

Pro Bono

IMPACT REPORT

2024



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01/ FOREWORD

We are proud to share our 2024 Pro Bono Impact Report. Our firm has a long-standing tradition of providing pro bono legal services, and this report demonstrates the depth and breadth of the work undertaken by our people from across the business. Driven by impact and positive change we focus on working with organisations who share our vision of a fairer and more equal society. We also remain committed to increasing access to legal representation for individuals and families who otherwise would be unable to access a lawyer.

Collaboration is a key value of our firm; recognising that working together we can achieve greater impact and better outcomes for all. Through strategic partnerships and networks, we have used our leadership position to reaffirm our commitment to promoting pro bono culture as a fundamental principle of the legal profession in Ireland.

Throughout 2024, our people stepped up and gave their time and energy to:

- support those fleeing war and persecution
- reunite separated minors from their families
- advocate for those needing homeless services or social housing supports
- provide access to legal information through outreach clinics
- carry out legal research advancing the rule of law
- share their legal and commercial expertise with our civil society and social enterprise partners

To our pro bono clients, our partners and everyone at A&L Goodbody, thank you for making this work possible.

David Widger
Managing Partner, A&L Goodbody LLP



02/ LEADING WITH INTEGRITY: ALG’S PRO BONO PRACTICE

The principle of universal access to justice and legal services is essential to the rule of law, the vindication of rights and the functioning of democratic society. That’s why access to justice remains the cornerstone of our pro bono practice. It informs the work we take on, the projects we pursue and the partnerships we foster and develop.

Since we launched our responsible business strategy *Our future with purpose – ALG’s commitment to sustainability* in 2022, pro bono has remained a key driver in putting ESG (environmental, social and governance) at the heart of our business. Not only is our pro bono practice a full practice within our firm, it is also recognised by the Law Society as a trainee seat for the purposes of qualification.

Our people are central to ALG’s success and to our thriving pro bono practice. With more and more of our people participating, pro bono has become a vibrant part of our lawyers’ everyday practice.

Equally, our pro bono partners continue to inspire us by their extraordinary expertise and dedication to justice. We consider it a great privilege to work alongside them and to help the communities they serve.

Our pro bono team



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02/ LEADING WITH INTEGRITY: ALG'S PRO BONO PRACTICE

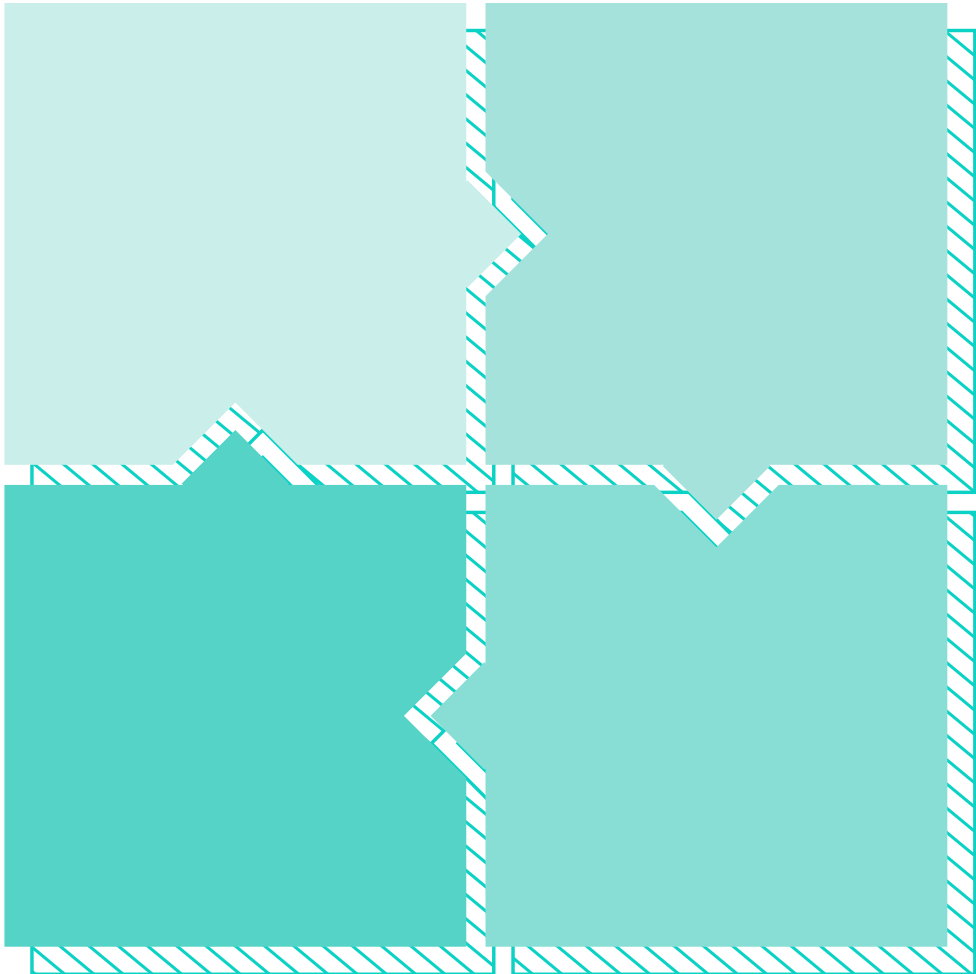
Aiming high: our pro bono practice goals

Develop human rights impact projects

With the support of independent law centres, we represent clients who are at risk, marginalised, or in vulnerable and precarious situations and who can't access legal services elsewhere.

Championing a vibrant civil society

We support a strong and vibrant civil society by giving legal help that meets the need of our pro bono organisational clients.



Promote legal education and information

We enhance legal literacy through education sessions, guides and research projects.

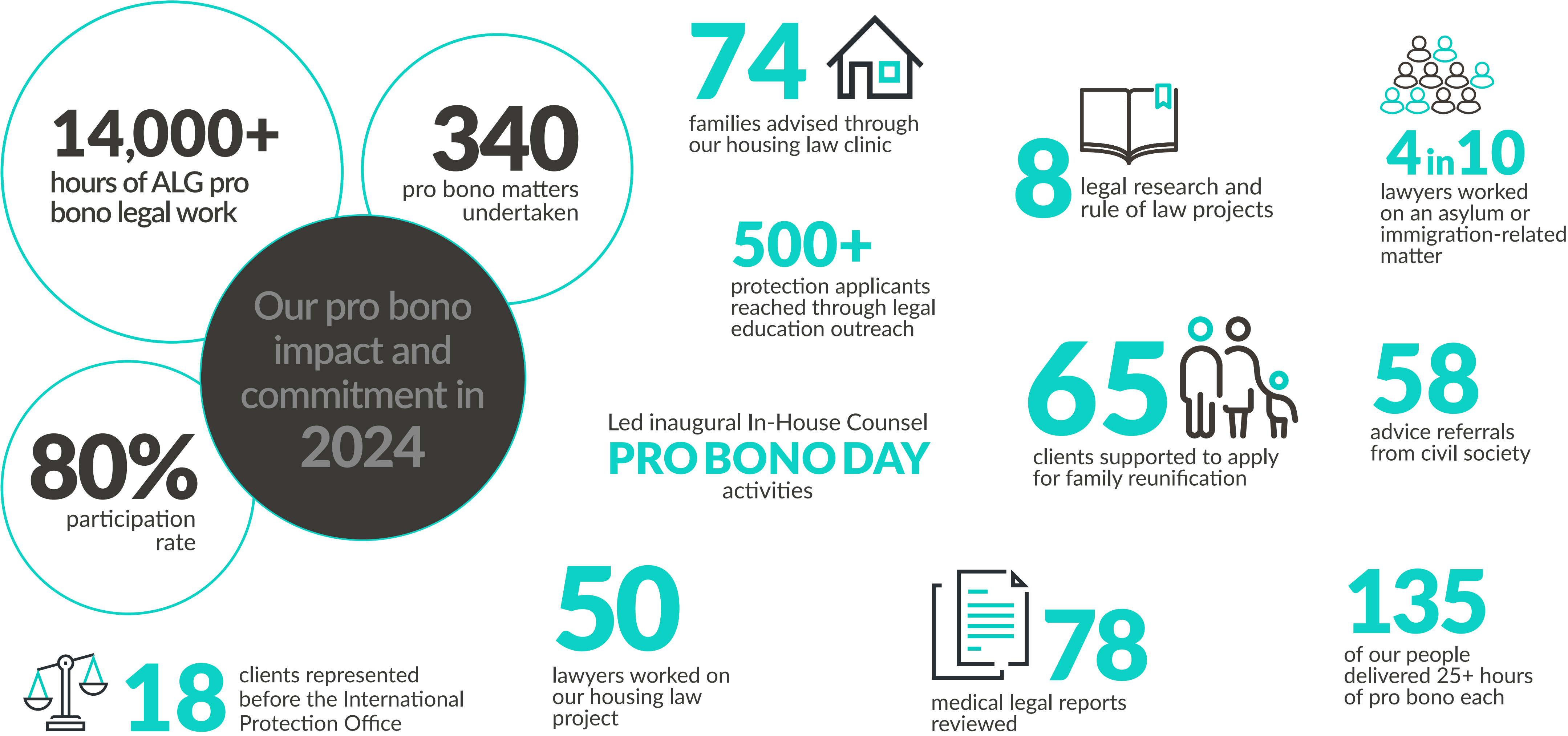
Unlock the potential of social enterprise

We help unlock the potential of social enterprises to tackle systemic issues and to secure a sustainable future for all through strategic partnerships.





02/ LEADING WITH INTEGRITY: ALG'S PRO BONO PRACTICE



03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

Through our pro bono work, we harness the skills, expertise, and passion of our lawyers to address unmet legal needs in human rights law. To do this, we partner with independent law centres, NGOs and frontline services to create collaborative projects designed to forge true change.

The law centres give our lawyers support, guidance and training to enable them to do this work effectively, while the NGOs and frontline services give our lawyers, and our clients support and expertise. Through these collaborative projects, we've gained the trust of decision-makers and civil society, while achieving great outcomes for our clients.





03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

Navigating the International Protection Process

The right to seek and to enjoy asylum from persecution is a fundamental human right, enshrined in international treaties and protected under Irish law. Navigating the process to reach this place of safety can be complex and access to timely and professional legal services can be a challenge for many.

To address this, we give protection applicants early legal advice and representation through our collaborative project with the Irish Refugee Council's Independent Law Centre (IRC). Specialist IRC lawyers train our lawyers in order to take on clients referred through the project.

Each client is assigned a legal team to advise them on the legal process, attend their protection interview and draft legal submissions to support their claim to avail protection in Ireland.





03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

CASE STUDY: INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Young Ugandan man granted refugee status on grounds of a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of his sexuality

Our client is a young man from Uganda. In his teens he became aware of his sexuality, and after some time began to accept himself as gay. Conscious of the virulent homophobia in Ugandan society and the criminalisation by the State, he decided to keep his sexuality to himself, for fear of the violence, persecution and prosecution commonly levelled at LGBTQ+ people there.

After having been outed in school, our client was physically assaulted by a mob of his classmates and immediately expelled. Upon learning this, our client's family subjected him to physical and emotional abuse.

Some years later, when his family uncovered the fact of his relationship with his boyfriend, our client was again subjected to abuse. He decided to leave Uganda and travel to Ireland. While visiting Dublin he availed of support from an LGBTQ+ youth organisation,

and soon afterwards decided to apply for international protection.

Our lawyers supported this young man to make his application. He was assisted with preparing a personal statement outlining his personal history and the reasons for his well-founded fear of persecution should he returned to Uganda. We submitted this to the IPO along with other documentation supporting his claim for international protection.

We then helped our client prepare for the substantive interview to ensure he was in the best position possible to tell his story and demonstrate how his circumstances met the legal definition for being granted refugee status. Our client is now a recognised refugee, working, studying and building his life here in Ireland.





03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

CASE STUDY: INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Iranian woman granted refugee status on grounds of a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of her political activism and conversion to Christianity

Our client was born in Iran and raised in the Muslim faith. While at a secondary school she became curious about other religions and faiths through one of her teachers. In university her interest in Christianity deepened and she began attending home churches. She also became politically active as a student and attended gatherings and protests against the Government. This resulted in her being detained and interrogated by security forces. Following her graduation, she continued to practice her Christian faith and hosted prayer groups. This led to further detentions, during which time she was subject to torture.

Upon release our client knew that her life was in danger, and she had no choice but to leave Iran. Following her arrival in Ireland our client

was referred to us from the IRC. Our lawyers worked closely to support her by helping her prepare a personal statement outlining her difficult and traumatic experiences, to obtain a medical legal report, and to attend with her at the substantive interview at the International Protection Office (IPO). Our lawyers also prepared detailed legal submissions, with up-to-date country-of-origin research outlining the treatment of political opponents, and in particular women, and the persecution of individuals who converted to Christianity.

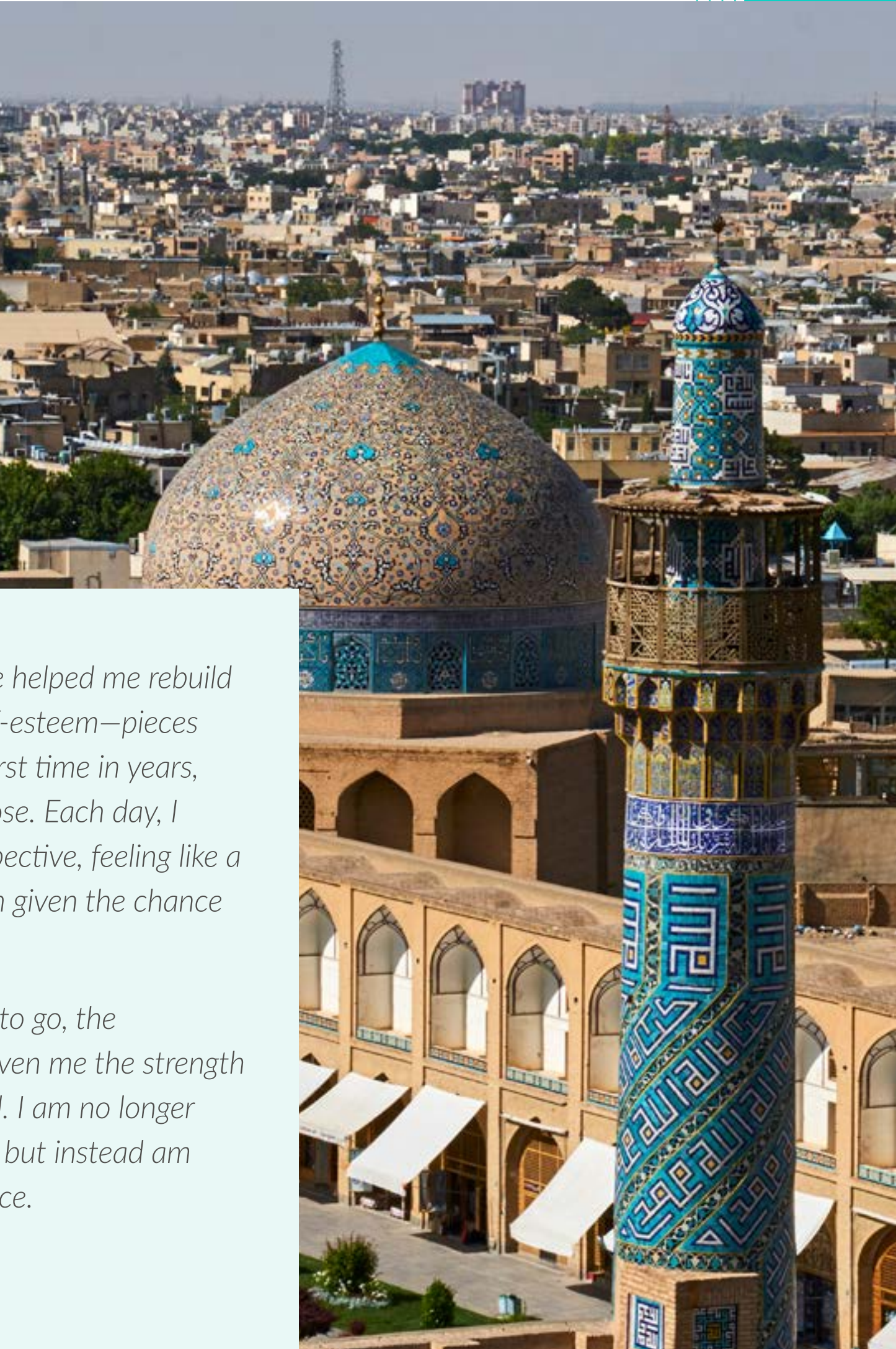
The IPO found our client met the legal definition of refugee. She is now building her new life in Ireland and practising her faith proudly and without fear.

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Through our journey together, you've helped me rebuild my identity, self-confidence, and self-esteem—pieces of myself I thought I'd lost. For the first time in years, I feel a sense of belonging and purpose. Each day, I approach activities with a new perspective, feeling like a different person who has finally been given the chance to experience life.

Even though there is still a long way to go, the foundation you helped me lay has given me the strength and courage to keep moving forward. I am no longer haunted by a sense of hopelessness, but instead am anchored by a new trust and resilience.

ALG client





03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

CASE STUDY: INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Kurdish mother and adult daughter granted refugee status on grounds of a well-founded fear of persecution based on their Kurdish ethnicity and political activism in Turkey

Our clients are a Kurdish mother and adult daughter who fled Turkey due to the harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrests and forced imprisonment targeted at their family by the Turkish authorities based on their ethnicity and political views. Following decades of persecution targeted at our clients' family, who were repeatedly torn apart by imprisonment and forced emigration, Turkey was no longer a safe place for our clients to live.

Our lawyers provided assistance and support to the clients throughout the international protection process, including in preparing personal statements detailing their experiences in Turkey and the reasons why they had a well-founded fear of persecution should they return to Turkey. We conducted updated country of origin research on the

treatment of the Kurdish people in Turkey and the Turkish government's response to political opposition generally, in support of their applications. We also accompanied our clients to multiple interviews at the IPO where they told their story of persecution. Following this we prepared legal submissions outlining the legal bases for our clients' claim to refugee status. Their applications were successful and they are now recognised refugees.

Following our clients' successful grant of international protection, we assisted one of the clients (the mother) with her application for family reunification in respect of her husband, who had fled Turkey years earlier following attempts to wrongfully imprison him due to his political activities. Our client's application for family reunification was also

successful, and the family have now been reunited after eight years and are rebuilding their lives here in Ireland.

Nuancing the application of our legal knowledge with the empathy required in asylum applications is a key skill for our lawyers.

It was a privilege to work with these clients on their applications for international protection and family reunification. It was an incredible day when we informed the clients that their applications were successful, and their family could be reunited and commence a new stage of their life in Ireland.

Nadia Skelton, Associate; Coleen Barrett, Associate, ALG

The lawyers have always been very kind and helpful to us. We always remember [them] fondly and it will always be that way.

ALG client



03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

CASE STUDY: INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Palestinian man granted refugee status on the grounds of well-founded fear of persecution due to imputed political opinion and membership of a particular social group

Our client is a Palestinian man who is a computer engineer by trade. He lived in Gaza with his wife and three young children, where he worked for a technology company, before joining a non-governmental organisation where he continued to do similar work.

Due to the nature of his work our client became a target for harassment and was detained and tortured on several occasions, with continued threats into 2023. Fearful for his life, our client fled Gaza in September 2023.

Upon arrival our client presented at the IPO and sought asylum. We worked with him to prepare his personal statement, setting out the reasons he feared persecution and could not be returned to his home country.

In April last year our client was granted refugee protection. At this point in time he had been separated from his wife and young children and was in constant fear for their safety given the ongoing war.

We urgently proceeded to prepare and submit our client's family reunification application. Meanwhile, our client arranged to relocate his children and wife to a safer place. The family's physical and mental health had deteriorated significantly with their exposure to the ongoing conflict and its impacts.

In August 2024, our client's family reunification application was approved and his family were reunited in Dublin soon after and are now building a life here.

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to work on this important and meaningful matter. We were pleased that our advocacy and efforts resulted in a quick and successful outcome to support a family in desperate circumstances.

Stephen King, Partner; Karla Hart, Associate; Ciara Ramsbottom, Trainee Solicitor, ALG





03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

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For more than a decade we have referred clients to ALG. ALG provide those clients with early legal advice on a pro bono basis in relation to their application for asylum in Ireland. They were the first major law firm in Ireland to offer this service. Over the course of our partnership, ALG's lawyers and trainee solicitors have built up vast expertise in asylum law. This expertise is strengthened with regular training and ongoing support from the IRC. When we refer clients to ALG, they meet with the client, assist them to prepare personal statements to support their asylum claim, (long letters that allow the person in the asylum process to explain why they've been forced to leave their home country, what happened to them, and why it would be unsafe for them to return), and attend interviews at the International Protection Office. They also prepare post-interview legal submissions, which set out why, in their legal opinion, the client in question should be granted refugee status in Ireland.

The partnership is incredibly important to us as we are able to refer cases to a group of lawyers that we trust and have huge faith in and who we know will deliver an expert service. It has been a vital support to our law centre, and an essential lifeline for clients who need specialist legal advice at crucial points in their lives. In the polarising world in which we find ourselves ALG and its hundreds of lawyers who have worked on these files have remained our steadfast ally in our work to secure a world where everyone feels safe.

Nick Henderson, CEO Irish Refugee Council

18
clients represented
before the International
Protection Office
in 2024



IRC's 30 Years, 30 Voices event, which ALG was proud to attend.



03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

Partnering with Spirasi to protect and empower survivors of torture

Spirasi is the national rehabilitation centre for victims of torture in Ireland. It offers clients holistic supports to heal from the damaging effects of torture.

One of its key services is producing medical legal reports for international protection applicants who have survived torture. A doctor undertakes a physical and psychological examination of each client, giving that person a safe space to have their experiences sensitively and objectively documented.

Before their protection interview, each client is given a report collating clear and consistent evidence of their experiences. This reduces the need for them to recall intimate details of their physical and psychological trauma during the interview.



Our work with Spirasi

Our lawyers undertake legal reviews of Spirasi’s medical legal reports, reviewing them for an approach and use of language consistent with that adopted by the Istanbul Protocol (the set of international guidelines for documentation of torture and its consequences).

To enable us do this successfully, our lawyers get ongoing support and specialist legal training from decision-makers, doctors and lawyers with expertise in the use of the Protocol.



Our doctors really appreciate the time given by ALG, attention to detail and comprehensive feedback of each legal review. It is so helpful in ensuring Spirasi produces high-quality objective reports for international protection applicants.

Paula Quirke, Rehabilitation Coordinator, Spirasi

The Spirasi MLRs are sometimes the key to an individual being granted asylum in Ireland. Reviewing these reports is our way of ensuring that individual gets a fair opportunity to make their claim for protection. The reports are unlike anything I regularly work on, so time spent on this project helps to develop my analytical and judgment skills and as a “corporate lawyer”, it’s quite refreshing to think that an actual individual may reap the benefits of a well-written report.

Caoilinn Doran, Associate, ALG

I am passionate about contributing to this project because it aligns with my commitment to supporting vulnerable communities. Spirasi’s vital work in providing medical legal reports for survivors of torture and trauma plays a crucial role in ensuring that they receive the care, protection and justice they deserve. The project is also beneficial as a solicitor in that it gives you an opportunity to work on attention to detail, structured thinking and effective communication which are ultimately transferable skills across many areas of legal practice.

Alannah McDonnell, Solicitor, ALG



03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

Reuniting young people and families

Every year, hundreds of unaccompanied minors arrive in Ireland seeking protection. Many have left their families behind in countries affected by conflict.

International human rights law recognises the central importance to a young person of the care and company of family. In furtherance of this, young people who have been granted refugee protection in Ireland have a legal right to bring their immediate family to be reunited in Ireland to build their lives together here.

In 2019, we joined other law firms and businesses to participate in a collaborative project with:

- Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), an international NGO devoted to protecting unaccompanied and separated children
- the Immigrant Council of Ireland
- the Irish Refugee Council

Through this project, we help unaccompanied minors to apply for family reunification, working in a professional yet child-friendly way.

Committing to our duty of care

To further our work in this area, our people have undertaken trauma-informed lawyering training to understand the importance of empathy, responsive listening, restraint from judgement and showing authentic care and concern when undertaking this work. They were also taught how to identify early signs of re-traumatisation and vicarious trauma and given the tools to tackle both.

Over recent years, we have extended this project to support adults seeking family reunification with their loved ones.

65

clients supported to apply for family reunification in 2024





03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

CASE STUDY: FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Young Somali woman welcomes her parents and siblings to Ireland following prolonged separation

Our client was separated from her parents and siblings in Somalia for over eight years. With ongoing violence between Al-Shabaab and the local government for a time our client lost complete contact with her family.

Our lawyers worked with our client to submit her application for family reunification in 2022. As an unaccompanied refugee child at the time of application, she had a legal right to bring her family to Ireland. Due to the ongoing conflict, it proved challenging to obtain the documentation to support her application; but through perseverance everything was collected and sent to Ireland over the course of several months. After almost two years of waiting, a positive decision was reached in our client's application and with the assistance of the Red Cross, our client was reunited with her family in Dublin airport in December 2024.



It is important as lawyers to understand that we hold an incredibly privileged position in life – I got involved in pro-bono work to use my skills to assist those who have had less fortunate beginnings. The family reunification project allowed me as a lawyer to assist a young person who fled war in Somalia, and as a child, left their life, family and home behind. In corporate law, we might not often work on issues that have a significant and immediate impact on peoples' lives - working on this case required a significant level of compassion and empathy.

Darragh Bollard, Associate, ALG

I'm sitting with my family right now and having a wonderful time full of laughter and joy. I'm delighted that this year ends with tears of joy. Before 2025 starts, I just want to mention that you have been one of my biggest support in my lowest moment and I truly appreciate all the help I have received from you.

ALG Client



03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

CASE STUDY: FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Leaving Certificate student supported to reunite with his father and siblings

Our client, who left Somalia when he was 16 years of age, applied for family reunification with his father and three siblings in 2022, after being declared a refugee in September 2021. Our client had no foster parent here in Ireland and was in his leaving certificate year at school when the application process began and there was an added urgency on foot of the ongoing danger in Somalia to our client's family arising from the Al-Shabaab attacks.

Following an 18-month process and additional information being required due to the fact that two of the family members were our client's half-siblings, our client was granted family reunification, with his father and three siblings being granted permission to reside in Ireland.

Our client then applied for their visas, which were granted in November 2024. Our client's family arrived in Ireland in early 2025, with our client seeing his family for the first time in four and a half years.



ALG has been incredibly supportive and helpful, providing assistance during these tough times. They were always quick to respond to any queries I had and took the time to explain everything clearly. Beyond that, every visit to ALG made me feel truly welcomed and valued. I am especially grateful for their dedication and kindness.

ALG Client



03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

CASE STUDY: FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Client supported with pathway to citizenship

Our client is now a recognised refugee who has been reunited with her son, and is working, studying and building their lives together here in Ireland.

Our client, who left Guinea when she was just 16, was granted refugee status in Ireland. After losing contact with her family for more than a year, we assisted our client in applying for family reunification with her mother and siblings in 2021.

Despite conflict in the region at the time, our client and her family were able to gather the required documentation to support their application and undergo DNA testing to

prove our client's familial link with her mother and siblings. After a positive decision, we worked with our client to apply for visas for her family members to come to Ireland. The family was reunited in Dublin in 2023.

We then supported our client in her application for citizenship. We advocated directly to the Department of Justice that our client should be awarded citizenship on a discretionary basis as a refugee. This application was also successful, and our client attended her citizenship ceremony in December 2024.

“
Your expertise and attention to detail gave me confidence, and I'm beyond grateful for how smoothly everything went. Thanks to your hard work, I'm now a citizen, and I've been reunited with my family, which means the world to me.
ALG client





03/ CHANGE IN A COMPLEX WORLD: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT PROJECTS

Combatting homelessness through housing law

Access to safe, suitable and affordable housing remains one of the single biggest social issues facing Ireland. To help tackle this crisis, we give free legal advice to families facing homelessness or social housing issues through a collaborative housing clinic project with the Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC) and Focus Ireland.

Adapting the MLRC’s pre-existing model, our solicitors work alongside support workers from Focus Ireland to provide timely, free, professional and accessible legal advice and representation to those who most need it.

Our lawyers continue to take in direct client referrals, providing end-to-end casework and additionally in 2024 we created a new online drop in legal advice clinics for frontline staff members of Focus Ireland. Staffed by lawyers from ALG and MLRC support and advocacy workers could present their issues on an anonymised basis and receive support and direction on how to resolve the barriers facing their families accessing emergency accommodation or social housing supports. This triage approach has enabled us to reach a far greater number of individuals, while retaining our capacity to full resource those in need of full legal representation.



Our flagship project with ALG is our joint housing legal clinic. Since 2017, ALG has worked with MLRC and Focus Ireland, pioneering a partnership which sees ALG lawyers provide legal advice to individuals and families experiencing homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This legal work continues to provide enormous value to MLRC and our clients, many of whom are the most marginalised in the community. This partnership is quite exceptional as it provides end to end legal services, including representation.

As demand for assistance on our service increases, so too does the number of clients that are represented by ALG lawyers. ALG’s continued and growing support allows MLRC to increase our capacity to deal with requests for assistance and free up MLRC’s lawyers to focus on other vital work that we undertake in the form of policy and strategic litigation.

**Freda Greal, Managing Solicitor,
Mercy Law Resource Centre**

Our partnership with ALG and MLRC has been an invaluable support for the people we work with. The clinic gives our clients access to crucial legal supports, often in urgent situations when barriers arise in accessing services.

The legal clinics also support staff in their advocacy work as they negotiate barriers for our clients, ensuring their rights are upheld. The ALG team is always open and willing to assist our services. We’re grateful for their ongoing support.

**Nicola Stewart, Services Manager,
Focus Ireland**



CASE STUDY: HOUSING

Family of EEA nationals supported to assert their right under EU law to equal treatment and secure a place on the Housing List and HAP

Our clients are a family of Romanian nationals - a married couple and their teenage children - who have been resident in Ireland since early 2023.

Shortly after their arrival, our clients faced a dire housing situation, which threw their lives into disarray. Their private rental accommodation ended in a summary and illegal eviction, with their possessions being bagged by the landlord and left on the street without warning while the family were attending mass. Their sudden homelessness forced the family to sleep rough in their car and saw them then access emergency accommodation. The stress of this situation resulted in debilitating medical difficulties for one of the parents, and the other lost their employment while trying to manage the chaotic situation.

Through friends, the family were able to secure work and another private rental tenancy, and began to get their lives on a more even keel. Due to their low income however, our clients were unable to make their full rent and sought to access the Housing Assistance Payment (**HAP**) – a financial support available to those on the social housing list – to cover the shortfall.

Their application to the local authority for a place on the social housing list was refused. The local authority sought to rely on the Housing Circular 41 of 2012 regarding access to social housing supports for non-Irish nationals. This is a government policy document which sets out guidance to the local authorities. In particular, the local authority asserted their reliance on a provision which says EEA nationals seeking a place on the housing list must be in work, or where out of work for this to be

result of accident or illness, or involuntarily unemployed and registered as a job seeker with more than one year of employment before losing their job. Our clients did not meet this criteria on account of their recent arrival in Ireland and the loss of employment being due to a need to attend to the emergency situation caused by their homelessness.

The clients sought support from Focus Ireland. Notwithstanding their excellent advocacy, Focus Ireland were unable to persuade the local authority change its position, and referred the clients to ALG for pro bono representation.

Our lawyers met with the family and took detailed instructions on their circumstances in order to advocate on their behalf with the local authority. Through written legal argument relying on case law of the Court

of Justice of the European Union in relation to the children’s right to remain in Ireland and complete their education, and the guarantees of Irish law and the EU Citizen’s Rights Directive, we advocated for the family’s rights to be treated on the same basis as Irish citizens including in relation to social assistance, which in this instance was a place on the social housing list and access to HAP.

The local authority accepted our arguments and reversed its decision, placing the family on the housing list and giving them access to HAP. Following further advocacy, our lawyers were also able to secure back payments of the arrears of HAP that would have been payable to the family were they not unlawfully refused access to the housing list in the first place.



CASE STUDY: HOUSING

Client supported to appeal refusal to provide him with emergency accommodation following breakdown in family relationship

Our client contacted Focus Ireland last year, informing them that he had been previously residing with his father but due to a relationship breakdown was now sleeping in the back of his car. Despite the best efforts of Focus Ireland in liaising with the county council in question our client remained homeless in the run-up to Christmas. Focus Ireland then reached out to ALG for assistance. Shortly thereafter, as a result of the considerable stress of the situation, our client became unwell and was required to avail of in-patient psychiatric healthcare.

Recognising the urgency of our client's situation, which was compounded by the harsh winter weather, we immediately arranged a call with our client to explain how we proposed to liaise with the county council to ensure our client did not face sleeping rough. Our initial letter to the

council, in which we cited the Housing Act 1988 (the **1988 Act**), the Irish Constitution 1937 and the European Convention on Human Rights, was met with the same response that the council provided to Focus Ireland, i.e., that our client was not homeless within the meaning of section 2 of the 1988 Act on the basis that it was reasonable for him to reside with his father.

We sent a second letter to the council emphasising that our client had no right to reside with his father and that he was in fact homeless under the 1988 Act on the basis that

- there was no accommodation available which he could reasonably occupy
- he was unable to provide accommodation from his own resources

This second letter, coupled with calls we put into the council, proved successful in securing emergency accommodation for our client.

In our role as legal advisors, we recognised that our client was going through a difficult period in his life and was in a very vulnerable position. We made it clear to him that we were on hand to answer any questions he had regarding his situation. We also checked in on him in the weeks after we secured emergency accommodation for him to ensure he was getting on well.



04/ FOSTERING EXCELLENCE: LEGAL EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Timely, accurate and professional legal information is vital to realising the right of access to justice. We dedicate a proportion of our pro bono practice to create entry points where legal information can be disseminated, including:

- legal information clinics
- tailored education programmes
- specialist training for civil society





04/ FOSTERING EXCELLENCE: LEGAL EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

UNHCR and ALG partner on legal information outreach clinics for international protection applicants

A fundamental in expanding access to justice is empowering communities of rightsholders to understand the law and the legal system. In situations where individual representation for every person in need is impossible, lawyers must think of the ways we can contribute through the promotion and delivery of legal information and education.

Throughout 2024, over 18,500 people sought international protection in Ireland. This required them to apply to the IPO and then engage in the in-depth legal application process which eventually determines whether or not they are legally entitled to

international protection - refugee status or subsidiary protection. While awaiting the outcome, applicants must make their life in Ireland, and navigate an unfamiliar society and legal system, unsure of their particular rights and obligations.

In recognition of the unmet legal need of this community, since 2023 ALG has partnered with UNHCR – the UN Agency mandated to protect people forced to flee their homes and find safety in other countries – and the Jesuit Refugee Service, to deliver information sessions to newly arrived international protection applicants on the application process, their rights and obligations, and related supports.

International protection procedure in Ireland is the result of intersecting national, European and International legal frameworks. These mandate the obligations and standards owed to refugees, as well as the complex legal tests they must meet to be granted protection.

The application process requires a person to tell their life story and in particular the events that have come to pass which have brought to bear their need for protection.

This is done by way of a long substantive interview, where the answers given by the applicant are evaluated by the decision-makers at the IPO against these legal tests and consideration.

The reasons why a person or a family might be required to flee their country of origin are myriad. They range from the personal – persecution on the basis of immutable human characteristics such as their gender or race, or infringement of their fundamental human rights, such as the liberty and freedom of speech – to the global and geopolitical. In delivering these workshops, our people share accurate and accessible legal information on these legal tests and the application process. This is vital if a person is to be given a fair chance of telling their story well and properly asserting their legal right to protection.

In 2024, ALG lawyers assisted in the delivery of 15 information sessions in direct provision centres, providing accurate and essential legal information to over 430 people seeking protection.

For anyone forced to flee, access to information is crucial to navigating an increasingly complex protection system when new to a country. Early information empowers individual asylum seekers and enables them to assert their rights and access relevant services and supports. ALG has assisted UNHCR not only in the delivery of these information sessions but also in their development, updating the content in line with changes in the protection system.

This partnership has enabled UNHCR to broaden our outreach and it has been a pleasure to work with the dedicated team of ALG lawyers as part of this project.

UNHCR Ireland





04/ FOSTERING EXCELLENCE: LEGAL EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Trinity FLAC: free legal information clinics for students

In recent years, we have worked in partnership with Trinity Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC) to deliver a free legal information clinic to Trinity College Dublin (TCD) students.

The clinics happen online on Tuesday evenings during term time. During them, any TCD student can have a free 20-minute consultation with a qualified solicitor to discuss a legal issue. These can include disputes with employers or landlords, information about immigration rights, and so on.



The partnership between ALG and Trinity FLAC ensures that students can access free, confidential, and reliable legal information with ease. By breaking down barriers to legal support, this collaboration not only empowers students to navigate legal challenges but also encourages law students / future lawyers to engage with pro bono work in a meaningful way.

Daria Jedruch, co-ordinator of the Trinity FLAC project

I really enjoyed volunteering with the Trinity FLAC project. I believe that it is important that everyone has access to free legal advice. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to use my legal skills to assist students by providing them with basic information to help them understand and access their rights.

Rhenee Dunne, Solicitor, ALG



04/ FOSTERING EXCELLENCE: LEGAL EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Ukraine Ireland Legal Alliance – enhancing access to legal information

The Ukraine Ireland Legal Alliance works to provide an inclusive platform for the Irish legal community’s response to the unlawful invasion of Ukraine.

As a founding member of the Ukraine Ireland Legal Alliance, we have collaborated with our peers from across the legal profession to ensure legal information is being delivered in an accessible manner and in a time efficient way for displaced Ukrainians seeking sanctuary in Ireland.

Together with the Irish Red Cross the Ukraine community was surveyed to identify what information gaps there may be in understanding their legal rights and entitlements in Ireland. With this information the network was able to design a webinar series, aimed at addressing common queries across a range of issues from employment, family, immigration and housing law rights. More than 2,000 members of the community subscribed to the webinar series with the recorded sessions publicly available.

We were delighted to co-design the session on housing rights with our peers at McCann FitzGerald.

Access to a safe and suitable home is a fundamental human right, a foundation from which people can re-build shattered lives. We were delighted to share our knowledge and expertise of social housing and homeless supports to the community through this education program with the Red Cross and our colleagues from across the legal profession.

Eithne Lynch, Head of Pro Bono, ALG





05/ PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

FLAC: Pro Bono Pledge Ireland

The FLAC Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA) has been a key stakeholder in creating the ecosystem where lawyers are matched with members of civil society to open networks between the two sectors. These connections expose each to different ways of thinking and facilitate opportunities to engage in positive social change.

This work led to the creation of Pro Bono Pledge Ireland (the **Pledge**), the first collaborative effort in Ireland to articulate the shared professional responsibility of lawyers to promote access to justice and provide pro bono legal assistance to those in need.

We're proud to have been a founding signatory of the Pledge, which has led to closer cooperation and collaboration with our legal peers. We continue to take on pro bono referrals through the Public Interest Law Alliance's pro bono referral scheme.



Pro bono is an essential part of the access to justice landscape. It has the potential to provide vital assistance and support for social justice NGOs in their internal procedures but also to provide targeted bespoke legal services for disadvantaged groups experiencing multiple legal issues - "clustered injustice".

ALG is an undoubted leader in the pro bono world. It was the first law firm to establish a formal structured approach to pro bono and appoint dedicated staff. It was one of the first firms to provide early and continued essential support for FLAC's clearing house, which is operated by PILA, by becoming a sustaining partner in 2014. It has continued to play a leading role, being one of the founding signatories of the Pro Bono Pledge. Its impact projects act as models and inspiration for other vital ongoing partnership with NGOs. Its leadership and support are vital to the development of a pro bono culture in Ireland.

Eilis Barry, CEO, FLAC



05/ PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

In-house legal community unite to create greater impact through pro bono legal work

Created in 2023 we have been supporting a dynamic network of in-house legal teams to drive forward the culture of pro bono legal work in Ireland. Included in the aims of the network is to promote and improve pro bono service and delivery, share knowledge and best practice, and to collaborate as members of the profession to have greater impact for those in our community who face barriers in accessing legal services.

Inaugural In-House Counsel Day for Pro Bono

In April we celebrated the inaugural In-House Counsel Day for Pro Bono in Ireland. The day was marked with two events in partnership with the Irish Refugee Council and Social Entrepreneurs Ireland respectively, and included legal teams from AIB, Bank of America, BNP Paribas, BNY Mellon, DCC plc, PTSB, Stripe, Western Union and Visa.

The morning event with the Irish Refugee Council was designed to equip recently arrived international protection applicants to enter the labour market in Ireland. The session focused on employment law rights and setting up a business in Ireland.

Lawyers from the Pro Bono Network worked with ALG lawyers to deliver practical presentations on the topics. These were followed by breakout group discussions whereby attendees could delve into the content deeper and discuss what they had heard with the lawyers present.

The afternoon event saw in-house and ALG lawyers discuss approaches to managing tricky HR challenges and reputational risks for attendees from alumni organisations of Social Entrepreneur Ireland’s Impact Award. Breakout sessions then gave the attendees an opportunity to take what they had heard and go into further details on the types of issues organisations can face, and receive expert professional guidance on the best way to safeguard their business, ensuring they can continue to focus on their organisations goals and mission.



05/ PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE



It was fantastic to see in-house legal teams from the Pro Bono Network and ALG coming together with our partners from the Irish Refugee Council and Social Entrepreneurs Ireland. The Pro Bono Network connects volunteer in-house legal teams with non-profit organisations and people in need of free legal services. There are a growing number of Irish organisations with in-house legal teams who are committed to provide pro bono services, which is great to see. Since it was established last year, we have seen a significant growth in the number of members joining the Pro Bono Network. In-house legal teams recognise the benefit we can bring to society and the impact on individuals' lives. We anticipate continuing growth in pro bono activity by in-house legal teams in the future.

Catherine May, General Counsel, Bank of America Europe

Our team at Social Entrepreneurs Ireland have supported over 600 social entrepreneurs who are solving Ireland's social and environmental issues. Yet, this journey isn't navigated alone. Social entrepreneurs require the support and expertise of sector leaders and business experts, exemplified by yesterday's collaboration with ALG and Pro Bono Network. This event is a wonderful example of utilising the cumulative power of people to create lasting social change.

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland

The people we work with arrive with little to no knowledge of the Irish labour market. They often ask us questions about if and when they can work or what they need to do to start a business. Helping them to understand their labour rights significantly eases the difficulties they face navigating the international protection system. As a small independent charity working in a high-demand environment, pro bono support from firms and corporates has a big impact on the quality and reach of our work.

Irish Refugee Council



05/ PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

Legal research to support the rights of people seeking international protection in Ireland

With conflicts erupting and ravaging communities globally, the need to protect the rights of those fleeing and seeking international protection with expert legal support has never been greater.

Throughout the year several members of the network supported the work of ALG lawyers acting for international protection applicants, by preparing country of origin reports. The reports provide objective, reliable and up-to-date information regarding the conditions in a particular country. This information is vital for the legal submissions made on the client's behalf as evidence of their well-founded fear of persecution should they return to their country of origin.

Throughout 2024, extensive research was done by colleagues in Citi, BNP Paribas, PTSB and Western Union into the state of conditions in Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Georgia, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

Contributing our legal expertise and research skills to support international protection applicants through country of origin reports has been a very rewarding experience for our team. It's a privilege to use our skills to assist individuals at such a critical point, and we're delighted to work with ALG and the wider Pro Bono Network on this important initiative. The collaboration has reminded us of the real-world impact of our profession.

Deirdre Kelly, Senior Solicitor, PTSB Plc



05/ PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

Improving legal literacy for people in prison

Empowering individuals to understand the law and the legal system is one of the most powerful ways of addressing legal problems before they arise.

In 2024, ALG in partnership with colleagues from the In-House Counsel Network began a new programme of 'legal literacy' outreach and education into the prisoner communities in the Mountjoy campus.

At its core, the ambition of this project is to utilise the experience and legal expertise of ALG lawyers and our in-house colleagues to provide practical and real-world legal skills to the students in Mountjoy. In the lessons we focus on core legal concepts, such as criminal law, housing rights, immigration and equality and leverage the experience within

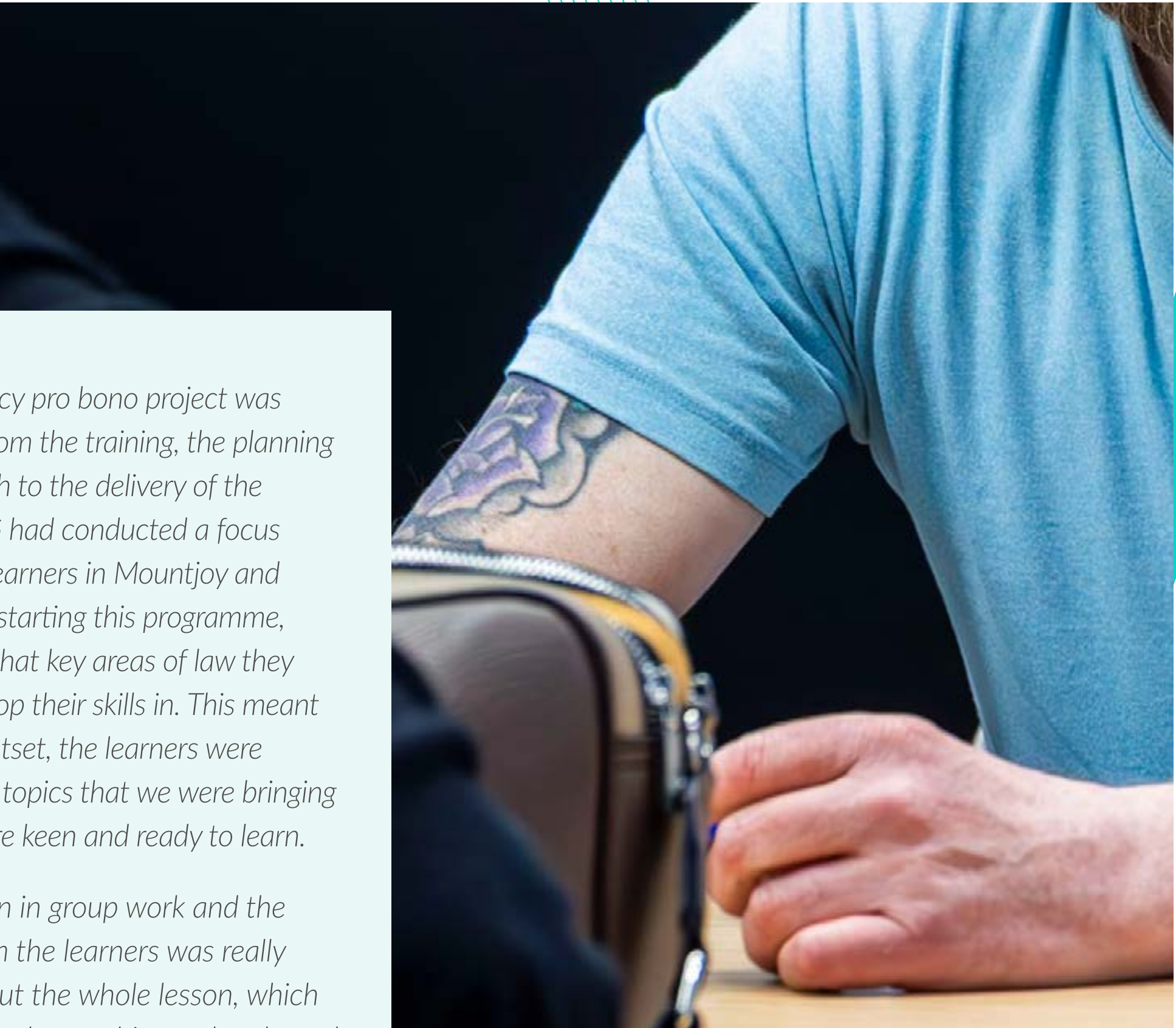
our teaching cohort to hold workshops to build lawyerly skills such as self-advocacy, disclosing and discussing sensitive issues, and navigating administrative and legal systems.

Colleagues underwent training with Sean Arthurs (Georgetown University), and John Lunney (Law Society of Ireland) in our offices in September 2024. The focus of this training was to develop a series of lessons, and more importantly, a teaching style, that focused on having students' debate, discuss and engage issues, and to tease out and make tangible legal concepts and their application. Throughout November 2024, colleagues ran workshops over consecutive weeks delivering the lessons, with excellent engagement from the students there.

This prison literacy pro bono project was truly inspiring, from the training, the planning and right through to the delivery of the legal lesson. ALG had conducted a focus group with the learners in Mountjoy and Dóchas prior to starting this programme, to understand what key areas of law they wanted to develop their skills in. This meant that from the outset, the learners were interested in the topics that we were bringing to them and were keen and ready to learn.

The participation in group work and the enthusiasm from the learners was really strong throughout the whole lesson, which is a testament to the teaching style adapted from the training we received. The feedback we received from the learners was very positive, and there is a clear appetite for more of this pro bono work in the future.

Alannah Shortt, BNP Paribas





05/ PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

Supporting the framework for the new local Ireland network for the UN Global Compact

We were delighted to support the United Nations Global Compact in its creation of a new local network for Ireland, bringing the world’s largest corporate sustainability initiative to Ireland. Working closely with the Global Compact team we put together an Irish corporate structure that offers flexibility, security and aligns with the global standards required of each local foundation.

In the beginning of the project, we prepared and delivered advice on the company incorporation process in Ireland and the steps to becoming a legal charity in Ireland. We then began working with the Global Compact to explore different company and governance structures common among Irish charities, researching the way in which different company structures can provide a forum for stakeholders to have input into the governance of the company, through

legal membership or otherwise. We also reviewed the Global Compact's International Quality Standards and provided advice and drafts relating to the Irish company’s key corporate documents, ensuring these will be in line with both the standards and Irish law.

We have also prepared advice and delivered presentations to potential future directors of the Irish company on the Irish company law framework and the responsibilities that come with being a director of an Irish company.

We are currently working with the Irish staff of the United Nations to finalise the corporate structure of the Irish company and assisting with the incorporation process, looking ahead to an application for charitable status.

We have really enjoyed this partnership with the United Nations Global Compact. It has given us a great opportunity to share our legal skills and knowledge and to think about Irish company law from the lens of a global charity. We look forward to continuing this work over the coming years.

Eoghan Browne, Senior Associate; Miah Phelan Sweeney, Solicitor, ALG

The pro bono support provided by A&L Goodbody has been instrumental in establishing the legal foundation for the UN Global Compact Network Ireland. Their expert guidance throughout the incorporation process allowed us to formalize our structure with confidence and focus our energy on advancing our mission to engage Irish businesses in driving progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. We are deeply grateful for their partnership, which reflects a meaningful commitment to responsible business and impactful collaboration.

Nessa Whelan, Executive Director, UN Global Compact Network Ireland



06/ CHAMPIONING CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society plays a vital role in bringing people together, campaigning to solve pressing problems, and offering services to those who most need support. Organisations are seeing increased regulatory and governance requirements being placed on their operations.

By giving civil society access to our legal expertise and support, we can help strengthen their internal procedures, while adding value and building their capacity to engage in social change. We continue to allocate much of our time to helping our pro bono partners, using our commercial legal skill sets to meet their day-to-day needs, as the following sections show.





06/ CHAMPIONING CIVIL SOCIETY AND PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

Depaul: unwavering work to assist people in need

Our enduring partnership with Depaul covers multiple workstreams, including fundraising events and initiatives, employee volunteering, strategic engagement at leadership level and pro bono legal support on significant service advancements.

Throughout 2024, we advised Depaul Housing on their arrangements with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (**DCEDIY**) in conjunction with the Housing Agency for the provision of accommodation and supports

to international protection applicants across Ireland. A cross-departmental team of lawyers from our Projects and Infrastructure team and our Real Estate team advised on the negotiation of the works and service level arrangements across a number of portfolios of properties used for International Protection accommodation.

We worked very closely with the Depaul Housing team to manage engagement with governmental stakeholders and to conclude the arrangements to ensure that Depaul Housing was in a position to carry out the works on the properties to bring them up to the standard suitable for accommodation and to provide the ongoing support services for International Protection applicants.



Your insights and assistance as ever have been invaluable not to mention your patience. We've all tried to keep our eye on the prize which is to get those properties into the system and we're finally there. You can be assured that your work will result in better lives for the people we serve, many thanks.

David Carroll, CEO Depaul

Contributing to this extremely worthwhile project was a huge privilege. Assisting Depaul on the tireless work they do helping vulnerable people was really rewarding. It was a great experience to step outside of the comfort zone of our day to day to assist an organisation that has such a positive impact on our society.

**Robbie Nicholas, Senior Associate;
Ross Moore, Partner, ALG**





06/ CHAMPIONING CIVIL SOCIETY AND PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

Open Doors Initiative

The Open Doors Initiative (ODI) works to provide opportunities to some of the marginalised members of our society (including refugees, asylum seekers, people with disabilities and disadvantaged youth, those from a Traveller or Roma background, LGBTQ+, people with a criminal past and any intersectionality between these groups). ODI achieves this by creating pathways to work through training, employment, education and entrepreneurship. This is because these marginalized groups face higher barriers to employment than most.



Our Corporate Team worked with ODI to successfully update its corporate governance framework and structure in line with the evolving needs and growth of the organization. This ensured ODI’s continued compliance with company laws and regulations in Ireland. This saw ALG meet with the ODI team to understand the required changes, determine how to implement the changes within ODI’s corporate governance framework, and file all changes with the Companies Registration Office.

ALG helped us when we most needed it. We had a new Chair and board members and had grown hugely over time and needed to overhaul our governance structures to meet this growth and our needs. The team were very supportive, gave expert advice and went above and beyond to help us. They treated us as an important client and helped set us up in best practice in our revised structures. We never felt that anything was too much trouble and were always sure that we were getting the best advice possible, which provides great security for a small NGO. We are very grateful for their help and look forward to working with them in the future.

Jeanne McDonagh, CEO, ODI

Working with ODI was yet another opportunity to showcase ALG’s breadth of expertise. I got to work with lawyers across different disciplines to come up with a solution to accommodate ODI’s evolving needs and growth. It was wonderful to work with the ODI team, a group of individuals who truly are, and believe in, what they do. The fact that the organization serves such an important role in society just makes it all the more worthwhile. I look forward to many more engagements with ODI in future.

Lawrence-John Maralack, Lawyer, ALG



06/ CHAMPIONING CIVIL SOCIETY AND PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

Hometree: working to restore complex ecosystems in Ireland

Hometree CLG (**Hometree**) is a registered charity that aims to establish and conserve permanent native woodland in Ireland, encouraging land regeneration and biodiversity through afforestation, restoration and education. ALG will assist Hometree with the Wild Atlantic Rainforest Project (the **Project**) which is focused on restoring large landscapes and complex

ecosystems through the acquisition and financing of sites across the West of Ireland. The first phase of the Project is estimated to take three to four years and ALG will act for Hometree in the acquisition and financing of the sites.

ALG have advised Hometree on potential projects with two renewables operators, involving the transfer and/or lease of lands to Hometree for biodiversity improvement, and the negotiation of a project agreement addressing one operator's replanting obligations from wind farm activities in Ireland, where Hometree will acquire, manage and afforest lands funded by the operator.

As a fast growing not for profit working in a big and rapidly emerging space, the challenges are many, but having the support of an organisation like A&L Goodbody has been nothing short of a godsend over the past few years. Their experience and integrity, have allowed us to move quickly on opportunities, and to lean on them for far more than just legal advice. The team has been instrumental and genuinely passionate about supporting nature restoration. We're incredibly grateful for the partnership.

Matthew Smith, CEO, Hometree



06/ CHAMPIONING CIVIL SOCIETY AND PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

LGBT Ireland: supporting those who need it most

It has been an absolute pleasure to partner with LGBT Ireland, a national support service for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people throughout the last year. LGBT Ireland provides support annually to thousands of LGBTQI+ people and their family members on issues relating to sexuality and gender identity through their network of helplines, online chat and peer support services.

In 2024, our Technology team worked with LGBT Ireland on uplifting and expanding LGBT Ireland's internal compliance

documents which underpin their services to ensure compliance from a regulatory perspective. Data protection and GDPR is a fast-moving and highly regulated space, so it is important that LGBT Ireland has robust policies in place and are well-equipped to adequately deal with issues as they arise.

Our Technology team took a collaborative approach in drafting internal documentation and crafting internal processes by taking time to understand the real issues faced by LGBT Ireland. This ensured that LGBT Ireland's policies and internal processes were as forward looking and adaptable as possible. Our work with LGBT Ireland on their legal compliance obligations meant that LGBT Ireland had greater resources and time to focus on their very important vision and mission.

Our team is proud to support LGBT Ireland in its continued growth and development, allowing the organisation to harness technology in continuing to deliver its vital services and support to supporting thousands of LGBTQI+ people throughout Ireland.

Shannon Owens, Solicitor; Chris Bollard, Partner, ALG





06/ CHAMPIONING CIVIL SOCIETY AND PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

Belong To: a new collaboration with Focus Ireland

Belong To is an LGBTQ+ youth organisation in Ireland that provides national services and advocacy for LGBTQ+ children and young people. Belong To offers a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where young people can connect with peers in similar situations while accessing social justice and support services.

ALG has provided legal assistance to belong to on various projects, including a recent collaboration with Focus Ireland. A 2020 report on the LGTBQ+ community

recommended that Focus Ireland, in partnership with the Homeless Network comprising nonprofit providers of homeless services in the Dublin region and the Dublin region homeless executive, identify and commission specialist training from LGTBQ+ organisations for frontline staff working in key access points and services.

In line with this recommendation, ALG advised Belong To on a contract for services related to the co-creation and development of a training program with Focus Ireland. This initiative aims to support charities in delivering training programs that ensure homeless services are more accessible and supportive for young LGBTQ+ homeless people.



“The impact of our relationship with the A&L Goodbody pro bono team and the wider firm is immeasurable to the work of Belong To LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland. The firm's knowledge, passion and professionalism towards supporting LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland and making change for good is untold. At every point of contact with ALG, we are met with friendly advice and understanding, which has a tangible and positive impact on our work. This is an incredibly impactful partnership that we look forward to continuing, and one we would be at a loss without.

Moninne Griffith, CEO, Belong To



06/ CHAMPIONING CIVIL SOCIETY AND PROMOTING PRO BONO CULTURE

Stand: operational support to international education charity

Stand (formerly known as Suas Education Developments) is a registered charity that delivers Global Citizenship Educational programmes to mobilise students to stand up for global justice, equity and sustainability.

One of the projects that Stand is involved with is providing a team who assist with the delivery of Irish Aid public awareness programme to schools and

other communities for the Irish Aid Centre. We worked with Nina Sachau, Executive Director, and Erin Kehoe, Operations Manager, to understand the service provision to Irish Aid, the type of work being carried out and the staffing needs to so we could advise on the employment aspects for Stand of providing the service.

This included drafting employment contracts and related employment law advice. It meant that Stand understood their obligations as an employer and what that meant for them in respect of the service provision to Irish Aid.

Using my experience as an employment law solicitor to advise a client who is a charity was rewarding. In addition, knowing I played a small part in assisting Stands continued success and their ongoing partnership with Irish Aid was very satisfying. It was a privilege to contribute to the overall work that Stand do and I look forward to seeing their continued success.

Emer Murphy, Senior Associate, ALG





07/ PROTECTING THE RULE OF LAW

Irish Rule of Law International: comparative research on criminal contempt

Irish Rule of Law International (IRLI) is a project-oriented rule of law organisation that seeks to progress resource-restrained societies to tackle the effects of global injustice. This year we got to support IRLI’s work in Malawi.

IRLI works to promote and strengthen the rule of law and improve access to justice. It achieves this by harnessing expertise and knowledge within the Irish and international legal community to give pro bono legal support, advice, and technical assistance.

IRLI has had a permanent presence in Malawi since 2011. Working there, it has been dedicated to:

- improving access to justice for adults and children in the criminal justice system
- strengthening institutional capacity, coordination and accountability
- supporting local justice actors to develop court rules and procedures

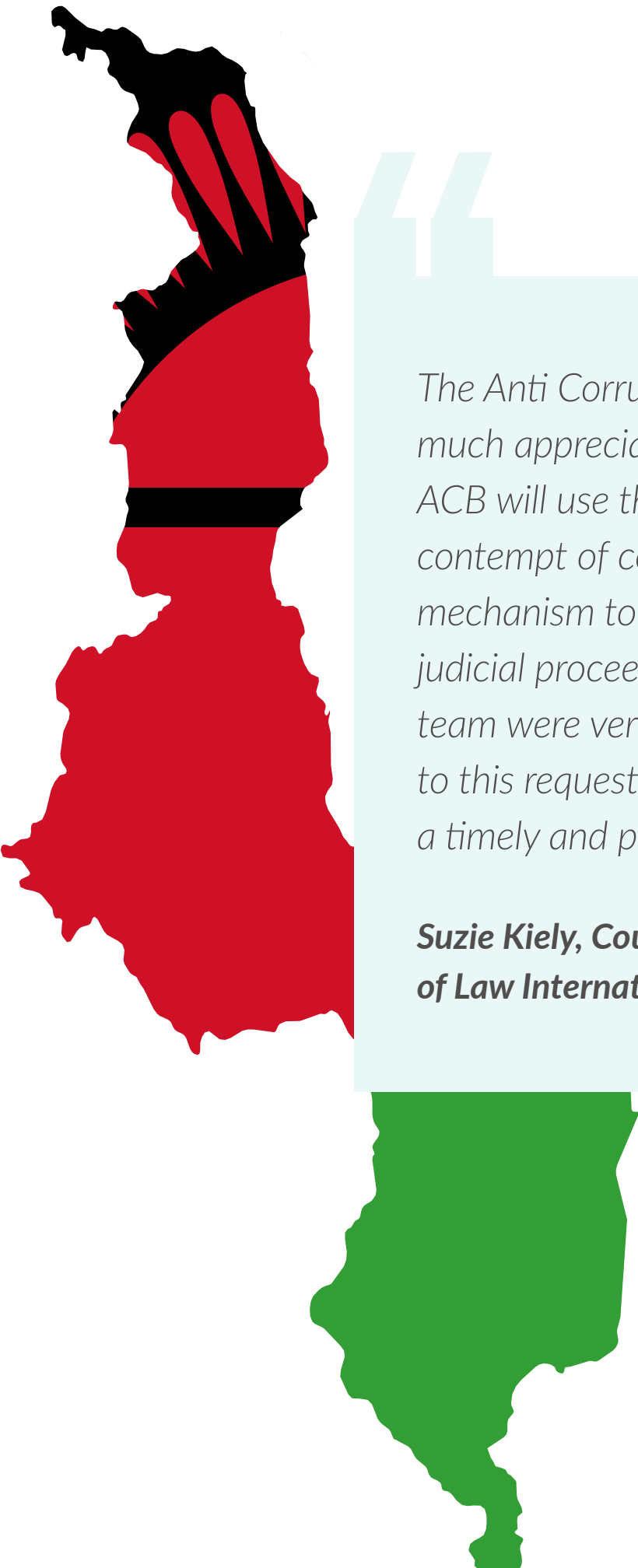
Last year at the invitation of the Anti-Corruption Bureau of Malawi we were asked to undertake comparator legal research on the use of criminal contempt of court by the superior courts in Ireland. Legal teams from our Belfast and Dublin office specifically examined:

- what constitutes an offence of criminal contempt
- what are the legal elements of the offence
- are there penalties a court can impose
- has criminal contempt been utilized by courts to combat misreporting of cases by journalists which interferes with administration of justice

Both teams also provided a broad overview of relevant legislation and case law.

The Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) very much appreciated the work done. The ACB will use the research to examine how contempt of court could be utilised as a mechanism to preserve the integrity of judicial proceedings in Malawi. The ALG team were very supportive and responsive to this request and delivered the research in a timely and professional manner.

Suzie Kiely, Country Director Malawi Irish Rule of Law International





07/ PROTECTING THE RULE OF LAW

Comparative research to support best practice in the rule of law for the United Kingdom

Cross-jurisdictional collaboration can be of huge benefit to every legal practice and pro bono is no different.

In October 2024, ALG staff across our Dublin and Belfast offices supported colleagues from Clifford Chance LLP in furtherance of a research project they were providing pro bono support on. Their client JUSTICE is a UK-based NGO focused on law reform for a fair, accessible and equal justice system.

To complement their 2023 report 'The State We're In: Addressing Threats & Challenges



to the Rule of Law', which set out the major rule of law challenges faced by the UK, JUSTICE sought with this research project to look at other jurisdictions and identify rule of law best practices to inspire reform in the UK.

Their research queries for both jurisdictions covered a broad area of topics including the use of legislative scrutiny in instances of high-volume law-making, the framework and practice around equality impact assessments, the delegation of legislative powers, standards around clarity of legislative drafting, and our human rights frameworks, with a particular focus on the national human rights institutions.

ALG lawyers from both offices worked in teams to explore these areas and formulate responses for JUSTICE to review and consider whether any best practice recommendations could be put forward.

A&L Goodbody LLP's contribution has been very helpful in fleshing out JUSTICE's upcoming Rule of Law: International Best Practices report, which seeks to identify best practices employed outside the United Kingdom to inspire reform of the British legal and law-making systems. We are planning to publish this report by Summer 2025.

The insights from the memorandum we received from A&L Goodbody informed the body of our report: in particular, we relied on the description of the institutional make-up of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) to outline an alternative model for how the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) could be structured. The IHREC example and its potential relevance for the EHRC will also inform our discussions with several expert stakeholders during two roundtable meetings in April 2025.

JUSTICE





08/ UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Social entrepreneurs are uniquely placed to deliver real social change with lasting impact. Their business models typically align with their values and purpose to deliver social, community or environmental good (sometimes all three).

Our Pro Bono practice has developed sustained partnerships with networks that support new ideas, bring them to market and help them to accelerate.

Since the beginning of our long and enduring partnership we have seen how Social Enterprise Ireland (SEI) has nurtured

and developed talented individuals, who with creative and innovative ideas, have sought to bring about positive social change. We were delighted to join with SEI and its extensive network of innovators and supporters to celebrate their 20th anniversary.

For ideas to take root, they required strong foundations. As lawyers our training provides us with the unique ability to assess risk and work with our clients to put in place the frameworks that will best achieve this result. Our work with SEI and its extensive network has taken several forms; for example, convening free legal information seminars on identifying the right legal structure, negotiating commercial agreements to considerations in making that first hire. By sharing our knowledge, we can provide peace of mind to the entrepreneur allowing them to continue to concentrate on the solution. We also advise entrepreneurs directly and they are on-boarded as clients in the same way as we would any fee-paying client of the firm.

More recently we have worked with other law firms and corporates to support them in building out their pro bono offerings to this community; with the multiplier effect of increasing the numbers of legal professionals joining this vibrant community and using their legal skills for the common good. Giving legal advice to this community is a huge privilege and we strive to ensure that each of them receives exceptional advice from our partners and expert teams.

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland has benefited greatly for more than a decade from our successful partnership with A&L Goodbody. Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, as well as many of the social entrepreneurs we support have received excellent legal advice on a pro bono basis that they simply would have struggled to afford. This gives not just best-in-class legal advice but also peace of mind, which for new founders of social startups is priceless.

Over the past 12 months, ALG have supported social entrepreneurs delivering solutions in sectors as diverse as the criminal justice system, gender equality in sports, the environment, neurodiversity education, mental wellbeing for girls, homelessness, migrants and asylum seekers and training and wellbeing support for at-risk youth distant from education and the workplace.

Tara Wilson, CEO, SEI





08/ UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Working with Hair Together to support their growth and expansion

Hair Together is an innovative and award-winning social enterprise operating in Ballymun and surrounding areas in Dublin. Incorporating a focus on well-being, their programmes upskill young people and adults in hairstyling and barbering, to unlock potential and equip them for careers with a bright future.

As a result, Hair Together, as a growing social enterprise, has the benefit of employment related legal advice and documentation to equip the business in their plans for growth into the future.

As employment law solicitors, using our experience and skills to advise a social enterprise as inspiring as Hair Together was hugely rewarding. It was a privilege to contribute to a small part of their growth journey and we look forward to seeing Hair Together continue to thrive going forward.



**HAIR
TOGETHER**



08/ UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

NOW Group expands across Ireland, empowering neurodiverse individuals through jobs and training

The NOW Group is a multi-award-winning social enterprise supporting people who are neurodiverse, autistic, have ADHD or have a learning disability with finding jobs with a future. As part of the partnership, we will become a JAM Card friendly business.

The NOW Group is based in Northern Ireland and has recently expanded into Dublin, Monaghan, Cavan, Louth and Meath with a pilot programme running in Galway. It commits to empowering individuals to gain the skills and access to meaningful employment. It achieves this through tailored employment academies, which provide participants with industry-specific training and work placements, and through their social enterprise businesses Loaf Catering and Cafes and Loaf Pottery.

Last year we were delighted to support the NOW Group to secure its new premises in Dublin and their ambition to scale the impact of their work across the island of Ireland.

We are incredibly grateful to A&L Goodbody for their outstanding pro bono support. Their team has provided exceptional legal expertise, treating NOW Group with the same diligence and professionalism as a fee-paying client. Their advice on corporate governance, company secretariat, intellectual property, and our new premises lease has been invaluable. As we scale our services and social enterprise trading, their ability to offer comprehensive legal support across multiple areas has enabled us to be prudent, manage risk effectively, and ensure best practices in all aspects of our operations. Their commitment to social impact and responsible business has made a real difference to our work, and we sincerely appreciate their partnership in helping us create inclusive opportunities for the communities we serve.

Maeve Monaghan, CEO, NOW Group



