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Alumni Profile

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ALUMNI PROFILE



Courtesy of the Human Rights Brief

Aldo Caliarì, a 2000 Washington College of Law (WCL) LL.M. graduate, is director of the Rethinking Bretton Woods (RBW) project at the Center of Concern (Center). Mr. Caliarì carries out research on the use of international law, particularly human rights law, to advance the Center's economic and social justice advocacy agenda.

A native of Argentina, Mr. Caliarì received his law degree from the Universidad Nacional de Tucumán Law School in 1997. Shortly before receiving his law degree, he participated in WCL's Second Annual Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court competition and received the "Best Oralist" award. This experience led to his enrollment in WCL's LL.M. program. While studying at WCL, Mr. Caliarì interned at the Center, which with the help of a New Voices Fellowship, developed into his full-time position. Upon grad-

uation, Mr. Caliarì received WCL's "Outstanding Graduate Award."

The Center is a non-profit organization grounded in the social values of Catholic social teaching. Founded in 1971, the Center enables individuals and organizations to explore global issues and social structures from an ethical perspective and to become involved in projects that promote social good. The Center started the RBW project ten years ago as a vehicle for analyzing global debt issues and to reform International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

The aim of the RBW project is to make the IFIs more transparent, accountable, and participatory. The project also seeks to democratize the world's economic policies and link trade and finance in order to achieve long-lasting, effective changes in the global finance system. Mr. Caliarì

travels internationally to coordinate efforts with organizations working on trade and finance. He was deeply involved in joining and unifying various groups at the UN Financing for Development Conference in 2002.

Mr. Caliarì says he principally focuses on linking trade and finance theories, perspectives, and organizations with human rights groups and perspectives. As he explains, "Debt relief deals have always been deals among the creditors. ... If the creditor-led, piecemeal approach has not worked, it is time to let the debtors define the terms of a comprehensive debt relief scheme." The RBW monitors and seeks to reform various regional trade agreements that impact agreeing countries' abilities to create and enforce human rights policies. Mr. Caliarì says a gap remains between the economic and social realities in many parts of the world and among the rhetoric and concepts used in discussions regarding human rights and economic policies. The RBW project works not only to raise awareness regarding this gap, but also to narrow the gap.

One of the ways the RBW project attempts to achieve its goals is by creating working groups. For example, the Working Group on Trade and Finance Linkages (Working Group) analyzes the negative impact of IFI involvement in trade. One of the issues the Working Group has addressed specifically is the IFIs' impact on the bargaining leverage of developing countries in critical World Trade Organization

negotiations regarding agricultural and industrial goods.

Mr. Caliarì states that his views have evolved significantly since he began his career. "When I started I had a rather naïve view," Mr. Caliarì laughs. "You quickly learn the problem is not only content, it is also process. There is no enforcement structure." He explains that it is not enough for advocates to care about what leaders are saying. Advocates and NGOs must work toward a structure designed to enforce laws for real and fair economic negotiations, and for practical steps toward economic policies that recognize human rights. Although he recognizes a temptation to feel discouraged, he says that his work at the Center has taught him to take things in perspective. "I have learned to see the importance of the work, regardless of the results." He explains that he has been fortunate to work out of the Center: "The Center gives a lot of space to develop new ideas and to be creative."

Mr. Caliarì remains connected to the WCL community through his work in Washington D.C. and hosting WCL interns. He is a tremendous example of human rights advocacy at work in the international economic arena. *HRB*

Jerald Hess, a J.D. candidate at the Washington College of Law, covers the Alumni Profile for the Human Rights Brief.