

Women's Human Rights in Africa Congressional Briefing

On Monday, April 16th the Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa (LAWA) Fellows held a Congressional Briefing on Women's Human Rights in Africa in the Gold Room of the Rayburn House Office Building. The Fellows presented their LL.M. Graduate Research Papers, identifying the background and current status of the women's right issue they researched, and providing recommendations to improve the lives of women and their families.

Over a hundred participants from a wide range of organizations were in attendance, including Congressional Staff Members and members of a variety of non-governmental organizations. After the presentations, the LAWA Fellows answered questions from audience members and discussed the future of women's rights in Africa. Voice of America's *In Focus* program taped the briefing and interviewed several of the Fellows at the conclusion of the event. The Fellows and their respective papers are:

Mary Ajoot – “Domestic Violence in Uganda: Walking the Law to Enforcement”

Elizabeth Enaka Ako – “The Missing Link: Discrimination Against Women in Cameroon's Nationality Code”

Evelyn Ogochukwu Ebubechukwu – “From Exclusion to Inclusion: Women's Inheritance Rights Under Customary law in Nigeria”

Sophia Gebrehiwot – “Victim Bystanders: Comprehensive Redress to Early Marriage in Ethiopia”

Kavinya Makau – “Shattering the Glass Ceiling: Enhancing Women's Political Leadership in Kenya”

Vera Nkwate Ngassa – “Realty for Real: Women's Land Rights in Cameroon”

Luwam Zenebe – “Post-Divorce Maintenance in Ethiopia: A Gap in Women's Human Rights”



AJOOT



AKO



Ebubechukwu



Gebrehiwot



Makau



Ngassa



Zenebe

US Fellow Work Highlights

This year's US Fellows have spent the last several months hard at work on women's rights issues at organizations throughout DC. Here are some of the highlights and accomplishments of our 2011-2012 US Fellows:



ANNA CARPENTER

“This year, my work in the Community Justice Project involved three main activities: 1) teaching litigation and trial skills, collaboration skills and policy advocacy skills in the clinic's twice-weekly seminar; 2) supervising student attorneys in their representation of clients in unemployment compensation cases and hearings; and 3) supervising a team of students working on a policy and organizing project on environmental justice issues in Southwest Washington, DC. This last project was especially gratifying, as the team sought and received input from all segments of this socioeconomically and racially diverse community.”

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ABBY COOK-MACK



“Over the past several months, I have had the opportunity to work on a range of issues, primarily the Family and Medical Leave Act, pregnancy discrimination, and the wage gap. Most recently, I worked on comments responding to a notice of proposed rulemaking expanding the FMLA pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act and Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections

Act. Our letter was joined by over 60 other organizations. I also developed a 50 state survey examining the wage gap on each state and exploring what women would be able to afford if the gap were closed. Finally, I helped prepare testimony for Senior Advisor Judy Lichtman to deliver before the EEOC regarding discrimination against pregnant women and possible steps forward.”

Kelley Hampton



“Some of the highlights of my work this year have included: presenting to local attorneys, advocates, educators and service-providers at the D.C. Superior Courts Conference about the dynamics of dating violence and responding to youth; travelling to, and working with, the Menominee Tribal Nation in Wisconsin

to develop comprehensive policies to prevent and respond to dating violence; and helping create tools and trainings for schools and service-providers funded by USDOJ Office on Violence Against Women to address legal and program requirements that impact youth.”

Toni Holness



“I have been working with The Women’s Collective (TWC) and the American Bar Association’s AIDS Coordinating Committee (ABA). At TWC, I support the agency’s mission of meeting the self-defined needs of women, girls, and families infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. The experiences of

TWC’s clients inspire my work with the ABA, where I strive to raise awareness about the role of attorneys to end discrimination on the basis of HIV status. My work with both TWC and the ABA has afforded me the opportunity to collaborate closely with current and former WLPPFP fellows. In the Spring 2012 semester, I was also the Teaching Assistant for the International Women’s Human Rights Seminar at GULC.”

Amy Hsieh



“In December 2011 during the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, I led consultations with women living with HIV and activists on prevention of vertical transmission issues and other advocacy priorities for people living with HIV. Following-up on fact-finding efforts led by former-WLPPFP fellow Aziza Ahmed in 2008, I raised the profile of a class action suit brought by Namibian women living with HIV who had been forcibly sterilized due to their HIV positive status during the December 2011 UN-AIDS Programme Committee Board meeting in Geneva, Switzerland (the case has been awaiting a verdict since February 2011). During the World Health Assembly in May 2012, I will be advocating for strengthened community engagement as an essential strategy to prevent vertical transmission of HIV globally. I have also contributed to chapters of the ABA HIV & AIDS Benchbook which will be published this summer.”

Anjela Jenkins



“I was the primary author of the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health’s testimony on the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act (CIANA). I presented on a panel at the Civil Liberties and Public Policy (CLPP) conference hosted at Hampshire College and I spoke about the work needed to make oral contraceptive an over the counter option. I also appeared on Telemundo news, a Spanish-language channel, talking about contraceptive coverage for women under the Affordable Care Act.”

Anna McClure



“As a member of the Family Economic Security team at the National Women’s Law Center I have worked on a wide variety of issues, including Social Security and Supplemental Security Income, unemployment insurance, minimum wage, tax and budget issues, and healthcare reform implementation. I worked

on a successful effort to stop a bill in South Carolina that would have harmed unemployed workers. I have participated in federal legislative advocacy to protect programs serving low-income women and their families. I have been involved in work with coalitions advocating on tax reform, raising the minimum wage, both at the state and federal level, and improving social security.”

CULTIVATING WOMEN'S RIGHTS LEADERS

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



- The Fellows met with Representative **Eleanor Holmes Norton** (DC-Del.) at her Congressional Office on November 28, 2011 (pictured above). Congresswoman Norton shared her experiences and insight as a legislator and discussed women's political leadership with the Fellows.
- **Deborah Epstein** (1990-1991), WLPPFP Board Member and Associate Deal of Clinical Education and Community Service at Georgetown Law, hosted our annual Holiday Party and Alum Potluck Dinner in December. The event provided a great opportunity for the WLPPFP community to meet the current Fellows and reconnect with one another.



- The Fellows attended Oral Arguments at the Supreme Court in the case of *Coleman v. Court of Appeals of Maryland*, which related to a provision of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

- On January 23, 2012, Dean **Deborah Epstein** (1990-1991) and **Margo Lindauer** (2010-2011) of the Georgetown Law Domestic Violence Clinic joined us for a Seminar on “*Domestic Violence: History, Development & Resources in DC.*” Dean Epstein discussed her work on Domestic Violence in DC, which ultimately led to the creation of the Domestic Violence Intake Center. Following the discussion, Margo led the Fellows on a tour of the DC Intake Center and viewing of a case at Moultrie Courthouse.
- The LAWA Fellows met with US Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor at the US State Department on March 5, 2012. The reception followed a virtual conversation between Justice O’Connor and female Jordanian legal professionals. Pictured below: Evelyn Ogochukwu Ebubechukwu, Luwam Zenebe, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, Mary Ajoot, Elizabeth Ako, Ambassador Kathleen Stephens, and Mary Hartnett.



- On March 19, 2012, we held our Annual Rita Charmatz Davidson Seminar, on the topic of “Promoting the Rights of Disadvantaged Women.” The Seminar featured special guests Judge David Davidson and his granddaughters, Rachel and Melissa Ludwig. Cindy Hounsell (1989-90), President of WISER Women discussed her work, and current issues related to women and retirement security. And, Anna McClure, presented her Advocate Report based on her work at the National Women’s Law Center focusing on advancing the rights of low-income women and women with disabilities. After the Seminar, Judge Davidson’s granddaughters and some of the Fellows went to see the Cherry Blossoms in full bloom around the Tidal Basin. Pictured Below: Kavinya Makau, Elizabeth Enaka Ako, Mary Ajoot, Melissa Ludwig, and Rachel Ludwig.



- On April 2, 2012, Christine Jahnke, Founder of Positive Communications and Author of “The Well-Spoken Woman” joined us for a Seminar entitled “A Standing Ovation – How to Give a Great Speech.” Chris shared wisdom and tips from her 20 years of experience working with female leaders in politics, business, government and nonprofits.

- On Wednesday, April 18th the LAWA Fellows enjoyed a lunch discussion with Justice Dikgang Moseneke, Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa. Justice Moseneke, who had recently delivered the Hart Lecture on Human Rights at Georgetown Law, shared some of his personal experiences and perspective on international human rights.



- Our Annual Harriet B. Burg Seminar on Promoting the Rights of Women with Disabilities included presentations by Sharon Masling, Chief of Staff to U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission Commissioner Chai Feldblum, and current Burg Fellow Abby Cook-Mack. Sharon shared her experience working on issues related to women with disabilities and employment opportunity, and provided an overview of the history and progression of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Abby discussed her work on behalf of women with disabilities at the National Partnership for Women and Families, focusing on fair pay, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and pregnancy and caregiver discrimination.
- Congratulations to the 2012 LAWA graduates! On Sunday, May 21st, the LAWA Fellows graduated from Georgetown and celebrated with their friends and family. Pictured below: top left Mary Hartnett and Mary Ajoot; top right Sophia Gebrehiwot, Evelyn Ogochukwu Ebubechukwu, Kavinya Makau; bottom left Vera Nkwate Ngassa, Luwam Zenebe; bottom right Elizabeth Enaka Ako.



WLPPFP and LAWA Alumni Accomplishments

GINNA ANDERSON (US Fellow 2010-2011) joined the ABA's AIDS Coordination Project and Center for Human Rights. It is a great fit so far and she is very excited to be working at ABA and to continue volunteering quite heavily for ICW.

NYANJAGI HADIJA ALLY (LAWA Fellow, Tanzania 1995-1996) is the Senior Policy Officer (Camp Coordination and Camp Management), Field Information and Coordination Support Section, UNHCR HQ in Geneva, Switzerland.

ANN CAMMETT (US Fellow 2006-2007) was named The William S. Boyd (UNLV) Law Professor of the Year for 2011. At Boyd, Ann teaches Civil Procedure and runs a Family Law Clinical Program.

DANIELLE HAWKES (US Fellow 2010-2011) is working on several large federal criminal cases, a civil rights case and a pro bono asylum case at the Utah firm she founded. Danielle has also been actively researching running for office as well and is being mentored by a prominent female legislator.

SCHOLASTICA JULLU HENRY (LAWA Fellow, Tanzania 2000-2001) is working with Legal Services Facility (LSF) as a Programme Officer Legal Sector Specialist.

JANE MAGIGITA (LAWA Fellow, Tanzania 2000-2001) is now the founder and Executive Director for Equality for Growth (EfG), www.equalityforgrowth.org with the goal of empowering women engaged in the informal sector in Tanzania. Jane left WLAC at the end of 2011.

TZILI MOR (US Fellow 2006-2008) currently serves as the New York Director of Equality Now, a pioneering international human rights organization working to promote and protect the rights of women and girls globally. She joined Equality Now after having served as a Gender Justice Adviser in Afghanistan with the International Development Law Organization where she worked with the country's first ever special prosecution Unit on Violence Against Women and to promote women's access to justice.

TERESA MUGADZA (LAWA Fellow, Zimbabwe 2002-2003) was recently appointed as the Deputy Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission, effective 1st of September 2011.

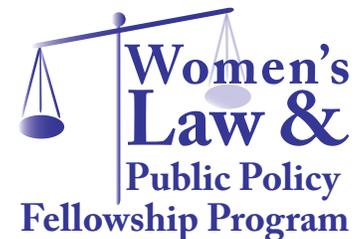
RACHEL MUTHOGA (LAWA Fellow, Kenya 2010-2011) is now working for Physicians for Human Rights as a coordinator of their project in Kenya on prosecution of sexual violence.

KARIN RAYE (US Fellow 1998-1999) is an adjunct professor at Lasell College, a very progressive service-oriented college near her home. She teaches intimate partner abuse advocacy, gender violence, victimology, children and violence. Karin's goal is to infuse the field with passionate, well trained advocates (she has many male students who want to be police officers) able to deal with domestic violence on all fronts. Teaching is a challenge she loves as many of her students have had tough childhoods, are survivors and are first generation college students struggling to make it.

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

The WLPPFP is delighted to welcome Jill Morrison as the new Executive Director! Jill was a Fellow in 1998-99, placed at the National Women's Law Center where she remained for the past thirteen years, most recently as Senior Counsel for Health and Reproductive Rights. She is a graduate of Rutgers University and Yale Law School, where she was an editor of the Yale Journal of Law and Feminism and President of the

Black Law Students' Association. Mary Hartnett will be returning to full-time work on the Ruth Bader-Ginsburg biography she is writing with co-author Wendy Williams, and will continue her involvement with the WLPPFP as a Board Member. A warm welcome also to Amanda Burns, who joins the WLPPFP team this summer as Program Assistant. Amanda is a native of DC, and is going into her second year at Georgetown Law.



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