



ELAW

WINTER 2025

advocate

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IN THIS ISSUE:

ELAW Fellows Program

(pgs. 1-3)

Vanessa Torres, COLOMBIA
Alpha Diallo, GUINEA
Clinton Ezeigwe, NIGERIA

Dominican Republic: Protecting Rivers from Polluting Pig and Poultry Farms

(pg. 4)

Advancing Cross-Border Environmental Protection in Southeast Asia

(pg. 5)

New ELAW Guidebook: How to Evaluate Oil and Gas Project EIAs

(pg. 6)

Inside ELAW

(pg. 6-7)

ELAW Host Families

(pg. 8)

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ELAW helps communities speak out for clean air, clean water, and a healthy planet. We are a global alliance of attorneys, scientists, and other advocates collaborating across borders to build a sustainable, just future.

EDITOR: MAGGIE KEENAN

GRAPHIC DESIGN: HELIOS CREATIVE

PRINTED BY: QSL PRINTING

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper with soy-based inks.



ELAW Fellows Program: Building the Movement

ELAW Fellows Vanessa Torres and Alpha Diallo enjoyed a field trip to southern Oregon to visit Crater Lake National Park (above) and Lava Beds National Monument. They were hosted by Karen Guillory, ELAW Outreach Manager (right).

More than 250 ELAW fellows from 65 countries have traveled to Eugene to work with us. New and seasoned advocates have gained skills, shared lessons, and inspired us. We have enjoyed hosting them, introducing them to Oregon's natural treasures, bringing them into our community, and learning from them. They have returned home, inspired to grow the global movement to protect our planet, public health, and human rights.

Our fall 2024 Fellows hailed from Colombia, Guinea, and Nigeria. These concurrent visits strengthened ties and built the friendships that make the ELAW Network strong. Please enjoy the following profiles.

Vanessa Torres | Bogotá, Colombia September 29-December 15, 2024

Vanessa Torres is Deputy Director at Ambiente y Sociedad (Environment & Society) based in Bogotá, Colombia. "I am honored to be part of an organization led by women that is training a new generation to strengthen environmental democracy across Latin America," she says.

As a high school student, Vanessa took part in a leadership program that visited vulnerable communities and worked with children. She learned the importance of community life and how those in rural areas protect their territory. "I witnessed painful inequality and felt we must strengthen the human rights recognized in our Constitution to overcome this injustice," she says.

Vanessa was inspired to pursue law after meeting a pioneer of environmental law in Colombia, Gloria Amparo Rodríguez. She learned about the climate crisis and Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities using traditional knowledge to protect their territories. "Ensuring the existence of these communities is the true meaning of environmental justice," she says.

Since 2018, Vanessa has taken the lead as Ambiente y Sociedad worked with colleagues to seek ratification of the Escazú Agreement, the first treaty that recognizes the obligation to protect the lives of environmental defenders. Escazú was ratified in September 2024, and Vanessa's organization is working on its effective implementation.

During her ELAW Fellowship, Vanessa worked closely with ELAW Scientists and Attorneys, advancing her organization's work to protect the climate and challenging short-sighted oil projects that threaten the Colombian Amazon and Indigenous peoples.

"Creating safe spaces for environmental lawyers changes the way we see the world. In my case, the ELAW Fellowship was an opportunity for strengthening, reflection, and openness. It is a privilege to be part of the ELAW family."

Vanessa Torres

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

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ELAW Fellows Program: Building the Movement

(VANESSA CONTINUED)

Vanessa also learned about the environmental regulatory framework in the U.S., sat in on classes at the University of Oregon School of Law, and joined ELAW Fellow Alpha Diallo for meetings with economic analyst Ernie Niemi, energy analyst Mike McCann, and environmental attorney Pete Frost from the Western Environmental Law Center.

In addition to her busy ELAW program, she kept up with work at Ambiente y Sociedad, completed the Intensive English Program at the University of Oregon American English Institute (AEI), and worked one-on-one with private English tutor Cybele Higgins. Many thanks to AEI for providing Vanessa with a Janet Hughes Mersereau Scholarship, and thanks to Penny Salus and Jared Rubin for serving as Vanessa's ELAW Host Family.



Vanessa (front row, 2nd from right) with her team at Ambiente y Sociedad (Environment & Society).

Mamadou Alpha Diallo | Conakry, Guinea September 28-December 12, 2024

Alpha Diallo is the monitoring and evaluation program officer for CODEC Guinea, a coalition of 10 organizations that protect natural resources and defend human rights. He holds the same position at Créativité et Développement, an organization focused on women's land rights, including the rights of communities affected by mining projects.

"Communities in Guinea face huge environmental problems, with little support," says Alpha. For example, Alpha's coalition has partnered with a remote community that has suffered for years from the impacts of a polluting gold mine. "There are very few lawyers in Guinea that focus on environmental problems. I'm honored to help," he says.

During his ELAW Fellowship, Alpha worked with ELAW Scientists to understand the impacts of polluting mines and how to monitor community health. He worked with the Law Team on legal tools that grassroots advocates around the world are using to protect the climate, rein in single-use plastic, and defend land rights. He also met with leaders at local nonprofits NextStep Recycling and the Western Environmental Law Center as well as energy analyst Mike McCann.

Finally, Alpha completed the Intensive English Program at the University of Oregon American English Institute (AEI) and worked one-on-one with private English tutor Cybele Higgins. Many thanks to AEI for providing Alpha with a Janet Hughes Mersereau Scholarship, and thanks to Peg Boulay and Bruce Newhouse for serving as Alpha's ELAW Host Family.



Alpha Diallo (front row, waving) joins community members in Simandou, Kérouané, to discuss land rights. PHOTO: C-DEV

"This was my first time to travel outside Guinea. I felt so at home in Eugene. The technical support from ELAW experts, learning English, the discoveries, and meeting new people. It was life-changing!"

Alpha Diallo

ELAW Fellows Program: Building the Movement

Clinton Ezeigwe | Ehime Mbanjo, Nigeria

October 28-November 3, 2024

Clinton Ezeigwe is an attorney and water activist. His passion for helping communities access clean water stems from childhood. Clinton and his six brothers took turns walking several kilometers from their home in Ehime Mbanjo to fetch drinking water from a local river in the next town. "Sometimes we would get there, and the line was long and fights were breaking out, so we'd turn around and have to walk back later," he says.

Clinton earned a Bachelor of Laws degree from Ebonyi State University and received his license to practice law from the Nigerian Law School, Abuja campus. He coordinates Nigeria's End Water Poverty #ClaimYourWaterRights campaign, a project of WaterAid UK. He is currently in the U.S. pursuing a master's degree in global affairs, with a concentration in governance and policy, at the University of Notre Dame.

When asked why he chose a career in law, he says: "As a college student, I witnessed a disturbing scene at the local police station. An old man had been arrested and it was clear they had the wrong man. The officer asked him, 'Do you know why you are here?' He replied, 'No, but will you feed me?' It was clear that there is an enormous need to represent the underserved."

During Clinton's Fellowship, he met with ELAW's Law and Science Teams and explored opportunities to collaborate on his work to provide better access to clean water and improve sanitation in Nigeria. He also met with ELAW Fellows Alpha Diallo and Vanessa Torres to discuss shared challenges in West Africa and South America.

Clinton's organization, the Christian Fellowship and Care Foundation (CFCF), has made significant strides in advocating for water rights in Nigeria, particularly in ensuring access to clean water for communities facing shortages. Clinton helped a community in Okigwe, Imo State, file a water rights complaint to the Nigerian Human Rights Commission that resulted in orders to alleviate the problem. And during the COVID-19 pandemic, CFCF's work prompted the government to truck water to underserved communities.

"We use the international human rights framework and file complaints to national human rights institutions, as well as regulators and local authorities, to hold the government accountable," he said.

Clinton looks forward to working with ELAW on community-based monitoring of water supplies and providing communities with legal support and representation to file complaints regarding water access violations.



ELAW Fellows Alpha Diallo (center, front) and Clinton Ezeigwe (at back, in blue) join ELAW Africa Law Associate Bernard Ngalim (second from left, at back) at a soccer match in Eugene.



Clinton joins an International Human Rights Day rally in Owerri, Imo State, to urge the government to respect, protect, and fulfill people's rights to water and sanitation.

ELAW designs each Fellowship to meet the Fellow's needs. We provide one-on-one training with ELAW's Law, Science, Defending Defenders, and Development Teams, and reach out to other experts in the U.S. and around the world to help ELAW Fellows meet their training objectives. We conduct field trips to the Oregon Coast, Cascade Mountains, and other natural areas so that Fellows can learn how we protect wild places here in the U.S.

Our Fellows are committed grassroots advocates and respected leaders who have gone on to do outstanding work. Seven ELAW Fellows later won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize, including 2016 Goldman Prize winner Zuzana Čaputová. Ms. Čaputová was an ELAW Fellow in 2007 and 2017, and served as President of Slovakia from 2019-2023.

Since 1993, we have welcomed ELAW Fellows from 65 countries:

Argentina	Colombia	Ecuador	Haiti	Kenya	Nigeria	Senegal	Uganda
Bangladesh	Congo	Egypt	Honduras	Laos	Pakistan	Slovakia	Ukraine
Belize	(Brazzaville)	England	Hungary	Liberia	Panama	Spain	United Kingdom
Bolivia	Congo	Estonia	India	Mexico	Papua New Guinea	Sri Lanka	Uruguay
Brazil	(Kinshasa)	Georgia	Indonesia	Moldova	Guinea	Swaziland	Zimbabwe
Cameroon	Costa Rica	Germany	Iran	Mongolia	Peru	Switzerland	
Canada	Croatia	Ghana	Israel	Morocco	Philippines	Tanzania	
Chile	Czech Republic	Guatemala	Jamaica	Nepal	Poland	Thailand	
China	Dominican Republic	Guinea (Conakry)	Japan	Nicaragua	Russia	Turkey	

Cleaning Up Waterways



ELAW partner Euren Cuevas Medina (with sunglasses) and his legal team.

Dominican Republic: Protecting Rivers from Polluting Pig and Poultry Farms

We are pleased to announce that longtime ELAW partner Euren Cuevas Medina and his legal team recently won court orders protecting waterways in the Dominican Republic. The orders followed criminal charges filed against the owners of polluting pig and poultry farms.

“These verdicts create an important precedent for river cleanup for human health, water quality, and environmental health,” says Euren, Executive Director at the Institute of Lawyers for the Protection of the Environment (INSAPROMA), based in Santo Domingo.

The LB, SRL Pig Farm has been polluting the Jamao al Norte River in Espaillat Province for years. In September 2024, the owner, Luis Manuel Brache, was fined 15 million pesos (US\$256,000) and had his environmental license suspended until environmental damages are remedied. Brache was also ordered to give talks to pig farmers as community service, to compensate for a one-year suspended sentence.

The Jamao al Norte River provides drinking water to communities in Espaillat Province. Euren called on ELAW’s Science Team to help determine what diseases could be caused by wastes listed among the effluents from the pig farm. The Science Team’s most troubling finding was evidence of *E. coli*. When present in drinking water and food, this bacterium indicates fecal contamination that may cause serious illnesses and even death.

The court victory proved that many people had been injured by the river pollution caused by the pig farm. To achieve this victory, more than 20 institutions and individuals united with INSAPROMA to demand justice.

In related work in October 2024, INSAPROMA lawyers held a polluting poultry farm in Espaillat Province accountable for contaminating the Cana Stream and Licey River. The Endy poultry farm has discharged untreated effluents into the waterways for 40 years.

The criminal court in Espaillat Province ordered the businessman Avelino Sarante and his company Endy Agroindustrial SRL, the top egg and poultry producer in the Dominican Republic, to pay 25 million pesos (US\$415,000), restore the Licey River near the town of Ceiba de Madera, install a wastewater treatment plant, and pay 50,000 pesos (US\$850) to each of 19 plaintiffs and civil actors to compensate for damages.

In both the pig and poultry farm cases, the ELAW Science Team provided valuable information on polluting effluents and the Law Team shared relevant decisions from courts in other countries.

“These sentences are historic and unprecedented,” says Euren. “They will ensure that businesses and their owners comply with environmental laws and prevent their effluents from contaminating waterways and harming communities.”



Advancing Cross-Border Environmental Protection

Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ELAW has partnered with the Asian Research Institute for Environmental Law (ARIEL) to engage civil society organizations to advocate for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to adopt a strong Declaration on Environmental Rights. The ASEAN community includes ten member states of Southeast Asia.

ELAW has provided financial and technical support to partners from seven of these countries to host national-level consultations or participate in regional consultations on the draft agreement being developed by the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.

“Although this will ultimately be a non-binding Declaration, it will help to raise awareness among all stakeholders and open up space for discussions about environmental rights that could help national-level advocacy efforts,” says BJ Schulte, ELAW Attorney.

A strong Declaration could lead to better protection of the environment, including the marine environment, and protection of environmental and land defenders.

Many thanks to the Paul M. Angell Foundation, Oak Foundation, Oceankind, and Oceans 5 for supporting our work advancing a strong ASEAN Declaration on Environmental Rights.

Aarhus & Escazú Conventions

Advocates engaged in developing a strong ASEAN declaration are building on lessons learned in the development of two other regional frameworks: the Aarhus Convention (signed in Aarhus, Denmark, in 1998) and the Escazú Convention (signed in Escazú, Costa Rica, in 2018).

Ukraine is a signatory to the Aarhus Convention (UN Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters). Together with its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, Aarhus protects peoples’ right to live in a healthy environment.

ELAW has worked for years with Ukrainian NGO Environment People Law (EPL) to ensure that Ukraine embraces this environmental agreement, which links environmental rights and human rights, acknowledges that we owe an obligation to future generations, and establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders.

In 2018, twenty-four Latin American and Caribbean countries adopted a regional agreement to ensure access to information, participation, and justice in environmental matters—the Escazú Convention. The agreement includes the first-ever legally binding provisions to protect environmental defenders from threats and attacks. ELAW provided support to several partners in the region as they participated in the negotiations leading up to the Escazú Convention. In Colombia, ELAW Fellow Vanessa Torres (see page 1) is taking the lead as her organization works on effective implementation.

Now, ELAW partners are drawing lessons learned from Aarhus and Escazú as they work on an agreement in Southeast Asia.



The 4th ASEAN Environmental Law Conference, held in Bangkok, July 31-August 2, 2024, was organized by ELAW, the Asian Research Institute for Environmental Law (ARIEL), and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The Conference included 10 sessions and a roundtable discussion, with 42 speakers, moderators, and 120 in-person participants from 12 countries. Left to right: Matthew Baird, ARIEL Director; keynote speaker Robert “Ka Dodoy” Ballon, Association of Small Fisherfolk of Concepcion, Cebu, Philippines; Rocky Guzman, ARIEL Deputy Director; and Genee Mislang-Tomboc, ELAW Attorney.

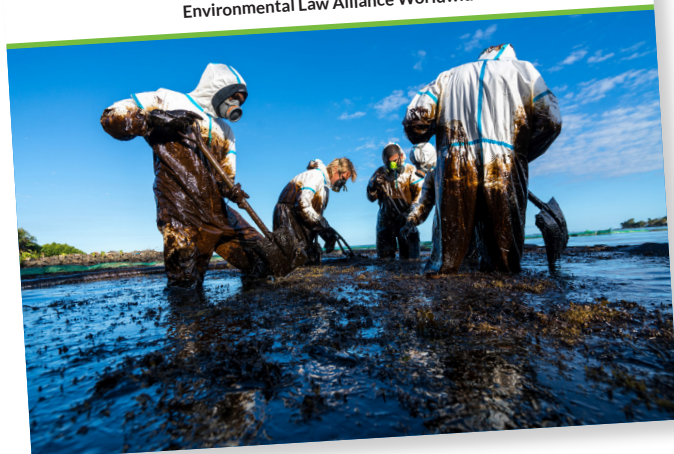
“There is urgency, because advancing compliance with Aarhus is a requirement for Ukraine to join the European Union.”

Olena Kravchenko, EPL Executive Director

How to Evaluate Environmental Impact Assessments for Oil and Gas Projects



Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide



New ELAW Guidebook How to Evaluate Oil and Gas Project EIAs

We are pleased to announce our new ELAW guidebook, *How to Evaluate Environmental Impact Assessments for Oil and Gas Projects*, now available on our website in English, French, and Spanish.

The guidebook “distills decades of experience collaborating with partners around the world to critique project plans for onshore and offshore projects,” says Dr. Mark Chernaik, ELAW Science Program Director and lead author.

ELAW partners are working with communities around the world to ensure that proposed oil and gas projects do not abuse ecosystems, endanger community health, and destroy the climate. Partners have called on us for the tools they need to ground truth proposed projects and halt damaging projects before they leave the drawing board.

Advocates from around the world joined a November 7 webinar to launch *How to Evaluate Oil and Gas Project EIAs*. Dr. Chernaik led a rich discussion with attendees about applying the lessons of the guidebook. Simultaneous interpretation was available in English, French, and Spanish.

Inside ELAW

Aye Mon Thu

2024 Killian O. Doherty Environmental Justice Fellow

Aye Mon Thu is a human rights and environmental justice lawyer in Myanmar. She is co-founder and former Director of the Dawei Pro-bono Lawyer Network, which provides legal support to impacted communities in and around Dawei, Tanintharyi Region.

As a young lawyer, Aye Mon Thu helped lead the Heinda Tin and Tungsten Mine case, one of Myanmar’s first tort cases, to successfully obtain remedies for local communities impacted by the pollution from mining operations. In addition to litigation, Aye Mon Thu has worked tirelessly with local communities to raise awareness about their environmental rights and provide training on environmental legal advocacy. She has also worked as a legal advisor, trainer, and advocate on other issues, including unlawful detention, anti-discrimination, fair trial rights, and free speech.

The Killian O. Doherty Environmental Justice Fellowship will fund Aye Mon Thu as she conducts new research to analyze local campaigns against illegal mining in Myanmar. The area she will research is a hotbed for the mining of rare earth minerals, jade, and other materials and is also largely under the control of non-state armed groups. Aye Mon Thu aims to take lessons from successful campaigns and share those strategies to strengthen communities’ capacity to protect themselves.

Many thanks to the Doherty Family and all those whose generous support helped make this Killian Fellowship possible!



Inside ELAW

Killian O. Doherty Environmental Justice Fellowship

Killian O. Doherty was a beloved member of the ELAW Law Team, where he used his legal and linguistic skills to collaborate with lawyers around the world to protect communities and the environment. We are proud to honor Killian's legacy by creating opportunities for advocates to work with ELAW to advance environmental justice and defend Indigenous peoples' rights.



Erica Dallman Program Assistant

Erica joined ELAW in August 2024 to manage our information database and provide administrative support to the ELAW Team. They bring global experience from volunteering with nonprofits and grassroots organizations. Their past projects include farming and volunteer coordination in Malaysia, organizing Diversity Equity and Inclusion training at Lost Valley Educational Center in Dexter, Oregon, and supporting human rights initiatives through events like Artists Against Apartheid in Eugene, Oregon, and a refugee housing project in Berlin. Passionate about the intersection of environmental and human rights, Erica stays involved in local organizations and enjoys playing folk music in Eugene's vibrant music scene.



Haley Rowlands Law Fellow

Haley Rowlands is our current Law Fellow, conducting research for ELAW partners on protecting biodiversity from short-sighted mining, illegal fishing, laws that reduce single-use plastic, and marine pollution treaties. She was a summer 2023 ELAW Law Intern, "which is where I fueled my passion for international environmental and human rights work," she said.

Haley graduated from Boston College Law School in May 2024 and was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar. She was selected by Boston College Law for a Public Service Fellowship, a program designed to allow new lawyers dedicated to public service to start their career through a year-long placement with a public interest nonprofit or law firm. This Public Service Fellowship made Haley's placement at ELAW possible.



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ELAW Host Families

A highlight of our Fellows Program is ELAW Host Families. Vanessa Torres was hosted by Penny Salus and Jared Rubin. Alpha Diallo was hosted by Peg Boulay and Bruce Newhouse. Many thanks to Penny, Jared, Peg, and Bruce!

If you live in the Eugene area and are interested in hosting an ELAW Fellow, please write to Maggie Keenan, ELAW Fellows Program Coordinator at maggie@elaw.org.

Please make a gift to support ELAW's work with inspiring partners around the world by visiting elaw.org/give.



Vanessa, Jared, and Penny



Alpha and Bruce at the Oregon Coast

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Charity Navigator and Candid give ELAW their highest rating for financial management, accountability, and transparency. You can be confident that your gift helps advance our mission of helping communities speak out for clean air, clean water, and a healthy planet. Please visit elaw.org/give to make a tax-deductible gift.

