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SUMMARY

ENHANCING ACCESS TO LAW AND JUSTICE

FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN VIETNAM

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE JUSTICE INITIATIVE FACILITATION FUND (EU JULEJIFF)



Hong Duc Publishing House



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01



BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE JUSTICE INITIATIVE FACILITATION FUND



A legal information session about environment protection for participants in Can Gio district, Ho Chi Minh city
Photo: Nguyen Duc Hieu / Oxfam / Vietnam National University HCM, University of Economics and Law (UEL)



BACKGROUND

Judicial reform is one of the essential requirements to build and improve the Socialist rule-of-law state in Vietnam. This has been confirmed in many documents issued by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) since Doi Moi (1986). Examples include Resolution No. 49-NQ/TW in 2005 of the Politburo on Judicial Reform Strategy towards 2020, the Resolution of the 13th Congress of the CPV (2021), and Resolution No. 27-NQ/TW dated 9 November 2022 of the 6th Conference of the 13th Party Central Committee on "Continuing to build and improve the Socialist Rule-of-Law State in Vietnam in the new period".

Vietnam has recorded important achievements in judicial reform. One of the most prominent is the amendment and supplementation of the criminal, civil, and judicial procedural legal systems in accordance with the Party's policies and guidelines as well as the provisions of the 2013 Constitution on protecting justice, human rights, and civil rights. In particular, the functions, tasks, and authority of agencies and organisations assigned to carry out judicial assistance activities have been adjusted to create a clearer division between the administrative management authority and judicial responsibilities/powers. These adjustments also increased the powers and responsibilities and the promotion of independence and accountability of judicial positions before the law. Meanwhile, innovation was encouraged in the organisation and operation of law practices and notary organisations in accordance with the policy to promote the mobilisation of resources from across society for these services.¹

Despite this progress, the field also has some limitations.² Therefore, the 13th Congress Document of the CPV emphasised the solutions for judicial reform in the 2021-2025 period in Vietnam as follows: "enhancing the capacity of people and businesses in accessing the law and justice; strongly developing the legal services market, lawyers' activities, legal advice, judicial assistance, and dispute resolution institutions outside of court...; strengthening citizen reception and resolution of complaints and denunciations from citizens".³

¹ Judicial Work and Judicial Reform have Achieved many Important Achievements, CPV electronic newspaper, Tuesday 19 November 2019, available at: <https://dangcongsan.vn/phap-luat/cong-how-to-practice-cai-how-to-learn-to-dat-to-be-important-in-543225.html>

² CPV: Documents of the 13th National Congress, National Political Publishing House, H.2021, volume 1, page 90.

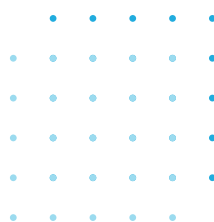
³ CPV: Documents of the 13th National Congress, National Political Publishing House, H.2021, *ibid.*, volume 2, pages 149-150.



INTRODUCTION TO THE JUSTICE INITIATIVE FACILITATION FUND

In this context, the EU Justice and Legal Empowerment Programme in Vietnam (EU JULE), funded by the EU, has been implemented on the basis of Financial Agreement No. DCI-ASIE/2014/037-404 signed between the Government of Vietnam and the EU on 2 December 2015. This was later concretised in Decision No. 2218/QD-BTP dated 18 August 2018 of the Minister of Justice. The EU JULE programme has the overall aim of strengthening the building of Socialist rule of law through a more reliable and accessible justice system.

This overall goal is concretised through increasing access to justice and the law for vulnerable groups – especially women, children, ethnic minorities (EM), and the poor – to enable them to overcome challenges in using public services in the justice system to exercise their legal rights according to Vietnamese law.





Participants attending an information session about the Law on Cyber Security and the Law on Marriage and Family, which was conveyed through art-based activities in Hoa Binh province

Photo: Nguyen Duc Hieu / Oxfam / Hoa Binh Women's Union (HBWU)

The programme includes two components. Firstly, the PAGOda component, managed by the Vietnamese Ministry of Justice (MOJ), together with United Nations agencies (UNDP and UNICEF) in Vietnam, focuses on technical assistance and strengthening the capacity of some Vietnamese government agencies and organisations. Secondly, the Justice Initiative Facilitation Fund (EU JULE JIFF, shortly "JIFF") component, managed by Oxfam in Vietnam acting as a Secretariat, supports qualified organizations (organisations are legally established and operating in accordance with Vietnamese law, holding appropriate experience and activities which are recognised in the legal field to carry out activities to support access to law the and justice for Vietnamese citizens) within the framework of JIFF initiatives. JIFF's initiatives contribute to all four results of the EU JULE programme:

RESULT 1

Increased public awareness and understanding of rights and how to invoke those rights.

RESULT 2

Increased access to legal advice, assistance, and representation in both civil and criminal matters.

RESULT 3

An improved enabling legislative and regulatory framework for legal empowerment and access to justice.

RESULT 4

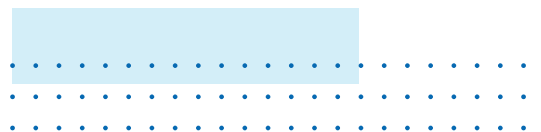
Enhanced integrity and transparency in the justice sector.



From 2018 to 2024, JIFF launched four calls for justice initiative proposals:

- 01 The first call was themed: "Enhancing legal and judicial access in gender equality and family issues for vulnerable people, particularly women, children, ethnic minorities, and poor people".
- 02 The second call was themed: "Strengthening access to justice and the protection of citizens' rights in the area of labour and employment, and conducting administrative procedures in access to health and education services".
- 03 The third call was themed: "Strengthening access to justice and the protection of citizens' rights in the areas of environmental management and protection for vulnerable groups, especially women, children, EM, and poor people".
- 04 The fourth call was themed: "Strengthening legal and judicial access for disadvantaged and vulnerable people, especially women, children, EM, and poor people".

JIFF's operation involves coordination between several stakeholders, including: the JIFF Secretariat, operated by Oxfam in Vietnam; the JIFF Grant Committee; and JIFF grantees. The EU JULE Programme Steering Committee (PSC) directed implementation with supervision from the EU JULE Project Management Unit (PMU) under the MOJ.





ĐA GIẢ ĐỊNH
Ề PHÒNG HỒNG
N DỤC

HỘI THẨM NHÂN DÂN

THẨM PHÁN
CHỦ TỌA PHIÊN TÒA

Simulated trial - one of the creative legal communication methods used by funded organizations
Photo: Luong Ba Son / Oxfam / Vinh University (VU)

To support the successful implementation of justice initiatives, JIFF focused on providing technical support and connecting relevant entities and partners through:

01

Capacity building and technical assistance to grantees based on their needs. This included training on project and financial management; skills on legal advice, support, and aid; and representation in civil and criminal cases. It also included mainstreaming gender in awareness-raising activities and legal advice; designing and conducting policy-oriented survey and research activities; and developing and deploying information, education, and communication (IEC) activities. This technical assistance was provided throughout the implementation of initiatives.

02

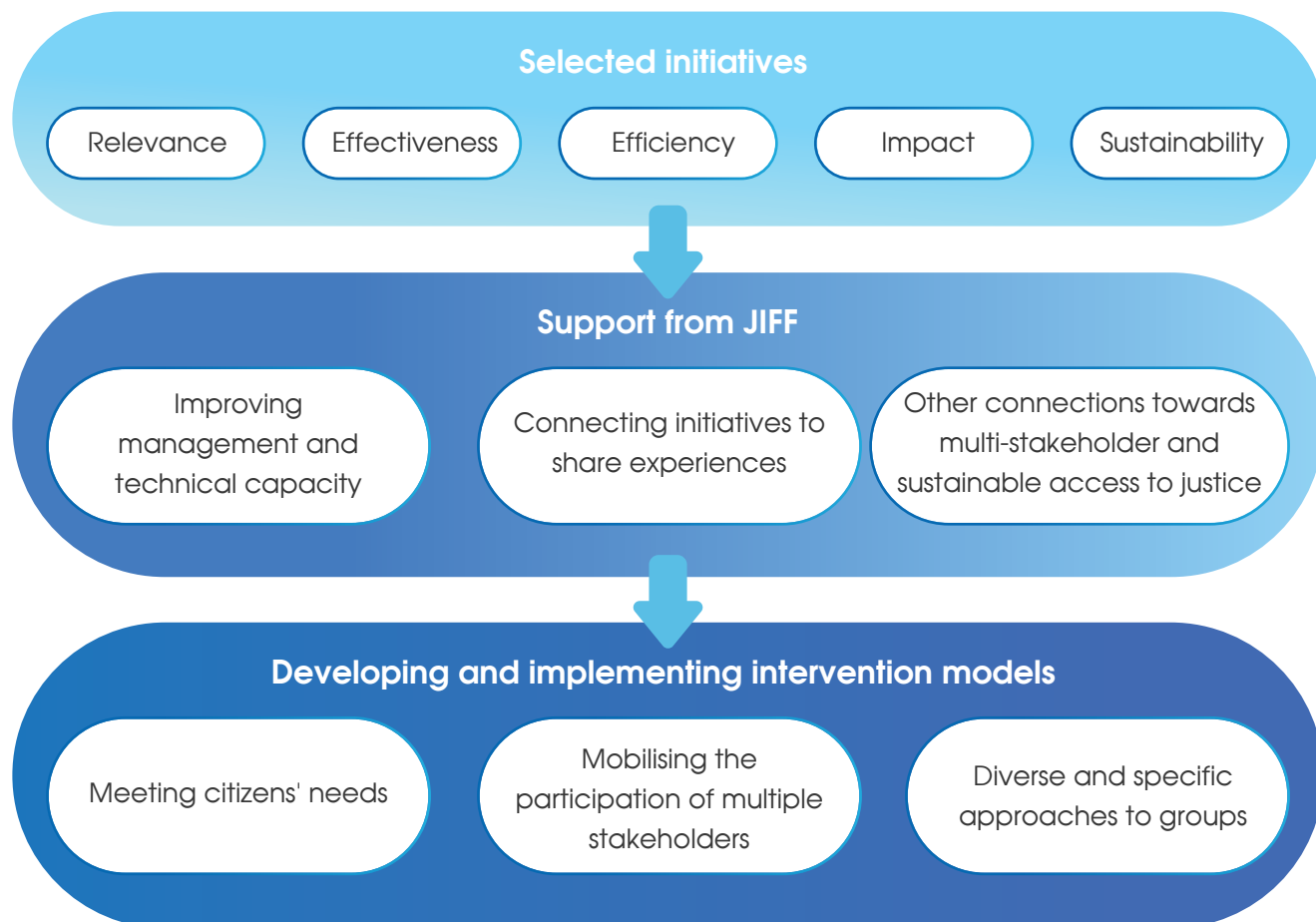
Connecting grantees with relevant government agencies at the central and local levels to facilitate the implementation of initiatives; optimising the efficient use of resources; and increasing integrity and transparency in the activities of government agencies, especially judicial agencies, towards a viable and sustainable access-to-justice ecosystem in Vietnam. This was done through discussions on project development and implementation as well as feedback sessions and recommendations to amend relevant policies and laws based on local practical evidence, thereby promoting dialogues and relationships between grantees and local governments in the areas where initiatives are implemented.

03

Connecting grantees, enabling them to share rich lessons learned and experiences in the process of implementing initiatives in different regions with relevant stakeholders. This was done through workshops to share experiences in implementing initiatives in some provinces/cities to strengthen connections between SOs receiving grants via JIFF.



Figure 1: The process of developing and implementing initiatives within JIFF



Source: This diagram was developed by the documentation team.



An experience sharing workshop for organizations implementing justice initiatives in the first funding round, Quang Binh
Photo: Trinh Thong Hai / Oxfam

02

KEY RESULTS OF JIFF



A legal information session about Law on the Implementation of Grassroots Democracy in Quang Binh
Photo: Nguyen Duc Hieu / Oxfam / Quang Binh Community Development Center (CDC QB)



04 Calls for justice initiative proposals

06 Provinces where the justice initiatives were implemented

62 Initiatives granted

More than 257.000 People have improved legal awareness

Nearly 15.000 People have received advice, support, and representation in court

30 Policies and legal documents were commented

207 Articles and television reports on justice initiatives



03

LESSONS LEARNED



Children in Ho Chi Minh city were supported in making birth certificates in the "A new page life" project
Photo: Management and Sustainable Development Institute (MSD)

In the process of implementing justice initiatives funded via JIFF, various useful lessons emerged for similar programmes and projects in the future. These can be divided into four main groups, as follows:

- 01 Develop a people-centred model, especially where vulnerable people are concerned
- 02 Develop a multi-stakeholder model and promote community groups
- 03 Cooperate and learn from experience to create a sustainable ecosystem
- 04 Expand resources and improve the capacity of grantees

LESSON 1: DEVELOP A PEOPLE-CENTRED MODEL, ESPECIALLY WHERE VULNERABLE PEOPLE ARE CONCERNED

Justice initiatives need to respond to the needs of the people

Justice initiatives need to originate from people's needs and help solve the problems that they face locally. They must also be suitable for the abilities, conditions, cultural traditions, customs, and practices of beneficiary groups. This is also a prerequisite for initiatives to receive consensus and support from local authorities.



Box 1. Initiatives based on people's needs is the foundation for sustainability

The initiative "**Supporting women to have decent, safe, and legal employment in the labour market overseas through improving their access to labour justice**" was implemented by the Quang Binh Province Women's Development Fund (QBWDF) and the Legal Advice Center belonging to the Women's Union of Quang Binh in four communes (Thanh Trach, Hai Phu, Duc Trach, and Nhan Trach) of Bo Trach district, Quang Binh province. This initiative aimed to solve the problem of female workers not having full access to the 2019 Labour Code or labour and employment policies when resolving employers' violations. During recruitment, vocational training, and signing labour contracts with their employers, female workers are at risk of being given false information, unsafe and illegal recruitment, or unfair treatment, and even of being exploited or exposed to possible human trafficking.

This was the first initiative in Quang Binh to address foreign labour issues for women.

QBWDF conducted a survey at the beginning of the semester, collecting information through in-depth interviews, group discussions, and observations of female workers in the initiative area. Based on the aspirations of female labour groups, QBWDF promoted the formation of female labour clubs so women could support and provide each other with authentic information about the labour market, conditions, etc., as well as to create community support for female workers to help each other solve problems. By understanding the needs of beneficiary groups, this initiative implemented flexible activities, choosing appropriate forms, times, and locations to attract beneficiaries to participate. At the same time, QBWDF selected and trained core, exemplary members to take the lead in community activities to become pioneers in IEC and knowledge-sharing.

In addition, QBWDF also consulted with local government leaders at all levels (provincial, district, and commune People's Committees); local state management agencies on justice and labour (provincial Departments of Justice (DOJ); provincial Legal Aid Centers; provincial Departments of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (DOLISA); district Bureaus of Justice (BOJ); district Bureaus of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (BOLISA)); and related SOs such as the Women's Union, Bar Association, Lawyers Association, and labour export enterprises.

QBWDF also organised four dialogues between the Department of Overseas Labour Management (DOLM) under MOLISA and other relevant departments, businesses, and workers on safe and legal migration in the four communes. The initiative, with 195 participating workers, recorded 40 opinions on issues related to foreign labour and received specific responses from DOLM and other relevant agencies.

In addition, QBWDF organised a successful live television dialogue on Quang Binh province radio and television between the National Assembly Delegation and workers. In this dialogue, many opinions and wishes were expressed concerning issues related to foreign workers and the 2019 Labour Code.

Regarding sustainability, the initiative will continue after its conclusion through being integrated into the activities of the Women's Union of Quang Binh province.

Source: Authors' compilation

Justice initiatives need the participation of local people, especially beneficiaries

Beneficiaries are the people who best understand their needs and barriers to access and protect their rights. The participation of beneficiaries is not only about their response to and support for justice initiatives but also a way for them to take ownership of their access to justice. Therefore, their direct and consistent engagement throughout implementation is a prerequisite to make sure that initiatives are effectively and sustainably carried out. This engagement will be even more effective when there is support from the government and local professional organisations with local resources. This is a consistent lesson learned from the actual implementation of all justice initiatives funded via JIFF.



Women in Hoa Binh took the lead in a widely supported tree-planting initiative
Photo: Nguyen Duc Hieu / Oxfam / Hoa Binh Women's Union (HBWU)

Box 2. The engagement of beneficiary groups brings effective legal support

The initiative: **"Strengthening capacity to respond to gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls with disabilities (WGDs) in Nghe An province"**, implemented by Action to the Community Development Institute (ACDC), aims to reduce GBV against WGDs in Thanh Chuong district, Thai Hoa district, and Vinh City in Nghe An province through raising awareness, improving skills, and strengthening the capacity of WGDs, their families and communities to respond to GBV and increase legal advice and support for WGDs.

In this initiative, WGDs have proactively supported each other in legal advice and awareness raising through "peer advice" groups. Firstly, active group members participated in training on connection and legal advice skills for people with disabilities (PWDs). These members then provided peer-to-peer advice to women and their families in the form of sharing and advice sessions on life issues, including initial legal advice on the issues that WGDs were concerned or confused about. This has helped WGDs to be more autonomous in sharing and seeking help (through peer advice groups) when they are treated unfairly or even subjected to violence which they would have previously hidden.

These active members have also helped ACDC to review the legal support needs of WGDs and refer them to specialised agencies for in-depth assistance. Based on that, ACDC has linked and cooperated with the Legal Aid Center of Nghe An province to organise more legal advice and aid activities directly in the community through mobile advice sessions, online/phone advice, a hotline, and other technologies such as Zalo. Through this initiative, the Legal Aid Center has gained a better understanding of PWDs, is more skilled in working with PWDs, and cooperates more closely with the Nghe An Provincial Association of PWDs in providing legal aid to PWDs.

Source: Authors' compilation

Appropriate and multi-channel IEC is critical to the success of justice initiatives

All the initiatives have aimed to support and work with vulnerable groups (women, children, the poor, EM, and PWDs) living in rural, remote, and mountainous areas as well as those with poor connectivity. Therefore, initiatives have used various types/channels of IEC to fit each beneficiary group and the actual context. These include traditional IEC channels such as commune radio networks, TV, and village/commune meetings; audio-visual IEC products (videos, posters, flyers, etc.); and new channels such as groups/communities on Zalo, social networks, and integrating IEC content into cultural activities, arts, and traditional festivals in the area.

Box 3. Children participating in disseminating legal knowledge

The initiative **"Improving the quality of life of people in rural, coastal, and EM areas of Quang Binh province through promoting law enforcement and environmental protection policies"** was implemented by the Lawyers Association of Quang Binh province in Quang Phu and Phu Hai communes in Dong Hoi City; Hien Ninh and Truong Xuan communes in Quang Ninh district; and Ly Trach, Trung Trach, Tay Trach, and Hai Phu communes in Bo Trach district, Quang Binh province.

Given that the audience for IEC here were children, the initiative selected appropriate and effective IEC channels including contests for students to learn about the Environmental Protection Law (EPL) as well as creating and performing plays incorporating EPL content. Thanks to these IEC formats, knowledge and information about the EPL was vividly conveyed to school students and teachers in the initiative area.

Source: Authors' compilation



Students attending a contest about the Right to live in a clean environment in Can Gio district, Ho Chi Minh city
Photo: Nguyen Duc Hieu / Oxfam / Vietnam National University HCM, University of Economics and Law (UEL)

Selecting suitable information technology (IT) platforms for beneficiary groups

Justice initiatives funded via JIFF show that IT applications are important to provide legal advice and aid to vulnerable groups, especially in mountainous and EM areas with difficult road conditions or in the context of natural disasters and pandemics.

All initiatives have used IT in their activities to different degrees. The most popular of which is using social networks to convey messages to beneficiary groups. Many initiatives have made good use of technology platforms such as websites, online training platforms, and mobile apps to effectively reach their target audience at a low cost in terms of time, human, and material resources.

However, it should be noted that the application of IT needs to be accompanied by a process of supporting disadvantaged groups to access these platforms. In addition, for groups without access to IT, initiatives need to design and implement appropriate alternative methods to ensure effective intervention models, avoiding widening inequality in access to information.



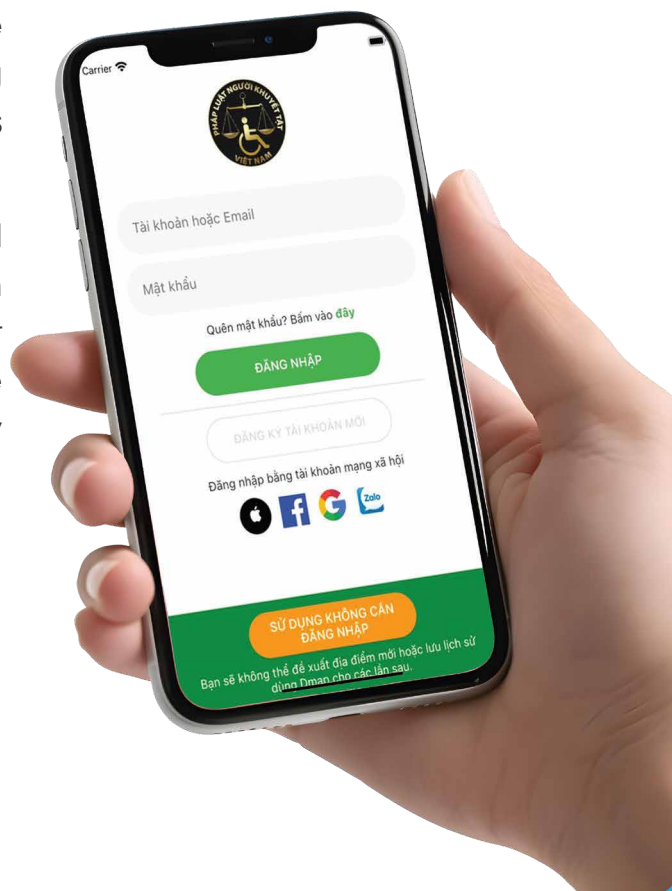
Box 4. Applying appropriate technology to support PWDs in accessing the law

The initiative "Strengthening legal aid and protecting the rights of PWDs in the fields of labour, employment, health, and education" was conducted by the Center for Disability and Development (DRD).

DRD designed and used the DLaw application to provide online legal advice and support for PWDs. As a result, PWD across the country can now access all laws related to PWDs through DLaw and interact with chatbots and the project management team to receive legal support. DRD's approach shows that technology is essential in the context of digitalisation, the industrial revolution 4.0, and the impact of COVID-19. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for PWDs.

Technology can help to overcome the mobility limitations of PWDs, helping those in rural areas nationwide access capacity-building support programmes.

However, PWDs still face financial and educational barriers. As such, they can easily be left behind if they do not receive appropriate support and are not equipped with digital technology skills. SOs supporting PWDs need to prepare in advance for this.



Source: Authors' compilation

LESSON 2: DEVELOP MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MODELS AND PROMOTE COMMUNITY GROUPS

Coordination among stakeholders is critical to the success of justice initiatives

In the process of implementing justice initiatives, no single agency or organisation can handle the work independently or separately. There must always be coordination and exchange among relevant parties including local government, socio-political organisations, associations, foundations, universities, centers, research institutes, and community groups. This creates unity and consensus, thereby ensuring quality and efficiency in the management and implementation of initiatives. This coordination between relevant parties also helps exploit and promote the capacity and strengths of each party in implementing the initiatives towards achieving the set goals. This is especially important for success in the policy feedback process.



An experience sharing workshop for organizations implementing justice initiatives in the fourth funding round, Ho Chi Minh city
Photo: Nguyen Duc Hieu / Oxfam

Box 5. Multi-stakeholder connection brings efficiency in providing legal policy recommendations

The initiative "**Promoting initial legal support and implementing policies on medical examination and treatment for people with hearing loss (deaf, hard of hearing, late-onset hearing loss)**" was implemented by the Center for Research and Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CED) in Ho Chi Minh City.

CED has actively connected with stakeholders, including:

- (i) People with hearing loss and their parents/teachers/supporters
- (ii) Doctors and medical staff;
- (iii) SOs;
- (iv) State management agencies.

Connection activities are carried out in many different forms such as collecting and sharing opinions with stakeholders, building networks, organising seminars, and workshops to improve policy implementation regarding medical examination and treatment support for PWDs.

First, CED coordinated with medical staff from several hospitals and trained/equipped sign language interpreters with the skills to support people with hearing loss. In addition, CED also expanded and built a support network for people with hearing loss from learners' groups through CED training courses to diversify the expertise of network members and encourage mutual sharing and learning. These activities not only better support people with hearing loss, they are also an opportunity for CED to gain a greater understanding of their needs and collect input from medical staff. In doing so, CED can help hospitals implement the Hospital Quality Criteria to better meet the needs of patients with hearing loss and contribute to developing procedures to better support them in hospital.

Furthermore, CED collects additional opinions from people with hearing loss and their parents, teachers, and supporters. Based on the opinions received, CED organises seminars and workshops with state management agencies, hospitals, schools, and SOs for people with hearing loss and their supporters.

On that basis, CED completed a "Guidance for supporting people with hearing loss in hospitals" manual with vivid content and design. With practical content, this manual has been re-compiled by the Department of Medical Service Administration into a legal document submitted to the Ministry of Health (MOH) to be issued to all public and private hospitals in Vietnam as a tool to support them in implementing the Vietnam Hospital Quality Criteria. In addition, in Decision 4052/QĐ-BYT issued on 3 November 2023, MOH also established a Drafting Committee to develop a manual to support people with hearing loss in medical examinations. CED is a member of this Drafting Committee.

Source: Authors' compilation



A workshop at Center for Sponsoring - Vocational Training and Employment Introduction of Ho Chi Minh City
Photo: Nguyen Duc Hieu / Oxfam /
The Center for Research and Education of The Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CED)

Promoting the role of local SOs and building community models and groups is important for implementing sustainable justice initiatives and maintaining their impact

Experience from JIFF-funded justice initiatives shows that the participation of SOs has helped mobilise local resources and promote their role in legal advice and aid for local people. In addition, the establishment of community models and groups in the initiative area with members of local SOs as core participants – chaired or supported by those SOs – will promote community dynamism and innovation and help to sustain the impact of the initiative for the long term. Through implementation, community group models have helped to implement initiatives innovatively in accordance with the needs of beneficiaries, ensuring sustainability once the common interests of the group have been established and serving as a bridge for information exchange between vulnerable groups, specialised agencies, and local authorities. As such, community groups have become an important actor in the system of legal support organisations for vulnerable groups.



Community action groups spearheaded environmental protection activities in Quang Binh
Photo: Nguyen Duc Hieu / Oxfam / Quang Binh Women's Union (QBWU)

Box 6. Building community groups ensures the sustainability of legal support

The "Family and Law (F&L) Club" model within the framework of the **"Raising legal awareness and providing legal support regarding child and cousin marriage for EM women and adolescents in Tuyen Hoa and Minh Hoa districts, Quang Binh province"** is an initiative of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Research and Development (CIRD).

This initiative raises legal awareness and legal aid for local people, especially EM (Ma Lieng, Chut, Ruc, Bru, Van Kieu, etc.) to help them understand the harmful effects and the relevant legal regulations regarding child and cousin marriage. The initiative provides legal advice and solutions to handle related violations.

In the five project communes, CIRD has established five F&L clubs with core members from the Women's Unions and village officials with a fairly balanced gender ratio. After being trained by Quang Binh Province Legal Aid Center (QBLAC) on legal knowledge and advice and legal aid skills, club members have delivered legal sessions to families and communities on related issues including preventing and handling GBV, domestic violence, etc. Members then shared relevant information at club activities and connected with QBLAC to provide mobile or telephone advice for special cases.

The F&L club model continues to operate and has now been integrated into the action programme of the Women's Union in the initiative area and replicated in other districts and communes of Quang Binh province. The clubs continue to connect with QBLAC for technical advice or refer clients there for in-depth advice.

QBLAC has integrated the initiative's activities into its action programme in IEC and legal advice for communities. In particular, the initiative's activities have been integrated into the province's programmes/projects on the reduction of child and cousin marriage in EM areas towards gender equality in Quang Binh province.

Source: Authors' compilation

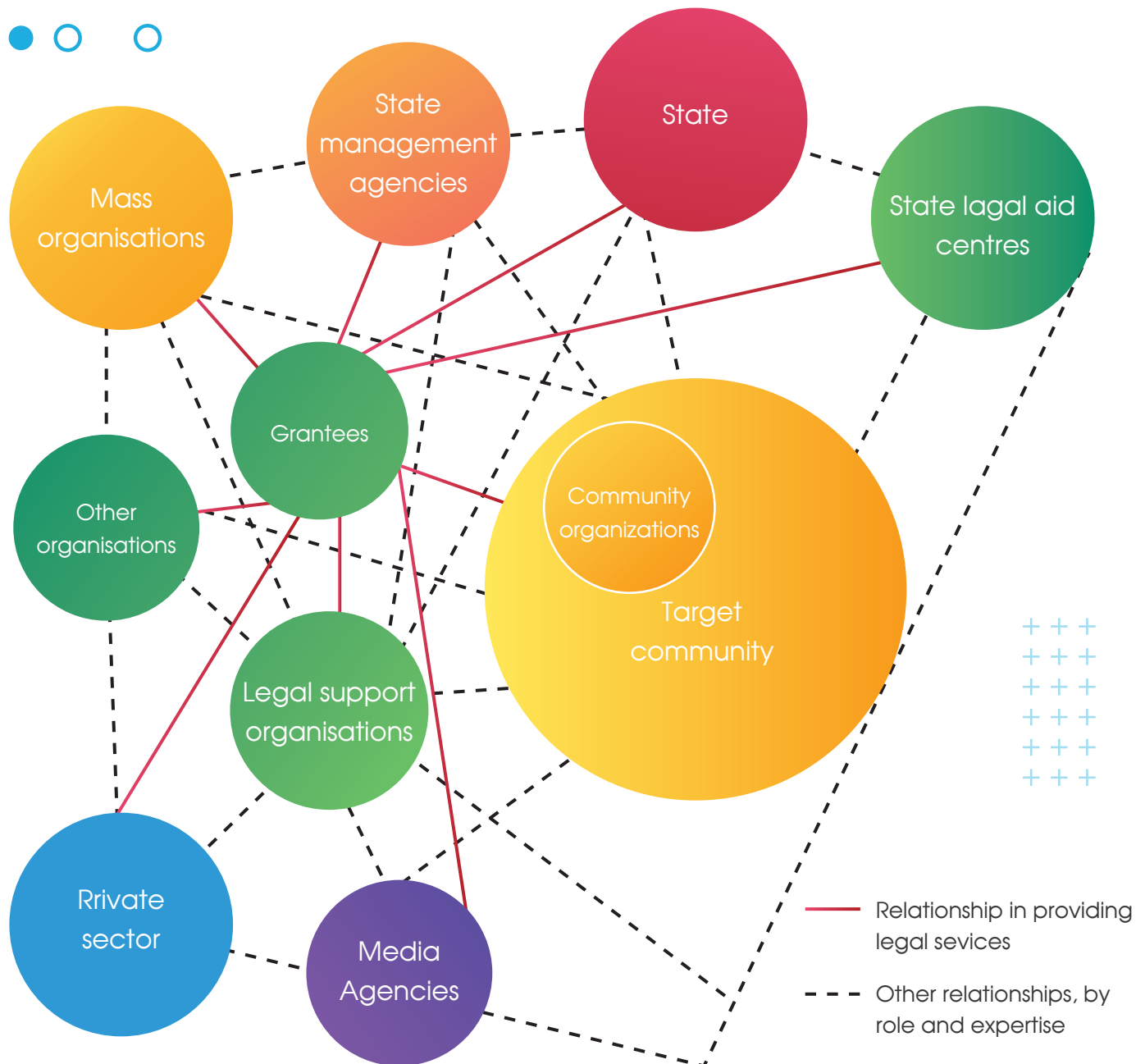
LESSON 3: EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES AND COORDINATE ACTIVITIES TO CREATE A SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM

The ecosystem of SOs operating in the justice sector aim to connect and link relevant stakeholders. In doing so, they promote the strengths and capabilities of each to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of legal support for vulnerable groups. Modeling the experience of fourth-call initiatives in Quang Binh province shows that the government, businesses, SOs, and community groups have linked together in many forms. These range from open formats such as exchanges, discussions, seminars, and policy consultations to formalized formats such as memorandums of cooperation (MOC) and memorandums of understanding (MOU) to maximise the strength of each stakeholder.



A family participating in the legal information and consultancy about the Law on Marriage and Family in Quang Binh
Photo: Trinh Thong Hai / Oxfam / Center for Indigenous Knowledge Research and Development (CIRD)

Figure 2. Multi-stakeholder coordination to improve the effectiveness of legal support for citizens



Source: Compiled from Call-4 initiatives in Quang Binh province



The linkage does not only exist in one single initiative. **Exchanging and learning from experiences between partners is very useful to improve the effectiveness of implementing justice initiatives.** The actual activities of JIFF show that organising activities to share experiences in implementing initiatives among grantees – and among grantees, local governments, and other local partners – are very helpful. This not only improves the effectiveness of implementing initiatives, but also helps to build an ecosystem of organisations operating in the justice sector. This, in turn, strengthens connections between SOs and local authorities, thereby opening up opportunities for cooperation and sustaining the achievements of the initiatives.



Thanks to experience-sharing activities, connectivity and the inheritance of experience between organisations have been promoted. A typical example is the **"Supporting access to education and health services for migrant workers and their children in Ho Chi Minh City"** initiative under the first call. To implement this initiative, the Social Development Training Center (SDTC) built an app named LAMICO on three platforms (Android/iOS/Web) containing updated content and information to help migrant workers and their children access education and health services. The app has been transferred for co-usage and co-development with grantees in the following rounds of JIFF: the Vietnam Association for Vocational – Educational Training and Social Work Profession (VAVETSOW), the Center for Disability and Development (DRD), and the Ho Chi Minh City Children's Protection Association. Data has been collected, synthesised, and updated to the LAMICO app on a regular basis.

LESSON 4: EXPAND RESOURCES, ADJUST PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION DURATION/TIMELINE, AND IMPROVE THE CAPACITY OF GRANTEES

Due to the broadness of the law and limitations in resources and time, JIFF-funded justice initiatives have been able to only partially meet needs for access to information, legal knowledge, legal advice, legal aid, and defense for vulnerable groups. The reality from initiative areas shows that, for vulnerable social groups to be fully aware of and easily access information and legal knowledge, justice initiatives, the scope of beneficiary groups, and legal content need to be expanded. In addition, some initiatives have not been able to fully implement their activities according to the initial plan due to their short implementation period (12 months or less), making them difficult to implement. Examples include successful advice and legal aid activities, especially litigation representation activities in court and non-litigation mediation. Meanwhile, the local scope of initiatives – mainly in rural, remote, and mountainous areas – also imposes obstacles to contributing overall comments to legal documents at the central level.

The implementation of JIFF also shows that the capacity of some grantees in financial management and policy analysis is still limited and has not improved significantly. This implies that similar programmes in the future will need appropriate planning and implementation to continue improving important skills for grantees.



04

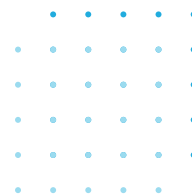
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Students of Hermann Gmeiner Hanoi school in a painting exhibition about the harmful effects of cigarettes
Photo: Nguyen Ngoc Manh / Oxfam / Institute for Population, Family and Children Studies (IPFCS)



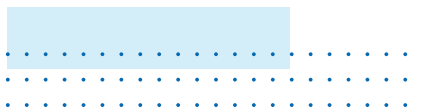
A training session on using Process toolkit for receiving and processing initial information for people in need of legal advice/support
Photo: Nguyen Duc Hieu / Oxfam / Association of People with Disabilities of Hoang Mai district, Hanoi (DPHM)



By supporting increased access to justice for people at the grassroots level, JIFF has contributed to overcoming the limitations of legal IEC and legal aid activities in Vietnam.⁴ The initiatives have focused on vulnerable people – especially women, children, EM, and poor people – as central subjects in the development and implementation of initiatives. Furthermore, many initiatives have also promoted the strengths of different stakeholders, building and implementing multi-stakeholder models to meet the needs of people, especially disadvantaged groups. Since then, the initiatives have made an important contribution to raising people's awareness and improving the legal framework to enhance their ability to exercise their rights and access justice in accordance with the 2013 Constitution and the international treaties to which Vietnam is a signatory.

⁴ See more at:

<https://cspl.mic.gov.vn/Pages/TinTuc/tinchitiet.aspx?tintucid=138587>.





Through its activities, JIFF has also made other contributions, including connection activities to share experiences between grantees and capacity building for SOs on supporting access to justice and proposing recommendations to polices and legal documents in the Northern, Central, and Southern regions of Vietnam. In addition, JIFF also contributes to strengthening the relationship between SOs and relevant state agencies at the central and local levels, thereby forming an ecosystem to promote the mobilisation of non-state resources from across society for legal support activities, especially at the grassroots level.

However, JIFF's initiatives still have certain limitations in some activities. These include legal advice, legal aid, and defense for vulnerable groups; contributing ideas to build and improve policies and laws; and promoting transparency and the integrity of the judicial system. This stems from social distancing regulations during COVID-19 and limitations in the duration and scope of the initiatives. In addition, many SOs have limited capacity as grant recipients in financial management and policy/legal analysis and evaluation.



A farmer participating in a model of Banana - Ginger - Pig applying Legal regulations in crop management to ensure food hygiene and safety

Photo: Nguyen Duc Hieu / Oxfam / Hoa Binh Cooperative Alliance (HBCA)

Based on the implementation results over the past six years, this document proposes some recommendations to stakeholders as follows:

Firstly, it is necessary to continue to develop programmes and projects supporting access to law and justice suitable for vulnerable people.

Through justice initiatives implemented in six provinces, it is clear that the need of people – especially vulnerable people – for access to legal services is still very high. Therefore, it is necessary to continue developing programmes and projects related to access to law and justice for those people. In addition, economic developments and social changes after COVID-19 and the economic crisis have given rise to many new needs. Moreover, the diversity of ethnicities, populations, and locations requires appropriate adaptive methods and specific legal disciplines to raise people's legal awareness and meet their legal access needs.

Lessons learned from JIFF also show the need to mobilise social resources for legal support initiatives, especially from businesses and international organisations.

Secondly, democratic institutions should continue to be strengthened at the grassroots level, taking the people as the central subject in legal support activities.

The legal system in Vietnam is being strengthened and gradually improved. The fundamental rights of citizens are upheld. Therefore, people and related parties have many opportunities to exchange information and strengthen the promotion of democratic institutions at the grassroots level towards building a society that not only ensures access to justice but is also a premise for sustainable development.

Thirdly, enhancing access to the law is not only the responsibility of the justice sector. It also requires multi/inter-sectoral coordination, thereby forming a legal support ecosystem.



The law regulates every aspect of life. Therefore, all individuals and organisations – such as authorities, businesses, SOs, universities, etc. – have an important role in disseminating, educating, and communicating legal knowledge.

Proactive coordination between individuals and organisations from the grassroots to the central level will help use resources effectively and enhance the quality and output of legal service provision activities. This coordination will gradually form a good ecosystem to strengthen legal support for vulnerable people.



A classroom session about the children's rights to education at a school in Quang Binh
Photo: Association for Empowerment of People with Disabilities in Quang Binh (AEPD)





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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Chữ viết tắt	Chữ đầy đủ
ACDC	Action to the Community Development Institute
CED	Center for Research and Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
CIRD	Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Research and Development
CPV	Communist Party of Vietnam
D-Law	An IT application used for online legal advice and support
EM	Ethnic minority
EPL	Environmental Protection Law
EU	European Union
EU JULE	"EU Justice and Legal Empowerment" programme in Vietnam
GBV	Gender-based violence
IEC	Information, education, and communication
IT	Information technology
JIFF	Justice Initiative Facilitation Fund
LAMICO	An IT app on three platforms (Android/iOS/Web) built by SDTC
PAGoDA	One of the two components of the EU JULE programme
PWDs	People with disabilities
QBWDF	Quang Binh Province Women's Development Fund
SDTC	Social Development Training Center
SOs	Social organisations
VAVETSOW	Vietnam Association for Vocational – Educational Training and Social Work Profession
WGDs	Women and girls with disabilities

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VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN VIETNAM
LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE JUSTICE INITIATIVE FACILITATION FUND (JIFF)**

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