

Engaging law school students through human rights clinics: a perspective from the United States

Professor Deena Hurwitz¹

Human rights clinics have established themselves as an important way for a group of American law schools to achieve pedagogical and social justice aims. This article is written from the perspective of someone who has taught in two such clinics, with a view to sharing some insights from the American experience in the hope that they will prove of interest to Australian law schools that might be considering establishing such clinics. The article explains the concept of a human rights clinic and the goals of such a clinic. Through the use of case studies it then considers the types of projects that are most valuable pedagogically.

Introduction

Clinical legal education, on the whole, perceives the law as dynamic and holding promise for social change (Frank 1933; Barry et al 2000; Wizner 2002; Hurwitz 2003). Human rights clinics tap into the evolving nature of international law and make the most of the role of lawyers as 'transnational norm entrepreneurs' (Koh 1998). I share the belief that the legal profession has an ethical obligation to responsible lawyering guided by a certain relevance to contemporary society. Public interest lawyering now requires at least a familiarity with transnational processes, including international law and, particularly, its normative human rights framework. Such knowledge can be deepened and made more sophisticated by students directly engaging with both the practical and values-oriented aspects of human rights work through a clinical course, particularly when that course exposes them to human rights problems from a variety of cultural contexts and/or countries.

Law school human rights clinics are rooted in precisely such an engaged pedagogy — emanating from a vision of the law as a tool for social justice, and concerned with maximising the process by which students integrate these values. No matter what area of the law — or of the world — clinical legal education proposes that students learn best when they are engaged in practice. A social justice pedagogy teaches that

¹ Clinical Professor and Director, Human Rights Program, University of Virginia School of Law. The author wishes to thank Carolyn Evans and Melissa Conley Tyler of the University of Melbourne for organising the Fulbright Symposium on Peace and Human Rights Education (21–25 June 2005), where this article was presented as part of a panel on Educating in Universities.

lawyers should not only observe and understand the transnational legal process and role of international human rights norms, but seek to influence them as well. Indeed, many clinical professors attempt to demonstrate this commitment to social justice to their students through their own actions and identities as both academics and practitioners.

This article begins by explaining the concept of a human rights clinic and some of the goals of such a clinic. It then considers ways of engaging students who enroll in human rights clinic subjects and, in particular, some of the attributes of good clinic projects. It concludes with case studies of three projects from the clinic in which I teach that demonstrate both the possibilities and problems with the human rights clinic model, both pedagogically and in terms of achieving social justice.

Human rights clinics

Defining a human rights clinic

There is no single model of a human rights clinic nor any agreed 'right way' to conduct such a clinic. Generally speaking, a human rights clinic is a practical course with international law as its primary legal reference. Such clinics engage students in a wide range of human rights lawyering techniques, but unlike traditional legal clinics, human rights clinics tend not to be client-centred. This distinguishes them from asylum and refugee clinics which, although they involve human rights, are fundamentally client-centred, calling for a different set of skills and relying primarily on domestic law. Human rights clinics can also be distinguished from inhouse live-client clinics; from externship programs (which place students in law offices or organisations outside the academic institution) and from simulation courses (which employ case studies — fictional, real, and/or composite — that give students the opportunity to practise skills and relate to the issues through narrative).

Human rights lawyering, a concept at the heart of human rights clinics, is used here to indicate a range of diverse strategies, sometimes legal (for example, litigation, legal assistance and legislative advocacy) but more often non-legal (for example, community education, fact-finding and reporting). It is sometimes practised in courtrooms, but more often in 'the court of public opinion', through the press, in the streets and in boardrooms, government offices and world conferences. Human rights may be developed through large inter-governmental organisations like the United Nations, but more often through the activism of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and grass-roots social movements. Human rights abuses are sometimes brought to light through the investigation and reporting of large, internationally

known NGOs such as Human Rights Watch. But, they are just as constructively exposed through the work of human rights defenders who, along with their organisations, are invisible outside their regions, and often inside as well. Thus, human rights lawyering involves litigation, advocacy, monitoring and reporting, policy and legislative drafting, organising and lobbying. Human rights clinics aim to acquaint law students with this variety of practice, and to engage them critically and practically in developing one or more of these skills.

For clarity, a distinction should be made between human rights *clinics* and human rights *programs*. Generally speaking, both consider advocacy in some form to be part of their mission and involve students in applied legal research, often for credit. Clinics, however, make student practice and engagement with partner organisations a pedagogical objective, while research and institutional programming are often the main objectives of academic human rights programs. Some law schools have both a human rights program and a clinic, such as the University of Virginia School of Law, Yale Law School, New York University School of Law and the University of California Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law. However, there are many more with only a human rights program, such as the University of Cincinnati College of Law's Urban Morgan Institute, DePaul University's International Human Rights Law Institute and Case Western Reserve Law School's Cox Center for International Law (Hurwitz 2003, 549). The first law clinic, within the definition provided here, was established in 1989. Today at least 15 US law schools, out of over 185 accredited law schools, offer human rights clinics. There are other clinics focusing primarily on other areas of the law (for example, immigration and asylum, civil and constitutional litigation and workers' rights), but that explicitly include human rights in their overall objectives.

The goal of human rights clinics

There is general consensus among professors working in US human rights clinics that our goal is to engage students in human rights advocacy by integrating the theory and practice of international human rights law. Through the clinics, the students can better understand key dilemmas of international human rights law, such as some of the difficulties of enforcement, or the perception that international human rights law is not really 'law' or is 'soft' law. Part of the value stems from the fact that students experience the dilemmas inherent in, and obstacles to, the realisation of human rights norms within a practical context (Steiner 2002, 326). But they do not only experience those obstacles. They can and do play a role in the development of stronger and more effective human rights protection. What is more, 'formal legal education programs should reflect the messy reality of practice as well as lofty theoretical ideals being exposed to the limits of the law and legal institutions', so that students develop 'a realistic appreciation of the law's potential' (Trubek 2005, 467).

One of the great benefits of clinics is that students are exposed to practitioners in the field, though academic activism can sometimes be controversial (Hurwitz 2003, 530–31). Since human rights clinics do not engage individual clients, partner organisations are both ‘client’ and colleague. This means that students owe the duties of professional responsibility (competence, diligence, truthfulness, candor, etcetera) to the partner organisation; at the same time, they must learn to work together and think strategically with them as associates. The relationship with partner organisations is thus both a significant aspect of the learning experience, and also an important opportunity to encounter human rights civil society. What makes for a good partner organisation is a function of both the specific project and the particular representative of the organisation; there is no ideal size or mission.

Another benefit of human rights clinics, although not one of the primary aims of such clinics, is that they teach the students general lawyering skills, skills that often do apply to human rights advocacy. These skills include a significant emphasis on legal, factual and advocacy writing; good oral communication; the ability to think critically and to develop effective strategies to solve problems; the capacity to be organised even under pressure and with competing demands; to work in teams; to develop strong research skills, including factual research and research in international and domestic law; and the ability to recognise and resolve issues of professional roles and responsibilities. In addition to these, effective human rights lawyers need other specific skills, such as knowledge of international and comparative law; foreign language proficiency; a sensitivity to distributive justice and the politics of globalisation; an awareness of ethos and race; and an ability to move perceptively and respectfully between cultures and societies. All of these skills will be valuable to students in a variety of contexts, which is important as most students who participate in human rights clinics will not go on to become professional human rights lawyers.

Finally, the clinics aim to encourage students to be responsibly engaged and to become more aware of their impact and the impact of law on the world. Being engaged means appreciating that the law is not neutral, nor are those who practise it. We are what we do in the world. Part of the ethics of lawyering is precisely how we identify ourselves, and what role we take. The complexities raised by the projects undertaken by the students, and the multiple roles that they must take on in completing those projects, can help them to become aware of law as a ‘process of struggle rather than a collection of substantive rules or “mere norms”’ (Lobel 1995, 1333).

However, the goal of human rights clinics is not to recreate students as uncritical, true believers. Professor Peter Rosenblum of Columbia Law School coined the phrase

ambivalent activism, referring to human rights advocacy as 'a process of strategic decision-making in a realm of uncertainty' and multiple discourses, in which students should learn to be 'committed to action, but alert to the multiple consequences' (Rosenblum 2002, 304–5). In this frame, and through the medium of a clinic, human rights takes its proper form as 'a realm of advocacy tools, not abstract truths' (Rosenblum 2002, 305). It is important for teachers in human rights clinics to emphasise to students the role of critical thinking and analysis when approaching human rights advocacy. Thus the professional obligation goes beyond simply acting in the best interests of the particular client. It includes making strategic decisions that are contextually based and derive from a more global perspective than the traditional law school subject that focuses almost exclusively on domestic concerns and domestic laws. And, importantly, in so doing, we endeavour also to capture the multiplicity of norms and directions that comprise the human rights 'movement'.²

My own goals in teaching the human rights clinic include providing students with practical experience of the range of activities in which lawyers engage to promote respect for human rights; helping students to integrate the theory and practice of human rights law; helping them to build the basic knowledge and skills necessary to be effective human rights lawyers and advocates; and, through project work and classroom discussion, helping them to examine critical issues affecting the promotion of human rights and to help students develop sensitivity to these issues. My clinic's goals also include contributing to efforts to protect human rights by providing valuable, high quality assistance to appropriate organisations and individual clients. I will elaborate on this below.

How to engage students working in human rights clinics

Many students come to human rights clinics with enthusiasm and a strong desire to be engaged and inspired by the projects that they undertake. Students themselves are demanding greater relevance in law school curricula and this may be one of the driving forces behind the decision of a law school to develop a human rights clinic. Students are coming to law school from varied backgrounds and work experiences, such as public health, anthropology, philosophy and international relations. They appreciate a multidisciplinary approach to learning. They are prepared to tackle

2 Thanks to Jim Silk (Associate Clinical Professor of Law, Allard K Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic, and Executive Director, Orville H Schell, Jr Center for International Human Rights, Yale Law School) and Peter Rosenblum (Lief, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein Associate Clinical Professor in Human Rights, Columbia Law School) for contributing to these observations in the context of a Human Rights Clinics Workshop held at New York University in February 2005.

learning contextually rather than abstractly. Some students become engaged when they see a connection to a personal issue or passion. Some are inspired by the passion of others. Some are moved by current events. Others are motivated mainly through consistency with personal choice, for example their notion of what they have come to do and what they think they ought to learn in law school. This explains, for example, the popularity of litigation projects in human rights clinics. Thus not all students who are involved with human rights clinics have the same aim — they do not all intend to become human rights lawyers (though some do). Clinics have to be designed with this in mind or they will be parochial.

The most important step in engaging students — and the one that I focus on for the remainder of this article — is to ensure that projects are selected and clinical curricula designed to engage students and to fulfill the goals discussed earlier. Human rights clinics select projects with various goals in mind. Some designate a specific substantive focus for the clinic — for example, gender (such as the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law and Georgetown University Law Center); genocide (such as Benjamin N Cardozo School of Law); marginalised communities; and economic, social and cultural rights (for example, the New York University School of Law). Some have a regional focus, such as Africa (for example, the University of Illinois College of Law) or the inter-American human rights system (for example, American University/Washington College of Law and George Washington University School of Law). Others, such as the University of Virginia, Yale and Columbia Schools of Law are generalists.

Selection of appropriate projects is a particularly complex task for human rights clinics. On the one hand, there is a certain preference — particularly on the part of teachers — for working with smaller NGOs in the developing world. This allows for the best use of our assets for a transfer of resources³ (where our assets include valuable student time and knowledge, as well as the vast resources of the academy) and can engage students through their contact with organisations working directly in some of the areas where human rights issues are most pressing.

On the other hand, a major aspect of the human rights clinical experience is exposure to the human rights community, including being able to ascertain who belongs to this apparently tight-knit network, and what they actually do. Towards this end, working with some of the so-called professional elites, like Human Rights Watch, Human

3 Thanks to James Cavallero (Associate Director, Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School) and Patrick Keenan (Assistant Professor, Director, International Human Rights Clinic, University of Illinois College of Law) for contributing to this observation, Human Rights Clinics Workshop, February 2005.

Rights First and the various international criminal tribunals, has distinct advantages for students interested in embarking on a human rights career. Perhaps the best compromise between these two goals is to strive for a balance between making a difference on the ground and mentoring or networking opportunities for students. Each plays an important part in motivating and engaging students and each helps to achieve different goals for the clinic.

The most successful clinic partners are generally ones where there is some relationship with the clinical professor and/or individual students; opportunity for in-person interaction (at least once during the semester); a representative who is accessible to the students (by email and/or telephone) for discussion and regular feedback; and an organisation that knows how to effectively use volunteers. Many human rights clinics draw projects and partner organisations simply from the interests and network of the individual professor. This highlights again the value of the practitioner-academic.

Is there an ideal project? I find that students' views on a great project often differ from my own pedagogical sense. Certain elements can be counted on to contribute to overall satisfaction with projects. Above all, projects should have a clearly defined advocacy goal, as articulated by the partner organisation, and the project should allow for student ownership and autonomy. That is, my role as professor is to guide and supervise, to clarify and edit, but never to do the work for the students.

Attributes of a good human rights clinic project

A project that engages students in preliminary stages of research and strategic development tends to have greater success than one in which students become involved at the tail end or work on a small aspect of a complex and ongoing strategy. Essentially, this has to do with student ownership of the work and helps explain why litigation does not always offer the most successful clinic project, pedagogically speaking. On the other hand, important victories have resulted from the involvement of clinics in long-term human rights litigation. A noteworthy example is the recent decision of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the *Case of the girls Yean and Bosico v Dominican Republic*. The case was the first major project undertaken by the University of California, Berkeley Boalt's International Human Rights Law Clinic when it opened in spring 1998. The Clinic had received reports that children of Haitian ancestry born in the Dominican Republic were not receiving birth certificates because of their race, which prevented them from receiving an education and made them vulnerable to expulsion from the country. The Clinic teamed with two NGOs (the Association of Women of Haitian Descent and the Center for Justice and International Law) and filed a petition before the Inter-American Commission for

Human Rights. They litigated and won before the Commission, and then litigated and won again before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (<www.law.berkeley.edu/news/2005/rightsclinic100805.html>).

As a general rule, a project that is relatively concrete, with a real-world application, or at least for which the partner organisation has an intended use, makes it easier for students to see how what they are being asked to do fits into a larger advocacy strategy. In order to be fulfilling, a project should be concrete and discrete enough to be accomplished in a timely fashion, with clearly identifiable objectives that can be achieved within the semester, or easily transferred from one semester's class to the next. Projects should require analytical thinking, even if they are not precisely legal. For example, projects that involve mere classification work (for example, compiling bibliographies or summary reporting) tend to disappoint law students because they do not take advantage of their growing legal knowledge and the opportunity for critical thinking provided by the law school context. With respect to the process, as noted above, a designated person at the partner organisation should be accessible to the student team to address questions and provide feedback on the work. Especially because of the often long-distance nature of the work of human rights clinics, such contact more often takes the form of conference calls or regular email exchanges, but even one face-to-face meeting makes a significant difference in students' ability to feel connected to the assignment and the partner organisation.

Case studies of human rights clinic projects

Do students have to be involved in projects they like and/or relate to in order to be engaged? Sometimes the most challenging and enlightening (and 'teachable') cases are ones students come to with skepticism. Let me give a few examples from my clinic. My reservations notwithstanding, human rights litigation projects are always popular. Students love them because they feel part of a process that is immediate and identifiable in relation to their conception of what a lawyer does. They have a tangible outcome, though it may be long and drawn out (students rarely object to working on a discrete part of a case). Litigation projects can involve activities as diverse as serving as counsel, writing an amicus brief, co-operating on the primary briefs, researching legal issues in the development of a legal theory prior and filing a case.

Alien Tort Statute litigation

Last year, my clinic assisted the San Francisco-based Center for Justice and Accountability in researching legal issues for a potential *Alien Tort Statute* case. We were involved at the earliest stage, so much so that the students were looking into

potential procedural obstacles to even filing the case (for example, statute of limitations, jurisdictional problems). The students considered it the ideal clinic project: they wrote legal memos and drafted the preliminary complaint. They worked with knowledgeable and encouraging lawyers on a well-defined project with clear goals. They received regular feedback on their work. It did not hurt that our partner was an energetic young lawyer who happens to be a graduate of the University of Virginia. Most importantly, he made a personal visit during the semester to meet with the students.

Tebtebba

Despite the appeal of litigation, the vast majority of clinic projects fall into a category I call 'general advocacy', essentially anything that is not expressly litigation, fact-finding or legislative policy work. Students complain that advocacy projects sometimes do not feel 'legal enough'. This is a reality of human rights lawyering. An example of the potential and the problems with these general advocacy projects comes from work that the clinic undertook with Tebtebba (<www.tebtebba.org>), a small Philippines-based NGO participating in the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in the drafting of a legal commentary and guidelines on free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous peoples in relation to development affecting their lands and natural resources (<www.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/groups/groups-01.htm>). We were asked to help research how FPIC is being implemented at the national level, as well as relevant practices of prior informed consent in fields other than human rights for comparative purposes — for example, in medicine and in other international treaty regimes such as transport of hazardous waste, access and benefit-sharing of biological resources.

I was excited by this project and the relationship with Tebtebba. I considered it a perfect clinic project dealing with emerging human rights norms that raise interesting dilemmas and opportunities regarding enforcement and even the scope of the claimed rights. It gave us an opportunity to work cross-culturally and to contribute to an under-resourced organisation in the developing world. It also exposed students to UN procedure.

But the students had a hard time getting going on the project and struggled to understand what they were being asked to do. They found it difficult to communicate with the partner organisation and, despite several long phone conference calls to England and the Philippines, they found it difficult to clarify their work objectives. Our colleague was neither directive nor demanding and was sometimes even tentative in approaching the students. I attributed this to a combination of things: in addition to cultural difference, our assignment dealt with a

novel set of norms and approach, making it hard for our partner to know exactly how to guide the students or even to assure them that they would find useful results. And, we were working — as human rights clinics often do — with the disadvantage of distance, making communication that much more difficult. In an evaluation, the student who worked on medical issues commented that he did not like the work because his topic was so different from what he does in law school, and what he thinks of as human rights.

On the other hand, in project rounds — sessions in which each team reports to the full clinic class as to their progress, raising and inviting questions and critical analysis — it was clear that these students got a lot out of the experience. Their reflections were insightful. For example, they were sensitive to the problems of identity: how Indigenous groups self-identify and are defined by others, particularly sovereign states, and the fact that there are so many different kinds of communities. The students noted that some Indigenous groups do not even recognise gender rights, and therefore they questioned the very notion of who has the authority to give consent for a community. They considered the dilemma of how a norm protecting the right to free, prior and informed consent in some areas — for example, intellectual property in traditional knowledge — could have an enormous impact at the level of international regimes such as the World Trade Organization, requiring them to undergo significant change to which they might not be amenable. We were unable to meet personally with our partner, but a meeting with the Indian Law Resource Center in Washington DC, which works on the same issues, contributed enormously to the students' overall focus on their work at hand. In sum, the frustration was not entirely fruitless.

Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Another example I expected would be a terrific advocacy project turned out to be challenging for students in ways that I find interesting, but they found mainly frustrating. In Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1979, members of the Ku Klux Klan and American Nazi party killed five people and wounded 10 others as Communist Workers Party activists gathered for a statewide 'Death to the Klan' rally and conference for racial, social and economic justice. Although four television crews filmed the incident, all the defendants in the state and federal criminal trials were acquitted (Barbash and Harris 1980; Harris 1980). Eventually, in a federal civil suit, Klan members, Nazis and Greensboro police were found jointly liable for one of the deaths. Although the city paid a sizeable settlement, it has never apologised or acknowledged any wrongdoing (Wheaton 1987; Waller 2005; Bacigal and Bacigal 1989).

A truth and reconciliation commission, modeled after ones in South Africa, Peru and elsewhere, was established in Greensboro, the first attempt of its kind in the United States to initiate a process whereby a community might resolve painful and divisive aspects of its history (<www.greensborotrc.org/>).

Students often question why we do not do more domestic human rights work, and I saw this as a good way to respond to that interest. Moreover, Greensboro is a mere three-hour drive from the University of Virginia — I expected we would attend a hearing and meet with the Commissioners during the course of the semester. Unfortunately, the hearings were postponed several times during the semester. Two of the students went to North Carolina to do research in the university archives, but it was an inconvenient time for the staff to meet with them.

The clinic was asked to analyse defects in the legal process (particularly in terms of failings of the prosecution) by applying relevant human rights norms to the three trials and considering whether there were violations of international standards. This proved to be more challenging than it first appeared. The judgments were unpublished, and obtaining court documents was costly. The Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (GTRC) did not have the resources to pay for these, nor did the clinic. The incident and the legal proceedings occurred between 1979 and 1985 — before the two most relevant international human rights treaties, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, were ratified by the United States. The students identified multiple dilemmas raised by this analytical framework: the skepticism of US lawmakers and judges towards international law; the attachment of reservations to our ratification of these instruments; the difficulties of enforcement in general, let alone in the US; and the amorphous nature of customary international law. The case also presents a fascinating intersection between racial and political justice; questions of government surveillance; and police misconduct. What is more, the truth and reconciliation process was not officially sanctioned: it was effectively a non-governmental initiative from one historical 'side'.

The students' initial lack of clarity surprised me, given the concreteness of the facts and the nature of the assignment. Their questions and doubts grew throughout the semester — possibly encouraged by the overt skepticism of one team member towards the process. I welcomed the skepticism in the spirit of ambivalent advocacy. It led to very interesting discussions, and our partner organisation appreciated the impartial legal analysis that resulted. Nevertheless, a degree of disapproval cast a pall over the team's experience. The students commented on the methodological problems and an unclear purpose for the assignment — considering the fact that the incident and trials were well documented, as indicated above. The skeptic said, 'The

facts are already out there, what truth is left to be, or can be, uncovered?'. They felt uncertain that a truth commission could make a difference for this community because, as they saw it, truth and reconciliation commissions generally function in situations where information is unavailable and justice is inaccessible. They also felt that, without a greater will in the community, the process could not succeed. Unfortunately, events seemed to reinforce this skepticism.

On the other hand, again, the project rounds generated dynamic discussion. A Japanese LLM student noted the irony in how difficult it was to get documents from US courts, in light of problems obtaining legal documents from other countries where the judicial system is either weak or considerably less transparent. He also noted that victims' rights appear to be neither guaranteed nor necessarily fully contemplated in the US criminal justice system. Considering the international right to a remedy, he mused that there must be avenues for victims without infringing on defendants' rights.

The legal proceedings were complicated by the effects of anti-communist prejudice and assumptions that the plaintiffs/victims were seeking justice. In reality, the victims and relatives refused to participate in some of the proceedings. It seems that the Communist Workers Party had a political agenda to expose the bias and corruption of the justice system. Another student pointed out that the GTRC did not seem to have resolved an interesting dilemma: who is the audience for or object of this process? I think the students had trouble seeing the GTRC as impartial, since it was initiated through what they considered a one-sided process. Overall, again, though the project may have been less than satisfying for the students, it forced them to think critically in ways distinct from other projects, for example, involving litigation.

Conclusion

What, then, might Australian law schools that are considering establishing human rights clinics take from the experience of US law schools? The first lesson is to recognise that human rights clinics are distinct from other worthy and related forms of engaging students in human rights work, particularly more client-focused or purely academic models. Law schools need to consider what is possible given their aims, resources and expertise, and then to engage professors with the most relevant experience to the particular program decided upon. It should be clear from the preceding discussion that human rights clinics are not as expensive or resource intensive as, for example, litigation clinics. Nor do they require an urban setting or proximity. I believe that there are significant benefits to faculties, staff and students when law schools open a human rights clinic and I have discussed some of these above. But such clinics may not be a model that will work for all law schools.

In considering whether to establish a human rights clinic, Australian law schools would do well to reflect on some of the goals of such clinics and the benefits that they can bring to the student body. By engaging students in projects that have both practical and intellectual dimensions, clinics assist students to understand law as a lived reality rather than a set of abstract norms. As well as assisting them to develop general skills that will assist them in many careers (including traditional legal practice) and specialised knowledge that will be useful in human rights lawyering, the clinics help to open their eyes to the limits of formal law; the possibilities of reform; and the grim reality of human rights abuses for some people within their own society and in foreign countries. A more sophisticated, nuanced understanding of law and legal systems is one likely result of this. I hope that they will also develop a passion for justice that they will carry on with them through their lives in whatever career they pursue.

Finally, it is important for students to be engaged by projects that are meaningful and challenging and that serve a practical purpose. Students will often come to the clinics with the perception that litigation-oriented projects for large, well-known organisations are the best and most rewarding. The clinical professor needs to be sensitive to the needs of such students and the benefits (both immediate and in the future, for the students as well as the partner organisations) that can accrue from engaging in such projects. However, the professor should also challenge students to see beyond this narrow paradigm to the possibilities of partnering with smaller, developing world NGOs and being involved in less traditionally 'legal' projects such as advocacy; truth and reconciliation projects; and law reform. Even frustration and skepticism present highly productive educational opportunities, and opportunities should still be pursued even when they may present students with difficulties or even disappointment. Evaluating success in learning is complex. Often, the projects that present intellectual and practical challenges and generate ambivalence are the most successful from a pedagogical point of view.

It is all too easy for law students to leave their studies with little understanding of the way law works or fails to work in practice; with no real understanding of international human rights law; with no real grasp of human rights abuses in their own country or other countries; and without having taken a subject that engages them intellectually, emotionally and practically. A well designed human rights clinic with well chosen projects can fill these gaps in legal education and hopefully will have the potential to transform the way in which the lawyers of the future understand their role in creating a more just, rights-respecting international community.

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