

Meet our 2011-2012 Women's Law Fellows

This year we have fourteen Women's Law Fellows: seven Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa (LAWA) Fellows and seven U.S. Law Fellows. Our LAWA Fellows pursue a Master of Laws degree at Georgetown with an emphasis on gender studies and human rights, while our U.S. Fellows work in Washington D.C. on gender equality issues. All of our Fellows participate together in bi-weekly seminars, training and other events that foster their professional development as lawyers committed to promoting gender equality and social justice.

MARY AJOOT



Mary comes to the LAWA Program from Uganda, where she spent 6 years at MIFUMI-Uganda, an international aid and development agency which seeks to reduce the burden of poverty by securing basic rights for people living in remote communities of Uganda. She has worked with local communities to help them understand their rights and eradicate injustices such as domestic violence and bride price/dowry. She uses a gender and human rights approach to train stakeholders including health workers, police, teachers, and young people to be more aware and to prevent and respond to human rights violations. Mary received her Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) degree from Makerere University and earned a Diploma in Legal Practice from the Law Development Centre in Uganda. Mary is also a Ford Foundation Fellow. Mary is writing her major LAWA research paper on domestic violence as a defense under criminal law in Uganda.

ANNA CARPENTER



Anna is a clinical teaching fellow and supervising attorney at The Community Justice Project, a legal clinic at Georgetown Law. Previously, Anna provided direct representation to low-income clients as an attorney with the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program where she worked in the HIV/AIDS Legal Services Project and Immigration Law Project. She helped low-income immigrant victims of violence obtain economic security and legal status in the United States and represented people living with HIV and AIDS in a range of civil law matters, including public benefits, landlord/tenant, estate planning and debt relief. In San Diego, Anna served as co-chair of the Women's Resource Fair, an event that provides legal, medical, and social services to hundreds of low-income and homeless women. Anna received her law degree from Georgetown University Law Center. During law school, Anna participated in the Domestic Violence Clinic where she represented victims of violence in protection order cases. She interned with the Clark County Public Defender and the Rebecca Project for Human Rights.

ABBY COOK-MACK



Abby is working at the National Partnership for Women and Families, where she is both a Harriet Burg and Rita Charatz Davidson Fellow, working to advance the rights of low-income women and women with disabilities. Abby graduated from Yale University with a B.A. in History and distinction in her major. Following graduation, she joined the staff of then-New York State Senator Eric Schneiderman, where she worked to advance policy changes to provide access to health care, fair funding for New York City schools and a higher minimum wage. She also represented the Senator in coalitions with women's groups across the state, working with them to advance women's reproductive health reforms in New York. In 2006, she was awarded a Coro Fellowship in Public Affairs enabling her to work for the Innocence Project. Abby received her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center. During her law career she participated in the Center for Applied Legal Studies clinic, where she successfully represented a woman seeking asylum. She also interned with the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, the National Women's Law Center, Bread for the City and the Advancement Project.

ELIZABETH ENAKA AKO



Elizabeth comes to the LAWA Program from Cameroon, where she was the first woman in the Manyu jurisdiction to become the Chief of Service for Judicial Affairs in the Legal Department. She also was the first woman to hold her most recent position, Registrar-in-Chief at the High Court of Fako, Buea. Elizabeth attended the University of Yaounde, where she obtained her Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) degree, as well as her “Licence en Droit” in English Private Law. Elizabeth is a member of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Cameroon, and served as Executive Director of Women in Action, an organization that promotes gender equality by advocating against societal practices that hinder the growth and development of women. Throughout her career, Elizabeth has consulted both nationally and internationally for the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA), a group that encourages development in sub-Saharan Africa. As an ardent supporter of women’s rights, she also helps to raise awareness through the Global Voices for Women radio program. Elizabeth is writing her major LAWA research paper on eliminating gender discrimination under Cameroon’s Nationality Code.

Sophia Gebrehiwot



Sophia comes to the LAWA Program from Ethiopia, where she was the Training Coordinator at Eminence Social Entrepreneurs, a company that promotes the socio-economic development of Ethiopian society. Prior to this position Sophia worked at the University for Peace based in Addis Ababa, on the ‘Environmental and Resource Issues as Factors in African Conflicts’ project, which focused on Darfur. Through research on topics such as internally displaced peoples and the role of gender in the Darfur conflict, Sophia assisted in the publication of the book, “Environment and Conflict in Africa: Reflection on Darfur.” Sophia also taught at Unity University in Ethiopia and worked as a project coordinator at African AIDS Initiative International, Inc., where she coordinated and implemented HIV/AIDS and human rights training programs for female university students. She also served as Gender and Human Rights Program Officer with Action Aid Ethiopia leading grassroots efforts to combat cultural practices harmful to women. Sophia also successfully added women’s rights awareness to the local Police College curriculum. Sophia received her Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) degree from the Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, and earned a certificate in Human Rights Studies from the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France. She is a member of the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association, and an active volunteer for the Tesfa Foundation, an organization that works to advance children’s education in Ethiopia. Sophia is writing her major LAWA research paper on ways to provide comprehensive redress to victims of early marriage and rape in Ethiopia.

Kelley Hampton



Kelley works as a Technical Assistance Specialist with Break the Cycle, a national non-profit that educates, engages and empowers youth to end domestic and dating violence. Kelley facilitates both in-person and web-based trainings, develops resource materials and offers individual consultations to service providers nationwide on various aspects of dating violence and the law. She also works to increase schools’ capacity to respond to dating and sexual violence. In 2007, Kelley was an Education Pioneers Fellow where she served as a law clerk for Prince George’s County Public School District in Maryland. She helped revise a district-wide harassment and grievance procedure for students, school faculty and staff. Prior to earning her J.D. and M.A. in Public Policy from Georgetown University, Kelley was a research assistant for the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in the Africa Program. She traveled to both Vietnam and China as part of a delegation analyzing the expenditure of the President’s Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Kelley has also written about many women’s rights issues such as the role of women in post-conflict Rwanda and Sierra Leone and child marriage in Morocco. During law school, Kelley participated in the Street Law Clinic where she taught residents of drug-rehabilitation and transitional housing programs the legal concepts of landlord-tenant law and dispute resolution in Maryland and Washington, DC.

Toni Holness



Toni is working at The Women’s Collective and at the American Bar Association’s AIDS Coordination Project, promoting the rights of women living with HIV/AIDS. Toni received her B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and her J.D. and M.A. in Economics from Temple University, where she was a Rubin-Presser Public Interest Scholar.

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Prior to law school, Toni was a fellow with the Congressional Hunger Center where she worked with the Medical Legal Partnership of the Boston Medical Center assisting low-income families applying for public assistance. She also worked with the Center for Community Change advocating for national immigration reform. In 2008, Toni was selected as an Ella Baker Legal Intern with the Center for Constitutional Rights where she worked on human rights and corporate accountability issues. Toni also interned with the Documentation Center of Cambodia, in Phnom Penh, supporting education and outreach initiatives, and with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights where she reviewed and evaluated the merits of petitions made before the Commission that alleged state-sponsored torture. Toni also competed with Temple's National Trial Team and Jessup International Moot Court Team. As the Global Economic Justice Chair of Temple's National Lawyers Guild Chapter, she organized events addressing international human rights and corporate accountability. Toni's Fellowship is made possible through generous funding from the Ford Foundation.

Amy Hsieh



Amy is working at the International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS and at the American Bar Association's AIDS Coordination Project, promoting the rights of women living with HIV/AIDS. Amy received her B.A. in East Asian Studies from Barnard College of Columbia University. While at Barnard, she developed a passion for health and human rights as she worked with the medically underserved through her internship at the Center for Immigrant Health. Prior to law school, Amy was Program Coordinator at the NYU School of Medicine where she helped develop, implement, and evaluate training programs that prepared health professionals to care for medically underserved communities. Concurrently, she earned her Master in Public Administration from NYU, with a focus on International Health Policy and Management. Amy obtained her J.D. from Brooklyn Law School, where she was awarded the Professor John A. Ronayne Memorial Prize for Public Service and became a member of the Order of the Barristers. Amy interned at Human Rights Watch as an Edward V. Sparer Public Interest Law Fellow, where she conducted research on government accountability for the HIV/AIDS epidemic among African American women. Amy also worked to obtain asylum for a gay youth from Kenya through her law school's Safe Harbor Project. Amy's Fellowship is made possible through generous funding from the Ford Foundation.

Anjela Jenkins



Anjela is a Law Students for Reproductive Justice Fellow at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health. She received her B.A. from Tulane University, with majors in International Relations, International Development, and Latin American Studies, as well as a minor in German. Anjela received her J.D. and graduate degree in political science from the University of Texas. During law school, Anjela was a staff member of the Texas International Law Journal and the Texas Hispanic Journal for Law and Policy. Anjela was also a member of the Chicano Hispanic Law Student Association, an advanced student in the Human Rights Clinic, and a member of Student Advisory Board of the William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law. She also volunteered as a translator for American Gateways, worked at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's Telephone Access to Justice Project, and served as a pro bono law clerk at Catholic Charities of Central Texas, Immigration Legal Services. Anjela has lived on four continents and is fluent in Spanish.

Kavinya Makau



Kavinya comes to the LAWA Program from Kenya. She has spent the last four and a half years working for Urgent Action Fund-Africa, Africa's only rapid response grant making organization for women, whose strategic mission is to support and enhance women's leadership, bring about justice and equity, and create a society free of disruptive conflict. Kavinya has worked with women in conflict and post-conflict in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe, addressing issues such as engendering transitional justice, promoting peace processes, and analyzing the intersection between sexualized forms of violence and HIV/AIDS. Kavinya is a member of the Law Society of Kenya and the Young Women's Leadership Institute. She is an advisory board member of Akili Dada, an organization that seeks to empower young underprivileged African women by providing comprehensive scholarships to advance their education. Kavinya graduated from the University of Reading-UK, with a Bachelor of Laws degree, received a diploma in law from the Kenya School of Law and was admitted to the bar as an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya. Kavinya is writing her major LAWA research paper on increasing and enhancing women's political participation in Kenya.

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Anna McClure



Anna is working at the National Women's Law Center, where she is both a Harriet Burg and Rita Charmatz Davidson Fellow, working to advance the rights of low-income women and women with disabilities. Anna received a B.A. in Political Science from George Washington University and graduated magna cum laude from Georgetown University Law Center in 2011. At Georgetown, Anna served on the boards of Law Students for Reproductive Justice, the Women's Legal Alliance and the Equal Justice Foundation. During law school, Anna worked with victims of disability discrimination cases at the National Association of the Deaf. She also worked on class action age discrimination litigation while interning at AARP Foundation Litigation. While interning for the National Women's Law Center, Anna worked on gender discrimination issues in education and employment. She also participated in Georgetown's Institute for Public Representation Clinic, where she worked on gender-based employment discrimination litigation.

Vera Nkwate Ngassa



Vera comes to the LAWA Program from Cameroon, where she has served alternately as a prosecutor and a judge for the past twenty-four years. Throughout her judicial career Vera has worked to promote women's rights, including initiating legal and gender literacy programs and training grassroots advocates and policy makers, such as mayors, traditional rulers and the judiciary. As a judicial activist, Vera broke new ground to advance women's rights especially in the areas of women's property rights and spousal abuse. Part of her work is featured in the BBC International Award winning documentary "Sisters in Law." Vera has also taught at the University of Buea in Cameroon, where she created the curriculum for "Women's Human Rights and Law," a course she has been teaching for twelve years. Vera is a founding member of FIDA Cameroon (International Federation of Women Lawyers), a member of the International Association of Women Judges, and founder of the Samaritan House of Empowerment, an association dedicated to rescue, redress and relief for victims of gender-based violence and trafficking in persons. Vera obtained her "Licence en Droit" in English Private Law from the University of Yaoundé, Cameroon, in June 1985. She then trained as a Legal and Judicial Officer at the National School of Administration and Magistracy, where she earned a Post Graduate degree in Magistracy. Vera is writing her major LAWA research paper on women's access to land in Cameroon as a human right.

Evelyn Ogochukwu Ebubechukwu



Evelyn comes to the LAWA Program from Nigeria, where she most recently worked as the Legal Officer for the Society for the Welfare of Women Prisoners. She completed her national youth service under the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) at Enugu State in Nigeria. Upon completion of her national service, she went into private legal practice working to facilitate women's rights through an NGO, specifically in human rights education for secondary schools and rural and urban communities in the South-Eastern States of Nigeria. Evelyn also serves as the legal adviser and secretary to several women's groups and organizations. Evelyn received her Bachelor of Laws degree from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria, attended the Nigerian Law School of Abuja and is a member of the Nigerian Bar. While at Georgetown, Evelyn is focusing her research on customary land inheritance and widowhood practices in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Luwam Zenebe



Luwam comes to the LAWA Program from Ethiopia where, as a Gender Officer for World Vision Ethiopia, she prepared and conducted trainings, workshops and seminars addressing the gaps in individual and community change with regard to gender. Prior to this, Luwam worked as a Justice Reform Program Expert at the Tigray Bureau of Capacity Building in Ethiopia. Through this work, Luwam identified and tried to close the gap between law and practice in the region, seeking to ensure justice for all. She also served as an Administrative Tribunal Judge, where she worked to facilitate uniform implementation of Ethiopia's labor laws and regulations. Luwam obtained her Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) degree from Mekelle University Law in Northern Ethiopia, where she worked in the Legal Aid Clinic providing pro bono assistance to vulnerable groups, including women and children. Her final thesis was on the topic of the rights and status of women and child refugees under Ethiopian law. Luwam is writing her major LAWA paper on post-divorce maintenance in Ethiopia.

CULTIVATING WOMEN'S RIGHTS LEADERS

Through networking opportunities, professional development trainings, seminars and panels on hot-topics in women's legal issues, and other programming, WLPFP helps our Fellows continue to develop as leaders of the women's rights movement. Examples of the activities of our Fellows include:



- The 2010-2011 Fellows met with Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg for tea at the US Supreme Court in June (pictured above). Justice Ginsburg shared her views on the challenges and inspirations for women's rights lawyers in the United States and abroad. In the words of one of the Fellows: "I will never forget our meeting with Justice Ginsburg, whom I deeply admire. The experience surpassed my greatest expectations. I so appreciated her thoughtfulness, honesty, and quiet sense of humor."
- On July 26, 2011, the WLPFP held a dinner to bid farewell to the US Fellow class of 2010-2011, and to welcome the incoming 2011-2012 LAWA Fellows. The dinner was held at the home of WLPFP Founding Board Member, Wendy Williams, and featured a Presentation of Certificates to the outgoing Fellows.



- The 2011-2012 Fellowship year started out with an exciting Alumnae Orientation Panel to discuss the opportunities and experiences that accompany being a WLPFP Fellow (pictured above). The Panel included Advisory Board Member Deborah Epstein (1990-91), Associate Dean of Clinical Education and Community Service at Georgetown Law; Regan Ralph (1992-93), Executive Director of The Fund for Global Human Rights; and, Cynthia Totten (1999-2000), Program Director at Just Detention International.

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Fall Fellow Retreat

On October 28th, ten women loaded into a van and headed to West Virginia for the WLPPFP retreat. About an hour outside of our destination, the snow descended upon us, but our fearless driver, Meghan Morris, drove us to safety.

First stop, The Purple Fiddle. This restaurant-bar is as charming and intriguing as its name promises. After the long, snowy ride, the fellows, Mary and Dick (Mary's husband) settled into the cozy venue. We enjoyed good music, sporadic rounds of Trivial Pursuit, and captivating conversation.

The next morning, Mary and Dick treated us to a delicious pancake breakfast. For dinner, we enjoyed a traditional Cameroonian meal, prepared by our own Vera Ngassa and viewed the film "Sisters-in-Law." "Sisters-in-Law" celebrates the lives and work of Cameroonian women, paying special attention to Vera, then State Prosecutor. The film tracks Vera's unflinching struggle to challenge Cameroon's patriarchal legal structure and bring a semblance of justice to women and children.

After two short days, we reloaded and headed back to the District, rested and re-inspired to continue our own individual work toward gender equality.

— By Toni Holness, Current Fellow

- Pictured below: The WLPPFP Advisory Board Members welcomed the 2011-2012 Fellow class to the Program with a barbeque dinner hosted by National Women's Law Center Co-President, Marcia Greenberger; National Partnership for Women and Families Senior Advisor, Judith Lichtman; and WLPPFP Founding Board Member and Georgetown Law Professor Emerita Wendy Williams. Marcia, Judy and Wendy treated the Fellows to stories about their fight for women's rights in America, and answered questions about the future of the women's rights movement. In the words of one of our LAWA Fellows: "We had a wonderful time and loved the stories of how far these women of courage have gone in leading the Program."

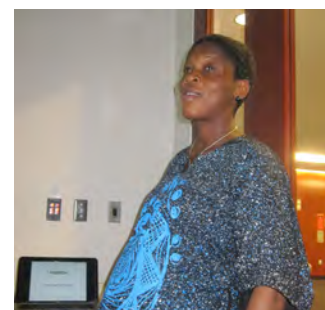


- Our first Seminar of the Fellowship year included Country Presentations from several of the LAWA Fellows. We learned about the status of women in Cameroon from Elizabeth Ako and Vera Nkwate Ngassa, and Ethiopia from Sophia Gebrehiwot and Luwam Zenebe, and lunched on Ethiopian cuisine (pictured below).



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- Pictured at right: On October 3, we held a Seminar on “Gender Rights and HIV/AIDS.” We were joined by a distinguished panel of guests, including (from left to right): Terry McGovern, Senior Program Officer at the Ford Foundation and a leading expert on Gender Equality and HIV/AIDS; Patricia Nalls, Founder and Executive Director of The Women’s Collective; Beri Hull, Global Advocacy Officer for the International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS; Tinselyn Simms-Hall, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator at The Women’s Collective; and Michael Pates, Director of the American Bar Association Center for Human Rights and AIDS Coordination Project.



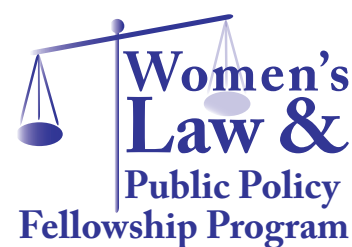
- Pictured above: Our October 17th Seminar completed our LAWA Fellow Country Presentations. Kavinya Makau from Kenya; Evelyn Ogochukwu Ebubechukwu from Nigeria; and Mary Ajoot from Uganda educated us about the political, economic, and social participation of women in their home countries. We were also treated to a delicious homemade meal of traditional foods from Kenya and Uganda.

We are grateful to all of our speakers and other supporters – thank you very much for your willingness to share your expertise, mentoring and advice with our Women’s Law and Public Policy Fellows!

New Faces at the Women’s Law & Public Policy Fellowship Program

Congratulations to Julia Ernst, former Executive Director, who is now an Assistant Professor of Law at the University of North Dakota School of Law! Mary Hartnett, a WLPPFP Board Member who served as Executive Director from 1998-2003, is back at the helm this year as a Visiting Professor at Georgetown Law and WLPPFP Executive Director. A warm welcome to new Program Assistant Meghan Morris, who joined WLPPFP this summer

after four years on Capitol Hill, covering health care, education, judiciary, and women’s policy issues for Congressman Stephen F. Lynch. Meghan is in her third year of law school in the evening division here at Georgetown Law. WLPPFP is also fortunate to have Georgetown Law Dean’s Fellow Darla Bardine ably assist WLPPFP on many projects. Darla is a 2011 graduate of Georgetown Law, where she was a Public Interest Law Scholar.



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WLPPFP and LAWA Alumni Accomplishments

We celebrate the continued achievements of our outstanding alumni, who strive throughout their careers to improve the lives of women and their families. Our alums constitute a powerful network of experienced and committed lawyers across the United States and the world, serving as founders and directors of non-profit organizations, judges and justices, parliamentarians, professors and deans of law schools, public interest lawyers, and in other influential posts. Below are a few examples of some of their recent activities:

Hope Lewis (U.S. Fellow 1986-1987), a Professor of Law at Northeastern, was recently elected to the Executive Council of the American Society of International Law and to the Board of Governors of the Society of American Law Teachers.

Helen Norton (U.S. Fellow 1989-1990) was recently appointed Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the University of Colorado School of Law, and also became a volunteer firefighter.

Deborah Epstein (U.S. Fellow 1990-1991), Associate Dean for Clinical Education and Public Interest & Community Service Programs at Georgetown University Law Center, WLPPFP Advisory Board Member and Founder and Director of Georgetown's Domestic Violence Clinic, was named the 2011 Outstanding Advocate for Clinical Teachers by the Clinical Legal Education Association.

Angela Dwamena-Aboagye (LAWA Fellow 1994-1995), the Founder and Executive Director of the Ark Foundation in Ghana (Ghana's first shelter for domestic violence survivors) was recently awarded the U.S. Ambassador's Martin Luther King Award for Social Justice (2009); The Millennium Excellence Award for the Women's Empowerment Category (2010); and the Africa Servant Leadership Award for Women's Empowerment (2011).

Robin Levi (U.S. Fellow 1994-1995), the Human Rights Director of the Oakland-based nonprofit Justice Now, is co-editor of a recently published book entitled *Inside This Place Not of It: Narratives from Women's Prisons*.

Margaret E. Johnson (U.S. Fellow 1995-96) was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor at the University of Baltimore School of Law. She continues to teach the Family Law Clinic, Property Law, Special Topics in Applied Feminism, and co-directs the Center on Applied Feminism.

Jennifer Goldberg (U.S. Fellow 1999-2000), Assistant Director of Advocacy for Elder Law and Health Care at the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau, was appointed by Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley to the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange Board of Trustees, where she hopes to help reduce the number of uninsured persons through implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

Emma Ssali Namuli (LAWA Fellow 1999-2000) recently started positions as a Lecturer at Uganda Christian University Mukono and Kampala International University. She is lecturing in Gender and the Law, Administrative Authorities, Equity and Trusts Law and Media Law.

Evelyn Nassuna (LAWA Fellow 1999-2000) is now the Uganda Country Director for Lutheran World Relief, an organization that works to seek lasting solutions to rural poverty.

Cynthia Totten (U.S. Fellow 1999-2000) was promoted to Senior Program Director at Just Detention International, a health and human rights organization that seeks to end sexual abuse in all forms of detention.

Naomi Stern Taransky (U.S. Fellow 2003-2004) recently joined OMB as an attorney in the Office of General Counsel.

Priscilla Huang (U.S. Fellow 2006-2007), Policy Director at the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, received (with a colleague) the 2011 Leadership Award in Advocacy from the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust.

Naomi Schoenbaum (U.S. Fellow 2006-2007), is a Bigelow Teaching Fellow and Lecturer in Law at the University of Chicago and recently published an essay in *The New Republic* about Justice Kagan's nomination and gender.

Victoria Thomas (U.S. Fellow 2007-2008) is a Staff Attorney at University Legal Services, where she is working on a class action representing people with disabilities who wish to receive Medicaid services in the community instead of in nursing homes. Victoria reports that another WLPPFP Alum, **Joy Whelan (U.S. Fellow 2009-2010)** is also working on this case at the Department of Justice.

Nadia Asanchev (U.S. Fellow 2008-2009) is now Director of Georgetown's Center on National Security and the Law.

Emilia Lobti (LAWA Fellow 2008-2009) recently became a member of a pilot committee for an International Labor Organization project in Cameroon where she focuses on migration and development from a gender perspective.

Laura Bornstein (U.S. Fellow 2010-2011) is now a Staff Attorney at Western Missouri Legal Aid, where she represents domestic violence survivors in divorce and child custody cases.

Danielle Hawkes (U.S. Fellow 2010-2011), started her own firm in Salt Lake City, Utah, where she plans to handle discrimination, immigration and criminal cases, and is on Equality Utah's legal panel.