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### **IHRP End of Summer Report**

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Santiago, Chile

The Centro de Derechos Humanos is an academic institution working throughout Latin America. They are based in the Law School of the University of Chile. Their mission is to promote human rights linked to the strengthening of democracies in Latin America. The Centre focusses on three main areas: women and human rights; human rights and democratization; and, human rights and the rule of law. During my summer internship at the Centre, I worked in the women and human rights department. The Centre boasts of an extremely sharp and talented team of lawyers who are at the forefront of human rights in Chile and Latin America generally. For example, the Centre was co-founded and is currently under the direction of Cecilia Medina who, during the period of 2008-2009, was the first woman to hold office as the President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

It is fitting that the Human Rights Centre is based in Chile. The long period and relatively recent period of dictatorship Chileans have known give them a particularly keen appreciation for democracy and human rights. Many members of the Centre have been personally impacted by Pinochet's ravaging dictatorship. From growing up in homes used to clandestinely help and protect political dissidents, to spouses who have disappeared ("desaparecidos") decades ago, and whose finality remains unknown, the staff of the Centre have much to contribute both on an intellectual and personal level.

Furthermore, the students of the Faculty of Law were heavily involved in the student movement for affordable education. The Chilean secondary and post-secondary education is the highest in Latin America and currently among the highest in the world. Often referred to as the "Chilean Winter", students all across Chile went on strike starting in May 2011 near the beginning of my internship, demanding affordable education. The massive demonstrations often began at the Faculty of Law and ended in front of the Palacio de la Moneda (the central government building). Both the costly education system as well as the police's violent response to the student demonstrations are seen as remainders of the Pinochet regime.

The cornerstone of the Center's work is the training of professionals through graduate diploma courses on human rights. Each course addresses a specific thematic area, and its goal is to provide the tools necessary to promote the protection of human rights throughout the countries of the region. In my capacity as intern at the Human Rights Centre, I was responsible for a thorough assessment and revision of the newly offered intensive course in the Women's Rights Program entitled "Women and Human Rights: Impacting Legal Strategies". This course received successful human rights lawyers working on women's rights issues from all across Latin America. The professors of the

diploma are a group of the most distinguished academics and human rights activists in Latin America, and the students are the current and future leaders of the region.

My role was to do an in-depth evaluation of all aspects of the course in order to provide a thorough analysis of the course and proposals for the following year. Mainly an academic exercise, I reviewed all the literature, student projects, course structure, and teaching methodologies. I created evaluative questionnaires for professors, mentors, and donor/collaborative institutions and examined their responses. I created my own evaluation of the course and combined it with student, professor, and donor evaluations in order to create a comprehensive view of both the strengths and weaknesses of the course and provide structural and methodological changes for the upcoming year.

Many concrete improvements on the course have been made as a result. The syllabus has been changed to offer a wider range of topics and women's issues. The structure of the final paper has been altered to offer a stronger theoretical base upon which to build each student's practical plan and project proposal. Changes have been made to the student-mentor relationship in order to give it clearer parameters and milestones towards the completion of the final project. Guidelines which are sent to professors correcting weekly assignments have been made clearer in terms of expectations and goals of the assignment and feedback given. A report on teaching methodologies and teacher evaluations will be used in the selection of next year's professors. Also, suggestions for fundraising have been organized in order to engage in further fundraising initiatives, among others.

I was also asked to write an article on the current situation and unique challenges abused women migrants face. One of the most vulnerable groups in many immigrant-receiving countries, these world-citizens are often left outside the legal protection of the nations in which they find themselves. Since their status in a receiving country often entirely depends on the male abuser who is sponsoring the woman, they often fail to report abuse or violence for fear of being deported. This, combined with many other factors such as language, culture, and socio-economic status create a very difficult situation for these women. The systems in both Canada and the United States, being countries with high levels of migrants, were used as case studies. An evaluation of both the strengths and weaknesses of each system was made. The article highlighted the obstacles faced by these women and different strategies to confront them, and reiterated the need for stronger protection of their rights. The article was published on the Centre's website and can be viewed at the following link: <http://www.programamujerescdh.cl/columnas/detalle.tpl?id=20110818173511>

This internship has given me the opportunity to explore legal academia and work on the restructuring of a university law course. It has also exposed me to a vast amount of international legal literature on women's rights and the current debates and discussions on the topic. Finally, it has allowed me a closer look into the situation of women's rights throughout Latin America and the projects, strategies, and tools that current human rights activists are using to incite change.