



# Authoring Justice

## Online Course Report



Global Campus  
of Human Rights

Right Livelihood



Co-funded by  
the European Union



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# Introduction

**The written word is a powerful vehicle for social change.**

Under the guidance of Professor Andrew Leon Hanna, author of *25 Million Sparks: The Untold Story of Refugee Entrepreneurs* (Cambridge University Press), we explored how to write non-fiction narrative with empathy and strength on an issue or area that the participants' feel most enlivened to change in the world. In particular, we emphasised human-centered narrative storytelling as a style that can effectively shine a light on those who are excluded, honor their equal dignity, and move society toward greater mutual understanding and change. The course encompassed 10 modules with approximately 25-30 hours of active learning.

**The main learning objectives included how to:**

- learn about the principles of narrative non-fiction writing
- gain deeper understanding of the whole process - from the first idea and outline to the book proposal - through precise tips and examples
- develop and reinforce writing skills through the reading of excerpts from key non-fiction works and the drafting of short assignments and a Capstone Project (~2,000-word piece)
- hone approach, style and methods through tailored personal feedback
- explore ethical issues to consider throughout the writing process
- learn from the tactical wisdom, firsthand experiences and writing tips shared by the main lecturer and the guest speakers
- contribute to creative brainstorming and peer-to-peer support

The ultimate aim of the course was to inspire a new generation of authors to harness the power of the written word for profound social change.

# The course in a nutshell

## Key information



12 May-20 July  
2025



Open EdX



5+ h/week



Webpage



Teaser



2 surveys,  
3 padlet exercises

# A snapshot

Main lecturer



Webinar guests




- **Andrew Leon Hanna**, main lecturer, entrepreneur, lawyer, author, and professor
- **Kao Kalia Yang**, author, public speaker, teacher
- **Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Right Livelihood Laureate 2015**, author, environmental and human rights activist
- **Shahram Khosravi**, professor and author
- **Jemma Neville**, writer and journalist
- **Casey Gerald**, author
- **Joel Rickett**, managing editor Ebury - Penguin Random House

# Structure and activities

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## 10 Modules

- ✓ Selecting a writing topic
- ✓ Narrative Non-fiction
- ✓ Navigating the writing process
- ✓ Ethical considerations
- ✓ Getting published



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## Capstone Project

Draft and submit a 2,000-words work  
(long-form article or part of a book)



Write 200-250 words on the human rights area that most makes you "come alive"



Draft a 200-250-words synopsis of your Capstone Project



Celebrate during our class reading of excerpts from our Capstone Projects

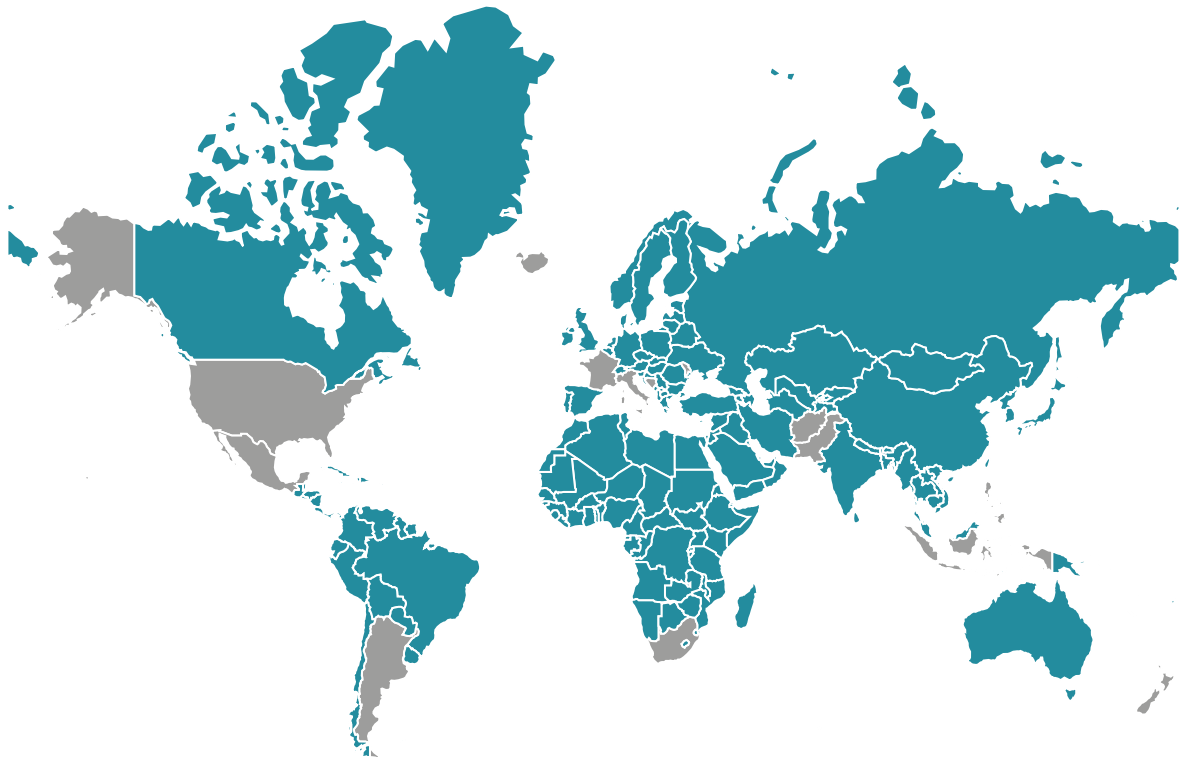
# Highlights

- **global representation** from various regions, for both participants and faculty
- participants with **diverse backgrounds**
- **two scholarships** offered as part of the institutional collaboration between Global Campus and Right Livelihood
- **expert guidance** of the main lecturer, Andrew Leon Hanna
- **engaging webinars with renowned authors**
- focus on **ethical considerations** throughout the course
- **tailored feedback** on assignments and Capstone Project
- **final celebration and publication** of excerpts in the GCHR Magazine and Open Knowledge Repository



# Demographics

**15**   PARTICIPANTS FROM  
ACROSS THE GLOBE



The course brought together 15 participants from around the world, representing a wide range of backgrounds—including academics, human rights advocates, researchers, climate journalists and activists, as well as a leader of a youth-led organisation.

# Participants' profiles



Human rights advocates



Academics and researchers



Climate activists



Journalists, filmmakers



GCA alumni

# Participants' motivation

The course attracted those looking for inspiration, structured guidance, and feedback to stay motivated in their creative journeys - driven by a desire to highlight underrepresented issues connected to human rights.

Many were looking for practical tools to turn their ideas into published works—whether articles, books, or even graphic novels—and hoped to gain a deeper understanding of the publishing process.

## Eager to improve their skills

[I would like] to familiarize myself with the key tools and techniques associated with narrative nonfiction and to gain confidence in that genre of writing.

(...) I hope to gain more knowledge on writing for social impact and be able to bring that to my everyday work.

[I hope] to to learn practical and actionable frameworks to narrative nonfiction for justice, and to hopefully publish my capstone project into a zine/book[

## Empowered to share their voices

My hope is to improve my creative writing skills and get better at mediating important topics, thus I am excited about getting the tailored feedback.

I am really excited about the speakers and hope to expand my network and become part of a writing community. I hope to learn how to navigate the world of publishing.

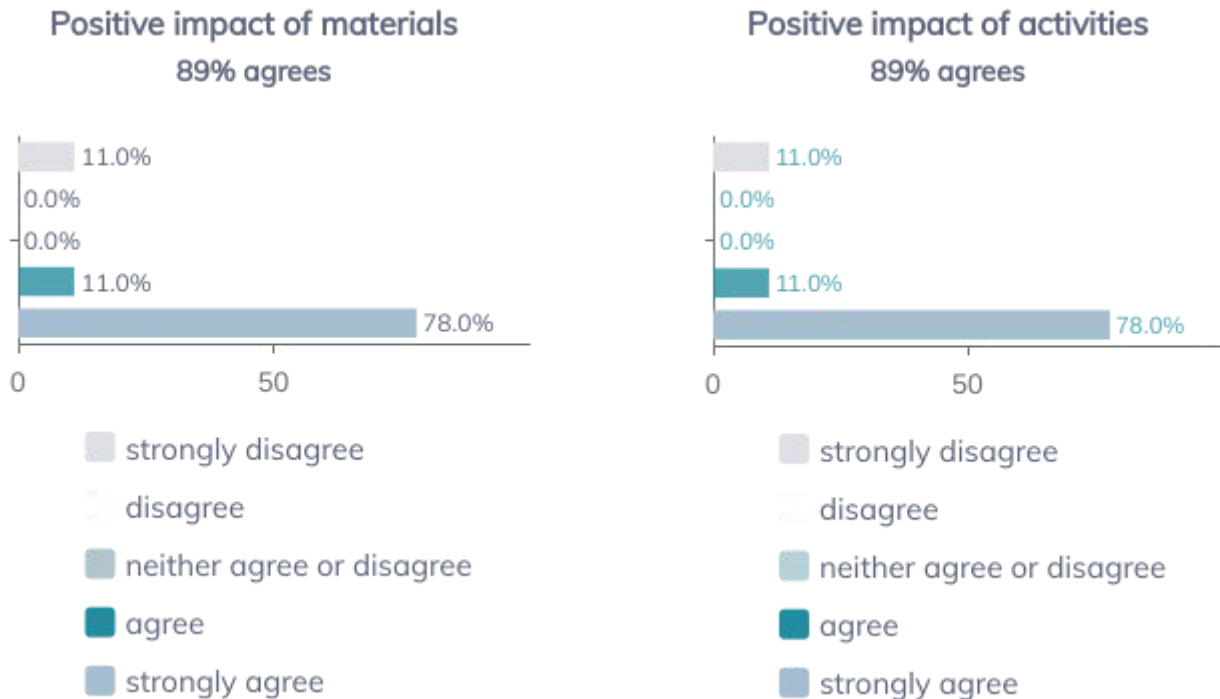
# Focus areas

- This year particular emphasis was placed on two thematic areas: **climate change and youth-led movements**
- This focus was further supported by the collaboration between the Global Campus of Human Rights and Right Livelihood for the provision of **two scholarships** for emerging writers working on related topics
- Yet, the participants explored many other stories—narratives that might have remained untold without their courage
- Among such stories can be included projects on **migration, conflict, environmental crises, racial justice**
- Many authors focused on deeply personal or familial experiences, described with passion and sincerity—so characteristic of **nonfiction and human-centered storytelling**



# Evaluation\*

The course materials and activities were generally well-received.



## 89% gave 4-5\*

When asked to give an overall rating on a scale of 1 to 5, **56%** of survey respondents gave **5\***, **33%** **4\*** and 11% assigned 3\*.

## 89% would recommend

Most of respondents indicated that they would recommend the course, rating it as **extremely likely (22%)**, **very likely (56%)**, or **likely (12%)**. One respondent remained neutral.

\*This report is based on the responses from the participant experience survey conducted via SurveyMonkey, with 9 out of 15 participants providing feedback.

# Impact

## Empowering writers

Through exchanging their experiences and perspectives, participants gained the ability to motivate others and possibly impact public opinion and policymaking—especially in areas where human rights are at risk of being overlooked or threatened.

Not only did the course strengthen participants' writing skills but it also inspired them to apply these insights across both creative and professional domains. Many participants expressed a renewed motivation to continue writing, with plans ranging from launching personal platforms like Substack to pursuing long-term goals such as authoring books and multimedia projects.

I will use it when I write creative nonfiction stories and beyond. Many of my learnings here can also be applied in human interest journalism, etc.

I would like to write a book. In the meantime this also enhance my written productions like articles.

The course helped me to clarify my ideas and start writing a proposal for a book/multimedia project about which I have been thinking for a while.



# Recommendations from participants



In general, the course met expectations. The most appreciated aspects were the live webinars with authors and publishers, tailored feedback on assignments and the Capstone Project, and the final celebration along with the publication of excerpts in the GCHR Magazine.

We also received valuable feedback on areas for improvement. Most participants suggested increasing interaction among peers to foster a more collaborative experience:

Speaking about the changes, I would introduce a feedback session on our synopsis or "what makes me come alive" written assignment so as to receive the feedback both from Andrew and the group in the midst of the course.

I suggest more interaction between guests and participants, like guided activities during the seminars (even with Andrew/moderated by Andrew). Feedback during the course.

# Participants' feedback

The course was praised by participants as a very useful and inspiring learning experience, under different points of view. The quotes below testify to the meaningful and practical impact of this initiative in the professional and personal development of participants. They also demonstrate the value of supporting many talented authors navigate new paths to tell human stories, honour human dignity and share powerful ideas and action for change.

This program gave me support, inspiration, and accountability.

The course helped me achieve my main goal that is to gain motivation and start the writing project.

I have come to realise that it's a process that means to evolve. I feel that sharing our work has allowed me to understand better the experience of writing and also sensitised me to topics I had taken for granted.

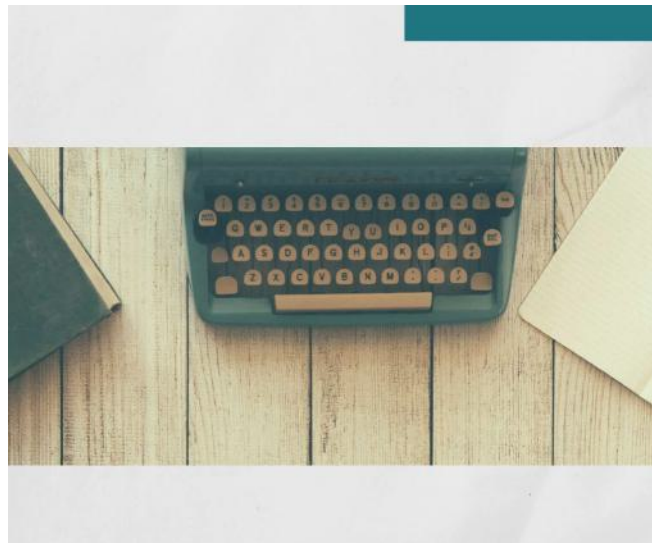
The course did [fulfill initial hopes] by answering all aspects of writing. From selecting the topic, to the actual writing, up to publishing. Also the feedbacks on an actual project made it even more of a learning experience.

# Organisers' impressions

In this year's edition we were pleased to see how effectively participants applied the techniques covered in the course, seamlessly integrating them into their final Capstone Projects. Their strong drive to publish these works further reflected a deep commitment to sharing their stories with a broader audience.

All in all, we felt that the course empowered and inspired them to continue telling the stories that matter—stories that extend empathy and open minds, eyes, and hearts to unseen places and unheard voices. Even in the face of dark and challenging realities, their narratives spark light, hope, and the potential for change.

Thank you - to all participants for their engagement, openness, and dedication.



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