

# NEW YORK CITY BAR VANCE CENTER

**The Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice**, mobilizes the global legal profession to engage in activities that expand access to justice for the poor and marginalized, especially in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Providing individuals and communities in need with access to justice not only gives them a chance to enforce their basic rights but also makes governments more accountable for their actions, strengthens democratic institutions, and leads to laws and policies that are responsive to social needs. We perform our work in partnership with private- and public-sector lawyers, members of the judiciary, law schools, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Founded in 2003, the Vance Center is part of the New York City Bar Association, and members of the City Bar are involved in planning and carrying out all of its activities. The Vance Center's name honors the memory of Cyrus R. Vance, past president of the City Bar and former United States Secretary of State.

## The Vance Center's Approach

*The Vance Center develops the capacity of members of the legal profession in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa to meet the legal needs of the poor and marginalized and advocate on their behalf for justice reform.*

- We work with our partners to encourage lawyers to devote at least a portion of their time and expertise to performing pro bono work. We coordinated the drafting and introduction of the **Pro Bono Declaration for the Americas**. The PBDA is a formal statement of a lawyer's obligation to provide pro bono legal services to persons and communities unable to afford the costs of legal representation. It has been signed by more than 500 law firms, bar associations, corporate law departments, law schools, and NGOs in Latin America, the U.S., and Canada.
- We help law firms, bar associations, social justice and human rights NGOs, and law schools in Latin America and Africa develop ways of **identifying pro bono opportunities** and of **delivering pro bono legal services effectively and efficiently**, so that the benefits reach the people and communities who are most in need.
- We set up networks and organize conferences and workshops that create opportunities **for exchanges of information and ideas** among members of the legal profession who want to promote access to justice and justice reform.
- We organize **training programs** for members of the legal profession who wish to develop their ability to do work that benefits the public interest.
- We promote **diversity in the legal profession** in order to strengthen its understanding of the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.



## *The Vance Center builds cross-border partnerships to develop innovative legal solutions to problems common across the globe.*

Through our Pro Bono Partnerships program, we identify public interest issues with global impact, such as women's rights, environmental sustainability, transparency, access to public information, freedom of expression, judicial independence, disability rights, and anti-corruption efforts, and then build **cross-border teams** of lawyers, advocates from NGOs and others who develop joint approaches to achieve their common goals.

## *The Vance Center provides lawyers with opportunities to engage in international pro bono work.*

Through our pro bono referral program, we connect U.S. and foreign pro bono counsel with organizations in Africa and Latin America that are engaged in efforts to promote social justice and human rights and are in need of legal assistance. The projects may take the form of research, transactional support, technical advice, preparing amicus briefs or acting as co-counsel. The work of the lawyers who have participated in projects referred to them under this program has resulted in law reform and greater protection for individual rights and rule of law.



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**VANCE CENTER**

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