

CAHRnews

Centre for Applied Human Rights newsletter

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the spring 2019 edition of CAHRnews! We are delighted to share with you work we have been doing both in York and internationally over the past months.

This year we have 15 students on the MA in Applied Human Rights and 21 on the LLM in International Human Rights Law & Practice. In this issue some of them reflect on their fieldwork experiences.

We have welcomed and bid farewell to eight human rights defenders, who were incredibly busy during their time at CAHR, conducting research, learning, networking—and doing art! They even performed music on International Women's Day. We have also awarded the first Jerry Lockspeiser Award for Social Justice to one HRD project.

We are also pleased to share with you new, published research spanning a number of human rights fields, ranging from transformative justice to more practice-oriented pieces on human rights defenders.

We hope you will stay tuned for more CAHRnews over the summer!

Sanna Eriksson
Centre Co-ordinator, CAHR

CAHR hosted eight Human Rights Defenders in 2018/19

CAHR hosted eight human rights defenders (HRDs) on its Protective Fellowship Scheme for HRDs at Risk in 2018/19. The defenders came from Belarus, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Singapore, Turkey, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Most of the HRDs spent 6 months in York, from September until end of March, participating in human rights skills trainings and conducting research relevant to their work in their home countries and communities.

For most HRDs, the highlight of this year's programme were the creative arts/activism workshops culminating in a public drumming performance and mini art exhibition at The Basement in York city centre on 9 March during York International Women's Week (see page 3).

The HRDs were accompanied on a networking and advocacy visit to London, to meet with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group and Rachael Maskell MP in Parliament. They visited also a number of international civil society organisations and funders, building networks that will hopefully support them upon their return home both in terms of greater protection in situations of risk and in accessing funding for their human rights work.

The next cohort of HRDs is expected to arrive in York in September 2019.



Left: six of the 2018/19 HRDs outside the Foreign and Commonwealth Office during their trip to London in 2019.

CAHR participates in Civicus International Civil Society Week 2019 in Belgrade

CAHR Centre Coordinator Sanna Eriksson and former CAHR visiting fellow Gacheke Gachihi participated in Civicus International Civil Society Week (ICSW) in Belgrade on 8-11 April 2019.

During ICSW, Sanna Eriksson participated in a side event discussing rapid response mechanisms reacting to the shrinking civic space across the globe, as well as a focus group on how to better resource grassroots movements.



Right: Gacheke Gachihi at ICSW 2019 in Belgrade, Serbia.

Gacheke Gachihi spoke on a panel on the use of the Civic Charter as a global framework for people's participation. He discussed using the Civic Charter at the grassroots level in informal settlements in Nairobi to facilitate community dialogue; to challenge the normalisation of extrajudicial killings; and to use rule of law to govern. In Gacheke's context the Charter has given power to community activists, unifying the grassroots movement and breathing life to rights that were being undermined.

Gacheke is a Kenyan grassroots human rights defender and social justice activist from Mathare Social Justice Centre in Nairobi. He participated in CAHR's Protective Fellowship Scheme for HRDs at Risk in 2015/6.

New Policy Briefs and Working Papers Available

Two new policy briefs have recently been published. The first, [Countering the Stigmatisation of Human Rights Defenders](#), argues that stigmatisation is a common method of deterring defenders, and analyses the negative impacts of stigmatisation on defenders. The brief argues that countering such stigmatisation is essential to ensure defenders' security and protection.



A gender-based approach is taken in [Gender, Intersectionality and Security](#). Women human rights defenders experience risks that are shaped by their gender, other aspects of their identities, the types of human rights issues they act upon, and the socio-political contexts in which they operate. This brief examines how gender and intersectionality affects women defenders' risks, the issues they face, and their experiences of security and protection.



The Human Rights Defender Hub has also published two new working papers. Janika Spannagel examines the effectiveness of UN communications sent under the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in her paper [The Effectiveness of Individual Casework on Human Rights Defenders: An Empirical Study of the UN Special Procedure Cases 2004-2015](#). In [The Capacity Building of Human Rights Defenders and \(Dis\)empowerment: An Analysis of Current Practice](#) Irina Ichim looks at how HRDs express a desire to attend trainings yet often do not seem to implement the knowledge they receive.

Recent and Forthcoming Publications

Temporary Relocation in an Academic Setting

Centre Coordinator Sanna Eriksson reflects on her experience on the Protective Fellowship Scheme at CAHR in her article [Temporary Relocation in an Academic Setting for Human Rights Defenders at Risk: Good Practice Lessons and Challenges](#), published in November 2018. Sanna observes that with increasing threats against human rights defenders (HRDs) worldwide and shrinking civic space impacting on their ability to act, HRD protection through temporary relocation is needed more than ever, yet temporary relocation schemes are starting to feel a shrinking space impacting on their ability to relocate HRDs. Using the example of the Protective Fellowship Scheme for HRDs at Risk based at CAHR, this paper analyses both good practice and everyday challenges encountered in relocation, suggesting good practice lessons to reflect on.

From Transitional to Transformative Justice

A new book edited by Prof Paul Gready (and Simon Robins), *From Transitional to Transformative Justice*, was published by Cambridge University Press in February 2019. The volume addresses questions about the long-term effectiveness of transitional justice, which has become the principle lens used by countries emerging from conflict and authoritarian rule to address the legacies of violence and serious human rights abuses. Contributors to the volume focus on transformative justice as an alternative to transitional justice, analysing it from both conceptual and empirical perspectives. The book has been called 'courageous and forward-thinking' (Harvey Weinstein - University of California, Berkeley; Co-Editor-in-Chief Emeritus of the International Journal of Transitional Justice) and 'deserves to be widely read' (Andrea Cornwall - Head of the School of Global Studies, University of Sussex).

York Human Rights City Indicator Report

The latest annual human rights indicator report is now available. Every year, we report on how the city is performing using 2 to 3 indicators for each of the five York priority rights (equality & non-discrimination, health & social care, housing, education and a decent standard of living). Additionally, this year we also include extra information on the right to housing, and discuss lived experiences of people whose housing rights are compromised.

The report is available in hardcopy from the Centre for Applied Human Rights, York CVS, and from the city's libraries. Alternatively, you can download a copy [here](#). The report has been welcomed by civil sector organisations around the city, and made headlines in the York Press. Our 2019 report, which will be launched in December, will focus on the right to a decent standard of living (investigating child poverty, food insecurity and low wages in the city) whilst providing updates for indicators for the other priority rights.

Forthcoming Publications

Dr Alice Nah has two publications forthcoming exploring migration in Malaysia. In the context of recent discussions of healthcare deservingness, *Risk entrepreneurship and the construction of healthcare deservingness for 'desirable', 'acceptable', and 'disposable' migrants in Malaysia* examines how state calculations of healthcare deservingness have been applied to authorised migrants in Malaysia. In *The ambiguous authority of the 'surrogate state': UNHCR's negotiation of asylum in the complexities of migration in Southeast Asia*, Alice again turns to Malaysia to examine how an international organisation with field presence, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), reinforces the distinction between 'refugees' and 'migrants' through regular practices of identification, intervention, and advocacy.

International Women's Day 2019

Staff, visiting fellows, and friends and supporters of CAHR came together to mark International Women's Day 2019, a day to commemorate women activists and highlight the challenges still faced by women and women human rights defenders today.

On 8th March, the Centre was honoured to host a panel discussion with special guests Thabitha Khumalo, MP and Rachael Maskell, MP, in collaboration with Unite the Union. Khumalo is an MP and founding member of the Movement of Democratic Change in Zimbabwe, having previously been a trade union official in Zimbabwe. She is a champion on the rights of children and women as well as all those in society who are disadvantaged. Maskell is Labour and Co-operative MP for York Central who has led the union's equality agenda, campaigning against discrimination and for equal pay, championing the NHS, campaigning for a progressive living wage, skilled jobs, a sustainable city, affordable housing and to integrate health and social care. Khumalo and Maskell joined two of our visiting Fellows, Prosper Tiringindi and Wanjeri Nderu, as well as the Centre's Dr Alice Nah, for a lively discussion which highlighted some of the core challenges faced by



women and women human rights defenders in the contemporary international context.

Left to Right: Rachael Maskell MP, Prosper Tiringindi, Thabitha Khumalo MP, Wanjeri Nderu and Dr Alice Nah discuss women and human rights in a discussion

CAHR's visiting Fellows participated in this year's York International Women's Week with an afternoon of music and visual arts exploring creative activism. The event followed a series of creative arts and activism workshops which form a part of the Protective Fellowship Scheme's holistic protection programme, supporting the defenders to express their lived experiences through the arts. Artwork and music created and performed by CAHR's defenders together with Newcastle-based Afro-Latin percussion and brass duet [Ladies of Midnight Blue](#) made for a lively and powerful event on Saturday 9th March. The fellows played to an enthusiastic audience who were able to not only enjoy African drumming but also participate in singing and playing instruments along with the fellows and musicians.



Above: The Fellows on stage at The Basement with Ladies of Midnight Blue.

Right: Visiting Fellows Johncation Muhindo and Andrei Paluda share a joke with one half of Ladies of Midnight Blue, Hannabiell Sanders.



Research artwork shown at the UN World Summit for HRDs in October 2018



Above: CAHR staff (left-right) Martin Jones, Patricia Bartley, Hannah Dwyer-Smith, Alice Nah and Emilie Flower at the UN World Summit for HRDs.

Human rights defenders from across all corners of the world met in Paris between the 29th and 31st October 2018 for the Human Rights Defenders World Summit. They gathered to develop a plan of action on how best to protect and promote the work of activists fighting for rights, 20 years on from the first UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

There were three days of discussions and strategy development spanning regional and global issues, environmental rights and women human rights defenders and the increasing attacks on human rights defenders everywhere.

The Summit discussed calls on governments, corporations, international financial institutions, donors and others, including the adoption of national governmental action plans, implementation of legislation to legally uphold the UN Declaration, protecting defenders as a priority in foreign policy and prioritising the protection and work of women human rights defenders, LGBT+, indigenous rights defenders and other marginalised defenders.

Several members of CAHR staff attended the summit and displayed a selection of pieces of the [artwork produced for the research project Navigating Risk and Managing Security](#). The works of art were seen by many hundreds of summit attendees.

MA and LLM students share testimonials about fieldwork experience

Every year CAHR's MA and LLM students undertake placements with civil society organisations in York, Cape Town (South Africa) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) as part of their degree. MA and LLM students Abisola Ayo, Sarah McCloskey, Chloe Amies, Claudia Hermida Ramos and Keleisha Robinson undertook a research project to identify problems faced by women in York and derive priorities for their project partners York Women's Forum and York Human Rights City Network to focus on within a rights-based framework.

"We all shared a strong interest in women's rights and selected this placement because it offered an opportunity to contribute a useful means of furthering productive discussions in York.

Across the two weeks, we used our research on women's international human rights and the city to create a survey that we then conducted across York. We had a total of 285 respondents to the survey. Committed to having as representative a sample as possible, we collaborated with community hubs and cafés, as well as local organisations like York Travellers' Trust and Kyra, to conduct the survey with a variety of people. It was an eye-opening experience to see the realities of the city beyond the tourist/student perspective, and particularly rewarding to provide a platform to individuals who are often otherwise marginalised, such as adults with learning disabilities and those caring for relatives with Alzheimer's. This is especially so since we ultimately produced a report that our partners found very beneficial to developing their work and encouraged us to disseminate further, with YWF inviting us to present the findings at one of their events and YHRCN publishing the report on their website.

The placement took hard work and a lot of group determination, but it was a great opportunity to develop and enhance many important skills, including: carrying out desk-based research to inform research approaches, understanding and complying with ethical principles, and adapting communication to different audiences. In addition to the invaluable experience we gained in taking the knowledge and training we had acquired in the classroom to a practical project, it was so enriching to make this small contribution to the ongoing efforts to address gendered issues in local society. As a team, we were immensely proud of what we achieved together and know that this has been a formative experience – both for the rest of our studies and our careers beyond."



Alex Buckham, an MA student, describes his fieldwork in South Africa as one of the most enlightening and character building experiences of his life.

"During the two weeks my group spent in Cape Town, we worked with partner organisation International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG). ILRIG are an anti-austerity, anti-neoliberalism, anti-globalisation activist organisation that seeks, primarily, to combat what they regard to be the state-initiated alienation, marginalisation and subjugation of the working classes. Our work entailed interviewing activists associated with ILRIG on the impact national budget cuts have had at a local level, and what work those activists were doing to combat budget cuts.

Lessons I learned whilst carrying out this work related to the structure of the interviews themselves, as well as general safety, and the upkeep of personal relationships with my course mates. Many of us had not been placed in such a challenging situation before and hence it was imperative that we showed each other the utmost respect and compassion, especially in moments of disagreement, in order to ease things along for the whole group. I also thoroughly enjoyed the degree of independence and responsibility myself and my course mates were afforded when in South Africa. Negotiating my way round these challenges, and the other factors discussed in this paragraph, undoubtedly aided my development, not solely as an academic, but also as a person.

In future years, I would wholeheartedly recommend that Applied Human Rights students seize the opportunity to go to South Africa. The stunning beauty of Cape Town's scenery is starkly juxtaposed against the city's political context and both are sure to enlighten and engage students who take advantage of all that this placement has to offer."

Martin Jones chairs discussion on refugee protection in Delhi

Martin Jones chaired and spoke on a panel at a national conference on refugee law in New Delhi (India) in January. The conference was organised by the Migration and Asylum Project of the Ara Trust, a leading research and legal advocacy organisation on refugee issues in India. Martin noted in his remarks that the law abhors a vacuum: "Even in the absence of national or international legal frameworks, local lawyers make legal arguments - and can be successful - based on local norms and traditions." One of the subjects of discussion at the conference was the ongoing litigation before the Indian Supreme Court on the refoulement of the Rohingya in India.

As part of his visit to India, Martin also met with the Ara Trust, one of the local partners in the Law of Asylum project (funded by the ESRC and the GCRF). The project also funded a critically esteemed and popular immersive art installation in Delhi coinciding with the conference. The installation, *Passage to Asylum*, takes visitors through the refugee experience in a series of "rooms" representing different stages in a refugee's journey to safety. The exhibition received glowing reviews in major national newspapers and has attracted critical praise from *Architectural Digest*.



Above left: Martin Jones chairs a panel discussion on refugee protection. Above right: Artwork exhibited as part of the Law of Asylum project received national critical acclaim.

The first Jerry Lockspeiser Award for Social Justice awarded to Kenyan Woman Human Rights Defender

The first ever Jerry Lockspeiser Award for Social Justice was awarded in March to Kenyan woman human rights defender (WHRD) and social media campaigner Wanjeri Nderu. Wanjeri's project will explore the wellbeing of Kenyan WHRDs who suffer from activism-related stress, trauma and burnout, pushing them to leave the human rights movement.

In Kenya, particularly in low-income areas, women are at the forefront of human rights defence and bear the brunt of the risks. Their wellbeing has previously not been supported by organisations who they work with or for, and they have instead relied on peer support to sustain themselves. Wanjeri's research project is a baseline study to assess the wellbeing of WHRDs and how they can be better supported through home-grown methods, ultimately enabling WHRDs to continue their human rights work in the long-term.

The Jerry Lockspeiser Award funds every year between 1-3 projects developed by CAHR visiting fellows during their participation in the Protective Fellowship Scheme for HRDs at Risk to the tune of £5,996.



Above: WHRD Wanjeri Nderu meets Jerry Lockspeiser

Below: Research Associates Hannah Dwyer-Smith and Patricia Bartley

Thank you to Trish and Hannah

This year we have said goodbye to Research Associates Patricia Bartley and Hannah Dwyer-Smith. Both Patricia and Hannah began their time at CAHR as students on the MA in Applied Human Rights, and went on to become integral staff members playing valuable roles in the training of visiting human rights defenders and research carried out at CAHR. We wish them the best of luck in their next steps and they will be sorely missed.



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