

OUTREACH 2013

Women's Law & Public Policy Fellowship Program
at Georgetown Law

FALL | WINTER



GEORGETOWN LAW



“When I look out over the faces

in this room I can sense the fire that is building in you. I cannot even imagine the extraordinary stories in the hearts and yes the souls of the current fellows and the alumni. The 92 women from the Africa program have had to encounter a troubled America and ask themselves profound questions about the rest of their lives, and in effect, literally, how to reinvent themselves. For the American fellows, the record of all 233 of you is so dramatic and filled with such promise that you are already on your way to consequential public service that is helping to build a civil society.”

— Eli Evans, remarks at the WLPPFP Sesquicentennial Dinner, September 20, 2013



Meet Our 2013-2014 Women's Law Fellows

We are pleased to welcome our twelve Women's Law and Public Policy Fellows: six Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa (LAWA) Fellows and six US Law Fellows. Our LAWA Fellows pursue a Master of Law (LL.M.) degree at Georgetown with an emphasis on human rights and gender law, while our US Fellows work on gender equality issues at prominent organizations in Washington, DC. All of our Fellows participate together in bi-weekly seminars, trainings, and other events that foster professional development as lawyers committed to promoting gender equality and social justice.



LAWA Fellow **Angelina Atabong** is from Cameroon, where she has been active in the promotion of human rights, gender equality and the rule of law. For the last seven years, Angelina has served as a

judge and investigating magistrate. Previously, she worked as a prosecutor. In her previous position at the Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy, Angelina designed and implemented training programs for thousands of people across Cameroon on issues such as violence against women, the political participation of women and youth, women's inheritance rights, human trafficking, and access to justice. At the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Bamenda, Angelina provided legal assistance to vulnerable persons, including victims of gender-based violence and human trafficking. She was instrumental in establishing paralegal aid centers and addressing violations of widows' rights. A member of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Angelina holds an LL.B. and a post graduate-diploma in law, both from the University of Yaounde, Cameroon, and a diploma

in magistracy from the National School of Administration and Magistracy, Cameroon.



Susanna Birdsong is advancing the rights of low-income women and girls at the National Women's Law Center, as the ABA Section of Taxation Fellow. Susanna received her J.D. from American University's

Washington College of Law in 2013, where she served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Gender, Social Policy and the Law*. She also holds a B.A. and M.S.W. from the University of North Carolina. As a social worker at the North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness and Habitat for Humanity International, she focused her efforts on increasing access to affordable housing and support services for low-income individuals and families. Susanna also volunteered as a creative writing facilitator at a shelter for victims of domestic violence, where she became especially interested in women's issues. Susanna has interned with the National Abortion Federation, the ACLU, and the National Women's Law Center.



Sophie Brion is promoting the rights of women living with HIV/AIDS at the International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS. Her Fellowship is generously funded by the Ford Foundation.

Sophie received a Masters in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in 2012, and a J.D. from the University of Miami in 2013, where she also earned her B.A. While at the Kennedy School, Sophie worked with the Southeast Asia Legal Office of EarthRights International, conducting legal and field research on human rights and corporate social responsibility. As a law student, Sophie traveled to Namibia with the African Neutral Trial Observer Initiative, and represented low-income clients in immigration removal and asylum cases. Before attending graduate school, Sophie was the director of the Women's Advocacy Project, where she developed collaborative efforts to achieve reproductive justice, end violence against women and improve women's economic security. Sophie also served as a member of the Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Oversight Board,

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co-chair of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Council of Greater Miami, and vice president of the Greater Miami Chapter of the ACLU. She has worked for Planned Parenthood and the ACLU of Florida.



Courtney Cross is the Clinical Teaching Fellow in the Domestic Violence Clinic at Georgetown University Law Center. A graduate of New York University School of Law, Courtney comes to the Fel-

lowship from Our Place DC, where she was an Equal Justice Works/AmeriCorps Legal Fellow and staff attorney. She represented formerly incarcerated women in domestic violence and family law proceedings; represented incarcerated women in revocation hearings before the U.S. Parole Commission; conducted legal clinics and classes for women in jails and halfway houses; and provided advice and assistance on housing, public benefits and other legal issues. Courtney also was an Advocate at DC Survivors and Advocates for Empowerment. At NYU Law, Courtney participated in a medical-legal collaborative, represented tenants in housing court and joined a comparative criminal justice clinic defense team. Courtney had internships with the Irish Centre for Human Rights, the National Partnership for Women and Families and Legal Momentum. She was a senior articles editor on NYU Review of Law and Social Change and a faculty research assistant. Courtney received her B.A. from the University of California, San Diego.



Maria Edith Jurua, a LAWU Fellow from northwestern Uganda, has been the Coordinator of Law and Advocacy for Women in Uganda (LAW-U) for the past six years. LAW-U, established in 1997, is

an organization of LAWU alumnae committed to using the law to promote respect for and protection of women's rights in Uganda. Significant accomplishments of LAW-U under Maria's leadership include the Constitutional Court's ruling that female genital mutilation

is unconstitutional and an infringement of human rights, enactment of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act of 2009 and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2010. To achieve these victories, Maria coordinated LAW-U's training of law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judicial officers, and helped prepare educational materials and research reports on the issues. Maria is a member of the Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association team that drafted the Sexual Offences Bill 2012, an effort to consolidate and reform various substantive and procedural aspects of laws relating to sexual offenses, now pending in the Ugandan parliament. Maria, who previously worked with the tribunal at the Uganda Human Rights Commission, has an LL.B. with honors from Makerere University and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Law Development Center.



Alice Kinyua, from Kilifi County, Kenya, believes that empowering women begins with educating and protecting children. Before joining the LAWU Program, Alice worked as a legal officer and manager of a chil-

dren's rights trust, the Mudzini Kwetu Center. She was a member of the team that established the Kilifi Children's Welfare Network, and she serves as its chairperson, engaging in a wide range of advocacy and policy activities to benefit children. As a trustee of Friends For Justice, Alice provides advice, leadership and a strong public voice on legal and policy issues important to women and children. As a member of CLEAR, a project of the Kenyan Christian Lawyers' Fellowship, she gives free legal representation to women and children. Writing for two Kenyan daily newspapers, she informs the public about the importance and social benefits of educating and protecting girls. Alice earned her L.L.B. at Makerere University in Uganda and her diploma in law from Kenya School of Law. She is and advocate of the High Court, a member of the Law Society of Kenya and of Habitat for Humanity and is a friend of FIDA.



Sara Kluberanz is working at The Women's Collective, promoting the rights of women and girls who are living with or at risk for HIV/AIDS. Her Fellowship is generously funded by the Ford Foundation.

Sara received her J.D. from the University of Georgia. Sara received her B.A. from the State University of New York at Albany, where she was involved in a peer sexual health education group. At New York University, where she earned her M.A. with a focus on gender politics, Sara conducted research for the Margaret Sanger Papers Project and wrote her master's thesis on the legal and cultural manifestations of battered woman syndrome. As a law student, Sara assisted with research projects and client services at a local domestic violence shelter, and at the law school's clinic, where she represented survivors of domestic violence seeking temporary protective orders. In addition, she did research and drafting for the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education's Georgia Domestic Violence Benchmark, and clerked for an administrative law judge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. After graduating from law school, Sara joined Project Safe's job re-training program, and worked for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, providing assistance to participants in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.



LAWU Fellow **Fagbenle Oluwaseun Oyindamola** ("Oyin") is a legal practitioner and women's right advocate from Nigeria. A passionate defender of women's and children's human rights, Oyin has

been active in campaigns, seminars and workshops on gender equality, poverty reduction and sustainable economic empowerment for women. In addition to working with the firm of Adegbenro & Co., she is a volunteer for the Media Concern Initiative, a non-governmental organization that advocates and litigates against abuses of women and children in urban and

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rural areas of Nigeria. As an intern with the Human Rights Section of the International Bar Association, London, Oyin assisted on cases challenging human rights abuses in Vietnam, Swaziland, Uganda and Cameroon. She holds an LL.B. from Olabisi Onabanjo University in Nigeria.



Vasu Reddy is advancing workplace fairness at the National Partnership for Women and Families, with the generous support of the Rita Charnatz Davidson Foundation. Vasu earned her B.A. from Harvard

University in 2006, and her J.D. in 2013 from Georgetown University Law Center, where she was a Public Interest Law Scholar. At Georgetown, Vasu was part of a team of students who designed and conducted a study of the barriers to education for students in the Los Angeles public school system with disciplinary or juvenile justice issues, published a report, and engaged in advocacy based on their findings. As an editor of the Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy, she helped shape articles dealing with juvenile justice and with marginalized girls. Vasu participated in the Georgetown Federal Legislative and Administrative Clinic, and worked on reproductive rights issues at the National Women's Law Center, the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, and as an officer of Georgetown Law Students for Reproductive Justice. She interned for the Senate Judiciary Committee and the New York Civil Liberties Union. Before law school, Vasu worked at Sanctuary for Families, a New York City nonprofit dedicated to serving survivors of domestic violence and sex trafficking, and their children.



LAWA Fellow **Elsy Chemurgor Sainna** is an advocate of the High Court of Kenya and a senior program officer at the Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ-Kenya) where she heads

the Access to Justice Programme. Her work has included research, writing and advocacy initiatives that have contributed to reforms and improved the administration of justice. Elsy was active in the Kenyan constitutional review process, helping to secure provisions on the independence of the judiciary and access to justice, and contributing to the design of an electoral dispute resolution mechanism. She has supported legislative reform initiatives designed to strengthen Kenya's legal institutions and its compliance with international human rights treaty obligations. In connection with the United Nations Convention against Corruption, Elsy was appointed as a civil society representative by the former Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission, since renamed the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission of Kenya. She has been part of a legal team for cases on torture and related human right violations brought before the East African Court of Justice and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Elsy holds a LL.B. from the University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom and a post-graduate diploma from the Kenya School of Law. She is a member the Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya, the Law Society of Kenya and the International Commission of Jurists – Kenya Chapter.



Emily Wales joins the Family Economic Security team National Women's Law Center, with the generous support of the Rita Charnatz Davidson Foundation. She graduated in 2013 from Harvard Law

School, where she served as vice president for membership of the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau. Emily spent two years at the Bureau

as a family law student, primarily representing survivors of domestic violence in divorce and custody cases. Emily was also a member of the Harvard Journal of Law & Gender, served on the board of the Women's Law Association, and was a summer law fellow at the ACLU. Prior to law school, Emily worked on the new media team at EMILY's List, supporting pro-choice Democratic women candidates in state and federal elections. A 2006 Harry S. Truman Scholar, Emily is originally from Missouri, has a B.A. from William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. She hopes to return to her home state to advocate for the rights of low-income women.



Behailu Teklehaimanot Weldeyohannes is a law professor from Adama City, Ethiopia. He comes to the LAWLA Program from Jimma University, where he teaches courses on gender and the law, human rights

law, constitutional law, and legal ethics. He is the Vice-Director of the Legal Aid Center at the School of Law, where he supervises students in domestic violence and prisoners' rights clinics, and manages and coordinates legal aid services for women prisoners and other vulnerable groups. To serve his clients and advance policy goals, Behailu works with a range of governmental and non-government agencies and groups, including the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Jimma Zone Women's Affairs Office, independent human rights advocates, prison administrators, courts and public prosecutors. Behailu also has taught at Royal University College. He received his LL.B. degree from Bahir Dar University, where he was active in several human rights groups and a member of a research team on gender issues.

An Honest Conversation about Genital Cutting

By Toni Holness, WLPPFP 2011-2012

Female Circumcision, Genital Cutting, Genital Mutilation, Initiation... these terms all refer to the ongoing cultural practice of removing part of the female genitalia. This is not to suggest that the terminology may be used interchangeably—some terms carry incendiary connotations, while others are more innocuous. Without intending any bias, I will use the term Female Genital Cutting (FGC) here.

On May 30, 2013, friends, alums, and current fellows of the program came together for a lesson in cultural competence and to learn the nuances of FGC and the diversity of advocacy viewpoints on the practice. The event featured Dr. Fuambai Ahmadu, a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Chicago and Dr. Crista Johnson-Agbakwu, MD, MSc, FACOG, Director of the Refugee Women's Health Clinic at the Maricopa Integrated Health System in Phoenix, Arizona.

Dr. Ahmadu is a medical and symbolic anthropologist; she completed her PhD in Social Anthropology at the London School of Economics and was awarded a National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) post-doctoral training fellowship at the Department of Comparative Human Development, University of Chicago. Importantly, Dr. Ahmadu herself has experienced FGC in her home country of Sierra Leone and therefore brought a wealth of personal experience to the dialogue.

Dr. Johnson-Agbakwu treats women who have experienced FGC by opening and sometimes re-closing their vaginal openings. Perhaps more impressive is Dr. Johnson-Agbakwu's dedication to educating the medical profession about FGC and cultivating cultural sensitivity among her fellow doctors.



2012-2013 Fellows with speaker Dr. Crista Johnson-Agbakwu.

The most striking aspect of the experts' presentations centered on their shared interest in preserving the dignity of those women who undergo FGC. Dr. Ahmadu honed in on the biased, hypocritical, and dehumanizing characterization of FGC in the global dialogue. For example, in 2010, the UN General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution banning the practice of Female Genital Mutilation. Yet, as Dr. Ahmadu described, western women increasingly flock to undergo genital cosmetic or vaginal rejuvenation surgery, and for hefty price tags. The identical surgical process is at the same time mutilating when performed on poor African women, but rejuvenating for well-to-do American women. As aghast as one may be at the thought of FGC, Dr. Ahmadu's point carries a ring of truth—the global women's rights dialogue around FGC has in some

measure dehumanized African women who have undergone the procedure, while leaving intact the dignity of their wealthy counterparts in the west.

Dr. Johnson-Agbakwu performs a range of surgical procedures on women who have undergone FGC. Like Dr. Ahmadu, Dr. Johnson-Agbakwu brings a fresh perspective to her work, withholding judgment against her patients. She has treated pregnant women who have requested that their scar be opened for childbirth, and she has even re-closed the scars of women post-childbirth.

Both experts challenged the room of advocates, and in fact the global women's rights movement, to be more introspective in our approach to FGC and question the cultural underpinnings of advocacy against the practice.

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Clockwise from top left: Current LAWA Fagbenle ("Oyin") Oyindamola speaks on adolescent pregnancy in Nigeria at an UNFPA panel hosted by WLPPFP Sarah Craven, 92-93; Emily and Elsy get ready to fly during the Fall Fellowship Retreat; Wonder Woman (along with Fellow Susanna Birdsong) lobbies for the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act; The Fellowship Retreat included lots of balancing, blindfolds, and bonding.

Greetings Alumnae!

By Executive Director Jill Morrison

It was a pleasure to see so many of you at our Anniversary Events last month, but I wish I had seen even more. Many of you expressed interest in how you could reengage with the Women's Law and Public Policy Fellowship Program and were curious about its current structure and relationship with Georgetown Law. By now US Fellows should have received the engagement memo and summary of the Town Hall held in conjunction with our Anniversary Events. If you haven't, please contact me directly at morrisjc@law.georgetown.edu.

We need every single Alumna/e to engage in whatever way she or he can. I've sent you a survey to identify how you'd like to connect and I will be following up in the coming months. Please take five minutes and fill this out. Here are just a few reminders of how you can give back to the Program that launched so many of our careers:

1. Keep your information updated, including your email and current organization and position, as well as any other career related achievements that would be of interest to other alumnae and our current fellow, like publications, awards, service on boards or commissions, etc. Stay tuned for a super Alumnae-Update issue!

2. If there's litigation or policy that would be especially interesting to our fellows, or you think that your particular area within the administration would be of interest to someone looking for a career in women's rights, let me know so we can have you in as a guest speaker at our seminar.

3. Send us job announcements, volunteer opportunities, and other events of interests for distribution to the Alumnae list. If you are in DC, be sure to come to the Alumnae Potluck and the LAWA Congressional Briefing.

4. Donate any amount you can to help support our Fellows' attendance at conferences, and so we can have a few nice lunches a year. https://secure.alumni.georgetown.edu/olc/pub/GTW/onlinegiving/showGivingForm.jsp?form_id=78749&referrer_type=UP>W_giftinfo_referralcode=owcbv

And I am very excited to see there is energy building around supporting our very own Alumnae Sponsored Fellowship. As I noted in last year's appeal, we could fund a fellow a year if each of us gave a little less than \$200. There's no reason why we can't do this! Stay tuned...



Advisory Board

Deborah Epstein

Director of the Domestic Violence Clinic and Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center

Marcia Greenberger

Co-President, National Women's Law Center

Mary Hartnett

Adjunct Professor of Law; Vice-Chair, American Bar Association's Committee on the Rights of Women

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Congresswoman for the District of Columbia and Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center

Judith Lichtman

Senior Advisor, National Partnership for Women & Families

Wendy Williams

Professor Emerita, Georgetown University Law Center



Congratulations to the graduates of the 2012-2013 LAWA Program