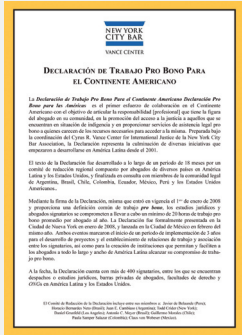


Pro Bono Declaration for the Americas



Launched in January of 2008, the Pro Bono Declaration for the Americas (PBDA) commits signatories to undertake a minimum of 20 hours of pro

bono work per lawyer per year. More than 400 law firms, bar associations, law schools and NGOs in Latin America and the United States have signed the Declaration and committed themselves to making access to justice a reality in the region.

The PBDA has had a catalytic effect on the expansion of pro bono in Latin America. The many exciting and innovative pro bono projects now underway include:

Fundación Acceso YA (Argentina):

a case brought to obtain accessibility for the disabled in all public and private schools in Buenos Aires;

Ashoka (Argentina, Colombia, Peru):

a comparative analysis of laws that affect the type and quality of care that juvenile cancer patients receive in Argentina, Colombia and Peru to be used to identify and advocate for medical practices that will lead to better outcomes for these patients;

Comunidad Padre Hurtado (Chile):

an action to prevent a public auction that would result in the eviction of 200 low income families from their homes; and

Fundación Grameen-Carso (Mexico):

the creation of a strategic alliance between Grameen Trust and Fundación Carlos Slim to provide microloans to indigent individuals in Mexico.

Highlights of Year Two of the Three-Year Implementation Phase of the PBDA

Spotlight on Pro Bono is a lively look at pro bono projects currently underway in firms throughout Latin America. *Spotlight* helps firms to think creatively about the various needs pro bono work can address. As *Spotlight's* audience grows, we are witnessing a friendly rivalry building among the firms to have a project "spotlighted," thereby encouraging firms to meet their PBDA goals.

Regional Roundtables were held in Bogota in May and Lima in November, which brought lawyers from Colombia and Peru together with colleagues from the U.S. and other parts of Latin America to solidify pro bono programs within law firms and to encourage NGOs to use pro bono assistance to advance the interests of their constituents. As a result of the Vance Center's collaboration with the legal community in these countries, pro bono clearinghouses have been launched in both of them.

The Pro Bono Implementation Guide for Latin American Law Firms has been distributed to all firms that have signed the PBDA and is a comprehensive manual for firms to use to establish pro bono programs. The manual, which has been prepared in collaboration with Skadden, Arps, has received an enthusiastic reception throughout the region. A supplement will be prepared in 2010 to address issues that have arisen as law firms implement their pro bono programs.

The PBDA Survey has been distributed to all Latin American law firm signatories of the PBDA. With the information we are gathering, we will be able to create a benchmark for evaluating the progress of pro bono in the region, allowing us to provide strategic assistance to improve pro bono programs. The preliminary results will be published in the Vance Center's *Latin American Pro Bono Interim Status Report* in December of 2009.

Expansion of the pro bono initiative in Latin America continues with new PBDA signatories in the Caribbean, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.



Clients outside the legal clinic of Los Andes Law School and the office of the Fundación Pro Bono Colombia in Bogota.

In 2010 the Vance Center will continue to drive PBDA implementation forward with a focus on bringing NGOs and law schools into closer collaboration with law firms in both Latin America and New York City, thereby strengthening two key pillars of the pro bono chain. We hope to provide more opportunities for lawyers in New York to collaborate on projects in the region through partnerships with NGOs that are working on issues such as economic development, equal opportunity, disability rights and other public interest initiatives.

South-South Human Rights Network

In 2009, the Vance Center published *A Partnership Between Africa and Latin America to Promote Access to Justice*, focusing on the pathbreaking work of the Vance Center, beginning in 2008, to connect human rights practitioners in the two regions. A steering committee of activists from the two continents was formed to direct the activities of a South-South Human Rights Network to facilitate further exchanges between African and Latin American human rights advocates and identify and organize joint projects.

In 2010 the Vance Center will build upon its work with partners in Africa and Latin America to promote a "South-South" dialogue on human rights advocacy. With the recent creation of the African Court for Human and Peoples' Rights, the human rights systems of both continents have become similar, with the result that there is now an opportunity for mutually beneficial collaboration between human rights advocates in the two regions. In order to facilitate this collaboration, the Vance Center will convene trainings in New York and Washington, DC, to encourage lawyers in the U.S. to get involved in human rights matters in the African and Latin American human rights systems. These events will take place on March 10th in New York and March 12th in DC.

Clearinghouse

The Clearinghouse continues to function as a major hub bringing together public interest legal projects and volunteer lawyers to support social justice and economic development on a global basis, leading to such exciting efforts as:

- **Center for Justice and International Law:** a collaboration with Debevoise & Plimpton to oppose euphemistically named "cooperation laws" designed to restrict the ability of non-government organizations to operate by imposing unnecessarily restrictive and complicated regulations on them; and
- **Rainforest Alliance:** a team project to promote sustainable practices in the agriculture, forestry and tourism sectors by helping small and medium-sized companies access green incentives. Incentives being examined include tax breaks, loans, grants, subsidies, streamlined approvals and payments for ecosystem services. Shearman & Sterling and Sive, Paget & Riesel are working on this project with a number of firms located throughout Latin America.



Cristina Quintero, Simpson Thacher Public Interest Fellow (right) and Paola Larrahondo, Executive Director of Fundación Pro Bono Colombia

New Staff

During 2009 and 2010, the Vance Center will be able to increase the impact of its work through the efforts of three lawyers who are working with us through law firm secondment programs. **Kristen Hutchens**, an incoming associate at Shearman & Sterling, worked with Elise Colomer on the organization and execution of the roundtables in Peru. **Cristina Quintero**, a Public Interest Fellow from Simpson Thacher &

Bartlett, is spending one year focusing on Latin America, including working on site in Colombia and Mexico. In 2010, **Wendy Fu** from Weil, Gotshal & Manges will concentrate on creating opportunities for New York lawyers to support human rights and public interest work in Africa and Latin America.



Lindani Mthembu, Vance Center Fellow (right) and his mentor at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison

South African Visiting Lawyers Program

The Vance Center welcomes **Lindani Mthembu** of South Africa to New York. Lindani will be spending the year at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison under the City Bar's South African Visiting Lawyer Program, which is administered by the Vance Center. He is the 34th participant since the program's inauguration in 2002. During 2010 the Vance Center will work with returned program alumni to identify Vance Center projects in Africa that would enhance access to justice and to develop approaches to breaking racial and gender barriers to advancement at law firms in South Africa.

VanceNet

VanceNet, www.VanceNet.org (formerly the Global Network for Justice Initiatives), has been redesigned and relaunched. VanceNet provides a user-friendly platform where advocates for access to justice, human rights and public interest can share information and ideas and collaborate on projects. The site contains a blog, a members' directory, discussion forums and an automated newsletter. **Sign up for VanceNet and become part of the global community working to expand access to justice.**

