WHERE THE VANCE CENTER OPERATES:
AFGHANISTAN  ALBANIA  ALGERIA  ANDORRA  ANGOLA
ARGENTINA  ARMENIA  AUSTRALIA  AUSTRIA  BAHRAIN
BANGLADESH  BELARUS  BELGIUM  BERMUDA  BHUTAN
BOLIVIA  BRAZIL  BULGARIA  BURUNDI  CAMBODIA
CAMEROON  CANADA  CAYMAN ISLANDS  CENTRAL
AFRICAN REPUBLIC  CHILE  CHINA  COLOMBIA  COMOROS
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO  COSTA RICA
CYPRUS  CZECH REPUBLIC  DENMARK  DJIBOUTI
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  ECUADOR  EGYPT  EL SALVADOR
ETHIOPIA  FIJI  FRANCE  GAMBA  GEORGIA  GERMANY
GUATEMALA  GUINEA  HONDURAS  ICELAND  INDIA
INDONESIA  IRAN  IRAQ  JAMAICA  JAPAN  JORDAN
KAZAKHSTAN  KENYA  KIRIBATI  DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF KOREA  KUWAIT  KYRGYZSTAN  LATVIA  LAO
PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  LEBANON  LITHUANIA
MACEDONIA  MADAGASCAR  MALAWI  MALAYSIA
MALDIVES  MALTA  MARSHALL ISLANDS  MAURITANIA
MAURITIUS  MEXICO  MICRONESIA  MONACO  MONGOLIA
MOROCCO  MYANMAR  NAURU  NEPAL  NEW ZEALAND
NICARAGUA  NORWAY  OMAN  PANAMA  PAPUA NEW
GUINEA  PARAGUAY  PERU  PHILIPPINES  PORTUGAL
QATAR  REPUBLIC OF KOREA  RUSSIAN FEDERATION  SAN
MARINO  SAUDI ARABIA  SEYCHELLES  SLOVAKIA
SOLOMON ISLANDS  SOUTH AFRICA  SPAIN  SRI LANKA
SURINAME  SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC  SWAZILAND
SWEDEN  TAJIKISTAN  THAILAND  TOGO  TONGA
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  TUNISIA  TURKEY
TURKMENISTAN  TUVALU  UKRAINE  UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES  UNITED KINGDOM  UNITED STATES  UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  URUGUAY  UZBEKISTAN
VANUATU  VENEZUELA  VIETNAM  YEMEN
The Vance Center advances global justice by engaging lawyers across borders to support civil society and an ethically active legal profession.

The Vance Center is a unique collaboration of international lawyers catalyzing public interest innovation. A non-profit program of the New York City Bar Association, we bring together leading law firms and other partners worldwide to pioneer international justice initiatives and provide pro bono legal representation to social justice NGOs and others.

VANCE CENTER STAFF

Maria Antonia Tigre
Senior Attorney, Environment Program

Brenda Kombo
Africa Program Manager

Leire Larracoechea San Sebastián
Director of Pro Bono Practice

Susan M. Kath
Director, Environment Program

Karina Benzaquen
Communications and Development Associate

Alexander Papachristou
Executive Director

Adriana Ospina
Director of Strategic Initiatives

Marie-Claude Jean-Baptiste
Programs Director
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

2016 saw the Vance Center strengthen our networks and extend our capacity geographically and programmatically. This was entirely a team effort and achievement. We brought on an Africa Program Manager who quickly engaged us in NGO partnerships regionally and oversaw expansion of our African Legal Fellows program to Kenya and Nigeria, while continuing in South Africa. We regained an Environment Program attorney with particular expertise in climate change adaptation and undertook projects to challenge the new threat to climate change mitigation. Our Director of Pro Bono Practice shepherded the institutionalization of the Pro Bono Network of the Americas, began an amicus support project, and led an initiative to set up a pro bono clearinghouse in Spain. Our Director of Strategic Initiatives helped launch the Lawyers Council for Civil and Economic Rights in the Americas, as well as establish a formal network of 19 national chapters of the Women in Profession program, guided by an international steering committee. On human rights, our Programs Director focused on women’s incarceration in Jamaica, with an eye to expanding into Latin America and then across the global south, began a business and human rights program, and continued to engage in the peace and transitional justice processes in Colombia, among other projects. The Vance Center Committee gained new leadership and several new members from existing and new law firms.

PRO BONO REPRESENTATION

The Vance Center represented 51 NGOs and international organizations in 89 matters, with co-counseling by 468 lawyers from 125 law firms in 45 countries.

FINANCES

The Vance Center grew our funding modestly and finished the year with a small surplus. We received grants from the Ford Foundation and the Tinker Foundation, among others.
We give pro bono legal advice and support to non-governmental organizations and international governmental bodies worldwide; and we collaborate with lawyers internationally to strengthen pro bono practice and diversity in the legal profession.

**THE VANCE CENTER WORKS IN TWO BASIC WAYS:**

**WE GIVE PRO BONO HELP IN THREE THEMATIC AREAS**

- **HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE**
- **ENVIRONMENT**
- **GOOD GOVERNANCE**

**WE STRENGTHEN THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN DIVERSITY AND PRO BONO PRACTICE**

- **AFRICAN LEGAL FELLOWS PROGRAM**
- **WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION PROGRAM**
- **LAWYERS COUNCIL FOR CIVIL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS IN THE AMERICAS**
- **PRO BONO NETWORK OF THE AMERICAS**
- **BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM**
- **AMICUS SUPPORT PROJECT**

We envision lawyers worldwide enjoying equal access and accommodation in their professional lives and sharing engagement in fundamental human rights, a sustainable environment, and fair, open governance.
THE LATIN AMERICA PROGRAM

The Vance Center got started when lawyers in Buenos Aires invited lawyers at the New York City Bar Association to collaborate on developing pro bono practice in Argentina. These roots have spread throughout the region into the Pro Bono Network of the Americas.

ADRIANA OSPINA
Director of Strategic Initiatives

LEIRE LARRACOECHEA SAN SEBASTIÁN
Director of Pro Bono Practice

KARINA BENZAQUEN
Communications and Development Associate
**LAWYERS COUNCIL FOR CIVIL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS**

Leading legal practitioners from 13 Latin American countries and the United States constitute the Council, and the Vance Center is the secretariat. The Council devises long-term, trans-national strategies of engagement with civil society and government to tackle systemic challenges to rule of law, democratic governance, and fundamental rights.

- The Council’s anti-corruption initiative focuses on strengthening enforcement of laws and procedures through partnership with civil society organizations and convening of lawyers from several jurisdictions facing common deficiencies and obstacles.

- The Council’s civil society initiative identifies shortcomings and threats to laws enabling non-governmental organizations to establish and operate independently and sustainably and rallies the legal profession nationally and regionally to strengthen the rights and resources for them.

Vance Center launched the Council soon after our Legal Summit of the Americas in December 2015. There, 85 lawyers from 19 countries focused on the core challenges facing open society and rule of law in Latin America and recognized common opportunities to address these challenges systematically, rather than only through individual pro bono representation. The initial membership of the Council includes leaders of bar associations, NGO board members, and pro bono practice leaders:

Carolina Zang; Jose A. Martinez de Hoz (Argentina)
Luciana Tornovsky; Roberto Quiroga (Brazil)
Pablo Guerrero (Chile)
Paula Samper (Colombia)

Vivian Liberman (Costa Rica)
Mary Fernandez (Dominican Republic)
Hernan Perez Loose (Ecuador)
Alfonso Carrillo (Guatemala)
Carlos Del Rio; Valeria Chapa (Mexico)
Ramon Ricardo Arias (Panama)
Alberto Rebaza (Peru)
Antonia Stolper; Todd Crider (United States)
Marcela Hughes (Uruguay)
Fernando Pelaye-Pier (Venezuela)
WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION PROGRAM

Opportunities and conditions for Latin American women in the legal profession remain limited by historical and structural bias. Changing mindsets and practices is essential for women to enjoy equal opportunities. The Vance Center’s WIP Program promotes the advancement of women lawyers and uses the practice of law to enhance the status of women in general and ensure women equal protection under the law.

The WIP Program began as an initiative of the New York City Bar Association in 1989 focusing on the legal profession in New York City. The Vance Center’s program continues to collaborate with the bar association’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion. It also collaborates with our pro bono representation program to engage WIP members in projects to support women and women’s groups needing legal assistance.

“The Vance Center’s Women in the Profession program has been of paramount importance to Paraguayan women. Our newly-created chapter “Liderando Paraguay” seeks significant change in the inclusion of women in the legal profession at all levels, and our pro bono program “Conoce tus Derechos” helps women from vulnerable segments of the population become aware of their rights and the legal tools at their disposal to enforce them.”

Marysol Estigarribia, Ferrere partner and Paraguayan representative of the WIP International Steering Committee.

An International Steering Committee of 48 leading practitioners from 18 countries oversees a network of 19 chapters in 18 Latin American countries. Its members are:

Carolina Zang; Patricia Lopez Aufranc (Argentina)  
Carolina Aguirre; Mariana Pereira (Bolivia)  
Ana Amelia Abreu; Raquel Stein (Brazil-Porto Alegre)  
Esther Nunes; Moira Huggard-Caine (Brazil-Sao Paulo)  
Carolina Menichetti; Patricia Silberman (Chile)  
Claudia Barrero; Paula Samper (Colombia)  
Andrea Saenz; Vivian Liberman (Costa Rica)  
Marielle Garrigo; Mary Fernandez (Dominican Republic)  
Margarita Zambrano; Paola Gachet (Ecuador)  
Michelle de Gutierrez; Morena Zavaleta (El Salvador)  
Gabriela Roca; Ruby Asturias (Guatemala)  
Guadalupe Martinez Casas; J. Vanessa Oquelí (Honduras)  
Bertha Ordaz; Valeria Chapa (Mexico)  
Gloria de Alvarado; Minerva Bellorín (Nicaragua)  
Cristina Lewis; Erika Villarreal (Panama)  
Tamara Serrati; Marysol Estigarribia (Paraguay)  
Fatima De Romaña; Nathalie Paredes (Peru)  
Antonia Stolper; Carrie H. Cohen; Julissa Reynoso; Lorraine McGowen; Marcia Maack; Patricia Menéndez-Cambo; Ruti Smithline; Sabrena Silver; Taisa Markus (United States)  
Corina Bove; Marcela Hughes (Uruguay)  
Margarita Escudero; Maritza Meszaros (Venezuela)
PROMOTING PRO BONO PRACTICE

Galvanizing pro bono practice in Latin America is the Vance Center’s founding and central endeavor. We spearheaded the Pro Bono Declaration of the Americas, a formal commitment to pro bono work, now with more than 540 law firm and other signatories from 21 countries representing more than 10,000 lawyers and a minimum of 200,000 annual hours of pro bono service. In 2011, the Vance Center and Fundacion Pro Bono Chile led the foundation of the Pro Bono Network of the Americas to provide mutual support for the now 18 network members.

IN 2016:

8 new law firms from Argentina, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Panama signed the Pro Bono Declaration of the Americas.

We convened lawyers in Nicaragua, Panama, and Uruguay and supported local efforts in Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, and Venezuela to encourage institutionalizing their pro bono work.

We helped law firms in Spain agree to develop a national clearinghouse.

We forged agreement of the Pro Bono Network of the Americas on formal mechanisms for membership and operations, and continued developing region-wide initiatives and activities.

Pro Bono Network Members from Latin America:

"The Vance Center is the go-to institution for anyone involved in pro bono legal work. Its constant support has been key for the advancement of pro bono work both in Panama and the region."

Cristina Lewis, Galindo, Arias & López Partner
THE AFRICA PROGRAM

The Vance Center has our origins in South Africa where we launched a program to overcome the legacy of apartheid preventing lawyers of color from advancing in the legal profession.
45 South African lawyers of color since 2002 have worked at 20 law firms and corporate legal departments to develop their transactional skills, receive mentoring, expand their professional networks, and gain exposure to pro bono practice.

In 2016, we expanded the program to include lawyers from Kenya and Nigeria. The network of South African Legal Fellows for the first time led the effort to identify a fellow for this year’s program.

Joba Akinola, from Olaniwun Ajayi (Nigeria) at Sullivan & Cromwell;
Rosemary Maina, from Bowmans/Coulson Harney(Kenya); at Debevoise & Plimpton;
Jabulile Ndweni, from Werksmans Attorneys (South Africa); at Cleary Gottlieb.
THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROGRAM

works to protect individuals from discrimination, violence, injustice, and corruption, as well as supporting international human rights bodies committed to such protection.

MARIE-CLAUDE JEAN-BAPTISTE
Programs Director
WHAT WE DID AND WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAID IN 2016

Through our Business and Human Rights Program, we joined the Expert Review Panel of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces - International Committee of the Red Cross project on business, security and human rights to review a toolkit guiding companies on responding to human rights and security challenges. 11 lawyers from 4 law firms, including 5 partners, participated with us.

“The invaluable support of the Vance Center and its review team helped the DCAF-ICRC project tremendously, by refining and increasing the practicality of a tool that will ultimately help companies mitigate security and human rights challenges and improve their impacts in the communities where they operate.”

Claude Voillat, Economic Advisor, International Committee of the Red Cross

We produced a brochure to inform citizens of El Salvador about the International Criminal Court, which that nation recently joined. Our client, la Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador, requested the brochure for its efforts to inform and support citizens seeking redress in the aftermath of El Salvador’s decades-long civil conflict.

“Undoubtedly, the Vance Center brochure on the ICC has contributed to the prevention of future human rights violations and helps to demonstrate that we now have a new instrument and mechanism of protection at the international level.”

Miguel Montenegro, Director, Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador
THE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

promotes conscientious stewardship of natural resources and the human rights obligations underpinning a sustainable environment and climate change.

SUSAN KATH
Director, Environment Program

MARIA ANTONIA TIGRE
Senior Attorney, Environment Program
We advised the Prey Lang Community Network, indigenous and environmental advocates in Prey Lang grappling with deforestation and other problems, in presenting public comments on Cambodia’s new Environmental Code. Our advice identified governance models for the co-management of protected areas to ensure that indigenous communities are involved in conservation efforts.

“The support of the Vance Center came at a critical time for the Prey Lang Community Network struggling to protect their ancestral lands from illegal logging. The community now can be appropriately involved in conservation and management efforts and receive on-call legal assistance to protect their members in case of persecution and incrimination.”

Ida Theilade, Senior Researcher, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

We have supported The Nature Conservancy for nearly 5 years to protect communities facing scarce water supplies to achieve sustainability. By evaluating the legal requirements to set up water funds in Peru, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Colombia, we helped find innovative ways to pay for clean freshwater while providing biodiversity-related services. We also assisted TNC to study Mexico’s new energy reform law and develop its pursuit of renewable energy there.

“The Vance Center has emerged as a trusted partner in The Nature Conservancy’s efforts to protect our water sources, helping us navigate complex challenges across Latin America and the Caribbean, drawing on their local knowledge and extensive legal network in the region.”

Daniel Shemie, Director of Strategy for Water Funds, The Nature Conservancy’s Global Water Team
THE GOOD GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

pursues openness and honesty in government, supporting civil society and independent journalism to hold officials and institutions accountable.

WHAT WE DID AND WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAID IN 2016

The International Consortium of Journalists, renowned for producing the Pulitzer-Prize-winning Panama Papers stories, sought our help to establish as an independent non-profit organization and maintain its staffing, technology, and sources of funding. We enlisted 3 law firms in the effort and managed a complex negotiation and new legal structure.

The staff and many network members of ICIJ achieved great success in 2016, including setting up a new organization that will enable us to expand our investigations and partnerships, thanks to the Vance Center’s tireless and expert support and its network of pro bono law firms.

–Gerard Ryle, ICIJ Director

We advised Transparency International in its Unmask the Corrupt campaign to name and shame the world’s most corrupt individuals and organizations and helped TI engage directly with nominees seeking to clear their names, as TI gathered evidence for further publicity and potential prosecution through meetings with officials in the United States and abroad.

The Vance Center has been a vital partner in TI’s efforts to pursue egregious cases of grand corruption, providing pro bono legal help in so many countries, along with access to officials and experts, as TI fulfills our 2020 strategy.

–Jose Ugaz, chair of the International Board
BY THE NUMBERS

CLIENTS SERVED: 51
PRO BONO PROJECTS: 89

OUR STAFF:
LAWYERS: 7
ADMINISTRATOR: 1
PRO BONO LAWYERS: 468
PRO BONO LAW Firms: 125
US LAW FIRMS: 23  NON-US: 102

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SOURCES OF SUPPORT

TINKER FOUNDATION
FORD FOUNDATION
J. M. KAPLAN FUND
CHUBB RULE OF LAW FUND
ALLEN & OVERY
AREN'T FOX
CLEARY GOTTlieb STEEN & HAMILTON
CHADBOURNE & PARKE
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CLIFFORD CHANCE
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SHEARMAN & STERLING
SKADDEN, ARPS, SLATE, MEAGHER & FLOM
SULLIVAN & CROMWELL
WEIL, Gotshal & MANGES
WHITE & CASE
VANCE CENTER COMMITTEE

Leading lawyers from international law firms and the corporate and public sectors in New York City, constituted as a Special Committee of the New York City Bar Association, provide strategic direction, core financial support, and pro bono leadership.

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Eruch P. Nowrojee, Co-Chair | Carlyle Group
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Hon. Richard J. Goldstone  
Former Justice Constitutional Court of South Africa

Hon. Juan E. Mendez  
Former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

WE PROUDLY TAKE OUR NAME FROM CYRUS R. VANCE – former U.S. Secretary of State, New York City Bar Association President, and prominent private lawyer – who exemplified ironclad commitment to fundamental rights through collaborative problem solving.