

Maria Roda L. Cisnero J.D.

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Attorney

Legal Researcher

Advocate

Extensive and in depth experience in legal research and analysis, policy advocacy and developmental human rights law and litigation. Five years of committed and intense legal practice with twin exposure in global training and campaigns with grassroots legal work and advocacy for the indigenous peoples and other marginalized clients and partners.

A committed advocate with hands on experience on alternative dispute resolution. Possesses strong negotiating skills coupled with oral and written communication skills, with I.T. familiarity. Successfully and diligently contributed in the improvement of organizational projects, campaigns and casework, capacities and systems development.

EDUCATION

Masters in Development Studies, Social Justice Perspectives and Human Rights
Erasmus University, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague
2013

Diploma in Governance, Democratisation and Public Policy
Erasmus University, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague
2009

Juris Doctor
Ateneo School of Law
2003

Bachelor of Arts in Broadcast Communication
University of the Philippines, Diliman
Graduated *cum laude*, 1998

LEGAL LICENSES AND AFFLIATION

Integrated Bar of Philippines—member La Union Chapter

Amnesty International Philippines—Board of Trustees - 2009—2011

Diplomacy Training Program Fellow
University of the New South Wales, Sydney, 2008

Asian Young Leaders in Governance Fellow
UNDP Regional Centre Bangkok, 2006/07

National Advocacy Director

International Justice Mission, Philippines

January 2014

July 2011 - August 2012

IJM global team of lawyers, social workers, community activists and other professionals at work in nearly 20 communities throughout Africa, Latin America, South Asia and Southeast Asia to protect the poor from violence. IJM partners with local authorities to rescue victims of violence, bring criminals to justice, restore survivors, and strengthen justice systems.

Research Associate

World Bank Justice for the Poor Research

July 2010 - March 2011

Justice for the Poor is a five country study on community paralegals conducted by the World Bank's Justice for the Poor Program. The study covers Sierra Leone, Indonesia, South Africa, Kenya and the Philippines. Responsible for a wide variety of tasks related to the research including planning and assisting in the data collection, data analysis; and disseminating research validation results. Contributes groundbreaking ideas and works on specific mini - analysis on assigned topics.

Project Coordinator

Alternative Law Groups Inc.

September 2010 - February 2011

Development of a sourcebook on the dynamics and conflicts of the Formal Justice System and the Informal Justice System. The project is a Supreme Court - Project Management Office (SC PMO) commissioned work with support from the United Nations Development Program.

Principal author and developer of the sourcebook. Coordinates and manages the overall conduct of the project. Coordinates with resource persons and works closely with stakeholders in relation to pre and post research concerns.

Legal Officer

Legal Assistance Centre of Indigenous Filipinos (PANLIPI)

2005 - Present

PANLIPI is an organization of Lawyers and Indigenous People's advocates that pioneered and continues to engage in development work among IPs in the Philippines. Directly responsible for all legal matters affecting the partner communities and stakeholders of PANLIPI in Northern Luzon and Cagayan Valley. Coordinates legal networking concerns and partnerships for PANLIPI.

Alternative Law Groups

Concurrently PANLIPI is one of the founding members of the ALG. ALG is a coalition of non-government organizations with legal program components that adhere to the principles and values of alternative or developmental law. These organizations have distinct programs for developmental legal assistance primarily concerned with the pursuit of public interest, respect for human rights and promotion of social justice.

Project Director

Represents the Alternative Law Groups management council in implementing the Community-based Dialogue Sessions on Human Rights Between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police, and Civil Society Organizations and Local Communities – an innovative project of the Alternative Law Groups with support from Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany.

Project Coordinator

Coordinated a nationwide, 19 site research on Indigenous Justice, cases and various Indigenous Justice Systems vis a vis the national justice system.

Justice Reform Initiatives Support Project (JURIS)

2006—2008

Local Action Researcher

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) approved a five-year "Justice Reform Initiatives Support Project in the Philippines" (JURIS). Monitored and reported on the implementation of the Alternative Dispute resolution component of the JURIS Project in the model court sites of Benguet and La Union. Regularly visited over 25 ADR courts to interview and observe judges, mediators and courts personnel. Gathered pertinent statistical data and reviewed legal reports and documents for analysis, monitoring and evaluation purposes.