

*Student experiences at the International Institute for the Sociology of Law in Oñati (Basque Country, Spain)*



The program is more interesting than I could have ever imagined. The professors and master's students attending the program come from different countries around the world, which has allowed me to learn not just a particular knowledge of Sociology of Law, but also from different cultures and diverse social experience from every corner of the world and apply a theoretical perspective in class. Currently, I am back in my home country doing field research for my thesis. I brought back many memories and experience and ready to go further with working life with confidence and pride. (Narith Non, Cambodia, 2017-18)

I studied sociology, and I got the information about this Master programme from my instructor, an alumnus of this Master programme. After my studies I worked for a year in a court, so that is when I gained an interest in the law. Seeing that I studied sociology before, I thought this would be the perfect fit. The whole programme as it relates to Oñati I think is perfect because it is a small town and there is not much distraction. Also, the teachers, the diversity, the aspect of multicultural, I think that this Master would be very good, if you decide to come here. (Kpindiyandi Bryant, Liberia, 2022-23)



This Master opened many doors for me in a way that it has helped me shape my academic career and my career as an activist and human rights defender. This Master is great because you live in Oñati, which is a beautiful town; you have a huge library, so you can study many, many forms of law; and then you will also meet people from all over the world which will help you shape your mindset, and you will learn to live with different cultures. (Victoria Capriles, Venezuela, 2015-16)

I remember the countryside and the community. I remember the mountain that watches over the town. I remember the camaraderie in the residence and the relationships and friendships that I made. I remember reading in the library until it was dark. I remember the discussions that we had in class, the dynamic and interactive way we felt our way into topics through each other's experiences. I remember doing dinner together with the other students every night and the celebratory events we would do at the end of each module: Indonesian dinner, Mexican food, Italian evenings. (Ben Semple, Ireland, 2016-17)





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My studies in Oñati connected me with an international network that has been essential for my professional development and, even more important, for my intellectual growth. (Lucero Ibarra, Mexico, 2009-10)



I study sociology of law because I want to see the implications of the law in the society. This is important for the law-making process, the formal justice process, etc. The study of sociology of law is part of the study of law, it is the study of reality, so you can comment and reflect on the justice system in your country. I really enjoy being in Oñati, because you can easily find the literature you need and because of the international environment. You have friends from around the world, and also the lecturers are from good universities around Europe and the world, with good experience and expertise. (Mufti Holish, Indonesia, 2022-23)

I remember Oñati for its most fruitful community of scholars, friendly staff and dwellers of the town who all come together in a very peculiar way to produce the most wonderful environment of the place that eventually helps studying and transforms one's life entire experience! Life changing experience for me it was! Without the studies in Oñati, I would never have achieved anything close to what I am now. I'm sure there might be different stories of different graduates, but my story is so far a success: I do a new thing learnt in Oñati and I enjoy doing it, I enjoy being a sociologist of law. (Alexander Kondakov, Russia, 2009-10)



I think that the dynamic of closeness between teachers and students is very interesting in that we share many activities. The fact that they live in the residence with us and share life with us inside and outside the classroom, makes the relationship between teacher and student even closer. Although we only live together for two weeks at a time, bonds of equality are created that is not the typical relationship of superiority, there is more friendship and companionship that the Institute helps create. (Nicole Velasco, Colombia, 2017-18)

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The studies were very useful for my work as a Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF. An organisation like UNICEF faces the challenge to strike a balance between promoting children's rights and at the same time ensuring that we do not cause damage to children by allowing them to grow up as irresponsible citizens in the name of children rights. In my course of duty I have applied several of the theories and practices that I acquired during my studies at the IISL. (Innocent Mofya, Zambia, 2004-05)

I studied law, and I decided to come here because I was looking for a programme that has different topics related to the law and its operation in society. In my case, my topics of interests are the human rights of children, of women, but also the popular culture and how it influences the consciousness of the people with regard to the law. I think at this moment, it has been a very good experience to be here, so I recommend this to everyone who wants to come to Oñati and start studying the relationship between sociology and the law. (Sepúlveda, Jorge; Chile; 2022-23)



It is exciting to have the opportunity to learn from people outside the U.S. Being here has meant the opportunity to ask questions in a different way and learn differently. While my education in the U.S. did a good job prioritizing critical thinking, I haven't had the chance to learn from knowledges in other parts of the world. (Emma Hyndman, USA, 2017-18)

The programme promoted my knowledge of diverse subjects in the social sciences, created a broader and more critical vision of certain topics, and provided information gathering tools for the analysis of social contexts. All this has helped me to assume academic positions more reflective of the socio-political context and encouraged me to think beyond quasi-dogmatic or ideological positions, drawing on academic social thought and the exchange of knowledge with different authors and people from the world. (Claudia Serna, Colombia, 2017-18)

