2014-2015 Annual Activities Report

July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

PUBLIC VERSION
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I. Overview

The Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School works with judges, legal professionals, and governmental and non-governmental organizations to improve access to justice in an effort to eliminate violence against women and girls. The Center was established in 2009 by a grant from the Avon Foundation for Women.

This report summarizes the Center’s activities from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. Initiatives included the 2015 Women and Justice Conference; clinical projects addressing issues ranging from accountability for sexual violence in Kenyan schools to women’s rights in prison in Jamaica; ongoing development of the Center’s Women and Justice Collection of resources; and the provision of legal research assistance to judges.

Center highlights from the year include:

- Hosting judges and other stakeholders from more than fifteen countries at the 2015 Women and Justice Conference, which examined the topic, Women, Prison, and Gender-based Violence;
- Drafting and successfully advocating for the passage of six local government resolutions in Tompkins County, N.Y., recognizing freedom from domestic violence as a fundamental human right;
- Creating and launching the first practice guide on Zambian juvenile law;
- Successfully advocating for the United Nations Committee Against Torture and the United Nations Human Rights Council to recommend that the United States take effective and meaningful measures to prevent and address military sexual violence;
- Expanding the Women and Justice Collection to include cases from more than 88 countries and ten international and regional human rights bodies;
- Facilitating a high-level stakeholders workshop in Kenya on the topic of sexual violence against schoolchildren;
- Completing research for judges in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, and the United States; and
- Hosting women leaders from Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen as part of the U.S. State Department International Visitor Leadership Program.
II. 2015 Women & Justice Conference

The Avon Global Center held its fifth annual Women & Justice Conference on April 14–15, 2015, at the law office of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe in Washington, DC. More than seventy senior and distinguished judges, human rights lawyers, and activists from over fifteen countries were in attendance. The conference was co-sponsored by the Avon Foundation for Women, Seneca Women, and the Virtue Foundation. In addition to hosting the event at its D.C. office, Orrick provided technical, administrative, and AV support during the conference and sponsored a significant part of the catering costs.

This year's conference topic was Women, Prison, and Gender-Based Violence. Internationally, the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (“Bangkok Rules”) recognize that the principle of nondiscrimination requires States to address the unique challenges that women face in prison and to take into account their particular needs. Yet, lack of implementation means that the gender-specific experiences of women offenders and prisoners are often overlooked. This includes gender-based violence, which many women prisoners experience as a cause, condition, or consequence of incarceration.

The conference and senior judicial roundtable focused on the role of judges and courts around the world in addressing the pathways that lead to women’s imprisonment, monitoring and improving the conditions that women experience in prison, and ameliorating the negative consequences of imprisonment for women and their families.

The conference began with an opening panel on “Addressing Justice for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence.” Representatives from the Avon Foundation for Women, Vital Voices Global Partnership, the U.S. Department of State, and the Mexican judiciary discussed the launch in Mexico of the Justice Institute to End Gender-Based Violence. Part of the Gender-based Violence Emergency Response and Protection Initiative of the Avon Foundation, Vital Voices, and the U.S. Department of State, the Institute provides specialized training and technical assistance to judges, prosecutors, law enforcement, government officials, and NGO advocates in an effort to improve victim protection and the criminal justice response to gender-based violence. A reception to celebrate the start of the conference followed the panel.

The second day of the conference opened with welcoming remarks from Hon. Ann Claire Williams, Judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and Steering Committee Member of the Avon Global Center. Judge Williams noted the conference addressed one of the “most compelling issues of our time” as the number of incarcerated women is continuing to grow. To contextualize the issues, Judge Williams told the gathered judges that, in the United States, Black women are two times more likely to be incarcerated and Latino women are three times more likely to be incarcerated than white women. Studies also show that women prisoners are more likely than male prisoners to have mental-health needs, seven in ten women who are incarcerated have minor children, and there is 40% more drug use among women in prison, compared to male prisoners.
Judge Williams then summarized and discussed the U.S. government’s attempt to convert the women’s prison in Danbury, Connecticut to a men’s facility. This proposal would have required the women prisoners to be relocated over 1,000 miles away in Alabama even though most of the women were from the Northeast. Coalitions were built to oppose this plan. The government ultimately took note of the opposition, and the women were relocated closer to home. Judge Williams shared the lesson learned from the Danbury campaign: “We have power, but how do we exercise that power? We exercise that power when we work together.” Judge Williams’ welcoming remarks were followed by two panel discussions, “Framing the Issues – Women, Prison, and Gender-Based Violence” and “The Role of Judges in Addressing the Causes, Conditions, and Consequences of Women’s Imprisonment.”

The “Framing the Issues” panel focused on gender-based violence and its relationship to women’s incarceration. The panelists discussed violence as a pathway to incarceration, violence in detention, and returning to a life of violence as several of the myriad ways in which women experience gender-based violence, which leads to trauma, incarceration, and probable re-incarceration. The panelists pointed to the “war on drugs” as having a disproportionate impact on women, as lengthy sentences are handed down to women for their low-level roles in drug offenses.

In the third panel, “The Role of Judges in Addressing the Causes, Conditions, and Consequences of Women’s Imprisonment,” judges from Malawi, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States shared their insights and experiences. The speakers emphasized that judges should be aware of the conditions that women face while incarcerated and suggested that judges have an obligation to visit prisons and police cells. The panel noted that, during the sentencing phase, judges should be aware of the impact of violence on women and take into account children’s best interest when sentencing their sole caregiver. Judges can look to alternatives to incarceration such as suspended sentences, community service, and electric tagging.

An in-depth, closed-door judicial roundtable was held on the final day of the conference with participating judges from countries around the world, including Argentina, Cameroon, China, Ghana, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, and the United States. The judicial roundtable topics included: pathways to women’s imprisonment, sentencing, and alternatives to incarceration; the conditions of women’s imprisonment; consequences of women’s imprisonment, including for children and families; and gender-based violence as a cause, condition and consequence of women’s imprisonment. The roundtable gave judges the opportunity to discuss and develop strategies around the steps judges can take to address these issues in their own courts and countries.

Key recommendations included:

- Judges should take into account experiences of victimization in sentencing, assess the family impact of incarceration, make reasonable decisions about sentencing, and inform the public of their sentencing rationale.
- Community-based alternatives to incarceration such as community service, suspended sentences, or electronic tagging should be utilized where possible.
- Judges should use human rights instruments to craft judicial orders that effect policy change.
Mental assessments of offenders should focus on detecting underlying issues such as trauma and abuse, not merely whether the accused is competent to stand trial.

During trial, judges should be aware of “battered woman syndrome” and other defenses that may help victims of violence and should receive training to understand the cumulative effect of violence and threats of violence on defendant-victims.

Judges should collaborate with each other to improve the conditions of women’s imprisonment, and should visit prisons to view conditions.

Judges should issue probation orders that require the county/state to provide the offender appropriate treatment services, although the availability of such services will vary between jurisdictions.

After the roundtable, the judges attended the Seneca Women Global Leadership Forum. The Forum, hosted by Seneca Women in partnership with the Avon Global Center, Virtue Foundation and iCivics, took place at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. The Forum included a special tribute to Sandra Day O’Connor celebrating her advocacy for female judges and work on increasing access to justice for women and girls. Ambassador and Seneca Women Co-Founder Melanne Verveer, Cornell Law Professor and former Dean Stewart Schwab, Judge Ann Claire Williams, and Virtue Foundation Director of Global Health and International Programs Dr. Ebby Elahi highlighted the work of the Avon Global Center on a panel discussing increasing access to justice for women and girls.

By bringing together judges and other stakeholders from around the world, the conference facilitated an important discussion on the role of judges in addressing gender-based violence as it relates to the causes, conditions, and consequences of women’s imprisonment. The Center thanks all conference participants for their insights and recommendations, and hopes to support judicial participants as they implement innovations inside and outside their courts to address gender-based violence and its links to women’s incarceration.
Day 1: April 14, 2015

Panel 1: Advancing Justice for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence

WELCOMING REMARKS

Kim K. Azzarelli, Co-Founder, Seneca Women and Partner, Seneca Point Global; Co-Founder and Steering Committee Chair, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Elizabeth Brundige, Executive Director, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice; Assistant Clinical Professor of Law, Cornell Law School

MODERATOR

Gigi M. Scoles, Director, Human Rights, Vital Voices Global Partnership

PANELISTS

Hon. Josselyne Béjar, Penal Judge, Criminal Court, Mexico and Secretary, Mexican Association of Women Judges

Christine Jaworsky, Program Director, Speak Out Against Domestic Violence, Avon Foundation for Women; Steering Committee Member, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice

Betsy Bramon, Program Officer, Office of Global Programs, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State

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Elizabeth Brundige giving an overview of the conference.

Gigi Scoles, Christine Jaworsky, Betsy Bramon and Hon. Béjar speak at the Conference’s opening panel.
Day 2: April 15, 2015

Panel 2: Framing the Issues – Women, Prison and Gender-Based Violence

WELCOMING REMARKS

Hon. Ann Claire Williams, Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit; Steering Committee Member, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice

MODERATOR

Sandra L. Babcock, Clinical Professor of Law and Director, International Human Rights Clinic, Cornell Law School; Steering Committee Member, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice

PANELISTS

Sarah Chandler, Human Rights and Community Justice Trainer; Former Coordinator of the Lilooet Restorative Justice Program, Canada

Corina Giacomello, Researcher, International Drug Policy Consortium, UK; National Institute of Penal Science, Mexico

Olivia Rope, Program Officer, Penal Reform International

Jaya Vasandani, Associate Director, Women in Prison Project, New York Correctional Association

Hon. Ann Claire Williams addresses the audience during her welcoming remarks.

Sandra Babcock, Sarah Chandler, Olivia Rope and Jaya Vasandani present at the conference.
Panel 3: The Role of Judges in Addressing the Causes, Conditions, and Consequences of Women’s Imprisonment

MODERATOR

Hon. Janet Bond Arterton, Judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut

PANELISTS

Mrs. Val Castell, Magistrates’ Association National Lead on Women Offenders, United Kingdom

Hon. Esme Chombo, Judge President, Central Region High Court, Malawi; President, Association of Women Judges of Malawi

Hon. Suntariya Muanpawong, Chief Judge, Research Division, Supreme Court, Thailand

Hon. Brenda P. Murray, Federal Administrative Law Judge, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission; Co-Chair, U.S. National Association of Women Judges Women in Prison Committee

“This was a very enriching program on ways to eliminate violence against women at the pre-trial level, during trial and also after conviction. As judges, we have realized we have a role to affect the lives of persons we sentence to avoid revictimization. We need to constantly build our capacity on the subject, train all stakeholders—e.g. police, prosecutors, prisons officials, the judiciary and the community—on the root causes of the menace and ways to stop it.”

– Hon. Mavis Kwainoe, Accra Central District Court

Hon. Esme Chombo of Malawi presents during the third panel.

Senior Roundtable on Women in the Judiciary

Facilitators

**Hon. Debra A. James**, New York State Supreme Court

**Hon. Sauda Mjasiri**, Court of Appeal, Tanzania

**Hon. Cathy H. Serrette**, Circuit Court for Prince George’s County, Maryland

**Hon. Shiranee Tilakawardane**, Supreme Court of Sri Lanka

**TOPICS**

- Pathways to Women’s Imprisonment, Sentencing, and Alternatives to incarceration
- Conditions of Women’s Imprisonment
- Consequences of Women’s Imprisonment, Including for Children and Families
- Gender-Based Violence as a Cause, Condition, and Consequence of Women’s Imprisonment
The Way Forward: Insights and Recommendations from Break-Out Group Discussions

Moderator

Hon. Virginia M. Kendall, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

 Closing Remarks and Thanks

Seneca Women Global Leadership Forum

Panels:
Access to Justice for Women and Girls
The Human Rights of Women
Beyond the Bench: The Impact of Sandra Day O’Connor

“The conference provided a rich opportunity to meet, teach, and learn from an international representation of judges, lawyers and academics who together paint a portrait of the many forms of violence that affect women before, during, and after justice processes.”

–Sarah Chandler, Human Rights and Community Justice Trainer; Former Coordinator of the Lilooet Restorative Justice Program

Hon. Kendall moderates the plenary session discussing the outcomes from the judicial roundtable’s break-out groups.

Group photo of 2015 Women and Justice Conference participants

III. Initiatives

A. Clinical Projects

The following Avon Global Center projects were undertaken in collaboration with the Cornell Global Gender Justice Clinic or the International Human Rights Clinic, taught by Avon Global Center Executive Director and Assistant Clinical Professor of Law Elizabeth Brundige with the assistance of Avon Global Center Women and Justice Fellows Sharon Pia Hickey and Anne-Claire Blok.

1. Research and Drafting of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women Shadow Report

In July 2014, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women—the expert body charged with monitoring countries’ compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women—reviewed India’s implementation of the Convention. In conducting this review, it was informed by the shadow reports submitted by civil society organizations, including a report submitted by the Center for Reproductive Rights and the Human Rights Law Network, to which the Avon Global Center and International Human Rights Clinic contributed research and drafting assistance. The shadow report highlighted selected issues of concern, including child marriage, maternal mortality, and marital rape.

On July 18, the Committee issued its concluding observations, which included several recommendations for India that had been included in the shadow report. Among other recommendations, it urged India to increase quality maternal health services, adopt a policy for mandatory and accurate reporting of maternal deaths and for monitoring the delivery of transparent health-care services, criminalize marital rape, and ensure the implementation of legislation prohibiting child marriage.

2. Handbook on Juvenile Law in Zambia


Zambia’s laws grant children and young people special legal protection yet many remain unable to access the protection to which they are entitled. Magistrates, prosecutors, and legal practitioners grapple with enormous backlogs, lack research capacity, and do not have access to relevant legal resources. As a result, children in contact with the law, especially child victims of abuse, are denied justice. The handbook seeks to fill this gap by providing a compilation and analysis of Zambian juvenile law, the law that governs juveniles who come in contact with the law.

The handbook was launched at an event in Lusaka, Zambia. A high-level panel of Zambian experts, moderated by Cornell Law Professor and Center Steering Committee Member Muna Ndulo, spoke at the event. The handbook was made available online and distributed free of charge to prosecutors and magistrates throughout Zambia.

This initiative has also had an impact on efforts to improve access to justice outside of Zambia. In May 2015, Honourable Georgina Wood, Chief Justice of the Republic of Ghana and Avon Global Center Steering Committee Member, commissioned a professor at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration Law School in Accra to produce a
similar handbook on juvenile law for the Ghanaian judiciary, using the Center’s handbook as a model.

3. Advocacy in Tompkins County, New York Seeking Recognition of Freedom from Domestic Violence as a Human Right

In partnership with the Global Gender Justice Clinic and the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County, New York, the Center drafted and successfully advocated for the adoption of local government resolutions recognizing freedom from domestic violence as a human right. In the fall of 2014, the Center drafted the proposed resolutions and prepared an accompanying background paper that addressed the prevalence of domestic violence, the challenges in responding to it, the legal and historical basis for recognizing freedom from domestic violence a human right, and the value of adopting the proposed resolution.

Between November 2014 and March 2015, six governmental bodies—Tompkins County Legislature, the Tompkins County Council of Governments, the Ithaca Town Board, the Ithaca City Common Council, the Lansing Town Board, and the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees—unanimously passed resolutions recognizing freedom from domestic violence as a human right. In April, the Mayor of the City of Ithaca issued a proclamation that reaffirmed the City’s recognition of this right.

The Center and its partners subsequently developed a proposed plan for implementing the resolutions, which includes the development of domestic violence and the workplace policies or guidelines and a study of the gaps and challenges in domestic violence prevention and response in Tompkins County. These proposals are currently under consideration by the local governments.

My experiences in the Global Gender Justice Clinic were personally rewarding and intellectually stimulating. Through the Clinic I developed a broad understanding of international human rights law and gained insight into different issues affecting women across the world.

— Andrew Yost, Student in Global Gender Justice Clinic
4. Workshop on Sexual Violence against School Children in Kenyan Schools: Gaps in Accountability

The Avon Global Center and Global Gender Justice Clinic partnered with the new Human Rights Clinic at the University of Nairobi School of Law to address the problem of sexual violence by teachers against schoolchildren in Kenya. Despite the country’s strong child protection laws and policies, school-based sexual violence is prevalent throughout Kenya and gaps in accountability have perpetuated the problem.

In the fall of 2014, the Center and Clinics examined the nature and prevalence of this abuse by conducting desk research and interviews with Kenyan Department of Education officials, teachers’ union representatives, NGOs, and child protection officers. They found that children rarely report teacher misconduct and culpable teachers are transferred to other schools instead of facing discipline from the Teachers’ Service Commission or criminal prosecution. This lack of accountability, together with widespread lack of awareness about the impact of abuse on children’s physical and mental health, contributes to a culture of impunity that allows the abuse to continue.

Drawing upon their research, the Center and Clinics hosted a high-level stakeholder workshop in Kisumu, Kenya on January 13, 2015 entitled “Sexual Violence Against Kisumu Schoolchildren: Enhancing Accountability.”

The roundtable facilitated discussions among government and community stakeholders that focused on identifying gaps in accountability and examining why laws meant to prevent school-based sexual violence are not implemented. At the conclusion of the roundtable, the participants agreed upon a list of commitments, which became known as the “Imperial Hotel Declaration,” and undertook to pursue concrete steps towards fulfilling those commitments over the ensuing months.

5. Engagement with the UN Committee Against Torture on Sexual Violence in the U.S. Military

In October 2014, the Avon Global Center, the Global Gender Justice Clinic, and the Service Women’s Action Network (SWAN) submitted a shadow report on the issue of sexual violence in the U.S. military to the UN Committee Against Torture, the body of experts charged with monitoring countries’ compliance with the UN Convention Against Torture. The report informed the Committee’s periodic review of the United States’ implementation of its treaty obligations under the Convention.
A Center delegation travelled to Geneva to participate in the Committee Against Torture’s U.S. review session in November 2014. The team engaged with the independent experts of the Committee, informing the Committee’s questions for the United States’ delegation and the review outcome document.

After its review session, the Committee Against Torture released its Concluding Observations, which included a specific paragraph on “Sexual violence and rape in the United States military.” In this paragraph, the Committee noted its concern about the high prevalence of military sexual assault. It urged the United States to increase its efforts to address this problem by taking effective measures to ensure prompt and impartial investigations, protection from acts of retaliation or reprisals, and equal access to disability compensation to veterans who are survivors of military sexual assault.

6. Engagement with the UN Human Rights Council on Sexual Violence in the U.S. Military

In September 2015, the Center submitted a shadow report on military sexual assault to the United Nations Human Rights Council, the United Nations’ main human rights political body, to inform its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United States’ human rights record. Several other organizations, including the ACLU, Equality Now, SWAN, and the Military Rape Crisis Center, signed on to this submission.

The Center and Global Gender Justice Clinic also engaged in related advocacy in preparation for the United States’ UPR in May 2015. A Center delegation travelled to the United Nations in Geneva in March to meet with representatives of UN member states. In addition, Women and Justice Fellow Anne-Claire Blok played a leading role in mobilizing U.S. human rights advocates by coordinating a working group on women’s rights for the U.S. Human Rights Network.

During the UN Human Rights Council’s review of the United States in May, two countries specifically raised the issue of sexual violence in the U.S. military and called upon the United States to improve access to justice for survivors. The United States will respond to the Council’s recommendations in September.
The Global Gender Justice Clinic has been my favorite class in law school, I not only learned about the power of international law, I was able to use international law and travel to the United Nations in Geneva to advocate for systemic change within the United States Military. Thanks to the efforts of the Global Gender Justice Clinic and its partners, the Human Rights Council called upon the United States to improve access to justice for victims of military sexual assault. I never thought I would have the chance to be part of something so big while studying at Cornell and I am so thankful for the experience.

– Amanda Reynoso-Palley, Student in Global Gender Justice Clinic

7. Study of the Impact of Women's Economic Empowerment on Domestic Violence

The Center, in collaboration with the Global Gender Justice Clinic, Seneca Point Global, and Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, LLP, launched a research project related to domestic violence and women's economic empowerment. Although the costs and effects of domestic violence are clearly understood, the question of how to address and reduce this form of violence remains. Economic empowerment can give women the tools they need to live independently and to support themselves and their children. However, studies exploring the interplay between economic empowerment and domestic violence provide conflicting understandings of whether economic empowerment of women can be an effective strategy to combat domestic violence.

Through this project, the Center and its partners have undertaken a comprehensive review of existing literature in order to assess whether and how economic empowerment can reduce the occurrence and effects of domestic violence. Drawing upon this literature, the project seeks to identify benchmarks that can measure the impact of economic empowerment on women’s ability to leave a domestic violence situation and strategies for deploying economic empowerment initiatives to reduce domestic violence.

8. Study on Women in Prison in Jamaica

The Center, together with the Global Gender Justice Clinic, the New York City Bar Association’s Vance Center for International Justice, and Evolve International, launched a study on women’s imprisonment. The study examines the causes of women’s imprisonment in Jamaica, the characteristics of women prisoners, and the impact of imprisonment on women and their families. It seeks to identify best practices and make recommendations for improvement in light of the UN Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Female Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the “Bangkok Rules”) and other international standards.

In spring 2015, the Center and Clinic conducted legal and factual desk research and developed a field research protocol, including a survey to be administered anonymously to women prisoners in Jamaica. The Center and its partners are currently applying for research approval from the Jamaican Ministry of Security and will seek ethical approval from Cornell’s Institutional Review Board and an equivalent ethical review body in Jamaica. They anticipate conducting field research in January 2016 and publishing a report on their findings. The partners also plan to carry out a second phase of the project, which will involve capacity-building activities for relevant members of the justice system and civil society.
B. Legal Research Support for Judges

With the assistance of Cornell Law students, the Center continues to provide research assistance for judges in the United States and around the world. The nature of requests varies from providing resources and articles on particular gender-related issues to more in-depth analysis and legal research memoranda. This research may support a judge’s adjudication of a case, development of courtroom procedures, or activities outside of the courtroom. During this reporting period, the Center completed ten judicial research requests for judges in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, and the United States, as well as for the International Association of Women Judges.

Responses to judicial requests included:

- Comparative research on the causes, consequences, and conditions of women’s imprisonment in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- Collection of case law involving sexual violence in conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- Analysis of Kenyan courts’ application of the country’s constitutional equality provisions in cases involving gender violence and discrimination;
- Comparative research relating to the use of expert witnesses to corroborate the testimony of a child victim of sexual assault;
- Research on innovations in courtroom procedure to inhibit intimidation of vulnerable victim-witnesses;
- Referral to resources relating to the human rights issues facing women prisoners and offenders;
- Assistance in developing concept and questions for judicial panel on ensuring that victims and witnesses of gender-based violence are not victimized in court;
- Development of a briefing paper compiling innovative court procedures to protect vulnerable adult and child victim-witnesses in courtroom procedures around the world;
- Research outlining the prevalence of femicide globally and in Mexico in particular, and the potential role of courts and judges in preventing femicide; and
- Comparative research relating to maternity benefits and best practices in national labor laws.

The Center also began work on a judicial request relating to anti-discrimination innovations in labor laws and their practical impact on women’s workplace equality.

C. Online Women and Justice Collection

July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 was a period of substantial growth for the Avon Global Center’s Women and Justice Collection.

The Collection offers a free, searchable database of legal resources relating to gender justice, including cases from more than 88 countries and ten international and regional human rights bodies that apply international and domestic law to protect women’s rights and prevent and punish gender-based violence. It also offers annotated and hyperlinked
reference lists of relevant international and regional human rights instruments, as well as articles, reports, and other secondary sources that address gender-related topics. By offering free access to these resources, the Center aims to provide information and tools to support judges, legal practitioners, and others in their efforts to advance justice and afford protection and redress to survivors of gender-based violence.

During this period, the Center’s research team, with the invaluable pro bono support of lawyers from White & Case, LLP, and law student members of the Cornell Advocates for Human Rights, added over 150 new cases to the database, substantially developing coverage of a number of jurisdictions, such as Europe, South Asia, and Latin America, and expanding the collection to include new jurisdictions. With this expansion, the Collection now offers access to over 950 judicial decisions from around the world.

The Center continues its goal to update the look and functionality of the database on its website, making it a more dynamic and intuitive tool for advocates for gender justice.

D. Online Presence: Media Outreach, Website Usage, Social Media

The Avon Global Center has greatly expanded its total social media reach and overall online presence over the past several years. The Center focuses its social media to better reach supporters of women’s rights worldwide so that their work may be usefully informed and augmented by our targeted legal resources.

In 2014–2015, the Center continued to implement its online Communications Strategy, which shapes the Center’s vision in developing, expanding and targeting its website and social media presence and outreach. The strategy outlines the Center’s overall goals: 1) to become one of the world’s leading platforms for law and gender justice; 2) to engage our current audience(s) in innovative ways and build new online communities; 3) to distribute Center content where audiences are active online to increase effectiveness and awareness of the work of the Center; 4) to direct traffic to the Center website; 5) to cultivate partnerships to increase the Center’s following and increase its visibility and profile; and 6) to streamline and modernize the Center’s website, allowing for increased use and user engagement.

The Center’s online reach has grown rapidly in the past year. Its number of Twitter followers has increased by 35% since summer 2014, reaching more than 800 followers. The Center’s Facebook following has also substantially increased by 45% over the past period, reaching over 1,050 users. In addition, the Center’s website has a broad reach internationally and features the work that the Center undertakes.

The Center has also continued to post relevant and incisive posts on its blog, which highlight clinical projects, cases from the Women and Justice Collection, events, and cutting-edge commentary on gender-based violence and women’s access to justice.

A Cornell student participating in a Center photo campaign in which participants were asked to share their views on why freedom from intimate partner violence is important.

In 2014–2015, the Center carried out two online campaigns to address gender-based violence. During “Domestic Violence Awareness Month” in October, the Center organized a successful photo campaign
addressing the questions why freedom from domestic violence should be considered a human right and why freedom from intimate partner violence is important. The campaign complemented local efforts to pass resolutions recognizing such a right while promoting greater visibility of the Center’s activities in the community and online. During “Sexual Violence Awareness Month” in April, the Center engaged in an online photo campaign, with community members outlining their reasons for pledging to stand up against sexual assault.

Finally, the Center’s programs and activities, as well as the related work of Center staff, received positive media coverage, including in the Washington Post, Mother Jones, Ghana Web, and the Zambia Daily Mail. Recent news coverage is available at:


E. Research Associates Program

The Avon Global Center has had the privilege of working with seventeen student research associates and interns in 2014–2015. During the 2014–2015 academic year, the Center worked with twelve research associates and interns, including four Cornell Law students, one Cornell Law graduate, one Harvard Law graduate, and six Cornell undergraduate students. The associates’ main task was to research and summarize cases for the Women & Justice Collection, and the undergraduate interns provided support for the Center’s social media, communications and events. One research associate also contributed to the Center’s clinical work. Several students had non-English language skills, which they used to expand the jurisdictions covered by the Collection. Two of the research associates attended the Women and Justice Conference as rapporteurs and assisted in developing the conference report.

In June and July 2014, the Avon Global Center hosted two full-time Cornell Law student research associates, one Cornell undergraduate intern, and one high school student intern. In June and July 2015, the Center hosted two full-time law student research associates, including a student from Cornell and a student from George Washington University Law School and one high school student intern. These research associates and interns valuably contributed to the multiple facets of the Center’s work. Among other activities, they:

- Researched and summarized cases for the Center’s Women & Justice Collection;
- Entered case summaries and full-text decisions into the Center’s Women & Justice Collection database;
- Drafted new materials for the Center’s website, blog and social media, and expanding our online reach;
- Responded to research requests from judges; and
- Assisted with Center clinical projects.

Working at the Avon Global Center was an absolutely phenomenal experience. In assisting with responses to judicial requests, memoranda and blog posts, I felt that I developed my writing and critical thinking skills. My time at the Center has forever instilled within me an enthusiasm for human rights work, which I will carry with me throughout my career as an attorney.

– Daniel Ovadia, 2015 Summer Research Associate
F. Center Events

During the period covered by this report, the Center hosted or co-hosted several events that highlight the diversity of issues that gender justice advocates face around the world today.


On August 6, 2014, the Avon Global Center hosted a launch event for its new “Handbook on Juvenile Law in Zambia,” co-authored with the Center for Law and Justice and Cornell International Human Rights Clinic. The event was co-hosted by the Law Association of Zambia, the Center for Law and Justice, and the Southern African Institute for Research and Policy.

The event celebrated the release of the handbook, which is the first practice guide on Zambian juvenile law and is intended to support the work of judicial officers and legal practitioners. At the event, Cornell Law School Professor and Center Steering Committee Member Muna Ndulo moderated a panel of high-level Zambian experts, including Maimbo Ziela, Deputy State Advocate for Gender-Based Crimes with the National Prosecuting Authority; Davies Mumba, Acting Deputy Registrar of the Kitwe High Court; and Kangwa Ngandu, Coordinator of the Child Justice Forum. The panelists reflected on the handbook’s insights and discussed strategies for addressing the challenges that prevent juveniles from accessing justice through the courts.

2. Education for Women and Girls as the Key to Liberation

On September 11, the Avon Global Center hosted Dr. Tashi Zangmo, Executive Director and Founder of the Bhutan Nuns Foundations, for a talk on education as empowerment for women. Dr. Zangmo highlighted the importance of educating women and girls, and spoke in particular about her involvement in teaching nuns to be good educators and helping them recognize their potential as change agents as they become teachers and counselors in their communities.


On September 16, the Avon Global Center hosted visitors from the U.S. State Department’s International Visitor Leadership Program. The women, who are
leaders in their home countries in North Africa and the Middle East, were traveling throughout the United States in order to investigate cooperative efforts aimed to safeguard women’s human rights in conflict. The leaders came from Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. Avon Global Center faculty and staff spoke with the delegation about its members’ work and gave a presentation on the Center’s activities.

Avon Global Center staff and women leaders from North Africa and the Middle East.

4. 20 Years After Beijing—Women’s Rights as Human Rights in the United States

On October 9, the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice, the Global Gender Justice Clinic, and the Cornell Advocates for Human Rights hosted Sandra Park, Senior Staff Attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union Women's Rights Project. Ms. Park, a women's rights advocate who has successfully litigated in front of the U.S. Supreme Court, spoke on the topic "20 Years After Beijing—Women's Rights as Human Rights in the United States."

Noting that Hillary Clinton declared at the 1995 Beijing Conference that "human rights are women's rights ... and women's rights are human rights," Ms. Park outlined how women now face a more nuanced form of discrimination than that of twenty years ago, including employment discrimination and lack of access to justice for survivors of gender-based violence.

She discussed some of her recent cases and initiatives, including her successful representation of a domestic violence survivor before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, a legal challenge to a city’s nuisance ordinance that effectively punishes survivors who report domestic violence to the police with the threat of eviction, and work with survivors of military sexual assault. Ms. Park also quoted President Obama’s recent declaration that freedom from domestic violence is a human right and advocated for local governments to pass resolutions to implement this obligation.

5. Discussion and Documentary Screening in Order to Raise Awareness of Domestic Violence

On October 21, as part of “Domestic Violence Awareness Month,” the Avon Global Center organized a screening of the documentary film, “Telling Amy's Story.” The film follows the timeline of a domestic violence homicide that occurred on November 8, 2001. The victim's parents and co-workers, law enforcement officers, and court personnel share their perspectives on what happened to Amy in the weeks, months, and years leading up to
her death. Because the content can be difficult to absorb, the screening was followed by a sensitive debriefing by Tiffany Greco of the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County, a direct service provider to domestic violence survivors.

6. Panel on Recognizing Freedom from Domestic Violence as a Human Right in Tompkins County

On October 22, the Avon Global Center organized a panel discussion highlighting a Global Gender Justice Clinic project advocating for the adoption of a resolution in Tompkins County, N.Y., to recognize freedom from domestic violence as a human right. Panelists included Cornell Law School students Joshua Baldwin, Joanne Joseph, and Carolyn Matos-Montes, and Kristi Taylor, Adult Community Educator for the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County.

The panel explained that framing freedom from domestic violence as a human rights issue recognizes that domestic violence is a societal problem that requires a societal solution: the first important step in moving this issue from the private sphere. According to the panelists, the purpose of the resolutions is simple: to increase public understanding of domestic violence, provide better services to survivors, give law enforcement new tools to support their efforts, and ensure that the County’s response to domestic violence takes into account survivors’ voices and needs. The panelists further stressed that Tompkins County has the opportunity to become a regional leader in a national movement by recognizing freedom from domestic violence as a human right.

7. Panel on Access to Justice for Juveniles in Zambia

On November 3, the Avon Global Center organized a panel discussion on “Access to Justice for Juveniles in Zambia.” Panelists included Center Executive Director Elizabeth Brundige; Tinenenji Banda, Esq., JSD candidate and Co-Founder of the Center for Law and Justice; Muna Ndulo, Professor of Law, Director of the Institute for African Development, and Center Steering Committee Member; Christopher Sarma, JD candidate; and Amy Stephenson, JD candidate.

Panelists discussed their work in developing the first-ever practice guide on Zambian juvenile law. They explained that the handbook aims to function as a tool for judicial officials and legal practitioners who work in the area of juvenile law. It addresses a range of issues from the constitutional, statutory, and human rights framework of juvenile law, special issues that arise in cases of child sexual abuse, and procedural protections for juvenile witnesses. The panelists further reflected on their strategies for ensuring that the handbook has meaningful impact and on potential next steps for improving access to justice in this area of the law.
8. Live Web-Cast of Convention Against Torture Committee Session

On November 14, the Avon Global Center hosted a live web-cast of the United States' response to the United Nations Convention Against Torture Committee's questioning on its compliance with the Convention in relation to impunity for sexual violence in the military. The web-cast complemented the work of Women and Justice Fellow Anne-Claire Blok and law student Florence Seaman, who were in attendance at the session in Geneva.

9. Speaker on Sex Workers at Risk and Criminalization of Condoms

On November 20, the Avon Global Center, the Global Gender Justice Clinic and Cornell's LGBT Clinic hosted a talk by Megan McLemore, Senior Researcher at the Health and Human Rights Division with Human Rights Watch, on human rights advocacy against the criminalization of condoms.

Ms. McLemore spoke about increasing rate of HIV infection in the U.S., noting how a "treatment as prevention" approach is crucial in stemming the spread of the disease. She highlighted the racial disparities of HIV in the United States—how African-Americans make up 14% of the U.S. population, but 44% of those living with HIV—and the correlation between poverty and HIV prevalence. She then outlined how the transgender community is particularly at risk from HIV as its members are four times more likely than the general population to live in poverty, two times more likely to be unemployed, and two times more likely to be homeless. People who are transgender are also less likely to seek medical care due to fear of harassment and discrimination.

Ms. McLemore then outlined how sex workers' risk of contracting HIV is compounded by poverty, housing instability, and the precarious, illegal nature of their work. For example, in the United States, police procedure of using of condoms of evidence of prostitution has reduced sex workers' willingness to carry and use condoms. Human Rights Watch documented sex workers' fear that carrying condoms would lead to arrest, immigration enforcement, and police abuse and highlighted Human Rights Watch's advocacy successes in working with local partners to stop the harmful police practice of using condoms as evidence of prostitution.

10. Documentary Screening of “Saving Face”

On February 5, 2015, the Avon Global Center screened the Academy-award-winning short documentary “Saving Face” about acid violence in Pakistan. The documentary follows women through their reconstructive surgeries, and in their struggle for justice and healing. It also highlights legislative
initiatives that have been introduced to improve survivors' access to justice.

Professor Sital Kalantry, founding faculty director of the Avon Global Center and co-author of the Center's report on acid violence in Bangladesh, India and Cambodia, provided a debriefing for the audience following the documentary screening. She offered insights into the global prevalence of acid violence and its underlying causes and consequences, and shared her experience testifying as an expert witness in an acid attack case in Ithaca.

11. Event: Sexual Violence in the U.S. Military: How Far Have We Come?

On February 19, the Avon Global Center organized an event in New York City on sexual violence in the U.S. military. The event was co-hosted with the New York City Bar Association’s Sex and the Law, Military Affairs, and LGBT Rights Committees, the ACLU, and Protect Our Defenders. It opened with introductory remarks by Col. Donald Christensen, former Air Force Chief Prosecutor and President of Protect our Defenders, and then featured a keynote address by Tracy Robinson, Chair of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Commissioner Robinson addressed the problem of military sexual violence from an international and regional human rights perspective.

Following Commissioner Robinson’s remarks, a panel of experts discussed recent efforts to reform how the U.S. military handles sexual assault within its ranks. Panelists included Sandra Park, senior staff attorney with the ACLU; Professor Elizabeth Hillman, a former member of the Response Systems Team to Adult Sexual Assault Crimes Panel that was congressionally mandated to review the systems used to respond to military sexual assault; Greg Jacob, Policy Director of Service Women’s Action Network and a former U.S. Marine; and Major John Altenburg, Jr., a retired U.S. Army officer who supported the Response Systems Panel as a subject-matter expert. The panel discussed recent steps that have been taken to address military sexual assault and considered what the next steps are in addressing the problem.
12. CSW Side-Event: Ensuring that Courts Do Not Re-Victimize: Making Beijing's Commitments a Reality

On March 9, the Avon Global Center partnered with the International Association for Women Judges (IAWJ) to organize a parallel event in New York City during the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

This year's CSW session focused on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including the current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Drawing upon this theme, the Avon Global Center/IAWJ panel, which featured judges from four continents, examined the steps that governments have taken to meet their obligations under the Beijing Platform, particularly to ensure that women defendants, victims, and witness are not re-victimized or discriminated against when they find themselves in court.

Center Executive Director Elizabeth Brundige and IAWJ Education Director Anne Goldstein moderated the panel, which included Judge Patricia Henry of the Integrated Domestic Violence Court of Kings County, New York; Judge Robyn Tupman of the District Court of New South Wales, Australia; Judge Marisa Zuccolillo of Criminal Court No. 1 in Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Magistrate Mavis Kwainoe of the Accra Central District Court in Ghana.

The panelists discussed the role of judges and of courtroom procedures in protecting the rights of women who are victims of gender-based violence. They also highlighted relevant international and regional standards that emphasize respect for human rights principles to ensure justice for adult and child victim/witnesses.

13. Advancing Access to Justice for Women and Children in Ghana

On April 20, the Avon Global Center and Cornell Law School's Berger International Legal Studies Program hosted Chief Justice Georgina Wood of the Republic of Ghana, a member of the Center's Steering Committee, for a talk on "Advancing Access to Justice for Women and Children." In her talk, the Chief Justice addressed three barriers—physical, legal, and financial—that women in Ghana face in accessing justice. She then discussed the steps that the Ghanaian government has undertaken to overcome these obstacles and improve women's access to justice.

14. Documentary Screening and Discussion of "India's Daughter"

On April 21, as part of "Sexual Assault Awareness Month," the Center hosted a screening of the controversial documentary "India's Daughter"
followed by a panel discussion. Co-sponsored by Cornell’s South Asian Program, sorority and fraternity organizations, and Cornell’s Women in Public Policy student group, the panel and audience examined the implications of the documentary and discussed the “culture” of violence against women in India, globally, nationally, and on campus.

Yamini Bhandari, Student Assembly representative of women’s issues, spoke about violence against women in the United States and on campus, highlighting movements such as the Every1 Campaign. Avon Global Center Executive Director Liz Brundige spoke about the Center’s work on combatting violence against women that is often connected to perceptions that the women have violated patriarchal gender norms, such as acid violence in South Asia and sexual violence in the United States military.


On April 23, the Avon Global Center partnered with Cornell International Affairs Society and Cornell International Affairs Forum to organize a panel assessing the successes and remaining challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their envisioned successors, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Muna Ndulo, Cornell Law School Professor, Director of the Institute for African Development, and Avon Global Center Steering Committee Member; N’Dri Assie-Lumumba, Professor in Cornell’s African Studies and Research Center; and Prabhu Pingali, Professor of Applied Economic and Management and Director of the Tata-Cornell Agriculture and Nutrition Initiative critiqued the MDGs, which expire in 2015, and discussed the good and bad points of the MDGs’ successors particularly in relation to gender equality. The Center was pleased to note the attendance of the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Education Kishore Singh at the event.

16. Domestic Violence Advocates Roundtable

On May 28, the Avon Global Center and Columbia Law School’s Human Rights Institute convened a roundtable at Columbia Law School on “Addressing Domestic Violence as a Human Right Through Local Resolutions.” Center Executive Director Elizabeth...
Brundige and Associate Director of the Human Rights Institute’s Human Rights in the U.S. Project JoAnn Kamuf Ward co-facilitated the roundtable discussion. The roundtable reflected upon the recent movement in the United States to secure the adoption of local government resolutions recognizing freedom from domestic violence as a human right. County and local governments in the U.S. have adopted twenty-four resolutions and proclamations, including those proposed by the Avon Global Center and adopted by six government bodies in Tompkins County, N.Y.

Participants discussed their experiences in advocating for the adoption of resolutions or engaging with other local human rights accountability initiatives. They shared lessons learned in building momentum for, drafting, and encouraging the passage of resolutions; identified avenues for strengthening local approaches to addressing domestic violence through a human rights frame; and examined strategies for implementing existing and future resolutions.

17. High School Gender Equality Competition

To mark the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing—a Conference specifically dedicated to advancing gender equality worldwide—the Avon Global Center launched its first-ever “High School Gender Equality Competition” in spring 2015.

The Center invited high school students to submit an essay or art or multi-media project that best depicts what gender equality looks like to them. The Center received many outstanding entries and was pleased to award two first-place winners. The winners will take part in an action-filled visit to Cornell Law School, where they will become a “Human Rights Lawyer for a Day”, focusing on women’s rights. The Center looks forward to hosting these outstanding students at Cornell in August 2015.

G. Presentations and Outreach

Avon Global Center faculty and staff made the following contributions to gender justice initiatives and events:

**Presentation at Cornell University Big Red Relief Art and Awareness Gala.** In November 2014, Women and Justice Fellow Sharon Pia Hickey, along with Cornell Law students Carolyn Matos-Montes, and Joanne Joseph, tabled and presented at an art exhibition to raise awareness about acid violence attacks and to raise money for Nine Yards, a social entrepreneurship empowering victims of acid violence in India.
Student Carolyn Matos-Montes presents the Center’s report on acid violence.

**Keynote Speaker at Domestic Violence Awareness and Benefit Concert.** In February 2015, Women and Justice Fellow Sharon Pia Hickey gave the keynote speech during Cornell’s Alpha Chi Omega and Kappa Delta Domestic Violence Awareness and Benefit Concert. Her speech explained why freedom from domestic violence should be a human right and highlighted local issues of domestic violence in Tompkins County. She urged the 300 attendees to support the Avon Global Center in its efforts to pass local resolutions declaring that freedom from domestic violence is a human right. The event proceeds were donated to the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County and Prevent Child Abuse USA.

**Petition to the Inter-American Commission on Sexual Violence in the U.S. Military.** In January 2015, Cornell Law School’s Global Gender Justice Clinic, led by Elizabeth Brundige, Anne-Claire Blok, and Sharon Pia Hickey, filed a petition before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on behalf of seven current and former U.S. service women. The petitioners were sexually assaulted while serving in the U.S. military and did not receive redress. Several had experienced retaliation from their Commanders for reporting the incidents, and none received sufficient access to judicial remedies.

The Clinic asked the Commission to join the petition with an earlier one filed by the International Human Rights Clinic in January 2014 on behalf of military sexual assault survivors. These are the first two petitions brought to the Commission, an independent human rights body of the Organization of American States, by survivors of sexual assault in the United States. The petition requests that the Commission conduct an investigation into these issues and recommends that the U.S. government take steps to eradicate sexual violence within the military.

**Presentations at International Human Rights Careers Panel.** On April 7, Professor Brundige, Ms. Blok, and Ms. Hickey spoke on a panel on “Pursuing a Career in Human Rights Law,” hosted by the Cornell Advocates for Human Rights. Together with Professor Sital Kalantry, Avon Global Center Founding Faculty Director and Steering Committee Member, and Professor Sandra Babcock, Center Steering Committee Member, they discussed their experiences in pursuing careers in the field of human rights.
Prof. Brundige presents the Center’s work at the Cornell Law School Reunion Open House.

College Democrats of New York Convention – Women’s Caucus. On April 18, Professor Brundige and Professor Kalantry spoke on “Advancing Women’s Human Rights in the United States” at the Women’s Caucus of the College Democrats of New York Convention, which was held at Cornell.

Panelist at Internationalization Symposium. On May 13, Professor Brundige was an invited speaker at a symposium on “Integration of International Experience into the Curriculum,” hosted by Cornell University’s Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies. She spoke about her experiences in developing and teaching the law school’s Global Gender Justice Clinic. Ms. Blok and Ms. Hickey prepared and presented a poster display at the symposium, featuring the Clinic’s work that was undertaken in collaboration with and with the support of the Avon Global Center.

Cornell Law School Reunion Open House Tabling. On June 5, Professor Brundige, Ms. Blok, and Ms. Hickey showcased the Center’s work to visiting alumnae and alumni of Cornell Law School.

Presentation and Workshop at International Human Rights Clinicians’ Conference. On June 14, Professor Brundige, Ms. Blok, and Ms. Hickey were invited speakers at the 2015 International Human Rights Clinicians Conference at Cardozo Law School in New York City. Professor Brundige spoke about building a social media strategy as part of a panel on “Innovations for Thriving in the New Normal” of today’s law schools, and Ms. Blok and Ms. Hickey led a workshop on using social media for effective communication and advocacy.

Engagement with High School Feminist Student Group. In the spring, Sharon Pia Hickey worked with a local high school feminist group. She plans to support them as they explore the feasibility of advocating for resolution recognizing that freedom from domestic violence is a human right in their locality.

Creation of Finger Lakes Women’s Bar Association – International Women’s Rights Committee. In the spring, Professor Brundige and Professor Kalantry were appointed co-chairs of the newly established International Women’s Rights Committee of the Finger Lakes Women’s Bar Association.
IV. Who We Are

A. Center Staff and Faculty

Elizabeth Brundige, Executive Director

Elizabeth Brundige is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Law at Cornell Law School and Executive Director of the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice. She also founded and directs the Law School's Global Gender Justice Clinic, in which students engage in local, global, and transnational efforts to address gender-based violence and discrimination.

Prior to joining Cornell Law School, Professor Brundige was the Robert. M. Cover - Allard K. Lowenstein Fellow in International Human Rights and a clinical lecturer in law at Yale Law School, where she co-taught the Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic. She was previously awarded the Robert L. Bernstein International Human Rights Fellowship to work with the International Association of Women Judges on programs designed to advance women’s human rights and access to justice in southern and East Africa. She was also an Associate Legal Officer in the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and a law clerk for Judge Kermit V. Lipez of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and Justice Sandile Ngcobo of the Constitutional Court of South Africa.

Professor Brundige received her B.A. from Yale University, an M.Phil. in Development Studies from Oxford University, and a J.D. from Yale Law School, where she was awarded the Khosla Memorial Human Dignity Prize for her human rights work.

Anne-Claire Blok, Women and Justice Fellow

Ms. Blok is a Women and Justice Fellow at the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School. Before joining the Center, she worked at Plan International's EU office in Brussels where she advocated for the inclusion of children's rights in the European Union's external action policy and practice, while particularly highlighting girls' rights and gender equality. Ms. Blok previously also worked with the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations in NYC tracking and analyzing women's human rights resolutions and engaging with UN agencies and other missions. While working with Transparency International, she gained experience conducting research and advocacy looking to enhance the implementation and impact of the UN Convention Against Corruption. Earlier, she assisted research into innovative anti-human trafficking legislation at Not For Sale. Ms. Blok received her LL.M. in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University Law Center in 2012. Additionally, she received both her LL.M. in Dutch civil law and LL.B. from Leiden University in the Netherlands.
Sharon Pia Hickey, Women and Justice Fellow

Sharon Pia Hickey is a Women and Justice Fellow at the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School. Sharon graduated with top honors from the National University of Ireland Maynooth, where she was executive editor of its law review. She received an LL.M. from Columbia Law School with certification in gender and sexuality law. While in Columbia, she served as an editor on the Columbia Human Rights Law Review and was part of Columbia’s Gender and Sexuality Law Clinic. In the past, Sharon worked with Women for Election, training women to run for political office, and the 5050 group, campaigning for political gender quotas. Sharon has also worked in the Law Library of Congress, as part of the Washington Ireland Program, and in the Women and Public Policy Program of the Harvard Kennedy School. She is admitted to the New York Bar.

Christina Price, Program Assistant

As the Program Assistant for the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice, Christina Price assists with many aspects of program support and coordination. Prior to joining the Avon Global Center, Christina earned a bachelor’s degree in Music Industry and Business Communications from the State University of New York, College at Oneonta in 2011. In the past, she has worked in the higher education field, assisting students, faculty, and more importantly planning and coordinating several events for several diverse departments. Christina is originally from the Ithaca area, living here for most of her life. She is very excited be part of the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice, and to join other women and organizations around the world to stand together to support women’s justice.
B. Steering Committee Members

Kim K. Azzarelli
Steering Committee Chair and Co-Founder of the Avon Global Center; Co-Founder, Seneca Women

Professor Sandra Babcock
Clinical Professor of Law, Cornell Law School

Professor Cynthia Grant Bowman
Dorothea S. Clarke Professor of Law, Cornell Law School

Dr. Ebby Elahi
Director of Global Health and International Programming, Virtue Foundation; Director of Fifth Avenue Eye Associates and FACES™; Associate Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology and Global Health, Mount Sinai School of Medicine; Attending Physician, Beth Israel Medical Center

Justice Elena Inés Highton de Nolasco
Vice President (Deputy Chief Justice), Supreme Court of Argentina

Professor Barbara J. Holden-Smith
Vice Dean and Professor of Law, Cornell Law School

Professor Sital Kalantry
Co-Founder and Founding Faculty Director of the Avon Global Center; Clinical Professor of Law, Cornell Law School

Christine Jaworsky
Program Director, Speak Out Against Domestic Violence, Avon Foundation for Women

Professor Muna Ndulo
Professor of Law and Elizabeth and Arthur Reich Director of the Leo and Arvilla Berger International Legal Studies Program, Cornell Law School; Director of the Institute for African Development, Cornell University

Honorable Barbara Rothstein
United States District Judge, United States District Court for the Western District of Washington

Honorable Joanna Seybert
United States District Judge, United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York

Erica H. Steinberger
Partner (ret.), Latham & Watkins, LLP

Honorable Ann Claire Williams
United States Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

Chief Justice Georgina Wood
Chief Justice of the Republic of Ghana