

CBA Young Lawyers International Program

In what is clearly a win-win situation for all concerned, The Young Lawyers International Program places interns overseas to work with human rights legal organizations. These internships, based in Latin America and the Caribbean, Southern and Central Africa and South East Asia, focus on issues as varied women's rights, labour rights, constitutional rights, children's rights and indigenous people's rights.

The Program is administered by the CBA and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) as part of the government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy.

Here are first-person accounts of four CBA internships.

CRISTIANO PAPILE:

Posted to the Tanganyika Law Society, the Bar association of mainland Tanzania.

When I was told that I would be moving to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, I had to ask Google exactly where I was headed. Thousands of search results told me that 11 time zones would take me to the land of Zanzibar, the Serengeti and Mount Kilimanjaro — I was about to move to one of the top travel destinations in Africa! I would be working for the Tanganyika Law Society, the Bar association of mainland Tanzania. My job description was unclear but it didn't matter: I was going to get real, hands-on experience working in law and human rights, and I was going to be doing so in one of the top travel destinations in Africa, by the Indian Ocean in a tropical climate.

After spending a week shopping for what I could have acquired in half an hour in any Canadian department store, I showed up at the TLS office at 8:00 on a Monday morning. I was greeted by friendly faces (I would soon learn that everybody showed up for work around 7:00) and a cluttered, crowded working space. Everybody was preparing for the upcoming Half-Annual General Meeting and I spent much of my first day awkwardly looking at some documents that had been left on my desk, trying to find something to do.

I was not idle for long. The half-AGM was to include a CLE component but most of the presenters had cancelled at the last minute and I was given 24 hours to prepare a seminar that I would present later that week to a group of 200 Tanzanian advocates. From



there, my tasks became varied and interesting. During the six months that I worked at the TLS, I had the opportunity to comment on draft legislation; assist in drafting a constitutional challenge to the death penalty; participate in meetings with judges, ministers and diplomats; organize a day aimed at providing legal aid to hundreds of people; and learn about the Legal Sector Reform Programme, a large reform programme aimed at reforming Tanzania's legal sector.

The work was not without its frustrations. Despite having lived in countries known for their overly bureaucratic institutions, my greatest challenge was to learn how to deal with constant delays in almost every aspect of my work. Nevertheless, my six months at the TLS opened a world of possibilities to me and now, having completed my internship, I am looking to stay in the beautiful country that is Tanzania.

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ROANNA TAY:
*Posted to the Legal Resources
 Centre in Grahamstown,
 South Africa.*

This was a six-month internship that has been immeasurably rich with lessons and gifts. I have been inspired by my colleagues, consulted with clients in the most remote parts of the country, fought with government officials, and had the joy and privilege of being part of a few small victories.



**Roanna Tay with Grahamstown
 office staff celebrating Christmas at
 the mouth of the Kariega River,
 Kenton-on-Sea, South Africa.**

By the end of the first week, we were deep in the Transkei. Hundreds of people arrived by foot from the surrounding countryside and I found myself in the middle of a meeting between the community and the Minister of Energy and Minerals. The community members sang loudly and toyi-toyed to express their opposition to a mining licence that threatened their environment and way of life. The LRC is their legal representative and our work has resulted in a halt to the grant of the mining licence as the Minister must consider an internal appeal and enter into proper consultations with the community.

The LRC's mission is to strive for a fully democratic society based on the principle of substantive equality and to ensure that the principles, rights and responsibilities enshrined in the South African Constitution are respected, promoted and fulfilled. This means that the LRC's work focuses on enabling the vulnerable and marginalized to assert and develop their rights. As my supervisor, Sarah Sephton, said to the community in the Transkei that day, "We want to make your voices heard in the court of law."

This has rung true throughout my internship. It has been a constant fight for the little guy: people whose land was expropriated by the apartheid government; abused and orphaned children in children's homes, street children without proper school facilities, poor homeless communities fighting for low-cost housing, foreign nationals denied administrative justice by government officials.



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The clients have often remained unseen, separated from our office by distance and poverty. But getting results on their behalf has been immensely satisfying, both for the pure principle of enforcing human rights and state obligations, and for their most simple expressions of gratitude. As I left Grahamstown, it was my turn to say thank you — to the LRC for giving me the responsibility and to the clients for entrusting me with their struggles. And I echoed the words of one of our clients: *a luta continua!*



SARAH LOUW:

Posted to the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The LHRC is a Tanzanian NGO focused on improving the human rights situation in Tanzania by engaging in strategic litigation, providing legal aid services and monitoring the state of human rights in Tanzania. My primary task at the LHRC was to research and draft the Tanzania Human Rights Report 2008. This annually published report tracks and analyses the trends in human rights in Tanzania.

At first, the task of putting together this report seemed rather daunting, as I manoeuvred my way through a new set of laws and tried to soak up as much information as possible about Tanzania. However, four months into the internship, I found I had become well versed in matters such as witchcraft, the use of corporal punishment, polygamous marriage and a host of other uniquely Tanzanian topics.

During my internship, I also had the chance to participate in a march against the death penalty, which culminated with the filing of a petition challenging the constitutionality of the death penalty in Tanzania. I also had the opportunity to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. In November, 21 people from the LHRC and other NGOs set off to climb Mount Kilimanjaro to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to support a campaign against gender-based violence. I felt very proud to be one of the four women in the group who participated in the climb, as it gave me opportunity to draw attention to women's rights in Tanzania. From a personal perspective, it was also incredibly fulfilling to participate in this climb.

**John Peters Humphrey Fellowship
in International Human Rights Law
or International Organization**



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The Canadian Council on International Law is pleased to announce the winners of the 2009 John Peters Humphrey Fellowships. / Le Conseil canadien de droit international annonce les récipiendaires de les 2009 Bourses de recherche John Peters Humphrey.

JENNIFER BOND

To pursue a Masters in Law at Yale University,
United States

ABBY DESHMAN

Deferred to 2010-2011

COEL KIRKBY

To continue doctoral studies at the University of
Cambridge, United Kingdom

ALAIN-GUY TACHOU SIPOWO

To continue doctoral studies at Laval University,
Canada

2010 John Peters Humphrey Fellowship/Bourse

Eligibility criteria and application are available as of September 15, 2009 at: / Les critères d'admissibilité et le formulaire de demande seront disponibles à partir du 15 septembre 2009 au : www.ccil-ccdi.ca
Closing Date is / La date limite pour la remise des candidatures est : November 15 novembre 2009.



**Canadian Council on International Law
Conseil canadien de droit international**

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Sarah Louw with colleagues and staff of the Legal and Human Rights Centre, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Aside from my work at the LHRC, the internship gave me the chance to experience life in Dar. At first glance, Dar has little appeal, as it is chaotic, disorganised and dirty. However, if you dig a little deeper, it reveals itself as a city where different cultures and religions meet with often fascinating results. Of course, Dar's location on the Indian Ocean and its beautiful beaches add to its appeal. Living and working in Dar has been an eye opening experience.

STÉPHANIE VIG:

Posted to the Ethiopian Bar Association (EBA), a non-governmental organization based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia devoted to promoting the rule of law through an independent bar.

While I was exposed to a range of files and activities, I devoted considerable attention to developing the internal capacity of the organization, primarily by improving the membership of the Bar and especially its female representation. This allowed me to grasp an understanding of the role of an independent bar in setting and building the foundations for the rule of law in a developing country.

Moreover, I participated as a project officer for the EBA. In this capacity, I conceptualized and developed projects for the bar association and solicited funds for programs as diverse as improving the provision of free legal aid services, proposing means to improve civic legal education throughout the country, and developing training sessions for judges, lawyers, parliamentarians, and police officers. This gave me a great opportunity to meet with a range of donors working for embassies, and international and local non-governmental organizations and to understand the circumstances under which these actors operate and interact. In particular, I developed a more subtle appreciation of the challenges facing organizations like the EBA in the efforts to promote legal programs.



Stéphanie Vig in Lalibela, one of Ethiopia's holiest cities and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Acquiring international legal experience is a challenge and rare are the opportunities for young lawyers to do so. The CBA's Young Professionals International Program should be celebrated for allowing young lawyers to gain such experience and to get first hand exposure to international legal work from a grounded perspective, working alongside local actors and interacting with international bodies. It also provides an incredible opportunity to meet a wide range of international workers, to make contacts, and even to develop friendships.



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