

November 2008



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Science and Human Rights Program Newsletter



Program News

Pro bono Scientists to Serve Human Rights



On October 23, before a gathering of scientists and human rights practitioners, the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program unveiled its newest project, "On-call" Scientists. Through this project, SHRP will connect scientists interested in volunteering their skills and knowledge with human rights organizations in need of scientific expertise. Scientists have much to contribute to the work being undertaken by human rights organizations. "On-call" Scientists was created to facilitate such contributions.

If you are a scientist who would like to volunteer your time and skills, or a human rights organization in need of scientific expertise, visit ["On-call" Scientists](#) to find out more.

Science Secures Human Rights

Rick Weiss
October 27, 2008

"In the political turmoil that devastated Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, tens of thousands of adults were abducted and killed by paramilitary forces, and many of their children were 'adopted' by wealthy adults affiliated with the government or the military. The task of reuniting these young victims with what remained of their families seemed impossible. . Impossible, that is, until scientists joined with human rights activists and developed sophisticated genetic tests that could link the youngsters with their surviving grandparents. . [Six] experts in science, medicine and human rights . told their stories at an event last week sponsored by the [AAAS]. The Washington-based general science organization has a Science and Human

SHRP EVENTS

January 14-16, 2009
Washington, DC
[AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition Launch](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Measuring the Progressive Realization of Human Rights Obligations
Sakiko Fukuda-Parr et al.
([link](#))

This paper proposes "a methodology for an index of economic and social rights fulfillment that: uses available survey-based objective, rather than subjective data; focuses on state obligations rather than solely on individual enjoyment of rights; and captures progressive realization of human rights subject to maximum available resources. . Recognizing the complex methodological challenges, the aim of this paper is not to resolve all the difficulties but rather to contribute to the process of building rigorous approaches to human rights measurement."

Access to Knowledge in Brazil: New Research on Intellectual Property, Innovation and Development
Lea Shaver (ed.) ([link](#))

"Thus far, scholarship on access to knowledge has primarily articulated this concept within the frame of economic development. There is also great

Rights Program that has long sought to foster synergy between the two fields. Last week it launched the latest of those efforts: an ["on-call scientists" database](#) to facilitate the matching of appropriately skilled scientists with human rights organizations that could use their help." [Read more.](#)

Science and Human Rights Coalition

Launch: January 14-16, 2009

If you represent or are a member of a scientific association, professional society, or science academy, we invite you to join us for the launch of the Coalition on January 14-16, 2009, at AAAS Headquarters in Washington, DC.

Opening the Launch, on the evening of January 14th, will be three distinguished speakers, including **Mary Robinson**, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and former President of Ireland, and **Sidney Verba**, Chair of the Committee on Human Rights of the National Academy of Sciences, and Research Professor of Government at Harvard University.

The following day-and-a-half will be an opportunity to learn about the mission and structure of the Coalition, its areas of activity, and how scientific associations and individual scientists can become a part of this important new initiative. Launch participants will hear about the varied contributions that science and scientists can make to human rights, and will have the opportunity to equip their scientific associations with information and tools needed for robust engagement in human rights. View the [Launch Agenda](#) to find out more.

Get your organization involved!

Eager to see your scientific association, society, or academy become involved in the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition? Keen to share with your colleagues and organization information about this initiative? Available [here](#) is a one-page description of the Coalition that you can use as the basis for listserv announcements, newsletter articles, and meeting presentations.

Introducing our Members:

potential, however, to advance access to knowledge claims within the international human rights framework. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: 'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits' (UDHR, Art.27). This is precisely the claim of the access to knowledge movement."

Just Health: Meeting Health Needs Fairly Norman Daniels ([link](#))

In this book, Norman Daniels "develops a comprehensive theory of justice for health that answers three key questions: What is the special moral importance of health? When are health inequalities unjust? How can we meet health needs fairly when we cannot meet them all? Daniels' theory has implications for national and global health policy: . When is an effort to reduce health disparities, or to set priorities in realising a human right to health, fair? What do richer, healthier societies owe poorer, sicker societies? [This book] explores the many ways that social justice is good for the health of populations in developed and developing countries."

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Introducing our Members: *American Statistical Association*

Founded in 1839, the American Statistical Association (ASA) is a scientific and educational society. With almost 18,000 members globally, hailing from government, academia, and the private sector, ASA members apply their expertise to diverse and vital areas that include: research in medical areas such as AIDS; environmental risk assessment; and the examination of social issues such as homelessness and poverty. One Committee supported by the ASA is the Committee on Scientific Freedom and Human Rights which concerns itself with violations of and threats to the scientific freedom and human rights of statisticians and other scientists throughout the world. The Committee also assists scientific societies and other responsible organizations with statistical questions relating to data on human rights. [Read](#)



