

# STANFORD

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## Trying to Right Wrongs

The Handa Center spurs human rights education and action.

For freshman Hannah Smith, landing this summer's internship at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., was a bit like winning a jackpot as soon as she sat down at the card table. She came to Stanford with her eye on the Haas Center for Public Service but then was introduced to the Handa Center for Human Rights and International Justice. And it's the Handa Center—at Stanford only a few years but rapidly expanding its impact—that is providing the fellowship for her summer program.

USIP's projects, dedicated to preventing and resolving conflicts around the world, are a gateway to practical career training for the intensely focused Smith. "This is my first opportunity to be engaged directly," she says.

Placements like Smith's, plus some that involve events making international news, are a signature of the Handa Center's impact on undergraduate education. Among the most prominent examples have been internships monitoring the Khmer Rouge Tribunal—Cambodian government trials of members of the country's Communist Party. One Handa fellowship student coordinated children's activities in a refugee camp in Greece; another interned for the International Labor Rights Forum in D.C., working on issues concerning the garment industry in Bangladesh.

Director David Cohen founded the center at UC-Berkeley, where he was a humanities professor. It operated there as the War Crimes Studies Center for 14 years but moved to Stanford at the end of 2013, finding both university financial support and the potential of extensive collaboration with related programs. Its renaming—formally the WSD (Worldwide Support for Development) Handa Center for Human Rights and International Justice—better reflected the scope of its operations as well as backing from Haruhisa Handa, a Japanese businessman and philanthropist with a wide range of humanitarian and cultural interests.

Job one in settling in at Stanford was to understand what groups with common interests were doing already and how the Handa Center would play a distinct role. For associate director Penelope Van Tuyl, a lawyer who has worked with Cohen since 2006, that meant her priority was to "say yes to every meeting."

What emerged was the notion of the Handa Center as both a home and a portal for students trying to navigate Stanford's rich but diffuse assortment of human rights-related coursework. The center would provide academic guidance and foster hands-on experiences: field research and training opportunities in such areas as justice systems, survivor trauma, human trafficking and public document archiving.

Van Tuyl and the center's staff, including former journalist and international policy studies alum Jessie Brunner, MA '14, also fulfilled a request from then global studies division director Norman Naimark, '66, MA '68, PhD '72, to organize a human rights minor. Global studies and the Handa Center operate within the School of Humanities and Sciences, and the minor was launched in the fall. Its first student, Alina Utrata, '17, is majoring in history and the law, and is the winner of a Marshall Scholarship.

Utrata, who has done postconflict social research in Bosnia and was part of the trial monitoring team in Cambodia last summer, connected with the Handa Center as a sophomore and became a driving force on the student advisory board, notes Van Tuyl. "I don't know what I would have ended up studying if the Handa Center wasn't here," Utrata says. Now she's preparing to use her scholarship in a master's program on conflict transformation and social justice at Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland.

Ibrahim Bharmal is a junior international relations and comparative literature major who says the Handa Center "has been the single most

important institution here that has supported my academic and individual interests." Acutely motivated by the plight of refugees worldwide, Bharmal volunteered in Greece, emphasizing that the time was as "poignant" as it was instructional. He credits the center with helping him seek a broader perspective on refugee issues through Bing Overseas Studies in Berlin, where he could observe refugees trying to establish new lives amid political and social controversy over their status.

For the Handa Center, one of the next priorities is greater interaction with an extremely specific community: Stanford graduates in the United States and around the world. "We feel like there's this huge population of alums who might be interested in engaging with our students," says Van Tuyl.

### The Psychology of Mass Trauma

The Handa Center, Law School faculty, and the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences collaborate in The Human Rights in Trauma Mental Health Laboratory, which investigates and studies the psychological effects of mass trauma, including genocide and rape.

- The lab provided analysis to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on crimes of sexual and gender-based violence in the Central African Republic.
- Forensic evaluations and testimony in immigration proceedings helped win humanitarian parole (for otherwise inadmissible aliens) on behalf of more than five dozen individuals from post-earthquake Haiti.
- Research is under way to examine the effects of prolonged and indefinite solitary confinement on prisoners.