



Juvenile Justice Interventions in Santiago, Chile

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Location

Santiago is the capital and largest city of Chile and is located in the country's central valley. The Andes Mountains surround the city and can be viewed from several high points in the city. Because it is located in a valley, air pollution is a serious public health concern. The city is divided by 36 communes, which includes the Commune of Santiago, considered Central Santiago or downtown.

Population

The gap between social classes has continued to increase and this difference can be seen from one commune to the other. The population in Santiago is 6.4 million, and is equivalent to approximately 1/3 of Chile's total population. The official language is Spanish. Sixty-eight percent of the population is Christian, with fifty-five percent Catholic. Chilean culture has been a mix of Spanish colonial elements with indigenous, mostly Mapuche, culture.



FIELD PLACEMENT AGENCY

My global field placement was with Corporation Promesi. This organization's mission is the social integration of youth that have been sanctioned by criminal law. It fulfills its mission by addressing juvenile delinquency through a psychosocial intervention, considering every individual as capable of developing to their potential and as responsible for their actions.

OUTCOMES

In the course of my 12 week field placement, I was able to complete 4 main projects:

- Developing and leading a gender-based interventions training for staff.
- Presenting on culturally relevant models of intervention used in the US.
- Conducting research on desistance of crime and interviews on levels of violence of religious inmates in Santiago's penitentiary.
- Developing a needs assessment tool for teen parents and a parenting skills workshop.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CONNECTIONS

Classroom:

- SW 796: This course helped me to better understand the juvenile justice system and how the developmental stages have an impact on delinquency.
- SW 633: This course advanced my understanding of social welfare policies in the US, which prepared me to critically analyze Chilean policies and welfare system.
- **Career:** This global placement increased my interest in developing culturally relevant interventions for youth in the justice system.

SKILLS DEVELOPED

With this global experience I increased my ability to:

- Advocate for myself and self-guide my projects
- Think critically about how laws and policies affect social problems in different countries
- Be more assertive in a multicultural environment

LESSONS LEARNED

- Take the time to get to know the community you're in and propose ways in which you can contribute to the work of the agency.
- If you feel like you are too comfortable, find ways to keep challenging yourself.
- Set deadlines but be flexible to changes and pace of the work environment.
- At the end, the most important thing will be the connections you make.

ADVICE

- Read a book on Chilean slangs. Chilean Spanish is very unique and different from other Latin American countries.
- Be prepared to greet everyone with a kiss.
- Take time to learn about Chile's political history. This will help you better understand the roots and causes of current events and Chilean culture.

