

Making the Global Local:

Session objectives & Guidelines for presenters

Monday June 22

Session 1 – The HR Cities Initiative

Many of our participants will not be familiar with the human rights cities initiative – its origins, history, key developments, etc. It would be ideal to provide them with a general overview as to highlight key political and conceptual challenges and questions. In addition, many of our participants are not academics, so the material for this and for all of the sessions should be presented with that fact in mind.

Please note that we will be inviting local public officials whom we've been talking with about how to implement Pittsburgh's Human Rights City Proclamation. We're still very early in these conversations, and we're hoping to provide examples from other cities of how local activists, scholars and educators, and policymakers have collaborated to advance human rights. Concrete examples from particular locations of policy initiatives or collaborations can help us locally with our efforts to educate and expand the 'political imaginations' of the people we're working with.

Session 2 – Global Perspectives on Human Rights Cities

The aim of this session is to share experiences of human rights cities from around the world and to consider challenges to the realization of human rights at the local level. We are interested in what has worked and what has not worked, as well as the reasons why. We are also specifically interested in how challenges to do with ethnic, gender, and class differences have played out. As is mentioned in the section above, we'll have local policy makers and practitioners in the audience who are not familiar with human rights cities. Providing concrete examples of initiatives or programs that have been carried out in your city or region can be especially helpful.

Session 3 – Human Rights Cities in North America

Like the previous session, we're interested in learning more about what's being tried in the North American context and particularly concerned with questions of race, class, and gender, both as obstacles and as areas that can benefit from being framed/addressed using a human rights approach. Are there any particular lessons or needs that you've identified in the work you've seen in different parts of North America? Are there particular models that seem fruitful for advancing human rights in these particularly contentious areas?

Session 4 – Human Rights Organizing in the US: issues and challenges

In this session we'd like to highlight some of the specific problems associated with organizing using a human rights framework in the US context. These might include political, legal, financial, or other challenges. We also like to learn about what has proven effective in the experience of our panelists. In your experience, is human rights a good framework for advancing the goals of dignity and justice for everyone? Why or why not? What might strengthen the appeal of human rights among the constituencies you are trying to reach?

Tuesday June 23

[The organizers will convene after the conclusion of the first day's sessions to provide more specific prompts for the workshop sessions based on the discussion to this point.]

Workshop 1 – Pittsburgh's Human Rights City Initiative: lessons, challenges, opportunities

In this workshop we'll hear from activists and practitioners involved in human rights work within the City of Pittsburgh about the knowledge they've developed, the challenges they face, and the opportunities they perceive. We'll break into small groups to discuss ideas that have emerged from the previous day's discussion and brainstorm about strategies and/or solutions to addressing some of the critical areas of human rights work in local settings, including Pittsburgh.

Workshop 2 – Institutions: building and rebuilding cities for human rights

What kinds of institutions need to be created so that human rights can be realized in the City? What kinds of institutions need to be dismantled or rebuilt? Again, we'll work in small groups to discuss examples and brainstorm ideas.

Workshop 3: Critical Research for Human Rights Cities

What kinds of research might scholars and practitioners undertake in support of the work of human rights cities and local human rights advocates? What kinds of partnerships might advance this research?