



# The Ara Trust

*Centre for Refugee Law & Forced Migration Studies*

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: LEGAL PROTECTION OFFICER

The Ara Trust (Ara) was set up in 2013 with the mission of facilitating access to asylum and expanding the protection space for refugees despite the legal vacuum in India. It is India's first and only refugee law center. It was set up by former United Nations (UN) legal officers and is a women-led organization. Our clients are from countries either severely affected by conflict or with failed/oppressive states, like Afghanistan, Myanmar, Somalia, Syria and Iraq. More than 80% of our clients are women and children from these countries, many of whom have faced severe sexual and gender-based violence. Our clients also include victims of war, victims of anti-government elements like the Taliban, LGBTI individuals, and survivors of torture. We currently run three initiatives that focus on legal aid, specialized assistance for women and children, and research and policy.

Ara has pioneered the concept of legal representation for refugees during the asylum process in India. Our services enable refugees to make effective claims and put them on the path to rebuilding their lives while in exile. Our assistance is critical since a wrongly-rejected refugee is likely to be deported and could then face persecution or even death in his/her country. The documentation we help refugees access regularizes their stay in India and gives them access to education, health and government documentation. Without this documentation, refugees are forced to go underground where they are vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, abuse etc.

Ara's activities primarily involve –

- Providing *pro bono* legal counselling and representation to refugees seeking asylum before UNHCR;
- Identifying the immediate protection risks of vulnerable refugees and seeking UNHCR's intervention or referring them to support services where appropriate;
- Creating awareness through focused trainings and workshops for the refugee community, universities, government agencies etc.; and
- Undertaking research on issues of refugee protection and law.

## RESPONSIBILITIES:

In order to carry out the activities mentioned above, Ara recruits, trains, and supervises skilled candidates to assist in the organization's work. The selected candidate will be part of Ara's legal team and his/her tasks shall include:

- (a) Assisting with client intake sessions, which involve registering new refugees, conducting intake interviews, and providing general information regarding UNHCR's refugee status determination process etc.
- (b) Conducting research on issues of refugee law, on clients' countries of origin, as well as relevant case law and legal provisions.
- (c) Drafting client testimonies and legal submissions.

- (d) Accompanying clients for their registration/refugee status determination interviews at UNHCR.
- (e) Conducting research for reports/projects on issues related to refugee protection.
- (f) Assisting in Ara's advocacy and training activities.
- (g) Maintaining office databases and drafting office correspondence.
- (h) Assisting in running the internship/volunteer program.
- (i) Other related work as the need arises.

#### **CRITERIA FOR RECRUITMENT:**

- (a) Indian citizen.
- (b) Graduate of Law only.**
- (c) Willingness to work from July 1, 2016.
- (d) Willingness to travel within New Delhi.
- (e) Preference will be given to those with prior experience working with refugees/migrants/IDPs or other vulnerable clients.

#### **NOTE:**

- (a) The contract will initially be for 6 months, and will be extended for a further period of 6 months subject to availability of funding and the candidate's performance.
- (b) Salary will be INR 34,000 per month; TDS will be deducted before payment of salaries.
- (c) Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted in the last week of May to schedule an interview.
- (d) The successful candidate should expect to begin on July 1, 2016.

#### **APPLICATION PROCEDURE & DEADLINE:**

Please email a letter of interest and an up-to-date CV to [office@aralegal.in](mailto:office@aralegal.in), with the subject line "Application for the post of Legal Protection Officer".

**The deadline for receiving applications is 5 pm (IST) May 20, 2016.**