FACULTY MENTOR

Laura Neitzel
Senior Fellow in Global Thought
Senior Lecturer in the Discipline of History
Global Thought
Columbia University

CLASSES

International Humanitarian Law/
Human Rights
Media Campaigning
and Social Change
Social Media
and Human Rights

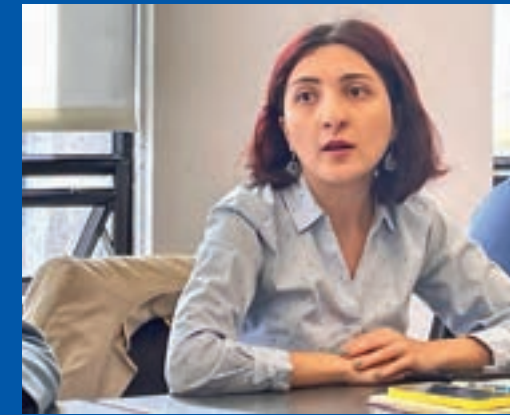
SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Strategic Litigation as a Tool for the Protection of Human Rights, Leitner Center for International Law and Justice, Fordham Law
Georgia: Once a Beacon of Democracy, Now on the Edge of Authoritarianism, Harriman Institute, Columbia University
Global Activists: Promoting Rights and Health of LGBTQI+ Populations in Brazil, Ethiopia and Georgia, Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

NETWORKING

NEW YORK
Amnesty International USA
Fordham University School of Law
Front Line Defenders
International Service for Human Rights
Madre
PEN America
Scholars at Risk
StoryCorps

WASHINGTON, DC
Council for Global Equality
Free the Slaves
Global Fund for Children
Human Rights Campaign
International Social Service-USA
National Endowment for Democracy
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Institute of Peace



The advocates attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

LEITNER HUMAN RIGHTS SPEAKER SERIES

IS HR
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Institute for the study of human rights

JOIN US FEBRUARY 28, 2023
AT 12:30 PM EST

Strategic Litigation as a Tool for the Protection of Human Rights-
analyzing cases from the Republic of Georgia



Marine Kapanadze
Civil and Political Rights Program Director,
Georgia Democracy Initiative

co-sponsored with HRAP at the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University

Where: Fordham Law School, RM 4-07
Also Via Zoom!

REGISTER:
LEITNERCENTER.ORG/EVENTS



The advocates networked extensively in NYC and DC.

SHARMA AURELIEN (she/her)

Former Executive Director

Solidarite Fanm Ayisyèn-SOFA

HAITI

I grew up in Haiti, a country where gender inequalities are prevalent in social relationships. It is the same for class inequalities as the differences in living standards between people from the working class and upper class backgrounds are excessively high. Similar to other societies, people in Haiti are more likely to recognize the latter type than the former. In other words, people are more aware of class issues than gender issues because they minimize such inequalities based on social relations between females and males.

With the family being one of the main institutions for the transmission of values, I began to observe this unbalanced relationship between my father and my mother and to question it very early in my life. My mother was also aware of these differences in terms of opportunities that were available to her compared to my father and always drew my attention to this. As a result, she never failed to remind me that school was the first path I needed to take to remove all of the barriers that women and girls face in society. But she was unfamiliar with the concept of patriarchy to explain this unbalanced relationship between women and men. In her view, only academic training for girls would be enough to break down gender barriers. My mother could not identify at that time the main cause of these inequalities or recognize that the main enemy of the full potential of women and girls is patriarchy. It also took me a long time to understand the mechanisms that establish these inequalities. But, my position as the oldest daughter of my family has led me to experience the reality of gender inequality and to better understand it.

As soon as I started university, I began to think more deeply about topics related to gender inequality. Thus, I did most of my assignments, my internship, and my undergraduate thesis on gender inequalities. When I joined SOFA-Solidarite Fanm Ayisyèn (Haitian Women

Solidarity), one of the oldest feminist organizations working to promote women and girls' rights in my country, in 2015, I started constructing my feminist activist path outside of my work first as a Program Officer and later as the Executive Director. I actively worked on all of SOFA's lines of intervention: the fight against violence against women and girls, women's political participation, women's health, and the fight against the feminization of poverty. I committed to helping women and girls in my country to reach their full potential by coordinating the concrete services offered to them by SOFA for the past seven years. The main services are the following: accompaniments for women and girls who are victims of violence, providing family planning, access to income-generating activities to girls and women in difficult socio-economic situations, research and training in the political participation of women, advocacy to demand depenalization of abortion, advocacy to increase access to legal and medical services for abused women and girls, and speaking out against corruption within the judicial system. Overall, these are the goals of my work as an activist.



Sharma spoke to Haitian groups in Brooklyn about her work.

“With the family being one of the main institutions for the transmission of values, I began to observe this unbalanced relationship between my father and my mother and to question it very early in my life.”

Sharma Aurelien (she/her)

FACULTY MENTOR

Megan Coffee
Assistant Professor of Population and Family Health
Mailman School of Public Health
Columbia University

CLASSES

Gender and Migration
Climate Justice

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

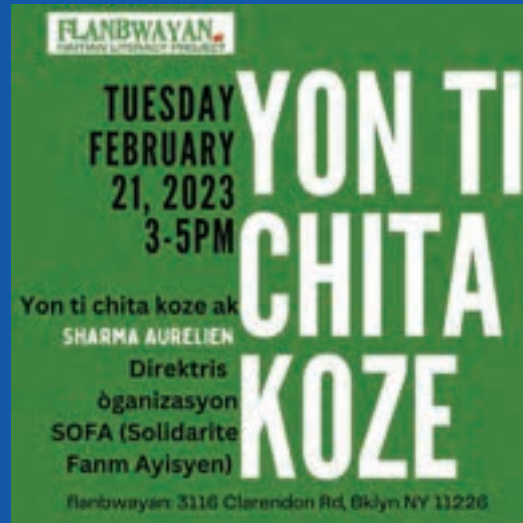
Gang Violence and the Call for Military Intervention by Illegitimate Authorities: A Focus on the Impacts of the Violence on Women and Girls, UN Commission on the Status of Women
Haitian Women's Movement, Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project
Origin of the International Women's Rights Day and Its Commemoration in Haiti, Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project
Haitian Feminist Movement: Assessment and Perspectives, Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees

NETWORKING

NEW YORK
American Jewish World Service
Amnesty International USA
Center for Economic and Social Rights
Front Line Defenders
International Service for Human Rights
Madre
Open Society Foundation Latin America and the Caribbean
PEN America
StoryCorps
United Nations Development Programme- Latin America and the Caribbean

WASHINGTON, DC

Council for Global Equality
Free the Slaves
Global Fund for Children
International Social Service-USA
Latin America Working Group
National Endowment for Democracy
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Institute of Peace



The winning photo from the DC trip was taken by Jelena Hrnjak.

ISABEL FLOTA (she/her)

Institutional Communications Officer

International Indigenous Women's Forum

MEXICO

Life has many paths. Throughout life, we make decisions sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously. I was three years old when my maternal grandmother began to call me her cute little guarecita. Guare is a Purépecha word from the Indigenous community of Michoacán. With those sweet words, my grandmother planted my identity in my heart.

My identity was also shaped by my paternal family through traditional Yucatecan food that reaches from the stomach to the heart. Our dishes and Mayan culture are intertwined. My grandmother, my aunts, and my father are always longing to return to the Yucatan after lunch or dinner to be surrounded by the aroma of achote, oregano, and red onion.

During my adolescence, we left behind the great capital of migration, Mexico City, to return to the land of our ancestors, Yucatan. That's where I found my roots. From a very young age, I began collaborating with Indigenous communities. We share food, words, and traditions. From Kopomá, Yucatán, I saw how my family migrated to the city, leaving behind their land but not their customs. They migrated because they wanted to have better resources in life.

At university, I continued to have a love for the land and communities. At that time, I lived in a small town in the state of Puebla. There I continued collaborating with the Indigenous communities near the city. They continued to awaken my spirit to work against racism, exclusion, and inequality.

Since then, I have created various collaborations with civil organizations. More than 10 years ago, I started the Alianza de Mujeres Indígenas de Centroamérica y México. I facilitated a communication workshop as part of the Diploma for Strengthening the Leadership of Indigenous Women which is organized at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. My involvement as both a facilitator and participant allowed me to rediscover myself and recognize all of the paths traveled by my Mayan and Purépecha ancestors.

I am a Mayan woman who works from her heart for a world without violence and that allows us to have a good life in our communities. On my way, I claim my Indigenous lineage in the company of my sisters and brothers because walking as a group in the Indigenous Movement is fruitful.

“I am a Mayan woman who works from her heart for a world without violence and that allows us to have a good life in our communities.”



Isabel Flota (she/her)

FACULTY MENTOR

Elsa Stamatopoulou

Director, Indigenous Peoples' Rights Program, ISHR

Adjunct Professor, Center for the Study of Ethnicity & Department of Anthropology

CLASSES

Indigenous Peoples Rights & Movements
Media Campaigning and Social Change
Social Media and Human Rights

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Presentation in Human Rights and Public Health, Barnard College

Brown Bag Lunch with Columbia Human Rights Advocates Program, New York University

Indigenous Women for Human Rights and Social Justice, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, Columbia University

Between Neglect and Exploitation: The Case of Indigenous Communities in the Peruvian Amazon, Free the Slaves and ECLA, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

NETWORKING

NEW YORK

Amnesty International USA
Center for Economic and Social Rights
Front Line Defenders
International Service for Human Rights
Madre
Open Society Foundations Latin America and the Caribbean
PEN America
Plan International
StoryCorps
United Nations Development Programme-Latin America and the Caribbean

WASHINGTON, DC

Council for Global Equality
Free the Slaves
Global Fund for Children
Indian Law Resource Center
Latin America Working Group
National Endowment for Democracy
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Institute of Peace
Washington Office on Latin America



Isabel and the advocates spoke to a number of organizations at a networking event in DC.



NYU
PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
IRPA
Latin American and Caribbean Studies
NYU ARTS & SCIENCE

BROWN BAG LUNCH

WITH

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

APRIL 3 1-2:15 PM

19 University Place
RM 222



Isabel Flota (she/her)
Mexico

Institutional Communication Officer @ International Indigenous Women's Forum

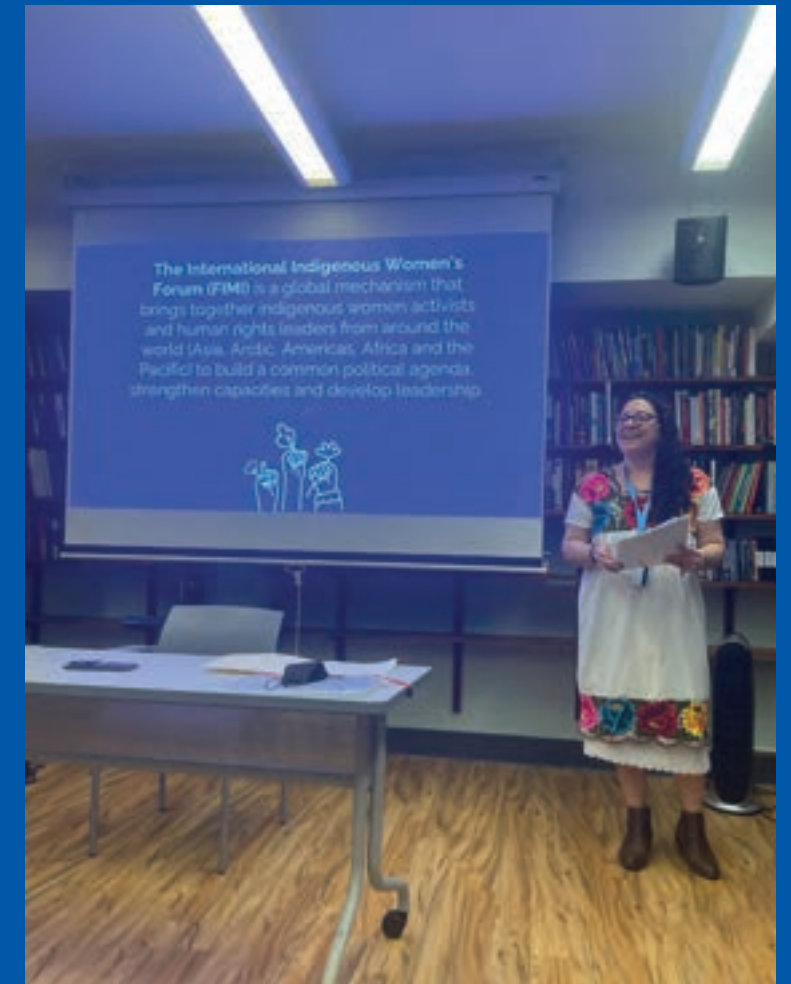


Jade Jacobs (they/them)
South Africa

Co-Director and Knowledge and Research Manager @ Iranti



Isabella moderated a panel at UNPFII that included Dayana.



Isabel spoke to students about her organization, FIMI.

JELENA HRNJAK (she/her)

Programme Manager

NGO Atina

SERBIA


Some of my first memories date back to the carefree and prosperous country of Yugoslavia, which quickly succumbed to civil wars and the complete breakdown of values, societies, and people around me. I was raised in the 1990s on the streets of Belgrade, a city colored by conflicts, crime, and destitution. The resistance movement against Slobodan Milosevic's regime was primarily led by youth protesters, who demanded that the atrocities committed on behalf of the people of Serbia stop and that the government take responsibility for its actions. I belonged to those jilted generations who found their purpose in civil action and disobedience; I continue to find my purpose in civil action today.

Life in those years was spent in complete darkness and detachment from everything human. Independent media and press representatives were intimidated, shut down, and canceled. On top of the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999, Serbian secret police assassinated Slavko Ćuruvija, journalist and editor-in-chief of the *Dnevni Telegraph* newspaper to ensure there was no freedom of speech. At that moment, I knew I wanted to become a journalist more than anything else. I knew I wanted to help share information when there was little information one could trust. I thought that was of the utmost importance to society.

At that point in my life, I was old enough to vote. I voted against the Milosevic regime. Milosevic lost those breakthrough elections but still refused to step down. The civic revolution in Serbia on the 5th of October 2000 followed his decision. I had my first lecture at the Faculty of Political Science that day. As a journalism student, I was reminded again of the critical lesson of civil disobedience, and I was encouraged by my professors to go to the streets and join the revolution.

One year later, I became the first woman editor-in-chief of the student newspaper *Politikolog* and wholly dedicated myself to ethical reporting. I realized through journalism how often women suffer negative socio-economic effects if they refuse to submit to certain societal pressures. I had a firsthand experience of all the oppressive strategies used to silence and discredit women. I felt the burden women are under when they dare to stand out. This was primarily because of the topics I was following such as war crimes, sexual violence in war (the cheapest military weapon), sexual exploitation and human trafficking, poor governance, organized crime, corruption, and structural human rights violations.

At that time, 14 years ago, I met women and girls who experienced human trafficking, and NGO Atina's uncompromised activists. I learned from them that institutional responses are necessary but insufficient, considering that many political leaders cannot comprehend their oppressed position in a society that abandons and humiliates women. Being a part of Atina, I realized the importance of the women's civil movement and how women and girls must regain freedom in order to recover. Being an advocate also made me aware of how authoritarian and undemocratic states—such as contemporary Serbia, where violence is used daily to silence opposing voices—are taking dignity from people. That drives me to strive, support other women, and stand on the right side of history.



“Being an advocate also made me aware of how authoritarian and undemocratic states—such as contemporary Serbia, where violence is used daily to silence opposing voices—are taking dignity from people. That drives me to strive, support other women, and stand on the right side of history.”

Jelena Hrnjak (she/her)

FACULTY MENTOR

Allison Ross
Senior Lecturer
School of Social Work
Columbia University

CLASSES

Gender and Migration
Media Campaigning and Social Change

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Ethical, Political and Social Challenges for Civil Society Organizations in Serbia in Addressing Violence Against Migrant and Refugee Women and Girls, Harriman Institute, Columbia University
Gender-Based Violence: Root Causes and Approaches to Healing, Proskauer

NETWORKING

NEW YORK

Amnesty International USA
Center for Economic and Social Rights
Front Line Defenders
International Network for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
International Service for Human Rights
Madre
New York State Anti-Trafficking Commission
PEN America
Plan International
Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Sanctuary for Families
StoryCorps
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

WASHINGTON, DC

Council for Global Equality
Free the Slaves
Global Fund for Children
Human Trafficking Legal Center
International Social Service-USA
National Endowment for Democracy
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Institute of Peace



Ethical, Political, and Social Challenges for Civil Society Organizations in Serbia in Addressing Violence against Migrant and Refugee Women and Girls A Lecture by Jelena Hrnjak

Jelena Hrnjak is a women's rights activist from Serbia. For almost a decade worked as a journalist in Switzerland and Serbia and graduated from the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Belgrade. As a Programme Manager of NGO Atina, Jelena has managed the organization's work for the past 14 years and is strongly committed to direct support and long-term assistance to women and children, victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence. She is considered one of the most experienced professionals in combating human trafficking in Serbia, especially in programming and supporting children who have survived sexual exploitation. She is also an international expert on human trafficking within the Council of Europe. The event will be moderated by *Tanya Domi*.

March 30, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
1219 International Affairs Building

 COLUMBIA | HARRIMAN INSTITUTE



Jelena and Isabel on the NYC subway.



The advocates met HRAP alumni including 2021-22 Advocate Danniell Alejandro Pinilla Cadavid.



The advocates met with Dave Peterson of NED when they visited DC.

JADE JACOBS (they/them)

Co-Director and Knowledge and Research Manager

Iranti

SOUTH AFRICA

I can't imagine that writing this will ever be able to adequately explain why I chose to become an advocate for human rights. I am a queer non-binary South African. For the longest time, I feared coming out because I feared being disowned by my family—I come from a family that struggled with accepting my identity as a queer person. This experience of having to hide my true self was extremely difficult and exhausting. For as long as I can remember, I wanted to find a way to make sure that other LGBTIQ+ people did not have to hide their identities and to create safe and inclusive spaces where LGBTIQ+ people could be their authentic selves.

I have been involved in the LGBTIQ+ movement in South Africa for a relatively short three years and seven months. I started my career as an LGBTIQ+ activist (if one can call activism a career...) after completing my MA in South African Sign Language at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2019. As a queer student doing research in communities that are mostly marginalised and often victims of violence, I realised that while research can be an important tool for creating awareness and driving change, action is also required to make that change accessible and tangible.

Over the past few years of my career, I have worked as part of a team to accomplish significant achievements toward shifting the harmful, discriminatory, and stigmatic misconceptions of LGBTIQ+ identities. While I felt myself getting stronger in my work, I also knew that I had room for growth. I understood that I needed to equip myself with tools that would enhance the skills I had already gained through my work in human rights advocacy. When the Human Rights Advocates Program was recommended to me, I applied after seeing how it offered incredible opportunities to build on the very skills I felt I needed. I had the honour of being accepted into the program, which was an important moment for

me because I knew this program would grant me access to a world of opportunities I would not easily come across otherwise. It also affirmed to me that all the hard work and effort I have continuously put in to have even the smallest impact in the lives of LGBTIQ+ African people like myself, was not in vain.

Becoming an HRAP advocate allowed me to strengthen my skills in networking and resource mobilisation, as well as learn more about strategy development for advocacy. It allowed me the space to think about how I would like to grow as an LGBTIQ+ activist and to meet with experts who guided me on this path. I also learned about human rights mechanisms such as various UN bodies and the role they play in providing access to human rights, and the protection of rights.

Initially, I thought that I would mainly connect with other LGBTIQ+ activists from across the world; I have since learned that this program allows me to think more broadly about working in intersectional ways across human rights sectors by gaining knowledge on the experiences faced by other marginalised groups outside of the LGBTIQ+ community. Through engagements with other human rights activists, I have learned some of the various methods being applied in their work to gain better access to human rights protections, and how these methods can be adapted and adopted in my own efforts towards the same.

Moving forward my aim is to take back the knowledge and skills I have gained through this program to effectively apply these strong and usable advocacy tools. I will apply these skills and work collectively to assist the LGBTIQ+ communities I work in to gain knowledge of their human rights, to gain access to their rights, and to protect their rights.



“For as long as I can remember, I wanted to find a way to make sure that other LGBTIQ+ people did not have to hide their identities and to create safe and inclusive spaces where LGBTIQ+ people could be their authentic selves.”

Jade Jacobs (they/them)

FACULTY MENTOR

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

CLASSES

Gender Justice
 Transnational LGBTI Rights

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Transgender Rights Worldwide, Human Rights Working Group, Columbia University
 Queer Perspectives from Brazil, Ethiopia and South Africa, International House
 Brown Bag Lunch with Columbia Human Rights Advocates Program, New York University
 Iranti: Dignity, Equality, Freedom, Arcus Foundation
 Human Rights in Sub Saharan Africa, Equality Without Borders
 Resident Panel for Human Rights: LGBT-centered Stories from Various Cultural Backgrounds, International House
 Presentation in Human Rights Methodologies, Columbia University

NETWORKING

NEW YORK
 Amnesty International USA
 Arcus Foundation
 Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
 Center for Economic and Social Rights
 Ford Foundation
 Front Line Defenders
 Initiative Sankofa d’Afrique de l’Ouest
 International Network for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
 International Service for Human Rights
 International Trans Fund
 Madre
 OutRight International
 PEN America
 SAGE
 StoryCorps
 UHAI-EASHRI
 United Nations Development Programme-LGBT

WASHINGTON, DC
 Council for Global Equality
 Free the Slaves
 Global Fund for Children
 Human Rights Campaign
 International Social Service-USA
 National Endowment for Democracy
 Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
 U.S. Department of State
 U.S. Institute of Peace

CAMBRIDGE, MA
 Carr Center for Human Rights, Harvard University

BROWN BAG LUNCH
 WITH
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

APRIL 3 1-2:15 PM
 19 University Place RM 222

Isabel Flota (she/her) Mexico
 Institutional Communication Officer @ International Indigenous Women's Forum

Jade Jacobs (they/them) South Africa
 Co-Director and Knowledge and Research Manager @ Iranti



The advocates spent time learning about each other while exploring NYC.



The advocates met a number of organizations during their visit to DC. Jade met with Jean Freedberg, Director, Global Partnerships, Human Rights Campaign.



Jade met with Human Rights Watch staff Graeme Reid and Ifé Fatunase.



2014 Advocate Esther Adhiambo and 2019 Advocate Wisdom Bebli met the current advocates.

ANONYMOUS ADVOCATE (they/them)

ETHIOPIA

Being an advocate for human rights, particularly for the Ethiopian LGBTIQ+ community, is not just a job for me. It is a personal calling, one that is born from my experiences of struggling to come to terms with my own gender and sexual identities.

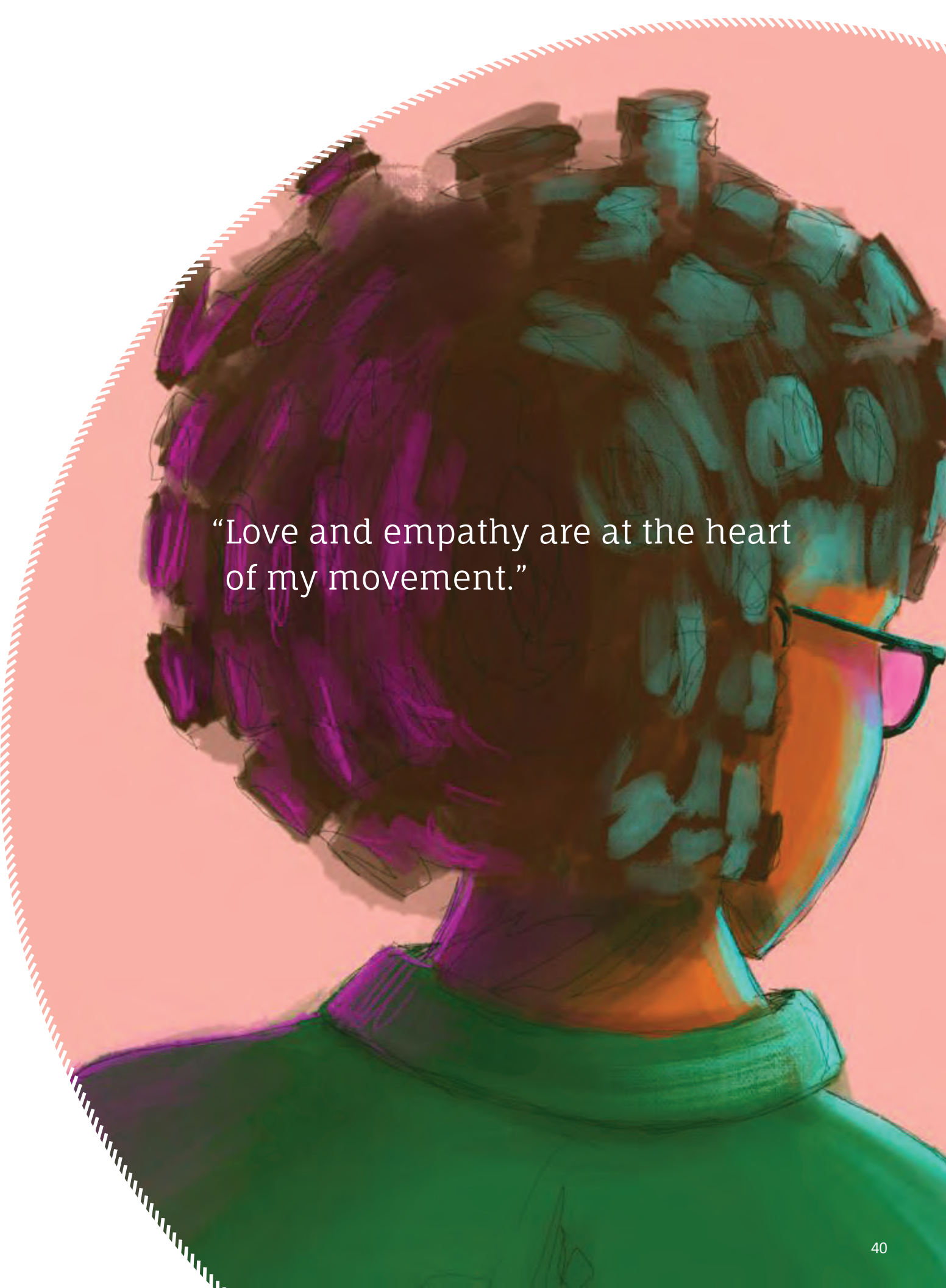
I grew up in a society that is intolerant towards anything that deviates from the norm, where individuals are shunned, discriminated against, and face violence. LGBTIQ+-identifying individuals often carry the brunt of that discrimination. It is a painful and isolating experience.

But being a part of the LGBTIQ+ community and working as an artist and activist, I have found a sense of belonging and purpose. I am lucky to have found a small group of people who have helped me find my voice and who share my passion for advancing the rights of sexual and gender minorities. Our work is not easy; we face real challenges and dangers that risk our lives and safety every day. But we work to create a safe space for people to express, accept, and love themselves for who they are. Love and empathy are at the heart of my movement. They motivate us to keep fighting for what is right, even in the face of extreme adversity.

The words of author-artist-educator-activist Toni Cade Bambara, “the role of the artist is to make the revolution irresistible,” have always resonated with me deeply. As

an artist, I have always felt that my role is to help shape the public narrative on culture and its impact on our daily lives. I believe that art has the power to change hearts and minds. It can push societal boundaries and allow for open conversations that might not be possible otherwise. By creating media that challenges people’s preconceived notions of what it means to be LGBTIQ+, I am working to do just that. Only by showcasing the truth can we create art and media that inspires people to think differently, questioning the norms and expectations of society in the process. I am co-creating a platform that brings attention to issues that are often overlooked or ignored and gives space for people who have been historically silenced. One way of doing that is by looking through our past to find better pathways to the future.

Being an advocate in Ethiopia is a daunting task, one that requires you to have patience, the courage to stand up against repressive power structures, and the imagination for a more just, equitable, and beautiful alternative reality. And I know that I am not alone in this fight.



“Love and empathy are at the heart of my movement.”

Anonymous Advocate (they/them) / Ethiopia

FACULTY MENTOR

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

CLASSES

Serious Play: Oral History and the Art of Storytelling
 Transnational LGBTI Rights

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Transgender Rights Worldwide, Human Rights Working Group, Columbia University
 Queer Perspectives from Brazil, Ethiopia and South Africa, International House
 Global Activists: Promoting Rights and Health of LGBTQI+ Populations in Brazil, Ethiopia and Georgia, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

We, Women, Web Activists—Principles, Outcomes, and Perspectives of Feminist Digital Activism for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, Initiative Sankofa d’Afrique de l’Ouest in collaboration with UHAI-EASHRI, UN Commission on the Status of Women

NETWORKING

NEW YORK
 Amnesty International USA
 Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
 Ford Foundation
 Front Line Defenders
 International Service for Human Rights
 International Trans Fund

Madre
 Out in Tech
 OutRight International
 PEN America
 SAGE
 StoryCorps
 UHAI-EASHRI
 United Nations Development Programme-LGBT

WASHINGTON, DC
 Council for Global Equality
 Free the Slaves
 Global Fund for Children
 Human Rights Campaign
 International Social Service-USA
 National Endowment for Democracy
 Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
 U.S. Department of State
 U.S. Institute of Peace
 Vital Voices

CAMBRIDGE, MA
 Carr Center for Human Rights, Harvard University



The advocates enjoying lunch at the Museum of the City of New York.



The advocates met with Front Line Defenders staff including Interim Executive Director Olive Munn and US Representative Ana Cutter Patel.

ANONYMOUS

I decided to become a Human Rights Advocate because I could no longer sit idly by after being sexually assaulted. It became crucial for me to stand up and fight for my community. I realized that many Trans women were in the same situation as me and silently lived in trauma and fear. They had no one to lobby for their cause. All the violence, discrimination, stigma, arbitrary arrests, repetitive corrective rapes, social exclusion, lack of access to education, increased poverty, lack of access to medical care, lack of a legal protection framework, suicides, etc. which the Trans community was going through was too much! All these inhumane situations motivated me to become a Trans advocate.

My organization promotes an environment in which LGBTQI+ people, particularly Trans women, can safely and freely live their lives without fear of discrimination, stigma and violence. We empower Trans women to rebuild their lives with dignity and purpose through direct services and support. My organization focuses

on protecting the rights of Trans women because they are the most vulnerable population within the LGBTQI+ community and are most affected by discrimination and violence of all kinds.

I organize spaces that foster a sense of family for my siblings grappling with the effects of trauma. I design projects with stakeholders, civil society organizations, and human rights organizations to raise awareness for LGBTQI+ rights and promote justice for victims of violence. Our team works in conjunction with other organizations to put pressure on political and religious leaders (the main authors of hate speech and violence against LGBTQI+ people in my country) to recognize and promote LGBTQI+ rights.

I am working towards developing my tools and knowledge as a Human Rights Activist so that I can better practice my activism and therefore better promote the lives of all Trans women throughout my country.

“We empower Trans women to rebuild their lives with dignity and purpose through direct services and support.”



The advocates spoke to representatives from a diverse group of organizations at a networking event in DC hosted by Free the Slaves and ISHR.

FACULTY MENTOR

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

CLASSES

International Human Rights Law
Transnational LGBTI Rights

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Transgender Rights Worldwide,
Human Rights Working Group,
Columbia University
Presentation in Human Rights in Theory
and Practice, Barnard College

NETWORKING

NEW YORK

Amnesty International USA
Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
Ford Foundation
Front Line Defenders
International Service for Human Rights
International Trans Fund
Madre
Out in Tech
OutRight International
PEN America
Plan International
SAGE
StoryCorps
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

WASHINGTON, DC

American Bar Association
Council for Global Equality
Free the Slaves
Global Fund for Children
Human Rights Campaign
International Social Service-USA
National Endowment for Democracy
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice
and Human Rights
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Institute of Peace

CAMBRIDGE, MA

Carr Center for Human Rights,
Harvard University

3

WORKSHOPS, CONVERSATIONS AND LECTURES



StoryCorps led a workshop on oral history for the advocates.

Research, Documentation, and Writing

Kyle Knight

Senior Researcher on Health and LGBT Issues

Aruna Kashyap

Associate Director, Economic Justice and Rights Division
Human Rights Watch

Aruna Kashyap and Kyle Knight led a six-part workshop that covered the conceptualization of a research project, interviewing victims and witnesses, interviewing perpetrators and accomplices, and writing.

An Introduction to StoryCorps

Kevin Alarcon and Isabella Gonzalez

National Facilitators

StoryCorps

Kevin and Isabella led a comprehensive workshop covering StoryCorps' mission, signature conversation style, operational procedures, tiers of service, style, community outreach efforts, and tools for communities while sharing some of the organization's work. They also invited the advocates to record conversations with StoryCorps.

Fundraising

Erik Detiger

Founder and Managing Director
Philantropia, Inc.

With more than a decade of experience working in the field of international philanthropy and fundraising, Erik provided the advocates with an overview of concepts and strategies in international fundraising. The four-part workshop series focused on fundraising from institutional donors and individuals.

Introduction to Candid

Tracy Kaufman

Programs Manager
Candid

Tracy Kaufman offered the advocates a comprehensive look at the resources available through Candid's online resources.

Video Advocacy

Isabel Pinheiro

Independent Human Rights Consultant

Isabel Pinheiro led a workshop on the effective use of video advocacy as a complement to traditional approaches to human rights advocacy. The 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.

Advocacy and Campaigns

Adrienne Lapar

Independent Human Rights Consultant

Adrienne Lapar facilitated a half-day workshop on human rights advocacy and campaigns. The workshop examined the process of developing an advocacy strategy and a theory of change. Adrienne shared examples of successful campaigns and lessons learned from her previous work with organizations like Human Rights Watch and Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict. It also gave advocates an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and to exchange ideas and good practices.



Adrienne Lapar worked with the advocates on campaign advocacy.

The Art of Creating Social Impact Campaigns

Stephen K. Friedman
Senior Advisor, Societal Impact
SYPartners

Stephen K. Friedman, former president of MTV and adjunct professor at SIPA, led the advocates on an examination of the workings of social impact campaigns that MTV had run, as well as strategies other organizations are using.

Consultation on Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

Tess McEvoy
New York Director and Legal Counsel
Jesselina Rana
Legal Fellow
International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
Ana Cutter Patel
US Representative
Front Line Defenders

The advocates participated in a consultation on the 25th anniversary of the UN Declaration on human rights defenders with staff from International Service for Human Rights and Front Line Defenders.



The advocates attended a consultation on the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Advocating in Challenging Situations

Lindsey Hutchison
Global Head of Humanitarian Policy, Advocacy, Influencing,
and Campaigns
Mohamed Djingo
Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Peace and Security
Plan International

Lindsey and Mohamed discussed ways to discuss challenging topics and advocate with audiences who might not be receptive to hearing them, how to convince stakeholders persuasively and safely, as well as how to effectively introduce yourself, your organization, your work, and your asks in an impromptu conversations or meetings. They conducted two-minute mock interactions with high-level diplomats at a reception where the advocates had to represent themselves, and shared feedback afterwards.

Human Rights Documentation

Pamela Graham, PhD
Director, Humanities & Global Studies
Director, Center for Human Rights Documentation
Kaoukab Chebaro
Head, Global Studies
Columbia University Libraries

The Center for Human Rights Documentation and Research at Columbia University holds an extensive collection of archives of human rights NGOs. Pamela and Kaoukab discussed the collecting program and the process of working with NGOs to preserve their records. They noted the value and importance of preserving the record of human rights advocacy. The CHRDR is also developing the Human Rights Web Archive, an online resource that captures and preserves the websites of human rights organizations and blogs. They demonstrated the HRWA and discussed the issues associated with preserving this information, and encouraged advocates to consider contributing their websites to this collecting effort.

Assessment of Need and Preventing Burnout

Helen Verdeli, PhD
Associate Professor of Psychology and Education
Founder and Director, Global Mental Health Lab
Teachers College

Dr. Verdeli led a workshop and in-depth discussion on ways to identify signs of burnout and work-related distress, as well as strategies to prevent burnout and mental ill health. Discussions led to personal sharings of the advocates distressing and stressful experiences, and the workshop provided a safe space to the advocates to process some of the challenges in their work.

Introduction to Columbia University Libraries

Yuusuf Caruso, PhD
African Studies Librarian
Columbia University Libraries

Yuusuf introduced the advocates to the Columbia University Libraries, which comprises 13 million volumes, over 160,000 journals and serials, as well as extensive electronic resources, manuscripts, rare books, microforms, maps, and graphic and audio-visual materials.

Introduction to the Foundation Directory

Stephanie V. Grepo
Institute for the Study of Human Rights
Columbia University

Stephanie introduced the advocates to the online Foundation Directory, the most comprehensive prospect research tool for fundraisers, with over 239,000+ grant maker profiles. She taught them how to search for grant makers who have funded organizations working on causes and with communities similar to those they serve.

Effective Presentations

Stephanie V. Grepo
Institute for the Study of Human Rights
Columbia University

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

Introduction to Podcasting

Emily Ko
Graduate Student, Film + Media Studies
Digital Audio Intern in the Music & Arts Library
Columbia University

Emily Ko introduced the advocates to the basics of podcasting.

Introduction to Vergil

Victor Jandres Rivera
Student, Columbia College
Work-study student, HRAP

Victor introduced the advocates to Vergil, the platform used by Columbia for course planning.

Coping Strategies for International Students

Yaniv Phillips, PhD
Senior Psychologist
Columbia Health

Dr. Phillips discussed the timeline of emotions facing international students new to campus and offered coping strategies. He addressed ways to maximize the classroom experience, how to navigate forming new relationships when living in a language and a culture that are not your own, getting comfortable, learning social norms, and managing expectations.

4

SUPPORT

The Institute for the Study of Human Rights is grateful to the following for their financial support of the advocates in the 2022–23 program.

Ambassador Nicholas Platt in memory of his wife, Sheila Platt

American Jewish World Service

Arcus Foundation

International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF/FIMI)

UHAI-East Africa

Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

Dean of Humanities, Arts & Sciences, Columbia University

Harriman Institute, Columbia University

Institute of Latin American Studies, Columbia University



ISHR organized a farewell lunch to celebrate the end of the 2022–23 HRAP.

5

TESTIMONIALS



Four advocates including Jade and Antonia (together farright) attended the first International Summit on LGBTQI+ Issues at Harvard.

“The LGBTQI+ activists from the Human Rights Advocates Program were outstanding participants at the first International LGBTQI+ Activism Summit at Harvard University. They engaged deeply with the content, brought a high academic caliber, and their presence was essential for the success of the event. Participants learned as much from their experience as they did from our faculty and experts. Despite the difficult and dangerous work they face, their commitment to advancing LGBTQ rights is truly inspiring. I am convinced they will be transformative changemakers when they return home to work on the safety and inclusion of LGBTQI+ people in their countries.”

DIEGO GARCIA BLUM, Social Change Fellow at the Center for Public Leadership, Harvard University

“Isabel Flota was a guest speaker in the advanced seminar on Human Rights and Public Health where one of the issues the students were exploring was climate change and environmental racism and their impact on the right to health and the right to a healthy environment. The students had read about the work on Indigenous communities to protect their traditional lands from exploitation, particularly at the hands of the extractive sector, and were interested to hear from Isabel about how Indigenous activists, women in particular, are organizing. She shared with the students the work done by Indigenous women around the world to shape CEDAW General Comment 39.

[The anonymous advocate] was a guest speaker in Human Rights Theory and Practice where students were exploring human rights standards and their application in real-life situations. [The anonymous advocate] recounted their/her work promoting rights for the LGBTQ community generally, but particularly for trans women who are specifically targeted for human rights violations and abuses. One interesting issue [the anonymous advocate] raised was the silence of the law in the their/her country on sexual orientation and gender identity but how that silence becomes a license for abuse. [The anonymous advocate] also discussed the challenge their/her community faces in light of the insecurity in [their/her country]. [The anonymous advocate] also discussed the potential impact of Uganda’s revived anti-homosexuality bill which has been passed by Parliament but not yet signed by President Museveni.

In both classes, the feedback was incredibly positive with the students thirsty to hear about human rights activism and advocacy and inspired to hear of Isabel’s and [the anonymous advocate’s] courage and commitment to making the world a better place.”

WIDNEY BROWN, Professor, Human Rights Program, Barnard College

“This Spring, the Human Rights Working Group and SPECTRUM, SIPA’s LGBTQIA+ advocacy group, co-hosted a very successful event on transgender rights around the world. Over 40 students listened to presentations by four of the LGBT+ advocates and were actively engaged in Q&A. A lunch hosted after the event allowed students to continue the conversation and further network with the advocate.”

HANNAH SATTLER, MIA Human Rights 2024

TESTIMONIALS

“I had the pleasure of teaching a workshop on advocacy and campaigns for the 2022-2023 HRAP cohort. It was a humbling experience to present a workshop to this accomplished group of advocates, who have such a wealth of experience in activism and knowledge of human rights issues. Their thoughtful questions helped me to reflect on key challenges facing the human rights movement today. The HRAP creates a unique and powerful opportunity for some of the world’s leading activists to exchange experiences and expertise, in order to strengthen the protection of human rights globally.”

ADRIANNE LAPAR, Independent Human Rights Consultant

“International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) was privileged to work and hold a consultation with human rights defenders part of the Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP), in line with ongoing activities around the 25th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. At ISHR, we are committed to being informed by and guided by experienced insights of human rights defenders, who provided valuable perspectives on the challenges they faced in their respective countries and regions. Overall, ISHR was honored to meet and work alongside defenders in HRAP, and we are grateful for their invaluable contributions and insights.”

TESS MCEVOY, New York Director and Legal Counsel, and
JESSELINA RANA, Legal Fellow, International Service for Human Rights

“The Human Rights Advocates program at Columbia University provides much need opportunities for human rights defenders (HRDs) to have rest and respite, to share their experience and to build their resilience and capacity. We were very happy to have the opportunity to engage with the HRDs in the 2022-2023 program and share and learn together.”

OLIVE MOORE, Executive Director (interim), Front Line Defenders



The advocates met with Front Line Defenders staff including Interim Executive Director Olive Munn (speaking).



The advocates visited PEN America.

“I was excited to welcome the 2022-23 Human Rights Advocates Program to PEN America’s office in-person this year following our lively networking meeting online with last year’s cohort. My team and I were once again so inspired to learn about the advocates’ heroic and impressive careers fighting for human rights and free expression through various intersections. It was a privilege to connect the cohort to all of the advocacy and assistance resources available to them through PEN America’s Freedom to Write Center, Artists at Risk Connection, and international PEN network around the world.

As a staff member from an organization pushing back against book bans across the United States, I was also particularly concerned to hear about the harassment faced by Ana Maria Belique for her children’s book “La muñeca de Dieula” for simply telling the story of a Black mother sewing her daughter a doll. Introducing Ana to our Writers at Risk team was an absolute privilege and we look forward to continuing to support her literary endeavors and fight against hate and censorship.

It is incredible to imagine the magnitudinous impact the Human Rights Advocates Program must be making year after year as more groundbreaking advocates are able to network with major advocacy organizations through this wonderful program. We are grateful to Columbia University and to Stephanie Grepo for inviting PEN America once again to support the advocates this year, and we look forward to making more meaningful connections with cohorts in the future.”

NICHOLAS “NIKO” PEREZ, Manager, Free Expression and Education

6

ISHR STAFF

IRENE ATAMIAN
Business Manager

JOANNE BAUER
*Senior Researcher, Business
and Human Rights*

JACKIE DUGARD
*Senior Lecturer in the
Discipline of Human Rights*

YASMINE ERGAS
*Director of the Woman and
Gender in Global Affairs Network*

STEPHANIE V. GREPO
Director, Capacity Building

CRISTIANA GRIGORE
*Founder of the Roma
Peoples Project*

GERGANA HALPERN
Director, Education

JULIA MANNES
*Undergraduate Studies
Coordinator*

MAGDALENA MEDLEY
*Communications and
Outreach Coordinator*

ANNA MILLER
Graduate Studies Coordinator

DAVID L. PHILLIPS
*Director, Peace-building and
Rights and Human Rights*

CAROLINE L. SILVA
*Senior Lecturer in the
Discipline of Human Rights*

ELSA STAMATOPOULOU
*Director, Indigenous Peoples'
Rights Program*

YVETTE ZAPATA
Finance Coordinator



2019 Advocate Florencia Ruiz (far left) organized a dinner for the advocates.

7

HRAP ADMINISTRATION

STEPHANIE V. GREPO (she/her) joined ISHR in 2008. Since then, she has increased the number of female participants in HRAP, secured funding to create openings in HRAP for LGBT and disability rights advocates, and encouraged HRAP alumni—who can be found in 95 countries around the globe—to cooperate across class years and geographic boundaries. She has advised alumni on their work ranging from youth empowerment in South Sudan and Bosnia-Herzegovina to capacity building for Indigenous Peoples to advocacy around prisoners' rights in Nigeria and Zambia. In 2011, she created a summer program at ISHR through which Columbia University students have volunteered at organizations led by alumni of ISHR's fellowships programs around the globe. She has organized side events on advocacy tools and strategies at the Committee on the Status of Women and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Most recently, she designed and secured funds for ISHR's first MOOC which is on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and can be found on edX.

With the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe from 2000 to 2007, Stephanie developed multi-ethnic experiential education programs in Kosovo; created and led a \$2 million euros grants program to support confidence-building projects at the grassroots level in North Macedonia; worked on return and integration issues and led a field office of 10 staff in one of the most politically sensitive regions of Croatia; and served as the youth and education advisor to the OSCE Head of Mission in Serbia. She has observed elections in Bosnia and Georgia.

Stephanie is currently on the faculty of The School of The New York Times where she developed and teaches the school's first human rights course for high school students. For nearly a decade, she was a lecturer at The New School. She is a graduate of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Her volunteer work in resettlement with Catholic Charities of Greater Boston led her to focus on human rights.

VICTOR JANDRES RIVERA (he/him) scheduled networking opportunities for the advocates in NYC and DC, recorded the advocates for the HRAP Channel on YouTube, copyedited grants and other documents for the advocates, and photographed them for the annual report. He is a student at Columbia College studying human rights as well as ethnicity and race studies. His academic interests include immigration issues, educational rights, and racial justice work. In addition to his work on HRAP, he is a member of Columbia's Students of Color Advisory Board, an immigration clinic director for Students for Sanctuary, a volunteer at the Riverside Language Program, and an undergraduate research assistant studying immigration and education policy. He is excited to live in Washington D.C. this summer to conduct public policy research through the Roosevelt in Washington Fellowship.

HANNAH SATTLER (she/her) organized the majority of advocates' speaking engagements on the Columbia campus as well as at Fordham and NYU. She is an MIA student at SIPA concentrating in human rights policy and international conflict resolution. Prior to beginning her graduate studies, Hannah worked for various non-profits, including the Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Education and Human Rights, the Anti-Defamation League and Human Rights First, as well as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. Hannah earned a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Northeastern University. Hannah will be spending the summer as an intern at Nia Tero, a human rights organization seeking to empower communities and expand the rights of indigenous in Colombia and across Latin America.



The advocates toured the Museum of the City of New York.



1996 Advocate **Twesigye Jackson Kaguri** was chosen to participate in the 2023 cohort of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative. The fellowship offers year-long immersion in inter-disciplinary academic learning, leadership development, and peer-to-peer collaboration. Jackson is the founder of Nyaka Inc., a nonprofit organization he founded in 2001 to tackle systemic inequalities, poverty, and hunger in his village of Nyakagezi in southwest Uganda. Jackson has raised over \$150 million for Nyaka to provide free education and healthcare to 86,000 AIDS orphans and vulnerable children. To foster sustainable economic empowerment, Nyaka provides micro-loans and entrepreneurial training for the 20,000 grandmothers who look after the children. He is board member of Global Giving, an international award winner and author of seven books, has been named CNN Hero of the Year, Heifer Hero, Global Citizen, and Power of One by Time Magazine.

As part of the Grupo de Trabajo de Agenda CEDAW in Costa Rica, 2021–22 Advocate **Larissa Arroyo Navarrete** recently coordinated and presented the platform's shadow report at the 84th session of CEDAW in Geneva in February. Larissa shared: "The Committee mentioned in the final observations to Costa Rica almost all the issues that we raised. I cannot tell you how happy I am and the impact that this will have over the years. All the learning [in the Human Rights Advocates Program] on advocacy, communications, funding, etc. was definitely put to use! It was hard but we achieved even more than we expected."



Outright International interviewed 2019 Advocate **Wisdom Bebli** about the anti-LGBTIQ bill launched in the Ghanaian parliament. Wisdom is the Executive Director of Solace Initiative an NGO working for the promotion and protection of LGBTQ+ people in Ghana.



Congratulations to 2019 Advocate **Nodjigoto Charbonnel** and his organization Association Jeunesse pour la Paix et la Non-Violence (AJPNV) for winning the the 2022 Rafto Prize. The Rafto Prize Award Statement in part says Nodjigoto and AJPNV were chosen for "their courageous struggle to abolish torture in Chad as well as internationally. In the context of authoritarianism, terrorism, war on terror and institutionalized violence, and at great personal risk, Charbonnel and his team assist survivors in rebuilding their lives after torture, and advocate the protection of human rights, and the prevention of torture and sexual violence by providing human rights education for youth and civil society."



One Young World awarded the 2022 Journalist of the Year Award to 2021–22 Advocate **Daniel Villatoro** of Guatemala. The award "honors five young leaders aged 35 and under who have been judged on the positive social impact of their work. These young leaders fearlessly and boldly inspire others through their work. They have changed the way stories are reported and empower others by giving them a voice." In his acceptance speech, Daniel said: "We need to accept that journalism has also been a challenging space for the recognition of diversity. As journalists that are LGBT like me, people of color or indigenous can tell you, we need journalism to evolve and be more inclusive to portray fairly the world we live in."

9

MOURNING THE LOSS OF 2016 ADVOCATE RAOUL KITUNGANO OF THE DRC



It is with a heavy heart that ISHR reports the passing of 2016 Advocate Raoul Kitungano of the Democratic Republic of Congo. He died on September 15, 2022, after a brief illness.

Raoul was the Coordinator of Justice Pour Tous (Justice For All), a non-profit organization that advocates for the political, economic, cultural, and environmental rights of local communities impacted by mining corporations and other extractive enterprises in the DRC. Raoul published several research papers on the relationship between mining, armed conflict, and human rights abuses in the DRC, as well as on electoral monitoring, mining code reform, and community land protection. He was dedicated to continuing to monitor the impact of rural development and poverty reduction projects in the DRC, as well as advocating for the social, cultural, and economic rights of local communities.

Raoul had a playful, gentle personality that contributed greatly to the joy and harmony in the 2016 HRAP. He was always quick to smile and inject happiness wherever he went. May his family, colleagues, and friends find comfort in knowing how much he is respected and loved by his fellow advocates in the 2016 HRAP, the staff and faculty of ISHR, and all the people he met while at Columbia University. He will be missed but he will never be forgotten.



Institute for the Study of Human Rights
Columbia University

91 Claremont Avenue | 7th Floor
New York, NY | 10027
212.854.2479 | humanrightscolumbia.org

Design by María Pérez-Nash/mpndesign.com