



# *Justice Together Initiative (JTI): Reflections on the first year*

## Learning Partner Report

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Miranda Lewis, Director, [m2](#).  
[miranda@m2consultants.co.uk](mailto:miranda@m2consultants.co.uk)

### *Executive Summary: Context and background*

The Justice Together Initiative (JTI) was launched in 2020. Its decade-long vision aims to ensure that people who use the UK immigration system can access justice fairly and equally, enabling them to get on with their lives. It is a unique and ambitious collaboration of 19 funders.

JTI grew out of conversations, research and workshops led by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to explore a strategic response to increasing demand in immigration advice needs. This increased demand is being driven by a mix of causalities, including: Brexit and the fact that a large new group of people is subject to immigration control as a result; a 'hostile environment' policy directed towards people who do not have, or cannot prove, their immigration status; spending cuts in public services including legal aid and funding for advice and support services; and legal issues in the wake of the Windrush scandal.

Since the Initiative was set up, the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis have further exacerbated the pressure on providers.

JTI aims to strengthen the immigration sector and to influence wider changes to support a fair functioning of immigration, nationality and asylum processes. It has three goals to enable this to happen:

- 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 serve.
- Goal 3: More people are able to secure justice.

The pathway towards each goal, including activities and short-, medium- and longer-term outcomes, are mapped in a Theory of Change (ToC). To date, JTI has supported 40 Grant Partners with funding totaling £9million. Grants are available under two themes:

### **1. Influencing**

These grants support organisations to build influencing capacity, such as through hiring community organising and influencing staff (with a focus on those with lived experience of the immigration system) and developing campaigns around specific issues.

### **2. Advice and representation**

These grants support organisations to develop more capacity to deliver more, and better quality, advice services. This can be through hiring new advice staff (with a particular focus on those with lived experience), upskilling existing staff, and entering into partnerships with networks of local organisations to develop advice strategies.

Alongside this funding, JTI also supports Grant Partners through its Community of Impact: workshops and training designed to build capacity and networks. There is an explicit anti-racist element to JTI's work, along with an aim to increase the numbers of people with lived experience working in the sector.

## **Executive Summary: Key findings**

There are many successes for JTI to be proud of since its inception. The thoughtful, expert and relational way in which the staff team work with - and support - the Grant Partners is greatly appreciated. This has enabled Grant Partners to develop a sense of partnership and build trust with JTI, and to raise any issues with staff openly.

There has also been demonstrable and concrete progress towards the Initiative's goals:

### **Goal 1: A more just and equitable immigration system**

The main progress towards Goal 1 has been around building additional influencing capacity through increased staff posts. There is also evidence that organisational understanding of strategic litigation and strategic communications and messaging has increased as a result of JTI's support.

There has been less progress to date with mobilising and building support around key influencing goals, largely due to an external environment in which undertaking influencing activity is very challenging. Over this period, recruitment and retention of staff has become more difficult.

There is an appetite from both funders and Grant Partners for JTI to further clarify its own role in relation to influencing.

### **Goal 2: Immigration organisations are more sustainable, better networked and more representative of the communities they serve**

Grant Partners have strengthened and developed their capacity through JTI's funding and support. They have more paid staff, attracted further funding (beyond JTI funding), and staff have gained new skills and qualifications.

Grant Partners have developed stronger, wider networks as a result of being part of the Initiative. These include stronger networks between Grant Partners; wider formal partnerships with other local migration sector organisations; stronger local and grassroots partnerships; and an increased ability to refer between organisations. Grant Partners have found that building strong partnerships takes significant time and resource, often more than organisations have budgeted for.

Moving towards a more professionalised approach with better qualified staff and greater capacity has enabled Grant Partners to be more strategic in their approach to tackling local and national issues.

There is less overall progress towards improved referral routes, as so much time is required to streamline case management systems, whilst demand for services continues to increase.

Across both Goals 1 & 2, greater numbers of people with lived experience are being employed: 32 roles in total have been created for staff with lived experience: 18 into advice roles and 14 into influencing roles. In total, 46 new roles have been funded. In the longer-term, it is hoped that these roles will positively influence their organisations and wider immigration sector. As these posts remain fairly new, outcomes are yet to be seen.

Staff with lived experience can be re-traumatised through their immigration advice and influencing work – supporting them in their roles, therefore, requires care and thought.

### **Goal 3: More people are able to secure justice**

Progress towards Goal 3 is reliant on progress being made towards outcomes in Goals 1 & 2. In particular, improved referral routes, increased numbers of staff, and enhanced access to supervision, training and well-being support for staff are intended in the medium-term to increase people's access to good quality, timely legal advice and support. The evidence in this report of progress towards these outcomes, therefore, suggests that headway is also being made towards Goal 3. There is also further evidence of progress towards this goal: the number of people Grant Partners anecdotally report as being able to access support has increased, and the quality of the advice and support they are able to offer has improved. However, it is difficult to robustly quantify this increase, as Grant Partners collect the data in different ways.

It is clear that Grant Partners are operating in an exceptionally challenging context, and questions about the sustainability of the work are very pressing – they would like JTI to hold open conversations about the plans for future funding and sustainability.

JTI has done a significant amount of thinking, reflecting and strategising about its work and practice – communicating and discussing this further with Grant Partners and funders would be welcomed.

## *Executive summary: Recommendations*

Overall, JTI can offer proof of concept around its ability to convene and fund effectively; in the next stage the focus can shift towards the longer-term vision. These recommendations offer some ways in which JTI can make further progress towards the outcomes:

### **Process and values**

- Develop further opportunities for funders to engage and constructively challenge at a strategic level, for example by dedicating one quarterly meeting entirely to strategy.
- Include information about JTI's structure and decision-making processes in impact reporting to Grant Partners.
- Hold a session with Grant Partners and funders to explain the ToC;
- Revise communications about available support (such as childcare) to Grant Partners to ensure messages are clear and accessible.
- Clarify the purpose and expectation of Community of Impact sessions, particularly those that are about sharing experience.

### **Goal 1: A more just and equitable immigration system**

- Develop JTI's influencing strategy, particularly in relation to JTI's role in working with statutory and other funders.
- Explain JTI's own role in influencing funders and Grant Partners.
- Establish if the influencing strategy requires additional internal capacity to implement it.
- Work with Grant Partners to establish what increased strategic collaboration and coordination around Grant Partner influencing activity would look like - and therefore what could be put in place to support this.

### **Goal 2: Immigration organisations are more sustainable, better networked and more representative of the communities they serve**

- Establish what would be the best mechanism for enabling frontline advice staff, particularly those with lived experience, to access clinical supervision.
- Re-visit and re-shape the Community of Impact session on anti-racism.
- Develop Community of Impact sessions designed to support Grant Partners to apply for legal aid contracts and other statutory funding for immigration advice.
- Explore how to support budgeting for partnership building in grant applications.
- Hold a discussion with Grant Partners about the sustainability of their funding after the grant period.

### **Goal 3: More people are able to secure justice**

- Consider how to best support organisations to understand and capture data on the number of people they support in a systematic way.

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## Learning Partner report approach

m2 was appointed as Learning Partner to JTI in April 2022. The key outputs from the learning partnership are:

1. A revised ToC.
2. A learning Plan.
3. This learning report.
4. Two case studies of Grant Partners: **JustRight Scotland** (JRS) and **Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit** (GMIAU).

### Methodology

When m2 was appointed as learning partner, no Grant Partners had yet completed or reported on a full year of funding. A decision was therefore taken to focus the learning approach upon the 10 Grant Partners from the Spring 2021 funding round, who were due to report on the first year of funding in Summer 2022. This report draws upon:

1. Semi-structured interviews. Carried out with all 10 Grant Partners. These were recorded and transcribed for coding and analysis.

2. Interviews with funders and stakeholders. m2 conducted interviews with three of JTI's funders and a stakeholder in order to ascertain their views on the Initiative's aims, progress and operations. These interviews have been used to inform the background and conclusions sections.
3. Grant Partner reporting. m2 had access to the annual grant reports. Grant Partners are offered the choice between sending a written report or holding a 'phone call with JTI, in which case the JTI staff member writes the notes. The reports were a mixture of both.
4. Further documentation. m2 also had access to wider documentation about the Initiative, including reports to funders.
5. Meetings with JTI staff. m2 had regular meetings with staff who gave updates on the Initiative and its progress.

### **Limitations to the data**

- As discussed with the respondents during the consent process, this is such a small sample that despite anonymisation it is possible that some research participants may be identifiable.
- The timing of this report means that some more recent activity is not reflected. For example, JTI has responded to Grant Partner concerns about the cost of living with an uplift in funding – this took place outside the timeframe of the research.
- The type of information provided through grant reporting is not entirely consistent due to the mix of written reports and phone calls.
- It is possible that the figures used in this report about staff numbers are not up-to-date due to the reporting timeframe. <sup>1</sup>

### *Background: JTI's aims*

The Justice Together Initiative (JTI) was launched in 2020. Its decade-long vision aims to ensure that people who use the UK immigration system can access justice fairly and equally, enabling them to get on with their lives. It is a unique and ambitious collaboration of 19 funders.

JTI grew out of conversations, research and workshops led by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to explore a strategic response to increasing demand in immigration advice needs. This increased demand is being driven by a mix of causalities, including: Brexit and the fact that a large new group of people is subject to immigration control as a result; a hostile environment; spending cuts in public services including legal aid and funding for advice and support services; and legal issues in the wake of the Windrush scandal. Since the Initiative was set up, the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis have further exacerbated the pressure on providers.

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<sup>1</sup> Grant Partner and funder interviewees were informed of m2's privacy policy and gave consent for the interviews. Efforts have been made to anonymise quotations as far as possible. We do not use quotations from the stakeholder group, as these are too identifiable. A list of interviewees can be found in Appendix I.

To some extent this context represents a market failure of legal advice, and there is recognition from JTI and its stakeholders that funding alone will not counteract this. This reflects the fact that the gap between demand and supply is too large: resolving this needs to involve reducing demand through systemic improvements in immigration system, and/or by statutory funding for advice.

JTI, therefore, aims to strengthen the immigration advice sector and to influence wider changes in order to support a fair functioning of immigration, nationality and asylum processes.

JTI has developed a Theory of Change (ToC), which sets out its three over-arching Goals, and the short-, medium- and longer-term outcomes leading to these. Progress towards the short-term outcomes for each goal is explored in this report. JTI occupies a unique space, between organisations offering legal advice services and those attempting to influence the migration system and Foundations.

Funders and stakeholders see it as having the potential for impact substantially beyond the grants themselves. In particular:

- The ability to horizon-scan and bring together intelligence from different parts of the system to identify future opportunities and challenges.
- Supporting and enabling Grant Partners and the wider sector to influence the immigration system.
- Aiming to leverage statutory funding and wider groups of funders.
- Acting as a convenor across its different groups of stakeholders, including enabling policy funders to learn from frontline service delivery.
- Supporting its stakeholders to keep focused upon longer-term systemic change.
- Helping funders to be more strategic about their overall portfolios by highlighting potential forthcoming issues.

## Background: JTI's funders and funding activity

The JTI has a staff of four and is housed within **The Legal Education Foundation**. The founding funding partners are:

- AB Charitable Foundation
- Baring Foundation
- Barrow Cadbury Trust
- Comic Relief
- Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
- Metropolitan Foundation
- Oak Foundation
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- The Legal Education Foundation
- Trust for London
- Tudor Trust
- City Bridge Trust
- Unbound Philanthropy.



JTI's governance structure includes an Advisory Group charged with sharing critical challenge and insight, and a Grants Committee which can make decisions on grants up to £350,000.

To date, it has supported 40 Grant Partners with £6.5 million towards advice and £2.7 towards influencing, totalling £9 million. Development grants totalling £56,000 have also been awarded.

Grants are available under two themes:

### **1. Influencing**

These grants support organisations to build influencing capacity, such as through hiring community organising and influencing staff (with a focus on those with lived experience of the immigration system) and developing campaigns around specific issues.

### **2. Advice and representation**

These grants support organisations to develop more capacity to deliver more, and better quality, advice services. This can be through hiring new advice staff (with a particular focus on those with lived experience), upskilling existing staff, and entering into partnerships with networks of local organisations to develop advice strategies.

Across both themes, grants are available in the range of £90,000-£200,000 for individual organisations and up to £500,000 for partnership bids, which involve one lead partner. There is a regional focus for the grants with the intention of strengthening different parts of the UK immigration system. Grants are typically for a three-year period.

## **Background: JTI's approach**

*How JTI works* is as important as *what* it funds. JTI has developed and shared a set of values (*see box on the next slide*) with which it aims to act in accordance. These guide both the focus of the work and the approach.

### **Lived experience and anti-racism**

JTI is committed to the belief and practice that a better coordinated and more strategic approach driven by lived experience will help to address systemic challenges in the immigration system. This is allied to a commitment to being an anti-racist partner and to supporting the equitable involvement and leadership of people with lived experience in the immigration sector.

Partners are also offered training and support in their own anti-racist work and are encouraged to include people with lived experience in paid roles and as leaders.

*How JTI works* is as important as *what* it funds. JTI has developed and shared a set of values (*see box on the next slide*) with which it aims to act in accordance. These guide both the focus of the work and the approach.

### **Collaboration and learning**

JTI aims to develop connections and networks between Grant Partners. They are invited into a 'Community of Impact', which aims to foster collaboration and support Grant Partners to share experiences.



Between October 2021 and November 2022 there were six online Community of Impact events. These covered topics ranging from: developing an influencing strategy; racial justice; and lived experience. The sessions are open to both directly funded Grant Partners and those supported by JTI through partnership grants. Attendance varied between 26-45 people at the events.

Grant Partners were also invited to an in-person residential in early December 2022 which offered an opportunity for face-to-face networking and reflection. Action learning sets focusing on community and movement lawyering are planned from January 2023.

### **Influencing**

JTI is also committed to learning from and with the sector and has commissioned several research reports and briefings on different aspects of immigration advice. Part of its role is around influence, both in terms of supporting Grant Partners to change specific policies and as an entity in its own right, particularly in relation to the wider funding system. JTI has written a draft influencing strategy which sets out its approach to this.

## **Background: JTI's values**

**Equity and human rights:** everybody has the right to access justice fairly and equally.

**Collaboration and partnership:** the essence of the Initiative is partnership and collaboration, with lived experience of the immigration system at its heart.

**Inclusion:** we value the many different perspectives and experiences of all those involved with the immigration system, recognising the importance of listening and working together to effect change.

**Anti-racism:** we recognise the systemic racism in the immigration system; we will embed an anti-racist approach in all our work and support those we work with to do the same.

**Learning:** we value the sharing of learning between partners, and will listen, respond and adapt.

**Trust:** we trust our partners and value their expertise. We stand in solidarity with our partners and recognise that change takes time.

**Courage:** we will approach complexity with courage and ambition and be open to new solutions to entrenched problems.

## Background: Grant Partners Spring 2021 round – advice and representation

Grant Partner	Area/Region	Grant focus	Amount awarded
Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit	North West England	Developing a partnership with five other organisations in order to develop a strategic approach to transforming legal advice in the region.	£486,437
JustRight Scotland	Scotland	Increase and strengthen capacity for the Scottish Refugee and Migrant Centre (SRMC) to deliver legal advice. Investment in SRMC Just Citizens project (panel of experts by lived experience) to ensure lived experience informs their approach.	£200,000
Settled	Scotland	Increase availability of legal advice related to the EU Settlement Scheme. Ensuring referrals of vulnerable and isolated EU citizens.	£263,558



## Background: Grant Partners Spring 2021 round - influencing

Grant Partner	Area/Region	Grant focus	Amount awarded
Citizen's UK	England & Wales	Funding two organisers from diaspora communities with lived experience to work with migrant communities to organise for change.	£165,000
Hibiscus	England & Wales	Core funding to set up an Influencing Department in order to leverage data from grassroots organisations, to advocate for change.	£150,000
Reunite Families UK	United Kingdom	Support the organisation to transition into being a charity and to create an umbrella network of groups working with those affected by family immigration rules.	£90,000
Migrant Centre NI	Northern Ireland	A lobbying and advocacy project aiming to advocate for a more just immigration system. This includes a gender justice lens to advocate for women with no recourse to public funds.	£120,000
Rainbow Migration	United Kingdom	Policy work, strategic litigation and strategic communications to make the asylum system fairer for LGBTQI+ people.	£200,000
Women for Refugee Women	England & Wales	Research into how to persuade key audiences and to develop a strategic communications campaign.	£150,000
IPPR	England	Improving access to justice for people with insecure immigration status through a partnership with Praxis and GMIAU.	£241,731



## Background: Context

Since the JTI was launched, the context in which it is operating has become even more challenging for an already hard-pressed sector. Grant Partners vividly described an extremely difficult operating environment in which additional funding may not be sufficient to counteract the challenges they face.

### **Political context**

Political instability is making work to influence the immigration advice system more difficult. Ongoing changes in Ministers and policy positions mean Grant Partners are being less strategic than they would like. Women for Refugee Women's report describes: *'unprecedented pressure on the team as the hostile policies of this government stir further fear and trauma. We have been forced into reactive mode.'*

At the same time, political positions and attitudes are hardening, as represented by the Nationality and Borders Act. This makes the work both more emotionally harrowing and more strategically difficult. Hibiscus describes how: *'race and immigration continue to be an inflammatory subject in the UK, fuelled by a one-dimensional, often negative media narrative.'*

Grant Partners described how this context affects the tools and approaches they have previously relied on and demands that more time is spent strategising as a result: *'The UK government wants to get rid of the Human Rights Act, which is the primary tool that I use.'* (Grant Partner 7); *'The Nationality and Borders Act is going to impact our model. We support people up until the point of getting asylum; we might have to change that because they will only get temporary refugee protection.'* (Grant Partner 3)

### **Increased demand**

Many Grant Partners are experiencing considerably increased demand for their services; this is in part driven by the war in Ukraine. Grant Partners are therefore realistic about the fact that the increased capacity they have gained from the funding is to some extent counteracted by these pressures:

*'I have a waiting list of 140 children that need legal representation. Adding one new caseworker to help address that capacity issue is big, but they can only take on a relatively small number of these cases. Some of the private providers who we previously relied upon have decided to either pull out of legal aid or to restrict the types or numbers of legal aid cases that they take on. The demand has increased massively.'* (Grant Partner 1)

Grant Partners described how the combination of the impact of austerity and the cost-of-living crisis is making their organisations more difficult to run:

*'The crisis that we're in in terms of being able to provide immigration advice: the impact of all the cuts over the last 10-12 years was part of the backdrop to this.'* (Grant Partner 1); *'The biggest obstacle [to progress on outcomes] right now is the cost of living and economic outlook and the impact that has on the whole organisation.'* (Grant Partner 3)

In particular, the cost-of-living crisis is making recruitment and retention acutely difficult for organisations that struggle to offer competitive salaries. For example, Citizen's UK tried and failed twice to recruit a Digital Campaigns Manager and cite: *'not strong enough applications and the [current] job market,'* as reasons for this. This experience was also mirrored by other organisations:

*'We are undergoing a wholesale overview of our pay. The social justice sector is miles behind all the other sectors in terms of pay. That makes it difficult to recruit and retain people. Criminal barristers are on strike in England and the situation in Scotland is not much better. Our competitors are government and national human rights institutions. Their pay is substantially better - and we rely on legal aid, which the government isn't increasing, or at least not enough.'* (Grant Partner 7)

JTI is aware of the issues outlined here and is aiming to counteract them where possible - for example, by offering additional funding for organisations supporting Ukrainian refugees and giving a cost-of-living uplift in the funding. Two new Grant Partners received £200,000 to support their work with Ukrainian nationals, and other Grant Partners received a total of £1.3 million.

Nonetheless, this adds up to a situation in which Grant Partners can feel that they are fighting just to stand still.

m2 asked organisations if they felt there were opportunities as well as challenges in the external context; it is telling that none felt there were.

## Reflections on JTI's funding processes: JTI approach

Grant Partners were unanimous in their praise for *how* JTIs manages its relationships and funding. JTI is regarded positively compared to many other funders as a result. Grant Partners highlighted and appreciated the following qualities in particular:

**Flexibility:** JTI responds flexibly and quickly both to changes in the external context (such as the war in Ukraine) and also if Grant Partners wish to discuss shifting priorities with them: *'There is great flexibility with how we allocate the funds.'* (Grant Partner 3)

JTI understands the pressures organisations experience. For example, MCNI welcomed the open and flexible approach to the funding: *'They [JTI] said they saw this as core funding...it did a lot for us in terms having the ability to plan for the future.'*

**Trust:** Grant Partners feel that JTI trusts and respects them to deliver the work: *'With other funders there is so much more of a limitation on what you can actually do, and then it feels like so much less trust on their end [...] it really pays dividends when a funder trusts their grantee groups to deliver.'* (Grant Partner 2)

**Expertise:** JTI staff are seen to be experts in the sector and credible; this helps engender a sense of being in it together: *'JTI 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 6)

**Transparency:** JTI's transparent approach is valued, particularly in the way that typical power dynamics between funder and Grant Partner are openly discussed: *'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 9)

This approach adds up to a more trusting experience for Grant Partners, in which a sense of partnership is engendered. This enables Grant Partners to be open with JTI if issues arise, which in turn helps them to focus upon delivering their work: *'That level of belief and support was not something that I expected to receive at all. There always seems to be an open-door policy.'* (Grant Partner 4); *'It is a completely different experience to [working with] most other funders.'* (Grant Partner 5)

## Reflections on JTI's funding processes: funder collaboration

From the perspective of Grant Partners, the funder collaboration adds value. JTI is seen to benefit from the collective experience of its funders, and to put their collective expertise in thoughtful grant-making into practice: *'It's a group of various funders. And I think they've taken the best of some of the other funders that are funding their initiatives.'* (Grant Partner 9)

Knowing that JTI is backed by this group of funders means the Initiative feels impactful and significant to be involved with: *'It is fairly well known that there are a limited number of funders working in this space, many of whom are under the Justice Together umbrella and that's a powerful thing. What you feel is a difference that this is an initiative with a lot of money behind it. A lot of funders have got involved in it, and so it feels very impactful. And there's a sense of idealism about it.'* (Grant Partner 10)

Grant Partners also appreciated the sense of working together that being part of the Initiative gives them. They gain access to multiple funders and a community of other organisations, but only need to report to one place: *'I think the upside of JTI is this is that they are a collaboration of different funders. So, we're getting 10 community practice things grouped together in one, which is a more efficient way of doing it. In terms of sharing practice there's been some opportunity to do that.'* (Grant Partner 7)

## Reflections on JTI's funding processes: JTI's strategy and sustainability

Some Grant Partners were not clear about JTI's overall vision, strategy and where their work fits into this. Some would also like to understand more about governance, strategy and decision-making within JTI, in order to feel more fully part of the Initiative.

Linked to this issue of strategy, Grant Partners were also concerned about sustainability, both in relation to their own organisations and work, and also to the wider sector. Some were very clear that in the current landscape, grant funding is their main route to survival:

*'My big interest in all of this is about the long-term sustainability of immigration advice, not just surviving, but also expanding. The sustainability of that is the big question; beyond the life of this grant. When that grant ends, we have a qualified person we don't want to lose. Where do we get the money from to sustain that post? That is the challenge for JTI and what we are all about. We know there are grants we can apply for. They are not going to sustain all of us for the next 10-20 years. We have to have the conversations.'* (Grant Partner 1)

The funders and stakeholders we spoke to felt that an important dimension of sustainability was linked to JTI's influencing role, and how this could be used to make the case for systemic change to the statutory funding system.

At the time of conducting the interviews it was not entirely clear to this group of interviewees what JTI's capacity for undertaking this kind of influencing work was, and whether this would be a focus for the future. Some felt that policy opportunities had not always been taken up, which they largely attributed to a lack of capacity in the JTI team.

## Reflections on JTI's funding processes: making space for challenge; clear communications

Grant Partners and the funders/ stakeholders we spoke to were keen to ensure that a culture of constructive challenge and critical friendship continues to develop at JTI, particularly given the long-term nature of the Initiative.

For funders, this was partly about ensuring there is time and space to have conversations that are reflective about the overall direction of travel and strategic vision of the work. Whilst the quarterly funder meetings are very helpful in terms of updates, there is less scope for this broader thinking.

For Grant Partners, it was about ensuring the current focus upon power dynamics and reflective practice does not get lost, and that the wider group of funders is included in this: *'It would be good for the funders to be checking themselves and be aware that it is a bit of a clique. That you can get an orthodoxy. It is a small group of people [funders] who are hanging together a lot and trying to think strategically - and that's a really powerful thing. But I think to be always checking the fact that you're kind of reinforcing each other's views; are you getting it right because it all makes quite a big difference to the people who do or don't get the funding on the outside.'* (Grant Partner 10)

Two Grant Partners said that they found attending JTI events difficult due to childcare costs not being covered. JTI does in fact cover childcare, but this message had not been received by everyone. This suggests that some communications between JTI and Grant Partners are not sufficiently clear - or repeated enough times.



## Progress towards JTI's goals

JTI's ToC outlines how the activities it plans to deliver intend to contribute to short-, medium- and longer-term outcomes, and how these in turn lead to JTI's goals.

Assessing progress towards JTI's short- and medium-term outcomes can therefore give an indication of direction of travel towards JTI's longer-term objectives. It is important to note that the pathways to change are not assumed to be linear and the goals (and associated outcomes) are expected to influence one another. In particular:

- Influencing activities to create a more just and equitable immigration system (Goal 1) are intended to contribute to approaches and policies that support more sustainable and better networked immigration sector organisations (Goal 2).
- Similarly, more sustainable, better networked and more representative organisations (Goal 2) are expected to be in a better position to work together for a more just and equitable legal advice system (Goal 1).
- The third goal of increasing the number of people who are able to secure justice is intended to come about through both improvements to the immigration system (Goal 1) and immigration organisations (Goal 2).

The following pages outline the evidence of the extent to which JTI is contributing towards the intended short- and medium-term outcomes and the learning surrounding this (i.e., what has supported JTI to make these contributions and any barriers or challenges encountered).

## Goal 1: A more just and equitable immigration system

JTI's approach to developing a more just and equitable immigration system involves both supporting Grant Partners to engage in influencing activities and developing and implementing an influencing approach for JTI.

Specific activities include providing funding for additional influencing positions (with a focus on people with lived experience); coordinating networking and relationship building activities with Grant Partners (including through Community of Impact sessions); supporting specific influencing approaching (such as community lawyering and strategic legal action); and generating insights about the sector through research and convening.

In the short-term, these activities are intended to:

- increase the capacity of Grant Partners to undertake influencing activities.
- support organisations to mobilise and build support around key influencing goals.
- Increase the number of people with lived experience employed in immigration sector influencing roles.

In the medium-term, this is intended to better position the sector for immigration policy reform. In the longer-term (beyond the scope of this research), this is intended to lead to grassroots and frontline organisations directly influencing policy.

All of JTI's goals are underpinned by an explicit commitment to - and activities focusing on - anti-racism.



### **Overall evidence of progress towards Goal 1**

The main progress has been around building additional influencing capacity through increased staff posts. There is also some progress in organisational understanding of strategic litigation, communications and messaging.

There has been less progress to date with mobilising and building support around key influencing goals. This is largely due to a challenging external environment in which undertaking influencing activity is very challenging.

## **Goal 1: Progress towards short-term outcome – organisations have greater capacity for influencing activities**

All the organisations in receipt of influencing funding have developed greater capacity. Key activities include:

- **Migrants Centre NI:** hired an Advocacy Officer. Increased capacity has meant an ability to gather more evidence and undertake collaboration and media work.
- **Citizen's UK:** hired two organisers focused on organising people with irregular immigration status (it has never had this capacity before).
- **Hibiscus:** built Public Policy and Affairs department, centered on lived experience leadership.
- **Reunite Families UK:** has had capacity to develop more campaigns, including one focusing on the impact of family holidays.
- **IPPR:** has now got capacity to work on a campaign around no recourse to public funds, in collaboration with eight partners.
- **Rainbow Migration:** recruited a Legal and Policy Director and is now making direct links between service delivery and policy work.
- **Women for Refugee Women:** hosted a campaigning workshop in London for women from the network to reflect on the campaigning work around the Nationality and Borders Bill and to brainstorm on next steps.

For Grant Partners, alongside having more staff in post, an important dimension of increased capacity is about having the time and support to explore and implement different influencing approaches. The Community of Impact sessions have been helpful in this process, enabling Grant Partners to share experience and learning about different influencing activities.

Grant Partners have developed further skills and knowledge about influencing strategies: *'I went a session on strategic litigation and some of the communities involved. There are opportunities to learn about different ways to affect change: understanding the value of different approaches, whether that's research, campaigning, strategic litigation, media, etc.'* (Grant Partner 9); *'We were part of judicial review training which was brilliant. It enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of where we stand with our wants and our campaigns to be able to know where is legal and where is policy change. 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 4)

Two Grant Partners described how they have developed specific communications and messaging strategies as a direct result of the support from JTI. This, they felt, was not work that is typically easy to fund despite its potential for influencing positive change: *‘They are funding things we would not easily get funded elsewhere... We are using some of the grant to fund message testing which wouldn't have necessarily fitted easily into any of our larger grants or get funded just for that project. So that was good.’* (Grant Partner 3); *‘The grant has enabled us to have a communication strategy and understand who our target audiences are [and] how we [can] most effectively communicate with them. It has informed all our work in detention campaigning. We have had publications on detention in outlets that we would not have otherwise had.’* (Grant Partner 6)

### *Goal 1: Progress towards short-term outcome - organisations are better able to mobilise and build support around key influencing goals*

Grant Partners are working more effectively to build support for their influencing activities. An important element of this is the ability to have the time and space to recognise patterns and root causes of problems rather than simply reacting on a case-by-case basis: *‘We have spent the last 12 months fighting the fires of huge change - legislatively and in practice. What that's given us is a very clear idea of where there are patterns that are problematic. And in the next 12 months, we will target those areas that are systemically problematic.’* (Grant Partner 7)

The box below describes how Grant Partner 2 sees the change that working in this way can make:

*‘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. After this meeting, I'm going to head to a monthly case review meeting that I facilitate every month with all of the Migrant Centre advisors and advocates. We discuss the cases they have been supporting over the last month. Issues around accessing services. Is this a case where we're seeing structural issues affecting them? Having the capacity to have someone in post just to talk about what kind of things are presenting creates a body of evidence around issues where we can document things happening. But there hasn't been the capacity here before. It also allows us to follow up on structural issues affecting specific cases.*

*One example I'll give is that we were seeing consistent issues around people with prior spent criminal convictions having their EUS [EU status] applications in limbo for six months or a year. Plus, we have one person who's been waiting for three years. And it's because the police basically had not updated the status of these spent convictions on their computer, so it wasn't reflecting on the national computer. So, we set up a specific contact that came about through these meetings. There's now a procedure to follow, whereas it was all uncoordinated before.’*

The challenging context organisations are operating in (outlined in section 2) is making working on influencing positive change in the immigration system extremely difficult. In particular, it is making it harder to hire and retain staff (thereby impacting capacity), as well as to mobilise around key influencing goals.

Ongoing changes in Government make it difficult to strategise and to develop the relationships with Ministers necessary for influencing work: *'The external context is shifting under our feet. As soon as you make plans in one direction there is a new government or policy proposal.'* (Grant Partner 6); *'We had a meeting with the Minister and then the Minister resigned two days after we had the meeting with her. And she promised that so many things.'* (Grant Partner 8)

This creates an additional layer of complexity to strategising – especially in thinking through how to maintain a balance between ongoing work and the need to be reactive: *'One of the things we are discussing as part of our comms strategy is how we strike that right balance of reacting to big political events but also maintaining the kind of progressive comms strategy that is ticking along despite some of those bigger distractions.'* (Grant Partner 6)

Grant Partners felt their influencing work could be enhanced by JTI in two ways: 1) increased strategic collaboration and coordination around influencing activity; and 2) greater visibility of - and discussion about - JTI's own influencing strategy, activities and priorities: *'Collaborating for the bigger changes we all strive for, that sense of the bigger picture. I would like to see more of it.'* (Grant Partner 4); *'I don't feel like I'm in strategic discussions about the Initiative and what we're trying to achieve. What I realise I don't know about JTI is if there's a steering group, a board - whether there's a bigger group of people who are having these conversations.'* (Grant Partner 1); *'If we are being funded to work on policy it will be very good for us for the JTI to get us together and have us as a platform for them to produce a statement.'* (Grant Partner 8)

## Goal 1: Progress towards short-term outcome - more people with lived experience are employed in immigration sector influencing roles

A key focus of JTI's strategy is to support and encourage organisations to hire people with lived experience into influencing roles. As well as increasing capacity in the short-term, this is intended to better position organisations to advocate for immigration reform in the medium term.

From the available data, 32 roles in total have been created for staff with lived experience: 18 into advice roles and 14 into influencing roles.

Grant Partners described the key benefits of employing people with lived experience as being ensuring greater credibility with stakeholders and funders and ease of working with people who understand the issues: *'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 7); *'We have a dedicated national team of leaders without status. It has enriched our whole organisation.'* (Grant Partner 5)

The commitment to lived experience extends beyond paid staff as organisations aim to build their campaigns and influencing work with and for those with lived experience. Women for Refugee Women have launched a spokesperson network, coordinated by a woman with lived experience of detention. They are now recruiting five women with experience of the asylum system who will be trained as spokespeople.

In addition, Hibiscus consulted and engaged with 36 women with lived experience of the criminal justice and immigration systems to identify focus areas. They then co-produced the content for influencing materials.

This depth of approach suggests there is progress towards the intended longer-term outcome that the immigration sector further values and resources lived experience.

Other Grant Partners have also worked with wider constituencies of people with lived experience. This enables them to ensure that work is credible and rooted in their experience: *'We enable the clients to have a platform and to have an opportunity to tell their stories. And we trained them and made sure that they are able to talk to journalists and tell their stories. We make them the centre of the organisation, so that all the policy work that we do comes from the people we support.'* (Grant Partner 8); *'In the past [our work] has been London-centric. Now it is more geographic [in its reach]. Having funding has been a bonus. We have some reach in working with community organisations who have undocumented people as part of their work. We have been able to build a constituency of people who are undocumented.'* (Grant Partner 5)

Several Grant Partners spoke about the responsibility and learning that comes from employing and working with people with lived experience, both in influencing and advice roles. In particular, Grant Partners were concerned that staff and volunteers could (and in some cases had) experience further trauma as result of sharing their stories: *'A lot of the work is relationship building by sharing stories through narrative. If you have been through a significant trauma, spending every day sharing your story and hearing other stories is tough. Perhaps we did not have the expertise. We don't do clinical supervision as they do in some other organisations where they are doing frontline work. We don't have that kind of culture. We ended up shifting them to an admin role.'* (Grant Partner 5)

Grant Partners are putting processes and policies in place to address this challenge. Hibiscus has developed an internal policy on how to work with people with lived experience in a more safe and meaningful way. The policy sets out principles and guidance for staff and volunteers when they co-produce training; an event; or a focus group with people with lived experience.

Women for Refugee Women's report points out that: *'involving women with lived experience requires complex and comprehensive support systems to be implemented across everything we do, including for those at risk of vicarious trauma.'*

It is therefore conducting a participatory evaluation of this work to inform next steps. Grant Partners also talked about the need to ensure all staff and volunteers are encouraged to take time out to reflect and recover – this also reflects JTI's emphasis on improving wellbeing: *'People step back because they need to reset their buttons because some things can trigger. So, we have to be very mindful and watch out for each other.'* (Grant Partner 4)

Several Grant Partners felt that having access to clinical supervision through the grants would help them to support staff and volunteers more effectively:

*‘Either being traumatised yourself or secondary trauma is so great in this work. We have a support package, but it is not designed for the pain and trauma that you are experiencing as part of your work. You could draw on expertise people have had for decades - they need clinical supervision.’ (Grant Partner 5)*

## Goal 1: Progress towards medium-term outcome - the sector is better positioned to advocate for immigration policy reform

There is also evidence of some progress towards the medium-term outcome of a sector that is better positioned to advocate for immigration policy reform, at an organisational if not yet sector level. As described above, organisations have developed capacity in understanding strategic litigation, communications, and messaging.

Some Grant Partners gave examples of how they are now better positioned to advocate for system reform. For example, JustRight Scotland are bringing a test case (following a case in Strasburg) about the issue of young Vietnamese people trafficked for cannabis cultivation. They have also done media work on this and are looking at how to use the Scottish Constitution as an advocacy tool.

This also demonstrates the crossover between the Influencing and Advice and Representation grants, as JustRight Scotland is funded through the latter theme. Citizen’s UK have led on a research project with Kings College London on the economic impact of regularisation. Because the researchers (who have lived experience of insecure immigration status) built such strong relationships with the people they are working with, they were able to ask very sensitive questions to undocumented people, including about work status and whether they have children in school. This has enabled them to make a strong economic case for regularisation.

Citizen’s UK have had meetings with MPs and built teams of constituents to lobby them around this. Their partners RAMP connected them with senior civil servants doing a role-play exercise on regularisation in order to help develop their influencing approaches. One Grant Partner said that being able to link policy and service delivery meant they were better placed to advocate for reform as a result of a legal policy role funded by JTI: *‘The Legal Policy Director noticed something happening through this legal advice that we provide. She shared that with other organisations to see if anyone else would notice this and then got it raised by an MP in Parliament, which got a response from the Home Office.’ (Grant Partner 3)*

## Goal 2: immigration organisations are more sustainable, better networked, and more representative of the communities they serve

Activities that are intended to lead to immigration organisations that are more sustainable, better networked and more representative of the communities they serve include: funding training, supervision and wellbeing support for frontline staff; funding partnership working; building regional immigration sector infrastructure; coordinating networking and relationship building activities with grant partners and funders; and generating research and supporting learning about immigration legal advice.

In the short-term, these activities aim to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Improving access of frontline staff and supervisors to training, supervision and wellbeing support.
- Increasing the number of people with lived experience being employed in immigration advice roles.
- Increasing funders' understanding of the rationale for funding immigration advice.
- Increasing Grant Partners' connections, networks and partnerships among grant partners and with funders.
- Increasing learning about sector needs and ways of working.
- Improved referral routes for people accessing services.
- Organisations having an improved understanding of structural racism and oppression.

In the medium-term, these outcomes are intended to contribute to:

- Funding partners continuing to fund JTI's work.
- Organisations having greater capacity to undertake their work.
- Organisations being better able to demonstrate the impact of their work.
- Organisations making better use of legal aid - and being in a better position to take on legal aid contracts.
- Organisations being better placed to tackle structural racism and oppression.
- In the longer-term, it is hoped that this will lead to regional and national collaboration being embedded as a sector practice; improvements to regional immigration advice infrastructure; and new and additional sources of funding being established for the sector.

### Overall evidence of progress towards Goal 2

- Grant Partners have strengthened and developed their capacity as a result of the funding and support. They have more capacity as a result of greater numbers of paid staff, more funding, and significantly stronger networks. Moving towards a more professionalised approach with more qualified staff and greater capacity has enabled them to be more strategic.
- There is, however, less overall progress towards improved referral routes as so much time is required to streamline case management systems.



## Goal 2: Progress towards short term outcome - more people with lived experience are employed in immigration advice roles

Of the three Grant Partners funded under the Advice and Representation theme, two had recruited staff with lived experience into immigration advice roles.

As with the Influencing theme, Grant Partners described how they had taken more of an organisational focus on lived experience. GMIAU for example has 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. Members of the group are given vouchers as compensation for their time.

A Grant Partner have found one of their biggest challenges to be how to create more paid opportunities. This grant has enabled them to create a new paid role: *'We have an incredible team who are passionate and motivated, and we want to harness that in a sustainable way. We continue to look for more funding but the exceptional support from the JTI team [...] has enabled us to create a full-time role for one lived experience team member rather than depending on the passion and drive of a volunteer who is personally affected. Being able to pay that person is in of itself something I am really proud of. And the fact that we have been able to get funding to pay people for the incredible work they have [previously] done for nothing.'* (Grant Partner 4)

## Goal 2: Progress towards short term outcome - funders better understand the rationale for funding immigration advice

There is evidence that JTI funding is increasing funders' understanding of the rationale for funding immigration work.

One Grant Partner described how having the JTI funding meant they were better able to leverage more funding. They attribute this to having funding from high profile grant makers, which in turn attracts other funding: *'Being able to raise money that is outside the fund is a success.'* (Grant Partner 4)

JustRight Scotland described how they had been proactively approached by another funder, as a result of the work they were doing with JTI.

These findings suggest that having JTI funding in itself is an important vote of confidence in an organisation, which in turn generates additional funding.

As outlined in the Background section above, for the funders we spoke to, a sign of success will be JTI working to develop greater access to statutory funding. The draft influencing strategy has an activity focused on: *Reaching out to Local Authorities and exploring match-funding opportunities together with funded partners.* As this work is undertaken, it will be important to ensure that successes and learning are captured.



## Goal 2: Progress towards short term outcome - increased connections, networks and partnerships among grant partners and with funders

Grant Partners have developed stronger, wider networks as a result of being part of the Initiative. These increased networks take five main forms:

1. Wider formal partnerships and collaborations.
2. Stronger local and grassroots networks.
3. New relationships with funders and other stakeholders.
4. New relationships with and between Grant Partners.
5. New relationships with the wider sector.

There has also been learning about the time needed to develop partnerships and the way in which grant partners want to interact.

### **1) Wider partnerships**

Whilst working in partnership is important for all Grant Partners, five received specific partnership grants. Under these, one lead partner receives and distributes JTI funding amongst a formal partnership. Working in this way is enabling Grant Partners to share experiences, develop shared goals and design more effective referral systems. For example, GMIAU's report states that: *'The partnership meetings between all the agencies involved in the partnership have been very positive, including for example, Asylum Link Merseyside's request to use the money allocated to them to go to Merseyside Law Centre, so that the legal advice fits within a legal advice setting rather than a less formal destitution service. This was an unexpected outcome but one which is a sign of the strength of the partnership and its shared goals.'*

The report reflects this: *'It has been a challenge to set something up of this nature when we are under pressure to meet the demand for immigration legal advice in the region. However, we know it's in our longer-term interests to do so and everyone has put in a major effort.'*

One Grant Partner found that some of the other organisations in the partnership that won the funding had low capacity for delivery. This has subsequently improved, but they wonder if more could be done to check delivery capability during the application.

Given that this would typically not be a funders' responsibility, this suggests that at application stage JTI could offer further guidance on how to ensure all partners are delivery ready.

### **2) Stronger local and grassroots networks**

By using the funding to increase staff numbers, Grant Partners have had more internal capacity to develop stronger networks with organisations working on immigration advice.

Developing these networks and contacts typically takes considerable staff time; without extra staffing this would not have been possible.

For example, Reunite Families UK has created a local community network within the Midlands with organisations working on immigration issues. They are now starting to develop networks in London and Cardiff.

One of the funders we spoke to felt that JTI's support and development of partnerships was increasingly visible in the funding applications they see - and in the way their grantees are working together and sharing experiences effectively.

One Grant Partner explained having more staff in post meant that they were able to help other organisations: *'We're now going in there and delivering them free info sessions to their groups, not just their staff, but the people they support. It feels like we are much more embedded in the community from that perspective. We're now able to be a lot more proactive. That's been something that's [not only] 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 7)

JustRight Scotland has now set up a quarterly event with grassroots organisations using the JTI funding: *'We wouldn't be able to do this without the additional grassroots budget.'*

### **3) New relationships with funders and other stakeholders**

Some Grant Partners described how JTI made efforts to put them in touch with funders and wider stakeholders; this was greatly appreciated and offered concrete benefits. For example, following a Community of Impact Session on judicial review, Reunite Families UK were put in touch with a business consultant.

### **4) Between Grant Partners**

Grant Partners were appreciative of the efforts JTI has made to foster the connections between the Partners: *'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 JTI.'* (Grant Partner 5)

The Community of Impact sessions have been an important element of getting to know and learn from different organisations: *'There are a handful we would not have been connected with or know or have an insight into their work...That is an added bonus: to be part of the community.'* (Grant Partner 6); *'We've been able to do networking with organisations that we weren't really linked with before. For example, with organisations doing similar work but in different UK jurisdictions to learn from them - looking at their service models to see what we could be doing.'* (Grant Partner 2)

Grant Partners appreciate the way that this network enables them to raise their profile with other organisations working on immigration issues: *'They provide a platform for our organisation to showcase our work between the other network members, as well as using us as an example of good practice.'* (Grant Partner 8)

A Grant Partner describes the useful networks developed during a Community of Impact session: *'This was extremely informative but also helped us to network with other immigration experts and other organisations.'*

Some Grant Partners felt that efforts to develop a strong network between them have been hampered by the necessity of being online, as well as by lack of time to attend meetings. They were not all aware of who the different Grant Partners are: *'There's always something a little bit lacking online as it can be a bit more challenging to get to know one another.'* (Grant Partner 9); *'I don't think we've really engaged with the community. It is our fault. It is just [a lack of] time.'* (Grant Partner 10)

In addition to these practical barriers, some Grant Partners also identified other reasons they had not fully engaged with the wider Initiative.

Firstly, not all Grant Partners were clear about the purpose of the Community of Impact events and felt that clarity about this would help them decide whether to engage more. Secondly, some were already connected with one another, and felt that these connections were sufficient. Linked to this, a minority did not necessarily feel a synergy with other organisations simply because they were all funded by the same grant-maker.

Part of this was a question of the extent to which working across different jurisdictions (England, Scotland and Northern Ireland) would prove fruitful: *'It is not a priority for us to feel part of the wider Initiative. Ultimately collaboration and partnership is a good thing to do, but for finding people to collaborate with, looking at who our funders fund is not the natural place to start.'* (Grant Partner 3)

Some Grant Partners reflected on the time and resource it takes to make partnerships work and to keep them engaged; some felt they had not budgeted enough for this: *'One of my issues is about how I keep the engagement going - it will require more effort [than I'd realised] to maintain that partnership.'* (Grant Partner 1); *'The time that we actually spent on the project compared to how much we thought we might when we were designing the proposal and the project is probably quite different.'* (Grant Partner 9)

Several Grant Partners reflected that it is important to bear in mind the degree of both time and capacity it takes to establish and nurture partnerships of this nature; in light of this, they were grateful for JTI's trusting approach to reporting which understands that progress takes time. They therefore do not feel under pressure to demonstrate impact from networks.

## **5) With the wider sector**

Through a raised profile and better connections, Grant Partners are also connecting and delivering services to a wider range of organisations than previously: *'We've been approached by different organisations in the sector that want to be trained - that's a big impact.'* (Grant Partner 8); *'For a small organisation we have a presence in quite a few places. The grant has given us a presence we did not have to the same extent before. We just got a contract to run training courses. It is helping to prove our reputation externally.'* (Grant Partner 10)

## Goal 2: Progress towards short term outcome - learning generated about sector needs and ways of working

JTI has undertaken various activities to generate learning about sector needs and ways of working. Research into various aspects of the legal advice sector has been commissioned. This includes the following reports and briefings:

- Report: How the remote delivery of immigration advice evolved during Covid.
- Briefing on the Need for Legal Advice and Advocacy for Ukraine Nationals.
- Briefing on the Legal Needs of Afghans in the UK.
- Report: A Huge Gulf: demand and supply for immigration legal advice in London.

There is currently a research project underway mapping local authority funding of immigration advice.

In the North East, JTI is (with Justice Lab) funding a project to build the data maturity of not-for-profits in the immigration legal advice and support sector.

As part of the learning partnership, m2 has been commissioned to support JTI to develop a learning plan. This will include ways to learn about sector needs and ways of working and ensure that data is collected effectively and ethically.

Through the Community of Impact, JTI is encouraging a culture of reflection and sharing learning, and some Grant Partners are keen to spend time thinking about the difference their work makes and what can be learnt from this: *'I want to slow down a little bit and measure the impact of what went right. We've done lot of papers, reports, research, interviews, events and report, all of that. I've just wanted to really go back to see where the impact on all of the work was that we've been doing - and then maybe focus on one or two or three areas instead of doing [too] many things. Try to choose one or two causes that matter.'* (Grant Partner 8)

## Goal 2: Progress towards short-term outcome – frontline staff and supervisors have better access to training, supervision, and wellbeing support

There has been significant progress made towards improving access to training, supervision and wellbeing support for frontline staff and supervisors. Activities intended to contribute to this outcome are the Community of Impact sessions and funding training for staff, alongside some wellbeing activities. Grant Partners have accessed training, accreditation, and some wellbeing support as a result of the Initiative. This has made a positive difference both to the amount of support on offer and to the quality of that support.

### **Community of Impact**

The Community of Impact sessions have offered training and information on specific elements of the law, as well as cross-cutting themes such as lived experience. Most Grant Partners found the training sessions helpful and have been able to use the learning in their work:

*‘There was a really interesting workshop on judicial review and using strategic litigation as a tool in campaigning. We had just embarked on legal action against the Home Office on detentions. It was super helpful. Lots of learning to bring back to the team.’ (Grant Partner 6); ‘It is amazing they do these network meetings. The events are online, and they pick a topic that interests other grantees. I’ve attended a few of them and I found it very useful because the topics were very much related to our work.’ (Grant Partner 8)*

Some Grant Partners found the focused Community of Impact sessions more useful than those where organisations shared learning. They were not clear about the purpose of these and felt that organisations were at such different points it was not as relevant: *‘Some were about sharing learning. Legal advice. Litigation. Very helpful and rich. One that was less useful was where everyone shared experiences. It felt difficult. People were not working on similar things. I think the learning was good, but the co-ordination was not.’ (Grant Partner 5)*

We heard that the purpose of these sharing sessions needs to be clearer so that Grant Partners know what to expect from the sessions. In comparison to other sessions, the anti-racism session was found to be less useful: *‘Why are we having these workshops? When we are participating, for example, on anti-racism. We were very advanced compared to other organisations. Are we an example to other organisations or are we sharing our experience equally?... That is what I did not get.’ (Grant Partner 8)*

### **Widening training to other organisations**

Some Grant Partners are also actively developing a training and support offer to other organisations as a result of the Initiative funding new roles. In turn, this develops wider capacity to offer immigration advice.

JustRight Scotland deliver free legal advice through webinars and training: *‘Working with grassroots organisations so they have access to our free legal advice. Wednesday – free legal advice. Organisations like Ubuntu, Women Shelter, Govan Community Project access this service. This is run alongside the information session with Maryhill Integration Network.’*

Hibiscus describe how, as a result of the JTI funding, they have identified training for government officials, policy makers and NGO staff and developed training packages on certain topics of intersectional needs for marginalised black women, cultural mediation and anti-trafficking and anti-racism: *‘Hibiscus trained over 80 professionals from Women in Prison, Women at the well and other women’s organisations that work in the criminal justice sector. The policy team have been invited by the Unlocked Graduates (who are working to break cycles of reoffending by training frontline prison officers) to develop and deliver a training on modern slavery and anti-trafficking as part of the training package for frontline prison officers.’*

### **Formal training**

As a result of the funding, some Grant Partners now have been able to train and upskill advice staff. GMIAU’s trainee has completed the IAAS/Law Society accreditation at level 2 and has additionally undertaken Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) levels 1, 2, and 3. This means they are able to offer advice on more complex cases.

In their report GMIAU describe how the role of the solicitor/trainer has been critical:



*‘[They] have brought extra supervision capacity and the ability to support everyone going through the OISC/SRA/IAAS/SQE routes to qualification.’*

GMIAU pointed to specific learning about the effectiveness and speed of the routes to qualification through the OISC due to the support available to train a new member of staff. Knowing this will help them plan training in the future: *‘In immigration terms, trainees are better to complete the OISC route to qualification at level 3 and consider the solicitor/SQE route later. This means that they become qualified to take on cases within 12 – 18 months. It also makes it more accessible for people who haven’t already got legal academic qualifications but who are more than capable of doing the work and all that goes with it.’*

### **Support with wellbeing**

Several Grant Partners offer wellbeing and therapeutic support to staff. Whilst these activities are not directly funded by the Initiative, they do demonstrate the way in which JTI prioritises a focus upon wellbeing as a criteria in grant-making decisions.

Grant Partners describe feeling under significant pressure. They would welcome further support with wellbeing. Some Grant Partners would like to be able to offer clinical supervision to frontline staff, particularly those with lived experience who could be re-traumatised through their work: *‘You are in it 24/7 and it is a tough time to be doing this kind of work.’ (Grant Partner 7); ‘Organisations work in such a challenging environment...maybe if some of their funds could go towards mental health and wellbeing.... There is a massive issue with burnout and staff turnover. If support with that came from the grant, we would feel we are not alone.’ (Grant Partner 8)*

In response to the need for further support around wellbeing, JTI has funded the Black Wellbeing Collective to run 8-week wellbeing sessions (starting January 2023). The aim of the programme will be to tackle the wellbeing issues in the sector and provide validation comfort and understanding for individuals, specifically racialised groups who work in the migration sector.

## **Goal 2: Progress towards short-term outcome – improved referral routes for people accessing services**

Some Grant Partners have made progress with increasing referrals between organisations, and in developing the necessary systems and processes in relation to this.

Reunite Families UK describe in their report how the funding has enabled them to employ staff and contractors and provide referral services: *‘Our membership grows every week and across the last year we have had over 1,700 active members engage in our group. We are now working with a safeguarding system [...] that will help us not only provide a secure safeguarding database but also provide us with statistics relating to the number of people RFUK is helping - and how.’*

Looking at how referrals in operate within partnerships is enabling some Grant Partners to look strategically at how not to duplicate services: *‘[We’re thinking about] how do we work in a way that’s not duplicating efforts of other organisations; looking where we would be making referrals, but also complementary to where there’s a gap in their services.’ (Grant Partner 2)*

Getting referral systems to work effectively can be challenging and time consuming. Each organisation often has its own system which is not necessarily compatible with others. Getting through this therefore entails considerable effort to streamline systems and processes: *‘There are issues like what kind of case management systems we each have and whether they’re compatible with each other. How we jointly work on those things. It means we are spending a lot of time looking at systems, IT.’* (Grant Partner 1)

## Goal 2: Progress towards medium-term outcome – organisations have an improved understanding of structural racism and oppression

There is evidence of progress towards organisations having an improved understanding of structural racism and oppression. JTI’s focus on anti-racism has prompted some organisations to address the issue of structural racism. JTI has supported Grant Partners to look at organisational practice and process in the light of structural racism. All Grant Partners were invited to a Community of Impact event looking at structural racism and 28 people attended it. All Grant Partners are asked to report on progress in tackling structural racism in the annual reporting cycle. Some organisations have also had one-to-one support.

For some Grant Partners this was quite new territory: they were clear that being asked to think in this way was in itself a means of opening up important internal conversations: *‘Anti-racism is a big thing. Now everyone is doing their own internal policies and internal action plans into anti-racism because every organisation needs to be an anti-racist organisation. JTI can lead on this and make sure that we all have similar approaches.’* (Grant Partner 8); *‘It was clearly directed that we should do work in this area. It was pursued by the funders. They will ask about it. Give updates. They have brought in a consultant who is doing a large piece of work around equality, diversity, inclusion, etc. The funder has contributed to catalysing some work in our organisation around it.’* (Grant Partner 7)

Other Grant Partners have implemented internal training and programmes on anti-racism. IPPR has run a training programme for staff and set up a working group on racial justice to implement actions including embedding racial justice into its culture and research. For Hibiscus, this was an opportunity to develop their existing anti-racism work further. Their report sets out the reflective way in which they approached this: *‘Hibiscus conducted a series of exploratory conversations and workshops with people across the organisation. This involved meetings with members of the senior leadership team, Black (African and African heritage) staff members, global majority staff members, white staff members and members of the Trustee board. Hibiscus [...] developed a comprehensive intersectional action plan which will provide the framework for addressing specific issues. [...] The anti-racism action plan is integrated within the organisation’s strategic vision and have [sic] clear criteria for evaluating the progress made.’* (Grant Reporting)

Grant Partners reflected on the support they have had around anti-racism. The only aspect of the support some found less helpful was the Community of Impact session. As described previously, several Grant Partners commented that the purpose of this session was not well communicated. In practice, it felt uncomfortable for some of the BIPOC in the group:



*'I am not sure everyone was clear on what the organisers were looking to get out of it. These conversations are never comfortable. There was not a clear understanding about purpose.'* (Grant Partner 7); *'I felt if anything, it was less helpful than not [to] have it. If it was delivered well, it would have been really useful. Turned out, it felt like a bit of a tick boxing exercise and definitely a lot of white guilt or something.'* (Grant Partner 2)

Grant Partners largely felt that one-to-one support within organisations would be more helpful than group sessions in helping them to become anti-racist organisations: *'With anti-racism: if they can provide one-to-one support to organisations that might be better.'* (Grant Partner 3)

Looking ahead, further evidence will be required to see what changes have been made in implementing practice as well as in terms of writing policies.

### Goal 3: More people are able to secure justice

Progress towards JTI's third goal of increasing the number of people able to secure justice is intended to come about through:

- Policy outcomes to create a fairer and more equitable immigration system (Goal 1) resulting from influencing work, such as immigration policies being applied more fairly; improved administration of legal and aid funding for immigration legal advice, in the longer-term); and
- Outcomes related to creating a more sustainable, better networked and more representative immigration organisations (Goal 2), such as improved referral routes; increasing staff and capacity and skills and the numbers of people with lived experience employed in advice roles; and boosting organisational capacity and funding.

These outcomes are intended in the medium-term to increase people's access to good quality, timely, legal advice and support. Over time, this is intended to lead to more people being able to resolve their immigration status in a timely manner.

#### **Evidence of progress towards goal 3**

The relevant outcomes related to policy reform are intended to be achieved in the longer-term and are therefore out of scope of this report. However, progress towards short- and medium-term outcomes related to influencing suggest headway is being made towards this objective.

There is clearer evidence of progress towards increased staff capacity and skills (outlined previously in relation to Goal 2), which in turn is intended to increase access to good quality legal advice and support. Indeed, Grant Partners report that the quality of advice and support they are able to provide has improved

Grant Partners also report being able to support a greater number of people. However, it is challenging to quantify this increase, as Grant Partners collect the data in different ways.

### Goal 3: Progress towards medium term outcome: increased access to good quality, timely legal advice and support

As a result of the funding, Grant Partners have employed more people to give legal advice. This has resulted in increasing number of people accessing services as a result: *'The grant is paying for immigration posts that wouldn't otherwise have existed. I couldn't have employed [the case worker] other than through this route. That is massive, so there's a benefit for the individual organisation. There's also a benefit to people who are now getting the service who wouldn't have had it previously.'* (Grant Partner 1)

JustRight Scotland describes how, as a result of increased staff numbers due to the JTI funding, they are now working with more migrant children than ever: *'the guardianship services doubled in size and the national transfer scheme is now mandatory.'*

There is also increased capacity across the GMIAU partnership, meaning that more people are accessing advice: *'The grant has put newly developing and existing immigration advice services on a firmer footing for the next three years. We have provided immigration advice and representation, in a number of settings, to people who would otherwise have been unable to afford or access immigration legal advice. The solicitor appointed to work with [the partnership] has increased capacity and they have taken on an increased number of cases, including more complex cases.'*

GMIAU have assisted an additional 1,555 people over the course of the year as a result of increased casework capacity: *'This comes from Manchester Refugee Support Network being able to operate a drop-in immigration advice service, twice a week, funded by a part-time OISC level 2 caseworker, who is supervised by GMIAU and who supervises an OISC level 1 caseworker. Revive have taken on cases at OISC level 3 through the post that is funded by the grant.'*

As well as increased capacity to deliver advice: *'the legal work I have been doing in the last 12 months has been great. It has been a boost of capacity that has transformed us.'* (Grant Partner 7), the JTI funding has enabled staff to be accredited at a higher level, meaning they are tackling more complex cases: *'It's enabled us to get accredited at OISC Level 3 which we wouldn't have done otherwise so we're able to give higher level advice and able to deal with more cases - and more complex cases. We were referring so many cases to law firms it felt a bit ridiculous. It has allowed us to manage our own work ourselves.'* (Grant Partner 10); *'Getting a grant to fund a post to go through that process [accreditation with OISC]. That is a great thing. We would not otherwise have been able to afford it.'* (Grant Partner 1); *'We've been able to help somebody who is a member that was suffering from domestic violence. We were able to be able to help extricate her and bring her back to the UK. We also helped somebody else who is also dealing with domestic violence. We overturned cases of visas that were unfairly refused.'* (Grant Partner 4)

In their report, Settled describe how they are moving into more complex areas of work: *'it has been an extra resource at the right time.'*

## Conclusions

### **Process and values**

JTI is living up to its values. The thoughtful, expert and relational way in which the staff team both work with and support the Grant Partners is greatly appreciated.

This has enabled Grant Partners to develop a sense of partnership and trust with JTI, and to raise any issues with staff openly. The fact that JTI is a funder collaboration is seen very positively by Grant Partners who feel they benefit from the collective.

Grant Partners and funders are not all entirely clear about JTI's overall strategy and feel more time and space to discuss this would be helpful. Whilst JTI's communications with Grant Partners are generally clear, some messages are not universally getting through.

### **Goal 1: A more just and equitable immigration system**

The main progress towards this goal has been around building additional influencing capacity through increased staff posts. There is also some progress in levels of organisational understanding of strategic litigation, communications, and messaging.

There has been less progress to date with mobilising and building support around key influencing goals, largely due to an external environment in which undertaking influencing activity is very challenging.

There is a weight of expectation upon JTI to make systemic change within this context. With a relatively small team taking a deeply relational approach to Grant Partners, having the capacity to do the more systemic influencing work and strategising can be challenging. There is not yet an understanding amongst Grant Partners and funders about JTI's own role in influencing for change.

### **Goal 2: Immigration organisations are more sustainable, better networked and more representative of the communities they serve**

Grant Partners have strengthened and developed their capacity as a result of the funding and support from JTI. They have more capacity as a result of greater numbers of paid staff, more funding (including from other sources), and significantly stronger networks. Moving towards a more professionalised approach with better qualified staff and greater capacity has enabled them to be more strategic.

There is less overall progress towards improved referral routes, as so much time is required to streamline case management systems, whilst demand for services continues to increase.

### **Goal 3: More people are able to secure justice**

The progress towards increasing organisational capacity to provide immigration advice, as well as staff skills and accreditation, suggest that headway is being made towards this goal. The number of people Grant Partners report as accessing support has increased, and the quality of the advice and support they offer has improved.

## *Recommendations*

Overall, JTI can offer proof of concept around its ability to convene and fund effectively. In the next stage of the Initiative, the focus can shift towards the longer-term vision. These recommendations offer some ways in which to progress further towards the outcomes.

### **Process and values**

- Develop further opportunities for funders to engage and constructively challenge at a strategic level - for example by dedicating one quarterly meeting entirely to strategy.
- Include information about JTI's structure and decision-making processes in impact reporting to Grant Partners.
- Hold a session with Grant Partners and funders to explain the ToC.
- Revise communications about available support (such as childcare) to Grant Partners to ensure messages are clear and accessible.

### **Goal 1: A more just and equitable immigration system**

- Develop JTI's influencing strategy, particularly in relation to JTI's role in working with statutory and other funders.
- Explain JTI's own role in influencing to funders and Grant Partners.
- Establish if the influencing strategy requires additional internal capacity to implement it.
- Work with Grant Partners to establish what increased strategic collaboration and coordination around Grant Partner influencing activity would look like for JTI, and therefore what support could be put in place.

### **Goal 2: Immigration organisations are more sustainable, better networked, and more representative of the communities they serve**

- Establish what would be the best mechanism for enabling frontline staff, particularly those with lived experience, to access clinical supervision.
- Clarify the purpose and expectation of Community of Impact sessions, particularly those that are about sharing experience.
- Revisit and re-shape the Community of Impact session on anti-racism;
- Develop Community of Impact sessions designed to support Grant Partners in accessing legal aid and other statutory funding.
- Explore how to support budgeting for building partnerships in grant applications.
- Hold a discussion with Grant Partners about the sustainability of their funding after the grant period.

### **Goal 3: More people are able to secure justice**

- Consider how to best support organisations to understand and capture data on the number of people they support in a systematic way.

## *Appendix I: Interviewees*

### **Grant Partners**

- **Hibiscus**
- **Citizens UK**
- **Migrant Centre Northern Ireland (MCNI)**
- **Reunite Families UK**
- **Women for Refugee Women**
- **Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU)**
- **Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)**
- **JustRight Scotland**
- **Settled**
- **Rainbow Migration**

### **Funders and stakeholders**

- **AB Charitable Trust**
- **Migration Exchange**
- **Paul Hamlyn Foundation**
- **Barrow Cadbury Trust**