



Centre for the study of
Emotion & Law

Centre for the Study of Emotion and Law



*Annual Report
2013-2014*

2013-2014: *Growing Up, Branching Out*

Dr. Jane Herlihy and David Rhys Jones

The work of the Centre for the Study of Emotion and Law has never presented itself as providing quick responses to current events; research doesn't work like that. Nonetheless we could not help but notice some significant changes in the milieu of emotion and law over the last year that have set us thinking about our contribution to the wider landscape.

Sexual violence: achieving justice

A tidal wave has hit the field of law and emotion in the form of historic claims of sexual abuse, not least by high profile individuals. This has provided space for discussions about the appropriate way to handle allegations of sexual violence, with the Crown Prosecution Service publishing a fundamental new approach to child sexual abuse including a list of common 'myths and stereotypes' about sexual violence, and specifically addressing misconceptions in the assessment of credibility (see the CPS website). Interviewed in the Guardian newspaper, the former director of public prosecutions, Kier Starmer, stated "Our criminal justice system is riddled with assumptions about how victims behave and most of them are misplaced."

To date we have largely focused on the asylum system and it may now be timely for us to expand our work and look at the assessment of credibility in other areas of law. We are convinced that there is a need for better understanding of the way in which people report sexual violence and that we are best placed to provide it, building on our work on credibility and the disclosure of sexual violence in the asylum system. We have therefore begun interesting conversations with Rape Crisis and others working with victims of sexual violence in the UK in order to outline the potential contribution which CSEL might bring to this important and growing field.

We have started to explore the issue of the prosecution of sexual violence in the courts with the supervision of a study of discrepancies in

accounts of rape (replicating the methodology of our study of discrepancies in asylum accounts). In the coming year we will be working to make connections, raise funds and support our associate researcher to join us to develop this crucial area of research and, of course, disseminate it to those best placed to ensure that people who have suffered sexual violence can achieve justice and reparation in an equitable, fully informed manner.

Reaching out

Meanwhile our reputation and influence in the field of asylum decision making has continued to expand this year, in the UK and beyond. This has been in no small part due to our involvement in the CREDO project (see pages 10 and 11), a review of credibility assessment in practice across Europe, funded by the European Refugee Fund. We were called in as academic consultants by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Hungarian Helsinki Committee in order to be at the forefront of UNHCR's definition and promotion of the 'multi-disciplinary' approach to credibility assessment. This project has taken us across Europe, training and presenting to decision makers and policy informers from Dublin to Budapest.

Growth

CSEL has doubled in size this year, taking on a new psychology researcher and a research and communications assistant.

We are often asked how - or whether - our research applies to children. Until now we have limited ourselves to psychological research on adults, and have never been able to confidently address this question. Now, thanks to our work with UNHCR's second CREDO report, and funders who have been keen to help us expand into this area, we have taken on clinical psychologist Zoe Given-Wilson. Zoe is developing research into

crucial aspects of child psychology which can affect young people making asylum claims. Read Zoe's article about her work on pages 8 and 9.

Also this year Gracie Bradley joined our dissemination team as part of the Evidence into Practice project, helping Clare to reach further into the voluntary and legal sectors and promote our work nationally and internationally. Working closely with Clare, Gracie gives us a longer reach and more capacity for the communications work essential to effective outreach, enabling us to inform legal processes with high quality psychological research. Gracie writes about the different strands of her work that she brings together to the benefit of CSEL on page 13.

Branching Out

The CREDO project has also allowed us to broaden our interest beyond the origins of our research interest in traumatic memory, to the function of memory generally. We are drawing on our 2012 review of memory (Just Tell Us What Happened to You: Autobiographical Memory and Seeking Asylum) to explain the basic functions of memory and contrast them with the demands that are put on people seeking asylum to provide consistent, coherent accounts of their lives. This broader approach mirrors the growth in our networking and dissemination work which has expanded our scope across different research areas, target audiences and disciplines.

In March last year we were invited by Dr John Stannard, our guest contributor (see page 7) to a two day colloquium on "The Emotional Dynamics of Law and Legal Discourse" at Queens University, Belfast, confirming our membership of a small but dedicated group of emotion and law scholars in this field. This meeting led to a special edition of the Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly journal, published in May 2013, with an article by CSEL's Jane Herlihy & Stuart Turner, as well as a piece by Professor of Law and Professor of Medicine, Health, and Society, Terry Maroney entitled

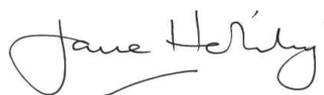
"Judges and their Emotions". As he outlines on page 7, Dr Stannard's aim is to build a central focus for emotion and law scholarship in Europe, bringing together the latest and most important work that examines emotion and law in their many different guises. The Belfast group are now putting together a book that will celebrate and elucidate this growing academic and often, as in CSEL's case, applied field of study.

Our board

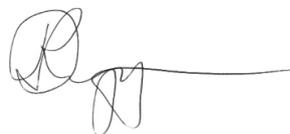
Martha Spurrier, a barrister at Doughty Street Chambers, joined our board this year. Martha is a human rights specialist in the field of public law, specialising in access to justice, mental health and women's rights. Before joining chambers Martha was in-house counsel at the mental health charity Mind. Martha was a 2014 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year finalist and we are privileged to have her join us.

Our special thanks and appreciation go to Clare Hogan, former Production Editor at The Times newspaper, who left the CSEL board this year, in order to concentrate on her studies and exciting new career in horticulture.

We are now looking forward to another great year in 2013-14, expanding our base of supporters, and taking our unique approach to research and dissemination to key actors, helping to ensure that justice, especially for the most disempowered, is properly informed by the best available, highest quality psychological knowledge.



Dr. Jane Herlihy



David Rhys Jones

Emotion + Law: the Bigger Picture

Dr. John Stannard of the School of Law, Queens University, Belfast on the field of emotion and law, and CSEL's contribution

In his seminal work on *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman suggests that the common view of human intelligence is far too narrow, and that emotions play a far greater role in thought, decision-making and individual success than is commonly acknowledged. The importance of emotion to human experience cannot be denied, yet the relationship between law and emotions is one that has largely been ignored until recent years and, even now, has not been comprehensively mapped out.

As Terry Maroney pointed out in 2006, the law has traditionally operated on the presumption that there is a world of difference between reason and emotion, that the sphere of law admits only of reason, and that in this sphere it is essential to keep emotional factors out of the picture. However, there have always been those who have argued for a more nuanced view of the topic, ranging from members of the American realist movement in the early part of the twentieth century, to the advocates of therapeutic jurisprudence in the 1990s, and the last two decades have witnessed a growing interest in the relationship between law and emotions at a more general level. The agenda was set in 1999 by Susan Bandes and her influential set of essays *The Passions of Law* (1999), and since then has been developed further in such diverse fields as criminal law, emotion in judging, victims' rights, hate crimes, property law, and even the law of burial disputes.

It is in this context that the valuable work done by the Centre for the Study of Emotion and Law needs to be seen. The study of law and emotion has many applications, and Jane Herlihy and her colleagues have done more than most to show how it is of crucial importance in the field of refugee law. Until now, this work has largely been done in

isolation from that of other law and emotion scholars, but over the last couple of years the work of the Centre has received increasing recognition around the world. In January 2013, an article by Jane Herlihy appeared in a special issue of the *Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly* devoted to the topic of law and emotion, and in March she contributed to a colloquium at the Queen's University of Belfast attended by influential scholars in the field from both sides of the Atlantic. Plans are now in hand to publish a series of essays based on that colloquium, and establish an international research network devoted to the study of law and emotion and its relevance to the theory and practice of law.

“the law has traditionally operated on the presumption of a world of difference between reason and emotion — but there have always been those who argued for a more nuanced view”

One of the most encouraging aspects of present day law and emotions study is the building up of connections between different groups of scholars who up to now have largely been working in isolation. If law and emotion is to take its rightful place as an established discipline, it has to be seen as part of a larger picture, along with therapeutic jurisprudence, multisensory law, the restorative justice movement, and other similar fields of study. In this enterprise the Centre for the Study of Emotion and Law has a crucial role to play. Having made its mark in one part of the enterprise, it is now set to make a key contribution to the whole.

Using Evidence in Mutual Aid

Jennifer Verson from Liverpool's Migrant Artists Mutual Aid (MAMA) on using CSEL's research findings in grassroots support

Being under-resourced is the daily reality of working as a grassroots migration justice campaigner, so free training in understanding and using unique resources such as CSEL's research is more than welcome. I attended CSEL's training seminar in Manchester, in December 2013, on behalf of Migrant Artists Mutual Aid, a group of migrants, mothers, and other women, who meet weekly. Together we support members who are seeking sanctuary, raise money for those in crisis, help each other through the legal process, and campaign for justice.

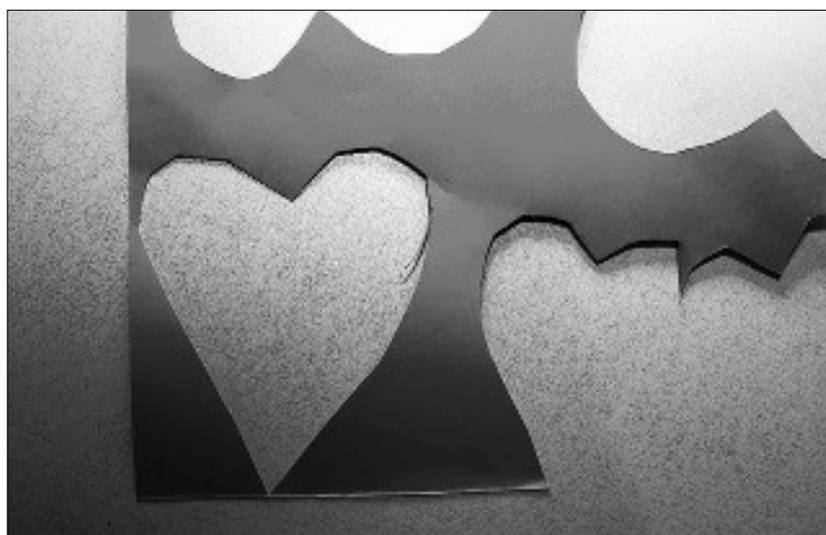
At the time of the training seminar, one of our members was in the process of making a fresh claim for asylum. I realised that CSEL's research was applicable to her case, and after the training I immediately forwarded the relevant research papers to her solicitor to include in her bundle. Critically, the legal aid solicitor had not identified the behaviours of our member as symptomatic of PTSD and had not referred her for a medico-legal report. Armed with the knowledge from the CSEL training I was able to persuade the solicitor to take account of our member's post-traumatic stress symptoms, and reconsider her case from this perspective.

Since founding, MAMA has supported several members whose solicitors did not have the resources or the time to take statements informed by a full understanding of the effects of trauma. Our members have repeatedly met with difficulties in getting referrals for medico-legal reports and had not had the help they needed to be able to disclose sexual violence. CSEL's training has empowered us as a group to be able to address

negative credibility decisions where members have experienced post-traumatic stress symptoms, or sexual violence, but this has gone unrecognised. We are more able to speak to solicitors in a way that is informed by empirical research, and to work collaboratively with the range of professionals involved in members' cases. We are able to support members who have not had access to medico-legal reports to be able to give accurate statements and deal with difficult memory issues.

It is really difficult for anybody to disclose sexual violence, but the complex ecology of friendship, support, knowledge, and activism of a peer support group helps. Understanding and being able to use CSEL's research reports helps MAMA members to provide this support for each other.

Photo: Pulpolux/flickr.com



Breaking Through the Assumptions Barriers

*Rebecca Rayment of the Manuel Bravo Project in Leeds on how
access to science helps to challenge injustice*

I am an Immigration and Asylum Caseworker for Manuel Bravo Project and Chapeltown Citizens Advice Bureau in Leeds. Manuel Bravo Project is a small Leeds-based organisation providing free legal assistance and representation for asylum seekers who have been refused Legal Aid. Chapeltown Citizens Advice Bureau is one of very few CAB branches that provides immigration advice and casework up to OISC Level 3. There is no charge for this service. I specialise in representing women who have experienced gender-based violence (including Female Genital Mutilation and sexual violence).

I have used CSEL research papers on many occasions: in representations to the Home Office, and before the Immigration and Asylum Tribunal as part of asylum appeals. Earlier this year I attended a CSEL training session for law practitioners, presenting research findings on memory, discrepancies and late disclosure, and providing for an open and frank discussion of the issues raised by the research. Operating in the third sector with ever-decreasing funding is challenging, so high quality, open source research, such as CSEL's, is an invaluable resource.

Over the years of doing this work, I have come across many instances of a serious lack of understanding from the Home Office and Judicial decision making, as to the effects of trauma on an individual's ability to recall events. CSEL's research findings can support practitioners to break through the assumptions behind these positions as it is thorough, highly respected and completely traceable. I feel it is extremely important that legal practitioners understand the interaction between the emotions that their clients inevitably experience and the impact this has on their ability to access justice. The current system of

strict rule-based decision making leaves no room for an understanding of responses to trauma, it is in everyone's interest to ensure that those making decisions understand that one size does not fit all. In my opinion CSEL is leading the way on this and I will continue to use the research in my representations at every suitable opportunity.

“Of the 114 patients I have seen in the last 3 years I don't think I saw one who did not have nightmares and sleep disturbance, lack of interest in anything, jumpiness, avoidance of violence on TV etc: and many had flashbacks and other PTSD symptoms. I always believed that differing accounts in separate interviews might be explained with reference to psychological evidence; now I can see the science of this.”

Charmian Goldwyn, GP

Publication

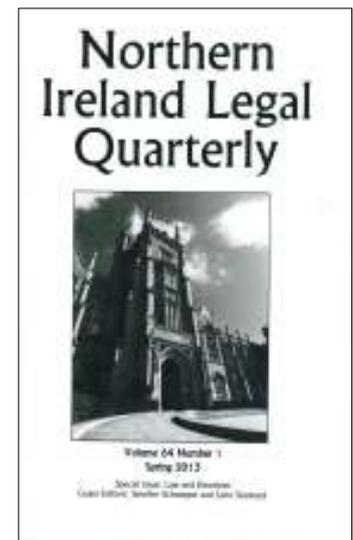
In 2013-2014 CSEL staff, associate researchers and trustees published a wide variety of papers expanding understanding in psychology and asylum law and policy, and the impact of psychological evidence on other aspects of law.

For the CREDO project Jane Herlihy wrote sections for the final report 'Beyond Proof', and a chapter entitled Memory & Its Limitations for the Hungarian Helsinki Committee training manual. See pages 10-11 for more on the CREDO project. In May 2013, Jane Herlihy co-authored a paper in a special issue of the Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly on emotion and law. The paper, 'What do we know so far about emotion and refugee law?' discussed the application of law and psychology enquiries to the field of asylum decision making, and introduced issues raised by the evidence found in CSEL's published research. Belinda Graham and Chris Brewin's paper, 'Overgeneral memory in asylum seekers and refugees', has now been accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue of the Journal of Behaviour Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry. We are also working on a follow-up to our 2002 discrepancies study.

CSEL's Trustees have disseminated their own work widely this year, too. Chris Brewin has published numerous papers. 'Episodic memory, perceptual memory, and their interaction: Foundations for a theory of posttraumatic stress disorder', published in the Psychological Bulletin in spring 2014, expands on the dual representation theory of PTSD that you may have encountered in our training sessions. A full list of Chris Brewin's publications, can be found on [the University College London website](#).

Mary Robertson and colleagues published a paper in late 2013 describing the approach of the Traumatic Stress Clinic to the treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and other psychological problems, in refugees. 'A group

-based approach to stabilisation and symptom management in a phased treatment model for refugees and asylum seekers', appeared in the December 2013 issue of the European Journal of Psychotraumatology.



Amina Memon has published extensively on interview techniques and eyewitness testimony in criminal justice processes. Although not specifically concerned with the asylum process, many of the findings may be relevant to refugee status determination, as explored in our 2009 paper 'The Psychology of Seeking Protection'. A full list of Amina Memon's published papers is available at [the Royal Holloway University of London website](#).

David Rhys Jones published several articles in OpenDemocracy. '[When you've been tortured, does it matter who your torturer was?](#)' reflects on the wider therapeutic and policy implications of a 2013 High Court ruling that, for the purposes of immigration detention, extreme cruelty does not need to have been perpetrated by an agent of the state in order to constitute torture. David also tackled the question of '[What stops the UK protecting victims of trafficking?](#)' finding a range of legal and practical barriers to justice in such cases.

For the Public Law Project, which aims to improve access to the law for people facing poverty and disadvantage, Martha Spurrier contributed to the Young Fabians' 'Law Corner' in summer 2013, writing on government legal aid reforms. 'Undermining access to justice and government accountability', examined changes to Judicial Review, prison law, and lawful residence requirements.

Outreach

During 2013-2014 we have consolidated CSEL's reputation for excellence and rigour in the field of scientific psychological research, and through our outreach and partnerships work we have begun to build a much wider network reaching sectors outside the asylum process entirely. Over the year we have also worked hard to build on CSEL's growing reputation for both working in and bringing together different sectors. We have done this through establishing the organisation's credibility in the voluntary sector and with lawyers through training; networking and presenting within the academic world; and becoming increasingly well known as interdisciplinarians with a particular skill for linking academia and practitioners, theory and practice.

Communications

Our Twitter feed, Current Projects blog and newsletter have grown in popularity and are now followed by more than 500 people, ranging from members of grassroots community groups to legal decision makers around the world.

Training

The Executive Director, Jane Herlihy, ran a series of training sessions in the summer and autumn of 2013. In June she spent a day delivering research-based training to medico-legal report writers at Freedom from Torture, with a particular focus on how torture may affect memory and recall. The following month she was invited to BABCP to co-deliver training for psychologists on PTSD in refugees and asylum seekers. Jane also partnered with Raggi Kotak of 1 Pump Court in October to train ILPA members on trauma and credibility in asylum and human rights claims.

Presentations & conferences

In May 2013, Jane attended the 13th European Conference on Traumatic Stress in Bologna, with the European Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ESTSS). The focus for the year was "Trauma and its pathways: PTSD and beyond." Associate researchers Belinda Graham, Hannah

Rogers and Lucy Wilson-Shaw presented a symposium chaired by Jane on asylum, credibility and PTSD, which comprised presentations of three pieces of CSEL-supervised research, on overgeneral memory in asylum seekers (now in press), credibility judgments about people with PTSD (now in press), and CSEL's 2012 paper *Non-clinicians' judgments about asylum seekers' mental health: how do legal representatives of asylum seekers decide when to request medico-legal reports?* While in Bologna, Jane additionally chaired a symposium by the Traumatic Stress Clinic on their work with pregnant women experiencing PTSD, many of whom are victims of trafficking.

CSEL also took part in the November 2013 conference preparatory to launching the new MSc in Mental Health and Law at the Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, Queen Mary University of London. Jane's presentation explored the potential and pitfalls of bringing psychological evidence into refugee law. The event gave the speakers, Professors Françoise Hampson, Kam Bhui and George Szmukler, and Sanchita Hosali, a valuable opportunity to explore the intersection of mental health and law from a variety of perspectives.

In the spring, Jane took CSEL to new audiences: at Solace Women's Aid she presented on theories of normal and traumatic memory for professionals in the violence against women sector; and at the Institute of Immigration Law at Leiden University she lectured honours students on credibility in asylum law and policy.

The very welcome addition to the team of Gracie Bradley as our Research & Communications Assistant, means that CSEL has also been present at conferences in the wider asylum law and policy sphere; most notably the Migration Law Network Conference last March on migration in the Mediterranean region. This has provided opportunities to extend CSEL's awareness of

key legal and policy concerns, as well as opening up new networking possibilities.

Partnerships & relationship-building

This year we have enjoyed strengthening existing networks and beginning new relationships in the fields of psychology, law and asylum, including with specialist service providers and other NGOs working strategically in related fields.

Law & policy

Both Zoe Given-Wilson, CSEL's new Child Psychology Post Doctoral Researcher, and Clare Cochrane, Evidence into Practice Project Manager, have been working in partnership with the Law Centres Network over the course of this year. Zoe sits on the advisory group for the LCN's three-year 'Principles into Practice' project. The project aims to investigate and improve understanding of the relationship between guiding principles in human rights and mental health law, and minors' asylum cases in the UK, and additionally to raise awareness of best-practice and legal frameworks. (You can read more about Zoe's work on pages 8 and 9.) In November 2013, Clare led a workshop at the Law Centres Network annual conference on bringing psychology into the law.

Psychology & research

Over the course of 2013-14, Professor Chris Brewin has worked with the UK Trauma Group, a group of people heading trauma services, to look at the available evidence for how PTSD can best be captured in the new ICD 11 classification, due in 2017.

NGOs & strategic work

We have also worked with a number of organisations who, like CSEL, are working for protection in the law of the most vulnerable in society, from equally innovative but radically different perspectives. CSEL is now a resource partner with

the [Fahamu Refugee Programme](#), which disseminates resources to support those supporting refugees around the world, particularly in the global South. Jane Herlihy and Fahamu's Lily Parrott (former CSEL intern, see Annual Report 2012-13) co-authored an [article](#) on psychology and refugee status determination in the April edition of the [Fahamu newsletter](#), and we are now providing information on memory and PTSD, and recommendations for in-depth reading, at the Fahamu website '[Legal Issues](#)' page. Other organisations we met in 2013-14, and hope to work with in the future, include the Detention Forum, which works on immigration detention issues in the UK; Redress, which supports survivors of torture in securing care, rehabilitation and redress for past violations of their rights; and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). Jane also met with the Migrant Children's Legal Unit, Clifford Chance, and the Home Office, to discuss how CSEL can support their legal casework and decisionmaking, and in the case of Clifford Chance, how they might support CSEL through their partners providing *pro bono* research and evaluation support, offering their legal skills for free.

Trustee Martha Spurrier, barrister at [Doughty Street Chambers](#), acted on behalf of interveners Mind and Medical Justice in the case of [R \(Das\) v SSHD](#), as part of a significant and successful effort to broaden the restrictive definition of "mentally ill" in the context of immigration detention. Martha was also an intervener for

Mind in the [Cheshire West](#) case regarding recognition of the human rights of disabled people, in spring 2014. The case is an excellent example of bringing psychological evidence to the law, to benefit vulnerable people in need of protection.



Photo: Josef Sauer, flickr.com

Credibility Assessment: Getting it Right Across Europe

CSEL has played an important part in this major initiative to harmonise credibility assessment across the European Union

This year the first part of the CREDO project published its final report and training manual, and moved onto the dissemination phase of its work. CSEL's involvement in the project has changed, too, from advising on the project's research methodology, to playing an important active role in dissemination.

CREDO is a collaboration led by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC) involving the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, the International Association of Refugee Law Judges (IARLJ), and the charity Asylum Aid, and funded by the European Refugee Fund. The project takes a multidisciplinary approach to identifying best practice, and shortcomings, in the treatment of credibility in asylum decision making across Europe. Ultimately the project aims to support the harmonisation of decision making across Europe, at a minimum high standard. The project's methodology complements CSEL's own theory of change: establish an empirical evidence-base, disseminate the findings, and deliver training to practitioners to improve best practice in decision making, for fairer outcomes. To achieve this CREDO had three key outputs: a final report to be published by UNHCR, guidelines for judges from the IARLJ, and the HHC training manual for frontline decision makers.

In April 2013 the IARLJ launched its guidelines for judges about credibility assessment at a conference in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. The report cites CSEL's work, and Jane Herlihy attended the launch and dinner, with judges

from across the globe. In June the same year, UNHCR published '[Beyond Proof: Credibility Assessment in EU Asylum Systems](#)', and launched the report at an event in Brussels, where Jane Herlihy gave a presentation to an audience of over 100 state



decision makers and UNHCR staff about autobiographical memory and CSEL's contribution to the then forthcoming CREDO training manual.

Having consulted closely on the design of the CREDO project, and interview questions, CSEL

contributed significantly to the final report. Jane Herlihy was asked to review relevant sections throughout the full report to ensure correctness and accuracy of the statements, provide exact alternative wording, and – in particular – to cite academic studies. The research findings have been mainstreamed in the report and translated into checklists for decision-makers in the asylum system. The project lead at the UNHCR in Brussels reports that: “the discussions with EU and non-EU states using the report and the checklists have fed into the existing and new Quality Initiatives, and the CREDO report is contributing to the further development of new UNHCR guidelines on credibility assessment.”

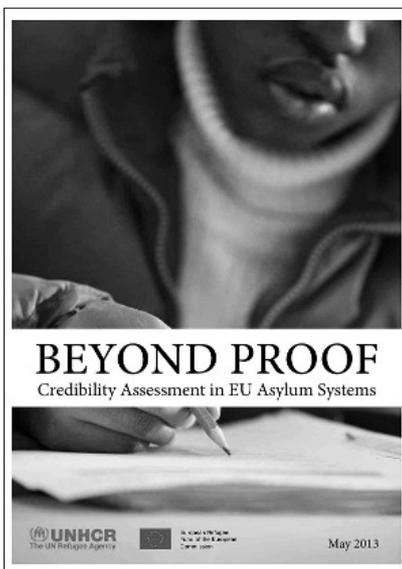
This allowed us to do exactly what we have been arguing for – which is to underpin recommendations regarding refugee status determination with peer-reviewed empirical psychological research. The UNHCR report argues for a “multi-disciplinary approach”

Photo: OpenDemocracy flickr.com

which mirrors exactly our approach: to have a decision-making process which is in line with the best available scientific evidence. Significantly, the project enabled a transition for CSEL from working only on traumatic memory, to working on the psychology of memory more generally, and its implications for the fairness of asylum decision making.

In September when UNHCR held its global executive committee meeting at the UN in Geneva, CSEL participated in an event entitled *Assessing Credibility In The Asylum System*. This was an exciting opportunity to put our work directly to key figures in asylum decision making from around the world, including delegates from Sierra Leone and other African countries, and Fatima Chohan, the South African Deputy Minister of Home Affairs. The exposure was invaluable and led to more speaking engagements for Jane at other CREDO-related UNHCR events.

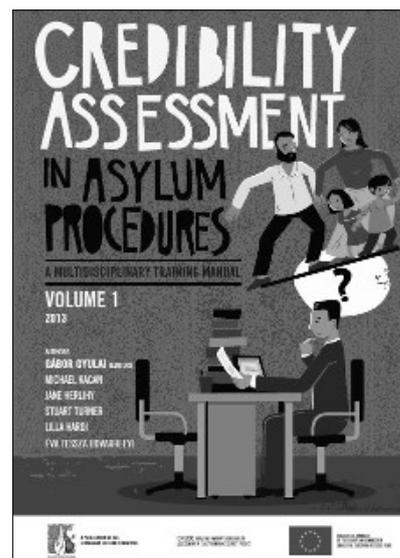
The Brussels launch of the CREDO report *Beyond Proof* inaugurated a series of events by local UNHCR offices around Europe, enabling national decision makers in different countries to hear from contributors and project partners directly. In December 2013 Jane Herlihy travelled to Dublin to speak about autobiographical memory at the Dublin UNHCR launch,



meeting Irish judges and decision makers. The event was timed to coincide with the introduction in Ireland of new procedures for asylum decision

making, and the appointment of new immigration judges.

The Dublin event followed the October publication by the HHC of the [CREDO training manual](#) for frontline decision makers, for which CSEL



wrote a chapter entitled *Memory and Its Limitations*. This was based on 'Just Tell Us What Happened To You: Autobiographical Memory and Seeking Asylum' by Jane Herlihy, Laura Jobson and Stuart Turner (*Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 2012), as well as literature reviewed for the *Beyond Proof* report. Excitingly, as well as offering additional material for our own training, CSEL's chapter in the training manual has already proved useful to CREDO partners, and has been used in project-related training for asylum officers and judges from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Spain and Portugal. The manual has since provided the basis of further training sessions for lawyers and decision makers across Europe.

The success – and, indeed, credibility – of the CREDO project has generated interest and funding for CREDO II. More than just a follow up to CREDO, this is a new project assessing and aiming to harmonise to a high standard, the assessment of credibility in decision making about the asylum applications of minors. For more on how CSEL is also contributing to CREDO II see Zoe Given-Wilson's article on pages 8 and 9.

The dissemination and training phase of CREDO is now well underway. As key contributors to both the research and dissemination we're looking forward to further opportunities to work with European partners and decision makers.

The Psychology of Children Seeking Protection

Dr Zoe Given-Wilson introduces CSEL's new research into child psychology, and talks about what led her to this work

I joined CSEL in October 2013 to review the research in child and adolescent psychology to inform legal processes and make them fairer. So far, my work has had a specific focus on psychological issues relevant to making applications for asylum, and how the psychological evidence can help to ensure a better informed and fairer application process.

In February this year I completed a literature review of relevant psychological research into the development of children and adolescents, their autobiographical memory, mental health, early life experiences, and cultural issues affecting individuals. The review was part of the Europe-wide CREDO project (for more on the CREDO project see pages 10-11), and formed a major contribution to the second CREDO report examining credibility assessment in asylum applications by people under the age of 18. I've also undertaken literature-based research for CREDO II looking at judges' assumptions about young people specifically, as well as a piece of research into issues involved in the interaction between a child applicant and an interviewer, such as interviewer responses and suggestibility. I'm currently working on a full systematic literature review of published papers on autobiographical memory in adolescence. In 2014-15 I'm looking forward to presenting on these research projects to a variety of audiences, including decision makers and lawyers, across Europe in



support of the forthcoming CREDO II report.

Excitingly, the CREDO II project began with a trip to Budapest in October 2013, where I met the whole CREDO II team: a fantastic and inspiring group of NGO workers, lawyers, psychologists and gender researchers. The group is broad enough to bring a creative diversity of perspectives and approaches to the work, and that came through in the presentations at the meeting. The event was a really helpful way to get quickly up to speed with the CREDO II project and the work of the different actors involved, as well as being immersed in the current issues of asylum and credibility. This included many thought-provoking conversations and opportunities to network. The geographic spread of the work of CREDO II means inevitably that the researchers and practitioners involved are widely dispersed and working alone much of the time. Meeting them all at the start – before I had even met all of the CSEL team! – gave me a sense of being part of a larger project.

My work at CSEL also includes sitting on the advisory panel of the Principles to Practice project run by the Law Centres Network (LCN). This is a ground-breaking initiative by

LCN to review legal practice with regard to young people seeking asylum, and explore how far that practice is and can be informed and guided by child-centred policy, as well as psychological

Photo: Todd Huffman flickr.com

and other evidence. CSEL's involvement in the project, through my role on the panel, is to offer a multi-disciplinary perspective, foregrounding pertinent psychological issues. CSEL as an independent research centre with an explicit focus on dissemination to practitioners, is ideally placed to support LCN with this, and the P2P is a great way to show how research and dissemination work can be a reciprocal dialogue between voluntary sector and legal practitioners on the one hand, and researchers on the other, with practice and research informing one another.

Converging interests

I came to CSEL from a background in clinical psychology, working in mental health practice and research since 2001. I also have an MSc in medical anthropology. I was attracted to CSEL by the opportunity to bring together my key areas of interest: cross-cultural working, developmental issues, and asylum. Working clinically with adult asylum seekers who had PTSD brought me into contact with inspiring people who are both vulnerable, and incredibly resilient and resourceful, and sparked my interest in asylum issues. I'm particularly interested in working on young people's issues - I've worked with young people in the community in India, and I currently work with adolescents in a mental health hospital in the UK. My past research projects have included work on adolescent suicidality, an ethnography of self harm in adolescents, and research into personality disorder in adults.

I feel it's really important to understand this age group and their developmental issues, because if we don't understand the particularities of young people's psychology, and the differences from adult psychology, then we can make erroneous assumptions. This in turn can lead to wrong decision making, unfairness, and in the worst cases, a

possibility of human rights violations.

Looking ahead

During 2014-2015, I'm looking forward to developing training based on the

literature reviews I've already completed, and presenting the review to diverse audiences. The review has also highlighted issues important to the asylum context where there is currently a lack of knowledge in the psychological literature, so I'm hoping to develop successful funding bids to conduct primary research in these areas.

Overall I hope that the work I'm doing at CSEL will help asylum decision makers to feel empowered and able to make fairer decisions about young people through having a better understanding of the complex mix of psychological factors affecting those young people making applications for asylum. Ultimately, of course, I'd like to be able to say that my work has contributed to helping young people fleeing persecution have a chance at a better future and quality of life.

“if we don't understand the particularities of young people's psychology, and the differences from adult psychology, then we can make erroneous assumptions that can lead to unfairness and even human rights violations.”

Evidence into Practice

Clare Cochrane on the first year of our new Comic Relief-funded dissemination project

This year our new dissemination project, Evidence into Practice, has taken CSEL further into the world of asylum legal practice, and supported new organisational development. Evidence into Practice expands on our previous dissemination project, training asylum lawyers and case workers to understand and use psychological research evidence, as well as continuing to train workers and volunteers in the asylum voluntary sector. Comic Relief's project funding also includes support for vital infrastructure development at CSEL, which has brought us a new staff member on the dissemination team, and helped us clarify our vision for supporting the development of emotion and law studies in the UK.

Things didn't look quite so rosy at the start of this last year, though. The project began with an R&D phase, and some careful designing. We knew that our plans to train asylum lawyers were ambitious for a small organisation with no established reputation in the legal sector, and we were reliant on the kind support of our friends in the law, the strength of CSEL's research papers, and the strong relationships we had so far developed. In May I ran a pilot training seminar with Turpin and Miller in Oxford, supported by Raggi Kotak, and then planned to roll out training over the summer of 2013. However, just as I set out to market the training to law centres around England and Wales, the legal sector was overwhelmed by the drastic cuts to legal aid contained in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO). With the viability of many legal-aid dependent law centres threatened, there was no capacity to take up training from an unknown organisation.

This threatened to disrupt the project, but a little restructuring of the workplan meant we found time early in the project for research and communications infrastructure development.

As an independent research centre, CSEL's sustainability, and the ongoing value of any outreach to, and support for, practitioners depends on us growing and establishing our reputation amongst those practitioners. We now had extra time to develop our vision of becoming a research and resources hub for researchers and practitioners interested in the field of emotion and law studies. By November we were ready to welcome our much needed Research and Communications Assistant, Gracie Bradley, whose enthusiasm, creativity and high-level skills has already brought us a 14% increase in subscribers to our quarterly newsletter. Our Twitter following has grown to match.

When the training began, it proved immediately popular. So far, we've reached more than 100 people through EiP training sessions in Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, and Bristol. The seminars are similar to those in the previous dissemination project, but now include an introduction to autobiographical memory: what it is, the evidence for how it works, and the implications for someone whose credibility is under assessment as part of the UK asylum process. We also aim to include a segment on self care; I find the amount of time available for this topic is in inverse proportion to the levels of interest in it! This partly reflects the increasing interest in vicarious traumatisation and the effects of emotional labour in the asylum field, and CSEL is hoping to develop research questions around these issues in 2014-2015 – one example of how learning from our dissemination work feeds back into research programme development.

My research indicated that legal workers voluntary sector workers and volunteers have slightly different expectations and training needs, So I've been running separate seminars

in each region for lawyers, and for the voluntary sector. A legal professional co-delivers the lawyers' seminar to ensure that any technical questions regarding particular cases are discussed where appropriate. Working across these two sectors, and observing the differences in working cultures, learning needs and expectations, has given me the opportunity to reflect again on CSEL's unique position at the intersections of different territories: academia and practice; law and psychology; the voluntary sector and the legal world. It has also brought interesting networking opportunities, such as the chance to present a workshop at the Law Centres Network conference in Birmingham in November 2013. This was the first time an organisation that doesn't practice law had

been given workshop space at their annual conference.

2014-15 will be the challenging middle year of the three-year project, in which we'll have to build on the first year's achievements, meet the second year's targets, and prepare for the final year's activities. This will include carrying out preliminary research for pieces of work that will build on the learning from the project so far, and ideally create a legacy that can be shared throughout the sector, or taken forward in CSEL's future work. We'd still like to hear from organisations interested in partnering with us or taking up training through Evidence into Practice. For more information about our dissemination work, contact me directly at c.cochrane@csel.org.uk.

Gracie Bradley on linking practice and theory in her work at CSEL and beyond

When I joined CSEL's dissemination team in November 2013, as part of the Evidence into Practice project, I brought a background in both frontline support at Room to Heal, and in academic research through studying for an MSc in Human Rights at the London School of Economics, where my focus is on questions of global justice, international relations and the laws of war; a constellation that often crystallises painfully and poignantly in the phenomenon of forced migration. My role at [Room to Heal](#), a therapeutic charity that works with survivors of torture and trafficking, includes fundraising and research and communications, but I had also spent much of 2013 cooking and gardening at the project. I knew I was in for something radically different when I arrived at CSEL: "No magical thinking here!", Clare advised me, and I was soon initiated into the world of evidence-based justice and psychological science.

At CSEL I have lead responsibility for our communications and online dissemination and communication platforms - the website,

blog, quarterly newsletter, and social media. I'm also responsible for developing the research database, and researching and internally communicating developments in relevant fields of enquiry. In 2014-2015 my first priority will be to work with Zoe Given-Wilson on our new research digest and resource hub for practitioners and academics working on psychology and law. I'll also be coordinating the overhaul of our website and the launch of a new 'Friends of CSEL' fundraising scheme.

Although it can sometimes be overwhelming, I am very glad to have a window onto so many worlds and to have access to another at CSEL; to be acquainted with both the articles of the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights, and the resilience and suffering of people subject to the bureaucracy and restrictions that constitute the daily life of someone seeking asylum in the UK. In between the letter and the operation of the law stands the valuable work of frontline organisations like Room to Heal, and structurally-oriented initiatives like CSEL. I'm looking forward to working with both in the coming year.

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF EMOTION AND LAW

Charity registration number : 1120257

Company registration number : 05985322

Registered Office : Unit LG07, 1 Quality Court, Off Chancery Lane,
London WC2A 1HR

Telephone : +44 (0)20 3176 4376

Website : www.csel.org.uk

Executive Director : Jane Herlihy

Trustees : David Rhys Jones (Chair), Mary Robertson (Treasurer),
Chris Brewin, Amina Memon, Martha Spurrier

Accountants: MHA Macintyre Hudson, New Bridge Street House, 30-
34 New Bridge Street, London EC4V 6BJ

Bankers : Unity Trust Bank, Nine Brindley Place, Birmingham B1 2HB.



doughty street chambers