

“Sustained Impact” expresses our hope and belief that seemingly intractable law and policy problems will yield to concentrated *pro bono* legal services committed over an extended period.

The Foundation's first Sustained Impact program began in 2019, in response to post-Hurricane Maria issues in Puerto Rico.

“There is huge, huge damage there that is not being tended to,” Squire Patton Boggs Foundation President John Oberdorfer said at the time. “The problems are, from every indication, entrenched and need a great deal of attention. We thought this was a good place and a good way for us to dedicate our talent and our energies.”

Law360 article, April 7, 2019

In the Sustained Impact Fellowship's initial year, Fellows Edmarie Rosario, from the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University, and Andreana Paz, from Case Western University Law School, worked with Centro Para Puerto Rico. Mónica Rodríguez of SMU's Dedman Law School worked with Ayuda Legal in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Edmarie Rosario Marín, at that time a rising 2L student at the Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law, spent her summer at Centro para Puerto Rico: Fundación Sila M. Calderón. Her work included research on the availability of funds, aid and programs, for individuals and families from underserved communities impacted by Hurricane Maria. She met with community leaders and assisted in the creation of informative materials for distribution to community members in need of legal aid.

Through workshops, she was able to assist individuals in understanding governmental procedures and provided referrals to legal aid groups available to these communities in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Andreana Paz, at that time a rising 3L student at Case Western Reserve University School of Law, worked with leaders of other nonprofit organizations and communities. She helped citizens apply for FEMA funding and with FEMA appeals. Centro Para Puerto Rico helped the citizens of the Buen Consejos subdivision of San Juan find resources to finish a community center that was being constructed when Hurricane Maria struck. They also hosted workshops for people in the community on topics such as how to establish a nonprofit, writing grant proposals and where to get available funding.



Mónica Rodríguez, at that time a rising 2L student at the Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law, worked at Ayuda Legal Puerto Rico, Inc. as a Public Policy Fellow, where she contributed to a disaster recovery advocacy initiative. In her position, Mónica collaborated with the Ayuda Legal team to construct a policy report focused on promoting the right of low-income Puerto Rican communities to a just recovery in relation to HUD's disbursement of Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds.

Additionally, she helped host legal workshops that educated and empowered low-income citizens to take action and communicate the needs of their communities to local government. This internship should propel Mónica's commitment to *pro bono* legal services for communities in need.

“My Fellowship was an invaluable experience, and the advocacy work we did was so important for the just recovery of Puerto Rico and its communities around the island.”

Mónica Rodríguez, Foundation Fellow

“You can't imagine how enriching this experience was for the Fellows, as well as productive for the impacted communities. Thanks for the opportunity and for thinking of Puerto Rico's recovery as part of your program for this year.”

Dennis R. Román President, Centro Para Puerto Rico

In 2020, Fellows Reinaldo Machin from the Howard University Law School and Clarissa Iglesias Torres from the University of Texas School of Law worked remotely for Centro Para Puerto Rico, and Tania Suárez Marques from the George Washington University Law School worked for Ayuda Legal in San Juan.

Reinaldo Machin, a student at Howard University School of Law, graduated from the University of Puerto Rico and then earned a Ph.D in molecular biology at the University of Iowa. He has been Science Ambassador for the Puerto Rico Science Policy Action Network, and founded “Bench2Bench,” a science and law communications and outreach platform.

Tania Suarez–Marquez, a student at George Washington University Law School, also graduated from the University of Puerto Rico, and earned a Master’s Degree in clinical psychology from Columbia University before beginning law school. Tania has worked with numerous government officials to advocate for Puerto Rico and other low-income communities.

Clarissa Iglesias Torres, a student at the University of Texas School of Law, has a strong and expanding academic and public service background in international law. She earned a B.A. in 2019 from Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, and has worked for the UN in Mexico City.

“This fellowship meant an opportunity to learn from top lawyers and top law students from all around the world. It was a chance to learn from others’ experience, gain tools I need to pursue my goals and develop lifetime relationships.”

Clarissa Iglesias Torres, Foundation Fellow.

In 2021, the Foundation, relying on the strength and determination of newly chosen Fellows, promises to do even more – and to sustain its commitment to progress and justice in the face of adversity.