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Teaching Social Justice Lawyering: Systematically Including Community Legal Education in Law School Clinics

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TEACHING SOCIAL JUSTICE LAWYERING: SYSTEMATICALLY INCLUDING COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION IN LAW SCHOOL CLINICS

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There is a body of literature on clinical legal theory that urges a focus in clinics beyond the single client to an explicit teaching of social justice lawyering. This article adds to this emerging body of work by discussing the valuable role community legal education plays in teaching skills and values essential to single client representation and social justice lawyering. The article examines the theoretical underpinnings of clinical legal education and community education and how they influenced the authors' design and implementation of community legal education within their respective clinics. Then, this article discusses two projects designed to help persons subjected to domestic abuse: the first project undertaken for the first time by a clinic teaching community legal education after a long hiatus, the second project ongoing for several years in a clinic with a long history of incorporating community education into its work. Through the discussion of these two projects, the article evaluates and explains the pedagogical and logistical successes and challenges of incorporating community education into clinical programs. The article focuses on the following objectives: (1) empowerment with legal knowledge to enable the community to advocate for its own self-interests; (2) the process of collaboration with the community in facilitating community legal education; (3) teaching and learning in context; and (4) teaching multi-dimensional lawyering skills and instilling a commitment to social justice. Finally, the article assesses whether the clinics' community work attained these justice outcomes and benefitted the target communities and the clinics' students.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a body of literature on clinical legal theory that urges clinics to focus beyond single clients to explicitly teach social justice lawyering.¹ This article seeks to add to this body of work and to discuss the valuable role community legal education plays in clinical legal education both as a vehicle for teaching and a forum for exercising skills essential to single client representation and social justice lawyering. In addition, this article explores the social justice impact of community legal education. By exploring two community legal education projects undertaken at different law schools this article also seeks to provide readers with insight into the practicalities of incorporating community legal education into clinical programs, share strategies for success, and identify challenges that community legal education

¹ For one of the most recent discussions, see generally Marcy L. Karin & Robin R. Runge, *Toward Integrated Law Clinics that Train Social Change Advocates*, 17 CLIN. L. REV. 563 (2011) (discussing an integrated approach to client representation, including community education). For a broad discussion of community lawyering and the underlying considerations, see generally Karen Tokarz, Nancy L. Cook, Susan Brooks & Brenda Bratton Blom, *Conversations on Community Lawyering: The Newest (Oldest) Wave in Clinical Legal Education*, 28 WASH. U. J.L. & POL'Y 359 (2008); Jon C. Dubin, *Clinical Design for Social Justice Imperative*, 51 SMU L. REV. 1461 (1998); Katherine R. Kruse, *Biting off What They Can Chew: Strategies for Involving Students in Problem Solving Beyond Individual Client Representation*, 8 CLIN. L. REV. 405 (2002).

projects present.

I. THE RELEVANCE OF COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

A. *Community Legal Education*

For purposes of our work and this article, we define community legal education as a form of systemic advocacy that aims to educate a segment of the community about its rights in a particular legal context to advance the empowerment of that community. Paulo Freire states that when “people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation.”² Lawyers, at the request of the community, can assist in providing community legal education. And because community legal education “is a lawyering model grounded in theories of progressive practice that view client empowerment as one of the goals of social change,” it serves as a critical piece for “rebellious lawyering,”³ as distinct from “regnant lawyering,” which does not aim to empower.⁴

Community empowerment can result from the following activities: “encourag[ing] planning on the basis of legal rights and obligations”;⁵ “mobiliz[ing] individuals and groups to pursue their rights”;⁶ “facilitat[ing] and strengthening community organizations”;⁷ “foster[ing] self-help activities for which lawyers will not be necessary”;⁸ and “demystifying the law.”⁹

The first task of an effective community legal education project is to define community. In domestic violence advocacy, which is the context for the University of Baltimore School of Law Family Law Clinic (Baltimore clinic)¹⁰ and the Catholic University Columbus

² PAULO FREIRE, *PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED* 83 (1970).

³ Ingrid V. Eagly, *Community Education: Creating a New Vision of Legal Services Practice*, 4 *CLIN. L. REV.* 433, 480 (1998). See also Stacy Brustin, *Expanding Our Vision of Legal Services Representation - The Hermanas Unidas Project*, 1 *J. GENDER SOC. POL'Y & L.GENDER SOCIAL POL'Y & LAW* 39 (1993).

⁴ Gerald López, *Reconceiving Civil Rights Practice: Seven Weeks in the Life of a Rebellious Collaboration*, 77 *GEO. L.J.* 1603, 1609-10 (1989) (discussing “regnant lawyering” as serving marginalized persons without seeking to empower them); William P. Quigley, *Reflections of Community Organizers: Lawyering for Empowerment for Community Organizations*, 21 *OHIO N. U. L. REV.* 455, 455 n.3 (1995).

⁵ Eagly, *supra* note 3, at 442.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ For more information regarding University of Baltimore's Family Law Clinic, please see *Family Law Clinic*, UNIV. OF BALTIMORE, <http://law.ubalt.edu/template.cfm?page=418> (last visited Feb. 21, 2012).

School of Law Families and the Law Clinic (CUA clinic),¹¹ community could encompass many different and overlapping groups: women and men who are subjected to domestic abuse; system actors who advocate for and provide services to those who are subjected to abuse;¹² or residents of a geographic location. Community could also be a self-identifying group, like the Washington/Baltimore Muslim community or a group that may not self-identify but shares a common experience, such as people who are subjected to domestic abuse and who access temporary shelter offered through the Washington, DC Crime Victims Compensation agency.

Second, any project aimed at community legal education must be clear about its goals. The most basic goal is to empower subordinated persons.¹³ The contours of the empowerment are not always clear. For instance, some have observed that empowerment means more effectively addressing the needs of the poor within the community.¹⁴ At the same time, literature on community education almost uniformly discusses the importance of the community defining its needs and community educators responding to the community's assessment of its needs in partnership with the community.¹⁵ Finally, the literature posits that community education is most effective when it builds on the capacity within the community to provide or continue to provide community education.¹⁶ Barbara Major, an African American community organizer, states:

People need to think a little more about working 'with community.'
This means lawyers have to learn how, with all of their skills, to

¹¹ For more information regarding CUA's Families and the Law Clinic, please see *Family & the Law Clinic*, COLUMBUS SCHOOL OF LAW, CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, <http://www.law.edu/clinics/cle/clinics-families.cfm> (last visited Feb. 21, 2012).

¹² The authors have different views as to whether or not service providers may in fact be the "community" envisioned by community legal education. For instance, as discussed at length below, the literature on community education focuses on the community as a group of oppressed persons, construing education as mutual between teacher and student with both parties focused on reversing the subordination status. If this is the definition of "community legal education," which the authors agree it is, then the question is whether service providers who are providing shelter, counseling, legal service, or other services for persons subjected to abuse are a community of "oppressed" persons. Many of us believe that legal education geared towards service providers can, in fact, be "community" legal education because those providers stand with the oppressed – the persons subjected to abuse – and such solidarity can weave them into the "community." On the other hand, others of us believe that service providers are not community, and that community legal education targeting only service providers or focusing on issues raised only by service providers will not effectuate the community legal education that is empowering the persons subjected to abuse by embracing their voice and vision to reverse subordination.

¹³ See, e.g., Eagly, *supra* note 3, at 434.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ See, e.g., FREIRE, *supra* note 2, at 54-55.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 79-80.

journey with the community. This journey has to involve the community really getting a sense of who they are, in the sense of beginning to understand their own power. In working with community the wisdom or the knowledge of the lawyer does not outweigh the wisdom and knowledge of the community, about itself especially. . .¹⁷

Ms. Major also stated

I think a lot of times lawyers have come into the community and only created another entity to be dependent on. Their communities begin to believe that all they have to do is bring their problems to court and they forget that they must continue to organize and educate the people.¹⁸

Community legal education offers many benefits. Community education provides time to learn as well as an opportunity to work within a network of similarly-situated persons,¹⁹ reaches segments of community not necessarily reached by traditional legal services, provides support for individuals not involved in litigation, responds to nonlegal concerns or concerns unable to be redressed by the law, develops leadership skills within the community, and transfers knowledge and encourages collaboration within and among communities.²⁰ These outcomes or benefits have the potential to transform individual communities and the educators themselves.

Community legal education takes many forms. It may consist of presentations, workshops or discussions of legal and other issues of concern.²¹ Community educators could develop a course or curriculum to teach a community about an issue;²² do a media campaign; or develop educational materials.²³ They could also assist in creating

¹⁷ Quigley, *supra* note 4, at 462.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ Eagly, *supra* note 3, at 449, 454.

²⁰ *Id.* at 472-79.

²¹ *Id.* at 454-59.

²² *Id.* at 460-62; Catherine F. Klein, Leigh Goodmark & Margaret Martin Barry, *Early Interventions: Domestic Violence Education for Teens*, in CREATIVE CHILD ADVOCACY: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES, SAGE-INDIA (2004); Ajay Kumar Panday, Associate Professor & Executive Director, Clinical Programmes, Jindal, Global Law School, Presentation at the Seventh International Conference on Clinical Legal Education, UCLA, Lake Arrowhead: Addressing the Disconnect Between Larger Promise of Law and its Grassroots Reality in India (Nov. 6, 2010), available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/centers-programs/clinical-program/international-clinical-conference-series/Pages/seventh-international-clinical-conference.aspx>. Kimberlee K. Kovach, *The Lawyer as Teacher: The Role of Education in Lawyering*, 4 CLIN. L. REV. 359, 379-380 (1998) (discussing Georgetown's Law Related Education Clinic and Street Law Clinic); Kamina A. Pinder, *Street Law: Twenty-Five Years and Counting*, 27 J.L. & EDUC. 211, 212-13 (1998).

²³ Randi Mandelbaum, "Aging Out: Don't Miss Out" – A Model of Community Legal Education, 48 FAM. CT. REV. 338 (2010) (describing a community legal education campaign that produced a comic book, workshops, and a state-wide education effort to inform

empowerment circles, share information among communities, host guest lecturers, or develop role-plays for participants.²⁴ Community legal education could also build capacity through training service providers²⁵ or organizing and staffing pro se clinics.²⁶ Many of these activities can be pursued through clinical legal education.

B. Community Legal Education Within The Clinical Legal Education Mission

Some clinics have discovered that community legal education can be a powerful means to pursue the clinical legal education mission. Other scholars have written that the general goals of clinical legal education include several themes that are interwoven through the real-life representation of clients and community work. Clinical legal education seeks to introduce students to the professional role of lawyer.²⁷ It teaches lawyering skills within the context of client representation,²⁸ transactional lawyering, trial work and other forms of advocacy.²⁹ These same skills are useful in litigation, legislative advocacy, regulatory work, public education, popular mobilization, local advocacy, media advocacy,³⁰ and international or transnational advocacy.³¹ In each context, clinical legal education introduces critical³² and creative thinking³³ and the role of the lawyer³⁴ by teaching reflective law-

teems about to age out of the foster care system of their rights); Eagly, *supra* note 3, at 459-60; Daniel H. Lowenstein & Michael J. Waggoner, *Neighborhood Law Offices: The New Wave in Legal Services for the Poor*, 80 HARV. L. REV. 805, 821-822 (1967).

²⁴ Brustin, *supra* note 3 at 55.

²⁵ Eagly, *supra* note 3, at 462-63.

²⁶ See generally Margaret Martin Barry, *Accessing Justice: Are Pro Se Clinics A Reasonable Response to the Lack of Pro Bono Legal Services and Should Law School Clinics Conduct Them?*, 67 FORDHAM L. REV. 1879 (1999) [hereinafter *Accessing Justice*].

²⁷ Margaret M. Barry, *Clinical Legal Education in the Law University: Goals and Challenges*, 11 INT'L J. CLIN. LEGAL ED. 27, 34 (2007) [hereinafter *Clinical Legal Education*].

²⁸ These skills include interviewing, counseling, fact development, negotiation and other alternative dispute resolution methods, oral advocacy, identifying ethical issues, pre-trial and trial skills, "attorney-client relations," and other core skills. Jayashri Srikantiah & Jennifer Lee Koh, *Teaching Individual Representation Alongside Institutional Advocacy: Pedagogical Implications of a Combined Advocacy Clinic*, 16 CLIN. L. REV. 451, 452 (2010); *Clinical Legal Education*, *supra* note 27, at 35.

²⁹ Srikantiah & Koh, *supra* note 28, at 452.

³⁰ Sameer M. Ashar, *Law Clinics and Collective Mobilization*, 14 CLIN. L. REV. 355, 399 (2008).

³¹ *Id.*

³² Margaret E. Johnson, *The Role of Critical Legal Theory in Clinical Education* (unpublished manuscript) (on file with author) [hereinafter *The Role of Critical Legal Theory*].

³³ *Clinical Legal Education*, *supra* note 27, at 35; Margaret E. Johnson, *An Experiment in Integrating Critical Theory and Clinical Education*, 13 J. GENDER SOC. POL'Y & L. 161, 165 (2005).

³⁴ Srikantiah & Koh, *supra* note 28, at 457, 481.

ying,³⁵ professional judgment and problem-solving skills,³⁶ ethical lawyering,³⁷ social justice,³⁸ a sense of public obligation,³⁹ and collaboration.⁴⁰ For instance, clinical legal education achieves these goals through “individual indigent client representation,”⁴¹ exploring the limits of the laws and the legal system’s ability to enforce them,⁴² learning lessons of power and privilege,⁴³ exposing “students to the impact that the practice of law has on people,”⁴⁴ having political and social vision shape intake and pedagogy, rather than shaped by them,⁴⁵ learning the role of systemic critique,⁴⁶ attending to the role of difference, race, ethnicity, gender and poverty in lawyering and client representation,⁴⁷ learning the need for pro bono work,⁴⁸ and learning to be an “empowering force in the lives of poor clients.”⁴⁹ This paper explores how systematic integration of community legal education into law school clinics may further all of these clinical education goals.

As discussed below, the clinical students enrolled in the Baltimore and CUA clinics found their role as community legal educators to be a rich experience that provided great educational and community benefits as well as some disadvantages. Kristin Eliason, a CUA clinic alumna, stated:

Along with the lawyering and interpersonal skills I learned doing community outreach, the experience opened up my eyes to the extreme lack of legal, social and economic resources available to the indigent population. Meeting women who literally had no place to go once their 30 days were up at the safe house was heartbreaking.

³⁵ Johnson, *supra* note 33, at 165.

³⁶ Srikantiah & Koh, *supra* note 28, at 457; *Clinical Legal Education*, *supra* note 27, at 35; Margaret Martin Barry, Jon C. Dubin &, Peter A. Joy, *Clinical Education for this Millennium: The Third Wave*, 7 CLIN. L. REV. 1, 38 (2000) [hereinafter *Clinical Education for this Millennium*]; Andrea M. Seielstad, *Community Building as a Means of Teaching Creative, Cooperative, and Complex Problem Solving in Clinical Legal Education*, 8 CLIN. L. REV. 445, 472-490, 491 (2002).

³⁷ Johnson, *supra* note 33, at 165.

³⁸ *Id.*; Srikantiah & Koh, *supra* note 28, at 452.

³⁹ Rebecca Sandefur & Jeffrey Selbin, *The Clinic Effect*, 16 CLIN. L. REV. 57, 58 (2009).

⁴⁰ Srikantiah & Koh, *supra* note 28, at 454, 462, 481; Ashar, *supra* note 30, at 401.

⁴¹ Srikantiah & Koh, *supra* note 28, at 452.

⁴² *Id.* (citing Juliet M. Brodie, *Little Cases on the Middle Ground: Teaching Social Justice Lawyering in Neighborhood-Based Community Lawyering Clinics*, 15 CLIN. L. REV. 333, 358 (2009)).

⁴³ Srikantiah & Koh, *supra* note 28, at 456; Johnson, *supra* note 33, at 166.

⁴⁴ *Clinical Legal Education*, *supra* note 27, at 30.

⁴⁵ Ashar, *supra* note 30, at 389; see also Gary Bellow & Jeanne Kettleon, *From Ethics to Politics: Confronting Scarcity and Fairness in Public Interest Practice*, 58 B.U. L. REV. 337 (1978) (discussing which clients to represent).

⁴⁶ The Role of Critical Legal Theory, *supra* note 32.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., Johnson, *supra* note 33, at 162.

⁴⁸ Brodie, *supra* note 42, at 335.

⁴⁹ Eagly, *supra* note 3, at 433.

The community project required that I and my fellow students have as many resources on hand as possible because the need was always greater than the supply. Along with pamphlets detailing, for instance, the legal process of filing an order for protection, we would have as many brochures for social resources, from housing to free grocery providers, as possible. Supplying the residents with only legal information that would solve only their legal problems would have been good, but simply not good enough. No resident at the safe house only had a legal problem that needed solving. Doing community outreach taught me that a more holistic approach needs to be taken in these circumstances.⁵⁰

Because community legal education can provide great opportunities to achieve the various goals of clinical education, both the Baltimore and CUA clinics have systematically integrated community legal education into their portfolio of individual client representation in litigation and legislative advocacy projects. Such integration has brought great rewards but also created challenges.

II. INFLUENCES FOR DOING COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION IN CLINICAL PROGRAMS

There are many influences that undergird the integration of community education in law clinics. Below we discuss the influences that propelled the Baltimore and CUA clinics to engage in community legal education.

A. *Commitment To A Just, Fair, And Moral Society*

The MacCrate Report states that lawyers need to be committed to creating a just, fair, and moral society.⁵¹ What that just, fair, and moral society should look like depends on the lens of those creating it.⁵² Community work permits students to see more of the systemic and structural nature of subordination in society than representing one client provides. Community work provides a broader context for witnessing, experiencing and inquiring into the forces of injustice.⁵³ In addition, community work avoids a downside of exclusively doing client work, which can result in seeing “the client . . . as one dimensional,

⁵⁰ Statement of Kristin Eliason, '09 CUA Law Graduate and former CUA student attorney (on file with CUA authors).

⁵¹ American Bar Association Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, Legal Education and Professional Development – An Educational Continuum, Report of the Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession: Narrowing the Gap (1992) (“MacCrate Report”) at 213.

⁵² Jane Aiken, *Provocateurs of Justice*, 7 CLIN. L. REV. 287, 296 (2001).

⁵³ For a fuller discussion of teaching clinic students to be “justice ready,” see *id.*; see also Kruse, *supra* note 1.

poor, helpless, and in need of the legal handout the clinic is willing to proffer, instead of as a person deserving focused, professional expertise to address the integrated problems heightened by the current predicament.”⁵⁴ As Margaret Martin Barry states, “the experience in a purely adversarial role gives students a skewed view of poor communities and of the role lawyers should play in working for change within them.”⁵⁵ By working with and within a community, lawyers can be part of a larger problem-solving team that sees a larger context. And the process by which the problem-solving takes place is one that is focused on empowerment of the community and its power and ability to define justice outcomes.⁵⁶

B. “You Must Be The Change You Wish To See In The World”

A simple and profound quote attributed to organizer, teacher, political leader, and lawyer Mohandas K. Gandhi has called countless persons and organizations to act: “You must be the change that you wish to see in the world.”⁵⁷ This statement supports clinics being in and “journey[ing] with the community.”⁵⁸ As a seeker of knowledge, Gandhi believed that students and communities should learn through experience rather than just through texts. Even today, his ideals of education are somewhat radical to academics:

It is a gross superstition to suppose that knowledge can be obtained only by going to schools and colleges. The world produced brilliant students before schools and colleges came into being. There is nothing so ennobling or lasting as self-study. Schools and colleges make most of us mere receptacles for holding the superfluities of knowledge. Wheat is left out and mere husk is taken in. I do not wish to decry schools and colleges, as such, they have their use. But we are making altogether too much of them. They are but one of the many means of gaining knowledge.⁵⁹

To overcome mass-production of the hollow educated, Gandhi advocated education through service. Gandhi wrote, “The end of all education should surely be service, and if a student gets an opportunity of rendering service even whilst he is studying, he should consider it as a rare opportunity and treat it not really as a suspension of his

⁵⁴ Margaret Martin Barry, *A Question of Mission: Catholic Law School's Domestic Violence Clinic*, 38 HOWARD L. J. 135, 136 (1994) [hereinafter *A Question of Mission*].

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ For a fuller discussion of empowerment of community, see Quigley, *supra* note 4, at 465.

⁵⁷ Widely quoted statement attributed to Mohandas K. Gandhi, no original citation was found regarding when it was first said.

⁵⁸ See *supra* note 17 and accompanying text thereto.

⁵⁹ M.K. GANDHI, TOWARDS NEW EDUCATION, 94-95 (Bharatan Kumarappa ed., 1931).

education but rather its complement.”⁶⁰ Thus, Gandhi’s ideals can inspire creation of community service projects for law students. The projects can be more than a means to reach the end-goal of becoming an attorney, and help students understand that law school is an introduction to the complex path they should travel to prepare for the life of an attorney. “Journey[ing] with the community”⁶¹ can help students see themselves as seekers of knowledge and persons who devote themselves to service of their communities.

As a teacher, Gandhi developed the ideal of *Nai Talim*, or Basic Education, which he based on his experiences teaching in South Africa. He advocated for holistic, decentralized, and life-long education. Dr. Dinabandhu Dehury summarized Gandhi’s ideals as follows:

- (a) True education is all-round development of the faculties, best attained through action. It bases itself on the fact that knowledge and understanding develop in relation to problems set right by action. Information thrust on the mind only burdens the memory and causes intellectual indigestion, casting learning into oblivion.
- (b) Education must be concrete and inter connected, not abstract or given in isolated sections. Concrete education allows the learner to manipulate problems or sets of problems and study their relationships, character and artistic sense. It allows the mind, heart, hand and eyes to work simultaneously in a correlated manner, resulting in a harmonious and well-balanced personality.
- (c) Education must be imparted in the [participant]’s mother tongue and organically connected with the [participant]’s Social and Cultural environment.⁶²

These principles of learning through action, concrete and inter-connected education, and culturally relevant education are all principles that resonate with the goals of community legal education.

C. *The Importance Of Fighting Side-By-Side, “Problem-Posing” Education And Intentionality*

Paolo Freire⁶³ argues that those who strive to truly better the lives of those they wish to help must fight at their side, not lecture at them about how to improve themselves.⁶⁴ If a goal of clinical education is bettering the lives of those we wish to help,⁶⁵ then community

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ See *supra* note 17 and accompanying text.

⁶² Dinabandhu Dehury, *Mahatma Gandhi’s Contribution to Education*, 753010 ORISSA REV. 13 (Sept.-Oct. 2006), available at <http://orissa.gov.in/e-magazine/Orissareview/sept-oct2006/sept-octreview.htm> (last checked Feb. 20, 2012).

⁶³ The writings of Paolo Freire revolutionized education. His writings caused many educators, after encountering his work, to reevaluate and reform their teaching posture from an oppressive one to a “radical posture.” See FREIRE, *supra* note 2, at 49.

⁶⁴ *Id.*

⁶⁵ See *supra* Part I.B.

outreach and education can serve an integral role in clinical legal education.

Freire argues that the lessons taught to the community must come from within the knowledge of the oppressed rather than from outside. “No pedagogy that is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them like unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption.”⁶⁶ Teachers and students must both be committed to the student’s involvement in education, and must educate “co-intentionally.”⁶⁷ The goal of this approach is to understand and value the relationship of community insight and expertise to effective service.

More specifically, Paolo Freire asks those truly dedicated to liberating the oppressed to reject the “banking” concept of education, or an education where the teacher attempts to “‘fill’ the students by making deposits of information he or she considers to constitute true knowledge.”⁶⁸ Freire argues that teachers must adopt “a concept of women and men as conscious beings.”⁶⁹ Teachers “must abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world. ‘Problem-posing’ education, responding to the essence of consciousness—*intentionality*—rejects communiqués and embodies communication.”⁷⁰ Like Gandhi, Freire argues that education must consist of identifying, evaluating, and solving concrete problems in order to be effective. Freire names this process “praxis,” or “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.”⁷¹

Freire’s work has greatly influenced approaches to domestic violence prevention and advocacy. One notable example is the work of Ellen Pence,⁷² a scholar, social activist and co-founder of the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, an inter-agency collaboration model used widely in the U.S. Pence worked with groups of women subjected to abuse to create the Power and Control Wheel, a seminal tool in domestic violence education and intervention. Pence also worked with community partners to identify and create the Duluth Model Curriculum, a batterer intervention educational program. Pence credits the writings of Paolo Freire as having influenced the

⁶⁶ FREIRE, *supra* note 2, at 54.

⁶⁷ *Id.* at 69.

⁶⁸ *Id.* at 76.

⁶⁹ *Id.* at 79.

⁷⁰ FREIRE, *supra* note 2, at 79.

⁷¹ *Id.* at 51.

⁷² During the writing of this article, we were saddened to learn that Ellen Pence passed away. We honor her memory by citing her work in this piece.

nurturing, development, and implementation of this curriculum.⁷³ Her vision for groundbreaking advocacy on behalf of women subjected to domestic violence also was grounded in Freire's vision for community education as liberation.

D. Grounding The Work In The Community

Similar to Freire and Pence, Gerald Lopez begins with the premise that the concept of "rebellious" lawyering must be "anchored in the world we're trying to help change."⁷⁴ López also believes that change must be, "Built from the ground up. Made part of what my relatives, friends, and allies do in rebelling against all that has oppressed us and our ancestors, all that seems now still likely to subordinate our descendants."⁷⁵ López rejects regnant⁷⁶ lawyering, which he characterizes as dominated by litigation practice, detached from those lawyers might serve, disinterested, and overbearing.⁷⁷ According to López, while regnant lawyers may believe they have the best interests of social justice at heart, their effectiveness is superficial at best. López asserts that every lawyer interested in changing the world must also reject regnant lawyering, notwithstanding that it is the reigning model of lawyering for subordinated persons.⁷⁸

According to López, rebellious lawyering requires lawyers to work with women, racial and sexual minorities, the poor, and the elderly, and "ground their work in the communities of the subordinated themselves."⁷⁹ Like Freire, López writes that community legal education and practice means mutual education.⁸⁰ For attorneys, this means not romanticizing subordinated people, but instead treating them as "capable, with a will to fight, and with considerable experience in re-

⁷³ Shamita Das Dasgupt, *My Friend, Advocate Ellen Pence*, 16 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 985 (2010). See also, ELLEN PENCE & MICHAEL PAYMAR, EDUCATION GROUPS FOR MEN WHO BATTER: THE DULUTH MODEL 29-65 (1993). Pence explains the objectives of each phase of the curriculum, the process, includes excerpts from many recorded sessions with men enrolled in a Batters Anonymous program, and provides an analysis of the contradictions and themes brought to light by the batterers' own words and reflections. Through the recorded dialogues with the facilitator, we see that the facilitator asks open-ended questions and uses role plays to pose problems which the men discuss and debate.

⁷⁴ GERALD P. LÓPEZ, REBELLIOUS LAWYERING: ONE CHICANO'S VISION OF PROGRESSIVE LAW PRACTICE, 7 (1992).

⁷⁵ *Id.*

⁷⁶ Regnant, *adj.*, \ˈreg-nant\, (1) exercising rule; (2)(a) having the chief power, (b) of common or widespread occurrence. *Regnant*, MERRIAM-WEBSTER, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/regnant> (last visited Aug. 24, 2011).

⁷⁷ LÓPEZ, *supra* note 74, at 24.

⁷⁸ *Id.* at 23.

⁷⁹ *Id.* at 37-8.

⁸⁰ *Id.* at 37.

sisting and occasionally reversing subordinated status.”⁸¹ Like Freire, López takes a problem-solving approach: “Helping people to see that they can identify, understand, and contribute to solving their own and others’ problems is one way of helping them gain more control over the life we share.”⁸²

Finally, López asserts that rebellious lawyering means cooperation and collaboration with a network of professionals and lay persons, or “problem-solvers.” The collaborative approach recognizes that legal approaches may not be the best method of resolving a problem and that lawyers may not always be the best face for a cause.⁸³ Moreover, “every form of group work,” López writes, is “central to every form of mobilization.”⁸⁴

E. Mutually Committed Education, Challenging Patriarchy And Racism

Similar to López, bell hooks advocates mutually committed education on the part of teachers and students and a mutual process of self-actualization.⁸⁵ hooks observes that the interwoven oppressions of racism, sexism, and classism limit and subjugate marginalized groups. To address such subjugation, hooks promotes holistic and “engaged pedagogy.”⁸⁶

Specifically, in terms of feminist theory, hooks clarifies that the problem is not men, but sexism, which women can also perpetuate.⁸⁷ She argues that society cannot end violence against women without challenging patriarchy.⁸⁸ Of course, racism compounds sexism. hooks asserts that privileged white women have produced most of the material that guides feminist practice and service of women, a perspective that does not reflect the reality of women of color or women of all social classes. She challenges white women who want to ally with

⁸¹ *Id.* at 50.

⁸² LÓPEZ, *supra* note 74, at 70. López calls this type of education and empowerment “self-help and lay lawyering.” López is quick to explain that this is in addition to, and not instead of, the state’s duty to provide support to underserved communities.

⁸³ *Id.* at 56. See also Bill Ong Hing, *Coolies, James Yen, and Rebellious Advocacy*, 14 *ASIAN AM. L.J.* 1, 22-24 (2007).

⁸⁴ LÓPEZ, *supra* note 74, at 77.

⁸⁵ bell hooks, *TEACHING TO TRANSGRESS: EDUCATION AS THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM* 15, 22 (1994) [hereinafter *TEACHING TO TRANSGRESS*]; see also BELL HOOKS, *TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING: PRACTICAL WISDOM* 21-22 (2010) [hereinafter *TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING*].

⁸⁶ *TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING*, *supra* note 85, at 21-22.

⁸⁷ bell hooks, *FEMINIST THEORY: FROM MARGIN TO CENTER* 71-83 (1984) [hereinafter *FEMINIST THEORY*].

⁸⁸ bell hooks, *Speech at New College of Florida: Ending Domination-The Struggle Continues* (May 1, 2010) [hereinafter *Ending Domination*].

women of color to “unlearn their racism.”⁸⁹ hooks wrote in 2000 that feminist revolution alone will not create a world without domination. Rather, hooks insists that society must also “end racism, class elitism and imperialism. But [feminist revolution] will make it possible for us to be fully self-actualized females and males able to create beloved community, to live together, realizing our dreams of freedom and justice, living the truth that we are all ‘created equal’.”⁹⁰

To be clear, hooks does not advocate the practice of blaming and creating enemies, which she believes only reinforces domination.⁹¹ Rather, she advocates critiquing these realities and forgiving for the sake of accountability and transformation.⁹² She calls on society to overcome the culture of domination and violence and to create the “beloved community”⁹³ where we can share ideas and make real change. She describes the advocacy that will heal and redeem both the oppressors and the oppressed as proceeding from an “ethics of love.”⁹⁴

The theorists discussed above have influenced the creation, reflection about and evaluation of the community legal education projects at Baltimore and CUA. We at Baltimore and CUA measure the effectiveness of our community legal education projects by assessing whether or not our projects empower the community through collaboration as suggested by Freire and López. Similarly, we design our community legal education projects to foster and achieve contextual learning as urged by Gandhi. Finally, we aspire for our projects to instill in the students a commitment to social justice as recommended by Pence and hooks. In addition, we aim for our community legal education projects to simultaneously achieve the goals of clinical legal education. As discussed below, our community legal education projects are integral to our specific law school clinics and have reaped some significant successes in achieving the above goals yet they also highlight the continued need to consciously reflect upon, evaluate and improve these projects.

III. COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION: A TALE OF TWO PROJECTS

We at Baltimore and CUA have incorporated community legal education projects into our clinics as a reflection of the influences of

⁸⁹ bell hooks, Keynote Address at the Women of Color Conference at the University of Oregon: Mind, Body, and Soul (Mar. 3, 2006) [hereinafter Mind, Body, and Soul].

⁹⁰ BELL HOOKS, FEMINISM IS FOR EVERYBODY: PASSIONATE POLITICS x (2000).

⁹¹ Ending Domination, *supra* note 88.

⁹² In her development of the Duluth Curriculum for Batterer’s Anonymous, Ellen Pence also discusses forgiveness and accountability in the best interests of justice.

⁹³ Ending Domination, *supra* note 88.

⁹⁴ Mind, Body, and Soul, *supra* note 89.

those leaders and scholars discussed in the previous section. We have striven to have a profound impact on our community and believe that facilitating community projects can have rich pedagogical benefits for clinical law students.⁹⁵ We believe that access to justice goes beyond the courtroom for our respective communities of persons who have experienced domestic violence. We recognize the need for an interdisciplinary approach to our clients' issues, the limitations of litigation as a response, and the benefits of legal work, short of full litigation, for persons who cannot or choose not to obtain a lawyer.⁹⁶ We believe that a "community education strategy reaches a wider audience and hopefully, helps to stem violence before litigation is ever needed."⁹⁷ Finally, we believe that community legal education helps fulfill the many goals of clinical legal education discussed in Parts I and II. For all of these reasons, community projects have become integral components of students' work in the Baltimore and CUA clinics.

A. *University Of Baltimore's Clinic: "When Violence Begins At Home: The Legal And Islamic Response To Domestic Violence"*

In the Fall of 2009, the faculty teaching in Baltimore's Family Law Clinic decided to integrate systemic advocacy projects into its one-semester, six credit clinic, which primarily focused on the traditional work of litigation in domestic violence civil protective order cases and divorce, child custody, child support, adoption and other family law matters. Although Baltimore's clinic historically invited students to be involved in systemic reform projects aimed at increasing access to justice in family law and domestic violence law, there was no explicit clinic requirement to do so. Prior to Fall 2009, Baltimore's systemic reform work was primarily legislative advocacy, working within a coalition of domestic violence advocates and service providers. Clinic students were only sporadically involved in community education, and, moreover, there was no explicit attention to issues of community education in syllabi or evaluation criteria for the clinic.

With this new initiative, Baltimore clinical faculty wanted to clearly communicate to incoming clinic students their view that sys-

⁹⁵ Brustin, *supra* note 3, at 41 (Stacy Brustin, who was one of CUA clinic's founding faculty members, states that "[s]uch projects open new paths for lawyers who want to move beyond the confines of individual representation, and instead, use multidisciplinary approaches to address entrenched social problems.").

⁹⁶ See generally Elliot A. Anderson, *Unbundling the Ethical Issues of Pro Bono Advocacy: Articulating the Goals of Limited-Scope Pro Bono Advocacy for Limited Legal Services Programs*, 48 FAM. CT. REV. 685 (2010).

⁹⁷ Klein et al., *supra* note 22, at 225.

temic advocacy work is as important as students' individual client representation.⁹⁸ Therefore, faculty conveyed clearly their goal that students learn multi-dimensional lawyering⁹⁹ — that by the time students left clinic they would not only know the skills and values associated with client representation and litigation, but also the skills and values of systemic reform work such as community education and legislative reform. Faculty wanted each student to see her/his lawyering role as including collaborative community change work. And, faculty hoped students could affect the community in ways broader than possible through individual client representation.

To this end, faculty teaching in Baltimore's clinic restructured components of the clinic to integrate systemic reform projects, and place them relatively on par with individual client representation. Faculty reflected on their goals for clinical legal education — goals consistent with those identified in Part I — and saw those goals consistent with a systemic reform curriculum.¹⁰⁰ Faculty reframed how they discussed students' work on the clinic website, during clinic open houses to recruit students, in a brochure made to advertise the clinic, in meetings faculty held with selected prospective clinic students to discuss clinic expectations before they enroll, and in the introductory letter sent to students prior to the semester commencing. Since restructuring, Baltimore's faculty assigns each student to the legislative advocacy or community education group (based on students' choices) in addition to individually representing clients.¹⁰¹

Before the Spring 2010 semester began, Baltimore's faculty presented the broad concept of community legal education to the in-

⁹⁸ See Stephen Wizner, *Beyond Skills Training*, 7 CLIN. L. REV. 329, 330 (2001) (noting "If there is a real flaw in our clinical pedagogy it is that we have failed to sustain and to pass on to our students the passion for social justice that many of us had when we first started practicing and teaching.").

⁹⁹ A term we borrow from Suzanne Goldberg, Clinical Professor of Law and Director, Center for Gender and Sexuality Law, Columbia Law School, who used the term during her session entitled "Outcomes Assessment in Challenging Contexts: Applying Clinical Theory to the Design and Implementation of Legislative Advocacy Clinics," AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education, Baltimore MD, 12 (May 5, 2010), available at <http://www.aals.org/clinical2010/booklet.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰ See discussion *supra* Part I.B. As part of this process, Baltimore faculty also consulted with CUA faculty to learn how they approached community education.

¹⁰¹ Although Baltimore engaged in this particular project only one time, it continues to systematically incorporate community legal education into its curriculum. Since Spring 2010, the students in Baltimore's FLC have continued to engage in community legal education projects, including creating, printing and distributing 25,000 copies of a brochure outlining a new Maryland law that provides rental housing protection to survivors of domestic violence and organizing a symposium with the community partners, including DV and housing advocates, who helped pass that legislation, organizing a teen dating violence prevention presentation at a middle school in Baltimore, and conducting a court watch program in the domestic violence court.

coming students and to those students who were enrolled in the clinic for a second semester (“FLC IIs”). Fasiha Kahn, an FLC II student, approached the faculty regarding her idea, after hearing about the plans to incorporate systemic reform, generally, and community legal education, specifically, into the clinic curriculum. Fasiha, a Muslim woman, indicated that she saw a need within the Muslim community for general domestic violence education and education concerning legal options available to Muslim women who had experienced abuse. Based on her experience as a member of the Muslim community, such educational programs were scarce. The Baltimore faculty believed that allowing Fasiha, or any student, the opportunity to lead a community legal education project fit within the broader clinical pedagogical goals of student role ownership and self-directed learning. Further, making space for the creation of a student-led community legal education project worked given that the Family Law Clinic had no pre-existing relationship with, or expectation from, the community to fulfill a commitment for a community legal education project.

Although Fasiha had identified the broad concept of developing a legal education program for the Muslim community on domestic violence, her ideas for the project were not refined beyond that basic idea. Along with Fasiha, faculty assigned four other students – all first semester students and all non-Muslim women – to this project. A non-Muslim faculty member supervised the students.

The students’ research tasks were considerable – they had to understand how to create a community education program that was structurally logical, substantively accurate, and culturally sensitive. To aid in planning and preparing for the project, the students held weekly meetings where they exchanged ideas, discussed their research, and identified and refined goals for their community education program. After engaging in preliminary research and brainstorming, the students identified as substantive goals for their community legal education project: creating dialogue within the Muslim community about what constitutes domestic violence and providing information on both legal options and non-legal resources available to survivors of domestic violence within the Muslim community. One of the first tasks students identified was to reach out to their contacts in the domestic violence community – both Muslim and non-Muslim – to gain a sense of how to create an effective, and relevant, community education program, generally, and an understanding of how to do so in a culturally sensitive way.¹⁰² The student team fostered a relationship with the

¹⁰² The students had a wide range of contacts and existing relationships with various domestic violence organizations, including the YWCA, Jewish organizations that offer training on domestic violence, batterer intervention programs, and, through Fasiha, numer-

Peaceful Families Project (PFP), a national organization “devoted to ending domestic violence in Muslim families by facilitating awareness workshops for Muslim leaders and communities, conducting research, and developing resources.”¹⁰³ This partnership with PFP was critical to the program’s success, as PFP shared materials and resources, and allowed the students to seek their expertise on the substance and form of the program. As a member of the Muslim community, Fasiha invited, and the non-Muslim students engaged in, candid and open discussions with Fasiha about her culture and her faith.¹⁰⁴ Although Fasiha did not identify as a battered woman, and thus could not provide the students with that perspective, these conversations provided a foundational understanding about Muslim culture, a first step in the students’ mutual education with the community they were serving.¹⁰⁵

The community legal education program the Baltimore students developed was held in April 2010 at the Dar al Taqwa Masjid in Columbia, Maryland. Columbia is a middle to upper-middle class suburb of Baltimore. Students selected the Dar al Taqwa Masjid as host for the project for three primary reasons. First, Columbia is centrally located between Baltimore and Washington D.C., allowing broad access to the program from a variety of communities. Second, the Dar al Taqwa Masjid is large – it is one of the largest in the greater Baltimore region. Finally, Dar al Taqwa is an active community, supports numerous programs housed within it, and had an engaged and highly supportive community liaison. The students titled the project, “When Violence Begins at Home: The Legal and Islamic Response to Domestic Violence.” To promote the program, the students marketed it extensively: they created a flyer advertising the program and faxed and mailed it to numerous domestic violence shelters in and around Baltimore City; they emailed the flyer and other information about the program to listservs used by members of the Muslim community; the students handed out flyers at Mosques in and around Baltimore; they

ous Muslim organizations and Mosques.

¹⁰³ PEACEFUL FAMILIES PROJECT, <http://www.peacefulfamilies.org/index.php> (last visited Jan. 26, 2012).

¹⁰⁴ As the leader of the program, and the one with the direct connection to the Muslim community, Fasiha incorporated into the weekly meetings opportunities for “question and answer” sessions about Muslim culture and Islam, and answered those questions as she understood them based on her experiences. Fasiha’s perspective and openness provided a safe space for students to begin to learn more about a culture and religion unfamiliar to most, and a foundation and context for moving the project forward. When one speaks on behalf of a larger community, there can be a risk that the voice of that one member may be assumed to be the representative voice of the entire community. Sensitive to this concern, the group ensured that they also explored these issues with community organizations, other individuals, including other Muslim women, and in their research.

¹⁰⁵ LÓPEZ, *supra* note 74.

created an event on Facebook; and they worked closely with the Dar al Taqwa to promote and advertise the program. The attendees included both men and women and, as was custom at the Dar al Taqwa, the room where the students presented had a divider separating the audience by gender. The students brought food and drinks, and provided each attendee with a program folder containing relevant hand-outs and a list of domestic violence resources. The program's content, as described further *infra*, included information on domestic violence within the Muslim community, a discussion with the audience on how power and control is defined, a presentation by an Islamic scholar regarding the Islamic and Qur'anic perspective on domestic violence, and a presentation on legal and non-legal options available to Muslim women who have been subjected to abuse, ranging from civil protective orders to tax relief.

B. CUA's Clinic: The Emergency Shelter Legal Clinic Project

CUA's Families and the Law Clinic launched the Emergency Shelter Legal Clinic project in February 2007. The project is one of a series of community education, limited legal services, and systemic reform projects that the Families and Law clinic has incorporated into curriculum since its expansion into a separate CUA clinic in 1993.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Additional past and ongoing projects have included facilitating a support and empowerment group for former CUA clients called "Women with Hope"; creating and presenting teen dating violence prevention workshops and related train-the-trainer programs for teens at D.C. middle schools and high schools; providing legal information and assisting *pro se* parties to draft court filings at the D.C. Superior Court Family Court Self-Help Center; serving as volunteer attorney negotiators in domestic relations cases through a pilot project sponsored by the D.C. Family Court and the D.C. Bar; engaging in all stages of legislative advocacy campaigns including, conducting research, building coalitions, drafting legislative language, talking points and testimony, attending community meetings and Council hearings, raising awareness, and negotiating fall-back positions when necessary; serving as volunteer attorneys at walk-in legal information clinics at Women Empowered Against Violence (WEAVE), a holistic services provider for people subjected to abuse; and creating and presenting interactive know your rights presentations at Thrive D.C.'s dinner program for homeless women. See Steven Berenson, Dale Margolin, Lisa Martin & Karen Pearlman, *Empowerment, Innovation, and Service: Law School Programs Provide Access to Justice and Instill a Commitment to Serve*, 48 FAM. CT. REV. 672 (2010) (discussing various community legal education projects undertaken by the Families and the Law Clinic); Klein et al., *supra* note 22 (discussing the teen domestic violence project at CUA's Families and the Law Clinic); *Assessing Justice*, *supra* note 26, at 1918-26 (assessing student work in two CUA Families and the Law Clinic projects: providing limited legal services by assisting in *pro se* divorce clinics and community legal education through developing and presenting teen domestic violence workshops); *A Question of Mission*, *supra* note 54, at 156-160 (discussing and assessing student participation in community legal education projects at CUA's Families and the Law Clinic).

1. *Purpose And Goals Of The Emergency Shelter Legal Clinic Project*

The Emergency Shelter Legal Clinic project was initiated to give students the opportunity to offer limited legal assistance and information to women residing at an emergency safe house funded by the District of Columbia's Crime Victims Compensation Program ("CVC"). Through this project, CUA faculty aspire to accomplish numerous pedagogical and service goals – goals that are congruent with the core aims of community legal education as outlined in Part I, *supra* – including: giving students a broad view of lawyering; encouraging students to lead and take full ownership over community work; challenging students to continually refine their work to respond to community needs; deepening students' understanding of domestic violence and poverty; expanding CUA's services to reach a larger segment of the community than CUA can assist through direct representation; and standing in solidarity with and supporting the women at the safe house.¹⁰⁷

2. *An Overview Of The Safe House And The Project*

The Emergency Shelter Legal Clinic project was created in partnership with My Sister's Place, a local domestic violence shelter, which also offers counseling and case management services at the safe house. The project provides a rare opportunity to provide timely, directly relevant information about civil protection orders (CPOs) to an audience who can benefit personally from the information. CPOs are emergency remedies, which petitioners typically file after an incident of violence at the advice of law enforcement personnel. Petitioners often do not seek legal advice about pursuing protection orders in advance of filing. They may not seek legal advice for a number of reasons, including: they do not know about CPOs; they do not know that they could qualify for a CPO; they are not interested in pursuing a CPO until their situation reaches a crisis point; they fear that consulting a lawyer could put their safety at risk; and the act of consulting a lawyer is itself a huge step that requires significant reflection about a relationship. Seeking legal counsel after filing a CPO petition also can be challenging for petitioners. CPO proceedings are expedited and often conclude within two weeks of filing. The accelerated timeline for CPO proceedings can be of great benefit to petitioners because it enables the resolution of many issues such as child custody, lease obli-

¹⁰⁷ Mary Helen McNeal, *Unbundling and Law School Clinics: Where's the Pedagogy*, 7 CLIN. L. REV. 341, 376 (2001) ("One advantage of limited legal assistance is that it encourages, if not dictates, greater client involvement in solving legal problems.").

gations, or financial support, which could otherwise encourage a petitioner to return to an abusive relationship. This same expediency can make it difficult for petitioners to find time to seek legal counsel. Often, much is in flux for petitioners during the two weeks between the filing of the petition and the CPO hearing as they work to stay safe and restructure their daily lives. This may be particularly true for petitioners who seek refuge at shelters such as the CVC safe house when they file their petitions, as they may have the added pressures of lacking a support network, needing to go into hiding, lacking safe long-term housing, having limited financial resources, some combination of the above, or other challenges to contend with. Under these circumstances, seeking legal advice may not even register as a priority.

CUA faculty and students created the Emergency Shelter Legal Clinic project as a means of bringing legal information to a group of petitioners at a time likely to be convenient for them and to eliminate the time these petitioners, who are likely to proceed *pro se* in CPO cases, would need to seek legal advice. CUA faculty and My Sister's Place social workers identified the need for regular provision of legal information at the safe house as there is a new group of residents every 30 days; nearly all residents have active CPO cases; and very few residents have the time or resources to invest in seeking legal assistance offsite.

As a community, residents of the safe house are an extraordinarily vulnerable, marginalized population of women who face significant risk of renewed violence.¹⁰⁸ They lack financial resources and support networks necessary to expediently achieve self-sufficiency and are confronted at every turn with intersecting social barriers of racism, sexism, and classism.

To qualify to reside at the safe house, one family member must have filed a petition for a CPO or have reported an incident of domestic violence to the police.¹⁰⁹ For these reasons, the residents of the safe house are largely women in crisis who are fleeing a recent incident of violence and pursuing CPOs or criminal charges (or both) against their abusers. Community demographics conspire to make residents share additional characteristics: they are largely poor, black, single mothers, many with young children, and many of whom live in impoverished neighborhoods in wards 7 and 8, east of the Potomac

¹⁰⁸ See, e.g., BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, U.S. DEPT' OF JUSTICE, SPECIAL REPORT: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE 5 (2000) ("Divorced or separated persons were subjected to the highest rates of intimate partner victimization.").

¹⁰⁹ For Crime Victims Compensation Program requirements, see *Crime Victims Compensation Program*, SUPERIOR COURT OF D.C., <http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/superior/cvcp.jsp> (last visited Feb. 21, 2012).

River in Washington, D.C. People fleeing abuse who have access to financial resources and broader social support networks nearly uniformly choose to reside outside wards 7 and 8. Families are authorized to remain at the safe house for only 30 days, with rare exceptions. A desperate shortage of affordable housing in the District ensures that many residents leave the safe house without a safe place to live. Conditions at the safe house are far from luxurious. Rooms are tiny. Residents share communal bathroom facilities that offer little privacy. There are no common areas apart from the lobby, hallways, and stairwells, no kitchen facilities and building security is nonexistent. Nearly all of the residents would benefit from the advice of an attorney. None can afford to hire one. The few legal services providers in the District that offer free representation in CPO cases, including CUA, can assist only a small number of the thousands of individuals who seek CPOs each year. Consequently, in 2005 approximately 98% parties in CPO cases in the District were unrepresented by counsel.¹¹⁰ Few safe house residents have the time, energy, or bus fare to attend the free legal clinics offered at the offices of District legal services organizations.

The Emergency Shelter Legal Clinic Project is a perpetual work in progress that faculty and students regularly assess and adapt to better serve community needs. CUA students strive to recognize the successes and challenges of each clinic session, build on approaches that worked, and learn from approaches that did not. The project has evolved over time from a limited advice clinic to a series of legal information presentations, and back again. The project also has expanded over time as CUA faculty and students have reflected on the project and desired to do more. Today, the clinic occurs monthly for one hour in a narrow hallway lined with chairs. Residents are offered beverages and lunch as they arrive and have a chance to chat with one another and the students as they wait for the clinic to begin. Residents choose at the outset whether the clinic commences with know-your-rights presentations (and if so, residents select the topics from a list of options) or proceeds directly to individual consultations. All residents who attend the clinic receive folders stuffed with pamphlets advertising free legal and social services and fact sheets outlining court processes and legal rights and remedies. Students offer residents who participate in individual consultations additional print resources and offer to contact them after the clinic to discuss steps residents have taken to address their legal issues and determine whether the referrals

¹¹⁰ D.C. ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMM'N, JUSTICE FOR ALL? AN EXAMINATION OF THE CIVIL LEGAL NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S LOW INCOME COMMUNITY 64 (2008), available at <http://www.dccaccesstojustice.org/files/CivilLegalNeedsReport.pdf>.

provided were effective.¹¹¹ To enable them to give residents relevant, useful take-aways, students maintain binders of referral information and legal and non-legal resources from community organizations. Students create their own materials to distribute when topics important to residents are not addressed by other available resources. After clinics, students conduct interviews of interested residents to learn about their experiences with the court system, lawyers, and the safe house, and understand what they identify as their greatest needs. By collecting residents' stories, students aim to improve CUA's work with the safe house and identify additional services and forms of advocacy that could benefit safe house residents.

Along with the scope of the project, student roles have expanded from participating in clinics otherwise planned by faculty to taking responsibility for all aspects of the administration and execution of the project. Students involved in the project today draft and revise know your rights presentations, update and expand resource binders, survey residents about their experiences with the clinic, organize fundraisers to finance the provision of food and beverages to residents, work with My Sister's Place to advertise the clinics, facilitate each clinic session, and plan and document post-clinic resident interviews. In the words of former CUA students assigned to the project:

Perhaps the most important thing to realize about the project is that the clinic is what you make of it. . . Do not expect that your role with the clinic – whether during preparation or at the safe house itself – will be a passive one. The very nature of the project requires that you take control of all aspects and dedicate yourself to its success. . . This level of responsibility can be intimidating at first; however, it is also extremely rewarding. This project is one of the rare opportunities law school provides to really make a project your own. Moreover, you will find that the many challenges of the clinic will teach you lessons about empathy, communication, and leadership that are truly invaluable and well worth the time commitment.¹¹²

C. Two Clinics, Two Projects, Shared Successes And Challenges

CUA's Emergency Shelter Legal Services Project and Baltimore's Domestic Violence Outreach Project differ in many aspects.

¹¹¹ CUA began to follow up with interested residents at the excellent advice and encouragement of Ross Dolloff of the Center for Legal Aid Education, which advises legal services providers on maximizing the effectiveness of community outreach projects. More information about the Center for Legal Aid Education is *available at* <http://www.legalaideducation.org> (last visited Feb. 21, 2012).

¹¹² Leah Branch & Kathleen Ugalde, *The CVC Safe House Community Project: A How-To Guide*, (May 2011) (on file with CUA).

CUA's project is ongoing – now entering its fifth year, while Baltimore's project was a one-time occurrence. The projects also differ in substance and target audience.¹¹³ Substantively, CUA's project takes place monthly for one hour, and covers a variety of topics depending on participant choices, including emergency protection orders, safety planning, navigating the criminal justice system, housing, divorce, custody, child support, and immigration. Baltimore's project lasted almost three hours, and, in addition to covering many of the topics covered by CUA, also included a discussion of religious and cultural issues that influence domestic violence in the Muslim community. With regard to audience, Baltimore's project aimed to raise the issue of domestic violence with a segment of the community united by religion and culture. By contrast, CUA's project seeks to inform women united by the shared experience of domestic abuse and residence at an emergency safe house of their legal rights and legal and non-legal resources. The projects vary in format as well, with Baltimore's project utilizing a prearranged multimedia/multi-speaker presentation for a large group, and CUA's project incorporating an impromptu mix of limited advice clinic and small group presentations.

Yet, despite these differences, the projects are united by subject matter and by the pedagogical goals and themes reflected in the teachings of those who helped inform our incorporation of community legal education into our clinics. As a result, the CUA and Baltimore projects share the following broad goals distilled from the foundational influences of Gandhi, Freire, hooks, López, and others: (1) empowerment with legal knowledge to enable the community to advocate for its own self-interests; (2) collaborating with the community to facilitate community legal education; (3) teaching and learning in context; and (4) teaching multi-dimensional lawyering skills and instilling a commitment to social justice.

1. The Parallels Of Client-Centered And Community-Centered Lawyering: Empowering The Community With Legal Knowledge To Advocate For Their Own Self-Interests

Once a month, I am given the chance to make the very confusing legal journey that the women at the safe house face a bit more tolerable, and most importantly, I am given an opportunity to encourage and applaud these women for being so resilient and strong.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ The ultimate goal of both projects was to reach people directly who had experienced domestic violence. As discussed in Section III.C.2, this can be extremely challenging. As the audience members who participated in the Baltimore project did not (and had no reason to) disclose whether they had any personal experience with abuse, it is unclear how many members of Baltimore's audience shared this experience.

¹¹⁴ Statement of Adriana Ginocchio,¹⁰ CUA Law graduate and former CUA clinic stu-

From Paulo Freire¹¹⁵ to bell hooks,¹¹⁶ those who influenced Baltimore's and CUA's incorporation of community legal education into their clinical programs consider the linchpin of successful community education to be empowerment of the target community.¹¹⁷ This message resonates with client-centered lawyering that is often central to clinical legal education. To be empowering, community education – legal or otherwise – must provide information in a manner that allows the individual or community the ability to make informed choices, rather than give them another system and set of persons to be dependent upon for help.¹¹⁸ Accordingly, community education should build on the capacity of the community; be flexible; and should allow the community to recognize its ability to identify its problems and contribute to solving those problems.¹¹⁹ So, too, client-centered lawyering focuses on empowering clients to make informed decision-making driven by the client's goals.¹²⁰ Within the context of Baltimore's and CUA's projects, engaging in community legal education in the manner championed by those who influenced our work fits the teaching of "client-centered" lawyering. Asking the community to help define its needs and to utilize the community's capacity to solve those needs is comparable to engaging an individual client in a discussion of goals and including the client in the identification and evaluation of options to meet those goals. While Baltimore's and CUA's programs aspired to engage in community legal education that empowered the communities they entered, and succeeded on many levels, some challenges existed. Those successes and challenges are described below.

dent attorney (May 2009) (on file with CUA).

¹¹⁵ FREIRE, *supra* note 2, at 65 ("Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated.").

¹¹⁶ See generally TEACHING TO TRANSGRESS, *supra* note 85; bell hooks, TEACHING COMMUNITY, A PEDAGOGY OF HOPE (2003).

¹¹⁷ See generally *supra* Part II.

¹¹⁸ Quigley, *supra* note 4, at 462.

("[L]awyers have to learn how, with all of their skills, to journey with the community. This journey has to involve the community really getting a sense of who they are, in the sense of beginning to understand their own power. In working with community the wisdom or the knowledge of the lawyer does not outweigh the wisdom and the knowledge of the community, about itself especially.") (quoting Barbara Major, an African American community organizer).

¹¹⁹ See *supra* Part II.

¹²⁰ See, e.g., DAVID A. BINDER ET AL., LAWYERS AS COUNSELORS: A CLIENT-CENTERED APPROACH (2nd ed. 2004); STEPHEN ELLMANN ET AL., LAWYERS AND CLIENTS: CRITICAL ISSUES IN INTERVIEWING AND COUNSELING (2009).

a. *Empowering The Community With Legal Knowledge:
CUA's And Baltimore's Successes*

The success of both Baltimore's and CUA's projects in empowering the communities they entered arose from reflective and thoughtful inclusion of the needs of the community in each program. Although, as noted, each program took different approaches to format and substance, both Baltimore and CUA included the client's voice in the presentation with "an eye toward increasing the political and social power of"¹²¹ women subjected to domestic abuse.

i. *Baltimore's Efforts At Community Empowerment*

Baltimore's students attempted to build on the capacity of the community by providing information in a substantively and culturally relevant, non-judgmental way, aspiring to allow the community to assess options and determine how to respond to the issue of domestic violence. The students set a tone of relevance consistent with the custom of the Masjid by beginning the program with a recitation of the Qur'an, which included singing and speaking of Qur'anic verse by a volunteer identified during the planning phase of the project. The Baltimore students intentionally included Muslim specific content throughout their program. For example, when presenting an overview on the prevalence of domestic violence, the students provided available data they found through research on domestic violence within the Muslim community. When providing an overview of legal options available to women subjected to domestic abuse, the students, in their discussion of divorce, included a discussion around *talaq* or, Islamic divorce, and provided specific case law from Maryland regarding how courts have treated the *mahr*, or marital dowry, in discussions of marital property. Through their relationship with PFP, students obtained and showed a portion of a video PFP created¹²² containing stories told by Muslim women who had experienced domestic violence, bringing an authentic Muslim narrative to the program. The video referenced many examples of power and control provided during a discussion component of the program where two students led a discussion with the audience about how domestic violence is defined, and what behaviors may qualify as acts of domestic violence. In framing this discussion, the students used the Muslim Power and Control Wheel,¹²³ an

¹²¹ Juliet M. Brodie, *Post-Welfare Lawyering Clinical Legal Education and a New Poverty Law Agenda*, 20 WASH. U. J.L. & POL'Y 201, 251 (2006).

¹²² DVD: Garments for One Another: Ending Domestic Violence in Muslim Families (Faith Trust Institute & Peaceful Families Project 2007), available at <http://peacefulfamilies.org/dvd.html>.

¹²³ Muslim Power and Control Wheel, go to <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/Mus->

adapted version of the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Program's Power and Control Wheel.¹²⁴ The students served as conversation facilitators for the discussion, allowing attendees to define, from their own religious, cultural, and social perspectives, what constitutes power and control, and how domestic violence is, or should be, defined.¹²⁵

Through their research, the non-Muslim students also came to understand the important intersection between Muslim culture and Islamic faith, and the role that Islam plays in the acceptance or condemning of domestic violence within the Muslim community. The students recognized that a failure to include a discussion on the Islamic perspective on domestic violence may de-legitimize a program they had so thoughtfully put together. However, the students also were concerned that a discussion referencing Islam, particularly if that perspective was not shared by the audience members, could also de-legitimize the program, or, perhaps worse, would appear that the students were promoting a particular viewpoint or judging a particular Qur'anic reading. In response to these concerns, the students partnered with Islamic scholar Dr. Zainab Alwani, who was recommended by PFP and approved by the Masjid,¹²⁶ and who was known in the Muslim community as an authority on Qur'anic interpretation. Dr. Alwani presented on the Islamic perspective on power, control, and domestic violence, focusing much of her presentation on Qur'anic Verse 4:34,¹²⁷ which has been interpreted as allowing for the "beating" of one's wife. The students remained seated and did not participate in this portion of the program. This partnership provided for some of the strongest praise in the program evaluations received.

lim%20Power%20and%20Control%20Wheel.pdf (last visited Feb. 23, 2012).

¹²⁴ *Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Power and Control Wheel*, DOMESTIC INTERVENTION PROJECT, <http://www.theduluthmodel.org/pdf/PowerandControl.pdf> (last visited Feb. 21, 2012).

¹²⁵ See Mandelbaum, *supra* note 23, at 340 (noting that community legal education "must be targeted to the audience, focusing on language and cultural concerns, logistical and convenience issues, and the needs of the community in general and how they might best understand and taking in what is being imparted.").

¹²⁶ Although the Masjid's community liaison was a strong supporter of Baltimore's program, some members of the board, and the Imam, were concerned about the content of Baltimore's co-presenter's information and sought review of her remarks before the program was held.

¹²⁷ This verse, as translated, provides: "Men are (meant to be righteous and kind) guardians of women because God has favored some more than others and because they spend out of their wealth. (In their turn) righteous women are (meant to be) devoted and to guard what God has (willed to be) guarded even though out of sight (of the husband). As for those (women) on whose part you fear ill-will and nasty conduct, admonish them (first), (next) separate them in beds (and last) beat them. But if they obey you, then seek nothing against them. Behold, God is most high and great."

ii. CUA's Efforts At Community Empowerment

CUA's Emergency Shelter Legal Services Project seeks to empower the community of women it serves by making them partners in the operation and development of the project and supporting individual participants as they take steps to address their problems.¹²⁸ First, CUA students involve clinic participants in establishing the structure and content of each clinic session. Rather than pursuing a fixed agenda, students offer clinic participants options as to how the clinic can proceed and ask them to decide as a group what the clinic format and content will be. Clinic format options include having the students give presentations on one or more legal topics of participants' choosing, breaking into small groups to discuss particular legal topics by interest, holding one-on-one meetings between students and participants, or some combination of these. Involving clinic participants in selecting the structure and content of each legal clinic encourages them to invest in the project and recognize their ability to identify their problems and interests.

In addition to keeping clinics flexible and responsive to participant interests, students strive to provide participants with tools to assist them in achieving their goals. When meeting with participants individually, students provide women with resources tailored to their particular problems. Students also work to identify steps participants can take to address their problems and offer to follow-up after the clinic to discuss their progress. The follow-up calls serve the dual purposes of reminding the women of the information they received and helping them feel supported as they work to address their problems on their own. In each of these ways, CUA students aim to help clinic participants make informed choices and recognize their ability to contribute to solving their own problems.

Finally, CUA students involve participants in the assessment and development of the project. During each clinic session, students ask participants to complete satisfaction surveys orally or in writing. From satisfaction surveys students hope to learn whether participants found the clinic to be helpful. Students also conduct interviews with volunteers following clinic sessions to learn about the women's needs and experiences from a broader perspective. From all of this information CUA students and faculty hope to understand how CUA can best serve the women at the safe house from a legal perspective and what other services might benefit them. By involving participants in efforts

¹²⁸ SUSAN SCHECHTER, *WOMEN AND MALE VIOLENCE: THE VISIONS AND STRUGGLES OF THE BATTERED WOMEN'S MOVEMENT* 6 (1982) (stating "Just as shelters helped battered women in grave danger, they also allowed feminists to start their own institutions, put forth their views, and gain legitimacy and respect from a much wider community.").

to assess and develop the project, CUA aims to treat residents as whole persons and partners, rather than “unfortunates” and give them the opportunity to improve CUA’s work, and thereby help future safe house residents. In short, the storytelling project aims to empower participants by recognizing their ability to identify the specific problems they face, and define for themselves how those problems are best addressed.

b. Challenges With Community Empowerment

Despite the successes both clinics had in involving the community in the creation of their programs, challenges emerged regarding whether the programs empowered the community beyond these limited encounters. Scholars and advocates have reflected that community education can assist the community in the “development of advocates and community leaders” and that to be “truly effective”, written and visual materials need to “to be a part of a larger educational campaign.”¹²⁹ Given these goals, we question whether our programs’ limited encounters are empowering, or if they, in fact, re-marginalize the community, despite the truest intentions otherwise.

i. One-Time Encounter

Although maintaining a long-term relationship with a segment of the community is not necessarily required to provide an empowering community legal education presentation, there is a risk that not engaging with a specific community on more than one occasion may *feel* (and look) like a top down process that provides students with opportunities to “try-on” multi-dimensional lawyering and to be given a social justice experience,¹³⁰ but that makes little lasting impact on the community they served. For different reasons, both Baltimore and CUA have limited contact with the communities after their encounters. One of Baltimore’s faculty’s goals when introducing systemic reform into the curriculum was that it be student-driven, to the extent that a student had an interest in identifying or leading a specific project. Given Fasiha’s connection to the Muslim community and her passionate desire to lead the project, and given that the students entering the Family Law Clinic the following semester did not identify this project to re-engage in, the program at the Masjid did not repeat. As such, Baltimore’s singular encounter was based on its faculty’s pedagogical choice to not necessarily repeat any community legal education program, despite the availability and accessibility of the com-

¹²⁹ Eagly, *supra* note 3, at 462.

¹³⁰ See discussion *infra* Part III.C.4.

munity, and despite the community's desire for the program to continue.¹³¹

CUA also has struggled with the limits of having a one-time encounter with safe house residents. Although CUA has a long-term relationship with the safe house and hosts clinics there monthly, the 30-day residency limit on the safe house residents ensures that CUA will usually have only one encounter with its program attendees. CUA faculty and students have wondered whether it might be possible to overcome some of the barriers involved in helping to organize people who have experienced abuse if CUA had repeated interactions with individual safe house residents.¹³² With more frequent interaction, CUA students and faculty might be able to identify women who would want to take a leadership or mentorship role for current and former residents, train interested residents to educate their peers about legal rights and court procedures, or learn what residents as a group believe lawyers and other services providers could do to best support them during and after their time at the safe house.

Given these pedagogical choices and community limitations that result in one time encounters with the target audience, along with realistic time limitations on the students, and the faculty's other learning goals for their clinical programs, there could be legitimate debate from Gandhi, Freire, López, and hooks¹³³ about whether we are, in fact, providing an empowering community legal education program.

ii. Audience

Although many of the programs' successes arose because of the consideration of audience and community voice, so too did many of the programs' challenges. Many advocates who contemplate community education emphasize that voice of the community is central to the creation of an empowering community education program.¹³⁴ Because of its location, CUA's project directly reached women who self-identified as having been abused and who were typically proceeding *pro se* in civil protection order proceedings. Baltimore's project, on the other hand, was open to anyone in the community, men and women, and those who attended included service providers seeking to obtain information specific to the Muslim women their domestic violence organizations serve, curious and interested members of the Mus-

¹³¹ Although Baltimore has not continued programs with this community, Fasiha has. Upon graduation, Fasiha began consulting within the Muslim community on the issues of domestic violence. To this extent, while Baltimore has had a one-time program, it has helped create a sustaining presence by fostering Fasiha's work while she was in the clinic.

¹³² See discussion *infra* Part III.C.2.

¹³³ See discussion *supra* Part II.

¹³⁴ See *supra* Part II.

lim community, and community organizers and liaisons who attended the program to learn information to pass on to women in their local communities.¹³⁵

Despite the difference in the makeup of the audiences, both projects were directed at a segment of the population that is often challenging to reach. For CUA, that is women in crisis who are at great risk of renewed violence,¹³⁶ overwhelmed by non-legal concerns, and who typically face barriers, such as time and resources, to seek legal information. For Baltimore, it was a group of women who are a religious minority and who often face cultural and religious obstacles to seeking protection from violence or from understanding how to access legal and non-legal resources in Maryland.

Baltimore's decision to hold its presentation at a local Masjid, allowing men and women to attend together, was intentionally made by the students as they considered the "needs of the entire community and tried to reach segments of the community not typically served by traditional legal services."¹³⁷ The students understood that while Muslim women who had experienced abuse would most directly benefit from understanding the legal definition of abuse, discussing Islamic responses to domestic violence, and accessing available non-legal options, others — men, community partners, and service providers — also sought to understand and consider that information. The student team also determined that holding the program at a prominent and centrally located Masjid would help it be accessible to most people interested in attending.

Although intentional and thoughtful, the students made these decisions about location and audience without input from the ultimate target audience — Muslim women subjected to domestic violence. While the students repeatedly attempted to find a survivor who would share her story personally, and provide feedback and insight regarding the program they were creating, they were unable to do so. Accordingly, it is not clear what impact the decision to invite both men and women to this program had on the composition of the audience. Offering a gender-neutral program on the topic of domestic violence, which, to many, is a politically and socially charged topic, may have

¹³⁵ Although the participants were not asked to identify themselves, some volunteered an affiliation with an organization during the discussion portions of the presentation, and others provided this information in the evaluations collected at the end of the program.

¹³⁶ See Martha Mahoney, *Legal Images of Battered Women: Redefining the Issue of Separation*, 90 MICH. L. REV. 1, 64-65 (1991) (noting that "at least half of women who leave their abusers are followed and harassed or further attacked by them," and that in one study of interspousal homicide, "more than half of the men who killed their spouse did so when the partners were separated.").

¹³⁷ Mandelbaum, *supra* note 23, at 340.

deterred attendance by women subjected to abuse. Thus, in their effort to reach the broader community, the students may not have “necessarily elicited” the voices of those who most need or want the information.¹³⁸ And, indeed, upon reflection the students recognized the obstacles of their decisions: in their debriefing at the end of the program, the students identified location and audience composition as aspects of the program they would change, if they were to engage in the program again.

2. *Commitment To The “Process Of Collaboration” In Community Legal Education*

“Perhaps the most challenging aspect of managing the clinic is finding the courage to throw yourself into helping the women while maintaining enough humility to identify yourself as an outsider.”¹³⁹

In many aspects of lawyering, a power imbalance exists between lawyer and client. Client-centered lawyering attempts to address this power imbalance by creating a collaborative partnership between lawyer and client. Nonetheless, lawyering is rife with challenges of privilege as described by Gerald López:

All of us – lay and professionals alike – regularly set lawyers and other professionals apart . . . We accord them privileged education, status, considerable autonomy, skills, rewards, and at least some trust in their work . . . Color, disability, gender, age, class, and sexual orientation only exaggerate this estrangement between lay and legal cultures.¹⁴⁰

This may be especially true in poverty law practice, where lawyers often enjoy many social advantages based on race, class, education, and professional role that clients do not.¹⁴¹ In the traditions of Freire,¹⁴² and López,¹⁴³ among others, CUA’s and Baltimore’s commitment to community legal education is rooted in part in the opportunities it offers students to collaborate with community members as equal partners.

Collaboration with the community in community legal education can take several forms: it can involve working to understand the cul-

¹³⁸ Eagly, *supra* note 3, at 460.

¹³⁹ Statement of Leah Branch, ’11 CUA Law Graduate and Kathleen Ugalde, ’12 CUA Law Graduate, both former CUA clinic student attorneys (May 2011) (on file with CUA).

¹⁴⁰ See, e.g., López, *supra* note 74, at 46-47.

¹⁴¹ See, e.g., Jane Aiken, *Striving to Teach Justice, Fairness, and Morality*, 4 CLIN.L. REV. 1, 12-17 (1997) [hereafter *Striving to Teach Justice*].

¹⁴² FREIRE, *supra* note 2, at 49.

¹⁴³ LÓPEZ, *supra* note 74, at 37 (“[Lawyers] must know how to collaborate with other professionals and lay allies rather than ignoring the help that these other problem-solvers may provide in a given situation.”).

ture and shared experiences of the target audience; identifying relevant topics and issues of common concern; developing a format and resources for participants; and facilitating and running the program. Collaboration may be undertaken with many facets of the community—women and men who experience abuse; social services providers who work with people subjected to abuse; a self-identifying group, such as the Washington/Baltimore Muslim community; or a group that may not self-identify but that shares a common experience, such as the people subjected to domestic abuse who access the temporary shelter offered through the Washington, DC Crime Victims Compensation agency.

Student-community collaboration has been a key contributor to the success of CUA's and Baltimore's community education projects by building trust with community members and helping students understand and approach the projects as a process of mutual education. At the same time, questions relating to collaboration have posed some of the richest challenges in this work.

a. Successes In Collaboration

Collaboration in planning the content and format of the CUA and Baltimore projects built trust by establishing the students as legitimate partners with the community, and by making the information presented resonate with the target audiences. Student-community collaboration also lent the projects legitimacy by making the efforts culturally appropriate and reflective of the shared experiences of the community. Although clinic students often raise concerns about legitimacy with individual clients – usually before their first client meeting – those concerns typically involve being viewed as a legitimate lawyer. Community education projects generate student awareness of their “outsider” status and assumptions about the impact that privilege and status can have on how the community receives the information they convey. Such assumptions spawn rich teaching moments on issues of race, class, gender, and religion.

i. Building Trust And Baltimore's Project

From the outset of their project, Baltimore students struggled with whether and how they would be viewed as “legitimate” with their target audience, given the non-Muslim status of most of the students involved in the project. Although some of the concerns raised by the Baltimore students were based on genuine issues of cultural sensitivity and awareness, others were based on assumptions of the role their “outsider” status may play in the program. Ultimately, the focus on ensuring legitimacy became a central theme in their planning and

proved critical to the project's success, which they achieved through both their research, their intentional embrace of Muslim culture, and their extensive collaborations with different representatives of the Muslim and DV communities. For example, in addition to collaborating with PFP and partnering with Dr. Alwani and the Masjid's community liaison, the student team contacted a shelter for Muslim women in Maryland, the Muslim Women's Center,¹⁴⁴ and invited the program director to attend the presentation and speak to the audience on the services the shelter provides. The students also placed a donation box in the back of the room where the presentation was held to provide program attendees an opportunity to donate to the severely underfunded Muslim Women's Center.

Further, based on their research, the students learned that housing is a significant concern for women subjected to domestic abuse, and that housing issues can be particularly problematic for Muslim women, who often have specific religious and dietary needs. Given that, the student team contacted 19 domestic violence shelters in and around Baltimore City to determine what, if any, accommodations they made for Muslim women. The students gathered data on which shelters made dietary accommodations (specifically a halal diet), which offered transportation to local Masjids, and which offered space for prayer. They organized this information into an easy to read chart, and included it in the folder they distributed to all attendees.

A unique opportunity for trust building presented itself on the day of the program. As part of their preparation in the weeks leading up to the program, the students had discussed appropriate attire, and whether they should wear headscarves, or *khimars*. Upon raising the question with the Masjid's community liaison, the students were informed that although appropriate, the Masjid would not require the presenters to wear headscarves. On the day of the program, after the students had arrived, the community liaison informed the students that the Masjid's Imam was requesting that the presenters, in fact, wear a head covering. The students had a discussion on site, within minutes of the program commencing, regarding the request and quickly determined that wearing the *khimar* provided an opportunity to show respect for the audience, the Masjid, and the culture that had invited them. The students expressed concern that by not wearing the headscarf, some members of the audience would be distracted or, worse, view their program as lacking legitimacy, or appearing disre-

¹⁴⁴ For information on this shelter, see *Shelter Opens in Baltimore*, MUSLIMAT AL-NISAA <http://www.mnisaa.org/new-shelter-opens-in-Baltimore.html> (last visited Feb. 21, 2012); Jamie Tarabay, *Muslim Women's Shelter Provides Refuge, Support*, NPR, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=120752667> (last visited Feb. 21, 2012).

spectful. Their decision sent the students on a search through the Masjid for women who had extra *khimars* with them, which they found and wore throughout the presentation. The students' conscious embrace of Muslim culture enabled them to facilitate a thoughtful discussion of domestic violence as legitimate partners in the project.

ii. Building Trust And CUA's Project

Like Baltimore, CUA students' ability to build trust with safe house residents is critical to the success of the Emergency Shelter Legal Services Project. Also like Baltimore's experience, collaboration assists CUA students to build trust with their audience by helping them to establish legitimacy and convey legal information in a way that resonates with their audience. Student collaborations with MSP social workers, CUA clinic faculty and alumni, and safe house residents have been vital to their success at building trust.

Through their collaborations, CUA students have learned to establish themselves as legitimate partners by creating a culture of dignity and respect, specifically, by providing food and beverages, listening, and keeping promises. Establishing legitimacy is challenging at the CUA clinics because of timing, residents' shared experiences, and cultural differences between residents and students. Although the CUA project is ongoing, the 30-day interval between clinics and the 30-day maximum stay for residents ensures that each CUA clinic is one-time encounter with residents, requiring students to build relationships anew at each clinic. Safe house residents often share two experiences that may create additional obstacles to establishing trust with CUA students. First, with the abuse, the majority of residents have been betrayed by a person they trusted and loved, which may make trusting people in general difficult.¹⁴⁵ Second, many residents have been let down by law enforcement or the legal system when they sought help by, for example, calling the police.¹⁴⁶ To the extent they equate law students and lawyers with the legal system generally, residents who feel let down by the legal system may be skeptical of the students' genuine ability or motivation to assist them.

¹⁴⁵ See, e.g., Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, in DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THEORY AND PRACTICE 953 (Schneider et. al. eds., 2d ed. 2008) (describing how the experience of trauma damages individuals' capacity to trust).

¹⁴⁶ See generally Linda Ammons, *Mules, Madonnas, Babies, Bathwater, Racial Imagery and Stereotypes: The African-American Woman and the Battered Woman Syndrome*, 1995 WISC. L. REV. 1003, 1017-30 (1995); Angela Mae Kupenda, *Law, Life, and Literature: A Critical Reflection of Life and Literature to Illuminate How Laws of Domestic Violence, Race, and Class Bind Black Women, Based on Alice Walker's Book the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, 42 HOW. L.J. 1, 14-21 (1998); Nancy K.D. Lemon, *Excerpt from Expert Witness Report*, in DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAW 165-66 (Nancy K.D. Lemon ed., 3d ed. 2009).

Building relationships with each new group of residents is also challenging because of the many cultural differences between most residents and most students as well as positions of privilege.¹⁴⁷ The residents are predominantly: poor; African American; between 25 and 60 years of age; single mothers with young children or pregnant; of limited education; and from low-income urban neighborhoods. CUA students also often share characteristics with one another, which differ markedly from the characteristics shared by residents. The students are predominantly: middle or upper middle class; Caucasian; between the ages of 23 and 28; childless; residing in a handful of upper-income urban and close-in suburban neighborhoods. As a result, the students, as a group, often appear to have little in common with residents.

Recognizing these differences and, like Baltimore's students, being concerned about being viewed as outsiders, CUA students sought input from My Sister's Place social workers and reviewed written feedback from residents to understand how to establish themselves as legitimate partners with the resident community. From these consultations and their experiences, CUA students learned that relationship building is most effective when they treat residents with dignity and respect. This may be especially important to residents because many have been treated with hostility and condescension by other actors in the legal system.

CUA students set a tone of caring at the outset of clinics by addressing a pressing need to many residents – hunger and access to healthy food. After My Sister's Place social workers educated CUA students about residents' struggles to obtain healthful food, students began distributing sandwiches, fruit, vegetables, and beverages to residents and their children during each clinic. Distributing food and drinks at the beginning of clinics promoted good will, as residents were appreciative of the food, and students were happy to distribute it. Food distribution also enables small talk on innocuous topics like ingredients and food likes and dislikes, rather than diving right into legal information and emotional personal experiences.¹⁴⁸ The oppor-

¹⁴⁷ See Susan Bryant & Jean Koh Peters, *The Five Habits: Building Cross-Cultural Competence in Lawyers*, 8 CLIN. L. REV. 33, 42 (2001) ("Lawyers and clients who do not share the same culture face special challenges in developing a trusting relationship in which genuine and accurate communication can occur.").

¹⁴⁸ Kimberlé Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color*, 43 STAN. L. REV. 1241, 1250 n. 31 (1991) ("[A] woman may come in or call in [a rape crisis hotline] for various reasons. She has no place to go, she has no job, she has no support, she has no money, she has no food, she's been beaten, and after you finish meeting all those needs, or try to meet all those needs, then she may say, by the way, during all this, I was being raped. So that makes our community different than other communities. A person wants their basic needs first. It's a lot easier to discuss things when you are full.") (quoting Nancy Anne Matthews, *Stopping Rape or Managing its Con-*

tunity for small talk seems to help both students and residents relax and feel more comfortable with one another, which encourages students to engage more with residents and residents to participate more actively in the clinics. Students hold fundraisers during the semester to fund food purchases. The fundraising efforts themselves have a positive influence on the students as they tend to build camaraderie and give the students a sense of accomplishment at having provided a tangible benefit to the residents and their families.

CUA students also demonstrate respect for residents by listening to their stories.¹⁴⁹ Since entering the legal system, many residents have not had an opportunity to describe their lives to anyone and most value the CUA clinic programs for the chance to talk about what they have gone through. Finally, students establish themselves as legitimate partners worthy of residents' trust by delivering what they promise. Students encourage resident participation in clinic presentations and in one-on-one question and answer sessions, and shape clinic content on the spot to respond to residents' expressed interests. To reinforce the information they convey during clinics, students collect and create legal information and legal and social services referral pamphlets and fliers and distribute them to residents. Finally, students follow up with interested residents to monitor the progress they have made.

Like Baltimore, CUA student efforts to present information in a way that resonates with residents have been integral to building trust with clinic participants. In order to make clinic content responsive to resident needs and reflective of resident experiences, students meet with MSP social workers at least once per semester to get feedback on the effectiveness of the clinics and learn what the social workers perceive to be the most pressing legal and non-legal issues facing the residents. Students also work with CUA clinic faculty and alumni to ensure that the programs are culturally competent and sensitive to residents' experiences. Imparting information that fundamentally conflicts with residents' life experiences and expectations can destroy credibility and promote an insider/outsider dynamic between students and residents. Role playing individual question and answer sessions and presentations in advance of clinics raises opportunities for group reflection on issues such as how poverty and abuse affect the choices

sequences? State Intervention and Feminist Resistance in the Los Angeles Anti-Rape Movement, 1972-1987, at 287 (1989) (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles)).

¹⁴⁹ See Leigh Goodmark, *Telling Stories, Saving Lives: The Battered Mothers' Testimony Project, Women's Narratives, and Court Reform*, 37 ARIZ. ST. L.J. 709, 756 (2005) ("Collecting narratives . . . gives battered women an opportunity to share their experiences and have their stories validated.").

available to residents and the perceptions of and experiences with law enforcement in the residents' communities (and how these may differ from students' perceptions and experiences). Role playing also creates the opportunity to reflect upon the impact of word choice in the clinics. Students are asked to consider whether questions could be perceived as victim-blaming and how residents might react to labels such as "victim," "battered woman," "abuser," or "batterer."¹⁵⁰

Perhaps most importantly, students seek input from residents in several additional ways. As noted above, students track the types of questions asked by residents at each clinic and research and develop new presentations and resources to address common issues; ask residents to complete evaluation forms at the end of each clinic; and interview interested residents about their needs and how lawyers can help them. Students also involve residents in selecting the content and format of each clinic, including deciding whether to include student presentations and which topics to present. Each of these collaborations enables students to better present information in a manner that responds to resident needs and resonates with resident experiences.

Building trust is not only critical to the success of CUA's monthly clinics. By building trust with each group of residents, CUA students lay a foundation for work with future residents if positive feedback about clinics is shared by word-of-mouth. In this way, students work to establish CUA as a long-term partner standing in solidarity with residents over time.

iii. Understanding Community Legal Education As A Process Of Mutual Education

In the words of Gerald López, to lawyer effectively against subordination, students must come to:

understand how to educate those with whom they work, particularly about law and professional lawyering, and, at the same time, they must open themselves up to being educated by all those with whom they come in contact, particularly about the traditions and experiences of life on the bottom and at the margins.¹⁵¹

The commitment to collaboration in the CUA and Baltimore projects encourages students to view community legal education as a process of mutual education in which students, audience, and other community partners all learn from and teach one another.

¹⁵⁰ See, e.g., bell hooks, *Violence in Intimate Relationships*, in *FAMILY MATTERS: READINGS ON FAMILY LIVES AND THE LAW*, 200-05 (1993).

¹⁵¹ LÓPEZ, *supra* note 74, at 37; see also FREIRE, *supra* note 2, at 69 ("Revolutionary leadership must . . . practice co-intentional education.").

(a) *Mutual Education Through Baltimore's Project*

Certainly, Baltimore's students had as much to learn in this project as they had to teach – the program was, by all measures, a process of mutual education. Baltimore's students learned not only substantive information about the law, but also about a culture and religion that most had limited understanding about, or exposure to, prior to the project. Like CUA, Baltimore's collaboration with partners, including PFP and Dr. Alwani, not only assured the information presented resonated with the Muslim community, but also created opportunities for student learning. In addition to the trust building techniques discussed above, and steps taken to ensure the information was empowering to the target audience, the students read law review and newspaper articles on Islam and domestic violence; watched a webinar on domestic violence in the Muslim community; reviewed the materials received from PFP; and had candid and open discussions with Fasiha, a member of the target community, about her culture and her faith.

In addition, Baltimore's students invited Muslim students from the broader Baltimore community to attend their moots, resulting in feedback on the content of the program, in offering a different perspective for students to consider as they refined their program, and in the engagement and learning of the students who attended. During one moot, an LLM Muslim student visiting from Saudi Arabia criticized the students use of the Muslim Power and Control Wheel because she believed some of the behaviors identified on the Wheel as controlling and abusive were actually examples of behaviors that demonstrated respect.¹⁵² Indeed, this student found the Muslim Power and Control Wheel offensive. When the students provided her the standard Power and Control Wheel, she was less concerned because it did not identify behaviors that she viewed as acts of respect. As a result of this moot, the students learned that, as in any culture, there is a wide range of perspectives in the Muslim culture. Based on this feedback, the student team determined that including the standard Power and Control Wheel and the Muslim Power and Control Wheel in the presentation packet would give the audience an opportunity to see different perspectives on, and make decisions for themselves about, the example behaviors identified. Although it is unclear whether the audience considered both wheels during the course of the discussion, or the program generally, the moot taught the students a

¹⁵² For example, this student viewed "requesting permission to use the telephone" under the header "Using Isolation" on the Muslim Power and Control Wheel, to be an act of being respectful, and not a sign of being controlled or isolated.

valuable lesson on assumptions and community voice, as well as the value of collaboration with the community, and the importance of listening and learning from the community.

(b) *Mutual Education Through CUA's Project*

CUA student collaborations with the MSP social workers and safe house residents made clear that students had at least as much to learn in their project as they had to teach. Through periodic consultations, the social workers inform students of developments and significant incidents at the safe house, the issues most often raised by residents, and the interpersonal dynamics among residents. Students provide social workers with written resources on common resident legal issues and inform them about the most common social issues raised by residents during clinics. Students and social workers have begun planning cross-trainings for one another, a project that, hopefully, will come to fruition in the coming semesters.

Also starting in the spring 2011 semester, students began to conduct brief interviews of interested residents about: their experiences at the safe house, in court, and with lawyers; expectations of the legal system and court processes; and most pressing legal and non-legal needs. By collecting this information, CUA students aimed to evaluate critically their approach to the clinics from the residents' perspectives and identify new ways to work with residents to address their most pressing needs. The process of developing interview questions and inviting residents to tell their stories itself helped students identify and question their assumptions about residents' needs and how students can best assist them. As two students noted:

we assumed that the [interviews] would [also] provide us with an opportunity to assist the women with their legal issues and concerns by providing legal information. However . . . our most important function at the hotel had nothing to do with providing legal information. Instead, we found that our most important – and rewarding – function was being a friendly face and eager listener.¹⁵³

The process of mutual education continues during the live clinics themselves. During presentations, students encourage residents to participate actively by raising questions and sharing information. Residents often do as much to help address questions raised by other residents as students do. Although students are able to explain available legal remedies and court procedures, and can point residents to advocates and allies working within the system, it is often residents

¹⁵³ Paper by Leah Branch and Kathleen Ugalde, "Avoiding the 'Assumption Trap': Assessing the Needs of Women Residing at the CVC Safe House Through the Narrative Response" (April 2011) (on file with CUA).

who are able to identify gaps and likely failure points in the system and offer options for working around the system when it breaks down. Similarly, in individual consultations, students learn how residents are often plagued by intersecting and counterbalancing legal and social barriers, which constrain the choices available to them.

Students learn quickly from their sessions with social workers and residents that there are many gaps in their knowledge of the law and how it affects residents in practice. As a result of these sessions, students provide information to address these identified gaps. To this end, students come to value their collaborations with social workers and residents as helping them to understand the realities of life in the safe house and contextualize the legal issues facing residents. This knowledge, in turn, helps students to better connect with and assist residents and see them as whole human beings with complex, interrelated problems, rather than isolated legal issues.¹⁵⁴

b. Challenges In Collaboration

Many challenges in collaboration are similar to those involved in working to empower the community, teaching in context, and teaching students about multidimensional lawyering. Challenges include building working relationships in projects involving one-time encounters with an audience, negotiating student time limitations, and communicating successfully with people from different cultural and professional backgrounds.

A particular challenge raised by collaboration in community education regarding domestic violence is identifying “the community” with whom collaboration should occur. Baltimore and CUA faculty share Freire’s and López’s convictions that efforts to empower marginalized people should come from the ground up: that is, they should be driven by the community of marginalized people themselves in partnership with their supporters.¹⁵⁵ Living up to this commitment in the context of domestic violence advocacy can be particularly challenging.

Whether a project can be characterized as “community driven” depends on the definition of “community”. Both the Baltimore and CUA projects were community driven to some extent. The Baltimore project was initiated by a Muslim student who identified a need for

¹⁵⁴ See *A Question of Mission*, *supra* note 54, at 136; FREIRE, *supra* note 2, at 50 (“[T]he oppressor is in solidarity with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor – when he stops making pious, sentimental, and individualistic gestures and risks an act of love.”)

¹⁵⁵ See FREIRE, *supra* note 2, at 66; LÓPEZ, *supra* note 74, at 7.

domestic violence prevention education in her community. The CUA project was initiated by providers of services to persons subjected to abuse who identified a need for legal information at the safe house. Neither project, though, emerged at the request of an organized segment of the target audience.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, had the projects been initiated by the members of the projects' target audiences, issues such as legitimacy likely would not have dominated students' efforts.

For a number of reasons, people who have been abused often do not organize themselves around that experience.¹⁵⁷ First, individuals subjected to abuse might not identify the behavior as abusive.¹⁵⁸ Individuals who grew up in abusive homes, who live in communities where violence is widespread, or whose peer group accepts relationship violence as normal might not expect non-violence in intimate relationships.¹⁵⁹ Others might minimize, repress, or deny what is happening to them, even to themselves. Second, the experience of abuse is intensely personal. The nature and character of abuse experienced varies widely from person to person, as does the nature of an individual's relationship with his or her abuser. Consequently, even individuals who self-identify as having been abused may not feel kinship with others similarly self-identifying because their individual experiences are so different.¹⁶⁰

Third, people who have experienced domestic violence may not want to disclose their experience with abuse in their daily lives, and may deliberately choose not to do so. Acknowledging abuse can have serious consequences. Individuals who identify themselves as abused

¹⁵⁶ See *supra* note 117 and accompanying text. The target audience for both projects ultimately was the same – individuals (most often women) who had experienced domestic violence.

¹⁵⁷ This is not to say that individuals never organize themselves around this experience. For example, advocates and professors Stacy Brustin and Alizabeth Newman have each had success in working with organized groups of women who have experienced abuse and chronicled their experiences. See Brustin, *supra* note 3, at 39; Alizabeth Newman, *Bridging the Justice Gap: Building Community by Responding to Individual Need*, 17 CLIN. L. REV. 615 (2011).

¹⁵⁸ See Sarah M. Buell, *Fifty Obstacles to Leaving, a.k.a., Why Abuse Victims Stay*, 28 COLO. LAW. 19, 19 (1999).

¹⁵⁹ See, e.g., Carole A. Sousa, *Teen Dating Violence: The Hidden Epidemic*, 37 FAM. & CONCILIATION CTS. REV. 356, 361 (1999) (describing numerous reasons why teenagers, as a group, often do not identify relationships as abusive, including inexperience, peer norms, and exposure to violence in their homes and communities. Many of the same factors may impact some adults).

¹⁶⁰ See LISA A. GOODMAN & DEBORAH EPSTEIN, LISTENING TO BATTERED WOMEN 91 (2008) (critiquing the standardization of services for victims of domestic violence as unresponsive to the needs of victims, who “differ on the basis of numerous factors, including mental and physical well-being; family structure; religious, ethnic, and cultural background; immigration status; sexual orientation; embeddedness in social networks; and socioeconomic status.”).

(and thereby identify someone in their lives as their abuser) may face threats or acts of violence, social stigma, feelings of shame or embarrassment, and discrimination. Finally, apart from the potential negative consequences posed by disclosure, people who have been subjected to abuse may not have the luxury of devoting time and attention to education or political activism, particularly if they are preparing to leave, are leaving, or have recently left an abusive relationship. Such individuals may be struggling simply to provide for their basic needs and those of their children and focus on maintaining physical safety, as individuals in this separation stage are at significant risk of retaliatory violence.¹⁶¹ For all of these reasons, it is challenging and rare to encounter women who self-identify as having experienced abuse and are interested and willing to help organize and develop community education efforts.¹⁶²

3. *Teaching And Learning In Context*

*Most non-clinic law school courses are heavily focused on reading cases and learning the law; there is very little time for real world practice or applying what is learned. Clinics and the community education projects are excellent opportunities for law students to learn by doing and to employ what we know to give back.*¹⁶³

A critical benefit of community legal education as a clinical teaching method is that it brings students out of the protective bubble of the clinic office and into the community — often to physical locations and social situations that students have not encountered before. Engaging with the community on its turf creates many challenges for students. Students must have the courage to leave their comfort zones, be open-minded, receptive, and responsive to new information and cultural expectations, and remain flexible in the face of changing circumstances and spontaneous in adapting to unexpected developments. CUA's and Baltimore's clinics found that students encounter some of the richest opportunities for learning available in law school when they embrace these demands because community legal education offer students unparalleled opportunities to learn in context.

¹⁶¹ See, e.g., JANICE ROEHL ET AL., U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE, INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT VALIDATION STUDY, FINAL REPORT, NIJ 2000WTVX0011 (2005), available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/209731.pdf> (finding that women attempting to separate from their partners were more likely to be killed and experience renewed violence).

¹⁶² Recent CUA efforts to interview safe house residents about their needs and experiences are motivated in large part by the desire to include their voices in project planning and development.

¹⁶³ Statement of Ashley Wagner, Baltimore clinic student, '10 University of Baltimore Law Grad (June 2010) (on file with Rachel Camp).

Those whose teachings influenced Baltimore and CUA's community education programs advocate for teaching and learning in context.¹⁶⁴ They take an expansive view of advocacy, identifying that understanding the needs of any community cannot occur in the abstract. Rather, as Gandhi advocated, education must be "concrete and interconnected" to the abstract principles the student is taught.¹⁶⁵ To be concrete, identifying the problems and needs of a population of marginalized persons must occur within those persons' contextual situations.¹⁶⁶ Within the context of domestic violence specifically, lawyers cannot essentialize women who have been abused to the single experience of the violence committed against them.¹⁶⁷ Rather, lawyers must understand them in context, based on their entire lives including understanding their familial, community, housing, and financial circumstances. Without an understanding of these different contexts, client centeredness generally, and teaching about domestic violence specifically, would be ineffective at best, and, at worst, potentially harmful to the women impacted by a community education program. Pedagogically, it would deprive law students of the importance of "journey[ing] with"¹⁶⁸ their clients to understand their clients' needs, reinforcing the top-down approach to lawyering that community legal education challenges.

By giving students a broader view of the context of individual problems, community education allows students to see individuals as more than "one dimensional, poor, helpless and in need of the legal handout the clinic is willing to proffer."¹⁶⁹ Community legal education has played an important role in assisting Baltimore and CUA students develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of social issues confronting their clients and the broader community.

a. Successful Voyages In Context

Baltimore's and CUA's clinics have found that teaching and learning in context about people who have experienced domestic violence is incredibly important. Domestic violence is a systemic problem of power and is not well understood – indeed, is often misunderstood – in our society. Stereotypes and assumptions about "victims" and "batterers" pervade our cultural discourse about abuse and subconsciously shape perceptions of, interactions with, and expect-

¹⁶⁴ See *supra* Part I.

¹⁶⁵ Dehury, *supra* note 62, at 13.

¹⁶⁶ Eagly, *supra* note 3, at 434.

¹⁶⁷ See Leigh Goodmark, *Autonomy Feminism: An Anti-Essentialist Critique of Mandatory Interventions in Domestic Violence Cases*, 37 FLA. ST. U. L. REV. 1 (2009).

¹⁶⁸ See *supra* note 17 and accompanying text thereto.

¹⁶⁹ *A Question of Mission*, *supra* note 54, at 136.

tations for people subjected to abuse. Separately, widespread beliefs about how different cultural and social groups view women and tolerate violence shape perceptions of what segments of the community will be receptive to discourse about domestic violence and supportive to people subjected to abuse. Individual case representation involving issues of domestic violence may or may not challenge students' biases or even help students identify the existence of such biases, depending upon the client's circumstances. Engaging in community legal education on domestic violence – either with people who have experienced abuse or with broader groups of people who may or may not have personal experience with abuse – contextualizes the issue in several ways that challenge student (and faculty) preconceptions.

First, the number and variety of people encountered in community education projects exposes students and faculty to a diverse sampling of experiences with and attitudes about domestic violence. For example, at each safe house program CUA students encounter 5 – 40 women who have left their homes because of abuse. The stories residents share are more intensely personal and varied in the experience of abuse than any reading students could do or faculty could assign on domestic violence. The diversity in women's stories includes the varying forms of violence and coercion their loved ones used and the ways in which the residents perceived their other life circumstances to impact the choices available to them. Bearing witness to this diversity in experiences teaches students that domestic violence encompasses a wide range of behaviors and relationships.

Like CUA's students, Baltimore's students could not have learned in a book what they were able to experience through their community education program. Indeed, a book may have provided a starkly different experience from what students experienced during their program. Although some members of Baltimore's student team had concerns about how well their program would be received by the attendees, particularly the men who attended the program and the governing body of the Masjid itself, students' concerns were quickly dispelled by the actual participation and discussion that occurred, which was informed, supportive, and engaged. This contextual learning for the Baltimore students, the vast majority of whom had never before been to a Masjid, elevated their learning about the Muslim community and the view of domestic violence within this particular community of Muslims, in a way that no description or abstract discussion could have.

Such diversity also ensures that students encounter personal stories or opinions that surprise them. Experiencing surprise at individual stories or opinions about abuse, including, for example, stories

from Muslim men about their concern and frustration over the abuse their mothers experienced, helps students recognize their personal biases and how those biases shape their expectations about what they will hear.¹⁷⁰ Second, hearing so many different stories within a short time period helps students to identify commonalities across diverse experiences with domestic violence. During CUA's programs, for example, students frequently hear about the ways in which inadequate law enforcement responses make residents feel hopelessly at the mercy of their abusive partners, how the dire shortage in affordable housing puts women between the Scylla of homelessness and the Charybdis of continued abuse, or how the cycle of drug addiction exacerbates financial hardship and is used to justify abuse. Separately, perceiving the many social and cultural similarities shared by the residents as a group and the many differences between the residents and the students themselves starkly illustrates for students how wealth, privilege, and opportunity is allocated in the community. Recognizing such commonalities helps students develop a deeper understanding of the problem of domestic violence, including the power and control dynamics at the heart of abuse, the frequent inadequacy of the community response to abuse, and the social barriers that conspire to tie poor women, in particular, to abusive relationships. Gaining such knowledge about domestic violence, in turn, better prepares students to stand in solidarity with and advocate on behalf of individual clients.

Finally, bearing witness to the many struggles and barriers faced by women who have been subjected to abuse gives students an appreciation for women's resilience and strength. As Emily Quinlan, a CUA student who participated in the Emergency Shelter Legal Services project, reflected:

Standing in the small hallway where we give our legal information presentations, trying to give women information that they may or may not need, while they are trying to take care of all of their other needs that in a lot of circumstances are actually more important than their legal needs, you wonder how they survive in such chaos. But they do survive. Because they have no other choice, because their children are relying on them, and because hopefully, they have people like us guiding them towards resources which can

¹⁷⁰ See Fran Quigley, *Seizing the Disorienting Moment: Adult Learning Theory and the Teaching of Social Justice in Law School Clinics*, 2 CLIN. L. REV. 37, 51-56 (1995); see also *Striving to Teach Justice*, *supra* note 141, at 2-3. One particular concern the students identified prior to the project was whether the program would be equally well-received by the men who attended, as by the women. The discussion portion of the program, as well as evaluations collected at the program's conclusion, indicated that both genders were concerned with domestic violence, and sought additional trainings and programs in their community.

help fill at least some of the gaps that are left in their lives.

b. Challenges Of Teaching In Context

Teaching in context is not without its challenges. A conundrum for faculty supervising both the Baltimore and CUA projects was deciding whether the context that makes each project so rich might also overwhelm the students and prevent them from absorbing the lessons they hoped community education would teach.

In the CUA clinic, for example, factors including the physical location where the programs are held, the sheer number of residents attending, and the dire shortage of housing resources for residents have caused some students to disengage with the project because of a sense of powerlessness. The narrow hallway where CUA students host the safe house clinics presents many challenges in its own right. The temperature is often uncomfortably warm, the space quickly becomes crowded and noisy when attendance is high, and small children continually weave paths up and down, coming precariously close to the fire escape. With larger crowds, students struggle to engage the group in an awkward presentation space and keep noise under control. With smaller groups, students are challenged to create a sense of privacy in the open hallway for residents concerned about confidentiality. Environment aside, students faced with large numbers of residents struggle to provide each with individual attention and targeted resources within the time constraints imposed by residents' and their own time commitments. Finally, regardless of the number of residents served at each program, students involved in the Emergency Shelter Legal Services project inevitably feel overwhelmed and discouraged by the enormity of the affordable housing crisis in Washington, D.C. and the bleak insufficiency of housing resources available to help safe house residents.

To overcome these challenges, CUA faculty have engaged students in problem-solving sessions to identify project issues and develop strategies to overcome them. In response, students have taken several steps, including creating how-to manuals and orientation curricula for new students taking over the project to help set their expectations at the outset. Students have also reached out to local housing advocates to bolster their housing resource materials and enhance their knowledge of District housing law and services. By engaging in a continuing dialogue with students about the project challenges, CUA faculty also encourages students to take ownership over the project and seek to improve it for future students and residents.

As noted, Baltimore students spent a great deal of time discussing how to create a program that was relevant and culturally sensitive. A

large portion of these planning conversations concerned both the substantive content of the program, and the team's own dress, actions, and behavior. Although these considerations followed some of the central themes of those who influenced this work, and were in line with the faculty's pedagogical teachings about audience and intentionality of all choices, the discussion in Baltimore's community education program often was presented by Fasiha as less about "choices" and more about "rules." Further, while understanding generally how the Qur'an has been interpreted to justify domestic violence provided powerful learning opportunities for students, there were times when the religious overtones of the project became, for lack of a better word, a distraction from the goals of providing students with an opportunity to understand the theoretical goals of community legal education, and to create a program attentive to needs of Muslim women who had been subjected to domestic violence. This preoccupation with the religion and not violating "rules" or norms of the culture became a larger focus than the supervising attorney and many of the students understood or anticipated when beginning this project. Though it is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify the experiences students have in a community legal education project, or to assess whether some lessons, including the cultural opportunities are or should be more valuable than others, in the end, the only real way to evaluate the success or failure of the program is through the students own reflections, and the evaluations of attendees. The Baltimore student team's course evaluations indicated almost unanimously¹⁷¹ that engagement with the program was worth the challenges they encountered along the way.

4. *Teaching Multi-Dimensional Lawyering Skills And Commitment To Social Justice*

From my perspective as a new lawyer, it seems that good lawyering involves countless assorted skills. The community education program helped me develop many of these skills including how to use legal knowledge to aid and empower people and communities, create more opportunities and choices for people, develop the understanding that everyone is generally their own best judge of what they need, confidence, public speaking, listening, reflections, and respect for, and appreciation of, people and cultures.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ See *infra* Part III.C.4.

¹⁷² Statement of Ashley Wagner, Esq., Former Baltimore clinic student, '10 University of Baltimore Law Graduate (June 2010) (on file with Rachel Camp).

The impetus for including community education in Baltimore's and CUA's clinics was to provide students with an opportunity to engage in multi-dimensional lawyering beyond the traditional, litigation model taught in many law school clinics, and a social justice experience beyond that provided through individual client representation. The programs define "multi-dimensional lawyering" as lawyering that includes a broad view of the opportunities and responsibilities of future lawyers, and one that allows students to serve a person or community according to that person's or community's needs. Baltimore and CUA believe that incorporating community legal education into a clinical program with intentionality reinforces the principle that "[a]n important part of the lawyer's professional work involves teaching people about the law and the legal system,"¹⁷³ allowing students to expand their professional identity beyond that of litigator or transactional lawyer. Rather, allowing students to engage in systemic reform projects – from community legal education to legislative advocacy to anything in between – provides an opportunity for students to both try on "rebellious" lawyering, and begin to redefine the possibilities that being a lawyer presents. Beyond that, our clinics also view community legal education as providing students additional opportunities to engage with, and learn, lawyering "skills" that can transfer between traditional litigation and systemic reform projects.

Although both Baltimore and CUA have experienced some pushback (which based on discussions with other clinicians, is not initially uncommon) from students on how their community legal education projects fit within the students' ideas of "lawyering", by the end of the semester, most students reflect that community legal education fits within their professional identity. Indeed, most students who have engaged in the community legal education projects have found significant value in the lawyering opportunities their projects presented, including the cross-over of numerous "lawyering" skills, such as collaboration, public speaking, flexibility, creativity, listening, reflection, and a deep understanding that lawyers can, and do, help communities understand legal options, and solve problems, in a variety of ways.

Although most students embraced including community legal education in the clinic curriculum and identified its value in enhancing lawyering skills and professional identify development, and embraced its social justice mission, there were, and are, students who resist this inclusion for two primary reasons. First is the significant strain on time many clinic students experience in juggling seminar, individual,

¹⁷³ *Accessing Justice*, *supra* note 26, at 1919 (quoting Kimberlee K. Kovach, *The Lawyer as Teacher: The Role of Education in Lawyering*, 4 CLIN. L. REV. 359, 359 (1998)).

long-term clients, and community education projects. At both CUA and Baltimore, students are often overwhelmed by the demands of their other clinic responsibilities, and resist developing or improving their assigned community education project. Both CUA and Baltimore have attempted to modify students' workloads, but even that has resulted in some pushback, with some students wanting all available experiences, with the time challenge then shifting to the faculty member as she attempts to juggle many competing teaching and supervision demands.¹⁷⁴ Balancing the workload for both faculty and students, while affording these varied and valuable clinical experiences, is an ongoing challenge at both clinical programs.

Second, some students have limited views of what lawyers' professional identities are, or ought to be. One Baltimore student was not enthusiastic about including community education in the clinic curriculum. Though this student was an engaged and active participant in the project, she viewed the project less about an opportunity for multi-dimensional lawyering and more as a project that interfered with additional litigation or traditional lawyering opportunities. Indeed, this student commented in her end of semester evaluation that there should be no outreach project because "I want to practice law." Although this student's view is not isolated, and may reflect an inflexible view of lawyering, a more nuanced analysis of her evaluation is warranted. First, the student struggled with the somewhat complex cultural and religious overtones present in Baltimore's project, which, as discussed *supra*, were not insignificant. Beyond those program specific challenges, however, was limited articulation to students, and limited transparency, regarding the role of community education in the broader clinic dialogue and curriculum, resulting perhaps in a view by some students that the community legal education project was not on par with the other clinic obligations of seminar and individual client representation. Through this experience, Baltimore faculty have made broad changes to the way Baltimore includes systemic reform projects in the curriculum: they have amended the clinic evaluation criteria to include the systemic reform work by name; expanded self-reflective journal assignments to include non-client representation work; discussed with students taking clinic at our pre-enrollment meeting the systemic reform projects along with and the seminar and

¹⁷⁴ See Srikantiah & Koh, *supra* note 28, at 467-77 (noting supervision challenges with ongoing systemic reform projects, and the pedagogical goals of non-directive teaching, including lack of time for students to develop first-hand awareness of the full context of their institutional client work on larger projects, reliance on instructors for the history of an organization and the clinic's relationship with the organization, and external time pressures, which may require the supervisor to provide "direct instruction and background so that the work can comply with deadlines.").

client representation obligations; used case rounds to discuss cases and systemic reform projects; and expanded orientation to include a component on systemic reform legal work.¹⁷⁵ With these changes, students' commitment to, and reflections on, subsequent projects have been almost unanimously positive, with many identifying community education as the highlight of their clinical experience.

Another challenge posed by teaching multidimensional lawyering for CUA involves student feelings of hopelessness as they begin to understand the enormity of the social problems faced by the community. For some CUA students, the experience of meeting with numerous women at the safe house each month, learning that most of them most desperately need a safe place to live, and learning that there often is no place to refer them creates a sense of powerlessness. By raising the issue in case rounds, students have been able to process their frustrations with their colleagues and feel supported as they continue to seek creative solutions. Recent students have wondered whether former residents who were successful at securing housing could mentor current residents facing this challenge. Although none of these strategies to date has fully resolved students' anxiety about the housing crisis, taking some action has benefitted many students by giving them the sense of involvement in a shared struggle to improve conditions for the poor.

CONCLUSION

*If they are to fully grasp the nature of their responsibilities as attorneys, students must achieve a deep understanding of the multiple dimensions of their roles and the arguments for alternative conceptions of the way that meaning should play out in practice.*¹⁷⁶

There is much anxiety in legal practice and in legal education about what the market will demand of the profession.¹⁷⁷ Some law

¹⁷⁵ In subsequent semesters, UB has broadened its systematic incorporation of community education into the curriculum by using backwards design technique from the May 2010 clinical conference to redesign our clinic regarding themes rather than skills, such as Storytelling (case theory); Difference (interviewing); Role of Lawyer (ethics, case planning, community education); Judgment/assumptions (counseling); Problem-solving (negotiation, coalition building); Making change (legislation and community education).

¹⁷⁶ WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN ET AL., *EDUCATING LAWYERS: PREPARATION FOR THE PROFESSION OF LAW* 146 (2007).

¹⁷⁷ A recent *New York Times* article by David Segal fed into this concern by indicting law schools for failing to prepare students for the demands of the legal market. Segal observed, "The nature of legal work itself is evolving, and the days when corporations buy billable hours, instead of results, are numbered. To succeed in this environment, graduates will need entrepreneurial skills, management ability and some expertise in landing clients. They will need to know less about Contracts and more about contracts." David Segal, *What They Don't Teach Law Students: Lawyering*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 19, 2011), <http://www.ny>

schools are revising their programs in anticipation of where the market for legal services will take us and in tacit acknowledgement of the mounting concern that law schools are not effectively preparing students for the profession.¹⁷⁸ As schools consider their educational objectives, the discussion has not included a very expansive view of the role of lawyers in our society. Educating lawyers to actively pursue the common good has resonated for many law schools,¹⁷⁹ but outside of clinical legal education, it has rarely translated into strategies for collaboration with those struggling to gain footing in our society.

In this article, we have recalled the pedagogical and the political goals that Gandhi, Freire, Lopez, Pence, and hooks connected so seamlessly to effective teaching and learning. At the center is the essential concept that law students and the society they are preparing to serve seek a vision for how to move forward, together. It is a fundamental, instinctual recognition of interdependence.

The Baltimore and CUA projects shared four specific goals: (1) empowering the community through community-centered lawyering; (2) instilling a commitment to collaboration; (3) teaching learning in context; and (4) teaching multi-dimensional lawyering skills and instilling a commitment to social justice. Each clinic identified a target community to serve, both with the goal of empowering victims of domestic violence. The Baltimore clinic chose to provide information to the Muslim community in greater Baltimore who were connected to a local Masjid. The CUA clinic chose to provide information and support to women in a shelter in the District of Columbia. Through each project, we sought to express the connection that educators who in-

times.com/2011/11/20/business/after-law-school-associates-learn-to-be-lawyers.html.

The article provoked considerable responses within the legal academy, some quite thoughtful. See, e.g., Oliver R. Goodenough, *Teaching Law for the 99 Percent*, HUFF POST COLLEGE (Jan. 18, 2012), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/oliver-r-goodenough/teaching-real-law-for-the_b_1214463.html. (“The legal profession isn’t the only sector of our society that has focused excessively on the needs of moneyed power, but it can help lead the way to redressing the balance.”).

¹⁷⁸ For example, in 2006, Stanford Law School announced changes to its curriculum that would emphasize clinical experience and development of interdisciplinary expertise. In describing the changes, the school noted that its “innovation is being driven by the new demands on modern lawyers, which are fundamentally different from those present when the law school curriculum was formed.” A “3D” JD: *Stanford Law School Announces New Model for Legal Education*, STANFORD LAW SCHOOL (Nov. 28, 2006), <http://www.law.stanford.edu/news/pr/47/>.

¹⁷⁹ Margaret Martin Barry, Martin Geer, Catherine F. Klein & Ved Kumari, *Justice Education and the Evaluation Process: Crossing Borders*, 28 WASH. U. J.L. & POL’Y 195, 203 n.22 (2008) (“A review of the Mission Statements of twenty-five randomly selected public and private U.S. law schools shows justice and public service to be among their primary educational goals.”).

spired us—Freire, Lopez, hooks, Pence—made between action and understanding, between service and knowledge.

With regard to the goal of empowering communities through community-centered lawyering, both clinics were attentive to identifying the particular needs of women they hoped to serve and tailoring their services to those needs. The Baltimore clinic's approach centered on learning and respecting Muslim traditions and presenting useful information in a manner consistent with cultural norms. The CUA clinic tailored the information provided to the most urgent needs of the women it met. The information was designed to help women understand the legal support and community services available to assist them in taking control of their lives. The limitations both clinics faced were in their single interface with women they sought to strengthen and support. Nonetheless, students in both settings embraced the challenge. Students learned the value of the limited service they could offer. They reached large numbers of women in each project, providing resources and a connection through their efforts at support. The CUA students had the added benefit of involving women they served in the process of assessing and developing the project, and this reflected the intimacy of that project and the repeated connection with the shelter, if not the women in it.

Students also learned the value of collaboration within the communities they sought out. Baltimore clinic students struggled with legitimacy given what many of them identified as their outsider status in the Muslim community. This led them to reach out to members of that community who could help them develop their program in a manner that would be accepted and understood by women they hoped to reach. The collaboration allowed them insight into the limitations of proceeding on their own and rich opportunities to learn the benefits of outreach. Similarly, CUA clinic students gained immeasurably from their contact with social workers connected with the shelter. These social workers provided students the opportunity to identify the needs of the women at the shelter and experience working with non-legal experts. Significantly, the students also benefitted from seeking input directly from the women they served and using the priorities women identified to develop and share useful information and support with each successive group. For each clinic, these efforts helped students build a modicum of trust with the communities they sought to serve and to understand that trust is fundamental to achieving successful collaborations. Nonetheless, students found it difficult to meet the goal of collaborating with either group of women in an effort to address the problems they faced in a systemic way because of women's common refusal to self-identify as a woman subjected to abuse, and

because of their transient residence in the temporary shelter. Faculty and students understood going in that their goals for social change would find expression, if at all, in individual actions by women in the groups they targeted.

Both projects brought the students into a broader context for service learning than they experienced through individual representation in their respective clinics. Students gained exposure to settings and people that helped them understand the complexities and challenges within the communities they sought to serve in a way that individual cases could not. They had a greater range of experiences and stories to draw upon in considering the ways in which their skills could be helpful, and gained insight into the reach of systemic barriers that women had to overcome. Conversely, the very contexts that students operated in were limiting. The narrow amount of time and even the physicality of the space where CUA students met with women in the shelter made it difficult for them to provide a coherent program. Further, lack of housing resources made it virtually impossible for students to provide or assist women in gaining the one resource they most immediately needed. Likewise, Baltimore students' concerns about respecting religious strictures made it difficult for the Baltimore students to focus on the needs of the women who experienced domestic abuse.

These experiences in focusing on empowerment of large groups of women, seeking collaboration and working in diverse contexts helped us to build on skills needed in direct representation, such as planning, community-centered lawyering, oral and written advocacy, as well as different skills than those required for direct representation. These different skills are connected to assessment of systemic problems and devising strategies for addressing them. They challenge students to lift their heads and consider the breadth of the problems presented by their individual cases. They challenge students to consider solutions on a scale that has the potential to address problems broadly. Students learn that the central skills needed to do this work effectively are problem solving and collaboration, resilience and creativity. They learn that the traditional lawyering skills connected to individual client representation and litigation, while valuable, are of narrower value than they thought, and that they can, indeed must, expand their sense of what lawyering can and should involve.

The goals, challenges and benefits we shared reflect a process. The process is guided by the idea that education is linked to meaning, and that this meaning is inevitably linked to striving to achieve social

change in support of dignity for all.¹⁸⁰ The students who engaged in these community legal education projects were challenged to consider these links in relation to their legal education and social justice agenda at the core of the projects. The discussions revealed the tensions between expanding the vision for what lawyers can do and the challenges of gaining competence in what lawyers traditionally do. The discussions challenged the professional identities the students were beginning to frame, and were uncomfortable for some of them.¹⁸¹ Their work in reaching out to audiences in distinct settings brought into relief the complex role of difference and connection in legal work,¹⁸² particularly as applied in groups.¹⁸³ They had to make peace with the limits of legal information they could offer to people in crisis. They had to develop the interfaces and consider delivery. Performance and evaluation contributed to making the students active participants in a process of pushing the parameters of traditional legal roles.

¹⁸⁰ See MYLES HORTON & PAULO FREIRE, *WE MAKE THE ROAD BY WALKING: CONVERSATIONS ON EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE* (1990) (both educators came together to discuss the nature of change and empowerment and the parallels in their campaigns for participatory education in the service of liberation and social change).

¹⁸¹ SULLIVAN ET AL., *supra* note 176, at 14 (describing professional identity as the third element of the framework for legal education; the other two being legal analysis and practical skill).

¹⁸² See ELLMANN ET AL., *supra* note 120, at 18-71, (discussing the challenges of and potential for connection across both differences and similarities); Bryant & Koh Peters, *supra* note 147 (building on the earlier collaboration with Jean Koh Peters to further consider the value of attention to the impact of diversity in the work of lawyers); Karin & Runge, *supra* note 1, at 599 (extending the client-centered counseling analysis to community legal education through consideration of how best to reach the target audience); Carwina Weng, *Multicultural Lawyering: Teaching Psychology to Develop Cultural Self-Awareness*, 11 CLIN. L. REV. 369 (2005) (urging self-awareness as a first step towards cultural awareness); Alexis Anderson, Lynn Barenberg & Carwina Weng, *Challenges of "Sameness": Pitfalls and Benefits to Assumed Connections in Lawyering*, 18 CLIN. L. REV. (forthcoming April 2012) (taking the discussion of similarities to another level by providing an in-depth analysis of the interpersonal dynamics when sameness exists between lawyers and clients).

¹⁸³ "Successful community lawyering involves challenging the boundaries of communities that have been used to maintain the power and privilege of some, while relegating others to their "place." The process is one of acquiring language, knowledge, and shared experience. The process, however, is always in motion. We know that boundaries inevitably shift. Accordingly, the ability to judge when to respect and when to challenge boundaries is essential to community-oriented work. At an even more basic level, community lawyers are questioning and analyzing anew their assumptions about what is at the core of public interest community lawyering. What, for example, are the essentials of meeting and interacting with a client community? How are relationships formed, nurtured, and maintained, within and across boundaries? In this way, community lawyering resists some of the conventional wisdom about the role and status of lawyers, the nature of client conflicts, and the very efficacy of the adversary system to solve systemic community problems." Tokarz et al., *supra* note 1, at 373. See also Paul R. Tremblay, *Counseling Community Groups*, 17 CLIN. L. REV. 389 (2010) (identifying challenges to accepted notions of client-centered counseling when representing community groups).

By virtue of their community projects, they were positioned to assess the limits and possibilities of the law, and to consider what it might take to achieve the kinds of contributions their legal training is broadening their capacity to offer. Thus, they engaged in perceiving “*the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves*” and considered how they might make it a better reality.¹⁸⁴

Similarly, as faculty who travelled with students in developing the projects, we found that our ideas about the possibilities for what lawyers can do were challenged. We have the benefit of pushing boundaries beyond professional identities that are intact relative to our students. We were comfortable with the educational goals we identified. However, we were less sanguine about the contexts chosen. We were gratified to see that most of our students rose to the challenges of the community projects and were realistic about the impact of what they offered. We were also gratified to see that the students appreciated the goals we identified and assessed them with significant insight. Ideally, such projects could build towards sustainable collaborations with the groups we identify as needing support and, in that way, allow for greater depth of service and experience in developing and assessing community work.

Thus, we found the two projects we have discussed to be examples of clinical legal education that should be shared because they intentionally pursued educational goals we and many other clinicians have for students—and because they are not perfect models. Engaging in the complexities of presuming to reach out to and work with communities are rich sources of growth for law students, and their teachers. This engagement offers possibilities for helping others by empowering them with information, validating their struggles, and working with them to achieve change. It is the process of doing so, and the related reflection and recalibration, that helps us all understand that we have much to learn and much to share as we join others on the path to making this world what it needs to be.

¹⁸⁴ FREIRE, *supra* note 2, at 70-71.