

Field: Law & Advocacy
Name: Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)
Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh
Names of Positions: Public Interest Litigation and Advocacy Intern
Legal Intern

Brief Description of Organization:

BLAST is a leading legal services organization in Bangladesh, and the only one that provides access to legal aid across the spectrum, from the frontlines of the formal justice system to the apex court. It prioritizes support to women, men and children living in poverty or facing disadvantage or discrimination. It also provides legal aid, advice and representation across a range of areas, including civil, criminal, family, labor and land law, as well as on constitutional rights and remedies, providing access to judicial remedies alongside alternative dispute resolution wherever appropriate. Alongside individual legal aid, BLAST undertakes strategic litigation, or public interest litigation, as a key part of its advocacy for law and policy reforms to ensure effective legal protection of rights.

Currently operating in 19 districts across the country, BLAST works through its staff lawyers (and paralegals and researchers) at headquarters and in each district unit, in collaboration with its enlisted panel of about 2300 lawyers across the country who provide legal redress to clients on a pro bono basis, with a nominal honorarium. A panel of lawyers practicing in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh also undertakes litigation and advocacy on law and policy reform. BLAST is governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of eminent jurists, lawyers and human rights advocates with experience in domestic and international protection of human rights, including on UN human rights mechanisms, who provide critical leadership to the organization. It is also supported by a Consultative Group, comprised of young professionals, including researchers, lawyers, and human rights advocates. It has a close relationship with the Bar Associations at all levels, in particular through its Management Committees comprised of leaders of the Bar within each District.

Information specific to the internship:

Primary Responsibilities

Public Interest Litigation and Advocacy Intern

1. Legal research including on international and comparative law in relation to ongoing PIL cases (for enforcement of human rights) at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh - cases requiring
2. Contribution to drafting of petitions /intervener petitions in such cases
3. Research Paper and Media articles on specific PIL cases
4. Legislative and media advocacy related to implementation of PIL directives and judgments

Legal Intern

1. Assisting the legal cell with impact assessment related research on specific areas of legal intervention
2. Reviewing legal aid interventions in specific sectors - labor rights or rights of marginalized communities (including persons with disabilities) and identifying dimensions for strategic legal aid (public interest litigation, and or for advocacy regarding law and procedural reform
3. Reviewing legal aid interventions at grassroots level in slum areas in Dhaka city on violence against women and women's rights in the family - focusing in particular on the issues of consent and choice in relationships and developing advocacy campaigns and materials
4. Contributing to developing systems for communication and more effective management across 19 districts across the country and improving client communications

Schedule:

Internships usually last for 3 months. Preferred start date June 1, 2012 for a minimum of 6 weeks.

Stipend / Assistance:

BLAST offers subsidized transport including travel across Bangladesh in connection with ongoing field visits or workshops/meetings/trainings, including to areas on the coast and in the hill tracts where they have legal aid units.

Additional Information:

BLAST can refer students to language schools and teachers who can do one-on-one study . Placement at BLAST will itself serve as an immersion in the language for any intern, as the main language of communication in the organization is Bangla for day to day interaction - though relevant staff with whom the intern would work speak English fluently. Relevant staff or members of our pro bono lawyer panels will be available for translation when required (on court visits to district courts or in public meetings/seminars etc.)

Apply through:

Sara Hossain, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Honorary Director (sara@blast.org.bd)

Website:

<http://www.blast.org.bd/>