

EHRAC LEGAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2011 13 JUNE – 17 SEPTEMBER 2011

Summary of participant feedback

The programme

The EHRAC Legal Skills Development (LSD) Programme is an annual event that is designed to complement participants' existing legal knowledge and to build new practical litigation skills. This year's programme brought together lawyers from some of the most active human rights NGOs in Russia, Georgia and Azerbaijan: Memorial HRC Moscow, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, the Legal Education Centre and Media Rights Institute in Baku, and the Democracy & Human Rights Resource Centre in Sumgait.

The 2011 LSD programme covered a variety of sessions ranging from substantive lectures on the rights to freedom of assembly and association (Art. 11), and to private and family life (Art. 8), one-to-one sessions with EHRAC Director, Prof Philip Leach, and Senior Lawyer, Jane Gordon, on individual case strategies, to discussion of strategic litigation approaches on a country by country basis. The programme incorporated an interesting talk, as well as a Q & A session with Adrian Arena, Director of the International Human Rights Programme of the grantmaking trust, the Oak Foundation, aimed at giving NGO lawyers a sense of grantor priorities, as well as useful tips on the preparation needed by



Russian, Georgian and Azeri lawyers discuss strategic litigation approaches with EHRAC experts on the first day of the LSD programme.

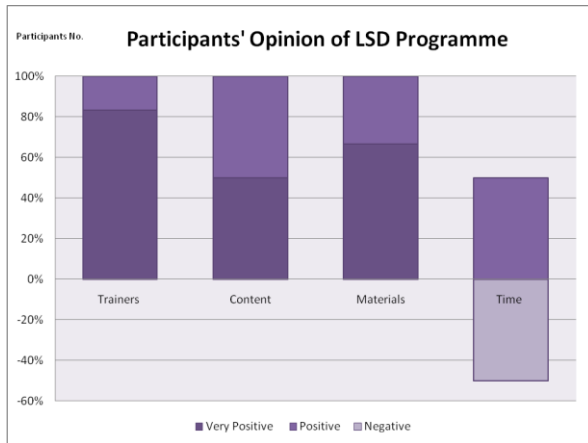


Participants visit the FCO.



Participants meet with Adrian Arena of the Oak Foundation.

NGOs prior to meeting with potential donors. The session was also a useful forum for our partner lawyers to hone their networking skills with major donors. LSD participants also had the opportunity to visit the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to share up to date information on the human rights situation, discuss latest developments and highlight concerns in their respective countries with desk officers and senior analysts of the Russia Team and the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate.



Participants' Feedback

The participants had extremely positive feedback about the LSD programme, as can be seen from the graph. All the participants felt either positively or very positively about the quality of the trainers and speakers, the content of the sessions and meetings, and the materials/handouts provided. However, there seemed to be general consensus on the lack of time to discuss all the issues of concern that came up in the discussions.

The “*well-informed*” trainers and speakers were praised across the board:

“Philip has great skills in getting across the main points and problems of the issues of concern”.

“Jane made an excellent analysis of all points of Art. 11 and its latest developments.”

In terms of the content, the sessions were deemed to be very useful:

“This event was perfect both in form and content.”

“It was important to hear about the different approaches used in other countries in comparison with the litigation work in your own country.”

Participants also greatly valued the possibility to have one-to-one sessions with the trainers, described as being “*of great help*”:

“Although we had previously communicated via email, face-to-face discussion of cases and of future strategy is always very useful and much needed.”

Half of the participants, while finding the sessions useful and well-organised, would have liked more time to further discuss the issues of concern:

“There were many issues up for discussion, but due to the lack of time we did not manage to discuss them all in their entirety.”

Handouts were unanimously deemed to be “*extremely important*” and participants claimed they “*will come in handy for future reference*”.

Lastly, the participants were particularly satisfied with the chance to visit the FCO and meet Adrian Arena of the Oak Foundation:

“I liked the interest that the FCO showed in the information we gave them about the condition of human rights in our country. We will be very glad if they will be using this information in their work.”

“The session [with Oak Foundation] was very interesting in terms of getting to know the funders, their position and/or opinions when deciding on funding NGO activities, how they assess the work of NGOs, and what is essential for them.”

“These kinds of seminars are very important and they should be regularly conducted if possible. Thanks to the speakers and organisers for making this happen!”