

Kristen Kelley
Rockefeller Center
Internship: Cultural Survival
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I chose to intern for Cultural Survival, a Boston-based non-profit organization committed to provide professional journalism experience surrounding indigenous rights and general human rights policy. The magazine has three separate publications: the Cultural Survival Quarterly, which is an academic journal that features several analyses of particular regions that are currently engaged in prevalent indigenous issues, the Cultural Survival Voices, which is a multilingual newspaper featuring stories written by indigenous peoples that are aimed at engaging university students in indigenous rights, and the Weekly Indigenous News, which reports original news stories relevant to indigenous communities throughout the world. During my eleven-week internship, I have served as one of the fifteen Research and Publications interns, gathering information regarding the rights of indigenous peoples and writing stories for the Weekly Indigenous News.

Upon arriving at Cultural Survival, I expected to be assigned a region to study as well as a compilation of sources to begin my research. I was given the area of 'The World'—meaning I was in charge of following the various news surrounding the United Nations as well as general global issues. At first, the task seemed daunting, as the magazine does not have a list of potential sources to begin understanding the various departments of the United Nations, and thus I have had to field my own way through the different U.N. committees and their functions. It has taken a great deal of time sifting through basic committees, annual meetings, and department officials. Ten weeks merely scratched the surface of the dense issues in which the United Nations is involved.

Throughout my internship, I have had over ten news briefs as well as two feature articles published. On a weekly basis, I have pitched all relevant news published by Cultural Survival to neighboring organizations so that they may further expand and publish the stories. Also, I have worked in collaboration with two other interns to write a film review of the 'Circle of Justice', which follows the lives of three incarcerated aboriginal men who have found a new sense of self-direction and inner dignity by participating in a Native Healing lodge. As part of a spiritual cleansing process, the inmates find a connection with each other and other tribal members as they learn about their heritage for the first time. Finally, the interns and our supervisor gather for a weekly luncheon to analyze current news, to watch films followed by a discussion of its content, and to meet speakers actively working to improve the lives of indigenous peoples.

The news briefs have been short summaries (200-300 words) addressing a particular issue at stake and the specific indigenous group affected. Many of the news briefs that I have contributed consist of specific indigenous communities appealing for international intervention on their behalf. Unfortunately, the responses by global human rights associations are less than stellar; I have found that it is difficult for indigenous groups to 'earn' a place at a discussion table, nevertheless inspire delegates to officially implement programs to aid their cause. For example, the years of subjugation of the indigenous Ahwazi group instigated discussion of future ramifications at the 7th U.N.P.O. General Assembly. However, the three initiatives of creating a central overseer to

investigate the Iranian shootings against the Arabs, freeing those currently held in captive, and eradicating the oil agreements to encompass the needs of the indigenous groups have yet to be strategically outlined in a plan since the June conference. Similarly, a special investigator to the U.N. Human Rights Commission has called for new legislation to battle the ensuing discrimination against the indigenous Ainu following a nine-day tour of Japan, which has yet to be implemented. A U.N. delegate has completed a week-long tour of South African indigenes without a clear announcement of his findings surrounding their degrading living circumstance, the Special Rapporteur has spoken out against the Botswana government for coercing a hunter-gatherer tribe from their reserve without consultation even though the ongoing dispute of the evictions has remained to be solved since 2002, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (U.N.H.C.R.) has expressed grave concern regarding the mysterious disappearances of indigenous Awa members despite the lack of action to cease the heated guerilla warfare on their homeland.

In addition to the lack of international intervention to end the violent discrimination tactics against indigenous communities, there is little help to stop the imposition of new mines on their lands irregardless of the mining and environmental laws. The indigenous Yanomami of Brazil have faced persistent gold miners raiding their Amazon reservation, an oil palm plantation to be funded by Chinese investors will have severe negative impacts on the wildlife and indigenes residing in the area, and it is alleged that the World Bank has failed to adequately consult members of local communities or evaluate environmental and humanitarian effects prior to funding a \$45 million gold mine project in Guatemala. Of course, much of the laissez-faire attitude of international organizations is in compliance with the inability to interfere in the governance of other states. However, it is frustrating to see violations against human rights be succumbed to the bureaucracy of associations and the hands-off libertarian ideal.

Not all the international news is slanted negatively, and, in fact, some enacted proposals will greatly benefit indigenous peoples all over the world. A new database to accumulate all the records pertaining to advocating language preservation has been launched by the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (U.N.E.S.C.O.), three global indigenous health projects have been initiated, the World Bank has increased funding to Mexico for indigenous higher education and to Indian female business owners attempting to spark their own line of production, and multiple festivals featuring minority culture film productions and artwork have occurred all over the world.

The two published features are in-depth analyses of significant topics—one on the continuing deforestation and urbanization of the Amazon region and the other on the repatriation of the indigenous Montagnards. As to the former article, two U.N. agencies have collaborated on Amazon conservation efforts by instigating a two-year, \$1.5 million project to identify specific polluted regions, to renovate damaged areas, and to address preservation challenges faced by indigenous groups of the area. Although the project seems environmentally sound and culturally sensitive, indigenous representatives fear that the project will provide power for foreign officials to claim possession over the land, thereby controlling its resources. The latter article refers to the repatriation over a whole indigenous community (about 2,000 members) to Vietnam following the rejection of their

asylum cases. Even though an agreement has been signed to prohibit the punishment and discrimination of returnees, the harassment by Vietnamese officials is relentless.

In addition to researching for international news to be reported in the Weekly Indigenous News, I have been assigned a research project to establish whether or not Fair Trade is actually fair to indigenous communities. Fair Trade is the theme for the September issue of Cultural Survival Quarterly, which has put together multiple articles based on interviews with indigenous coffee and craft cooperatives, as well as their trading partners, by Cultural Survival staff and grant-funded consultants. In order to strengthen the distribution of the Quarterly issue, I have compiled all the contact information from three main sites that engage in Fair Trade of coffee and crafts all over the world (Fairtrade Labeling Organization, Fair Trade Federation, and TransFair) into a database system. Additionally, I have notified the headquarters of each association in order to obtain information for senior staff members so that Cultural Survival may gain direct contact with those who work close to the ground with the indigenous communities engaging in fair trade. Finally, I have added key personnel of international funding entities that encourage fair trade, such as the InterAmerican Development Bank, IMF, and the World Bank. Every person and organization will receive a copy of the September issue of the Quarterly to demonstrate support for their persistent encouragement of fair trade and to advance the perspectives of the indigenous community surrounding trade.

My favorite part of the entire internship was the annual bizarre hosted by Cultural Survival in Tiverton, Rhode Island from August 6-7. The event is a bi-annual collaboration of indigenous vendors from all over New England, coming together to educate the public about native tradition and to sell their hand-crafted items produced all over the world. The bizarre is a fundraising event for the magazine, which receives forty percent of the profits, but the spirit and the energy surpasses any amount of profits. Both days feature non-stop entertainment of Indian dances, music, and food. The crafts sold by the vendors are absolutely exquisite, ranging from home décor to fashion garments and accessories to embroidered basketry. At the bizarre, all the interns made connections with the vendors and helped to promote the mission of Cultural Survival (as well as thoroughly shopping for their own accessories!). The bizarre had the largest turnout yet, bringing in over \$70,000 (\$30,000 of which went to the magazine). Following the event, I have documented an excel spreadsheet listing all the vendors and their profits for the last five bazaars. I have found that if people do not make any money the first time around, it is likely that they will not return, but if people make some profit (albeit small) the first time around, they will return even if they don't make anything the next one, two, or even three times. There seem to be minor fluctuations over time for each vendor, and the last two bazaars have garnered huge profits and improvements for a majority of the vendors, comparatively speaking. Additionally, I have created a map of all the vendor locations to note whether the position of the vendor made a difference the amount of profits generated. Fortunately, I have found that location made no difference, which is helpful to keep in mind for future bazaars. After such a successful outcome, the staff has decided to extend the bi-annual bizarre tradition to a series of 9-12 events per year. The events would travel all over New England (one of which I am hoping to bring to Dartmouth in the summer of 2006!) and would feature a more diverse group of vendors. It is an economic and time-constrained risk for Cultural Survival to step out on a limb and

add more to its list of goals, but I am confident and excited that the decision will have amazing results.

Prior to interning at Cultural Survival, I was relatively ignorant of the human rights abuses that are common indigenous communities on a global scale. I joined the team with a superficial knowledge of the desires of indigenous groups and the responses of state governments. My endless researching and reporting of the distressing harms on indigenous communities has inspired a deeper passion for remedying the social cries of injustice and has instigated a greater cultural awareness. The staff at Cultural Survival is small, but they have come together to promote a public consciousness of indigenous issues, minority discrimination, and human rights abuses on an international level. The atmosphere at the magazine has convinced me of how I see a future career: in a small, public service law firm, working to combat urban poverty, persistent discrimination (albeit subtle), and civil rights abuses. The passion, dedication, and openness within each staff member are inspirational, and I feel honored to have worked with such a wonderful group. Upon searching for internship opportunities last spring, Cultural Survival sparked both intellectual curiosity and journalism interest. After leaving the job, I am confident that I have left with a stronger fervor to alleviate the all-too-common human suffering that exists in correlation with enduring discrimination.