January - February 2010

Program News

Bringing Science to Human Rights
Benjamin Somers
AAAS
December 10, 2009

"As organizations around the world observe International Human Rights Day on 10 December, a pioneering AAAS initiative launched just over a year ago has produced several active collaborations bringing scientific expertise to bear on human rights. Since its launch in October 2008, the "On-call" Scientists initiative, which pairs scientists and engineers interested in volunteering their skills with human rights organizations in need of scientific expertise, has attracted more than 350 scientists and engineers interested in offering their time and expertise on a pro bono basis. ... [For example], Mark Logsdon, a geologist, is currently working on a Global Rights project in the West African country of Guinea. ... 'I was very surprised that a human rights organization would ask someone like me to help them,' he said. 'But, they recognized that I am a scientist who pledges to give an unbiased opinion.' ... Maria Koulouris, director of the Natural Resources and Human Rights Initiative at Global Rights said ... "Working in this way increases the credibility of our work and that of our partners." Read more.

Geo-Mapping for Human Rights - Featured Dialogue
New Tactics in Human Rights

Lars Bromley, Director of the Geospatial Technologies and Human Rights Project, recently took part in an online dialogue focused on the ways in which mapping and satellite imagery analysis have been used to share critical information, promote transparency and engage communities. Convened by New Tactics in Human Rights, the conversation spanned funding, data collection, volunteerism, and more. "Though not as 'mobilizing' as we would like, the process of interacting with local groups to develop geospatial information on ... human rights violations is a community building experience," Lars wrote. "The entire process really means a lot to local groups and people, they generally feel ignored and marginalized in world affairs so it's important to them that outsiders are literally watching and finding evidence to support their reporting." Read more.

Science and Human Rights Coalition

SHRP EVENTS

January 21, 2010
Washington, DC
Training: Best Practices in Defending the Human Rights of Scientists

January 22, 2010
Washington, DC
AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition Meeting

Other Events

April 26-30, 2010
Tallahassee, Florida
Training: Crime Scene & Evidence Documentation (link)

Useful Resources

Science and Human Rights Syllabi
Annotated Bibliography
Partnerships: Scientists Working With Human Rights Organizations
Member Human Rights Activities
Publications

The Human Right to Enjoy the Benefits of Scientific Progress
Jessica Wyndham (link)

The right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications "remains one of the least well known and least clearly understood of the international human rights framework," the author
Next Meeting: January 22 - Register Now!

Members, affiliates, and interested scientists, register now to attend the next meeting of the Coalition which will be held at AAAS Headquarters in Washington, DC on Friday, January 22 (8.30am-7:00pm).

Opening with a panel of experts to discuss the ethical and human rights challenges arising when scientific research takes place in a military context, the meeting will continue with sessions, working meetings, and trainings relevant to the application of human rights in the work of scientists and scientific associations. Sessions include: Hearing From Survivors of Human Rights Violations; The Right to the Benefits of Scientific Progress; Volunteer Programs of Scientific Associations; and Human Rights 101 for Scientists: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. View the agenda.

Training: Defending the Human Rights of Scientists - January 21

Register to attend a training session being conducted by Scholars at Risk, in partnership with the Coalition’s Welfare of Scientists Working Group. The training is aimed at equipping scientific associations to defend the human rights of scientists at home and around the world. Participants will learn procedures for evaluating requests for assistance from colleagues at-risk; effective response strategies; proven public and private advocacy techniques; quality alert-writing; and options for engaging key stakeholders. Register here.

News from Coalition Members: Association of American Geographers

"The AAG has launched a new website on Geography and Human Rights known as the Geography & Human Rights Clearinghouse and Forum. The website includes a bibliography on Geography and Human Rights research, as well as links to numerous NGOs, research centers, and scientific associations that focus on human rights issues, often while drawing upon geographic methods or technologies. The website describes a suite of human rights activities at the AAG including the AAG's role in the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition, and specially highlighted human rights sessions at our annual meetings – specifically those planned for our upcoming 2010 conference. Information on the AAG Statement on Professional Ethics, the GIS&T Ethics Project, and our Ethics, Justice, and Human Rights Specialty Group is also made available."

Introducing our Members: Society for Research in Child Development

"The Society is a multidisciplinary, not-for-profit, professional association with a membership of approximately 5,500 researchers, practitioners, and human development professionals from over 50 countries. The purposes of the Society are to promote multidisciplinary research in the field of human development, to foster the exchange of information among scientists and other professionals of various disciplines, and to encourage applications of research says. Emphasizing the need to give meaning to this right, she identifies the points of consensus and identifies questions still to be answered.

Human Rights and Social Justice: Social Action and Service for the Helping and Health Professions

Joseph Wronka (link)

This book "provides a clear blueprint for how human rights and social justice concerns can serve as a conceptual framework for policy and practice interventions among the helping and health professions." The book is intended as "text for social policy and practice courses encompassing social work, psychology, psychiatry, public health, medicine, nursing, ethics ... political science" and other disciplines.

We Have Human Rights: A human rights handbook for people with disabilities

Harvard Project on Disability (link)

"This handbook is intended to help people with developmental disabilities understand their rights and become effective self-advocates. It provides background information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and provides anecdotes from individuals with developmental disabilities that demonstrate the relevance of the rights contained within the Convention to their everyday lives."

Global Information Society Watch 2009

Association for Progressive Communications (Link)
From the Science Community

Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues (and human rights)

On November 24, 2009, the White House Office of the Press Secretary announced that President Obama has established a new Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues to advise the President on bioethical issues that may emerge from advances in biomedicine and related areas of science and technology. In support of its mission, the Commission may "examine issues linked to ... the intersection of science and human rights." Read Executive Order.

From the Human Rights Community

Sharing knowledge on HIV/AIDS, the law and human rights

AIDSLEX

AIDSLEX (the AIDS and Law Exchange) has launched a new web tool for activists, community organizations, researchers, policy-makers, journalists, health workers and anyone who seeks quick and easy access to a wide range of resources about HIV, human rights and the law. It helps people around the world communicate and share information, materials and strategies, with the ultimate goal of contributing to a global effort to protect and promote the human rights of people living with or vulnerable to HIV and AIDS.

From the UN

Joint Statement on Human Rights and Climate Change

Special Procedure Mandate Holders of the Human Rights Council
December 7, 2009

"It is a matter of human rights," stated a group of United Nations human rights experts just before the opening of the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. "Adaptation or mitigation measures ... must be developed in accordance with human rights norms," warned the experts. "Affected individuals and communities must participate, without discrimination, in the design and implementation of these projects." Read more.
About the SHRP Newsletter

The Science & Human Rights Newsletter is issued bi-monthly by the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program. Through the newsletter we strive to keep scientists and human rights practitioners informed with news items, program updates, new resources, and upcoming events at the intersection of science and human rights. Submissions to the newsletter are welcome and can be made via our online form.

Please visit our website to learn more about our programs as well as our past accomplishments.

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