



Naomi with some new friends in Ghana

Ghana I had felt thrilled when there were power outages and delighted when I would eat fufu with the locals in the village. I liked to think that I was 'roughing it'. I soon learnt that I was not. There is a big difference between choosing to live somewhere and having no choice but to live somewhere. I learnt what this difference meant when I decided to leave Ghana to get better medical attention in Australia. I had the privilege to make a basic choice that none of my local friends or colleagues could make, or even consider, and I am no more deserving of the opportunity to make that choice than they are. I really hope that one day my Ghanaian friends and family will be free from poverty and free to make the everyday choices that all people have the right to make.

In light of my outstanding and unique experience in Ghana, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the Castan Centre, which has provided me with unwavering support and encouragement. This is an experience I will never forget. I encourage anyone passionate about human rights to make the most of the amazing opportunity offered by the global internship program.



Naomi in Ghana



Six questions for:
New Castan Centre
Project Officer

Grace Jennings-Edquist

How did you become interested in human rights?

My parents believed very strongly in the principles of equality and non-discrimination, and those values rubbed off on me and led me to intern at a women's legal service in New York when I was about 20. Many of the clients were undocumented immigrants who had either fled human rights abuses abroad or were suffering gender violence in the US, and I was fascinated to learn about the powerful ways in which law could be used as a tool of empowerment for these women. My interest in human rights snowballed from there.

What are the most pressing human rights issues in Australia?

The promotion and protection of the rights of refugees, marriage equality and the elimination of violence against women are key concerns of mine, although I believe that indigenous rights are still often overlooked in Australia.

Who is your human rights hero?

I have a long list of human rights heroes including Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee and former High Court judge Michael Kirby.

What did you do before working for the Centre?

I trained as a litigation lawyer with a large Australian plaintiff law firm, travelled a lot and completed a few internships in journalism and human rights, including one at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague and another monitoring women in conflict for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom at UN headquarters in New York. I also started postgraduate journalism/international law degrees shortly before taking this job, and am looking forward to graduating in December this year.

What do you do when you're not busy updating Twitter?

I am fortunate enough to work with people with similar values and interests. I also love interviewing a range of inspirational and fascinating human rights advocates, and getting paid to combine my passions for social media, editing and human rights.

What are you hoping to do with your journalism degree?

I am interested in both online and broadcast journalism, and am hoping to continue to use my journalism training to tell original 'human interest' stories relating to international conflict, human rights and development.