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Ioana-Cristina Moraru, Human Rights Internship, Argentina

2nd Year Politics & International Relations

Iona-Cristina's two month placement focused primarily on practical work within the Fundacion Ciudadanos del Mundo organisation in Argentina. Iona-Cristina planned her opportunity through an agency called Connect-123. Iona-Cristina's duties included helping immigrants and refugees who were in positions of social and legal vulnerability. Specifically, she helped them with their legal documents and applications for permanent residency in Argentina, speaking on their behalf when they were encountering difficulties expressing themselves, translating for those who only spoke English and accompanying them to different state institutions, such as the immigration office, to file their documents. She also contributed to processes of addressing cases of human rights violations and the investigations that every case entailed, as well as liaising directly with organisations such as Amnesty International and UNHCR.

Iona-Cristina identifies that her main achievement during her placement was, "the confirmation and strengthening of my abilities and genuine passion that I have for the field of human rights." She particularly enjoyed working in a multi-cultural environment, interacting with people from a wide range of different countries and found it rewarding to be able to be autonomous in her day-to-day work, although sometimes the number of different languages spoken by the people with whom she was working presented her with communications issues.

The environment in which Iona-Cristina worked was challenging. However, this helped her to build her determination and confidence, in turn improving her communication skills, her ability to research, her networking skills and her fluency in Spanish. Iona-Cristina is hoping to pursue a career in human rights and the internship that she undertook in Argentina made her aware that she needs to deepen her knowledge of key aspects of the topic, including areas such as international law, as well as having to become fluent in multiple languages.

In terms of the impact that Iona-Cristina's placement had, she observes that:

> After I left Argentina both the NGO and I had to write an individual feedback regarding our experiences. I was extremely happy to see that theirs was more than positive too and that they felt I made a valuable contribution to their organization. First of all, they mentioned that my knowledge of English has proved to be extremely useful, as it has allowed and facilitated the personalised follow-up of a series of cases and has led to visible results in the social situation of those people in need.
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> Also, they appreciated my ability to constantly adjust to the new tasks I was given, which included the direct communication with other institutions in order to remedy the critical conditions of people that we encountered so often. Subsequently, I believe that my presence there did make their job easier by having a reliable person at the office on a daily basis.
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> Furthermore, right from the beginning of my internship, I wanted to get involved in all of the cases that arrived and to be of assistance at all times and this was highly appreciated. The first case I specifically worked on was directed at helping a boy from Nepal legalize his stay in Argentina, find a job and get in contact with people from his own country.
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> The results of my work could be rapidly seen in my first weeks there and I can actually say that the gravity of the situation was remedied in a short amount of time. To conclude, judging from their feedback, I believe that my work has added value to the cause of the organization by truly making a difference, irrespective of how small, to those people who were in desperate look for help."

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