

Strategic Plan 2023–2027



Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision is of a fair society where no-one is left behind.

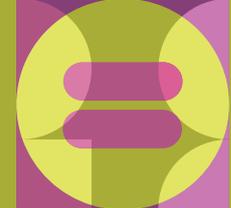
St Stephen's Green Trust is an all-island independent grant-maker which supports groups to effect positive social change in critical areas of social justice.

We work in solidarity with communities, acknowledging their leadership in, and ownership of, the outcomes we help fund. We hold ourselves accountable to donors, grantees and the wider community through setting high standards for ourselves in reflecting on impact, governance and using our influence to support social change. We value long-term relationships with stakeholders and recognise that systemic change can take many years. We strive to be flexible, mindful of emerging needs and take calculated risks in our pursuit of a just society.

Strategic Goals 2023–2027

Given the current context and resources available to SSGT, the following Strategic Goals will be pursued over the next five years:

- 1 **Contribute to improving the system of support for families affected by convictions and imprisonment to improve rehabilitation outcomes.**
- 2 **Contribute to the goal of Travellers having full equality in Irish society.**
- 3 **Support people in the international protection process to become full members of Irish society.**
- 4 **Strengthening democracy through civic engagement and participation.**



Strategic Goal 1

Contribute to improving the system of support for families affected by convictions and imprisonment to improve rehabilitation outcomes.

Over the next five years, SSGT will contribute to improving the system of support for families affected by convictions and imprisonment to improve rehabilitation and resettlement outcomes. Working across the two jurisdictions, an initial three year grant programme (2022–2024) has the following outcomes:

- 1 Family-centred approaches to rehabilitation and reintegration become normalised in the prison system, at the point of imprisonment, during the sentence and on release.**
- 2 The voice of prisoners and their families adds to the evidence base and understanding of the value of family-centred approaches to reintegration and maintaining family bonds.**
- 3 Government and state bodies are held accountable for reducing the harm of imprisonment to families.**

The grant programme will be supported by activities to strengthen the environment within which community-based criminal justice organisations are operating. This will include support for reflective spaces and developing practice and advocacy networks.

SSGT believes putting families at the heart of the criminal justice system and processes is the 'golden thread' which can reduce the harm of imprisonment and contribute to rehabilitation. Evidence shows that prisoners who manage to maintain family bonds whilst in prison have significantly reduced reoffending risks upon release. Families cannot bear this burden alone and should be supported in this role. SSGT acknowledges family relationships are complex, and systems and practice should take account of the best interests of both the family and the prisoner.

Strategic Goal 2

Contribute to the goal of Travellers having full equality in Irish society.

Support for Travellers seeking equality in all aspects of their lives has been a consistent goal of SSGT, due to their continued marginalisation in Irish society. The specific areas supported are a function of identified needs at a particular point and opportunities to fund. Given the work to date and the current context, over the next five years SSGT will focus on accommodation; the criminal justice system and employment.

Strategic Goal 2.1

Traveller Accommodation – support the provision of culturally appropriate, secure, quality accommodation for Travellers.

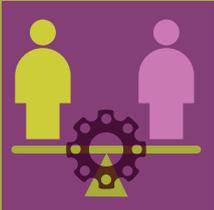
SSGT will continue its current 10 year grant programme (2018–2028) with outcomes of: strengthened support through organising and campaigning; improving awareness and attitude towards the need for change in how accommodation is being delivered; strengthened alliances; and improved policies, legislation and change to current practice in the delivery of accommodation.

Grants will be made for work which: stimulates and strengthens activism and movement building at a local, regional and national level, particularly among young Travellers; supports effective advocacy to improve practice; supports work (effective advocacy, knowledge or research) that leads directly to policy (including legislative) change. We have a particular interest in collaborative proposals and in supporting Traveller-led work in Northern Ireland.

Strategic Goal 2.2

Traveller Justice Initiative – Embed changes in policy and practice that have a positive impact on Travellers in prison, their families and communities.

The Traveller Justice Initiative (TJI) will continue its five key action areas of building a knowledge base about Travellers in the Irish criminal justice system; improving Travellers' access to and outcomes from prison-based services and re-integration supports; improving culturally appropriate family support; developing and implementing initiatives to promote peer support and advocacy amongst Travellers in prison and documenting and sharing the learning of the Initiative.



Strategic Goal 2.3

Contribute to increasing the participation of Travellers in employment and enterprise.

Trustees believe improving outcomes in Traveller employment and enterprise is key to achieving equality. SSGT has done some strategic grantmaking in this area in the past and, although there are no funds currently available for a full grant programme, the goal remains part of our overall Traveller equality strategy.

Trustees recognise that supporting Travellers in their goal of achieving equality is long-term work and programmes are underpinned by the principles of Traveller participation and relationship building. The meaningful participation of Travellers at the design, implementation, and monitoring stages of the work is necessary for it to be effective. The very high level of prejudice and intolerance towards Travellers in Irish society is considered to be a root cause of many of the inequalities they face and this will be considered during strategy design.

Strategic Goal 3

Support people in the international protection process to become full members of Irish society.

People in the international protection (IP) process have been identified in SSGT's scoping of need reports as being a particularly vulnerable group within Irish society, north and south. Over the next five years, this programme will build on progress to date supporting people in the IP process to become full members of society. The objectives are to contribute to:

- 1 the creation of a more humane asylum process.
- 2 more effective community-led approaches to integration; and
- 3 a stronger voice for people in the international protection system.

The programme seeks to make a contribution to the overall goal by focusing on the following outcomes:

- increase the participation of asylum seekers in their communities and the decisions that affect them;
- create stronger asylum seeker voices within the community, at local and national decision making structures and processes;
- develop or strengthen relationships with other groups and agencies through collaborative working;
- promote the positive impacts which migrants have on their communities;
- support the delivery of effective integration strategies by local and national authorities.

Over the next five years, SSGT will continue work in a number of areas, with ongoing review and design of approaches to adapt to the current context.

The **Stand Up Speak Out** programme is focused on addressing the lack of a strong asylum seeker and refugee voice within communities and in local and national decision making processes.

The **Community Sponsorship programme** which integrates families into local communities helps to demonstrate what works around effective integration strategies. It also promotes the positive impacts which migrants have on their communities.

Support for vulnerable women and families in the international protection process helps to create a more humane asylum process and more effective community led approaches to the integration of vulnerable migrants.

The changing nature of international protection systems and pressures means SSGT will be flexible and adaptive in how it supports people who seek refuge in Ireland, north and south. The inclusion of the voice of those most affected in decisions which affect them is essential for effective integration strategies. It also demonstrates the contribution which migrants make to our society and is a protective factor against misinformation and far-right organising.



Strategic Goal 4

Strengthening democracy through civic engagement and participation.

Learning from SSGT's grassroots peacebuilding programme in Northern Ireland over the past six years has demonstrated the importance of and need for engagement and participation by civil society to strengthen democratic structures. Systems change driven by civil society organisations is an integral part of SSGT's grant programme strategies.

Over the next five years, SSGT will conclude the current phase of its work in the north on grassroots peacebuilding programme and develop a strategy which responds to the importance of opening up power to more people through increased participatory counter-balances to corporate and state power.

The strategy will support collective action initiatives which deepen democracy across a number of levels and draw out the learning including actions which:

- **Impact on democratic decision-making including a review of media impact and narrative framing; supporting participative and deliberative democracy initiatives.**
- **Build platforms for collective power and influence including supporting progressive platforms for transformative thinking and advocacy and which develop value-based approaches to identify elements of transformative change.**
- **Create space for participation and voice with specific proactive work to ensure amplification of marginalised voice and related participation and which identifies points of divisiveness and equips activists to manage them.**

Strategic Enablers

SSGT's values and way of working include: driving and reflecting on impact; good governance, being flexible and mindful of the current context, taking calculated risks and strategic advocacy. Trustees have committed to utilising its independent funding to best effect by using statutory funding only in exceptional and time-limited contexts.

Although mindful of SSGT's small size and limited resources, we will support our way of working by:

- **Resourcing staff with the time and expertise to carry out the work, embedding ourselves in the sectors in which we operate.**
- **Utilising the expertise of trustees to best effect.**
- **Ensuring SSGT has sufficient resources to develop impactful grant programmes underpinned by learning and reflection.**
- **Developing SSGT's strategic advocacy approach.**
- **Working in partnership with others to increase programme impact.**
- **Allowing space to respond to new opportunities which fit our vision and mission.**
- **Ensuring SSGT's governance, IT and other systems are sufficient to reach good standards of transparency and accountability whilst working effectively towards our mission.**

Ireland is changing, growing in population terms North and South and changing in terms of the diversity of its population and the attitudes of its people. Such changes are not always comfortable, but arguably they are healthy in creating space for new ideas, attitudes and the ability to interrogate established certainties that did not always serve society well.

If change is to be progressive, then the specific disadvantages and inequalities that continue to persist need to be named and addressed. The role of community and voluntary groups and organisations has always been important in this context, but there is some evidence that restricted resources, an increased statutory emphasis on service provision and an over-emphasis on general busyness has blunted the necessary discussion about the nature of transformative change and the means to work towards it. This programme offers an opportunity for SSGT to contribute to facilitating change through supporting ongoing civil society reflection and discussion.