

Leitner Center for International Law and Justice

at Fordham Law School, New York City



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One of the oldest and largest law school-based human rights programs, the Leitner Center provides **EDUCATION AND TRAINING** to law students, facilitates **CAPACITY BUILDING AND ADVOCACY** with activists and grassroots groups around the world, and contributes to **CRITICAL RESEARCH** among scholars in international human rights.

From its base at Fordham Law School in New York City, the Center develops long-term partnerships with local social justice organizations and other stakeholders across the globe. Through its **PIONEERING PROGRAMS, CLINICS,** and **EDUCATION INITIATIVES**, the Leitner Center trains students to become international legal experts and impassioned human rights advocates.

Meaningful human rights work is not a solitary enterprise. The Leitner Center attracts talented, dedicated individuals who work together to fulfill its compelling and unique mission. Through training and scholarships for students, the Center works in solidarity with grassroots activists to further four core objectives:



Strengthening the rule of law and access to justice



Promoting the rights of vulnerable populations around the world



Fostering sustainable development



Examining the role of traditional legal systems and their relationship to international law and human rights



Education & Training

INSPIRING STUDENTS TO BE CRITICAL LEGAL ADVOCATES

The Leitner Center believes firmly that successful law graduates are educated in international legal theory as well as practice. In 1997, the **Crowley Program in International Human Rights** began preparing students for a human rights law career by providing practical field experience. Since that time, the Leitner Center has expanded its hands-on clinical programs to include the **Walter Leitner International Human Rights Clinic**, the **Corporate Social Responsibility Clinic**, and the **International Law and Development in Africa Clinic**, each creating unique training opportunities in targeted, substantive areas. The Center's programs in Africa, Asia, and the Americas also create roles for students through **independent studies** as researchers, report drafters, and human rights practitioners.

Each Center project, no matter its focus or location, prepares students to do important legal work in a variety of fields. For example, the **International Law and the Constitution Initiative** provides opportunities for students to work on law and policy projects. Human rights-specific lectures and seminars round out the complete legal education of the Fordham-trained lawyer.

Course offerings include the following:

- Advanced Topics in Human Rights
- Constitutional Rights and Human Rights
- Public International Law
- Law, Society, and Rights in Asia
- Human Rights Scholarship
- Laws of War and International Criminal Courts
- International Law of Development
- Climate Change Law and Policy
- International Environmental Law
- Law of International Organizations
- International Human Rights Law
- The UN and Human Rights



Capacity Building & Advocacy

The Leitner Center partners with activists, stakeholders, and groups around the world to provide support for networks of human rights advocates. The Center has conducted trainings on international human rights law, held mobile legal aid clinics, hosted community dialogue sessions, and held workshops and conferences that support human rights from the ground up.

All the Center's work, whether conducted in a country overseas or around the corner in New York City, focuses on one or more of the following: the rule of law and access to justice, the rights of vulnerable people, sustainable development, and traditional legal systems.



Project Spotlight

LGBT Rights Working Group

The Leitner Center promotes global LGBT rights through clinical work, academic seminars, and legal training and exchange. The Center offers clinical courses focused on the human rights of LGBT people, partnering with organizations and activists in China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Uganda, and Nepal.



Research, Scholarship & Exchange



The Center contributes to cutting-edge human rights scholarship with fact-finding reports, journal articles, books, and opinion pieces. Our faculty and staff contribute to this scholarship through independent research under the aegis of Center programs.

RECENT SCHOLARSHIP INCLUDES

Economic Injustice: Employment and Housing Discrimination Against LGBTI Refugees and Asylum Seekers in South Africa

Suppressing Protest: Human Rights Violations in the U.S. Response to Occupy Wall Street

International Criminal Tribunals: A Visual Overview

Mental Health and Human Rights in Cambodia

The Future of African Customary Law

Missing in Action: Gender in International Environmental Law

International Environmental Law and Multinational Corporations

Air, Atmosphere and Climate Change

Frequent conferences and events at Fordham Law—including a weekly human rights lecture series—create an open space for dialogue and exchange on human rights issues.



Creating Opportunities for Practitioners & Scholars

The Leitner Center is committed to not only educating future human rights leaders but also providing support for them as they begin their careers. The Center provides stipends for **summer human rights internships**, while the **Tolan Fellowship in International Human Rights** provides top graduates with a funded human rights position for one year. Past Tolan Fellows have gone on to work full time at prominent human rights organizations.

LL.M. candidates from the developing world benefit from waived tuition and a living stipend through the **Vivian Leitner Global South LL.M. Scholars Program**. The Leitner Center also hosts doctoral students at Fordham Law School who are doing international legal research.



The Leitner Center for International Law and Justice was launched in September 2007 on the 10th anniversary of the Crowley Program in International Human Rights. Professors Martin Flaherty and Tracy Higgins founded the Crowley Program in 1997, and since that time, the Program and Center have trained scores of students, sponsored hundreds of events, and greatly expanded opportunities for students to work in international law and justice.



The Leitner Center is named in recognition of longtime supporter James Leitner '82, who has made possible the expansion of the programs now available to Fordham students at the Leitner Center.

Crowley Program in International Human Rights



An innovative, fieldwork-centered international human rights program

A pioneering program among American law schools, the Crowley Program's annual human rights fact-finding program is a national leader in legal education for the study of and advocacy for the rights of individuals throughout the world.

Every year, selected students join the Crowley Program, a rigorous academic study of human rights that is followed by an overseas Human Rights Fact-Finding Project enacted in partnership

with local organizations and activists. Fordham students help to plan every stage of the project and then spend 2 weeks on the ground conducting interviews. The Program has yielded 16 annual reports, and students then work with partner groups in implementation and advocacy work.

Project Spotlight

Cambodia - Mental Health and Human Rights

In cooperation with networks of social service organizations and advocate groups, the Crowley Program documented the state of mental health services and the extent to which they respond to Cambodians' mental health needs. In addition to preparing a comprehensive report, students held workshops and trainings for experts, judges, and funders to draw attention to the human rights concerns related to mental health.



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exchange



Creating
opportunities



HUMAN RIGHTS FACT-FINDING PROJECTS

1. **Bangladesh** – The human rights concerns of LGBT people
2. **Bolivia** – Human rights gaps in the criminal justice system

Bolivia – Corporate responsibility for violations of economic and social rights
3. **Cambodia** – Mental health and human rights
4. **Ghana** – Women’s inheritance rights
5. **Hong Kong** – Legal reform and human rights after political transition
6. **Kenya** – Reproductive rights and the right to health
7. **Malawi** – The feminization of HIV/AIDS
8. **Malaysia** – Civil and political rights and the Internal Security Act
9. **Mexico** – Criminal justice and the right to a fair trial under international law
10. **Nepal** – Land rights and socioeconomic injustice in a time of transition
11. **New Zealand** – The elimination of violence against women
12. **Romania** – Minority rights and the right to education
13. **Rwanda** – The right to education for children with disabilities
14. **South Africa** – Legal pluralism and gender equality
15. **Tanzania** – Women’s rights to adequate housing in urban areas
16. **Turkey** – The rights of detainees in the State Security Court system

Project Spotlight

Malawi – The Feminization of HIV/AIDS

For this project in Malawi, the Crowley Program conducted approximately 500 interviews documenting widespread community-level stigma and HIV/AIDS-related discrimination. The Crowley Program partnered with the Coalition of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (COWLHA) in Malawi and presented the Leitner Center’s first Human Rights Prize in 2007. Following that project, COWLHA and Executive Director Daphne Gond received a prestigious Red Ribbon Award at the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, Mexico, in August 2008.

Walter Leitner International Human Rights Clinic



Training a new generation of human rights advocates at Fordham Law School

The Walter Leitner International Human Rights Clinic trains students to be strategic, reflective, and creative social justice advocates by immersing them in human rights practice through professional-level projects around the world. Since its founding in 2007, the Clinic has worked on over 30 projects in partnership with 20 grassroots NGOs in Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi,

Sierra Leone, South Africa, Turkey, the United States, and Zimbabwe that have focused on the sexual health and rights of marginalized populations as well as access to justice. Students gain invaluable human rights lawyering experience by employing a range of advocacy methods, including legal and policy analysis, fact finding and report writing, public interest litigation, submissions before human rights bodies, and direct legal assistance.

The innovative global social justice work of the Walter Leitner International Human Rights Clinic has been honored with national, citywide, and university awards from the *National Law Journal*, the Urban Justice Center's Police Reform Organizing Project, and Fordham Law School public interest students.



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SELECT WALTER LEITNER CLINIC PROJECTS

1. **India** – crafted policy document with alternative guidelines for HIV/AIDS interventions targeting sex workers
2. **Kenya** – designed human rights training manual for sex workers
3. **Lebanon** – drafted needs-assessment report outlining employment discrimination faced by the Lebanese transgender community
4. **Malawi** – conducted international and comparative constitutional law research for public interest lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of forced HIV testing of sex workers and anti-homosexuality laws

Malawi – conducted mobile legal aid clinics, providing individuals with direct legal assistance on cases involving witchcraft accusations, property grabbing, and domestic violence

Malawi – conducted anti-torture workshops for Malawian police and prison officials
5. **Sierra Leone** – held anti-female genital cutting workshops in seven schools, with thousands of students participating
6. **South Africa** – assisted sex worker-led national campaign to decriminalize sex work in order to uphold human and constitutional rights of sex workers

South Africa – drafted report documenting employment and housing discrimination against LGBT refugees
7. **Liberia** – drafted 200-page handbook on the design of community-based paralegal programs
8. **United States/Ethiopia** – drafted report on the effect of U.S. foreign policy on Ethiopian women’s access to safe abortion services
9. **United States** – conducted on-site surveys assessing level of reproductive healthcare being provided to American Indian women through government-run Indian Health Services in South Dakota

United States – drafted series of policy reports on NYPD abuse of black and Latino communities, Muslim-American communities, sex workers, LGBT youth of color, street vendors, homeless people, and Occupy Wall Street protestors
10. **Zimbabwe** – drafted policy paper on decriminalization of sex work

Sustainable Development Legal Initiative



Strengthening legal education and capacity for sustainable development

Through its expertise in international law, legal education, research, and practice, SDLI aims to promote the use of law to foster environmentally sound development and poverty eradication. Selected SDLI programs and activities include the following:

RULE OF LAW & ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Capacity building to strengthen the justice sector as a guarantor of fundamental human rights and the rule of law in Africa is a core focus of our work. SDLI has piloted several projects to build legal education and capacity in Africa, and in Ghana in particular. Highlights include the following:

- Collaborating with the Judicial Service of Ghana (JSG) and the U.S. Federal Judicial Center to organize research surveys and judicial training programs in Ghana, and U.S. visits and exchanges for members of the Ghanaian bar, bench, and academy
- Partnering with the JSG to fund a pilot clerkship program for the Supreme Court that has now become a permanent, sustainable program
- Coordinating scholarships for promising young Ghanaian judges and scholars to attend Fordham's LL.M. in International Law and Justice program



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- Piloting innovative projects to raise awareness and support for the Legal Aid Scheme of Ghana and to maximize and expand its impact

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

A second key focus area for SDLI's work is environmental sustainability. SDLI's efforts to promote environmentally sound development include the following:

- Conducting research and advocacy regarding the import and disposal of e-waste in Ghana through strategic assessment of the existing national information and communication technology policy, and proposing national e-waste strategies
- Identifying obstacles and opportunities for the carbon trade in Africa by conducting literature reviews, interviews, and surveys with key stakeholders, as well as high-level workshops and trainings on the carbon markets
- Undertaking research and negotiations regarding the regulatory framework for independent solar energy providers in Ghana on behalf of a U.S. benefit corporation exploring investment opportunities in West Africa

International Law and Development in Africa Clinic



Exposing students to the realities and challenges of development work through hands-on projects in partnership with African law students

The opportunity to work with African lawyers and students is the defining element of the ILDA clinic and unique in American legal education.

Blended teams of students provide several advantages, as they produce stronger, smarter projects by capitalizing on their respective strengths. Working effectively on a cross-cultural team also requires flexibility, adaptability, perseverance, and sensitivity—all skills that serve students well as future lawyers and leaders.

By exposing students to the realities of working in countries with different legal cultures and often fewer resources, the Clinic engages them in thinking critically about the challenges of development work and what being a lawyer in such circumstances can mean. Past and ongoing projects include the following:

Women's Inheritance Insecurity Project – Organizing rural workshops on women's inheritance rights and free legal clinics for marriage registration, will drafting, and dispute resolution services

International Trade Project – Promoting understanding and implementation of international trade legislation and U.S. trade measures designed to increase access to the U.S. market for African products

Access to Justice Project – Interviewing remand prisoners, completing and registering their files, and partnering with judicial service to convene courts in prisons to release those who have been unlawfully detained



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Religion, Culture and Human

Rights Project – Convening venues for traditional leaders, government officials, and members of civil society to gather and discuss controversial traditional practices and their relationships to domestic and international law

Family Justice Project – Researching the needs of Ghanaian families as well as best practices in the design and implementation of family justice centers; preparing proposals for the creation of a pilot family justice center in Ghana

Right to Health Project – Promoting awareness of patients' rights through educational workshops and publications and a large-scale survey of patient experiences with existing complaint mechanisms

Customary Law Project – Publishing an online database of the decisions of the Courts of the Asantehene, the King of the Ashanti, one of the largest ethnic groups in Ghana

LGBT Rights Project – Researching, developing, and implementing trainings on the rights of LGBT citizens, in collaboration with an NGO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

ADR Project – Conducting interviews on customary law practices and ADR workshops for traditional chiefs and community leaders to build local capacity to conduct legally binding arbitrations

Corporate Social Responsibility Program



Helping businesses to maximize social and environmental benefits alongside profits

Human rights, labor rights, the environment, and anti-corruption efforts are affected by almost every aspect of corporate activity. In February 2012, following a generous gift from PVH Corp., the Leitner Center launched a new Corporate Social Responsibility Program. Through education, research, project work, and speaker events, the Program examines the challenges and opportunities for companies and stakeholders as they strive to develop sustainable business practices.

The Program is one of the first of its kind at a U.S. law school and provides a unique learning opportunity for students at Fordham.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CLINIC

The Clinic introduces students to the law and practice of CSR. In addition to a weekly seminar that explores CSR in different regions around the world, the Clinic also offers students the opportunity to work on practical, real-life projects with business and NGO partners. Projects to date include the following:

- Researching anti-corruption reporting behavior of multinational corporations and presenting findings to a United Nations Global Compact Working Group Meeting
- Producing a series of human rights risks fact sheets for a multinational corporation on a select number of countries in which the company operates
- Examining human rights risks of investment in the information and communications technology sector in Myanmar, to inform wider research by the Institute for Human Rights and Business



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- Partnering with a multinational corporation to develop a human rights education program for primary schools in Rwanda
- Drafting human rights policies for multinational corporations in light of the recently endorsed United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights

Project Spotlight

CSR and Lawyers Global Project

Exploring the social responsibility of lawyers to provide free legal services to the poor and underserved, the CSR Program established a new CSR and Lawyers Global Project. Partnering with local law students and NGOs, the Project examines current pro bono efforts in selected countries and presents proposals for future reform and expansion. The Project began work in 2012 in Colombia and has since traveled to Ghana in 2013. The Project has been invited to conduct similar research in other countries in Latin America in 2014.

PVH Corp. Sustainable Enterprise Speaker Series

A lunchtime CSR speaker series hosts distinguished speakers from across the field who present on the most recent developments and challenges facing the business and human rights agenda.

CSR Leadership Course

A new leadership course will educate companies and lawyers on the expanding legal obligations in the field of CSR and will introduce them to the instruments and mechanisms in place to help them navigate this challenging terrain.

Asia Law and Justice Program



Promoting fundamental rights and the rule of law in Asia

The Asia Law and Justice (ALJ) Program exposes students to critical human rights concerns in Asia, a region that is vast, diverse, and facing a wide range of challenges to the rule of law and access to justice. Students are trained to think critically and creatively through seminar course offerings and hands-on projects in partnership with grassroots groups, including in Burma, China, and Nepal.

The ALJ Program creates programs for students that train them in the skills required of a professional human rights advocate, including research, legal

and policy analysis, fact finding, international advocacy, and capacity building in partnership with local advocates.

Through a dedicated seminar, students learn to examine and respond to traditional critiques of applying human rights laws in Asian countries and learn to identify successful strategies for promoting human rights within that unique context.

Students are supervised by faculty and program staff working directly with NGO partners and activists in countries throughout Asia and create training



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materials and other resources for use in diverse settings. Students conduct interviews with local stakeholders and facilitate trainings on human rights standards with local groups.

The ALJ Program's recent work has focused on lawyers and other human rights defenders, women's rights, protections for refugees, socioeconomic rights, and the human rights implications of foreign investment in Asia.

Project Spotlight

Promoting the Rights of Farmers in Nepal, Including Support for International Advocacy at the UN

The Leitner Center worked with the Community Self-Reliance Center through the 2008 Crowley Program, documenting the rights of landless farmers. Since that time, the ALJ Program has continued to partner with CSRC to provide advocacy support, international legal training, and documentation, including support for international advocacy at the UN.

Advocating for Human Rights Lawyers in China

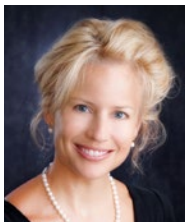
The ALJ Program partners with the Committee to Support Chinese Lawyers in its efforts to improve the situation of Chinese human rights lawyers through strengthening the rule of law. The ALJ Program conducts research, publishes reports, and provides advocacy support to the Committee.

Fostering Gender Equality in Burma

The ALJ Program has partnered with organizations inside and outside Burma to provide legal analysis and training materials on women's rights. Students have created training materials on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its applicability to promoting human rights in Burma.

People

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