



JUSTICE | HONG
CENTRE | KONG

Impact Report

July 2024 - June 2025

Message from our Executive Director



What does justice look like for someone who has fled violence, crossed borders, and arrived in a place where the future remains uncertain?

At Justice Centre, we believe it starts with being heard. It means having a chance to explain your story, supported by people who understand the system – and care enough to walk with you as you navigate it.

This year, our work focused not only on winning cases, but on reinforcing the quality and humanity of Hong Kong’s broader ecosystem of support for refugees and other forcibly displaced people. From our legal victories in asylum appeals, to expanding the support we offer to people affected by detention, from growing a network of specialist mental health professionals, to developing new practice resources – we’ve grown in depth, scale and reach.

Across the region and beyond, 2024 was marked by continued movement towards more equitable and collaborative responses to forced displacement. Through the Global Refugee Forum Legal Community Pledge,

we reaffirmed our commitment to work with different legal actors to increase access to high-quality legal support. Our work is grounded in the belief in the resilience and ability of people with direct experience of displacement. We have launched new projects to empower individuals—especially youths and survivors of gender-based violence—to shape their own paths, and to have a voice in the systems that affect them.

As we look ahead, we are committed to the kind of reflection and responsiveness that allow us to remain true to our values while ensuring that our work addresses systemic gaps and leads to lifechanging outcomes.

Because whatever the challenges we face—new conflicts, shrinking resources, closed borders, and more—our aim remains the same: to ensure that everyone gets a fair chance at a safe and decent life.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Lynette Nam
Executive Director



Mission & Intended Impact

Justice Centre Hong Kong is a non-profit, non-political organisation that provides free legal, welfare and psychosocial support to refugees, torture survivors and others who have been forcibly displaced. Through strategic and community initiatives we work to ensure displaced peoples have equitable access to high quality services and a voice in our society.

Our mission is to make sure no one walks alone on the path to protection, justice and a decent life.

All our work is designed to:

- achieve better legal outcomes for displaced people with their protection claims under Hong Kong law and enhance their well-being throughout legal proceedings
- help displaced people develop improved sense of agency and self-efficacy
- enable practitioners working with displaced people to deliver appropriate & high-quality support
- ensure practitioners can apply positive legal precedents and best practices with improved access to practitioner resources
- enable laws, policies and practices to integrate the perspectives and needs of displaced people
- ensure solutions are people centred and based on evidence

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Together our intended impact contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Read our strategy and theory of change here



Population & Circumstances

Currently there are over 15,800 forcibly displaced people seeking protection in Hong Kong. Many of them have fled violence and persecution, and survived torture, trafficking or sexual violence in their home country or on their journey.

In Hong Kong, men, women and children **find safety** and receive basic social assistance. But the wait for an outcome on their asylum claims is often lengthy, and full of uncertainty and legal complications. Meanwhile they cannot work and most survive on a government support package that puts them below the poverty line.

>15,800 people¹

8% children

38% female¹

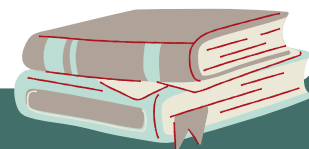


HK\$40 vouchers per day for food and necessities

HK\$1500 per month to landlord

No right to work²

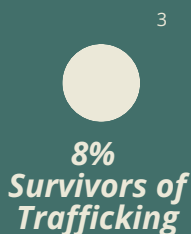
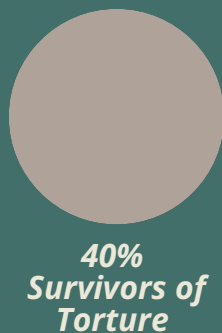
Barriers to higher education



The people we serve

40% Female

60% Male



100% Survivors of Violence & Displacement

Country of Origin:⁴



Egypt



Bangladesh



Uganda



Sri Lanka



Pakistan



Kenya



Somalia



Afghanistan

[1] Demographic data based on data provided by ImmD as of 31 December 2024.

[2] Substantiated claimants may request discretionary permission to work.

[3] One person may have experienced multiple forms of violence.

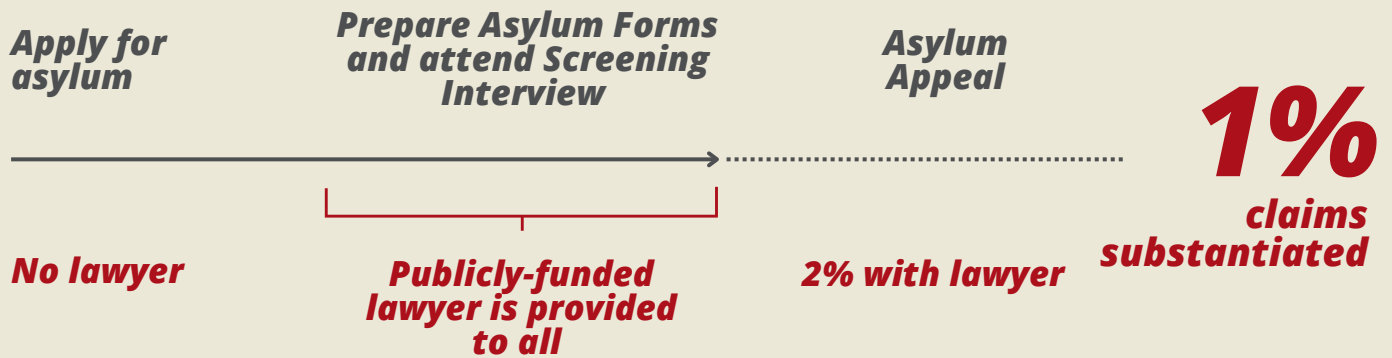
[4] From the most highly represented countries among Justice Centre clients.

Asylum Process⁴

Access to Justice Gap

To claim protection people must navigate a complicated system, in languages with which they might often be unfamiliar. Government-funded legal representation is limited and unavailable at key stages of the process.

No legal help is provided at the outset. In 2024, 98% had to represent themselves on appeal. Only a fraction of asylum claims are accepted. Many risk being returned to a situation where they face serious harm.



It can take *over a decade* for an asylum application to be finalised.

Immigration Detention

Admittances into immigration detention in 2024

7,946



In Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre (CIC) alone there were **18 cases** of self-harm or suicide in 2024.

[4] While legal meanings differ, “Non-refoulement Protection” and “Asylum” are used interchangeably in this report, for the sake of simplicity.

Immigration detention is a form of administrative detention, where people are deprived of their liberty without an order of the court. Traumatized persons may be detained for indefinite periods with limited access to legal support.

Children can be separated from their detained parents with limited visitation rights. In some instances, this can last for a considerable portion of their childhood.

- Limited phone call time (5 min per week for CIC detainees)
- 1 visit per day from 1 friend, family (incl children) or NGO representative. Visits are 15 min, behind glass
- All communications are monitored

TOWARDS IMPACT Legal Aid & Empowerment



- *Displaced people achieve better legal outcomes*
- *Displaced people develop improved sense of agency and self-efficacy*

Justice Centre's dedicated team of asylum experts and qualified lawyers work with renowned legal firms to provide tailored and in-depth **legal services** to people seeking protection in Hong Kong. Together, we support people through all stages of seeking **non-refoulement protection**.

173

people benefitted from full-spectrum legal support to get the status needed to rebuild lives

330

people received 1:1 legal information to make informed decisions

88% ^[5]

of outcomes at asylum appeal have been successful with a Justice Centre team

6 *legal visits conducted to people in immigration detention*

100% *success rate seeking redress for unlawful detention of refugees and torture survivors*

45 *attendees at the first Toolkit information session*

53 *people in detention assisted to understand legal options*

For people affected by immigration detention, we provide information on legal options and support torture survivors to seek redress for unlawful deprivations of liberty.

We expanded our reach to individuals in immigration detention through regular in-person visits, enabling faster case triage and more responsive legal and welfare support. In parallel, we launched a Detention Self-Help Toolkit—a rights-based, community-informed resource that empowers detained individuals to better understand their options. The toolkit is now being rolled out in the community through information sessions and a dedicated community paralegal programme.

Follow us on social media to learn when the toolkit is available online.

[5] Appeal representation with our law firm partners, compared to a 1% success rate among the general asylum seeking population.



Client Stories

Anne⁶

fled her home country due to threats from an ethnic gang, and arrived in Hong Kong to seek asylum. One day, during a routine reporting appointment, she was unexpectedly detained—despite having an ongoing case. Fortunately, a friend alerted Justice Centre to her situation.

We acted quickly, providing Anne with detailed information by mail to ensure she could meet a critical court deadline and safeguard her legal rights. With this support, Anne was able to progress her case and was released from immigration detention shortly afterwards.

[Justice Centre] are very helpful and supportive to our family when we really need help[...] With Justice Centre's help, we were able to get a lawyer through legal aid so that our baby's case could be properly heard."

Justice Centre Client, 2024

Marie

is a survivor of family violence from Africa. She came to Hong Kong after enduring years of extreme physical violence and marital rape. She feared returning home due to the risk of further harm from her abusive partner. Her initial claim for protection was rejected.

In partnership with a pro bono law firm, Justice Centre supported her through the appeal proceedings, helping her articulate the risks she faced and ensuring that the gendered nature of her claim was properly presented. Drawing on our Practice Advisory on Family Violence, we made the case that intimate partner violence—when paired with state inaction—can amount to persecution. Her claim was substantiated, marking an important step in the recognition of gender-based violence as a valid ground for non-refoulement protection in Hong Kong.

[6] Client names have been changed.



TOWARDS IMPACT

Welfare Advice & Mental Health Support



Goals

- Displaced people achieve better legal outcomes
- Displaced people develop improved sense of agency and self-efficacy

Justice Centre's Psychosocial Services are committed to addressing the **welfare** needs and enhancing the **well-being of people** affected by trauma and destitution while they undergo legal processes and pursue solutions to their displacement.

Welfare advice

Our welfare team support people to access housing, schooling and medical care. For substantiated claimants, we help them connect with employers, obtain work permits, and open bank accounts, empowering people to provide for themselves and their families.

Mental health support

Our mental health services provide specialist, culturally sensitive support for refugees, asylum seekers, and other displaced individuals navigating extreme adversity. We understand the psychological toll of displacement — from violence, persecution and family separation, to dangerous journeys and prolonged uncertainty and isolation in Hong Kong.

Over the past year, we expanded our 1:1 counselling programme, coordinating a team of psychologists and therapists to provide free therapy sessions to people struggling with trauma and ongoing stressors, many of whom are survivors of torture or gender-based violence.

With our help, people were able to access:

11

Pathways beyond HK

58

Healthcare

9

Financial Agency (Bank Accounts)

34

Livelihoods & Permission to Work

55

Emergency Welfare Provisions

20

Education & No Objection to Study

39

Shelter and Housing

This year we saw a significant increase in the need for emergency shelter

Growing our mental health services:

14

Counsellors on our Panel

42

People Received Therapy

3

Children Received Specialist Therapy

209

Therapy Sessions

Client Stories



Senna

When Senna, a mother of seven, arrived in Hong Kong after years of displacement, she was physically unwell, suffering from symptoms of trauma, and unsure where to turn. She is a survivor of sexual violence, and some of her children were born of the assaults she endured. Others have witnessed serious harm committed against her.

Justice Centre intervened to prevent destitution, arranging emergency shelter for the family. Our legal team is assisting with her asylum claim, while our welfare team arranged medical appointments and trauma counselling with a therapist on our panel. We also helped her communicate with service providers, while navigating publicly funded social services.

Her children are now beginning to settle, and the family is taking steps toward greater stability in extremely challenging circumstances.

Edward

After losing his entire family to targeted violence, Edward arrived in Hong Kong seeking safety but instead found himself sleeping on the streets and facing deep emotional distress. Within a week, he was detained. Upon release, he was referred to Justice Centre.

He shared feelings of being overwhelmed and isolated. We urgently connected him to a therapist on our panel, whom he has been seeing regularly. We also supported him to access community classes and group activities - small but important steps toward rebuilding a sense of connection and stability.

We continue to support him legally and socially, as he seeks protection and the chance to begin again.

The main thing I am so grateful for was [...] my Mental Health. Helping me through all the ups and downs was the best thing that anyone ever done for me. Thank you.

Justice Centre Client, 2024



TOWARDS IMPACT

Training & Technical Assistance



Goals

- *Displaced people achieve better legal outcomes*
- *Practitioners working with displaced people deliver high-quality support*
- *Practitioners apply positive precedents & best practices*

103+

lawyers across 7 law firms received training on asylum law

100%

*of attendees agreed that the trainings equipped them with the legal knowledge to **take on asylum matters** and **feel better prepared to work with clients** who have experienced traumatic events*

We draw on our expertise in international best practices and Hong Kong asylum procedures to provide training and technical support to legal professionals. Our goal is to equip practitioners with the tools to offer effective, trauma-informed support to people seeking protection.

In the past year, we have integrated specialised modules on gender-based violence and family violence as grounds for protection—drawing from our practice advisories on these topics. This ensures that the complex realities of gendered harm are properly understood and addressed in asylum claims.

Our trainings are CPD accredited and delivered by qualified lawyers.



Through our **2025 Mental Health Speaker Series**, we brought together leading experts and practitioners to explore core themes such as refugee trauma and social justice approaches to care.

Across six expert-led sessions—including trainings on Liberation Psychology, Narrative Exposure Therapy and medico-legal report writing—we expanded the capacity of our pro bono clinician panel and other NGO partners.

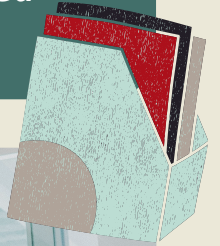
These sessions not only equipped professionals with practical tools to respond to the mental health needs of displaced clients, but also helped strengthen cross-sector relationships and lay the groundwork for more collaborative, informed approaches in an underdeveloped field.

TOWARDS IMPACT Strategic Casework



Goals

- *Displaced people achieve better legal outcomes*
- *Practitioners apply positive precedents & best practices*
- *Laws, policies & practices generate people centred solutions based on evidence*



Through our direct services we identify and advance cases that can lead to positive jurisprudence and incorporation of best practices to improve the legal outcomes for people seeking protection. Our casework strategies centre around effective screening and preparation, recognising that it is often in the interests of all parties to avoid litigation.

Specifically, we prioritise:

- Using casework to improve **procedural practices** and quality of decision-making throughout all stages of proceedings.
- Building a pipeline of cases that ensure **robust evidence** and arguments are consistently put before decision-makers.
- Strategically reinforcing **positive jurisprudence** achieved in the High Court to ensure its implementation at the administrative level.

In this year we have advanced work under these thematic areas:

Advancing access to legal protection for women fleeing sexual and gender-based violence



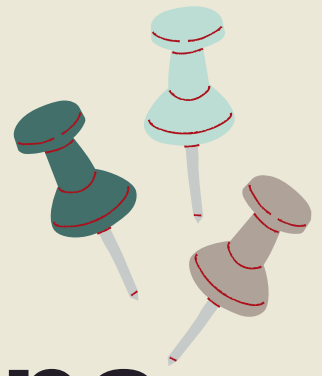
Reinforcing the procedural and substantive rights of asylum-seeking children

Achieving redress for unlawful detention of torture survivors



Advancing systems and pathways for stateless people





TOWARDS IMPACT Research & recommendations



Goals

- *Displaced people develop improved sense of agency and self-efficacy*
- *Laws, policies and practices integrate the perspectives and needs of displaced people*

Research sits at the heart of Justice Centre’s efforts to strengthen refugee protection in Hong Kong, providing the evidence base for fair and inclusive systems. Our research underpins **constructive recommendations and solutions** and integrates the perspectives of people with direct experience of displacement and related challenges.

Including Refugee Perspectives in Housing Reform

This year, Humanity Seekers—a refugee-led community group supported by Justice Centre—took part in discussions with a member of the Legislative Council on the Basic Housing Units Bill, sharing how proposed changes may unintentionally impact refugees.

Barred from working and relying on limited housing allowances, many refugees depend on subdivided units for shelter. However, exemptions and support measures in the Bill do not apply to them. Through this engagement, Humanity Seekers members highlighted the need for inclusive policy that accounts for everyone living in these conditions, regardless of status. Their participation marked a meaningful step towards ensuring refugee experiences are considered in public decision-making.

Co-Creating Guidelines for Legal Practitioners

Good legal practice begins with listening. Justice Centre and a partner law firm are developing professional guidelines for lawyers supporting people seeking protection—designed not only by legal experts, but in collaboration with refugee consultants.

Through a co-designed methodology, refugees are sharing their experiences working with legal professionals: what built trust, what created confusion, and how support could be improved. Their insights now form the foundation of a forthcoming practice advisory, aimed at promoting more effective legal support.

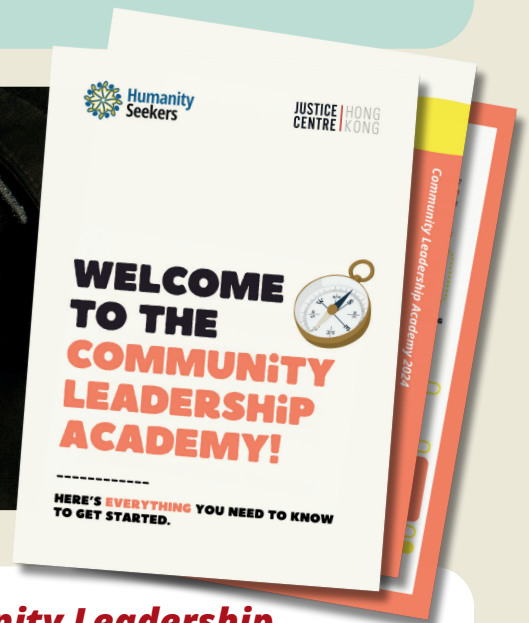
This participatory approach reflects our broader commitment to ensuring that people with lived experience help shape the systems intended to support them.

TOWARDS IMPACT Community Building



Goals

- Displaced people develop improved sense of agency and self-efficacy
- Laws, policies and practices integrate the perspectives and needs of displaced people



People seeking protection in Hong Kong have experienced displacement and disempowerment firsthand and are deeply aware of the issues facing their communities.

The **Humanity Seekers** initiative, led by refugees and facilitated by Justice Centre, promotes meaningful and positive interactions between refugees, asylum seekers, and Hong Kong society.

Project examples:

Paralegals for Protection: Community-Led Legal Empowerment

In March 2025, we began laying the foundations for Paralegals for Protection—a new initiative designed to strengthen legal awareness and peer support among refugee communities. We co-designed workshops with lived experience leaders and recruited our first cohort of 7 women as paralegal trainees. The programme formally launched shortly after this impact period and is already showing promise as an effective approach to building accessible, trusted, community-led support, empowering people to know and use the law for themselves.

Community Leadership Academy

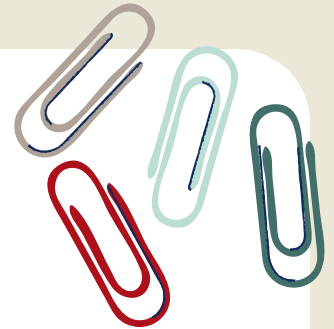
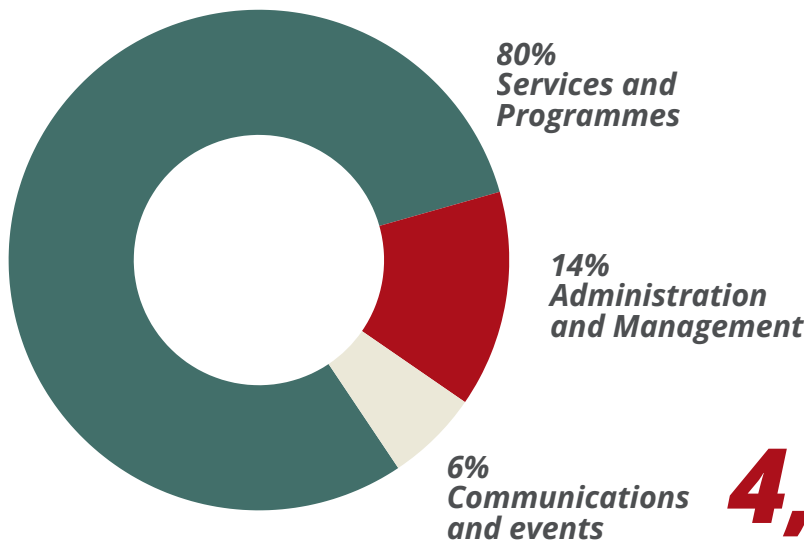
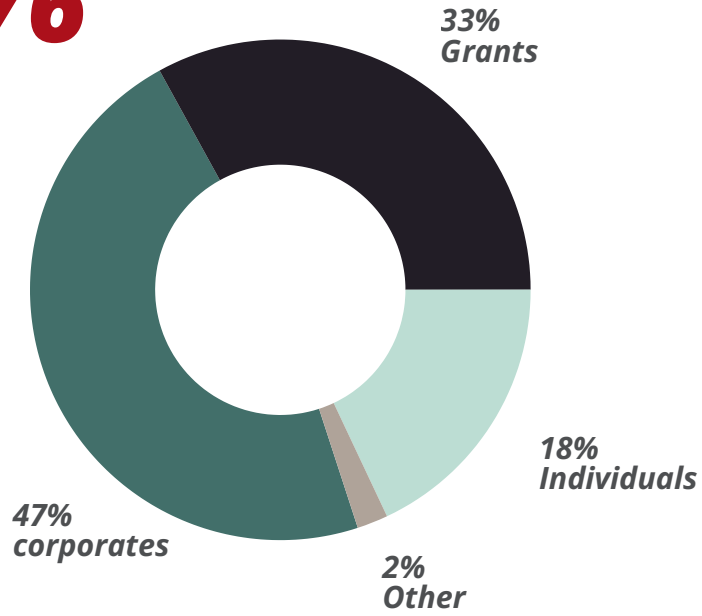
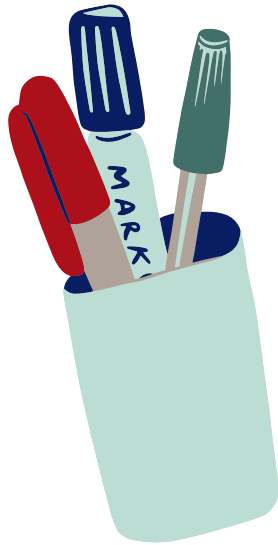
Through the Academy, a programme for refugee youths run in partnership with Humanity Seekers, refugees become empowered leaders, creating positive social impact – as a community, for the community.

This year's cohort saw 8 young people grow from passive recipients to active facilitators and changemakers. Alumni from the previous cycle returned as mentors, reinforcing the CLA's long-term aim: to foster a growing network of community leaders grounded in lived experience.

Financial Overview

Total Income

4,922,276



Total Expenditure

4,884,278

*We are working hard to close funding gaps for our crucial services and programmes.
Give generously to support our critical services.*

Get Involved

If you are motivated to **translate compassion to action**, we would love to hear from you!



| Fund our work:

Justice Centre provides expert support to clients with acute, complex needs, for no fee. Support impactful initiatives backed by experience, strong results, and trusted delivery.



| Donate your time:

We work closely with **lawyers**, medical doctors, mental health practitioners, social workers and other professionals to offer holistic services.



| Share your audience:

We deliver talks to **schools** and **corporates**, and at events to raise awareness of the issues we work on.



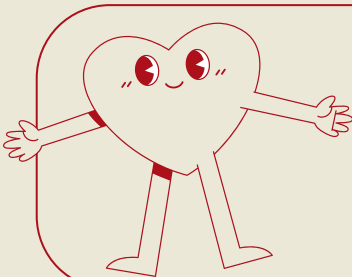
| Learn with us:

We offer educational activities for **students** to learn about social justice and get hands on experience in community work.



| Partner for Impact:

We work with **foundations** and in partnerships and networks to pilot, implement and scale up innovative and effective solutions.



| Fundraise for us:

We heartily welcome individuals and groups who are interested in fundraising for us. From sporting competitions to dinner parties, we can help you get started and work with you to make your fundraiser a success.

Donate now:
Every dollar counts.
Thank you for your generosity!



Contact us at info@justicecentre.org.hk or find out more about how you can get involved here:
<https://www.justicecentre.org.hk/get-involved/>

“[W]ith JC, my family has had/walked a long 10 year journey so far, which is the same times we have spent/lived in Hong Kong. [...] their doors have been always open before all and everyone [...], their teams have been on alert throughout the years ready to give the best advice and take the best action.

My family and other HK asylum seekers and refugees feel deep gratitude towards such bee cell and amazing source/fountain of restoring hope that bears the name of Justice Centre and all its lawyers, administrators.”

Donors & Partners

Thank you to our donors, partners and supporters for your **generosity, trust and collaboration**. Achieving access to justice and social good are joint endeavours, and we are grateful for our partners—long standing and new—for walking this road with us.


We extend our deep gratitude to our Law Firm Partners, and the teams of pro bono lawyers who have collectively dedicated thousands of hours to make sure that people fleeing conflict and violence are provided with the best legal help this city has to offer.


Get In Touch

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