

ANNE LEDDIN GELL

171 Washington Park, #7 ▪ Brooklyn, NY 11205 ▪ 510-541-0843 ▪ anniegell@yahoo.com

In the fall of 2010, I will begin work as a Lawyers' Earthquake Response Network (LERN) Fellow with the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI). I am currently seeking donations to fund my work in Haiti. The following proposal outlines the many challenges facing Haiti, the exceptional human rights advocacy work of IJDH and BAI, and how my fellowship will contribute to the promotion and protection of the human rights of the Haitian people in this critical time.



The Challenges Facing Haiti

On January 12, 2010 the most powerful earthquake in over 200 years struck Haiti, causing catastrophic destruction in the Western hemisphere's poorest country. It is estimated to be the worst natural disaster per capita in human history. The earthquake

ANNE LEDDIN GELL

171 Washington Park, #7 ▪ Brooklyn, NY 11205 ▪ 510-541-0843 ▪ anniegell@yahoo.com

struck near the capital of Port-au-Prince, the most densely populated part of Haiti. The death toll is over 250,000. The suffering of the survivors is impossible to quantify.



The earthquake devastated Haiti's frail infrastructure, including housing, public buildings, main roads, and the port and airport of Port-au-Prince. It worsened already inadequate and inequitable access to basic services and necessities like food and water throughout Haiti. It also created a severe lack of safety and security, exacerbating the already grave problem of sexual violence against Haitian women and girls.

Though the earthquake created a crisis of profound proportions, Haiti was a place of devastation even before the earthquake struck. Nearly 80 percent of Haitians live in extreme poverty, and more than half suffer from malnutrition. Unemployment is a

ANNE LEDDIN GELL

171 Washington Park, #7 ▪ Brooklyn, NY 11205 ▪ 510-541-0843 ▪ anniegell@yahoo.com

staggering 70 percent, and tens of thousands of people die each year from preventable illnesses related to a lack of clean water. Infant mortality rates are among the highest in the world, and the average life expectancy is only 50 years. The women of Haiti, who are both over-represented among the poor and responsible for meeting the basic needs of the vast majority of the population, suffer disproportionately. One in 16 women faces a lifetime chance of dying during childbirth and gender-based violence is widespread.



These grim indicators stem from ill-conceived policies imposed by donor countries, corruption in the Haitian government and a failure to enforce the rule of law, which have encouraged poverty, social inequality and environmental destruction in Haiti. Today, as the international community pursues recovery for Haiti, the country is at a crossroads: it could recreate the status quo of widespread misery or rebuild in ways that promote sustainable development and human rights.

The Project

Host Organizations



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti Bureau des Avocats Internationaux

The Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and its Haiti-based affiliate, the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI), have 15 years of demonstrated success enforcing Haitians' human rights, in Haiti and abroad.

IJDH and BAI have four principle program tools:

1) *impact litigation* forces open the doors of Haitian, international and U.S. courts for precedent-setting human rights cases;

2) *documentation* provides public officials, human rights advocates and grassroots activists the reliable information they need to speak up for human rights in Haiti;

3) *transnational grassroots advocacy* compels governments and powerful institutions in Haiti and abroad to respect Haitians' human rights; and

4) *systemic capacity building* develops a corps of Haitian lawyers and advocates trained to fight for sustainable change in their country.

IJDH and BAI are recognized for their innovative and successful advocacy work on behalf of Haiti's poor. BAI spearheaded the prosecution of the Raboteau Massacre Trial, regarded as one of the most important human rights cases in the Americas. IJDH and BAI persisted in their pursuit of those found responsible, resulting in judgments in U.S. court against a former death squad leader. In May 2008, BAI Director Mario Joseph

ANNE LEDDIN GELL

171 Washington Park, #7 ▪ Brooklyn, NY 11205 ▪ 510-541-0843 ▪ anniegell@yahoo.com

delivered \$430,000 in damage awards to the victims. The New York Times called Mario Joseph “Haiti’s most respected human rights lawyer.”

The Board of IJDH and BAI is comprised of some of the most innovative human rights practitioners in the world. Dr. Paul Farmer, MD, Ph.D., of Partners in Health, changed the way the world treats infectious diseases among the poor. Ira Kurzban, Esq. is one of the pre-eminent immigration and refugee lawyers in the U.S. Bryan Stevenson, Esq., a professor at New York University Law School, is a tireless and successful advocate for death-row inmates, founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama, and a MacArthur Foundation “Genius Award” winner.

Because of their unparalleled leadership, experience and success, IJDH and BAI are at the forefront of human rights advocacy in Haiti.

The Lawyers’ Earthquake Response Network (LERN)

BAI and IJDH established the Lawyers’ Earthquake Response Network (LERN), to coordinate the response of international lawyers to the earthquake in Haiti. LERN employs a human rights-based approach to advocate for the victims of the earthquake and reduce Haiti’s vulnerability to future natural, political and economic stresses. The Network’s projects include fighting for safe housing, long-term, effective international assistance to Haiti, immigration opportunities to the U.S., and effective prevention of and responses to gender-based violence in post-earthquake Haiti. LERN will also develop replicable models for international legal responses to large-scale natural disasters. IJDH launched LERN on January 17, 2010. Since then, over 360 lawyers, law professors and law students – many of them top experts in their field – have joined the network

ANNE LEDDIN GELL

171 Washington Park, #7 ▪ Brooklyn, NY 11205 ▪ 510-541-0843 ▪ anniegell@yahoo.com

My Work as a LERN Fellow

As a LERN Fellow with IJDH and BAI, I will work to promote the rule of law and assist in the rebuilding of Haiti at a time of profound need under the guidance of some of the most innovative human rights advocates in the world. My work will include coordinating communication between U.S. and Haitian lawyers, facilitating human rights delegations and fact-finding trips, preparing advocacy reports that incorporate legal research and factual findings made through LERN delegations, conducting trainings on various topics such as international law standards, and collaborating with victims and victims' organizations to develop advocacy plans.

My Commitment to Human Rights and Haiti

My dedication to human rights advocacy began when I was an intern at Médecins Sans Frontières. At MSF, I learned about the complexities of humanitarian work and found myself confronting difficult and troubling questions. What is ultimately achieved, I wondered, by bandaging up a wounded Sudanese soldier only to watch him walk directly back into war? Where is the victory in treating a Haitian child for malaria when she will certainly die of dysentery within weeks because of lack of clean water?

Yet by working with those on the forefront of the humanitarian movement, I quickly came to understand that the best of what makes us human – our ability for compassion and empathy – is what drives efforts like those of MSF to lessen other's suffering. Most importantly, I realized the necessity for multi-faceted advocacy combined with direct intervention to address both emergency and systemic problems that underlie human suffering.

ANNE LEDDIN GELL

171 Washington Park, #7 ▪ Brooklyn, NY 11205 ▪ 510-541-0843 ▪ anniegell@yahoo.com

Since my time at MSF, I have honed my advocacy skills and deepened my commitment to the promotion of human rights. I studied international human rights law intensively at Columbia Law School and devoted my time outside of my studies to human rights work. In 2008, I worked as a Legal Associate at the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam). In Cambodia, I found a post-conflict country whose population is still traumatized by almost thirty years of conflict and atrocities. My work allowed me to travel throughout the Cambodian countryside with the Victim Participation Team, assisting in presentations about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal and interviewing survivors who wished to join the proceedings as civil parties. Although I had traveled to developing countries such as Malaysia and India, my experience in Cambodia was particularly fulfilling because it allowed me to use my advocacy skills to directly contribute to the promotion of human rights.

My interest in Haiti was born from my undergraduate study of history. Soon after the successful slave revolt that launched its statehood, Haiti became a pariah to a world disturbed by the idea of a free black republic. Ever since, Haiti has remained subject to foreign interventions – some well intentioned, most misguided – that range from the violent (gunboat diplomacy and occupation by the U.S. Marines) to the subtle (aid embargoes and support to bloody dictatorships).

Despite this tragic history, I was inspired by reading Mountains Beyond Mountains in 2004 and learning about Partners in Health, an organization that has innovated health care provision in Haiti and thereby disproved the popular belief that it is a place of intractable suffering. In law school, I wrote two major research papers on human rights challenges in Haiti – the first on increasing accountability for sexual

ANNE LEDDIN GELL

171 Washington Park, #7 ▪ Brooklyn, NY 11205 ▪ 510-541-0843 ▪ anniegell@yahoo.com

exploitation and abuse perpetrated by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti and the second on human rights violations in Haitian prisons. The research and writing process allowed me to delve deeply into Haitian history, politics, and contemporary human rights challenges.

My interest in Haiti is not simply academic. As a post-graduate fellow at Sanctuary for Families, I have worked to reunite Haitian victims of gender-based violence in New York with their children stranded in post-earthquake Haiti. As a law student, I worked with the Legal Aid Society to defend a mentally ill, HIV+ Haitian man in immigration proceedings. As I gathered and developed expert affidavits for my client's case, I was deeply inspired by attorneys working on the complex human rights challenges in Haiti, including Brian Concannon at IJDH and Mario Joseph of BAI.

On January 12, 2010, I watched the immediate aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti with horror and have continued to monitor the crisis as it unfolds. The earthquake and its aftermath have created a catastrophe among a population already facing so many challenges. Yet the international attention and resources that the tragedy has brought to Haiti also presents a historic opportunity. As a LERN Fellow with IJDH and BAI, I can use my advocacy skills and human rights training to directly contribute to the rebuilding of Haiti and the promotion of human rights at this critical crossroads in Haiti's history.

ANNE LEDDIN GELL

171 Washington Park, #7 ▪ Brooklyn, NY 11205 ▪ 510-541-0843 ▪ anniegell@yahoo.com

Estimated Budget

Housing:	\$8,400	(\$700 per month)
Utilities (phone, electricity, water):	\$3,600	(\$300 per month)
Food:	\$6,000	(\$500 per month)
Language lessons (French refresher; Kreyol):	\$3,000	
Incidentals (toiletries, vaccinations, medicine):	\$1000	
Travel to and from Port-au-Prince:	\$2,000	
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>\$24,000</i>	

ANNE LEDDIN GELL

171 Washington Park, #7 ▪ Brooklyn, NY 11205 ▪ 510-541-0843 ▪ anniegell@yahoo.com

To Donate

Please help me to help the people of Haiti by contributing to IJDH in support of my work as a LERN Fellow. To donate, mail a check to IJDH, PO Box 745, Joseph, OR 97846 or donate online at <http://ijdh.org/donate>. Please note on your check or the online form that your donation is in support of Annie Gell, LERN Fellow. IJDH is a non-profit organization and your donation is tax-deductible.

Thank you.

