



Good Practices and Commitments on People- Centered Justice

JUNE 2023

Justice Action Coalition

The **Justice Action Coalition**, originally convened by Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, is a multi-stakeholder, high-ambition coalition of countries and organizations championing equal access to justice for all (SDG 16.3). In May 2022, the Ministerial meeting of the **Justice Action Coalition** launched the Justice Appeal 2023, calling on countries and justice actors to come to the second SDG Summit with data and evidence to demonstrate their contribution to closing the global justice gap. **Justice Action Coalition** countries and partners have answered the call. This document highlights some examples of good practices and country commitments on people-centered justice from **Justice Action Coalition** members who have taken action to close the global justice gap.



The Justice Action Coalition is a multi-stakeholder coalition comprising countries and organizations committed to closing the global justice gap.

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GOOD PRACTICES

Countries



Canada is working to advance people-centered justice in several ways. Two highlights include prioritizing a justice theme in our national plan on open government and supporting the [Legal Empowerment Learning Agenda](#), developed and led by Namati and members of the Grassroots Justice Network (formerly Legal Empowerment Network).

National Action Plan on Open Government

Canada's [2022-2024 National Action Plan on Open Government](#), which Canada launched in September 2022 as an Open Government Partnership member country, supports transparency and accountability, and has elevated our commitment to providing equal access to justice for all. Developed collaboratively, [priorities](#) within the justice theme included providing more open data; using plain language; ensuring accessibility for under-represented and marginalized populations through an intersectional approach; and increasing collaboration across governments and sectors.

Efforts to gather, analyze and share access to justice-related data and evidence represent a notable area of progress. Results of the [2021 Canadian Legal Problems Survey](#) were published in 2022, followed by the release of the Public Use Microdata File and ten subsequent complementary [qualitative studies](#) on legal problems experienced by specific populations across Canada. Having this data publicly available informs policy and program development across federal and local governments, and within communities. It also helps access to justice organizations to seek funding.

Legal Empowerment Learning Agenda

Supported by Canada's International Development Research Centre, and developed and led by Namati and the Grassroots Justice Network, this project strives to foster progress by examining how legal empowerment strategies can enhance community power and advance changes to laws and institutions, especially in the face of structural inequality, exclusion and rapidly eroding public accountability.

Teams' methods involve a mix of reflections on past efforts, for instance, strategic litigation and collective action on land and environmental struggles in Indonesia and the Philippines, and experimentation with new interventions to gauge their potential effectiveness, such as an early warning system for threats to women's and Indigenous peoples' land rights in Cameroon and Uganda. Teams in Nigeria, Benin, Senegal, Kenya, and Zambia are developing data to feed advocacy efforts of social movements, guard against [widespread forceful evictions](#) or chart [pathbreaking participatory redevelopment](#). In Malawi, Thailand, and Indonesia, teams are supporting marginalized groups, like sex workers, LGBTQI+, informal traders, and refugees and asylum-seekers, to identify open engagement with public officials, traditionally sometimes dangerous. Teams in Latin America are focusing on environmental justice from an intersectional perspective, with direct participation of Indigenous Peoples organizations in Chile and Mexico, and LGBTQI+ rights organizations in urban informal settlements in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Four regional "hubs" are helping teams connect and convene to share information, workshop solutions, and provide feedback.



Flickr / Central European University's School of Public Policy

Participants in a 2016 executive course on legal empowerment leadership, organized in part by Namati.

Chile is committed to advancing and supporting people-centered justice through the collection of data and evidence on people's legal needs, as well as through the development of legal aid policies to protect and guarantee the rights of children and adolescents.

Legal Needs Surveys

Chile has developed two legal needs surveys in the last decade (2015 and 2020), enabling the collection of relevant information on people's unmet legal needs, disaggregated by subject area and populations, such as those most at risk of being left behind. Despite the novelty of this work in the region, survey information has not been used for new studies or to inform laws and/or public policies. In response, and in light of the bill creating the New Access to Justice Service, information from the survey will be used as evidence to inform and discuss public policy.

People's unmet legal needs reflected in the surveys will inform an analysis of legal aid and representation in civil matters, supported by the government. This analysis seeks to identify which issues are handled by public institutions and those that escape state attention, thus diagnosing barriers in access to justice. It will be further informed by an evaluation of the legal aid service (Judicial Assistance Corporations - CAJ), reviewing the entire lifecycle of cases. These efforts are intended to enable the New Access to Justice Service to provide professional and free legal representation to those who cannot afford it, reducing barriers to access to justice and optimizing effective representation of people living in vulnerable situations.

Professional and Free Legal Aid

Chile has developed strong public policies to protect children, including the My Lawyer Program (Programa Mi Abogado) and the Children and Adolescents Defend Themselves Program (La niñez y la adolescencia se defienden). Both provide free legal aid for children and have resulted in the protection and guarantee of the rights of children and adolescents.

In 2017, the My Lawyer Program launched a pilot program providing legal representation to children and adolescents in residential care of the state (National Minors Service). Subsequently, it was expanded to serve all children and adolescents in alternative care (Specialized Foster Families), like those separated from their families of origin, and infants that are under the care of incarcerated mothers in the Growing Together Program (Creciendo Juntos). Taking a cross-sectoral approach, this program protects and operationalizes human rights of children and adolescents through a professional triad (lawyer, social worker and psychologist) who provide specialized and interdisciplinary defense and comprehensive services.

The Children and Adolescents Defend Themselves Program is a specialized initiative of the CAJ, whose purpose is to grant tailored and autonomous legal representation to all children and adolescents, guaranteeing effective access to justice and due process in all administrative and judicial procedures. This serves those whose interests are incompatible with their parents, those with legal representatives or legally under the care of others, or those facing protection procedures to ensure their rights.

In over 99% of cases admitted, the Children and Adolescents Defend Themselves Program is accessed through a designation made by Family Courts judges, who appoint lawyers as legal representatives of children and adolescents. It can also operate spontaneously when a parent or caregiver of the child goes directly to the CAJ to request guidance and legal representation.

Chile's programs have prioritized the best interests of children and adolescents, protecting them in all cases that have been prosecuted.

Colombia has several initiatives and projects to advance people-centered justice. Three highlights include, strengthening customary and informal justice systems, ADR mechanisms, as well as supporting victims of the armed conflict, historically discriminated persons, and/or isolated communities.

Strengthening Indigenous Customary Justice Systems

Key efforts include:

- Strengthening Colombian Indigenous justice systems, including special indigenous jurisdiction (art. 241 of the 1991 Constitution), ancestral justice systems, and customary laws;
- Promoting intercultural dialogue and coordination between State entities and special Indigenous jurisdictions;
- Protecting the rights of women, youth, children and elderly Indigenous populations within the framework of their own justice systems.

This has affected 37 reservations and Indigenous grassroots organizations in 31 municipalities across the country, reaching approximately 130,000 indigenous people, supporting victims of the armed conflict and isolated communities

Alternative Conflict Resolution Centers: PACE (Puntos de Atención en Conciliación en Equidad)

At the end of 2022, the Diferencia Foundation opened the first LGBTI PACE-Floralia in Bogotá. The center was created to strengthen peaceful resolution of conflicts from the perspective of social inclusion. The first ethnic PACE opened in Medellín in 2023, and is expected to positively impact 31 indigenous communities, representing approximately 400 local families.

Implementing these types of access to justice initiatives seeks to build more just, inclusive, and peaceful communities by empowering at-risk populations.

The Conciliation Center of the Financial Superintendency of Colombia

This center, launched in Bogotá in 2022, seeks to protect the rights of financial users in-person or virtually. The center was created to help financial users avail an easy and free tool to secure their rights by facilitating dialogue with banking entities, thereby promoting a more symmetrical relationship between individuals and the banking sector. It is expected to serve more than 5,000 people.



The Conciliation Center of the Financial Superintendency of Colombia increases consumers' access to justice.



Members of the Diferencia Foundation open the first LGBTI PACE-Floralia in Kennedy, Bogotá.

Germany prioritizes people-centered access to justice, both domestically and in its international cooperation with partner countries. The examples profiled focus on one national and two ODA examples. These focus on strengthening ADR, the role of paralegals, restorative justice and empowering civil society to participate in policy reform, transparency and accountability.

General Conciliation Body (Universalschlichtungsstelle) in Germany

In Germany, a General Conciliation Body (Universalschlichtungsstelle) was established in 2020 as a neutral dispute resolution body. Between 2020 and 2022, 8,187 consumers turned to it to settle disputes with traders in a voluntary procedure out of court. The General Conciliation Body, which is run by an independent registered association, the "Zentrum für Schlichtung e.V.," deals with disputes between consumers residing in the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway and traders based in Germany and can be handled in German, English, French, and Swedish. Only consumers can apply and the dispute must concern a consumer contract. The body neither represents traders nor consumers, but serves as a neutral conciliator between the parties. Conciliation is nearly always free of charge for consumers; for traders, fees are based on the regulation for the General Conciliation Body. In addition, in Germany 26 sector-specific ADR bodies (so-called Verbraucherschlichtungsstellen) exist; should one of them be competent, the General Conciliation Body redirects the parties to it. Together, they have handled up to 100,000 cases per year.

Justice and Prison Reform for Promoting Human Rights and Fighting Corruption – Bangladesh

This joint initiative between Germany and the UK in Bangladesh supports poor and vulnerable persons in the criminal justice system, particularly women. Through positioning paralegals at courts, police, and prisons, the project has changed the notion of legal assistance by making it proactive and available. The program has effectively rendered access to justice to the people in conditions of vulnerability in 40 districts and has secured the release of 24,505 prisoners (including 1,394 women), reducing prison overcrowding. 362,175 justice seekers were guided through complex justice procedures outside of courts. Legal support has been provided to 839 domestic violence survivors.

Early release saves an average of 6.5 months or 195 days per prisoner, allowing them to earn extra income and saving prison costs. The prisoners made £7.75 million in income from early release, saving the Government £5.9 million in prison costs.

Economic impact of early release through the Justice and Prison Reform for Promoting Human Rights and Fighting Corruption in Bangladesh

EnACT Programme – Zambia

The Enabling Access to Justice, Civil Society Participation and Transparency (EnACT) Programme, co-funded by the German Government and the European Union, supports civil society participation in policy reform, transparency and accountability, legal aid and recently, legal tech in Zambia. EnACT has supported major justice policy changes, like the 2018 National Legal Aid Policy, a review of the 2021 Legal Aid Act, and legal recognition of paralegals as legal aid service providers. So far, 331 paralegals (47% women) have been trained, working at "Legal Help Desks" located in seven courts, ten correctional facilities, two police stations and 20 local communities. In 2020, only 27 % of the people supported by legal aid desk paralegals were sentenced to prison. The remaining 73% of criminal cases were diverted away from the criminal justice system, or those charged received a fine, community service or other non-custodial sentences.



Between 2017-2022, more than 104,000 Zambians received legal aid through paralegals. The annual caseload expanded rapidly from 10,000 at launch in 2017 to 17,000 by 2022.

For more than a decade, Indonesia has been a pioneer in supporting and strengthening people-centered justice initiatives through legal aid and paralegal practices, as well as innovative digital tools to monitor the quality of the services delivered.

Legal Aid Program

Enacted in 2011 and fully implemented 2013, Indonesia's Legal Aid Law established a legal aid program countrywide. It recognizes legal aid as a right and guarantees free legal aid for the poor, thereby strengthening the roles of paralegals, especially in non-litigation matters. It also provides funding to encourage regional government participation in legal aid funding. In 2023, the budget for each case is US\$ 534, totalling US\$ 3,757,688 for the entire program. With a limited state budget, this program has reached 22,571 justice seekers. Aside from government-funded programs, Indonesia also encourages the pro bono legal aid service supported by the Bar Association and voluntary lawyers, which has so far served around 41,000 justice seekers annually.

Customary and informal justice through community-based mediation has been recognized and set up around the country, including in churches in Manokwari West Papua and in villages in Bali. Legal Service Posts have also been created in 365 villages in Bali, where 730 village-paralegals have been trained to provide legal aid in matters which do not involve litigation, primarily those relating to mixed-marriages, immigration, citizenship, and communal intellectual property rights, benefitting about 14,000 villagers. Since 2010, 310 legal aid programs have been created, which by 2024 is expected to rise to 619. These programs include about 6,208 advocates and 5,744 paralegals. Twenty of Indonesia's provinces - 59% - already have regional regulations on legal aid (Perda Bankum), which is critical to securing funding.

In addition, the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, the Supreme Court and the Pancasila Ideology Development Agency created a Paralegal Justice Academy in 2023 which trains and provides Paralegal Justice Awards for Heads of Villages. To this day, 765 Chief of Villages have registered; among them, 300 Chiefs have been trained through the Paralegal Academy.

Using Information Technology to Support Legal Aid Implementation

A legal aid information and database system was launched in 2016 to ensure professional, accountable and transparent implementation of legal aid. The web-based app is equipped with tools to monitor the quality of legal aid delivery, verification/accreditation for legal aid providers and reimbursement systems. In addition, several other apps have been developed to advance access to justice, with a particular eye towards increasing public information and enhancing accountability.



Mediation by paralegals in Village Legal Service Post, Bali.



Priests, Tribal Chiefs and Community leaders trained as paralegal in Manokwari West Papua.

Faced with a high backlog of court cases and low efficiency of the justice system, the Kosovo Government and justice institutions are making joint constant efforts to reform the sector. The Rule of Law Strategy (2021) and the Joint Statement of Commitment (2023) guide this reform.

Beside structural and procedural reforms, Kosovo is in the process of finalizing its policy on state compensation of persons whose rights to a trial in reasonable time were violated and has adopted amendments to the Free Legal Aid Law (February 2022), to allow unconditional free legal aid to victims of domestic, gender-based or any kind of sexual violence; victims of human trafficking; victims of discrimination; and journalists. Free legal aid is offered to these categories regardless of the applicant's financial situation.

The new amendments were followed by a very active communication campaign of the Agency for Free Legal Aid as part of the Ministry of Justice. In this regard, the number of cases the Agency offered free legal aid increased from 4,539 in 2021 to 5,373 in 2022. In addition, the Ministry during 2022 received direct requests or held individual meetings with 588 parties facing problems with the efficiency of the justice system, while following up with respective activities and coordination between institutions.

Kosovo is committed to transitional justice by providing recognition, the right to truth, justice, and reparation to victims of gross human rights violations that occurred during Kosovo war, as steps towards reconciliation and prevention of new violations. For this, Kosovo has recently developed its first Strategy on Transitional Justice. The Action Plan of the Strategy foresees establishment of an institutional mechanism for documenting crimes, intensifying the process of clarifying the fate of the enforced disappeared persons, gathering documentation by internal organizations and the civil society, increasing local and international cooperation in criminal justice, and providing financial and psychosocial support to all victims, while reviewing the relevant legislation.

The good practice of developing such a Strategy is that it was closely drafted with key persons of interest and in particular groups representing victims. The institutions published calls for facts and evidence on documentation of war crimes and a total of 30 meetings were organized between the institutions with the victims and their representatives from all groups: ethnic communities, women, youth and students, workers in the public sector, human rights activists, education workers, intellectuals, journalists, religious communities, legal professionals, the security sector, and social workers (465 individuals in total). The percentage of participants by gender in focus groups was almost equal.

In addition, the Strategy was consulted online through the Government public consultation platform (May-June 2023), allowing each citizen to provide his or her views on this Government policy.



Minister of Justice visits the safehouse of domestic violence victims in Mitrovica



Solidarity march for survivors of sexual violence during the war.

Luxembourg has worked to promote people-centered justice through restorative justice initiatives. The country first introduced restorative justice into criminal law in 2017 and has expanded efforts since, aiming to promote voluntary dialogue, provide reparations and redress in severe criminal cases, through the support of trained restorative justice facilitators.

Restorative Justice Service (SEJURE)

The Restorative Justice Service (SEJURE), launched in July 2021, is the only service in Luxembourg which offers restorative justice. The center aims to facilitate voluntary dialogue between perpetrators and victims and help resolve issues, negotiate reparation, and provide redress in severe cases where traditionally offered damages might not be sufficient.

To increase staffing capacity, the Ministry of Justice collaborated with the “Competence Center” of the University of Luxembourg and the Belgian association “Médiate ASBL” on a pilot project to help ten candidates become restorative justice facilitators. These facilitators offer a neutral and confidential environment for dialogue and accompany parties throughout their justice processes.

SEJURE has received nine case applications, including two cases involving sexual violence; four cases involving murder or assassination; one case involving attempted murder; and one case involved threats and insults. While five remain in progress, several are resolved. SEJURE’s first case resulted in the first restorative justice encounter, another included a direct meeting between parties and a third included indirect communication between parties.

As SEJURE is relatively new and this is Luxembourg’s first practical experience with restorative justice, the approach will evolve going forward with evidence from current efforts. At the same time, while interest and curiosity are gradually increasing among judicial professionals and social workers, restorative justice continues to be an unfamiliar concept in Luxembourg. In response, Luxembourg launched an awareness and information campaign in 2021, including awareness-raising workshops on restorative justice in prisons and information sessions with the country's victim support associations.

After extensive preparation, including a dozen individual interviews, the case’s perpetrator and victim finally looked each other in the eyes and were able to express their thoughts and feelings. Both left the meeting relieved, already experiencing the first benefits. This first feedback demonstrates critical evidence on how restorative and transformative the process has been for them.

Luxembourg's first restorative justice case.



Awareness raising is critical to Luxembourg's efforts to introduce restorative justice.

The Netherlands prioritizes people-centered access to justice, both domestically and through our Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) programming on justice. The examples highlighted below focus on domestic policies. Through ODA, the Netherlands supports people-centered justice interventions mainly in the Sub-Saharan Africa and MENA regions, mainly through our strategic partnerships with HiiL, IDLO, ICTJ, Impunity Watch and UNDP. We also support global advocacy on SDG16.3 through our work on the Justice Action Coalition and our partnership with Pathfinders.

Pilots Enhancing the Social Effectivity and Accessibility of the Judiciary

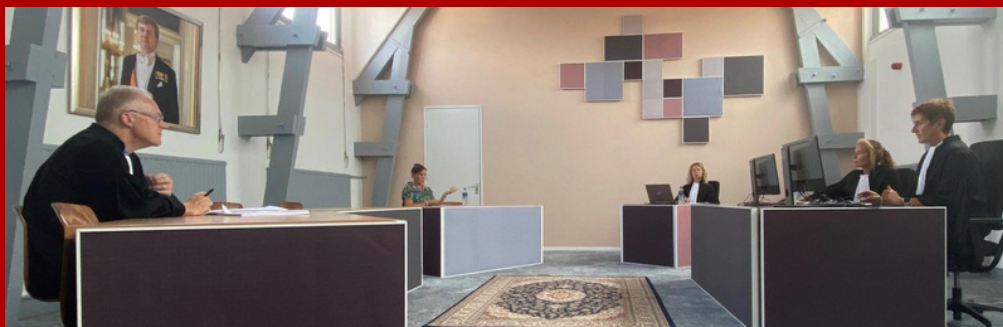
The Dutch judiciary focuses on enhancing its social effectiveness and accessibility from a people-centered perspective. Starting in 2016, innovative ideas have been tested through pilots at courts throughout the country, focusing on issues like complex divorces and problematic debts, simplifying civil procedure and using community judges. Where proven successful, innovations are implemented country-wide, like a pilot with debt officers who link the judiciary and municipal debt assistance which will be widely expanded to better support parties facing problematic debts. In 2023, a new law on experiments in civil procedure commenced, expanding opportunities to experiment and use lessons from pilots to drive country-wide implementation of innovative ideas.

Legal procedures can be costly, time-consuming, complex and not always effective. Decisions by a judge do not always address underlying conflicts. Focusing on enhancing the judiciary's social effectiveness and accessibility from a people-centered perspective has allowed for quicker, more affordable and informal procedures prioritizing the litigants' needs.

The benefits of people-centered justice reforms.

Subsidized Court-Referred Mediation

The subsidy to mediators allows 2.5 hours of free mediation to litigants after referral by a court or court of appeal. It allows litigants to explore if mediation will benefit them and aims to encourage parties to resolve their dispute amicably under professional mediation, which research indicates results in better outcomes than those that are imposed by, for instance, a court. It also lowers the threshold to mediation for litigants. It is expected to increase cases referred to mediation by 1,600, resulting in a total of 3,700 per year.



Example of a pilot court.

Niger has strived to strengthen people-centered access to justice through the improvement of legal and judicial assistance and the effectiveness and quality of public justice services.

Forming the National Agency for Legal and Judicial Assistance (ANAJJ)

In 2011, Niger created the National Agency for Legal and Judicial Assistance (supported by UNDP, UNODC, IOM, IDLO, UNFEM), an administrative public institution dedicated to improving legal and judicial assistance. Headed by a magistrate, it mainly focuses on improving universal access to justice and rights for vulnerable people. It receives an annual subsidy from the government, 50% of which is shared with the Bar Association, which sits on the Board of Directors.

From 2018 - 2022, legal assistance services provided by the Legal and Judicial Assistance Offices reached 59,791 people, including 6,668 with judicial assistance. During the same period, despite COVID-19 restrictions, about forty training workshops were organized, involving about 2,500 magistrates, lawyers, court-appointed defenders, media, and civil society actors. These awareness-raising activities are supported by the facilitators of the legal clinics in the intervention areas of the Spotlight Program. This Program, a partnership among the European Union, the United Nations, and the Government of Niger, aims to help eliminate gender-based sexual violence, harmful practices and barriers to access to sexual and reproductive health rights.

Creating the Criminal Chambers of the High Courts

In 2018, Niger took a key measure to improve the quality of public justice services by replacing the Assize Courts with the Criminal Chambers within the High Courts (TGI) to increase timely processing. Related laws later established the Code of Criminal Procedure, creating a criminal chamber within each high court and a court of appeal.

This reduces the time required for trial; consolidates jurisdiction to rest with the Criminal Court of the TGI; and guarantees a higher quality of decisions through professional judges rather than jurors. It also increases annual assizes from twice annually to once monthly, helping resolve a significant case backlog.

**TGI has accelerated
processing: at
inception, 1,511
criminal cases were
pending, some of
which had awaited
trial for over 10 years.**

Two years after the inaugural sessions were held, the ten High Courts have organized about sixty sessions allowing for judgment of 1,136 cases, including 700 cases inherited from the assize courts and 597 new cases investigated by the TGI.

Processing speeds have increased with TGI criminal chambers.

Portugal seeks to promote people-centered justice through innovative and simplified forms as well as through digital platforms that strengthen ADR mechanisms, via the launch of an interactive digital platform RAL+ Platform.

RAL+ Platform

In 2023, the Justice Ministry introduced the RAL+ Platform to facilitate alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in a faster, simpler and more accessible way outside the Judicial Courts in 12 municipalities. The Platform is an integrated solution that will allow the digital processing of cases, including the modules that support the different means of ADR. This new platform brings advantages, not only for the citizen, but also for justice professionals allowing to: enhance the celerity in the resolution of conflicts, open channels of agile interaction with the parties and their representatives, ensure security in authentication, shielding against fraud, enhance the dematerialization of processes, rationalizing costs and work processes, monitor cases in real time and ensure interoperability between relevant systems.

This allows citizens to request information, workplace mediation, case status, session schedules, documents, and notifications. The Ministry plans to expand access to cover the entire judicial network in the country by October 2023. Within the year, the platform will reach 35% of the population via 25 Peace Courts across 70 municipalities. The Minister of Justice also announced the launch of a digital Peace Court (connected via the RAL+ Platform), which will provide countrywide access. An upcoming publicity campaign will also increase the platform's use.

RAL+ Mobile App

Building on the ADR+ Platform's success, Portugal is launching the complimentary RAL+ Mobile App, that will enable users and justice professionals to:

- Use their mobile device to access RAL information virtually in real-time to identify the right mechanism for resolving specific disputes, tailored by geolocation
- Obtain detailed information about the necessary requirements for each dispute mechanism
- Simplify submission and communication on procedural documents
- Receive electronic notifications
- Access an agenda with deadlines for the practice of acts and diligences
- Read information specific to their area of intervention

Supporting the Peace Courts through new forms of digital innovation is one of Portugal's Ministry of Justice's main tasks. Between 2002 and 2021, the Peace Courts received about 136,000 cases, of which 132,000 were resolved.

The RAL+ Platform will launch a digital Peace Court, which will expand access to ADR virtually.



RAL+ Platform launch.

For over a decade Sierra Leone has worked to enhance legal representation, advice and education through the establishment of the Legal Aid Board and formally recognising the important role of paralegals. These structures provide guidance on dispute resolution methods to administrators of local and informal and traditional courts,, as well as conduct legal education, awareness and empowerment activities during town hall meetings, community and school outreach events and community radio phone-ins.

Highlight Cases

Umaru Bah

Umaru Bah, a 17-year-old popularly known as Sparta was detained for fifteen months at the Kenema Male Correctional Center for stealing two thousand Leones - \$0.10 worth - of bread. According to Umaru, he was never convicted, but still was on trial.

“The magistrate didn’t give me an audience, but today, the judge gave me an audience to explain my side,” he said in tears, thanking the Judiciary for providing another chance or opportunity to hear their cases through a judicial review.

Christiana Kallon

During the judicial week in Kenema, Justice Alusine Sesay released Christiana Kallon, a still-nursing mother who gave birth while detained at the Kenema Female Correctional Centre. Christiana and her husband, who was being detained at the Male Correctional Center in Kenema, were both incarcerated at the time she gave birth. After a thorough and careful examination of the case, Justice Alusine Sesay ordered that Christina, whose baby girl was seven months old, be released immediately.



Inmates released during Judicial Week shake hands with the Judiciary Spokesperson.

Judicial Review Week

Sierra Leone’s annual judicial review week is a government initiative aimed at enhancing access to justice and reducing incarceration rates by ensuring accused and certain convicted persons have the opportunity to be heard and have their cases reviewed.

During the 2022 Judicial Week, the Legal Aid Board deployed 50 staff, including 30 paralegals and 20 lawyers, across the country. Seven lawyers from the Sierra Leone Bar Association were contracted to represent 870 accused persons who appeared before 26 judges presiding over courts nationwide. Out of a total of 870 inmates, positive outcomes were secured for 74% of the accused, including the discharge of 234 inmates (23% of all cases) and bail for 514 (51% of all cases).

- **30 paralegals and 20 lawyers supported**
- **870 case reviews before 26 judges**
- **234 releases and 514 bail grantees**

Sierra Leone Judicial Week highlights.

A baseline study on access to justice conducted by UNDP in 2019 provided evidence for a multiple of interventions to promote people-centered justice initiatives like the strengthening of paralegals and community legal advocates, the consolidation of legal clinics and working to bolster gender equality and social inclusion in justice services.

Paralegalism Project

A two-tiered paralegal project commenced in 2019 to increase access to justice for remote communities lacking access to formal justice systems. Resulting efforts have included training and deploying paralegals and community legal advocates to conduct community awareness efforts, reaching 25,441 people (12,896 of whom are women) with enhanced knowledge and understanding of their rights and how to access justice services.

This project was undertaken through multi-stakeholder efforts both on the funding and implementing sides, essential to both success and sustainability. Solomon Islands also provided a small grants initiative to civil society and NGOs to further expand reach, as well as enhancing coordination and institutional capacity.

Gender and Social Inclusion

Solomon Islands has implemented targeted initiatives to bolster gender equality and social inclusion in justice services. For example, the UNDP supported Access to Justice project maintained gender parity in all areas of recruitment of paralegals and community legal advocates and supported a variety of initiatives including International Women's Day, the Women in Justice Forum, a communications workshop to promote social inclusion, and the Disability Sector Collaboration Workshop.

Legal Clinic for People with Disabilities

The UNDP Solomon Islands Access to Justice baseline study found that those with a disability were less satisfied with national level justice services and with ways of resolving disputes. The study also found those with a disability were twice as likely to think that national-level justice services had worsened. People with disabilities in Solomon Islands now benefit from a revamped legal clinic, operated by the People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI) in partnership with the PSO, which facilitates free legal advice and representation.



Awareness-raising event promoting gender equality and social inclusiveness.



Awareness-raising event promoting access to justice for people with disabilities

USAID

At the May 2023 Summit for Democracy, USAID released the U.S. Government's first-ever policy on international rule of law assistance, recognizing how the rule of law provides a foundation for democracy and more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. The USAID Rule of Law Policy builds on decades of experience and learning and is the culmination of a multi-year consultative process with the international rule of law community of practice.

Exhibit 2: People-Centered Justice Elements



The Policy endorses the Hague Declaration and references the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16. It prioritizes the use of data to develop user-friendly and problem-solving justice systems and services and calls for greater investments to develop innovation platforms to close the justice gap. USAID also has launched a new Rule of Law Innovation, Design Experimentation, Acceleration, and Solutions (IDEAS) Lab. The Lab is currently focused on a range of projects supporting USAID's "First Wave" of people-centered justice activities, including, for example by compiling learning from our partners' efforts to develop methods for measuring social, cultural, and behavior change in Colombia, facilitating a justice innovation network in Kosovo, implementing procedural justice initiatives in the courts of Georgia, conducting local justice needs surveys in Kyrgyzstan, convening court-community dialogues in Serbia, and introducing an online community justice house in Ukraine.

U.S. Department of Justice

In 2021, United States Attorney General Merrick Garland reestablished the Office for Access to Justice (ATJ) within the U.S. Department of Justice to promote the Department's ability to make the promise of equal justice real for everyone.

Examples of the Department's people-centered approaches include:

- Promoting language access for non-English speakers across Justice Department programs through hiring the first Department-wide Language Access Coordinator, who sits in ATJ
- Highlighting people-centered approaches to simplifying government processes, forms, and language so that all people can more easily access federal resources, including through the 2022 White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable Report, Access to Justice through Simplification: A Roadmap for People-Centered Simplification of Federal Government Forms, Processes, and Language
- Engaging with justice-impacted communities, public defenders, and advocates through a country-wide National Public Defense Day Tour, an initiative led by ATJ to celebrate the 60 th anniversary of Gideon v. Wainwright, which recognized the right to counsel in criminal cases. During the tour, leaders from across the Department announced a number of new actions including the Deputy Attorney General's launch of a 100-day review of access to counsel in Federal Bureau of Prisons pretrial facilities.

The Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law is committed to strengthening foundational aspects of criminal justice reform through foreign assistance using evidence-based interventions that emphasize holistic approaches to justice reform which best respond to the needs of those accessing justice systems.

U.S. Department of State has adopted people-centered justice reforms.



GOOD PRACTICES

Organizations



Access to justice is a universal aspiration, but its pursuit in fragile countries is also essential for peace and stability.

Injustice is among the root causes of cycles of violence and fragility in conflict-affected countries. The ability to access justice is not only a means to peace, but an end in and of itself. Justice is recognized as one of five peacebuilding and statebuilding goals in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and is part of the SDG 16. The g7+ member countries have lived the nexus between justice and stability, and therefore commit to putting people and their legal needs at the center of justice systems. The member countries' unique experiences pursuing justice for all have helped inform global discourse on people-centered justice, and their lessons have also inspired fellow members to reform their own justice systems.

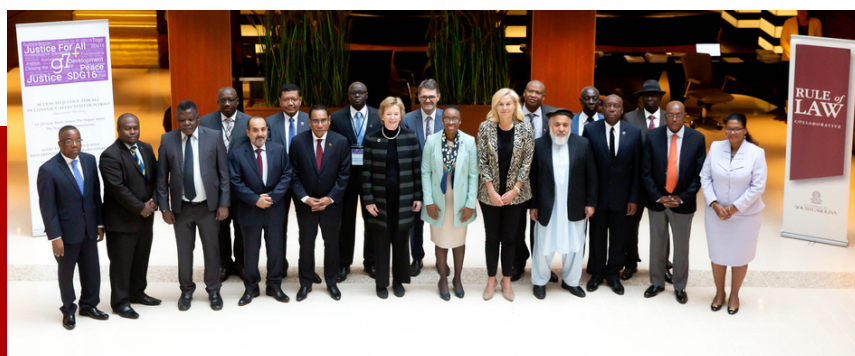
Despite its universality, delivery of access to justice is rooted in national contexts; as a result, the g7+ has long advocated for national ownership in its pursuit. In its Ministerial meeting on access to justice for all in conflict affected countries, the g7+ issued a declaration summarizing the group's aspiration on access to justice. The g7+ also issued a joint action plan, which, in partnership with the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, was also used to inform the United Nations Common Agenda. Furthermore, the g7+ also actively engages with partners to ensure SDG16 is reflected in implementation of the UN's Sustaining Peace Agenda.

Under its flagship program of fragile-to-fragile states' cooperation, the g7+ facilitates the exchange of information and best practices, including lessons on customary justice systems to address grievances and conflicts. These lessons are aimed at inspiring reforms critical to making access to justice effective. The g7+ also collaborated with the University of Coimbra in Portugal to provide training on "Constitutional Building and Statebuilding Judicial System," featuring senior officials from Ministries of Justice in g7+ countries. The workshop promoted information on how access to justice contributes to strengthening peace and development.

For the g7+, access to justice is crucial to fighting inequalities, regaining people's trust and indispensable for conflict prevention in fragile and conflict-affected countries. It is equally important for international development partners to ensure that assistance they provide to justice systems is sensitive and appropriate for national contexts they support.



g7+ Ministers of Justice held the plenary discussion on Strengthening and Integrating Formal and Informal System of Justice during the Justice Ministerial Meeting in the Hague, Netherlands in 2019.



Access to Justice for All in Conflict-Affected Countries event.

Hiil supports efforts to increase prevention and resolution rates through people-centered justice programming, integrating data (knowing the needs and experiences of people), evidence-based practice (developing and sharing the interventions that work best to resolve frequent and pressing problems), innovation (developing scalable and sustainable organizational models to deliver interventions where they are needed); and building an enabling financial, regulatory, and political environment for success. Below are a few examples of Hiil's current work:

The Netherlands

A consortium of 34 organizations jointly submitted a proposal to the Dutch National Growthfund to develop evidence-based pathways for pressing justice problems. In 2022, dialogues on problem-solving criminal justice processes and an Innovation Lab resulted in an investable plan for systematically resolving neighbor justice issues.

Niger

A national people-centered justice program is rolling out with the Ministry of Justice and the support of the Dutch Embassy, following a national Justice Needs and Satisfaction (JNS) survey in 2022. Hiil is currently using these results to facilitate the drafting of an innovation strategy, with Innovation Labs to follow.

Nigeria

At the federal level, Hiil agreed to start work in Imo, Ogun, and Kaduna states. Based on three strategic stakeholder dialogues, one strategy document was published. A new edition of the JNS survey was conducted in 2023, which follows selected adults over the following four years to further understand their legal needs and track resolution. An Innovation Lab in Imo designed a community justice service model, which is now in the pilot phase.

Uganda

Hiil has worked on people-centered justice programming with the Justice Law and Order Secretariat and the Judiciary, including two JNS surveys and an Innovation Lab, which produced a draft community justice service delivery model.

Tunisia

In partnership with UNDP and the Ministry of Justice, Hiil facilitated an Innovation Lab on community justice which led to the co-creation of "Mobile Justice" - an innovative, accessible, and high-quality legal delivery model. The new edition JNS was launched in 2023. Two strategic stakeholder dialogues were held, resulting in one investible plan.

Justice Accelerator

This program supported all of a country's activities, with an annual call for innovations to address frequently occurring justice problems, an Innovation Award, and access to the Accelerator Program to support scale up. In 2022, the Innovating Justice Fund was launched, which is starting to make its first investments.



Regional workshops on people-centered justice in Niger.



An incubation program in the Innovation Hub MENA in Tunisia.

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) works with victims to obtain acknowledgment and redress for massive human rights violations, hold those responsible to account, reform and build democratic institutions, and prevent the recurrence of violence or repression. ICTJ is an ally of those on the frontlines of the struggle for justice, supporting the capacity to articulate and advance their demands, engage with institutions, influence legislation, and get results.

Capacity Building on Transitional Justice in Yemen

In Yemen, ICTJ organized a workshop on transitional justice in 2023 to address the need for capacity building, networking, and coordination among civil society and victim groups. Most significantly, it included representatives of victim groups from different regions working on a range of violations, most of whose participants are themselves victims. Participants represented mine survivors, mothers of abductees, victims of torture, the disabled, victims of bombings, the committee of the detained, the syndicate of journalists, the syndicate of teachers, and the National Union for the Marginalized, in addition to organizations working on womens' development and rights. The participant representing victims of torture was himself a victim of torture, who was detained for years and disabled as a result. The workshop provided networking and exchange of best practices. This convening created a network of victim groups and a decision to work on a joint submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review.

“We were never given the chance before to participate in workshops and build our capacities.”

One participant in Yemen's transitional justice workshop.

Special Jurisdiction for Peace in Colombia

In Colombia, ICTJ has supported the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP) in its innovative integration of a restorative justice lens into institutional criminal proceedings for human rights violations. The SJP is a mixed system of restorative and criminal justice, involving investigations and prosecutions, public acknowledgment of responsibility and harm as well as restorative projects for victims. In advance of the SJP's acknowledgment hearing in 2022's Macro Case 01 on taking hostages, serious deprivations of liberty, and other concurrent crimes, ICTJ convened a series of workshops with victims and perpetrators, both together and separately. The workshops were designed jointly between the SJP, ICTJ, and the team of psychologists working with FARC commanders involved in the case using a methodology based on restorative justice. The sessions contributed to a common understanding among victims about the similarities of their experiences and the responsibility of the FARC commanders and included psychosocial support to victims and FARC perpetrators. The hearing marked the first time FARC-EP leaders publicly acknowledged their role in systemic crimes and represents a decisive step in the country's transitional justice process and in affirming victims' dignity.

“You can go from being perpetrators to being the ones who make the victims feel truly compensated and repaired.”

For victims like Héctor Mahecha, SJP hearings in Colombia represent a ray of hope; he told former FARC-EP leaders it was an opportunity to make history.

Empowering Young People

To promote inclusive, intergenerational child and youth justice participation to drive the achievement of SDG 16.3, Terre des hommes and United National Foundation Next Generation Fellow for Justice and other Justice Coalition partners (as well as Nepal and India) collaborated to empower young people to shape and contribute to Justice Action Coalition events, including with national governments at the 2023 High-Level Political Forum. This resulted in a participation task force including children and young people from around the world, with adult allies from policymakers, third sector organizations, and academia. In addition, funded by the Legal Empowerment Fund, it supported travel for a delegation of children to contribute to the HLPF and SDG Summit.

Policy Briefs on the Strategic Levers to Achieve Justice for Children

Together with many partner organizations and countries, four task forces that are part of the Working Group on Justice for Children on SDG16+ of the Justice Action Coalition, are developing briefs on four strategic levers to advance justice for children: the first, which was jointly endorsed by the UNODC and Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, was launched at a High Level Side Event at UNODC Crime Commission in 2023 with support from the governments of Brazil, Canada, Netherlands, Thailand, and Indonesia.



A Community House of Justice in Burkina Faso.

Community Justice Houses (Maisons de Justice Communities) in Burkina Faso

Accessing local, culturally sensitive, and inclusive justice is a powerful element that contributes to social cohesion within communities: people- and child-centered justice is an important driver of progress in achieving equal rights and peaceful and respectful societies. In Burkina Faso, in partnership with HiiL, TdH worked to strengthen access for individuals and communities to people and child-centered local justice, legal aid services, and legal empowerment through the development of Community Justice Houses (Maisons de Justice Communities). By building new partnerships with children, using evidence and data to steer child-centered reforms, and drawing on child-friendly methodologies, this effort had several key results. First, a study on children's justice needs and satisfaction in the areas hosting internally displaced populations. And second, it operationalized a Community Justice House in two regions of Burkina Faso where communities, families, and particularly children, were not accessing justice.

"I want to finish by saying that this agenda takes courage and determination and Brazil has both. In order to break the predictable cycles of intergenerational justice involvement, Brazil is starting with children: we are committed to making 'access to justice for children' a national priority. Brazil calls on other governments to do the same."

Vice Minister of Justice of Brazil, 26 May, UNODC CCPCJ, Vienna.

For over a decade, Namati and the Grassroots Justice Network (former Legal Empowerment Network) have worked with a vision of a global movement of people who advance social and environmental justice by knowing, using, and shaping the law.

Across Namati's six focus countries, partners, paralegals and communities have achieved concrete remedies to social and environmental injustices, improving the lives of nearly 1.5 million people. Families from traditionally marginalized minorities have obtained ID documents. Overburdened communities have compelled factories and mines to comply with pollution regulations. Building on this grassroots experience, movements in each country have demanded and won systemic changes. In Sierra Leone, for example, paralegals and communities secured two of the world's most progressive laws on land, climate, and environmental justice, granting communities the right to free, prior, informed consent over development on their land; banning industrial development in old-growth forests; and empowering local land use committees which must be at least 30% women.

Meanwhile, the Grassroots Justice Network, which Namati convenes, has grown into the world's largest community of justice defenders, comprising 12,000 individuals representing 3,300 organizations across 175 countries. Together, members engage in peer learning that builds their skills and generates knowledge for the field. In the past decade, over 5,000 people have participated in our learning exchanges, virtual learning opportunities, and flagship Legal Empowerment Leadership Course. Between 2018 and 2022, over 280 organizations significantly improved their impact and effectiveness as a result of learning through the Network.

Members also advocate together on issues that matter to them. Hundreds of Network members mobilized and successfully secured the inclusion of access to justice in Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To turn that commitment into results, the Network launched the Justice For All campaign – which engaged more than 8,000 people and 180 organizations, and secured laws and policies in 14 countries that recognize or fund grassroots justice defenders. Our advocacy also resulted in the launch of the Legal Empowerment Fund in 2021 - the first multi-million dollar fund providing core funding to grassroots organizations worldwide.

Land, Climate, and Environmental Justice Laws in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, communities and paralegals envisioned, fought for, and won to pass two transformative laws: the 2022 Customary Land Rights and the National Land Commission Acts. This victory built on the efforts of paralegals and communities working with Namati, who, over the past decade, have taken on over 500 land or environmental injustices, including unfair lease agreements, unlawful pollution, and heedless destruction by mining companies and agribusiness. Connecting across those specific struggles and identifying common patterns, paralegals and communities began to envision what a better system of land and environmental governance would look like. During the 2017 national elections, communities took part in the Wi Land Na Wi Fyuchɔ pledge (*Our Land Is Our Future*), including by sharing this vision at a community forum in Freetown bringing together officials from across political parties. Eventually, 17 political parties endorsed the pledge, including the winners of the elections – the Sierra Leone People's Party.

In 2019, the Sierra Leone Ministry of Lands committed to action on land reform, and two leaders of Namati Sierra Leone – Sonkita Conteh and Eleanor Thompson – were invited to help draft the new legislation, drawing on their own intimate knowledge of community needs. To generate pressure on lawmakers, large numbers of community members attended and shared their support for the bills in a series of nationwide consultations in 2019, and authored a joint open letter – covered in the press – urging the President to ensure the bill's passage. In 2022, these bills were passed by Parliament and signed by the President.



The Legal Empowerment Fund, the first ever multi-million dollar, multi-donor fund for legal empowerment, launched in 2021.

New laws are now two of the most progressive laws on land, climate, and environmental justice in the world. Among other things, the laws grant every community the right to free, prior, and informed consent over any development on their land; ban industrial development in old-growth forests; and empower local land use committees which must be at least 30% women.

The OECD works on promoting accessible and people-centered justice through the support of member and partner countries by:

- Supporting monitoring of and progress under SDG 16.3.3, as a co-custodian of the indicator together with UNDP and UNODC.
- Identifying people's legal needs and developing user-oriented approaches to delivering justice services.
- Providing tailored and actionable policy advice by undertaking a strategic diagnosis.
- Supporting the design and implementation of access to justice modernization initiatives.
- Promoting international and domestic policy dialogue, like the OECD Roundtable on Equal Access to Justice.

OECD Tools and Instruments

OECD has released important guidance to advance people-centered justice. This includes: the 2021 OECD Framework and Good Practice Principles for People-Centered Justice, the 2019 report Equal Access to Justice for Inclusive Growth: Putting People at the Centre, and a forthcoming OECD Council recommendation on access to justice and people-centered justice, as well as the forthcoming Framework on Child-Friendly Justice. OECD has contributed to the field of people-centered justice by creating tools to measure legal needs and assessing justice performance as well as by making a case for investing in justice through its reports including the 2019 White Paper: Building a Business Case for Access to Justice, a collaboration with the World Justice Project.

OECD is also developing tools on digital technologies and data for closing justice gaps, like the forthcoming Conceptual Framework for Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) and the governance of justice data and observatory for people-centered justice data (together with IDRC, World Bank and ABF)

Examples of OECD country support:

- Gender Equality in Colombia: Access to Justice and Politics at the Local Level
- Towards Child-Friendly Justice in Egypt
- Judicial Staffing Needs, Access to Justice and Judicial Map in Ireland
- Developing Child-Centered Justice & supporting Barnahus model implementation through Cost-Benefit Analysis in Latvia
- Developing an Effective Online Dispute Resolution Concept in Latvia
- Supporting Digital Transformation of the Justice System in Morocco
- OECD Justice Review in Peru: Effective and Transparent Justice Institutions for Inclusive Growth
- Justice Transformation in Portugal: Building on Successes and Challenges

OGP works to expand responsiveness, accountability and inclusion into justice systems. For OGP members – currently 75 countries and 105 local jurisdictions - justice is an increasingly important policy area for reform. OGP helps members invest in open and accessible justice institutions, allowing people to better defend their rights, demand access to public services, and protect their ability to participate in democratic processes.

In the OGP domestic multistakeholder model, both ground-level and national-level institutions have a role to play in the design and delivery of justice services. OGP's support at the national level falls into three categories: access to justice, open justice, and justice for open government.

- **Access to justice:** Members make commitments to addressing barriers and systemic problems, for example through efforts to increase people's legal empowerment via alternative justice systems (Kenya and South Africa); increase access to legal aid (United States, Indonesia, The Republic of North Macedonia, and Albania); or improve or streamline justice processes (Bulgaria).
- **Open justice:** Members prioritize the importance of open justice systems, where institutions operate transparently and with increased accountability. In Colombia this has included courts; in the Slovak Republic, prosecutors; and in Sierra Leone, legal aid providers. Other members have committed to transparency and accountability across the justice system, like Buenos Aires' Open Justice and Innovation Lab (JusLab) for co-creation and collaboration on open justice reforms.
- **Justice for open government:** Mechanisms to ensure accountability have remained low, but members like Tunisia established an independent public authority to hear appeals, and Ecuador is working to improve citizens' access to accountability institutions by implementing the Escazu Agreement.

Enhancing Legal Aid in Indonesia

Indonesia, a member of OGP since 2011, is currently implementing its seventh National Action Plan. The OGP Support Unit has closely assisted Indonesia's justice commitments, which focus on expanding and improving legal aid, especially for vulnerable groups. Through the formal OGP co-creation process, Indonesian justice service and civil society organizations have an ongoing dialogue mechanism with government counterparts to design and implement justice reforms.



Buenos Aires' Council of Magistrates and the Civil Association for Equality and Justice launched JusLab to promote transparency and accountability in the judicial system.



The Association for Legal Education and Transparency (L.E.T. Station) is an example of a local people-centered justice organization working to improve access to justice for marginalized groups in North Macedonia.

The Pathfinders' Justice for All program is a multi stakeholder platform bringing together governments, civil society and multilateral organizations to collaborate, share good practices and accelerate action on SDG 16.3 - equal access to justice for all.

Thought Leadership

Building on the Task Force on Justice and its flagship Justice for All report, Pathfinders continued its role in collaborating with partners to set the international agenda on advancing equal access to justice for all. In addition to thought leadership on people-centered justice, the program articulated linkages between trust, social contract and justice in its "Justice in a Pandemic" series, which were ultimately reflected in the Justice Action Coalition's joint letter to the U.N. Secretary General and the Common Agenda.

Building a Movement on People-Centered Justice

Pathfinders engages with a range of stakeholders and partners to advance people-centered justice. The program convenes over 17 partner organizations on a monthly basis to collaborate, develop a shared vision and build a strong movement on people-centered justice. Pathfinders has also helped advance several critical global commitments: by linking evidence-based research with stakeholders convening on justice: over 60 countries have now endorsed the principles of people-centered justice set out in the Hague Declaration on Equal Access to Justice. Similarly, more recently, the program engaged closely with the rule of law and people-centered justice cohort of the U.S. Summit for Democracy, resulting in a joint statement and call for action, which endorsed the Hague Declaration.

At the international level, Pathfinders supports multilateral discussions on people-centered justice at the U.N. through regular meetings and convening. Following the recommendation of the Justice for All report, Pathfinders conceptualized the Justice Action Coalition and brought it to fruition with the support of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The program currently serves as the secretariat to the Coalition comprising 19 countries and 15 partner organizations. It also convenes bilateral donors regularly to discuss investments in scalable and people-centered justice; the Ibero-American Alliance for Access to Justice; and the Young Justice Leaders, bringing young voices to the fore and advancing their perspectives with policy and decision-makers at the highest levels.



Members of the Young Justice Coalition in dialogue with members of the Elders.



Launch of the Ibero-American Alliance at the 2022 World Justice Forum.

Working in close partnership with the whole spectrum of national justice stakeholders - Ministries of Justice, courts, law enforcement, Bar Associations, civil society organizations (CSOs), national human rights organizations, community-based networks, traditional actors, individual lawyers and paralegals - UNDP is widely recognized as a key provider of international development assistance in the justice sector, with long-term engagement in approximately 50 contexts. Its support to both institutions and communities has been considered highly relevant, particularly in fragile and crisis contexts where the demand for justice is highest.

UNDP uses a context-tailored, human rights-based approach to support the development of legal frameworks, strengthening of national rule of law rights institutions, establishment of legal aid mechanisms, and empowerment of those most at risk by providing legal information and advice. This contributes to access to justice for millions of people annually, serving 78 million people in 2021 and 85 million in 2022. UNDP uses a variety of strategies to support programming, contribute to global knowledge and develop policy including: the Justice Futures CoLab for strategic, people-centered and integrated approaches based on evidence and learning; investment in M&E; Accelerator Labs to test innovations; the Environmental Justice Initiative; and the Gender Justice Platform.



UNDP mainstreams human rights and women's voices into multi-stakeholder platforms, including in Sierra Leone.

Solomon Islands - Access to Justice Project

Implemented in partnership with the Solomon Islands' Ministry of Justice and the Public Solicitor's Office, this project deploys provincial paralegals and community legal advocates to improve access to justice for all, especially in the most remote areas. The Access to Justice baseline study conducted in 2019 provided the evidence to develop the project. As a result, 25,441 people (50% women) have enhanced knowledge of their rights and how to access justice services.

Sierra Leone - Empower Communities to Claim Their Rights and Hold Companies Accountable

UNDP partnered with the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) and civil society organizations to popularize the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights among national and local stakeholders to stimulate responsible business operations and empower communities to hold multinational companies accountable for human rights violations. The project enabled a series of disputes to be resolved and supported a national policy on, and a national hotline to, report human rights abuses and violations.

Thailand - "Justice by Design" to Improve Justice Services Delivery

The Court of Justice in Thailand collaborated with UNDP, the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ), and the LUKKID Group to co-design solutions to make justice more accessible, efficient, and user-friendly through a collaborative process of empathy, ideation, prototyping, and testing. This groundbreaking initiative addresses the challenges Thai judicial system and court users face, with a focus on inclusive justice services for marginalized groups.



Justice by Design: Transforming Thailand's judicial system through collaboration, empathy, and innovation.

Between 2021 and 2022, UN Women in partnership with UNDP and supported by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was able to reach marginalized groups with legal aid services, ultimately supporting 42,938 people (36,228 of whom were women). Of all cases, 3,270 were sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) cases. In nine countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, State of Palestine), efforts were made to reach those most at risk of being left behind including women with disabilities, displaced women, migrant domestic workers and refugee women, and those in hard-to-reach geographical areas. Using traditional and social media and technology, information on women's rights and how to access justice reached approximately five million people.

Legal Aid in Tanzania

With public-private support, mobile legal aid services supported 547 females in Kagera. Having various government and non-governmental stakeholders on the ground improved client referral among legal aid providers. Cases included those relating to land use, national identity, GBV, probate, marriage and divorce, and other civil cases. Referral services were further offered to connect clients to legal aid providers, who were able to resolve about 130 cases at Mabila and Nkwenda Wards. Eighteen land cases were taken to the District Land Tribunal and Housing Tribunal; 19 cases were channeled to the immigration department; and five cases taken to primary court. To ensure that both female and male judges are administering justice in a gender responsive manner, Tanzania's President and the Tanzania Women Judges Association launched a Gender Bench Book.

Legal Aid in Uganda

In Uganda, over 20,000 women and girls accessed services through legal aid clinics in hard-to-reach geographical areas. The project ensured increased monitoring of COVID-19 and enhanced prevention of transmission through provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). UN Women, through the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention and other coalition members, collectively and actively enhanced gender responsiveness of Uganda's COVID-19 response planning. They identified advocacy challenges and developed strategies to influence policymakers and members of parliament, ensuring the prevention of violence against women and girls was prioritized amidst COVID 19.



Improving access to justice for women in Tanzania.

The World Justice Project (WJP) is committed to people-centered justice to help counter the steady decline in rule of law globally and narrow the justice gap. WJP generates evidence to trigger action and help orient priorities across the justice ecosystem. Since 2008, WJP has conducted survey research evaluating how well countries adhere to rule of law practices via the Rule of Law Index®. Relying on first-hand accounts from more than 150,000 households and 3,600 experts, the 2022 Index evaluated 140 countries and jurisdictions providing a unique comparative analysis of people-centered data.

The WJP's expertise extends beyond the flagship Index to sub-national and thematic studies of justice systems from the user perspective. These include: a) the Mexico States Rule of Law Index, which has been cited in several Mexican state development plans and federal programs; b) inmates surveys in Afghanistan and Mexico providing insights on criminal justice reforms; c) an expanded survey exploring interactions among police, crime victimization, perceptions of the criminal justice system, and migration in six Central American countries; and d) a new multi-year project to produce people-centered indicators on justice, governance, and rule of law across the European Union.

Justice Data Graphical Report

In the upcoming *Justice Data Graphical Report (2023)*, the WJP identifies noteworthy trends in the state of justice around the world, examines how justice problems overlap and co-occur, and highlights relevant patterns in their frequency and severity. The report, which can support the identification of priorities in policy making, also disaggregates the WJP's legal needs survey data by geographic region, level of wealth, and gender to diagnose existing inequalities.

Global Insights on Access to Justice

In 2019, with the Global Insights on Access to Justice, the WJP conducted one of the most extensive global legal needs surveys to provide insights into how people around the world, shedding a light on the prevalence and ubiquity of justice problems, people's experience throughout their justice journeys, and the degree to which justice needs go unmet. This allowed the WJP to contribute technical expertise on the inclusion of access to civil justice in the SDG indicators. This research is complemented by the Atlas of Legal Needs Surveys, a systematic mapping of all other publicly available legal needs surveys.



*Building Bridges Burundi, 2022 World Justice Challenge
finalist in the Access to Justice category*



COUNTRY COMMITMENTS



- Recognizing that justice is an essential dimension of social contract and a critical enabler for achieving other sustainable development goals, **Canada** will continue to promote and support people-centered justice at the global, regional and national levels to close the justice gap.
- **Canada** commits to advance policy-making in the justice sector in line with SDG 16 through data and evidence-based processes, in collaboration with justice institutions, civil society and other key stakeholders.
- **Canada** will form cross-sectoral partnerships to improve justice outcomes for people.
- **Canada** commits to support fair and equal access to justice for women, children, displaced persons and other groups at risk of being marginalized.

Domestically:

- **Germany** will promote access to justice by strengthening alternative mechanisms for dispute resolution, including through mediation, using formal and informal justice mechanisms.
- **Germany** is committed to ensuring access to justice through providing necessary legal aid and focusing on legal empowerment.
- **Germany** will leverage new technologies to improve access to justice for all.
- **Germany** will partner with civil society and private sector to foster innovation in the justice sector, looking at scalable and sustainable solutions.
- **Germany** commits to support fair and equal access to justice for women, children, displaced persons and other groups at risk of being marginalized.
- By 2027, **Germany** will report on SDG 16.3 in each Voluntary National Review report submitted to the United Nations.

In its cooperation with partner countries:

- **Germany** remains committed to support its partners in their efforts to promote the rule of law and to ensure fair and equal access to justice for all.
- **Germany** will specifically support fair and equal access to justice for women and marginalized groups.

On the international level:

- **The Netherlands** will continue to play an active role within the Justice Action Coalition, mobilizing further political and financial support for the work of the Coalition. The Netherlands will provide financial resources to finance the operations of the Secretariat during the inception phase (2024-2025).
- **The Netherlands** will continue to promote people-centered justice, both in policy dialogue at global, regional and country-levels, as well as through development cooperation, in close collaboration with partners.

Domestically:

- **The Netherlands** will promote access to justice by advancing alternative mechanisms for dispute resolution, including through mediation, using formal and informal justice mechanisms.
- **The Netherlands** is committed to improving access to justice through enhancing the government-funded legal aid system and focusing on legal empowerment.
- **The Netherlands** commits to support the judiciary in its efforts to enhance its social effectivity and accessibility from a people-centered perspective.

- **Niger** will promote access to justice by strengthening alternative mechanisms for dispute resolution, including mediation, using formal and informal justice mechanisms.
- **Niger** commits to strengthening equal access to justice for all through innovative justice policies seeking to improve people's justice journey and ensure fair outcomes for people.
- **Niger** is committed to improving access to justice through expanding access to legal aid and focusing on legal empowerment.
- **Niger** commits to advancing policy-making in the justice sector in line with SDG 16 through data- and evidence-based processes, in collaboration with justice institutions, civil society and other key stakeholders.
- **Niger** commits US\$30,000 for supporting the permanent structure of the Justice Action Coalition.
- **Niger** will support the permanent structure of the Justice Action Coalition by organizing or hosting at least one (1) number of annual global, regional or national meetings on people-centered justice.
- By 2027, **Niger** will have public, regularly updated data on the number of women and other vulnerable priority group in the justice sector.
- By 2027, **Niger** will have public targets and annual reports on the number of women and other vulnerable priority group in the justice sector.
- By 2027, **Niger** will have developed a data methodology to measure women's participation in the justice sector, aligned with SDG indicator 16.7.1.

- By 2027, **Niger** will have developed a mechanism to monitor the retention and advancement of women and other vulnerable priority group in judicial institutions and in justice leadership positions.
- By 2027, **Niger** will have created and funded a program to mentor women and other vulnerable priority groups in the justice sector and promote their professional development and advancement.
- **Niger** will leverage new technologies to improve access to justice for all.
- **Niger** will partner with civil society and the private sector to foster innovation in the justice sector, looking at scalable and sustainable solutions.
- **Niger** will form cross-sector partnerships to improve justice outcomes for people.
- **Niger** commits to supporting fair and equal access to justice for women, children, displaced people and other groups at risk of marginalization.
- By 2027, **Niger** will conduct a justice needs and satisfaction survey targeted specifically to women's justice issues and other priority vulnerable groups, and publish the results.
- **Niger** commits to collecting data and evidence on SDG 16.3 indicators as well as on people's justice needs and justice pathways, including data on vulnerable and hard-to-reach people such as children, people living with disabilities or displaced populations.
- By 2027, **Niger** will report on SDG 16.3 in every VNR report submitted to the UN.
- By 2027, **Niger** will define and measure access to justice in terms of fair outcomes for people.

- By 2027, **Niger** will report every two (2) years on the proportion of people (disaggregated by gender and age group) who have encountered a justice problem and have had access to formal or informal dispute resolution, in line with indicator ODD 16.3. 3.
- By 2027, **Niger** will conduct a survey of justice needs and satisfaction (disaggregated by gender and age group) every (1) year, and publish the results.
- By 2027, **Niger** will provide annual data on justice problems and satisfaction with justice services, disaggregated by gender and age group.
- By 2027, **Niger** will have institutionalized an annual justice needs and satisfaction survey every five (5) years (disaggregated by gender and age group), and the results will be discussed in parliament.
- By 2027, **Niger** will have regularly updated public data on the number of people (disaggregated by sex and age) deprived of their liberty; in pre-trial detention (disaggregated by the number of years spent in pre-trial detention) and those sentenced to alternative sanctions.
- By 2027, **Niger** will have public targets and annual reports on the number of people (disaggregated by sex and age) deprived of their liberty; in pre-trial detention (disaggregated by the number of years spent in pre-trial detention) and those sentenced to alternative sanctions.
- By 2027, **Niger** will achieve a 50% reduction in pre-trial detention rates aligned with SDG indicator 16.3.2 and/or an increase in alternative sentencing for people who would otherwise be deprived of their liberty.
- By 2027, **Niger** commits to devote 1% of its ordinary justice budget to legal aid.



Justice Action Coalition



CANADA



CHILE



COLOMBIA



COSTA RICA



FRANCE



GERMANY



INDONESIA



KOSOVO



LIBERIA



LUXEMBOURG



NIGER



THE NETHERLANDS



PORTUGAL



SÃO TOMÉ AND
PRÍNCIPE



SIERRA LEONE



SOLOMON
ISLANDS



SWEDEN



SWITZERLAND



UNITED STATES



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



**Norway, Switzerland, and the ABA are observers.*