



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



 SYSTEMIC JUSTICE



Cover photo, clockwise from top right: 1. Sign in Copenhagen reading “Our homes are not for sale”, by Systemic Justice’s partner Almen Modstand. Photo: Systemic Justice. 2. Participants at a Systemic Justice workshop. Photo: Mohamed Badarne. 3. Snapshot of Systemic Justice’s organisational timeline made at a team retreat in 2025. Photo: Systemic Justice. 4. Participants at a Systemic Justice workshop, London 2025. Photo: Systemic Justice.

# CONTENTS

<b>WHO WE ARE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FROM OUR FOUNDER &amp; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2025 AT A GLANCE</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>OUR WORK</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND POWER</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>CO-DEVELOPING COMMUNITY-DRIVEN COURT CASES</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>DEVELOPING A NETWORK OF LAWYERS FOR CHANGE</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>BUILDING A DIFFERENT KIND OF ORGANISATION</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>OUR FINANCES</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>LOOKING AHEAD</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>GET IN TOUCH</b>	<b>47</b>

**“Hope lies in social  
justice movements  
and in the power of  
the people.”**

– Saranel Benjamin  
Executive Director, Systemic Justice

# WHO WE ARE

Systemic Justice exists to radically shift what justice looks like – and who gets to shape it. We partner with communities fighting for racial, social, and economic justice, using strategic litigation as a force for systemic change.

As the first Black-founded and majority BPOC organisation in Europe to centre a community-driven, intersectional approach to strategic litigation, we stand firmly in a different tradition of justice work. At Systemic Justice, communities most impacted by injustice are our co-strategists: they set the direction, define the priorities, and build the long-term change they want to see. This is how we shift who holds power, who defines harm, and who drives the fight for justice.

# OUR VALUES

## **ANTI-OPPRESSION**

---

We challenge oppression (including racism, homophobia, ableism, sexism, xenophobia, transphobia) by confronting systems of domination, privilege, exclusion, and institutional violence.

## **INTERSECTIONALITY**

---

We approach our work through an intersectional lens that centres how an individual's social or political identity and personal characteristics can overlap and combine to create different modes of discrimination, exclusion, and oppression.

## **JUSTICE**

---

We believe that justice means providing all individuals with an equal opportunity to enforce their rights, access remedies, and receive reparations for violations of their rights and to push for change before the courts.

**“Strategic litigation...  
is one tool in the  
toolbox to shift the  
power dynamics.”**

# FROM OUR FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2025 has been a year of deep reflection and significant transition for us at Systemic Justice. It's been a year of looking back, appreciating everything we've built so far, and moving forward into our next chapter. Internally, we initiated a bold shift. After five years of growing and shaping Systemic Justice into the force that it is today, I (Nani) felt the organisation was ready for a new leader with a fresh perspective. In September, we welcomed Saranel Benjamin, our new Executive Director, who brings with her decades of decolonial activism and leadership experience from previous roles at Mama Cash and Oxfam GB. Recognising that change – even the best kind – can be challenging for team members and partners, we have navigated this shift together with care, designing a transition process that will conclude in June 2026.

Across Europe, the environment turned increasingly hostile for many of our partners this year, with many of them tackling serious challenges with

energy and acuity, finding possibility in the very legal processes that have so often been used against them. Many took part in our strategic litigation workshops, generously sharing their experiences while showing willingness and courage to find a way to make the law work for them. In the face of right-wing rhetoric and increased marginalisation, our partners redoubled their efforts, channelling kindness, community, and hope.

Our efforts to catalyse a gradual, cultural transformation within the legal profession continued through our Community of Practice. A network of like-minded lawyers and litigating organisations, the Community continued to build more equitable working practices and laid the groundwork for an ambitious collaborative learning journey. This journey focuses on how to make community-centred practice a reality, while acknowledging the inequities and harms that can be reproduced in traditional lawyer-client relationships.

**“I am truly excited about working with the incoming leadership to set Systemic Justice on a strong continued path in pursuit of its community-driven mission.”**

– Nani Jansen Reventlow, Founder

Five years after the idea for Systemic Justice took shape on the back of a napkin, we can honestly say there is so much to be proud of – including being the first Black-founded and majority BPOC organisation in Europe to use a community-driven, intersectional approach to strategic litigation.

We are grateful to our partners for their continued trust, commitment, and leadership – and to our funders and allies for their support during a period of substantial change, when steady backing is most needed. Our approach remains as solid as ever,

working side by side with, and being led by, organisations, movements, and collectives.

Hope lies in collective action and community-led struggles for racial, social, and economic justice. The power for change lies here, with us, in movement together.

Yours in solidarity,

Nani Jansen Reventlow, Founder  
Saranel Benjamin, Executive Director



Photo by:  
Josimar Senior

**“What I’ve learned today, when it comes to strategic litigation, is to centre the communities who are affected by the specific case that you’re looking into. So, actually focusing on and allowing those people to lead the litigation, to lead the case.”**

# 2025 AT A GLANCE

2025 brought continued enthusiasm from community partners to put the legal system to work on their own terms. Alongside this, Systemic Justice gained fresh energy from new team members and a reinvigorated commitment to centring communities in the campaign for justice and equality.

We strengthened our support for marginalised communities as they continued to face oppressive policies and discriminatory practices in 2025.

# NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR FOR SYSTEMIC JUSTICE AND OUR PARTNERS WERE:

## JANUARY - DECEMBER

---

We continued to build power and knowledge among communities, helping them understand how to use strategic litigation in their campaigns for change. With our support they co-developed legal strategies to address systemic racial, social, and economic harms and injustices that communities face across Europe.

## APRIL - MAY

---

New Supervisory Board members joined our oversight body.

## JULY

---

We held our annual Community of Practice retreat where participants initiated the Community's 12-month learning journey.

We expanded our legal team and recruited Susheela Math, our new Head of Legal, while saying goodbye to Jonathan McCully, founding member of Systemic Justice and the first person to hold this position.

## AUGUST

---

We published our community toolkit in Arabic, Dutch, and Somali to broaden accessibility and reach new community groups across Europe.



## SEPTEMBER

---

We entered a leadership transition phase as we welcomed Saranel Benjamin, our new Executive Director, who worked closely with our outgoing Founder Nani Jansen Reventlow to design a careful transition process.

## OCTOBER & DECEMBER

---

We held legal workshops on climate justice in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, welcoming community partners from across Europe, including those campaigning for the inclusion of Black people, indigenous people, and people of colour (BIPOC) communities.

## NOVEMBER

---

We kicked off our strategic reflection and strategy process. Through this, we began looking back at our founding phase working with community partners and other stakeholders, with a view to developing Systemic Justice's strategic plan 2027-2031.

## DECEMBER

---

We worked with community partners challenging Denmark's so-called "Ghetto Package" of laws in preparation for a landmark ruling from the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), which found that core aspects of those laws could amount to racial discrimination under EU law.



The image features a large white circle centered on a background split into teal and dark teal sections. The text 'OUR WORK' is written in a bold, dark teal, sans-serif font within the white circle.

# **OUR WORK**

As part of our mission to radically transform how the law works for communities fighting for racial, social, and economic justice, Systemic Justice's three tracks of work are:

## **1. BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND POWER AMONG ORGANISATIONS, MOVEMENTS, AND COLLECTIVES**

## **2. CO-DEVELOPING COMMUNITY-DRIVEN STRATEGIC LITIGATION**

## **3. DEVELOPING A NETWORK OF LAWYERS FOR CHANGE**

These three tracks complement and mutually support each other, equipping communities to use litigation on their own terms to advance community priorities, and fostering more community-centred and equitable ways of working by the broader legal field.

1.

**BUILDING  
KNOWLEDGE  
& POWER**

At the heart of Systemic Justice’s community-driven approach to litigation is ensuring that communities can make informed choices about if, how and when they want to use the courts in their campaigns for systemic change. To make these choices, communities need to first build their knowledge and strengthen their awareness of “strategic litigation,” the courts, and how legal campaigns can play a role in the fight for radical justice.

Many of the communities we work with have been let down and even harmed by the legal system. They have been disenfranchised by efforts to push for policy change through strategic litigation. Because of this, much of our time and resources go into supporting communities to gain a better understanding of what strategic litigation can do for them and the role they can play in driving these processes.

# IN 2025, WE IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY TO OUR RESOURCES AND EXPANDED COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE AND POWER BY:


Producing an audio version of our comprehensive, Europe-wide, community consultation report, Revisiting Systemic (In)justices;

Translating our Community Toolkit for Change into Arabic, Dutch, and Somali;


Exploring new partnerships with a training institution to enable us to offer our resources and workshops to a wider range of community groups;

Running 14 workshops in a number of countries, including Denmark, the Netherlands, Turkey and the United Kingdom, as well as online.





**“We had an amazing time  
and came away inspired  
for our campaigns and  
also learned a lot from  
your facilitation style.”**



– Participant at climate justice workshop, 2025

Our workshops follow a particular structure, starting with identifying each community partner's vision. This informs the rest of the days' activities and reflections. We then jointly unpack the concept and definition of "strategic litigation", and explore the different ways that the courts have been used historically for long-term campaigns for justice. We view these workshops as a necessary first step in building community-driven litigation with us. A number of our workshops have translated into partnerships, with communities embarking on "litigation readiness journeys". The workshops are designed to be fully accessible and tailored to partners' needs. For example, having worked carefully with the Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) on meeting access requirements, we delivered one introductory workshop in bite-sized chunks over a period of months, complete with simultaneous sign language interpretation and "easy read" toolkit materials.

In line with our intersectional approach to climate justice, we convened two multi-group climate justice workshops in Amsterdam and London. Taking place in October and December, the workshops welcomed 11 community organisations from across Europe, including groups challenging environmental racism, such as by working on the right to clean air, and others campaigning for the inclusion of BIPOC communities. These communities are particularly impacted by the climate crisis but are often sidelined in climate litigation. The workshops were well received, had excellent feedback, and enabled partners to explore commonalities in their struggles across borders.



Participant at a Systemic Justice climate justice workshop, London, December 2025, photo by: Systemic Justice

# CO-DEVELOPING COMMUNITY-DRIVEN STRATEGIC LITIGATION

2.

Systemic Justice believes that communities should be leading on the litigation campaigns that concern them, and that they should be able to access justice on their own terms. This is more than strategic litigation as we know it, or even “community-centred” litigation: we are building a model of community-driven litigation.

This means that, following the initial stage of building knowledge and power, we co-design a customised “litigation readiness journey” for community partners who wish to build a litigation strategy and take legal action. The first stage of these journeys includes a series of five to six workshops and strategy sessions, mapping issues, targets, and allies.

**“This is a real unique opportunity for our community to think about creating change via the courts and how our stories fit together to show our experiences of oppression.”**

– Reyss Wheeler, Head of Implementation,  
Global Child and Maternal Health

In 2025, we began three litigation readiness journeys with partners in three different countries, working on intersex rights, disability and gender justice, and inclusive education for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), particularly those who are Black.

For example, we continued to collaborate with Global Child and Maternal Health (formerly Black Child SEND) on transforming England's education sector into one that is nurturing, empowering, and cohesive for children with SEND. In particular, affected community members identified the structural changes needed to ensure that affected children's educational needs are met in a timely, non-discriminatory manner. Global Child and Maternal Health previously produced research showing racial disparities in this sector, with Black children at a particular disadvantage.



Participants at a Systemic Justice climate justice workshop, Amsterdam, October 2025, photo by: Systemic Justice

# COMMUNITY-DRIVEN STRATEGIC LITIGATION

## CHALLENGING THE SALES AND MARKETING OF DANGEROUS BEAUTY PRODUCTS TO BLACK WOMEN

---

We continued our collaboration with a feminist collective seeking to challenge the production, distribution, and sale of certain products marketed to Black women and children. Over the past 20 years, studies have demonstrated links between these products and cancer, kidney failure, asthma, fertility issues, and chemical burns. Despite this, their sale, distribution, and marketing continue with little oversight, regulation, or enforcement.

For the collective we are working with, this issue reflects the broader systemic harm perpetuated by white supremacy within the beauty industry and the politicisation of Black beauty. It also sits at the intersection of our two thematic focus areas – climate justice and social protection – where systemic failures in the protection of Black health converge with disproportionate exposure to toxic environmental chemicals. The result is environmental injustice, with racialised communities continuing to bear a greater share of environmental risk.

# CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATORY APPROACHES TO HOUSING IN DENMARK

---

In December, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) issued a landmark ruling, finding that central elements of Denmark's so-called "Ghetto Package" may amount to racial discrimination under EU law. This was a step towards victory for our partners, residents from affected areas, and the grassroots housing movement, Almen Modstand. For years, they had been fighting key housing measures under this Package, which targets citizens of "non-Western background" (a racialised category), and has resulted in thousands across the country losing their homes.

The case before the CJEU arose from legal challenges brought in 2020 by residents of the Mjølnerparken neighbourhood in Copenhagen, supported by the Open Society Justice Initiative, whose work on this matter was led by Susheela Math, who later became our new Head of Legal.

Systemic Justice worked closely with the residents, local counsel, and the Open Society Justice Initiative to prepare for the judgment. Systemic Justice organised a press conference in Mjølnerparken's community centre on the day of the CJEU decision, which was attended by the world's media and resulted in coverage across the globe. This raised further awareness of the injustice faced by the community and centred their voices and narrative. For a number of years, Systemic Justice has also supported residents in Mjølnerparken and other affected areas across Denmark, in partnership with Almen Modstand, with a view to further challenging the structural racial, social, and economic injustices created by the "Ghetto Package".



Participants at a Systemic Justice climate justice workshop, Amsterdam, October 2025, photo by: Systemic Justice

**“There is absolutely no excuse for Denmark to wait for a loss in the domestic courts: the legislation should be repealed; the categorisation of ‘non-Western immigrants and descendants’ abolished; and all victims of this discrimination afforded effective redress.”**

– Susheela Math, Head of Legal, Systemic Justice,  
speaking about the CJEU’s December ruling on  
Denmark’s so-called “Ghetto Package”

**3.**

**DEVELOPING A  
NETWORK OF  
LAWYERS FOR  
CHANGE**

Since its inception, Systemic Justice has facilitated a Community of Practice for litigators, legal practitioners, and litigating organisations across Europe who share a desire to take a more community-focused approach in litigation work. In this Community, we regularly meet to rethink lawyering practices and develop collaborative working methods that centre communities in litigation.

Ultimately, the aim of the Community is to build a shared repertoire of equitable working models that further the practice of social justice litigation. That practice is firmly on the terms of those communities who are affected by inequality and marginalisation. We encourage this approach to become the norm when it comes to social justice lawyering.

In 2025, we returned to gathering the Community together in person. In July, we held a Community of Practice retreat in Montenegro. In preparation, we interviewed members to identify common threads of learning and interest.

The most prominent themes were the:

- investigation of power and positionality;
- relationship with time and trust that members have with their clients and communities.

Underlying these themes were concerns around:

- white supremacy manifesting within the legal profession;
- extractive practices;
- the lack of trauma-informed approaches;
- challenges with working with funders in ways that honour community-centred processes.

**“Being part of the Community of Practice means learning, unlearning, and growing together – with compassion, courage, and a shared commitment to justice and dignity for all.”**

– Participant at Community of Practice retreat,  
Montenegro, July 2025



During our retreat in Montenegro, these and other subjects were further examined, and the outcome was a plan for the next 12 months of our collective learning journey. That learning journey comprises monthly online sessions exploring three learning arcs:

- 1.** Operationalising community-centred practices from the base of our organisations;
- 2.** Examining how our identities, unconscious behaviours and institutional ways of working reproduce the harmful practices we seek to dismantle;
- 3.** Turning our reflection into collective and accountable action, alongside the communities we centre.

# **BUILDING A DIFFERENT KIND OF ORGANISATION**



**“Systemic Justice has reached a point of maturity where it will benefit tremendously from someone coming in with fresh energy to take it into the next phase following the foundational work and initial building.”**

– Nani Jansen Reventlow, Founder

When we set up Systemic Justice in 2021, we committed to building a different kind of organisation: one that would question so-called best practices, and one whose work, externally and internally, is rooted in its foundational values of anti-oppression, intersectionality, and justice.

Doing this has been delicate, intricate, and difficult work. But it's necessary and vital to organisational progress, to those we serve, and to be able to safeguard those who work at Systemic Justice. Internally, we underwent significant changes to our leadership and teams, areas where we invested time in careful planning and transition. We also began the process of building a new strategic plan, due to be launched in 2026.

# 1.

## LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

---

After four years at the helm of the organisation, our Founder, Nani Jansen Reventlow, felt it was time to make space for a new leader. Nani's intention was to find an expert whose vision and energy could propel Systemic Justice into its next phase of growth. In September we recruited Saranel Benjamin as our new Executive Director, signalling the beginning of an intentional leadership transition for our organisation. Saranel has 30 years' experience as an advocate for racial, social, and economic justice.

# 2.

## TEAM TRANSITION

---

Head of Legal Jonathan McCully, another founding member of our organisation, moved on to pursue a long-held passion for playwriting. The first to set up and head our legal team, Jonathan created the Community Toolkit for Change and was key to establishing the non-extractive litigation model we champion. Reflecting on his departure, Nani Jansen Reventlow said: "Jonathan has been a pivotal partner in everything we've built over the past years, often bringing in that slightly different perspective that made us get exactly where we needed to be." In July, we successfully recruited Susheela Math, formerly of the Open Society Justice Initiative, as our new Head of Legal. Our team was further bolstered by the recruitment of an additional lawyer in late 2025.

3.

## GOVERNANCE

---

We continued to grow the Supervisory Board, which we set up in 2024. Nani Jansen Reventlow worked with the Board to begin drafting a values-aligned approach to Board governance.

4.

## STRATEGIC REVIEW

---

We kicked off our strategic review process, starting with preliminary reflections on Systemic Justice's founding period (2021-to date) at a retreat in October. Guided by our Founder Nani Jansen Reventlow, we mapped our organisational milestones, challenges, and moments of joy together. Our team then co-created the strategic reflection process during an online session in November. In December, we held an in-person team session to reflect on the work, successes and lessons drawn from Systemic Justice's work over the previous four years. Our strategic reflection process included consultations with partners from organisations, movements, and collectives; members of the Community of Practice; and funders. The outcomes of this process provided us with the foundations of our next strategic plan.

# OUR FINANCES

Systemic Justice is funded primarily by grants from philanthropic organisations. We also receive in-kind donations, including pro-bono legal support from a variety of law firms.

# 2025

**TOTAL INCOME**

---

EUR 1,371,146

**INCOME FROM  
PHILANTHROPIC  
GRANTS:**

---

EUR 1,356,426

**INCOME FROM OTHER  
SOURCES INCLUDING  
PRIVATE DONATIONS:**

---

EUR 3,599

**TOTAL VALUE OF IN-KIND SUPPORT:**

---

EUR 11,122

**EUR 0-50,000**

---

Donor Advised Fund  
Paul Hamlyn Foundation  
Private foundation

**EUR 51.000-100.000**

---

ClimateWorks Foundation  
Impact on Urban Health  
Luminate  
Olin  
Private foundation  
Robert Bosch Stiftung  
Stichting DOEN

**EUR 101.000-250.000**

---

Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust  
Open Society Foundations  
Private foundation



Participants at a Systemic Justice climate justice workshop, London, December 2025, photo by: Systemic Justice

# LOOKING AHEAD

2026 offers Systemic Justice many reasons for hope. It marks a new chapter for us: we'll be moving from our founding phase to a period of consolidation and growth – five years after the idea for Systemic Justice took shape on the back of a napkin.

**“Community-driven litigation acknowledges that those affected by injustice are best placed to identify what's wrong and what should be done to remedy it – and that they are the rightful owners and leaders of any legal action taken. I look forward to further supporting our community partners into the next chapters of their campaigns for structural change – and, ultimately, racial, social and economic justice.”**

– Susheela Math, Head of Legal

We will continue to work on developing and launching community-driven litigation cases with our partners, while building more equitable working practices in the legal profession. We will achieve this by doing the following.

## **BUILDING KNOWLEDGE & POWER**

- Deliver four further multi-group introductory workshops on climate justice, including environmental racism.
- Collaborate with the Advocacy Academy in the UK to provide an introduction to strategic litigation for youth activists from across the country at a summer camp.
- Expand our community toolkit by adding, for example, a casebook on inclusive education.
- Publish elements of our litigation methodology.

## COMMUNITY-DRIVEN LITIGATION

- Continue litigation readiness journeys for existing community partners in France, the United Kingdom, and Turkey.
- Build cases and file litigation as appropriate.

## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

- Continue monthly sessions of the 12-month learning journey initiated in late 2025.
- Expand the Community's membership.
- Collaborate with the Public Interest Litigation Project (Netherlands) on a movement lawyering conference in October 2026, followed by our fourth annual Community of Practice retreat.

On the organisational side, we are launching our next strategic plan and continuing to strengthen our team. We will also complete the joyful transition of our executive leadership. We will achieve this by doing the following.

- Strategic reflection and planning: Publish our strategic plan 2027-2031 in June 2026, alongside new communications and fundraising strategies.
- Document our first five years: Celebrate our origin story, including our values-driven approaches, setting a baseline against which we can measure our future growth and impact.
- Expand our team: Recruit additional legal team members, fundraising support, and a new Head of HR, People and Culture.
- Further develop our governance: Expand membership of our Supervisory Board and develop ways of collaborating with our Management Board.
- Further strengthen our risk management: Embed our enhanced risk framework throughout the organisation, especially in the context of safeguarding Systemic Justice as we develop legal cases with community partners



Residents involved in the work seeking to end Denmark's social housing policy known as the "Ghetto Package", photo by: Rasmus Preston

**“Nani Jansen Reventlow, the Founder of Systemic Justice, has built a solid foundation for the organisation. She has planted all the right seeds to achieve the vision of a world where communities have the power to use the courts on their own terms to secure racial, social, and economic justice.**

**My vision for the next few years is to ensure that Systemic Justice is a strong, stable, and resilient organisation that works with and is led by communities to bring about systemic change by making the law work for them. It is an exciting time as we work with community partners to bring cases to court.”**

– Saranel Benjamin,  
Executive Director

Participants at a Systemic Justice climate justice workshop,  
Amsterdam, October 2025, photo by: Systemic Justice



# GET IN TOUCH

We would love to hear from you. If you have any questions or comments, please get in touch:

[info@systemicjustice.ngo](mailto:info@systemicjustice.ngo)

For media inquiries: [press@systemicjustice.ngo](mailto:press@systemicjustice.ngo)

[systemicjustice.ngo](http://systemicjustice.ngo)

Keizersgracht 391a, 1016 EJ Amsterdam, Netherlands

**“Systemic Justice  
give people hope...  
They have shown  
that there is a way to  
use the law to make  
effective change.”**

– Japheth (Jeff) Monzon,  
Black South West Network