

## **Preliminary Agenda**

2021 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Virtual Conference

DISCLAIMER: The views and opinions expressed at the conference sessions are those of the presenters. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions, views, or policy positions of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) or its members.

### **DAY 1: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21**

9:00 – 9:30 Welcome and introductory remarks: Jessica Wyndham, AAAS

9:30 – 10:45 **Global Perspectives on Catalyzing Action Against Air Pollution**

Access to clean air is a human right. Yet 90% of the world's population suffers from poor air quality and only half of the world's population has access to information about the air they breathe. This plenary session will bring together five air quality advocates from South Africa, Kenya, India, Mongolia, and Albania to share key lessons learned about the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration and examples of how to utilize these collaborations in order to fight air pollution. (Organizer: Chisato Calvert, OpenAQ)

10:45-11:00 Break

Recognizing the 2021 SciTech and Human Rights FutureGen Scholars and Student Essay Competition Winners: more information coming soon!

11:00 – 12:15 **Building a DNA Bridge to Reunify Separated Migrant Families**

Family separation, whether caused by armed conflict, repressive regimes, disasters, or immigration policies, is traumatic for children and parents. A well-defined, replicable, scalable, and sustainable framework to collect and manage sensitive DNA data is urgently needed to support the reunification of separated migrant families in a manner that is secure, ethical, and humane. No technology, including DNA analysis, is capable of reuniting all families; however, this inherent limitation cannot and should not serve as a rationale to avoid applying scientific tools to support the prompt reunification of parents and children whose whereabouts are unknown. (Organizer: Sara Katsanis, Lurie Children's Hospital)

12:15 – 1:00 Break

1:00 – 2:30 Workshops

- **Building bridges: Digital rights & social justice within the covid-19 pandemic**

Many human rights and social justice organizations/movements haven't had time or resources to explore how data & digital rights (DDR) relate to their work. State and private sector responses to the Covid-19 pandemic

have these groups to work remotely, question data collection processes, and witness the ways that basic needs and human rights are tied up in digital cables. Whether it's LGBTQI+ rights groups with concerns about contact tracing, racial justice groups seeking information about healthcare, or migrant rights movements worried about remote access to education and employment, how do these activists approach systemic problems hand-in-hand with DDR movements? (Organizer: Laura Guzman, The Engine Room)

- **A One-Stop COVID-19 Pandemic Response for Diverse Urban Underserved Communities**

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted social inequality in the U.S., including access to healthcare, economic stability and mobility, and the democratic process. Skepticism about vaccines, governmental agencies and subjection to a distribution system that has historically favored predominantly Caucasian communities with abundant resources has resulted in a human rights crisis that requires creative and urgent responses. We will present a case study describing a unique partnership between a public university, healthcare systems and county and state agencies to provide free on-campus COVID-19 testing, vaccinations and research including genomic sequencing of COVID-19 variants, to promote public health in underserved communities. (Organizer: Jeffrey Toney, Kean University and Sigma Xi)

- **Meet Up: The Welfare of Scientists**

More information coming soon!

2:30 – 2:45 Break

Flash Presentation: Results of Coalition Social Responsibilities of Scientists Survey

2:45 – 4:00 **Equity, diversity, and inclusion: Whither human rights?**

Systemic racism, health inequities, and other disparities are prominent in the public eye, but how are they connected to human rights? Many organizations and practitioners are seeking to understand how to frame equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as a part of human rights initiatives. This session will address this issue through three interrelated components: An academic leader will provide an overview of connections between EDI and human rights; representatives of scientific organizations including the American Psychological Association, the American Political Science Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science will discuss their organizational efforts to address EDI with a human rights lens; and an applied practitioner will explain how on-the-ground EDI work can be based upon a human rights framework. (Organizer: Gabe Twose, American Psychological Association)

4:00 – 5:30 **Networking sessions**

Engage with colleagues and meet others with similar interests as part of virtual discussions led by Coalition members on the following themes:

- The right to science
- Collaborations between scientists and frontline communities
- Integrating human rights education into STEM education

7:00-8:00 After Hours: Student Networking

**DAY 2: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22**

9:00 – 9:15 Welcome

9:15 - 10:30 **Integrating Human Rights Education in STEM Education**  
(More details TBA)

10:30 – 10:45 Break

10:45 – 12:15 Workshops

- **When algorithms decide: Machine learning in human rights & humanitarian work**  
As humanitarian organisations and human rights practitioners address growing needs with limited resources, it's fundamental to engage with the ethical issues of experimental technology whose subjects are vulnerable populations. Participants will gain a better understanding of the current landscape around machine learning technology in use and hear lessons learned from speakers' experience in this space (e.g how to avoid experimentation, how to incorporate consent, and more). This session will include a wider group discussion, when participants will be encouraged to share their own challenges and solutions faced while working with machine learning technologies in sensitive, vulnerable or crisis settings. (Organizer: Laura Guzman, The Engine Room)
- **International Social Justice and Climate Change**  
Addressing climate change will require cooperation across sectors and borders. Scientists play a key role in bringing forward the technical solutions to address this threat, but it is imperative that their benefits are enjoyed across in countries at all levels of development. This workshop participants will break into 2 groups with 2 discussion leaders: a scientist and a representative from an international climate justice organization from an emerging economy. Participants discuss the challenges facing that specific community and identify ways scientists and these nonprofits

can work more cooperatively to ensure that the benefits of climate change solutions are equitably distributed. (Organizer: Lori Brown, American Chemical Society)

- **Building Back Better Everywhere: Health Inequities, SDGs, the Right to Science**

According to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, inequality has become the defining quality of the 21st century with the COVID-19 pandemic laying bare how unequal we are within and between countries. Understanding and addressing histories of discrimination in benefitting from scientific advancement (the human right to science) and access to vaccines and cures (SDGs) requires listening to those invested in marginalized communities. Psychologists with experience working with the disability community, with immigrants, with the indigenous community and with the African diaspora will articulate these issues in a format that will be structured and solution focused, allowing for meaningful collaboration with participants. (Organizer: Neal Rubin, Adler University)

- **Taking Science to Capitol Hill: Evidence-Based Science-Policy Partnerships**

The pandemic has exacerbated existing human rights issues, necessitating broad structural reform. One way to achieve such reform is by bolstering relationships between scientists and policymakers, but existing efforts to do so are rarely evaluated rigorously. This interactive plenary session details three communication strategies that have been empirically shown to improve legislators' research engagement: being an "honest broker," effectively establishing credibility, and using storytelling to convey research. Attendees will be guided through drafting a fact sheet outline and email for distribution to policymakers. By using evidence-based strategies for improving engagement, attendees can increase their impact by supporting policymakers' research use. (Organizer: Jessica Pugel, Research to Policy Collaboration, Penn State University)

12:15 – 1:00 Break

1:00 – 2:30 Workshops

- **Laboratory Science and Respect for the Ancestors**

The continual development of analytical laboratory techniques certainly advances research on human remains, but it also perpetuates harm against these communities when such techniques are utilized without informed consent. Laboratory scientists, unlike social scientists, often do not receive the training which allows them to understand the ethical

concerns surrounding such research. Research involving human remains in the United States disproportionately impacts Native American Ancestors and descendant communities. Because of this, this session discusses harms caused by laboratory analysis of ancestral remains and suggests strategies for addressing and proactively avoiding such harms in future collaborative work with affected individuals and communities. (Organizer: Krystiana Krupa, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)

- **Essential Work or Essential Workers? Human Rights & COVID-19's Emergency Orders**

The Center for Equitable Policy in a Changing World is studying how official definitions of essential work affected the already-unequal access to the labor market in Seattle and the economic strategies of marginalized communities during times of crises. We will present a model of the labor system in Seattle, looking at how COVID-19-related health orders changed the flow of workers from one sector to another, onto unemployment insurance, or left the workforce. The proposed workshop will include a working session with participants to introduce them to the ways in which they can adapt the model to different communities. (Organizer: Patrick Zimmerman, Center for Equitable Policy in a Changing World)

- **Technology and Human Rights: The Decoders Project**

Artificial intelligence is a powerful technology that can be used to undermine human rights. With misuse, intentional or otherwise, some technology can harm people's rights. This workshop will explore the human rights risks associated with the use of Facial Recognition Technology and how it threatens our right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Learn how a network of volunteers from around the globe and tech companies are working together to help gather missing data that can be used to advocate for greater human rights protections. (Organizer: Cynthia Gabriel Walsh, Amnesty International USA)

- **Creating Opportunities in the Future of Engineering and Human Rights**

This workshop builds on the University of Dayton's (UD) Human Rights Center & Studies Program, and ETHOS (Engineers in Technical Humanitarian Opportunities of Service Learning) Center "Engineering and Human Rights" partnership. The goals are to create an engineering minor, invest in engineering and human rights research, and advance vocational pathways for engineers, including by contributing their skills, techniques and expertise to human rights, peace, sustainable development and humanitarian organizations. The workshop will engage participants in relevant topics, methods, concerns, and organizations that would enhance collaborations between engineering and human rights in both

academic and practitioner realms. (Organizer: Shelley Inglis, University of Dayton Human Rights Center)

2:30 – 2:45 Break

2:45 – 4:00 **Poison and Power: The Fight for Water: Cross-disciplinary experiential learning**  
The Moral Courage Project (MCP) is a program of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center and PROOF: Media for Social Justice, a New York-based NGO. MCP prepares undergraduate students to conduct immersive fieldwork at domestic sites of human rights crisis. MCP's most recent effort addresses the struggle to secure clean and affordable water in Michigan and Appalachia. For "Poison and Power: The Fight for Water," the students interviewed a diverse array of individuals to share a story about community resistance grounded in both empirical data and lived experience. Our participants will share our cross-disciplinary model for experiential learning. (Organizer: Glenna Jennings, University of Dayton)

4:00 – 4:30 Closing: Theresa Harris, AAAS

4:30 Conference Adjourns

Thank you for attending this year's conference!