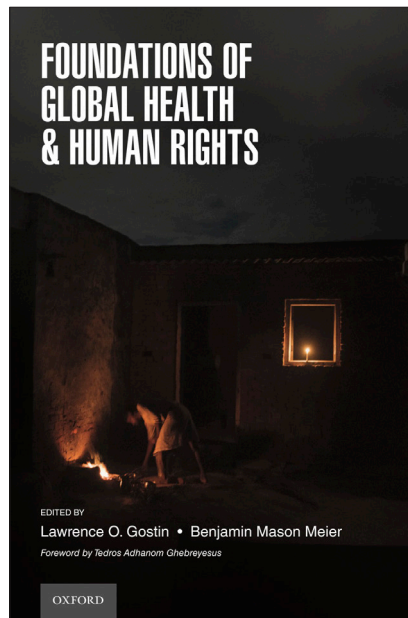


BOOK REVIEW



Foundations of Global Health & Human Rights
Ed. by Lawrence O Gostin and Benjamin Mason Meier. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. ISBN: 9780197528297

Written for advanced students across disciplines, this extraordinarily informative and well-researched textbook is foundational and unique. Gostin and Meier have collaborated with 38 distinguished contributors, all experts and practitioners in health and law from across the globe, to produce the latest

commentary on global health and human rights.

Twenty chapters, edited seamlessly over 488 pages, produce a comprehensive and easy read. Four sections progress conceptually: 1. 'Norms and principles', presenting the evolution of health as a human right under international law; 2. 'Implementation and accountability', applying international human rights to the domestic public health arena and monitoring their realisation; 3. 'Contemporary applications', provoking a thoughtful examination of the use of human rights as a means to confront a wide array of public health concerns such as infectious diseases, water, sanitation, disability, and mental and reproductive health; and 4. 'New challenges', analysing the state of global health under immense pressure from new and emerging issues such as complex humanitarian emergencies, climate change and rising populism.

The editors ensure cohesive flow with helpful links between content. Clear headings, descriptive footnotes and in-text references to previous chapters are helpful. Case studies and questions at the end of each chapter, followed by source references, are particularly useful, encouraging critical reflection and discussion. The one task for the reader is to memorise numerous acronyms for long titles of organisations and documents. An accessible list of abbreviations for quick reference would certainly assist here.

This volume stimulates interest in the subject by thoroughly canvassing health and human rights in multiple spheres, including health research. The authors' explanation of strategic advancement towards global health generates an appreciation for the successes and challenges achieved so far. South African readers will delight in the frequency with which exemplary Constitutional Court victories are cited. The book does not shy away from the difficulties, describing imbalances and counterweights to health operationalisation and governance regionally. One of the book's many strengths is that it elevates local experience to international significance. It paints a picture of clear progress, but also the need for tenacity and persistence in the pursuit of global health justice in uncertain times.

An 'Afterword' by the editors fittingly concludes this excellent work. It offers heartfelt advice to human rights defenders to look after themselves and keep their hope alive despite the obstacles.

Yolande Guidozzi

Advocate of the High Court of South Africa

Nicolette Erasmus

Honorary Lecturer, Unit for Undergraduate Medical Education, School of Clinical Medicine, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa; and Attorney of the High Court of South Africa, Independent Corporate Counsel
nicolette.erasmus@wits.ac.za