

AP INTERNS DELVE DEEPER INTO LOCAL CULTURES

AdvocacyNet
News Bulletin 76, July 20, 2006
Intern Update

The Advocacy Project's 18 summer interns are blogging on the AP website about their summer assignments. The interns are working with community-based partner organizations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Italy, Guatemala, Nigeria, Fiji, Palestinian Territories, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and India. Excerpts from their blogs follow. Read more on the AP [2006 internship program](#).

- [Blackouts Become Frequent in Kosovo](#)
- [Inefficiency in Afghanistan's Education Ministry](#)
- [Survivors of Trafficking Struggle for a Future in Italy](#)
- [Adopting the Bosnian Lifestyle of Coffee and Relationships](#)
- [Nepal Talks Hit a Roadblock](#)
- [Individualized Attention in Kuala Lumpur](#)
- [Weaving a Story With a Huipil in Guatemala](#)
- [Going Bananas in Delhi](#)

Refugee Camp in the West Bank Offers Insight into Occupation Resistance

[Sarah Sachs](#) (Columbia University) is working for cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis with the Alternative Information Center (AIC) in Beit Sahour/Jerusalem.

"In Jenin camp, children grow up isolated from the outside world, with little in the way of choice for a hopeful future. Unemployment in the camp is high, even compared to that of the city as a whole. It's precisely camps like these that feed the resistance movement and provide an endless supply of passionate, angry and desperate young adults eager to make a name for themselves as a shaheed, or martyr."

Dying of AIDS Without a Fight in Nigeria

[Jessica Sewall](#) (Georgetown University) is working for women's rights in Nigeria with the Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON).

"HIV testing is voluntary, and the stigmatization of both HIV and prostitution creates an intimidating environment for trafficking victims to seek help. As one counselor at a Benin NGO stated, 'Many girls deported from Europe after being trafficked come back to Benin City for a quiet death.' The girls are afraid of being rejected by their families and society, and despite efforts to sensitize the community and provide counseling, a gap remains that victims fall into, leaving them to die of AIDS without a fight."

Blackouts Become Frequent in Kosovo

[Barbra Bearden](#) (American University) is working for women's rights in Kosovo with the Kosova Women's Network.

"It seems, with my arrival the blackouts became more and more frequent - and in these past weeks, since I've moved into my new 'new apartment,' they happen at least once a day...Some comparisons can be made between the tensions here in reaction to status talks. People are worried, though they don't talk about it much, they are worried that decisions made by the Security Council will elevate tensions and lead to violence."

Inefficiency in Afghanistan's Education Ministry

[Alison Long](#) (American University) is working for girl's education with the Oruj Learning Center in Afghanistan.

"Being shuffled from one room to the next, gaining access to the Deputy solely because the Evaluation and Monitoring officer thought Sadiqa looked like his eldest daughter, men being paid to sit and eat two three-hour meals, while not doing any work - it all felt a bit like the absurdist musings of Lewis Carroll. I have no doubt that every government's bureaucracy is bound to suffer from some amount of inefficiency and illogical structures and procedures. However, after visiting the MoE, I now understand how little support - financial or ideological - the national government in Kabul is able to offer girls' education."

Survivors of Trafficking Struggle for a Future in Italy

[Anya Gorovets](#) (NYU) is working to prevent human trafficking with TAMPEP in Italy.

"These women are all off the street now and have denounced their traffickers - basic criterion for the very onset of the social protection program. I did not ask too many questions, mostly I just listened to them speak and tried to piece things together. Neither woman was happy. I did not shrug from my mind for a moment what I imagined and could realize about their realities, their pasts, presents and even futures."

Adopting the Bosnian Lifestyle of Coffee and Relationships

[Yvette Barnes](#) (Georgetown University) is working for women refugees and survivors in Bosnia with Bosfam.

"While our obsession with work in the United States so often defines who we are, I get to slow down and live like a Bosnian...But in all that we have other priorities; coffee is definitely a priority, and relationships. When people stop by the office, they are always welcome to sit and chat, even if it is about nothing."

Nepal Talks Hit a Roadblock

[Lori Tomoe Mizuno](#) (NYU) is working to mobilize civil society networks to work towards conflict transformation and peace building with the Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP) in Nepal.

"The conflict in Nepal seems to have hit a roadblock. But I suppose the road was never going to be easy."

Individualized Attention in Kuala Lumpur

[Melissa Muscio](#) (Tufts University) is working on women's development with eHomemakers in Malaysia

"So, while they work on larger projects of ICT training and basket-weaving, eHomemakers also takes time to look out of the individuals in their network who might need a little extra attention. It is all part of a philosophy, which looks at each case and comes up with a creative solution, rather than simply relying on a cookie-cutter answer that may not apply. If it doesn't work, they think again."

Weaving a Story With a Huipil in Guatemala

[Charles Wright](#) (Georgetown University) is working for indigenous survivors of a 1982 massacre with Adivima in Guatemala.

"A common sight on the streets of Rabinal is the huipil (pronounced we-peel). The huipil, a rectangular, traditional blouse worn by the women, is a remarkable piece of clothing known for its extraordinary colors and patterns...Like the thread used to make huipils, these subjects might not seem connected or even related to ADIVIMA, but in reality they contain crucial bits of information about the work and challenges that this human rights organization faces on a daily basis."

Going Bananas in Delhi

[Donna Laverdiere](#) (Duke University) is working for street children with Butterflies in Delhi.

"If I can't offer money to these children, at least I can give them something healthy to eat. I can always tell which children are hungry and which ones only want money by their willingness to accept food in the place of coins. I wish I could do more for them, but for now, I can just offer bananas."