

Global Interns Return Home

By Mini Chandramouli

The 2012 Global Internship program provided a platform for exciting new opportunities and experiences for all twelve of our high calibre interns. This year's program was our most diverse and expansive with placements ranging from the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York to Plan International in Haiti. Each intern had a unique experience of human rights issues on the continents they visited.

Three of our interns headed to Africa and advocated for key issues specific to the region. Kylie Pearce interned at the Human Rights Advocacy Centre in Ghana. Within her first week, Kylie was in the field conducting interviews in the local slum which had been demolished unannounced by government authorities. She was on a fact finding mission and her subsequent report was submitted to parliament and garnered national media attention. Kylie saw human rights violations, bribery and corruption at the highest levels of government during her internship, but far from being disheartened, Kylie has started her own NGO – Human Rights Youth Ambassadors Ghana.

Sandra Murray and Divya Roy undertook a six week internship with Oxfam Australia in South Africa, where they were placed within the Refugee and Migrant Rights program. The interns were the first point of contact for drop-in clients and one of the most common issues was the lack of identification documents required to apply for asylum seeker permits. The interns would assist these people in writing affidavits and this simple document meant the difference between a person being an illegal alien or a documented asylum seeker. Sandra and Divya often attended client interviews when they investigated why clients left their originating countries. The majority of these people had experienced or witnessed horrific acts of violence and the interviews Divya and Sandra to understand firsthand how lawyers deal with such sensitive matters. For both interns, the experience solidified their ambitions to pursue a career in social justice and stimulated a new interest in refugee law both in Australia and globally.

Interning in The Hague, Giselle Diego and Jeremy Shelley underwent an enriching experience at the offices of International Criminal Law Services. One of their major projects was to create training manuals for practitioners who were conducting domestic war crimes trials in Kosovo. In order to gain guidance on the political and legal landscape in Kosovo, they had the opportunity to meet the head of chambers at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Catherine Marchi-Uhel. The experience instilled in them a strong belief in the goals of the International Criminal Law Services.

Amanda Thompson interned a little closer to home at International Women's Rights Action Watch – Asia Pacific in Kuala Lumpur. The majority of Amanda's work was focused on preparing for the 51st reviews session for the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women in Geneva. As part of her stint, Amanda had the opportunity to attend the session in Geneva and was witness to the amazing capacity that these sessions have to trigger change, however incremental, in State parties. Amanda's experience broadened her appreciation of gender development and policy and she felt empowered by the work of the organisation.

At Human Rights First in New York City, Nabila Buhary completed an enthralling internship working predominantly with the Refugee Protection Program. Within the first week, Nabila had the chance to work directly with clients and she was constantly amazed by the wealth of knowledge within the organisation. The most rewarding experience for Nabila, and one which cemented refugee law as her future career choice, was seeing one of her clients granted asylum. Nabila hopes that the knowledge and experience she has gained will allow her to continue to pursue social justice for refugees.



(l-r) Sandra Murray, Nabila Buhary, Divya Roy, Amanda Thompson, Elisabeth Howard, Jeremy Shelley, Giselle Diego, Manav Satija, Alison Cole, Kylie Pearce, Tessa Daws.

Alison Cole also interned in New York, at the Center for Constitutional Rights. Alison's interest in corporations and human rights fit perfectly with the Center's work on the *Kiobel* case before the US Supreme Court, a case which is set to determine the liability of US corporations for human rights abuses abroad. Alison's experience in New York has strengthened her desire to find a career in human rights law.

Manav Satija interned with the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. Throughout his experience, Manav had the real sensation that the work he was doing was 'cutting edge' and critical in the area of economic, social and cultural rights. One of his major projects involved conducting research for an ICJ submission to the UN Economic Social and Cultural Rights Committee on rights relating to employment. Manav found the experience inspirational, insightful and enjoyable and he is confident that he will be able to integrate some of his incredible experiences into practice.

Four more interns, Jeremy Shelley, Elisabeth Howard, Melody Stanford and Tessa Daws interned at International Criminal Law Services in The Hague, Plan International in Haiti, UNHCR in Kuala Lumpur and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health in Delhi. You can read their final reports on pages 13 to 16.

The 2012 Global Internship program was extremely successful, with each of the interns bringing back a unique perspective on global human rights issues which will be sure to enrich their future endeavours, whether here in Australia or overseas.

For more information on this year's Global Interns, visit castanglobalinterns.wordpress.com.

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