

The grant generously awarded by the Ziegler Trust Fund allowed me to travel to Myanmar (Burma) for an internship at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in August–September 2012. This internship has proven extremely interesting for my research on State-organised crime and kleptocracy. Myanmar is currently experiencing rapid political change, with regular progress towards democracy. However, the extent of concessions surprisingly made by the regime over the last year and a half should not obscure the reality of rampant corruption in the country. With the soon to come intensification of foreign investments, corruption in Myanmar is a particularly sensitive issue.

UNODC has most recently been asked by the government of Myanmar to provide legal and technical assistance with the drafting of an Anti-Bribery Bill, and more generally to assist the government in implementing international anti-corruption standards. The government of Myanmar has indeed formally expressed commitment to ratify the UN Convention against Corruption in the near future. I was thus in charge of conducting an assessment of the local anti-corruption and anti-money laundering legal and institutional framework, with a view to improving the current draft Anti-Bribery Bill and ensuring compliance with the UN Convention against Corruption. On the occasion of a pre-ratification workshop organised by the Bureau of Special Investigation of the government of Myanmar, I had a chance to discuss these matters with senior government officials and learnt a great deal from exchanging ideas with them.

In addition to my work on corruption and money laundering, I also spent a few days on the field. I was sent on mission to visit opium poppy fields in Southern Shan State, in the heart of the Golden Triangle. UNODC is conducting a programme aiming at reducing opium cultivation and developing sustainable alternative livelihoods for opium poppy farmers in the region. I was asked to report on the progress of the programme and identify needs and problems to be addressed in the future.

This internship has been an amazing and eye-opening experience. It offered me a privileged insight into the dynamics of corruption in Myanmar and significantly contributed to my doctoral thesis. It was also a unique chance to visit a fascinating and little known country, with extremely rich culture and history.

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to Pembroke College for having made this experience possible.