

Aparna Polavarapu

Professor Polavarapu is an Associate Professor at the UofSC School of Law and the Executive Director and Founder of the South Carolina Restorative Justice Initiative. She has over a decade of experience working in human rights and rule of law, both domestically and abroad. She has significant expertise in the field of legal pluralism, with a particular research focus on informal, community-driven justice systems and how they work together with formal, state-centered systems. Her research has covered a wide range of topics, including legal innovations used by courts to expand access to constitutional justice, the use of restorative justice mechanisms to combat domestic violence in Uganda, and how customary and statutory law interact to govern land rights in sub-Saharan Africa. Much of her scholarship draws from her direct experience working with women's rights groups in sub-Saharan Africa and in the United States

As the Executive Director of the South Carolina Restorative Justice Initiative, she oversees the development of restorative justice education and programming and works with organizations seeking to develop and implement their own restorative practices.

In addition, Professor Polavarapu continues to work with practitioners on domestic and global women's rights and justice matters. She has instructed practitioners on international rule of law topics, including African customary law, legal pluralism, and strategies for promoting human rights in legally pluralist systems. She has authored or contributed to expert human rights reports for organizations such as the UN Foundation and the Center for Reproductive Rights. Locally, she has testified before the South Carolina Senate on legislation affecting women and conducted trainings on restorative justice.

Professor Polavarapu teaches courses in Restorative and Transformative Justice, Comparative Law, Rule of Law, Transnational Law, and International Human Rights Law. Prior to coming to South Carolina, Professor Polavarapu was a Teaching Fellow with Georgetown's International Women's Human Rights Clinic. Prior to that, she practiced law at Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP in Boston. She received an LLM and JD from Georgetown University Law Center, an MA in international affairs from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, and a BS from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.