



McGill Centre for Human  
Rights and Legal Pluralism

Centre sur les droits de la personne  
et le pluralisme juridique de McGill

# International Human Rights Internships Program 2013 Report



**McGill**

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# International Human Rights Internships Program

## 2013 Report

### Introduction

McGill University's Faculty of Law enjoys a rich tradition of human rights education and involvement. In 1992, the Faculty established a number of partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and institutions in the global South, Canada and the United States. In 2000, the internship program became a fully credited course, allowing students to earn six credits toward the completion of the McGill B.C.L./LL.B. Program. The International Human Rights Internships Program is administered by the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism. Each year, the program adds new internships and attracts more applicants to the program.

The International Human Rights Internship Program carefully selects law students for placements as interns with NGOs and tribunals for a period of 12 weeks, giving students an opportunity to experience and contribute to the work of human rights organizations in Canada and beyond. Partner organizations provide students with practical work experience in human rights investigation, monitoring, and reporting.

Upon their return to McGill, students must submit an internship report describing their work and experiences. Student also must write an academic research essay supervised by a professor, on a theme linked to their summer internship.

### Around the world and at home

This report briefly captures interns' experiences documented in their Internship reports and their photos.

## Intern: Lia Bellefontaine

Location: Manila, Philippines

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Placement: **Ateneo Human Rights Center**

Research Paper: "The Fairness of the International Regulated Migration Paradigm of Low-Skilled Workers as Applied to Canada and the Philippines"

*\*Recipient of the Novak-Weil Fund Bursary*

Lia was an intern at the Women's Desk of the Ateneo Human Rights Centre (AHRC). AHRC is a non-governmental organization located within the law faculty of Ateneo de Manila University. The AHRC focuses on research and advocacy in the areas of children's rights, indigenous peoples' rights, women and migrant workers' rights and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations human rights mechanism. The AHRC's longest-running program is a human rights internship course offered to law students from Ateneo Law School and other law students from across the Philippines.

During her work at the Women's Desk and the Children's Rights Desk, Lia wrote educational pamphlets about issues affecting women, particularly women in the workplace. Lia also closely studied a Reproductive Health Bill that the AHRC helped defend in front of the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

Lia was able to listen to oral arguments presented to the court and wrote a memo defending the bill's constitutional arguments. This opportunity was an internship-highlight for Lia. This experience was particularly interesting because it provided the opportunity to examine women's rights through a Filipina lens while watching one of the most important court cases of the decade in the country.

Lia enjoyed the office atmosphere that provides support to its student interns and maintains a friendly and collegial environment. Life in Manila was relaxing and enjoyable. Lia enjoyed exploring the Philippines and discovering the country's culture and fascinating history. She experienced a bilingual working environment of English and Tagalog and benefitted from human rights guest lectures and presentations that take place at Ateneo de Manila University's law faculty.

## Intern: Alexandra Bornac

Location: Yaoundé, Cameroon

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Placement: **CONGEH/CIAH**

Research Paper: "Customary, Written and the Middle Law: Protecting Women's Socio-Economic Rights in Polygamous Marriages in sub-Saharan Africa"

*\*Recipient of the Francine and Robert Wiseman Award*

Alexandra worked at the Coalition des ONG et OCB du Cameroun Ouvrant dans le Domaine des Établissements Humains working in the domain of Human Settlement (CONGEH) and its sister organization, the Collectif Inter-Africaine des Habitations (CIAH) in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Cameroon is known as *Africa in Miniature* and Alexandra was able to meet people from across the African continent while learning about the history and diversity of the country. CONGEH was initially established in the mid-1990s in collaboration with the government in order to address the land and property issues of Cameroon's most impoverished. Since then, the organization's focus has shifted towards women's issues, especially matters affecting women living with HIV/AIDS.

Alexandra drafted grant proposals that were developing projects for portable water, the construction of a hospital, as well as a large funding request for a project on the property and succession rights for women living with HIV/AIDS in 6 neighbouring countries. She also worked alongside a judge and a staff person on a UN-sponsored project to provide women struggling with property rights access to the courts. The results of the program are being evaluated for their long-term effectiveness in providing women access to justice in Cameroon.

While there is an uphill battle to increasing awareness and protection for the rights of women living with HIV/AIDS, Alexandra remarks on the experience as rewarding and life-changing.

## **Intern: Emily Hazlett**

**Location: Mexico City, Mexico**

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Placement: **Disability Rights International**

Research Paper: “Disability Rights in a post-Convention Era: Protecting Legal Capacity at the European Court and Beyond”

*\*Recipient of the Junior Fellowship in Disability and Law*

Disability Rights International (DRI) in Mexico City is an organization that advocates for the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities across Latin America. DRI focuses on the most vulnerable groups of mentally disabled persons, namely children, the institutionalized, and persons deprived of their legal capacity.

Emily worked alongside DRI’s full-time staff members preparing a case within the Inter-American Human Rights system against the Guatemalan State for abuse in a Psychiatric Hospital in Guatemala City. This case was what Emily spent most of her summer working on. Emily also prepared a number of reports on topics related to disability, such as recidivism and the right to health. Emily enjoyed the work schedule and threw herself into a new topic almost every week. She was also able to participate in a few meetings with Mexican officials and at psychiatric institutions in Mexico City.

While at times Emily found her work to be challenging, the amount of knowledge she obtained conducting legal research was incredible. She prepared documents about precautionary measures for youth psychiatric patients. She produced a report on the remedies available for abuse perpetrated by state institutions. She also worked on preparing legal arguments that the institutional segregation of persons with disabilities violates a number of rights under the American Convention on Human Rights.

Emily greatly enjoyed the legal research aspects of her internship. They provided for a rewarding summer where she was able to apply her formal legal training as a first year law student. She also enjoyed working closely with the full-time staff at DRI.

## **Intern: Marika Tremblay**

**Location: New York City**

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Placement: **Human Rights Watch**

Research Paper: ““Rule of the Gun” or “Rule of Law”: INGOs in post-Gaddafi Libya”

*\*Recipient of the Novak-Weil Bursary Fund Bursary*

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is a global organization that advocates for and defends human rights on a global scale. Beginning in 1978 as Helsinki Watch, the organization originally focused on the observance of the Helsinki Accord, and combined with other regional watch committees to form HRW in 1988.

Marika’s internship far exceeded her expectations. She enjoyed the intense research work she was given while living in a fast-paced cosmopolitan city like New York. Her knowledge of international criminal law expanded rapidly. Her primary task throughout the 12-week internship was assessing the competence of the International Criminal Court in trying the case of Muammar Gaddafi and his chief aides in the Libyan government (*Le Procureur c. Seif Al-Islam Kadhafi et Abdallah Senoussi*).

Marika utilized her bilingualism to research the ICC’s jurisprudence and participated in HRW’s strategic meetings for approaching the human rights response in Libya.

Marika’s research and work on Libya led to her working under the supervision of a HRW lawyer working on the human rights concerns in Syria and HRW’s response. This work led her to understand the role of NGOs promoting human rights through legal advocacy in different countries such as Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leon, Bosnia, Sudan, and Cambodia. By taking a comparative role, Marika was able to reflect on international criminal law more generally.

Marika enjoyed her working environment at HRW and found the office staff to be kind and welcoming. She stayed in Harlem enjoyed spending her summer in a diverse neighbourhood. While Manhattan is expensive, the intern can save money by accessing less expensive restaurants, grocery stores and free entertainment available in New York City. She recommends the internship to students interested in international law, criminal law, and their intersections.

## Intern: David Nugent

## Location: Iqaluit, Nunavut

Placement: **Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik Legal Services**

Research Paper: "Recent Amendments to Nunavut's *Liquor Act*: A Sensible Approach to Alcohol Related Harm?"

*\*This internship is funded.*

The internship at Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik Legal Services offers a unique opportunity for students to receive hands-on experience working with aboriginal clients and practitioners in the areas of criminal, family, and poverty law. As the largest Legal Aid office in the territory, Maliiganik deals with a large volume of files. The bulk of interns' work relates to 'show cause' or judicial interim release (bail) hearings. Students review Crown disclosure, meet with clients at the RCMP detachment, and devise a plan for their release before a Justice of the Peace and Crown in JP Court. Students work on files ranging from regulatory and summary conviction offences, to more serious crimes including sexual assault. This kind of litigation experience is not often afforded to students in other Canadian jurisdictions.

David spent much of his time running interim release hearings to help people charged with crimes access their rights to a hearing to argue that their detention is unnecessary. David was exposed to a variety of files, ranging from petty property and drug possession offences to serious allegations of aggravated sexual assault. The hearings presented many challenges; for instance, many clients did not have phone numbers and confirming their whereabouts was difficult. David also assisted criminal lawyers with research and *Canadian Charter* applications.

David enjoyed the independence at Maliiganik and found the staff to be incredibly accommodating and generous with their time. He greatly enjoyed the litigation experience that he received as he was in Court every other day, advocating for clients and their interim judicial release.

Getting out into the community and learning about Nunavut's rich culture and history was a unique highlight of David's internship experience.



## **Intern: Claire Gunner**

## **Location: San José, Costa Rica**

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Placement: **Inter-American Court, San José, Costa Rica**

Research Paper: “Legal capacity of the child and the best interests principle in domestic immigration enforcement”

*\*Recipient of the Lindsey Anne Cameron Award and the Novak-Weil Fund Bursary*

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights is an autonomous judicial institution based in the city of San José, Costa Rica. Together with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, it makes up the human rights protection system of the Organization of American States (OAS), which serves to uphold and promote basic rights and freedoms in the Americas.

Claire worked on one major project for the summer: drafting part of the Court’s advisory opinion on the scope and content of the child’s right to family life in the context of immigration enforcement. Her first assignment was to write a research memo addressing member states’ observations on the child’s right to family life, and the different components of the questions that the Court may want to include in its advisory opinion.

The Court has a welcoming and cooperative work atmosphere that makes it a great place to work. The workload assigned to interns varies greatly and depends on the length of the internship, the intern’s knowledge of Spanish, and the dynamic between the supervising lawyers as well as their “work personality”.

The ability to travel was a definite internship highlight for Claire. You can get to most places throughout Costa Rica by bus, which departs from downtown San Jose early in the mornings and are affordable. Claire visited Manuel Antonio National Park, the volcanoes, Puerto Viejo, Tortuguero, Corcovado National Park among other places.

Claire recommends finding a place to stay within walking distance of the Court because official information on the bus system in San José is difficult to come by and traffic is often heavy. There is no shortage of lunch options within walking distance of the Court. A typical lunch plate in Costa Rica is *casado*, which is rice, beans, plantains, some kind of protein, and a green salad.

Reading, writing, and speaking Spanish was essential to this internship; however, there are other North American interns at the Court whose first language is also English. Claire notes that experience clerking would be of great help to future applicants interested in this position.

## **Intern: Lipi Mishra**

## **Location: Kampala, Uganda**

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Placement: **Legal Actions for Persons with Disabilities**

Research Paper: “Medicine and Marginalization: How Intellectual Property Laws Provide a “Generic” Solution to a Grave Human Rights Problem”

*\*Recipient of the Junior Fellowship in Disability and Law*

During her three months in Kampala, Lipi worked with two organizations: the Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) as well as Legal Action for Persons with Disabilities (LAPD). CEHURD is an indigenous not-for-profit organization with the mandate of realizing the justiciability of the right to health in Uganda. LAPD is a not-for-profit organization that was formed by lawyers with disabilities and seeks to assist and advocate for persons with disabilities

At CEHURD, Lipi worked within the Community Empowerment division on two main projects: the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) community consultations and the tobacco control initiative. These projects took Lipi outside Kampala where she met with rural farmers, community leaders, and medical professionals. Lipi also participated in consultations with the LGBTQI community.

While Lipi encountered a few challenges along the way with respect to reconciling aspects of culture and social justice, these challenges presented an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with her colleagues. She encourages future interns to step out of their comfort zone and take some time to explore Kampala and the rest of Uganda.



Lipi and her colleagues tour a tobacco field in Kampala; a consultation as part of the Millennium Development Goals

### **Intern: Alexandra Olshefsky**

### **Location: Winnipeg, Canada**

**Placement: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada**

**Research Paper: "Containing Indigenous Bodies: A Critique of the Safe Streets and Communities Act"**

*\*Recipient of the Novak-Weil Bursary Fund and the Lord Reading Society Award*

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was established as part of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement between residential school survivors, churches, and the federal government. The Commission is mandated with learning the truth of what happened in residential schools and sharing that information with Canadians. The Commission's mandate ends in summer 2014.

Alexandra worked primarily as a research assistant to Doug Smith, head writer at the TRC. She conducted considerable archival research on government policy documents dating back 6 decades, work that was initially extremely challenging, especially because she was introduced to the project mid-way.

Slowly, Alexandra began to envision where her skills would fit best within the work at the Commission. Using her French language skills, Alexandra translated French-language documents from the St Boniface Archives, which contains handwritten letters from French priests dating back to the 1920s. She also helped research a fire that occurred at a residential school in a Franco-Albertan Métis settlement.

During the second half of her internship, Alexandra worked directly with the TRC's head-researcher and put together a document on the human biomedical experimentation that took place in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools. Alexandra greatly enjoyed this part of her internship. She was excited each day about the work she was producing and was consistently intellectually stimulated.

While this internship is not available to future interns, as the TRC's mandate is nearing its end, it was a well-regarded placement in the IHRIP. Subsequent internships involving the human rights concerns of First Nations communities and the atrocities their communities faced in the past are being offered in 2014 and beyond.

Placement: **Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network**

Research Paper: *“By Us, For Us”: A Woman of Colour Critique of Non-Profit Social Justice”*

*\*Recipient of the Justice Morris J Fish Award and the Novak-Weil Bursary*

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network is a non-profit organization which aims to protect the human rights of people living with HIV or who are at a great risk of HIV by the means of research, advocacy, public education and litigation. The Legal Network’s focus is both domestic and international, and it has played key advisory roles to the Canadian government and the United Nations.

Alyssa arrived at the Legal Network at an exciting time. Just a few weeks into her internship, the Supreme Court of Canada heard oral arguments in the *Bedford v Canada* case, which was a constitutional challenge to 3 laws in the *Criminal Code* that prohibited sex work (although sex work itself was not illegal in the *Code*). The Legal Network was an intervenor in the case and was active in the debates in the media over the public health and human rights concerns over sex work.

Alyssa also conducted considerable research on housing rights and the impact of the housing shortage in the Greater Toronto Area, with particular concerns for low-income women, women of colour and HIV positive women. She was able to attend a 3-day hearing of a lawsuit against the Canadian and Ontarian governments for failing to address the housing crisis and for systematically divesting from affordable housing and public housing. This greatly complemented Alyssa’s research as she quickly realized the inadequacy of housing for marginalized people in Canada’s largest city as well as the fact that the federal government currently lacks a national



**Frank Mugisha, a Uganda LGBTQ human rights activist was the keynote speaker of the Legal Network’s annual symposium**

housing strategy.

Alyssa enjoyed the vibrant, progressive atmosphere at the Legal Network. She worked closely with lawyers and the media team and received great advice about how to advance human rights comments through the law. She enjoyed the independent work and research. She recommends that future interns be proactive in their internship at the Legal Network, ask questions, and get involved in the ongoing media campaigns



## Intern: Linda El Halabi

Location: Montréal, Canada

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Placement: **Equitas**

Research Paper: "Channeling the Potential of Public-Private Partnerships in Canada: A worthy Enterprise"

*\*Recipient of the Morris J Fish Award and the Novak-Weil Bursary Fund*

Equitas (International Centre for Human Rights Educations) is a non-profit organization that works for the advancement of equality, social justice and respect for human dignity in Canada and around the world through transformative human rights education programs. Equitas provides communities with tools to strengthen solidarity and public accountability.

During her internship, Linda worked as an education intern and helped prepare the annual International Human Rights Training Program (IH RTP) hosted in Montreal. She helped to prepare a bilingual manual for program attendees and worked on programming on youth political and cultural participation in countries in the Middle East and North Africa. She was able to participate in active debates on the crisis in Syria and translated the presentation of a Syrian journalist of Kurdish origin who was seeking asylum in Europe. She also organized discussions for attendees.

Linda got along very well with facilitators and participants in the IH RTP. She benefitted greatly from her multilingual skills in English, French, and Arabic. She connected with many of the international participants.

Linda enjoyed her internship and the combination of office work and work on the IH RTP. While at times she encountered technical glitches and stressful deadlines, overall her experience was positive.

Linda is happy to answer any questions about her experience at EQUITAS for interns who may want to consider staying in Montreal to complete a human rights internship.

## Intern: Tina Hlimi

Location: Mt Kenya region, Kenya

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Placement: **ELIMU**

Research Paper: "Title Deeds as a Means of Securing Property and Economic Rights in Central Kenya"

*\*Internship attended with the support of McGill's Department of Economics*

ELIMU is an NGO that was created in October 2012 by Professor Mathieu Chemin of McGill's Economics Department. It is a registered Kenyan research NGO and provides marginalized individuals with access to legal aid and the judiciary in the realm of property law. Tina worked to provide legal aid to the largely marginalized agrarian population in Kianyaga. Legal disputes she encountered dealt primarily with land rights, boundary delineation, boundary disputes, property theft, wills, and successions.

Tina's work at ELIMU was extremely rewarding. She provided access to justice for individuals who were otherwise unaware of their legal rights with regard to their land.

Tina's worked varied from field research, data collection, administrative tasks, drafting court documents, writing the ELIMU handbook, accompanying self-representing clients to court, meeting law clerks and the magistrate, dismissing cases with the legal aid lawyer and holding workshops for clients and the paralegals. Toward the end of her internship Tina worked on a paralegal manual specifically tailored to ELIMU and a property rights questionnaire.

Tina enjoyed Kianyaga's lush tropical environment. The climate was very agreeable with scenic terrain, including volcanic soils are striking and lead to vast agricultural lands with all types of crops.

**Intern: Léa Pelletier-Marcotte**

**Location: Phnom Penh**

**Placement: Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)**

**Research Paper: « L'héritage de l'«international» : Démocratie, primauté du droit et droits humains au Cambodge 20 ans après l'APRONUC »**

*\*Recipient of the Wiseman Award*

Fondée en 1992, la LICADHO est l'une des organisations non-gouvernementales (ONG) les mieux établies et les plus respectées du Cambodge. C'est l'actuelle présidente, Mme Pung Chhiv Kek, médecin de formation, qui l'a mise sur pied. Bien que « Mme Kek » soit souvent présente aux bureaux à Phnom Penh, c'est sa fille, Mme Naly Pilorge, qui dirige principalement les activités de la LICADHO en sa capacité de directrice. Il ne faut toutefois pas sous-estimer le rôle de Mme Kek : elle est l'image internationale de la LICADHO, et si la LICADHO peut se permettre d'émettre des opinions qui vont plus loin que ce que le gouvernement pourrait permettre, c'est un peu grâce à Mme Kek et sa réputation qui dépasse les frontières du Cambodge.

Après avoir passé trois semaines à visiter le Cambodge, Léa a commencé elle stage le 21 mai 2013. Pendant celui-ci, elle a effectué plusieurs tâches et a participé à plusieurs projets, qui s'articulent souvent autour des questions d'actualité au Cambodge. Elle a eu la chance de travailler en étroite collaboration avec d'autres organisations non-gouvernementales, locales et internationales, pour la rédaction de rapports et lors de campagnes de sensibilisation.

Elle a également rédigé de nombreux documents, certains dans le cadre de procédures de l'ONU, comme le *Universal Periodic Review* du Haut Commissariat aux droits de l'Homme, ou encore, qui furent envoyés à d'importants donateurs de la LICADHO. Elle a su apprécier la qualité du travail qu'elle effectuait en observant et collaborant avec les autres ONG, ainsi qu'avec l'ONU au Cambodge. Elle admire particulièrement les liens de confiance qu'elle a su développer avec les membres des communautés à risque, et l'indépendance qu'elle tient à préserver par rapport aux autorités.

Le stage à la LICADHO lui a fait découvrir les multiples facettes et complexités du Cambodge, et lui a donné un bon aperçu de ce qu'est la vie d'un travailleur étranger dans une ville d'Asie du Sud-Est comme Phnom Penh, de ce à quoi il faut s'attendre, des dangers, de la bureaucratie, la corruption, mais aussi de sa richesse et sa beauté. Le stage lui a également permis de rencontrer des gens inspirants, dédiés à leur cause, et lié avec eux des amitiés indélébiles.

**Intern: Silvia Neagu**

**Location: Malawi**

**Placement: Equality Effect**

**Research Paper: "Legal Approaches to Redressing Gender-Based Violence in Southern Africa: Beyond the objectification of victims and toward empowerment"**

*\*Recipient of the Litvack Award*

Silvia had the opportunity to intern with Equality Effect, an organization that seeks to use human rights law to enforce the rights of women and girls. The organization has a new project in Malawi with a current area of focus on ensuring access to justice for girl child victims of defilement. Equality Effect was recently successful in holding the Kenyan government and police accountable for failing to investigate and prosecute the defilement of girls.

Silvia's internship was divided into 2 parts: first, work at the University of Malawi; second, with Women in Law of Southern Africa. Silvia was able to conduct research relating to the corroboration rule

Silvia also visited court to watch defilement proceedings and interviewed magistrates, prosecutors, child and youth workers and hospital staff. This information was used as the basis of a report she helped draft that explained how victims were treated in the Malawian justice system. Silvia continued to meet with local service providers, included shelter workers. She conducted independent research on shelters and co-authored a report on this topic with another intern.

Silvia's internship was both personally and professionally rewarding. While she was exposed to harsh realities of the justice system, she was inspired by the advocacy and support of parents, social workers, counsellors, and lawyers.

**Intern: Andrew Higdon**

**Location: Colorado, USA**

Placement: **Oceans Beyond Piracy, One Earth Future Foundation**

Research Paper: "Piracy, Universal Jurisdiction and *US v Ali*"

*This internship was funded by the generosity of the OEFF*

Andrew worked as a legal intern for the only lawyer employed by One Earth Future Foundation. Andrew was assigned meaningful projects that contributed greatly to the policy work at OEF. Andrew was primarily asked to produce memos on various topics of international maritime law. In addition, Andrew critically examined proposals for new private security company regulatory regimes and help with aspects of a case comment.

Andrew appreciated the effort that OEF made to ensure that interns were not just given "busy work". A particularly popular initiative was the weekly intern reading group. Each week, interns were given a paper that was near completion to read and critically evaluate. Then, interns would meet in the conference room with the author of the paper and go through the criticisms together. On weeks where there was no paper to review, interns could choose a topic to discuss.



Andrew greatly enjoyed living in Colorado. He found it to be a beautiful state with fantastic mountain views. The OEFF staff liked to hike, and Andrew was invited his first week to climb a 14,000 ft mountain.



Andrew also enjoyed the Fulford cave system with a fellow intern from Denver University.

OBP is a new NGO and, as Andrew writes, "finding its way in a crowded marketplace". It is full of kind, talented people who take an active interest in the experiences they give interns. One important tip Andrew recommends is for future interns to stay on top of the VISA process prior to their departure.

## **Intern: Laura Rhodes**

## **Location: Colorado, USA**

Placement: **Responsibility to Protect, One Earth Future Foundation**

Research Paper: "Supplementary Governance by Business for Human Rights Protection in Resource-Based Conflict"

*\*This internship was funded by the generosity of the OEFF*

OEF's vision is a world beyond war, achieved by the development of new and effective systems of cooperation, coordination, and decision-making (collectively, "governance"). During her internship, Laura produced a report on corporate liability and obligations under international law and select domestic legal regimes related to the prevention of mass atrocities. She worked on a comparison of indicators used to forecast corporate political risk, and empirical literature on indicators of risk related to the core crimes under the responsibility to protect. She also conducted a comprehensive survey of business association, multi-stakeholder and industry-level initiatives to ensure "conflict-free" minerals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Laura enjoyed the office atmosphere at OEF. The workdays are flexible and interns can manage their own schedule. Unlike other McGill human rights internships, however, interns are expected to work 40 hours per week.

One highlight during the internship for Laura was the opportunity to meet Marcel Arsenault, the founder and funder of the organization. Laura, and the team of interns, had the opportunity to have lunch and discuss his motivation and advice for young people embarking on their careers in business and human rights.

Laura chose to live in Boulder, Colorado, as opposed to Denver, because of easier access to hiking and other outdoor activities without a car.

## **Intern: Jim Burman**

## **Location: Colorado, USA**

Placement: **Shuraako, One Earth Future Foundation**

Research Paper: The Role of Business Regulations in Promoting Economic and Social Rights Through Governance

*\* This internship was funded by the generosity of the OEFF*

OEF began its investigation into the problem of maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia—an instance where there was a clear gap in global governance. OEF realized that there was a need to address governance issues in Somalia. It was this line of thinking that led to the Shuraako program to which James was assigned. This endeavor seeks to promote individual business initiatives as well as improvements in the governance climate for business within Somalia.

James' time at OEF focused on researching (1) the connections between conflict and land tenure practices in Somalia and (2) the challenges posed to Somali remittance transfers by anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing laws.

James found the 12 weeks he spent at OEF to be very rewarding—both personally and professionally. OEF is a unique organization that has brought together a diverse group of friendly and talented people to pursue its dual missions of advancing the scholarship of global governance while also attempting to make on-the ground improvements in governance with a focus on Somalia.

One challenge he faced related to the personnel changes within his assigned program. As a small, relatively new organization, this was to be expected, but it did force interns to be prepared to adapt. Despite these difficulties, James highly recommends the internship to future McGill students.

## Intern: Jean-Marc Lacourcière

## Location: Banjul, The Gambia

Placement: Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA)

Research Paper: "Transnational Litigation and Egregious Human Rights Abuses by Extractive Industry Corporations: Context, Prospects and Limitations"

*\*Recipient of the Wiseman Award*



Jean-Marc was the first McGill human rights intern to join IHRDA. The NGO's main activity is human rights litigation, with staff lawyers representing victims of human rights violation from across Africa before African human rights tribunals. IHRDA also acts as a publisher of African human rights jurisprudence, and trains lawyers on litigation before African human rights institutions.

Jean-Marc worked on three different projects. First, he assisted work on a complaint to the African Commission on behalf of the victims of the Kilwa massacre. Jean-Marc researched the African Commission's jurisprudence on its ability to award specific amounts of reparations to victims. Jean-Marc compared this jurisprudence to happenings at the European Court on Human Rights

Jean-Marc's second litigation file related to human rights violations in mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He conducted research related to the requirement that complainants exhaust domestic remedies before applying to the African Commission. His research culminated in presenting his findings before IHRDA staff prior to their departure to the DRC for a training of victims of human rights violations related to mining in the DRC.

Jean-Marc's third project involved preparing a database project on gender-based violence in Kenya, Uganda and the DRC. He identified partners in Kenya, Uganda and the DRC and then solicited materials from the partners pertaining to case law on gender-based violence.

Jean-Marc was also involved in a number of ongoing projects at IHRDA. He served as rapporteur for a sensitization workshop for law enforcement officials on The Gambia's new legal aid regime. He also provided considerable translation work.

Jean-Marc enjoyed the "pan-African" organizational vibe among IHRDA staff who came from across the continent of Africa. IHRDA has beautiful offices and staff members were kind and welcoming. While at times, his supervisors were too busy to provide him with feedback, he was able to receive a thorough overview of his tasks. He especially enjoyed working on mining-related human rights issues, which gave him unique insight into the gravity of the systemic abuses in the mining industry.

Banjul is approximately 15 km of coastline south of the Gambia River. It is on an island about 20 minutes away from the Atlantic coast. In the winter months it is an increasingly popular holiday destination for Europeans. Jean-Marc enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere and spent plenty of time on the beach!

Jean-Marc was struck by the political situation in the Gambia, an increasingly repressive regime that arrests political dissidents and, it is rumored, infiltrates society through covert agents. He recommends future interns to thoroughly monitor the political situation prior to departing, as many of the resources he consulted did not accurately describe the situation on the ground.

## **Intern: Charlotte-Anne Malischewski**

**Location: Calcutta, India**

Placement: Calcutta Research Group

Research Paper: "Where the Exception is the Norm: The Production of Statelessness in India"

*\*Recipient of the Hans & Tamar Oppenheimer Chair in Refugee Law Award*

As the first intern to work at the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, Charlotte-Anne went in with an open mind. She was told by her advisor that she would be a "guinea pig" of sorts.

After arriving in Calcutta, Charlotte-Anne settled into her work quickly. Her tasks included drafting grant reports, compiling bibliographies on assigned subjects, assisting non-native English speakers in re-writing English academic articles, editing academic texts prior to publication, writing summaries of academic articles and chapters, attending CRG events such as speakers and book launches, and creating audio-visual presentations and powerpoint presentations.

In addition to these tasks, Charlotte-Anne was given 2 specific requirements as an intern: (1) produce original research on an assigned topic; (2) present original research to a group of invited guests at a public CRG lecture.

Charlotte-Anne found the work culture at the CRG to be very different from other places she'd worked or volunteered. There is a strong sense of solidarity and a high level of intellectual engagement. Charlotte-Anne observed that she had never been in a social milieu with people with such a strong grasp of both Western and non-Western thought in the social sciences, humanities, and art.

Charlotte-Anne recommends the internship especially for those interested in legal academia and those interested in issues of partition, borders, displacement, migration, conflict, peace, governance, democracy, autonomy, and social justice. It is an office-based internship in a largely non-legal, public academic environment. It is a unique, intellectually stimulating opportunity at an organization that profoundly believes that intellectuals have a role in bringing about social change.

## **Intern: Diya Bouchédid**

**Location: Quebec City, Canada**

Placement: **Avocats sans frontières**

Research Paper: « Le système de contrôle international des drogues et les Droits de l'homme: Cohésion ou Confrontation? »

*\*Recipient of the Novak-Weil Internship Award and the Law Internship Award*

Avocats sans frontières Canada (ASFC) est une organisation non gouvernementale de coopération internationale dont la mission est de soutenir la défense des droits humains des groupes ou des personnes les plus vulnérables par le renforcement de l'accès à la justice et à la représentation légale. Le siège social d'ASFC est un petit bureau chaleureux et convivial où travaille une dizaine d'employés. J'y ai passé trois mois à titre de stagiaire.

Elle expérience avec ASFC a été très positive. Elle a eu l'opportunité de travailler sur plusieurs problématiques relatives aussi bien au droit social, au droit criminel qu'au droit à la propriété et ce, dans des contextes nationaux diversifiés. Elle a aussi eu la responsabilité d'organiser un colloque et d'interagir avec plusieurs coopérants volontaires travaillant pour ASFC à travers le monde.

À travers le stage avec ASFC, elle a été initiée aux droits humains. Cette organisation a fourni la structure requise pour permettre de naviguer dans le monde du droit international et des droits humains tout en laissant assez de latitude pour développer elles propres initiatives.

L'environnement de travail était toujours chaleureux, encourageant et stimulant. ASFC est une organisation idéale pour un/une étudiante en droit intéressé(e) à concentrer ses énergies sur la protection et la défense des droits des plus vulnérables.

Diya recommande fortement cette expérience à ceux et celles qui s'intéressent aux droits humains et veulent vivre une expérience enrichissante.

## **Intern: Angela Slater    Location: Accra, Ghana**

Placement: LAWA-Ghana

Research Paper: "Traditional Legal Institutions through a Rule of Law Lens: the Chieftaincy in Ghana"

*\*Recipient of the Labour Law and Development Lab Award*

LAWA-Ghana is a women's human rights organization located in Accra, Ghana. Angela arrived at LAWA-Ghana when the organization was working towards completing a multi-year project entitled "Combatting Human Trafficking: Action Oriented Research on Child Domestic Servitude." The project sought to rescue young people who had been trafficked into domestic servitude.

Angela completed two main tasks during her internship. First, she worked on a policy document outlining all the laws applicable to domestic workers in Ghana, whether national, customary or international. In completing this document, she canvassed areas of labour rights, children's rights in domestic work, harassment, violence and abuse, occupational health and safety and migrant workers. The document included recommendations for legal reforms that should be undertaken to strengthen the rights of domestic workers.

Towards the end of her internship, Angela created an annual report for the organization. This involved researching LAWA's projects over the previous three years, drafting articles on recent changes, including recent legislation introduced on the property rights of spouses in Ghana.

Angela also spent some time creating official correspondence for LAWA's communications with partner organizations or the government. She attended a number of workshops and official meetings on behalf of LAWA.

Angela found Ghana to be a fascinating country and her internship allowed her to gain a deeper understanding of the history and diverse societies in West Africa. It was inspiring to see so many women lawyers. She enjoyed the many beaches in and around Accra and advises any visitor to Ghana to bring back as much fabric as possible; it is the number one producer of fabric in Africa!

Angela lived at the University of Ghana, Legon at the time. She recommends future interns consider alternative living accommodations, as the campus was quite empty since it was the summer. Many expatriates (including summer students) lived in hostels around Osu, a more central part of Accra.

Ghana is a relatively safe place and while there were some unpleasant interactions in public, Angela recommends dealing with these incidents with as much grace as possible.

We thank all the interns for their outstanding contributions to the 2013 International Human Rights Internship Program

Questions?

Write to us:

[hrinternships.law@mcgill.ca](mailto:hrinternships.law@mcgill.ca)



**Faculty of Law**

Day, Chancellor, Hall, 3644 Peel Street  
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1W9  
Tel.: 514-398-6666 | Fax: 514-398-4659



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**Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism**

Day, Chancellor, Hall, 3644 Peel Street  
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1W9  
Tel.: 514-398-3577 | Fax: 514-398-7145