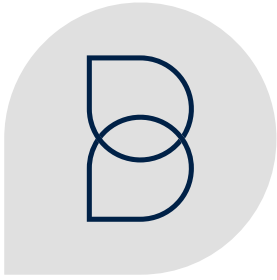


**High
lights**

Student Fellowships Reports 2021

PART OF OUR ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS





Amna Ali DPhil in Law Candidate

UNRWA Field Legal Office, Jordan

OVERVIEW

I was awarded the OPBP - Bonavero Institute Student Fellowship at United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees ('UNRWA'), Field Legal Office, Jordan. Due to travel restrictions, my internship was remote. In this short report, I will detail my experiences during the internship, the work I undertook and how I benefited from the internship.

THE WORK

The Jordan Field Legal Office provides legal advice and support to the Jordan Field Office. I undertook a wide range of tasks predominantly relating to UNRWA's legal and administrative framework.

First, I assisted with research and the provision of legal advice to different departments within UNRWA. As well as grappling with humanitarian and refugee law, this required knowledge of UNRWA's administrative framework. Due to the nature of the work, the issues raised would be highly sensitive and involve many departments within UNRWA working together. As an intern, it was interesting to observe how a strong interdisciplinary approach was adopted to these sensitive issues.

Second, my casework consisted of regularly drafting internal memoranda and correspondence relating to investigations and disciplinary actions taken against staff members. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement. Service to such a large population will invariably result in conflicts and disciplinary issues. As a caseworker, I would receive the investigation documents which included witness statements, court documents, and reports. By scrutinising UNRWA's policies and legal framework, I would come to a judgement as to the appropriate disciplinary response by liaising with the Head of the Legal Office. Following this, I drafted the required letters to the staff member, reports, and various internal memoranda to document the decision. Other interns and staff members were extremely helpful in helping me ease into this type of work by offering advice and help.

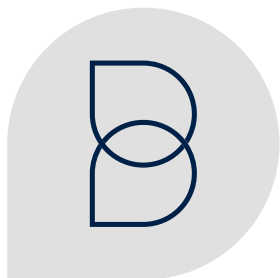
Third, I assisted with the drafting and review of legal documents and letters. For example, on a few occasions, I assisted in drafting letters addressing government ministers to serve the operational and institutional needs of the Agency. On another occasion, I drafted a settlement agreement. Upon sending my draft, I would be sent the final version of the letter or agreement to help improve my drafting skills. As an Arabic speaker, I was able to read any relevant government documents which helped save time.

THE BENEFITS

First, I have greatly benefited from a career perspective. As an aspiring barrister, the drafting experience I gained from the internship was invaluable. By researching, analysing and applying the UNRWA legal framework, I am now confident in my ability to draft a variety of legal documents. The academic skills I gained during my undergraduate and BCL at Oxford gave me an excellent grounding in the knowledge and critical analysis required, whilst the internship equipped me with vital legal and professional skills.

Second, the internship provided me with practical legal experience at a UN Agency. Internships at the UN are notoriously difficult to obtain. The OPBP-Bonavero fellowship was invaluable in opening this door. I anticipate that this will greatly help if I decide to join other NGOs during my career.

Third, the internship exposed me to the important work of UNRWA, Jordan. The plight of the Palestinian refugees raises a vast array of human rights issues. UNRWA is in a unique position in being mandated to provide services to Palestine refugees pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. However, its mandate is limited; they cannot resettle Palestine refugees and they strictly adhere to impartiality and operational independence. Often this means that tricky, politically sensitive issues need to be navigated carefully. The internship exposed me to these issues.



Petra Stojnic
DPhil in Law Candidate

AIRE Centre

OVERVIEW

I was awarded a 2021 Bonavero Institute of Human Rights Student Fellowship to enable me to intern with the AIRE Centre from July to September 2021.

THE WORK

Since my involvement as a member of the University of Oxford team in the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition, volunteering for Oxford Legal Assistance: a pro bono legal clinic, and studying Human Rights as part of my undergraduate degree, I became interested in human rights and international humanitarian law, particularly in the context of the Western Balkans. This led me to apply to intern with the AIRE Centre.

Spending the summer of 2021 interning with the AIRE Centre was an immensely rewarding, worthwhile and challenging experience, which enabled me to hone my legal research and writing skills. During my eight-week internship, I undertook an array of tasks, as follows:

- I conducted research and explored ideas for the establishment of a Western Balkans network of 'Gender Champions in the Justice Sector'
- I conducted research and wrote a text on discrimination on grounds of sex in the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, focussing on measures of affirmative action, for a publication on gender equality
- I conducted research and wrote a text on the impact of COVID-19 on women's rights in the Western Balkans, focussing on gender-based violence, increased unemployment, social protection measures, unpaid care and domestic work, and mental health concerns
- I conducted research on the misuse of the Schengen System by Council of Europe Member States as a politically motivated sanction

Besides my substantive experiences, I sought to make the most of the opportunities offered by and through the AIRE Centre, such as attending webinars on the deprivation of nationality and prevention of statelessness.

I am very grateful for the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights' support in allowing me to undertake this internship. The highly interesting nature of the material, as well as the sheer passion of the team, crystallised my commitment to pursue human rights in the future. As a Bachelor of Civil Law Candidate, I am now studying Comparative Human Rights, and International Law and Armed Conflict. In light of the above, I highly recommend this position to future University of Oxford law students and alumni and encourage the Bonavero Institute to continue supporting this programme.



Emma Rowland
DPhil in Law Candidate

JUSTICE

OVERVIEW

Both the work and the people have made my internship at JUSTICE really enjoyable. I was assigned to Tyrone, who works as the criminal lawyer at JUSTICE, to assist him for two months over the summer.

THE WORK

I mainly worked on JUSTICE's Parole Board working party and this involved researching specific aspects of the Parole Board, taking minutes for working party meetings as well as drafting sections of the report. I was surprised at the amount of responsibility I was given by Tyrone, especially when drafting the report, and found this really empowering. Something that struck me, and which I had not appreciated before the internship, was the degree of creative freedom that the lawyers at JUSTICE have when unpacking problems and proposing

solutions to issues with the JUSTICE system. In addition to working on the Parole Board, I did research into several bills that are due to go through Parliament this autumn. Getting to scrutinise bills that were getting media attention was really interesting as well as showing me the more immediate impact of JUSTICE's work.

As well as the work, I found JUSTICE a really enjoyable organisation to intern at because of how friendly everyone was and how much of an effort was made for all the staff to get to know the interns despite the internship being remote. For example, I had one on one meetings with all the staff members where we could chat about what they do and how they came to be at JUSTICE. There were also fortnightly internship catchups over zoom which meant I was able to get to know the other interns at JUSTICE too which was really nice touch. I would highly recommend anyone interested in law reform and the JUSTICE system to apply for a JUSTICE internship



Anjali Rawat
DPhil in Law Candidate

Dejusticia

OVERVIEW

The Bonavero Institute Summer Fellowship at The Center for Law, Justice and Society (Dejusticia) in Bogotá (Colombia) has been a truly enriching experience. I was selected for the fellowship in 2021 and worked as a research assistant and intern from August 2021 to November 2021.

THE WORK

I am immensely grateful to the Bonavero Institute for this opportunity to connect with Dejusticia, a leading Human Rights organisation working in Latin America which combines research and advocacy in its approach to realising rights.

I am a current DPhil in Law Candidate at Faculty of Law, Oxford University working on furthering substantive equality in polygynous relationships using a rights-based approach in India and South Africa. At the time of my selection, I was writing my MPhil thesis on adjudication of polygyny in India from a human rights perspective, also undertaken at Oxford. In line with my research interests in gender and religion, they accommodated my request to work with the Gender division which oversees the research and advocacy in the field of gender equality and other gendered concerns. I was supervised by Diana Esther Guzmán Rodríguez, a Deputy Director at Dejusticia, who heads the gender division. This is one of the six fellowships which were on offer in 2021 and stood out to me for their groundbreaking work in gender justice. Building alliances with the human rights advocacy in other parts of the global south, given my own interest in India and South Africa, was especially significant for me as it offered me a chance to familiarise myself with the jurisprudence of Colombian Courts and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

THE BENEFITS

I have learnt a lot from the law in context approach of Dejusticia where equal emphasis is placed on legal research and activism and the interconnectedness of both. My direct input during the fellowship was in researching for an upcoming book on Challenges to the Secular State in Latin America. I assisted Diana with research on potential gender and religion conflicts which impede secularism as well as gender equality. Over course of the research, we narrowed on employing a comparative study using a mixed-methods approach to this issue and narrowed on abortion as our case study to illustrate these challenges. I assisted Diana with comparative socio-legal research from India and Ireland and carried an extensive literature review of the Latin American literature (available in English). My research extended beyond legal realms and I engaged with social and feminist movements which impact the state-religion dynamic in different countries, focusing on abortion in the three countries under study. Diana was the most patient supervisor and took time to explain the research in Spanish to help me understand the overall context of the comparison. We had weekly one-hour calls to discuss the research.

In addition to this project, I also benefited from the engagement with other researchers and interns at Dejusticia. We had weekly research as well as social meetings to discuss each other's work which gave me insights into the functioning of other divisions. Despite the online nature of the fellowship due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the connections over Zoom, Signal, and the employee portal made me feel like part of a larger community, united in our passion to defend and support human rights in Colombia and take the lessons back to apply in differing contexts.

The experience I gained over the course of my fellowship has not only improved my legal research skills but also familiarised me with multi-method research and looking at the impact created by social and activist movements on legal issues. This again emphasises the importance of context in researching legal issues which have an ongoing impact on several lives. Seeing the operation of how legal research translates in practice has also enthused me further to conduct my doctoral research hoping for a positive social impact in future. I once again thank Bonaverero for the infrastructure and support which made this internship a possibility.

Contact us

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Aastho Prasad FEB 2022