2012 saw René Cassin continue to build on the foundations laid by Simone Abel in her first year as Director. In her short time as Director, Simone expanded our policy areas and educational offerings, increased our collaborative efforts with other organisations, and diversified our funding base to secure a more sustainable future. These efforts have made us both more effective and more efficient, and we look forward to continuing on this path in the future.

2012 was a year marked by hopefulness and increasing pride in what it means to be British. The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympic celebrations highlighted the best of Britain, and reminded us of the common values we are lucky to share.

However, 2012 also saw continued and increasing threats to the fundamental mechanisms upon which we rely on to protect our human rights, and human rights abuses both globally and locally. Among other issues, the push to repeal the UK Human Rights Act continued, the government’s commitment to eliminate child detention failed to materialise, and Gypsy and Traveller communities remain subject to institutionalised discrimination throughout the country.

At René Cassin we felt a renewed sense of the important role Jewish people have to play in combating these and other abuses. We would like to express our appreciation for your on-going support of our work, without which we could not continue to exercise our responsibility to defend the human rights of all people.

Maya Jaffe
Chair of René Cassin

SNAPSHOT/2012

In 2012, René Cassin:

Completed 5 policy papers in our thematic areas

Responded to 3 government consultations in an effort to enact legislative changes

Communicated with 75 MPs and other politicians

Held 6 events on pertinent human rights issues

Travelled to 2 international conferences to advocate for our positions

Worked with hundreds of supporters, partner organisations and volunteers to do our meaningful work
Due to the overwhelming success of our first annual Autumn Gala, held at the top of the BT Tower on 8 September 2011, we were able to bring on another full time staff member to increase our capacity.

Shauna Leven joined René Cassin as Programme Manager in December 2011. Shauna came to us with a variety of private and non-profit sector experience. She will be involved in increasing the organisation’s advocacy and educational outputs, mobilising our committed volunteers and assisting with fundraising and organisational development.

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ABOUT OUR NAMESAKE

Monsieur René Cassin, a French Jew and Nobel Laureate, was one of the principal codrafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. During his lifetime, he also served as President of the UN Commission on Human Rights, President of the European Court of Human Rights, President of the Court of Arbitration at the Hague, and founder of the Consultative Council of Jewish Organisations (CCJO), the parent body of the René Cassin organisation.

His vision, and ours, is of a world where everyone fully enjoys all their human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Our mission is to draw upon the experiences and values of Jewish people to promote the universal rights of all people through education and advocacy.

Our aims—

BRANCHING OUT
Promote and protect universal human rights through advocacy, awareness raising, and education.

We have continued on-going efforts to raise awareness of human rights issues and advocate for marginalised groups like Gypsies, Travellers, victims of human trafficking, and children.

GROWING STRONG
Raise awareness of human rights and foster activism within the Jewish community.

Modern human rights are largely rooted in the experience of the Holocaust, and we believe Jews have a responsibility to work for the basic rights of groups that are discriminated against today.

DEEPENING ROOTS
Promote the legacy of M. René Cassin by running educational and advocacy initiatives in defined human rights thematic areas, including discrimination, slavery, genocide and detention.

In 2012, René Cassin continued working to educate young people and the greater community about the human rights issues that plague us today. We also made significant updates and expansions to our educational programmes, and have found early results to be highly encouraging.
Our volunteers

As a small organisation, René Cassin depends on our volunteers and activists to help us effect change. In 2012, dedicated volunteers assisted in a variety of ways; we cannot effect the change we envision and act towards without the help of others. It is vital to achieve our goals that we raise awareness and engage others in our struggle to promote and protect human rights.

In the past year, our volunteers, activists and Interns have had the opportunity to gain substantive experience on:

**Shaping our policy on detention**
Tom, an American law student, wrote a series of policy papers reflecting René Cassin’s position on the treatment of asylum seekers and detainees. The papers, on topics from detention, destitution, and deportation to treatment of vulnerable asylum seekers, are becoming been critical resources in René Cassin’s efforts to advocate for, and increase awareness of these issues.

**Raising awareness of the issues**
Laura authored an article on the connection between slavery and major sporting events for publication in Open Democracy.

**Charity communications and marketing**
Kim, a law student, created marketing materials and assisted us with developing our communications. She also designed our 2011 Annual Report.

Our volunteers do substantive and meaningful work — learn more about volunteering with us at www.renecassin.org.

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**Intern Profile: Persis Eskander**

I spent three months interning with the René Cassin Foundation as part of an internship programme — it was the best decision I’ve ever made.

Working to end discrimination against Gypsies & Travellers in the UK is a foreign issue for me, so I was taken on a steep learning curve and exposed to human rights violations that I had never before encountered.

I’ve spent one of the best summers of my life interning in London with the René Cassin Foundation. It’s so incredibly rewarding you can’t help but come back for more.
Guilty until proven innocent: seeking different treatment for asylum seekers

The Jewish people have been refugees from persecution throughout much of history. Today, many countries around the world fail to treat those fleeing persecution with dignity and humanity, often leading to automatic detention of even the most vulnerable individuals. René Cassin works to frame the detention of asylum seekers as a human rights issue and seek change in the UK particularly in the areas of indefinite detention, detention of vulnerable people, and the Detained Fast Track system.

Policy Work
In 2012, René Cassin drafted three policy papers on the detention of asylum seekers. These papers identify the problem, outline the legal framework, and explain the objectives of our specific campaigns: to end indefinite detention, the detention fast track system and detention of vulnerable people.

Advocacy and Awareness Raising
In 2011, we released articles covering different aspects of the Asylum Seekers campaign and explaining the key issues to our supporters; urged our membership to pressure MPs and the Home Secretary to halt the impending deportation of several asylum seekers; continued our work with the Detention Forum to pressure the British government on immigration detention reform; and brought our activists to detention facilities.

A Toolkit for Activists
In January 2012, we launched our Detention Toolkit for activists and students. The Toolkit frames detention as a human rights concern, serves as a guide to campaigning generally, and provides a framework for increased involvement in our campaign to change the system of detention of asylum seekers.

We distributed more than 500 copies of the toolkit in schools and universities around the UK during 2012.

SLAVERY-FREE LONDON

The 2012 London Olympics raised concerns about forced labour, child labour, and the general issue of human trafficking with Olympic sponsors, providers, suppliers, and partners. Major events, sporting and otherwise, create economic drivers that have the potential to increase demand for forms of modern slavery. The heightened risk of slavery and human trafficking is of increasing concern to governments, civil-society organisations and the media.

René Cassin partnered with a coalition of 37 US and UK companies and NGOs to raise awareness, urge individuals to pledge their support for a Slavery-Free London, and encourage Olympic sponsors and partners to identify their existing policies and practices relating to risk factors for modern slavery, and develop or strengthen their internal human rights framework to evaluate existing practices, reduce risks, and report progress.

There are more slaves today than at any point in history, even though slavery is widely
A Toolkit for Lawyers
With the success of the Activist Toolkit, we realised that there was no similar resource for those in the legal profession who lack specific human rights training and experience but are interested in donating pro bono time to our efforts. To fill this gap, we began the process of producing a Legal Toolkit to address the issue of detention of asylum seekers.

Demystifying the Human Rights Act
René Cassin addressed many common concerns about the UK Human Rights Act that threaten to undermine the hard-won framework of human rights protection in this country, and by example in the rest of the world.

We hosted an interactive discussion on the Human Rights Act at Doughty Street Chambers. The evening focused on demystifying the Act, explaining its significance, and providing attendees the opportunity to question Professor Francesca Klug OBE and Sir Vernon Bogdanor CBE on issues relating to the debate around the so-called UK Bill of Rights.

condemned and banned in the majority of countries where it is practiced. Perhaps most disturbing is how many slaves live in the midst of thriving, developed cities like London. It is estimated that up to 5,000 people are trafficked in the UK at any one time.

The Olympics provided an opportunity to show London at its best, but also raised fears that trafficking would increase. The risk was not just sexual exploitation, but also in labour demand in construction and the service industries as the city prepared for the massive influx of visitors. The government acknowledged that “recent trends suggest that trafficking for labour exploitation could become more prevalent than other forms of trafficking.”

The international focus on the 2012 Olympics provided a valuable opportunity to raise awareness about modern slavery and human trafficking. It is vital that we and our partner organisations take advantage of events like these to expand our efforts and support ongoing campaigns.
Policy work

Like the Jews, Gypsy and Traveller communities were victims of the Holocaust, and both have endured centuries of discrimination and persecution. However, although many Jews find themselves upwardly mobile today, Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities continue to face this kind of treatment throughout Europe.

In the UK, discrimination may be either direct or indirect, appearing as legislative provisions that create structural inequalities for these people. Gypsies and Travellers in the UK face homelessness, greatly decreased life expectancy and other health issues, illiteracy and poverty. René Cassin raises awareness of these issues and advocates to end discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers. As part of our advocacy work on behalf of these chronically excluded communities, René Cassin produced a policy paper identifying the problems currently faced by Gypsies and Travellers, outlining the legal framework, and discussing our goals for these communities.

A TOOLKIT FOR LAWYERS

Our work on this paper revealed a lack of substantive legal resources concerning the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

The Legal Toolkit will provide detailed directions to guide professionals with legal training and experience who wish to assist Gypsies and Travellers in a variety of matters including property and planning issues; cases or complaints concerning direct and indirect discrimination, racism, hate crime, and media misrepresentation; employment issues; access to healthcare; and, access to education.

Education and community outreach

CRYSTAL’S VARDO

René Cassin collaborated with Friends, Families and Travellers to produce a play for children about the harmful effects of bullying on Gypsy and Traveller children. The play, designed to educate local communities about the widespread discrimination facing Gypsy and Traveller communities, was performed to rave reviews at the Pavilion Theatre in Brighton and will make its London debut in early 2013.

We hope the play will help break down barriers and enable the children to empathise and identify with the main character, played by Kavanagh Rose Rattigan – herself of Irish Traveller heritage – and help facilitate the acceptance and celebration of diversity.
**The Universal Periodic Review**

The Universal Periodic Review is the UN’s quadrennial examination of the UK’s current treatment of human rights. The UPR is conducted under the auspices of the Human Rights Council. One of the main undertakings of the HRC, the UPR is designed to ensure equal treatment for every country in the assessment of their human rights situations.

In November of 2011, René Cassin representatives travelled to Geneva to present a joint submission signed by 44 partner NGOs to the UPR. In the submission, we set forth our concerns about the way in which recent political and institutional developments risk undermining the framework for human rights protection in the UK and discussed issues we believe need to be explored in any attempt to assess the UK’s human rights performance. The thorough investigation of human rights in the UK at the UPR is a crucial opportunity for René Cassin and other NGOs to ask the UN to hold the UK accountable for stronger human rights protections.

While in Geneva, the representatives met with state missions to the UN, representatives from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and from the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, and NGOs who advocate for the protection and promotion of human rights on the international stage.

**The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Development**

In July of 2012, René Cassin travelled to the United Nations’ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ High Level Segment to present an intervention on the social exclusion of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in Europe. Our submission was heard by delegates from 54 member states and numerous other non-governmental organisations and was also included in the final session report, providing a valuable perspective on the UN’s pan-European Decade of Roma Inclusion initiative.
Deepening Roots

EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Activist Enrichment Programme

The Activist Enrichment Programme develops young professionals into committed human rights activists. To achieve this goal, we seek to develop knowledge through a seminar series, develop skills in workshops, and send delegations to Strasbourg and Geneva to gain a deeper understanding of how the international judicial framework functions.

“Meeting with various UN and EU bodies during the AEP helped me to develop a deeper understanding of these bodies while having a unique opportunity to engage directly with them and ask questions.”

— 2011 AEP Participant

In Geneva, the delegates attended high level meetings with state missions to the UN, and UN and NGO representatives to learn about human rights advocacy on the international stage.

In Strasbourg, the delegates focused on protecting human rights on the European level, with a particular focus on the European Court of Human Rights, of which M. René Cassin was the first President.

…and as a child I was filled with passionate admiration for acts of civic courage…
René Cassin Fellowship Program

René Cassin began the process of expanding our educational offerings in 2012, with efforts to design and fund the René Cassin Fellowship Program. The RCFP explores Jewish visions for a just society and provides young Jewish professionals with the knowledge, skills and contacts needed to enhance their activism in the areas of social justice, international human rights or related fields. Although it is similar to the AEP in its focus on human rights advocacy, it is tri-regional and aims to reach 36 participants, 12 each from the UK, the US and Israel.

The experience, connections, and opportunities provided by the RCFP will strengthen the Jewish voice for human rights at international forums including the UN, build relationships between politically and socially active young professionals from Europe and develop a future generation dedicated to human rights.

with passionate
for acts of civic courage...

- René Cassin
We strive to maintain the legacy of M. René Cassin by using Jewish experience and values to campaign and educate in our four major policy areas: discrimination, genocide, slavery, and asylum.

"Never will Jews in particular obtain real equality until the totality of human rights are respected for everyone." – René Cassin, Jerusalem 1968

**In schools**

We work with UJIA Jams to bring human rights education to Jewish schools, and in 2012 spoke on modern slavery, refugee issues and the UK human rights act to schools around London.

We promote UNICEF’s Rights Respecting Schools Award, which provides a framework to help schools use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as the basis for their ethos.

**In Synagogues and the Jewish community**

We travel to Synagogues and community events to speak on issues of concern to the Jewish community, such as extremism, modern slavery, refugee issues and religious pluralism.

Over the past year, René Cassin:

...brought our Human Rights Shabbat materials and presentation to over 20 Synagogues around London

...presented a session on Human Rights at Limmud

...created and distributed human rights resources for many festivals, such as Pesach, Shavuot and Chanukah

...worked to develop supplements for Jewish schools on modern human rights issues such as slavery

...spoke to youth movements about human rights issues and what they can do to help in dark times

...participated in Gefiltefest, a day long festival of food devoted to Judaism and food with our partner Friends, Families and Travellers to raise awareness of our shared historical experience and enjoy traditional dishes

...hosted multiple events including a panel discussion on extremism and its impact on Europe’s minorities with the Board of Deputies and Human Rights Watch
IN THE BROADER COMMUNITY
Over the past year, René Cassin stayed active in the London community. In 2012, we...

...organised a photography exhibition at the French Institute with the Cassin family to remember M. René Cassin’s legacy and to raise awareness of human trafficking. The event, in partnership with PhotoVoice and Leila Segal, benefited Voice of Freedom, a participatory photography project in Israel for formerly enslaved women. It showcased Marjin Alders’ documentary photos of trafficked women living in Israel as refugees and featured photography on modern slavery by the Red Light Campaign and PhotoVoice.

...presented a panel discussion on extremism and its impact on Europe’s minorities with John Mann MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism; Mike Whine MBE, Defence Director, Board of Deputies and Head of Government and International Affairs, CST; Benjamin Ward, Deputy Director, Europe and Central Asia Division, Human Rights Watch; and chaired by Alex Brummer, Vice President, Board of Deputies and City Editor, Daily Mail.

IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA
Internationally in 2012, we...

...took our submission directly to the Universal Periodic Review in Geneva in order to highlight human rights issues around detention of asylum seekers, discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers, slavery and human trafficking and attempts to repeal the Human Rights Act.

...advised the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on the human rights aspects of detention when used in counter-terrorism cases.

...prepared an oral submission for the UN Commission on Social Development on the social exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers, which was accepted and circulated.

...played a key role in a coalition of 201 NGOs to call on Russia to back the UN Security Council action to end the crisis in Syria. Enlisting the support of celebrities and prominent patrons in the campaign.

We continue to deepen our connections with London’s Jewish community as we pursue M. René Cassin’s vision of a world where everyone fully enjoys all their human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
FINANCE

Revenue and Support 2012

- Foundations and Trusts £57,353
- Individual donations £4,473
- Corporate donations £1,000
- Events £4,436
- Other £13,630

Total revenue and support £80,892

Expenditure 2012

- Wages and salaries £67,333
- Operations £4,176
- Events £5,489

Total expenditure £76,998

WITH THANKS TO:

JHub SIGRID RAUSING TRUST

THE ALLEN LANE FOUNDATION GARDEN COURT CHAMBERS

Mishcon de Reya Pears Foundation

Bluston Charitable Trust
Dear Supporters,

As you know, recent years have brought financial hardships on many charitable organisations and René Cassin was no exception. However, I am pleased to report that 2011/12 saw René Cassin assume a much more positive position than recent years. During our 2011/12 financial year, thanks in part to your generous support, we have been able to nearly double our organisational income and significantly diversify our funding sources to ensure greater security in the future.

Our supporters recognise the importance of having a vehicle through which Jewish people exercise their voice in the international human rights debate, and when the organisation came under threat financially, many mobilised to ensure that we could continue to fill this role. Although we are always grateful to our institutional donors, we owe special thanks this year to our inaugural Patrons and Corporate Sponsors and the many other individuals who began making regular contributions to our work because they feel strongly about our mission. We are more financially secure as a result, and our funding base is broader than it has ever been.

Our increased financial security has allowed us to broaden our reach, and this year saw the launch of two new campaigns, additional policy research and the development of a new educational programme, to be launched next year. For more information about these, or any of our work, please visit us online at www.renecassin.org.

While we are in a stronger position, we will continue exploring varied sources of funding to continue supporting our advocacy efforts and educational programmes, and ensure a strong future.

Thank you again for your continued support,

Andrew Simon
ACCOUNTANT
To labor for the human rights of all peoples has been an integral part of commitment to Judaism throughout our long past. We shall remain faithful to it in the future.

The Declaration on Judaism and Human Rights, adopted in Montreal on 23 April 1974.