



# Restorative Justice Practices: Juvenile Victim-Offender Mediation

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## Location: Santiago, Chile

Santiago is Chile's capital and it sits in a valley surrounded by snow-capped Andes and the Chilean Coast Range. It houses approximately 5.641 million people. While Spanish is the official language there are indigenous communities (Mapudungún, Aymará, and Rapanui) that preserve their language.

## Juvenile Victim-Offender Mediation

- In 2016 the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights made it a priority to promote consistent approaches to confronting the problem of juvenile offenses in Chile.
- In 2017 Ivan Navarro piloted restorative justice practices that focused on juvenile victim-offender mediation in Santiago, Chile.
- Professor Daniela Bolivar from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile evaluated the pilot and was able to show the success that led to the expansion to two other major cities in Chile; Valparaiso and La Serena.



## Project Information:

I studied at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile where I was hosted by Dr. Bolivar who was the led researcher for victim-offender mediation pilot program. I was interested in learning:

- What motivated the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights to move forward with a juvenile victim-offender medication model
- How the model was designed
- What were the key measurements of success

I interviewed key informants, Pilot led; Ivan Navarro, Evaluator; Daniela Bolivar, Research Assistant; Bianca Baracho, and Mediating Lawyer; Marcela Saldias.

Outcomes:

- The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights decided to move forward with a juvenile victim-offender mediation for three reasons:
  1. High juvenile recidivism
  2. Influence from other countries in Latin America and Europe who use victim-offender mediation
  3. After the dictatorship in the 1990 all the government and civil services were reformed to include mediation so it made sense to incorporate it with youth offenders
- The model was designed by Ivan Navarro, Juvenile Justice Lawyer, and a Public Administrator. They received training from the European Forum of Restorative Justice. Throughout the designing process they held round table discussions with academic professional in the field of child welfare and juvenile justice to get feedback.
- The key measurement for success were:
  - Reparation (victim) and Responsibility (offender)
  - Satisfaction of the court process
  - Recidivism is a secondary objective

## Classroom Connections:

**SW 725: Juvenile Delinquency, Juvenile Justice and Social Work**  
This course provided me with the context about the United States Juvenile Justice system. We covered the structure barriers, systems of oppression and how intuitional racism pushes youth into the juvenile justice system. The content provided with a lens to compare and contrast the juvenile justice system in Chile and the United States.

**SW 648: Issues in Global Social Work**

This course challenged me put my U.S. values to the side to be able to immerse myself in another country. We discussed and prepared for ethical dilemmas that may arise when aboard and how to handle them.

**SW 683 Evaluation in Social Work**

This course introduced me to program evaluation, and gave me the skills to conduct interviews. I used the interview skills during my meeting with key informants.

## Career Connections:

Studying in Santiago, Chile I realize that as I move forward in my career as a Social Worker, I want to ensure I keep a global lens. I want to partner with other countries globally to exchange information to create a society that will keep marginalized communities at the forefront.

## Skills Utilized/Developed:

1. Analyzed models of assessment, intervention, and evaluation
2. Collaborated with colleagues for effective policy action
3. Practiced empathy and other interpersonal skills



## Lessons Learned

1. Youth who get pushed into the juvenile justice system both in Chile and the United States are usually from underserved communities. Lack of resources in schools and neighborhoods, and youth being stigmatized are leading causes.
2. Chile has a similar economy to the United States because of the contribution of the Chicago Boys. The Chicago boys were economists prominent around the 1970s and 1980s, the majority of whom learned libertarian economic theories at the Department of Economics of the University of Chicago. Organized by the U.S. State department the University intended to design a program for international economic development.

## Advice

I highly suggest taking SW 648: Issues in Global Social Work with Katie Lopez. I also recommend to research a country of interest and talk to your professors. A lot of the professors have connection globally and can connect you with people.

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