

# Increasing access to justice in the immigration system



# Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1. Welcome</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| Who we are and what we do  |           |
| <b>2. Our impact</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| Increasing access to justice   |           |
| <b>3. Collaboration and learning</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| Sharing learning, listening and responding in an ever more challenging context |           |
| <b>4. Building an open and trusting funding partnership</b>                    | <b>20</b> |
| Being courageous and open to new solutions and entrenched problems             |           |
| <b>5. Finances and our people</b>  | <b>24</b> |

## Glossary

**Lived experience** – This refers to someone who has lived experience of the immigration system. Justice Together defines “lived experience” as having direct personal experience of the immigration system or having insecure status in the UK or an equivalent system.

**Organisations led by people with lived experience of the immigration system** – Justice Together defines an organisation as led by people with lived experience of the immigration system if: the majority of their board members, senior leadership team, and operational staff are people with lived experience. Through the assessment process we weigh quantitative and qualitative information to make a judgement about meaningful lived experience leadership and accountability. We would look for over 50% of the board as well as some of their senior leadership and/or operational staff, and they can demonstrate that they are embedded within and accountable to the community they work with, and they have sufficient mechanisms for this.

**Grant Partner** – This is an organisation receiving funding from Justice Together. We also refer to Partner Organisations, which are organisations that are Grant Partners and receiving funds but they are not the main applicant, for example Migrants Organise are the main Grant Partner and there are two Partner Organisations, which are receiving Justice Together funding via Migrants Organise.

**OISC** – The Office for Immigration Services Commissioner is the regulatory body for immigration advice. Immigration advisors are regulated by them. There are different levels to register at, which outline what type of immigration advice can be given.

**NRPF** – No Recourse to Public Funds is applied to people who are subject to immigration control. It means you are not able to access public funds such as mainstream benefits and social housing.

# 1 Welcome

## Foreword

It has been a privilege to be part of the Justice Together Initiative, from the start through its first two years in action.

Improving access to justice for people in UK immigration system is a significant challenge. These past two decades have seen successive UK governments pursuing increasingly hostile immigration policies, with the explicit goal of eroding migrants' rights and challenging the idea that migrants belong, and erasing the positive links between migration and the history and heritage of our present-day communities. These challenges, as well as consistently inadequate funding for legal aid casework, have been compounded by a massive reduction in access for people in the UK immigration system to quality legal advice, in almost every region of the UK.

Justice Together is an ambitious response to these complex challenges – a community of funders working in partnership to support and strengthen the migration sector's response building infrastructure, embedding anti-racist practice, and aiming to promote sustainable grantmaking, and to do better by the organisations we support.

We promised to trust, and be trustworthy, and we promised to approach complexity with courage, and remain open to new solutions to entrenched problems.

Already we have seen the huge benefits that a values-driven funder collaboration can have. In our first year, we have seen the funding of 15 influencing posts, taken up by people with lived experience of the immigration system – working in community organising, strategic communications and policy roles, to improve access to justice in the immigration system.

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It's given us a lot more capacity to address issues at the root rather than just putting out fires in individual cases when they present. Having the capacity just to talk about what kind of things are presenting creates a body of evidence around issues where we can document things happening.

Grant Partner

In nearly every region of England and in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales we have seen ambitious partnership projects launched, bringing legal advice providers together with holistic support organisations and grassroots migrant-led organisations to improve referrals and increase capacity for immigration advice.

Through our community of impact meetings with grant partners, we are starting to see the links forming between advice providers and those doing influencing work, to spot trends early on and work together on shared influencing strategies.

Our Justice Together partners continue to work in a challenging environment and to this end, it has been fantastic to see a focus within the initiative on supporting organisations to be more anti-racist and providing specialist wellbeing support for racialised people working in the sector.

The Justice Together team will be working with our grant partners over the next year to develop a joint vision for access to justice in the UK immigration system, and to produce some shared asks on what urgently needs to change.

I very much look forward to this piece of work, which I have no doubt will reflect the courage, ambition and trust that our team has nurtured in our funders and our partners, at the heart of Justice Together.

Jen Ang **Chair Grants Committee**

## Who we are and what we do

### Context:

The Justice Together Initiative (Justice Together) is a unique collaboration launched in 2020 with a decade-long vision for the immigration sector.

### Vision:

People who use the immigration system can access justice fairly and equally, so that they can get on with their lives.

### Mission:

We will create lasting change by increasing access to immigration advice, improving coordination and cooperation, and strengthening influencing capacity across the immigration sector. We will achieve this through our grant making, collaboration and by centring lived experience.

### We are guided by our values:

- Equality and human rights
- Collaboration and partnership
- Inclusivity
- Anti-racism
- Building trust with our partners
- Sharing learning, listening and responding in an ever more challenging context
- Being courageous and open to new solutions to entrenched problems

### Our strategic goals are:

- Goal 1:** A more just and equitable immigration system
- Goal 2:** Immigration organisations are more sustainable, better networked and more representative of the communities they service
- Goal 3:** More people are able to secure justice

**The Justice Together Initiative is a project of Justice Collaborations** which has been incorporated as a subsidiary of the Legal Education Foundation (TLEF). Both entities are charities registered in England and Wales. There is a Justice Collaborations Board and Justice Together Initiative Grants Committee, as well as a core team of three staff.

## We are supported by our funder partners:

A B Charitable Trust



**The Baring Foundation**



**DISRUPT FOUNDATION**



SUPPORTED BY  
**MAYOR OF LONDON**



**OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS**



**UNBOUND**



**the Tudor trust**

## Justice Together as a Participatory Grantmaker

The Justice Together Grants Committee makes all key decisions on grant funding and strategy development for the initiative. The majority of the six members have lived experience of the immigration system and have worked within the migration and grant making sector. The three external members were recruited openly and are paid for their time on the committee. Given our commitment to developing a strategy in partnership with the sector and the people affected by immigration control, we carried out an extensive consultation between August and September 2020. We held 15 virtual roundtables and focus groups in the devolved nations and regions of England with 153 people attending in total; of those 46 people had lived experience of the immigration system. These roundtables brought together people providing holistic support, immigration legal advice, and undertaking policy, advocacy and campaigning around the immigration system. There were additional focus groups with people who have lived experience of the immigration system, gathering their views on access to justice and how the system needs to change. Along with the roundtable meetings, we carried out 33 individual calls with key people working in the sector and beyond to explore needs and opportunities in relation to the political and economic context, specific areas of immigration and broader influencing and capacity-building opportunities.



# An interview with Dami Makinde – Grants Committee Member for the Justice Together Initiative

## What were you doing before you joined the Justice Together Initiative?

In 2019, I co-founded a charity called We Belong, which fights for the rights of young migrants in the UK aged 16 – 25. The organisation was born out of the necessity for young people to take ownership of their story, develop a voice and lead change in the area that affects them most. We were first a project from 2014, and we initially focused on access to higher education. We had a big win on access when we contributed to the success of a legal battle between a young migrant and the government at the Supreme Court. The win was huge but not enough, as several migrants were still excluded from student finance. Ultimately, we realised that education was only a symptom of our issue and that immigration was the root cause that needed addressing. Therefore, we expanded our focus and started meeting with our MPs to shorten the route to settlement and reduce the punitive cost, which we also won, reducing the route to settlement from 10 to 5 years. Along my journey, I was seconded to the Mayor of London's office to work as an external advisor for the Social Integration team and I started a forum called Young Londoners.

I have now left We Belong to focus on my university studies, and I am doing some consultancy work in the immigration sector.

## Why were you interested to be part of the Justice Together Initiative?

For me, the biggest thing was the initiative's values and vision to ensure access to justice fairly and equally which aligned with my own values. When I was younger, I was not able to access justice easily; I couldn't easily access quality advice. Being part of the initiative is an incredible feeling for me, I feel like I have come full circle, especially knowing how I felt as I was younger. With my own life experiences of the

immigration system and setting up a charity I knew I could add some authenticity to the work, which is an awesome thing to be able to do.

## What have you enjoyed and found most difficult about being part of the Grants Committee?

I found the first Grants Committee meeting the most difficult. I had never sat on a Grants Committee before and it was a real eye-opener for me. I also soon realised how London-centric my experiences are, and I knew less about what was happening outside of London. I was shocked at how big the problem was across the UK and felt naive. So I started to do more in-depth research on the organisations outside of London, which has been super interesting.

I have also really enjoyed the process and the support of the staff and Jen as our chair. Although the decisions are serious and carry a lot of weight, the best thing is the knowledge the initiative is changing people's lives.

## Why do you think it's important that Justice Together exists?

Organisations are so stretched with so little funding. Justice Together is so important as it creates opportunities to increase capacity, with so many organisations working together and creating new positions, so more people can access legal advice, and challenge the immigration system.

## Why do you think it's important to have more diverse committees like this?

It's vital to give people who have actual experience with the immigration system a voice in decisions. They understand and know the system, and can speak with authenticity.



# 2 Our impact:

## Increasing access to justice

### Our grant making so far



**42**

grants made to main organisations<sup>1</sup>



**3**

development grants<sup>2</sup>  
totalling £56,100



**79**

partners  
organisations



**37**

immigration advisors<sup>3</sup>  
funded, 18 of whom have  
lived experience of the  
immigration system



**£9,056,404**

granted in total



**16**

influencing positions  
funded, 15 of whom have  
lived experience of the  
immigration system



**22**

advice grants  
totalling £6,494,955



**28**

organisations funded  
that are led by people who  
have lived experience of  
the immigration system<sup>4</sup>



**17**

influencing grants  
totalling £2,505,307



**2,357**

people advised by the  
three Grant Partners who  
have had their first year  
of activities

1. We are still to do one last grant round in the East of England for Advice and Representation, following a development grant.

2. Development grants were awarded for regions to assess what plan for immigration advice would work best for them, to help inform how they applied for funding. Areas that were advice deserts and/or needed more time to develop plans and partnerships were selected.

3. For positions funded this includes both part-time and full time positions.

4. Of the 28, 14 are main grant partners, and 14 are partner organisations.

# Our Grant Partners

## Influencing Grant Partners

| Grant Round | Geographical area           | Grant holder                                     | Partner organisation                                       | Length of Grant | Amount awarded |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--|--|-----------------|----------------|
| Spring 2021 | Northern Ireland            | Migrant Centre NI                                | Women's Resource Agency                                    | 36 months       | £120,000       |
|             | England and Wales           | Women for Refugee Women                          |  | 36 months       | £150,000       |
|             |                             | Public Law Project                               |  | 36 months       | £250,348       |
|             |                             | Rights of Women                                  |  | 36 months       | £195,000       |
|             |                             | Citizens UK                                      | RAMP and Small Axe   | 24 months       | £165,000       |
|             | UK                          | Rainbow Migration                                |  | 36 months       | £200,000       |
|             |                             | Reunite Families UK                              |  | 36 months       | £90,000        |
|             |                             | Hibiscus Initiatives                             |  | 36 months       | £150,000       |
|             | England                     | Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)      | Praxis and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU) | 24 months       | £241,731       |
| Autumn 2021 | UK                          | the3million                                      |  | 36 months       | £117,555       |
|             |                             | Asylos   |  | 36 months       | £130,412       |
|             | England, Scotland and Wales | Focus on Labour Exploitation                     | Migrants at Work and Rosmini Centre Wisbech                | 24 months       | £200,000       |
| Spring 2022 | Wales                       | Bevan Foundation                                 |  | 24 months       | £95,261        |
|             | Yorkshire and Humberside    | Migrant Action                                   | Racial Justice Network                                     | 36 months       | £200,000       |
| Autumn 2022 | West Midlands               | Coventry Asylum and Refugee Action Group (CARAG) | Hope Projects and Tactic                                   | 24 months       | £50,000        |
|             | England                     | New Europeans                                    | Leicester Roma Community Service and Seraphus              | 24 months       | £150,000       |
|             |                             | Asylum Aid                                       |  | 36 months       | £250,000       |

## Development Grants

| Geographical area | Grant holder                                 | Partner organisation   | Length of Grant | Amount awarded |
|-------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| East Midlands     | Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum |                        | 6 months        | £19,600        |
| South West        | Bristol Law Centre                           | Bristol Refugee Rights | 6 months        | £18,000        |
| East of England   | Norfolk Community Law Service                | Suffolk Law Centre     | 6 months        | £18,500        |



## Advice and Representation Grant Partners

| Grant Round | Geographical area        | Grant holder   | Partner organisation   | Length of Grant | Amount awarded |
|-------------|--------------------------|--|--|-----------------|----------------|
| Spring 2021 | North West               | Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit                        | Boaz Trust, Revive, Asylum Link Merseyside, Merseyside Law Centre, Manchester Refugee Support Network (MRSN)   | 36 months       | £486,437       |
|             | North East               | North East Law Centre  | Justice First, Action Foundation, North of England Refugee Service, Angelou Centre, West End Refugee Service, Friends of Drop-in (FODI), International Community Organisation of Sunderland (ICOS), Rainbow Home and Open Door North East.   | 36 months       | £600,000       |
|             | Scotland                 | JustRight Scotland (JRS)                                       |  | 36 months       | £200,000       |
|             |                          | Scottish Refugee Council                                       | Fraser Latta and Co, Just Right Scotland   | 36 months       | £200,000       |
|             |                          | Settled  | Citizens Rights Project  | 36 months       | £263,558       |
| Autumn 2021 | London and South East    | Migrants Organise  | POMOC and Hastings Refugee Buddy Project   | 24 months       | £275,000       |
|             | South East               | Asylum welcome   | Settled, Reading Refugee Support Group, Slough Refugee Support   | 36 months       | £388,560       |
|             |                          | Samphire   |  | 36 months       | £111,440       |
|             | London                   | Coram Children's Legal Centre                                  | Citizens UK, Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (CARAS), South London Refugee Association, Young Roots   | 24 months       | £250,000       |
|             |                          | South London Refugee Association                               | Project 17, Southwark Law Centre, Citizens UK  | 36 months       | £300,000       |
|             |                          | Freedom from Torture   | Redress  | 24 months       | £270,000       |
|             | Northern Ireland         | South Tyrone Empowerment Programmes (STEP)                     | YMCA Welcome Project (North Downs & Ards), Stronger Together NI, NW Advice (Derry City & Strabane), Phoenix Law (Belfast City), NW Migrant Forum (Derry City & Strabane), Omagh Interethnic Forum (Omagh & Fermanagh), Intercultural Partnership (Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon), Inter-Ethnic Forum (Mid and East Antrim + Causeway Coast & Glens)  | 30 months       | £200,000       |
|             |                          | Law Centre Northern Ireland                                    |  | 36 months       | £300,000       |
|             | Yorkshire and Humberside | Manuel Bravo Project   | Community Integration Advocacy Centre – CIAC, Leeds Refugee Forum  | 36 months       | £250,000       |
|             |                          | Refugee Action   | St Augustine's Centre (Halifax), DASH Kirklees   | 18 months       | £350,000       |
| Spring 2022 | Wales                    | Asylum Justice   | British Red Cross  | 36 months       | £400,000       |
|             | West Midlands            | The Refugee & Migrant Centre: Black Country & Birmingham (RMC) | Hope Project, Brushstrokes, Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent (CASNS)   | 36 months       | £425,000       |
|             | West Midlands            | Tulia  |  | 36 months       | £75,000        |
|             | London and South East    | Work Rights Centre   |  | 12 months       | £70,000        |
|             | London and South East    | Eastern European Resource Centre                               |  | 12 months       | £130,000       |
| Autumn 2022 | South West               | Bristol Law Centre   | Bristol Refugee Rights, Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS), The Harbour Project, Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support, Plymouth Hope, Refugee Support Devon  | 36 months       | £500,000       |
|             | East Midlands            | Community Advice Law Service (CALS)                            | Community Law Service (Northamptonshire) – CLS, Derbyshire Law Centre (Derbyshire) – DLC, Nottingham Law Centre (Nottingham) – NLC, The Race Equality Centre (Leicester) – TREC Northamptonshire Rights & Equality Council (Northamptonshire) – NREC, Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (Nottingham) – NNRF, Refugee Roots (Nottingham) – RR, Mojatu Foundation (Nottingham & Derbyshire) – MF Derby and Derbyshire Refugee Forum (Derby) – DDRF Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Centre (Derby) – BHCC | 36 months       | £450,000       |

## Our impact

-  Awarded grants to 42 lead organisations and 79 partner organisations across the UK to improve access to justice in the immigration system.
-  Resourced the building of stronger referral pathways and networks in the North East, North West, London, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Made grants to new partnerships to create these in the South East, West Midlands, South West, East Midlands and Wales.
-  Supported stronger and wider networks, including formal, local and grassroots partnerships and new relationships with funders and wider stakeholders.
-  Supported the involvement of lived experience within the immigration sector through practical guidance and grant making priorities.
-  Built the sector's capacity to influence policy change through funding 16 new influencing posts, 15 of which are filled by people who have lived experience of the immigration system, and creating spaces for collaboration.
-  Increased immigration advice capacity by funding 37 new legal advice posts at OISC level 2 and above, 18 of which are filled by people with lived experience of the immigration system.
-  Created a new space for collaboration across the immigration advice and influencing sector through the Justice Together Community of Impact, which has so far met together eight times to share learnings, network and strategise.
-  Developed our internal understanding and approach to anti-racism and funded expert support for two Grant Partners.
-  Created a structure for additional funds to support access to justice in the immigration sector, which enabled a rapid response to unexpected events. Following the war in Ukraine, we raised an additional £622,700 for advice and influencing and distributed this to organisations within two months.
-  Our Grant Partners are working on multiple-issue areas spanning migration and refugee protection. We also have an active portfolio of influencing grants that complement this activity.

## A selection of key highlights from our Grant Partners' first year

**People with lived experience taking a lead in community organising, with unique research and parliamentary access.**

### **Citizens UK with Refugee, Asylum and Migration Policy (RAMP)**

The initiative funded the recruitment of two new part-time community organiser posts based in Newcastle and London (with a national focus). Both of the organisers have been through the immigration system themselves and only recently received status.

Having dedicated organisers with recent experience of being undocumented, focussed specifically on organising with people with irregular immigration status, has really enriched the work and helped them to make great progress in a short space of time. The team led a research project with King's College London on the economic impact of regularisation, and their lived experience and community connections and relationships meant they have been able to ask very difficult but important questions to people who are undocumented.

Citizens UK had initially intended to employ a parliamentary officer but, working with the Justice Together team, decided to partner with RAMP instead. This partnership has been immensely useful and meant the organisers have had great access to key parliamentarians and senior civil servants. RAMP also helped Citizens UK connect with senior civil servants (doing a role-play exercise on regularisation) in the Home Office who had been advisers to Boris Johnson and to senior housing ministers. Once the regularisation research is complete, Citizens and RAMP will work with parliamentary groups and use the research as a lobbying tool.

**Linking evidence to influencing with lived experience as the driving force.**

### **Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) with Praxis and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU)**

Justice Together funded four part time posts: a researcher, a community organiser (who has lived experience of the immigration system), and two policy and communications roles. The aim is to work together to improve the system for people with insecure immigration status, using research, data, political influencing, grassroots organising and campaigning.

As part of the project, they have established a No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Action Group, made up of people with lived experience of the immigration system. The team supported the group to run a successful campaign to get free school meals for all children irrespective of their immigration status. As the NRPF Action Group said: **"We are not resting on our laurels, there are more battles to fight."**

Now the NRPF Action Group has decided to focus on the 10-year route to settlement, following consultation within the partnership. The 10-year route has been identified as a real issue of concern not only for the action group, but also for a lot of the people that GMIAU support. Key challenges include the minimum income criteria, the need for frequent renewal applications, and long delays experienced by those on this route.

The NRPF Action Group has recently launched a campaign called "Stop the Waiting" to reduce the 10-year route to settlement to five years for all who are affected by it. The success of this partnership has been linking the research, data and policy elements to the work of the NRPF Action Group and co-producing campaigns.

# 3 Collaboration and learning

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It strengthens relationships with other organisations. There are probably five or six organisations we are now in touch with. Some there is a very close partnership with solely because of Justice Together.

Grant Partner



## Community of Impact

Our Grant Partners make up a Community of Impact which focuses on sharing learning, partnership building and achieving lasting change. We have held eight Community of Impact sessions so far. These sessions aim to create a space for people doing advice and influencing work to share knowledge and skills, strategise for influencing and build partnerships. The session topics vary according to what Grant Partners are interested to explore. We also have a shared online space for Grant Partners to exchange updates and documents, and a Slack channel for communication.

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We were part of a session on judicial review which was brilliant. It enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of where we stand with our wants and our campaigns, and to be able to know where is legal and where is policy changes. What we found helpful on that day was getting a better understanding of the path that we thought might be legal to go down, but actually worked out that it would be better to go down campaigning on the policies and to MPs and to Parliament.

Grant Partner

## Community of Impact events and numbers of people attended

121

**Community  
Lawyering – USA**  
July 2021

112

**Community  
Lawyering – UK**  
October 2021

45

**Lived experience in recruitment**  
July 2022

33

**Partnership spotlight on  
North East Law Centre** July 2022

32

**Partnership spotlight on IPPR,  
PRAXIS and GMIAU project** Nov 2022

30

**Introductory meeting for new Grant Partners**  
May 2021 / June 2022

28

**Introduction to Racial Justice**  
Feb 2022

26

**Developing an influencing strategy**  
Feb 2022



“

It is amazing they do these network meetings. The events are online, and they pick a topic that interests other grantees. I think this is really interesting. I've attended a few of them and I found it very useful because I think the topics were very much related to our work

**Grant Partner**

# Racial justice

Racial justice is a central value of the initiative, and developing a commitment towards racial justice is at the core of Justice Together's intervention in the migration sector. Below is a summary of our progress so far as well as some of the ongoing approaches we are working on.

## Justice Together's internal racial justice work

The Justice Together staff team, board and Grants Committee together completed an in-depth and extensive training over six months on power and anti-oppression, delivered by Jedi Consultancy, to raise our awareness internally and start this important conversation. We continue this through bi-monthly internal sessions called 'Lemon Squeezes', to discuss race and power, facilitated by a rotating staff member.

## Our work with Grant Partners on racial justice:

- We ensure a focus on anti-racism is embedded in the application and grant-making process by asking specific questions about how organisations intend to be anti-racist and what their plans are. This is considered by our Grants Committee.
- We convene specific anti-racist learning sessions with our Community of Impact.
- As a pilot we have funded consultants to work in-depth with two Grant Partners, Women for Refugee Women and Work Rights Centre, on how they can be more anti-racist as organisations. Learning from this pilot project will be shared and we hope to extend this support to other Grant Partners in the future.
- Providing partner support beyond funding e.g. developing a wellbeing support offer for racialised people and those with lived experience working in the immigration sector.



## Justice Together's Anti-Racism Working Group (ARWG)

The Anti-Racism Working Group is a mix of external experts, Justice Together staff and Grants Committee members. The group meets quarterly to discuss, propose, and strategise around the processes used and carried out by Justice Together.

The group is currently working on:

- Creating a guiding framework for anti-racism
- Engaging Justice Together funder partners on the topic of anti-racism, through training and lesson-learning
- Resourcing and being a catalyst for developing a charter on anti-racism in the sector in partnership with the migration sector, based on the Violence Against Women and Girls charter (ARWG ([endingracisminvawg.org](http://endingracisminvawg.org)))

## Valuing lived experience

Justice Together is committed to promoting the involvement and leadership of people with lived experience of the immigration system in an equitable and proactive manner, and supporting our Grant Partners to do the same. We are proud of our success in increasing the number of people with lived experience recruited to immigration influencing and advice posts.

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**We have a dedicated national team of leaders without status. It has enriched our whole organisation.**

**Grant Partner**

Our work to increase lived experience representation and accountability:

- We produced a guide on how to recruit people with lived experience of the immigration system, and held a Community of Impact event to share learning on this.
- Our grant application criteria asks for evidence about how organisations are accountable to the communities they support, including being led by people with lived experience, which is examined closely by the Grants Committee.
- We proactively reached out to smaller grassroots migrant-led organisations to encourage them to apply to the initiative.

## A more sustainable sector – Wellbeing

Through the development of our strategy, we recognised that burnout of staff working in the immigration legal advice and support sector was a real problem. Part of the solution identified was around longer term funding and better support for organisations as a whole to strengthen them. Another area was around what direct support can be offered to those people delivering this work.

In light of our commitment to racial justice and valuing lived experience, we have been working with the Black Wellbeing Collective and recently launched a wellbeing opportunity for racialised people working in the immigration sector. It is an initial pilot programme of support for 12 people with eight sessions covering areas such as resilience, burnout, migration journeys, and vicarious trauma. We have also been working with Refugee Action to explore what wider wellbeing support is needed by the sector. As part of this joint work we were able to offer Grant Partners a number of free wellbeing workshops delivered by Act Build Change.

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**We now have someone full-time who is a specialist. She is the daughter of an asylum seeker. She has lived experience. She is multilingual. She gets it. She has transformed it.**

**Grant Partner**



## Community and movement lawyering

In movement lawyering, legal advocates support community groups and their members (those with direct lived experience of the issues) to build power, develop leadership and change systems – such as laws, administrative practices, economic conditions or social and cultural environments – to further a social movement. The role of the lawyer is to act as legal consultant, open doors to community members, advise on legal implications of strategy and support the community to build power to advance their own interests, not to direct change. At its heart is real collaboration between lawyers and communities to determine together the best tools to bring about impactful change.

We identified early on some of the fantastic work already being done to develop more community and movement lawyering approaches. We facilitated two very well attended workshops with experts in community lawyering from the US and the UK who are using this approach to share their learning. These workshops sparked much interest in community lawyering. As a result, we have launched a virtual learning exchange, initially between six solicitors and organisers from the UK and USA to share ideas, problem solve and develop community lawyering approaches in their organisations.

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We're now going in there and delivering them free info sessions to their groups, not just their staff, but the people they support and it feels like we are much more embedded in the community from that perspective. We're now able to be a lot more proactive. And I think that's been something that's been really important for the community, but also really important for us and for my staff – they love it, they love going in... you're fostering a sense of solidarity against the things that are happening.

Grant Partner



# Reflections from our learning partners




## Miranda and Matthew at m2

Our learning partners m2 have interviewed funder partners, sector experts and Grant Partners who have completed their first year of funding (of which there are 10 in 2022) to identify key learning. Here is a summary of their key findings.

### Successes

The expert and relational way in which the staff team work with – and support – Grant Partners is greatly appreciated. This has enabled Grant Partners to develop a sense of partnership and build trust with Justice Together, and to raise any issues with staff openly.

Justice Together has made demonstrable progress against its three Goals:

-  Grant Partners have developed capacity for greater influencing activity, both in terms of the numbers of staff and the skills they have developed as a result of the funding and support and through stronger partnerships and networks
-  Greater numbers of people with lived experience are being employed
-  Grant Partners have developed stronger, wider networks as a result of being part of the Initiative. These increased networks take five main forms:
  - Formal wider partnerships;
  - Stronger local and grassroots networks;
  - New relationships with: funders and other stakeholders; with and between Grant Partners; and with the wider sector;
  - Grant Partners have accessed training, accreditation and some wellbeing support, resulting in better qualified staff;
  - Some Grant Partners have made progress with increasing referrals between organisations - and in developing the necessary systems and processes in relation to this.

### Challenges and learning

Four key learning points emerged:

-  1 There is appetite for Justice Together to clarify its own role in relation to influencing;
-  2 Staff with lived experience can be re-traumatized through the work – supporting them requires care and thought;
-  3 Justice Together has done a lot of thinking, reflecting and strategising about its work and practice – communicating and discussing this further with Grant Partners and funders would be welcomed;
-  4 Grant Partners are operating in an exceptionally challenging context, and questions about the sustainability of the work are very pressing – they would like Justice Together to hold open conversations about the plans for future funding and sustainability.

# LEARNING PARTNER CASE STUDY:

## JUSTRIGHT SCOTLAND

JustRight Scotland ([justrightscotland.org.uk](http://justrightscotland.org.uk)) (JRS) is a Scottish charity which provides legal services to defend and extend people's rights. JRS works on issues including women's rights, migrant and refugee rights, anti-trafficking and exploitation, disability, and equality.

With the Justice Together grant of £200,000, JRS recruited three new part-time posts: two immigration lawyers and a Participation & Development Officer (an influencing role, filled by a person with lived experience from within the organisation).

Due to the Justice Together grant, JRS has been able to further develop its existing services and support. Interviewees identified five areas in which the grant is making a positive contribution to their work:

### 1 Provision of services

The Justice Together grant has provided more capacity for JRS to work with the Scottish Guardianship Service, which provides personalised and sustained support to children and young people who are separated from their families. JRS is now, 'working with more migrant children than ever.' (Legal Director & Partner, JRS) and has delivered training on refugee family reunion and other issues to strategic migration partnerships across the UK.

Justice Together funding also enhances JRS's ability to support people with lived experience:

**“ We are [now] able to progress lived experience work. We've got a panel of migrants, for example, who inform a lot of our policy and advocacy work and how we deliver our legal service. The fact that Justice Together are willing to fund that within a legal organisation is really good.**

**Legal Director & Partner, JRS**

### 2 Lobbying and advocacy

JRS receives funding from multiple sources and works with a number of existing stakeholders. This, and the complex climate for immigration advocacy work, makes it difficult to define the exact contribution made by the Justice Together grant. It is clear, however, that the Justice Together grant helped JRS in the following ways:

- Strengthening JRS' work on the Nationality and Borders Act, by providing a legal opinion on the impact in Scotland when the bill was going through Parliament;
- Furthering JRS' work on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as the Scottish Parliament is now incorporating this into Scots law, and the Human Rights Act;
- Enabling JRS to work alongside the Roof Coalition to carry out successful work on ending 'Hotel Detention' (the use of hotels and other forms of institutional accommodation for asylum seekers);
- Setting up a quarterly event with grassroots organisations.

**“ We have done a lot of work in the last 12 months with the Scottish Refugee Council. We've given evidence at Parliament, we've obtained legal opinions, we've contributed to the Scottish Parliament voting on a Legislative Consent Motion. We've done all sorts of very interesting and positive things. Justice Together's funding has given us capacity to do it when we would have been very stretched without it.**

**Legal Director & Partner, JRS**

**“ [Justice Together funding enables us] to take a step back and think about the bigger picture, the strategic challenges...the [Justice Together] funding is absolutely crucial for that.**

**Solicitor, JRS**

### **3 Grassroots activity**

Justice Together gave JRS money to work closely with local grassroots organisations to provide them with free legal advice. JRS has also been able to connect groups to other organisations, including the British Red Cross and the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) – even Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). It also instigated a celebratory community event during Refugee Week: ‘Roots of Refugee’.

**“ This led to us setting up a quarterly meeting for grassroots organisations to network and connect with each other. [This was] only possible due to the grassroots budget given in the Justice Together grant.**

**Legal Director & Partner, JRS**

### **4 Additional money for services**

JRS staff felt the Justice Together grant had helped them to leverage additional funding:

JRS was proactively approached by - and gained funding from - other funders off the back of their Justice Together work;

JRS also – and ‘unexpectedly’ – received Scottish government funding for a seasonal worker support scheme and a central hub for Ukrainians, which has supported over 2,000 people.

### **5 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)**

The Justice Together grant provides dedicated resources and capacity for JRS staff to work on their policy and practice in relation to equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism. JRS staff recognise this as an area that requires significant attention:

**“ This is a demanding, draining area for staff and management and needs a lot of capacity and resource. Core organisational requirements need to be robust, in order to do it properly.**

**Legal Director & Partner, JRS**

JRS staff also feel that the learning involved could be helpfully shared with other organisations, including Justice Together Grant Partners, faced with similar challenges.

**m2** consultants conducted this case study as a key component of our learning partnership with Justice Together.

Alongside background reading, the case study is principally informed by three in-depth interviews.

# 4 Building an open and trusting funding partnership

## Justice Together's learning on process

As a new initiative with a strong commitment to sharing learning, listening and responding, we gather feedback from successful and unsuccessful applicants after each grants round to see how the process can be improved and make any necessary changes. As a result, each grants round has been different as we respond to feedback and improve our processes to make it easier for those applying.

“

We're pleased with their way of reporting - it's a revelation. They are clearly an open-minded funder [and] our grant manager is excellent... responsive...flexible.

Grant Partner

| What you told us  | What we changed   |
|---|---|
| The application form was too long for a light-touch approach  | We reviewed all the questions and really explored exactly what we were doing with the information from each one. After this, we were able to cut four questions and reduce the size of the form to what was absolutely essential.   |
| The word count in the application is not enough   | We extended the word count for all application questions  |
| Sometimes forms are difficult to fill in  | We offered all applicants the opportunity to have a conversation with us and the option to fill in the application form for them  |
| It didn't feel clear what the budget for the region was, we thought we would get funded and we didn't     | We revised all our initial telephone call structure and literature and introduced an open Q&A for interested applicants, to make sure the budget for each region and the criteria were clear.   |
| Notifying you of any changes to the budget of 10%, within the annual report is not straightforward for us | We reflected as a team about why we ask this and what we use the information for. We decided to remove this question from reporting and instead cover it through discussion and checking organisations' accounts. We trust our Grant Partners to tell us if there are any financial issues. |
| We are super busy and don't always have time for reporting – can it be light touch?                       | We offered all Grant Partners the option to have a conversation with us, where we would fill out the report for them instead of having to fill it out themselves. We also reduced the number of questions we ask.   |
| Can you notify us when a payment has been released to our account?  | We are working with the admin and finance team to improve our notification system and reduce requirements, such as receiving a payment drawdown request.  |
| Rather than group sessions on racial justice, one-to-one intensive support would be better                | We launched a pilot providing intensive consultancy support for two Grant Partners, and hope to role this out further.  |

## How the funder collaboration works

The initiative's funder partners meet together at least twice per year, to share learning and updates from the initiative as well as trends and forecasts in the immigration advice and influencing sector and wider policy context. The initiative is also able to identify and share gaps in funding.

Funder Partners contributed to the initial strategy development. They do not make decisions on grant applications but are updated on outcomes. There is one shared annual report for all funder partners.

“

Obviously they're new and they're finding their way to a degree. But I really appreciate how honest, open and transparent they are about that process. So, some of that power imbalance between funders and grantees is levelled out a little.

Grant Partner

## An agile collaboration – Rapid Response to upsurges in advice needs

In March 2022 when the invasion of Ukraine began, we reached out to all our Grant Partners to ask if they were seeing any changes in need and what additional capacity they may require. A number reported they were seeing a huge increase in advice enquiries and had also identified areas for influencing especially around seasonal workers' visas and country of origin information.

In response, we put together a briefing for funders outlining the legal advice needs for people from Ukraine, and a proposal for additional funding that was needed for advice and influencing organisations. The appeal raised £622,700, which was distributed within two months to Grant Partners for additional advice and influencing work. We were also able to align with additional funding from Paul Hamlyn Foundation, AB Charitable Trust and City Bridge to bring on new Grant Partners: Work Rights Centre and the Eastern European Resource Centre. This ensured that all the additional funding given was part of a longer-term and more sustainable approach, rather than one-off short-term funding for advice posts. We have also held some funds for additional convening and wellbeing support for the sector.

Our ability to respond quickly showed how the initiative has created a structure to secure additional funding for the immigration sector, contributing to building long-term capacity in addition to meeting emergency needs.

“

Justice Together have a real understanding of what we are trying to achieve. They have a solid understanding of the context in which we are operating.

Grant Partner



# LEARNING PARTNER CASE STUDY:

## GREATER MANCHESTER IMMIGRATION UNIT (GMIAU)

GMIAU (gmiau.org) is a voluntary organisation and leads a partnership funded by Justice Together with a £486,437 grant to increase advice and representation. The partner organisations are: Boaz Trust; Asylum Link Merseyside; Revive; Manchester Refugee Support Network (MRSN); and Merseyside Law Centre.

The aim of the partnership is to create a collaborative, strategic approach to immigration legal advice provision in the North West of England, addressing the lack of funding and capacity and increasing people's access to advice.

“ Justice Together felt like a once in a lifetime opportunity to rescue immigration advice services that were on the brink of closure and it gave hope for the future in that it was recognised as a significant issue and that we were going to be able to do something about it...therefore it is not just a grant application in that sense, for me it was much more meaningful.

Chief Executive, GMIAU

Interviewees identified three key areas in which the grant is having a positive impact on their work:

### 1 Increased and strategic collaboration

Interviewees commented that the grant has encouraged collaboration between partners, rather than competition. For example, one partner decided to re-allocate their share of Justice Together funding to another organisation, as this better met their strategic aim of providing better services in Liverpool:

“ The resources out there lack coordination and one of the things that Justice Together is trying to do is bring together organisations that have different sets of expertise and allowing us to collaborate more effectively.

Director/Solicitor, Merseyside Law Centre

GMIAU has brought together organisations in the North-West so that together they can develop and set up more coherent immigration advice referral systems. They hope that this work will improve the capacity of partner organisations and their ability to meet the demand for immigration advice and support in the area - whilst engendering the shared aim and common goal of improving immigration advice:

“ The partnership aims to think about how we can improve immigration advice in the area – together.

Trainee Caseworker, GMIAU

“ What is working well is that people are prepared to share because they have a common goal, and that has positive implications for all organisations as they are not having to use their resources in isolation in order to achieve those aims. So far it has exceeded our expectations... we are developing very fast.

Director/Solicitor, Merseyside Law Centre

“ We are proud of the way we have genuinely brought people and organisations together. We are having some good discussions about what we're trying to achieve and in that sense we're all on the same page.

Chief Executive, GMIAU

It is clear the partnership is enabling stronger, more collaborative working relationships across different organisations. This in turn is improving service delivery:

“ The project... is allowing the smaller [partner] organisations to grow; the long-term impact is that they are going to have the support, connections, and infrastructure of advice in the North-West to be able to thrive.

Trainee Caseworker, GMIAU



## 2 New posts and capacity resulting in more immigration advice being delivered

The Justice Together grant provides funding for posts that would not exist otherwise. Prior to the grant MRSN was unable to deliver immigration advice as they did not have the necessary trained staff. Thanks to the funding and wider support from partner organisations, they now have OISC qualified staff providing immigration advice:

“The big [change] is that [the funding has] helped us build our capacity. The money has secured immigration advice posts in this area that would have disappeared had that money not come - it has given us a foundation on which to try and build on. Without this funding, we could not deliver immigration advice.

GMIAU are much bigger and experienced than us, so they help us by sharing their best practice...and ensuring we comply with OISC standards.

Manager, Manchester Refugee Support Network

Critically, this increase in capacity to provide advice means that more people are benefiting from legal advice services: GMIAU – through MRSN and Revive – have assisted 1,555 people over the course of the past year due to increased casework capacity:

“We are helping a lot more people than we had expected...we are meeting more people's needs.

Manager, Manchester Refugee Support Network

## 3 Learning and training resulting in more effective information sharing and better legal advice

The funding has enabled GMIAU to invest in and provide immigration advice training, supervision, and development opportunities

to people with lived experience and partner agencies. The aim of this work is to enable organisations to better meet and address the needs of people most marginalised in the immigration system. GMIAU has also established a consultation group of people with lived experience in order to ensure that the direction of the organisation is informed by those who use it now or have done so in the past.

“GMIAU is providing us with support ...because of this partnership we have registered to get OISC accreditation. Justice Together delivers [Community of Impact sessions] which also give us a chance to meet other organisations.

Manager, Manchester Refugee Support Network

“We have monthly training sessions with the other partners, [along with] information sharing sessions...if an area of development [resides] in one of the partners, they are willing to share their experience with the rest of the group.

Manager, Manchester Refugee Support Network

“We have really benefited from being part of a group of experts...this opportunity has given us access to them and we can ask questions if we get stuck.

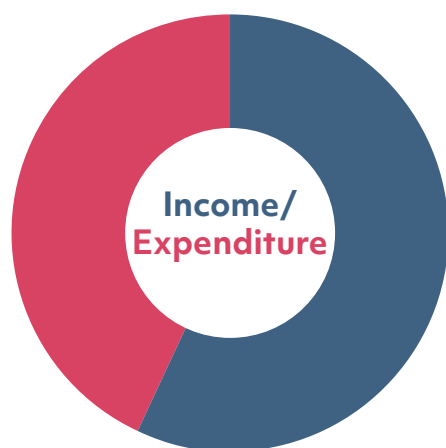
Director/Solicitor, Merseyside Law Centre

m2 consultants conducted this case study it is principally informed by four one-hour depth interviews.

Other sources of information include background documentation about the organisations and the year 1 grant progress report.

# 5 Finances and our people

## Income/Expenditure (December 2019– June 2022)



Income  
£10,612,000

Expenditure  
£7,941,000

Most of the surplus shown here was spent on awarding grants in the Autumn 2022 round. We spend on average **7%** of our budget on running costs and the rest goes to making grants and supporting our grant partners.

## Our people

### Justice Collaborations Board

Joint Legal Education Foundation (TLEF) trustees:

- Paddy Sloan (Chair)
- Alison Pickup (resigned from JC September 2022)
- Clare Johns - Company Secretary
- Jen Ang and Jacqui Broadhead – Independent Trustees
- Matthew Smerdon – TLEF Chief Executive

### Justice Together Initiative Grants Committee

Responsible for decision-making on grant applications and support with strategy development.

- Ali Torabi (external member)
- Dami Makinde (external member)
- Dylan Fotoohi (external member)
- Jacqui Broadhead
- Jen Ang (Chair)
- Matthew Smerdon

### Justice Collaborations Executive (Senior Management Team)

- Hazel Williams - Head of Justice Together Initiative
- Jake Lee - Co-Director of Justice Collaborations
- Rachael Takens-Milne – Co-Director of Justice Collaborations

### Staff Team:

- Alex Mik – Grants Officer (2 days a week)
- Farah Al-Haddad – Grants Manager
- Fidelia Elias – Grants Officer
- Hazel Williams – Head of Justice Together Initiative
- Laura Redman – Deputy Head of the Justice Together Initiative (August – October 2020, September – October 2021). (Cover) Head of the Justice Together Initiative (November 2020 – August 2021)

We are also supported by the wider Legal Education Foundation Team including finance, administration, learning and policy support.



THE JUSTICE TOGETHER INITIATIVE  
IMPACT REPORT 2020 – 2022

## Increasing access to justice in the immigration system

[justice-together.org.uk](https://justice-together.org.uk)

 [@justice\\_tog](https://twitter.com/justice_tog)

Justice Together is an initiative of Justice Collaborations  
Registered Charity No. 1187441

