

Program in International Human Rights Law Indiana University School of Law - Indianapolis

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Overseas Work Opportunities for Law Students:

Program in International Human Rights Law Summer Overseas Internships

The IU-I Law School's Program in International Human Rights Law (PIHRL) provides students with opportunities to travel and work in all corners of the globe. Since 1997, our students have received scholarships to work as human rights summer law interns in Australia, Hong Kong, South Africa, India, New York, Switzerland and many other cities and countries. That list is expanding in 2000!

For the 2001 summer, any IU Law student can receive a scholarship to work as an overseas human rights law intern, in any one of dozens of countries.

This article answers questions you might have about the overseas internship program, the application process, intern scholarships, experiences of past interns, and other aspects of the PIHRL.

Which students may participate in the Summer Internship Program?

All first and second year IU-I students are eligible to apply for positions as overseas international human rights law interns. Some third year students may also be eligible. Most interns work for 10-12 weeks for governmental, non-governmental or inter-governmental organizations.

The organizations can be located in any country. Placement criteria include: the interests of the students; the students' knowledge of and experience in human rights law; any special skills of the student (eg, language skills); the students' general abilities; and the needs of the organization. Emphasis is placed on the ability of the student to have an excellent educational experience working at the particular organization. No human rights experience is required for interns.

Must students have human rights experience, or have taken a human rights course, to participate?

Interns do not need to have had a course in human rights law. Prior human rights experience is not required to be selected as an intern. Thus, even students who have completed only one year of law school may work as interns during their first summer.

Some intern placements are reserved for students who have taken a course in international human rights law, or who

have specialized experience. Other placements will be filled by students without experience.

All students selected as interns will, before their internships begin, be instructed on what they need to know about international human rights law. All interns will be required to participate in a short briefing session before their departure from the United States. The briefing session will cover aspects of international human rights law relevant to the intern placements.

What is the intern selection criteria?

Placements are determined after assessing the likelihood that the students will have a full educational experience, and make a significant contribution to the host organization. We strive to make appropriate matches between students and organizations, where both will reap clear rewards.

Will students receive scholarships?

Dean Lefstein is committed to maximized educational experiences for our student interns. For an overseas internship to be successful, the interns must have adequate funding to cover their internship expenses. As the internships are unpaid, funding primarily comes from Law School Scholarships.

The Law School has provided student intern scholarships sufficient to cover the students' airfare to and from their internship, living expenses (including food and accommodation) in their host country, and miscellaneous other expenses. The scholarship amounts vary, depending on the needs of the student, the costs associated with the particular internship, etc. Third year students will not normally be eligible for law school scholarships. However, all students may apply for financial aid and outside scholarships to help cover any expenses that might not be covered by the scholarships.

May students receive academic credit for the internship?

Students may receive 4 credit hours for successful completion of an international human rights law internship. The requirements for academic credit include that the student work 10-12 weeks, complete and submit time logs, and complete several internship assignments.

How do students apply for internships?

In the autumn, students submit applications for overseas internships and scholarships for the following summer. Announcements for the application process will be made. At information sessions, prospective interns may ask questions and receive application forms.

In which countries may students work?

We plan to expand the internship program. We want to increase the number of student interns, and increase the number of interesting and varied host countries and organizations.

In future years, we would like to send students to new places, including: Italy (Pisa or Rome), Jamaica (Kingston), Costa Rica (San Jose), Norway (Oslo), Czechoslovakia (Prague), France (Paris), Morocco (Casablanca), Lebanon (Beirut), England (London), Hungary (Budapest), Austria (Vienna), and Brazil (Sao Paulo or Rio de Janeiro).

Of course, we could also send students back to any of the 17 different countries, where we have placed previous interns, including South Africa (Cape Town), Switzerland (Geneva), Hong Kong, India (New Delhi), New York, and Australia (Sydney and Melbourne).

These lists of prospective placement locations are not exhaustive. There are many other cities and countries where interns might work.

If there is a city/country not on the list in which you have a particular interest, please let us know!

At what types of organizations do interns work?

The organizations where students will work fall generally into 3 different categories: (a) non-governmental organizations (such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch); (b) governmental bodies (such as the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission); and (c) inter-governmental organizations (such as the United Nations). The placement can be at the head office of an organization, or at a field office. All the organizations are involved in human rights legal work.

Where did our student interns work in 1999?

During the 1999 summer, 9 IU-I law students worked at international human rights organizations in 12 different countries. You will be able to find out more details of each of the interns experiences in Volume 3 of the Indiana International Human Rights Law Bulletin, and in upcoming and past issues of the Dictum. Following are a few words about each of the 1999 intern placements.

(1) San Juan, Puerto Rico Intern

Ms. Karla Cameron ('00) worked for the **Attorney General of the Puerto Rican Department of Justice**. She assisted the Attorney General in attempting to persuade the U.S. Navy to cease live weapon training on the Puerto Rican Island of Vieques. She also was

involved in a project concerning the Constitutional rights of American citizens to vote for the U.S. President and Vice President. Currently, citizens of "territories of the United States" such as Puerto Rico and Guam cannot participate in presidential elections.

(2) Accra, Ghana & Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Intern

Mr. Kenya-Taray Delemore ('00) held two internships – one in West Africa and one in East Africa. In West Africa, he worked in Accra, Ghana for the **African Commission of Health & Human Rights Promoters** on issues related to health and human rights, HIV-AIDS, and torture victim assistance. In East Africa, he worked in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for the **Research Centre for Civic Human Rights & Civic Education** on issues related to civil and political rights and human rights education.

(3) Melbourne, Australia Intern

Mr. Scott L. Goodroad ('99) worked for the **East Timor Human Rights Centre (ETHRC)** in Melbourne, Australia. He documented human rights abuses in East Timor, determined what actions constitute human rights violations, drafted interrogatories, and submitted documentation to appropriate NGOs, foreign governments, and the United Nations. He also prepared a Bi-Annual Report on human rights abuses in East Timor, for submission to foreign governments, NGOs, and the United Nations.

(4) Harare, Zimbabwe Intern

Mr. Jason Gross ('00) worked with two different organizations in Harare, Zimbabwe. He worked with the **Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights)** and with the **Gay & Lesbian Association of Zimbabwe (GALZ)**. He drafted a paper on the violation of the human rights of gays and lesbians in Zimbabwe, focusing on discrimination based on sexuality. The paper is to be used for lobbying before Zimbabwean and United Nations bodies.

(5) Ottawa, Canada Intern

Ms. Michele Jackson ('00) worked for the **Human Rights Internet, Children's Rights Division** in Ottawa, Canada. She worked on Phase II of the "Protection Project: Creating an International Framework for Legislation to Protect Women and Children from Commercial Sexual Exploitation". The project will generate model legislation for the purpose of enabling countries to draft laws to prevent, reduce and ultimately eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children. Ms. Jackson published a human rights article in the global **Human Rights Internet** publication the **Tribunal**.

(6) Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Intern

Ms. Kirti Patel ('00) was placed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with a human rights group named **Tenaganita**, which is led by human rights advocate Irene Fernandez. Irene is currently on trial, having been charged under the Printing Presses and Publications Act of 1984 with allegedly maliciously publishing false news regarding conditions in government run detention centres. Ms. Patel researched, wrote memos, and was involved with issues related to hearsay and malice standards in various countries, the admittance of audio tape recordings at trial, and the preparation of witnesses for trial. She also worked on migrant worker human right issues.

(7) Katmandu, Nepal Intern

Mr. Joshua Robertson ('01) worked for the **International Human Rights and Environmental Organization (INHURED)** in Katmandu, Nepal. He researched race discrimination in Nepal, and drafted a report analyzing Nepal's compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The report will be submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, which meets at the United Nations European Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, and will be used by **INHURED** for a legal advocacy campaign in Nepal.

(8) Arusha, Tanzania Intern

Ms. Celine VanHoenacker ('98-'99 Lille Exchange Student) worked for the **United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)** in Arusha, Tanzania. She researched and wrote legal memoranda on various topics related to the defense of various individuals accused of genocide and crimes against humanity. These individuals are awaiting trial at the Tribunal. She also researched and wrote legal memoranda on other aspects of international criminal law, compiled minutes (in English and French) of Judges' meetings, and researched and compiled a bibliography of materials to be used at the Tribunal.

(9) Moscow, Russia; Gomel & Minsk Belarus; and Vilnius, Lithuania Intern

Mr. Richard Woodhouse ('00) interned in three different countries for various organizations. First, he worked in Moscow, Russia for three organizations: the **Open Society Institute; Civic Assistance;** and the **Moscow Helsinki Group**. In Russia, his focus was on civil & political rights.

In Gomel & Minsk, Belarus, Mr. Woodhouse worked through the **Central & East European Law Initiative ("CEELI")** (of the American Bar Association) with a Belarussian Professor on a project related to domestic violence.

In Vilnius, Lithuania, he worked through the

United States Information Agency with the **Jewish State Museum** on a project related to Nazi war crimes.

Where did our student interns work in 1998?

During the 1998 summer, 4 IU-I law students were sent to work at international human rights organizations, in four different countries around the globe. Three of the interns completed their internships in August 1998, while one of the interns extended his internship through October 1998.

More details of the work experiences of the 1998 summer interns can be found in Volume 2 of the *International Human Rights Law Bulletin* (edited by Scott Goodroad, '99). Following are a few words about each of the four 1998 intern placements.

(10) Hong Kong Intern

Mr. Kevin Green (2L) worked for 3 months for the **Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor** in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor is a non-governmental organization that was founded in the early 1990s to help promote and protect human rights in Hong Kong. Highlights of Mr. Green's experience include: his escorting around Hong Kong members of the European Parliament, who had travelled to Hong Kong to observe Legislative Council elections; his design of a survey on race discrimination in Hong Kong; and his participation in a meeting with the Hong Kong Chief Executive, Mr. Tung Chee Wha.

(11) Sydney, Australia Intern

Mrs. Jody Spangler DeFord ('98) spent 3 months this summer working for the **Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission** in Sydney, Australia. She was assigned to work for the Commissioner responsible for race and aboriginal affairs. Mrs. DeFord had numerous interesting experiences, including: hosting delegations of overseas officials; researching and writing in legal areas related to aboriginal rights; and drafting Commission human rights materials to be distributed to the public.

(12) New York Intern

Ms. Samira Irsane ('97-'98 Lille exchange student) worked for three months at the **United Nations** in New York. She was assigned to the **United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women**. Ms. Irsane participated in meetings of various UN Committees of experts, comprised of delegates from around the globe. The committees included the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Ms. Irsane's French language ability permitted her to participate in otherwise confidential meetings concerning human rights violations in particular countries.

(13) Cape Town, South Africa Intern

Mr. Aklilu Tedla ('98) was selected to intern in Cape Town, South Africa, for the **South Africa Health and Human**

Rights Project. This project was conceived as a follow-up to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which explored human rights violations during the apartheid era. Mr. Tedla's was able to defer the commencement of his internship until after he sat for the Bar Exam in July.

Where did student interns work in 1997?

During the 1997 summer, 2 students worked overseas as interns.

(14) India Intern

Ms. Toma Guha ('98) worked for the **South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre (SAHRDC)**, in New Delhi, India. The SAHRDC is a non-governmental organization that investigates, documents and disseminates information about human rights violations in South Asia. It focuses on violations such as torture, political imprisonment, summary and extra-judicial executions, disappearances, and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Ms. Guha drafted a chapter of a human rights "know your rights" manual, to be disseminated in India; she researched and wrote about human rights of women in prison in India. She met with various Indian lawyers, foreign diplomats, and representatives of international organizations based in New Delhi.

(15) Switzerland Intern

Mr. Aklilu Tedla ('98), who in 1998, also worked as an intern in South Africa, in 1997 worked at the **United Nations Centre for Human Rights** in Geneva, Switzerland. The UN Human Rights Centre is the nerve center for all UN activity — worldwide — related to promoting and protecting human rights. Mr. Tedla worked with a UN Special Rapporteur — named Mr. Param Kumaraswamy — who investigates and reports on human rights abuses related to the independence of judges and lawyers. Violations include threatening or causing violence to lawyers because they handle politically sensitive or unpopular cases, corruption within a national judiciary, and inability for fair trials to be had because of undue influences on the judiciary.

Mr. Tedla reviewed complaints filed by individuals and groups from around the world, drafted communications to governments accused of violations, and drafted portions of reports filed within the UN system.

Did the 15 interns have good experiences?

The 15 students had a wealth of educational, legal, travel and cultural experiences in their several months abroad. The students also contributed to the protection and promotion of human rights through their work at their respective organizations. And, they all had a great deal of fun!

There is no need to take my word for it! More stories *Indiana International Human Rights Law Bulletin*. Volume 2 of the *Law Bulletin* (edited by Scott Goodroad, '99), for stories of the 1998 interns, and Volume 3 of the *Law Bulletin* (edited by Alex Forman, '02) for stories of the 1999

interns.

Finally, you can read about student experiences on the PIHRL Web Page, which is now operational thanks to Professor Wilkins and Mr. Dick Bash ('99)! The Web Page address is: www.iulaw.indy.indiana.edu/programs/humanrights/contents.htm

You may also speak with the interns who have returned to Indianapolis.

Can students participate in PIHRL activities other than internships?

The PIHRL invites you to participate in other activities, some of which are listed on our Web Page. These activities include: the PIHRL Overseas Guest Lecturers Series, and PIHRL Conferences (including the Women, Health, Africa & Human Rights Conference which was held at the IUPUI Conference Centre in October 1998).

What are the ways to get involved?


Furthermore, other ways that you can get involved include:

- (a) contributing writings to the *Indiana International Human Rights Law Bulletin*. (Contributions can include stories, articles, notes, other commentary, etc);
- (b) working on projects assisting overseas and domestic human rights organizations (Mr. Daniel G. Foote ('97), who is an associate at Locke Reynolds, has performed pro bono work through the PIHRL for human rights groups in Hong Kong, and work in conjunction with a foreign Consulate in the United States.);
- (c) satisfying your Senior Writing Requirement in the International Human Rights Law area;
- (d) taking a course in international human rights law at the law school; and
- (e) if you are a graduate, making a financial contribution to the PIHRL!

How can students contact the PIHRL?

Students can contact the PIHRL by e-mail (gedwards@indiana.edu) or fax (317) 278-7563. Or, you can contact me through Ms. Chalanta Shockley (317-274-1917).

Conclusion

The *Program in International Human Rights Law* has exciting and interesting activities and events planned, both at the law school and in various corners of the globe. We look forward to your participating in as many of these as possible! 

by: Professor George Edwards

Director, Program in International Human Rights Law
