Promoting justice, economic opportunity and human dignity through the rule of law.
ABA RULE OF LAW INITIATIVE

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More than 50 Countries.
More than 500 professional staff.
$1.2 million in pro bono assistance.
Discover the ABA Rule of Law Initiative.
FOREWORD

Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to share with you the ABA Rule of Law Initiative’s (ABA ROLI’s) 2016 Program Book, providing a snapshot of the work we do to advance the rule of law throughout the world.

The past year marked the 25th anniversary of the ABA’s rule of law development programs, a moment to take stock of those efforts, celebrate rule of law progress, evaluate persistent challenges and chart a course for the future. As we have done so, we have been gratified by the development of ABA ROLI in both reach and impact. What started in 1990 as a short-term pro bono project to provide technical legal advice on new laws and constitutions in a handful of Central European countries is today a global organization, with some 500 staff, consultants and volunteers, an on-ground presence in more than 50 countries, and a wide range of programming to address contemporary rule of law challenges. Whether it’s facilitating legal assistance to refugees in Turkey, supporting a civil society campaign against corruption in Ukraine or contributing to the post-conflict transition and constitutional reform process in the Central African Republic, ABA ROLI is working with justice sector colleagues on today’s rule of law front lines.

In this work, we draw on a quarter century of experience and a proven approach that prioritizes partnership with local actors and advances sustainable solutions based on international standards and best practices. This volume profiles programmatic highlights from the past year. Illustrative highlights include:

- Our work with governmental and non-governmental partners in Morocco to raise public awareness of key constitutional rights. By the end of 2015, we had reached approximately 100,000 citizens through educational caravans, another 85,000 through open days and live events and about two million through radio campaigns.
- Efforts to strengthen Georgia’s criminal justice system by convening representatives from the judiciary, the prosecutor’s office, the Georgian Bar Association and law schools to agree on the country’s first official commentary on the criminal procedure code, an 820-page volume that promises greater consistency and adherence to new code provisions protecting defendant rights.
- Our collaboration with local organizations in the Democratic Republic of Congo’s South Kivu Province to promote access to justice for communities affected by large-scale mining. With our support and training, a network of community-based paralegals has provided legal services to 275 community members seeking redress for issues such as arbitrary arrest and illegal occupation of land and has successfully resolved 91 mining-related disputes.

We are enormously proud of such achievements, chronicled throughout this volume. But even as we have celebrated them during our anniversary year, ABA ROLI is not resting on its laurels. We are mindful of the significant rule of law challenges we face—persistent scourges such as corruption and discrimination, as well as new and growing threats, including cybercrime and extremist violence. To meet them, ABA ROLI is redoubling its efforts, with a new strategic plan that focuses on “learning and leadership,” capitalizing on our unparalleled experience and networks to mine lessons learned, to develop new innovative approaches and to share these with the global community of rule of law practice. We know that it is this committed community—of judges and lawyers, ministers and activists, donors and policy-makers—that makes our work and the progress we see possible. Even as we confront daunting challenges, we remain confident that, together, we can meet them.

We hope you find this survey of our work useful, and we welcome your feedback and suggestions for how we can strengthen our efforts.

M. MARGARET MCKEOWN
Chair, ABA ROLI Board

ELIZABETH ANDERSEN
Director, ABA ROLI
The mission of the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) is to promote justice, economic opportunity and human dignity through the rule of law.

For more than 25 years, and through our work in more than 100 countries, we have remained committed to this worthwhile aim. Regardless of the specific program or locale, ABA ROLI and our partners have sought to strengthen legal institutions, to support legal professionals, to foster respect for human rights and to advance public understanding of the law and of citizen rights. Each of these efforts contributes toward a more hospitable environment for rule of law in our host countries and, ultimately, worldwide.
In collaboration with our in-country partners—including judges, lawyers, bar associations, law schools, court administrators, legislatures, ministries of justice, and human rights and civil society organizations—we design programs that are responsive to local needs and that prioritize sustainable solutions to pressing rule of law challenges. ABA ROLI has roughly 500 professional staff working in the United States and abroad, including a cadre of short- and long-term volunteers and legal specialists, who in fiscal year 2015 alone contributed $1.2 million in pro bono legal technical assistance.
OUR PROGRAMS
Our work is concentrated in four program areas:

- **Governance and Justice System Strengthening.** An independent, fair and efficient justice system requires both skilled and ethical professionals and effective and accountable institutions. To that end, ABA ROLI works with a range of partners to strengthen core justice sector institutions and capabilities.

  To strengthen judiciaries, ABA ROLI facilitates dialog on judicial independence, accountability, ethics and transparency; designs and conducts training for judges and court personnel; supports drafting and implementation of judicial reforms and ethics codes; and helps to enhance court administration and efficiency.

  Our contributions toward criminal procedure code reform have resulted in investigations and trials that are increasingly free from bias and that contain enhanced rights protections—for the accused and victims alike—at all stages of criminal investigations and proceedings. In countries transitioning toward a more adversarial system, ABA ROLI provides trial advocacy training for criminal justice actors adjusting to new roles and responsibilities in criminal proceedings. Additionally, we provide targeted, substantive trainings on such issues as organized crime, money laundering, terrorism financing, domestic violence and gender-based violence to further professionalize and empower criminal justice actors, and keep communities safer. ABA ROLI’s anti-corruption and public integrity programs help our host countries’ efforts to develop effective legal frameworks and bolster institutions’ capacity to prevent and sanction corruption, including by supporting anti-corruption commissions, assisting with the design and implementation of ethics codes for public officials generally and justice system actors in particular, and training prosecutors and law enforcement personnel in investigating and prosecuting corruption.

  Our programs assist law schools in developing new courses and practical skills-building approaches that better meet the needs of tomorrow’s legal professionals, including via legal clinics, mock trial and legal writing competitions, and mentoring and internship programs; provide institutional support to law schools as they upgrade facilities, refine and introduce curricula and enhance faculty and administrative capacity; and

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

1. **PARTNERSHIP.** We employ a highly consultative approach to the delivery of independent, professional technical assistance, working with justice sector colleagues and local stakeholders to develop programs that are responsive to their needs and interests.

2. **EMPOWERMENT.** We provide people with the legal information, resources and assistance to defend their rights, access justice and hold government accountable.

3. **INCLUSIVITY.** We work to eliminate bias and to ensure that marginalized groups have access to justice and public participation.

4. **UNIVERSALITY.** We look to comparative and international law to identify universal standards and global best practices, with the U.S. legal system providing just one of several available models.

5. **SUSTAINABILITY.** We pursue strategies with lasting impact, including furthering citizen awareness, strengthening local capacity in the governmental and non-governmental sectors and furthering the professional development of our host country staff, who will become their country’s next generation of leaders.
foster appreciation among the public, including children, for the rule of law through public service announcements, civic education programs and know-your-rights brochures and websites. Finally, ABA ROLI assists with bar examination development and administration; supports the adoption of ethics standards and codes of conduct for lawyers; strengthens independent bar associations to serve as advocates for the rule of law; and establishes and modernizes continuing legal education regimes and courses.

**Human Rights and Access to Justice.** Enhancing access to justice and the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including women, children and marginalized populations, are among the principal aims of ABA ROLI. ABA ROLI takes a human-rights-based approach to legal development and crafts specific strategies to promote human rights and gender perspectives worldwide and integrates this approach across all its programs and practice areas. Our human rights programs promote and facilitate the documentation and investigation of human rights abuses; enhance access to justice through the use of alternative or informal justice systems and by empowering CSOs to support individuals and communities; ensure full respect for women’s rights through legal education and advocacy programs, support for women bar associations and mentoring programs and by improving countries’ responses to gender-based violence; support the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons by training, supporting and empowering local lawyers, paralegals and CSOs to advocate against violence and assert sexual rights; and combat trafficking in persons through legal and policy reform by enhancing victims’ access to justice and essential services through criminal justice strengthening and by facilitating multi-sectoral and international cooperation.

**Inclusive and Sustainable Development.** Fair and transparent laws and effective, just and accountable legal institutions are essential to broader goals of inclusive and sustainable economic and human development. ABA ROLI
develops and implements strategies to harness the potential of laws and legal institutions to strengthen development effectiveness and help ensure that progress is meted out in a just and equitable manner. In this vein, we work to improve environmental governance and mitigate environmental costs associated with economic development through increased transparency of environmental information and cutting-edge public interest litigation; integrate legal strategies into addressing public health concerns, such as HIV-related discrimination and health effects of environmental pollution; improve land and natural resource governance and work to reduce high social, environmental and economic costs often associated with large-scale extractive exploitation; promote appreciation for human rights, rule of law and development challenges among local businesses, encouraging them to design corporate social responsibility programs; and reform commercial laws and practices to promote the use of alternative dispute resolutions, strengthen enforcement of commercial contracts, improve protection of intellectual property rights and create equal economic opportunities for small entrepreneurs, women and other disadvantaged groups.

- **Transitions, Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding.** Legal capacity building is critically important to successful transitions from conflict to long-term peace and stability. Our programs include a variety of interventions that have been developed with the primary goal of strengthening the response of justice sector actors to conflict. They include: support for justice sector capacity building, including the prosecution of perpetrators of serious human rights abuses in accordance with fair trial standards; capacity building for civil society to promote and engage in activities aimed at community reconciliation, atrocity prevention and transitional justice; and strengthening legal institutions and frameworks in support of electoral and political processes, including constitutional and legal reform. ABA ROLI works at multiple levels, using participatory, consultative methods to link grassroots with official perspectives on transitional processes.

**RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENTS**
ABA ROLI’s overseas work is supported by legal research and assessments. The program conducts in-depth evaluations of draft legislation at the request of host country partners, conducts legal research, produces resource guides on rule of law issues, and develops and implements a range of assessment tools.
To date, ABA ROLI has developed 13 formal assessment tools and methodologies that explore significant rule of law topics, from access to justice and judicial reform to detention procedures and prosecutorial reform. We have conducted more than 80 assessments in 30 countries using these tools, which are available online and are regularly relied upon by local reformers, technical assistance providers, international donors and scholars alike. You can learn more about our research and assessment capacity on page 112, and a full list of published assessments is available on page 128.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION
ABA ROLI adopts rigorous and innovative monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches to assess the quality and effectiveness of its programs, ensuring that its programs are grounded in empirical evidence and remain relevant and sustainable.

The ABA ROLI M&E team provides training and technical assistance to ABA ROLI program staff, building their capacity to develop instruments and frameworks for systematic monitoring of program outputs and to measure longer-term outcomes. To evaluate the outcomes of ABA ROLI’s work, the M&E team conducts independent, internal evaluations of certain ABA ROLI programs, while facilitating external evaluations for others in accordance with program budgets and needs. ABA ROLI employs a participatory approach to evaluation whenever possible in order to maximize the incorporation of the perspectives of the various partners and beneficiaries of ABA ROLI programs into the learning process.

In the past year, ABA ROLI grounded programs and project implementation through baseline studies, evaluation of previous reforms, training needs analysis, coalition assessment analysis, court performance reviews, perception surveys, focus group discussions, interviews, capacity and conflict assessments, and beneficiary and stakeholder mapping in various programs. The M&E team led and supported evaluations of ABA ROLI programs in China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, Turkey, Russia and the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa and continues to incorporate state-of-the-art M&E approaches to help programs capture the perspectives of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

ABA ROLI’s commitment to monitoring and evaluation supports its accountability to donors, as well as to the lawyers, civil society actors and members of the public who participate in its programs.

PROGRAM FUNDING AND DONORS
In fiscal year 2015, which ran from September 2014 through August 2015, the bulk of ABA ROLI’s program funds were received as grants from the United States government—specifically from the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development—and from the governments of the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. We also received program funding from The Catherine T. and John D. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, the 11th Hour Project and from individual donors.
BA ROLI develops a wide variety of programs responsive to the needs of its host country partners, focusing its assistance in four substantive areas:

- Governance and Justice System Strengthening
- Human Rights and Access to Justice
- Inclusive and Sustainable Development
- Transitions, Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding

Examples of our work in each program area follow.
GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE SYSTEM STRENGTHENING

Judicial reform

As part of its judicial reform programs, ABA ROLI promotes greater independence, accountability and transparency in judicial systems; assists in drafting and implementing codes of judicial ethics; promotes judicial education and training; and helps to enhance court administration and efficiency.

When we first began providing technical legal assistance in Central and Eastern Europe about 25 years ago, the judiciaries of many nations in the region were in desperate need of reform. As ABA ROLI expanded its rule of law programming to other regions, it became apparent that similar obstacles existed in judicial systems throughout the world. And while many judiciaries have made significant progress, challenges remain.

Insufficient judicial education and professional training, as well as a lack of emphasis on judicial ethics, hamper the effectiveness of judiciaries.
and of individual judges in many countries throughout the world. Overwhelming caseloads—coupled with inadequate resource allocation and a lack of modern case-management systems—can result in procedural delays that undermine the administration of justice.

Courts are often plagued with corruption, undermining often-fragile public trust in the fairness and efficiency of the judicial system. Moreover, insufficient professional guarantees and ill-defined judicial powers leave many judges and magistrates demoralized and marginalized in their own courtrooms and thus unable, or unwilling, to promote the rule of law.

ABA ROLI believes that an independent, accountable, well-functioning judiciary is a central pillar of the rule of law. With this in mind, we offer expert assistance in and provide resources for:

- conducting assessments of judicial reform efforts,
- facilitating dialogue on judicial reform and independence,
- promoting education and training for judges and court personnel,
- improving judicial ethics and accountability, and
- strengthening court administration, efficiency and transparency.

**Evaluating judicial reform**

To identify and target the core challenges necessitating judicial reform, we have committed resources to building advanced assessment capacity. ABA ROLI undertakes assessments of judiciaries, using its *Judicial Reform Index (JRI)*, a tool that assesses judicial reform and independence. The *JRI* was conceived and designed based upon comparative analyses of legal traditions, international standards and regional norms, so it can be implemented globally. Since 2001, ABA ROLI has undertaken 40 *JRI* assessments in 20 countries, informing national reform and donor priorities alike.

**Criminal justice reform**

ABA ROLI’s criminal justice programs provide technical assistance to governments, civil society organizations and justice sector professionals, including prosecutors, police, defense counsel, magistrates and judges.

Our programs improve criminal justice systems by helping justice sector professionals and institutions increase capacity and enhance skills. A well-functioning criminal justice system protects and promotes individual rights. Our contributions toward criminal procedure code reform have resulted in investigations and trials that are increasingly free from bias and that contain enhanced rights protections—for the accused and victims alike—at all stages of criminal investigations and proceedings. In some countries, especially those transitioning toward a more adversarial system, ABA ROLI provides trial advocacy training for criminal justice actors, helping them communicate and advocate more effectively. These trainings also emphasize compliance with international and regional standards and best practices.

Our role in establishing and supporting public defender and legal aid centers helps to create improved and sustainable access to justice in many countries. Programs that help delineate and strengthen the respective roles of judges, prosecutors and defense counsel promote fairness and a better
balance of power between the state and the accused. Targeted, substantive trainings on a wide range of issues, including organized crime, money laundering, terrorism financing, domestic violence and gender-based violence, further professionalize and empower criminal justice actors and help keep communities safe.

Assessing criminal justice reform efforts

Our Prosecutorial Reform Index offers host-country justice institutions, international organizations, development agencies and technical assistance providers a reliable means for evaluating current prosecutorial institutions and processes, developing targeted prosecutorial reform programs and monitoring progress toward establishing more accountable, effective and independent prosecutor offices.

Additionally, we have developed the Detention Procedure Assessment Tool (DPAT) to evaluate pre-trial detention and sentencing practices through the prism of international standards and best practices. We piloted the tool in Armenia in 2010, and the DPAT methodology has since been used in Belize, Lebanon, Nicaragua and Serbia.

Legal practice

ABA ROLI works with lawyers and bar associations around the world to provide technical assistance to build a strong, effective and independent legal profession. ABA ROLI provides support in three main areas: professional development of lawyers, technical assistance to bar associations and assessments of the state of the legal profession.
Legal professional development
ABA ROLI supports the professional development of lawyers by working with advocate training institutes and bar associations to design and conduct continuing legal education on a variety of topics, including trial advocacy skills, law practice management, alternative dispute resolution, mediation and court procedures. We have provided skills training for trial lawyers in countries transitioning to the accusatorial system in more than a dozen countries. These programs strengthen the practical skills of legal professionals and increase their substantive knowledge of the law, allowing them to serve their clients more effectively.

Developing effective bar associations
ABA ROLI’s programs help to increase the capacity of bar associations, creating independent, self-governing, effective, and sustainable organizations capable of providing the crucial services required to advance the legal profession. We support and work with a variety of legal professional organizations, including those for young lawyers and for female lawyers, and regional bar networks. Our efforts include assistance in drafting ethics and disciplinary codes, as well as setting standards for entering the legal profession. We have also assisted with the creation and facilitation of bar examinations.

Assessing the legal profession
To help strengthen the independence and professionalism of lawyers around the world, we have developed the Legal Profession Reform Index (LPRI), which provides an empirical basis for examining the independence and effectiveness of legal professionals and the environment in which they practice. To date, we have conducted LPRI assessments in more than 15 countries. These assessments guide ABA ROLI, local justice-sector partners and international organizations in the development of more informed and targeted programming, and they empower legal professionals themselves to take a more active role in promoting legal reform and the rule of law in their countries.

In 2013, we developed the Analysis of Criminal Defense Advocacy (ACDA) methodology, and piloted it to produce a comparative analysis of criminal defense capacity in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. A strong, independent and effective criminal defense bar is essential to protect the rights of citizens and to boost public confidence in the criminal justice system, and the ACDA provides an empirical basis for analyzing the criminal defense in one country or comparatively in several countries.

ABA ROLI also designs tailored legal profession assessments, which can be implemented to analyze particular issues or legislation affecting lawyers in a host country.
Legal education reform
At ABA ROLI, we believe that developing the capacity of a country's future legal professionals is one of the surest ways to secure lasting legal reforms. Yet, in many parts of the world, the next generation of judges and lawyers is being shaped by legal education systems that are in dire need of reform.

Often unregulated, many of the world's law schools use ineffectual teaching methodologies and severely outdated textbooks and educational materials. In addition, corruption and lax standards at some law schools allow students to obtain a degree with little evidence of acquired skills and knowledge, degrading the value of a law degree and diluting the pool of competent, practice-ready law graduates. In response to such challenges, ABA ROLI works with universities to support curriculum and accreditation reform, clinical legal education, and moot-court and mock-trial activities. We also promote the use of modern, interactive teaching methodologies that engage students and build their critical and analytical skills.

ABA ROLI's Legal Education Reform Index evaluates a country's legal education system by analyzing those laws that regulate higher education institutions and law schools. We also conduct in-depth interviews with law students and professors, lawyers, and governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to determine the degree to which a country's legal education system complies with these laws as well as international best practices.

OUR GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE SYSTEM STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS INCLUDE

- Our Balkans Regional Rule of Law Network brings together bar associations and civil society groups from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia to facilitate and encourage the exchange of ideas, materials, resources and best practices among legal practitioners in the region.

- Our Great Lakes regional judicial training initiative, targeting Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and Rwanda, works with judges, national justice sector leadership and legal experts to encourage regional experience sharing and targeted training on emerging areas of law with regional significance.

- In Mexico, ABA ROLI provides trial advocacy workshops for law professors and students in connection with a national mock trial competition and alternative dispute resolution tournament, all of which supports the country’s transition to an accusatorial criminal justice system.

- ABA ROLI collaborates with the Philippines Supreme Court and Department of Justice, among other entities, to improve court efficiency and administration, to promote alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and to enhance judicial integrity.

- In Morocco, ABA ROLI conducted an assessment of Morocco’s Institut Supérieur de la Magistrature (ISM), the entity responsible for the training of Moroccan trainee-judges and prosecutors, as well as for the initial training and continuing legal education of court clerks. ABA ROLI suggested reforms for the entry requirements for the ISM, the entrance examination, evaluation of potential candidates and the effective delivery of judicial training.
HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Enhancing access to justice and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including women, children and marginalized populations, are among the principal aims of ABA ROLI. ABA ROLI implements targeted strategies to promote human rights worldwide while simultaneously applying human rights and gender perspectives across all its programs and practice areas, in keeping with a general human rights-based approach to legal development. In doing so, ABA ROLI is guided by human rights principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.

Advancing human rights

Respect for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights is a pillar of a strong rule of law culture, providing safety and stability to communities and nations alike. Our programs encourage increased appreciation for and application of regional and international human rights principles within national legal systems. Through customized trainings and capacity building for lawyers, judges, government officials, law professors, law students, civil society organizations and the public, ABA ROLI contributes toward the development of societies that can uphold and assert human rights. We also promote and facilitate the documentation and investigation of human rights abuses, support strategic litigation and help to protect human rights in the context of business and development.

Enhancing access to justice

International standards recognize access to justice as both a basic human right and a means to protect other universally recognized human rights. Too often, even when rights exist on paper, enforcement of these standards is weak. Where human rights protections are lacking, marginalized groups are often vulnerable to abuses and face significant challenges to realizing their rights, including within the formal justice system. Our approach focuses on empowering individuals and communities to assert their rights vis-à-vis the state, helping to nurture fairer, more accountable justice systems and strengthening the frameworks that support human rights at the national, regional, and international levels.

Our expansive view of access to justice includes not only one’s ability to access the courts and legal representation, but also one’s ability to engage effectively with law enforcement officials and to make use of informal, non-state justice mechanisms. Civil society can provide important support for individuals and communities and offer an effective counterbalance to the powers of the state and of the private sector. Thus, we often draw upon civil society organizations’ unique perspectives, grassroots-convening power and institutional knowledge to design and implement effective and sustainable programs.

A lack of effective indigent defense services often results in a denial of full access to justice for all citizens. To help, ABA ROLI programs promote better access to courts, legal representation and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. ABA ROLI has extensive experience with traditional
legal aid approaches, such as legal clinics, traveling lawyer programs, civil and criminal legal aid programs and pro bono assistance, and with advocating for laws to establish such services. Additionally, we work to empower non-traditional legal resources, such as community-based paralegals, that often serve as a primary means by which poor and marginalized people settle disputes. ABA ROLI also seeks to increase citizens’ understanding of their rights by incorporating civic education into legal services delivery.

Elevating the status of women

Ensuring full respect for women’s rights is essential to building the rule of law, yet achieving this goal is challenging in many countries. We initiated our women’s rights program in 1996 to promote reforms that foster women’s empowerment and enhance their legal status. ABA ROLI undertakes a range of activities to advance gender equality, including by promoting access to justice, supporting the role of women in the legal profession and combating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

ABA ROLI assists local stakeholders in their legislative drafting efforts and implements legal education, legal aid and advocacy programs to advance women’s rights. To improve women’s access to justice, we facilitate mobile courts and support women’s legal aid clinics, as well as paralegal and traveling lawyer programs, which offer pro bono assistance when the services of local attorneys are unavailable or unaffordable. To promote female lawyers’ professional development and harness their potential to advocate for women’s rights, we offer training and mentoring programs as well as support for women’s bar associations. And to improve countries’ responses to domestic violence, systematic rape, harmful traditional practices and other atrocities, we implement legal empowerment workshops, advocacy campaigns and legal aid programs. In addition, we promote effective and vigorous prosecution of these crimes by offering capacity-building trainings to police, prosecutors, judges and lawyers. We also work with women activists, leaders and lawyers to advocate for policy reforms and to include and implement gender parity provisions in laws and constitutions. These targeted strategies are complemented by a gender-mainstreaming approach to ensure that gender perspectives constitute an integral component of our programs across all thematic areas.
Promoting sexual rights

Violence, discrimination, harassment and other egregious human rights violations against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities and individuals are widespread across the globe. Some of these violations are entrenched in highly punitive and restrictive laws that impede the rule of law, hamper access to healthcare and other essential services and, in their extreme forms, lead to inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment by law enforcement, justice system actors and government officials.

ABA ROLI actively promotes the rights of all persons, including LGBT people, to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. To that end, we train, support and empower local lawyers, paralegals, representatives of civil society organizations and members of LGBT communities to advocate against violence and use national anti-discrimination laws and international human rights treaties to protect and assert sexual rights. In parallel, we train justice system actors on how to handle discrimination and hate crimes cases, and we work to broaden legal protections against bias-motivated offenses through legislative reform efforts and strategic litigation. Finally, we conduct public awareness efforts that challenge harmful biases and stereotypes and highlight the contributions of LGBT people to society.

Combating trafficking in persons

Trafficking in persons (TIP) is a multifaceted, highly complex phenomenon tightly interlinked with poverty, unemployment, gender discrimination, social exclusion, globalization, displacement and foreign migration. Drawing on the well-respected “four Ps” paradigm, ABA ROLI’s anti-TIP programs aim to partner with state and non-state actors, prevent TIP, prosecute perpetrators, as well as identify and protect the victims. Our approach involves advancing sustainable solutions through an array of technical assistance programs encompassing legislative drafting, policy formulation, research and analysis, capacity building and training, strengthening multi-sectoral and international cooperation, civic education, strategic litigation, trial monitoring and victims’ rights. We have been particularly successful in responding to TIP in five priority areas, including legal and policy reform; enhancing victims’ access to justice and essential services; criminal justice strengthening; prevention and risk mitigation; and facilitating multi-sectoral and international cooperation.

Combating assessment methodologies

ABA ROLI believes that research and the collection of country-specific information serve as a necessary foundation for developing effective strategies to advance human rights. Accordingly, we have developed an array of assessment tools designed to measure a country’s de jure and de facto compliance with international human rights treaties, such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Assessment Tool), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR Legal Implementation Index) and the
United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Human Trafficking Assessment Tool or HTAT). We have also created the Access to Justice Assessment Tool (AJAT), which empowers civil society organizations to identify access to justice challenges and to design and implement programming that addresses those challenges. Lastly, we designed a comprehensive Status of Women Assessment Methodology and a methodology for identifying law- and policy-based human trafficking risks in global supply chains. To date, we have produced two ICCPR Legal Implementation Index analyses, five CEDAW Assessment Tool reports, two Status of Women assessments, three HTATs and four AJATs.

**OUR HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROGRAMS INCLUDE**

- In **Bahrain** and across **Southeast Asia**, ABA ROLI is working to protect freedom of expression (FOE) by training local lawyers and justice system actors on FOE principles, international standards and their practical application under domestic laws.

- Based on seven years of successful work in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, where ABA ROLI’s programs have provided pro bono legal services to 20,125 survivors of SGBV and helped to file 11,306 cases with local authorities, resulting in 1,924 concluded trials, our new program in the **Central African Republic** offers holistic legal aid services to SGBV survivors and strengthens the justice sector’s response to these crimes.

- In **Sudan**, ABA ROLI is providing technical support to a local bar association bringing communication before the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights in defense of seven Darfuris who were detained by the Sudanese military, tortured and subsequently sentenced to death following deeply flawed judicial proceedings.

- In **El Salvador** and **Moldova** lawyers, justice system actors and civil society organizations work to protect sexual rights and effectively respond to discrimination, violence and hate crimes against LGBT people and communities.

- In **Moldova**, **Georgia** and **China**, ABA ROLI has successfully advocated for new laws and policies that address domestic and intimate partner violence. In **China**, we are also strengthening the capacity of judges and legal aid centers to handle domestic violence cases and protect the rights of victims.

- In **Turkey**, ABA ROLI seeks to contribute to the protection of refugee populations by assisting Syrian refugees to exercise their rights under the Turkish legal system via an SMS-based legal advice service, as well as by working with bar associations to promote legal awareness and coordinate legal services.

- ABA ROLI is conducting a legal and policy analysis for a study aimed at identifying the causes, risk factors and possible approaches to tackling trafficking in persons in **Sub-Saharan Africa’s** supply chains.
INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In recent years, there has been a growing global recognition that stronger economic growth and increased foreign investment as a means towards sustained poverty reduction must take into consideration a variety of social and environmental factors that affect whether national wealth and opportunities are distributed in an equitable, balanced manner. Multi-dimensional challenges such as poor public health, climate change, environmental degradation and socially irresponsible business practices threaten to interfere with human development and undermine the basic human rights of entire populations. These problems often have a distinct legal aspect, and solutions require laws and legal institutions that ensure the effective and fair delivery of social services, the equitable distribution of resources and the efficient and just resolution of disputes. Yet, within the development field, rule of law is too often an after-thought in efforts to address these issues, with little attention paid to developing and integrating relevant law and governance-oriented strategies.

ABA ROLI strives to change this view by broadening the development community’s appreciation of the impact of law and justice on human development. We believe there is a fundamental connection between rule of law and human rights, on the one hand, and public health, climate change and environmentally sustainable and socially responsible business, on the other. The promotion of rule of law, especially when founded on a human rights-based approach, can significantly advance objectives in each of these fields. Laws and public institutions that can promote accountability and transparency, combat corruption and protect local populations are critical to fostering sustainable and inclusive development. A stable legal system,
with courts and judges capable of interpreting and enforcing the law in an informed, open and predictable manner, is also crucial to achieving confidence of both domestic and foreign investors. A holistic, cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach that encompasses the legal and regulatory environment is, therefore, key to any effective response strategy.

In line with this philosophy, ABA ROLI engages with local communities, civil society organizations, businesses and governments to develop rule of law and human rights-based solutions to multi-faceted development problems. As part of our Inclusive and Sustainable Development program area, we work to:

- improve _environmental governance_ and mitigate environmental costs associated with economic development, through increased transparency of environmental information and cutting-edge public interest litigation;
- integrate legal strategies into efforts to address _public health_ concerns, such as HIV-related discrimination and the health effects of environmental pollution;
- improve _land and natural resource governance_ and work to reduce high social, environmental and economic costs often associated with large-scale extractive exploitation, by enabling mining communities to become informed and active stakeholders and ensuring tenure security and access to land;
- promote appreciation for human rights, rule of law and development challenges among local businesses, encouraging them to design _corporate social responsibility_ programs and anti-bribery compliance strategies in accordance with international standards; and
- reform _commercial laws and practices_ to promote the use of alternative dispute resolutions, strengthen enforcement of commercial contracts, improve protection of intellectual property rights and create equal economic opportunities for small businesses, women and other disadvantaged groups.

ABA ROLI’s programming relating to these complex human development challenges is premised on a set of core human rights principles, which include active and meaningful participation of affected communities in policies and programs; substantive gender equality; non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups; and accountability. We believe these principles set an important framework for orientation of programs concerned with inclusive and sustainable development, and therefore integrate them into design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our programs. Entry points for our programs in these areas are familiar to rule of law practitioners and include approaches such as:

- developing national strategies through an inclusive and participatory process;
- legislative and regulatory reform;
- enhancing access to justice and legal empowerment through civil society capacity building, civic education and legal literacy programs, and mobilizing the legal profession to advance relevant rights;

In China, ABA ROLI trains grassroots CSOs on environmental legal advocacy, enabling them to participate in groundbreaking litigation and legislative reform to promote the public’s health and a cleaner, safer environment.
• developing administrative, judicial and quasi-judicial claims and accountability mechanisms;
• training judges, lawyers and government officials on relevant subjects; and
• anti-corruption programming, especially in the area of public access to information.

Researching and evaluating reform efforts
ABA ROLI published a guide on *Integrating Rule of Law and Global Development: Food Security, Climate Change and Public Health*, which serves as a primer on issues that development practitioners may not have previously considered and is intended to spark conversations and ideas for programming among practitioners, donors and local stakeholders. The guide makes specific recommendations for rule of law programs and provides case studies that demonstrate the value of legal strategies in these multi-dimensional contexts.

Additionally, our *HIV/AIDS Legal Assessment Tool* is a mechanism for assessing a country’s *de jure* and *de facto* compliance with international legal standards on the protection of human rights of people living with, perceived to be living with and affected by HIV. It is uniquely equipped to both uncover the incidence of HIV-related discrimination and address such issues as whether a country’s legal system is sufficiently strong to protect people living with HIV from discrimination or whether the state has committed appropriate resources and taken concrete steps to reduce HIV-related discrimination and to ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms for vulnerable populations.

**OUR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS INCLUDE**

- **In China**, ABA ROLI trains grassroots civil society organizations on environmental legal advocacy, enabling them to participate in groundbreaking litigation and legislative reform to promote the public’s health and a cleaner, safer environment.

- **In Guinea**, we developed a comprehensive toolkit for communities impacted by industrial mining to improve community leaders’ and civil society organizations’ understanding of options for constructive engagement to protect community rights and facilitate transparency in relations between government, mining companies and communities.

- ABA ROLI collaborates with Libya’s National Economic and Social Development Board and other partners to conduct a commercial law assessment that analyzes the legal and regulatory environment affecting participation of small- and medium-sized enterprises in the economy.

- **In the Philippines**, we work closely with the Philippine Judicial Academy, Intellectual Property Office and justice sector actors to support enforcement of intellectual property rights, as well as to enhance the quality and increase the use of alternative dispute resolution and to strengthen contract enforcement in insolvency cases.

- **In Ukraine**, ABA ROLI conducts a “You Have the Power to Stop Bribery” awareness campaign and provides business owners, who are often forced to give and take bribes to conduct business, with the tools to identify and combat bribery.
TRANSITIONS, CONFLICT MITIGATION AND PEACEBUILDING

Transitions in governance, particularly in societies emerging from conflict, are critical opportunities to establish the rule of law. The outbreak, escalation and recurrence of violent conflict, particularly those in which large-scale human rights abuses are committed, present a significant, ongoing threat to development, peace and stability. Political transitions – ranging from elections to peace agreements after civil war – have often served as triggers of violence. Other circumstances that lead to violence are often rooted in core grievances, including impunity, lack of access to justice, systematic inadequacy of government response, ethnic and religious divisions, unresolved legacies of past conflict and the oppression or neglect of vulnerable communities. Rule of law strategies can play a critical role in mitigating conflict that accompanies these transitions.

ABA ROLI adopts conflict-sensitive approaches in the design and implementation of programs. We work at multiple levels, using participatory, consultative methods to link grassroots with higher-level perspectives on strategies to establish the rule of law in such contexts. Our programs include a variety of interventions that have been developed with the primary goal of strengthening the response of justice sector actors to conflict. A recurring theme in our work is the importance of strategies that situate the response as close to the affected communities as possible.
**Transitional justice and accountability for gross violations of human rights**

At the most basic level, ABA ROLI’s institutional reform programs strengthen the core capacities of national jurisdictions, particularly where a period of conflict or repression has gutted the justice sector’s capabilities. Such capacity building can contribute to conflict mitigation and post-conflict peace-building by facilitating effective accountability for human rights abuses and, more generally, reestablishing the rule of law. We believe, where possible, that the trials of perpetrators of human rights abuses should take place in national courts, and our assistance to justice sector institutions in post-conflict settings seeks to develop their capacity to undertake such proceedings consistent with international standards.

Effective transitional justice requires that the transitioning community buys into the justice process. Accordingly, in post-conflict settings, ABA ROLI develops programs to engage affected communities in the design of transitional justice strategies and solutions. Our lessons learned from this work have been reflected in our *Guide on Community Participation in Transitional Justice*.

**Engaging and empowering civil society**

Capacity building for civil society partners, including women, youth and traditionally marginalized groups, is another important strategy of ABA ROLI’s work in transitional and conflict-affected contexts. We train civil society on substantive law and build their skills in documenting human rights abuses in a way that can be used in subsequent accountability processes. We partner with civil society to design and implement community-based early warning and response systems that have staved off attacks on villages, home to hundreds of thousands. We develop consensus-building processes that incorporate the views of civil society on constitutional reform and institutional design. Such programs contribute to atrocity prevention, transitional justice and peacebuilding, providing an outlet for grievance, an alternative to violence and a sense of justice done, while also contributing to the reestablishment of the rule of law.

**Strengthening legal institutions and frameworks governing electoral and political processes**

ABA ROLI’s programs assist in-country efforts toward peaceful transitions to new governing structures. This work includes substantive guidance on constitutional and legislative reform in line with international standards as well as support for civil society input into such reform processes and public education to explain new structures, rights and processes. In this work, we have put a particular emphasis on reaching, engaging and empowering women and other marginalized communities. Our programs also include technical support for election law reform, related trainings of legal professionals and mobilization of the legal community to ensure compliance and pursue legal remedies for any election law violations.
OUR TRANSITIONS, CONFLICT MITIGATION AND PEACEBUILDING PROGRAMS INCLUDE

• In Mali, we provide financial and technical support to civil society organizations that are participating in the design and implementation of transitional justice mechanisms.

• In Libya and the Central African Republic, ABA ROLI builds the capacity of civil society organizations to represent community interests in the national constitutional reform processes that seek to restore democracy and bring an end to prolonged civil conflict.

• During the presidential and parliamentary elections in Armenia, ABA ROLI supported local advocates and lawyers in proving free legal consultations relating to election concerns, including voting rights violations.

• ABA ROLI supports a regional forensics program, operating in El Salvador and Guatemala. By providing technical assistance to justice sector actors who are integral to the criminal investigation process, we aim to strengthen these actors’ ability to use forensic science to combat impunity and citizen insecurity in the region.

• In the Democratic Republic of Congo, ABA ROLI encourages a peaceful and participatory electoral process in the upcoming presidential elections. By facilitating the interaction of government actors, civil society representatives and community leaders to identify shared goals and common challenges around participation in elections, we strengthen the engagement of civil society. We also help build the capacity of local organizations to provide legal aid to vulnerable populations, including avenues for redress in cases where political rights have been infringed, and provide technical support to national judicial institutions, magistrates and judicial personnel who will hear election-related cases and complaints.
In Africa, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) operates programs that increase access to justice for poor and marginalized populations, promote accountability for human rights violations, strengthen justice sector institutions and foster public participation. Working in close cooperation with government officials, judges, police officers and prison personnel—as well as advocates from civil society organizations (CSOs), bar associations, community leaders and legal academics—we take a participatory and multidisciplinary approach to the design and implementation of programs, advancing sustainable solutions to pressing rule of law challenges. Highlights include:

- supporting the engagement of civil society in the ongoing political transition in Central African Republic;
- combining innovative technology, mobile justice and sustained national advocacy with the empowerment of community leaders to combat
impunity for rape and other serious crimes in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
• organizing trainings and roundtables to bolster the role of judges in promoting sustainable and equitable economic development in the Great Lakes Region;
• supporting a coalition of Malian CSOs in developing transitional justice strategies, including for monitoring court proceedings and initiating strategic litigation;
• deploying community-based paralegals and fostering legislative reforms to increase political participation of Mauritania’s marginalized groups;
• increasing Guinean women’s awareness of their rights and access to justice through public outreach and pro bono legal services; and
• supporting independent Sudanese bar associations to effectively engage with the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.
Over the past 50 years, the Central African Republic (CAR) has been marked by weak governance and extreme poverty that have fueled a series of coups d’état, rebellions and outbreaks of widespread violence. During the past two-and-a-half years, CAR has been gripped by turmoil stemming from a coup that precipitated large-scale sectarian and inter-communal violence. The resulting instability has created a climate of public mistrust and apprehension of authorities. Sexual violence is pervasive, and a pronounced absence of psychological, legal and economic support services amplifies the challenges for survivors. An international intervention, led by a United Nations peacekeeping mission, is attempting to consolidate an elusive peace and to assist CAR’s central government to project a presence beyond the capital of Bangui. While recent elections passed peacefully, a late-2015 resurgence of armed violence was a reminder that the conflict remains far from resolved.

Supporting civil society engagement in constitutional reform
New elections are a priority for both the transitional government and the international community as all involved seek to restore legitimacy to the state leadership in CAR. A key strategy is to strengthen civil society as a conduit for communication between citizens and the government. Since January 2015, ABA ROLI has worked to build the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to effectively advocate for their communities’ interests during and after the constitutional reform process. ABA ROLI has supported community consultations in towns and villages. Additionally, ABA ROLI-trained CSO representatives have voiced community concerns to decision-makers at national events. Our support for the country’s CSOs develops sustainable structures for citizen engagement and commentary that will provide a check on government power and inform future reforms.

Responding to conflict-affected communities’ justice needs
ABA ROLI seeks to address both short- and long-term needs of Central African communities, including by strengthening justice and security institutions to provide direct services themselves. ABA ROLI provides direct legal aid to survivors of serious crimes, including sexual and

PAST PROGRAMS IN AFRICA INCLUDE
- Our Ethiopia legal education reform program supported professors in modernizing out-of-date textbooks and organized practical skills-building activities for law students.
- In Liberia, we collaborated with the law school, trained the first class of professional magistrates, supported the establishment of the country’s first judicial training institute and helped to secure the release of more than 2,500 persons from prolonged pre-trial detention.
- We fought human trafficking both in Nigeria, where we developed a national database and educated police officers on how to identify and investigate trafficking, and in Uganda, where we supported anti-human trafficking legislation and worked to connect survivors with services.
- ABA ROLI conducted an assessment examining justice, accountability and reconciliation measures that could respond to atrocities in South Sudan.
- We worked with the Zambian Association of Women Judges to develop a magistrate training manual covering access to justice, equality under the law and rights of women and children.
gender-based violence (SGBV), emphasizing flexibility and responsiveness to community needs. We provide citizens with information, advice and assistance in navigating the formal justice system. Through legal aid attorneys and community-based paralegals, ABA ROLI legal aid clinics address ethno-sectarian tensions that often manifest through disputes over land or property. Our clinics in Bangui, Bimbo and Bouar seek to end impunity by providing holistic services—including legal and psycho-social counseling and referrals for medical services—to SGBV victims. In collaboration with local government and CSOs, we organize community outreach activities to broaden awareness of SGBV crimes and the services available for survivors.

Building justice sector capacity and supporting coordination

To ensure that the pursuit of justice through legal means is an increasingly viable option, ABA ROLI helps to build the capacity of prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges and police. In early 2015, we began to train justice and security officials on investigation and prosecution techniques to combat impunity and strengthen the justice sector.

ABA ROLI also supports decision makers in identifying justice sector priorities and planning for deployment of justice services. We assist in planning retreats and coordination meetings for representatives of the judiciary, prosecution, police and other government institutions. Furthermore, we provide justice sector institutions with technical support to develop work plans, track progress and increase accountability. To help increase communities’ trust of government, ABA ROLI supports coordination between justice institutions, CSOs and local leaders to facilitate the redeployment of state institutions into communities that have had limited access to justice.

Emphasizing the role of women in peacebuilding

Post-conflict peace processes, including constitutional reform, present unique opportunities for advocacy on behalf of disadvantaged groups, including women. ABA ROLI is working to ensure women have a voice and are represented in ongoing legal reforms in CAR. ABA ROLI supports community forums to increase rights’ awareness and to foster dialogue among local authorities and women’s groups about issues of concern to women and girls. Additionally, we support national CSOs in coordinating advocacy on behalf of women and in monitoring the implementation of constitutional provisions and legislation that seek to protect women’s interests.
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

A combination of protracted conflict, forced displacement, chronically weak institutions and underdevelopment has deprived large segments of the population in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) of their physical security and access to basic services. Cycles of recurrent violence, especially in eastern DRC, mean that improvements in people's living conditions are often undone in a matter of days. This, in turn, erodes public confidence in the government's ability to provide security, basic services and justice for widespread abuses and violations.

ABA ROLI works alongside government and civil society partners to both strengthen government institutions—with a focus on the justice system—and reinforce people's capacity to demand justice and accountability, two basic components of sustainable peace. Specifically, our programs:

- offer free legal aid and facilitate mobile courts to meet the needs of those in remote areas;
- help to build the justice system's ability to manage, analyze and use data to improve the delivery of justice;
- use simple yet powerful technology to increase access to justice, connect the various actors within the justice system and avert violence;
- empower community leaders to advocate on behalf of communities affected by large-scale mining; and
- provide scholarship and externship opportunities for female law students.

Providing free legal services

ABA ROLI believes that providing free legal service to victims of violence, particularly victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), is a powerful way to protect survivors from further abuse and to help them get their lives back on track. We currently support 12 legal aid clinics in eastern and central DRC that provide services primarily to SGBV survivors, but also to women seeking legal support on family-related matters, including inheritance, child support and property ownership. Between the opening of the program in 2008 and December 2015, ABA ROLI-supported clinics provided legal counseling to 20,125 survivors and helped file 11,306 cases with local civilian and military authorities, resulting in 1,924 trials and 1,336 convictions. ABA ROLI has also facilitated trainings to build the capacity of 3,492 justice sector officials, lawyers, psychologists and paralegals. In addition to training members of the Special Police Force for Women's and Children's Protection, ABA ROLI provided the police force with 10 motorcycles and two trucks to help them overcome transportation challenges and facilitate investigations in Goma, North Kivu Province and Kasai Orientale Province.
ABA ROLI also supports a paralegal program, which is funded by the 11th Hour Project of the Schmidt Family Foundation, to serve SGBV survivors in Maniema Province. Since 2012, ABA ROLI-supported paralegals have provided counseling to more than 3,014 people, mediated 431 cases and educated more than 62,400 men and women on their basic legal rights. Our paralegal program is housed in close proximity to our Maniema Province legal aid clinics—which are staffed with licensed attorneys—making it easy for SGBV survivors who decide to pursue their cases in court to receive further legal services.

**Improving the quality of judicial data**

ABA ROLI recognizes that lack of data about the operations of the judicial system makes it impossible to pinpoint and address the system’s most pressing problems. To help alleviate this challenge in the DRC, ABA ROLI designed an online case database that provides trained justice sector officials with access to case statistics, summaries and conviction terms and, in 2012, piloted it in South Kivu Province. The database has since expanded to Maniema and North Kivu provinces, where we have trained justice sector actors to use the database and continue to provide mentoring and technical support. With an eye to providing more judicial actors with improved data that would lead to better decisions and increased accountability in the delivery of justice, by early 2017, the program will expand to more of the country’s provinces.

**Using technology to enhance atrocity prevention and prosecution**

To increase the rate of prosecution of SGBV crimes by improving communication and collaboration between police and prosecutors—including by allowing investigators to correspond with prosecutors in real time from crime scenes—ABA ROLI developed and implemented an innovative SMS-based digital case-filing system.

We have also developed an early warning system (EWS) that utilizes SMS technology and trained community observers to use the system to anonymously alert authorities to potential threats or outbreaks of violence in volatile locations. Information collected through this system is disseminated through SMS messages and aggregated on an online map accessible to assistance providers and government officials, allowing them to identify the location of the violence and coordinate a response. In 2015, ABA ROLI worked with local civil protection units within the Ministry of the Interior to expand the EWS to Beni territory in North Kivu, where there are frequent violent attacks and ambushes.

**Leveling the playing field for communities impacted by large-scale mining**

In South Kivu Province, a growing number of large-scale natural resource extraction projects leave local communities struggling between potential new economic opportunities and the risk of losing their land and liveli-
Our work in Africa

Since 2012, with continued support from the 11th Hour Project of the Schmidt Family Foundation, ABA ROLI has promoted access to justice for local communities in South Kivu. In close partnership with local organizations, we established, trained and deployed a network of community-based paralegals to assist in resolving conflicts arising from large-scale mining in Twangiza, South Kivu.

Our paralegals have successfully resolved 91 mining-related disputes, helping resettled families get adequate compensation, and providing legal services to 275 community members seeking redress for such issues as arbitrary arrest, illegal occupation of land, displacement, disruption of artisanal mining and inheritance. They also conducted public awareness campaigns, educating almost 12,000 people about the rights of communities impacted by mining activities, including their right to information and compensation, as well as avenues to seek legal redress.

Strengthening juvenile justice

In South Kivu and Kasai Orientale provinces, ABA ROLI is implementing a child protection program that focuses on at-risk children, particularly those who are separated from their families, subjected to hazardous working conditions or caught up in the criminal justice system. ABA ROLI, with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, works with local bar associations in these provinces to deliver a range of legal services for children, including in filing for official government documents, seeking release from illegal or unnecessary detention, ensuring proper handling of minors in detention, appealing for reduced sentences and prosecuting adult perpetrators of crimes against youth.

Supporting women law students

ABA ROLI’s Legal Scholarship Fund for Congolese Women was established through the generosity of a private donor in 2011. It has since expanded, thanks to funding from more than 65 other individuals and foundations, to provide scholarships to 30 female law students at universities in Goma, Bukavu and Kindu. Scholarship recipients are selected based both on their academic performance and on their commitment to fight for women’s rights and empowerment in the DRC.

Scholarship recipients in North Kivu Province attend the University of Goma School of Law and receive mentorship from ABA ROLI staff throughout their legal studies and internships.
GREAT LAKES REGIONAL PROGRAM

Since the early 1990s, civil wars and interstate conflict in the African Great Lakes region have weakened state institutions and government’s capacity to protect human rights. While cooperation between the international community and countries in the region has yielded notable progress over the past two decades, significant challenges remain for ensuring peace, security and stability. Further, geopolitical events during the past year have eroded the foundation for long-term development.

In recent years, the region’s countries have sought ambitious economic growth through the development of natural resources, manufacturing and services. However, economic development through increased foreign investment will contribute to long-term poverty reduction only if it is environmentally sustainable and if it results in equitable, widely distributed growth that benefits all. Fostering balanced development requires strong governance, laws and institutions that can uphold the rule of law, promote accountability and transparency, combat corruption and protect local populations. We believe that courts and judges play a critical role in making development sustainable and equitable by interpreting and enforcing laws in an informed, open and predictable manner.

In Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and Rwanda, ABA ROLI is implementing a regional judicial training program, the African Center for Justice (ACJ), which fosters cross-border judicial cooperation, particularly around legal issues that have regional dimensions. With support from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, the ACJ program encourages the development of new skills through training and experience-sharing and nurtures long-term support for collaborative judicial development in the region.

Ensuring local participation and leadership

The ACJ program complements national reform and training efforts currently underway to strengthen the judiciary’s role as a guardian of the rule of law and good governance. Through a participatory and inclusive approach, the program nurtures national ownership and regional support for high-impact professional development opportunities for justice sector personnel. A regional steering group with representatives from all participating countries guides the ACJ program’s focus on regional challenges, identifies opportunities for regional cooperation and advises on priorities for national and regional trainings.

To complement ongoing national judicial development efforts, we convene regional workshops that rotate among the participating countries and combine instructive presentations, experience-sharing activities and peer-to-peer discussions. We also organize national workshops in each country that bring together representatives from both the Ministry of Justice and the judiciary—including high courts and specialized tribunals, such as commercial courts—along with legal practitioners, academics and civil society representatives.
ABA ROLI’s resource mapping exercises highlight the impact of industrial mining on traditional livelihoods.

Strengthening regional judicial capacity
ABA ROLI organizes regional workshops for judges, magistrates and other legal professionals on a range of topics, including alternative dispute resolution, enforcement of commercial contracts, environmental law, good governance, and social and economic rights. Broad national workshops in each participating country precede the regional gatherings and permit the local stakeholders to discuss strengths and weaknesses of relevant domestic legal frameworks and their enforcement by local courts. Such substantive reflections can also feed discussions between national authorities and regional organizations, encouraging adoption of regional and international conventions and guidelines.

ABA ROLI also collaborates with national judicial training institutions to develop model curricula and training modules that serve as resources for replicating the regional trainings at the national level. These resources incorporate the laws, regulations and legal decisions that comprise the national legal frameworks, as well as international legal standards, providing a foundation for comparative analysis. Perhaps most importantly, the training modules also include interactive case studies of related human rights challenges that are significant within each country. These model curricula enable judges to learn from the experiences of their regional peers facing similar situations and will lay the foundation for long-term national change, as well as future judicial collaboration between the participating countries.

GUINEA
Since Guineans went to the polls in 2010 to participate in the country’s first democratic presidential elections marking an end to decades of authoritarian rule, Guinea has continued to face major challenges, including weak justice sector institutions, limited access to justice in rural areas and inefficiencies in transforming the country’s vast natural resource wealth into a vehicle for economic development. Many Guinean women and girls are unaware of their legal rights, are marginalized when claiming divorce or inheritance rights, and fear social stigma or retribution when asserting these rights publicly, especially in cases of sexual or gender-based violence. In addition, the extraction of natural resources has posed human rights and access to justice concerns, with large-scale extractive development often obtained at a high social, environmental and economic cost to surrounding communities.

ABA ROLI serves some of the country’s most marginalized populations by helping to increase their understanding of their legal rights and by bringing citizens closer to the justice institutions intended to protect them. We work in remote rural communities as well as the urban capital to improve access to justice by assisting local civil society organizations (CSOs) in establishing networks of community-based paralegals and legal aid clinics that serve women and girls free of charge. ABA
ROLI also works with local CSOs and government institutions to enable communities to engage as informed and active stakeholders in large-scale extraction of mineral resources. Additionally, ABA ROLI has collaborated with local CSOs to conduct human rights assessments and utilized its Access to Justice Assessment Tool to explore community-based mechanisms for conflict mitigation.

**Increasing access to justice**

Since 2012, ABA ROLI has enlisted the help of Guinean paralegals to increase access to justice by providing *pro bono* legal services to prisoners and pre-trial detainees. As our work has expanded over the years, paralegals continue to serve as change agents within their communities, working most recently to promote and defend the rights of women and girls. Utilizing their close ties to their respective communities and the trust community members place in them, the paralegals provide information on citizens’ rights and on legal options to mitigate conflicts, often serving as informal mediators. When needed, they refer cases to regional or mobile legal aid clinics, where lawyers provide consultations, file reports with the police and pursue cases in local courts. The paralegals also work with local health clinics to make legal services available to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. To date, ABA ROLI has trained and supported 30 community-based paralegals to provide hundreds of women in 15 local communities with legal education, representation and mediation services.

**Fostering inclusive and sustainable economic development**

In 2013, ABA ROLI worked alongside relevant Guinean ministries and CSOs to ensure that provisions of new mining-related legislation took into account community rights—including those that pertain to the resettlement of local populations, social and environmental impact assessments and community development agreements. Both domestic law and international standards require mining companies to consult with communities affected by their activities. Yet, local Guinean populations face significant barriers to meaningful participation in making decisions related to land use, compensation and resettlement, and environmental impacts.

To address these concerns, ABA ROLI created a rights-based toolkit that provides Guinean CSOs with information and practical guidance necessary to equip communities to defend their rights. The toolkit draws on domestic and international legal frameworks, industry standards and comparative best practices around community engagement and protection to increase benefit sharing and reduce points of contention amongst actors, both within local communities and between companies and communities. The toolkit incorporates input from diverse community members—gathered through regional consultations—and has been praised as innovative by experts. It employs a question-and-answer format, which makes it useful both as a reference guide and as a training manual. ABA ROLI has used the toolkit to train more than 100 civil society leaders, state actors and mining company representatives on their respective roles and responsibilities in promoting equitable and just economic development.
MALI

A coup d'état in 2012 and the subsequent seizure of large areas of Mali's north by a mix of separatist and Islamist groups turned what had appeared to be a model of West African democracy into a state in crisis. Although the country's territorial integrity has largely been restored, problems at the root of the crisis, such as weak institutions and entrenched corruption and inequality, remain. The Malian government now faces dual challenges of delivering justice sector services to remote populations, while also attempting to nurture a lasting peace in Northern Mali.

We have worked in Mali since 2010, when we began a program to address descent-based slavery in the northern part of the country. We have since expanded our efforts to include programs that assist the Malian government and civil society organizations (CSOs) in developing transitional justice strategies on a national and local level. We also provide legal assistance to victims of human rights violations committed during the country’s recent crisis.

Fostering transitional justice and peacebuilding

Mali’s 2012–2013 crisis led to a rapid deterioration in human rights, with reports of abuses committed by both rebel groups and the Malian army. Even prior to the signing of the June 2015 Algiers Peace Accord between the government and militia groups, the creation of a national transitional justice framework was the country’s top priority. Since 2013, ABA ROLI has supported Malian civil society groups to solicit local communities’ input into the framework by documenting the communities’ transitional justice priorities. ABA ROLI has trained civil society leaders to help communities identify and implement truth, justice and reconciliation strategies at a local level.

ABA ROLI regularly convenes a transitional justice coalition composed of dozens of CSOs representing communities from across Mali’s political and social spectrum. The group aims to increase information sharing and coordination among four main regions, as well as to present diverse views when lobbying the Malian government on new laws and frameworks. This group has also provided invaluable input for the ABA ROLI-published model Transitional Justice Strategy, a document that summarizes communities’ transitional justice needs and policy recommendations. In 2015, Mali’s Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission used the model strategy as a reference in developing its institutional action plan.

In addition to working with CSOs, ABA ROLI organizes transitional justice workshops for representatives from key institutions, including the President’s Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of National Reconciliation and Development of the North and the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. The workshops address various issues, including truth seeking, reconciliation, criminal responsibility and victims’ reparations. The workshops have led to the development of an informal network of transitional justice leaders composed of government officials, community leaders and activists who have gone on to play a significant role in Mali's transitional justice process.
Ibrahim Harouna Toure is a prominent human rights defender and activist in Mali. In his hometown of Gao, he works to ensure that the human rights of community members are upheld and that victims of past violations have access to legal remedy. In 2012, when armed separatists occupied Gao, Ibrahim witnessed severe human rights abuses, including murder and violence, which he says he never imagined would take place in Mali—much less in his own community.

That year, Ibrahim collaborated with local human rights organizations to document dozens of cases of human rights violations. With the ABA Rule of Law Initiative’s (ABA ROLI’s) financial and technical support, Ibrahim and his fellow human rights advocates have submitted the most pressing cases before Malian courts. Over the years, Ibrahim has taken part in ABA ROLI trainings on selecting cases that are most likely to have the greatest success in court and the largest impact on both victims of human rights violations and their community. Ibrahim says that ABA ROLI’s support has strengthened the fight against impunity for human rights violations.

“The training,” he says, “has helped to build solidarity among Malian civil society organizations and has led to the creation of a strong network of human rights defenders.”

Three years later, the local courts are yet to give their verdicts on the cases the ABA ROLI-supported network of human rights defenders submitted. Ibrahim says that he feels like these legal procedures have failed to offer victims any closure for the human rights violations they suffered during the conflict. He says that the formal justice sector in Mali has not provided victims with any psychological or financial restitution, either. To alleviate the situation, in 2015, ABA ROLI established a victim support fund to pay court fees and to reimburse victims and their lawyers for the costs they incur traveling to regional police stations and courts. ABA ROLI is also conducting strategic litigation and advocacy in Bamako to highlight the need for speedy and just resolution to these cases.

From May 28–29, 2015 Ibrahim and 30 civil society leaders from four regions in northern Mali participated in an ABA ROLI training that focused on strategic litigation. During the training, which utilized more than 20 case studies from across Mali, participants learned how to better select cases and advocate for their clients in local courts. Ibrahim says that the training taught him how to engage with the legal system more effectively so that cases he presents to courts may reach a just resolution. He adds that he has since been using his newly acquired skills and tools to benefit his whole community. As he continues to help victims seek redress for crimes allegedly committed during Mali’s conflict through the formal legal system, Ibrahim is also determined to raise community members’ awareness about available transitional justice mechanisms.

Ibrahim is optimistic that an increased awareness will encourage more people to seek legal remedies to past grievances. “Now that the communities understand what transitional justice means,” he says, “everyone is talking about it.”
Promoting access to justice
Since the return of civilian rule in 2013, and despite the human rights abuses committed during Mali’s 2012–2013 conflict, so far, no perpetrator of human rights abuses has been successfully prosecuted. With support from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and the U.S. Agency for International Development, ABA ROLI is partnering with Malian CSOs to provide legal assistance to victims of human rights abuses. ABA ROLI is also training lawyers and judges to better adjudicate crimes with an understanding of transitional justice principles and with a particular sensitivity to gender-based crimes. These trainings of justice sector officials and senior magistrates prepare them to better handle serious human rights violations and adjudicate civil claims. Additionally, ABA ROLI monitors court proceedings related to human rights abuses and is using radio and newspapers to increase citizens’ awareness of their rights and ongoing justice and truth-seeking initiatives.

MAURITANIA
Mauritania’s post-independence period has been marked by ethnic tensions within its diverse and highly stratified citizenry. Discrimination against marginalized groups—particularly women, refugees, the stateless and slavery survivors—is entrenched, both within the courts and other state institutions, and within society more generally. Therefore, marginalized populations continue to face significant obstacles in exercising their most basic rights, such as obtaining legal identity documents and registering to vote. In February 2015, ABA ROLI, in partnership with Search for Common Ground (SFCG), launched a program aimed at supporting Mauritanian civil society organizations (CSOs) in their efforts to increase the political and civic participation of marginalized groups through legal reform, strategic litigation and community-based paralegals. With support from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, the program aims to promote a mobilized Mauritanian civil society that works together to increase access to justice for marginalized groups and advance social inclusion in the country.

Fostering CSO collaboration
ABA ROLI is working with a group of 15 Mauritanian CSOs as they develop their advocacy and collaboration skills to advance the rights of the marginalized. Together with SFCG, ABA ROLI holds trainings that engage representatives of partner organizations in conflict resolution activities and encourages dialogue on existing stereotypes. Additionally, ABA ROLI is training CSO members on non-adversarial advocacy strategies designed to enable them to nurture constructive engagement with the government and media, and to advance civil society interests regarding the rights of marginalized groups. These activities seek to foster collaboration and improve understanding among different civil society groups operating in Mauritania and, ultimately, to create an enabling environment for advocacy work.
Supporting community-based paralegals
ABA ROLI is working closely with a consortium of local CSOs to train and deploy community-based paralegals to provide legal advice, conduct mediation and help members of local communities navigate legal and administrative hurdles. Community-based paralegals place a particular emphasis on political and civic issues, such as assisting individuals in obtaining national identity cards or registering to vote. They also conduct public awareness campaigns about rights of and services available to marginalized groups, such as legal aid and counseling. Lack of data regarding the legal challenges facing marginalized groups in Mauritania makes it difficult for CSOs to tackle these issues effectively. The data paralegals collect will provide concrete evidence that informs nationwide civil society advocacy and helps a recently established legal working group to identify its priorities.

Establishing a legal working group
In partnership with local CSOs and government representatives, in May 2015, ABA ROLI established a legal working group aimed at tackling marginalization through targeted advocacy for improved legislation and strategic litigation. The working group is composed of lawyers from civil society groups, legislators and representatives from the Mauritanian Bar Association and the National Human Rights Commission. The group's members meet on a regular basis to discuss legal and policy issues affecting marginalized groups in Mauritania and propose concrete strategies to resolve those issues, including by sharing their recommendations for improved legislation. The legal working group creates an unprecedented opportunity for civil society collaboration and engagement with other local stakeholders around issues of marginalization. The working group also coordinates closely with the consortium of CSOs managing community-based paralegals to identify priorities and propose strategies that consider the local context. Lastly, the working group is also developing an action plan for ensuring meaningful civil society participation in a government-initiated national dialogue and helping CSOs advocate for the integration of issues of marginalization in the national dialogue's agenda.

A representative from the Mauritanian Bar Association talks about rule of law issues affecting the country during a legal working group meeting in Nouakchott, Mauritania.
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESEARCH PROGRAM

Human trafficking is the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud or coercion. According to the International Labor Organization, 3.7 million people in Africa are in situations of forced labor or are victims of human trafficking, and four out of every 1,000 Africans may be in forced labor at any given time. While business practices and legal frameworks that do not adequately address human trafficking may exacerbate sub-Saharan Africans’ vulnerability to the crime, neither the specific risk factors nor the corporate and governmental initiatives that can best combat human trafficking are well understood. To fill this knowledge gap, ABA ROLI has partnered with Verité, the African Labour Research Network (ALRN) and the Solidarity Center to conduct a two-year investigation of global supply chains and human trafficking risks in sub-Saharan Africa.

Our two-year program will generate a detailed map of global supply chains in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as a dynamic typology matrix connecting human trafficking risks, legal and policy frameworks, and associated corporate practices. We have created a methodology to analyze relevant legal and policy frameworks in the region’s countries. ABA ROLI will conduct a comparative analysis of the region’s legal, policy, institutional and accountability frameworks vis-à-vis international legal standards and best practices. The assessment will identify legal and policy gaps that may facilitate human trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa and undermine individual and corporate accountability for the crime. Informed by results from this analysis, as well as from our partners’ research on supply chains and corporate practices, we will create a matrix sortable by several relevant variables, including country, risk of human trafficking, corporate actor, business practices, corporate social responsibility and legal or policy context. This matrix will allow governments and companies to identify human trafficking risks in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as best practices to combat those risks.

In addition, ABA ROLI will conduct two case studies: one focused on sexual violence and sex trafficking of women and children in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly in the artisanal mining and conflict minerals zones; and a second focused on large-scale forestry and logging-related vulnerability to human trafficking of indigenous and/or displaced populations in the Central African Republic. Further, ALRN will conduct case studies of the fishing industry in Namibia, oil and gas exploration in Ghana, agriculture in Malawi, apparel manufacturing in Uganda, textile manufacturing in Lesotho and mining in Zambia. These case studies will demonstrate how the laws and policies affect human trafficking in these specific industries and countries.
SUDAN

It is estimated that more than 2.5 million people died during the decades of conflict in what are today Sudan and South Sudan. Millions more have been displaced by the violence and insecurity. Despite repeated condemnation by the international community, widespread human rights violations persist in Sudan, with little or no hope for victims to access justice through domestic courts.

The Sudanese government’s failure to hold individuals responsible has created a climate of impunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses. As a result, Sudanese lawyers face an overwhelmingly hostile legal environment and lack access to impartial institutions to seek meaningful legal redress. Along with other human rights defenders in the country, lawyers face harassment, arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention and torture by military and security forces. Lawyers representing survivors of human rights abuses are confronted by laws that shield security personnel from prosecution, reluctance on the part of the police and the Attorney General’s Office to prosecute, or even investigate, government authorities, and as well as a dysfunctional judiciary. Additionally, as a result of a severe shortage of trained judges—many of whom have fled the conflict in recent years—appointed judges frequently lack any legal education or experience and are often members of the Sudanese military.

ABA ROLI works to increase accountability for human rights abuses in Sudan by strengthening the capacity of the Darfur and Nuba Mountain bar associations to document violations and seek justice for victims. We work alongside Sudanese lawyers as they engage in public advocacy and file formal communications (complaints) to the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (African Commission).
Engaging with the African Commission

In the absence of reliable domestic justice institutions, regional mechanisms for protecting human rights provide avenues to raise complaints about a wide range of human rights violations. However, due to serious security concerns and communication constraints, many Sudanese lawyers are unable to access the information and training necessary to effectively engage with the African Commission.

ABA ROLI has trained Sudanese lawyers who demonstrated an aptitude and passion for human rights law. These ABA ROLI-trained lawyers have independently organized their own grassroots trainings for a broader range of human rights defenders. As a practical component of the training workshops, ABA ROLI also supports opportunities for the lawyers to establish contact with the Secretariat for the African Commission, meet with individual commissioners and share experiences with a vast and vibrant community of human rights defenders from across Africa.

Additionally, ABA ROLI has helped to raise the visibility of the human rights situation in Sudan by facilitating in-person participation of Sudanese lawyers at semi-annual sessions of the African Commission and at the non-governmental organization forums that precede the commission’s sessions and serve as discussion platforms for organizations working on democracy and human rights issues throughout Africa. These advocacy missions sustain a long-term relationship with the African Commission and entail a combination of public advocacy actions, such as organizing open panel discussions, delivering oral statements and seeking the adoption of resolutions on the situation of human rights in Sudan.

Providing technical support in the African Commission communication process

The submission of a formal complaint to the African Commission is a lengthy and highly technical process. ABA ROLI has worked with Sudanese lawyers to develop a strategy for engagement with the African Commission and has provided ongoing technical assistance in the planning, preparation and submission of formal complaints to the regional human rights mechanism. This practical and collaborative process is strengthening the capacity of lawyers to independently challenge human rights violations within Sudan. Presently, ABA ROLI’s Sudanese partners are pursuing a formal communication (Communication 470/14—Ibrahim Almaz Deng and 6 others vs. The Republic of Sudan) with the African Commission concerning the case of seven Darfuris who were detained by the Sudanese military, tortured and subsequently sentenced to death following deeply flawed judicial proceedings in Sudan.
Abdelrahman Al-Gasim is a Sudanese human rights lawyer in exile. In 2000, he helped to found the Darfur Bar Association (DBA)—an independent, non-profit association of Darfuri lawyers and jurists that provides pro bono legal services to those in need and advocates for cultural understanding, respect for human rights and peace. Even though it led to his exile, his commitment for human rights in Sudan remains unwavering.

“I started the organization [DBA] because the Sudanese Bar Association was not independent,” he says. In September 2010, Abdelrahman—representing the DBA before the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland—asked the UN to extend the mandate of an independent expert on the human rights situation in the Sudan. Shortly after his return home, Abdelrahman and his colleagues were arrested while attending a meeting. Despite calls from international organizations—including the American Bar Association—for their release, they were kept in an undisclosed location, where, he says, “We found ourselves face-to-face with armed security officers.”

Abdelrahman says that the detainees could hear each other being beaten and crying. “It was heinous.” They endured torture, including sleep deprivation, humiliation, severe beatings with plastic pipes and threats of rape. While the beatings stopped a few days later, the mistreatment continued much longer. Abdelrahman says he was held incomunicado for “50 days … without newspapers, radio, legal assistance or medical visits” until he was transferred to Kober Prison in late December 2010.

On January 21, 2011, Abdelrahman was released on bail. Five months later, he says, “they charged me and several others.” Each of the 13 charges he faced, including propagation of false news, criminal conspiracy, undermining the constitutional system and espionage, carried a life-in-prison or death sentence. On December 4, 2011, all charges were dismissed for lack of sufficient evidence. Still, he remained under suspicion. Intelligence agents placed his law office under surveillance and monitored his whereabouts. Abdelrahman fled and sought refuge in Uganda, from where he continues his advocacy and serves as the DBA’s spokesperson.

In October 2011, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) began to work with the DBA to strengthen the capacity of Darfuri lawyers. Based on a needs assessment, ABA ROLI organized a week-long workshop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in June 2012. Abdelrahman and nine other Sudanese human rights lawyers attended the training, which focused on the documentation of human rights abuses, effective advocacy before the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (African Commission) and strategies for enhancing personal security while advocating for human rights. Abdelrahman has since attended two ABA ROLI-organized advanced advocacy workshops. Abdelrahman has spoken on several panel discussions, highlighting the human rights situation in Sudan. He and his colleagues have also filed a legal complaint with the African Commission against the detention and death sentences of seven Sudanese prisoners convicted after trials that did not meet international due process standards.

Abdelrahman continues to strive for an improved human rights situation in his country. “Although I must remain in exile, I continue to care about the fight for human rights in Sudan,” he says. As he continues to strive for an increased awareness about the human rights challenges in the Sudan, he says he’s grateful for the support he gets. “ABA was one of the first organizations which contacted the DBA,” he says, “we thank them so much for their partnership and the legal support that has been provided.”
In Asia and the Pacific, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) currently implements programs at both the country and regional level. Our country-based programming includes criminal justice and rights advocacy for vulnerable populations in China, judicial reform and access to justice in the Philippines, anti-corruption in Laos, as well as legal profession reform, bar development and anti-corruption in Sri Lanka. At the regional level, we promote cross-border, collaborative approaches to combating corruption and have worked with lawyers, civil society organizations and law enforcement agencies to address human rights abuses. In each of
our programs, we work closely with local partners while offering comparative perspectives and international expertise to ensure we can effectively and sustainably address the specific needs of the country or region. Our technical assistance and capacity-building efforts often include in-country legal workshops and trainings, specialized trainings conducted in the United States and assessments of a country’s adherence to international law and best practices. Through our context-tailored and collaborative approaches, we ensure that our programs empower local advocates, lawyers and institutions and contribute toward sustainable rule of law gains in Asia and the Pacific.

A court clerk discusses the benefits of a successful transition from manual to fully automated processes at the Quezon City Hall of Justice in the Philippines.
Since China began to open up to the West in 1978, the country’s legal system has undergone a dramatic transformation. Growing from a system whose courts, public prosecution offices and legal profession were dismantled during the political upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, the Chinese legal community today boasts approximately 210,000 judges, 200,000 prosecutors, 270,000 lawyers and more than 700 law schools.

Since 1998, ABA ROLI has worked in China to promote rule of law, support the legal profession and increase access to justice for Chinese citizens. Our work spans a range of subjects, including criminal justice, environmental governance and health, women’s rights, public participation and information transparency, and the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, including children, migrant workers, persons with disabilities and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. We have provided training, supported practical research and facilitated professional exchange relationships between Chinese legal reformers and their counterparts abroad.

**Local partnership and collaboration lie at the heart of ABA ROLI’s programs.** Our partners include China’s judiciary, bar associations, universities, civil society organizations (CSOs) and legal scholars.

**Supporting criminal justice reform**

Significant obstacles continue to impede the development of a robust, accessible and fair criminal justice system in China. Over several decades, Chinese reformers have made progress toward a more just and transparent system, implementing important legislative and policy reforms that include significant revisions to the country’s *Criminal Procedure Law* in 2013, as well as judicial reforms and revisions of policies governing key issues.
Since 2003, ABA ROLI has supported China’s criminal justice reforms. Programs have focused on supporting criminal defense lawyers in developing effective advocacy skills and practices, improving the quality of and access to legal aid for indigent defendants and promoting nationwide criminal justice reforms that protect the rights of defendants and espouse the fairness of criminal procedures. ABA ROLI has invited leading domestic and international experts to train defense lawyers and helped to create independent legal aid centers for indigent defendants. Our programs, which focus on systemic reforms, have contributed to the adoption of new policies on a wide variety of key topics, including effective representation of defendants in death penalty cases, exclusion of illegally obtained evidence, incorporation of mental health assessments in criminal proceedings to determine if defendants are fit to stand trial and the use of social background investigations to take into account juvenile defendants’ real-world circumstances. ABA ROLI programs have had encouraging impact, with key government stakeholders, legislators and nationally renowned scholars incorporating ensuing recommendations into national laws and regulations.

Strengthening women’s rights
Domestic violence (DV) is a widespread problem affecting as many as one-third of Chinese families. In recent years, China has empowered the judiciary to reduce instances of DV and protect victims. There has been significant progress in enhancing the institutional and legal infrastructure necessary to protect DV victims. In November 2014, China issued the first draft of a landmark national Anti-Domestic Violence Law, marking a new era in rights protection for victims.

ABA ROLI has been a leader in providing technical assistance and international comparative perspectives in support of these anti-DV initiatives and instrumental in their successes. We have supported China’s first pilot courts to promote the use of court-issued protection orders to protect victims; trained legal professionals—including judges, prosecutors and lawyers—in the knowledge and skills necessary to handle DV cases; provided direct assistance to DV victims; educated a new generation of lawyers and vulnerable communities through pioneering university-based DV legal clinics; and advocated for new anti-DV laws and policies.

In particular, the promise of national-level legislation is one that has roots in years of cooperative international programming. As the anti-DV law undergoes further revision, ABA ROLI remains involved in facilitating expert recommendations and providing technical assistance on drafting legislation to support stronger protections for vulnerable citizens.

Improving environmental governance
China’s rapid development has come at a significant environmental price. Citizens are increasingly concerned about the health effects of pollution, and the Chinese government has shown growing commitment to strengthening laws and regulations and improving their enforcement, passing a revised Environmental Protection Law in 2014 and an Air Pollution Law in 2015, and revising or drafting other laws to address other environmental issues.
ABA ROLI has conducted legal advocacy trainings and workshops for lawyers and LGBT CSO advocates and established the Rainbow Advocates, a network of more than 140 lawyers and CSO advocates located across 15 provinces.

Since 1998, ABA ROLI’s environmental programming has provided legal technical assistance to Chinese judges, lawyers, legal experts and CSOs, inviting U.S. government officials, lawyers and other environmental experts to engage Chinese decision-makers on critical environmental law reforms that promote the rule of law, expand public participation and increase transparency. ABA ROLI has trained judges on adjudicating environmental cases, organized conferences on such cutting-edge issues as CSO-headed public interest litigation and held exchanges on using alternative dispute resolution in remedying damages caused by pollution.

ABA ROLI cooperates with Chinese legal experts to train law enforcement officials on proper application of the law and provides recommendations for improving enforcement procedures. ABA ROLI also supports legal advocacy by training environmental lawyers and grassroots CSOs to effectively use information transparency and other legal mechanisms, including public interest litigation, to monitor implementation and address China’s pollution.

Promoting recognition of LGBT rights

Although LGBT CSOs have grown in recent years, they have focused on public education and service provision; only a few of these organizations experimented with legal advocacy while the vast majority of them remained uninformed or skeptical.

ABA ROLI has conducted legal advocacy trainings and workshops for lawyers and LGBT CSO advocates and established the Rainbow Advocates, a network of more than 140 lawyers and CSO advocates located across 15 provinces. Rainbow Advocates’ lawyers have already achieved historic results by providing dozens of legal consultations to LGBT persons on matters ranging from blackmail to property inheritance. Some of the consultations have resulted in pioneering cases, such as China’s first LGBT-related employment discrimination case and other anti-discrimination cases to contest the use of textbooks that pathologize homosexuality and unexplained censorship of an LGBT documentary.

ABA ROLI’s outreach programs have raised awareness of LGBT rights among the public. ABA ROLI and its partners have cooperated with Chinese social media outlets and engaged more than 7.2 million viewers on issues related to LGBT rights, including conversion therapy, marriage equality and employment rights.
LAO PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia, where more than one quarter of the population lives on less than $1 per day, corruption has caused a substantial loss to the government and impairs the living standards of citizens. From 2012 to 2014, the Government Inspection and Anti-Corruption Authority (GIAA) estimated that more than 1.2 trillion Lao kip ($149 million) were misappropriated due to corrupt practices. Corruption also worsens Lao PDR’s extreme vulnerability to transnational organized-crime networks operating in the Mekong region, including those that take part in trafficking in persons, illegal logging and illicit trade in wildlife, drugs and other commodities.

Recognizing the negative toll that corruption has had on the country, the government has recently made fighting corruption one of its publicly declared priorities. The government has passed a series of legislative reforms and developed strategic action plans, including the Ministry of Justice’s Master Plan on the Development of Rule of Law and a strategy for GIAA to fight corruption. Laos PDR officials are working in partnership with international experts to increase the country’s capacity to prevent and combat corruption.

Supporting the GIAA and the customs department

ABA ROLI is supporting the Lao PDR government’s efforts to design and execute strategies that combat corruption, increase transparency and ensure that government resources are available for programs that benefit the country and its citizens. ABA ROLI has worked with officials in the GIAA and other government agencies, as well as with private sector and banking officials, to effectively implement anti-corruption priorities.

Since 2014, ABA ROLI has been collaborating with the GIAA to implement its anti-corruption capacity-building priorities, which include
developing the tools and practices necessary to comply with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and enforcing the country’s new anti-corruption laws. ABA ROLI is providing training on UNCAC, recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force and domestic anti-corruption frameworks to GIAA agents, many of whom are embedded in other government departments and agencies. ABA ROLI’s engagement with the GIAA focuses on the agency’s role as the country’s central anti-corruption authority.

ABA ROLI is also liaising with the Lao Customs Department to ensure a culture of integrity by improving internal processes and implementing global best practices. ABA ROLI will collaborate with the department’s leadership in developing a code of conduct for the department and in training its agents.

**PHILIPPINES**

Over the past decade, the Philippines has experienced consistent economic growth alongside a political environment that is increasingly conducive to reform. During this time, ABA ROLI has worked with a broad coalition of local partners—including trial and appellate courts, the Supreme Court, the Philippine Judicial Academy, the Public Attorney's Office and various non-governmental organizations and universities—to improve court efficiency, increase business sector confidence, combat corruption and advance human rights. Our programs have:

- pioneered the nationwide implementation of small claims courts;
- developed case information management systems—including the nation’s first automated case assignment system—for trial, appellate and small claims courts;
- produced a benchbook outlining major case and procedural laws;
- promoted the use of arbitration and specialized courts to resolve commercial disputes;
- assisted with the establishment of an Internal Affairs Unit and an Office for Competition within the Department of Justice;
- helped to enhance the capacity of government, civil society and media to promote transparency;
- improved access to justice for persons with disabilities; and
- combated impunity for extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances.

In 2012, the Philippine and U.S. governments entered into the Partnership for Growth agreement to address the most serious constraints to economic growth and development in the Philippines. One of the partnership's main objectives is to create a more transparent, predictable and consistent legal and regulatory regime and to strengthen the rule of law. An outgrowth of this is ABA ROLI’s Judicial Strengthening to Improve Court Effectiveness (JUSTICE) Program, a five-year initiative funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. JUSTICE builds upon our previous success in fostering good governance and economic development in the country.

As of October 2015, efforts by ABA ROLI and the Philippine Supreme Court to decongest trial courts disposed of or archived 16,518 of the 95,025 cases that were pending at 119 court branches—more than double the project’s original target of 8 percent.
Boosting judicial efficiency

The Partnership for Growth identified docket congestion and case delay as major barriers to justice and economic growth in the Philippines. We are working with the judiciary to overcome these barriers. Through the JUSTICE project, we have rolled out a court automation system, e-Court, to bolster trial courts’ efficiency and decongest dockets. This initiative draws upon our collaboration with the Philippine Supreme Court to automate the appellate courts by developing a Case Management Information System (CMIS).

The e-Court system streamlines all stages of a case, from filing to disposition. First piloted in Quezon City, e-Court has been improved and rolled out to trial courts in Angeles City, Lapu-Lapu City, Tacloban City, Davao City and Cebu City. It incorporates a number of CMIS features and adds new ones, such as enhanced dashboards, centralized and automated case assignment and automated hearings, which allows judges to prepare and issue orders directly from the bench. We are now in the final stages of rolling eCourt out to trial courts across the country.

To facilitate a smooth transition to fully automated courts, ABA ROLI—together with the Philippine Supreme Court and our partners—is undertaking a massive initiative to help decongest the overburdened trial courts. As of October 2015, the initiative disposed of or archived 16,518 of the 95,025 cases that were pending at 119 court branches—more than double the project’s original target of 8 percent. All of the piloted cities, except Manila City—which disposed of 42 percent of its original target—disposed of or archived significantly more cases than their original target: Quezon City, 284 percent; Makati City, 141 percent; Angeles City, 175 percent; Davao City, 327 percent; and Pasig City, 118 percent.

Since 2011, ABA ROLI has worked closely with the Philippine Supreme Court to develop procedural guidelines and legal resources—including a Handbook on using the Anti-Money Laundering Act in Trafficking Cases, Criminal Sentencing Guidelines, Manual for Special Commercial Courts and Guidelines on Continuous Trial for Criminal Cases. The guidelines, which are revised periodically, have helped to modernize the rules of procedure and speed up the litigation process—in some cases leading to 60–65% reduction in the average age of disposed cases.

In May 2015, ABA ROLI brought a Philippine Supreme Court delegation, headed by Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno, on a week-long study tour to the Washington, D.C., area to gain comparative perspective on the United States’ experiences with employing court automation and improved
Executive Judge Fernando Sagun of the Quezon City Regional Trial Courts and his stenographer demonstrate the new automated hearings system, part of ABA ROLI’s eCourt.

**Strengthening contract enforcement**

While the Partnership for Growth seeks to create an open and competitive business environment with lower barriers to entry in the Philippines, the judiciary still struggles with timely adjudication of contract disputes. To address this challenge, ABA ROLI is helping to strengthen the capacity of courts to handle contract cases and promoting the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms in contract disputes. In 2012, President Aquino signed an executive order (E.O. 78), which requires the inclusion of ADR clauses in private-public partnership agreements.

Through JUSTICE, we have trained more than 100 lawyers from the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) and government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) on domestic and international commercial arbitration. We have also helped the OGCC, which drafts contracts for and arbitrates disputes between GOCCs, develop ADR-clause templates for incorporation into contracts. Additionally, ABA ROLI has assisted the National Economic Development Authority, the Philippine Department of Justice’s Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution and other government agencies in implementing E.O. 78.

Furthermore, we are helping to strengthen contract enforcement in the area of insolvency law. To date, we have trained 298 judges on applicable rules of the Financial Rehabilitation and Insolvency Act of 2010. To maximize impact, the trainings target judges who most frequently encounter insolvency cases, including those of the Court of Appeals and special commercial courts.

**Protecting intellectual property rights**

Although the Philippines still needs to improve its enforcement of intellectual property laws, recent progress has kept the country off the United

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To date, we have trained 298 judges on applicable rules of the Financial Rehabilitation and Insolvency Act of 2010.
States Trade Representative’s Watch List since 2014. Newly adopted intellectual property rules and court guidelines, judicial trainings (including those sponsored by ABA ROLI) and public awareness campaigns contributed to this achievement. ABA ROLI continues to work with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines and the Philippine Judicial Academy to train judicial sector personnel on the newly adopted rules, as well as the use of case monitoring information systems to collect data about intellectual property cases. The workshops help participants in identifying and reporting serial intellectual property rights’ violators and mechanisms for aiding law enforcement authorities on prosecutions. In 2014 and 2015, the Philippines’ intellectual property office presented ABA ROLI with a plaque recognizing it as an Intellectual Property Champion of the Philippines.

Supporting reconstruction efforts in Tacloban
In November 2013, Tacloban City was devastated by Typhoon Yolanda. Its Hall of Justice, the building housing the city’s trial courts, was no exception. ABA ROLI immediately mobilized its financial and human resources to help reconstruct the Hall of Justice. While Tacloban was originally not slated for eCourt piloting under the JUSTICE project, ABA ROLI worked closely with local and national judicial sector partners to rebuild a better and more resilient Hall of Justice in the city. In May 2015, ABA ROLI introduced the eCourt system in Tacloban.

Protecting the rights of the disabled
With support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), ABA ROLI worked to increase access to justice for persons with disabilities. We helped to enhance the courts’ capacity to serve the disabled and educated judges, lawyers, court employees, police and persons with disabilities on the rights of citizens with disabilities. ABA ROLI also supported a team of University of the Philippines experts as they produced a disability rights handbook for justice sector employees. More than 10,000 copies of the handbook have been distributed.

Using forensics to combat extrajudicial killings
Through another DFAT-funded program, ABA ROLI worked to reduce impunity for extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances in the Philippines. Activities focused on enhancing the legal community’s ability to respond to extrajudicial crimes and fostering advocacy to end impunity. Currently, most extrajudicial and forced-disappearance cases rely heavily on witness testimony. ABA ROLI’s program boosted prosecutors’ ability to analyze and present forensic evidence. In collaboration with the University of the Philippines, we published a litigation handbook and developed a related training curriculum that details the introduction of forensic and physical evidence. The resources were used to train prosecutors, public attorneys and civil society representatives across the country. Altogether, ABA ROLI trained 102 human rights defenders and distributed more than 10,000 copies of the litigation handbook.
Automated Hearings: Real-time Orders Win Widespread Praise

Judges, litigants and trial lawyers in the Philippines have long been accustomed to delays associated with the issuance of official court orders by mail. Often exacerbated by several rounds of post-hearing edits, or by judges prioritizing other tasks, such a delay is one of many longstanding barriers to justice Filipinos have faced.

The ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) and its partners are beginning to chip away at these barriers, however, by equipping judges with the tools and procedural changes necessary for better courtroom management. One of these changes is the introduction of automated hearings. A feature of the ABA ROLI-supported eCourt system, automated hearings enable judges to review, edit, print and serve orders directly from the bench—all over the course of a live hearing.

First introduced in May 2014, the automated hearings have won widespread support from judges, lawyers, litigants and pre-trial detainees.

Judge Angelene Mary Quimpo-Sale of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court was one of the first judges to pilot automated hearings in June 2014. A key reformer in the Philippine judiciary, Quimpo-Sale immediately took to the new system. “The burden [of improving judicial efficiency] is on the trial courts,” she says. “We should not be afraid to try new things, to get out of our comfort zones.” By December 2014, Quimpo-Sale—a family court judge—was issuing automated orders in all cases that didn’t require her to issue orders within chambers. She estimates that this saves her an average of two hours a day, time she now uses to better understand cases, weigh arguments and write decisions.

The system has also made a believer out of judge Luisito Cortez of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, who, for a short period of time, was a skeptic. “The immediate and noticeable effects of the system made [me] a more effective judge … [and] brought [me] inner peace,” he says. As an example, Cortez cites the multi-page orders routinely issued during initial hearings for uncontested land-registration cases. Without automated hearings, he says, up to 30 minutes of trial time would be consumed by lawyers’ oral recitals and corresponding dictation of orders, and it would be another two to three weeks before parties even received the official orders by mail. Now, the entire process has been reduced to a mere five minutes.

Litigants and lawyers are also noticing the change. Quimpo-Sale says that the new hearings have generated extremely positive reactions from lawyers and litigants who are amazed and sometimes even brought to tears by the immediate relief courts can now provide. Cortez reports similar experiences. “Several lawyers have been manifesting in open court their awe with the automated hearings,” he says. Some lawyers ask to look at his screen as he edits the order.

The eCourt system—and automated hearings, in particular—have had immediate, tangible impacts in the lives of pre-trial detainees, languishing in cells, waiting for their cases to be heard in criminal courts.

Regional trial court judges Omar Viola of Angeles City and Fernando Sagun of Quezon City say that automated hearings enable them to issue release orders immediately after a hearing, allowing detainees to be released within three hours, instead of three days. The eCourt system also holds courts accountable. It automatically tracks detainment time and sends notifications to judges—allowing them to better manage and prioritize cases.

“The respect for [the courts] has improved,” says Viola, on the impact of automated hearings. “Because people see and feel the process.”
REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION ADVISOR PROGRAM

ABA ROLI’s regional anti-corruption advisor (RACA) program has been advancing anti-corruption initiatives in Asia-Pacific for more than a decade. With funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the RACA works in close collaboration with governments, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations to provide technical advice on a range of anti-corruption topics. Since 2003, the RACA has worked to combat corruption and promote transparency and integrity by:

- educating government officials in the Asia-Pacific region about anti-corruption best practices and strategies for combating transnational crimes;
- building the capacity of governments and NGOs;
- helping to broaden key stakeholders’ understanding of regional and international anti-corruption conventions, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC); and
- promoting effective implementation of initiatives of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

By consulting with experts, convening and training diverse stakeholders and raising awareness of emerging corruption and security threats, we support broad-based and innovative responses to some of the region’s most intractable challenges.

Serving as a regional resource

The RACA supports government agencies as well as NGOs in tackling corruption and its adverse effects. Each year, the RACA responds to key anti-corruption stakeholders’ requests for technical advice, trainings and assistance with resource identification. Over the past year, the RACA has
Our work in Asia and the Pacific

A representative from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime discusses corruption and environmental crime at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Pathfinder Dialogue II.

More than 120 delegates from the Asia-Pacific region shared proven methods to combat the harmful role of corruption in human trafficking, illegal logging, wildlife trafficking and illicit fisheries.

trained hundreds of professionals on skills that will enable them to better detect, identify and prevent corruption. For instance, the RACA trained law enforcement officers on strategies to combat transnational organized crime; NGO representatives on anti-money laundering systems against wildlife trafficking; and government officials on anti-corruption laws, including UNCAC. The RACA also advises governments in the region on training curricula, policies and legislation. In addition, our program connects individuals with experts for detailed advice on specific issues.

**Combating corruption and transnational crime**

Our RACA program focuses on combating corruption and its enabling role in transnational crime, including money laundering, violent extremism, human trafficking and slavery, wildlife trafficking, deforestation and illegal fishing. The program emphasizes multi-disciplinary initiatives, which involve a wide variety of public- and private-sector stakeholders. To further strengthen regional and international partnerships against corruption and transnational crime, the RACA program supports the APEC Pathfinder Dialogue, which emphasizes interregional collaboration and information-sharing, as well as innovative strategies to disrupt and dismantle corruption and illicit trade.

The first APEC Pathfinder Dialogue, co-hosted by the governments of the United States and Thailand, was held in Bangkok in 2013. It focused on the need to combat corruption and illicit trade networks involved in money laundering, and human and wildlife trafficking.

Building upon the foundation laid in Bangkok, the second APEC Pathfinder Dialogue, co-hosted by the governments of the United States and the Philippines, took place in Cebu, Philippines, in August 2015. More than 120 delegates from the Asia-Pacific region shared proven methods to combat the harmful role of corruption in human trafficking, illegal logging, wildlife trafficking and illicit fisheries. Noting that combating corrupt and illicit trade networks facilitates legitimate trade and economic growth, delegates described powerful measures to combat corruption risks using tools embodied in UNCAC and the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The second dialogue produced a set of strategies for efforts in 2016 and beyond, including:
• strengthening multi-agency, multi-disciplinary teams and working through public-private partnerships;
• assessing corruption risks and sharing intelligence;
• improving systems for asset forfeiture and seize and to detect money laundering;
• using better technology analysis;
• strengthening international cooperation to coordinate support for investigations and prosecutions; and
• caring for and protecting victims, witnesses and whistleblowers more effectively.

Through ongoing trainings, workshops, consultations and awareness-raising activities, the RACA program is continuing to support the Pathfinder initiative and the priorities identified in both Bangkok and Cebu to improve the global fight against corruption and transnational crime.

SRI LANKA

In 2014, ABA ROLI began a partnership with the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) to support the development of permanent and effective institutional infrastructures and local capacity to protect, implement and enforce Sri Lankan citizen's legal rights. The election of Maithripala Sirisena as Sri Lanka’s president presents a unique opportunity for the country to further promote the rule of law and establish credible anti-corruption mechanisms. ABA ROLI and BASL have embarked on a series of joint initiatives addressing widespread corruption by building the justice sector’s capacity and implementing an array of anti-corruption initiatives.

Formalizing bar partnership

The American Bar Association and BASL signed a historic friendship agreement on July 11, 2014 to emphasize both associations’ commitment to and collaboration on promoting the rule of law. The agreement led to the exchange of legal expertise and information between the two bar associations, as well as with the country’s provincial bar associations, helping to build the foundation of the legal profession in Sri Lanka. During a February 2015 study tour to ABA’s Midyear Meeting in Houston by BASL, ABA ROLI held a ceremonial signing reception for the agreement. ABA President William C. Hubbard and BASL Delegation Head Anura Meddegoda signed the agreement for their respective associations.

Assessing the legal profession

In June 2014, ABA ROLI staff traveled to Sri Lanka to conduct an assessment of BASL’s capacity and needs, using a modified version of ABA ROLI’s Legal Profession Reform Index (LPRI). The LPRI employs a rigorous analysis of those laws that regulate the legal profession and draws upon interviews with key stakeholders, including informal focus groups and structured sessions with lawyers and with representatives of the broader legal sector and NGOs. Based on the LPRI’s recommendations and priority issues that emerged, ABA ROLI worked with BASL to develop a strategic plan and a corresponding
action plan to boost BASL’s internal capacity in key areas, including ethics, financial management, access to justice and communication.

**Exploring professional development models**

With an eye towards establishing lasting professional networks, we conduct study tours for BASL leadership and other lawyers. The first study tour brought eleven BASL members to Houston, Texas, in February 2015. The delegates attended the ABA Midyear Meeting, discussing the four priority areas of the BASL strategic plan—continuing legal education, ethics, research and advocacy—with their U.S. counterparts and learning about how the American Bar Association helps to enrich the American legal profession, promote the rule of law and foster professional responsibility.

ABA ROLI conducted a second study tour for eight BASL members in Singapore City, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in September 2015. Malaysia and Singapore were chosen because they are home to comparable regionally-based bar associations that match the size and capacity of BASL. This tour included meetings with legal experts, practitioners, bar association leaders and judges who are at the forefront of rule-of-law ad-
vocacy in their home countries. The meetings allowed participants to share information and experiences on the development of an effective, efficient and financially viable bar association capable of serving its members and advancing justice for all citizens.

**Combating corruption**

Under a program launched in November 2015, ABA ROLI works with BASL to combat corruption in Sri Lanka by providing access to international best practices on addressing corruption. ABA ROLI and BASL are striving to build the capacity of lawyers, justice sector actors and civil society advocates to oversee and promote implementation of anti-corruption initiatives. We are providing technical assistance, resources and training to investigators, prosecutors, the judiciary and civil society organizations on international legal standards, including the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.
The ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) began its work in Europe and Eurasia in 1990 as the American Bar Association’s first overseas legal technical assistance program. Over the years, ABA ROLI has worked in 28 countries across the region, and today we are active in 15 countries. In 2014 and 2015, we launched new programs to prevent corruption and improve the business climate in Ukraine, to foster the prevention and prosecution of hate crimes and to promote understanding of and tolerance for sexual and ethnic minorities in Russia, and to evaluate and help improve the effectiveness of investigation and prosecution of drug trafficking across Central Asia.
ABA ROLI programs emphasize building the capacity of local organizations to sustain reform efforts. Our work in the region has:

• helped to increase access to justice;
• fostered judicial independence and ethics;
• supported public integrity measures to combat corruption;
• helped law schools better train tomorrow’s legal professionals;
• advocated for international human rights standards and educated marginalized and vulnerable groups about their rights and responsibilities;
• promoted criminal code revisions to address human trafficking, money laundering, cybercrime and other domestic and transnational crimes; and
• strengthened legislation and legal institutions in countries seeking European Union accession.

Georgian legal professionals take part in a training on plea-bargaining and negotiation skills.
ARMENIA

Since its independence in 1991, Armenia has taken important steps toward the rule of law. An independent bar association regulates the legal profession and the government has pursued criminal law reforms. Through its 20 years of work in the country, ABA ROLI has collaborated with government and civil society partners to support judicial independence and transparency, foster due process and offer legal aid to the indigent, among other initiatives.

Today, Armenia continues to face obstacles in guaranteeing human rights for its people. There is poor equality of arms between prosecutors and defense attorneys, and public trust in the justice system is low due to perceived corruption. Moreover, legal education continues to rely heavily on rote memorization, leaving law graduates ill-equipped to serve their clients. Our current program, funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, addresses these continuing challenges.

Improving access to justice

ABA ROLI works to build the practical skills of advocates, public defenders and law students. We have developed a trial advocacy curriculum for law schools and advocates. We also conduct continuing legal education (CLE) seminars that respond to the most critical training needs of advocates and public defenders. Additionally, we support law school-based criminal law clinics, internship opportunities with the Public Defender’s Office (PDO) and the Chamber of Advocates’ legal aid program. These efforts promote understanding of human rights, improve public trust of the justice system and increase the public’s demand for and the legal system’s capacity to provide access to justice.

Fostering practical legal education

ABA ROLI’s legal clinic program is complemented by efforts to encourage curriculum reform in Armenia’s law schools. Our one semester, university-level course on trial advocacy skills has been adopted by six law schools, three of which are based outside the capital. Students enrolled in the course also have the opportunity to participate in our annual mock-trial competitions, which allow law students from throughout Armenia to compete.

PAST PROGRAMS IN EUROPE & EURASIA INCLUDE

• Through our Roma regional program, we provided free legal aid for minorities, continuing legal education and cross-border networking opportunities for advocates and supported public advocacy for Romani communities in Bulgaria, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia. During the four-year program, ABA ROLI established 44 pro bono legal clinics and provided free legal aid to 8,272 Roma individuals.

• In Belarus, we trained law students and lawyers on trial advocacy and helped them build those practical skills required to represent clients in the courtroom.

• Our Central Asia criminal law program encouraged networking among criminal defense attorneys from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and trained them on emerging legal issues and practical trial skills.

• We helped to increase Macedonian citizens’ access to justice by strengthening the quality of legal defense and the capacity of the Macedonian Bar Association. A total of 567 advocates, or 23% of the country’s advocates, took part in our Criminal Procedure Code trainings.
in a courtroom setting. Centered around hypothetical criminal cases, the competitions showcase and help to enhance students’ trial advocacy and critical thinking skills.

Making continuing legal education sustainable
ABA ROLI developed an online learning platform, a web-based CLE resource, to make our professional development opportunities both sustainable and available, including to advocates in Armenia’s remote areas. The platform also helps to improve the quality of and access to justice, benefiting the justice system at large. Our trainings, which are available for CLE credit, cover such topics as criminal law and procedure, pre-trial detention and how to file appeals with the Constitutional Court or the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

Promoting the use of human rights mechanisms
In recent years, Armenian advocates have had increasing success employing the European Convention of Human Rights and case law from its enforcement mechanism, the ECtHR. ABA ROLI works to build Armenian advocates’ awareness of and ability to utilize these mechanisms. In addition to trainings on the convention and accessing the ECtHR, we also support cases with the potential to create precedents that advance the rights of arrestees, defendants and prisoners.

Supporting the Public Defender’s Office
To increase the PDO’s capacity to manage cases, ABA ROLI supports a mentorship project, which has expanded to five Armenian regions. Through this project, more experienced public defenders oversee and advise their less experienced colleagues with their cases. Additionally, we support a web-based case management system, which allows mentors based in one region to collaborate virtually with mentees based in another region.
BALKANS REGIONAL RULE OF LAW NETWORK PROGRAM

Since the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the countries of the Western Balkans have been in transition to governance based on democratic principles and the rule of law—a path that has been complicated by war and conflict as these countries moved toward independence. A successful transition depends upon a judicial system that serves the public and protects citizens’ rights. A strong and independent defense bar and well-trained defense attorneys contribute to the protection of these rights. However, many of the defense attorneys and defense bar associations in the Balkans region lack the needed training and support.

With support from the United States Agency for International Development, ABA ROLI is implementing the Balkans Regional Rule of Law Network (BRRLN) Program to support defense advocacy and rule of law in five countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. The program helps the region’s defense bar associations and human rights advocates to forge connections. It also facilitates collaboration among the region’s bar associations, journalists and civil society organizations (CSOs), providing them with an avenue to share best practices, tools and experiences.

Addressing common criminal defense needs

ABA ROLI started the program by interviewing more than 120 justice-sector stakeholders to develop a comprehensive assessment of the issues within the defense bar community in each of the five program countries: Comparative Analysis of Criminal Defense Advocacy in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. We presented the findings at a May 2014 conference in Macedonia for more than 40 stakeholders, including advocates, journalists, CSO representatives and heads of national bar chambers. Following a participatory, stakeholder-driven approach, participants shaped the BRRLN mission and goals. They also identified the following priority areas for reform in defense advocacy:
• **Legal aid, ex officio defense**: strengthening *ex officio* (court-appointed) defense systems in the region by improving appointment processes, payment and competence of court-appointed advocates.

• **Continuing legal education (CLE)**: enhancing the delivery of face-to-face CLE training and developing online CLE resources for advocates throughout the region.

• **Bar chamber capacity**: developing a memorandum of understanding between the BRRLN and the region’s national bar associations to facilitate mutual support and cooperation.

• **Criminal law reform**: improving the administration of criminal justice by reforming criminal laws, *de jure* and *de facto*, to achieve equality of arms, ensure fair trials and protect fundamental human rights.

• **Media and public awareness**: understanding media portrayals of advocates and improving the media’s perception of advocates, as well as the relations between journalists, advocates and bar chambers.

### Fostering regional collaboration
Following the May 2014 conference, ABA ROLI continued to support working groups in all participating countries in addressing the challenges in each priority area by organizing periodic in-person meetings. In 2015, ABA ROLI awarded subgrants to local organizations to implement year-long projects, which are enhancing defense advocacy in the region by strengthening CLE, criminal law reform and *ex officio* defense.

In March 2015, ABA ROLI organized a leadership conference in Serbia to foster greater collaboration among the network’s bar chambers. During the conference, CSOs and bar chamber leaders formulated the network’s governing structure and launched the BRRLN website. A virtual network for the BRRLN community, the website is allowing members to exchange ideas, resources and best practices on defense advocacy. Additionally, the bar association leaders signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate in protecting the independence of the legal profession and in developing their institutions’ capacity.

Throughout 2015, we organized several regional peer-to-peer exchanges, fostering discussions on bar association management and development, plea bargaining and the defense of clients in war crimes cases. We also launched a pilot mentorship program between the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates and the Minnesota State Bar Association on issues of organizational structure, management and member services, which we plan to replicate for other members of the network.

In 2016, our activities will focus on ensuring the network’s sustainability, including by supporting its pending registration as an independent, local entity in one of the program countries and by developing its capacity to raise funds from government and private donors in Europe.
Macedonian Lawyer Works to Strengthen Criminal Justice Systems in Her Country and Region

Ruzica Nikolova is a service-oriented Macedonian criminal defense lawyer. Over the years, she has served as a trainer—educating her fellow criminal defense lawyers on new laws and procedures, as well as practical skills. She has also served on technical committees of both national and regional lawyers’ associations. Ruzica says that the ABA Rule of Law Initiative’s (ABA ROLI’s) trainings helped her contribute in ways she would not have foreseen early on in her career.

A member of the ABA ROLI-supported Balkans Regional Rule of Law Network (BRRLN), Ruzica currently sits on one of the network’s five working groups—the one that focuses on fostering the independence of the region’s bar associations. Launched in 2013, the BRRLN allows lawyers, bar associations and civil society organizations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia to build ties with each other to strengthen defense advocacy and the rule of law in the region.

Through her involvement with the BRRLN working group, Ruzica says she wants to support efforts to establish a strong defense bar association in Macedonia. She says that the Balkans countries face similar challenges in strengthening their criminal justice systems and the legal profession. That, she adds, “[makes the] BRRLN an excellent [avenue] to share best practices, identify common problems and fight together for the role of advocacy in the region.”

While the BRRLN has created opportunities for Ruzica to contribute to regional efforts, her support for efforts to strengthen the criminal justice system started a couple of years ago at home. Seven years after Ruzica graduated from law school, Macedonia adopted a Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) that transitioned its criminal justice system from an inquisitorial to an adversarial one. The CPC redefined the role of criminal defense advocates during investigation and trial, and introduced plea bargaining. The transition meant that criminal defense lawyers needed to enhance their legal writing as well as trial advocacy skills to practice law effectively. To help prepare lawyers for the new criminal justice system, between 2011 and 2015, ABA ROLI implemented a program, training more than 25 percent of Macedonia’s more than 2,500 advocates on the CPC and on legal advocacy skills.

Ruzica was one of the 628 criminal defense lawyers who took advantage of ABA ROLI trainings. In 2012 and 2013, she participated in several ABA ROLI-organized trainings on the CPC, and on basic and advanced trial skills. Ruzica says that the trainings “had a great impact on the advocates’ community.” The series of workshops helped to enhance defense lawyers’ understanding of the adversarial criminal justice system and its implementation.

In recognition of her interest and active participation, in September 2015, Ruzica was selected to attend a training of trainers and became one of five ABA ROLI trainers in Macedonia.

“I remember my first training as an ABA ROLI trainer where all the participants were my colleagues from the [legal] defense community,” says Ruzica. “It was a great challenge and I felt like an excited student preparing for an exam.” She said that every training she conducted “was different and presented a new experience for me.” She continued to grow as she helped her fellow defense attorneys prepare for practice under the new CPC. “I was lucky to have had the honor of teaching the courses alongside ABA ROLI’s experts as I too was able to learn many new teaching approaches.”

Today, Ruzica continues to play a leadership role among her fellow lawyers, including by serving as a member of the Macedonian Bar Association’s Board of Directors.
CENTRAL ASIA COURT MONITORING PROGRAM

Over the past decade, the transit of illicit drugs through Central Asia—often originating in Afghanistan and destined for Western Europe, Russia and East Asia—has affected stability, security and public health in the region. To curb drug trafficking and related crimes, the governments of the Central Asian republics have made targeted amendments to their national legislation and policies in recent years. Nonetheless, the region’s nations continue to have relatively low drug seizure rates and few successful prosecutions of drug-trafficking suspects. Most criminal arrests are for small-quantity possessions of illicit substances, suggesting that drug users, rather than traffickers, are targeted.

ABA ROLI recognizes the complexities of prosecuting narcotics-related crimes, including the prevalence of organized criminal enterprises, the cross-border nature of the crimes and the need to coordinate across government agencies and between governments. Further, it can be difficult to monitor the implementation of disparate, yet interconnected, drug policies. This backdrop also presents challenges in assessing where policies and practices are effective and where they are in need of further improvement. Through our regional program, we strive to bridge the gaps between these policies and their implementation across the Central Asian republics and to facilitate a truly regional approach to prosecuting drug-related crimes.

Monitoring drug-related court cases

In September 2014, ABA ROLI began to implement a regional court monitoring program in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and, through partners, Uzbekistan. This program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, examines trends in criminal investigations and prosecutions of narcotics-related cases. Our efforts focus on evaluating the effectiveness of the criminal justice systems in Central Asia to address such crimes. Building on our long-term presence in Central Asia and previous successful court monitoring and criminal law-related programs, we are leveraging strong relationships with representatives of the region’s governments, legal communities and civil society organizations for this work. Based on the findings of the court monitoring, stakeholders will develop recommendations for remedying procedural deficiencies.

ABA ROLI will continue to provide technical assistance to the program countries as they work to strengthen their fight against
Monitors in Bishkek develop a methodology to ensure relevant information is collected during the case observation phase of the court monitoring program.

drug-related crimes. We will support working groups in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in consolidating and sharing their recommendations, as well as the countries’ efforts in implementing those recommendations. In Uzbekistan, our partner organization—Regional Dialogue—is fostering dialogue on these issues through trainings and roundtable discussions that engage Uzbek judges, investigators, defense lawyers and prosecutors.

Our first year of programming—the partnerships and relationships we have built with stakeholders in the region along with relevant state agencies’ willingness to consider and implement working group recommendations—has laid the groundwork for practical results, increasing the potential for further progress in improving the effectiveness of national and regional criminal justice systems, as well as the investigation and prosecution of drug-related crimes.

Creating study tour opportunities

In July 2015, ABA ROLI organized a study tour to Bangkok, Thailand, for 15 legal professionals from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Thailand is a transit and destination country for illicit narcotics, and it implements a multi-sectoral approach in the fight against narcotics with a strong focus on regional cooperation. The study tour allowed delegates from Central Asia to learn from Thailand’s experience addressing drug trafficking. The delegates—representatives of various government agencies, the judiciary, civil society and the criminal defense community—met with representatives from various Thai government agencies and organizations. These organizational representatives and private practitioners shared their insights on different facets of the fight against drug-related crimes, including investigation, prosecution and prevention.
**GEORGIA**

Georgia officially declared its independence in 1991, and the decade that followed was marked by waves of progress and regression on key rule of law issues. The 2003 Rose Revolution paved the way for a spate of democratic reforms. Georgia’s then-president, Mikhail Saakashvili, is widely credited with ridding the country of low-level corruption and instituting an array of legislative changes that brought the country in line with international norms. Soviet-era judges were replaced with reform-minded professionals, a system of legal aid service for the indigent was created and an adversarial system of justice was written into the *Criminal Procedure Code (CPC)*.

Over the past 18 years, ABA ROLI has earned a reputation as a reliable partner and strong supporter of legal reforms in Georgia from helping to administer judicial and bar examinations and supporting the creation of the Georgian Bar Association (GBA) and the Georgian Law Students’ Association, to helping introduce jury trials and contributing toward a national anti-corruption strategy. Past efforts have included implementing domestic violence legislation, promoting judicial integrity and skills-based education in law schools and establishing legal clinics in law schools to improve access to justice for indigent Georgians. Today, we continue to support the rule of law through a program funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

**Building the capacity of defense attorneys**

We have trained nearly 75 percent of Georgia’s approximately 2,000 defense attorneys, helping to build skills critical to the new jury trial system. Notably, of the more than 20 defense attorneys who have participated in Georgia’s completed jury trials, nearly 90 percent were trained by ABA ROLI, and all the full or partial verdicts for the defense have been won by ABA ROLI trainees, exemplifying ABA ROLI’s role in successfully preparing defense attorneys to operate effectively under the country’s new CPC.

ABA ROLI trains Georgia’s defense attorneys on the CPC, plea-bargaining, negotiation skills, discovery issues, opening statements and closing arguments, direct- and cross-examinations, legal writing, jury selection and instruction, as well as forensics, forensic psychiatry and traffic-accident reconstruction. In the past year, ABA ROLI has developed four new trainings covering practical lawyering skills, changes to the *Criminal Code*, forensics and enforcement of decisions of the European Court of Human Rights.
Advancing continuing legal education

We work with the GBA to bring Continuing Legal Education (CLE) opportunities to all defense lawyers. In May 2014, ABA ROLI launched an online learning platform (OLP), which serves as a web-based CLE system for defense attorneys throughout the country and extends professional development opportunities to lawyers in more remote areas. The OLP holds a library of more than 20 training videos. ABA ROLI will soon transfer administration of the platform to the GBA.

ABA ROLI works with regional partners to meet the needs of lawyers who do not have Internet access. Since 2013, ABA ROLI and the Legal Aid Service (LAS), a Tbilisi-based institution that provides legal aid to the indigent, have trained more than 500 defense attorneys via live, video-conference trainings—benefiting those who would not have had access to ABA ROLI’s in-person trainings. Between January and July 2015, ABA ROLI-trained LAS trainers led 45 video trainings in Tbilisi and seven of Georgia’s 12 regions.

Promoting uniform application of the CPC

In 2014, ABA ROLI began efforts to promote a more uniform interpretation of the CPC within the legal sector via a set of official commentaries. There are a number of provisions in the CPC that many practitioners view as vague or open-ended. As a result, many of the main actors in the legal process—judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys and law professors—have often interpreted these provisions in conflicting ways. To resolve this issue, ABA ROLI brought these parties together to agree on the intent and purpose of the CPC so there can be little room for error. The commentaries were finalized in late 2015, helping to promote more uniform application of the CPC.
KAZAKHSTAN

In 2012, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev delivered his “Kazakhstan 2050” speech, introducing the government’s new political, economic and legal initiatives. Kazakhstan has since undertaken a number of legal reforms and focused its efforts on developing a strong, professional judiciary—one that is fair and consistently delivers justice. As part of these legal reforms, Kazakhstan set a course to modernize and humanize its criminal legislation and to bring its national laws in line with international standards. As part of this initiative, in 2014, the country adopted four new pieces of legislation, the Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Correctional Code and the Code of Administrative Offenses.

In support of recent reform efforts within the judiciary and in cooperation with key local stakeholders, ABA ROLI is providing technical assistance through a variety of training activities, professional exchanges and resource development initiatives. These efforts, which are funded by the United States Agency for International Development, focus on improving the capacity of judges and on enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of the judicial system.

Strengthening judicial decision writing

To support the creation of concise, well-written judicial opinions, we are developing an arsenal of resources on judicial decision writing. These resources include manuals and in-person and distance-learning course curricula. We have also provided the country’s stakeholders with examples of international approaches to decision writing, alongside detailed analyses of Kazakhstan’s procedural legislation. Building on the success and positive reception of our materials among local partners, we are working closely with the Supreme Court, the Union of Judges and the Institute of Justice to integrate a course on decision writing into the existing continuing legal education curriculum for judges.

Sharing international best practices

ABA ROLI is joining hands with the Supreme Court and the Union of Judges to provide technical expertise on the implementation of criminal and criminal procedure codes adopted in July 2014. As part of these collaborations, in March 2014, ABA ROLI organized a judicial exchange for six Kazakhstani judges to Germany and Estonia to build participants’ understanding of these countries’ experience with certain elements of criminal procedure—including the different aspects and procedures of charging a criminal infraction—which are also incorporated in Kazakhstan’s 2014 criminal and criminal procedure codes. ABA ROLI continues to engage judges to explore best practices and lessons learned in implementing criminal procedure, including by enlisting their support in developing training curricula and resources. Additionally, ABA ROLI is working closely with local stakeholders to encourage broader use of alternative dispute resolution, including by developing curricula and resources on mediation.
Training participants work on a case of maintenance obligations.

Boosting public understanding of reforms
In addition to providing resources and practical trainings for judges, ABA ROLI is undertaking an information campaign to raise public awareness of the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code and their effect on the trial process, as well as the use of mediation to resolve disputes. Since 2012, ABA ROLI has developed and distributed 5,000 pamphlets and aired two radio public service announcements (PSAs) in both Kazakh and Russian languages. The pamphlets and PSAs inform citizens of the resources available to them and help in building public confidence in the judiciary as a fair mechanism of legal redress. In 2015, in cooperation with the Supreme Court, ABA ROLI published and distributed 194,650 copies of eleven leaflets, both in Russian and Kazakh languages, focusing on numerous aspects of criminal procedure, followed by two radio PSAs in both languages, one on novelties of the Criminal Code and the other on novelties of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Monitoring drug-related criminal prosecutions
In September 2014, with funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, ABA ROLI launched a regional program to examine and help address deficiencies in criminal investigations and prosecutions of narcotics-related cases in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and, through a partner, Uzbekistan. Please refer to page 67 for more information.
During the first national congress of advocates, Kyrgyzstani defense attorneys vote for board members, on the structure of the association and on statutory documents pertaining to their unified bar association.

KYRGYZSTAN
Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kyrgyzstan has implemented significant legal reforms. However, defense attorneys remain fairly unregulated and unsupported by the government. ABA ROLI’s work in the country, which began in 1993, supports the legal defense community through targeted trainings and partnerships that strengthen legal education and professional examination procedures. Our current programs in Kyrgyzstan are funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

Strengthening the legal profession
To strengthen the legal profession and foster its independence, ABA ROLI works with local partners in the legal community and the government to promote institutionalization of the national and regional advocaturas. The Law on Advocatura, which came into effect in July 2014, empowers lawyers to form and maintain an independent, self-governing professional association to defend their interests, protect the integrity of the profession, promote training and ensure the equality of arms between the prosecution and defense. In fall 2015, ABA ROLI facilitated the inaugural congress of advocates, which brought together nearly 700 defense advocates from around the country to elect members of the administrative and executive bodies of the new National Advocatura—the national association of defense advocates.

ABA ROLI has supported the advocatura’s establishment through targeted technical assistance, including by helping with drafting founding
documents, facilitating a strategic planning process and providing training on bar association management and administration. In July 2015, ABA ROLI brought five leaders of the *advocatura* to the U.S. for a study tour that allowed them to meet with their counterparts in local and national American bar associations, to gain an international perspective on the development of professional associations and to exchange best practices in managing bar associations.

**Advancing continuing legal education**

Continuing legal education is a critical tool in helping new and experienced advocates enhance their practical skills and substantive knowledge of emerging legal issues. ABA ROLI works with the Advocates Training Center (ATC) and other local partners to offer regular trainings on core civil law issues and priority matters, such as domestic violence, professional ethics and jury trials. To date, the ATC has trained more than 3,000 lawyers and defense attorneys in practical and substantive areas and is Kyrgyzstan’s preeminent continuing legal education resource for defense advocates. ABA ROLI assisted the ATC in developing a long-term strategic and financial plan that will sustain locally-led training capacity.

**Promoting skills-based legal education**

ABA ROLI supports seven university-based legal clinics that combine practical educational benefits for law students with the provision of *pro bono* legal services for the indigent. To hone students’ skills, in April 2015, ABA ROLI hosted the third annual client-counseling competition among the clinics’ students, once more offering the dual benefit of a competitive environment and opportunities to network with peers from other regions.

In February 2015, ABA ROLI and the legal clinics collaborated to establish the Legal Clinics Association, which coordinates clinical activity throughout the country and serves as a resource hub for clinic directors, students and the public. Over the past year, more than 160 legal clinic students provided free legal services to nearly 600 members of their respective communities. The clinical legal education enriches participating students’ learning experience by serving as an opportunity for the students to learn by doing and by boosting their confidence in their ability to practice law.

**Monitoring drug-related criminal prosecutions**

In September 2014, with funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, ABA ROLI launched a regional program to examine and help address deficiencies in criminal investigations and prosecutions of narcotics-related cases in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and, through a partner, Uzbekistan. Please refer to page 67 for more information.
MOLDOVA

For more than 20 years, ABA ROLI has been working with partners in Moldova to help strengthen the rule of law. Our programs have promoted access to justice, criminal law reform, and legal education and legal profession reform. We have also worked to advance gender rights and combat human trafficking and domestic violence. Over the past five years, our work has focused on bolstering the Moldovan defense bar association’s institutional capacity—enabling it to better serve, train and represent its members—and on creating a more structured pathway to the legal profession via internships for recent graduates. We have joined local efforts to address corruption within the judiciary and to boost management and leadership capacity within the prosecutorial system—activities that closely align with the Moldovan government’s priorities for justice system reforms to meet European Union criteria and standards. We also work in partnership with the leading local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) advocacy organization, GENDERDOC-M, to improve the application of Moldova’s 2012 anti-discrimination law to better protect the LGBT community. Our work in Moldova is funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and its Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

Building defense capacity and preparing future legal professionals

With funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, we assist the Union of Lawyers—Moldova’s defense bar association—in training legal professionals, especially on key criminal justice and international human rights topics.

ABA ROLI provides commentary on draft criminal procedure legislation, assists with the publication of legal materials and helps with the development of programs that build the practical skills of law students and legal interns. We host mock trial competitions for students and interns, as well as monthly lectures and professional networking events both for legal apprentices—who are completing required internships to be licensed as advocates—and for practicing lawyers. Additionally, we have helped the Union of Lawyers enhance its own legal apprenticeship program, including by creating a first-of-its kind apprenticeship guidebook and a training curriculum. The association later formally adopted the curriculum.
ABA ROLI is currently developing an online learning platform, which will allow more lawyers to access mandatory continuing legal education courses.

**Advancing prosecutors’ technical and leadership skills**

Since 2014, ABA ROLI has worked with the Prosecutor General’s Office to support Moldovan prosecutors in implementing their portion of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform, a multi-year reform effort, which includes prosecutorial independence and specialization, transparency and accountability, and review and capacity building of key institutional bodies of the prosecutorial service. To invest in future reforms, ABA ROLI organizes a regular convening of young prosecutors to discuss items pertinent to their professional development and career advancement.

**Addressing corruption in the justice sector**

ABA ROLI’s programs complement the Moldovan government’s anti-corruption efforts. We support legislative measures to combat corruption and train prosecutors, investigators and judges on how to most effectively investigate and prosecute high-profile judicial corruption cases. Activities have included trainings and exchanges that feature Moldovan, Eastern European and American experts to share best practices and to support the development of anti-corruption legislation.

**Enhancing local capacity to defend the rights of the LGBT**

Through its National Partnership for Equal Rights Program (NPER), ABA ROLI works to improve the institutional and technical capacity of local LGBT and anti-discrimination non-governmental organizations to continue the important work the NPER has been doing with funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Together with Moldova’s leading LGBT non-governmental organization, GENDERDOC-M, we train lawyers, judges, prosecutors and police to handle discrimination and hate-crime cases. We also support legislative reform and strategic litigation efforts to help broaden protections against hate- and bias-motivated offenses. Additionally, we conduct targeted awareness raising activities and legal trainings to educate and empower LGBT persons to assert their rights. Our partner GENDERDOC-M also provides emergency hotline and shelter support to LGBT persons in need. Finally, we conduct public awareness efforts which challenge harmful biases and stereotypes and highlight the contributions of LGBT members to society.
Moldova adopted an anti-discrimination law in 2012, and several local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have since undertaken many public awareness initiatives on the law. Yet, the public continues to strongly discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members of society.

Rampant discrimination and hostility often force the LGBT to be secretive about their sexual orientation. Dmitri* is a 26-year old gay man from the city of Balti, who was always concerned about the mistreatment of the LGBT. Eager to learn about what can be done, in summer 2014, he attended his first public awareness event on Moldova’s anti-discrimination law. GENDERDOC-M, a local LGBT advocacy NGO and an ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) partner in a program to combat discrimination against LGBT persons, organized the event. Dmitri attended subsequent events, including in the capital Chisinau, increasing his understanding of legal anti-discrimination protections and meeting other LGBT people.

Dmitri says that these events taught him a lot about Moldova’s laws on discrimination and hate crimes. He nonetheless admits that, back then, he did not realize just how important those laws would be to his own life.

An unfortunate event in October 2014 brought it all home for Dmitri. He went on a first date with someone he met online. Since the person he met, Nico*, looked young, Dmitri asked his age, and learned that he was a minor. Dmitri says, “The minute I saw him, I lost interest. He was just a kid, probably lonely and curious as I was at his age.” He told Nico they could be friends but nothing more. Nico agreed and invited Dmitri over for tea at his nearby house. Oblivious to the trap he walked into, Dmitri accepted the invitation.

As they walked to Nico’s apartment, a large group of teenage boys joined Nico and surrounded Dmitri. They yelled gay slurs at Dmitri and beat him up, all the while announcing their affiliation with Occupy Pedophilia, a group that has committed similar attacks against LGBT persons. The group videotaped the attack and uploaded it on a Russian social media website.

Empowered by GENDERDOC-M’s events, Dmitri reported the attack to the police. A few days after the first assault, a man who recognized Dmitri from the video rushed toward him yelling, “I know who you are! I saw you on the Internet,” and hit Dmitri—who ran away and escaped. Dmitri reported the second assault to the police. While he hoped for a fair legal resolution, he did not have the much-needed support at home. His mother blamed him and his sexual orientation for the beatings. Dmitri says that his worried mother told him to “please quit this lifestyle,” adding, “go to church if you cannot stop it by yourself.”

Feeling unsafe in his own city and home, Dmitri contacted an ABA ROLI-supported emergency hotline for victims of discrimination. He spent one night in a Balti shelter and moved to Chisinau, where GENDERDOC-M provided him with free lodging and a meal allowance. Three days later, Dmitri found a job and rented an apartment.

As the criminal case proceeded and with help from GENDERDOC-M’s lawyer, Dmitri filed a civil suit claiming damages for the attacks he sustained. In November 2015, two of the accused minors were found guilty of “violating citizens’ equality,” while a third—who filmed the attack—was found guilty of “disclosing personal data.” Each was fined the equivalent of $300.

Eventually, Dmitri felt safe enough to return to Balti, where he now lives and works as he awaits resolution of the pending civil claim.

* Pseudonyms.
RUSSIA
ABA ROLI has worked in Russia in collaboration with local partners since 1992. Our multi-faceted programs have leveraged Russian and American expertise on an array of rule of law efforts. From assisting with the adoption of judicial and legal profession ethics codes and supporting clinical legal education curricula, to implementing broad pro bono legal services programs and building the public oversight capacity of Russian non-governmental organizations, our work has allowed us to engage with nearly every stakeholder within the Russian legal system.

Despite complex political developments over the past year, there remains significant demand for programs that collaborate with Russian stakeholders to address issues of local concern. ABA ROLI is a trusted, neutral and credible partner that has cultivated robust relationships with Russian legal professionals and organizations committed to upholding rights, decreasing corruption, strengthening the legal profession and fostering increased transparency in government decision-making.

Today, we work with communities of lawyers, law professors, law students and businesses to broaden our local partners’ legal understanding, to strengthen aspiring and practicing lawyers’ practical skills and to bolster the organizational capacity of Russia’s legal institutions. We help our counterparts refine their approaches toward clinical legal education, continuing legal education (CLE), anti-discrimination practices and professional networking. Our work in Russia is funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and its Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.
Enhancing legal professionals’ capacity
ABA ROLI works with local partners to build the capacity of Russia’s defense lawyers to uphold fair trial standards in criminal proceedings. Targeted advocacy skills trainings highlight best practices in specialized areas of law and ensure that lawyers are able to apply that knowledge in the courtroom. Designed in response to partners’ needs, our trainings are implemented in collaboration with the Federal Bar Association, regional bar chambers, universities and other organizations.

ABA ROLI supports CLE courses for both new and experienced lawyers, in partnership with CLE centers across six Russian Federation regions: Krasnoyarsk, St. Petersburg, Stavropol, Tver, Ulyanovsk and Vladimir. We offer training-of-trainers workshops for the CLE centers’ staff, including on case strategy, communications skills, trial skills and interactive teaching methods. The ABA ROLI-trained trainers then develop curricula and deliver courses with ABA ROLI oversight. We also work with the centers to design and implement business plans to support each center’s sustainability goals. To expand the continuing education opportunities for Russian lawyers, over the next two years, we will launch another two CLE centers in Samara and Chuvashia regions.

Improving law students’ advocacy skills
To foster the use of interactive teaching methodologies in clinical legal education, we train legal clinic instructors from Moscow-based law schools on interactive teaching approaches. With an eye toward preparing the next generation of Russian lawyers, we also work directly with law students to help enhance their advocacy skills and increase their appreciation for human rights. Our goal is to build a cadre of students who will go on to advance standards of practice by establishing more ethical relationships with their clients, by holding the state accountable and by incorporating international standards into their arguments.

Supporting anti-corruption efforts and promoting compliance
ABA ROLI has worked to increase the anti-corruption and compliance capacities of Russian legal professionals, officials, businesses, entrepreneurs and journalists. We have conducted federal and regional skills trainings—and hosted conferences and roundtables—that analyze and educate on applicable Russian and international laws. A compliance and business ethics manual that ABA ROLI published in 2013, which serves as a reference for Russian lawyers and businesses, was among the first Russian-language publications to cover such topics.

Furthermore, we helped our local partners create an Anti-Corruption Oversight Center where community members can register corruption complaints, obtain guidance on legal remedies and connect with journalists who can investigate and publicize incidents of corruption. We also supported a corresponding social media campaign, which encourages high-profile officials and businesses to take a public anti-bribery pledge. Our other activities include conducting trainings and competitions for journalists who...
Trainers and staff from well-established continuing legal education (CLE) centers in Russia share best practices in running a CLE center with their peers from more recently launched centers.

Covering corruption issues and collaborating with municipal governments as they develop and adopt anti-corruption practices. Additionally, we help advance understanding of corporate social responsibility by organizing awareness-raising events and by working directly with Russian businesses to develop such programs.

We continue to work with universities and students to design anti-corruption strategies and courses—many of which have been integrated into the curricula at several Russian universities. We also work with our partners to engage school-aged Russians in discussion clubs, which cover the types of corruption they may encounter in everyday life, the importance of combating corruption and how they can help address corruption.

**Strengthening public oversight**

In 2013, ABA ROLI launched a program to promote accountability in local and regional government. We helped to develop the capacity of Russia’s regional public oversight committees and to empower community-minded citizens to monitor and to engage with state institutions. We have held a series of seminars in Kaliningrad, Novosibirsk, St. Petersburg and Kazan to equip local leaders with monitoring skills and tools, and expanded the network through which they can share best practices in government oversight. To amplify the contribution of our trainings toward a grassroots anti-corruption movement by civil society, we encourage those who participate in regional trainings to share what they have learned with members of their local communities.

**Combating discrimination**

ABA ROLI is working with the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor to increase the safety and security of Russian minority groups, building the capacity of local lawyers to protect their rights. We provide trainings for lawyers, civil society representatives and the public on local anti-discrimination laws and on those international human rights conventions to which Russia is a signatory. These sessions also cover the legal means of recourse available for victims of discrimination. Additionally, we are supporting a network of first responders that connects victims of discrimination with lawyers who can provide free legal services.
SERBIA

ABA ROLI’s current Serbia program is the continuation of many years of collaboration with local partners to strengthen the rule of law. Since 1997, ABA ROLI has been supporting the country’s transition to democracy and, more recently, its preparation for European Union membership. We helped with the implementation of the constitution adopted on November 8, 2006, assisted in the creation of a judicial training center and introduced practical skills training and legal clinic programs for law students. After our 2011 Prosecutorial Reform Index assessment highlighted the lack of consultation between prosecutors and victims prior to trial, Serbia’s Office of the Public Prosecutor took steps to establish a victim and witness coordination unit, which works to ensure that the rights of victims and witnesses are protected during the pre-trial and trial phases.

A revised Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) took effect in January 2012 for courts dealing with war crimes and organized crime and in October 2013 for courts of general jurisdiction. The revised CPC transitioned the justice system from an inquisitorial model, under which the judge directed an investigation and case, to a more adversarial system in which the prosecution and defense drive the case before an impartial judge. In 2012, ABA ROLI began to work with Partners for Democratic Change Serbia (Partners Serbia) to prepare Serbian advocates and lawyers to effectively represent clients under the revised CPC. This work is funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

Strengthening the defense bar

ABA ROLI works with Partners Serbia and the Bar Association of Serbia to train defense attorneys on the basics of the CPC and on trial advocacy skills. In September and October 2012, we trained an initial group of Serbian experts on adult teaching methodologies and the use of case studies and trial simulation exercises to strengthen practical skills. We continue to support these experts as they lead trainings for their peers. Between early 2013 and early 2016, ABA ROLI-prepared trainers conducted 36 trainings and seven mock trials that reached more than 1,900 defense attorneys. Each training was supplemented by an ABA ROLI-developed CPC benchbook and a trial advocacy manual customized to the Serbian context.

ABA ROLI and Partners Serbia also developed an e-learning platform that features a series of short lectures and presentations by local and international experts and a discussion forum. The training modules, which cover various components of trial advocacy and criminal defense, have been viewed nearly 34,000 times by more than 1,100 attorneys, law students and other legal practitioners.

Expanding use of legal alternatives

The revised CPC on a broad scale introduces alternatives to detention and expands possibilities for plea bargaining arrangements. ABA ROLI and Partners Serbia have organized a series of roundtables to provide defense attorneys, prosecutors and judges with opportunities to discuss the merits of and procedures for plea-bargaining. These conversations have
Advocates practice trial skills at a training in Novi Sad, Serbia.

highlighted a need for further training for defense attorneys on how to properly navigate the plea process. ABA ROLI and Partners Serbia are currently providing trainings that address the issue.

**Advancing the legal profession**

In 2012, the Bar Association of Serbia established its Academy of Legal Profession, which is mandated to provide quality training to the country’s attorneys. It helps to advance lawyers’ knowledge and practical skills, and to prepare them for an independent, impartial, efficient and ethical practice.

ABA ROLI and Partners Serbia have been supporting the academy in planning and providing trainings for the legal defense community. This year, we will transfer to the academy management of our online learning platform, along with the defense advocacy training materials we developed in collaboration with Partners Serbia.

**Fostering regional networking**

ABA ROLI also works in Serbia through its regional Balkans Rule of Law Network Program. This program, described in detail on page 64, aims to create a legal network for sharing best practices, tools and knowledge among bar associations and justice sector civil society organizations in the Balkans region.
TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan is gradually emerging from a five-year civil war that divided the nation, slowed the economy dramatically and stalled prior legal reform efforts. Building upon the rule of law gains that we have championed since we first opened our office in Dushanbe in 1997, we currently implement programs that focus on assisting Tajikistan’s transition to an adversarial system of criminal justice. We work to increase the capacity and professionalism of the country’s legal professionals and to improve the protection of citizens’ rights.

Our partners include both governmental agencies and civil society organizations, and our programs support the development of the rule of law on the local, regional and national levels. We assist with legislative and institutional reform efforts to improve the quality of legal representation, develop practical legal resources and work to strengthen the criminal defense bar. We also help young lawyers prepare for the evolving practice of law by collaborating with law schools to provide practical and interactive courses that develop students’ critical thinking skills. ABA ROLI’s programs are funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

Supporting the legal profession

ABA ROLI continues to implement its Legal Reform Program, launched in August 2012, to strengthen the professional capacity of Tajikistan’s advocate community and to support the formation of a unified body representing defense advocates. The Law on Advocatura Tajikistan adopted in March 2015 mandates that the advocate community establish a national association, the Union of Advocates. To facilitate the implementation of this mandate and to prepare the advocate community for the transition to a unified body, ABA ROLI helped with the development of protocols and procedures that regulate bar association management, including by defining uniform testing requirements for admission to the bar and outlining resource-sharing mechanisms.

In September 2015, ABA ROLI supported the inaugural congress that formally adopted the Union of Advocates’ governing regulations, launching the association in accordance with the new law. At the congress, the union elected a former judge, with a reputation for impartiality and fairness, as president.

As part of our efforts to develop the capacity of Tajikistan’s criminal defenders, since 2012, we have provided continuing legal education courses to more than 1,200 advocates. Additionally, ABA ROLI—through its Public Defense Center in Dushanbe—makes training resources on 12 substantive...
As part of our efforts to develop the capacity of Tajikistan’s criminal defenders, since 2012, we have provided continuing legal education courses to more than 1,200 advocates.

topics, as well as a case management system accessible to defense advocates. Data collected through the case management system has been used for evidence-based advocacy efforts and helped with the identification of advocates’ training needs. To ensure the center’s sustainability, ABA ROLI is working on transferring its ownership and management to the Union of Advocates.

**Improving the legal education system**
ABA ROLI has a Legal Education Reform Program in Tajikistan, which addresses gaps in the country’s legal education by supporting university administrators and professors as they incorporate interactive teaching techniques into their classrooms and expand law school curricula to engage and challenge their students. ABA ROLI has conducted training of trainers and a United States study tour for law professors from two partner universities and developed supplemental resources to equip the educators with interactive teaching techniques and best practices. We are also supporting law professors in revising courses to introduce interactive methods, including the Socratic method and mock trials, and in designing new curricula and instructional materials—such as textbooks.

Moreover, ABA ROLI continues to organize workshops, mock-trial and client-counseling competitions, and public awareness campaigns to help university-based legal clinics develop the capacity of the student clinicians and professors who run them.

**Monitoring drug-related criminal prosecutions**
In September 2014, with funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, ABA ROLI launched a regional program to examine and help address deficiencies in criminal investigations and prosecutions of narcotics-related cases in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and, through a partner, Uzbekistan. Please refer to page 67 for more information on the program.

**UKRAINE**
In 2012, Ukraine began transitioning its criminal justice system from an inquisitorial to an adversarial one with the implementation of a new Criminal Procedure Code (CPC). This new system creates stronger checks on the state, the judiciary and prosecutors, and broadens protections of defendants’ rights. In addition, the Euromaidan events of 2014 and the country’s subsequent political transition further amplified calls for government transparency and the rule of law, and solidified citizens’ consensus on the need for reforms.

ABA ROLI has worked in Ukraine since 1992 and implemented rule of law programs in several areas that included anti-corruption, anti-human trafficking, bar development, criminal law reform, law enforcement reform, judicial reform, legislative development, election law reform, anti-cybercrime and anti-xenophobia efforts. Collaborating with Ukrainian stakeholders, we worked to draft and analyze legislation, to create a unified bar association and to support the establishment of a legal aid system. We established a network of 40 legal advocacy non-governmental organizations, which provide access to justice for vulnerable populations through
pro bono legal clinics and conducted public rights-awareness campaigns.

Most recently, through our criminal law reform program—funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs—we have worked with the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to support the implementation of the new CPC by training the MOJ’s network of free legal aid lawyers on adversarial trial skills and other provisions of the code. In summer 2015, ABA ROLI launched a new program, which is funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development, to support public-driven anti-corruption efforts led by universities, lawyers and other grassroots movements.

Supporting legal aid
ABA ROLI supported the MOJ’s Legal Aid Coordinating Center (LACC) to improve the capacity of a core group of defense attorneys to provide free legal services. We have conducted basic and advanced trainings on trial advocacy skills, as well as workshops on the 2012 CPC. In 2015, ABA ROLI trained 61 legal aid attorneys from 23 regions to prepare them to train their peers. These ABA ROLI-trained advocates have since conducted 52 trainings for 1,752 of their peers. Since 2012, we have trained more than 2,500 advocates from 26 regions of Ukraine, including conflict zones.

Furthermore, in 2015, ABA ROLI launched an online learning platform, a web-based continuing legal education resource, to make its trainings available to advocates across Ukraine. These for-credit CLE courses cover several issues, such as contracts and procedures for signing them, the quality standards of free legal aid system and the peculiarities of free secondary legal aid system (free in-court representation) in Ukraine.

In 2015, Ukraine adopted new legislation requiring free legal aid providers to take both administrative and civil cases, in addition to criminal ones. To help LACC manage the ensuing sharp rise in the demand for its services, ABA ROLI assisted the center in developing its first centralized call center for client intake.

Combating bribery
The fight to stop bribery starts with the individual, and every person counts in this fight. ABA ROLI is raising individual awareness in combating bribery and giving individuals the tools to do so. Starting in August 2015, we have been conducting a public awareness campaign—You Have the Power to Stop Bribery—which incorporates public forums, television advertisements and anti-bribery pledges. The campaign helps to increase citizens’ understanding of how to resist bribery in everyday life. We work with business owners and civil servants, who are often susceptible to giving and receiving bribes as they conduct business, on how to identify and combat the crime. In addition, ABA ROLI works with its partner Ukrainian Legal Aid Foundation to train advocates from select legal aid clinics on handling bribery complaints.
In Latin America and the Caribbean, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) currently supports legal reform efforts in El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico and Peru, and we recently concluded programming in the Dominican Republic. We also maintain a multi-country program to combat criminal impunity in El Salvador and Guatemala. Each of ABA ROLI’s programs in the region draws upon partnerships with host-country government institutions, universities, bar associations and non-governmental organizations. We collaborate with these partners to address an array of host-country needs through programs that:
• support human rights, including the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community;
• promote freedom of information;
• support reforms in legal education and in the legal profession;
• assist in transitions to oral, accusatorial criminal justice systems;
• strengthen the investigation and prosecution of transnational organized crimes; and
• bolster capacity to use forensic evidence in criminal cases.
CENTRAL AMERICA REGIONAL PROGRAM

In recent years, Central America has seen a rise in violence linked to drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Its strategic location in close proximity to the United States and large drug-producing nations has placed the region’s countries along drug-smuggling routes, representing a significant challenge for local law enforcement institutions and causing indices of crime and violence to rise. Homicide rates have surged, particularly in the Northern Triangle, and justice institutions are often ill-equipped to properly investigate, prosecute and process criminal cases, leaving many unsolved. Law enforcement officials’ general inability to manage forensic evidence exacerbates this problem.

Our El Salvador-based regional program supports efforts to fight crime and reduce violence by collaborating with police officers, lawyers, judges and others in the justice sector to increase the use of scientific evidence in criminal investigations and prosecutions. This includes trainings on crime-scene investigation and use of forensic evidence at trial, and the development of specialized inter-institutional investigative teams. Through our work in El Salvador and Guatemala, we also promote cooperation among various actors within and across the countries of the region to streamline institutional responses to transnational organized crime. This program is funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

Fighting impunity with forensic evidence

ABA ROLI cooperates with police officers, crime-scene technicians, forensic scientists, prosecutors and judges to boost their ability to gather,

PAST PROGRAMS IN LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN INCLUDE

In **Belize**, ABA ROLI aided in the development and implementation of a strategic plan for juvenile justice reform, which included post-prison rehabilitation and reintegration. We also trained justice sector actors on transnational organized crime.

Our **Brazil** program supported children living with HIV/AIDS, assisting in their transition back into the education system, offering vocational and HIV/AIDS-prevention training and providing legal support for the indigent and survivors of abuse.

In **Costa Rica**, we conducted an assessment of the ministries of public security and treasury, which examined their institutional capacity to confront internal corruption and further outlined recommendations for addressing corruption within governmental institutions.

In the **Dominican Republic**, ABA ROLI provided legal aid to stateless individuals in the northern provinces of the country through a stationary legal aid clinic. In addition, the program created a mobile clinic that traveled to marginalized communities to provide services to those lacking access to justice.

In **Ecuador**, ABA ROLI trained judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, police officers, law professors and law students on trial skills for the accusatorial criminal justice system.

In **Guatemala**, we trained justice sector officials on transnational organized crimes. In addition, we conducted an assessment of and improved efficiency in the Attorney General’s Office.

ABA ROLI assessed **Nicaragua’s** legal framework for, and capacity to handle, juvenile cases, later developing a strategic plan for juvenile justice reform.

In **Panama**, ABA ROLI promoted respect for human rights and due process among the nation’s law enforcement entities. We also supported the country’s transition to an oral, accusatorial criminal justice system by training judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, police officers and forensics experts.
store, analyze and present scientific evidence in criminal investigations and prosecutions. In coordination with local partners, including the Attorney General’s Office, courts, police and the forensics institute, ABA ROLI drafted a country-specific manual for police, criminal investigators and first responders in Guatemala. The manual covers various issues such as the protection, preservation and processing of crime scenes, as well as chain of custody and admissibility of evidence. In El Salvador, ABA ROLI developed a manual for investigators, crime scene technicians, police officers and prosecutors working on cases involving clandestine cemeteries and mass graves. We also arrange for U.S. and regional experts to train justice administrators on a number of forensics-related issues, including crime-scene protection, chain of custody, evidence law and basic techniques of evidence collection. Finally, we are developing a regional evidentiary benchbook to provide judges and prosecutors with a shared understanding for the use of forensic evidence in criminal cases.

**Increasing inter-institutional coordination**

To increase the use and effectiveness of forensic evidence during trials, we promote greater coordination between forensics laboratories and law enforcement agencies in El Salvador and Guatemala. We also convene and support a forensics working group in each country to promote internal cooperation between forensic experts, police, investigators, prosecutors and courts. In addition, we are working with forensics laboratories to refine their internal processes, to implement better quality management systems and to improve their interactions with police and prosecutors.

To increase the use and effectiveness of forensic evidence during trials, we promote greater coordination between forensics laboratories and law enforcement agencies in El Salvador and Guatemala.
EL SALVADOR

El Salvador has made considerable progress toward greater democratic inclusion since the end of the country’s civil war and the signing of its peace accords in 1992. However, the country still faces some challenges, particularly in ensuring the rights of minorities. Among the most vulnerable groups are members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, who experience excessive discrimination and physical violence. El Salvador’s LGBT community is disproportionately targeted with violence, and police often fail to sufficiently investigate cases of physical violence related to sexual orientation or identity.

ABA ROLI is working to curb violence against the LGBT community with the support of the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Our program is helping to increase the capacity of the country’s justice sector to protect the LGBT community from violence. ABA ROLI is also helping civil society organizations build their capacity to promote and protect LGBT rights.

Training justice sector actors

A lack of sensitivity toward the LGBT community and limited recognition of the violence perpetrated against its members contribute to the justice sector’s inability to address violence against the LGBT. To help address these issues, ABA ROLI is conducting trainings for justice sector operators and healthcare workers on how to identify and combat violence against LGBT persons. Our sensitivity workshops help to increase participants’ awareness of both the specific needs of the LGBT community and the trend of pervasive physical violence against LGBT minorities. These workshops highlight common trends of LGBT victimization to empower justice sector officials and healthcare operators to play the role of a watchdog. The trainings, which incorporate practical exercises around hypothetical cases of violence against LGBT persons, educate participants about the human rights of LGBT individuals and give an overview of investigative and prosecutorial tools. The practical skills sessions allow training participants to apply the lessons they learned during the workshop, with medical professionals attending a victim, police investigating the crime and prosecutors conducting a trial.

Supporting LGBT advocacy

While there are civil society organizations in El Salvador that are dedicated to defending the rights of LGBT individuals and furthering society’s understanding and acceptance of the LGBT community, there has been little collaboration among such organizations. The lack of coordination of resources and efforts has limited the effectiveness of these organizations’ efforts to advocate on behalf of the LGBT. ABA ROLI’s program seeks to address this issue, among others.
Salvadoran Lawyer Strives for the LGBT’s Rights and Visibility

Systemic discrimination and hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members of the Salvadoran society did not sit well with attorney Sandra Bessy Ríos Torres. Time and again, she heard stories of mistreatment from members of the country’s LGBT community—including her relatives, friends and colleagues—and she wanted it to end. Yet, she was well aware that she couldn’t wish it away.

Her involvement with human rights issues began when she was a law student and worked for the association advocating for the children that went missing during El Salvador’s civil war. While Bessy has been in private practice for the past 12 years, she is a columnist for the online newspaper El Faro and blogs on such issues as human rights, women’s empowerment and LGBT rights.

In 2009, Bessy founded the Foundation of Family and Friends for Sexual Diversity in El Salvador (known by its local name De La Mano Contigo, Spanish for Hand in Hand with You) to promote the rights of the LGBT. Ever since its launch, De La Mano Contigo has been carrying out public education activities to raise awareness of LGBT rights among the LGBT community, governmental and non-governmental organizations and the general public. The foundation also advocates for relevant legal reforms and provides legal services and informal counseling to subjects of discrimination and human rights violations. “These activities have been carried out thanks to the unconditional support of people who are interested in creating places that guarantee inclusion and respect for the fundamental rights of the [LGBT] community members,” says Bessy.

Since the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) began to implement a program that promotes the rights of the LGBT in August 2015, Bessy has been one of ABA ROLI’s closest partners. Supported by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, ABA ROLI’s program employs a multi-disciplinary approach that brings together criminal-justice and public-health institutions, as well as civil society organizations to advance the human rights of Salvadorans. Through the program, ABA ROLI works to increase the justice sector’s capacity to protect the LGBT community from violence and discrimination, and to boost civil society’s capacity to protect LGBT rights.

ABA ROLI has been supporting De La Mano Contigo’s efforts to enhance its institutional capacity, to clarify its goals and objectives, to draft its organizational regulations and to solidify its brand. Bessy says that the assistance has enabled De La Mano Contigo to gain name recognition. It has also allowed the foundation to begin the registration process with El Salvador’s Registry of Associations and Not-For-Profit Foundations. In addition, ABA ROLI is helping the foundation overcome the barrier of invisibility that haunts LGBT rights organizations and develop connections with other human rights organizations in El Salvador.

Bessy says that ABA ROLI’s support is encouraging and boosts her organization’s efforts. “[I hope our collective effort] will facilitate access to justice and increase investigations of hate crimes against the LGBT community,” she adds.
ABA ROLI fosters dialogue between civil society organizations that advocate for LGBT rights to discuss the central challenges facing LGBT persons in El Salvador. We are also working to improve the capacity of local non-profit organizations that seek to increase public awareness of, and respect for, LGBT rights—including Fundación de Familiares y Amigos por la Diversidad Sexual de El Salvador, De la Mano Contigo (Foundation of Family and Friends for Sexual Diversity in El Salvador, Hand in Hand with You). ABA ROLI has convened a working group led by De La Mano Contigo. Established in 2015, this working group strives to increase the capacity of civil society organizations to promote and protect the rights of the LGBT community through a clear identification of common goals and development of a strategy to advocate for LGBT rights in the country. Drawing on its experience with public outreach campaigns, ABA ROLI is assisting De La Mano Contigo in creating informational materials to educate the LGBT community of its rights and of services the justice and healthcare sectors offer to victims of physical, sexual and psychological violence.

HAITI

Since the election of President Michel Martelly in April 2011, the Haitian justice sector has made significant efforts to strengthen the rule of law, including the establishment of a High Judicial Council to manage and discipline the judiciary and the adoption of legislation to combat corruption and money laundering. Despite these positive developments, the criminal justice system faces a number of serious challenges, including a high pre-trial detention rate and low conviction rate. Underlying these issues are inadequate criminal investigations and a general failure to fully comply with criminal procedures.

Consequently, since 2011, ABA ROLI has been working to strengthen the capacity of Haiti’s criminal justice sector by training judges, prosecutors and police investigators on investigation and prosecution skills, enabling them to play a more effective role in combating public corruption, kidnapping, money laundering, gender-based violence, and arms and human trafficking. We also conduct training and outreach to support criminal law and criminal procedure code reforms. In addition, ABA ROLI encourages greater judicial transparency and supports a program for judicial inspectors. This work is funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

Strengthening the justice sector

We are assisting Haiti’s justice sector in preparing its officials to implement recent anti-corruption and anti-human trafficking laws. For example, our mentoring program connects experienced international judges and
prosecutors with local officials to provide them with advice on their investigation, prosecution and adjudication of related cases. We also work with the judiciary to help sensitize and inform judges, prosecutors, bar associations and the general public about the new anti-corruption legislation. The conviction rate in Haiti is extremely low, approximately three percent. This, in part, is due to an inconsistent approach to crime-scene management by police and prosecutors, which generates impunity and jeopardizes public security. For example, officials routinely fail to properly gather key crime-scene evidence. In response, ABA ROLI is providing specialized trainings for judges, prosecutors, criminal defense attorneys and police officers to promote a singular, cohesive vision of the criminal justice system and to foster inter-institutional collaboration. One such partnership has been established between Haiti’s Forensics Institute, Magistrate School and the National Police School, which have jointly developed a forensics training curriculum for use by judges and police. ABA ROLI also offers specialized trainings on substantive areas to address emerging threats to social order, such as kidnapping, sexual and gender-based violence, drug trafficking, money laundering and corruption.

Supporting criminal reform
Currently, Haiti is both reforming its criminal justice system and revising its criminal and criminal procedure codes. ABA ROLI is generating support for these efforts by supporting sensitization workshops held by the Presidential Reform Commission. At these workshops, the codes are presented to justice sector operators to solicit their comments and foster buy-in.

Enhancing judicial capacity
We are working with Haiti’s High Judicial Council to create a strong and autonomous judicial inspections unit, which will be responsible for the integrity and operational effectiveness of the country’s judges and their staffs. We have developed several inspection tools and a related training curriculum for the unit to ensure proper function of the country’s court system. We helped to train the judicial inspectors and are currently providing them with technical expertise in conducting court inspections. We have also completed drafting of the first code of ethics for judges. Furthermore, ABA ROLI is collaborating with local organizations to launch a series of trainings to help enhance citizens’ and media professionals’ understanding of the role of judicial inspectors.
Security and stability are the only way for Haiti to reach sustainable socio-economic development. Once I fully understood this, I felt like I was on a mission. It is my duty to devote my time and energy for this project, which will benefit generations to come.

—Jean Joseph Exumé, Head of Haiti’s Presidential Reform Commission

Since 2012, Haiti has been engaged in revising its criminal and criminal procedure codes, which have not been updated significantly since 1835. Jean Joseph Exumé, a former minister of justice who heads Haiti’s Presidential Reform Commission—a five-member expert group mandated with updating the codes—is at the forefront of the ongoing criminal justice reform effort. He says, “The world has drastically changed since [1835] and this must be reflected in our legislation.”

In part due to the outdated codes, Haiti suffers from limited access to justice and high corruption. International observers indicate that the country has a whopping 75 percent pre-trial detention and a mere 3 percent conviction rates. Exumé—along with other Haitian jurists—has been working to reform the criminal justice system since 1995. As a minister, he oversaw the passage of legislative reforms, including one that led to the creation of a judicial inspection unit. Yet, the revised criminal and criminal procedure codes will have more far-reaching impacts. “The proposed codes foster greater respect for citizens’ rights and freedoms, and will allow the justice system to be more effective through the use of modern technology,” says Exumé.

In 2015, when the commission was drafting the new codes, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) supported the organization of two workshops on comparative criminal law. Latin American, African and European experts provided an overview of criminal justice reforms in their respective countries. The workshops allowed Haitian stakeholders to learn from similar reform initiatives. Exumé says, “It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel. We need to benefit from other countries’ experiences and adapt them to our own specificities.”

Exumé adds that his discussions with the visiting counterparts helped him see the urgency of the criminal justice reform. “I recognized how slowly we have been engaging in the criminal justice reform process,” he says. “It reinforced my belief that I should commit all my experience and expertise to [the initiative].”

The proposed codes would make the criminal justice system more effective, including by drastically reducing pre-trial detention and introducing plea bargaining. They clarify the roles of justice sector operators, introduce anti-organized crime measures and witness-protection mechanisms, and define the rights of victims and minors.

His involvement with the initiative made Exumé realize even more the importance of the reform efforts. “Security and stability are the only way for Haiti to reach sustainable socio-economic development,” he said. “Once I fully understood this, I felt like I was on a mission. It is my duty to devote my time and energy for this project, which will benefit generations to come.”

Once the codes were drafted, ABA ROLI—with funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs—helped the commission organize 10 workshops to elicit stakeholders’ feedback and foster their buy-in. Held across the country, the workshops were attended by a total of 763 justice sector operators. Exumé says that these consultations afforded members of his commission a better understanding of the country’s realities. “For instance, I became conscious of the overwhelming problem of violence against women,” he says. “The commission then adapted the code to reflect this issue.”

Later this year, the codes will be submitted to parliament for adoption. “[Once adopted,] the new codes … will benefit both the people and the justice system,” says Exumé. “Our justice system cannot afford to stay in the 19th century while we live in the 21st.”
MEXICO
Since 2008, Mexico’s criminal justice system has been transitioning from an inquisitorial to an accusatorial model, and from a writing-based approach to one that uses oral trials featuring live witness testimony and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. The Mexican government and its partners consider these reforms vital to strengthen and institutionalize the rule of law in the country. These reforms require significant revamping of the country’s legal education and legal profession regimes, as well as concerted efforts to produce and train legal professionals capable of discharging their duties under the new system. In the meantime, support for criminal law reform has grown within both the government and civil society. Building upon this enthusiasm, ABA ROLI supports reforms by strengthening Mexico’s legal education and legal profession regimes and by empowering law students, law professors and justice sector operators to support the accusatorial system and to operate more effectively within it.

With support from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, we partner with local experts, bar association leaders, law schools and national inter-institutional bodies to promote stronger legal profession and legal education. Activities include promoting professional certifications, mandatory bar membership and continuing legal education for lawyers, as well as clinical legal programs, practical-skills courses and mock-trial competitions for law. In addition, we promote a culture of lawfulness by training justice sector operators and civil society representatives on freedom of information legislation and working to build bridges between police and the communities in which they work.

Developing legal resources
ABA ROLI works in coordination with the legal education and the legal profession sectors to encourage responsiveness to the reforms. Based on the findings of two ABA ROLI-conducted assessments, the Legal Education Reform Index and the Legal Profession Reform Index, we published a Reform Guide for the Strengthening of Legal Education and the Legal Profession in Mexico, which in turn led to the development of an ethics-focused guidebook for legal professionals. These publications also served as a basis for subsequent publications, including a model code of ethics for lawyers and an operations manual—along with an associated training course—to promote more effective bar association management.

Promoting a stronger legal profession
In addition to supporting the publication of these resources, ABA ROLI has supported a committee composed of academics, private attorneys, bar association representatives, judges and regulators who work to support a strengthened legal profession. The committee is tasked with drafting laws on mandatory bar membership and on lawyer certification, as well as on related amendments to the Mexican constitution to enable bar associations to better serve their members and the public at large.
Improving legal education
Many Mexican law schools have begun to revise their curricula to accommodate the changes in the criminal justice system. Building upon the initial efforts of these pioneering institutions, ABA ROLI is conducting mock-trial competitions and disseminating teaching manuals. Additionally, working with local law schools, ABA ROLI is supporting nine legal aid clinics that specialize in criminal defense for indigent clients. The clinics provide an opportunity for law students to strengthen their oral litigation skills and to utilize them in real-world scenarios. Moreover, by providing free services to indigent clients, the clinics both increase access to justice and foster a commitment to pro bono service among future lawyers. We serve as a technical resource to clinic managers by sharing best practices and by fostering improved understanding of the accusatorial criminal justice system.

ABA ROLI partners with law professors and students to improve teaching methods for the new criminal justice system by training professors and students in oral advocacy and training professors in innovative teaching skills. We are also conducting regional and national mock-trial competitions, allowing students to practice their newly learned trial and mediation skills and to gain deeper appreciation for the new justice system.

Improving accountability and citizen engagement
The justice sector’s implementation of the accusatorial system is steadily advancing, yet the public’s trust in the Mexican government’s ability to provide justice remains weak. In an effort to address the critical need for effective collaboration between the justice sector and civil society while improving accountability and the level of public trust, ABA ROLI is implementing a program to promote a culture of lawfulness.

Through this program, ABA ROLI facilitates dialogue and engagement between law enforcement agencies and the community. We seek to increase the flow of information to citizens about their rights and responsibilities in an engaging and productive manner. In addition, we are working with in-country partners to sponsor an awareness campaign that features open house visits to courts and branches of the Attorney General’s Office in various states to familiarize the public with the justice system. We are also training members of civil society organizations on existing state and federal freedom of information laws and pending amendments, as well as on these laws’ implications on transparency.

PERU
The political and social conditions in Peru during the 1980s and 1990s led to a loss of confidence in government institutions, particularly in the judicial system. Moreover, the perception of institutional inefficiency further weakened public confidence. Over the past decade, the government has undertaken a series of reforms to address these concerns and to strengthen justice sector institutions. One such measure is the implementation of a 2004 Criminal Procedure Code (CPC), a process that began in 2006 and is scheduled to be completed in December 2016.
ABA ROLI, with funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, supports Peru’s transition to an accusatorial criminal justice system and its implementation of the CPC. We work in coordination with the Peruvian government to strengthen the justice sector’s capacity to process cases effectively under the accusatorial system, as well as to mobilize support for criminal justice reforms within the justice sector and civil society and among the public at large. To support the reforms, ABA ROLI is training justice sector personnel on trial advocacy skills and on investigative techniques, as well as conducting activities that foster awareness of the accusatorial system among citizens, such as outreach campaigns and guided tours of the courts.

**Strengthening accusatorial skills**

ABA ROLI’s work in Peru supports CPC implementation through a series of trainings designed to promote understanding of the accusatorial system and to impart the necessary skills for operating effectively within it. The workshops are offered to judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys and police officials, and they foster mutual understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities under the new system. ABA ROLI courses cover a range of issues, including investigation and litigation skills, transnational crime, money laundering, and human and narcotics trafficking.

We have also conducted study tours to Colombia and to the United States to enable members of the Peruvian justice sector to witness and observe the application of criminal procedures under an accusatorial system. These exchanges allowed participants to establish a dialogue with counterparts who can share best practices for key accusatorial functions.

**Encouraging broad support for reforms**

The success of Peru’s transition will depend, in part, on the level of buy-in within the justice sector and among the people of Peru. ABA ROLI is engaging in a range of outreach activities to promote the new system among justice sector institutions, bar associations, law schools, civil society and the public. We organize forums that convene civil society representatives to facilitate discussions on how the changes will affect their work and to devise ways to increase access to justice. ABA ROLI has also launched a multimedia campaign. The campaign utilizes public service announcements and a series of radio and television shows that feature a range of justice professionals providing their insights on key elements of the accusatorial criminal justice system, including the roles of police officers, prosecutors and judges; the phases of criminal proceedings; and alternative dispute resolution.

**Assessing court administration practices**

The accusatorial criminal justice system requires an evolution in Peru’s criminal justice sector. The reforms require changes in how institutions conduct their daily operations. ABA ROLI is therefore helping the Public Defender’s Office design a new national policy in response to CPC reforms. With ABA ROLI’s assistance, the office is re-designing its services, developing new training modules for its staff and creating new indicators, protocols and guidelines.

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For more than a decade, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) has been implementing programs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and has seen life-changing impacts. Over the years, we have helped to strengthen professional skills among judges and lawyers, supported the institutionalization of judicial and legal training programs, strengthened governmental and non-governmental organizations and helped to enhance legal and judicial practices, as well as to empower citizens. Currently, we work with judiciaries, the legal profession, law schools, civil society and governments in Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the West Bank.

We develop strategies that respond to changing needs and new challenges in the region, including by building unique partnerships through multi-sector and regional activities. We foster legal education reform in
Libya, Egypt and the West Bank; provide legal assistance to Syrian refugees in Turkey; promote national dialogue in Libya; support participatory governance in Morocco; and develop judicial education in Bahrain. In addition to ongoing programs highlighted in more detail in the pages that follow, we have initiated new partnerships in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

In January 2015, William Hubbard, former American Bar Association president, led a four-member delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to discuss opportunities for cooperation with the legal community. We later launched a program to enhance teaching skills of law professors at Prince Sultan University College for Women. Hubbard also led a delegation to Lebanon and signed memoranda of understanding with the Beirut and Tripoli bar associations.
BAHRAIN

ABA ROLI has worked with the Bahraini Ministry of Justice since 2003. We continue to expand our engagement in Bahrain to collaborate with a variety of partners that can support ongoing reform of judicial administration and judicial training, with the aim of supporting Bahrain’s efforts to strengthen its justice system. We also help with training judges, prosecutors and lawyers on freedom of expression. Additionally, we support initiatives to institutionalize human rights education at the University of Bahrain. Our work is funded by the U.S. Department of State.

Fostering judicial independence and effectiveness

ABA ROLI supports the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) as it embarks on a series of ambitious reforms. ABA ROLI provides technical assistance to the council’s leadership in defining the roles and responsibilities of planned departments, including by supporting the development of strategic approaches that allow the SJC to effectively and efficiently address key priorities. ABA ROLI also assists the SJC in examining administrative structures and processes for its secretariat, in prioritizing objectives, as well as in identifying activities and developing an implementation roadmap.

Providing continuing legal education

ABA ROLI helped to establish the Judicial and Legal Studies Institute (JLSI) in 2005. We continue to support its institutional development, including by offering trainings in specialized areas of the law, by conducting needs assessments and designing trainings for judges and lawyers. We also provide direct assistance in the development and delivery of courses on international law and on key practical legal skills.

Supporting legal education reform

In 2014, ABA ROLI conducted a comprehensive assessment of the University of Bahrain’s legal education programs. A team of experts evaluated the program against international standards and best practices and presented its initial findings to the university. Conducted at the request of the university, the assessment included a detailed review of the law curriculum, faculty qualifications, teaching methodology and other resources of the
In Egypt, ABA ROLI trains young prosecutors to develop their investigation and prosecution skills, particularly in cases involving sexual and gender-based violence.

**Raising students’ human rights awareness**

ABA ROLI also works with the University of Bahrain to promote increased understanding of human rights among students. With ABA ROLI support, in 2013, the university established Bahrain’s first clinical legal education program, a human rights clinic that focuses on juvenile justice and children’s law. We continue to support the clinic as well as the development of a mandatory human rights curriculum to improve the quality of human rights education at the university.

**EGYPT**

ABA ROLI’s programs in Egypt help to strengthen legal services by improving the quality of legal education in law schools and by boosting the knowledge and skills of new and experienced lawyers through continuing legal education (CLE). Large class sizes, limited resources and little exposure to legal analysis or problem-solving activities limit the practical skills of law graduates and practicing lawyers. To help strengthen legal education, we train law professors and organize practical-skills activities for law students. Additionally, ABA ROLI’s CLE programs prepare recent graduates to practice law while allowing seasoned lawyers to keep up to date with new laws and to hone their courtroom skills.

ABA ROLI also works with the Ministry of Justice and the Public Prosecutors’ Office to train judges and prosecutors, respectively, on a range of substantive issues as well as applied skills. Our programs in Egypt are funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the Ford Foundation.

**Building students’ lawyering skills**

In 2015, ABA ROLI helped the law schools at Al Azhar, Ain Shams, Beni Suef, Cairo, Menoufia, Tanta and Zagazig universities integrate experiential learning into their curricula. To prepare them to teach legal clinic courses, ABA ROLI trained 22 law professors on the establishment and management of legal clinics, legal analysis and problem solving, interviewing clients and interactive teaching methodologies.

Additionally, ABA ROLI conducted national moot-arbitration and legal-writing competitions for law students. In the lead up to the national...
From February to December 2015, ABA ROLI trained 75 law professors from five of Egypt’s 13 public universities on interactive teaching methodologies. Additionally, in 2015, ABA ROLI helped the law schools at Al Azhar, Ain Shams, Beni Suef, Cairo, Menoufia, Tanta and Zagazig universities integrate experiential learning into their curricula.

ABA ROLI conducted preparatory trainings for approximately 200 students from seven partner law schools. Through a separate program, ABA ROLI collaborated with law professors to offer supplementary, applied legal skills courses to 62 law students. Led by ABA ROLI experts, these supplementary courses allowed participating students to apply the lessons they learned in their traditional courses to hypothetical cases.

### Training law professors

From February to December 2015, ABA ROLI trained 75 law professors from five of Egypt’s 13 public universities on interactive teaching methodologies. ABA ROLI has also trained some of these professors on curriculum development. These advanced trainings prepare the participants to create interactive, problem-solving exercises to enhance the traditionally lecture-based courses they teach.

### Expanding continuing legal education

ABA ROLI conducts CLE trainings, in both English and Arabic, for new and more experienced lawyers alike. Our CLE offerings range from short two-day courses to an extended 50-hour training. In response to demands from remotely located young lawyers who have historically had limited training options, in May 2012, ABA ROLI launched a program of interactive e-learning courses. Our CLE courses address substantive areas of law, such as real estate or intellectual property, as well as lawyering skills, such as contract drafting, oral advocacy, client interviewing and legal analysis. To help ensure the sustainability of the effort, ABA ROLI has over the years built up a cadre of more than 40 local CLE instructors who have completed a rigorous training of trainers workshop and now teach the CLE courses, as well as, in some cases, at Egyptian universities.

Since the inception of the CLE program in May 2009, ABA ROLI has trained approximately 3,100 Egyptian lawyers. These lawyers, most of whom had less than five years of experience, often gained an important competitive edge when applying for positions with law firms and other potential employers.

### Training judges and prosecutors

ABA ROLI collaborates with Egypt’s Ministry of Justice to train judges on topics ranging from judicial ethics to anti-human trafficking. To institutionalize these efforts, ABA ROLI also assists with designing and implementing judicial training curricula, developing and publishing benchbooks and training future trainers. ABA ROLI tailors these courses to the Egyptian context and pairs international and local experts to facilitate the exchange of experiences. In the same vein, we provide a series of workshops to prosecutors, focusing both on specific subject matters, such as criminal procedure and sexual and gender-based violence, as well as on experiential skills, such as interviewing techniques and evidence gathering. Between April and December 2015, we trained 231 judges and 94 prosecutors.
LIBYA

Libya continues to struggle as political uncertainty and increasing violence threaten the rule of law. Since May 2012, ABA ROLI has provided steady support to key stakeholders in the country’s transition—including judges, lawyers, prosecutors and civil society representatives. ABA ROLI also works to enhance communication between local communities and national institutions tasked with promoting national dialogue. Our programs in Libya are funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of State’s Middle East Partnership Initiative, the International Legal Assistance Consortium and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

Supporting the legal profession

In Libya, ABA ROLI is working to enhance lawyers’ capacity to serve as effective rule-of-law advocates. ABA ROLI also provides technical assistance to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Libyan Bar Association (LBA), supporting the development of strategic plans for improved communication, administrative and financial management, and advocacy for law reform and justice sector integrity. We are also collaborating with the LBA in designing a practical skills course for new lawyers, which addresses six major topics, including professionalism, civil litigation, commercial and corporate practice, criminal law, personal status, Sharia and family law, and legal writing. Additionally, ABA ROLI, in partnership with the LBA and the National Economic Development Board, is conducting a commercial law assessment.
Fostering clinical legal education
ABA ROLI is helping three Libyan universities establish clinical legal education. Building on study tours, mentoring opportunities and trainings it previously organized, ABA ROLI supported the development of curricula for human rights-focused online classes. The new courses will enhance students’ substantive knowledge and practical skills, and improve the delivery of services to clients of the legal clinics. In addition, ABA ROLI assisted the law schools in conducting internal and national moot-court competitions. In 2015, 36 students took part in the competitions.

Promoting human rights
We are working to increase the capacity of the National Council for Civil Liberties and Human Rights (NCCLHR) to serve as a national human rights regulatory body. Our assistance includes developing an electronic system to streamline the processing of human rights complaints, designing a training program for staff, and promoting legislative drafting and advocacy on human rights issues. We are also working to build the capacity of human rights lawyers and civil society leaders to document human rights violations and report them to the NCCLHR. In 2015, the NCCLHR—with ABA ROLI support—sent a delegation to Libya’s universal periodic review before the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The delegation highlighted human rights issues in Libya and made specific recommendations to the council about how to address the issues.

Engaging with women legal professionals
While Libyan women have a robust presence in the legal profession, they face many challenges. We are collaborating with a core group of women activists to examine the status of women legal professionals through de jure and de facto analysis. We are also conducting targeted trainings and study tours to regional women’s legal associations, and developing online resources to build the capacity of a newly established network of women lawyers. The network advocates on behalf of women legal professionals and creates mentoring opportunities for female lawyers, judges and prosecutors.

Encouraging constitutional dialogue
In 2015, ABA ROLI facilitated citizen participation in the constitutional drafting process by creating opportunities for national dialogue on constitutional development. We organized workshops for various stakeholders, including legal professionals, human rights activists and local government representatives. Recommendations from these workshops, including on human rights, youth and women’s rights, and the roles of local government and decentralization, were submitted to the Constitutional Drafting Authority for consideration. Additionally, we collaborated with the National Dialogue Preparatory Commission to promote peace by engaging citizens in dialogue. We are also working with the commission to build a network of community liaisons to lead dialogue in their local communities. ABA ROLI is currently training the liaisons and providing support for follow-on activities in their communities.
Libyan Activist Promotes Human Rights for her Fellow Citizens

“I believe in the future of Libya, in which the rights and liberties of every Libyan are respected,” says Marwa Salem, a women’s rights activist who also heads a department within the Libyan National Council for Civil Liberties and Human Rights (NCCLHR). “The NCCLHR can play a decisive role in building such a future.”

Established by law in 2011 as an independent body, the council is the first national human rights institution of its kind in Libya. Its mandate is to promote the protection of civil liberties and human rights by working with governmental and non-governmental agencies to monitor and deter violations. Marwa’s department spearheads the council’s cooperation with international organizations.

While Libya’s political and security situation is not conducive for any human rights activists, the conflict has put particular pressure on the NCCLHR. Due to disruptions in budget allocations for the council, Marwa and her colleagues have had to work without pay for months; and in October 2014, militias closed the NCCLHR office in Tripoli. Despite these challenges and hovering threats, Marwa says that she and her colleagues prefer to focus on the support and encouragement NCCLHR gets from local and international stakeholders.

For the past two years, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) has worked to develop the council’s institutional capacity. In May 2015, ABA ROLI supported the council’s participation in the United Nations Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the human rights situation in Libya. “This was an important experience and an opportunity for [our council] to make its voice heard,” says Marwa. “This was the first time that the NCCLHR participated in the UPR session, presented its own assessment of the human rights situation in Libya and made recommendations for its improvement.”

In the months leading up to the UPR, ABA ROLI experts advised Marwa and her colleagues on UPR rules and procedures, as well as on submitting written human rights assessments. ABA ROLI also sponsored the participation of the NCCLHR delegation in the Geneva meetings, which allowed Marwa and her team to meet representatives from the UN Human Rights Council’s Middle East and North Africa Division, as well as other local and international organizations working on human rights issues in Libya.

Marwa says that, despite all the challenges, the NCCLHR can grow to become a powerful, independent human rights institution. The council’s engagement with other stakeholders, says Marwa, will strengthen its advocacy efforts. “Participation in the UPR convinced me of how strong our voice can be, and of how we can make a difference,” she adds.

Testimony to its valuable contribution to the UPR process and the promotion of human rights in Libya, in 2015, the UN coordinating committee for national human rights institutions rated the NCCLHR as a “category B” national human rights institution. “Achieving category B rating was a strategic goal for the council and we are very happy to achieve the goal sooner than expected,” says Marwa. “The B rating gives us more opportunities to participate in international and UN forums.”

The NCCLHR, with ABA ROLI support, continues to monitor Libya’s implementation of the UPR recommendations. It is also collaborating with local civil society actors and decision-makers to improve Libya’s compliance with its international obligations, including by submitting recommendations on Libya’s draft constitution. “ABA ROLI has empowered an important human rights institution in Libya,” says Marwa. “It helped us to create an adaptable work plan in a very critical, changeable time.”
ABA ROLI assists efforts to raise Moroccan citizens’ awareness of corruption in the criminal justice sector, works to build local partners’ capacity to combat corruption, trains young lawyers on human rights, and assists local government and civil society in the implementation of the country’s legal framework on local governance and citizen participation.

### Building civil society’s advocacy capacity

ABA ROLI supported the creation of a coalition of 3,500 civil society organizations (CSOs), which has drafted policy statements and legislation that would implement the new constitutional right of citizens to submit legislative initiatives to parliament. We also supported a nation-wide public consultation process on the draft legislation, as well as civil society-led advocacy. ABA ROLI provided technical assistance to the CSO coalition as it drafted the policy statements, which also articulated the role of Moroccan civil society in promoting democratic governance. Between 2014 and 2015, more than 4,000 individuals attended ABA ROLI-organized trainings or public information events, while more than 10.4 million citizens were reached by ABA ROLI’s media campaign.

### Fostering gender parity

ABA ROLI continues to assist women’s rights organizations in identifying Moroccan laws and practices that treat women disparately. We helped our local partners advocate for the harmonization of Moroccan law and practice, including their drafting of a law on the gender parity-related article 19 of Morocco’s constitution. We also organized citizen discussions on women’s issues, convening lawyers, parliamentarians, academics, and CSO and political party representatives to exchange views on these issues. The discussions led to the drafting of 11 position papers on such issues as the marriage of minors, inheritance and women’s political participation.

### Training young lawyers

Moroccan lawyers and judges have interpreted constitutional provisions on the supremacy of international conventions to mean that these conventions have become a source
of law for domestic jurisprudence. To enable lawyers to understand and apply international laws, ABA ROLI worked with local bar associations to develop a human rights law course, which draws upon relevant domestic laws and international conventions that Morocco has ratified. The course, which contains practical exercises and a section on pleading techniques, explains how international human rights law can be applied in domestic courts. ABA ROLI also developed a manual on interactive teaching methodology to accompany the course. The course covers several topics, such as due process, torture, human trafficking, violence against women, freedom of expression, and economic and social rights, including worker’s rights, sexual harassment and workplace safety. Since February 2015, ABA ROLI has trained 430 young lawyers in 17 Moroccan cities, while more than 1,000 people attended associated informational events.

Raising awareness of due process and other rights
In collaboration with our Moroccan partners—including the Ministry of Justice, the anti-corruption commission, regional human rights commissions, the judges’ association and CSOs—we conducted a public awareness campaign to educate citizens on due process and other constitutional rights. The campaign targeted the Marrakech region via radio programs, community theater and educational caravans. By the end of 2015, approximately 100,000 citizens were reached through the educational caravans, another 85,000 through other face-to-face events, and about 2,000,000 others through the radio campaigns. Additionally, ABA ROLI helped bar associations answer or direct to appropriate authorities questions from approximately 600 citizens.

Enhancing judicial training capacity
In response to a request from a local partner, l’Institut Superieur de la Magistrature (ISM), ABA ROLI conducted a judicial education assessment. The ISM is responsible for training Moroccan judges, prosecutors and court clerks. The assessment findings will inform new strategies to enhance all aspects of judicial training, including curriculum, teaching methodology and management of the ISM. In March 2015, four ABA ROLI experts spent several weeks in Morocco working with local experts to understand the needs, objectives and challenges of the country’s judicial education. They developed a report that included specific suggestions for improvement, presenting their findings to local partners. Their input has been incorporated into the final assessment recommendations.

Reinforcing local governance efforts
ABA ROLI is training representatives from local governments and CSOs to promote the implementation of newly passed legislation on local governments. These efforts focus on helping local governments strengthen transparency, facilitating citizen engagement and empowering Moroccans to assert their rights.

Between 2014 and 2015, more than 4,000 Moroccans attended ABA ROLI-organized trainings or public information events on new constitutional provisions and associated legislation, while more than 10.4 million citizens were reached by ABA ROLI’s media campaign.
SYRIA

Since March 2011, more than four and half million Syrians have fled to neighboring countries, escaping a brutal and relentless civil war. After making the difficult journey out of Syria, the refugees continue to struggle in their host countries and are largely unaware of or unable to access basic rights, such as legal assistance, housing and education. The majority of Syrians live scattered among the urban populations in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, and not in refugee camps. To be able to navigate their host countries’ legal systems, they need information on how the law applies to them and, in many cases, legal counsel.

Providing legal assistance to Syrians living in Turkey

The majority of Syrians in Turkey live outside established government camps and must co-exist with their Turkish neighbors in cities, towns and villages across the country. The law is critical both to define the rights of Syrian refugees and to resolve any conflicts that arise among Syrians, and between Syrians and their Turkish hosts. While the Turkish government introduced the Temporary Protection Regime (TPR) in spring 2014 to clarify Syrians’ legal status, associated regulations are constantly evolving and have many gaps that make the TPR’s implementation challenging. Moreover, lack of information—along with language and cultural barriers—keeps many Syrians from taking advantage of important rights and protections the law affords, such as healthcare and education. Others are denied critical services because providers are misinformed about the rights of Syrians in Turkey.

With funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, ABA ROLI works to help Syrian refugees in Turkey’s urban areas to utilize the local legal system to assert their rights. We promote awareness and coordinate legal services for the Syrian population in Turkey. Working with local bar associations and individual legal professionals, we have trained 106 lawyers on the TPR. Our trainings also equip participants with special interviewing and counseling techniques and foster sensitivities when working with clients who escaped violent conflict, including those who have been injured or tortured, suffered sexual abuse or lost family members and property.

The ABA ROLI-trained lawyers conduct multiple legal awareness sessions each month to urban Syrian populations—primarily in Southeast Turkey and Istanbul. Held at community centers and partners’ offices, these sessions focus on the rights of Syrians under Turkish law and address such issues as legal documentation, housing, healthcare, employment and family law. Additionally, ABA ROLI distributes informational brochures written in Arabic to complement the awareness sessions.
Turkish Lawyer Utilizes Her Skills to Serve Syrian Refugees

Zehra Saglam never wanted a typical legal practice. She specializes in cutting-edge and evolving areas of Turkish law, such as intellectual property rights and real estate. Zehra is also interested in refugees’ and particularly women’s rights. When the president of her local Gaziantep Bar Association asked Zehra if she was interested in participating in the ABA Rule of Law Initiative’s (ABA ROLI’s) program to provide legal information and advice to Syrians in Turkey, she jumped at the chance.

ABA ROLI—with funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration—is currently implementing a program that assists Syrians living in Turkey in exercising their rights within the Turkish legal system. While Turkish law provides Syrians certain rights, the laws are complicated and difficult to navigate. This leaves Syrians vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including denial of critical services, such as healthcare and education. Lack of awareness among both Syrians and Turkish civil servants also limits Syrians’ ability to work, their access to housing and their realization of certain family rights. In January 2015, ABA ROLI began to train Turkish lawyers to deliver legal awareness sessions and individual legal consultations to urban Syrian populations throughout Turkey. ABA ROLI’s program spans cities along the southern border with Syria, including Gaziantep, Kilis, Sanliurfa and Hatay, as well as cities with a high density of Syrians, such as Mersin and Istanbul.

Zehra is one of more than 100 lawyers ABA ROLI has trained, and she conducts weekly legal information sessions for Syrians in two cities—Gaziantep City and Nizip—on legal topics including family law, labor law, citizenship, access to education, health, housing and legal aid. She also answers participants’ legal questions following each awareness session.

“From my experience with the ABA ROLI program,” says Zehra, “I know that what most Syrian people need is dignity. They want to live free from fear and uncertainty, they want to get a livelihood.”

As of February 2016, Zehra had led legal awareness sessions for more than 1,500 Syrians. She says that her work with ABA ROLI has allowed her to gain practical experience and insight. She has learned firsthand how the Turkish legal system functions in practice for Syrians living in Turkey. She says that understanding the challenges the Syrians face in finding an answer to many of the issues that may arise empowered her to become an advocate for those in need.

“Before I started with ABA ROLI, I was talking about the Syrians’ issues with my friends, with the representatives of Turkish institutions, because it is a great challenge for Turkey,” she says. “Now, I also understand the point of view of the Syrians, and I can voice their concerns when I meet government officials.”

Zehra also feels a particular responsibility toward helping the numerous Syrian women that seek her assistance. In each of her awareness sessions, women are not afraid to ask questions and appear driven to learn more about their rights. Their questions are mostly related to marriage, divorce and citizenship. She finds their willingness to ask questions very encouraging. She believes that the legal and civic education sessions may result in changing the mentality of the attendees, and encourage women to act as change agents.

Zehra has also started to conduct legal awareness sessions targeting women and other vulnerable populations. She says defending Syrian and women’s rights has become part of her life. She hopes that the ABA ROLI program will continue, she says, and “reach more Syrians, voice their needs and advocate for their rights.”
Immediately after the awareness sessions, the lawyers provide private one-on-one legal consultations to interested Syrians. Between April 2015 and March 2016, ABA ROLI conducted 221 general awareness sessions, reaching more than 4,700 Syrians and providing private legal counseling to more than 735.

**Addressing the needs of more vulnerable refugees**
ABA ROLI organizes separate sessions for more vulnerable members of the Syrian refugee population, including women and children, focusing on issues that disproportionately affect them, such as early and forced marriage, and sexual and gender-based violence. Between April 2015 and March 2016, ABA ROLI conducted 82 sessions for youth, women and girls.

**Maximizing impact with technology**
To complement the in-person sessions, we provide cell phone-based legal information and advice services to Syrian refugees. Our SMS-based system receives questions 24 hours a day. The questions are sorted, tagged by topic, translated into Turkish and sent to Turkish lawyers, who provide real-time advice. The answer is then translated back into Arabic and securely sent back to the appropriate refugee. Arabic-speaking translators are also on-hand to call and make arrangements for in-person consultations when necessary.

In addition, ABA ROLI sends out blast SMS messages with quick tips on basic rights. The program began in April 2015, and as of March 2016, more than 2,500 Syrians have signed up to receive such tips. ABA ROLI has sent out 31 blast SMS messages on different legal topics, providing legal advice via SMS to more than 370 individuals.
In the West Bank, ineffective legal representation is a threat to the rule of law. The quality of legal services suffers, in part, due to shortcomings of the legal education system. Traditionally, classes in law schools are lecture-based. There are too few opportunities for students to develop much-needed legal skills, such as oral advocacy, critical thinking, and legal research and writing. Moreover, law graduates strive to address human rights issues and advocate for marginalized populations without sufficient training on human rights laws and on the application of those laws. Therefore, incorporating interactive teaching methods—including student competitions—into law school curriculum is a necessary component of legal education reform.

**Conducting moot-court competitions**

In September 2015, ABA ROLI—with funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs—launched a West Bank program to support the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot-Court Competition. More than 550 law schools from more than 80 countries take part in the competition—the world’s largest. ABA ROLI’s program supports the development of a sustainable Jessup Moot-Court Competition in the West Bank and helps to enhance Palestinian law students’ knowledge of international law and human rights norms, as well as their advocacy and practical legal skills.

ABA ROLI is working with seven Palestinian universities to organize a national Jessup competition for at least two years. The winning teams from the national competitions will participate in the final rounds in Washington, D.C. in April 2016 and April 2017. ABA ROLI is collaborating with the International Law Student Association—which organizes the Jessup competition—as well as local law school administrators and professors to develop materials and coordinate the national competitions in the West Bank. We are also rallying local justice sector stakeholders to support the competition.

In addition, we are providing training to the Palestinian law students participating in national Jessup activities to help develop their legal English, oral advocacy, critical thinking, research and legal writing skills. ABA ROLI is also training law professors and coaches on the rules and procedures of the moot-court competitions. Further, we provide law professors with broader trainings, including on how to develop, oversee and evaluate moot-court exercises.
Efforts to promote the rule of law typically yield the best results when they address a country’s particular challenges while capitalizing on its strengths and available legal resources. To ensure that our programs target a host community’s specific needs, whenever we can, we base our efforts on studies that assess key aspects of a country’s legal system. In addition to developing 13 formal assessment tools and methodologies the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) has published a number of technical guides, flexible assessment frameworks, legislative assessments and handbooks related to our thematic areas. Many of these products, as well as our assessment tool reports, are available on our website.

Flexible assessment frameworks
We develop flexible assessment frameworks that can be adapted to the special circumstances and needs of a given country or region. Several of these frameworks, such as the *Assessment of Juvenile Justice in Nicaragua* (2010),
Assessment of Juvenile Justice in Belize (2010) and the Detention Procedure Assessment for Serbia: Pre-Disposition Stages (2013) are based on existing formal assessment tools. All of these frameworks were based upon the methodology of our Detention Procedure Assessment Tool.

Other frameworks have been created to assess areas of a country’s legal system not already covered by existing ABA ROLI assessment tools. Examples include Enhancing Public Services and Combating Corruption through Morocco’s Criminal Justice System (2013); and the Assessment of Judicial Training Needs in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and Rwanda (2013). Several such frameworks offered comprehensive recommendations for follow-on programming that were ultimately undertaken, including the creation of a rule of law network for criminal defense advocates in the Balkans and the establishment of the African Center for Justice in the Great Lakes region.
Handbooks and technical guides

Our published handbooks cover both general rule of law topics and issues specific to a particular country. These include the Handbook of International Standards on Pretrial Detention Procedure (2010); the Handbook of International Standards on Sentencing Procedure (2010); the Overview of Court Administration Systems in France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States (2013); and International Human Rights Law: A Handbook for Tunisian Stakeholders (2013).

Legislative assessments and studies
ABA ROLI’s research programs began in the 1990s with assessments of draft legislation from emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, and to date we have completed legislative assessments for more than 40 countries on a wide range of topics.

Formal assessment tools
To date, ABA ROLI has developed 13 formal assessment tools and methodologies, which have been created to fulfill several functions. First, local government leaders and other policymakers can use the findings to prioritize and focus reform efforts. Second, ABA ROLI and other rule of law technical assistance providers can use the assessment results to design more effective rule of law reform programs. Third, the tools provide donor organizations, policymakers, and local and international non-governmental organizations with hard-to-find information on, and analyses of, the structure, nature and status of the legal system in assessed countries. Fourth, the assessments contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how the rule of law functions in practice. And finally, assessment results also serve as a springboard for local advocacy initiatives, including public education campaigns.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE ASSESSMENT TOOL
Access to justice is the ability of citizens to seek and obtain remedies for their justice problems through formal or informal justice institutions in line with international human rights standards. ABA ROLI recognizes how essential access to justice is to communities and individuals, especially the poor and the marginalized. The Access to Justice Assessment Tool (AJAT) is designed to engage local civil society organizations (CSOs) in addressing obstacles to access to justice. The AJAT and its findings also inform justice sector reforms, helping civil society actors to identify justice priorities and advocate for evidence-based reform.
The *AJAT* is a mechanism for assessing whether citizens can obtain legal remedies that ensure their basic rights are recognized and protected. The tool measures six elements of access to justice: legal framework, legal knowledge, advice and representation, access to a justice institution, fair procedure and enforceable solution. ABA ROLI developed the tool to be implemented by local civil society organizations. As such, its design is inspired by the belief that research programs have a dual purpose: first, to produce credible, convincing evidence about a community’s challenges and about effective solutions to them, and second, to build local capacity to conduct quality research.

The tool includes a training manual to assist CSOs in identifying and devising solutions to access to justice challenges. The manual provides an analytical framework and teaches core research techniques for conducting semi-structured interviews and focus groups, for evaluating research findings, for preparing recommendations and for presenting reports. The *AJAT* fosters positive change by producing objective data and knowledge that empowers communities.

In 2010 and 2011, ABA ROLI piloted the *AJAT* with CSOs in Africa and Southeast Asia. With our training and assistance, the CSOs formulated key research questions, developed comprehensive research plans, conducted interviews, convened focus groups and wrote policy papers summarizing their findings. The pilot assessments considered both formal and informal justice mechanisms, and they included the perspectives of citizens as well as key governmental and community stakeholders. Partner CSOs used the resulting reports, which were published in both English and a local language, to advocate for reform. ABA ROLI also provided small grants to enable partner CSOs to design and implement programs to address the needs identified through their research.

After two years of intensive development, testing and vetting, ABA ROLI publicly released the *AJAT* in 2012, allowing partners to share their findings with the international development, academic, and public and private sector communities. Since then, the *AJAT* has continued to serve as an important contribution to the emerging discourse on legal empowerment and participatory research.
ANALYSIS OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE ADVOCACY

A strong, independent and effective criminal defense bar is essential to protect the rights of citizens and to raise public confidence in the criminal justice system. As part of ABA ROLI’s commitment to promoting fair and functioning criminal justice systems worldwide, the Analysis of Criminal Defense Advocacy (ACDA) provides an empirical basis for assessing the strength, independence and effectiveness of the criminal defense bar. It assesses 10 factors that significantly impact the ability of lawyers to effectively represent their clients and protect the human rights of people accused of crimes.

Summary of the ACDA Methodology

The ACDA relies on international human rights law and internationally accepted standards for the legal profession, including standards developed by the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the International Bar Association, among other international and regional institutions. When developing the methodology of the ACDA, ABA ROLI used a rights-based approach. In a rights-based approach, the assessor’s goal is to determine whether and how the criminal justice system serves and empowers the holder of the rights—in this case the accused. The rights-based approach ensures that the assessor considers whether and how the duty bearer, in this case the defense advocate, is upholding his or her responsibilities. The rights-based approach allows the ACDA to highlight the role defense advocates and a healthy defense bar have in upholding human rights.

The ACDA evaluates local laws, regulations and practices vis-à-vis the assessment tool’s 10 factors, which reflect essential characteristics that contribute to a strong, independent and effective criminal defense bar and correspond to a fair and functioning criminal justice system. Information is gathered through a rigorous review of the bar’s legal and regulatory framework, as well as interviews with key stakeholders, including defense lawyers, prosecutors, judges, development professionals, civil society organizations, academics and other criminal justice professionals.

The report presents an in-depth analysis of the legal, institutional and practical issues relating to each factor. The ACDA’s flexible format allows it to be implemented in whole or in part in a single country or as a comparative analysis in several countries and may include recommendations for reform.

The pilot ACDA was implemented in 2014 as a comparative analysis of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia.
DETENTION PROCEDURE ASSESSMENT TOOL

In many countries, overuse of detention is a major problem at both the pre-trial and sentencing stages of criminal proceedings. The overuse of detention is often a symptom of a dysfunctional criminal justice system exacerbated by a lack of protection for the rights of criminal defendants and by limited institutional capacity to impose, implement and monitor non-custodial measures and sanctions. Also, it is often a cause of human rights violations and a range of societal problems associated with over-taxed detention systems, such as prison overcrowding, mistreatment of detainees, inhumane detention conditions, failure to rehabilitate offenders, increased recidivism and the social stigma of having been imprisoned on an ever-increasing portion of the population.

Drawing upon our more than two decades of experience providing legal technical assistance in nearly 100 countries worldwide, and in the framework of our nine other legal assessment tools, we developed the Detention Procedure Assessment Tool (DPAT) to evaluate the use of detention in criminal cases at both the pre-trial and sentencing stages.

Summary of the DPAT Methodology

ABA ROLI’s DPAT assesses the procedures, legal framework and practices relating to deprivation of liberty at all stages of criminal proceedings, from the moment an individual is first deprived of liberty until the time that individual is returned to full liberty, including an assessment of the framework and practice for imposing non-custodial measures at both the pre-trial and dispositional stages. The DPAT examines both the de jure legislative and procedural framework for detention and the de facto practices under which detention is imposed. The DPAT assessment draws upon international and regional laws, norms and best practices concerning pre-trial detention and sentencing, evaluating a country’s detention regime vis-à-vis 29 factors (including those impacting victims, juveniles and vulnerable adult populations) that relate to distinct issues at critical junctures and stages of the detention process.

The DPAT provides local government leaders and policymakers with information they can use to prioritize and focus reform efforts. Its results give donor organizations, policymakers, and local and international non-governmental organizations with hard-to-find information on the structure, nature and status of the legal system—and specifically detention procedures—in assessed countries. This information helps ABA ROLI and other legal technical assistance providers to design more effective programs and informs grassroots advocacy efforts to promote pre-trial and detention-related legal reforms and to improve compliance with internationally established standards.

The DPAT was piloted in Armenia in 2010 and implemented in Lebanon in 2012. Additionally, in 2010, the DPAT methodology was used to assess juvenile justice issues in Nicaragua and in Belize; and in 2013, it was used to examine detention practices prior to disposition in Serbia.
HIV/AIDS LEGAL ASSESSMENT TOOL
There are approximately 36.9 million people living with HIV worldwide. 17.1 million of them do not know they have the virus and need to be reached with HIV testing services and around 22 million of them do not have access to HIV treatment. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is exacerbated by widespread discrimination against people with HIV and key populations who experience unique HIV vulnerabilities, i.e., women, children, youth, people who use drugs, people in state custody, sex workers, men who have sex with men and transgender people. The international community has recognized that full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential element in the global response to HIV/AIDS. When people living with HIV enjoy full equality and inclusion in political, economic, social and cultural life—and when they are guaranteed the rights to liberty and security of person, privacy, confidentiality, family life, health care, education, housing, employment and freedom of movement—they are more likely to seek testing, receive counseling and maintain treatment regimens.

ABA ROLI’s HIV/AIDS Legal Assessment Tool consists of 22 factors that provide a mechanism for assessing a country’s de jure and de facto compliance with international legal standards on the protection of human rights of people living with, perceived to be living with and affected by HIV. The tool is uniquely equipped not only to uncover the incidence of HIV-related discrimination, but also to address such questions as whether a country’s legal system is sufficiently strong to protect people with HIV from discrimination and whether the state has committed appropriate resources and taken concrete steps to reduce HIV-related discrimination and to ensure rights.

The primary focus of the tool is HIV-related discrimination in both public and private life, and a section of the tool’s analytical framework is devoted to assessing the rights of key populations. Also, the tool includes detailed analyses of HIV-related discrimination faced by HIV advocates and service workers. The tool is designed to conduct assessments of the legal rights of people living with HIV and of key populations, providing a roadmap for addressing HIV-related discrimination and ensuring states’ compliance with applicable international legal standards. The tool also helps facilitate legal reforms, multi-sectoral collaboration and civil society organizations’ HIV/AIDS human rights initiatives.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING ASSESSMENTS
Trafficking in persons (TIP) is one of the world’s most prevalent and heinous crimes, harming hundreds of thousands of victims each year and adversely affecting stable democracies, countries in transition and societies immersed in war. International organizations, governments and non-governmental groups have recognized TIP as a contemporary form of slavery and—in certain circumstances—a crime against humanity.

One of the most important international tools aimed at responding to TIP is the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Trafficking Protocol). ABA ROLI’s
Human Trafficking Assessment Tool (HTAT) measures countries’ compliance with this treaty and other pertinent international legal standards.

The HTAT is a mechanism for assessing a country’s de jure and de facto compliance with the Trafficking Protocol. The HTAT is designed to address two fundamental questions:

- Is a country’s legal system sufficiently strong to combat human trafficking effectively?
- Has a country’s government committed appropriate resources and taken concrete steps to prevent and prosecute human trafficking as well as to protect human trafficking victims?

Substantively, the HTAT follows the key concept surrounding global anti-human trafficking efforts, namely, the “four Ps” paradigm: prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships. Consequently, the tool explores such issues as the legal definition of trafficking in persons, international cooperation, information exchange and training, border measures, security and legitimacy of documents, identification of and assistance for victims, status of victims in receiving states, repatriation of victims, prevention programs, criminalization, protection of witnesses, jurisdiction, extradition, organized crime, obstruction of justice and corruption.

The HTAT is designed to fulfill several functions. First, it analyzes a country’s progress in combating TIP and identifies gaps in its anti-TIP
efforts, thus enabling governments and anti-human trafficking stakeholders to prioritize reforms. Second, HTAT findings provide vital information for ABA ROLI, other technical assistance providers, donors and others charged with revising relevant legislation and designing anti-human trafficking policies and programs. Third, HTAT reports provide hard-to-find information on the structure, nature and status of TIP response in countries where the tool is implemented. Fourth, the assessment’s results can focus local efforts to improve compliance with the Trafficking Protocol. It also can facilitate enhanced inter-agency collaboration and international cooperation in the fight against this global challenge. Periodic implementations of the HTAT can identify a trend of improvement or remedial action on the part of a country, show areas where there has been backsliding of reforms and illustrate which anti-human trafficking strategies have been successful, which have stalled and which have had little or no impact. ABA ROLI piloted the HTAT methodology in Moldova in 2005. In addition, HTAT assessments have been conducted in Mexico and Nepal.

ABA ROLI has also created a comprehensive legal and policy tool for assessing TIP risks, as well as strategies for mitigating those risks, in global supply chains. The methodology is currently being implemented in sub-Saharan Africa.

**ICCPR INDEX**

The rule of law is inextricably linked to the protection of fundamental rights and civil liberties. *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* is one of the most fundamental international expressions of human rights. It is particularly useful in promoting the rule of law and legal reform, as it sets forth both individual human rights and the institutional structures that protect those rights. Currently, 167 states are parties to the ICCPR. These states are obligated to adopt measures to ensure that individuals within their jurisdiction enjoy without discrimination the rights and freedoms found in the covenant.

First, the ICCPR Index is a framework for examining the extent to which a state’s laws and policies conform to the ICCPR, as well as the manner in which it has implemented its ICCPR obligations. The ICCPR Index organizes the ICCPR’s protections into several major categories of rights to facilitate comprehensive reviews of specific human rights concerns. These categories include due process and detention protections, political participation, women’s rights, children’s rights, minority rights and aliens’ rights. ABA ROLI’s ICCPR Index assessments may broadly address a country’s compliance with the entire ICCPR, or they may target one or more specific areas of interest.

Second, the index also serves as a reference guide to the ICCPR, drawing on commentary and jurisprudence to explain the rights contained in the covenant.

Third, and most importantly, ICCPR Index assessments help to produce a roadmap for compliance with the ICCPR’s human rights protections. The
index may be applied either as a preliminary assessment of a country’s efforts to implement the ICCPR to inform programming and reform efforts or as a follow-up on programming to assess progress and future needs. By providing a detailed analysis of the status of civil and political rights, the ICCPR Index helps to guide governments and civil society leaders toward more effective program development and rights protection.

JUDICIAL REFORM INDEX

An independent, accountable and effective judiciary is a central pillar of the rule of law. Without it, the right to a fair trial and other fundamental rights, as well as the impartial application of law, remain illusory. Yet, numerous challenges can weaken a judiciary’s ability to advance these goals. Insufficient professional guarantees and powers leave judges marginalized in their own courtrooms. Inadequate judicial education and insufficient emphasis on judicial ethics hamper professionalism and effectiveness. Inadequate resources, overwhelming caseloads, the lack of modern case management mechanisms and resulting procedural delays undermine the administration of justice. Widespread perceptions of corruption can plague courts and further erode fragile public trust in the judiciary’s fairness and efficiency.

The Judicial Reform Index (JRI), the first and most widely utilized of ABA ROLI’s assessment tools, provides an empirical basis for assessing the status and role of judges and the legal environment in which they operate. The JRI was designed on the basis of comparative legal traditions and the international standards set forth in the United Nations’ Basic Principles on...
the Independence of the Judiciary and the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct. Additionally, it relies on regional norms promulgated by organizations such as the Council of Europe, the Law Association for Asia and Pacific, the Ibero-American Judicial Summit and the Arab Justice Conference.

The JRI evaluates local conditions and practices related to judicial reform and independence vis-à-vis 30 factors that are characteristic of an independent, accountable and effective judiciary. These standards are related to the following six topics: quality, education and diversity of judges; judicial powers; financial resources; structural safeguards; accountability and transparency; and judicial efficiency.

A neutral, independent assessment team evaluates these factors through a rigorous analysis of a country’s legal framework on organization and operation of the judiciary and through in-depth structured interviews with judges, court personnel, attorneys, prosecutors, government officials, academics and media and civil society representatives. The results are collected in a standardized JRI country report. Each factor is assessed and assigned a value of positive, neutral or negative, followed by a thorough discussion of the legal provisions, local conditions and mechanisms present or lacking in a country’s judicial system.

The index does not contain specific recommendations for reform initiatives; instead, it provides a diagnostic analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of a country’s judiciary. The information collected in the JRI assessment enables ABA ROLI, other legal technical assistance providers, international development agencies and local reformers to better understand important elements in the judicial reform process and to target their reform efforts accordingly.

The JRI can also be used to monitor judicial reform over time and systematically catalogue problems and their solutions. The index constitutes a baseline against which progress can be measured through its periodic applications in a particular country. Furthermore, the JRI serves as foundation for comparative legal research and analysis that may help inform diverse audiences about the state of judicial affairs in transitioning and emerging democracies. Thus, it facilitates identification and transfer of specialized knowledge and lessons learned. Since 2001, ABA ROLI has undertaken JRI assessments 40 times in 20 countries.
LEGAL EDUCATION REFORM INDEX

Quality legal education is essential to producing legal professionals who can competently represent clients and promote the rule of law. However, the quality of legal education in many countries does not meet international standards, and many law graduates do not possess the requisite skills to become effective lawyers. Against this backdrop, ABA ROLI developed the Legal Education Reform Index (LERI), an innovative tool that assesses the status of legal education reform in a given country vis-à-vis internationally established principles. It offers international organizations, development agencies, legal technical assistance providers and local reformers a blueprint for targeting legal education reform programs.

In developing the LERI, ABA ROLI relied on comparative legal traditions as well as international, regional and national standards and best practices for legal education, accreditation, degree recognition and quality assurance. The LERI evaluates legal education systems through a prism of 22 factors, each of which states a particular standard related to one of six topics:

- licensing, accreditation and evaluation
- admission policies and requirements
- curriculum and teaching methodology
- student evaluation, awarding of degrees and recognition of qualifications
- faculty qualifications and conditions of employment
- institutional holdings and capacities

An independent assessment team evaluates the factors on the basis of a rigorous analysis of a country’s legal framework regulating higher education institutions and legal education programs (de jure analysis). The team also conducts a series of in-depth structured interviews and focus groups with law school administrators, faculty and students, government officials responsible for higher education, legal education experts, legal practitioners and other stakeholders (de facto analysis). Each factor is assigned a correlation value of positive, neutral or negative, followed by a brief description of the basis for the conclusion. The results are presented in a standardized LERI country report. The report also includes a more thorough analysis of the legal provisions, local conditions and reform mechanisms present in a country’s legal education system. While it makes no specific recommendations for reform,
the report provides a diagnostic analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of a country’s legal education regime.

The resulting data enables ABA ROLI to better understand all facets of legal education reform in a country and to target technical assistance programs accordingly. The assessment can also be used to monitor legal education reform over time and to systematically catalog challenges and potential solutions. Periodic applications of the LERI allow measurement of progress within a particular country. Finally, the LERI provides a platform for comparative legal research and analysis that may be used to inform a variety of audiences about the state of legal education in a range of countries. As such, it is well suited to identifying and transferring specialized knowledge and lessons learned. ABA ROLI has undertaken LERI assessments in three countries: Armenia, Kosovo and Mexico.

LEGAL PROFESSION REFORM INDEX

An ethical, effective and independent legal profession is essential in any country to hold government accountable, uphold basic human rights, and boost the general public’s confidence in the legal system. Legal professionals also play a critical role in supporting market-oriented economies based on private property rights and freedom to contract, as well as in promoting other social norms and benefits. Furthermore, active bar associations are an important component among the broad range of organizations that constitute a robust civil society. Conversely, legal professionals have been used by various governments as part of an apparatus of repression, making independence of the profession all the more challenging and vital.

The Legal Profession Reform Index (LPRI) is part of ABA ROLI’s series of assessment tools that collectively assess the primary sectors within the legal systems of emerging democracies and transitioning states. Specifically, the LPRI provides an empirical basis for examining the status and role of lawyers and the environment in which they work.

In developing the LPRI, ABA ROLI relied on comparative legal traditions as well as standards set forth in various international, regional and national instruments. The LPRI evaluates the legal profession through a prism of 24 factors relating to the following five topics:

- professional freedoms and guarantees
- education, training and admission to the profession
- conditions and standards of practice
- legal services
- professional associations

These factors are evaluated by an independent team, which undertakes a rigorous analysis of a country’s legal framework regulating the legal profession (de jure analysis) and a series of in-depth structured interviews and
informal focus groups with lawyers, judges, prosecutors and other key government officials and stakeholders (de facto analysis). The results are published in a standardized LPRI country report. Each factor is assessed and assigned a value of positive, neutral or negative, and a brief summary describing the basis for the conclusion is provided. A more thorough analysis of the relevant legal provisions, local conditions and legal profession reform efforts follows.

The LPRI does not make specific recommendations for reform but rather provides an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the legal profession in a country. The assessment enables ABA ROLI to better understand the process of legal profession reform and to target its technical assistance programs accordingly. The LPRI facilitates strategic planning, and its subsequent applications enable countries and reformers to monitor legal profession reform over time and to systematically catalog challenges and solutions.

While repeated implementations of the LPRI in a particular country establish upward or downward trends on individual factors, the tool also provides a platform for comparative legal research that may be used to inform a variety of audiences about the state of the legal profession in a range of countries. As such, it is well-suited to identifying and transferring specialized knowledge and lessons learned. ABA ROLI has undertaken LPRI assessments a total of 20 times in 13 countries.

PROSECUTORIAL REFORM INDEX

The need for an independent yet accountable prosecution function is an essential element for safeguarding the rights of citizens and promoting public confidence in the criminal justice system. It is also often a vexing challenge, compounded by specific difficulties that prosecutors face, including inadequate resources and training, unrealistic caseloads, threats to their safety, complicated relationships with investigatory authorities and poorly drafted criminal procedure codes. Based on over 25 years of experience in the field of legal technical assistance, ABA ROLI’s Prosecutorial Reform Index (PRI) examines these issues and promotes the development of transparent, ethical and unbiased prosecutorial systems that are free from the influence of external actors.

The PRI is part of ABA ROLI’s series of assessment tools that analyze the primary sectors within a country’s legal system. Specifically, the PRI provides an empirical basis for examining the status and role of prosecutors and the environment in which they work. In developing the PRI, we relied on comparative legal traditions and international standards established by organizations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the American Bar Association and the International Association of Prosecutors. Drawing upon these, we compiled a series of 28 factors that fa-
An assessment team discusses a potential approach for implementing a Prosecutorial Reform Index for Bulgaria.

cilitate an accountable, ethical and effective prosecutorial function. These factors encompass six areas: qualifications, selection and training; professional freedoms and guarantees; prosecutorial functions; accountability and transparency; interaction with criminal justice actors; and finances and resources.

Each of these factors is evaluated through a rigorous analysis of all laws, normative acts and sources of authority that regulate the prosecutorial function (de jure analysis) and an interview process that includes focus groups and structured interviews with prosecutors, judges, defense attorneys, investigators, government officials, non-governmental organization representatives and members of the media (de facto analysis). Analysis of each factor allows a correlation value of positive, neutral or negative, and it is followed by a thorough analysis of the issues, legal provisions, local conditions and mechanisms that are present or lacking in a country’s prosecutorial system. Cataloguing the data in this way permits users of the PRI to learn from the experiences of different countries in specific areas and—as PRIs are updated—to assess progress within a given country over time.

The PRI, like our other assessment tools, is a valuable resource for promoting the rule of law throughout the world. In addition to guiding our efforts to support the development of the prosecutorial function, the PRI can inform the work of other legal technical assistance providers, criminal law reform and development specialists and the donor community. The PRI also empowers prosecutors to pursue needed reforms and assists non-governmental organizations in supporting prosecutorial reform and engaging in grassroots advocacy efforts. ABA ROLI has undertaken PRI assessments in six countries in Europe, Eurasia and Latin America.
STATUS OF WOMEN ASSESSMENTS

The lack of gender equality and limited respect for women’s rights weaken the rule of law and hamper development. Societies with greater gender inequality face higher incidences of poverty, malnutrition and ill health, and they have lower levels of academic achievement. They also experience slower economic growth and weaker governance. While most constitutions guarantee equal protection under the law for all, women’s rights are seldom fully enforced because many governments have only a tenuous commitment to women’s empowerment. One of the most important international tools in advancing women’s rights is the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Although the CEDAW is among the most widely ratified human rights treaties, it suffers from numerous reservations and inadequate implementation in many countries.

In 2002, ABA ROLI developed the CEDAW Assessment Tool to assess countries’ de jure and de facto compliance with the CEDAW. Subsequently, we redesigned the tool to make it even more comprehensive and to include other pertinent international and regional legal instruments. The resultant Status of Women (SOW) Methodology is designed to uncover normative and practical obstacles that frustrate the achievement of greater gender equality. As such, the SOW Methodology:

- examines national laws and evaluate the degree to which these laws protect the rights of women; and
- measures the degree to which in practice women are accorded the rights guaranteed to them under international and domestic laws.

Among the major focuses of the SOW Methodology are the real-life impediments to equality, many of which are not necessarily the product of inadequate laws. The SOW reports generate a wealth of information that provides a comprehensive analysis of the status of women’s rights in a country. The reports serve multiple purposes. First, they help design and prioritize reforms, programs and campaigns aimed at advancing women’s rights. Second, they serve as a springboard for initiatives leading to improved governmental compliance with international women’s rights law. Third, they facilitate important capacity-building efforts among local stakeholders and the broader women’s rights community.

To date, we have implemented the CEDAW Assessment Tool in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Serbia, and we have conducted status of women assessments for Iraq and Libya. In addition, ABA ROLI has successfully leveraged the assessment process to encourage civil society organizations in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan to submit shadow reports to the United Nations CEDAW Committee.
## APPENDIX A
### Published Tools and Assessments

**Access to Justice Assessment Tool (AJAT)**
- Indonesia: 2012
- Mail: 2012
- Philippines: 2012
- Republic of Guinea: 2012

**Analysis of Criminal Defense Advocacy**
- Balkans Regional: 2014

**The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Assessment Tool**
- Armenia: 2002
- Georgia: 2003
- Moldova: 2007
- Russia: 2006
- Serbia: 2003
- Armenia: 2002
- Georgia: 2003
- Moldova: 2007
- Russia: 2006
- Serbia: 2003
- Armenia: 2002
- Georgia: 2003
- Moldova: 2007
- Russia: 2006
- Serbia: 2003
- Armenia: 2002
- Georgia: 2003
- Moldova: 2007
- Russia: 2006
- Serbia: 2003

**Detention Procedure Assessment Tool (DPAT)**
- Armenia: 2012
- Belize: 2010
- Lebanon: 2012
- Nicaragua: 2010

**Human Trafficking Assessment Tool (HTAT)**
- Mexico: 2009
- Moldova: 2005
- Nepal: 2011

**The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Legal Implementation Index**
- Kyrgyzstan: 2008
- Macedonia: 2004

**Judicial Reform Index (JRI)**
- Bosnia & Herzegovina: 2006, 2001
- Croatia: 2002
- Georgia: 2008, 2005
- Kazakhstan: 2004
- Kyrgyzstan: 2003
- Macedonia: 2003, 2002
- Montenegro: 2002
- Philippines: 2006
- Romania: 2002
- Slovakia: 2002
- Tajikistan: 2008
- Ukraine: 2005, 2002
- Uzbekistan: 2002
- Armenia: 2007
- Kosovo: 2010, 2008
- Mexico: 2011
- Azerbaijan: 2005
- Bahrain: 2008
- Bulgaria: 2006, 2004
- Georgia: 2007, 2005
- Kyrgyzstan: 2014, 2004
- Macedonia: 2004
- Mexico: 2011
- Moldova: 2009, 2004
- Tajikistan: 2005
- Belize: 2011
- Guatemala: 2011
- Kyrgyzstan: 2007
- Moldova: 2008
- Serbia: 2011
- Iraq: 2006, 2005
- Libya: Pending Publication
APPENDIX B
Program Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2015

For fiscal year 2015, our program expenditures were over $38 million. Calculated by geographic region, they are as follows:

- **AFRICA**
  - $6,075,107
  - 15.83%

- **ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**
  - $9,711,058
  - 25.30%

- **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**
  - $5,020,872
  - 13.08%

- **EUROPE AND EURASIA**
  - $8,072,490
  - 21.03%

- **CROSS-REGIONAL**
  - $129,454
  - 0.34%

- **MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**
  - $9,373,101
  - 24.42%

**Total Amount:**
$38,382,082
# APPENDIX C
## List of Countries Where We Work

### AFRICA
- Burundi
- Central African Republic
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Nigeria
- Republic of Congo
- Republic of Guinea
- Rwanda
- Sudan

### ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
- Burma/Myanmar
- Cambodia
- China
- Indonesia
- Laos
- Malaysia
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand

### EUROPE AND EURASIA
- Albania
- Armenia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Georgia
- Kazakhstan
- Kosovo
- Kyrgyzstan
- Macedonia
- Moldova
- Serbia
- Tajikistan
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan

### LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Haiti
- Mexico
- Peru

### THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
- Bahrain
- Egypt
- Jordan
- Kuwait
- Libya
- Morocco
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Syria
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- West Bank
APPENDIX D
Map of Countries Where We Have Worked (1990–2016)

Darker colors indicate current programs. Lighter colors indicate countries where ABA ROLI has implemented programs in the past.