During 10 weeks over the summer I worked with the UN Global Compact in Chile. Our mission was to design a Social Responsibility course that will be taught as part of the general educational program for students at the Chilean university Andres Bello. I was working with amazing and very distinguished people, starting with Ms. Margarita Ducci, Executive Director of Global Compact Chile; Maria Isabel Muñoz, graduate professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaiso; and Mabel Tatiana Cortes, professor and designer of the online course platform.

My days at the office are busy and exhausting. My working hours were from 9am to 6pm (8 hours + 1 hour for lunch) from Monday through Friday. My days were all different in terms of activities; sometimes I had to attend some events with my boss and some other days I spend a couple of hours in the library doing research. I had weekly meetings with my working team where we discussed the material and interesting resources we wanted to include into the program. There were some times when I worked with these professors for entire days. Our meetings were quite intense; they started at 10:00am and finished at 6:00pm. We reached a point where we didn’t even need to time ourselves at work, by the end of the day we just looked at each other face and we could feel that it was enough for the day.

After that I would go home and have dinner with my host family. That
was the time when every member of the family would share the highlights of their day while enjoying a delicious meal together. Sometimes we also explored the city at night, but some others I just went to bed straight after dinner. I was amazed for how fast and how much I could learn in one day. There was no day in which I did not learn something new. It wasn’t easy. This was an accelerated and exhausting job. I wasn’t just an intern for the organization, I was a part of the Global Compact team and I had heavy responsibilities with it. I certainly hesitate if I would make it or not, but told myself that I needed to cope with it and try to make and learn the most of that experience... and that’s what I did.

I thought work would be the hardest part of the experience, but I also discovered that I needed to keep a balance between work, my social life and my personal time. There was a point when my life was completely work focused and that’s when I discovered that I was missing some things in my life. I started making some time for me and for the people around me, time for enjoying the crazy life in Santiago and just join the celebrations for the soccer “American coup”. A part of me was seeing this experience as a life-time opportunity, but the other part knew that work wasn’t it all and I needed to fill that gap.

Since Spanish is my first language I thought I wouldn’t have a problem with the language at all. Nevertheless, I have to confess that it was so difficult for me to understand the Chilean accent and even some words. It was something that I didn’t expect, and it took me at least a couple of weeks to get used to it. My host family and co-workers were so sensitive about it and helped me as much as they could. Sometimes a translation to “standard Spanish” was needed because some expressions have a completely different connotation for me to what they really meant in Chile. My host family gave Chilean Spanish lesson every night at 7:30pm. That wasn’t only the time for me to learn more about Chile, but it was also the time when the family gathered to have dinner together and share things about people’s days. That was one of my favorite parts of the day, and undoubtedly contributed enormously to make me feel a truly part of the family.

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During my internship with Global Compact Chile, I put into practice many skills and abilities that I did not know I had. First, I needed to come up with innovative and creative ideas for the online course. At the beginning I was scared of putting my ideas out there because I felt inferior to the people I was working with. It was a matter of days when I discovered that the team wanted to hear what I had to say and they really care about what I thought – I was the student critic eye for the program – they said. My problem was that I needed to believe it and believe in myself.
These 10 weeks were basically a new world for me. I was learning a lot about Social responsibility: starting from the person, passing through its form in organizations and culminating with the State intervention and the International Organizations that promote it. My focus was mainly on the Sustainable Development Goals, ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility and environmental policy. I got a deeper understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) even before they have been approved internationally. I didn’t expect that my boss would take me to important and transcendental meetings. I particularly remember the one where the Minister of Chancellery spoke about the priorities for Chile in terms of the SDG; or the panel discussion about the Papal encyclical that has criticize the human interventions in the planet and how it has been addressed nowadays. I felt privileged to have the opportunity to attend events like these ones not only for my internship purposes but also as an enriching and learning experience. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that at times I felt kind of labor exploited. Now that I look back, I think I could have done some things differently. I waited too much until I could finally speak out about my working hours. My contact said I needed to only complete 320 hours during the 10 weeks. Instead, I was working 8 hours a day from Monday through Friday, 40 hours per week. I really did enjoy my work, but there were some times when it was more than enough.

I think this was a great first big step for me as a fellow. After Mid-CORE and all the talks and advices I received from people at Middlebury, I felt I could finally put all of that into practice; from simple things as writing emails, to asking for help when I needed it, and putting yourself out there to solve whatever comes to you. Sometimes we (me included) do not give the sufficient importance to things that the Center does for us; the speakers are brought to speak, the TED talks we are advised to watch, those small things that can give us a broader perspective and opinions on current issues or and ideas.

I can say that I had an extraordinary first internship experience, throughout this 10 weeks I feel I grew up in two different ways: personally and professionally. I needed to act and behave according to the profes-
sional environment that I was living in, dress up accordingly and speak about current events in Chile and the world. I learned the value of an 8hr shift and the importance of valuing my own work.

This was my first time in South America. From this summer I am sure I can keep two images in my mind: one, the warm of the people and how caring Latin-American people are, and second, the problems and necessities that still need attention and urgent action. I have clear now that I want to continue contributing to Latin America in any possible way. There is so much to be done, never too late to start and there is no insignificant contribution that can be made.

*The Global Compact Chile team, 2015.*