Ethics and Coexistence
Student Fellowships

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 participated in the program in 2003.

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 Slika Program in Intercommunal Coexistence, a program of the 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 program has been made possible by a generous grant from the Alan B. Slifka Foundation.

2003 Ethics and Coexistence Student Fellows

Paul Adler ’04
Fundación Turcios Lima, Guatemala

Ayham Bahnassi ’05
Parents’ Circle—The Israeli-Palestinian Bereaved Parents’ Forum, Massachusetts, USA

Xiomara Gonzalez ’05
Fundación Turcios Lima, Guatemala

Matthew Harris ’04
University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa

Deirdre Mooney ’05
Ikamva Labantu, Cape Town, South Africa

Marina Pevzner ’04
AHIMSA, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Paul Adler '04

Home: Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
Major/Minor/Program: politics  
Career Goals: Work in the non-profit sector with a focus on social justice and sustainable development  
Internship: La Fundación Turcios Lima, Mazatenango, Guatemala

Xiomara Gonzalez '05

Home: The Bronx, New York  
Major/Minor/Program: economics  
Internship: La Fundación Turcios Lima, Mazatenango, Guatemala
Caminando con el Commandante: Experiencing Development and "la mistica" in Guatemala

La Fundación Turcios Lima is a non-governmental organization that does integrated development work with communities affected by the 36-year civil war that ended in 1996. It works on various agricultural projects, as well as community building. My role within the organization was working to educate members of La Fundación about Fair Trade coffee as well as develop connections between La Fundación and various international development organizations.

**Project Goals**

- Educate members of La Fundación about the details of assisting coffee farms in entering the Fair Trade market, which guarantees farmers decent prices for their coffee.
- Use my connections with Oxfam America to help set up a meeting between Cesar Montes (the president of La Fundación) and the director of Oxfam’s Central America regional office, in order to help La Fundación become a partner organization of Oxfam.

**Personal Goals**

- Improve my Spanish skills by immersing myself in the language.
- Become acquainted, first-hand, with the realities of community development in a Global South nation.
- Serve as a positive ambassador for the United States in a nation that has been deeply harmed by U.S. foreign policy in the past.

**Activities**

- For the main part of the two-month internship, I traveled with Juan Carlos and Pavel, agricultural engineers working for La Fundación in two communities of returned refugees. While there was little formal work to do, I provided an additional perspective on various community dynamics that affected their work.
- Combining Internet research with an actual trip to a Fair Trade coffee farm, I was able to give instructions to various members of La Fundación on the dynamics of organizing a Fair Trade farm.
- Initiated and organized a meeting between the president of La Fundación, Cesar Montes, and the director of Oxfam America’s regional office.

**Key Dilemmas**

- How to adapt to a new culture, with all the many aspects and quirks that entails.
- Being respectful of the culture while still being critical of aspects (for example, the social position of women) that bothered me.
- How to work with people even when I disagree with or find them difficult to work with.
- Taking extra precautions to ensure my safety as the country’s political situation deteriorated.

**Important Learnings**

- Development and globalization issues are amazingly complex issues that cannot be narrowed to simple formulas.
- A philosophy of arrogance among those working to improve the situation of the poor will lead to disaster. The key is to work with the people, not for them. One must be highly respectful and adaptable to differing situations. At the same time, to romanticize “the people” is a mistake, as they are people, for better and for worse.
- Networking, as “dirty” as it may seem sometimes, is crucial to success in social justice work. Knowing the right people can open big doors.

I had the good fortune of visiting Santa Anita, a coffee community made up of ex-guerrillas that had recently entered the Fair Trade market. I am standing with Lazaro, the head of commercialization for Santa Anita, with whom I had a long conversation about the details of Fair Trade to impart that knowledge to members of La Fundación.
One of the first steps the agricultural engineers took in the communities was to run “agricultural diagnostics,” community meetings to determine the economic condition of the farm. Here is Pavel conducting one in Nuevo Mexico.

(Nuevo Mexico, one of two communities of returned refugees which I visited once a week for two months with a team from La Fundación. On the far left is Pavel, an agricultural engineer who specializes in commercialization and who I spent a great deal of time with. To his right is Juan Carlos, whose family I lived with for two months and is also an agricultural engineer. On the far right is Guillermo, the community organizer for La Fundación.

(Above) A protest in Mazatengano (my host city for the majority of my time). The government is currently trying to privatize all health services in the country and this was a demonstration by a coalition of union members and indigenous people against privatization.
Studying at El Centro Lingüístico Maya continues to go quite well and my Spanish is improving. So much knowledge, after years of studying, is bubbling to the surface. I can even use pronouns now! My professor is a riot, full of jokes as well as knowledge about all aspects of Guatemalan culture, history, and politics. Inevitably, I’ve started to fall in love with Antigua and highly recommend some of us do the expatriate thing down here at some point, as it’s perfect.

Last Thursday, Xiomara, Cesar Montes, two other officials from La Fundacion Turcios Lima, and myself went to a farm, a drive several hours to the southwest. We went over some really back country roads, almost killing about eight dogs and a campesino heading to work. With regard to driving, Guatemalan’s heartily believe “the best defense is a good offense.” The poverty here is heartbreaking and the emotional impact is only lessened because it does not seem much different from what I expected. The country is gorgeous and I’ve seen a lot of the farming areas.

At one point Cesar calmly noted that we would be driving by the spot where his wife was killed while fighting the army. He also described how all of his brothers were murdered during the conflict. Our drive took us on dirt roads, through a huge farm, and to a group of tents that appeared to be part of a giant fiesta. We thought we were only visiting a farm that works with La Fundación, but it turned out to be much more. Guatemala’s peace accords are about the most radical there are in concept. As part of the accords, a government agency called El Fondo de las Tierras is redistributing land to landless peasant families. We had come to a ceremony marking the handing over of land to 358 peasant families who in the history of their families had never owned their own land. We sat under a giant red tent as a group of civil society leaders (unions, NGOs, etc.) made fiery speeches about their right to land and called for greater social justice. The look on the faces of the farmers as they received the certificates to their land was incredible. I’d never seen justice in action so clearly until today.

Pictured above is President of La Fundación Turcios Lima, César Montes, with one of the campesinos of Finca Montecristo who had just received their own land, as part of the redistribution process being implemented on account of the peace accords.
Xiomara Gonzalez

Learning on La Finca:
Community Development from the Bottom Up

La Fundación Turcios Lima provides technical support to poor rural farm communities where most families are returnees from exile. It hires social workers and agricultural engineers and assigns them to work in specified communities. Participating farm communities have heard about the foundation and solicited its services. I worked under the guidance of Cesar Montes, ex-Guerrilla commander of FAR (Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes or Rebel Armed Forces.)

Project Goals
• Learn and understand the history of the 36-year civil war and how it affected and continues to challenge the lives of the Guatemalan people
• Assist in the promotion of reconciliation efforts for campesinos in two rural farm communities

Personal Goals
• Understand the hard work involved in grassroots community organizing and how to do it in a way that responds to the specific needs of La Lupita and Montecristo
• Employ and enhance my Spanish speaking abilities in addition to learning some Mam and Quiche (Mayan languages)
• Create personal relationships based on trust, listening, and interdependence

Activities
• Gathered census data: name, age, weight, height, level of education, ability to read, indigenous background, and occupation
• Co-facilitated group diagnostics- local workshops that provide a space for families to evaluate community progress, discuss both short and long run needs, project ideas, and financing plans- at both Lupita and Montecristo
• Solicited aid and donations from local firms and businesses
• Contributed to the development and creation of a youth project that focused on self-esteem and collective history. This program encouraged the organization of a strengthened youth and an appreciation for their farm community.

Key Dilemmas
• Local, national, and foreign political corruption— especially during an election year— partnered with false promises and an outright disrespect for the 1996 peace accords undermine development efforts and makes it difficult for families to maintain hope for a more prosperous tomorrow
• It is an ongoing struggle for non-governmental organizations to remain active, positive, and effective when their human and capital resources are lacking.

Important Learnings
• Reading about suffering and fear can never truly prepare an individual to receive oral history. Meeting victims face to face and listening to their stories of murder, rape, torture, loss, and escape is very real and terrifying.
• A community’s future sustainability depends on the work and presence of a strengthened, informed, and literate youth.
• A collective with minimal resources still has the ability to create an egalitarian structure. The key elements include a common philosophy, non-opportunist technical support, and a high level of organization from the bottom up.

A young campesino poses for a portrait at the Montecristo Maricela farm community that I visited.
At community meetings, attendance was taken. Since many campesinos in rural areas cannot read or write their own names, they sign with their thumb prints.

(Above) A few men from Montecristo show their appreciation for their fellow neighbors by giving each other back rubs during a group workshop.

La Milpa: Corn is the most widely cultivated crop in Guatemala. The ever-so-essential tortilla is made from this staple produce. Expansive fields of tall and beautiful stalks can be encountered at any given moment in this green country.

(Above) I found political propaganda all over the country—on trees, rocks, and walls—during this controversial election year.

(Center) Colorfully painted school buses serve as Guatemalan public transportation.

(Lower Right) Senora Dominga does the daily laundry at Finca La Lupita.
Elaborately decorated, condemned school buses travel down broken highways across the country into cities out of pueblos and back again. “Tikisate! Tikisate!” shouts the gold-toothed man with widened arms from the open side door of the moving camioneta in the market. “Dale, dale!” he shouts with hard slaps on the side of the bus. Heavy footsteps overhead are heard as bags and packages are tossed, caught, and squeezed into place on the bus’s roof. The camioneta continues on and the man hops in. Inside, sweaty morning bodies wrapped in brightly woven traditional patterns press tightly together in contorted positions forming colorful human collages in seatbelt-less seats while struggling to breath through small window cracks. They pass golden quetzales, while making way for migrant vendors to crawl in the crowded aisle and sell their aguas or naranjas con chile pimiento. The driver pulls the loose string by his side and the horn blasts. Rocks and heavy diesel smoke trail the bus. The vehicle curves and makes sharp turns in order to avoid deep potholes. A sudden exhaustion comes over me on the Monday commute to La Lupita.

The Lupita livestock choir holds their first rehearsal of the day. The rooster begins with a high-pitched solo and the dogs provide backup with less than harmonious howls. Mosquitoes later chime in with a sporadic buzzing surround sound. The firecracker percussion will be random, not seldom, but unpredictable and dramatic indicating a birth, union, or perhaps loss. My not-so-subtle natural alarm clock partnered with the arrival of the morning heat begat by the rising sun makes returning to sleep an impossibility. I arise.

I pull my mosquito netting back, toss my legs over the hammock’s side and extend my toes down until they reach the damp earth. I hoist the remainder of my body up and stand. I take my first steps and make my way to the hut’s small opening so that I can confront the new day. Upon exiting, I unexpectedly plop my feet into the cool morning mud provided by the heavy rains that took place throughout the night. Very faint is the shrieking horn of the only bus into town as it passes by the Monte Gloria farm community and heads into Willywood. I look down at my freshly soiled feet, smile, and whisper “buenos dias” to myself. I rub my feet deeper into the wet ground and decide that I have never been happier.
Ayham Bahnassi '05

Hometown: Worcester County, Massachusetts
Major/Minor/Program: politics and Near Eastern Judaic Studies
Internship: Parents'Circle—the Israeli-Palestinian Bereaved Parents’ Forum, New England (based in Israel)
Fear of Getting Involved in Coexistence Groups

An Israeli businessman founded Parents’ Circle (PC) after the murder of his son at the hands of Hamas in 1994. He hoped that this organization would serve as a support group for all the parents that lost beloved family members due to the conflict. He also wanted PC to function as a voice of hope, proving that the cycle of hate and revenge can be ended and that peace is possible. Today, Parents’ Circle is a large Arab-Jewish peace activist organization that consists of Israeli and Palestinian parents that have lost family members as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The message of these bereaved parents is to seek reconciliation, not revenge.

Project goals:
• Parents’ Circle receives support from many American synagogues and liberal Protestant churches. However, before my internship, it had little contact with the Arab-American communities. My job was to identify sympathetic Arab-American communities and garner their support.
• Visit Arab-American institutions such as churches, mosques, organizations, and activist groups in order to raise awareness about PC
• Build support for PC from the Arab-American communities
• Begin to develop a relationship between Arab-American community leaders and PC
• Bring Yitzhak Frankenthal, PC founder, and a Palestinian parent from PC to speak to Arab-American audience for the first time
• Encourage partnership and future collaborative work between PC and Arab-American communities

Activities:
• Prepared an extensive and elaborate presentation about PC
• Contacted and visited many Arab-American communities and organizations in New England, in order to give my presentation about PC
• Organized PC’s and Frankenthal’s first visit to a mosque in the USA

Key Dilemmas:
• What reactions will I, an Arab-American, receive from other Arabs for volunteering for an Israeli organization?
• How can I get Arab-American community leaders to trust the intentions of Frankenthal, an Israeli, and founder of PC?
• Are the principle and message of PC well conveyed to an Arab audience? Are the brochures, website, and videos of PC appropriately suited for an Arab-American audience?

Personal Goals:
• Encourage Arab-American communities to play an active and influential role in peace activist groups such as PC. I, as an Arab-American, fear that lack of action could prove to be very costly for Arabs, as they might get completely left behind during the peace process if inactivity and indifference persist.
• Understand the fears, concerns, and other reasons for an Arab-American community’s hesitation to work with PC
• Help PC to become more appealing to an Arab audience

Important Learnings
• It is crucial for an Arab-Jewish peace organization to reflect equality in the power structure of the organization. Arab and Jewish members need to divide the responsibilities and the authority equally in order for the peace organization to thrive and to have the ability to gain support from both communities.
• Immense courage is required for both Arab and Jewish members to volunteer for this organization. Many members hesitate to tell friends and families that they work for PC.
Ayham Bahnassi

Here is one of the communities I visited to raise awareness about Parents’ Circle—The Islamic Society of Boston (ISB).

Yitzhak Frankenthal describes the mission and activities of Parents’ Circle to Dr. Krayyem, a leader in Worcester’s Muslim community.

Above is the logo for the Parents’ Circle—the Israeli-Palestinian Bereaved Parents’ Forum, the organization where I worked.
It was 7:30 and the synagogue was packed. The crowd consisted mainly of senior citizens and members of the Jewish community in Great Barrington. I sensed the crowd’s eagerness to hear from Yitzhak. I even witnessed a small brawl between two parties of senior citizens for the limited front row seats. All chairs were eventually filled. Many had to stand during the lecture. I was excited for the event to begin and drove two hours so that I could see a Palestinian member of Bereaved Parents’ Forum. I wanted to observe how Ghazi would interact with Yitzhak. Is Ghazi just there to serve as a Palestinian token? Or is he just as intelligent, devoted, and as eloquent of a speaker as Yitzhak?

Eventually the head of the congregation introduced Betsy and she revealed the bad news. Yitzhak and Ghazi were stuck in a Buffalo airport. Their flight was cancelled because of storms. The crowd was sad, yet certainly not disappointed because Betsy’s presentation was awesome. People remained in their seats and listened attentively to her moving presentation. She showed poise, was informative, and very articulate.

She discussed the profound emotions attached to this conflict. Everyone is passionate about his or her views. Regardless where one stands on the political spectrum, most refuse to modify their views. She revealed that when Yitzhak raised an opposing perspective to a crowd as large as the one I saw at the temple in Great Barrington, it significantly jeopardized his security. In some Jewish communities in Israel, Yitzhak needs bodyguards because the atmosphere can become antagonistic.

Learning that Yitzhak needs bodyguards when he speaks almost belittles my fears of describing Parents’ Circle to an Arab audience. My insecurities to deliver a presentation are petty compared to the real dangers that he faces. He admirably does not allow a hostile crowd to discourage him from spreading his views on peace and coexistence. My gravest fear is social denunciation. Not only does he encounter social rejection from his own people, but he also has to worry about his physical safety. I know that in America, regardless of how different my views may be, I won’t suffer physically for it. I may be labeled as a traitor, or not be welcomed, but at least I have the security of not being physically harmed.

Even Betsy was prepared to endure backlash at the temple. Fortunately, the crowd responded positively, but Betsy told me that she was prepared to hear it all, both compliments and scolding. Betsy and Yitzhak have encountered hostile audience after expressing their views. However, inhospitable audiences do not intimidate them. Yitzhak isn’t discouraged from an unsympathetic audience. He keeps spreading his word, which is an inspiration to me. I admire their resiliency. It encourages me to speak courageously, no matter how the crowd might react.
Matthew Harris ’04

Home: New City, New York
Major/Minor/Program: economics, International Business and Peace and Conflict Studies Program.
Tentative Career Goals: Work in health care policy in both the United States and abroad, and pursue graduate studies in medicine and public health.
Internship: University of Cape Town, South Africa

Deirdre Mooney ’05

Home: East Northport, New York
Major/Minor/Program: political science and International and Global Studies
Tentative Career Goals: Spend time in Latin America working with basic medical skills before attending Mount Sinai School of Medicine, NY. My long-term goal is to practice emergency medical care in Latin America, or work with an international organization such as Doctors Without Borders
Internship: Ikamva Labantu, Cape Town, South Africa
Matthew Harris

Issues of Fear and Identity in Engaging with Your Community

Worked with Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, clinical psychologist and former member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), on two studies. The first explored Apartheid Era conscientious objectors from the South African Defense Force, and the second was a psychology study stemming from her work in trauma.

Project Goals
• Determine a cognitive model regarding the decision to conscientiously object
• Assess current and past material relevant to trauma and recovery, and connect this research with our study

Personal Goals
• Gain a better understanding of the psychology of recovery
• Learn about the social, economic, and political disparities that continue in South Africa even a decade after the official end of apartheid

Activities
• Researched cognitive modeling with respect to conscientious objection
• Interviewed several conscientious objectors
• Collaborated with Gobodo-Madikizela on an article summarizing our findings, to be published in a journal of psychology in South Africa

Key Dilemma
• How can I, as a foreign, transient observer, begin to understand my role in a country with such deeply intrinsic problems?

Important Learning
• We connected our conscientious objection study to the notion of cognitive dissonance, postulating the idea that people generally have a set of ethics or morals, which may be in contradiction with the ethical code of the military state. Those who cannot reconcile the two codes find themselves experiencing this cognitive dilemma, and will often engage in conscientious objection.
Children play in the park, Grahamstown, SA.

I joined the crowds exploring the Grahamstown Arts Festival in Grahamstown, SA.

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (above) is a former member of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, center affiliate, and my boss.

A view of Cape Town from Robben Island
Dear Sir;
I stood here this morning, not actually today, but twenty-seven years ago. I stood on the ground of Soweto, a township no different from any other in South Africa. I stood here with my friends, my peers, and even those who I didn’t really like. We stood here, 170,000 of us.

We stood here because we are forced to learn in Afrikaans, a language we do not know. It is forced on us only to perpetuate the cycle of white oppression on the black and colored communities. We just wanted to be taught in English, a language we understood.

On a winter morning, 170,000 kids between the ages of 10 and 20 marched through Soweto’s streets peacefully, but demanding our right to be taught in English. We carried no guns or knives, only our hope that you will listen.

There you stood on the grounds of Soweto, with your batons ready and tear gas. Marching in groups of 15,000, we must have been some sight from where you stood. You approached us with batons swinging and tear gas launching into the crowd of children. We were scared but we didn’t go. You didn’t warn us, you just took a swing, pulled a trigger. Yet, for some reason, we still did not leave. Not as we laid crying and bleeding from the beatings. We chose to stand. We fought back with small stones, against your mighty arms and brutal batons.

I guess it was difficult to see the fear in our eyes. I suppose you could not fathom the extent to which you were hurting young children. I imagine, that from where you stood, that you were blind to the things you were doing. I guess from behind the gun, your vision was poor.

I don’t know if you remember me, us. I don’t know if you’ve chosen not to. But come visit. It’s not hard to find, our homes neatly beside each other, beneath stones that bear symbols of our faiths. You may have killed me or rather us. But you brought to life the spirit of our cause, though the costs of this revival was great. I hope that you do remember us, me. I hope that you never forget, while you and your children celebrate this national holiday in the mini-malls and movie-theatres that were built when our townships were destroyed by bulldozers. I hope you remember that day, when you stood there, across from us. Across from me.

Sincerely,
Faceless
Project Goals
• Compile information on HIV/AIDS and TB in South Africa
• Help establish a wellness program for Ikamva Labantu’s office staff
• Co-coordinate the annual Winter Programme for township teenagers
• Collaborate with the founder and director of Ikamva Labantu to develop a program working with boys and male role models in the townships
• Assist with general operations of the Youth Sector and provide evaluations on the Sector’s daily operations

Personal Goals
• Get some sort of grasp on the situation of AIDS, HIV, and other communicable diseases in terms of the educational awareness, general opinion, the availability and use of presentation, and the availability of treatment. In particular, I wanted to understand how HIV/AIDS could spread to the point that one out of three educated college students are HIV+ and the rate of teenage pregnancies is so elevated.
• Gain an understanding of life during and after Apartheid and how it affected various parties and individuals

Activities
• Researched, compiled, and presented information on pertinent health issues and established contacts within the community to develop an internal wellness program
• Attended internal office meetings and civil society discussions relevant to the Youth and Health Sectors
• Organized activities for the Annual Winter Programme focused on survival in the township.
• Worked on activities such as Hoops 4 Hope tournaments, Youth Day celebrations, and Marimba Band demonstrations

Key Dilemmas
• Providing an evaluation of my experience working with one of the sector coordinators called for a delineation between our personal and professional relationship
• Knowing when to accept that interactions were limited by time and the availability of safe transportation to the townships
• Choosing how to spend work and free time—each sector offered interesting opportunities. It was difficult to focus on two different projects without getting drawn into helping others. “Free time” provided many opportunities: traveling to townships, exploring Cape Town, going to the bird rehabilitation center I volunteered at, or
spending time with friends. Since township life was very different from the life that my non-work friends led, it was seldom possible to blend work and non-work friends.

**Important Learnings**

- Location can be everything. Relationships are forged through Ikamva Labantu that might never be forged otherwise because it is a meeting ground for people with the common goal of improving the quality of life in South Africa. Individuals put aside racial, ethnic, and socio-economic differences to collaborate. However, the geographic and economic divide between communities frequently prohibits them from being able to socialize outside of work due to safety, cost, and time.

- Although the legal foundation of Apartheid was eliminated almost a decade ago, it has left profound repercussions on the structure of society evident in everyday interactions.

- Cultural generalizations are not unique to any culture. People asked if I had thought Africa would be a jungle rife with wild animals, poking fun at the assumption that most Americans are ignorant about the rest of the world. However, many South Africans assumed I supported Bush and his wars among other generalizations.
I woke on a Saturday morning to do what a friend told me was a crazy idea—go to Nyanga. An infamous black township outside the Central Business District of Cape Town, Nyanga is known for gang violence. The first time I heard about the township was on my third night in Cape Town when a colleague said he had witnessed a fatal hijacking there.

The car’s engine was still spinning when one of the kids in the car eagerly popped out of the car to greet his buddies. We had arrived in Nyanga. The energy was palpable. I saw barefoot boys, ranging from ages six to 20 years old, drilling passing the ball to each other in the parking lot. These kids were pumped! They were pumped to play, to cheer, and to eat!

Over 100 children and coaches watched the games from the balcony overlooking the court. The arena smelled like sweat and oranges. Oranges, the cheapest fruit available, are sold in pockets of ten or more. A few teams brought a pocket; others anticipated that food would be provided. It was refreshing to realize that this was just one of the many ways that Martin, my supervisor, was trying to get township kids off the streets. Not only was basketball fun, it was time-consuming. Daily practices required a commitment by players of which they could be proud. Most teams had a coach and jerseys, sponsored by Hoops 4 Hope. Children were being forced to make life-altering decisions on a daily basis. Was today the day they’d try stealing, prostitution, or hanging out with a gang? Life in the townships is hard and structured opportunities for fun are limited—no pools, game rooms, sports fields, etc. Other places are too far away or too expensive.

After a long day, the tournament concluded with one school winning both the boys’ and girls’ division. Unfortunately, the term winner implies the existence of a loser. One of the organizers addressed this issue when half of the “losing” girls’ team walked out without shaking the hands of the other team. He preceded the trophy presentations with a discussion on sportsmanship. He explained that every team worked hard to get to the finals and that it was an accomplishment of which every team could be proud. “You can’t be a good winner unless you can be a good loser.”

Shown here is one of the girls’ teams from the Hoops 4 Hope program, which gives township youth the opportunity to do something positive after school and on weekends. These uniforms were donated by a school on Long Island, NY, USA. Many players have uniforms, but shoes, sports bras, and other equipment are still in short supply.
Marina Pevzner ‘04

Home: Rehovot, Israel  
Major/Minor/Program: political science, sociology, and Peace and Conflict Studies Program  
Tentative Career Goals: Combine conflict resolution and transformation on international level with local coexistence work  
Internship: AHIMSA Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peace, Colombo, Sri Lanka


**Between Hope and Struggle:**
**Dialogue in Sri Lanka and Israel**

Ahimsa is dedicated to educating for peace and conflict resolution. The organization promotes coexistence through raising awareness of non-violent values within Sri Lankan society, while strengthening groups and individuals in their efforts to live by these values. Some of its activities include working with students in high schools and incorporating peace education into school curriculum; working with shanty area's children through holistic education, carrying out conflict resolution programs across Sri Lanka, and incorporating creative methods of bringing in communities to a coexistence process within their conflict resolution frame. As part of this effort, Ahimsa has been integrating applied theater techniques into their programs which have become a promising coexistence tool in bringing communities together to discuss the conflict.

**Project Goals**
- Learn about the different program Ahimsa is currently engaged in and the methods it uses in promoting organizational goals
- Introduce dialogue to Ahimsa staff
- Explore the possibility of incorporating the dialogue techniques into the various ongoing activities and programs of Ahimsa and Sri Lankan society as a whole
- Understand the successes and struggles of Sri Lankan non-governmental organizations working in the coexistence field

**Personal Goals**
- Develop personal relationships with Ahimsa staff
- Learn about the different aspects of Sri Lankan culture in terms of its uniqueness, gender dynamics, role of religion, different local traditions, and the place and roles of each of the different ethnic groups within the society and the conflict at large
- Understand the meanings of the ongoing conflict and the peace process on the grassroots level and the way it is perceived by individuals in the society
- Explore the possibility of establishing a relationship between Ahimsa and Reut-Sadaka — an Arab-Jewish youth movement for coexistence in Israel.
- Feel that I made a contribution to the organization

**Activities**
- Led a series of dialogue trainings for Ahimsa staff
- Facilitated a three day dialogue workshop for Tamil, Sinhalese, and Muslim social workers, teachers, and policemen from the Eastern district
- Led activities on promoting non-violent education with Sinhalese children from shanty areas in Colombo
- Helped to develop project proposals that incorporated dialogue exchange for Ahimsa’s ongoing “Peace Education in High School” program
- Begun developing a dialogue manual as a link between Israeli organization “Reut-Sadaka” and Ahimsa
- Met and interviewed female peace activists across Sri Lanka
- Participated in applied theater training with Ahimsa staff

**Key Dilemmas**
- How can the existing dialogue framework developed in other parts of the world be applied as an effective coexistence tool in Sri Lanka?
- Can the obstacle of the lack of common language be dealt with in the dialogue setting effectively?
- In what ways can the work that I started continue into the future?
- What impact will the unfolding political realities have on the grassroots coexistence work such as that of Ahimsa?
**Important Learnings**

• English is a language of the more privileged part of Sri Lankan society. Thus to be able to implement long-term coexistence work knowledge of local languages is essential.
• Understanding the cultural and social norms and being able to integrate into them while being flexible about your own goals is the basis for the ability to implement programs productively and for establishing personal relationships.
• Theater has an important place in the local culture and can serve as a great coexistence tool for dialogue, especially given the language barriers.

• The ongoing diplomatic process does not translate fully into the daily lives of people— it becomes a major obstacle when planning and implementing programs aimed toward conflict transformation.
• There are many similarities between the Sri Lankan and Israeli political realities. People in Sri Lanka are very intrigued by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and are interested to learn about it and the various coexistence efforts taking place in Israel.
I am in Colombo two days earlier than planned. My trip to Batticoloa was cancelled because of violent incidents, which are still taking place. The LTTE called for a general strike (Hartal) in Batticoloa on the day before we had planned to arrive. During the strike, vehicles cannot enter or leave either Batticoloa or the surrounding area. The strike is in response to an army arresting a vehicle that allegedly carried eight armed LTTE women. The army surrounded the area but is unable to respond. Interestingly, the Sri Lankan media has provided almost no coverage on the incident. I've been told that during a crisis the government doesn’t allow information to be reported.

I am very concerned that this incident will put additional negative pressure on the ongoing peace process, which is already not in great condition. I am also disappointed because I was supposed to conduct several interviews in Batticoloa and will not have time to do so before I leave Sri Lanka.

Aside from my early return, the trip to Trincomalee was both exciting and fruitful. On the way to Trincomalee we passed several checkpoints, some of the war-affected villages, and two refugee camps run by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Since I have not been directly exposed to the devastating impact of the conflict during my stay in Sri Lanka, seeing these sights was both interesting and educational. Passing through the checkpoints brought back memories of my own country, Israel. I was reminded of the stories of the long waiting lines and living with the fear of attacks; stories shared by my Sri Lankan friends.

We had an amusing incident at a Sri Lankan army checkpoint. To the guard's surprise, he discovered a white girl driving a van with three Sri Lankans. Me, the white girl, had driven for few hours since the ride was very long and the driver was tired. I was not carrying an international license and with my American license our driver had to answer few questions. However, in the end it was fine and he let us pass through. Driving in Sri Lanka is an experience that I will never forget.
2003 Ethics and Coexistence Student Fellows

Paul Adler '04, from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is a political science major. Paul is a Core Committee member of the Oxfam Collegiate Click Drive and serves as a leader for the Oxfam America CHANGE Initiative, a program for college students interested in hunger, poverty, and globalization. He also serves on the Core Committees of Students for Peace in Israel and Palestine and Students for Just Society (SJS), for which he runs the Brandeis Circle, a speaker’s forum on issues of social change and globalization.

Ayham Bahnassi '05, a political science and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies major, is from Boylston, Massachusetts. An active member of the campus community, he is cofounder and club coordinator of the Arab Culture Club and is a member of the University’s Arab-Jewish Dialogue Group. As a high school student, Ayham was very involved with the Model United Nations, through which he participated in forums that shaped his interest in coexistence and dialogue groups.

Xiomara Gonzalez '05, from Bronx, New York came to Brandeis as a Posse Scholar. She is still involved in her home community, serving as a research assistant at Columbia University Teachers’ College with their Early Head Start Program since 1999. She also spent a summer working as a healthcare assistant with La Clínica Del Boson, a clinic in Argentina. Xiomara is the recipient of several awards including the Hewlett Pluralism Alliance Grant, for which she worked with Brandeis’s theater department writing 415 South Street, a play that explored issues of race, religion, and gender at Brandeis. She is also co-president of AHORA, the latino student organization, and working is with the Brandeis Labor Coalition on the Justice for Janitors movement.

Matthew Harris '04, is from New City, New York, where he volunteers as an EMT for the New City Volunteer Ambulance Corps/Rescue Squad. He is pursuing a major in economics, a minor in international business, and is in the Peace and Conflict Studies Program. In addition to working as a teaching assistant in sociology, Matthew is a medical supervisor with the Brandeis Emergency Medical Corps and is regional coordinator for the National Collegiate Emergency Medical Services Foundation.

Deirdre Mooney '05, is pursuing a double major in politics and International & Global Studies, and has been accepted into Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She is from East Northport, NY and spent the summer of 2002 in a human rights internship in Costa Rica through the Institute for Central American Development Studies. Deirdre is active at Brandeis as co-chair of campus registration for the Oxfam Collegiate Click Drive campaign and a member of Students for a Just Society, the Mountain Club, the Ballroom Dance Team, the Ski Team, and the Paintball Club.

Marina Pevzner '04 came to Brandeis from Rehovot, Israel as a Slifka Scholar. While in Israel she facilitated Arab-Jewish coexistence and dialogue groups. She is pursuing a double major in political science and sociology and is in the International Business and Peace and Conflict Studies Programs. Marina is very active in campus coexistence efforts, serving as coordinator of the Arab-Jewish Dialogue Group, and cofounder of the Indian-Pakistani Dialogue group. She is the recipient of several honors including the Karpf Peace Prize 2002, the Undergraduate Research Program Award 2002, and the National Jewish Women’s Committee Recognition 2002.
Summer Internship in Context

The summer internship is only one component of the three-part Ethics and Coexistence Student Fellowship. One of the unique features of the Fellowship is the intensive preparation beforehand and substantive processing after the internship. In fact, the Fellowship is not only a summer experience, but a year-long commitment.

In the spring, the Student Fellows take the course “Introduction to Coexistence,” a rigorous course taught by Professor Cynthia Cohen, director of coexistence research and international collaborations for the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence, a part of the Ethics Center. This spring course explores the concepts, practices and dilemmas that are at the core of the emerging field of intercommunal coexistence. Together, students learn about methods of intercommunal work, partly through hands-on activities: encounter, dialogue, activism, and the arts. This academic and practical preparation gives the students the tools to become involved in their summer internship much more as coexistence workers rather than curious tourists.

In addition to the course, Student Fellows gathered this spring for the first time at a day-long retreat in preparation for the summer. Held at the Peace Abbey in Sherborn, Massachusetts, students took advantage of the time away from campus in this serene yet energizing setting to share their hopes for the summer experience, air some of their fears and concerns, and receive nuts-and-bolts instruction about international travel, culture shock, and fieldwork methods.

After their summer internship, students take a fall course, “Internship and Analysis,” taught in 2003 by Professor James Mandrell of the Romance and Comparative Literature department. This course gives students the rich opportunity to process their summer experiences with a professor and each other. Students often find parallels between their experiences in widely disparate regions and cultures. Through readings, group discussion, and a presentation to the Brandeis community, Student Fellows are challenged to integrate their spring academic learning with their summer practical experience. That is, how were the coexistence theories that you learned in the spring either borne out or contradicted by your summer experiences? Interestingly, this fall course is often cited as one of the most valuable aspects of the three-part Fellowship. Students who undertake other life-changing summer experiences often bemoan the lack of a context to process their experiences both emotionally and intellectually.

It’s a rare student that is able to contribute to the work of intercommunal coexistence on this level as an undergraduate. Brandeis Ethics and Coexistence Student Fellows are doing just that.