

# Young Justice Leaders Work Plan

July 2022 - September 2023

## OVERVIEW

### Young Justice Leaders

The Young Justice Leaders is an initiative that began in early 2022. Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies brings together youth leaders and activists from around the world working for justice, and provides a platform to amplify their voices and their work. The cohort is composed of change makers who bring a people-centered focus to their respective work to meet the justice needs of others.

To reduce the global justice gap in which 5.1 billion people lack meaningful access to justice, the 2022-2023 inaugural cohort of Young Justice Leaders will spearhead a range of people-centered justice activities leading up to the 2023 [SDG Summit](#). The group will facilitate dialogues, build networks, and contribute to the global justice movement and policy — demonstrating that people-centered justice is both possible and necessary.

The Young Justice Leaders engage closely with the Justice Action Coalition with the support of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies, which acts as the secretariat for both the Justice Action Coalition and the Young Justice Leaders.

## Justice Action Coalition

The Justice Action Coalition is a multi-stakeholder, high-ambition coalition of countries and organizations championing equal access to justice for all. The guiding goal of the Justice Action Coalition is to close the global justice gap and to achieve measurable progress in justice outcomes for people and communities by the second SDG Summit in 2023.

More information can be found about the Justice Action Coalition [here](#).

## Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies

The Pathfinders are a group of 43 UN member states, international organizations, global partnerships, civil society and the private sector. They work to accelerate action to implement the [SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion \(SDG16+\)](#). The Pathfinders was co-founded by and is hosted by the New York University Center on International Cooperation.

Following the first SDG Summit in September 2019, the Pathfinders continues to act as a platform for action. They aim to demonstrate measurable change against the SDG16+ targets in Pathfinder countries by the second summit in 2023 by working on national and international delivery and grand challenges for promoting justice for all, preventing violence, and tackling exclusion and inequality.

# OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES

The 2023 SDG Summit is a key moment for national and international stakeholders to demonstrate and discuss progress they have made towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. To make any meaningful progress on the SDGs, global, regional and domestic debates and policies must include the voices of young people by providing spaces that authentically engage young voices and utilize their ideas and expertise.

The members of the Justice Action Coalition have committed to making 2023 a pivotal moment for people-centered justice. They have appealed to young people to voice their expectations and visions for justice in their present world and the future.

As we approach the 2023 Summit, the Young Justice Leaders will take on research and advocacy projects based on their thematic and regional expertise. The Young Justice Leaders have identified five objectives over the next year to close the global justice gap:



Mainstream people-centered justice



Increase access to justice data and promote data justice



Increase financing for people-centered justice



Reimagine youth justice



Engage with dispute resolution and informal justice

The Young Justice Leaders will present their findings at the 2023 SDG Summit. Engaging closely with the Justice Action Coalition, the Young Justice Leaders will amplify youth voices and their justice needs at this global event.

## Objective 1: Mainstream people-centered justice



**Objective Lead:** *Vino Lucero*

People-centered justice is well-known among justice actors around the world, however, it is often understood in slightly different ways. Furthermore, the concept is not commonly used among the general public. Justice should be available and accessible to all. Many see justice as only accessible for the rich and powerful. However, justice should be for all. We hope to reintroduce how justice should look – that is, it should be centered on the people, not just the elite few – as part of our work as Young Justice Leaders.

Our approach to mainstreaming people-centered justice revolves around producing and publishing content that reflects the experiences of vulnerable groups facing injustices, advocating for people-centered justice at international and regional events, and acting as youth amplifiers of people-centered justice around the world.

## Objective 2: Increase access to justice data and promote data justice



**Objective Lead:** *Vino Lucero; Gulsen Guler*

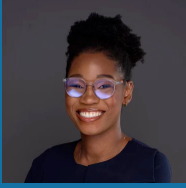
Justice data and data justice are two sides of the same coin – how can we ensure we make decisions about justice that are evidence-based, and how can we ensure that this evidence is collected and used in a just way? With this objective, we engage in both sides of work. As the Young Justice Leaders, we acknowledge the importance of data to achieve Goal 16. However, we call for critical examination of data’s role, and commit to investigating its gaps and limitations, building accountability in data collection and use, and promoting data justice.

We commit to coupling quantitative data with lived experiences and situated knowledge. We will emphasize the voices of people who are affected by injustice, experts and practitioners who are working in the area to make a change, community groups advocating for equitable justice and inclusive institutions, and other groups in the justice ecosystem.

The second component of this objective revolves around improving access to justice data. To do so, we will focus on four key areas of work:

1. Increase public awareness about the availability of people-centered justice data in Asia through research and FOI requests;
2. Amplify narratives and voices of marginalized groups and the kinds of injustices they experience to an international audience;
3. Increase awareness and action toward the topic of data justice in Asia through various activations and network-building efforts; and
4. Connect with advocates and supporters from different parts of the world to sustain efforts.

## Objective 3: Increase financing for people-centered justice



### **Objective Lead:** *Kelechi Achinonu*

The ODI and Pathfinders' policy brief, "Justice aid update and lessons from latest evaluations of donor programming" highlights some of the challenges facing the justice sector when it comes to financing. For example, "despite the growing global movement on people-centered justice approaches, latest aid figures confirm that justice is a low priority for donors, accounting for just 1.4% of their aid. This is in marked contrast to the priority they attach to justice in their own countries which accounts for 4% of their budgets." Furthermore, "donor justice programmes continue to be largely focused on top-down institutional reform and capacity development of core justice institutions largely delivered by consulting firms or international NGOs."

Increasing financing for justice means engaging donors to both increase their financing for justice, and to institute financing mechanisms that support people-centered justice. We will accomplish these objectives by:

1. Amplifying the work of justice innovators and their solutions across the world
2. Creating conversations on the need for financing these justice innovations and how much impact will be made
3. Securing financial commitments from donors to support justice innovations

## Objective 4: Reimagine youth justice



**Objective Lead:** *Iliana Pujols; Shaneel Lal*

Recent developments in neuroscience shows us that adolescents are in a state of development until the age of 25. Many countries across the world criminalize people from a very young age, in some states as young as 12 years of age. The age of criminality in many countries is not based on neuroscience. Adolescents are predisposed to risk-taking behavior and have compromised self-control and emotion regulation, making adolescents more vulnerable to performing impulsive behavior. Taken together, these elements significantly reduce, if not eliminate, the criminal culpability of adolescents.

1. It is our aim to reimagine a justice system that takes a restorative rather than punitive approach to adolescent offending.
2. It is our aim to develop an argument that the age of criminalisation should be revised.

We will pursue these aims through research and presentations leading up to the 2023 Summit.

## Objective 5: Engage with dispute resolution and informal justice



**Objective Lead:** *Amoding Agnes Cynthia*

Community-based, indigenous, or religious, customary and informal justice is often more accessible to the general public than formal justice systems in many regions of the world. Traditional dispute resolution mechanisms are often the only opportunity for people to find solutions to their justice problems. Much of the practice of dispute resolution happens outside formal court systems. Actors in the informal justice system are often left to work independently from the formal justice system – sometimes leading to fragmented or incoherent justice journeys.

Advocating for the increased use and recognition of informal justice mechanisms is a way to advance access to justice for all, and close the global justice gap. Using Uganda as a case study, we will research local methods of dispute resolutions. We will also organize capacity building workshops to increase awareness of informal justice mechanisms. Based on our research and discussions, we will advocate for statutory recognition of informal systems.

# KEY EVENTS

Leading up to the 2023 SDG Summit, there are a number of key justice events in which the Young Justice Leaders will amplify the objectives outlined in this work plan:

- **High Level Political Forum - July 5-18, 2022 (New York)**
- 77th Session of the UN General Assembly UNGA77 - September 13-27, 2022 (New York)
- The Indonesia-Netherlands Rule of Law and Security Update (INLU) - September 19-29 (Jakarta)
- Global Roundtable on Access to Justice - September 21-23, 2022 (Riga)
- Open America (América Abierta) - September 26-29 (Santo Domingo)
- World Bank Annual Meeting - October 14-16, 2022 (Washington D.C.)
- IACA Conference - October 17-20, 2022 (Helsinki)
- **ASEAN SOGIE Caucus - October, 2022 (Bangkok)**
- **KPSRL Annual Conference - October 20, 2022 (The Hague)**
- Africa and the Middle East Regional Meeting - November 1-3, 2022 (Marakech)
- Fourth Session of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law - November 24-25, 2022
- **Global Justice Week - February 2023 (tbc) (Europe, tbc)**
- **High Level Political Forum - July 2023 (New York)**
- UN General Assembly - September 2023 (New York)
- **2023 SDG Summit - September 2023 (New York)**

**\*Bold events denote those in which Young Justice Leaders will attend.**