

Law students put research into practice to support international human rights protection

Postgraduate Laws students at UCL are addressing real-world human rights protection issues by providing cutting-edge legal research to organisations working to protect human rights around the world.

Each year, the Public International Law Pro Bono Project, which began life as a PhD and LLM student initiative, brings together a competitively selected group of students, who collaborate and offer their expertise on a pro bono (for free) basis.

The project helped the organisation Redress, which seeks justice for survivors of torture, to prepare reports on the UK's compliance with its obligations, which were submitted to the UK Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights and to the UN Committee Against Torture.

In addition, the project has prepared a case study on compliance with international humanitarian law for the International Committee of the Red Cross, posted on its 'IHL in Action' webpage.

Since 2017, more than 60 UCL students have participated in the project, with support and supervision provided by faculty members and UCL Laws doctoral students.



Target 16.3, which calls on countries to 'Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all'.

"To meet this target, countries must develop justice systems that consider the needs of the people they are designed to serve," explains Professor Pleasence.

To help them achieve this, Professor Pleasence has advised on and helped to develop clear guidelines and frameworks to enable countries to provide better access to civil justice, and mechanisms to measure progress. These include providing a framework for countries to carry out surveys that help understand people's everyday legal problems and experiences of their local justice system.



UCL clinic provides access to justice for local community

Legal problems and ill-health often coincide. Without intervention, problems can escalate – with deteriorating health leading to financial difficulties, worsening living conditions and further stress and anxiety.

The UCL Access to Justice Clinic provides free legal advice and support to local residents who are experiencing legal problems and health issues. The clinic is a partnership between UCL and the local community, providing a vital service to those in need.

