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Taking on the NYPD by Centering the Impact and Building a Movement: A Successful Human Rights Campaign Case Study (abstract)

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The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy

2015 Conference of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center

Oct. 2-3, 2015, Dayton, Ohio

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Research Panel: Advocacy – Global and Local

Presenter: Nahal Zamani

Title: Taking on the NYPD by Centering the Impact and Building a Movement: A Successful Human Rights Campaign Case Study

Abstract: The United States was a leader in the creation of the modern human rights regime, however, in recent years, actual implementation of treaty provisions into domestic laws, policies and practice in order to protect against human rights violations has been halfhearted and modest at best. In New York, the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) policy of stop and frisk and other discriminatory policing practices have had a detrimental impact on peoples' lives.

Starting in 2011, a highly successful and collaborative campaign took head on the issue of stop and frisk and other discriminatory policing practices by centering the impact of these policies, winning political will, successfully suing the police department, and passing landmark legislation to ensure accountability of the NYPD. The international human rights community also drew its scrutiny to the practices of the NYPD as an example of how the U.S. government was failing to meet its international human rights obligations.

This research is a case study for effective human rights advocacy and organizing work, highlighting strategies for effective campaigning and discuss how large human rights organizations can meaningfully collaborate with and support the capacity-building of community-based partners to advance social justice.

Keywords:

Advocacy Strategies, Policing, Human Rights, Effective Campaigning

Biography: Nahal Zamani is a committed human rights activist with broad-based experience directing advocacy campaigns and educational initiatives. Nahal joined CCR in 2010 and serves as an Advocacy Program Manager, directing CCR's advocacy campaigns and initiatives within the U.S. These campaigns include challenging the NYPD's abusive use of stop and frisk and other discriminatory policing practices, combating inhuman prison conditions and standing up for economic and social justice. Nahal advocates regularly on these issues before elected officials and the UN, and co-chairs the Executive Committee with the Communities United for Police Reform campaign. Prior to joining CCR, Nahal led human rights advocacy campaigns at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) National Office, and worked with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) New York resettlement office, and with Animédia in Paris, France.

Nahal lectures extensively on human rights advocacy, strategies for coalition-building and campaign development, and the application of a human rights framework to address social justice issues in the United States.

Nahal received her Master's in Human Rights from Columbia University, focusing on documentation of the stressful impact of economic, social and cultural rights (ESC) violations. She also received her Bachelor's from Rutgers University.

