

## International Korner

### *"How to Get Involved in International Social Work Without Leaving Home"*



*by Autumn Fiske*

International social work undoubtedly involves countless human rights issues. Numerous national and local organizations provide social work professionals with ways of making a difference in the international community without leaving home.

Here are just a select few of them:

#### National

##### **Amnesty International USA** [www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org)

This website delineates human rights actions in which social workers can get involved. For instance, regarding the crisis in Haiti, you may be able to write to Homeland Security Secretary Ridge to stop the deportation of Haitian refugees. Or, you can urge your representatives and senators to pass the End Racial Profiling Act.

##### **United for Peace and Justice** [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org)

You can sign up to receive action alerts on various internationally related topics, including the Iraq campaign, the global justice campaign, the nuclear disarmament campaign, the Palestine/Israel campaign, and immigrant rights. You can learn how you can participate in rallies and forums in a number of cities connected to these campaigns.

##### **United Nations Association of the United States of America** [www.unausa.org](http://www.unausa.org)

You can sign up on the E-Action Network for advocacy updates. You can participate in legislative advocacy for global children's health, international justice, and minefield reduction. Learn about current UN policy on a variety of topics, including the War on Terrorism and the Iraq situation.

##### **Equality Now** [www.equalitynow.org](http://www.equalitynow.org)

A project devoted to the campaign against sex tourism and the international trafficking of women. Join the Women's Action Network and follow the organization's guide to activism. Sample actions include writing letters, circulating petitions, and organizing informational forums.\

**National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights** [www.nnirr.org](http://www.nnirr.org)  
Search news, publications, and resource databases to stay up to date with immigrant issues and to receive help with individual immigration cases. Become a member of the network to get involved in campaigns and initiatives such as legalization, Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Era (BRIDGE), and projects concerning immigrant women.

**Human Rights Watch** [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)  
Search campaigns by country and issue, such as HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, prison justice in Jordan, and refugees in the Sudan. You can obtain action tools from various places on the website.

**Jubilee USA Network** [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org)  
This is a coalition of various religious, labor, AIDS activist, and other organizations that have joined together to reduce third world debt. You can participate in monthly actions, contact Congress, and be involved in spreading the word about this imperative international issue.

#### Local

#### **Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) /Connecticut Immigrant and Refugee Coalition (CIRC)**

Both coalitions are involved in advocating for state and federal legislation that protects the immigrant community. CIRC also conducts city-based immigration forums to assist the immigrant community with the citizenship process. Get involved by individually lobbying for legislation, volunteering with different outreach activities, or hosting an immigration forum. Contact MIRA by going to the website, [www.miracoalition.org](http://www.miracoalition.org); contact CIRC by calling Joyce Hamilton at DemocracyWorks, (860) 727-1157 ext. 12.

#### **UCONN Human Rights Institute** [www.humanrights.uconn.edu](http://www.humanrights.uconn.edu)

This website provides information on resources, information conferences, and links to national organizations. The Institute serves as a great educational tool for international social work issues.

For more organizations (country-specific projects and other related issues), visit [www.webcom.com/hrin/intlgrps.html](http://www.webcom.com/hrin/intlgrps.html) (Human Rights Interactive Network). See also Clive S. Thomas' book, Research Guide to U.S. International Interest Groups.