

Impact Report 2023

SUMMARY

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.

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.

2023 at a glance

101

Grantee groups supported



29

Counties throughout Ireland



>6,000

Direct beneficiaries of the programmes

Total grant amount €791,245

Support for families in

135

direct provision centres

Learning network events and convenings with more than

60

organisations

2

new funding programmes launched

Co-funded work with

6

partner philanthropies

New Strategic Plan 2023–2027 launched

Our Impact in 2023



Strategic Goal 1

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

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. The goal is to help develop systems of support for families affected by convictions and imprisonment to improve rehabilitation and resettlement outcomes.

Activities 2023:

- A **current Context Paper** was developed which set out the basis under which SSGT was inviting grants from eligible organisations and a grant programme was opened in July 2023.
- Ten grants were made in October for a total of €155,000. A full list of grants is available [here](#).
- SSGT works closely with the Irish Penal Reform Trust's 'Children and Family Initiative' on this programme as our objectives are aligned. A new funder, the SSJG Grant Scheme came on board in 2023 and joins our current funder, foundations advised by Porticus.

Learning and Achievements

The programme was in development stage during 2023 and the outputs and outcomes from grants made in 2023 will be delivered throughout the four years of the programme.

A grant of €6,000 was made to Noteworthy, an online investigative journalism platform which carried out an investigation on the effect of prison visiting on the children of prisoners. Two articles and a podcast were published in November 2023.

'A long way from normal': Families say visits to prison still restricted post-pandemic – Some children only get to see their parent in-person once a month and experts are concerned that video calls are replacing visits.

'Children don't deserve this': Visiting an imprisoned parent is 'traumatising' – Gruelling travel, harsh security and restricted interaction with parents make prison visits extremely tough for children.

The Explainer x Noteworthy: Are kids being locked out from jailed parents? Investigative reporter Alice Chambers and former prison governor John Lonergan

talked to Susan Daly about how some children are struggling to get access to their loved ones in prison. Noteworthy received the *Mary Raftery Prize* for social justice journalism for this work and were shortlisted for a Law Society *Justice Media Award*.

What's Next:

- In 2024, SSGT will continue to work with existing grantees as they implement their projects.
- There will also be a focus on developing learning around how systems can be supported to change for the benefit of families affected by imprisonment and convictions.
- A further grant programme will be opened in July 2024.

Strategic Goal 2

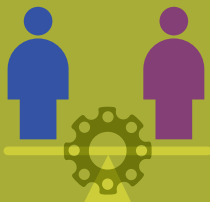
Contribute to the goal of Travellers having full equality in Irish society.

Strategic Goal 2.1

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

Activities 2023:

- As 2023 marked the midpoint of SSGT's ten-year Traveller Accommodation Programme, we intentionally took stock of the work to date, its impact, and its future through consultation with Traveller-led groups, and particularly, our existing multi-annual partners. Reflective sessions were held with eight groups to deepen engagement and to inform future grantmaking.
- Among the issues arising from those sessions included the need to convene groups leading on the issue of Traveller accommodation and as a result, SSGT partnered with Cena on a National Conference on Traveller Accommodation to take place in 2024.
- Also prominent, was the feeling that, although groups were building strong campaigns at a regional level, capacity and resourcing deficits meant that these groups were unable to take



their work to the next step. With this in mind, we launched a grant round in September to support these groups to accelerate and strengthen existing campaigning work. Three grants were awarded to; Cena to support the organisation of a national conference on Traveller Accommodation, to Galway Traveller Movement to increase their capacity around public affairs and communication and to Cork and Kerry Regional Traveller Accommodation Working Group to develop a position paper on the current state of policy for the supply of family homes for families living in mobile homes.

- A partnership between SSGT and **The Detail** also developed during the year which supported a series of three investigative articles that profiled the experiences of Travellers in Northern Ireland.

Learning and Achievements

In 2023, we spent a significant period gathering intelligence, meeting with groups leading on the issue and attending events. SSGT has invested in strengthening of campaigns and supporting movement building at a regional level and the impact is being felt by groups who are reporting greater momentum and increased capacity.

What's Next:

- In 2024, we will build on the intelligence gathered to date and continue to convene key groups to support a shared vision and movement building.
- A new multi-annual grant round will be launched in July that will continue to support the programme's core objectives and will make support available for collective strategic advocacy and for the strengthening, building, and resourcing of new or existing coalitions.

Strategic Goal 2.2

The Traveller Justice Initiative (TJI) seeks to embed changes in policy and practice that have a positive impact on Travellers in prison, their families, and communities.

Activities 2023:

In 2023, the TJI undertook a broad spectrum of work including:

- Continuing to pursue the collection of data and production of joint reports with the Irish Prison Service.
- Progressing the recommendations of the evaluation of our pilot education initiative: Traveller liaison teachers are in situ in each prison, and NALA contracted to deliver training on literacy to them.
- Producing a paper on pre-sentencing guidelines for Travellers that has since been used by The Probation Service as the initial draft for their internal guidelines. This is a major step in ensuring that sentencing guidelines accounts for the situation, experience, and identity of Travellers.
- Securing funding from the Department of Justice through a joint proposal with Barnardos and the National Traveller Women's Forum to employ a dedicated support worker at Barnardos for Traveller women in the CJS and their families.
- The recruitment of a Traveller man (with experience of imprisonment) to the position of Youth and Family worker for Travellers in Oberstown.
- Coordinating several events which have broadened the work of the TJI and extended its profile and reach.

Learning and Achievements

Our 2023 work involved the TJI supporting the employment of Traveller specific support roles and Travellers in these roles across mainstream agencies/ services. This is a significant achievement. It is also key to ensuring that the TJI ethos and values are not diminished in mainstream organisations, and that workers are supported and mentored prior to, and continued while in their employment.

Traveller participation and engagement and strong, intentional collaboration with key stakeholders remain central to the success of the TJI. We continue to support the participation of Travellers (including ex-prisoners) in our work and to engage strategically with the media, the Prison and



Probation Services and the Office of the Inspector of Prisons to gather data, deepen relationships and lead proactively with CJS organisations in advancing key policy areas.

What's Next:

- In 2024, TJI will continue to seek resources for the recruitment of support roles for Travellers and their families across the CJS and will work with its network of partner organisations to ensure that the delivery of such supports meet our core values and principles.
- We will continue to provide supports and mentoring to workers that are delivering these supports (family, peer and youth-related) and to work with stakeholders in broader parts of the CJS (e.g. Judges) and widen our reach and influence.

Strategic Goal 2.3

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

As part of SSGT's goal of supporting Traveller participation in employment and enterprise, we provided Bounceback Recycling (BBR) with a multi-annual grant (2021–2023) of €20,000 a year for three years for its expansion programme, with the final grant paid in 2023. This was a multi-funder multiannual grant – a total of €736,000 in funding to BBR from seven organisations, including government, to expand its mattress recycling to 100,000 mattresses annually and support 30 Travellers into employment. A new service was added in 2022 – to upcycle furniture and reupholster furniture – which now employs four Traveller women. BBR diverted an additional 125 tonnes of waste between 2021 and 2022, from 475 tonnes to 600 tonnes. An additional 150 tonnes of waste diverted is projected for 2023 bringing the total to 750 tonnes per annum. There was an increase in traded income from €390,000 in 2021 to €400,000 in 2022 (2.6%). The projection for traded income in 2023 remains at €400,000.

The programme was funded in 2023 by the Discalced Carmelites.

Strategic Goal 3

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

The core objectives of this programme 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.

Activities 2023:

- In February SSGT launched a new programme focussing on supporting the most **Vulnerable Women and Families in International Protection** including; lone parents, families with children who have additional needs, women and children who have survived abuse, victims of sex trafficking and families with deportation orders who do not have access to adequate financial or social supports. The programme included two funding strands and sought to support work in Ireland and in Northern Ireland. In Strand 1, one-year grants of between €5,000 (£4,500) and €8,000 (£7,500) were offered to local groups working to improve the living conditions and pathways to support for the target beneficiaries. Strand 2 welcomed applications for up to €20,000 (£17,500) per annum for up to three years from groups working strategically to improve the situation of vulnerable women and families in the long-term. Seven groups were funded under Strand 1 and a further three were funded for a period of three years under Strand 2. The full list of funded projects is [here](#).
- Five applications were made to SSGT's **Community Sponsorship Programme** in 2023, all of which were funded. Throughout the year, reports were gathered from grantees and information was collected through meetings with Sponsorship Groups and Regional Support Organisations (NASC, the Irish Refugee Council, the Irish Red Cross, The Open Community).
- 2023 marked the end of the **Stand Up, Speak Out (SUSO) programme**. A final learning network meeting was held with all grantees in April and an end of programme report was published highlighting the key issues, challenges, and successes of the funded projects. We continue with ActionAid Ireland whose residual budget will be spent on a video highlighting the positive contribution of migrants to Irish life. We also administered the first of two grants to Participation and the Practice of Rights to continue to part-pay the salary of their Housing4All campaign coordinator.



Learning and Achievements

Funder collaboration: Throughout 2023, SSGT deepened its relationships with other funders (including One Foundation, Rowan Trust, and Katharine Howard Foundation) around a shared strategic interest in supporting people in international protection. We met as a group with Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to discuss key issues and took part in a residential convening with a range of stakeholder groups to discuss the impact of the rise of the Far Right in Ireland. We also collaborated with the Irish Network Against Racism to pilot a 'Rapid Response Fund' for communities facing extremism and hate and a report that was co-commissioned by the group entitled **Greater than Fear: A Community Based Response to Tackling Hate and Extremism** was published.

Christmas Voucher Fund: In late 2023, SSGT was approached by the Lakeside Fund to distribute €20 vouchers to all children in the international protection process in Ireland who are living in direct provision. A total of 44 groups were awarded grants to cover 135 direct provision centres and reached 5,512 children. Donations were received from Lakeside as well as the Quinn Family Foundation and the One Foundation.

Convenings: As part of our Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation (MEL) approach, SSGT supports convening and networking of groups. In 2023, we coordinated Learning Network Meetings for groups supported under our SUSO and Vulnerable Women and Families programmes. We also provided a third of three annual grants to the Irish Refugee Council for its coordination of the national Asylum Support Network.

Published Reports: In October we published a **Learning Report** following the conclusion of our SUSO Programme.

What's Next:

- In 2024, we will further develop our programme to support people in international protection based on our learning in 2023. Based on the data gathered, we will produce a context paper for the work in the first quarter that will inform a new funding round opening in summer.

Strategic Goal 4

Strengthening democracy through civic engagement and participation.

Strategic Goal 4.1

Supporting civil society to contribute to a 'high energy democracy'.

Activities 2023:

- In 2023 a grant programme was designed based on a **paper exploring the current context for civil society on the island of Ireland**. This programme aimed to contribute to a 'high energy democracy' by supporting work by civil society groups to engage in participative and deliberative democracy initiatives that harness the power of civil society to transform democratic decision-making processes; Develop progressive platforms for collective power and influence which use values-based approaches to identify elements of transformative change and; Create spaces for participation and voice, particularly among those who are most marginalised.
- Following a two-step assessment process and meetings with all applicant groups, eight organisations were awarded grants under the programme. A list of the projects funded under the programme and a copy of the original context paper can be found [here](#).

Learning and Achievements

SSGT are working in partnership with the Social Change Initiative (SCI) on this programme. SCI were involved in the assessment of applications and will work with funded organisations to establish a network of engaged and connected activists over the period.

What's Next:

- In 2024, SSGT will work closely with SCI to establish a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework that is flexible and evolves with the needs of the grantee groups. This will involve supporting a grantee network, convenings, learning sessions and knowledge-sharing. This grant round was established as an exploratory strand of work in 2023 and there was unprecedented demand for funding and, with local, European, and general elections taking place in 2024/25, this demand is expected to increase further and to influence the future of the programme.

Strategic Goal 4.2

Strengthening democracy through civic engagement and participation.

Supporting Intercommunity Practice and Activism (2017–2024): Over the past seven years, SSGT has worked with grassroots peacebuilding groups in the north of Ireland. We believe that the strengthening of collaborative and supportive relationships within and between communities is essential for peacebuilding.

Activities 2023:

- We continued to work with the 12 funded groups which are working collaboratively on an inclusive and inter-community basis to address common issues and identify barriers to inclusive work and relationship-building, within and between communities and learning how these can be overcome. Project summaries can be found [here](#).
- During 2023 final grants were made to groups. Extension grants were given to some groups affected by the pandemic in implementing their projects. A final programme Learning Network Meeting was held in Belfast which discussed the achievements and impact of groups work over the four years of the programme, a [video](#) was produced highlighting the value of the programme.

Learning and Achievements

As part of the SSGT evaluation framework a final [case study publication](#) was published in December 2023. Following the completion of a *Women in Peacebuilding* report in collaboration with programme partners, SSGT supported follow-up meetings with grantees in Derry and Belfast to build on learning and continue to draw out lessons and the experience of women engaged in harder-edged peacebuilding work. This resulted in a report published by SSGT in December – [Positive Peacebuilding in NI – Overcoming the Challenges to the participation of grassroots women in peacebuilding](#). This report, along with the final case study can be found on SSGT's website. The total value of the programme funded by Porticus between 2017–2024 is €1,480,000.

What's Next:

- A final residential convening of all groups will close out the grant programme and a small number of final grants will be paid in 2024 after which the programme is complete.

SSGT's Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements can be accessed [here](#) in full.

