

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019



CYRUS R. **VANCE CENTER**  
FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

NEW YORK  
CITY BAR



# H I G H L I G H T S   O F   T H E   Y E A R



Alexander Papachristou  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Vance Center in 2019 saw continued expansion of the Vance Center's programs, teams, and funding.

**WE NOTABLY LAUNCHED A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS** led by four working groups of the Vance Center Committee. Over the year, the Committee added **five new members**, including two joining the Africa Sub-Committee, and two representing new law firms. Committee members and their firms provided **record financial support**. We celebrated Ted Maynard's retirement from his firm and commitment to the new role of Executive Chair of the Committee. He and Africa Sub-Committee Chair Inosi Nyatta traveled to **Kenya and Ethiopia**, and he and our Africa Program Manager visited **Ghana**, opening new partnerships with law firms there. The Lawyers Council led delegations to **Peru and Guatemala** to assess judicial independence, and we conducted a workshop for the Guatemalan Association of Judges for Integrity, including multinational in-house and law firm lawyers, with support from the Chubb Rule of Law Fund, which also funded projects in **Brazil, the Gambia, Mexico, and East Africa**. The Program in Independent Journalism of the Open Society Foundations gave us a three-year grant to support **investigative journalism, human rights defenders, and anti-corruption activists**. The Human Rights and Access to Justice Program gained a new fellow, thanks to Paul Weiss, began a pilot research project in **Sierra Leone** for the Women in Prison initiative, and established the **Business and Human Rights** Working Group at the New York City Bar Association. The Environment Program joined important litigation in Chile on the **right to a healthy environment** and launched pioneering work on the **rights of nature**. The Keep Families Together initiative redoubled efforts to **reunite separated families** and convened its US and Central American partners to assess further needs and opportunities. The Power Africa Legal Fellows Program successfully launched its first year.

## The Human Rights and Access to Justice Program

**REMAINED ACTIVE IN SUPPORTING LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS** around the globe in addressing some of the more salient human rights challenges by securing key protections for vulnerable groups, ensuring accountability for atrocity crimes, and promoting business respect for human rights.

### • **ELA: COMBATING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

In the wake of the MeToo movement, the Vance Center supported Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género (ELA), an NGO from Argentina that aims to achieve gender equality and improve the social, political, and economic status of women, in addressing the pervasive problem of sexual harassment in the workplace. We researched best practices in New York State and City to address sexual harassment in the workplace and remedies that courts in the U.S. and Latin America have awarded in such cases. We made recommendations on how ELA may assist employers and the judiciary in Argentina and Latin America more broadly to tackle this issue.

### • **WOMEN IN PRISON: RESEARCH IN SIERRA LEONE**

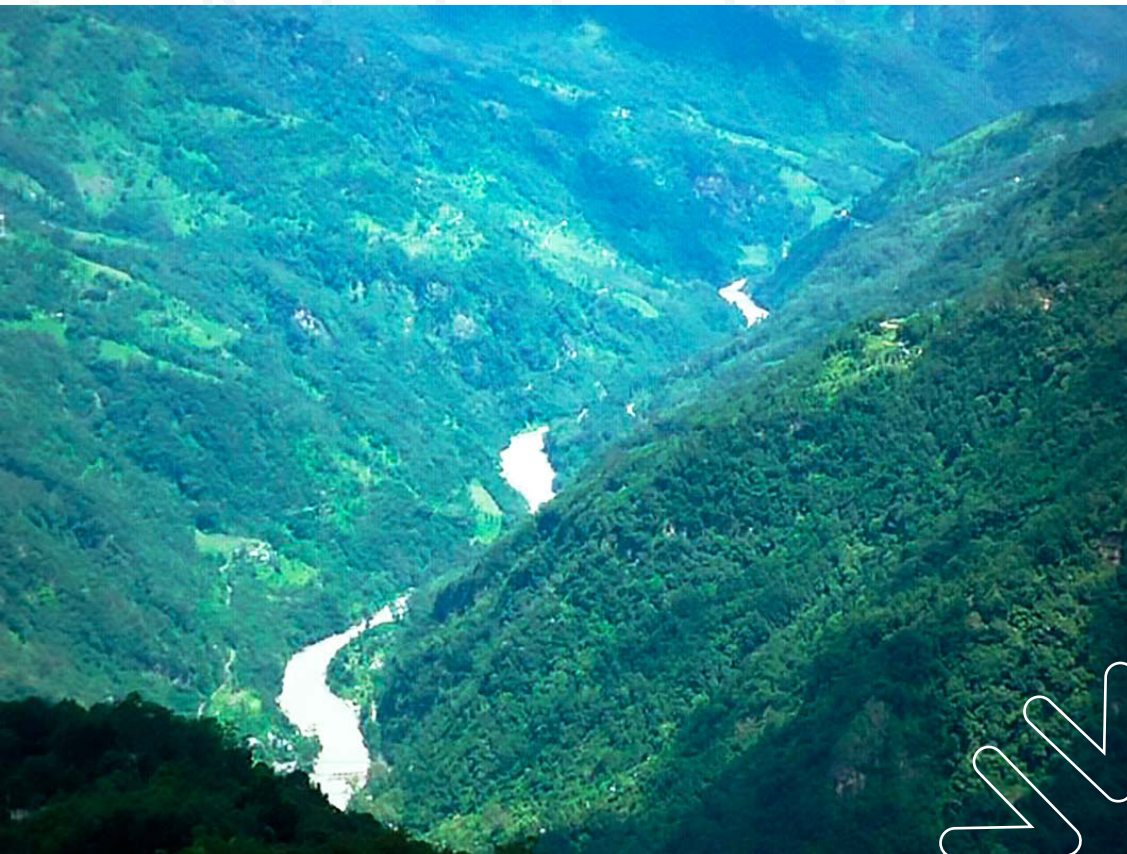
As part of the Women in Prison initiative, the Vance Center launched a pilot research project in Sierra Leone. The research, which the Vance Center is implementing jointly with the NGO Advocaid, focused on the causes and consequences of women's incarceration in Sierra Leone. The Vance Center and Advocaid interviewed women and correctional officers in seven correctional centers across Sierra Leone, formerly incarcerated women, families of women in prison, government officials, and NGOs. The project's report, which includes a guide on conducting research in prisons, will serve as a blueprint for similar research that other organizations can conduct in their respective countries.








## THE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

CONTINUED ITS WORK ON THE INTERSECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS, supporting efforts in the different arenas of advocacy, litigation, and the United Nations system.



- The program assisted client International Rivers, with pro bono support from the Indian law firm Talwar Thakore & Associates, in research and analysis of the governmental structure for decision-making with regard to rivers and the environmental impacts of hydropower plants located in the state of Sikkim. The research also involved Indian and international laws protecting the cultural rights of Indigenous groups, tribal communities, and others, as well as judicial decisions and international best practices regarding protection of rivers. 
- The program prepared an [amicus brief](#), with the support of Weil Gotshal & Manges, on behalf of Human Rights Watch in a claim by the residents of Quintero and Puchancaví, Chile, where pollution hospitalized more than 1,300 people. The Chilean Supreme Court found that the government had violated national and international laws in failing to prevent the pollution and issued 15 orders against the government, including requiring more careful inspection and monitoring of toxic chemicals, improving emergency and evacuation plans, and filtering and reducing chemical emissions. 
- The program began advising United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment David Boyd in a study of nearly 400 national and subnational jurisdictions, documenting that a large majority of UN member states recognize the right to a healthy environment. Led by the Vance Center, the project had the invaluable participation of Clifford Chance, White & Case and dozens of other law firms in research of constitutional provisions, statutes, case law, and international treaties. 

## THE GOOD GOVERNANCE PROGRAM CONTINUED TO FOCUS ON NONPROFIT INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM WHILE EXPANDING ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS SYSTEMIC CORRUPTION 🌐



- With a grant from the [Chubb Rule of Law Fund](#), the Vance Center organized a [workshop on international financial transactions and compliance](#) for 50 Guatemalan judges, conducted by in-house multinational legal counsel and law firm partners. The independent Association of Guatemalan Judges for Integrity requested help with the increasing caseload of transnational corruption cases that its members face. A [video](#) of the workshop is available.
- With pro bono support from Weil Gotshal & Manges, the Organized Crime and Reporting Project fended off a defamation lawsuit by an Azerbaijani parliamentarian at the London High Court, in a proceeding lasting two years and exemplifying the burdensome cost of vexatious claims and threats facing many journalists in the United Kingdom. The Vance Center also assisted OCCRP and several other clients to defend press freedom in Cyprus, Switzerland, Italy, the UK and the US.




## PRO BONO PRACTICE



- We organized together with partners in the [Pro Bono Network of the Americas](#) the second annual conference on pro bono practice, hosted in Santiago by our Network co-coordinator [Fundación Pro Bono Chile](#). With more than 100 attendees, the conference addressed key issues in human rights, access to justice, as well as pro bono legal education and public interest careers in Latin America. A closed planning meeting of Network executive directors featured workshops on marketing strategies for pro bono clearinghouses.
- We concluded the 2018 work plan for the Pro Bono Network of the Americas, focused on addressing the regional migration crisis and strengthening relationships with law schools in Latin America. As part of its follow up to the San Jose Declaration enacted at the conference on refugees organized with [HIAS](#), the Network organized a series of panels and events focusing on migration.
- We published the results of our 12th annual pro bono survey in partnership with Latin Lawyer, achieving the highest participation rate from [Latin American](#) law firms since inception. Results show that the corporate legal sector is more committed than ever before to institutionalizing pro bono practice. With over 160 law firms participating, 80% of respondents indicated that their firm has a dedicated pro bono coordinator and 83% are members of local clearinghouses.

## KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER

THE VANCE CENTER'S INITIATIVE TO SECURE LOCAL PRO BONO COUNSEL for separated children and families in their home countries.

- KFT enlisted 60 pro bono attorneys from 17 law firms in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India and Mexico to support the legal representation of separated children and families. The attorneys, increasingly including family law practitioners, obtained identity documents, medical records, supporting affidavits, and other vital evidence to support family reunification and immigration relief. .
- KFT formalized partnerships with 33 non-profit legal services providers and U.S. law firms, representing a total of 115 separated families since its launch in September 2018.
- KFT held a workshop in June with 45 key stakeholders from non-profits, law firms, and clearinghouses collaborating with the initiative identified new approaches to bridging gaps in the international legal representation of separated families. 





## Latin America

### THE LAWYERS COUNCIL

CONTINUED FOCUSING ON COMBATING CORRUPTION,  
strengthening judicial independence, and supporting civil society.

- A delegation of the Lawyers Council met officials and other lawyers in [Peru](#) to observe and offer recommendations on the ongoing process for selecting judicial officials in the country. The delegates presented [comparative experience](#) in the region to support the process.



- A delegation of the Lawyers Council undertook an assessment of the judicial appointment process in [Guatemala](#). The delegates presented a [document](#) delineating international standards and comparative experience regarding ensuring transparent and participatory evaluation of nominees, and, after the visit, issued a [report](#) with specific recommendations.







## THE WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION PROGRAM

**PROMOTES THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION**, emphasizing individual and institutional leadership.

The program's 19 Latin American chapters regularly host events, pro bono projects, mentoring programs, and other initiatives. In 2019:

- The WIP International Steering Committee met in Chile to review each chapter's pro bono efforts and programs and develop a regional initiative. A working group presented a draft of the Mentoring Toolkit.

- WIP Chile [organized a seminar](#) “An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Gender Equality: Challenges and Best Practices”, with more than 200 people attending. Vance Center Committee member [Veronica Rodriguez \(Paul Hastings\)](#) made opening remarks and introduced keynote speaker [Gonzalo Smith](#), Chief Legal and Governance Officer at [Falabella](#) whose presentation focused on workplace diversity.

## Africa

### THE AFRICA PROGRAM EXPANDED PROGRAMMATICALLY





and geographically, relying on a new partnership with Power Africa and collaboration with longtime partners in Latin America.



- The African Legal Fellows Program continued its second year of collaboration with USAID, hosting two Power Africa Legal Fellows from Nigeria and one from Kenya, as well as a fellow from South Africa, at four law firms. Over 19 years, the program has hosted 59 fellows, primarily from South Africa, as well as Kenya and Nigeria.
- The program received funding from the Chubb Rule of Law Fund to conduct workshops for judges in East Africa and the Gambia on international financial transactions and the adjudication of transnational corruption. Planning began with judicial organizations, as well as the International Center for Transitional Justice for the Gambia workshop.
- The program expanded efforts to transfer appropriate experience from the Women in the Profession and Pro Bono Promotion initiatives in Latin America to countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It also continued to engage with and on behalf of civil society organizations in Ethiopia, Kenya, the Gambia, and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.



## By The Numbers

	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20
 REVENUE:	\$996,007	\$1,128,890
 EXPENSES:	\$996,007	\$1,225,467
 PRO BONO CONTRIBUTIONS:	\$5,500,000	\$5,500,000
 IN-KIND SUPPORT:	\$180,376	\$40,950

64



Clients  
Served



Our Staff

8

LAWYERS

2

ADMINISTRATORS

114



Pro Bono  
Projects

425



Pro Bono  
Lawyers

139



Pro Bono  
Law Firms



U.S.

23



Non-US

116



## SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Novo Foundation	Ford Foundation	The Tinker Foundation
Open Society Foundations	Chubb Rule of Law Fund	
Power Africa	Paul Weiss	

Allen & Overy	Arent Fox	Baker & McKenzie	Cleary
Akin Gump	Clifford Chance	Davis Polk	Debevoise
Eversheds Sutherland		Hogan Lovells	Hughes Hubbard
King & Spalding	Linklaters	Mayer Brown	Milbank
Morrison & Foerster	Orrick	Paul Hastings	Paul Weiss
Proskauer Rose	Simpson Thacher	Shearman & Sterling	Skadden
Sullivan & Cromwell	Weil	White & Case	Winston & Strawn

 **VANCE CENTER COMMITTEE AND VANCE CENTER STAFF** 

