

# THE ETHICS CENTER STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS, 1998

The Ethics Center sponsors Brandeis undergraduate students to do integrated course work and field work related to issues of ethics and social justice in a global context.

Eight Brandeis undergraduates have participated in the program in 1998. They enrolled in a course on "Topics in Ethics, Justice and Public Life" in the spring semester. Over the summer, they worked in internships on several continents. In the fall of 1998, each student is working with a mentor on the Brandeis faculty.

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

## THE ETHICS CENTER STUDENT FELLOWS, 1998

### Intern in the Balkans:

Ariele Cohen '99

### Intern in Baltimore, MD:

Liora Cobin '99

### Intern in Ecuador:

Ben Singerman '99

### Intern in the Middle East:

Forsan Hussein '00

### Intern in Mozambique:

Eldad Einekave '00

### Intern in Pakistan:

Nageeb Ali '99

### Intern in South Africa

Brahmy Poologasingham '00

### Intern in Tanzania:

Manuel Costescu '99

The International Center for  
Ethics, Justice, and Public Life  
Brandeis University  
781-736-8577



This exhibit is supported by  
the Rice Family Foundation.

# ETHNIC CONFLICT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

## IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA



### PROJECT GOALS

- To educate youth and professionals in Yugoslavia about coexistence and tolerance
- To peacefully protest oppressive governmental policies in Yugoslavia
- To promote human rights in Yugoslavia

### PERSONAL GOALS

- To learn about the ethnic and political situation in the heterogeneous region of the former Yugoslavia
- To receive hands-on experience working in an NGO dealing with ethnic conflict and conflict management.



**Arielle Cohen**

(1991) South Orange,  
New Jersey  
Internship with the Center  
for Anti War Action  
Belgrade, Yugoslavia

### ACTIVITIES

- observed interactions between people in the community who have passionate feelings about the situation in Yugoslavia
- visited and interviewed representatives of regional and international NGOs involved in human rights work and conflict management in Yugoslavia
  - participated in the Forum for Ethnic Relation's summer school in Zjablak, Montenegro, where I explored issues of Balkan psychology, as well as the crisis in Kosovo and its effects on the Albanian population in Montenegro







## KEY DILEMMAS

- How can I, as an American, empathize with and understand the powerful emotions associated with nationality and ethnicity in the Balkans?
- Is it possible to negotiate, or talk rationally and logically, with people who seem extremely set in their beliefs and convictions? If so, how?
- Can historical events and myths be used in forward looking and progressive ways? How?



The International Center for Ethics,  
Justice, and Public Life  
Brandeis University  
781-736-8577

## IMPORTANT LEARNINGS

- Being a good listener and observer is important while trying to gain close understanding of another culture's way of thinking.
- Different versions of history play an important role in ethnic conflict.
- Problems in ethnic relations are not only about racism and prejudices. Ethnic tensions increase when issues of wealth and social status come into play.



## PROJECT GOAL

The goal of "A Call to Community" is to build community between Baltimore City and the surrounding counties so that citizens and leaders

throughout the metropolitan area can cooperate to solve common problems. Through organized conversations leading to action plans, project participants strive both to understand, and to combat, the deep personal and institutional racism that lie at the heart of many of the region's problems.



**Liora J. Corbin**

(1999), St. Paul, Minnesota  
Internship with Interfaith  
Action for Racial Justice, Inc.  
Baltimore, Maryland

## PERSONAL GOALS

- to deepen my understanding of how race and racism operate in the United States.
- to learn about different ways people are working to combat racism, particularly the "study circle" model
- to contribute to efforts to combat racism.

**A CALL TO COMMUNITY:  
AN HONEST CONVERSATION  
ON RACE, RECONCILIATION,  
AND RESPONSIBILITY**







## ACTIVITIES

- examining the evaluation and follow-up processes for study circles, proposed more effective approaches, and began implementing some of my proposals
- participating in a "study circle" and facilitator training
- working in the project office

## KEY DILEMMAS

- How can people of different races and classes effectively be brought together to deal with substantive issues?
- How much work has to be done within communities before it is possible or effective to reach out and work between communities?
- Is it possible to build organizational structures that model the mission of the organization? If so, how?

## IMPORTANT LEARNINGS

I learned:

- about the depth and complexity of issues of race and racism in the United States.
- how difficult and yet how essential it is for a project's internal structure to model its mission
- about the "study circle" model of working against racism
- more about my own place as a Jewish, white, woman in the struggle against racism.



## PROJECT GOALS

to create a museum of indigenous ethnicity that will:

- represent all of the cultures of the Amazon
- become a sustainable source of cash revenue for local indigenous communities
- serve as an educational center for scholars, eco-tourists and indigenous young people themselves.

## PERSONAL GOALS:

to educate myself about indigenous culture and the cultural politics of the Upper Ecuadorian Amazon.

## ACTIVITIES:

- observing the relationships among different people and players in the community
- capacity-building for the indigenous people working in the museum
- translating museum labels into English.



### Ben Singerman

[199], Longwood, Florida.  
Internship with Fundacion Sinchi Sacha  
and Union Huacamayos, Archidona,  
near Tena, Ecuador



# AMAZON WORLDS MUSEUM:

AN EXPERIMENT IN CULTURAL  
TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE UPPER  
ECUADORIAN AMAZON



## KEY DILEMMAS:

- How can indigenous cultures coexist with the Western culture that is intruding into their region? How can they survive?
- What are the most effective ways to promote sustainable development projects? What are appropriate roles for local, national and international players?
- How can sustainable development projects in the region be better designed and implemented to facilitate cooperation and respect between indigenous groups and the ngo's and other organizations that want to assist them?



## LEARNINGS:

- It is very important to negotiate clear roles from the very beginning of such a project.
- The conflicts between the indigenous people and the NGO about the museum project did not seem to be about the content of the museum or the representation of the culture. They seemed to be primarily about issues of credit, money and power.
- In terms of maintaining their own cultural integrity, the indigenous people valued their language, their chicha rituals, and their agricultural work – all sustained independently of the museum.

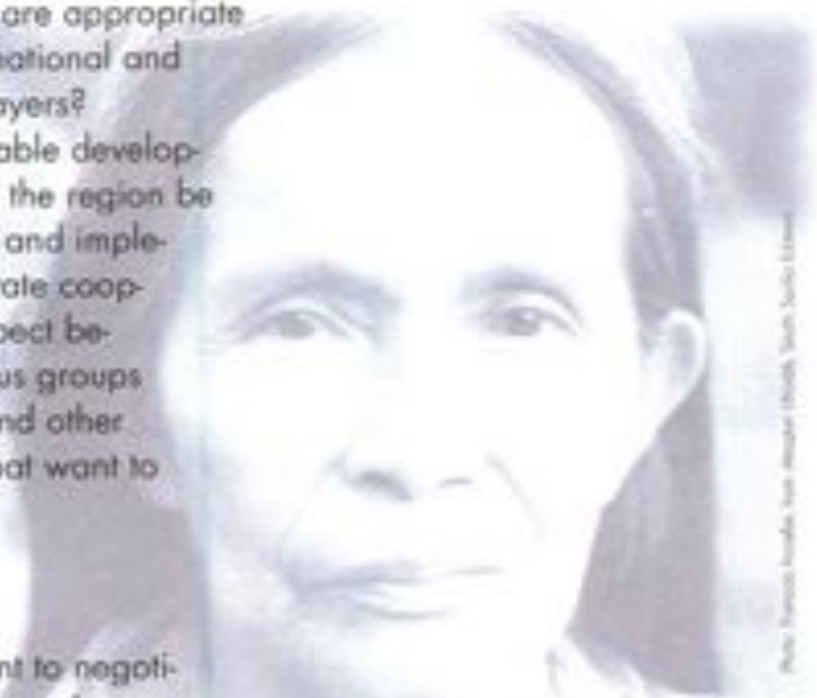


Photo: Francisco Gonzalez, from *Indigenous World, South-South Links*

International Center for  
Ethics, Justice and  
Public Life  
Brandeis University  
781-736-8577



## PROJECT GOALS

- To document human rights violations in the Occupied Territories
- To educate policymakers and the general public about the human rights situation there

## PERSONAL GOALS

- To educate myself about the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- To support B'Tselem and to make others aware of the human rights situation in the West Bank.

## ACTIVITIES

- Conducting fieldwork: traveling in the West Bank and interviewing Palestinians who suffer human rights violations
- Doing research and gathering data on issues of human rights violations for written reports
- Translating from Arabic into Hebrew and assisting with office work

# WORKING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP



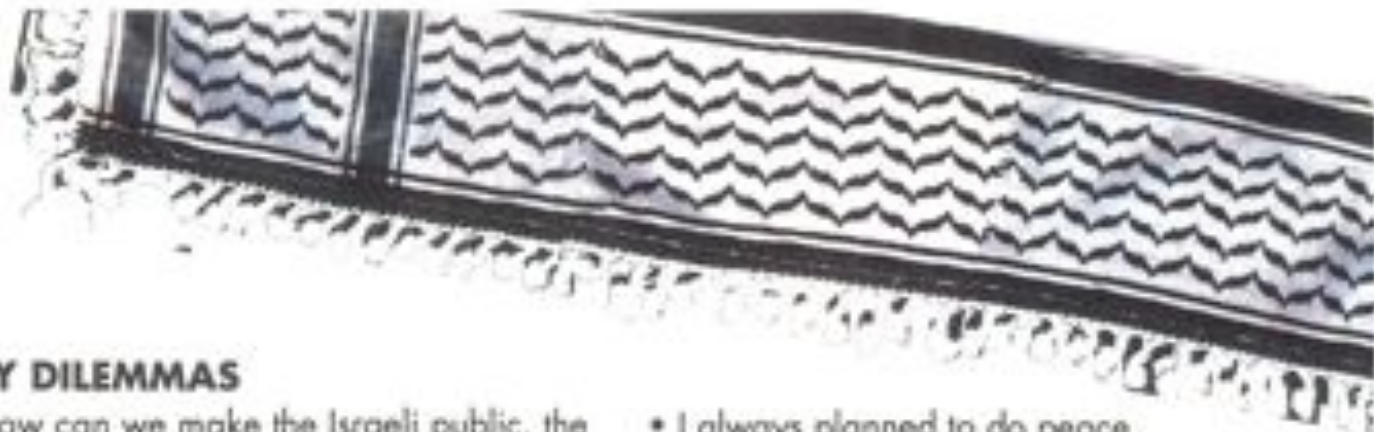
Map from The Green Line of the Israeli Settlement House



**Forsan Hussein**  
('00), Sha'ab Village, Israel  
Internship with B'TSELEM:  
The Israeli Information  
Center for Human Rights in  
the Occupied Territories  
Jerusalem, Israel

Design: Valeri Tash





## KEY DILEMMAS

- How can we make the Israeli public, the Arab world, and the international community more aware of human rights abuses in the occupied territories and more ready to act and to help?
- The people in the West Bank asked: "Are you working for us, or working for them?" As a Palestinian Israeli, what could I say?
- I always planned to do peace work for the rest of my life. But when I went to B'Tselem and saw how my people are being treated, I became very angry — not just at the Israeli government, but at everything Israeli. I still feel anger toward the government, but I am working with this anger in order to be an effective peacemaker.

## IMPORTANT LEARNINGS

- I was shocked to discover the terrible living conditions of Palestinian people in the occupied territories.
- Although there are many violations of human rights by the Israeli government and by Israeli soldiers, the Israeli public is not aware of these violations.
- We can never reach a real peace between ourselves and the other party of the conflict (the so-called enemy) as long as we humiliate other people and disregard their humanity.

The International Center for Ethics,  
Justice, and Public Life  
Brandeis University  
781-736-8577



## PROJECT GOALS

to create strong village institutions that can effect change and create systems of self-sufficiency, by:

- building infrastructure
- providing credit in rural areas
- consulting on environmental issues

## PERSONAL GOAL

I wanted not just to witness rural poverty, but to engage actively with poor people and the organizations working to support them.

## ACTIVITIES

- I interviewed villagers in twenty rural villages.
- I read extensively on the region and on the operations of rural credit markets.
- I am now in the process of compiling a report.

Karachi

### Syed Nageeb Mustafa Ali

(1999), Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Internship with Aga Khan  
Rural Support Programme  
Skardu, Pakistan



# AN INQUIRY INTO POVERTY ALLEVIATION: RURAL CREDIT IN THE NORTHERN AREAS OF PAKISTAN



## KEY DILEMMAS

- At what level does the provision of rural credit foster income inequality?
- Why does such a system of poverty alleviation work in some cases and not in others?
- What are the advantages of having an NGO perform such work?

## IMPORTANT LEARNINGS

- Though large-scale institutional state-sponsored change is often necessary for development and poverty alleviation, NGO efforts are important because they save lives in the short-run.
- Over the summer, as my social analyses developed, I saw myself changing from being simply a consumer of knowledge, to being also a producer of knowledge.



The International Center for Ethics,  
Justice, and Public Life  
Brandeis University  
781-736-8577



## PROJECT GOAL

to reduce infant mortality by targeting major medical problems and constructing a sustainable response to them

## PERSONAL GOALS

- to understand trans-cultural medical intervention of the type found in rural, developing regions, including related cultural and political complexities
- to gain clinical experience in the Cuamba hospital

## ACTIVITIES

- Observing interviews with traditional healers of the region
- Accompanying surveyors of local health posts on visits
- Editing reports and preparing maps of the Niassa region
- Creating a nutritional questionnaire for gauging the nutritional condition among the local children and mothers
- Working with doctors and interns to assess the condition of the Cuamba hospital



Map from the Niassa region of Mozambique



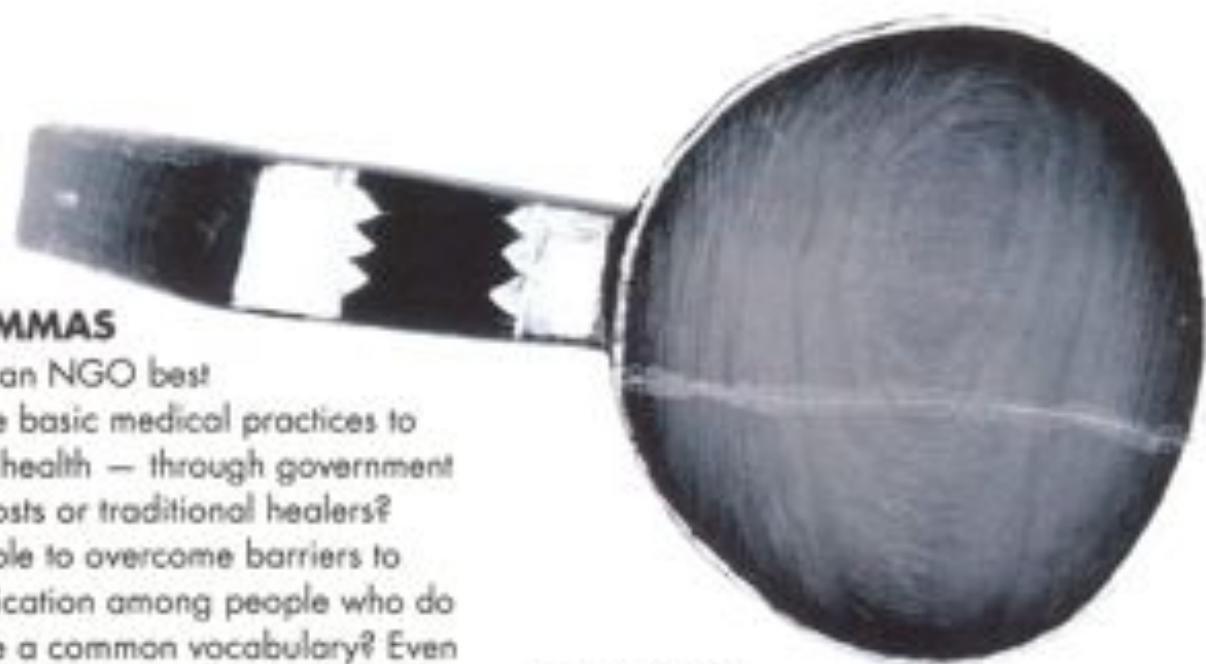
**Eldad Enekave**

['00], Beverly Hills, California  
Internship with Medical Care  
Development International,  
Washington D.C.

# CHILD SURVIVAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH PROJECT IN CUAMBA, MOZAMBIQUE







## KEY DILEMMAS

- How can an NGO best introduce basic medical practices to improve health — through government health posts or traditional healers?
- Is it possible to overcome barriers to communication among people who do not share a common vocabulary? Even basic graphic illustrations are full of cultural associations that may not be shared.
- Where does the scope of a health project begin and end? Political conditions, social problems and economic factors are all central to the health of a region's population.
- On the other hand, if the population is not equipped to deal with the medical distress, even foreign means should not be denied. As a last resort, such relief is generally effective in the short-run and it may serve to build a population's trust in an NGO.

## IMPORTANT LEARNINGS

- It is critical to work with awareness of the existing cultural dynamics and infrastructure.
- A project's success should be judged by continued improvements in the health of the region after the life of the project. More efficient and effective uses of existing resources are preferable to the introduction of large sums of foreign aid, which can foster dependence and undermine the image of a competent local culture.

The International Center for Ethics,  
Justice, and Public Life  
Brandeis University  
781-736-8537



# NOVA: A PROJECT IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND POVERTY UPLIFTMENT IN RURAL SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITIES



**Brahmy Poologasingham**

('00), Jaffna, Sri Lanka  
Internship with NOVA Foundation  
Pretoria, South Africa



## PROJECT GOALS

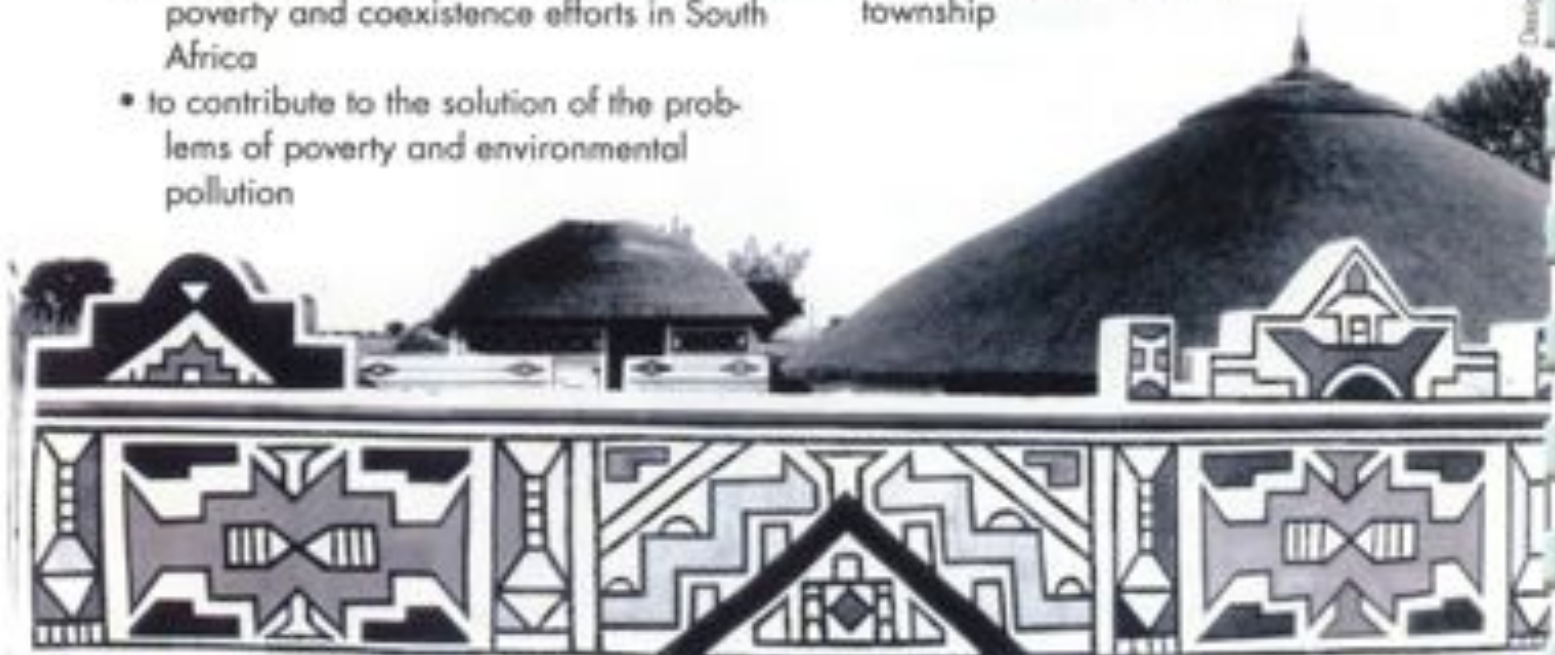
- to reduce the pollutants in the township of Embalenhle, in the province of Mpumalanga, in order to provide a better environment for the inhabitants

## PERSONAL GOALS

- to understand the nature of poverty in South Africa
- to explore the relationship between poverty and coexistence efforts in South Africa
- to contribute to the solution of the problems of poverty and environmental pollution

## ACTIVITIES

- Interviewing and observing participants in the project
- Conducting fieldwork, collecting scientific and research data
- Serving as a regular contact between NOVA and the township







### KEY DILEMMAS

- Is it possible to introduce new solutions from outside of South Africa but apply them in ways that are sensitive to the local cultures and contexts?
- What are the most effective interventions that will result in better housing and the reduction of environmental pollution, both in the present and the future?

### IMPORTANT LEARNING

- An organization like NOVA must remain grassroots and involve the people if it is to be successful and productive.
- Communication between NOVA and the community allowed the project to run smoothly.

The International Center for Ethics,  
Justice, and Public Life  
Brandeis University  
781-736-8577



While in South Africa I also interned for the Human Rights Commission in Johannesburg/Soweto and the National Institute for Public Law and Research, an NGO in Pretoria. In both organizations, I worked on human rights and gender issues, preparing case studies and working in educational programs. I also volunteered at a Township Aids Program in Soweto, working with children 5-10 years old.

# PLAGUE CONTROL IN TANZANIA



**Manuel Costescu**  
(1999), Sibiu, Romania  
Internship with Gessellschaft für  
technische Zusammenarbeit (GFZ)  
Lushoto, Tanzania

## PROJECT GOALS

- To test the willingness of farmers to contribute financially to the procurement of insecticides and rodenticides to prevent plague;
- To discover how traditional healers treat the plague and whether they cooperate with the hospital in administering tetracycline, in addition to herbs and fetishes.

## PERSONAL GOALS

To understand the dynamics of a society fundamentally different from mine, to integrate into it, and to see how many cultural barriers I could break by openly revealing my personality.

## ACTIVITIES

- organizing logistics
- gathering data
- producing a report for the Plague Control Commission.



## KEY DILEMMAS

- To rid itself of the plague, does this area need only insecticides — or does the society have other problems that are deeper and more cumbersome to combat?
- The hardest thing was not driving on the dusty roads of the villages under plague quarantine, but rather it is now, walking with my girlfriend at 10 p.m. on flashy Newbury Street, knowing that at the same time, as the morning breaks in Tanzania, women are lighting up a feeble fire and cooking chapati in front of their dilapidated day-houses.



An average catch for a farmer per night on the maize field. Each rat is a potential transmitter of the Black Death.

The International Center for Ethics,  
Justice, and Public Life  
Brandeis University  
781-736-8577

## IMPORTANT LEARNINGS

I learned:

- how to communicate using my body more than my tongue
- how to survive in circumstances I never before encountered
- a lot about myself



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

*The mission of the International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life is to engage around the world in examining questions of ethics, social justice and moral responsibility through projects that draw on the strengths and confront the challenges of national, racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious pluralism. The Ethics Center is a program of Brandeis University.*

For more information, contact:

The International Center for Ethics,  
Justice, and Public Life  
Brandeis University  
MS 086, P.O. Box 9110  
415 South Street  
Waltham, Massachusetts 02454-9110

phone: 781-736-8577; fax: 781-736-8561  
[ethics@brandeis.edu](mailto:ethics@brandeis.edu) or [www.brandeis.edu/ethics](http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics)