

## **Reports by Torys Interns, Summer 2007**

**Alexis Fink**

**Barbara Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, Toronto, Ontario**

During first-year, I became involved with the Barbara Schlifer Commemorative Clinic. I took part in a joint initiative between the Women and Law Association and the Queen's Human Rights Unit to create a website designed to aid Canadian lawyers, like those at the Schlifer Clinic, involved in extradition proceedings in which a party is a victim of domestic violence.

Fortunately, Torys LLP's Public Interest Summer Internship Grant permitted me to continue my work with the Clinic, this time as a summer student. At the Schlifer Clinic, I gained broad exposure to the intersections between different areas of the law, including family, criminal, immigration and child welfare law. Though I worked primarily in the area of immigration law, I learned that clients with legal problems in the area of immigration often have multiple legal needs.

The staff at the Schlifer Clinic encouraged me to take on as much responsibility as I wanted and could handle. Consequently, I was responsible for all levels of a file, from the initial client interview to the final draft of an immigration submission. The Schlifer Clinic encouraged a "learning-by-doing" approach. While there, I learned to interview diverse clients from around the world on sensitive personal matters, often working through interpreters. I also gained experience in the development of legal arguments and was directly responsible for drafting immigration submissions. I was highly impressed with the direct substantive work available for students. In turn, I was able to make a significant contribution to the Schlifer Clinic's activities and programs.

In addition to my work with individual clients, I was also able to assist the Schlifer Clinic more broadly in the integrated and effective delivery of services to its clients. I created and updated information sheets for women who have experienced domestic violence. These information sheets focused on how to proceed in the aftermath of an incident of violence, how to find and retain a lawyer, and how to make an effective legal aid certificate application. In addition, I created a number of public legal education materials on family, immigration and criminal law to meet the needs of victims for legal information.

The Torys Public Interest Summer Internship Grant allowed me to work as a summer student at the Schlifer Clinic. This provided me with a meaningful experience that both enhanced my understanding of the legal system and provided a great deal of substance. My initiatives involved considerable legal research, analysis and writing. I am confident that the cultivation of these skills at the Schlifer Clinic will aid me in the practice of any area of law.

**Miriam Levin**  
**The Israel Centre for Family Justice, Jerusalem**

This summer, thanks to Queen's University and Torys LLP Summer Internship Public Interest Scholarship, I was able to spend four months interning at The Israel Centre for Family Justice in Jerusalem, Israel.

**Background**

The Israel Centre for Family Justice, or Miklat, is the only network of shelters in Israel that addresses the needs of Orthodox Jewish women and children who are victims of domestic abuse. Miklat was founded in 2004 to provide representation in secular and religious courts, and free legal services to women of all backgrounds in need of guidance in understanding and navigating Israeli family law. Miklat also operates a special shelter for religious teenage girls at risk.

Miklat opened its legal department in 2004 in attempt to meet the needs of domestic violence victims pursuing justice in Israel's civil and rabbinical courts. The centre offers its services to all Israeli women, regardless of religious or ethnic background. 1,035 women sought legal help from Miklat in 2005 due to the center's reputation and legal expertise. Miklat helps women in cases of divorce, alimony, child support, criminal charges, restraining orders, and various other legal issues.

Miklat is funded almost entirely by private donors, with only a small stipend they receive from the Israeli government. The shelter is unique in that it caters towards a specific clientele and the unique problems that these women face. Though this shelter was opened only two years ago, it is can be used as a prototype for other shelters of its kind internationally if it is sufficiently funded and staffed. This kind of shelter is particularly well suited to be a prototype in the Middle East, where social and cultural stigmas prevent women from seeking assistance in domestic abuse situations.

**Description of the Program**

I was one of four interns at Miklat this summer. Also interning were students from Columbia Law School, Fordham Law School, and New York Law School. The program began with an orientation by the office lawyers and staff to the type of legal work that we would be involved in and the goals the lawyers and the students had for the summer.

Every day at the office involved different work and new opportunities. I was able to sit in on client intake meetings and not only observe but also ask questions. I took notes at each meeting that I used in preparing each woman's file. I accompanied the staff lawyers to both Rabbinical and civil court, and gained an inside perspective into the Israeli court system. I helped the lawyers draft divorce agreements, "shalom bayit –

peaceful home” agreements, custody and alimony agreements, and restraining orders. I was able to participate in the legal process from the moment a woman entered the office to accompanying her to court.

The lawyers also prepared special programs for me to attend. I was able to meet one of the leading Rabbi’s of the ultra-orthodox world, who shared his insights into the problem of women not being able to obtain divorces in Israel. I participated in a seminar at Bar Ilan University, for professionals working with abused women, both secular and religious, in Israel. I met with two judges from the Israeli Family Court, one who was a former New Yorker, who shared his experiences as American working in the Israeli court system, and its similarities and differences to North American systems. I also had the opportunity to take a tour of the Supreme Court of Israel and sit in a hearing.

Miklat also operates two shelters in addition to the legal aid office, and I was able to visit the shelter and meet with not only the women who work there, but women who were staying there. I heard personal stories of how the women came to find Miklat, what the lawyers had done for them, and what life in the shelter was like. I was also able to meet the coordinators and psychologists who worked in the shelters.

In addition to the legal work I was exposed to, and the various activities planned for me, I was also able to see a different side of Israeli society. I spent my weekends at the staff lawyers’ homes, visiting their communities, and learning about their backgrounds and how they came to work at Miklat. The lawyers gave me real personal insight into what kind of legal work I may ultimately do, and what was personally fulfilling to them. I learned how they balanced working in such an emotionally taxing area of the law, and how they saw their roles as lawyers.

I am very thankful to both Queen’s Law and Torys LLP for enabling me to spend my summer working at Miklat.

***(Note to potential interns – all the legal work, including drafting materials, client intake meetings, language of speakers and events was conducted in Hebrew.)***

**Matthew Lui**  
**Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic, Ottawa**

My internship at the Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic (“CIPPIC”) was a rewarding experience. I was involved in a variety of projects at different levels. Below is a brief description of the most substantial projects I took part in.

**Privacy Complaint**

On behalf of our client, CIPPIC filed a privacy complaint to the privacy commissioner of Canada against Astroglide Corp. My duties were researching the relevant provisions of the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, drafting a memorandum, corresponding with the client, and filing the complaint.

**Consumer Copyright Backgrounder: Copyright and Anti-Circumvention**

For this task, I participated in team with two students and one supervising lawyer. I edited the paper for style and readability. I participated in many meetings strategizing format and readability.

**Canadian Music Creators’ Coalition: Peer-to-Peer White Paper**

I participated in a conference call regarding the scope of the draft paper and planning the next steps. I then edited and provided comments on the draft, researched background information including Berkman (Harvard) studies, and drafted a document outlining the advantages and disadvantages of centralized distribution models (including iTunes, eMusic, and MagnaTunes).

**Unfair Trade in E-Contracting Policy Paper**

I contributed to the development of a policy paper addressing unfair online trade practices. My responsibilities included:

- Used CANLII and AUSTLII to research whether any terms were prescribed unfair terms under Australia’s *Fair Trading (Amendment) Act 2003*
- Edited and checked citations in draft sections on inadequate notice, unilateral changes to contract, eliminating consumer remedies, dispute resolution, and unreasonable prohibitions
- Researched and drafted analysis on New South Wales jurisprudence relating to exclusion from liability clauses
- Researched Canadian Consumer Protection Acts to determine Canada’s stance on limiting, shifting, or indemnification from liability clauses
- Researched and drafted prevalence analysis relating to unfair practices of inadequate notice.

**Warda Shazadi**  
**Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund Inc., New York**

This past summer, I interned at Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund Inc. (TLDEF) in New York City. TLDEF is a non-profit civil rights organization that serves individuals who have been discriminated against because of their gender identity and expression. The organization has served as counsel for a number of very successful cases in New York City. One of TLDEF's recent cases, for instance, propelled amendments to the public transport system throughout New York City.

My internship with TLDEF provided me with experience I may not have received after first year of law school. For instance, I designed a survey to examine health policies within New York City Hospitals. I also researched continuing medical accreditation procedures in New York City, attended meetings with doctors, psychiatrists and attorneys on policy changes, helped organize a press conference for a highly-publicized case and attended a live-to-air interview with a client. TLDEF also provided me with the opportunity to attend a four-week summer associate training program with a business-law firm. This program exposed me to professional ethics, rules of confidentiality, depositions and negotiations while introducing me to business law.

The most interesting part of my internship was applying the academic tools I developed in first-year Law to the transgender context, an area about which I knew very little at the start of my internship. I got to work directly with diverse clients who taught me how the law affects real people and how gaps in the law can hurt those who most need its protection. I intend to apply this understanding throughout my legal career towards any field I pursue.

Although I went to New York to work for TLDEF, I formed lasting friendships with fellow interns and with associates who went through the summer associate training program with me. The executive director at TLDEF became a mentor to me, advising me on future career options and academic choices. I formed contacts with people in New York City and my unique summer experience became a conversational catalyst for every interview I had throughout second year OCIs and interview week.

I wanted to relax after working hard during first year of law school, and I was unsure whether to undertake a summer internship, but I was able to structure my internship so that I had the opportunity to enjoy time with my family and travel with the friends. I enjoyed my internship and I would encourage those who are thinking about summer options to consider a public-interest internship.

**Robert Trager**  
**HIV and AIDS Legal Clinic of Ontario, Toronto**

This past summer, I volunteered at the HIV and AIDS Legal Clinic of Ontario (HALCO). HALCO is a not-for-profit charitable organization that supports people living with AIDS/HIV. The rationale behind the clinic is that many people living with the illness often face stigmatization and do not seek legal aid as a result. HALCO counters this problem by creating a comfortable environment for people living with AIDS/HIV, and in doing so they ultimately promote the availability and accessibility of the justice system.

Working at HALCO provided me with an invaluable opportunity to use my research, writing, leadership and communication skills for a cause that I truly value. I was given significant responsibility to solve legal problems and directly handle a diverse range of clientele. Over the course of the summer, I identified legal issues related to many areas of the law and developed practical solutions to the difficulties encountered by our clients. In doing so, I demonstrated my ability to address time-sensitive matters and refined my legal research, writing and analytical skills by drafting memoranda, filing appeals, and assisting with mediations, tribunals and court proceedings.

In addition to developing interpersonal, legal and academic skills, assisting clients with their legal issues and seeing the impact my work had on their lives was an amazing experience. I realized both the limits and the power of the legal profession. This knowledge has shaped the way I approach the study of law and will undoubtedly have an impact on the way I will practice.

My time at HALCO has left an indelible impression on me. I have gained pertinent skills as well as a valuable perspective on the power of the law and the role of lawyers. Thank you for assisting me with this opportunity.

## **Reports by Dean's Excellence Interns, Summer 2007**

**Kate Findlay**

**Women's Centre for Change, Penang, Malaysia**

I undertook my internship at the Women's Centre for Change (WCC), a not-for-profit NGO in Penang, Malaysia which seeks to alleviate women's and children's human rights abuses. The WCC is comprised of a staff of about ten women and is composed of two arms: one side of the organization educates the community about abuse, counsels abused women and runs a shelter for abused women and their families. The other arm of the WCC is the Legal Reform Committee which operates under a lawyer at the WCC in conjunction with lawyers at sister organizations. I worked for the Legal Reform Committee while interning at the WCC.

My goals while interning were to gain some legal experience prior to completing my articling applications and to contribute to an organization doing human rights work. I feel that I was able to achieve both of these goals while working at the WCC. I completed several legal memoranda under the direction of the staff lawyer at the WCC on topics such as consent in sexual assault cases, bias in the trial setting, and women's labour laws. In addition, I was responsible for editing a proposed amendment to the *Domestic Violence Act* which was submitted to the government by the WCC. I was also responsible for completing the initial legal research needed by the WCC to commence drafting an *Equality Act* which will, it is hoped, be presented to the government in the near future. I gained real legal research, writing and drafting skills while completing these tasks. I was able to contribute to the WCC not only through the completion of these tasks but also more generally through my English-language skills (which were put to use by both arms of the organization through much editing), and through my student access to legal research databases (Quicklaw, Westlaw), which the WCC is unable to afford access to on a regular basis.

My internship was made particularly enjoyable for the opportunity it gave me to live in Malaysia. While Malaysia is a Muslim country, Penang, the sole Chinese-majority state in Malaysia, is an island with a population of one million people off the north-west coast of Malaysia. Penang is a culturally diverse island comprised of Chinese, Malay and Indian peoples who, for the most part, live in relative harmony. The mix of cultures in Penang makes for many interesting sights (and great food!). The women I worked with at the WCC were definitely the highlight of my time there; they were very hospitable and frequently took me out for dinner, hiking and to the beach. They were also very helpful in arranging my accommodation in Malaysia (which was very nice!) All in all I consider my internship to have been a fabulous learning experience, both academically and personally.

**Fazilah Hussain**  
**Department of Political Affairs, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

In June 2007 I joined approximately 230 other graduate students from around the world as an intern at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. The pristine building, located at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, was my new home for the next couple of months, and provided me with an experience that will last a lifetime.

My original placement was with the Office of Legal Affairs, as that was the natural choice for a law student. However, I was transferred into a much smaller department shortly before my arrival, an event that drastically altered my experience. I worked in the **Department of Political Affairs** for a small branch called **The Focal Point for Democracy and Rule of Law**. The office was extremely small, consisting of the Department chief, Mr. Tapio Kanninen from Finland, his assistant Mr. Daniel Tuohy from France, an intern from Kazakhstan, and me. The department was in the middle of preparing a lengthy report for this fall's General Assembly on the UN's support for New or Restored Democracies. Since I was the only person whose first language was English, drafting the report fell into my hands. When I arrived in early June, the project was in full swing. Given the nature of the department, there was little time for orientation and training. I quickly learned that this was an environment where I was going to learn a lot in a very short period of time, and the more I put into it, the more I would get out of it. The learning definitely did not end at any point during my internship. This is probably the reason why many interns choose to extend their placements to the 6 month maximum.

In addition to the large report that was drafted during my internship, I was also able to get involved in many other aspects of the department's work, including: an ongoing study about building a cohesive information databank to service Member States undergoing democratic transitions and electoral assistance; observations of inter-departmental meetings; strategic planning projects; research projects on the benefits of regional organizations in the democratic transition process; and other day-to-day activities.

There are a wealth of resources and programs available to provide guidance as well as social networking for intern. The Internship Program is a department on its own. Hundreds of interns from graduate programs across the world participate in the program each year and are greatly appreciated by the staff at the United Nations.

Having completed the Public International Law stream at the ISC was an invaluable asset for this experience. It provided me with a solid foundation for some of the issues in international law which translate into daily concerns at institutions such as the United Nations. The opportunity to work at the United Nations provided me with insight into this major international organization and was of tremendous personal benefit as it left me with life-long friendships, memories and experiences.

**Daniel Kostka**  
**The Back Door, Calgary, Alberta**

The Back Door has been helping Calgary's street youth since 1988. It is an innovative program that uses 'contracting' to help young people take steps toward mainstream society. Contracting is a process by which the youth (called 'participants' rather than 'clients') describe positive steps they could take to get their life back on track (such as getting proper ID or preparing a resume). Each step completed earns them \$15. They can complete up to 10 steps per month and can contract for a total of two years. The volunteers at The Back Door are viewed as 'cultural interpreters' whose role is to act as caring listeners who don't judge, direct, or overtly counsel the young people. About 100 youth are contracting with The Back Door at any given time.

Completing an internship with The Back Door was a rich educational experience for me. My key goal was to learn about how the law affects street youth, in terms of police interaction, bylaw enforcement, and disproportionate impact (through laws such as loitering, illegal camping, and transit enforcement). I spent the first few weeks mainly reading about street youth, learning about the other agencies and resources in the city, learning about The Back Door's history and philosophy, and observing the volunteers and listening to their interactions with the young people. Soon I was contracting with the participants myself. I quickly realized that it was important that I first observe, listen, and learn so that I could understand the street culture first, rather than simply rushing in with my well-intentioned desire to apply my legal knowledge, other education, and personal experiences to the situation.

In addition to reading, observing, and discussing the issues with the project director and the agency's volunteers, I completed the following tasks during my internship:

- Researched legal resources and key legal questions for a legal guide
- Contracted with participants
- Rewrote content for the agency's website
- Catalogued, categorized, and sorted hundreds of reference books
- Found and typed excerpts from a recommended reading list
- Brainstormed alternative names for The Back Door
- Created a values/needs grid and commentary regarding participants and donors
- Interviewed the manager of the Upper Room in Victoria, BC, and took photos
- Conducted in-depth interviews with current and past participants about the impact of the law, their backgrounds, their sense of personal safety, and interactions with police
- Spent an evening touring the downtown with a participant, visiting agencies and meeting other street youth
- Toured the Mustard Seed (a street shelter/soup kitchen) and interviewed a counselor

I am very glad that I chose to do an internship with The Back Door. It has opened my eyes to how the law impacts a vulnerable segment of society and has further inspired me to ensure there is a public service component to my future work as a lawyer.