



Dear friends

Happy New Year from CSEL, and welcome to the first newsletter of 2011.

We're looking forward to this year and building on our partnerships with psychology experts, legal practitioners, grassroots and voluntary sector organisations, funders and other supporters – you! I hope in 2011 we can be part of real progress in helping to make the UK's asylum process fair. But first, here's an update on our efforts in the last few months of 2010:

I'm glad to start the new year with **a warm welcome to four new trustees:**

- **David Rhys Jones** brings a wealth of experience in the sector, having worked with UK Immigration Advisory Service, UNHCR, Refugee Legal Centre, Glazer Delmar solicitors, the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, the Helen Bamber Foundation, the Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID) and Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID). David co-authored the widely cited article '[Medical Evidence in Asylum and Human Rights Appeals](#)' in the International journal of Refugee Law, volume 16, issue 3.
- **Professor Amina Menon** is Professor of Psychology at Royal Holloway College, London. She has conducted research in the psychology and law field for over 25 years, in partnership with academics around the world, and her expert opinion has been sought in civil and criminal cases in Scotland and England.
- **Mary Robertson** was previously director of the [Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation](#) (CSVR) in Johannesburg, which employs researchers, community facilitators, psychologists and social workers in order to prevent violence and build reconciliation, democracy and a human rights culture in South Africa and other African countries. She is now clinical director of the Traumatic Stress Clinic, also managing the Refugee Service there.
- **Clare Hogan** is Assistant Law Editor working on the Law Pages at The Times newspaper.

Our **three main projects** all saw progress over the autumn months:

- The **Cambodia project** funded by [Swiss Network for International Studies](#) to undertake psychological research at the court hearings of the trials of Khmer Rouge members is moving along. We are currently waiting for a date for the second of the five planned trials (the first was held in 2010). Rebecca Brönimann, the PhD student who will attend the hearings, visited CSEL in September 2010 for a week to work with Jane refining the design of the study.
- The Big Lottery funded '**Discrepancies II**' research project that follows on from our initial research into [discrepancies in refugees' accounts of traumatic experiences](#) is going well. We

have now interviewed 50 people about their memories of traumatic experiences, but we're still looking for more people to take part – both refugees and non-refugees. People have been very generous in giving their time to help with this project, and being willing to share their traumatic memories with us to help with this study. We'll continue to recruit participants until May - if you or someone you know would like to take part, please get in touch with Jane Herlihy, CSEL's executive director and research lead: j.herlihy@csel.org.uk.

- Clare Cochrane, working on the **Dissemination Project for Refugee Women**, has been busy catching up with people who took part in the first training session in January 2010 to find out how they've used the training. Feedback has been very encouraging - it seems most people have been enthusiastically sharing what they've learned with their colleagues, feel it's very valuable to the work of their organisation, and that it should be even more widely disseminated. In September Clare held a training seminar for around 20 people in Newcastle, hosted by the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, and attended the BASIS conference in Birmingham where she met refugee community organisations from around the west Midlands.

CSEL's Executive Director Jane Herlihy had the chance to do some valuable networking at **two international events** in recent months:

- In October Jane went with Stuart Turner, CSEL's Chair of Trustees, to **the annual meeting of the [International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies \(ISTSS\)](#)**. While there, Stuart was awarded the Sarah Haley Memorial Award for Clinical Excellence, and spoke about his work for ISTSS with the United Nations, with whom the ISTSS has Special Consultative Status. Also at the conference, Jane presented data from our [study of decision-making assumptions](#) in a session with Derrick Silove of Australia's University of New South Wales. The ISTSS newsletter, Traumatic Stress Points, [published a summary of CSEL's work](#) just before the conference (see pages 5 and 6).
- In September, Jane was invited by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) to attend the EU presidential conference in Brussels, where expert NGOs from around Europe developed briefings on key issues about asylum to inform the ministerial meeting negotiating common asylum policy.

In **other news** relevant to CSEL...

- **A question asked in the House of Lords** in December highlighted the need to explain why non-clinician decision makers need to understand PTSD. [Lord Avebury asked](#) 'what training UK Border Agency case owners receive with regard to the effect of post-traumatic stress disorder on memory and recollection.' Home Office Minister Baroness Neville-Jones replied that 'There is no specific training covering the effect of PTSD on memory and recollection', and that: 'We do not expect case owners to make clinical decisions.' So that's another item to add to the 2011 'to do' list!
- In December the government published a [Green Paper consulting on proposed changes to legal aid](#) in England and Wales. Most legal work to do with asylum will continue to qualify for legal aid, but there are a few proposals which will affect people seeking asylum, such as the proposal to remove eligibility for legal aid from all welfare-related cases including

asylum support cases, and to provide asylum legal advice via telephone access, amongst others. The Refugee Council ([click here](#)) and the Institute of Race Relations ([click here](#)) have both published briefings on the Green Paper. The deadline for consultation responses is 14 February 2011.

So what of our plans for 2011? Well you won't be surprised to hear they are no less ambitious than our pace of activity in 2010 was hectic! The thread through all of our work is to identify, undertake and disseminate the findings of research into areas where psychology and law intersect. The first part of this is to identify research needs – we need to ensure that we are investigating issues which are deeply relevant to practitioners and those going through legal processes. Our mission is to ensure that psychological evidence is made available to help to develop fair legal processes. We'll do this through existing and new relationships – and we're looking forward to hearing from and working with many of you over the year.

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CSEL... is a registered charity that aims to contribute to the development of fair legal processes that take psychological information into account. CSEL carries out empirical research into psychological aspects relevant to legal processes; and disseminates the findings through peer-researched journals, professional training, academic knowledge-sharing, and networking. CSEL is not partisan, except in favour of science and evidence-based information.

Please let me know if you do not wish to receive this quarterly newsletter.

Thank you.