The Global Institute for Health and Human Rights was founded in 2012 by physicians and renowned human rights advocates Kamiar Alaei and Arash Alaei with the mission to facilitate a deeper understanding of the intersection between health and human rights, and to promote innovative solutions to contemporary challenges in this arena. Through research, education, policy, advocacy and development, the Institute seeks to advance understanding and protection of health and human rights in a theoretical, academic, practical, and ethical context.

Believing that health, well-being, and human rights are complex and multi-faceted concepts, the Institute seeks to promote an equally rich and multi-disciplinary approach to the understanding of and solutions to the health and human rights challenges of our contemporary world. Activities of the Institute include: inter-departmental collaborative research; education through the creation of graduate, undergraduate, online and certification courses; participation in policy reform and implementation to work towards universal equal access to health and well-being; advocacy to encourage understanding, protection and promotion of health as a human right; and development projects to promote well-being, including biological health, education, mental health, economic productivity, and social integrity, in target populations.

Health and human rights are deeply interconnected. Improving the well-being of the population requires that everyone, without discrimination, have access to good-quality health services. Moreover, good health is necessary to realize other basic human rights. Thus, health is itself a basic human right, and it is an important precondition for the meaningful fulfillment of a wide range of other human rights.
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Research
• Facilitating research that crosses disciplinary boundaries
• Creating fellowships for research areas of interest
• Publishing articles on topics in health and human rights
• Providing field-based opportunities for applied research

Education
• Working with students at the undergraduate and graduate levels to understand the links between health and human rights
• Organizing academic courses, lectures, workshops and seminars
• Developing long-distance trainings and workshops on health and human rights
• Providing internships for students at international organizations working with the Institute on health and human rights issues

Advocacy/Outreach
• Raising awareness for the public and promoting the interest of students
• Strengthening the capacity of major organizations working in the field of health and human rights issues, while benefitting from their expertise
• Helping to build the capacity of universities in developing countries through program collaboration
• Providing advocacy and support to colleagues under threat

Field Work
• Developing projects for harm-reduction and capacity-building to protect health
• Working directly with affected vulnerable populations
• Using health diplomacy to improve community and international relations

Interdisciplinary Networking
• Encouraging the development of interdisciplinary and inter-institutional networks to achieve the aforementioned goals

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE, 2012- PRESENT

Research grants submitted:

1. Kamiar Alaei (PI), Arash Alaei, Kevin Williams, Punkin Clay Stephens. Actionable HIV Research Training Program in War-Torn Afghanistan applied through National Institutes of Health - Fogarty Grant: Limited Competition: Training Programs for Critical HIV Research Infrastructure for Low- and Middle-Income Country Institutions with the amount of $276,000

2. Kamiar Alaei (PI), Arash Alaei, Kevin Williams, Kaveh Khoshnood, Michael Waxman, Alexandra Harrington. Mitigating Humanitarian Crisis with Public Health Evidence-Based Lessons, Save the Children ELRHA - R2HC Expression of Interest, £267,627

3. Kamiar Alaei (PI), Arash Alaei, Kevin Williams. Emerging Priorities in Reproduction, Maternal and Newborn Health (PRMNH): UASID Grant, Annual Program Statement # APS-OAA-13-000005 with the amount of $8,300,000

COURSES OFFERED:

Course for Health and Human Rights, currently offered for 2nd year in The Honors College

TPOS/TSPH 272 Health and Human Rights: an Interdisciplinary Approach

Spring, 2013 The Honors College, University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, NY

Graduate course in Health and Human Rights to be offered in Fall 2014

RPOS/SSPH 586, RPOS/SSPH 486 Health and Human Rights: an Interdisciplinary Approach

Spring, 2013 Cross-listed/Shared-resource, University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, NY

Guest Speakers Include:

Department of Philosophy - Kristen Hessler
Department of Political Science - Victor Asal
Department of Women’s Studies - Vivien Ng
School of Social Welfare - Robert Miller
School of Public Health – Russ Altone
Albany Law School - Alicia Ouellette
School of Criminal Justice - Allison Redlich

And many other faulty and experts from the University and throughout the community

Certificate Program in International Health and Human Rights

To address the growing demand for interdisciplinary solutions to our contemporary world challenges, the Global Institute for Health and Human Rights (GIHHR) in collaboration with the University at Albany School of Public Health (SPH) and the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy Department of Political Science (ROCK) proposed the introduction of a Graduate Certificate in International Health and Human Rights to be offered to students and professionals (health care professionals, lawyers, policy makers etc.) in collaboration with 3 other institutions. The proposal has been approved by the Graduate Academic Council, University Planning and Policy Council, and University Senate. It has been sent on to SUNY Central and the Department of Education and we hope that it will be approved by summer, 2014.

Proposal for “3 in 1” MIA/LLM/Certificate Program

The proposed program of Masters of International Affairs (MIA), Masters of Law (LLM), and Health and Human Rights Certificate is a two-year program established by University at Albany SUNY and Albany Law School. The dual degree is ideal for individuals who wish to combine a triple careers in international affairs, law and health and human rights. The MIA and LLM will include a concentration in Health and Human Rights.
Co-founding of The Center for Health and Human Rights Free Health Clinic in Virginia as a pilot; plans are in process to replicate the model in NYC and CA

Mission
To provide free or reduced fee direct medical services and community education to target populations, and to provide advocacy and policy analysis on matters of health and human rights, on behalf of these populations.

Vision
To provide medical services to underserved populations, including internal medicine, dental services, cardiology, mental health services,
To develop an ever-increasing network of physicians and healthcare providers
To increase implementation of evidence-based medicine and best practices
To provide educational and social services to promote total health and well-being in an organic fashion
Engage in capacity building in target populations for community health promotion
Provide leading advocacy and policy analysis in support of the vision of health as a human right of the “first order” and as a prerequisite to human prosperity

Participation in Community Engagement Fair & Internship Fair, etc.
The Institute was invited to participate in two student outreach fairs this year, and additionally delivered presentation at several student group events.

Women in the Middle East Conference
The Global Institute for Health and Human Rights hosted "The Women of the Middle East" conference, from Monday, October 21 to Friday, October 25, 2013 in Albany, New York. It was a week-long conference and cultural program at the University at Albany and Albany Law School.

Founding of Students for Health and Human Rights
A group of students this year founded a Student Association group to engage students in issues of health and human rights and beyond.

Workshop with WHO/Pan American Health Organization
All students working on the U.N. modules and Board of Directors Members came together at the University at Albany in order to collaborate and organize the modules. Students came from different states and countries. This two-day workshop took place on February 2nd-3rd, 2013.

Consultant to Guidelines on Human Rights Education for Health Workers Published (ODIHR)
18 modules authored on health and human rights in prisons
Students of various universities & academic disciplines are working on U.N. modules. These modules focus on a plethora of subjects in regards to health and human rights in the Pan American region. Students are connected either with the Global Institute for Health & Human Rights (GIHHR) and/or the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO). Five of the 18 modules are under review for publication, and the rest are expected to follow shortly.

First framework for Health and Human Rights in Prisons
Dr. Kamiar Alaei is, since 2011, an external consultant of the PAHO Human Rights team. Since then, he provided technical support in the development of a framework to assess and improve health and human rights conditions in prisons using human rights instruments. This framework is under review for publication and is expected to be published shortly.

Training in El Salvador
In February 2012, a workshop co-facilitated by Dr. Kamiar Alaei for over 100 representatives from 9 different countries of the Latin American region, took place in El Salvador to build capacity among the relevant Ministries on the importance of improving health conditions in prisons.
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

At any given time we have had 2 to 4 interns hosted in the Institute coming from Albany Medical College, Albany Law School, Albany College of Pharmacy, University at Albany and more. These interns have performed important work instrumental to the development of the Institute, while earning academic credit toward their programs.

We have hosted: four Albany Medical College students for 1-2 months each; 11 Albany Law students who have worked “to create a global compendium of state reports regarding the health and human rights afforded to prisoners and the health and human rights afforded to indigenous communities”; two graduate students through the School of Public Health internship requirement; five undergraduates, three of whom are in the Honors College; and one high school student.

This summer we will host: five medical students from SUNY Downstate who will perform research in Turkey; three Albany Medical College Students; 7 Albany Law students; one medical student who will work in Argentina; and several new and returning UAlbany interns.

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Through this program we have hosted undergraduate and graduate students-at-risk both on-campus and online and developed significant international partnerships.

In early 2013, President Jones agreed to have his first foreign trip to Turkey to visit 5 Turkish universities and meet with their presidents; the outcome was the signing of 5 MOUs, several dual diploma programs as well as 2+2 programs.

IAP’s international network also made it possible for UAlbany to begin academic relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. As a result of these partnerships, approximately 120 international students have applied to UAlbany from these countries, which resulted in 32 students from Iran, 10 from Iraq, and 8 from Saudi Arabia being admitted to study at the University at Albany. IAP has helped broaden UAlbany’s international student body and its diversity, and increased the number of international students studying here at the University.

2020 PROPOSAL FINALIZED FOR THE HIRE OF TWO FACULTY MEMBERS & TWO GAs

The GIHHR was approved for two full-time junior faculty members to work in the field of Health and Human Rights. The approved plan is to hire two faculty members with joint appointments; one hosted by Rockefeller with joint appointment with SPH with a focus on health and human rights as relates to politics and policy, and one hosted by SPH with a joint appointment in School of Criminal Justice with a focus on health and human rights in prisons and other places of deprivation of liberty. Each would be research intensive, and would teach two courses per semester on health and human rights (likely shared-resource grad/undergrad courses).

This hiring plan achieves the two broad aims of NY SUNY 2020 RFP: (1) it will increase research excellence and external funding in an area of research through increasing collaborative research efforts with other departments, schools and colleges at UAlbany, thereby facilitating multidisciplinary partnerships that is central to initiatives in UAlbany Impact, and (2) it will provide capacity for increased enrollment at the undergraduate and graduate levels, while ensuring high quality of education.
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

Afghanistan

HOLD - HOLD is a non-profit organization recognized in Afghanistan

AABRAR – AABRAR is dedicated to social, civic and economic integration and development in Afghanistan.

MoPH and ANPHI – Both of these federal level groups in Afghanistan will be keys in developing programs and identifying the current level of training in the two provinces.

Turkey

Istanbul University

Hacettepe University
Bahcesehir University
Istanbul Cultural University
Ayfon University
Mugla University
Ett University

TURMAKS, a humanitarian not for profit with an established history working with refugee women and children and issues concerning gender-based violence and mental health.

Iraq

Civil Society Initiative and PARY NGO for Development and Legal Consultation, both of which have been working campaigning against gender-based violence

TRAININGS AND LECTURES:

Summer, ’13 Global Challenges facing Children Youth and Families International Conference at Wheelock College in Boston

Summer, ’13 Global Health Essentials training course at Weill Cornell Medical College

Iraq

Civil Society Initiative and PARY NGO for Development and Legal Consultation, both of which have been working campaigning against gender-based violence

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HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK 2012

Health and Human Rights Week was launched on World AIDS Day on December 1st, and concluded with Human Rights Day on December 10th, 2012. During that week we organized lectures, workshops, trainings, performances, tabling, and other events to promote the important issue of health and human rights, and help to bring people together to develop strategies for protecting that right. It was a great success, with collaboration from many academic departments and community organizations.

This weeklong series of events is anticipated to be repeated in future years.
PUBLICATIONS


HONORS AND AWARDS

Directors Kamiar and Arash Alaei have been awarded several honors and awards since the founding of the Global Institute for Health and Human Rights. These awards have provided an opportunity to promote the work of the Institute and the University at large, often on an international scale.

2013 Gleitsman International Activist Award 2013 of Center for Public Leadership of Harvard Kennedy School; nominated and selected for short list

2013 Young Global Leader 2014 of World Economic Forum; nominated

2013 Citizen of the University Award of University at Albany, SUNY

Recognizes outstanding contributions to the University

2013 Humanitarian Award of Iranian American Medical Society

2012 Elizabeth Taylor Award

Inaugural award, in Recognition of Efforts to Advocate for Human Rights in the field of HIV presented by Actress Sharon Stone and sponsored by The Foundation for AIDS Research and the International AIDS Society

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING 2014

On April 18th, the Global Institute for Health and Human Rights held its second annual Advisory Board meeting, welcoming both the Board of Directors and the Advisory Board to the University at Albany Campus. The meeting served as a wonderful opportunity for experts in the field of Health and Human Rights to gather and share ideas with regard to their personal expertise and fieldwork experience.

In the afternoon, breakout sessions were included, allowing all board members to reconvene in smaller groups of 9-10 members, sharing and discussing similar background interests. The breakout groups included Environment Health/Law, NIH/federal grants, and HIV/Addiction, where members considered new approaches for GIHHR within each specific field. After combining a multitude of informative perspectives, the meeting successfully established the goals that GIHHR will seek to accomplish over the next year.