

Geneva for Human Rights – Global Training, Geneva
Kathryn Aubrey-Horvath

Description of the Work Done

Despite being an intern for Geneva for Human Rights (GHR), I never actually spent time in our office. Instead, I spent my 5 weeks at the United Nations, monitoring meetings, compiling data and information, and producing reports on what was going on in the daily meetings. My first assignment was to monitor the inaugural Human Rights Council session, and my second was to monitor the ECOSOC session. My written reports were very detailed submissions, but I was also expected to present regularly to the GHR team an analysis of general trends and highlight emerging areas or abnormalities.

How it Contributed to the Public Interest Work of the Organization

One of the main mission statements of GHR is to provide a “UN education” to those NGOs in developing countries which do not have access to the same resources as the wealthier NGOs which have permanent representation in Geneva. My reports and analysis of various UN meetings were used as training tools to educate those developing country NGOs, and would help them decide whether an issue was important enough for them to work towards sending representation to Geneva to engage the system. The human rights NGOs from Columbia and Thailand both made extensive use of my reports, and it was immensely rewarding to see how they shaped their organization’s policy responses from analysis.

How Work Improved My Skills and Knowledge

I learned so much in my time at GHR that it seems implausible that I was only there for 5 weeks. My oral advocacy skills were improved from the briefings that I made on a regular basis to the team. My analytical skills were sharpened by the overwhelming amount of information that I had to sift through daily in order to produce short and concise reports. Given the setting and the people I dealt with every day, I also had to be extremely professional, an astute politician, and an able diplomat. I had to be well informed and up-to-the-minute about all world events, and be able to voice an opinion on said events at all times.

How the Internship May Have Affected My Plans for the Future

The internship affected my plans for the future by reinforcing my passion for international law, diplomacy and governance issues. I was able to work at an institution that I idolized as a child, and emerge from the experience as a less idealistic but equally enthusiastic supporter of the UN body. My commitment to social justice issues has been reaffirmed and even augmented. I am doing Pro Bono and an International Law moot now in second year law, both of which are a direct consequence of my summer experience in Geneva.

Midwinter Harvest, Tyendinaga
Chris Badenoch

The internship I completed with Midwinter Harvest was a very worthwhile experience. Daily contact with the members of the group allowed me to increase my understanding of the legal issues facing Aboriginal communities in ways that would not have been possible through study alone. I developed practical legal skills dealing with issues of great public interest for the people of

Tyendinaga. Working with practising lawyers on live legal issues was also an educational experience simply in terms of becoming familiar with professional expectations.

In the early part of the internship I wrote a twenty-five page legal memo for Steven Reynolds, an Ottawa lawyer that does work for the group. That memo focused on the legal issues involved in establishing an aboriginal right to inter-reserve trade, with particular attention to the way tax and excise laws affect aboriginal territories. This memo was used by Mid Winter Harvest as the starting point for mounting a test-case on trade issues that impact the ongoing efforts of aboriginal communities to gain economic self-independence. In all the research that went into this memo, particular emphasis was placed on the legal issues that face Tyendinaga and other reserves with sizable Mohawk populations.

I also produced a legal memo on the manner in which land allotments are made under the Indian Act and how this process impacts the ability of aboriginal communities to create viable commercial enterprises. The point of this research was again to further Midwinter Harvest's goal of making aboriginal communities (and particularly Tyendinaga) economically self-sufficient. The group's aim of creating grass-roots solutions to the social and economic difficulties experienced by aboriginal peoples directed almost all of my research.

I also assisted Peter Rosenthal, a Toronto lawyer that does work for the group, in a criminal trial. I took almost sole responsibility for the pre-trial preparation. I conducted legal research and produced another memo dealing with the legal issues of the case. I interviewed the accused and four witnesses, conducted field research (took distance measurements of the areas of Deseronto and Tyendinaga that were relevant to the case) and wrote up all these documents for the lawyer. Later, I worked with the lawyer, re-questioning witnesses, preparing them for trial and determining a general strategy for the trial. I provided assistance to the lawyer during the trial, taking notes and making suggestions as the trial unfolded. Additionally, I was called as a witness and was cross-examined by the Crown.

The trial raised the question of the proper relationship between the Tyendinaga Police Force and the OPP as well as the relationship between Tyendinaga residents and both of these law enforcement bodies. Having such an active role in the trial was an invaluable educational experience for me at this stage of my career. The assistance I gave to the lawyer (who was working for free) was crucial to achieving the positive result for the defendant and for the Tyendinaga community.

I did some extra research, where time permitted, into how Midwinter Harvest might best conduct its food production operation and power its new community Long House in environmentally sustainable ways.

Though I did not take an articling position working specifically in the area of aboriginal law, the internship provided me tactical insight into litigating aboriginal issues in a way that has given me the confidence to initiate a relationship with an Aboriginal law boutique firm in Toronto. After articling with the Environmental Review Tribunal, I plan to develop this relationship further in a way that will allow me to incorporate aboriginal legal work into my practice.

There is no recruitment system to help students and lawyers interested in advocating on behalf of aboriginal students connect with one another. To find a place in this small legal community it is important to be more than competent and interested, it is also crucial to be credible. Participating in

this L.F.O. internship has increased my knowledge of aboriginal legal issues, but more importantly it has allowed me to view the practical, tactical side of litigating aboriginal issues and given me the confidence to initiate the personal relationships that are vital to success in this legal field.

Sierra Legal Defence Fund, Toronto

Bonnea Channe

I was involved in 3 kinds of work: litigation and advocacy-related work, researching and assembling legal and scientific information toolkits, and responding to email and phone inquiries from members of the public.

The most memorable litigation file I worked on was a PEI fisheries-related case. Sierra Legal was representing three environmental organizations that were seeking intervenor status. I drafted affidavit questions, witnessed representatives of those organizations being interviewed by our lawyers, and wrote and edited certain sections of factum.

An interesting area of advocacy work was legislative reform. This entire experience taught me about the process of how a bill becomes law and, more importantly, how the public can become involved in that process. While I assisted our lawyers by researching and writing memoranda in regards to proposed legislation, I also attended oral submissions made by stakeholders to the Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly, participated in strategy sessions with clients and offered my opinion on what advocacy styles were effective or not, and witnessed the standing committee go through a clause by clause consideration of the bill. At the end of the day, I was satisfied that the work of my organization and I contributed to the public interest. Our written and oral submissions gave the public interest a voice in the process, and furthermore the interest of the public was reflected in changes that were made to the bill that is now legislation.

My work on these major files improved my knowledge on the specific subject matters and the processes involved. In addition, I greatly improved my skills in researching bills and legislation. The daily inquiries from members of the public, usually through email, increased my knowledge on a number of statutes as I got into the habit of looking up and informing citizens of statutory provisions relevant to their concerns.

Because my internship was a rewarding experience that spoke to my interests, I am keen to maintain volunteer work with this organization (or a similar one) during my career. Public interest organizations like Sierra Legal depend on volunteers. Almost all Sierra Legal lawyers volunteered at the organization before becoming staff lawyers, and there are lawyers volunteering for this group.

United Nations Information Centre, Brussels, Belgium

Burgandy Dunn

While working as an intern at the United Nations Regional Information Centre (UNRIC) in Brussels, Belgium, I led a project on migration in Europe and also worked as Editor on the daily Press Review.

The project on migration in Europe was in part a research project, which required me to research current issues in migration (including the conditions and status of refugees, legal and illegal migrants). The project was aimed at coordinating a media awareness campaign, with the goal of promoting migration as a phenomenon that is beneficial to all three parties (the migrant, the receiving country and the country of origin), so as to help to reduce the negative stigma often associated with the notion of immigration.

The Press Review, to which I contributed, was an accumulation of news summaries printed in newspapers throughout Western Europe, which were translated into English by other interns or by me, for the purpose of being sent for use in New York.

I found the work to be very helpful in terms of refining my research, interpersonal and communication skills. I was given a lot of independence, and I very much enjoyed being able to have the responsibility to lead a project – the migration in Europe project - which I found so interesting and pertinent. Moreover, I was exposed on a daily basis to various reports and critiques from countries all over Europe on international affairs and politics. In addition, the work atmosphere was very stimulating. I found working with interns from around the world and from various backgrounds an extremely interesting and enriching experience.

Overall, I found the experience of working as an intern in the UNRIC office in Brussels to be very rewarding. It has helped me get a better sense of what kind of career I could see myself having in the future. Although I cannot say that I would want to work in the particular office where I did my internship, I feel that I learned a lot about how the United Nations operates, and would like to someday work in a different branch/office, or in a related field.

Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP)

Tim Fish

For the summer of 2006, I interned at the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP). I worked on a variety of projects, including researching tax laws related to bio-fuel development, as well as examining and comparing greenhouse gas trading schemes and the possible implementation of one in Canada.

I wrote a report that was commissioned by Bull Frog Power, a distributor of renewable energy, to look into the property law related to the instillation of heat pumps in homes. My report focused on the difficulty in obtaining property rights in heat pumps if they are interpreted by the courts as being fixtures and some of the disadvantages of having to rely on contract law.

I did some research on the possible implementation of incineration technology in Ontario, and whether or not it should be encouraged. I had the opportunity to meet with some of the leading experts from industry and civil society to discuss the pros and cons of incineration technology.

I also had the chance to meet with government of Ontario officials regarding the implementation of new regulations on waste processing.

Overall, my internship was a huge success; I learned a lot and made some great contacts. My work at CIELAP has added to the debate in environmental law, and I now have a better idea of the areas in which I would like to practise after graduation. Although I want to work in the private sector, I have seen how lawyers in the private sector have given their time and ideas to initiatives in the non-profit sector. I hope to contribute in a similar way in the future.

UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Tanzania

Lulama Kotze

I am currently working as an intern at the International Criminal Court for Rwanda, based in Arusha, Tanzania. *[Note – Lulama extended her internship and took a one-term ‘stop out’ from law school in the fall of 2006 with her own resources.]* I have been very fortunate to be assigned to an excellent team in the office of the prosecutor that allows me to get very involved with the case and get invaluable hands on legal experience. I have been working primarily under the supervision of a Canadian lawyer from the Department of Justice, war crimes division.

I have had the opportunity to draft motions, a pre-trial brief, attend a pre-trial conference and a status conference as well as countless other meetings. As a result I have become very familiar with the case I am presently working on and my team has appointed me the acting Case Manager for the current session beginning on 25 September 2006.

I was fortunate to be able to travel to Rwanda twice in the last 3 months on mission for work relating to my case. The first time I went for a five-day mission to assist in collecting judicial records from the Rwandan government. A few weeks ago I was able to accompany my team to Rwanda for a second mission in September, when we will interview all the witnesses scheduled to testify for the prosecution.

I have applied to take a semester off from Queen’s Law in order to continue on the case through the first court session beginning in September. I am told that I will have even more challenging work of an even greater legal nature as the case gets under way and we are increasingly busy. Now that I am the case manager, it is my job to know all the details of the case history, prepare all documents for court and attend all sessions of court.

My experience here has directly effected my career plans as I am remaining here for this session and there is a strong possibility I will be offered a paid position as a case manager in the future.

International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR), Montreal

Vanessa Lam

I was involved in the Country Profiles project at the IBCR. This project involves conducting analysis and reporting on the status of realization of children's rights in the countries that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, highlighting progress made, good practices, and remaining challenges. I was mainly researching, editing, and composing draft country profiles on the status of children's rights in various countries. I edited about a dozen country reports for parts of Asia and about half a dozen more country reports for parts of Africa. I also wrote draft country reports for Mauritania, Guinea, and Canada. Besides this research work, I was involved in several other administrative tasks. For example, I edited the format for all countries in Asia and converted the Word documents to PDF format so that they could be made accessible through the IBCR website. I also helped create a standard template, trained new interns, and performed research on nongovernmental organization contacts and research for a fact-finding mission.

My work, and the work of all the other interns at the IBCR, is very important to the Country Profiles project. All country reports are first drafted by interns before fact-finding missions are approved and before children's rights and human rights experts are consulted. The outcome of the analysis is compiled in regional publications that include reports on the status of implementation of the CRC on a per country basis. These publications and the posting of draft reports on the IBCR website help to promote children's rights internationally and accelerate the effective implementation of the Convention at the country level, as well as fill the gap of the absence of a single consolidated regional report on the children's rights situation.

Interning at the IBCR exposed me to a wide variety of children's rights topics and the status of such rights in many different countries. Also, working specifically on the Canada report, I was able to gain a better idea of the situation here in Canada and some new relevant developments (such as Bill C-2 changes regarding victims and witnesses of crimes and Bill C-49 changes regarding sexual exploitation laws). In addition, I was able to look at the political and legal role of international conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This knowledge will be extremely helpful this year as I am planning on writing an ISP on children's rights for Professor Bala. It will also be helpful for my future career. My work at the IBCR will undoubtedly help in my future applications to work with the Family Responsibility Office as well as the Office of the Children's Lawyer. After gaining a more international perspective, I am also more interested now in taking International Law in third year.

Institute of Local Government Studies, Accra, Ghana

Ian Mathany

During the summer of 2006 I went on an internship to Ghana. The internship was arranged with the *Institute of Local Government Studies* in Accra and Tamale. The *Institute's* primary function is to offer training programs to citizens that will increase their capacity to lobby local government and to initiate positive change in their community.

The purpose of the internship was to learn about the challenges facing the citizens of Ghana in the areas of local government and individual rights. After meeting with local government officials, community leaders, and academics I administered a survey to use as field research for a comparative analysis paper. Of particular interest to the paper is the tension between the progressive rights afforded to citizens from their *Constitution* and Ghanians overall lack of knowledge and education in regards to their rights. The Director of the *Institute*, Dr. Esther Ofei-Aboagye, was interested in having research from a comparative perspective to offer new ideas to old challenges. It is my hope that the research I conducted met her goals. In this manner, the paper contributed to the public interest work of the *Institute of Local Government Studies*.

The internship was a valuable experience on many levels. I had the opportunity to enhance my research skills and administer some hands-on research for the first time. In addition, having interviewed academics and local officials, I learned how to listen and appreciate the challenges that people face from all different perspectives. In all, this opportunity taught me that initiative, enthusiasm, and interpersonal skills are the keys to success when facing a new challenge.

Having completed my initial research report, it is my intention to follow up this project with a more detailed paper in the form of an Independent Study Project with Queen's law supervision. Given the nature and size of the challenges facing the Institute, I hope that a more detailed look into access to justice issues could further enhance to ability of the *Institute* to administer programs that will increase the capacity of local citizens.

In all, the trip was a great success. The *Institute* was a great host and the people were very hospitable.

Community Law Centre at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa

Scott Palmer

From mid-May to the end of July 2006 I had the opportunity to undertake an internship with the Community Law Centre (CLC) at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa which would not have been possible had it not been for the grant provided to me the Law Foundation of Ontario. The CLC has a strong legacy in South Africa from conducting policy research, training, and advocacy in constitutional and public law issues of importance for rights and empowerment for all in that country. Every Minister of Justice in the new South Africa served at the CLC before taking that ministerial position and the renowned Archbishop Desmond Tutu sits on the Board of Trustees. The CLC has five areas of focus—socioeconomic rights, children’s rights, gender rights, privatisation, and local government. My internship was with the local government department.

The local government section of the CLC is concerned with municipal law and the effective observance of the Constitution and applicable statutes. South Africa’s government is designed with the intention that municipalities rather than federal or provincial governments have the most responsibility for service delivery and law-making. In this sense it is a very ‘bottom-up’ type of structure, which is most sensitive to regional disparities in a country with such a diverse mix of cultures and historical fragmentation. As expected with such a relatively new and untested governmental framework—the South African constitution is only ten years old—in a country with widespread poverty there are many challenges. This makes the local government project at the CLC a very exciting and challenging place to be.

Rather than having one primary project to focus on at the CLC, I helped with many tasks. The bulk of my time was spent proofreading and editing the manuscript of a large and updatable local government textbook co-authored by the local government project coordinator and the CLC’s director to be published by Butterworths. Once finalised, this volume will prove to be the definitive work on the subject of local government in South Africa, which broader applications for other developing nations. I would recommend that law libraries in Ontario purchase this volume once published in order to promote scholarship in local government issues in Canada where it seems to me the subject of municipal law and comparative local government law is largely neglected.

Another task I assisted with was the preparation of the Local Government Bulletin, a bimonthly periodical distributed to libraries and elected officials across the country to draw attention to current issues, court rulings and ideas in the area of local government. Many elected officials in South Africa lack even a high school education and for some of them the bulletin is their primary source of information about how to find solutions to questions of good governance. The bulletin has subscribers across Africa and as far afield as India, but there are no North American subscribers. Again, I would propose that law libraries in Ontario consider subscribing to this periodical in order to promote scholarship of local government issues and international community development.

Beyond the proofreading, editing, and citation-checking I did for these two publications, there were many other tasks I helped with. I helped organise and conduct a three-day training session for all the elected municipal councillors of the City of Cape Town. It was a fantastic and profoundly insightful experience hearing their ideas and questions and getting the chance to speak with them. Another thing I did at the CLC was provide legal research for projects various senior members of the local government project were working on. I researched statutory construction, criminal law,

and municipal case precedents for the CLC's director. I also helped arrange the Dullah Omar Memorial Lecture by former Chief Justice Arthur Chaskalson. Also, I compiled a database of local government legislation from the other countries of the Southern African region, as the CLC is now expanding its scope beyond the borders of South Africa. The local government project for example has been consulting with the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to draft a new constitution. There were many other administrative tasks I carried out during the internship.

The internship was tremendously fantastic for me personally. I learned a lot about a substantial area of law I had known practically nothing about before the internship started. I also gained a fuller appreciation for the incredibly complex issues facing the nation of South Africa which have been moulded by the historical forces of cultural disparity, colonisation, apartheid, the AIDS epidemic, foreign investment, privatisation, and constitutional reform. I was able to attend committee hearings at the South African parliament and meet parliamentarians. I met countless Cape Town city councillors, the mayor of Cape Town, the Western Cape Premier, the Western Cape Minister for Local Government, and the former Chief Justice. I also met the Austrian ambassador to South Africa (Austria is one of the sponsors of the CLC's work) and the director of the Australian local government public policy centre. Most inspiring however were my coworkers at the CLC who comprised many nationalities but were all committed to helping South Africa reach its full potential under its new Constitution. My coworkers were encouraged me to not only be concerned about the developing world, but to be fully committed to working to see improvement at the highest levels of government. I think local government will always be an area of interest in law for me for the rest of my legal career. I am committed to revisit South Africa again in the future and do what I can to help its government help its people to the extent set forth in its Constitution. There is little in terms of financial reward in local government work, but I think the rewards of seeing proper government improve the lives of literally millions of people are far greater. The challenges are great but that is what makes the task all the more interesting.

I thank Queen's Law and the Law Foundation of Ontario for allowing me to undertake this amazing and remarkable internship.

Toronto Workers Health and Safety Legal Clinic
Mark Phillips

The Toronto Workers Health and Safety Legal Clinic is funded by Legal Aid Ontario to provide legal and technical advice and representation to unorganized workers who face health and safety problems at work. The Clinic provides workers with information about health and safety hazards of their employment, advice about their rights under the law and legal representation where required. In addition to individual advocacy, they undertake community education and outreach programs aimed at unorganized workers, particularly newcomers to Canada and youth organizations in the Toronto area.

This summer I worked on a number of wide-ranging projects:

- The formulation of an independent research project with respect to the Early and Safe to Work Policies of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.
- Providing legal research for clients appearing before the Workplace Safety and Insurance Tribunal.
- Outreach and coordination of the Clinic's public legal education programs and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Boards Young Worker Awareness Program. This task involved administration and meetings with representatives of community agencies.
- The review of a project proposal from the Clinic's Board of Directors assessing the true costs of workers' compensation. The task involved rewriting, research and the preparation of a draft project proposal.
- Assisting in a job/safety analysis for a large Toronto community agency to assist them in safe and early return to work procedures and an assessment of modified duties. This task involved a practical application of the research involved in the primary research on safe and early return to work and the development of an analysis template for use by other community agencies.

REVIEW:

When I began my internship I was a little bit disappointed by the amount of work available at the office. It is a small 2 person legal clinic, where each file tends to last for several years. As well, in the month of May there were 2 other law students volunteering their time there, so as to make for limited available work. As the summer moved on, I received an increase in the amount of legal work and experience, mostly in relation to case research.

This September the clinic took on an articling student for the first time. With all available work going to the articling student, I suspect a legal internship would not be very interesting for law students in the upcoming summer.

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic

Yashoda Ranganathan

The Barbra Schlifer Clinic offers legal assistance to women survivors of violence. As a summer law student at the clinic I was fully immersed in the day-to-day functioning of the clinic while receiving guidance from the clinic's staff lawyers.

The majority of my work at the clinic consisted of conducting legal intake. Client's call into the clinic at a high volume on a daily basis and, from time-to-time, in very dire situations. There is only one staff legal intake worker at the clinic and, as such, the assistance of students is critical to attending to all the clients seeking help. It is the job of the legal intake workers to identify the client's most pressing legal issues and to find the client legal assistance, either from one of the clinic's staff lawyers, or more often, through legal aid. This role enabled me to develop critical skills at conducting client interviews.

In one dramatic situation, I was able, with the assistance of the clinic's counseling staff and staff lawyers, to convince a woman who had called in describing a very volatile domestic situation to move into a shelter. I then found that client legal representation to assist her with custody and support issues. Because I was the first person that the client had spoken to about the abuse she had experienced, she began to rely heavily on me as her case progressed. It was challenging for me to delineate the subtle boundaries between legal assistant and friend. The experience taught me a great deal about the kinds of personal pressures that come to play when dealing with clients in high-stakes situations.

My experience at the Barbra Schlifer Clinic has shown me that it is possible to assist marginalized individuals in immediate need of help through legal avenues, but that there are limits to the assistance that a lawyer can provide. It has also taught me a great deal about the personal strength and mental balance required to face that kind of work on a daily basis. Most of all, working at the Barbra Schlifer Clinic has demonstrated for me the importance of not-for-profit organizations and of lawyers who work pro bono or on legal aid certificates, without which, many individuals, deserving of help, would be unaware of the legal recourse available to them.

The six-week internship at the Barbra Schlifer Clinic has strengthened my resolve to ultimately work at not-for-profit or non-governmental organization that addresses the needs of individuals whose needs would otherwise be un-represented.