

IHRP Fellowship Final Report
International Development Law Organization (IDLO) - The Hague, Netherlands

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August 22, 2025

Brief Statement

Through my internship experience as a Gender and Law Intern with the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) in The Hague, I had the opportunity to work in-depth on a variety of legal and analytical work at the intersection of women's rights, law, justice and development. It was a wonderful opportunity to delve deeper into transnational legal research in a development context, amid a fitting backdrop in the peace and justice capital of the world. In my research and drafting work, I was particularly pleased to be able to immerse myself in the legal and institutional frameworks of diverse national contexts, tying together regional and international human rights jurisprudence and local-level lessons learned into compelling cases for advocacy.

Introduction

For my IHRP Fellowship, I completed a 3-month internship with the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), based in its Branch Office in The Hague, Netherlands. IDLO is an intergovernmental organization that works on promoting the rule of law as a driver of peace and sustainable development. Through programs centering on access to justice, rights awareness, justice for women and girls, and effectively engaging with customary and informal justice systems, IDLO seeks to champion people-centered justice as a means to realizing more peaceful and inclusive societies.

Given my background studying and working in global development, and my academic and personal interests in gender equality, customary and informal justice, and the importance of strong and sustainable justice institutions and processes, I was keen to work with the organization. Through my summer internship, I hoped to be able to deepen my growing skillset in law, human rights, and international development. I was able to find this internship opportunity through the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy's internship application portal. Having heard of previous JD and Master of Global Affairs students that had positive experiences interning with the organization, I felt it would be an ideal fit for someone with my legal and development background with a passion for human rights and gender equality.

Situated in The Hague office this summer, I worked within the Gender Team, which forms part of the organization's Research and Learning department. While the department primarily works on research and advocacy initiatives, creating and disseminating pertinent knowledge products and exchanging with academic institutions and policymakers on key rule of law issues,

the Gender Team's legal advisers also provide cross-cutting support on thematic and substantive issues relating to the intersection of law, justice and women's rights, as pertinent for programme teams in country and at Headquarters in Rome as well its offices in New York, Geneva and The Hague itself.

Key Tasks and Projects

Over the course of my internship, I had the opportunity to work on a variety of programmatic and thematic tasks. Given the cross-cutting and advisory role of the Gender Team, I was able to work on substantive inputs for thematic and country-specific work. In particular, I worked on the following assignments:

Country Gender Analyses

Throughout my internship, I had the opportunity to support country office colleagues in multiple national contexts in researching and drafting gender analyses to be annexed to our country strategies for the countries in which IDLO operates. This work entailed researching and drafting on relevant legal commitments, jurisprudence, and rule of law issues, with a cross-cutting gender lens and attention to women and girls' justice needs. Particularly, I was able to work on analyses for Moldova and Niger. As part of my work on the Niger analysis, I coordinated with field colleagues from the country office to collaboratively research and draft this work based on open-source information as well as on-the-ground consultation and direct reports from the country's Ministries of Statistics and Finance. It was a pleasure being able to connect directly with and hear from our country colleagues on this work, as it helped to contextualize the high-level policy and research task into the local country context. I was particularly pleased to be able to interact with colleagues, research, and draft in French as well as English, given the country's official language. Through this work, I became more familiar with the relevant legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and stakeholders involved in addressing women's rights and combating violence against women and girls in these particular country contexts. Furthermore, I was able to identify the gaps in research, international and regional commitments, and data sources for various aspects affecting the daily lives of women and girls, which I will bear in mind in my future academic and professional pursuits.

Business Case for Women's Justice

Throughout my internship, I was tasked with conducting medium-term research on crafting an evidence-based case for investing in women's access to justice. To inform IDLO's policy and programmatic work, I conducted this internal research by reviewing development bank and international organization datasets and reports, NGO and civil society advocacy pieces, and economic analyses relating to women's justice, rights, and economic performance. After researching and reviewing reports on the business case for investing in women's rights and access to productive assets – including land, property, and economic opportunity, I drafted key lines of logic for the team and organization's use and presented these narratives to the Gender Team at the end of my internship.

Reviewing and Providing Substantive Inputs to Country-Specific and Thematic Reports

Throughout the summer, I also had the opportunity to work on various knowledge products which are in the final stages of drafting, both on thematic issues, such as the elimination of discriminatory laws against women and girls, and country-specific priority areas, such as the legal assessment for Mali. For these tasks, I conducted research and drafted inputs on relevant national and regional jurisprudence, international human rights commitments, and regional and international normative frameworks, including researching relevant UN Treaty Body Concluding Observations and General Comments/Recommendations. I also reviewed legislation, development bank datasets and academic reports to contribute substantially to the analysis in these reports.

Event Concept Note on Online Violence against Women and Girls

Another task I worked on during my internship was researching and drafting a concept note in preparation for an event upcoming this fall, in partnership with various state delegations, on combating the growing concern of online violence against women and girls. This task involved researching and drafting the critical issues on online violence against women and girls, taking note of evolving language on the subject from UN agencies and NGOs, and ensuring that the concept note appropriately reflects the scope and objectives of the anticipated event. In particular, I had to research and draft on the commitments of various countries and examples of recent evolutions in jurisdictions in adopting frameworks to combat online violence against women and girls, as well as include relevant statistics on the prevalence of this violence in digital spaces. This was a great

opportunity to familiarize myself with diverse national and regional regulatory frameworks online sexual violence and harassment, an emerging area of law in the gender and law space.

Supporting Policy Reporting and Strategic Planning Work

In addition to my research work, I had the opportunity to contribute substantially to numerous policy and strategic planning assignments over the summer. In particular, I supported the Gender Team in brainstorming and putting together a thematic plan on IDLO's Strategic Outcomes relevant to the justice needs of women and girls. For this task, I developed specific entry points for programs colleagues to consider, heeding international and regional commitments on public integrity and anti-corruption. I also helped produce the final product submitted to senior management. I also had the chance to virtually attend, note-take, and report on various policy events relating to the justice needs of women and girls. After attending the events, I synthesized the relevant policy dialogues and key takeaways for the organization, sharing briefings or Note to Files with my team and senior management to inform our strategic outlooks and policy advocacy.

On the programmatic side, I was also able to support the Gender Team in conceptualizing a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Framework for an upcoming iteration of a justice-focused project in the Philippines, for which IDLO will be an implementing partner (primarily of technical assistance). To this end, I researched and reviewed documentation from previous project cycles of the project, priority areas and relevant indicators from the donor's side, national frameworks, and other international organizations' gender equality and inclusion frameworks. I provided a conceptualization of the framework for my colleague's review, which will inform the development of a broader Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Framework to be used across IDLO's programmes.

Reflections

I feel grateful to have been able to complete this internship on fascinating thematic subjects in The Hague, the world capital of peace and justice. A highlight of my time here has been meeting colleagues and like-minded professionals. Attending special events and delegation visits at our Branch office has been a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the work relating to gender justice and rule of law taking place in The Hague and beyond, as the need for global justice and

accountability becomes ever more pressing. Thank you to the IHRP for its support in making this internship possible.