



July 2023-  
June 2024

# Impact Report

# Message from our Executive Director



As we tune in to the news these days, we see a world rife with human beings mistreating each other. Escalating wars, abuse of minorities and exploitation of people in vulnerable situations remain stark reminders of the pervasive danger and injustices that many face daily. In these harsh realities, Hong Kong SAR offers protection to those from other countries who are forced to flee.

Here at Justice Centre, we hold a fundamental belief: everyone deserves a fair chance to live a safe and decent life, regardless of their circumstances or immigration status.

With the support of our skilled team of lawyers and a network of pro bono partners, we bridge critical legal aid gaps, and work with people who have been forcibly displaced to put their strongest case forward. We know that quality legal help can truly change outcomes: research shows that individuals with legal representation are five times more likely to succeed on appeal than those without. In our work, we've seen this power in action—89% of our clients have achieved positive outcomes through their asylum appeals—a striking contrast to the general 1% success rate.

We also recognise that a person's ability to participate in asylum proceedings is deeply connected to their mental health. Alongside legal support, we prioritise access to counselling and welfare services, helping individuals to reclaim their agency and rebuild their lives.

Beyond individual casework, our work extends to enhancing the broader ecosystem of professional support in Hong Kong, raising the standard of representation for refugees and fostering an inclusive system where displaced communities have a voice in shaping the processes that affect their lives.

We may not be able to solve all of the world's problems, but for the men, women, and children who find safety through our work, this world becomes a kinder and more hopeful place. To those who have supported us—whether through donations, pro bono efforts, or simply following our journey—your support matters greatly. Together, we can build a world where everyone is given a fair chance to thrive.

**Lynette Nam**  
Executive Director



# Mission & Intended Impact

**Justice Centre Hong Kong** is a non-profit organisation that provides free legal, welfare and psychosocial support to refugees, torture survivors and others 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 SDGs.*



*Read our strategy and theory of change here*



# Population & Circumstances

Currently there are over 15,000 forcibly displaced people seeking protection in Hong Kong. Many of them have fled violence or 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 claim 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.

**>15,000** <sup>1</sup>  
people

**8%**  
children

**42%**  
female

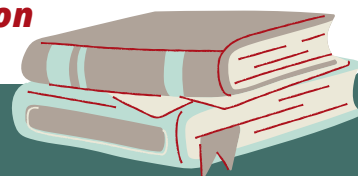


**HK\$40 vouchers per day  
for food and necessities**

**HK\$1500 per month to  
landlord**

**No right to work**<sup>2</sup>

**Barriers to  
higher education**



## The people we serve

**46% Female**

**54% Male**



### Country of Origin: (top 8)



Egypt



Sri Lanka



Pakistan



Uganda



Somalia



Yemen



Bangladesh



Rwanda

[1] Demographic data based on data provided by ImmD as of 30 June 2024

[2] Substantiated claimants may request permission to work

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

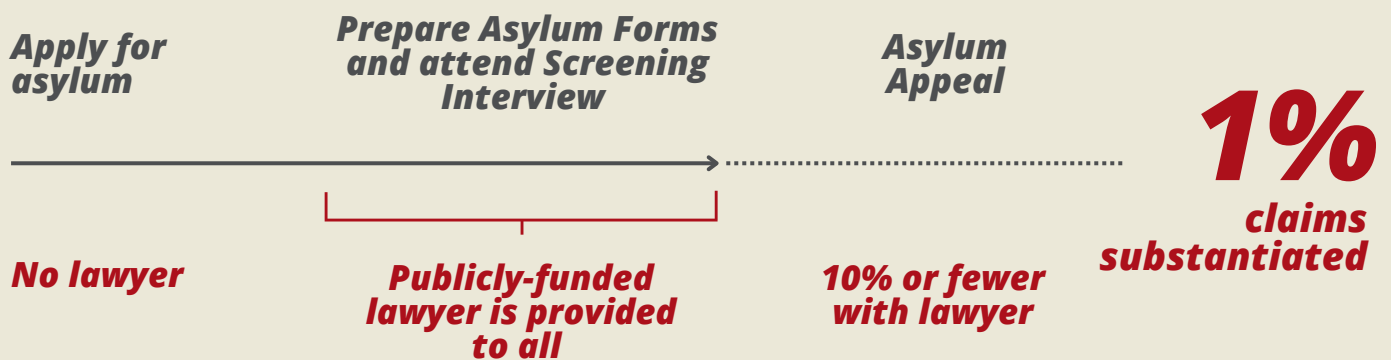


# Access to Justice Gap

## Asylum Process<sup>4</sup>

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 2023, 94% 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 2023

**8,736**



In Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre alone there were **8 cases** of self-harm or suicide in 2023.

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.

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

## 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**.

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

**128**  
*clients received individualised, in-depth legal support*

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

**89 %**  
*successful outcome upon asylum appeal*



By providing access legal information, we support displaced people to make informed decisions about their situation.

**305** *attendances at our community information sessions, enabling people to know & use the law*

**8** *organisations' frontline staff trained on asylum processes*

**100 %** *of attendees of info sessions agreed that the information was useful to their situation*

*"The information was easy to digest for clients [...] it helps so much in raising awareness of clients to be more focused and more concentrated about their own cases"*

*--Partnering charity serving refugees*

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



# Client Stories

## Kelvin<sup>6</sup>

Kelvin is a former teacher who fled his home country due to his profession. He was caught in the middle of a conflict between the government and armed militants. After his case was dismissed at First Instance, Davis Polk and Justice Centre helped Kelvin prepare detailed testimony and gather expert evidence to support his case for protection in Hong Kong. Kelvin's case was approved by the Appeal Board on all applicable grounds, opening up a path towards a more certain and safe future.

*["Justice Centre gave me] Courage, confidence, and strength. With Justice Centre in my corner, it makes my life meaningful."*

*Justice Centre Client, 2024*

## Stella

Stella is a young woman and is neurodivergent, cared for by her mother. They have been unrepresented throughout most of their complicated asylum proceedings. As a result, Stella's specific circumstances and unique situation were not properly considered. Justice Centre tried to get Stella legal representation, facing various challenges because she is an adult, but considered not to have mental capacity to instruct a lawyer. By preparing legal submissions, Justice Centre ensured her case was not struck out by the Court of Final Appeal before it could be meaningfully considered. After three years of persistence, she was finally given publicly-funded legal assistance at the Court and will now have a lawyer to assist her.

[6] This and other names within Client Stories are not the real names of the people we have supported



## TOWARDS IMPACT

# Welfare Advice & Psychosocial Support



### Goals

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

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

### Welfare support

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

### Psychosocial support

Through our Mental Health Initiative we work with therapists to offer pro-bono specialised care and individual therapy to help clients heal from past traumas and build resilience.

**With our help, people were able to access:**

**16**

**Pathways beyond HK**

**54**

**Healthcare**

**3**

**Financial Agency (Bank Accounts)**

**37**

**Livelihoods & Permission to Work**

**26**

**Shelter and Housing**

**32**

**Psychological Therapy**

**49**

**Emergency Welfare Provisions**

**24**

**Education & No Objection to Study**

### Community through Activity

Our "**Cooking for Wellness**" project provided vital psychosocial support to refugee women in Hong Kong through a series of culturally enriching cooking classes. These not only equipped them with new culinary skills, but also fostered social connections, reducing isolation and improving mental well-being.

The project successfully addressed trauma, anxiety, and other mental health challenges by creating a supportive community environment. Evaluations showed significant improvements in participants emotional and psychological health, making a meaningful impact on their overall quality of life.





# Client Stories

*"I've encountered numerous challenges, both familiar and unfamiliar. The Centre's unwavering support has been instrumental in helping me navigate these difficulties. Being able to seek guidance and discuss personal issues anytime has been and is always incredibly reassuring and supportive."*

--A Justice Centre client



## Dalia

Dalia, who fled violence in her country due to her sexual orientation, experienced significant improvements in her well-being through our support. Initially suffering from social isolation, her participation in our Cooking for Wellness project led to increased confidence, new skills, and meaningful friendships. This positive change empowered Dalia to seek further assistance with her housing and medical needs, which we were able to address together with our partner organisations. The project not only enhanced her social connections but also provided a foundation for greater stability and well-being in her life.

## Florian

Florian and his family were persecuted in their home country due to their religious conversion. Alongside the legal assistance Justice Centre provided for their asylum claim, we also helped the family gain access to crucial resources, including housing, food, and education for their child. Additionally, our support enabled them to secure a bank account, contributing to their financial stability. These interventions have helped Florian and his family build a more secure and stable life in their new environment.



TOWARDS IMPACT

# Training & Technical Assistance



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



We draw from our expertise in international best practices and Hong Kong asylum processes to train legal and medical professionals, providing resources and technical assistance so that they can deliver **effective and trauma-informed** support to people seeking protection in Hong Kong.

Our trainings are CPD accredited and delivered by qualified lawyers.

## 180+

Learning sessions on asylum law delivered to over **180 lawyers across 7 law firms**

## 100%

of lawyers trained agreed that the trainings equipped them with the legal knowledge to **take on asylum matters** and **feel better prepared to work with clients** who may have experienced trauma

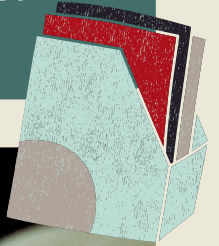


# TOWARDS IMPACT Strategic Casework



## 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**



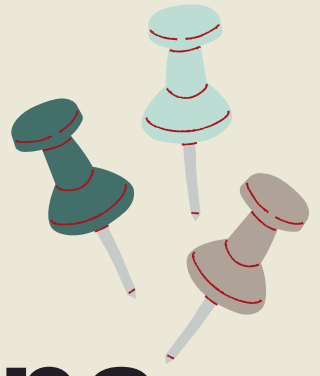
**Reinforcing the procedural and substantive rights of asylum-seeking children**

**Achieving redress for unlawful detention of torture survivors**



**Advancing systems and pathways for stateless people**





TOWARDS IMPACT

# Research & recommendations



- *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 and inclusion in Hong Kong, providing evidence for a fair and efficient asylum system. Our research underpins **constructive recommendations and solutions** and integrates the perspectives of people with direct experience of displacement and related challenges.

## ***Durable solutions***

In response to community requests for assistance in finding durable solutions to their displacement, Justice Centre conducted research on options for mixed nationality families with one Indonesian spouse to relocate together. Many claimants from Indonesia who have established families in Hong Kong fear leaving partly due to the risk of prolonged family separation. Our research aims to provide these families with a clearer understanding of their options and enables people to consider relocating to Indonesia as a viable way to keep their families together.

## ***Integrating perspectives***

We facilitate direct engagement between refugees and key stakeholders to ensure no one is left behind. To promote government objectives to enhance environmental protection, we worked with Humanity Seekers



to disseminate information on the Municipal Solid Waste Charging Scheme. Through written submissions, Humanity Seekers established a positive line of engagement with the Environmental Protection Department, conveying questions and recommendations on how to enable refugees and asylum seekers to observe and support the Scheme's implementation. The EPD responded with positive clarifications, and worked with Humanity Seekers to co-organise a train-the-trainer session for refugees. While the implementation of the Scheme has been delayed, these engagements have ensured refugees are consulted and included.



# 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:

### **Humanity Seekers Cooking for More Good**

The "Refugees Cooking for More Good" project, in partnership with More Good, empowered refugees by giving them a sense of purpose as they came together to help others. Together, they prepared and distributed 2,475 nutritious meals to vulnerable groups, including the elderly and homeless, fostering social inclusion and providing essential support to the community.

*"I never thought I would be able to help a Hong Kong person"*  
---- Refugee Participant



## **Community Leadership Academy**

Through the Academy, a programme for refugee youths co-designed by Humanity Seekers, refugees become empowered leaders, creating positive social impact – as a community, for the community.

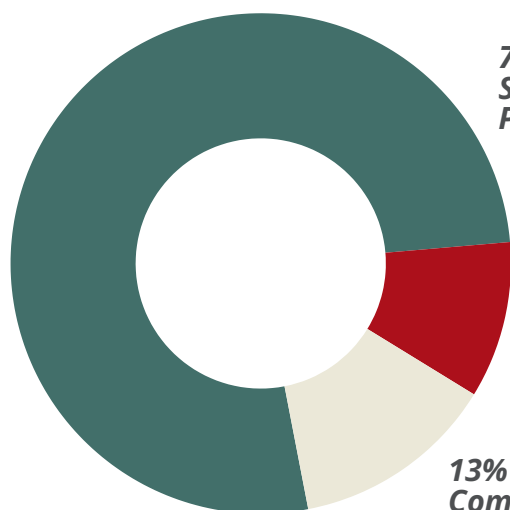
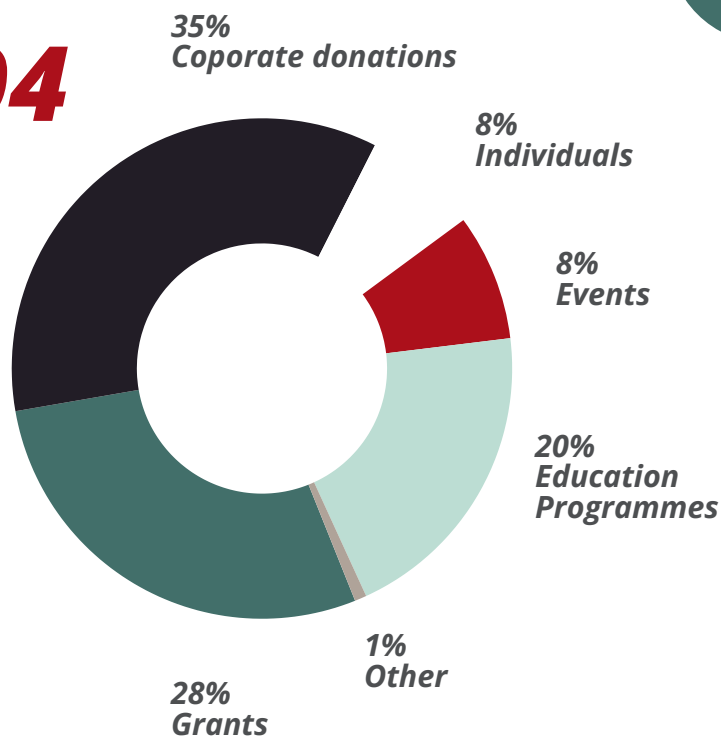
In 2023, 11 young refugees graduated from the first youth focused cohort, and have since driven their own initiatives to understand community needs, set up community projects, such as a sports team, and are co-developing and co-facilitating the 2024 traineeship.



# Financial Overview

**Total Income**

**5,020,704**



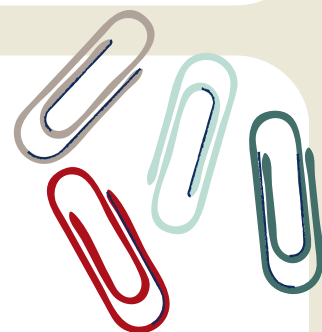
77%  
Services and  
Programmes

10%  
Administration  
and Management

13%  
Communications  
and events

**Total Expenditure**

**5,369,120**



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

# Get Involved

We are powered by compassionate and generous people, who donate dollars, resources, time, skills and so much more to support our mission.

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



## | **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.



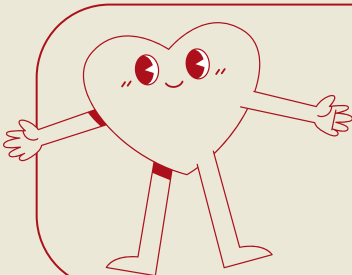
## | **Learn with us:**

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 your dollars:**  
**Every dollar counts.**  
**Thank you for your generosity!**



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

***“Thank you for all the help thus far  
because without the aid, my family  
would be stuck and unable to  
continue living a happy life.”***

## **Donors & Partners**

Thank you to our donors, partners and supporters for your **generosity, trust and collaboration**. Achieving access to justice and social impact 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**

 [Justice Centre Hong Kong](#)

 [@justicecentrehk](#)

 [Justice Centre Hong Kong](#)

 Unit 5, 10/F, Hermes Commercial Centre, 4 Hillwood Road,  
Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong

 +852 3109 7359

 [justicecentre.org.hk](#)

 [info@justicecentre.org.hk](#)