

WILLIAM DAU

Anti-Corruption Activist

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Profile

Grassroots anticorruption activist for more than 30 years. Native of Cartagena, Colombia. Lawyer. Due to death threats and surviving assassination attempts was granted political asylum in the US, living in New York until returning to Colombia to run for Mayor of the city of Cartagena on an intensive anti-corruption campaign.

2024 – Present: Executive Director, Projects for Democracy (Pfd)

Founded this CSO aimed at promoting democracy, rule of law, transparency, anti-corruption, open government, and citizen participation / more than 10 acts of corruption uncovered and filed before corresponding authorities / <https://projectsfordemocracy.org/proyectos>

2020 - 2023: Mayor of Cartagena

Became the first mayor in over a decade to complete a full four-year term after having eleven mayors in the previous 8 years due to corruption / dismantled over 20-year predatory concession contracts, including internal toll roads and public lighting / restored the city's finances, paying off Cartagena's considerable debt and achieving a record surplus of approximately \$250million dollars/ produced a White Book on Corruption documenting systemic corruption in Cartagena / completed more than 10 stalled healthcare infrastructure projects ("White Elephants") / created the Office of Transparency and Anti-Corruption, the only one of its kind in the Caribbean region / led Cartagena's membership to the Open Government Partnership / filed dozens of corruption related criminal complaints.

2004 – 2019: Asylum in the United States

Fleeing from certain death received political asylum and citizenship in the US working in New York, initially at a law firm (Cleary Gottlieb) and later a private equity firm (Blackstone), while continuing anticorruption activities related to Cartagena and Colombia / returned to Cartagena to run for Mayor in 2019.

2017: Let's Save Cartagena Movement / Salvemos a Cartagena

In January 2017 launched the anti-corruption movement *Let's Save Cartagena / Salvemos a Cartagena* through social media (Facebook and Instagram), providing a platform for citizens to safely report corruption receiving a high volume of confidential information leading to criminal complaints filed / conducted an eight-month investigation that led to a criminal complaint against more than 100 public officials and contractors, involving over 220 contracts with non-profit entities, exposing a large-scale corruption scheme involving billions of pesos / exhaustive investigation of illicit enrichment by then governor of Bolivar.

2014: Honest America SCO

Founded Honest America, a nonprofit organization in New York initially aimed at combating corruption in Cartagena. After several fruitless trips to Cartagena in search of allies desisted from this initiative because of heightened fears of assassination of activists.

1999 – 2004: Corporación Cartagena Honesta (CCH)

A citizen watchdog organization against corruption, which was recognized two years later as the foremost NGO of the year in Cartagena / successfully achieved the removal of a Mayor of Cartagena / contributed to the dismissal or reassignment of numerous criminal prosecutors in the Political Administration Crimes Unit / provided legal, technical and logistical advice and support to anti-corruption activists throughout Colombia / pioneered the concept of the "Anti-Corruption Chiva (Bus)" / named one of the "Ten Outstanding Citizens of the Year" by city's main newspaper / Frequently consulted by local and national media and featured in various international publications, including: *The Water Barons* (published by International Consortium of Investigative Journalists - ICIJ); *Washington Report on the Hemisphere* (published by Council on Hemispheric Affairs - COHA); *Cartagena en la Olla Podrida* (written by Óscar Collazos) which was later included as reading material in World Bank courses / served as a Guest Research Scholar at Columbia University, where, with the support of its law school (Environmental Law Clinic), he filed a claim before the World Bank Inspection Panel regarding the Cartagena Submarine Outfall Project. This case marked one of the few instances in which a non-governmental organization successfully challenged the World Bank.

1996 – 1999: Citizen activist

Individual anticorruption activist investigating and filling complaints before authorities beginning with a criminal prosecutor in 1996.



SOCIAL MEDIA

facebook.com/savecartagena

instagram.com/salvemos_a_cartagena

x.com/daulaw

tiktok.com/@eltractordau

<https://www.youtube.com/@slugfestinthetrenches>