



**Hong Kong
Refugee Advice
Centre**

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Team News

Staff

We are very sad to announce that Christine Lin, our Legal Director since August 2009, will be leaving HKRAC on 16 September 2011. Christine's contribution to HKRAC has been immense and we will miss her. Under Christine's leadership, HKRAC has provided excellent service to our refugee clients and seen increasing refugee recognition rates among those represented at HKRAC. Christine is a consummate professional and in her time at HKRAC she has worked tirelessly towards raising the standards of our services. We wish Christine every success in all her future plans.

Stephanie Jones will relinquish her position as Staff Attorney (Clinical Programs) and take over as Interim Legal Director on the same date. Please see the job opportunity announcement for the permanent Legal Director position.

We are also sad to announce that Accounts Officer Melissa Lit has left HKRAC. Her diligent work and the laughter she brought to the office will be missed and we wish her the best of luck in her new employment in Brunei.

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New Staff

We are happy to announce that Gabrielle Curtis has joined us and will take over as Staff Attorney (Clinical Programs). Gabrielle is an Australian qualified lawyer with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) and Bachelor of Law (Hons) from the University of Sydney, and a Masters of Law (Human Rights) from the University of Hong Kong. She has worked at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. Most recently, she worked as a research assistant at the Centre for Comparative and Public Law at the University of Hong Kong, examining the application of the Convention Against Torture in various jurisdictions. She is also a graduate of the HKRAC clinical program. Gabrielle began working as a volunteer caseworker at HKRAC in 2009.

Volunteers

We are pleased to welcome Catherine Bissell an attorney from the United States who joins us as a full-time volunteer lawyer, and new Refugee Legal Assistance Clinic students Christina Tsang, Bryan Lee, Sharon Yuen Mei, Robyn Crowter, Thomas Wong, Kelly Shang from the University of Hong Kong and Janet Pang, Judy Chu, Jenny Poon, Justin Heifetz, Coody Yuen, Cecilia Zeng from the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Christine's Farewell

HKRAC will be hosting a farewell party for Christine on Thursday 15 September.

Please join us in thanking Christine and toasting her invaluable contributions to HKRAC's work.

Location: Pier 7 Cafe & Bar

Roof Viewing Deck, Central Pier 7, Star Ferry, Central

Time: 6pm-9pm

Casework Update

Since June 2011, UNHCR has recognized 7 HKRAC clients as refugees!

- On 24 June 2011, UNHCR recognized an African client and his 3 children as refugees. Tony Leung and Leanne Tse, who were enrolled in HKRAC's clinical program with the Chinese University of Hong Kong during the Fall 2010 semester, represented the client under the supervision of Legal Director Christine Lin.
- On 24 June 2011, UNHCR recognized a Somali woman represented by HKRAC volunteer lawyer, Armin Kalyanram.
- On 21 July 2011, a Sri Lankan client was granted refugee status. Representation was provided by Alexander Haslam, Kelsey Hui, and Nick Rushgrove of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, and Brian Barbour.
- On 1 August 2011, a Somali male was recognized as a refugee. Anita Wise, who was enrolled in HKRAC's Refugee Law Clinic with the University of New South Wales, provided legal representation.

HKRAC would also like to acknowledge James Cameron, Patric Hoy, and Adrien Ng of Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer for their excellent representation of a Somali client who was granted refugee status on 29 April 2011.

HKRAC's work would not be possible without the tireless support and countless hours provided by all of our interpreters, volunteer caseworkers, and pro bono lawyers to assist our clients. Thank you all!

Community Interpretation Training

In August HKRAC organized two 40-hour interpreter training courses, facilitated by expert trainer Alice Johnson, Director of the Cairo Community Interpreter Project (CCIP) at the American University in Cairo.

The training is an abridged form of the semester-long CCIP course, designed specifically for community interpreters working in refugee legal aid settings. It covered topics such as: refugee law, fundamental components of professional community interpretation, interpreter roles and responsibilities, protocols and procedures, interpretation techniques, cognitive skills and memory training, note-taking, glossary building and reference research strategies, and interpreter ethics.

This training was held for the first time in Hong Kong in 2008. HKRAC then noticed a drastic improvement in the quality of interpretation, which in turn greatly increased the efficiency of our work. We were therefore extremely excited to have CCIP return to Hong Kong to run this training once more.



40 interpreters speaking 17 languages were trained, including Swahili, French, Urdu, Somali, Hindi, Tagalog, Sinhala, Tamil, Pashto, Tigrinya, Bahasa Indonesia, and many more. The training ended with



an informal graduation dinner, where Alice awarded the interpreters CCIP certificates and HKRAC staff had the opportunity to meet and mingle with the new interpreters.

The participants thoroughly enjoyed the course, describing it as fun and enlightening. They were inspired by Alice's captivating and engaging teaching style.

With HKRAC's support, the interpreters are now collaborating and working hard to build an online glossary of refugee law terms in 17 languages!

August was a very busy month for Alice: in addition to the interpreter trainings, Alice conducted a workshop for CHEER interpreters at the Hong Kong Christian Services Centre for Ethnic Minority Residents. Alice also conducted short workshops on "Working with an Interpreter" for UNHCR and HKRAC caseworkers, to enhance their understanding of the interpreters' roles, and to improve communication during client interviews.

Before jetting off to Thailand and Indonesia to conduct more trainings, Alice even managed to interpret for four of our clients.

Given the overwhelmingly enthusiastic and positive feedback we have received from the participants of the workshops and trainings, we can't wait to bring the Cairo Community Interpreter Project (CCIP)

back to Hong Kong for more trainings in the near future!

HKRAC and the interpreters would like to express their gratitude to the Marden Foundation for their sponsorship of this invaluable training opportunity, and for continuing to support HKRAC's efforts to improve the quality of community interpretation in Hong Kong.

We would also like to thank the Centre for Comparative and Public Law at the University of Hong Kong for their support and for providing us with excellent facilities.



A big thank you to Jessie Wang, Luna Zhang and Stephanie Tam for their help during the two interpreter trainings!

HKRAC would also like to once again thank all our interpreters for their dedication and support. We would not be able to do the work we do without your help.

Thank you for being part of the HKRAC team!



Reflections from the Interpreters

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre for including me in the interpreter training that just finished. It's excellent—well thought-out, informative, engaging and superbly executed. Alice's enthusiasm is inspiring. Even the most disinterested participant would find it difficult to not feel engaged. The sample cases/situations she used to drive home her message are common enough for many experienced interpreters to relate to. For someone like me who has no experience in interpreting, the training is invaluable. I don't know if I would have the presence of mind to apply all the lessons I have learned in future, but the training has given me the confidence to at least know what problems to anticipate, and how they could be solved.

One of the trainees said that the first time he was called on to translate, his hands shook uncontrollably. If my hands shake on my first session, I'd console myself with the thought that they would be shaking much more if I had not taken the training.

Elena Villaprudente

The week long course @ HKU has been intense yet enjoyable. I've learned a lot, more than I thought I would in a week, it has sparked my interest to study more in the field of interpreting. I'd like to thank HKRAC for their efforts in making this possible.

Subhan Ali



HKRAC News

HKRAC Attends the UNHCR-NGO Consultations in Geneva, Switzerland



Legal Director Christine Lin attended the UNHCR-NGO Consultations in Geneva, Switzerland, which took place from July 28-30, 2011. To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the theme of this year's Consultations was 60 Years of Partnerships: The Road Ahead.

This was the first year that UNHCR formally invited HKRAC to attend the Consultations, and HKRAC had its own seat at the plenary sessions as well as an individual organizational participant listing. The UNHCR-NGO Consultations are an opportunity for NGOs to raise concerns with key UNHCR representatives regarding specific issues as well as to network with other NGOs working on refugee issues globally. HKRAC is a member of the Southern Refugee Legal Aid Network (SRLAN) Legal Aid Working Group. The Legal Aid Working Group organized a meeting with Suzanne Duff, Head of the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) Unit of UNHCR's Division of International Protection, to discuss issues

regarding RSD, which Christine attended. Christine also met with representatives of UNHCR's Asia Bureau with other members of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) to discuss regional concerns.

Prior to the Consultations, Christine participated in Asylum Access's 3-day Refugee Rights Leadership Training from June 24-26, 2011. Christine also attended the International Detention Coalition (IDC) planning meeting and meetings for the Southern Refugee Legal Aid Network (SRLAN) and the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), which took place in Geneva on June 27, 2011.

Upcoming Events

In collaboration with local and regional partners, HKRAC is organizing two events in November 2011.

2011 East Asia Symposium

Beyond Asylum: Refugee Policy in Practice and How Refugees Experience It

12 November 2011

The University of Hong Kong, Council Chambers

East Asia has the potential to lead positive developments in the field of refugee protection in the Asia Pacific region: Japan and Korea are amongst the few countries in Asia to sign on to the Refugee Convention, and although it is not yet a state-party of the Convention, Hong Kong has a strong civil society and rule of law that has led to several alternative systems to provide partial protection to refugees. The Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) believes that East Asia has both the capacity and the responsibility to establish a better refugee protection system and to support other countries in Asia to adopt protection mechanisms.

This Symposium brings key actors from Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macau and Taiwan together to identify gaps and solutions, debate the key issues, and challenge misconceptions about the most vulnerable population in Asia: refugees.

This event is free and open to the public. Please RSVP to Flora Leung if you would like to attend at: fkleung@hku.hk.

Refugee Mental Health Training

9-11 November 2011

Scout Centre, Austin Road, Tsim Sha Tsui

This training will be useful for anyone who works directly with refugee clients, such as: lawyers, psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, social workers, doctors, NGO staff, government immigration and social welfare officers, etc.

Topics covered include: models of interventions when working with refugee populations; the consequences of violence (physical, psychological, social, and spiritual); the helping process; skills in interviewing, assessment of your client, interventions with vulnerable groups: Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV); Working with traumatized children and their families; etc.

The training will be facilitated by Ms. Adrienne Carter, M.S.W., R.C.S.W. who has spent many years working in the area of refugee mental health. She has worked with Médecins Sans Frontières for the past 11 years and trained counselors in many different countries.

Training will be closed and limited to 60 registered participants, and a registration fee of HK\$1,000 will be charged.

To register for the event, please visit: <http://refugeerightsasiapacific.org/2011/08/22/east-asia-symposium-refugee-mental-health-training>, or contact cchan@hkrac.org.

Thanks go out to the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy and the Japan Association for Refugees, both of whom are supporting the events.

News

Community TeamWorks Event

On Saturday May 9th, employees from our valued supporter Goldman Sachs teamed up with HKRAC on a Community TeamWorks (CTW) project, conducting a survey assessing public awareness and perception of refugee issues in Hong Kong. Many respondents were unclear on several issues, including the definition of refugees, the numbers of refugees living in Hong Kong, and the Government's policies regarding refugees. However, it also showed widespread support and sympathy for refugees from the public, with an overwhelming 81% of respondents stating that refugees should be allowed to reside in Hong Kong and receive assistance such as legal aid, basic necessities and job opportunities. Our appreciation goes out to Goldman Sachs again for their help and support.

Rights of Migrant Sex Workers in Hong Kong

Dr. Lisa Yarwood, Assistant Research Professor at one of HKRAC's clinic partners, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Faculty of Law, has completed a research project on the rights of migrant sex workers in Hong Kong. The objective of the project was to identify the rights (and gaps in rights protection) of migrant women working in the sex industry in Hong Kong, highlighting issues faced by migrant sex workers due to a lack of legislative protection, and to raise awareness of those issues with policy makers, to better inform migrant sex workers of their rights under Hong Kong law, to encourage policy makers to address the gaps in the legislative framework that would offer legal protection for migrant sex workers, and to promote cooperation amongst service providers,

better enabling these groups to access assistance and the services of other organizations.

While the focus of the project is on migrant women, the findings are much broader and are of use to any individual (male or female) working in the sex industry, as well as migrants arriving in Hong Kong.

The full and summary documents, including criminal implications for migrant sex workers, legal entitlement to stay, medical care, rights in terms of repatriation, social welfare services, legal aid and translation services, educational entitlements, employer obligations, employment rights and tax obligations, and support service contacts, are available for download at:

http://www.law.cuhk.edu.hk/download/Rights_of_Migrant_Sex_Workers-Working_Document-English.pdf

http://www.law.cuhk.edu.hk/download/Rights_of_Migrant_Sex_Workers-Summary_Document-English.pdf

The summary documents are also being translated into traditional and simplified Chinese and Swahili. Feel free to make use of these resources!

Student Reflections

An Invitation to the Refugee Run



A Saturday morning is always relaxing. We can sleep till late in the day, we can have a great breakfast, we can take a complete rest after five days of work, we can do anything we want for our greatest enjoyment. But nothing is more special and life-changing than spending a wonderful morning for the "Refugee Run" at Crossroads.

On a special Saturday, we were given entirely new identities ranging from illiterate children, pregnant women, wealthy merchant to the disabled. When the Refugee Run started, no matter who we were, we all quickly found ourselves in great trouble. In the midst of darkness, some soldiers rushed into the room and people were grabbed.

We arrived at the refugee camp finally. We were asked to fill in a form though most of us were illiterate. We tried to find our family members but we could hardly locate each other in this chaotic situation. Later we were divided into groups and set up the tent ourselves. We lived in that small tent and dare not make any noise. We saw soldiers everywhere searching for people. There was always the sound of bomb explosions.

Sometimes we were running in panic. Sometimes we waited in the queue for food, cleaning water and medical care but these basic resources were often in shortage. We could do nothing but kept on waiting. We were afraid because soldiers were rude and corrupt. They would take away our valuables whenever possible. We were desperate because we could never know what would happen next. There was no peace, no hope and no future.

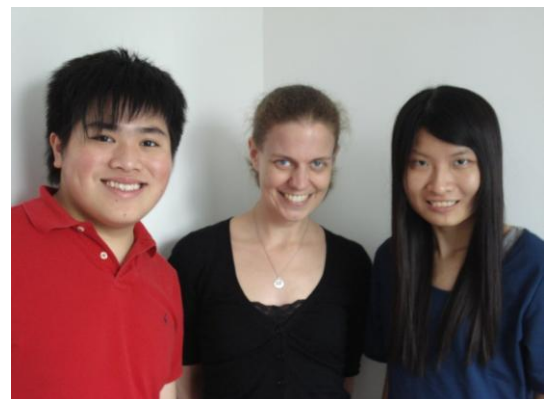
Finally we heard the long-awaited announcement, "The simulation is over." Relieved. Then there was the story given by a former refugee and we had discussions on refugee matters. After the debriefing one of us saw someone crying. Who could stay calm if they became a refugee?

The demonstrator is right. We have no idea of who will be a refugee tomorrow. People become refugees just because circumstances change. It may be you and me, and there is no way for us to predict the future. All we can and should do is to offer a warm hand to refugees. This is not merely charity, this is life-saving.

The life of a refugee is difficult to comprehend for us city dwellers. A simulation gives us the opportunity to get the experience of a refugee in a safe and relatively mild manner. We sincerely invite you to the "Refugee Run" at Crossroads. Trust me, the experience is marvelous and is definitely life-changing.

Hokki Chan & Gigi Ng

*HKU-HKRAC Refugee Legal Assistance Clinic students
(Summer 2011)*



Recruitment

Accounts Officer

HKRAC seeks a positive and trustworthy person to update and maintain the organization's bookkeeping and accounting records.

The Accounts Officer will report directly to the Executive Director. S/he will:

- Have responsibility for all of the accounts
- Record all transactions and post debits and credits (maintain the general ledger)
- Produce regular financial statements (profit and loss and balance sheets)
- Prepare reports and summaries for donors, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Director
- Assist in donor relations
- Prepare bank deposits
- Verify and balance receipts
- Handle payroll, MPF, and insurance
- Prepare invoices, cover letters, and official receipts
- Hire the independent auditor and assist the annual audit
- Work closely with the Executive Director to support HKRAC's institutional needs

The successful candidate will be detail-oriented, trustworthy and have good communication skills. S/he will be self-motivated and confident, and will have a strong aptitude for numbers. S/he must be careful, orderly, and detail-oriented to avoid making errors and to recognize errors made by others. S/he should also be discreet because s/he will frequently come into contact with confidential material. Finally, s/he should have good communication skills, because s/he may interact with donors, staff, volunteers, clients, government and the general public.

Minimum Qualifications:

- 2 years of bookkeeping or accounting experience
- Fluency in both written and spoken English
- Fluency in Cantonese and Mandarin is an advantage
- Excellent presentation, interpersonal and communications skills
- Computer literacy including Microsoft office (especially Word and Excel)
- Knowledge of specialized bookkeeping or accounting software is especially valuable
- A demonstrated commitment to ethics in the performance of one's duties is particularly important for bookkeepers, particularly for a charity, and particularly for a charity that works with vulnerable clients.

Please send your CV and Statement of Interest by 30 September to info@hkrac.org with the subject line "Accounts Officer."

Legal Director

We seek a dedicated and effective lawyer to direct all aspects of refugee legal aid at HKRAC.

Under the supervision of HKRAC's Executive Director and Board of Directors, the Legal Director is responsible for overseeing all aspects of casework management, client representation and advice, advocacy and referrals. S/he is also responsible for the recruitment, training and supervision of Staff Attorneys and Volunteer Caseworkers who are involved in HKRAC's refugee legal aid project. The Legal Director will supervise up to 5 full time staff members as well as our volunteer caseworkers.

The Legal Director will also work closely with HKRAC's law firm sponsors. S/he will oversee caseworker trainings and will attend local and international conferences and meetings on behalf of the organization.

The ideal candidate will be energetic, articulate and comfortable interacting with diverse segments of society, from vulnerable clients to corporate sponsors. S/he will enjoy collaborating with HKRAC's small staff of tireless refugee rights advocates and wider circle of dedicated volunteers and supporters.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Qualified lawyer in any jurisdiction;
- A minimum of 5 years experience in refugee or human rights law;
- Experience in managing and supervising staff or volunteers;
- Excellent legal research and drafting skills;
- Public speaking experience;
- A demonstrated commitment and sensitivity toward vulnerable and/or displaced people;
- Fluency in both spoken and written English.

Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis. Please send your CV and Statement of Interest by 12 September 2011 to: info@hkrac.org with the subject line "Legal Director Position."

Thank you for your support!

HKRAC thanks all those who have recently made donations to HKRAC.

We would also like to thank Kriti G. and Dali Polot for their work on the newsletter and the website.

The contributions of our supporters and partners enable HKRAC to continue providing life-saving aid. We pledge to stretch every cent and make every dollar count!

➔ Donations by cheque:

Please make cheques out to "Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre Ltd", and mail to the following address:

10B Comfort Building,
86-88A Nathan Road,
Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon,
Hong Kong

➔ Donations by bank transfer:

HSBC account: 808-340434-838

➔ Further details on how you can donate to HKRAC can be found on our website at:

<http://www.hkrac.org/how-you-can-help/donations>

The logo for the Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre is a white speech bubble with a red outline, set against an orange background. Inside the speech bubble, the text "Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre" is written in red, stacked in three lines.

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* a non profit company