The FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University is a university-wide interdisciplinary center that conducts rigorous investigation of the most serious threats to health and wellbeing globally. We work closely with scholars, students, the international policy community, and civil society to engage in ongoing strategic efforts to promote equity and dignity for those oppressed by grave poverty and stigma around the world.
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Hector Lucero, Rachel Elizabeth Murray, the Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and the faculty, fellows, and staff of the Harvard FXB Center for Health and Human Rights.
DEAR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS,

A report to you on our last two years of work has the strong potential of proving overwhelming—to the writers, the readers, and the printer. We are nevertheless in a stable historical cycle of releasing a report every two years on the activities of the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University.

With this fact in mind, and in deference to the new trends in annual and biannual reports and the cumulative record one can infer from our website, we have kept the text of this report relatively light and relied on photographs to convey our story. In so doing we invite you to join with us in our review of accomplishments during this period while also acknowledging the rising tides of misery none of us, within the academy or outside, have been able to relieve.

These are most challenging times for those of us who work on refugees, forced migration, human rights, humanitarian support, and protection of the vulnerable. In the face of these challenges, we have endeavored to advance our mission to empower and protect children, adolescents, and their families in the most difficult circumstances worldwide.

This effort of action-oriented research has taken our faculty and staff to far-flung parts of Europe, the Mideast, Africa, and Latin America. We have written many reports, journal articles, editorials, and blogs about our findings and our views. Books and book chapters reflecting on our work contribute to the scholarly impact of our findings and assessments.
Governments, UN agencies, and major think tanks seek us out for a range of research and policy efforts: to conduct field assessments in austere settings; to contribute to strategic thinking on child protection on the world stage; and to lend our expertise to significant international initiatives relating to empowerment and protection of vulnerable populations.

We have organized conferences and given talks in diverse venues—of course throughout Harvard University, but also from the Chinese University of Hong Kong to Lahore University of Management Sciences; from the Geneva headquarters of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to a convening on adolescence in Mumbai; from the University of Bergen in Norway to the World Bank.

We welcome and celebrate our significant collaborations with key partners at Harvard and elsewhere. And we deeply thank our donors and supporters who have continued to make our work possible.

With all best wishes,

Jennifer Leaning, MD, SMH
Sixty percent of the world’s children experience violence on a daily basis, either directly or as witnesses to the violence perpetrated on parents or other significant actors in their lives. Some are subjected to abuse, physical or sexual, at home, in school, or in the community. Others are trafficked for exploitation, sometimes through the mediation of family members or other trusted adults. Yet others are exposed to the brutality of conflict, often continued in the post-conflict context in refugee camps, perilous migration trajectories, or harsh resettlement situations.

This dramatic set of human rights deficits is a central target of Harvard FXB’s work and the focus of a range of projects over the period covered by this report. These encompass research, policy analysis, advocacy, and knowledge diffusion across the following areas:

- Endemic discrimination and ethnic segregation affecting Roma communities in Europe
- Acute child protection challenges and possible intervention strategies in refugee camps surrounding Syria
- The high burden of maternal mortality on surviving children and families
- The role of early warning and early action in the prevention of mass atrocities
- Empowering children with disabilities
- Protection needs of distress child migrants
- Assessing the crisis facing displaced Rohingya populations
- Operationalizing human rights concepts
- Addressing the human rights of adolescents

“Sixty percent of the world’s children experience violence on a daily basis, either directly or as witnesses to the violence perpetrated on parents or other significant actors in their lives.”
One set of projects has identified unanswered research questions pertaining to empowering and protecting young people against violence. The center has explored a range of successful strategies for preventing child and adolescent recruitment into trafficking and other forms of exploitation. A series of studies in India has investigated the factors that enable very underprivileged girls from low castes whose families are illiterate to obtain a college education. Our studies suggest that these “champions” — girls who succeed in building alternatives to exploitation — benefit from a complex set of success triggers. Surprisingly, government social protection programs are only a minor part of the picture. What appears to be decisive is the unconditional support of mentors — parents, siblings, teachers — who are willing to challenge norms such as early marriage and domestic confinement to support girls’ aspirations. The research protocol used in these studies is being applied to other at-risk groups of children and adolescents.

The health and safety of adolescents affected by emergencies is an increasingly critical issue often neglected in research and policy. In partnership with faculty in Australia, China, Nepal, and Hong Kong we have launched the Disaster Resilience and Response Program, an investigation of the longer-term impacts of natural disasters in China and Nepal on adolescent health and development, with the aim of determining specific mechanisms for resilience. This study will provide innovative findings on the social determinants of health and security in disaster-affected populations, and highlight opportunities for skills training in field operations.

The Impacts of Maternal Death on Living Children was a groundbreaking study that illuminated the intergenerational impacts of maternal mortality. Findings from the Impacts Study have helped mobilize a coalition of advocates, researchers, and policy and program implementers to take strategic action to reduce maternal mortality and ameliorate the effects of maternal deaths on children.

Through our Program on Empowering People with Intellectual Disabilities, the center is engaged in a cross-cultural research study to identify the needs of adolescents and young adults with an intellectual disability as they transition from special education to adult services. An effort to document grassroots initiatives undertaken by parents and
communities to provide services for children and young adults with disabilities in the United States, with the goal of enhancing both service delivery and policymaking, is in the early stages of development.

A pioneering participatory action project centering on the empowerment of Roma young people provided youth with an opportunity to self-advocate and to design activities that foster agency in and ownership of their own communities. The center’s involvement in promoting the rights and participation of Romani children and adolescents has seen the completion of two projects; we are now engaged in a third, Romani Champions, which is looking at the factors behind educational success among first-generation Romani adolescents who, despite familial, historical, ethnic, and socio-economic disadvantages, have made it to tertiary education.

ANALYZING REFUGEE NEEDS
Another set of research projects aims to understand the situation of refugees in the Middle East and South Asia. We have expanded our rapid field assessments of the conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan to identify the centrality of livelihoods and education options for the millions now in their fifth year of forced exile. We have also launched a multistate study of ethnically targeted violence and exploitation directed at one of the most miserable of displaced populations in the world—the Rohingya minority in Myanmar and surrounding countries. In this latter study Harvard FXB Center is examining the different elements of vulnerability, the mechanisms currently in place to address it, and the range of possibilities for improving current violations.

Our goal in these contexts is to move beyond the cyclical exposure to violence and substitute instead a robust and protective child and adolescent rights framework to guide a strategic policy approach.

EARLY WARNING FOR ATROCITY CRIMES
Our research on atrocity early warning continues on two tracks: (1) exploring how early warning on drought in Syria might have led to timely policy interventions, and (2) building on our 2015 report to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), developing digital analytic systems for early warning on hate speech, with particular reference to the Roma in Hungary.
Harvard FXB Center has targeted current Indian anti-trafficking intervention strategies in order to address the impact of underlying policies on the lives of children, families, and their communities. A systematic study of India’s rescue and reintegration framework revealed the following:

- Despite vigorous engagement with the problem of trafficking, Indian regulations fail to ensure protective rescue operations or effective and sustainable reintegration programs.
- The numerous agencies and committees involved communicate poorly. As a result, exploited and brutalized children repeatedly fall through the protection cracks.

The center will pursue these findings with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, and propose pilot programs to improve essential work on reintegration of trafficked children.

Based on three field assessments of refugee settings in Syria and Jordan, we have produced policy briefs aimed at the major humanitarian actors tackling issues of safety, protection, livelihoods, education, and health. These briefs form the basis for our recommendations and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders in UNHCR and UNICEF.

As part of our collaboration with colleagues in Hong Kong to strengthen community resilience to current and future disasters in the Asia Pacific region, we conducted a scoping study of current capacity and gaps and shared the results and recommendations with government officials and civil society. The findings justify the
need for community outreach and engagement, inclusion of less familiar disasters within the scope of preparedness, investment in more resources for training, and the creation of a knowledge repository for easy access to information.

Findings from our research on atrocity early warning and its potential links to early action have been shared with major convening organizations on the prevention of genocide and the responsibility to protect and are now integrated into their deliberations regarding the roles of national authorities in establishing frameworks for intervention at the state level.

The now concluded Power of Numbers project aimed to explain if and how the Millennium Development Goals shifted global and national policy priorities and discourse. Power of Numbers engaged actors from around the world—representing civil society, national governments, donors, and the UN—to critically examine through a series of case studies how the MDGs created incentives for behavior (policy) change and knowledge (ideas) change. Findings were disseminated to high-level audiences involved in shaping the post-2015 development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, and were shared in a special double issue of the *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, published in 2014.

In concert with OHCHR, WHO, and other key partners, our policy team developed two summary reflection guides on applying a human rights based approach to health. These are intended to support policymakers and civil society organizations to effectively and meaningfully design and implement human-rights based programs and policies on sexual, reproductive, maternal and child health.

As part of our ongoing efforts to confront extremism and hate-motivated violence against Roma communities in Europe, we published an analysis of anti-Roma violence in Hungary which alerted the United Nations and the international community to the mounting incidence of hate crimes, racist propaganda, discrimination, and exclusionary ideologies that are endangering the physical and psychological safety of Roma people. The report was heavily used to support legal cases brought by a number of Roma living in Hungary, some of which saw success in the courts.
As an academic center situated at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Harvard FXB Center welcomes its responsibility to generate pedagogical materials, curricular offerings, mentorship opportunities, and public dissemination events in its areas of expertise.

The Center is the preeminent leader in scholarship and capacity strengthening for the adjudication and litigation of health rights, thanks to the tremendous efforts of our policy initiatives team. The policy team has provided trainings to judicial actors around the world through regional and national colloquia in Kenya, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico, and continually provides resources and capacity-strengthening to high-level actors and supra-national bodies.

Among our major convenings over the past two years was the 21st Century National Identification Systems conference. Participants explored the dramatic inclusionary potential of national identification as a mechanism for generating legal identity and social protection portability in low and middle-income countries. The Center is likely to participate in future collaborations on identity management training for a broad range of human rights constituencies, and on identity documentation for humanitarian applications, including in refugee situations.

In collaboration with a number of departments and centers across the university, we continue to host Harvard’s annual conference marking International Roma Day. The 2014 event centered on school segregation and featured a special screening of “Our School,”

“Participants explored the dramatic inclusionary potential of national identification as a mechanism for generating legal identity and social protection portability in low and middle-income countries.”
THE ROMA PROGRAM AT HARVARD

Since 2012 Harvard FXB Center has been implementing an innovative research, advocacy, and capacity-strengthening program to (a) promote the rights and participation of Roma children and adolescents, (b) promote reflection on past and present state-sponsored violence against Roma, and (c) advocate for the realization of Roma rights on academic and policy agendas.

Our team employs participatory action research and case study methodologies to give voice to the issues identified as problematic by Roma people themselves. We aim to strengthen community capacity and support the development of youth leadership in order to build investment in social and political change. Moreover, we work closely with young Roma and non-Roma scholars to conduct Roma-related research in an ethical, professional, and culturally sensitive manner.

a film following three Roma children in rural Transylvania, all three of whom were participants in a pilot program on school desegregation. In 2015 we welcomed Damian Drăghici, a renowned musician and Roma member of the European Parliament, for a set of robust, critical conversations assessing Europe’s track record in addressing anti-Roma discrimination so far.

Since the last iteration of this report we have developed an ambitious, interdisciplinary curriculum on child protection. The curriculum is designed to reach health professionals around the world at the start of their careers, as well as experienced child protection officials. In the coming years this successful, lively program is expected to grow, both in terms of student enrollment and practicum opportunities.

Also during this period we developed a number of in-depth, written case studies on disasters and war and have spearheaded the production of related e-learning cases for use in courses we have taught at various faculties at Harvard University and elsewhere. Course themes are early warning for early action, decision making under stress, and protection of the vulnerable based on legal norms and best practices in humanitarian response.

Last yet far from least, our FXB Fellows have become core members of our research and policy teams, and we have benefited from the contributions of a number of visiting scholars who have expanded our frames of reference and contributed to our strategic thinking regarding new research and policy objectives.
Engagement with high-level experts and decision makers completes our strategy of action-oriented research, policy analysis, and, with advocacy, direct intervention.

Our faculty and senior administration have consulted widely with national and international policymakers to develop new conceptual frameworks, guidelines, and operating procedures to tackle problems of violence, exploitation and abuse at a normative and political level. Through the work of our policy initiatives team, the Center was a cofounder in 2014 of the new Global Coalition of Partners to End Child Poverty.

Our expertise in child protection is regularly sought by a number of UN agencies, including UNICEF, UNHCR, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and UNFPA. Briefings provided by the Center to the U.S. Department of State, USAID, the World Bank, and Permanent Missions to the UN regarding refugee issues continue to lead to further requests for consultations and strategy papers.
FXBVILLAGE TOOLKIT AND FIELD EDUCATION INTERNSHIP

In May 2015, in collaboration with FXB International, Harvard FXB Center launched the **FXBVillage Toolkit and Planning Guide**. The guide was developed in response to Center founder Countess Albina du Boisrouvray’s intent to offer widely and free of charge her FXBVillage model on poverty eradication. Center staff worked to develop a 200-page interactive planning guide outlining the successful FXBVillage approach, an initiative of FXB International.

The toolkit chronicles the history and guiding principles behind the model and provides step-by-step guidance on the FXBVillage methodology. Its purpose is to support a range of entities—NGOs, governments, social entrepreneurs, philanthropists, and so on—in their efforts to break the cycle of extreme poverty. The toolkit also includes success stories from a number of program sites, including urban slums in Colombia, rural villages in Rwanda, and remote communities in China.

The previous year saw the launch of a related endeavor—the **FXB Field Education Internship**. This initiative offers Harvard students an opportunity to participate in a potentially transformative experience of community service by conducting research and participating in the life of one of 30 FXBVillages worldwide.

A university-wide initiative housed at the T.H. Chan School of Public Health, the internship program began during the 2014-2015 academic year and quickly drew interest among graduate and undergraduate students across the university. Successful candidates have already traveled to places as far afield as China, Rwanda, India, and France.

The FXB Field Education Internship allows students to deepen their understanding of how to implement a human rights based approach to poverty alleviation and program monitoring and evaluation, and how to ensure that research has practicable value on the ground.

FXB International has a 26-year history of tackling poverty in more than 150 villages across the world. The organization’s FXBVillage model uses a field-tested, comprehensive approach that identifies and simultaneously addresses health care, housing, education, nutrition, and income generation. [https://fxb.org/toolkit/](https://fxb.org/toolkit/)