

International Human Rights Internship Program

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



McGill FACULTY OF
Law

McGill Centre for
Human Rights
and Legal Pluralism



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



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Director's Foreword

Summer 2022 saw 31 students pursue a human rights internship. The gradual normalization of life after two summers of restrictions on travel allowed many students to have an in-person experience of internship. Some students, however worked under remote and hybrid arrangements both with Canadian as well as overseas partner organizations. The last-minute cancellation of an in-person internship in Colombo, due to the political upheaval brought on by the economic crisis in the country was a reminder that students have to be prepared for the unexpected. The insightful [student blogs](#) provide a glimpse into the rich and varied experience of the participants of the programme. The original and creative research papers written for the companion seminar course in fall 2022 are testament to the unique and transformative experience of each intern.

Summer 2022 also saw IHRIP enter into partnerships with UNHCR in Tunis and Avocats Sans Frontière in Bogota. The unfaltering support of the donors, alumni, new and old partners, and the Faculty of Law allows IHRIP to remain responsive to interests of our students and the needs of our existing partners. It also allows us to create new partnerships with organizations working in pertinent human rights issues locally and internationally. I am grateful to the Program Coordinators and IHRIP alumni Shona Moreau and Ellen Spannegel and CHRLP Events Coordinator Sharon Webb for their excellent support to the interns throughout their internship experience.





Photo by Joshua Singer Johnson, 2022

What is the International Human Rights Internship Program?

McGill University's Faculty of Law enjoys a rich tradition of human rights education and involvement. Since 1992, the Faculty has established a number of partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Canada and abroad.

Administered by the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism (CHRLP), the International Human Rights Internship Program (IHRIP) is a fully credited course that allows students to earn six credits towards the completion of the B.C.L. / LL.B. degree. The program is managed by the Faculty's Human Rights Committee under the direction of Professor Nandini Ramanujam.

Each fall, the Program interviews and selects law students for placements as interns with NGOs, courts, and public institutions for a period of 12 weeks over the summer. Partner organizations provide students with practical work experience in human rights investigation, monitoring and reporting. The internships also provide exposure to the operation and implementation of human rights instruments and norms.

2022 IHRIP Team



**Nandini
Ramanujam**
*Program
Director*



Elle Spannegal
*Student
Coordinator*



Shona Moreau
*Student
Coordinator*



Sharon Webb
*Programs
Coordinator*

2022 Interns

Yasmine Amar

Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse | Montréal, Canada

Somaya Amiri

Refugee Law Project | Kampala, Uganda

Laiba Asad

Council of Canadians with Disabilities | Winnipeg, Canada

Jack Ball

Yukon Human Rights Commission | Whitehorse, Canada

Aliya Behar

Bulgarian Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (BCNL) | Sofia, Bulgaria

Weeam Ben Rejeb

Aswat Nissa | Tunis, Tunisia

Cassandra Betts

Institute for Human Rights and Development in Afrida (IHRDA) | Banjul, The Gambia

Fatima Beydoun

Ateneo Human Rights Centre (ACHR) | Manila, The Philippines

Sophie Bisping

International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) | Colombo, Sri Lanka

Brandon Bonspiel

Justice Department at the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne | Akwesasne, Canada-US Border

Andrea Carboni Jiménez

Legal Clinic on Human Rights and Disability | Lima, Peru

Rebecca Clayton

Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development | Kampala, Uganda

Catherine Dunne

HIV Legal Network | Toronto, Canada

Eric Epp

Métis Nation Saskatchewan | Saskatchewan

Mariana Furneri

Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) | Toronto, Canada

Bella Harvey

Forum for Human Rights | Prague, Czechia

2022 Interns Cont'd

Ella Johnson

Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights | Montreal, Canada

Joshua Singer Johnson

Ministry of Justice | Windhoek, Namibia

Nicolas Kamran

Maliganik Tukisiniarvik Legal Services | Iqaluit, Canada

Laurence LeBlanc

UNHCR | Tunis, Tunisia

Renée Lehman

Avocats sans frontières | Québec, Canada

Nathan Leung

Avocats Sans Frontières | Bogotá, Colombia

Angela Nassar

Instituto de Democracia y Derechos Humanos | Lima, Peru

Catherine Ndiaye

Equitas | Montreal, Canada

Vidish Parikh

Office of the Federal Housing Advocate at the Canadian Human Rights Commission | Ottawa, Canada

Genny Plumptre

Conseil national des droits de l'Homme | Rabat, Morocco

Hannah Reardon

Justice and Correctional Services of the Cree Nation Government | Waswanipi, Canada

Noémie Richard

Elimu Impact Evaluation Centre | Kianyaga, Kenya

Charlotte Ridsdale

Centre for Law & Democracy | Halifax, Canada

Poonam Sandhu

Human Rights Watch | New York City, USA

Angela Yang

Citizen Lab | Toronto, Canada



Yasmine Amar

Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse | Montreal, Canada



Yasmine Amar est une étudiante de première année en droit à McGill. Avant son entrée à la faculté, elle a obtenu un DEC au Collège de Bois-de-Boulogne en Sciences, Lettres et Arts. Elle est notamment coprésidente et membre fondateur du projet intergénérationnel « Et si on se racontait ». Dans le cadre de celui-ci, elle prit part à la rédaction du livre éponyme publié en 2021 et organisa la campagne de sensibilisation « Entre toi et moi ». Depuis cette année, elle coordonne également un programme de bénévolat intercollégial visant à renforcer les liens intergénérationnels à l'échelle du Québec. Présentant un grand intérêt pour la politique québécoise et la protection des droits humains dans un contexte local, elle est à la recherche constante de nouvelles façons de s'impliquer dans sa communauté et de rendre le Québec plus inclusif. Yasmine est également très intéressée par le journalisme et la culture. Au cégep, elle participa notamment au Prix littéraire des collégiens et fut rédactrice pour le journal étudiant « La Claque ». En compagnie de son orchestre, elle participa également à de nombreux festivals et compétitions musicaux, dont le National Band and Orchestra Festival du Carnegie Hall.

“Mon stage à la CDPDJ m’a permis de voir à quel point le travail humanitaire peut avoir un impact concret sur la vie des gens. En effet, travaillant dans le département du contentieux, tous les concepts que je voyais dans mes recherches étaient rattachés à des situations personnelles bien précises et réelles. Je pouvais donc voir très concrètement à quel point le travail théorique ou jurisprudentielle que je faisais aidait la vie des victimes en leur permettant d’obtenir justice.”

Comment décririez-vous votre expérience globale?

J’ai beaucoup aimé avoir plusieurs projets simultanés sur lesquels travailler, puisque cela m’a permis de toucher à plusieurs sujets différents au cours de l’été et de varier ce sur quoi je travaillais. J’ai aussi aimé le fait que le travail était réellement de nature juridique et n’était pas de simples tâches administratives. Finalement, j’ai aimé recevoir des mandats de recherche plus complexes, car cela m’a motivée à me dépasser et m’a permis de beaucoup développer mes connaissances juridiques et mes aptitudes de recherche. La majorité des mandats que j’ai reçus étaient aussi liés à de réels dossiers portés par la Commission devant le TDP et donc cela rendait le tout plus intéressant et gratifiant, puisque l’utilité de mon travail m’était tout de suite apparente.

Quel type de travail avez-vous effectué, Yasmine?

Les mandats sur lesquels j’ai travaillé étaient de règle générale des recherches juridiques, c’est-à-dire qu’au cours de la préparation de leurs dossiers, les avocates rencontraient certains problèmes très précis ou se posaient certaines questions et donc venaient me voir pour que je fasse une recherche dessus.





Somaya Amiri

Refugee Law Project |
Kampala, Uganda



Somaya Amiri is a first year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. She holds an Honours B.A. in Political Science from McGill University as a Loran Scholar. Somaya has experience working in not-for-profit, private, and public policy institutions across Canada. She has a background in qualitative research analysis on migration policies and how various political systems shape the lives of marginalized communities. She extended her undergraduate degree to complete a one-year international fellowship in France and studied at Science Po Strasbourg. While in France, she worked with the municipal government and volunteered with local organizations to support migrant communities. Upon graduation, Somaya was selected for the Parliamentary Internship Programme, where she spent five months working with the government and another five months with the opposition. During this legislative experience, she was intrigued by the interplay between law, politics, and human rights. Her combined experiences led her on a journey to study Law at McGill as a McCall McBain Scholar.

Established in 1999 and based at the School of Law of Makerere university, the Refugee Law Project's mission is to empower asylum seekers, refugees, deportees, IDPs and host communities in Uganda to enjoy their human rights and lead dignified lives. Over the last twelve years, the RLP's focus has broadened. While the project started by looking exclusively at the situation of refugees and asylum seekers, it has become increasingly important to also assist other forced migrants, notably internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and deportees. The project also considers the question of transitional justice as it affects forcibly displaced populations. As such, the overall focus can now be described as Justice & Forced Migration.

"Working at Refugee Law Project (RLP) has been an extremely educational and fulfilling experience giving me an insight into human rights issues migrant communities face in Uganda, and some of the ways local and international organizations work together to address these challenges. RLP, in addition to legal support, provides a wide range of services for forced migrants across Uganda. I requested to be placed in its Access to Justice (A2J) team as its focus is more on legal representation to refugee communities, capacity building for policymakers, human rights awareness and community empowerment, and research/advocacy. Throughout the internship, I was immersed in each branch of the team's work."

What did your work at the Refugee Law Project entail?

"To give an insight into the Access to Justice team's day-to-day work, everyday refugee and asylum-seeking clients would line the benches outside lawyers' offices seeking advice on how or where to pursue an issue. Some of the issues brought to the attention of the lawyers require legal representation at the court, mediation between clients and community members, or just general referral to other partner organizations such as the Norwegian Refugee Council (...) I had the opportunity to attend many bail court hearings and criminal trials, in addition to interviewing clients and preparing cross-examination questions. Later, I began drafting Court submissions (...) which required intensive research on the status determination of refugee families in Uganda"

Read Somaya's blog posts about her internship experience:

[Reflection on Refugee Resettlement Process](#)
[Fieldwork 101](#)



Laiba Asad is a second-year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. Prior to beginning law school, she completed her DEC in Health Science (IB) at Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf. At the Faculty, she is the Executive Online Editor for the McGill Journal of Law and Health, Co-VP Events of the McGill International Law Society, and a senior editor with Rooted. She also works for a non-profit organization based in New York City that offers legal services to social entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations.



Laiba Asad

Council of Canadians with Disabilities |
Winnipeg, Canada



The Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) is a social justice organisation comprised of individuals with all types of disabilities that advocates for an inclusive and accessible Canada in which people with disabilities can fully exercise their human rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Council brings together disability advocacy organisations to defend and advance people with disabilities' human rights through public education, advocacy, litigation intervention, research, consultation, and partnerships. CCD supplements their partners' expertise by acting as a convening body and consensus builder.

What did your work this summer entail, Laiba?

"The majority of my work with the CCD consisted in helping the organization develop the online Information Hub of its System Navigator project by creating a toolkit on the disability benefits offered in provinces and territories across Canada.

During the first week of my internship, I did a lot of background reading and research on the poverty experienced by people with disabilities in Canada and the policy recommendations that have been made to address this poverty. Overall, I learned that since federal and provincial child and family benefits are a significant source of income for people with disabilities who are of working age, federal and provincial/territorial governments play an important role in providing income security to people with disabilities through direct transfers. However, people with disabilities are currently not able to access a range of supports, services, and benefits they are entitled to for lack of awareness, misunderstandings about available supports, complex systems with unclear eligibility criteria, and intimidating processes. I also read various studies and reports developed by the CCD regarding the feasibility and implementation of a System Navigator Service whose purpose is to ensure that people with disabilities who need and are eligible for available services and benefits can access them."

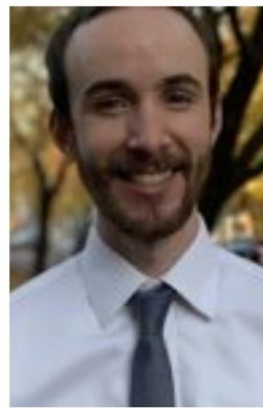
What recommendations would you give to future interns?

"I would recommend that future interns be proactive by seeking out projects, following up with their supervisors if needed and asking for feedback, and suggesting regular check-ins and updates throughout the internship."



Jack Ball

Yukon Human Rights Commission |
Whitehorse, Canada



The Yukon Human Rights Commission promotes equality and diversity through research, education and enforcement of the Yukon Human Rights Act. The YHRC is an impartial and independent organization. Its vision can be summarized as follows: 1) to provide accessible public information and education about human rights throughout the Yukon 2) to partner proactively with individuals and institutions to improve understanding of and respect for human rights in the Yukon 3) to model best practices as an employer and organization and 4) to provide a fair and effective process for dealing with human rights complaint. The Yukon Human Rights Commission makes every effort to help settle complaints by assisting both the individual or group making the complaint and the individual or group to whom the complaint has been made against.



Jack Ball is a second-year BCL/JD student at McGill University from Fredericton, New-Brunswick. He previously completed a BA at McGill and an MA at Queen's, both in English literature. Along with human rights, he is interested in criminal and administrative law, and litigation. Jack is currently a senior editor at the McGill Journal of Law and Health and a junior editor at the Canadian Journal of Law and Justice. He is also a volunteer caseworker at the Legal Information Clinic at McGill and previously worked for the legal tech start-up EvenUp, where he helped obtain compensation for California wildfire victims.

"In short, the summer ultimately exceeded all my expectations. I had the opportunity to learn a ton about discrimination and harassment law, as well as see the innerworkings of an administrative agency up close while receiving fantastic mentorship from staff at the Commission; I spent tons of time outside hiking, fishing, camping, and just marvelling at the beauty of ridges lined with wildflowers; and I made lifelong friendships. The internship itself was a phenomenal opportunity to develop professional skills such as memo writing and communicating with clients, and allowed me to explore my particular interests in employment and administrative law issues."

What did you learn from your internship experience, Jack?

"In a matter of weeks, I learned so much not just about discrimination and administrative law, but also about Yukon's society and the types of human rights problems the people there are facing, whether they fell within or beyond Yukon's Human Rights Act. I also learned a great deal from Commission's staff about how to approach human rights issues and legal work in general. The mentorship I received was invaluable, and I returned from the experience with a much clearer idea of how I want to approach my legal career."

What was the work environment like?

"The staff culture is very collegial and welcoming, and many of the members of the team are friends outside of work (...) Every Thursday morning, the staff gathers for "Coffee Time," where we discussed a wide range of non-work-related topics. I really treasure the friendships I made with all the staff members."

Read Jack's blog posts about his internship experience:

[Living and Working at a Frontier](#)
[Wanting Power, Getting Rights](#)



Weeam Ben Rejeb is a second-year student in the BCL/JD program at the McGill Faculty of Law. She holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology and International Development Studies from McGill University. Prior to her legal studies, she worked at Canada's Development Finance Institute focused on gender-lens investing in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. At the Faculty, Weeam is an executive with the Women of Colour Collective and a caseworker at the Legal Information Clinic. She is also actively involved in advocacy work around Bill 21 and equity initiatives on campus. She is passionate about increased access to justice, advocacy, and human rights.



Weeam Ben Rejeb

Aswat Nissa | Tunis, Tunisia

What was the highlight of your internship, Weeam?

"The most rewarding parts of my internship were sitting in conferences and meetings with other organizations, lawyers, journalists, and other key actors of civil society. The civil society space in Tunisia is incredible, and Aswat is highly regarded in the space. There is a high level of communication and collaboration between groups, especially when faced with a common issue. Having the privilege to hear and learn from influential activists gave me an intimate knowledge of civil society organizing, and an insider look at the efforts behind the 2011 revolution."

What did you learn from your internship experience?

"The political context during my internship provided me with invaluable learning opportunities. I assisted in the organization of a feminist festival, a popular protest organized with Avocats Sans Frontiere and other civil society organizations, a social media awareness campaign featuring key activists and academics in the MENA region, and a large-scale research project with the National Democratic Institute. I also learned about Tunisian law and constitutional framework, all while practicing my third language. The scope of Aswat's work is very broad, and I felt privileged to be involved in so many different initiatives."

"My experience in Tunisia, interning at Aswat Nissa, was transformative in many ways. Aswat is a feminist civil society organization that aims to empower women and advocate for women's rights. They are a small but well-funded organization that is very active in civil society. The organisation was born following the 2011 revolution and has maintained its militant and progressive ethos. They are extremely agile and adjust their priorities based on current events, other initiatives by civil society organizations, and donor requests. What this means is that they are often open to new ideas and suggestions, and are not constraint by an extensive institutional history."



Aswat Nissa is a feminist Tunisian non-governmental organization created in 2011. The organization is non-partisan and free from political influence. It advocates for the integration of the gender approach in all public policy areas. Aswat Nissa supports women to voice their opinions and to become active members – as they should be – in the public and political spheres of the Tunisian society. In Arabic, Aswat Nissa means "Women's voices".

Read Weeam's blog posts about her internship:

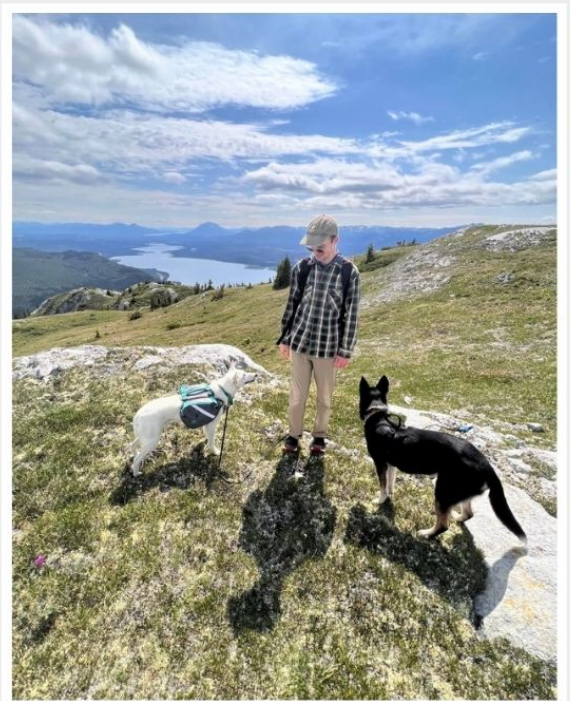
[Lessons learned: interning in a civil society organization in Tunisia](#)
[Tunisia on the precipice](#)



Somaya Amiri, Refugee Law Project, Uganda: "David, Somaya, and Michael – three interns at Access to Justice. This is a photo in the Arua office after a long day of interviewing."



Jack Ball, Yukon Human Rights Commission, Canada: "In an alpine meadow on top of a mountain with my coworker's dogs"



Weeam Ben Rejeb, Aswat Nissa, Tunisia: "The team threw me a little goodbye party on my last day at Aswat"



Somaya Amiri, Refugee Law Project, Uganda: "Conrad, Michael, Somaya, and David. An adventurous lunch break, where we went to try Lusaniya local food."



Cassandra Betts

Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa | Banjul, The Gambia



“My experience at the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) was challenging and rewarding. The work I did was the type of work I imagined doing way back before I started law school. I drafted my own submissions to an African court, wrote legal memos, conducted legal research, and assisted with training and development activities. I worked with many different regional mechanisms in many different jurisdictions in both English and French. I felt like I had the perfect amount of work. IHRDA was very careful not to overwhelm me, so I was able to ask for more substantial assignments when I felt like I had the capacity and was ready for them.”

Cassandra Betts is a third year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. She holds a BA from Sciences Po Paris and a BCom from the University of British Columbia. Throughout her time at McGill, Cassandra has worked as a senior editor for the McGill Journal of Sustainable Development Law and as a caseworker for Innocence McGill. In 2020, she researched gender pay equity at the Canadian Human Rights Commission to help implement the federal Pay Equity Act.

What was the work environment like, Cassandra?

"I felt like I had the perfect amount of work. IHRDA was very careful not to overwhelm me, so I was able to ask for more substantial assignments when I felt like I had the capacity and was ready for them. I enjoyed working with all the legal officers and felt very mentored and cared for by all the staff both inside and outside the office. The subject matter of the work is tough, but I feel like the legal officers provide strong role models on how to be empathetic and not become desensitized to the atrocities they deal with everyday, while still being happy and enjoying their life outside of the office."

What kind of work did you complete?

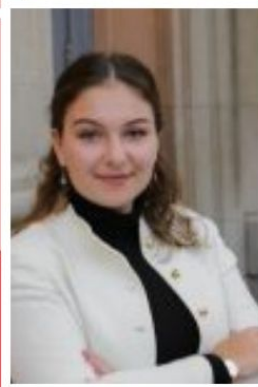
"The bulk of my work had to do with IHRDA's litigation activities. During my time at IHRDA the staff had cases appearing before local Gambian courts, as well as cases that were submitted to the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice. They were also requesting an opinion from the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC)."

IHRDA's principal focus is to ensure that the enforcement mechanisms of African human rights treaties are an effective instrument to redress human rights violations on the continent. IHRDA achieves its goals through four main programs areas: legal advocacy, litigation, capacity building, research and publication, and more broadly, cooperating with the African regional human rights system. Since its founding, IHRDA has worked to increase the number and quality of human rights cases brought to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights [ACHPR]. It has done this primarily through litigation training as well as launching or otherwise providing support to cases before the ACHPR and other African instances.



Aliya Behar

Bulgarian Centre for Not-for-Profit Law | Sofia, Bulgaria



What were the highlights of your experience, Aliya?

"The first was the BCNL Summer School for NGOs. Discovering Balchik, probably the most beautiful place I visited during my time away, and being surrounded by so many interesting and passionate young activists greatly inspired me. I spoke to them about their work, most of which was done on a grassroots level in rural communities, and their plans for establishing or building up their organizations. They helped me understand the broader implications of my research on hate speech, and the political/social context in Bulgaria. I would encourage any future intern to take part on this experience if they can. The second highlight was conducting interviews as primary sources for my research project. I met with a variety of activists from different organizations (ex: Deystvie, Infinite Opportunities Association, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee), and they were the driving force of my report. I had also never conducted primary source interviews, so the whole process was new to me and an immense learning experience."

What did your work at the BCNL entail?

"Aside from my independent research project, I compiled small research and translation work for the Center, as well as the drafting of some blogs for their website. I also participated in a number of BCNL's events, including the Summer School for NGOs, the Civil Alarm Clock festival, and the Let's Go Awards Ceremony. I was able to meet prominent activists and exchange on the political and social sphere in Sofia, and Bulgaria more broadly."

The **Bulgarian Center for Not-for-Profit Law (BCNL)** was founded in 2001 as public-benefit foundation. BCNL is part of the network of the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) and of the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) which operate in over 100 countries worldwide with the aim to protect the right to association and develop the legal framework for civil organizations. The BCNL's mission is providing support for the drafting and implementation of legislation and policies with the aim to advance the civil society, civil participation and good governance in Bulgaria.



"I spent my summer with the Bulgarian Center for Not-for-Profit Law (BCNL), performing research in the area of freedom of expression, with a focus on hate speech. Within my first few days of arriving in Sofia, I joined members of the BCNL team at large-scale protests in the city center, notably in support of Ukraine. Between adjusting to a new city, culture, language, and time zone, I plunged into the deep end of Bulgaria's political and social discourse. My work and research report blossoms out of conversations with my peers at BCNL, as well as local activists, on freedom of expression within the country."

Aliya Behar is a second year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. Prior to studying law, she pursued a DEC in Health Science with an honours certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies from Marianopolis College. Aliya has worked with the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, and advocates for political prisoners' freedom with the Wallenberg Advocacy Group. She also works as a Caseworker at the Legal Information Clinic at McGill, and is a Senior Editor for the Contours journal. Aliya's interest in human rights work is underpinned by its potential to concretely and positively impact individuals' lives.

Read Aliya's blog posts about her internship experience:

[Coming Full Circle in Sofia](#)

[Time Travel & Tug of War in Sofia](#)



Fatima Beydoun is a first-year student in the BCL/JD program at the McGill Faculty of Law. Before coming to McGill, she completed a combined honours undergraduate degree in Environmental Sustainability and International Development Studies at Dalhousie University on the unceded Mi'kmaq territory of Halifax (K'jipuktuk) where she also hails from. Fatima's interest in human rights stems from her longtime involvement with Amnesty International Canada, starting as a youth organizer and formerly the Co-president of the Amnesty Club at Dalhousie. Now in her fourth year on the National Youth Action and Advisory Committee for the Canadian chapter as the first Maritimer, Fatima incorporates her passions of youth empowerment and human rights while working alongside others to advocate for more equitable systems on local and global scales. Having had the opportunity to speak in the House of Commons, Fatima has been involved with environmental, migrant and racial justice work on campus and in her community. Her active involvement in student leadership is vast, where she recently concluded her two-year term on the Board of Dalhousie University as a student representative and was a founding member of a racial justice collective at Dalhousie. Currently an inaugural McCall MacBain Scholar, Fatima hopes to use her experiences to foster cross-cultural solidarity and is very grateful for her internship placement in the Philippines to pursue this goal.



Fatima Beydoun

Ateneo Human Rights Centre | Manila,
The Philippines

“Overall, I had a very positive internship experience at the Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC) in Manila, Philippines. The AHRC team and work environment are special for their culture of collective care, high-spirited energy and passion for their work. The center aided significantly with my adjustment into a completely new cultural setting, and I always felt comfort and immense gratitude being an intern there. The notable relationship-building capacity of the Center to engage closely with the government, the private sector, NGOs, and other civil society groups allowed me to gain a broad understanding of the AHRCs approach to the variety of human rights issues they set out to address.”



What was the work environment like, Fatima?

“To say that the AHRC staff and work culture is the kindest and most caring environment one can find themselves in would be an understatement. It is the type of work environment where lawyers and administrative staff enjoy each other's company and hold socializing at different points in the day to be essential, with lots of laughter and passionate banter. I immediately felt comfortable and welcomed into the office. I would often engage in great conversations of cultural exchanges, having learned so much from the core staff on a personal level as well.”

AHRC was established as one of the first university-based institutions engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights in the Philippines. AHRC pursues its mandate of protecting and promoting human rights through increasingly varied programs and services. Among other things, it is engaged in legal assistance, research and publication, law and policy reform advocacy, training and education, institution building, curriculum development, and values formation. In pursuing its goals, AHRC works closely with various governments, the academe, NGOs, grassroots organizations, and other civil society groups. Partnerships have been established and maintained with national and international organizations whose operations and expertise are relevant to the respective sectors served by AHRC.

Read Fatima's blog posts about her internship experience:

[“Never, never again!”](#)





Sophie Bisping

International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES)
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sophie Bisping is currently a first-year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. She holds a bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts and Philosophy, and a master's degree in Transcultural Studies and International Public Policy. Prior to her legal studies, she has worked for the Max Planck Institute for International Peace and the Rule of Law on comparative constitutional law and capacity-building workshops for Sudanese and Moroccan lawyers. She has also worked for the German Parliament in the context of the International Parliamentary Scholarship, specializing in issues of cultural policy and foreign affairs. Sophie is currently an associate editor for *InterGentes* – the McGill Journal of International Law and Legal Pluralism. At the International Centre for Ethnic Studies in Sri Lanka, she hopes to pursue her interests in transitional justice and reconciliation processes.

What was your overall experience like, Sophie?

"My internship experience this summer was exciting and challenging, partly due to the fact that I did two internships: one remotely for the International Centre for Ethnic Studies in Colombo (ICES), and one in person for the Global Observatory on Academic Freedom in Vienna (GOAF). Just four days before my departure to Sri Lanka, the governmental travel advisory changed to "avoid non-essential travel" because protests against the government had gotten violent. This resulted in my having to cancel my flight to Colombo. Thankfully, I was able to come to an arrangement with the Centre that I would do the internship remotely. I was also lucky that Professor Ramanujam quickly offered the possibility of going to Vienna."

What did your work this summer entail?

"As part of a larger research project on mass graves in Sri Lanka, I was tasked with writing a report on the current state of knowledge of these sites from a historical and legal perspective. The most challenging part was defining the scope of this task, and my lack of knowledge of the history and legal system in Sri Lanka. I often felt like what would take me a whole day to write would take only an hour for a Sri Lankan lawyer, because in spite of the preparatory readings I had done before the start of my internship, there was so much I did not know, or understand, about Sri Lanka (...) Work at the GOAF was also very interesting for me (...) My main tasks were to develop the methodology for a global mapping of regulatory frameworks on academic freedom, and subsequently to start gathering data for the mapping itself. It offered a good counterbalance to the unclear scope of my report for ICES, because the work was well-defined and measurable. Living in Vienna for two months was lovely, and I very much enjoyed going to the office every day, speaking with colleagues who were all very kind, and working on the mapping."

The **ICES's** goal is to contribute towards relevant rigorous intellectual traditions that recognize our common humanity, promote diverse identities, and generate ideas that inform and guide policies and institutions in order to promote justice, equity and peaceful coexistence. The unique mission of ICES is to deepen the understanding of ethnicity, identity politics, conflict and gender, and to foster conditions for an inclusive, just and peaceful society, nationally, regionally and globally, through research, publication, dialogue, creative expression and knowledge transfer. The ICES has been an important player in the areas of reconciliation, justice, gender and human rights and has been particularly influential in shaping policy and public imagination on issues of gender equality, ethnic diversity, religious coexistence, and constitutional reform in Sri Lanka.

Read Sophie's blog posts about her internship experience:

[Overwhelmed by numbers](#)

[Legislate First, Define Later](#)



Brandon Bonspiel is a first year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. He holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science, with a Minor in Law & Society from Concordia University. Prior to McGill Law, Bonspiel worked at Apple Inc, where he was tasked with business growth, leadership, and technical support duties. Bonspiel has been an intern at Patel Legal Inc. since 2019. Through this experience Bonspiel's main focus is on pro-bono files catering to minority groups. Additionally, he has been a board member at First Nations Paramedics since 2018. The ambulance company serves his home territory of Kanehsà:ke. Bonspiel's interest for human rights is rooted in access to justice and the lack thereof. He is excited to enhance his knowledge of indigenous law, human rights & transsystemic legal mechanisms. For the summer 2022, Brandon Sakoiewátho Bonspiel will be interning at the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Justice Department.



Brandon Bonspiel

Justice Department at the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne | Akwesasne, Canada-US Border

What was your overall experience like, Brandon?

"During my 12-week internship at the Akwesasne Justice Department (AJD), I assisted the development of a Child Rights & Responsibility Law for the community. I researched the implications of Bill C-96, the act promoting the French language laws in the province of Quebec. I was a counsellor for a week at the community Cultural Youth Camp on Thompson Island. Lastly, I helped build a diorama replicating the multiple geographical jurisdictions of Akwesasne. The initial purpose of the internship was to gain professional experience. However, my time spent in the community solidified my connection to my culture which allowed me to gain focus on what truly matters. I want to help people, doing human rights work is the best channel to accomplish this vocation. The AJD helped further this goal."

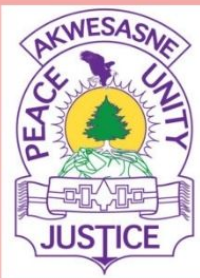
What was the work environment like?

"From a professional aspect, the highlight of my internship was aiding in the development of the Child Rights & Responsibility Act. Most jurists dream of creating a Law that impacts positively their community, I was able to accomplish this dream in my first summer at Law School. On a personal note, the highlight of my time in Akwesasne was reconnecting with my people. Joyce [Joyce King, Justice Department Director] was great in inviting me to part-take in traditional Longhouse ceremonies, where I danced, sang and shared stories with other Mohawks like me."

The Akwesasne Justice Department

strives to provide a comprehensive Justice System for the people of Akwesasne which is equitable, fair and respectful of individual rights and is also respectful of our Culture and Heritage as Mohawks. The department's goals are as follows:

1. To develop and administer a community based justice system based on traditional principles.
2. To provide community members with the institutions to resolve internal conflicts and disputes, and a forum for the adjudication of community law.
3. To manage and expand the application restorative justice programs and native court worker program.
4. To provide community members with a local supervision program for adult, youth offenders and federal parolees from the courts and correctional centers in Ontario, Quebec and New York State.



Read Brandon's blog posts about his internship:

[A Summer of Crossing Borders and Jurisdictions in Akwesasne](#)

[Leaving Akwesasne: Much More Than Just a Legal Internship](#)





Aliya Behar, Bulgarian Centre for Not-for-Profit-Law, Bulgaria



Fatima Beydoun, Ateneo Human Rights Centre, The Philippines:
 "Some candid images captured of me reading the names of Martyrs on the Wall of Remembrance courtesy of a photojournalist attendee named Danielle."



Brandon Bonspiel, Justice Department at the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Canada-US Border

Andrea Carboni Jiménez

Legal Clinic on Human Rights and Disability | Lima, Peru



Andrea Carboni Jiménez is a first-year BCL/JD candidate in the McGill Faculty of Law. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in Psychology and a Master of Science in Psychiatry, both from McGill. Prior to her legal studies, Andrea's research focused on examining burden among informal caregivers to people living with systemic sclerosis and evaluating the effectiveness of psychological interventions among incarcerated individuals with mood disorders or trauma. In the Faculty, Andrea volunteers as a caseworker with Innocence McGill and serves in the Executive Committee of the McGill Law Latin American Students' Association. While her interests in the legal field are broad, she hopes to concentrate her efforts on aiding vulnerable populations.

The **Clinic on Human Rights and Disability** is focused on disability, discrimination and overcoming sociolegal barriers that hinder the rights of persons with disabilities. The core of the Clinic's work is providing legal aid in strategic cases where disability has restricted a person's – or a group's – right. The Clinic also regularly provides legal workshops for persons with disabilities and their family members.

What was your overall experience like, Andrea?

"The remote internship consisted of two main parts: a course led by Professor Renata Bregaglio Lazarte (with some lectures led by Professor Renato Antonio Constantino Caycho) and the projects I was separately assigned (an amicus curiae brief for the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and a report to the university about an ableist provision in their enrolment regulations). The internship was very insightful. The course was interactive and allowed me to hear about my peers' perspectives, who were upper year law students. Beyond discussing disability and the law, the professors asked thought-provoking questions about the negative associations we have with disability (...) These thought-provoking discussions pushed me to question my own beliefs. I was also assigned my own work, an amicus and the report, which allowed me to learn much about the Latin American landscape in disability law."

What did you learn from your experience, Andrea?

"Through the Professors' accounts of their own experiences and students' accounts of their work as caseworkers, I learned a lot about the challenges of human rights work. There are significant negative stereotypes in Peru about mental health (the main disability focused on during my internship) so the work is both micro (e.g., helping parents ensure their children with autism spectrum disorder have an additional support worker in class) and macro (e.g., redefining the ways reparations are attributed using a social model of disability instead of a medical model by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights). Through hearing professors teach about mental disorders and making factually incorrect statements (e.g., electroconvulsive therapy being taught as an ineffective treatment), I also learned about the importance of an interdisciplinary team when tackling human rights issues. In addition, I felt the strong sense that students are looking to make change. Although I take with me the general feeling that progress is slow, it is active."

Read Andrea's blog posts about her internship experience:

[The End to a Remote Experience](#)

[The Importance of Interdisciplinary Approaches](#)





CEHURD
social justice in health



Rebecca Clayton

Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development | Kampala, Uganda

Rebecca Clayton is a first year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. Prior to law school, she completed a BAH in International Development with a minor in Political Science, focusing on rural agricultural development & food security. After her undergrad she worked for The SEED, a non-profit food project where she created and facilitated programs to increase physical and financial access to good food for community members. Based out of the Guelph Community Health Centre, she worked closely with primary healthcare practitioners on the intersection of food and health, and is excited to pursue human rights and public health further in Kampala with CEHURD. She currently volunteers with Pro Bono Students Canada at the Native Women's Shelter in Montreal, and is a professional photographer in her spare time. Passionate about human rights, food-related justice and storytelling, she is deeply excited to learn more about how these pieces connect this summer.

CEHURD is a non-profit indigenous research and advocacy organization dedicated to the right to health. To advance vulnerable communities' health rights through litigation, advocacy, and research. Founded in 2010, the Center for Health, Human Rights, and Development (CEHURD) has advanced social justice and health rights in health systems in Uganda, the East African Region, Pan-African, and globally. They contribute to the deconstruction of health and human rights by utilizing the law, policy engagements, evidence-based advocacy, and community mobilization as major entry points that inform our interventions at the national level and in ten districts throughout Uganda. We have pioneering strategic litigation cases that have shaped jurisprudence and defined expanded rights for our target constituencies. While actively participating in East African, Pan-African, and international human rights mechanisms, processes, and movements.

"Overall, I loved my time in Uganda this summer, and was so happy to be placed at CEHURD. I had such a range of experiences and a deep well of learning that I continue to unpack in the months since I've returned. It was challenging, probably more so than I anticipated, but I would not trade my experience for anything."

What was the highlight of your experience, Rebecca?

"My favourite part of working at CEHURD this summer was getting to work on the strategic side of the cases we had. I loved the opportunity to research cases, and try to come up with arguments based on case law and constitutional articles (...) It felt like a great fit for me and for the big-picture aspects of law that I really love, and taught me a lot about what working in human rights could look like. I also really appreciated all the times I was invited along for hands-on experiences. Watching how human rights law is practiced and learning from my colleagues made me feel very lucky."

What was your overall experience like?

"Working at CEHURD was a different experience every day. Living in Kampala was both awesome and exhausting. Travelling around Uganda was so great and also came with its own unique challenges (...) The biggest aspect of this internship opportunity revolved around the work – most of my time and energy was spent at the CEHURD offices, and so their culture really impacted my experience (...) The staff are incredibly hard working and fun, and I have so much respect for them. My team at the strategic litigation department were so welcoming to me, and I enjoyed getting to spend time with each of them throughout the summer."

Read Rebecca's blog posts about her internship experience:

- [5 final lessons from my work this summer](#)
- [5 lessons from my first few weeks in Uganda](#)



Catherine Dunne is a second-year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. She holds an Honours B.A. in International Human Rights from Western University. Prior to beginning her legal studies, Catherine led the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, representing over 150,000 students' interest to all levels of government. She advocated for equitable access to post-secondary education, and improved gender-based violence prevention and response throughout her time at the alliance. At the Faculty, Catherine is an Executive Editor for the McGill Journal of Law and Health, and an Associate Editor for the McGill Journal of Sustainable Development and Law and Rooted. Catherine has also volunteered as a caseworker at the Legal Information Clinic and as a volunteer with Pro Bono Students Canada throughout her time at the Faculty. She is passionate about using her legal education as a tool to respond to climate change, health inequalities, and colonialism. Catherine is very grateful for the opportunity to intern at the HIV/AIDS Legal Network to learn more about public interest litigation and legal reform. In particular, she looks forward to learning more about the decriminalization of HIV non-disclosure and sex work, and the intersections with colonialism and gender-based violence.



Catherine Dunne

HIV/AIDS Legal Network |
Toronto, Canada

"My internship with the HIV Legal Network was nothing short of fantastic (...) The HIV Legal Network's mandate is related to HIV and human rights, but I found that this covered a broader scope of human rights issues than I initially expected. For instance, the work ranges from LGBTQ+ rights to drug policy to prisoners' rights to HIV decriminalization advocacy. Over the course of the summer, I gained a deeper understanding of the human rights impacts of HIV criminalization, harm reduction and drug policy, and had the chance to work in other legal systems and to engage with international human rights law. I also got to understand how civil society operates to advocate for policy changes and how lawyers work with activists and front-line workers to affect change."

What did your work this summer entail, Catherine?

"The work at the HIV Legal Network is primarily substantive legal research and writing. As a result, I spent most of the summer working independently on various research and writing files. I sharpened my legal research and writing skills and my understanding of Canadian and Caribbean constitutional law and international human rights law. Some of my projects were less legal in nature and offered me exposure to understand the other facets of the HIV Legal Network's advocacy activities. For instance, I supported the HIV Legal Network team to prepare for an in-person roundtable with stakeholders to discuss alternative responses to HIV criminalization. "

The **Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network** is engaged in education, legal and ethical analysis, and policy development. The Legal Network promote responses to HIV/AIDS that: implement the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights; respect the rights of people with HIV/AIDS and of those affected by the disease; facilitate HIV prevention efforts; facilitate care, treatment, and support of people with HIV/AIDS; minimize the adverse impact of HIV/AIDS on individuals and communities; and, address the social and economic factors that increase vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and to human rights abuses.

Read Catherine's blog posts about her internship experience:

[No room for siloes in human rights work](#)
[Centering love in HIV decriminalization advocacy](#)



Eric Epp

Metis Nation Saskatchewan | Saskatchewan, Canada

Eric Epp is a first-year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. He holds a BA (Honours) in English Literature from the University of Alberta and an LMus in Music (Voice Performance) from McGill. Eric grew up in Edmonton, and spent many happy summers during university working as a costumed historical interpreter at Fort Edmonton Park. Following his studies in music, he worked for two years as a tour guide at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. Last year, he had the chance to take courses in philosophy and political science at the University of Victoria. Currently, Eric is a junior editor at Rooted, McGill's Indigenous law journal.



Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) is a government in Saskatchewan that represents Métis people. MN-S is governed by the Metis Nation Legislative Assembly (MNLA), which is made up of Métis Local Presidents and the Provincial Métis Council. The MNLA is empowered to enact legislation, regulations, rules, and resolutions that govern Métis affairs and behaviour in Saskatchewan. The 2019 "Métis-Ottawa Accords" are a watershed moment in Métis history, as they are the first self-government agreements reached between the Métis Nation and the federal government. These agreement represents the most significant advancement in Métis rights since the important hunting, recognition, and self-identity rights. Following the signing of the accords, future negotiations will take place to give the Métis Nation control over its own affairs in areas such as childcare, leadership selection, government operations, and citizenship. Most importantly, the accords give Métis control over the creation of future constitutions for their respective nations.

What kind of work did you complete this summer, Eric?

"I was essentially a researcher for the tribunal, and I ended up covering a wide variety of topics. I wrote memos on: the limitations/opportunities of the self-government agreement with the feds; potential intersection of our tribunal with the new CFS legislation; other Indigenous legislation related to the CFS legislation; Métis law relating to the hunt and from St Laurent; and a final memo in early September on Western policy reasons for legitimacy. I also worked on some more unofficial, specific reports for Marilyn, e.g. tracking down specific cases, summarizing reports, and researching paralegal programs in Canada. We had bi-weekly meetings that also served as times to present our research—there was never the feeling of evaluation, but our research was often the focal points of these meetings, and served as jumping off points for the rest of the team."

What was a highlight of your internship?

"For me personally, I really appreciated engaging in a higher level of conversations around Indigenous topics. I worked at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights for several years, doing tours and learning on my own terms, and this summer allowed me to have analogous conversations but at a much more authentic level. I was able, too, to be a learner rather than a teacher (...) although I am not Métis I was still working with them, in relation to them, and part of their network. My highlight was being able to learn from people at the very core of some very important conversations."

Read Eric's blog posts about his experience:

[Good Gosh It's Better Than Frosh: It's Back to Batoche!](#)

[Whose Law Is It Anyway?](#)





Mariana Furneri

Canadian Civil Liberties Association |
Toronto, Canada

Mariana Furneri is a second-year BCL/JD student at McGill University and holds an Honours BA in Political Science with a Minor in Anthropology. At the Faculty of Law, Mariana is a Senior Editor for Volume 18 of the McGill Journal of Sustainable Development Law (MJSDL), following her role as a Special Associate Editor for Volume 17. Mariana's experience with academic journals also extends beyond law school. Throughout her BA, she served as an Editor and Managing Editor for the McGill Journal of Political Studies, as well as the Vice-President Newspaper for McGill's Chapter of Journalists for Human Rights (JHR). Mariana is passionate about the ways in which policy and the law intersect and how they impact marginalized communities. She views human rights and public interest work as vital forms of advocacy.

The **CCLA** fights for the civil liberties, human rights, and democratic freedoms of all people across Canada. Founded in 1964, we are an independent, national, nongovernmental organization, working in the courts, before legislative committees, in the classrooms, and in the streets, protecting the rights and freedoms cherished by Canadians and entrenched in our Constitution.

What did your work at the CCLA entail, Mariana?

"I worked on a variety of subjects and tasks at the CCLA. Mainly, I researched and produced legal memos. The largest legal memo I submitted was done for litigation purposes and to help the CCLA's pro bono external counsel. The 4000-word memo explored the evolution of freedom of expression and the parameters of lawful protesting, and how the right to protest might be adapted for online protesting. This involved researching and summarizing case law, and I heavily relied on CanLII and Peter Hogg's Constitutional Law textbook to complete the first part of my legal memo. Since there is no Canadian case law on online protest and virtual activism, it was a great joy to research scholarly articles and to express my own ideas about how this right might be (and ought to be) construed in a virtual space by Canadian courts. The CCLA encourages its interns to share their own views and express their research-informed positions in legal memos. It is a great way to exercise critical thinking."

What was a highlight of your internship?

"I most enjoyed my time in the fundamental freedoms and equality programs. The highlight of this rotation was working with lawyers from one of Toronto's biggest international firms and having my legal memo featured heavily in their factum for the Ontario Court of Justice. Throughout my internship, I felt as though all of my work was valued and contributed to the CCLA's mandate, whether that work was researching and writing a memo that grew my understanding of a particular Charter right, assembling a coalition group of academic and political actors that would push for policy reform on Canada's outdated privacy legislation, or writing blogs for the CCLA's website on a timely case to inform readers of the latest infringements on civil liberties. I also felt as though this work developed various skill sets that any human rights lawyer should have, and that I can carry what I've learned from the internship throughout my career."

Read Mariana's blog posts about her internship experience:

[Reflecting on What I've Learned in Law School](#)
[Seeing Myself in Human Rights Work](#)





Rebecca Clayton, Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development, Uganda



Eric Epp, Métis Nation Saskatchewan, Canada



Rebecca Clayton, Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development, Uganda



Catherine Dunne, HIV Legal Network, Canada

Bella Harvey

Forum for Human Rights | Prague, Czech Republic



Bella Harvey is a second-year student at the McGill Faculty of Law, currently pursuing a BCL/JD with a minor in Computer Science. She holds a BA in Honour Political Science with a minor in Philosophy from McGill, as well as an MA in Political Science from the University of Toronto. Throughout her post-secondary education, Bella has acted as a research assistant on several different projects and has held both managerial and editorial positions on a variety of academic journals. She deeply cares about social, transitional, and environmental justice, so she is very grateful for the opportunity to work at the Forum for Human Rights in Prague to help them with their international human rights litigation and advocacy efforts.

"One of the things I really liked about the internship was the opportunity to learn a lot about strategic litigation and advocacy efforts from a very practical perspective. I think the collaborative aspect of human rights work has never been more cemented for me. I mean this in terms of collaborating with other human rights organizations as well as those who you are trying to help and other relevant people, groups, and organizations, as well as within the FORUM itself."

What did your work at the Forum entail, Bella?

"Some of the things I worked on during my internship included working to help the FORUM gain participatory status on the European Social Commission. I also did a lot of legal research re the FORUM's strategic litigation efforts. One of the cases I had been doing research on concerned challenging the immigration detention of children before the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)."

What was something you learned from your time working at the Forum?

"Overall, my time as an intern at the Forum offered me such valuable experience for learning and mentorship. Things are so often quite different in the field or even in the office in contrast to the ways in which we read about and understand them through formal study. As an intern at the Forum, I learned much about commonalities and differences in understanding when it comes to human rights practice and its intersection with law. I also got to see witness the power and limits of the law and how law can act as a mechanism but also a barrier to the realization of rights. As you can read about these things, learning by doing and through other pedagogical methods is so essential for truly understanding how things operate. Actively participating in human rights work and learning through collaboration and cooperation, seeing how transnational ideas such as human rights become meaningful in local settings and are vernacularized, offers so much in terms of understanding reliance and struggle."

FORUM
Human Rights

Forum for Human Rights

(FORUM) is a Central European legal non-governmental organisation focusing on international human rights litigation and advocacy in Central Europe. FORUM works to ensure that human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled in accordance with relevant international human rights standards, using litigation and advocacy to promote human rights before national and international courts and domestic and international human rights bodies. It provides support and leads domestic and international litigation and advocacy activities.

Read Bella's blog posts about her internship experience:

[Reflecting on Human Rights Work](#)
[A Forum for Human Rights](#)



Ella Johnson is a first-year student BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. There, she engages with environmental issues as an associate editor on the McGill Journal of Sustainable Development Law. She also advocates for the release of political prisoners as a junior advocate with the Wallenberg Advocacy Group to explore her interests in the rule of law. She hopes to use her degree to support work that addresses environmental issues and strengthens democratic institutions. Prior to McGill, she spent two years advocating for climate justice with MN350 and Earth Law Center. She led and supported campaigns that sought to address the climate crisis from multiple angles, including by legalizing rights for nature and holding purportedly "green" corporations accountable for anti-climate lobbying. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a B.S. in Ecology, Evolution and Behavior from the University of Minnesota. She briefly worked at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory Climate Change Sciences Institute before making the left turn that led her to law school.



The **Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights** is a unique international consortium of parliamentarians, scholars, jurists, human rights defenders, NGOs, and students united in the pursuit of justice, inspired by and anchored in Raoul Wallenberg's humanitarian legacy.

The Wallenberg Centre is organized around five pillars of pursuing justice, each of which reflects and represents Wallenberg's humanitarian legacy:

1. Heros of Humanity
2. The Holocaust and Genocide
3. Protecting Democracy
4. Defending Political Prisoners
5. Advancing Women's Rights

Ella Johnson

Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights | Montreal, Canada

What was your overall experience like, Ella?

"My experience was overall excellent because the Centre was an excellent fit for me. The organization's working rhythms, communication styles and values aligned unusually well with my own. I was surprised and happy to find myself working with a supervisor who wanted to hear my thoughts on everything we worked on and to have the full trust of the organization to take on such challenging work as an intern. My work was by and large extremely interesting and engaging. And I felt valued and supported throughout."

What kind of work did you complete this summer?

"The majority of my summer was taken up by trying to get two major legal reports out the door, but it was a slow start. The first report was nearly done when I came onboard. (...) After that, there was a week or two where I was working on random tasks, mainly opinion editorials to follow the release of the report, one of which ultimately got published. Then, (my supervisor) asked that I look at another legal report they wanted to get out the door, and I spent the next three weeks cleaning up that report and its citations, with help from the other interns. That was probably the most exciting and difficult part of my internship. It was difficult, time-pressured work, but I loved being given so much responsibility and the challenge of making a 100-hundred page document work."



Read Ella's blog posts about her internship:

[A diversity of strategies for change](#)
[An event or a process? Thinking about the origins of human rights abuses](#)



Joshua Singer Johnson is a second year student at the McGill Faculty of Law. He previously completed a B.A. in History and Philosophy. Josh is particularly interested in environmental law, and enjoys educating the public about the law as a volunteer with the Legal Information Clinic at McGill. A British Columbian at heart, Josh enjoys long hikes, kayaking, skiing, and anything that gets him outside near mountains and oceans.



Joshua Singer Johnson

Republic of Namibia Ministry of Justice
| Windhoek, Namibia

The mandate for the **Ministry of Justice** is to administer justice in the Republic of Namibia. The distinguished mandate as per the functions is: to provide legal services and access to justice. Through its Directorate of Legislative Drafting, the Ministry is charged with the function of scrutinising and drafting bills for Parliament, Proclamations of the President, Regulations and Government Notices from Ministries, Offices and Agencies, as well as Rules of the Supreme Court, High Court and Magistrate Courts. In addition, the Ministry provides legal advice to Ministries, Offices and Agencies of Government, mainly on the drafting of legislation, subsidiary legislation and particulars of legislation in force.

"This internship was an absolutely incredible experience. From both a professional and personal perspective, it was certainly among the best things I have ever done.

I feel very grateful to have had the opportunity to learn a variety of legal skills, and for the trust that was placed in me from the outset. The work that I was doing was clearly important, and the structure of the Ministry truly made me feel that I was the only person around who could do the work I was doing, other than the Minister herself. I was not expecting that, but it made it an absolute joy to bounce over to the office every morning."

What did your work at the Ministry entail, Joshua?

"There are many files ongoing at the Ministry of Justice. Through the legislative drafting directorate, the Ministry oversees the drafting of all new Namibian laws, so the scope of work is very broad. While I was there, in the Fall/Winter of 2022, the most significant files we were working on were the community (tribal) courts, legislation facilitating access to justice, the Combatting of Rape and Combatting of Domestic Violence bills, divorce reforms, and the establishment of a small claims court for Namibia."

What was your overall experience like?

"The work at the Ministry of Justice was less directly connected to human rights than the work of most internships in this program. I certainly learned to expect the unexpected, and how to adapt to the real challenge of trying to affect change with very limited resources. The mandate of the Ministry of Justice is everything from the representative services of an MP, to the provision of legal aid, to the drafting of legislation. The consequence of one office trying to do everything, is that the work tend to be done gradually in a haphazard and patchwork manner. This is the reality of trying to make reforms and change a system from within (...) I do think the reforms we were attempting to implement were noble and potentially transformative, but the pace of change is glacial."

Read Joshua's blog post about his internship experience:

[And you may ask yourself, well, how did I get here?](#)



Nicolas Kamran

Maliganik Tukisiniarvik Legal Services | Iqaluit, Canada



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LEGAL SERVICES BOARD OF NUNAVUT
TAPKUAT MALIGALIGIYIT KIVGAQITIT KATIMAYIT NUNAVUTMI
LA COMMISSION DES SERVICES JURIDIQUES DU NUNAVUT

Nicolas Kamran is a second-year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. Prior to studying law, he obtained a DEC from Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf in Arts and Science. It was during this time that he presided several student environmental committees, organizing direct climate action in his community. At the Faculty, Nicolas remains deeply invested in community life. He is a Senior Editor at the McGill Journal of Sustainable Development Law, a Senior Advocate at the Wallenberg Advocacy Group, a caseworker at Innocence McGill, a columnist for the Quid Novi, and a group assistant for the first-year Criminal Justice course taught by Professor Mugambi Jouet. In Summer 2021, he also assisted the Administrative Housing Tribunal's Director of Legal Services. Nicolas has a strong interest in criminal justice, believing in the power of human rights to renew commitment to the rehabilitative ideal.

Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik Legal Services is the legal aid office that serves the Baffin region of Nunavut. The lawyers work in criminal, family, poverty and civil law. The largest section is the criminal law section. The court workers working in Iqaluit and in communities throughout the territory do substantive legal work by representing clients in Justice of the Peace Court. For 40 years, Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik, through its legal aid clinic in Iqaluit, has focused on public legal education, law reform and client representation. Today, 8 criminal law lawyers, 3 family law lawyers, 1 poverty law lawyer, 2 full time Iqaluit Inuit court workers and Inuit Court Workers in 12 Baffin Communities continue the work of the last 40 years ensuring that access to justice remains at the forefront in Nunavut.

What was your overall experience like, Nicolas?

"During my internship, I worked exclusively on criminal and Charter files. I completed tasks at every stage of the criminal justice system, from initial arrests to appeal. This entailed research memos, client interviews, factum drafting, disclosure reviews, and even sitting as second chair on trials. A major highlight of this internship was going on circuit. The experience pushed to the extreme every feeling of challenge and gratification there is to be felt at Maliganik (...) Iqaluit is a small city with a large sense of solidarity. Whether you are hiking through Sylvia Grinnell Park, hunting narwhal, or riding your ATV out on the land, you are bound to feel dwarfed by the sheer scale of your surroundings. There are always places to go and people to meet!"

What was the highlight of your internship?

"Circuit court was the highlight of my stay. I was extremely fortunate to work in Pond Inlet towards the end of my internship. Over 9 days, I aided 3 defence lawyers (two of whom were senior private panel lawyers from Toronto) with 62 clients, 77 files, and 185 charges. Before leaving, I was tasked with reviewing disclosure and assessing strategy for every single file. Once there, I interviewed clients for sentencing and prepared trials. I even sat at counsel table to assist with cross-examination on 2 sexual assault trials. On the whole, this experience was the most memorable and difficult one of my internship (and possibly my life). The sheer pace and volume of the circuit was exhausting. I worked 15-hour days, and my supervising lawyers would be negotiating deals with the Crown well past 2 or 3AM."

Read Nicolas's blog posts about his internship experience:

[Walking with History](#)
[Traces of Transience](#)



Laurence LeBlanc

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees | Tunisia, Tunisia

UNHCR has been active in Tunisia since 1957, when Tunisian authorities asked for its assistance to protect several thousands of Algerian refugees. UNHCR established an honorary representation in 1963, then a full representation through the signature of a Headquarters agreement in 2011 between UNHCR and the Tunisian Government. Since then, UNHCR works in close collaboration with authorities and Tunisian civil society to promote a favourable protection environment for refugees and asylum-seekers in Tunisia. UNHCR and its partners, with the essential support of donors, ensure international protection through the registration of refugees and asylum-seekers, documentation and the Refugee Status Determination procedure. UNHCR and its partners provide emergency assistance to the most vulnerable (shelter, material assistance) and a follow-up for socio-economic inclusion of persons of concern to UNHCR.



Laurence LeBlanc is a second-year BCL/JD student at McGill University. Prior to law school, she completed her MA in political science with a concentration in international development. Her thesis involved conducting fieldwork in rural Kenyan communities to gain insight into gendered labour responsibilities and ecologically sustainable women's group initiatives. Her interest in human rights law began during her BA in international development when she had the chance to live in Ecuador for a year working in environmental justice and corporate accountability. Outside of her studies, Laurence serves on the Board of Directors for a grassroots NGO called Help-Kids-India, which fundraises the operating expenses of three Dalit preschools in Tamil Nadu, South India. Laurence also volunteers at the legal clinic at McGill, and is an avid ceramic artist who donates the proceeds of her pottery sales to women's shelters in Montreal. Always excited by grassroots activism and language learning, Laurence is thrilled to be working with UNHCR in Tunisia this summer.

What did your work at UNHCR entail, Laurence?

"My official unit was the community-based protection unit. (...) To demonstrate the always-changing nature of my work at UNHCR, the third week of my internship alone included:

- Going to the refugee accommodation facility with my colleagues (...)
- Writing a code of conduct for the accommodation facility (...)
- Drafting a 30-page report of a survey with Ivorian refugees in Tunisia about their intentions to return to their country after the cessation clause of their refugee status takes effect on June 30 (...)
- Researching legal questions for the protection team regarding international humanitarian norms (...)
- Completing trainings on fraud and corruption, gender-based violence, LGBTQ+ refugee case management, etc. (...)"

What was your overall experience like?

"My experience living and working in Tunisia this summer was a phenomenal opportunity for professional and personal growth (...) While I have engaged in other internships in other parts of the world in the field of human rights and environmental activism, my time at UNHCR Tunisia stands out as being the most memorable professional environment where I contributed as an active team member to a human rights project. Rather than simply being an observer, in this workplace my contributions were valued, my intellect was respected, and my opinions were solicited. Not only was I learning, but I was also sharing my knowledge as a contributing member of a team. In terms of professional networking, this experience absolutely elevated me to a range of career opportunities that will serve me well in the future."

Read Laurence's blog posts about her internship:

[What can we learn from protesting refugees? : A UNHCR Tunisia example](#)
[Queer Activism in Tunisia](#)



Nicolas Kamran,
Maliganik
Tukisiniarvik
Legal Services,
Canada



Bella Harvey,
Forum for
Human Rights,
Czechia

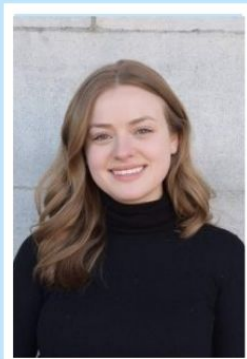


Laurence LeBlanc,
UNHCR, Tunisia



Joshua Singer
Johnson, Ministry
of Justice,
Namibia

Renée Lehman is a first year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. She holds an Honours B.A. in political science from McGill, with minors in international development studies and philosophy. During her undergraduate degree, her research focused primarily on the impacts of precarious immigration and citizenship statuses in contexts of political violence and human rights violations. As a Student Fellow with the Yan P. Lin Centre's Research Group on Constitutional Studies, she also studied issues of policing, prisons, and punishment. Through volunteer work in her community, Renée became especially interested in the disproportionate mental health impacts of public policy, notably the adverse effects of Bill 21. She is currently completing a placement with UQAM's Droit et soins de santé project through McGill's chapter of Pro Bono Students Canada, and she is very excited to be volunteering with Avocats Sans Frontières in Québec City this summer.



"One of the major highlights was ASFC's sincere prioritization of my learning, even going so far as to try to assign me with tasks tailored to my interests wherever possible. Another highlight was the level of trust they had in me, from the beginning. They clearly assumed that I was capable from the get-go, and allowed me to work independently on important projects and trusted me to do a good job. This made for an extremely encouraging environment!"

Avocats sans frontières Canada est une ONG dont la mission est de soutenir la défense des droits des personnes les plus vulnérables par le renforcement de l'accès à la justice et à la représentation légale. Fondé au Canada en octobre 2002, ASFC compte sur plus de 25 employés à temps complet à son siège de Québec et sur le terrain, de même que sur environ 200 bénévoles. ASFC met actuellement en œuvre des programmes de coopération en Haïti, en Colombie et au Guatemala.

Renée Lehman

Avocats sans frontières Canada (ASFC)
Québec, Canada

What was the work environment like, Renée?

"I had a truly excellent experience with the 'culture' at ASFC. They utilize a "gestion collaborative" method of working, which emphasizes that each team member working on a project has an equal voice. It attempts to rid teamwork of hierarchical positionality in order to encourage the input of all team members. This helps to include multiple perspectives in how each project develops. In practice, it's obvious that interns still do take 'instructions' when working in teams, but I nonetheless found that this method encouraged me to voice my ideas and encouraged my superiors to listen."

What was something you learned from your time working at AFS?

This internship allowed me to learn a huge amount about various human rights issues and the many ways that different actors seek to address them. Through working with practitioners and being tasked with a large variety of research mandates, I learnt about both the practical and theoretical aspects of human rights work. In a 'big picture' sense, I learnt that human rights work involves many of the skills that we learn in school. My past research experience during my undergraduate degree and my work as a research assistant helped to prepare me for the type of in-depth research and concise summarization that I was tasked with."

Read Renée's blog posts about her internship:

[Global Views from Home: Lessons from a Remote Internship](#)

[Subsidiarity and Complementarity: Guiding Principles in International Human Rights Work](#)





 **Lawyers**
without Borders
Canada

Nathan Leung

Avocats Sans Frontières Canada (AFSC)
| **Bogota, Colombia**

Nathan Leung is a first year BCL/JD student at the McGill Faculty of Law. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics from the University of Toronto and had the opportunity to study abroad at the National University of Singapore. His undergraduate thesis focused on understudied Chinese languages and won first place at the Scarborough Undergraduate Linguistics Conference. Prior to law school, Nathan volunteered as a translator at the Asian Community AIDS Services to improve access to LGBTQ services for newcomers and people who do not speak English. At the faculty, he is a copy editor for the student-run newspaper Quid Novi. During the fall semester, he was also an Events and Community Outreach Officer for IRAP. Nathan is passionate about the intersection of race, LGBTQ identity, and the law. He is also deeply interested in issues involving language and the law, such as jurilinguistics and protections against linguistic discrimination. This summer, he will conduct legal research at Avocats Sans Frontières to improve protection for victims of human trafficking, with a focus on female and LGBTI persons. He looks forward to learning more about international human rights law from the cooperation of cross border institutions in Colombia, Canada, and Latin America to prevent human trafficking.

What was the work environment like, Nathan?

"The best part of the internship was truly the work environment. All of my colleagues were extremely welcoming and were more than happy to share Colombian traditions and history with me. The workplace atmosphere was extremely relaxed and at times even felt more like a gathering of friends than coworkers during break times. This internship greatly improved my confidence in working professionally in Spanish, and I am very happy to say that I am now fluent in the language thanks to this opportunity."

What kind of work did you complete this summer?

"May mostly consisted of me reading about the armed conflict in Colombia, the International Criminal Court's preliminary investigation on Colombia, and what ASFC had published so far for both of their projects. In June, I was able to attend the closing event of JUSTRAM which consisted of two parts: the first where the women whom ASFC worked with were invited to celebrate the results, and the second part where academics and officials were invited to discuss the report produced from finishing JUSTRAM. In July, my work consisted of researching matters related to the Final Agreement and the armed conflict, before slowly transitioning into No Mas Trata and looking at countries that had legalized sex work. I was also able to accompany an ASFC employe to a campaign session about human trafficking in August."

Avocats Sans Frontières

Canada (ASFC) is a non-governmental international cooperation organization whose mission is to support the defense of people's human rights in vulnerable situations by improving access to justice and legal representation. ASFC is implementing this project to assist victims of the Colombian armed conflict and their legal representatives in claiming their right to truth, justice, and reparation, and thus contribute to the construction of a stable and sustainable peace. Its main mission is to strengthen the participation of vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls, in the transitional justice mechanisms provided for by the peace agreement signed and adopted by Congress. ASFC and its partners hope to contribute to the strengthening of Colombian society's confidence in these new transitional justice mechanisms by intervening in Antioquia, Cauca, Cesar, Cundinamarca, Nario, Norte de Santander, Santander, and Valle del Cauca

Read Nathan's blog post about his internship experience:

[Bogotá: A Dynamic City of Contrasts](#)





Angela Nassar

Institute for Democracy and Human Rights | Lima, Peru



Angela Nassar is a second-year BCL/JD student at McGill University. Prior to starting her legal studies, she completed her French baccalauréat at Collège International Marie de France, in the speciality Society and Economy. Before entering McGill, her devotion to allowing equality for all, reflected itself in her implication as a volunteer tutor for immigrant students of families of low income at Baobab Familial, a nonlucrative organisation. Keenly interested in human rights and its effects on access to justice, she is both a member of the Avocats Sans Frontières and the Arbitration Student Society clubs at McGill. Furthermore, she was selected for a two-months internship with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) responsible for research for NGOs in the middle-eastern region and African continent. Driven by the possibility of equal rights and access to justice, she hopes to continue advocating these fundamental aspects of a just society.

“My internship experience at the IDEHPUCP was an incredible and unforgettable learning—and unlearning—journey. Even after being home for the duration of my internship, I still feel very grateful for the knowledge I have gained and the preconceptions I have shaken down.”

What did your work at the Instituto de Democracia y Derechos Humanos entail, Angela?

“I worked on multiple projects during my time at the Institute. The first, which took up most of my time and was ongoing for most of my trip, was a jurisprudential project. I was tasked with reading and summarizing landmark cases in human rights law for the final objective of compiling them as a database (...). My other two major research projects involved putting together information on the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations and highlight how the rights of older adults were mentioned/or not. Then, in my last month at the Institute, I was tasked with aiding in the development of a yearly event that the Institute organizes (“Yachay”). This year the topic was on Human Trafficking and specifically, on human disappearances. I was in charge of proposing the topics and sub-topics that would be covered during the event. Finally, I was tasked with proposing a research paper on migration—its advantages and disadvantages—in view of a final project they had fitting in the Human Mobility line of work.”

The Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (Instituto de Democracia y Derechos Humanos - IDEHPUCP) is an academic center attached to the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Its goal is to strengthen democracy and the respect for human rights in Peru through academic and professional training, applied research, and the promotion of public policy with the state and civil society. Since its foundation in 2004, the IDEHPUCP has been closely working with diverse national and international organizations, regional and local governments, civil society organizations and citizens devoted to the country's democratic culture.





Catherine Ndiaye

Equitas | Montreal, Canada

Catherine Ndiaye is a first-year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. Prior to her legal studies Law, she was an Honours Psychology student at John Abbott College, where she was the recipient of the Women Studies & Gender Relations certificate, as well as the Peace & Social Justice Studies certificate. During her collegiate years, she presided over the Black Student Union club, where she organized "Systemic Racism Awareness Week" events and created a discussion group for racialized students in predominantly White institutions. As well, she participated in various other clubs and committees advocating for marginalized individuals while enhancing race relations. At the Faculty of Law, Catherine is a member of the Black Law Student Association and a member of the International Refugee Assistance Project. She hopes to make a difference in society by advocating for marginalized individuals through Human Rights law.

"Working as a coordination intern for Equitas' 2nd edition of the Global Rights Connection (GRC) was a transformative experience, that gave me great insight on the inner works of a worldwide acclaimed non-profit organization."

Equitas advances equality, social justice and respect for human dignity through transformative human rights education programs in Canada and around the world. To deliver on their mission, Equitas' programming contributes to the empowerment of individuals and groups that are subject to discrimination, exclusion and other forms of human rights violations to challenge inequality and discrimination and take action to respect, protect and defend human rights.

What did your work at Equitas entail, Catherine?

"As a coordination assistant, I was in contact with many human rights defenders worldwide, which allowed me to learn about ongoing social issues and the numerous projects taking place to counter them. As well, I had to write short biographies of previous participants to promote GRC on Equitas' Instagram page, which allowed me to familiarize myself with their organization's mission and projects."

What was something you learned from your time working at Equitas?

"My internship at Equitas truly challenged my beliefs on human rights work. When I applied to Law school, and subsequently, the International Human Rights Internship Program, I thought that working in human rights meant civil litigation for marginalized folks through organizations like la Commission des droits de la personnes or the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. It never occurred to me that human rights could be practiced outside the courtroom, and even less through education. Nonetheless, Equitas taught me that there is a way of having a direct impact on marginalized communities without using the courtroom, and are even less costly in the long-term. GRC is not only cost effective, but it empowers vulnerable communities by providing them with the proper tools to know and defend their human rights. Thus, my internship broadened my knowledge on what constitutes human rights work."

equitas

educate. empower. change.





Vidish Parikh

Office of the Federal Housing Advocate at the Canadian Human Rights Commission | Ottawa, Canada



Canadian
human rights
commission

Commission
canadienne des
droits de la personne

Vidish Parikh is a second-year law student at McGill University (BCL/JD). He studied Economics with a focus on Statistics and Policy in his previous studies and continues to have an appreciation for the power of data analysis as a tool to meaningfully unravel the stories behind numbers. Vidish's legal interests lie in Constitutional and Criminal law matters. He is particularly interested in oral advocacy within these fields. He has worked in some of these areas in the past, most recently as a summer law student at the Department of Justice in Health Canada's Legal Services Unit, where he was exposed to Federal Cannabis Regulation and other Health Law issues. As a first-generation immigrant and visible minority, Vidish has always had a passion for advocating for human rights and addressing justice issues. He wishes to continue to use his transsystemic legal education to approach legal and policy issues with emotional intelligence. In his free time, he enjoys reading and writing about these issues and others (such as the trials and tribulations of being a Leafs fan)!

What was something you learned from your time working at the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, Vidish?

"Over the course of my internship, my understanding of human rights work changed greatly, because I developed a more thorough appreciation for transformative change. I now know that to appreciate the experiences of communities such as indigenous peoples and their engagement with housing rights, I first need to understand that there may be no concepts like western rights in their vocabularies. That is human rights work may mean different things for different groups of people. I now realize, that (because I am sure that there are exceptions), many indigenous peoples find the lens of a rights discourse to be deeply unsettling and unhelpful: In fact (as I understand it) they prefer to see human rights work as building a shared understanding on values and community."

What was your overall experience like?

"The small nature of the team gave me an opportunity to engage with novel policy questions on a federal scale, often for the first time. I felt like I was learning with the team, rather than feeling out of place. I also enjoyed that because the team was new, we had a chance of doing various initial touchpoints with marginalized communities. For instance, I was able to meet with various housing groups in Quebec and Ontario to talk about how the right to housing applied to municipal and regional by-laws."

The Canadian Human Rights

Commission is in charge of representing the public interest and holding the Government of Canada accountable on human rights issues.

The Commission is authorized to work with federally regulated employers to ensure that they are preventing discrimination and promoting inclusion through proactive compliance with these laws. Within the Commission, the **Federal Housing Advocate** is an independent, self-contained unit empowered to drive meaningful action to address housing need and homelessness in Canada. The Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, housed at the Canadian Human Rights Commission, works to promote and protect the right to housing in Canada, including the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing. The Advocate's work aims to effect change on key systemic housing issues and advance the right to housing for all Canadians.



Genny Plumptre is a second year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. She holds an MA in Communication Studies and Art History from McGill University, where her research focused on temporal technologies of border control in the context of Canadian liberalism; as well as an Honours BA in Contemporary Studies and History from the University of King's College. Prior to her legal studies, Genny worked in a variety of arts organizations and cultural institutions, including the Canadian Centre for Architecture and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. She also volunteered with Solidarity Across Borders' Education Collective, assisting non-status and precarious status migrants to enrol their children in Québec schools and advocating for universal access to education. Genny has worked as a legal research assistant on topics of systemic discrimination, AI-based workplace surveillance, and privacy risks resulting from the data brokerage industry in Canada. She serves as Associate Editor of both the McGill Law Journal and Rooted: A Publication on Indigenous Law.



Genny Plumptre

Conseil national des droits de l'Homme | Rabat, Morocco

"My internship at the CNDH was a foray into many different worlds at once: international human rights, the Moroccan civil service, the history and geopolitics of the Maghreb, and daily life in Rabat. Twelve weeks is too short a time to come to know any of these in much depth. Still, I left the CNDH and Morocco with renewed appreciation for the importance of travel, and of opening oneself up to different people, places, and cultures, in order to shift one's perspective and unsettle preconceived ways of thinking about the practice of law and of human rights in particular."

Le **CNDH** a trois missions. Sa première consiste à la protection des droits de la personne et afin de remplir ce mandat, le CNDH bénéficie des prérogatives nécessaires pour assurer le monitoring des droits de la personne au niveau national et régional, le traitement des plaintes des violations des droits de la personne, la médiation et l'intervention par anticipation, les enquêtes et investigations liées à des allégations sur la survenance de violation et le reporting au niveau national et international. La deuxième mission du CNDH est celle de la promotion des droits de la personne, mission qui est portée à bien à travers la diffusion de la culture des droits de la personne, le renforcement des capacités des acteurs institutionnels et de la société civile, l'harmonisation des textes législatifs avec les conventions internationales ratifiées et finalement, l'entretien et le développement de la coopération internationale. La dernière mission du CNDH consiste en l'enrichissement de la pensée et des débats sociétaux sur les questions des droits de la personne.

What did your work at the CNDH entail, Genny?

"My projects typically consisted in synthesizing various meetings and events organized or attended by members of the CNDH. I enjoyed this overall because I was able to get a glimpse of pressing human rights issues affecting the regions of North Africa, the Mediterranean, and Europe. It was also interesting to see NHRI diplomacy in action, and to learn about the crucial role of NHRIs in bridging international human rights norms with domestic law and policy."

Read Genny's blog posts about her internship:
[North Africa's colonial borders](#)
[Putting universal human rights standards into practice](#)





Hannah Reardon

**Justice and Correctional Services of the Cree Nation
Government | Waswanipi, Québec, Canada**



Waswanipi is a Cree community in the Eeyou Istchee territory of central Quebec, Canada, located along Route 113 and near the confluence of the Chibougamau and Waswanipi Rivers. The Waswanipi Justice Committee is there to help, support, assist and provide guidance to the members of Waswanipi, when there is conflict in the family, and/or with the law.

"With very little exaggeration I can say that this summer internship has been one of the most formative experiences of my life so far. Working for the Cree Nation Department of Justice and Correctional Services (DOJCS) was an immense privilege. It was also challenging and sometimes a little solitary. I learned a lot about the innovative work that the DOJCS is doing and about the challenges and rewards of working with Indigenous communities. I also learned a great deal about myself as a person and as a professional."

What kind of work did you complete this summer, Hannah?

"My main project was to produce a Gladue report. This required extensive training and preparation and occupied most of my time later in the summer. In between Gladue writing and working on the community histories, I also contributed to a communications project that sought to explain the criminal justice process in simple language, and I sat in on some meetings on the Tiny Homes project for reintegrating former offenders."

What was something you learned from your time working at the DOJCS?

"From the outset of my internship it was very clear that I should have no misgivings about my role in the organization. I was there as a privileged guest, someone who had received a unique opportunity to learn about an innovative organization under visionary leadership. This organization certainly did not need my help. But I was given the chance to contribute to some projects in order to learn and make connections. This lesson in humility guided everything I did over the course of the summer and was important to temper my law student's ego. To draw on this lesson in order to speak of "human rights work" in a more big-picture sense, I would say that my experience of the DOJCS taught me about the importance of empathy and listening in human rights work. I now understand "human rights work" to be work that advances human dignity, in all its forms. Any "human rights work" that is not guided by conversations held directly with those whose dignity you are trying to safeguard runs the risk of slipping into saviourism, which can be harmful to both the recipient of the work and to the image of the discipline itself."

Hannah Reardon is a second-year BCL/JD student. Prior to studying law, she completed a Master's degree in Anthropology. Her thesis focused on participative management frameworks for protected areas in the Brazilian Amazon. Beyond her studies at McGill, Hannah is also the coordinator for the HocheLégal legal information clinic in her neighbourhood. In addition, she is an associate editor at the McGill Journal for Sustainable Development Law and a group assistant in the first-year bilingual section of Criminal Justice. Hannah is passionate about access to justice and a firm believer in local self-determination and indigenous sovereignty.

Read Hannah's blog posts about her internship:
[Sovereignty and Justice](#)
[Dismantling "Bureaucratic Colonialism"](#)

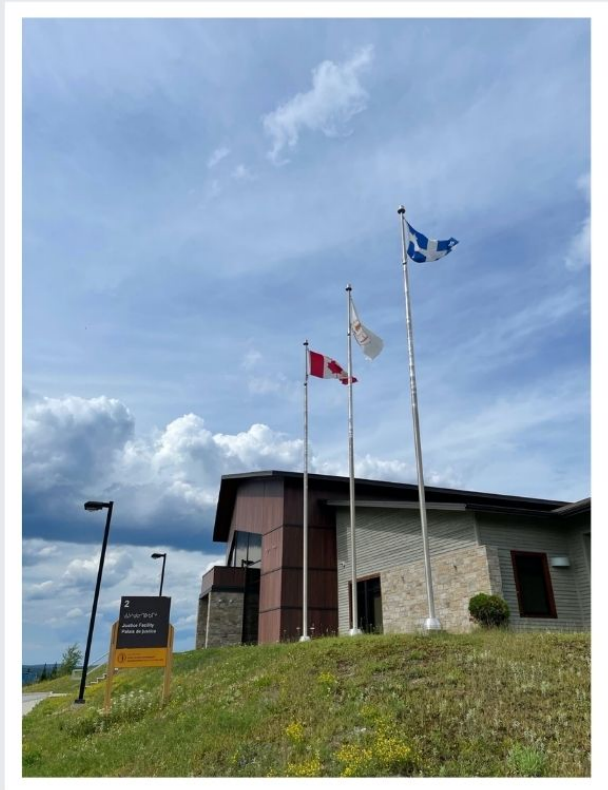




Genny Plumptre, Conseil national des droits de l'homme, Morocco: "Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca"



Nathan Leung, Avocats Sans Frontières Canada, Colombia



Hannah Reardon, Justice and Correctional Services of the Cree Nation Government, Canada: "The Justice facility in Waswanipi"

Noémie Richard

Elimu Impact Evaluation Centre | Kianyaga, Kenya



Noémie Richard is a 1L student in the McGill Law Faculty. Prior to this, she completed a undergraduate degree in Global and International Studies, majoring in Global Law and Social Justice at Carleton University. During that time, she had the opportunity to work in the Senate of Canada and in the Parliament of Kosovo. Noémie has a passion for travelling which brought her to volunteer, travel, work and live in many parts of the world.

The **ELIMU Impact Evaluation Center** was founded in 2006 and is a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Kianyaga, Kenya's Central Province. Their work entails evaluating the practical impact of a variety of poverty-relief initiatives, including rural electrification, microinsurance, and legal assistance. Their approach is based on the randomized experiment concept. This initiative was born out of the realization that without a proper counterfactual, it is impossible to assess the impact of development aid. Elimu solves the counterfactual problem by randomly assigning treatment to a treatment group and comparing it to a control group, similar to how a randomized drug trial does, and Elimu can determine which development projects are successful and which initiatives are the most cost effective methods of raising living standards.

What did your work at ELIMU entail, Noémie?

"The Kenya-Canada Remote Legal Aid Project seeks to address the gap between small-scale rural farmers and accessing legal information (...) Services offered include legal research, legal document drafting, court application filing, training sessions for self-representation in court, mediation (ADR), etc. During my internship, I facilitated the project's transition from its pilot phase to a fully implemented program. To do so, I focused on four aspects:

- 1) expanding the scale of the project by growing the client base and the number of volunteers
- 2) ensuring the long-term sustainability of the program by starting a legal clinic course at the McGill Faculty of Law, registering the project as a LSA club, creating standardized procedures, creating the project's branding (branding kit, logo, etc), establishing recruitment procedures, and beginning the project's social media presence
- 3) setting up the research surveys
- 4) working on new cases, assigning cases to KUSOL students, and coordinating their work

Additionally, I was responsible for the everyday tasks at the office, which included collecting new cases, conducting court perusals and land searches, attending court hearings, and facilitating client meetings.

What was something you learned from your time working at ELIMU?

Access to justice does not start with access to judicial institutions and legal solutions but with legal education about one's rights, without which victims of injustices may never be aware of the rights which are being infringed upon. Access to legal information empowers individuals with the knowledge on what they are entitled to and the limits of other's entitlements. Legal information clinics help bridging the gap between opportunity to seek the enforcement of rights and one's capability of accessing justice by tackling barriers to accessing legal information, such as language barriers, lack of access to electricity or internet, lack of capital to hire a lawyer or pay for transport, corruption, etc.

Read Noémie's blog posts about her internship:

[Knowledge is Power: How Access to Legal Information Can Protect Human Rights](#)

[Kenya 101: A practical guide for newcomers](#)





Charlotte Ridsdale

Centre for Law and Democracy |
Halifax, Canada



Charlotte Ridsdale is a 1L student in the BCL/JD Program at McGill. She holds an Honours BSc in biology from McGill, and has worked on many fieldwork projects. Her interest in food security and environmental science have motivated her previous work in the non-profit sector and in ecological conservation.

Since starting law school, Charlotte has been involved in research projects with Pro Bono Students Canada and legal clinics. She is currently researching migrant farm workers' rights in Canada and beyond.

"I really enjoyed working in a space with such breadth of research interests. I was able to work on quite diverse topics throughout my time at CLD, which was very rewarding. It was also great to see my research used in official UN submissions and other documents."

The **Centre for Law and Democracy** (CLD) works to promote, protect and develop those human rights which serve as the foundation for or underpin democracy, including the rights to freedom of expression, to vote and participate in governance, to access information and to freedom of assembly and association.

What kind of work did you complete this summer, Charlotte?

"When I started at the CLD I began a long-term project on digital rights. The organization was interested in compiling legislation that impacts online forms of expression (social media censorship, government internet shutdowns, etc), specifically in democracies (...) This project was ongoing and I worked on it when other projects closed. I also worked on adapting training materials for Media Defence from the African to the South and Southeast Asian context. This involved a lot of comparative legal research within the domestic laws in Southeast Asia. Media Defence produces training modules to help train lawyers in litigation on various media freedom issues (...) I also got to work on the CLD's submission for this year's UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression's thematic report (...) I very much enjoyed the variety of projects I got to work on, and seeing my work being used for relatively high-profile projects."

What is something you learned from your internship experience, Charlotte?

"Through my internship, I learned that human rights work isn't all "on the ground". There is so much policy-based work that goes on in the background of any human rights case or big issue, and this work is very important.

Read Charlotte's blog posts about her experience:

[A Balancing Act: freedom of expression and protection from harmful content](#)
[An End-of-Summer Reflection](#)



Poonam Sandhu is a third-year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. She holds a Masters in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies from the University of Oxford and a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from the University of British Columbia. Prior to coming to law school, Poonam worked for the Federal Government of Canada and briefly as an impact and evaluation researcher in Lima, Peru. At the Faculty, Poonam is the Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Inter Gentes: McGill Journal of International Law and Legal Pluralism* and Project Director for the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) – McGill Chapter. A highlight of her time at McGill has been volunteering as a caseworker for the Legal Information Clinic. Poonam is passionate about interdisciplinary research on human rights issues at both the international and domestic levels. She is deeply grateful to have the opportunity to further her understanding of human rights and international justice through an internship with Human Rights Watch.

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH



Poonam Sandhu

Human Rights Watch |
New York City, United States

"My internship with the International Justice team at Human Rights Watch was an unforgettable professional and personal experience which exposed me to the world of international criminal law. This internship was the perfect marriage of an outstanding team of colleagues and interesting/challenging work, which kept me excited and motivated for the summer. I had no background in International Criminal Law before this internship but I left feeling very confident in what I had learned about the technical aspects of the Rome Statute, as well as the practical realities of seeking justice for serious crimes. From the very first day of my internship, I felt like a valued member of the team and was given substantive work. I never felt underutilized and felt as though my supervisor truly had my best interest in mind."

What was something you learned from your time working at Human Rights Watch, Poonam?

"The biggest lesson I have learned is that having a strong understanding of domestic judicial systems, and the challenges they have historically faced and continue to face, is crucial in the project of international justice and advancing human rights (...) This lesson has really made me curious to dive more into how international instruments are domesticated and interpreted by national courts throughout the world, and particularly Canada. I have also learned a lot about extrajudicial advocacy efforts and how they contribute to the project of international justice."

What was a highlight of your internship?

"The most rewarding part of my internship was becoming very well acquainted with the first trial at the Special Criminal Court in Bangui. The opening of the court was a long-anticipated moment by members of the IJ team and was an opportunity for me to engage directly with sources in Bangui to conduct interviews on how the process was going."

Human Rights Watch is the largest human rights organization based in the US, employing lawyers, journalists, and academics in seven internationally-located offices. HRW researchers conduct fact-finding investigations into human rights abuses in all regions of the world. The intern is placed in International Justice Program, and works on advocacy related to the international criminal tribunals. The McGill partnership with Human Rights Watch started in 2002.

Read Poonam's blog posts about her experience:

[International Criminal Justice, what's it good for?](#)
[Reflections on a summer working for Human Rights Watch in New York](#)



Angela Yang is a second year BCL/JD student at McGill's Faculty of Law. Born in Montreal but raised in Hong Kong, she moved to the United States to pursue a BA at Brown University, where she created her own major in the field of critical humanitarianism. While at Brown, she also spent a semester on exchange in Nepal, Jordan, and Chile studying comparative human rights. Prior to law school, she worked for various organizations engaging with migrants' rights, anti-human trafficking policies, as well as racial and climate justice in the media. At the Faculty, Angela is a Senior Editor for the McGill Journal of Sustainable Development Law, an active member of the McGill International Law Society, and a research assistant in equality and discrimination law. She also volunteers with Pro Bono Students Canada at PINAY, where she conducts research on labour laws relating to caregivers.



Angela Yang

Citizen Lab | Toronto, Canada

What did your work at Citizen Lab entail, Angela?

"During my time at the Citizen Lab, I worked on one large research project which spanned the course of the summer, and a number of smaller, one-off, or miscellaneous tasks (...) The main research project I worked on was in support of the Lab's ongoing work on digital transnational repression. When I started at the Lab, they had just published their first report on the topic (...) The goal of my research was to provide some background information and context for the next phase of this project at the Lab. I did a deep dive into the role of social media companies, and more specifically their community guidelines, and reviewed what different social media platforms' official policies might have to say about digital transnational repression, including its gendered nature. This research project ballooned into a much larger project than I had originally anticipated and was incredibly interesting – not least because I was getting insights into these company's concrete policies about user behavior on their platforms for the very first time, despite being a longtime and frequent user of these platforms myself."

"I came to the work this summer with virtually no background in issues relating to digital rights, security, and privacy, but I quickly discovered how critical the Lab's work has been and continues to be, and that they really are at the global forefront of documenting and advocating for how those issues engage with or come into conflict with human rights and democracy."

The **Citizen Lab** is an interdisciplinary research and development organization based at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto. Its mission is to conduct research, develop products, and engage in high-level strategic policy and legal engagement at the intersection of information and communication technologies, human rights, and global security. They conduct research through a "mixed methods" approach that incorporates elements of political science, law, computer science, and area studies. Their research focuses on the mechanisms of transparency and accountability that exist between corporations and government agencies in the context of personal data collection and other surveillance activities.

Read Angela's blog post about her internship experience:

[On Privacy\(ies\)](#)



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