

On-call Scientists: Pro Bono Scientific and Technical Support for Human Rights

Example: Partnership with HelpAge

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Overview



- What is the AAAS On-call Scientists initiative?
- What types of projects can On-call Scientists volunteers take on?
- How can human rights organizations request assistance?
- Project example: HelpAge report on sexual and gender based violence against older people in situations of prolonged displacement



AAAS Headquarters, Washington, DC

AAAS is the world's largest multidisciplinary scientific membership organization

NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC since 1974

Publisher of the *Science* family of journals



AAAS On-call Scientists



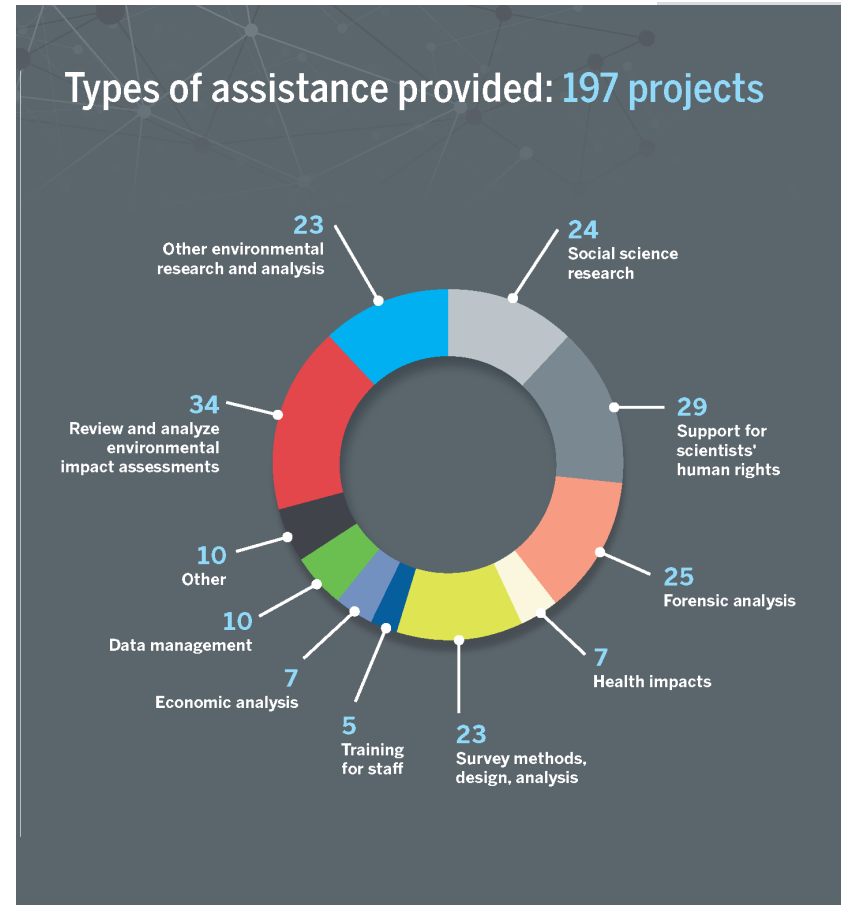
Mark Logsdon explains to community leader Ibrahima Sory Fadiga and civil society partner Kabinet Cissé, how ground waters can be affected by mining.

- Answer scientific questions about evidence or methodology
- Provide specialized expertise in investigations
- Design a survey or help with sampling
- Review documents for scientific accuracy
- Provide training for human rights organization staff

... support almost any human rights-related project that requires specialized, technical expertise from a scientist, engineer, or health professional.

AAAS On-call Scientists

- **Volunteers:** Scientists, engineers, and health professionals (M.S. + 2 years experience minimum)
- **Hosts:** Human rights organizations in need of pro bono scientific and technical expertise



Matching Process



- AAAS staff discuss project needs with the requesting human rights organizations.
- AAAS staff assess eligibility of organization.
- Where a match from the roster looks possible, AAAS staff review the volunteer's CV and interview the prospective volunteer.
- In addition to qualifications, we look for:
 - Science communication skills;
 - Strong endorsement from three references regarding qualifications, experience, integrity, and judgment.

Matching Process

- AAAS shares the volunteer's contact information, CV, and other relevant information with the human rights organization.
- **The final decision regarding a placement rests with the human rights organization.**
- We provide project leaders and volunteers with guidelines to support the initial stages of building their partnership.

<http://www.aaas.org/report/human-rights-projects-guidelines-scientists-and-human-rights-organizations>



**HUMAN RIGHTS
PROJECTS:
Guidelines for
Scientists and
Human Rights
Organizations**

Project example: HelpAge



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE



HelpAge

global network



**Inclusion
agenda**

Older people

**Gender-based violence among older
people living in
protracted displacement**

Project example: HelpAge



Problem

- 65.3 million people displaced worldwide.
- Global data sets do not include older people.
- Gender-based violence surveys are among those that limit data collection to those younger than 50.
- Older people often excluded from humanitarian and development services.
- What is their experience with GBV?



Project example: HelpAge



- Research funded by U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
- HelpAge USA served as project lead
- AAAS coordinated pro bono assistance from team of 18 statisticians, social scientists, psychologists, medical professionals, and computer scientists
- Research carried out in four different countries with local volunteers in each location to train and supervise

Findings



- **Older people experience violence, including GBV, before and during displacement**
 - 2 of 3 experienced violence either before or after displacement
 - 1 of 3 reported violence during displacement
 - 1 of 10 have experienced some type of GBV in their lifetimes
- **Older people experience domestic abuse, including IPV**
 - 35% report DV, abuse, or neglect in their lifetimes
 - 25% respondents reported IPV in their lifetimes
- **Older women experience certain types of GBV at higher rates than men, while older men reported higher rates of conflict-related violence**
 - Women were 2.5 x more likely to experience IPV than men
 - Men reported higher rates of violence typically related to conflicts and displacement

Evidence-based policy advocacy by HelpAge



- Remove age caps on data collection
- Expand existing services to include older people
- Involve older people in design and delivery of services
- Training for service providers to increase awareness
- More: <https://helpageusa.org/helpage/en/our-work/older-women/the-inclusion-agenda/>

Thank you!

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