

ROXANA GAMBLE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

## SANTIAGO, CHILE

Santiago is the capital of Chile. It is home to nearly a third of the country's population of 18 million, and is highly segregated by class. Chile has the strongest economy in South America, but one of the greatest wealth gaps in the world.

Chile experienced a violent dictatorship from 1973-1990. The return to democracy focused heavily on human rights, including ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Because of this, youth-serving agencies stress respecting the dignity of clients. There are also frequent protests and organizing efforts to change structural inequalities.



## GLOBAL FIELD PLACEMENT

### CIP-CRC SANTIAGO:

My placement was a juvenile detention center run by the Nacional Service for Minors (SENAME). SENAME manages Chile's juvenile justice and child protection systems.

The majority of the youth who enter SENAME centers come from low SES families, with limited access to quality social services

CIP-CRC Santiago provided youth with drug counseling, school, therapy, case management, job training, and other services while they served out their sentence.

## SKILLS DEVELOPED

- professional relationship-building
- research and analysis
- interview instrument creation
- identifying organizational processes and internal policies
- assessing strengths/weaknesses of communication within interdisciplinary teams
- development of culturally appropriate trainings
- dynamic workshop facilitation in Spanish
- managerial/leadership skills
- engaging youth clients
- professional communication in Spanish
- self-care



## OUTCOMES

During my 3 month placement at the center, my main project was creating and facilitating a series of professional development workshops for the direct care workers. The content was based on a needs assessment of the workers as well as relevant best practices and theory.

The workshop topics were:

- 1) **Social & psychological theories to explain the youths' behavior**
- 2) **Strategies for creating a therapeutic alliance for client engagement**
- 3) **Self-care for professionals who work with victims/perpetrators of violence**

For each workshop I created an interactive presentation and accompanying facilitator's guide. At the end of my placement, I recommended internal policy changes to improve the communication between male CRC unit staff.

## CONNECTIONS

### Classroom:

- SW 651: Planning for Organizational & Community Change  
This course provided me with a framework to analyze the organizational context of the detention center. It also gave me practical tools for including and engaging stakeholders at all levels of the organization.
- SW 648: Issues in Global Social Work Practice  
This course prepared me with strategies to integrate into a foreign organization and analyze how culture influences SW practice.

### Career:

This experience strengthened my link between social justice and management, and exposed me to the inner workings of a Latin American social service agency. I hope to work as a management consultant for youth-serving organizations abroad in the future.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Relationships are the foundation for change.
- A needs assessment should include the voices of as many stakeholders as possible.
- A good manager is open to feedback from her staff, makes sure they have enough support (training & resources) to do their job, and are recognized for good work.
- Self-care is essential for professionals who work with violence.

## ADVICE

- Chilean Spanish is very unique, so it would help to watch Chilean movies or listen to music before you go to get used to it.
- Read up on Chile's political history, as it will put a lot of their culture into context.
- Connect with Chileans at U-M! Grab a coffee with an international student and get advice straight from the source!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Office of Global Activities and the SSW Alumni Board of Governors for their financial support. Muchas gracias to the staff at CIP-CRC Santiago for providing an unforgettable learning experience.