Ethics and Coexistence Student Fellowships 2001

The International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life

Brandeis University
Waltham
Massachusetts
About the Ethics and Coexistence Student Fellowships

The International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life sponsors Brandeis undergraduate students to do integrated course work and field work related to coexistence and issues of ethics and social justice in a global context.

Six Brandeis undergraduates have participated in the program in 2001. During the spring semester, they enrolled in the course "Introduction to Intercommunal Coexistence." Over the summer, they worked in internships in various regions. In the fall of 2001, each student works with a mentor on the Brandeis faculty to integrate the academic coursework and the practical experience.

This booklet presents the work done by the students during their internships. They currently are working on completing written projects that document their work in greater detail.

About The International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life

The International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life at Brandeis University exists to illuminate the ethical dilemmas and obligations inherent in global and professional leadership, with particular focus on the challenges of racial, ethnic, and religious pluralism. Examining responses to past conflicts, acts of intervention, and failures to intervene, the Center seeks to enable just and appropriate responses in the future. Engaging leaders and future leaders of government, business, and civil society, the Center crosses boundaries of geography and discipline to link scholarship and practice through publications, programs, and projects.

The Brandeis Initiative in Intercommunal Coexistence, a program of the Ethics Center, is designed to engage the university's students, faculty, and staff in an exploration of the dilemmas and possibilities that emerge when we seek to understand, to promote, and to enact respectful personal and communal relationships across differences such as those of religion, ethnicity, race, class, and political conflict. The Initiative has been made possible by a generous grant from the Alan B. Slifka Foundation.

Ethics and Coexistence Student Fellows, 2001

Intern in Sri Lanka:
Jennifer Lewey, '02

Intern in Israel:
Daniel Weinstein, '02

Intern in Northern Ireland:
Maryanne Cullinan, '02

Interns in South Africa:
Aliya Caler, '02
Yaser S. Robles, '03
Anna Jaffe-Desnick, '02

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Jennifer Lewey '02

Home: Boston, Massachusetts
Major/minor/program: Biology/Peace and Conflict Studies
Tentative career goals: Medicine and Public Health, with an emphasis on women's health and the health needs of war-affected populations
Faculty mentor and department:
Dan Terris, American Studies, Ethics Center

Internship: The Sewa Lanka Foundation, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Sewa Lanka is an economic development organization that helps to rebuild communities that have been displaced by the war through relief, rehabilitation, and development programs. The Foundation works mostly in the conflict-affected Northern and Eastern regions of Sri Lanka and is the only national non-government organization (NGO) to work both in areas controlled by the government and in areas controlled by the LTTE (Tamil rebel organization).
Reconciling Peace and Justice: Economic Development and Community-Building in Sri Lanka

Project Goals
- Understand and evaluate how an economic development organization can utilize its capacities to incorporate peace-building activities into its work
- Encourage children and young people to think about peace and their voices in the peace process in creative, nontraditional ways
- Document the stories, struggles, and hopes of people affected by the war from diverse parts of society and the country

Personal Goals
- Form relationships with individuals from many different political, social, and ethnic backgrounds in order to understand their different cultures, attitudes, and constructed histories
- Learn and write about a conflict, a country, and a people that receives very little attention from the American media
- Understand what "peace and coexistence" means to a country in the middle of war and to explore the relationship between peace and economic or social justice

Activities
- Facilitated a workshop for university students throughout the country who were brought together to role-play a political negotiation to the ethnic conflict
- Interviewed displaced families in Sinhala and Tamil villages in the Northern areas about their life stories
- Assisted Sewa Lanka in planning peace-building activities by collecting information from other local NGOs, conducting a village exchange program, and organizing cooperative children’s games

Key Dilemmas
- How do I talk to people who are suffering from such dire economic conditions or a history of human rights abuses about “peace” and “coexistence”?
- What does it mean to be an American studying peace work in a war-affected developing country?
- How can I remain hopeful for an end to the conflict in a situation of escalating violence and political turmoil? If I cannot remain hopeful as a foreigner, how can I expect the Sri Lankan people to remain hopeful?

Jennifer attended the sports meet of the children living in a temporary resettlement village in the boarder village of Vavuniya.
Important Learnings

- In order to talk about peace and coexistence, one must address the problems of inequality and economic and social injustices. This places an economic development agency like Sewa Lanka in a special position to take on this kind of peace work.
- There is a great need for incremental peace work on a grassroots level, in spite of the discouraging levels of distrust and fear that pervade the life of civil society. Yet the initiative and directive for these programs must come from the people themselves and not from foreigners.
I was very sensitive to my role as a foreigner in Sri Lanka and the danger in associating Western ideologies with developing countries.

Poem

This poem is by Sister Puttmanayaki, a Catholic nun involved with Caritas Sri Lanka. She is an encouraging and radiant spirit. I worked with her as a facilitator for the Peace Laboratory with the University students. This is one of her published poems on peace, for which she has won awards.

But now—why—
When the whole world is moving rapidly
With its discoveries of science
And the multiple theories of Psychology
Theology, Sociology and Philosophy

There is no Peace, Harmony, and Oneness?
Our nerves are strained
And our ear drums blocked
With the sound of guns, bullets, bombing
Air-attacks and shooting!

Humanity shouts out with one accord
Peace... Peace... Peace...
Be aware little Babe.
Since the world is exhausted with non-stop war,
Awake your people.
To live in love, peace, and oneness,
So that we may once more
Sing that glorious song of the angels
"Glory to God in the highest
And on earth peace among men"
Without any distinction of
Caste, Creed, Nationalities, Languages
And Religions.

Top: Jennifer traveled often with Kaushyla, a Sri Lankan intern at Sewa Lanka. This man-made tank serves the water needs of surrounding villages in Kurunegella.
Above: Kamala pounds the rice paddy for eating and selling. She was displaced to this temporary Sinhala village of Ullukkulum with her three children and owns the village store. Right: A wood carving made by local villagers.
Bridging the Gap: Dialogue in a Divided Israel

Project Goals
- Organize resources, books, movies, and articles according to their usefulness in Gesher programming
- Research material for programs on the history of the religious/secular divide, and the depth of cultural polarization and social division

Personal Goals
- Understand the role of foreigners in this conflict and dialogue process
- Develop new programs and formats for Gesher dialogue groups, utilizing videos, articles, and other resources

Activities
- Participated in sessions, seminars, lectures, classes, and film screenings
- Prepared materials for use by facilitators in future Gesher programs

Key Dilemmas
- How can success of the Gesher program to reduce tension and discrimination between religious and secular groups be measured on a social level?
- Will Israel heal from the religious/secular divisions exacerbated by the Rabin assassination?

Daniel at the Western Wall, which has been a symbol of both unity and of violent tensions.
Important Learnings

- I learned a great deal about the effectiveness of film, art, humor, and meals in dialogue work.
- The stereotypes people hold about the effectiveness of dialogue work impacts the success of that work.
- The desire to come together can be an unbelievably strong catalyst in coexistence work.

Top: Old City of Jerusalem, the scene of historical tension between different ideologies and between peace and violence.

Above and right: Gesher attracts different faces of Israel, bringing together the secular, religious, and military to discuss their identities and stereotypes.
Maryanne Cullinan '02

Home: Temple, New Hampshire

Major/minor/program: Linguistics and Cognitive Sciences/Elementary Education

Tentative career goals: Elementary School Teacher

Faculty mentor and department: Robert Hunt, Anthropology

Internship: Corrymeela Community Centre, Ballycastle, Northern Ireland

The Corrymeela Community Centre is involved in a number of areas of ongoing work, attempting to stimulate understanding between different members of the society in Northern Ireland. These include residential trips to the Centre for school groups, families, youth, camps, focus groups, and the like. The Community also is involved in outreach and mediation. Corrymeela's work mostly takes the form of residential experiences where groups come to have fun, make friendships, and grow in a way that is not possible in their home environments.
A Personal Peace: Reconciliation on an Individual Basis for the Children and Families of Northern Ireland

Project Goals
- Work within Corrymeela to create a safe space for people to have conversations about their fears and prejudices
- Help create an environment of fun where people who have suffered severe trauma simply can have a good time away from stress and fear

Personal Goals
- Gain an understanding of the history of the conflict and how that history affects people today
- Help people find the strength to try new things in new ways
- Understand the way that Corrymeela works, both on a day-to-day level and as a vehicle of peace
- Acted as a friend and role model to children, building a safe space that allowed them to be kids and have fun with me and, more importantly, with each other.

Key Dilemmas
- The passing of trauma can occur between generations—how will people who know trauma as normal be able to function in a society that promotes peace?
- What practical steps can be taken to alleviate the frustration that Northern Irish people have over ongoing socio-economic inequities that still exist?
- Will peace occur in a society that continues with segregated schooling?

Activities
- Participated in and led many activities such as song, dance, ecumenical worship, outdoor activities, and art, which allowed people to become comfortable with one another, have conversations, and try new things.
- Listened to people of all ages, hearing hopes for the future.

Arts and crafts provide a creative outlet for children's ideas about coexistence. These children are preparing materials for a worship session about breaking the cycle of violence.
Important Learnings

- In a country this small, affecting even one person can impact the greater society.
- It takes a great deal of energy and courage to step away from what is “normal” for any given person and to move toward what s/he desires life to be like. But people are willing to make changes. They need support and encouragement.
- Prejudices and misunderstandings do not go away overnight. Face to face dialogues, however, can help people move beyond their fears to relate on a personal level.

Left: Ideas about community and cultural identity are passed down between generations. This boy, dressed like his father, is participating in a Protestant parade on July 12, 2001, celebrating the victory of William of Orange over James II in 1690.
Below: While on a daytrip to the beach town of Portrush, these boys build bridges between their sandcastles and each other.
Aliya Caler '02

Home: Seattle, Washington
Major/minor/program: Sociology/Politics/Peace Studies
Tentative career goals: Development work
Faculty mentor and department: Shula Reinhartz, Women's Studies

Internship: U Managing Conflict (UMAC); Women and Peacebuilding Project, Cape Town, South Africa

UMAC is a pro-active, non-partisan non-governmental organization, which primarily operates in the Western and Eastern Cape Provinces. UMAC strives to identify the causes of conflict in order to intervene and facilitate in conflict situations as well as to train communities in an effort to build their capacity, empowering South African citizens to find alternative and effective methods of resolving conflict without the use of violence. I worked with their Women and Peacebuilding Program, which is an integrated development and community safety strategy that empowers unemployed women from disadvantaged communities to become leaders and peacebuilders in their communities.

Yaser S. Robles '03

Home: Born and raised in Honduras; lived in Bronx, New York, for the last several years
Major/minor/program: Politics/International Political Economy
Tentative career goals: Diplomacy or social development
Faculty mentor and department: David Jacobson, Anthropology

Internship: Ikamva Labantu – Future of Our Nation, Cape Town, South Africa

I helped run the second annual Winter Program “Forward 2 Your Destiny” at Nyanga Township, coordinated by the Lifeskills Experiential Learning Project. Our aim was to bring together a group of over 100 students from all different backgrounds. Through workshops, music, arts, drama, and many other educational activities, they learned new leadership skills, the importance of teamwork, shared life experiences, and built strong friendships. I also was in charge of the English Program for refugees coming from Congo, Angola, and other African countries. This took place at Langa Township twice a week for three to four hours each time. I prepared the lessons and was able to obtain essential class materials such as black boards, dictionaries, pen, pencils, notebooks, and books.
Anna Jaffe-Desnick '02

Home: Ashland, Oregon

Major/minor/program: Sociology/Development Studies/
Economics/Peace and Conflict Studies

Tentative career goals: University Professor, active community
member, and world citizen!

Faculty mentor and department:
Karen Hansen, Sociology

Internship: Gender Advocacy Programme’s (GAP) Domestic Violence
Project, Cape Town, South Africa

South Africa is in the midst of transformation from a society bound by
inequalities of race, class, and gender inherited from apartheid and colonialism.
GAP, as a gender sensitive development organization, endeavors to act as a
catalyst to ensure the empowerment of historically disadvantaged people,
particularly women. Through their work of connecting, mobilizing, and
educating civil society as a force for change, the organization strives to ensure
that gender sensitive government programs, policies, and legislation are
successfully implemented.
Lifting the Shackles: Women Building Peace in an Unreconciled South Africa

Project Goals
- Assess the role of women in the South African transformation to a democracy
- Understand the limitations as well as the successes that empowerment projects can have
- Explore how South Africa's gender machinery works at the various levels of government and how these processes affect women's lives in civil society

Personal Goals
- Think about what shifts in power have taken place in South Africa, who has been affected by those shifts, and in what ways
- Grapple with the meaning of reconciliation
- Work with my own pain in an effort to create more peace within myself and, thus, within the world

Activities
- Conducted an evaluation of the Women and Peacebuilding Program in order to determine its effectiveness and capabilities for growth
- Interviewed female leaders and peacebuilders from the townships of Nyanga, Phillipi, and Crossroads
- Participated in three project workshops involving women and peacebuilding: "Conflict Resolution," "Women Building Peace," and "Refugees and Xenophobia"

Key Dilemmas
- What does reconciliation mean for women living in a culture of gender-based violence, in a country that practices neo-liberal economic policies and has drastic inequalities in wealth?
- Post-apartheid South Africa made a peaceful transition to democracy and yet the majority of South African citizens still do not have their basic human needs met. One must ask the question: What does "peaceful" mean and for whom?
- I grapple with my own privilege which my skin color, social class, and citizenship provide me on a daily basis.

A painting of a woman done by Caleb, a local South African artist.
**Important Learnings**

- Living peace is a huge responsibility because it means recognizing our interconnectedness on a continual basis.
- Fear of failure results in highly destructive behavior for self. The belief in one's self makes a world of a difference.
- Emotional poverty can be more devastating than basic needs poverty.
- We must gender our thoughts on reconciliation, development, and conflict resolution and realize that these concepts and processes could mean very different things for women than they do for men.

*Although UMAC is located in Observatory in Cape Town proper, the majority of its work takes place in the Cape Flats in various townships surrounding the city.*

*Above: Aliya with Women and Peacebuilding participants and coordinators at a seminar on Refugees and Xenophobia at KTC hall. Left: Aliya conducting an interview with former Women and Peacebuilding community intern, Sindsiswa, at New Crossroads youth center in Nyanga township.*
Cultural Frameworks: Shaping the Ways People See, Understand, and Act in the World

Project Goals
- Teach youth life skills that increase their self-esteem, better their lives, and help them become more productive members of society
- Encourage youth to become active participants in their communities and to pass along their newly gained knowledge

Personal Goals
- Become an active participant in the communities
- Better understand the new educational reforms
- Put into practice what I have learned in class about coexistence

Key Dilemmas
- The apartheid era is over at a governmental level, but not at a grassroots level. Segregation still is very much in evidence, with blacks and people of color remaining at the bottom of the ladder. Coexistence still is an unknown concept for the majority of the people.
- South Africa's new constitution is exceptional but people still do not know their rights. Governmental strategies to teach them are inefficient.
- The increasing number of refugees coming into the country has become another major problem to South Africa as it struggles to accommodate the new immigrants. The unemployment rate is high and food and shelter are limited. In addition, refugees also have to deal with the reluctance of the South Africans as they struggle to adjust to a new society.

Activities
- Served as assistant coordinator for the second annual Youth Winter Program “Forward 2 Your Destiny” at Oscar Mpetha High School, Nyanga Township. Program included visual arts, theater, African and Western dances, music, and workshops about the importance of school education
- Researched the new educational reform of South Africa: Curriculum 2005 & Outcome-Based Education to facilitate workshops to parents and high school students in Nyanga Township
- Led an English program at a shelter in Langa Township for refugees from Congo and Angola and for South Africans living at the shelter. Planned class curriculum and obtained class materials
Important Learnings

- People from the townships do not want to move out. There is a great sentimental attachment to the towns and moving out is like leaving behind a big part of their lives.
- The Xhosa culture has maintained the status quo when it comes to gender roles. Men still believe that women belong in the house.
- Refugees in South Africa face challenges similar to those encountered by illegal immigrants in the United States.
- Education is the key to social change in South Africa, but the educational reforms are failing due to lack of resources and unprepared teachers.

Top Left: Yaser and student participants polishing an African dance for the main performance of the Winter Program.
Lower Left: Bob Skepe on the left, a visual arts facilitator for the Winter Program, practicing the drum skills together with two student participants. Above: Hat from Robbin Island Museum, former prison of Nelson Mandela.
South African Women Unite: Gender Rights
Lobbying and Advocacy

Project Goals
- Contribute to a reduction of domestic violence in South Africa by increasing women's understanding of their rights and empowering them to access social and political supports
- Inform women of strategies to address domestic violence and decry domestic abuse as a violation of women's human rights
- Target poor communities and groups to build the advocacy and lobbying capacity of their organizations

Activities
- Research and compile database details for GAP's Domestic Violence Project resources
- Evaluate the Domestic Violence Project's Training for Gender Advocacy and Lobbying
- Attend GAP project trainings

Key Dilemmas
- How can I maximize my exposure to the grassroots level in an office building workplace?
- How can South Africa's racial groups heal injustice and work toward reconciliation if the society fails to truly honor and compensate post-trauma realities? How can an atmosphere be created in which embittered and misunderstood groups might interact?
- How can I, informed and with the least harm to others, use my privilege and consumer capabilities?

Left: Anna's desk was an excellent location for meeting and talking with other GAP employees. GAP's secretary, Bukelewa, shared many things about her life as a black woman living in a Capetonian township. Above: One of many friends who visited Anna's home.
Important Learning

- South Africa's phenomenal gender-sensitive policies are the product of committed and educated women as central players lobbying for advocacy and equality, and for reinforcing the potential of women to establish grassroots efforts to change society.
- The majority of South Africans remain unequipped to the trauma of apartheid. Deprivation, trauma, and anger remain fueled by pervasive economic and emotional poverty.
- The people of South Africa and I, personally, are in the process of internal and external transformation in the sense of personal examination and continued commitment to political and social change.

Above: Previous attendees of GAP's workshops provided a primary source for evaluating the training. The focus group session (above) provided one source of information. Right: GAP publishes a monthly newsletter detailing national and local development relevant to its work. These newsletters are a valuable resource for education and for ensuring the visibility of GAP's process.

Aliya, Yaser, and Anna traveled together to attend events and to visit friends in the townships. The mural behind them displayed an important message about community and AIDS. "My friend with AIDS is still my friend."
2001 Ethics and Coexistence Student Fellows

Aliya Caler '02 is a sociology and politics major from Seattle, Washington. She is the co-founder of Students for a Just Society, a student organization whose mission is to raise awareness and to promote the discussion of economic and social justice issues. Aliya spent a summer in Tanzania working with a women's group that provides services for AIDS orphans. Her summer internship involved work in Cape Town, South Africa with the Women and Peacebuilding Programme of the U Managing Conflict (UMAC). The program empowers women from disadvantaged areas to be leaders and peacebuilders in their communities. Her mentor is Shulamit Reinarz of the Women's Studies Program.

Maryanne Cullinan '02, a linguistics and cognitive science major, also is in the elementary education program. She came to Brandeis from Temple, New Hampshire. Maryanne does a variety of volunteer work through the Waltham Group, including work with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Companions to Elders. She also does costume design for a production of Cabaret this semester. She spent the summer in Ballycastle, Northern Ireland, working with the Corrymeela Community, which is committed to reconciliation and the healing of social, religious, and political divisions. Her mentor is Robert Hunt of the Anthropology Department.

Anna Jaffe-Desnick '02, from Ashland, Oregon, is pursuing an independent concentration in Development Studies, a major in sociology, a minor in economics and a program focus on Peace and Conflict Studies. She organizes a meditation group to bring together teachers of various meditation disciplines. She also is involved in several campus-wide initiatives around peace activism and social change. Anna spent her spring semester abroad in Nepal studying natural and human environments. She worked with the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) in Cape Town, South Africa, for her summer internship. GAP works to reduce domestic violence in South Africa, educating women about their rights and increasing accessibility to resources. Her mentor is Karen Hansen in the Sociology Department.

Jennifer Lewey '02, from East Boston, is a biology major enrolled in the Peace Studies Program. She is a member of the University's recycling program and the Peer Perspectives Program. Jennifer is also involved with Peace Games, a program that teaches conflict resolution and violence prevention in schools in the Boston/Cambridge area. Jennifer spent her summer internship with the Sewa Lanka Foundation in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The foundation promotes social mobilization and institutional capacity building in conflict-affected communities. Her mentor is Daniel Terris of The International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life.

Yaser S. Robles '03 is pursuing a major in sociology and a minor in economics. In addition, he is in the Latin American Studies and Posse Programs and serves as a peer tutor in Spanish. He came to Brandeis from Bronx, NY. In the summer of 2000 he worked as a camp counselor with the “Youth Living with Conflict” international summer camp in East Jerusalem. He spent this summer in Cape Town, South Africa working with Ikanis Labantu, which supports democracy in post-apartheid South Africa by providing educational and economic resources to community members and townships. His mentor is David Jacobson of the Anthropology Department.

Daniel Weinstein '02 is studying Conflict Studies, Philosophy, and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies. Before he came to Brandeis from Tarzana, California, Daniel spent a semester on a kibbutz in Israel and participated in an independent study program with the Joint Distribution Committee in Warsaw Poland, restructuring cultural and educational programs for the emerging Polish-Jewish community. He spent his summer internship working for Gesher in Jerusalem, Israel. Gesher is an organization that promotes dialogue between secular and religious Jews through the implementation of educational programs. His mentor is Arthur Green of the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies Department.