

Community spirit.
Linklaters

Access to Justice

Asserting legal rights and responsibilities



As lawyers, our primary professional duty is to secure access to justice for all our clients. Our community investment commitment is to provide the same high quality of service and effort to community organisations and others who could not operate effectively without that support. Not only do we want to offer members of disadvantaged communities free legal advice and representation, but we also want to empower them with the skills, knowledge and awareness necessary to access justice institutions and legal services.

We have a clear and consistent global approach to community investment that harnesses our commercial and legal expertise to respond to the needs of local communities. Our programmes operate at global, local and individual levels, using the skills and expertise of all our people.

October 2010

GLOBAL
HIGHLIGHTS



63,750

hours volunteered by our people, including pro bono

41%

of our people were involved in volunteering activities

17,671

people benefited from our volunteering activities around the world

- > In 2009/10, we supported 27 legal advice centres globally
- > Over 100 pro bono matters are underway at any one time

Key case study

Camfed has the mission of delivering girls' education and the empowerment of young women as the route to lasting change in Sub-Saharan Africa. At no cost to the charity, a Linklaters team from **New York** and **London** has undertaken a major project to produce "Accounting to the Girl", a report analysing Camfed's governance model.

To see how the model works in practice, the team visited Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi to interview girls, parents, teachers, government officials and village leaders. The partnership is one of four Global Projects, the aim of which is to contribute our particular expertise and cross-border capabilities to organisations that have innovated a practical solution to one or more of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

This report reflects such innovation and, significantly, was chosen for discussion at the opening plenary of the Skoll World Forum in Oxford in April 2010.

i Further information

For other examples of our work see:
www.linklaters.com/responsibility/casestudies

International law

Over **170 Linklaters lawyers** have provided pro bono advice to Lawyers Without Borders. Judges in Liberia are required to take into account previous judicial decisions but many have only limited access to these, thereby increasing the potential for inconsistent determinations. We are supporting Lawyers Without Borders to promote the rule of law in Liberia by producing a digest of the country's entire jurisprudence. The project is being underwritten by the World Bank with the aim of producing a hard copy digest to be distributed to every judge throughout the cities and rural areas of Liberia.

Our Italian office supports the UN Business and Human Rights Project. Law firms around the world are participating in a UN-led effort to identify whether and how national corporate law principles and practices currently foster corporate cultures respectful of human rights. Our **Milan** office is producing the Italian chapter of this research and co-ordinating the research of three other law firms in North Africa for the UN.

Our **Brussels** office advised Minority Rights Group International in relation to the preparation of a test case regarding alleged violations of the land rights of an indigenous group in Burundi. This international charity works to ensure the protection of indigenous peoples' rights and this particular project was referred by Advocates for International Development.

Environment

Our Asian offices support ToughStuff, a social enterprise which aims to provide very affordable solar powered products to low income people in the developing world, replacing expensive and environmentally damaging alternatives. Our **Shanghai** and **London** offices have drafted contracts and provided them with a range of legal advice. ToughStuff aims over the next five years to help 30 million families switch from kerosene to its solar products, preventing over 287 million batteries from being unsafely disposed of and saving over 199,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

We acted on the legal structuring of the first carbon capture project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (and the first forestry project in Africa) to benefit from the Kyoto Protocol Clean Development Mechanism. Thanks to the partnership, the community in Ibi Batéké will have over 400 new jobs, boosting the local economy whilst protecting and enhancing the local environment.

Local legal advice

In **Hong Kong** we assist the Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre in preparing reports, testimonies and legal briefs on behalf of asylum claimants. Around 30 of our lawyers have undergone their two-day training programme. One applicant we supported was granted refugee status by the UNHCR in Hong Kong after we persuaded it to re-open his case.

Our **London** office has supported a number of legal advice centres for many years. Our volunteers gain much from their work at these centres – the Mary Ward Legal Centre, Toynbee Hall and the Disability Law Service to name just a few – and we are now beginning to capture the impact of our work in this area. It has been estimated that our work with

IPSEA (the Independent Panel for Special Education Advice), for example, resulted in an extra £333,000 of support being awarded to young people in 2008/9.

Our **New York** office works with The Community Development Project of the Urban Justice Centre (UJC), providing legal assistance to community groups engaged in a wide range of community development efforts throughout New York City. We work with UJC on a variety of matters, including litigation on behalf of restaurant workers for wage and overtime violations.

The **Warsaw** office works with the Warsaw University Law Department's Law Clinic, where our lawyers supervise law students providing pro bono advice on employment and pensions law, landlord and tenant disputes, family law (maintenance and parental rights issues) and wills and probate. The advice is focused on the most disadvantaged members of the community.

Governance

In **Lisbon** we support Entreaajuda, an organisation that aims to help charity institutions improve the services they render by providing technical and administrative expertise. It also aims to make it easier for the public and companies to work together with charities. We work with this organisation to provide legal advice to the Private Charity Institutions (IPSS) listed by Entreaajuda, a significant agency in the Portuguese charitable sector.

In **Madrid** we provide pro bono advice on data protection (e.g. trade mark claims) to a number of NGOs including Félix Rodriguez de la Fuente, an organisation that consolidates and improves environmental and science disclosure in Spain.

“Linklaters have provided us far more than legal support, they have helped bring peace of mind. Knowing we have a professional and highly regarded firm to whom we can turn is very reassuring and valuable.”

ToughStuff

To find out more about our work on Access to Justice at Linklaters, please contact **Elisha Butler** (elsha.butler@linklaters.com 020 7456 4973)