

# Update on Current ERT Projects

## I. Thematic Projects

### ***Applying Equality and Non-discrimination Law to Advance Socio-Economic Rights***

This thematic project started in July 2011 and is aimed at building strategies of better enforcement of economic and social rights through drawing and communicating lessons from a global review of jurisprudence which has used equality and non-discrimination law to advance the realisation of social and economic rights. The major activities under this project have been completed. A book-length report is in the final editorial process and is due to be published in the coming months.

### ***Developing Resources and Civil Society Capacities for Preventing Torture and Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of Persons with Disabilities: India and Nigeria***

This project commenced in November 2010 with partner organisations in India (Human Rights Law Network - HRLN) and Nigeria (Legal Defence and Assistance Project - LEDAP). Its objectives include the development of legal and policy guidelines on the prevention and remedy of torture and ill-treatment of persons with disabilities, based on documentation of abuses and test litigation, as well as capacity building related to the intersection of disability rights and non-torture rights.

Since March 2014, the Equal Rights Trust's key activities under this project have been twofold. Firstly, it has continued to work

on a *Resource Pack on Disability and Torture* for both India and Nigeria, based on the outcome of its consultations with key stakeholders in conjunction with HRLN and LEDAP. These Resource Packs describe patterns of torture and ill-treatment of people with disabilities in the respective country identified in the course of field research, present legal research and analysis, bringing together relevant international, regional and domestic law and jurisprudence on disability and torture, and make recommendations for change.

Secondly, the strategic litigation component of the project continues to progress. The project is supporting eight legal cases currently before the courts in India. It also supports a further 13 cases which, with the Trust's support, have been filed before the Nigerian courts since March 2013. Amongst other positive developments, the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir found a violation of the article 21 (right to life) of a Kashmiri man with intellectual disabilities who was ambushed, tortured and killed by two army officers. The Court ordered that a trial of the two accused officers take place expeditiously and that compensation be awarded to family members of the victim. In Nigeria, in three cases, the court has found in favour of the clients, finding violations of their fundamental rights and awarding compensation. In one case, the court found no violations and LEDAP, supported by the Equal Rights Trust, is now in the process of appealing the decision.

### ***Empowering Human Rights Defenders in Central Asia to Combat Discrimination on the Basis of Ethnicity and Religion***

This project started in January 2013 and is implemented in partnership with two NGOs based in Central Asia, with the participation of further local activists and experts. It seeks to address ethnic and religious discrimination in five Central Asian countries, and to publish studies on the subject.

Since March 2014, the Equal Rights Trust has been coordinating field and desk research towards the production of a series of reports on discrimination and inequality in Central Asia. Our partner in Kazakhstan has completed initial field research and begun desk research on patterns of discrimination and inequality. In Kyrgyzstan, monitoring and documentation is underway, with researchers working in different geographical regions of the country. In addition, following the completion of two successful workshops for activists from other Central Asian countries, the Equal Rights Trust began detailed research planning for reports on Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The Trust has now begun reviewing the draft chapters. In all of these initiatives, the Equal Rights Trust plays a leading role, providing guidance and feedback.

In July 2014, the Equal Rights Trust provided training to 20 human rights defenders from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The first two days of the training focused on introducing key concepts in equality law as provided in the Declaration of Principles on Equality and as utilised at the international level, with a focus on discrimination on the basis of race/ ethnicity and religion. The final day focused on monitoring and documenting cases of discrimination. A further workshop for another 12 activists from the same countries was held in August 2014.

### ***Ending Gender Discrimination in Nationality Laws***

This project began in September 2014 in partnership with the Tilburg University (Netherlands). It aims to research two countries which maintain gender discriminatory nationality laws (Nepal plus one more to be confirmed) and two countries which recently amended gender discriminatory nationality laws (Indonesia and Kenya) for the purpose of conducting advocacy on this issue and supporting the international campaign to end gender discriminatory nationality laws (of which the Equal Rights Trust is a steering committee member).

In the first month of the project, the research team has been formed, and desk research and other planning and preparation activities are being carried out.

### ***Equality and Freedom of Expression: Sudan and South Sudan***

This project began in November 2012, in informal partnership with Journalists for Human Rights (JHR), a network of independent journalists operating in Sudan. It seeks to build on the Equal Rights Trust's previous collaboration with the JHR in the period 2010-2012, expanding the work to involve journalists and human rights defenders from South Sudan, with the aim of establishing a sister network in that country. In addition to providing on-going support to journalists working in the challenging media environment in both countries, and providing training on human rights and equality, the project aims to increase collaboration between those working in Sudan and South Sudan. In so doing, the project aims to make a contribution to tackling one of the most important human rights and security concerns between the two countries: the perpetuation of hate

speech by the political leadership and media in Sudan and South Sudan.

During the reporting period, we have continued to support the JHR network in Sudan and to foster the development of an informal sister network in South Sudan, in face of serious security challenges for journalists, human rights defenders and the wider population in both countries. In addition, the Trust has supported monitoring and documentation, by members of the two networks, on patterns of discrimination, violations of the right to freedom of expression, hate speech and other human rights abuses.

### ***Greater Human Rights Protection for Stateless Persons***

This advocacy project started in 2010 and follows on from a research project undertaken in 2008-2010, which resulted in the publication of *Unravelling Anomaly: Detention, Discrimination and the Protection Needs of Stateless Persons*. The project had the following objectives: (1) Strengthening human rights protection standards for stateless persons, with a focus on detention; (2) Strengthening capacity and awareness on statelessness at an international level; (3) Developing networks on statelessness and encouraging greater civil society activity on statelessness; (4) Carrying out advocacy on statelessness at international and regional levels.

Under this project, the Equal Rights Trust continued its network building and coalition building activities on statelessness around the world. In particular, the Trust continued its engagement with the European Network on Statelessness (ENS), of which it is a founding steering committee member. The Equal Rights Trust attended ENS meetings and teleconferences

and has contributed to the growth of the network through recruiting new members, developing its law and policy pillar and contributing to policy development, awareness-raising and capacity building activities of the Network.

The Equal Rights Trust is also a steering committee member of the international campaign to end gender discriminatory nationality laws. Other steering committee members are UNHCR, the Women's Refugee Commission, the Tilburg University Statelessness Programme, Equality Now and UN Women. The Trust has been involved in conceptualising the campaign and regularly attended planning teleconferences during the reporting period. The campaign was launched on 17 June 2014 at a side event to the Human Rights Council session in Geneva. The launch was well attended, by states (including Algeria, Hungary, Kenya, New Zealand, Tunisia and the USA), UN personnel and civil society representatives. Consequent to the Trust's role as a steering committee member, it has begun a new research and advocacy project on this issue (see below).

The Equal Rights Trust attended the annual UNHCR NGO Consultations in June 2014, and a retreat for organisations working on statelessness immediately prior to the Consultations. Through this and other efforts during this period, the Trust was able to continue its engagement with and contribution to the growing international movement to address statelessness.

In August 2014 Amal de Chickera served as a resource person at the Statelessness Summer Course at Tilburg University, the Netherlands. He took sessions on statelessness and discrimination, the detention of stateless persons and statelessness and advocacy.

The Equal Rights Trust also took active part in the first Global Forum on Statelessness on 15-17 September 2014.

***Rohingya 1: Strengthening Human Rights Protection of the Rohingya***

This project started in March 2011. It aims to strengthen human rights protection for stateless Rohingya through targeted research in six countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia and Thailand) followed by advocacy at national, regional and international levels.

In June 2014, the Equal Rights Trust hosted a side event on the human rights of stateless Rohingya, at the UNHCR NGO Consultations. The Trust also spoke on the human rights of the Rohingya at a World Council of Churches consultation on statelessness and at the Global Forum on Statelessness in September 2014.

The Equal Rights Trust will be publishing research reports on the human rights of stateless persons in Malaysia and Thailand in October 2014.

***Rohingya 2: Strengthening the Right to a Nationality, Stay Rights and Human Rights of Stateless Rohingya***

This project began in January 2014. It aims to strengthen the right to a nationality, legal stay rights and human rights of stateless Rohingya through legislative and policy reform, advocacy, awareness raising and capacity building in Bangladesh, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand and at regional and international levels.

In April 2014, the Equal Rights Trust and its partners visited Myanmar for a scoping study. During the nine day visit, the team met with over 30 representatives of government, the international community, NGOs and Roh-



Shwe Maung, Rohingya MP in the Myanmar parliament, April 2014

Photo credit: Equal Rights Trust

ingya leaders, to develop and strengthen ties, assess the situation and gather information necessary for strategic planning of future project activities in Myanmar.

Since this visit, the video and documentation activities have continued, with additional photography and video documentation being carried out in Bangladesh and Thailand. Furthermore, consultants have been identified to carry out legal research in Malaysia and Thailand.

## II. Country Projects

### ***Azerbaijan 2: Empowering Civil Society to Challenge Discrimination and Promote Equality in Azerbaijan***

This second project in Azerbaijan began in November 2013, with the Equal Rights Trust again working in partnership with Women's Organisation Tomris (Tomris). The project seeks to increase the capacity of Azerbaijani civil society to combat discrimination through documentation, litigation and advocacy. Project activities include training workshops on equality law, meetings of the Azerbaijan Equality Forum that was established under the first project in Azerbaijan, the publication of a comprehensive report on discrimination and inequality, an advocacy campaign for legal and policy reform and strategic litigation.

In April 2014, the project team produced a 40 page study baseline study on discrimination and inequality in Azerbaijan. It comprises an account of the major patterns of discrimination and inequality in Azerbaijan, combined with a broad overview of the legal and policy framework in place to combat discrimination. The study is complemented by a second baseline study on the capacity of civil society in Azerbaijan to combat discrimination

through litigation and advocacy. Tomris held the first and second meetings of the Azerbaijan Equality Forum in April and June 2014.

On July 2014, the Equal Rights Trust provided training to over 50 civil society organisations in two cities in Azerbaijan (Gadabay and Qabala). The workshops focused on international and European standards and law on equality and non-discrimination as well as the protections offered in Azerbaijan. They covered key concepts in equality law as provided in the Declaration of Principles on Equality and as utilised at the international level and by the European Court of Human Rights; and protections contained within the Azerbaijani legal framework with an analysis of the gaps, deficiencies and weaknesses in terms of content and implementation.

### ***Belarus 2: Empowering Civil Society to Advocate Collaboratively the Adoption of Anti-discrimination Legislation***

This second project in Belarus began in April 2012, in partnership with the Belarusian Helsinki Committee (BHC). It aims to build on the achievements of the first Equal Rights Trust project by providing training on the development of advocacy campaigns and engaging in international advocacy on equality issues for civil society organisations; establishing a National Equality Forum; developing and implementing a strategic paper and action plan for the National Equality Forum; creating an Online Equality Forum; supporting international advocacy actions by Forum members; and generating new evidence of discrimination through documentation and research.

Between May and July 2014, the Equal Rights Trust supported the BHC in establishing a working group on equality law reform in Belarus to develop a concept paper on com-

prehensive equality legislation. The Trust worked with BHC to develop selection criteria for the members of the working group and terms of reference for the group's work; we also provided BHC with information and guidance on the essential elements of comprehensive equality law, based on the Declaration of Principles on Equality.

On 22 July 2014, Dimitrina Petrova and Vadim Poletschuk (our consultant who worked on the report *Half an Hour to Spring: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Belarus*) participated in a roundtable meeting on equality law reform in Minsk. Leading civil society representatives discussed and agreed the recommendations made in the concept paper developed by the working group, which sets out the key substantive and procedural elements of a future national equality law, in line with established international law and best practice.

Following the publication in Russian of our report, *Half an Hour to Spring: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Belarus* in November 2013, we have continued to work on the English language version of the report.

### ***Bosnia and Herzegovina: Developing Civil Society Capacity to Combat Discrimination and Inequality in Bosnia and Herzegovina***

This project began in December 2011 with two partner NGOs, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (HCHR) based in Sarajevo and the Centre for Informative and Legal Aid (CIPP) based in Zvornik. The project seeks to increase the capacity of civil society organisations and other professionals to understand and apply anti-discrimination and human rights law in challenging discrimination and inequality; create an institutional framework for civil society dialogue and advocacy on issues relating to discrimination and inequal-

ity through establishing an Equality Forum; enhance and strengthen the implementation of the new anti-discrimination law in Bosnia and Herzegovina through training, advocacy and strategic litigation; and positively influence social attitudes towards minority groups and those vulnerable to discrimination, including ethnic and religious minorities, women, LGBT persons, persons with disabilities and returnees.

The Equal Rights Trust and its partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina identified and filed five strategic cases in the third quarter of 2013. At present, these cases are awaiting consideration in the respective municipal courts.

A draft of a report on discrimination and inequality in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been subjected to a first round of review and editing, with comments and feedback provided to the drafters. The revised draft is now undergoing a substantive edit, the penultimate phase before finalisation and publication.

### ***Guyana 3: Combating Discrimination through Advocacy and Strategic Litigation in Guyana***

This third project on Guyana began in January 2013, overlapping with the final phase of the Equal Rights Trust's second project in Guyana which ended in 2013. It is being implemented in partnership with the Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD) and the Justice Institute of Guyana (JIG). It seeks to address two major problems identified through the Trust's research in Guyana: the failure of implementation and enforcement of laws which provide protection from discrimination; and the stark difference between the legal rights of LGBTI persons and all other persons in the country.



Claire L'Heureux Dube speaking in Georgetown, Guyana, April 2014

In April 2014, the Equal Rights Trust co-organised a Judicial Colloquium on the Rights to Equality and Non-discrimination in Guyana. The event was hosted by JIG and the office of the Chancellor of the Judiciary of Guyana. All but one of Guyana's High Court Judges participated in the colloquium, as did Justice Adrian Saunders, representing the Caribbean Court of Justice. Participants engaged in a peer-to-peer discussion on topics including the personal scope of equality law, forms of prohibited conduct and definitions of discrimination, exceptions and limitations, and remedies and sanctions. Our Trustees Stephen Sedley and Claire L'Heureux-Dubé, prominent retired judges, spoke at the colloquium and two other events in Guyana to promote equality law reform in the country. On 3 April 2014, Claire L'Heureux-Dubé gave a public lecture entitled "For a Better World: Speaking the Language of Equality".

On 5 April 2014, Stephen Sedley spoke on the importance of the rule of law at an event organised by JIG.

Following the judicial colloquium, the Equal Rights Trust provided training on strategic litigation on equality and non-discrimination for civil society organisations and lawyers in Guyana. The workshop provided an introduction to key concepts in equality law and an introduction to techniques in strategic litigation; participants applied the knowledge acquired, working in groups to identify and develop proposed strategic litigation cases. The Equal Rights Trust and JIG have begun the process of identifying suitable cases to support, with the aim of filing several cases under this project.

The Equal Rights Trust is in the final stages of preparation for publication of its com-

prehensive report on discrimination and inequality in Guyana.

***Guyana 4: Empowering Civil Society to Combat Discrimination in the Enjoyment of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights***

In March 2014, the Equal Rights Trust began working with SASOD on a fourth project in Guyana. The project aims to combat discrimination in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights through a range of activities, including training, documentation of discrimination and national and international advocacy.

In June 2014, SASOD held a meeting of the Guyana Equality Forum (GEF). The meeting focused on the expansion and extension of the GEF advocacy strategy. The GEF was established during the Equal Rights Trust's first project in Guyana in 2011 and has continued to operate, with support from the

Trust, since that time. The Trust will continue to support the GEF through this project. The GEF is currently working to provide an updated national advocacy strategy to encompass economic, social and cultural rights along with civil and political rights that are considered under the existing strategy.

The Equal Rights Trust provided training to over 50 participants in Georgetown through three training workshops held in August 2014. Each of the workshops focussed on introducing the right to non-discrimination and economic, social and cultural rights; they further contained discussions of discriminatory barriers to the enjoyment of socio-economic rights in Guyana and techniques and approaches to monitoring and documenting cases of discrimination. A wide range of participants were invited, due to the focus on discrimination in the enjoyment of socio-economic rights, including representatives from civil society organisations, lawyers, law



Jade Glenister and Oslin Marson in Guyana, August 2014

Photo credit: Equal Rights Trust

students and also nurses, teachers and representatives from trade unions.

SASOD and the Equal Rights Trust are currently in the process of engaging six civil society organisations to undertake monitoring and documentation of discrimination in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights in all areas of life in Guyana. The documentation of this discrimination will form the basis for advocacy by SASOD and the Equal Rights Trust to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other international bodies, and also support the national advocacy campaign.

The Trust will continue to support the GEF through this project. The GEF is currently working to provide an updated national advocacy strategy to encompass economic, social and cultural rights along with civil and political rights that are considered under the existing strategy.

### ***Jordan 2: Empowering Civil Society to Increase the Protection of Groups in Jordan Vulnerable to Discriminatory Torture and Ill-treatment***

The Equal Rights Trust's second project in Jordan began in January 2014, and is implemented in partnership with Mizan for Law. It seeks to increase the understanding of laws prohibiting discriminatory torture and ill-treatment and of general equality law; improve the documentation of discriminatory torture and ill-treatment; and increase the capacity of civil society to engage in advocacy and strategic litigation to drive legislative and policy change. Project activities include training, civil society roundtables, advocacy and strategic litigation.

A baseline study on discriminatory torture and ill-treatment in Jordan was drafted by the project team, assisted by Professor Mohammed Moussa, a Jordanian academic spe-



Photo credit: Equal Rights Trust

Participant in a workshop in Amman, July 2014



Photo credit: Equal Rights Trust

cialising in human rights law. At the same time, the team drafted a second study assessing the capacity of lawyers and civil society in Jordan to combat discriminatory torture and ill-treatment. Both studies informed the planning and delivery of the Equal Rights Trust workshops on discriminatory torture and ill-treatment.

In August 2014, the Trust provided training to over 50 lawyers and representatives from civil society organisations in two cities in Jordan, Amman and Irbid. Each workshop provides participants with knowledge to contribute to advocacy and litigation strategies to address discriminatory torture, inhuman or degrading treatment in Jordan.

The Equal Rights Trust has continued planning for strategic litigation cases on discrimi-

natory torture and ill-treatment which it will take with Mizan in the coming year. The completed project baseline studies have identified a number of important issues which may be appropriate for strategic litigation. In addition, the Trust and Mizan have begun identifying lawyers who may act in such cases, with concerted efforts being made through training workshops to recruit additional lawyers to Mizan's network.

#### ***Kenya 4: Improving Access to Justice for Victims of Gender Discrimination***

This five-and-a-half year long project began in April 2011 and is implemented in partnership with the Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya (FIDA). It seeks to increase access to justice for women and girls in Kenya who experience discrimination which contributes to or creates poverty. The project's

central activity involves the establishment of community-based legal advice services (referred to as Legal Assistance Scheme Partnerships), situated within Community Based Organisations (CBOs). This is to be achieved through a combination of training, production of a handbook, ongoing support and advice and financial support to the CBOs and the lawyers with whom they work on the project.

In May, the Equal Rights Trust and FIDA convened a training workshop for CBOs participating in our legal assistance scheme for victims of gender discrimination. The training was designed as a follow-up to an initial training workshop provided in April 2013, before CBOs began delivering legal assistance in their respective communities. The workshop provided a refresher on the rights to equality

and non-discrimination and Kenyan laws prohibiting discrimination and discriminatory violence. The workshop also focused on dealing with difficult or complex issues identified by CBOs in the first year of the scheme's operation, with group discussions and interactive sessions used to enhance knowledge.

The Equal Rights Trust continues to review more than 1,100 complaints that have been received from women by CBOs working across Kenya. The complaints relate to a range of matters and largely fall within the scope envisaged for the project, namely issues of: gender-based violence; succession, land and other economic issues; and education. The Equal Rights Trust and FIDA have worked to improve the pro bono referral process to ensure that clients are referred to a lawyer as necessary.



Photo credit: Equal Rights Trust

Equal Rights Trust lawyers and colleagues at training in Nairobi, May 2014

***Moldova 2: Empowering Civil Society in Moldova and Transnistria to Combat Discrimination through Documentation, Litigation and Advocacy***

This second project in Moldova started in December 2013, and is implemented in partnership with Promo-LEX, based in Chişinău. It seeks to increase the capacity of civil society to combat discrimination in Moldova. The project was designed to respond to the needs of civil society following the adoption of new equality legislation in the country in 2012, and involves a range of capacity-building activities, including training, the establishment of a working group on equality law reform, the development of a comprehensive report on equality and non-discrimination in the country, advocacy for legal reform and strategic litigation.

In April 2014, a baseline study on discrimination and inequality in Moldova was produced by the project team. It comprises an account of the major patterns of discrimination and inequality in Moldova, combined with a broad overview of the legal and policy framework in place to combat discrimination. This study is complemented by a second, 20 page baseline study on the capacity of civil society in Moldova to combat discrimination through litigation and advocacy.

In May 2014, the first meeting of a working group on equality law reform in Moldova took place, with the Equal Rights Trust present. The working group was established in order to consult on and develop proposals to improve the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation in Moldova. Its members are made up of leading civil society actors working on issues of discrimination and inequality in Moldova, including the Human Rights Advisor at the United Nations Programme Office. At the first meeting, partici-

pants discussed potential priority areas for joint advocacy, including strengthening the recently-established Council on Equality and Non-discrimination and improving legislation on hate crimes.

In June 2014, the Equal Rights Trust and Promo-LEX held a roundtable event in Chişinău. At the meeting, which was attended by a range of civil society organisations and a representative from the Council on Equality and Non-discrimination, Promo-LEX presented the initial proposals made by the working group and encouraged discussion on priority areas for advocacy.

Also in June 2014, the Equal Rights Trust provided training to civil society organisations and lawyers in Chişinău and Bălţi on international and European standards and law on equality and non-discrimination. The training focused on introducing key concepts in equality law as provided in the Declaration of Principles on Equality and as utilised at the international and European (including the European Union) level. It also focused on recently-introduced national legislation (the Law on Ensuring Equality) and the work of the Council on Equality and Non-discrimination, with presentations from Andrei Brighidin, a member of the Council. Finally, the participants were provided with training on monitoring and documenting cases of discrimination. Two further workshops were held in Chişinău in July, one in Russian and the other in Romanian, mirroring the first two workshops. In total, approximately 100 people participated in the workshops.

The Equal Rights Trust plans to file several strategic litigation cases over the next two years. During the reporting period, Promo-LEX has proposed a potential case which relates to inhuman treatment of a pre-trial prisoner with disabilities in prison detention.

The Trust has been supporting Promo-LEX's lawyer in developing a case strategy and will continue to do so, including by providing an expert opinion on the relevant international and regional law in due course.

### ***Nigeria: Discrimination and Torture***

Under this project, which started in August 2010, the Equal Rights Trust supports the work of a Nigerian NGO, the Legal Defence and Assistance Project (LEDAP) to provide direct assistance to victims of torture. Our primary responsibilities involve overseeing the case assessment process, advising on the discriminatory elements of the torture and ill-treatment which has occurred and managing the project.

After a long period of procedural delays, there has been some progress in relation to four of the 13 cases of discriminatory torture or ill-treatment of people with disabilities which were filed in 2013. In three cases, the court has found in favour of the clients, finding violations of their fundamental rights and awarding compensation of between N1,000,000 and N5,000,000 (equivalent to roughly £3,750 and £18,500). The Equal Rights Trust and LEDAP are in discussion on the adequacy of the judgments to determine the appropriate next steps. In one case, the court found no violations and we are in the process of appealing the decision.

### ***Russia: Empowering Civil Society to Challenge Discrimination in Russia, Including on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, in a Unified Framework on Equality***

This project started in December 2013 and is implemented in partnership with Sphere, an LGBT rights organisation based in St. Petersburg. It seeks to address the lack of capacity

among civil society organisations to challenge discrimination against LGBTI persons, and to advocate for improved implementation of legal protection from discrimination, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Project activities include a roundtable "Combating Discrimination in Russia"; training workshops on monitoring and documenting discrimination; research to document incidents of discrimination in Russia; the establishment and meetings of the Russian Equality Forum; the publication of a report on discrimination in Russia; strategic litigation; and an advocacy campaign for legislative reform on equality.

At the end of May, the Equal Rights Trust participated in a roundtable in St Petersburg attended by civil society organisations. The roundtable aimed to begin building a coalition of organisations to work together to combat discrimination in Russia. Discussions were held on which forms of discrimination need to be addressed by civil society and on previous successes and failures in advocacy efforts; it concluded with consideration of the best approach to be taken in Russia.

### ***Serbia: Empowering Civil Society to Improve the Implementation of Anti-discrimination Laws in Serbia***

In May 2014, the Equal Rights Trust began working in partnership with Praxis on a project to improve the implementation of anti-discrimination laws in Serbia. The project will establish a working group to develop national advocacy strategies and includes training, roundtables, several events aimed at raising public awareness and strategic litigation activities.

In July, the Equal Rights Trust visited Belgrade for a scoping mission. Two focus group sessions were held with a number of civil so-

ciety organisations together with a number of meetings with practicing lawyers and the Deputy Commissioner for Equality. The visit was highly successful in providing the Trust and Praxis with valuable ideas for the project and generating enthusiasm amongst civil society to participate in the project. Following the visit, the team began work on a baseline study on discrimination in Serbia and another on the capacity of lawyers and civil society in Serbia to advocate for the improved implementation of anti-discrimination laws.

The Equal Rights Trust and Praxis have begun to explore two cases for strategic litigation to combat discrimination against Roma families in housing. A working group that will help to steer the project has been formed.

### ***Solomon Islands 2: Empowering Civil Society to Promote Gender Equality and Reduce the Incidence of Gender Discrimination***

This project began in April 2012 and is implemented in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Solomon Islands Country Office and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team. The Equal Rights Trust is responsible for training and report writing activities under this project.

In May 2014, we completed a first consultation draft of a report on Solomon Islands. This follows a period of desk research and analysis which has been ongoing since mid-2013, and field research which was conducted by the project team in 2013. The draft report has been disseminated to stakeholders from civil society, government and academia in Solomon Islands. In addition, we worked with local partners to consult practicing lawyers on the section of the report dealing with the legal and policy framework. In August 2014, the Trust's local partners convened a

roundtable discussion to gain further input on the report.

The Equal Rights Trust has also begun discussions with its partners on potential strategic litigation relating to gender equality.

### ***Sudan 1: Empowering Civil Society in Sudan to Combat Discrimination***

This project, implemented in partnership with the Sudanese Organisation for Research and Development (SORD), aims to build the capacity of Sudanese civil society organisations to advocate for improved protection from discrimination and for the promotion of equality, through training, support with documentation, publication of a country report and support with the development of an advocacy strategy.

All but one of the project's activities – the publication of a report on discrimination and inequality in Sudan – were completed in 2013. In respect of this final activity, having produced a first draft of the report in 2013, ERT and SORD agreed that the potential existed to produce a report of greater depth and breadth. The partners agreed to continue work towards this end, and work to produce this report continued throughout 2013 and into 2014, both under this project and under the project "Strengthening Civil Society Capacity to Combat Discrimination in Sudan", detailed below.

### ***Sudan 3: Strengthening Civil Society Capacity to Combat Discrimination in Sudan***

This third project in Sudan began in July 2013, and seeks to create the foundations for sustained civil society and media advocacy on issues of discrimination in Sudan. The Equal Rights Trust drafted the first ever comprehensive report on discrimina-

tion and inequality in Sudan, *In Search of Confluence: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan*. The report contains analysis of major patterns of discrimination and inequality, combined with an assessment of the legal and policy framework on equality and non-discrimination. The project also aims to engage key government departments and agencies, the National Human Rights Commission and civil society stakeholders on the report's findings and recommendations, in order to maximise the impact on government policy; to publicise the report in the national, regional and international media; and to complete advocacy actions at the international, regional and national levels. The report is will be published in October 2014.

***Turkey: Empowering Civil Society to Challenge Discrimination against LGBTI Persons in the Aegean and Marmara Regions of Turkey***

This project began in January 2012 and is implemented in partnership with a Turkish LGBTI rights organisation based in Izmir, the Black Pink Triangle (SPU). It seeks to address the lack of capacity among civil society organisations in two of Turkey's regions to challenge discrimination against LGBTI persons and to advocate for improved legal protection from discrimination, including on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, through improving documentation of all types of discrimination; increasing knowledge of anti-discrimination law and concepts among civil society organisations; creating civil society expertise in documenting cases of discrimination in the target regions; and cooperation between civil society organisations in the target regions through the creation of a Regional Equality Forum.

A report on Turkey, which focuses on the Aegean and Marmara regions, is currently being finalised. Draft sections of the report were produced by the project team. During the reporting period, these sections have been subjected to a first round of review and editing and a consolidated draft report has been produced, and is currently awaiting review.

***Ukraine: Empowering Civil Society to Challenge Discrimination against LGBTI Persons in Ukraine***

This project began in November 2012 and is implemented in partnership with an LGBTI organisation, Nash Mir, based in Kyiv. The project involves the delivery of training to civil society organisations, support to the Coalition on Combating Discrimination, and the development of a report on discrimination and inequality in Ukraine.

Civil unrest in Ukraine and the armed conflict in the east of the country had a significant impact upon the project. Nonetheless, in March 2014 the Equal Rights Trust provided training to LGBT activists in Ukraine on advocating for LGBT rights from an equality perspective. The training focused on introducing key concepts in equality law as provided in the Declaration of Principles on Equality and using this knowledge to analyse gaps and shortcomings in the Law on Combating and Prevention of Discrimination which was adopted in Ukraine in 2012. It also focused on advocacy strategies for LGBT organisations, using the history of the LGBT rights movement in the UK as a basis to draw out lessons and points for consideration.

The Equal Rights Trust is currently coordinating field and desk research towards the production of a report on discrimina-

tion and inequality in Ukraine. The majority of the field research was completed in April. Following completion of field and initial desk research, the team prepared draft chapters on patterns of discrimination and inequality, and on the legal and policy framework of Ukraine relevant to equality. These draft chapters are currently undergoing a first round of review; it is anticipated that this phase will entail additional research and analysis of the preliminary findings from the perspective of current international standards on the rights to equality and non-discrimination.

The Equal Rights Trust has also begun discussions with Nash Mir about potential strategic litigation opportunities. Nash Mir is working with its partners in the Coalition on Combating Discrimination to identify potential cases, through the Coalition's Strategic Litigation Programme.

### ***United Kingdom: Greater Protection for Stateless Persons***

This project began in 2011 and its purpose is to deliver trainings on statelessness in the UK. The Equal Rights Trust with partners Asylum Aid and Garden Court Chambers delivered seven training workshops on statelessness and the use of the 2013 UK rules pertaining to the identification of stateless persons through this project. At each workshop, the Trust delivered training on the international statelessness and human rights frameworks and the principles of equality and non-discrimination. In March 2014, the final workshop was delivered in Bristol. Additionally, we delivered training on the international legal framework pertaining to statelessness to post graduate students at the London Southbank University in March 2014.