

Jubeda has lived her entire life in Assam India, with her husband, children and grandchildren. In 2017 she was stripped of her Indian citizenship and detained for 3 years. She was released on bail in 2020, into the new COVID-19 landscape. Having drawn on the family's meagre resources to secure her release, she now faced a new, desperate reality: her irregular work had dried up and her husband was also unable to find work, due to the lockdown and health concerns. Jubeda does not have a ration card and doesn't benefit from any state relief. As a released detainee, she is required to register at the police station every week. Travelling by foot and in poor health herself, this 26km journey takes her 5 hours to complete. Recently, floods in Assam displaced her from her home.

TOGETHER WE CAN:

A CONSORTIUM TO PROTECT THE STATELESS

Jubeda, a victim of structural discrimination, has been deprived citizenship of the only country she knows. The COVID-19 pandemic has added another layer of rights' deprivation, further exacerbated by the intransigence of the state, and her exclusion from state relief. Jubeda is one of millions of stateless people around the world, whose situation has significantly deteriorated due to COVID-19. Through the COVID-19 Emergency Stateless Fund (CESF), our Consortium of partners works on behalf of those like Jubeda, to challenge the structural discrimination they endure, while fighting for their rights and inclusion during the pandemic.

EQUAL ACCESS TO VACCINATIONS: A HUMAN RIGHTS & PUBLIC HEALTH **IMPERATIVE**

With the world's attention on the vaccine rollout, it is essential that the stateless are not left out or disadvantaged. The right to healthcare is a basic human right. Yet in practice, healthcare systems are often based on nationality, denying the stateless equal access and potentially lifesaving support in the context of a global pandemic.

We urgently need a concerted effort to ensure universal and equal access to healthcare.

FIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT STATELESSNESS AND COVID-19

- Stateless persons are mostly **excluded** from COVID-19 responses, relief, healthcare and vaccinations.
- Stateless persons are being denied their rights, arbitrarily detained & subject to xenophobia & hate speech at higher rates in the context of COVID-19.
- COVID-19 is bringing to light the (invisible) structural discrimination that stateless persons have always endured.
- COVID-19 is creating **new risks of** statelessness as registration and other key activities are stalled.
- COVID-19 presents a unique opportunity to raise visibility, address the structural causes of statelessness, and secure lasting change.

THE CESF AT A GLANCE

A targeted and time-bound initiative to build a consortium of NGOs and citizenship rights activists at the frontline of the COVID-19 crisis. Through the COVID-19 Emergency Statelessness Fund (CESF), we jointly develop strategic and bespoke projects which implement research-based action advocacy, to realise structural solutions and challenge the exclusion of stateless persons, while also addressing emergency needs. The CESF is overseen by an Expert Committee of citizenship rights activists, humanitarian and human rights actors and donors.

Established in June 2020, the CESF currently supports projects in 13 countries, alongside the global advocacy efforts of the Consortium. With further funding, we will be able to provide more in-depth, potentially lifesaving, support to more stateless communities around the world.



The CESF Consortium is an urgent and much needed response to the exclusion and structural discrimination faced by stateless people around the world that has been exacerbated by COVID-19. The Consortium's innovative design allows for frontline citizenship rights activists from around the world to work collaboratively. DLA Piper as a global law firm is proud to be providing pro bono support to the Consortium. We are honoured to take part in this incredible exchange of ideas and expertise, a critical initiative in the global push for citizenship equality.

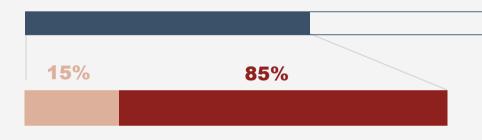
> Nesha Balasubramanian, Associate, Pro Bono Manager, **DLA Piper**

€ 387,000

€ 750,000

funds raised

funding target



€ 59,000

ISI's role

(supporting partners, capacity development & advocacy)

€ 328,000

Partners

(lead-implementers of country projects)

FIVE REASONS TO SUPPORT THE CESF

- A Blindspot: Statelessness is a global challenge that cuts across many issues. But it is poorly understood and often falls between the cracks of donor priorities. Institutional blind-spots towards the stateless mean they are often the least visible, most vulnerable and furthest left behind, especially during a global pandemic.
- Localisation: Inspired by the maxim 'nothing for us without us', the CESF is shaped and driven by community groups and activists, who design and implement bespoke action to meet the needs of their communities.
- Innovation: The innovative design of the CESF allows for the implementation of strategic projects that address both structural issues and emergency needs; horizontal learning and collaboration through the Consortium; and global advocacy facilitated by ISI.

- Impact: Through the CESF, we recognise both the challenge and opportunity presented by COVID-19. CESF projects are designed to maximise impact, and over its short history, our partners have delivered ground-breaking results.
- Value: All projects are planned to maximise impact. 80% of funds go to the field. The rest is invested in enhancing partners' capacities, strengthening the Consortium through cross-learning and engaging in joined-up global advocacy.

When the pandemic hit and ISI began to organize their COVID-19 response, we felt it was critical to support. ISI's fund combines addressing both emergency needs and structural problems. For humanitarian funders who might focus more narrowly on relief, it's critical to also understand the structural issues that need to be addressed."

CESF Donor. Martin Dunn. Dunn Family Foundation















CESF COUNTRY PROJECTS

STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Community outreach: awareness raising through interviews, focus groups, podcasts, radio programmes, documentaries etc. Paralegal support to navigate access to documentation and COVID-19 relief measures.

Research & mapping stateless communities, human rights abuses, and the impact of COVID-19.

Advocacy for inclusion of stateless persons in COVID-19 relief efforts, and other services.

Advocacy for law and policy change to address structural discrimination and exclusion. Emergency humanitarian support as an interim relief measure.

NORTH MACEDONIA







Research & Mapping; Community outreach

A help desk for excluded Roma during the pandemic.

MONTENEGRO







Storytelling and awareness raising for the Roma community through a documentary.

Research & Mapping; Advocacy for inclusion of stateless persons in COVID-19 relief efforts, and other services

Mapping people with unregulated documentation in Montenegro opens the door to a real solution to the problem. Previously, we relied on unreliable and fabricated official data. This mapping will provide credible evidence to resolve documentation issues of the Roma and Egyptian community, which prevents them living dignified lives.

CASE STUDY:

Gzim Mustafović has been fighting to provide documentation for his wife and five children for nearly two decades. Although Gzim's own status is regulated, his children have been denied documentation. During the pandemic, he was unable to work and did not receive help from the state or humanitarian organizations, and struggled to feed his hungry family. Until we did, no one had offered him help, and he was unaware of how to navigate the labyrinth of legal procedures.

Our research and constant communication with people in extreme need like Gzim and his family give them hope that they will finally become visible to the state.

THEMATIC & GROUP COVERAGE



Right to nationality, legal identity and documentation



Right to healthcare



Livelihoods and other socio-economic rights



Minority rights, racism and related discrimination



Gender discrimination



Xenophobia and hate speech



Freedom of movement. liberty and other civil & political right



MALAYSIA







Advocating for evidence-based policy reform to end discrimination against Malaysian transnational families.

Advocacy for law and policy change; community outreach

CASE STUDY:

Gaithiri was trying to return to Malaysia with her family to spend time with her unwell father. Her spouse and child were denied entry to the country during the pandemic. We connected her to a journalist and her story was **published**. Soon after, her family was given approval to return to Malaysia. Gaithiri sent us a message, "I just wanted to share that I just got an email from immigration. My appeal for my spouse and daughter is approved! I can't thank you enough. The community built has been an incredible support, especially during these unprecedented times", she added. "For mothers like me all we want is to be reunited with loved ones, but the system seems stacked against us".

Malaysia's nationality law is gender discriminatory, impacting nationality rights and free movement of families with one Malaysian and one foreign parent. COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation. Foreign spouses and children who previously periodically left Malaysia to renew visas, now cannot return. This project gathers evidence on bureaucratic inconsistencies and challenges faced by such families to create awareness and push for evidence-based policy change.

- 1. The persistent CAMPAIGN to bring spouses home succeeded and the government allowed spouses to return. Since June 2020, hundreds of families have been
- 2. Spouses and non-citizen children of Malaysians are able to submit and renew their visas without having to do the infamous visa runs during the pandemic.
- **21,000** spouses supported through online platform.
- **3,500** spouses provided bespoke advice (entry, quarantine, COVID-19 testing, visa application and renewal guidance).
- 3. Immigration authorities have made the immigration system MORE EFFICIENT through digitalisation. Malaysians, their spouses and children can now apply via an online portal to enter and exit the country.
- 4. Quarantine fees have been waived for spouses entering Sarawak, easing the financial burden on these transnational
- **300** spouses connected through peer support whatsapp groups.
- **100** Malaysian mothers affected by gender discriminatory laws connected in peer support group.













Understanding the exclusion of stateless minorities in order to provide evidence for reform

Research and Mapping; Advocacy for inclusion of stateless persons in COVID-19 relief efforts, and other services

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC







Empowerment and demonstration of capacities of the stateless through supporting stateless entrepreneurs.

Advocacy for law and policy change; Paralegal support

KENYA







Providing legal and psychosocial support to minority communities who risk further exclusion through a digital ID scheme.

Paralegal support; Community outreach

BANGLADESH/MYANMAR/ INDIA/MALAYSIA





ISI and the consortium don't just work for us, they also work with us. Through this collaboration we are able to empower and train

fellow Rohingya activists to implement our work on behalf of the



Community member,

Rohingya Human Rights Initiative

Raising awareness on COVID-19 amongst Rohingya refugees.

Community outreach

Rohingya community.

Publications: COVID-19 Protection monitoring and advocacy Rohingya refugees in India







Raising awareness on citizenship rights and supporting mental health of stateless communities through a dedicated podcast. Community outreach; Research & Mapping







Creating a civil society nationality rights network in the context of mass nationality deprivation and disenfranchisement in Assam.

Paralegal support; Advocacy for law and policy change Publications: Marginalised and Impoverished in Assam

BANGLADESH

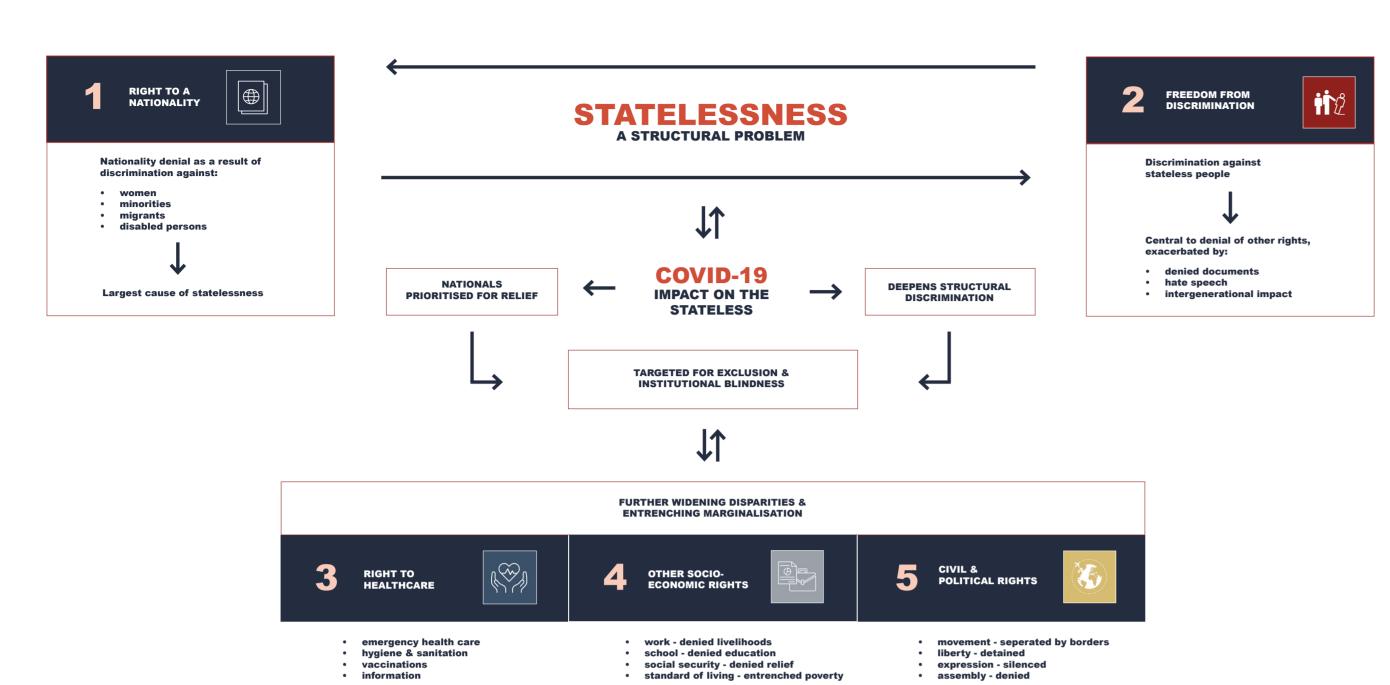






Setting up a rights advocate system to address community exclusion.

Community outreach; Advocacy for law and policy



TOGETHER WE CAN: PROBLEM: A CONSORTIUM TO PROTECT The exclusion or marginalisation of the stateless in COVID-19 responses is characteristic of how they THE STATELESS IN TIMES OF COVID-19 have always been treated. Historically, state-stateless relationships have ranged between enforced invisibility and indifference, bureaucratic violence and exclusion, and targeted persecution or even genocide. Unless the status quo is urgently challenged, the COVID-19 impacts on the stateless will be immense, and for many, irreversible. The challenge is ensuring continued engagement on longer-term structural causes, whilst recognising and addressing the COVID-19 crisis and its immediate (and lasting) impact on the stateless. **OUTWARD FACING RESPONSE:** Awareness & visibility The CESF Consortium connects and elevates the work of all partners. This is not merely a fund which supports **Donor outreach** strong projects around the world: it facilitates true collaboration between all partners. This model – based on solidarity and peer-support - has enabled us to collectively make a greater impact, that is both inward facing (improving our expertise, organisations and activism) and outward facing (better serving our communities and pursuing structural change) **INWARD FACING** Information sharing Peer learning Capacity development Joined up strategy Solidarity We collectively raise international attention and exert pressure on states and The Consortium is an unusual, modern form of cooperation that other stakeholders who continue to discriminate against and exclude the stateless easily connects countries that seemingly have nothing in common, contributing to the understanding of the universality of the problem, in COVID-19 responses. Last year, we facilitated a joint civil society statement with 83 organisations 'IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE STATELESS'; published an the need to network and act at the national and global level at the IMPACT REPORT and hosted a WEBINAR 'Stateless in a Global Pandemic'; same time. The Consortium creates this simultaneous global action released a BRIEFING PAPER and hosted a WEBINAR 'What Now for the with one goal - to help the most excluded group, stateless people, Rohingya?'. We have also drawn attention to the issue through a **DEDICATED** during a pandemic." WEBINAR and SERIES OF VIDEOS. We continue to engage in direct advocacy with multiple states, UN agencies, humanitarian and development actors, **CESF Consortium Member,** and spread awareness through webinars, audio-visual materials, op-eds and Phiren Amenca Roma Youth Organisation, Montenegro publications. We will continue to strengthen advocacy, build capacities and reach out to other, marginalised groups, both in times of crisis and beyond.

CESF Consortium Member,

Nubian Rights Forum, Kenya

Through the Consortium, partners mutually benefit through

expertise sharing and comparative analysis, as well ISI's

capacity building, advocacy and networking expertise. We

organise workshops to address Consortium members' needs,

through trainings and exchange of expertise on skills such as research, advocacy, communications and outreach. We also

bring in external expertise and connect partners to pro bono

law firms and research experts.

LOOKING FORWARD

In June 2021, the Consortium will be launching its new *IMPACT REPORT ON COVID-19 AND STATELESSNESS*, and we will engage in concerted advocacy around it. We are also currently speaking to potential new partners in a number of countries, with whom we hope to begin implementing new and exciting projects. None of this work would be possible without our inspirational partners, and generous donors.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE THESE PLANS A REALITY.
JOIN US BY SUPPORTING THE CESF.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE!



ISI is the only human rights organisation dedicated to working globally on behalf of approximately fifteen million stateless persons and tens of millions of persons whose nationality is at risk. Our knowledge and networks have put us in a unique position to effectively and sustainably respond to COVID-19 through our COVID-19 Statelessness Emergency Statelessness Fund (CESF).

The joint statement, ISI impact report and your correspondence

in these challenging times. We welcome your partnership in this

" regard and commend your advocacy for the human rights of

vulnerable communities."

draw much-needed attention to matters affecting stateless persons

Filippo Grandi,

UN High Commissioner for Refugees