

King's Legal Clinic Annual Report 2021







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'Being a part of the King's Legal Clinic is not only a brilliant way to enhance skills and gain practical experience, but to also give back to the community. Due to many funding cuts to legal aid, it is now more difficult than ever to receive adequate legal support. As part of the Clinic, you get to directly work with people and make a tangible difference to their lives using your legal knowledge and skills. Undertaking the module is extremely rewarding and truly a beneficial and enjoyable experience.'

Melanie Amaya Mazza, **Law with European Legal Studies**

EVERYONE IS

WELCOME



Mission statement

King's Legal Clinic ('the Clinic') has two key aims; enhancing the education of our students and promoting social and economic justice.

Our aims are achieved through five objectives:

- Providing our students with the opportunity to work on live cases thereby developing their skills and understanding of law in context.
- Developing innovative experiential learning and teaching methods.
- Developing students' professional and ethical awareness and instil a lifelong commitment to access to justice for all.
- Providing free high-quality legal advice to members of the public, in particular those who cannot afford to pay for legal advice; and
- Engaging in legal activism and research initiatives relating to access to justice and social justice issues.*

We aim to achieve our objectives by developing projects and initiatives which focus on:

- The provision of free legal advice.
- Research on access to justice and social justice issues.
- Partnerships with external organisations.
- Widening participation.
- Community engagement and outreach.

The Team



Shaila Pal
Director of Clinical Legal Education, Senior Lecturer and Supervising Solicitor



Sue Willman
Assistant Director, Lecturer in Law and Supervising Solicitor



Veronica Barresi
Assistant Director, Lecturer in Law and Supervising Solicitor

*The Clinic recognises that climate change is one of the most significant social justice issues we face. Its impacts will be felt most by the poorest and most vulnerable. As a student law clinic with a commitment to social justice, we commit to raising awareness of the issue of climate change in our teaching, research and activism; and to finding ways to support law students to contribute to the struggle for climate justice.

King's Legal Clinic

The Clinic continued to grow during the 2020–21 academic year and thanks to considerable efforts by our students, the Clinic team, and our partners, we were able to deliver our services remotely throughout the pandemic.

The Legal Advice Clinic (LAC)

The LAC is a free first tier advice service based in The Dickson Poon School of Law. We continued to offer advice on a wide range of legal issues including family, immigration and asylum, housing, employment, and commercial matters. Our students work under the supervision of in-house Clinic lawyers and external lawyers to provide much needed pro bono advice to the public. We are grateful for the continuing support of our partner law firms: Duncan Lewis, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Stowe LLP, and Wilson LLP.

Our students are essential to the running of the LAC. After an online enquiry from a potential client is received, it is the responsibility of the student administrators to gather initial information to assess

if a case is suitable. If the matter is taken on it is passed onto our student advisors who would work with in-house and external lawyers to advise the client. The pandemic and shift to remote working made the work of the student administrators particularly challenging for a range of reasons and as a result student team leaders were recruited to support the administrators. The team leaders, Shaked Mor, Agota Lasaitė and Carolina Neves Do Vale, were a great help to the LAC and were critical in enabling us to provide our services to the public.

The LAC also expanded its activities through the launch of two new Clinics: The Intellectual Property Law Clinic and the Human Rights & Environment Law Clinic. Both have successfully provided students with an opportunity to advise clients in interesting and varied areas of legal practice.





'My main responsibility was to manage a team of seven student administrators and train them on how to communicate with clients through email and over the phone.

Through being in a managerial position, I quickly became aware of the fact that all students require different levels of support. I soon learnt to identify when a student was struggling and how to best help them. I also learnt the importance of providing students with constructive feedback so that they can work more effectively, develop their skills and make the most of their experience at the Clinic. Amongst other skills, I was able to exercise my organisational skills by creating a monthly rota and scheduling team meetings whilst being mindful of the fact that all my students were working in different time zones. I was also able to build on my experience with client

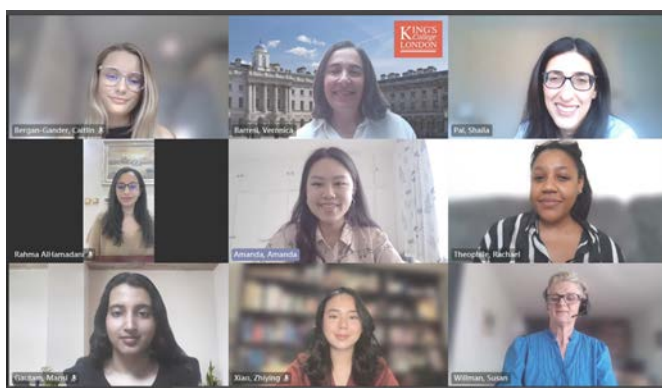
interaction through being responsible for calling clients which the Clinic was unable to assist. I learnt that clients often feel less disheartened upon hearing that we can direct them to an organisation which is better suited to respond to their enquiry.

One of the key benefits of working at the King's Legal Clinic is that it exposes students to the legal sector whilst also enabling them to develop transferable skills applicable to any profession. The level of support provided by all staff members at the Clinic builds a fantastic learning environment in which students are comfortable taking ownership of both their successes and their mistakes. Despite the difficulties of operating the Clinic during a pandemic, this high level of support was maintained, and the staff was always open to hearing students' questions and concerns. Working on projects with students who are as excited and inspired by the aims of the Clinic is always a wonderful experience.'

Shakhed Mor, LLB

Clinic Awards

The work of the Clinic was recognised at the LawWorks and Attorney-General Student Awards 2021: the IP Clinic was shortlisted in the Best New Pro Bono Activity; the Protea Clinic, which provides specialist immigration advice to vulnerable foreign national women and prisoners, won Best New Pro Bono Activity and Amanda Ignatia (Student Director of the HRE Clinic) won Best Individual Contribution.



Protea Clinic winning Best New Pro Bono Activity award.

Collaborative community projects and research

The Clinic continued to work with organisations

working on the frontline to provide access to justice to local communities. These included:

- Ten King's students each volunteering for a minimum of 20 days for Support Through Court, a charity which provides support for litigants in person in the Central London Family Court.
- Six King's students supporting the Zacchaeus 2000 Trust (Z2K) clients in appealing against refusals of disability benefits by the Department for Work and Pensions. Since March 2020 when the national lockdown restrictions were imposed, both Z2K and the Tribunal service have been operating remotely. Students have been quick to adapt to this new way of working and have been able to work on a case-by-case basis to ensure clients receive the best possible service tailored to their needs. King's students helped on six Z2K cases, winning two, with three still ongoing at the time of writing. The financial benefit the King's students have obtained for Z2K clients has been £28,676.60 so far.

'Through this very difficult year, navigating the pandemic and the new model of working, the contribution of the King's Legal Clinic has been appreciated and valued by our clients. We are grateful for their continued support.'

Lucy Isaac, Tribunals Coordinator, **Z2K (Zacchaeus 2000 Trust)**



Windrush Clinic launch event at Elim House Community Association.

- Five King's students provided pro bono support to the University of London Refugee Law Clinic for an entire academic year. King's students prepared fresh claims for asylum for vulnerable refugees and some also prepared a 'Good Practice Guide for Lawyers' working on fresh claims cases.
- Our students supported Southwark Law Centre on an important research project which evidenced the extent to which problems with welfare benefits contributed to possession action, and possible homelessness for vulnerable tenants.

'Despite the difficulties of remote working during the pandemic, the students' diligent input was invaluable in analysing evidence to assist the Law Centre in drafting the report. The findings are being used to help in developing the Law Centre services and to contribute to Ministry of Justice consultations.'

Sally Causer, Executive Director,
Southwark Law Centre

Streetlaw Society and Mediation Project

As part of the Pro Bono Society at King's College London, the Mediation Project aims to promote and encourage the use of mediation within King's. It enables students from both law and non-law backgrounds to become qualified Civil and Commercial Mediators through bi-annual mediation training with the Normanton Chambers (the Society of Mediators). To provide opportunities for students to apply mediation skills, they organised additional training sessions and participated in various mediation competitions in the past year. Supported by the Clinic, they entered the ADR ODR Mediation Competition and the ICC Commercial Mediation Competition, winning the Best Speaker's Award.

We continued our public legal education work with the Streetlaw Society, where the aim is for King's students to educate members of the local community about the law using interactive teaching methods. Students delivered on-line Streetlaw law presentations on a range of topics including immigration and employment rights to Shpresa, a charity that promotes the participation and contribution of Albanian-speaking refugees and migrants in the UK, and intellectual property to the entrepreneurs at King's Entrepreneurship Institute.



New clinics

Human Rights and Environment (HRE) Clinic

The Human Rights and Environment (HRE) Clinic launched in 2020, a first among UK Legal Clinics. The HRE Clinic takes a holistic approach to client needs, offering initial research through casework and helping to navigate legal procedures for individual clients in the UK and communities abroad affected by climate change. Under the supervision of Sue Willman, a senior consultant at a public interest law firm, students work on a range of projects that tackle social, economic, and environmental issues.

The human rights work includes legal research on proposed reforms to the Human Rights Act, and legal input towards informative videos produced by LawforLife, aimed at informing Roma parents about their legal rights and duties in relation to children being taken into state care. Module students advised on cases about data rights affecting activists in the UK and in the Middle East.

The HRE Clinic works closely with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and activists for maximum impact. In the UK, the Clinic partners with the Environmental Law Foundation which referred to us a range of domestic environmental law cases with a focus on air pollution and climate change related issues during 2020. Barristers from Landmark Chambers work pro bono to review students' advice. Outside the UK the Clinic has been developing a ground-breaking project in the Sundarbans, India, working with students and academics in Kolkata to seek remedies for climate change related to the activities of fossil fuel companies registered in the UK.

Tackling climate change in Uganda – the Clinic in action

We also started working with Greenwatch, an environmental rights advocacy NGO in Uganda, which is alleging that three governmental enforcement

agencies have failed to implement/uphold the law relating to forestry protection and climate change prevention. In collaboration with students from the King's geography department and with tireless work from law student volunteers, supported by Landmark Chambers' barristers, the HRE Legal Clinic has worked for five months to produce an amicus curiae and extensive scientific report which will support a progressive legal claim concerning human and environmental rights in East Africa. The team was separated into two individual groups: law research done by undergraduate and masters students from King's and geography research by PhD students from Edinburgh and King's. In addition, we partnered with a professor from Makerere University in Uganda. The claim responds to government inaction in the face of unprecedented levels of deforestation, whose effects are already felt by the public in the form of hazards like droughts and flooding. According to experts, these hazards represent just the tip of the iceberg and in the next decade, a failure to act could constitute a violation of the right to life and a healthy environment for the local population.

'I have thoroughly enjoyed working with such dedicated students and organizations who have put months into over 80-page research reports that went into producing work that will support an important legal case and an imperative environmental cause. This is the first time I have worked on an environmental case of this scale and import and getting involved with an organization like Greenwatch, with its past experience and expertise has been illuminating. Projects like these are what drew me to the HRE Legal Clinic, and this type of extensive collaboration, research and involvement are what I think makes it particularly special.'

Isabelle Standen, HRE Student Director



Events

In December 2020, King's Legal Clinic participated in the second annual Global Day of Action for Climate Change. This was done as part of a wider Climate Justice Pledge Initiative, which has been signed by universities all over the world. The chosen theme had been pitched by the King's Clinic students in a stunning video called Rights of Nature. The Clinic collaborated with the University of York Legal Clinic in organising a panel event and a moot competition. The purpose of this series of events was to engage in a wide discussion on this novel area in the field of environmental law, challenge received ideas on what environmental law is or should be and consider forward-thinking and creative solutions to the climate related problems facing us today.

The moot competition invited 28 students from King's, York, and City University to compete in front of legal experts (including QCs from leading barristers' chambers, and practitioners from Living Law, Friends of the Earth, and the Earth Law Centre) to represent a river as a client. The day of moot was closed by a panel discussion on 'How Rights of Nature



can help protect the environment'. The panellists consisted of leading environmental and human rights lawyers from all over the world, including Cormac Cullinan, Michelle Maloney, barrister Paul Powlesland, Constanza Prieto Figelist, and Shrishtee Bajpai, joined by indigenous activist Casey Camp-Horinek. The lively discussion was joined by 120 attendees and resulted in a thought-provoking conversation on whether Rights of Nature can be used to develop a better legal framework for UK environmental law and international law.

Intellectual Property Law Clinic

The Intellectual Property Law (IP) Clinic, led by Veronica Barresi, opened its doors during the 2020/21 academic year and has since advised and protected new businesses, supported female and young entrepreneurs, and helped foster creativity and innovation during the pandemic. More than 40 students were involved in assisting 20 clients varying from small businesses, creative freelancers, and start-ups from diverse backgrounds. Our students were supervised and assisted by leading specialist lawyers at our partner firms - Briffa, a cutting-edge boutique firm, and Bird & Bird, an international city law firm.

It was of course a tough year due to the pandemic. Everyone missed going for a cup of tea together or simply chatting in Somerset House. However, the IP Clinic managed to expand its client base by utilising technology and was supported by student advisers, clients, and external supervisors alike. Students advised IP Clinic clients on a range of queries, such as how to protect a new start-up, artificial intelligence, trademark and designs registrability, ownership of copyright in collaborative photography, and copyright infringement of videos posted on Instagram just to name a few. The IP Student Directors also showed great commitment and enthusiasm and helped the Clinic expand its activities and organise high profile events. We are proud of the feedback that our students received from clients and law firm partners. The clients felt supported in a friendly and secure environment and felt that their concerns were rapidly addressed and resolved.

IP Clinic events

A joint event between the Clinic and the Streetlaw Society brought much excitement. The students presented an 'Overview of IP Rights' to the Entrepreneurship Institute.

The presentation was part of the King's 20 programme. We were also privileged to have Lord Arnold, the innovation judge par excellence, who kindly agreed to be subject for over an hour to a (friendly) barrage of questions from students in our 'Meet the Judge' event in February 2021.

Recognition

The IP Clinic was shortlisted in the Best New Pro Bono Activity category for the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards 2021. The main case study put forward in the nomination concerned a female young entrepreneur who set up a new business during the pandemic. The student advisers worked with Veronica Barresi and external supervisors at Briffa to assist the client on a range of issues.

The students commented:

'We felt we made an impact and empowered the entrepreneur whose business is an award-winning start-up that was established during the pandemic.'

The Client echoed these feelings and stated:

'Students stayed connected via CLIO and I felt like a valued client. The advice I received was easy to understand and explained the rationale behind their comments. It helped demystify the trade marking process and gave me a clear understanding of next steps. The advice has saved me money and equipped me with the tools I need to trademark my business name. This is without a doubt a great service for new start-ups, and I would highly recommend it to other businesses in a similar situation.'

The Law Clinic module

The Law Clinic module is a 30-credit optional module available in the final year of the LLB programme. Students are placed in firms of four and work on up to four cases under the supervision of qualified lawyers. Working in small groups gives students the opportunity to reflect on their experience, the development of their skills and develops their understanding of the law in context. Students also analyse the effectiveness of the law and legal procedures with a particular focus on access to justice.

The class of 2020–21 showed great resilience and flexibility. Due to the pandemic the module was conducted on-line including all classes, client interviews and supervision meetings. Students provided high quality legal advice to their clients and performed very well in the module.



‘Undertaking the Student Law Clinic module was a very unique experience compared to other traditional academic modules. I gained practical experience by working with students

on real life cases and taking part in research, interviews with the client, and letter writing. We were directly supervised by a solicitor who gave us the necessary guidance throughout our case. Being involved in such tasks gave me the opportunity to have a client facing role and develop skills such as teamwork and research. It was also a great way to work closely with three wonderful team-members who have now become good friends of mine.’

Melanie Amaya Mazza, Law with European Legal Studies



Facts, figures and feedback

Students

Students can get involved with the Clinic by participating in the Law Clinic module, or on an extracurricular basis. The extracurricular activities include; being a student advisor or administrator; volunteering on a community collaborative project or research initiative; and getting involved in the Streetlaw Society and Mediation Project.

204

students

24

module students

140

extra curricular students
(advisors, administrators,
project workers)

40

Streetlaw Society and
Mediation Project

‘I am deeply impressed by
the quality of support.’

Client



Client feedback

One of our main aims is to serve our community and help our clients resolve their problems. We aim to provide a high quality and professional service and endeavour to instil these values in our students. We greatly value our client feedback and are pleased that it continues to be highly positive.

‘I found the service very efficient, and the communication was quick and brilliant. Overall I am very happy that I approached King’s Legal Clinic.’

Client

250

client enquiries received

150

clients signposted

73

clients advised

100%

of clients would recommend the Clinic to someone else

100%

of clients would use the Clinic again

100%

of clients would describe the service received at the Clinic as very good to good

100%

of clients were very happy with the speed at which the Clinic dealt with their case

‘Extreme professionalism and also understanding of an area that is rapidly evolving. I was impressed by the swift digestion of our complex case and speed with which we received feedback for future action.’

Client

‘Amanda was really helpful in my case, from following up documentation and during the meeting with the solicitor, as well as following up the outcome of the advice. Her intervention contributed to making me feel safe to address my issues in a legal advice environment.’

Client

Awards

LawWorks and Attorney-General Student Awards 2021

It was a great year for the Clinic as we were shortlisted in three categories (including best new pro bono activity for the IP Clinic) and won in two categories.

Best individual contribution by a student



Amanda Ignatia won best individual contribution by a student.

Amanda was recognised for her countless hours volunteering in the Clinic from immigration cases to complex research. Her

most innovative work was in her role as a student director of the King's Human Rights and Environment Clinic (HRE Clinic). The HRE Clinic, the first of its kind in the UK, focuses on public interest cases and research projects which aim to protect the environment and promote human rights. Amanda provided exemplary support to Sue Willman and King's students working on HRE cases.

Her casework ranged from advising a south London community group concerned about high air pollution levels caused by traffic to conducting research for an amicus curiae for a Ugandan NGO on the protection of Ugandan forests. Amanda had successfully pitched the chosen theme for the Law Clinics Global Day of Action on Climate Justice: 'Rights of Nature' for which she co-organised a series of events that were attended by many students and leading legal experts.

'I am incredibly honoured and overjoyed to receive the Award. I am so proud to be part of such a brilliant group of people at King's Legal Clinic, a huge thank you to Sue Willman. I am extremely grateful to have her guidance and the support of everyone around me. I hope to continue contributing to pro bono, especially in promoting climate justice by protecting natural entities and helping vulnerable communities all over the world.'

Amanda Ignatia, **Politics, Philosophy and Law**

'We are proud of all our students' pro bono effort at King's, but Amanda's commitment to pro bono and social justice is outstanding. The breadth and the quality of her work, the significant time she put in and her innovative Climate Justice work makes her an exceptional student. Like so many clinics, we have faced challenges adapting our services to the pandemic environment. I remember during the first lockdown, we needed students to work on cases using our new remote system which we were still developing. I put out a call for volunteers, Amanda was the first person to reply and worked with the whole Clinic team patiently, flexibly, and constructively. When people have been ill in the Clinic and we need the extra support, Amanda has stepped in. She is a joy to work with, always kind and supportive to clients, fellow students, and the Clinic team.'

Shailla Pal, Director & Supervising Solicitor,
King's Legal Clinic

Best New Pro Bono Activity – Protea Clinic

The Protea Clinic is a collaborative project set up by King's Legal Clinic, Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre (HFLC) and Hibiscus Initiatives (HI) to address the need for high-quality legal advice for vulnerable migrant females and to help identify and assist victims of modern slavery.

Many of the Protea Clinic's clients come from complex backgrounds and experience mental health difficulties, language and cultural barriers, poverty, gender-based abuse, and involvement with the criminal justice system. These multiple disadvantages often mean that their immigration cases are complex and not easily resolved. The Protea clinic has allowed King's students to investigate complex immigration cases and support vulnerable and disenfranchised clients through a holistic clinical model.

'Thank you for the advice. I am really thinking through everything that was said. Although my options are limited, I feel a sense of relief that I can make the right application with the Home Office and feel more secure.'

Client feedback

Case study

The client is a victim of modern slavery. She was trafficked from a Latin American country to the UK and exploited for sexual commercial activity. The client is a witness for the police in the prosecution of her traffickers. The criminal trial has been subject to delays due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The client has been waiting for a considerable time for a final decision from the Home Office as to whether she is a victim of modern slavery. The Clinic advised on the

lawfulness of the delay and her eligibility to remain on asylum and human rights grounds. The Clinic has also assisted in securing a legal aid lawyer.

'We have made great efforts to adapt the Clinic so it can be delivered virtually, including use of technology to serve our advice sessions on a visual platform, thereby ensuring that the human rapport is visible and providing clients and students with the additional support needed to navigate case preparation remotely. It is a matter of pride to say that Coronavirus did not obstruct access to justice for our clients even during these difficult circumstances. We are truly grateful for the commitment displayed by students from King's Legal Clinic. They are an invaluable component in the fact-finding process, and I have witnessed first class research produced by students on topics as varied as the availability of a HIV drug in Uganda to the risk of persecution of a political organisation in China.'

**Raj Sahota, Immigration Solicitor,
Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre**

'Joining the Protea Clinic enabled me to witness first-hand the impact of providing access to legal services to vulnerable people who need it but cannot afford it. I found my experience very gratifying, both personally and professionally. This experience reinforced my belief that providing pro bono service should be an integral part to every lawyer's legal practice and professional obligations.'

Rahma Alhamadani, LLM in Transnational Law

The future

Future projects – Windrush Justice Clinic

In the 2020–21 academic year we will be working with Southwark Law Centre to provide support for those claiming under the Windrush Compensation Scheme. Two years ago, the UK government finally accepted that it had wrongly detained, deported and denied legal rights to Commonwealth citizens from the Caribbean, Africa, and Southern Asia in what is now known as the ‘Windrush Scandal.’ In April 2019, the government established The Windrush Compensation Scheme (‘WCS’) which aims to provide victims with recompense for their suffering, for issues such as illegal imprisonment and deportation, loss of employment, accrual of debts and loss of homes, frozen bank accounts, lack of access to welfare benefits, and health care. The number of applications to the WCS has so far been low. This is partly due to distrust in the government and the WCS in light of the hostile immigration environment. No legal aid is available to prepare an application to the WCS.

The Windrush Justice Clinic (WJC) is a broader collaboration between Southwark Law Centre and North Kensington Law Centre, the University of Westminster Legal Advice Clinic, King’s College London’s Legal Clinic, the London South Bank University Legal Advice Clinic, and community groups including Claudia Jones Organisation, The Windrush Compensation Project and The Jigsaw House Society.

The Clinic will be working with the wider WJC group and our students from King’s will specifically provide support to a Windrush Justice solicitor from the Southwark Law Centre. Students will help raise awareness of the WCS through a series of workshops in the community and help prepare compensation claims. They will undertake research, gather evidence, and take notes and statements.



ALAMY

‘Over several decades, many citizens of countries that were part of the British Commonwealth were wrongly detained, threatened with deportation and in some cases wrongly deported from the UK, or not allowed to return. An unknown number lost their jobs or homes or were denied benefits or medical care to which they were entitled to.

The Windrush Justice Clinic aims to be a single point of contact for Windrush victims, offering free independent legal advice. We want the victims of this injustice to receive compensation which accurately reflects their loss and suffering.’

**Sally Causer, Executive Director,
Southwark Law Centre**

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DESIGN

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