Putting the Power of Law in People’s Hands

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

NAMATI CONVENES THE GLOBAL LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK
IN 2017, THE GLOBAL LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK GREW TO OVER 1,300 ORGANIZATIONS AND 5,000 INDIVIDUALS ADVANCING JUSTICE ACROSS 160 COUNTRIES.

NAMATI AND OUR IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS WORKED DIRECTLY WITH OVER 20,000 CLIENTS TO ADDRESS PRESSING JUSTICE CHALLENGES IN 9 COUNTRIES.

Implementing partners:
DEAR FRIENDS

The people we work with give me hope. They convince me every day, even in dark times, that it’s possible to forge a deeper version of democracy. A democracy in which rules and systems aren’t captured by elites or special interests. In which the law is something everyone—even the least powerful—can understand, use, and shape.

You can meet some of them in these pages: Daw Nan Shan from Myanmar, who worked with a community paralegal to reclaim her family’s farm after the military seized it. B.T. Gouda and his neighbors in south India, who used environmental law to stop a stone crushing unit from poisoning their children.

These aren’t isolated stories. They’re the makings of a movement. The Global Legal Empowerment Network now has members advancing justice in every part of the globe.

As I write this, our community is launching a global campaign to finance and protect the work of justice defenders. The Elders—founded by Nelson Mandela and chaired by Kofi Annan—are standing with us.

We are determined to rise to the challenges these times present. We hope you’ll stand with us too.

With love and hope,

– VIVEK MARU, CEO
FEBRUARY 2018

“...it’s possible to forge a deeper version of democracy. A democracy in which rules and systems aren’t captured by elites or special interests...”
WHAT
WE DO

For billions of people around the world, the law is broken. It’s an abstraction—or worse, a threat—but not something people can use to exercise their basic rights.

Namati is building a global movement of community legal workers—also known as barefoot lawyers, or community paralegals—who empower people to understand, use, and shape the law. These paralegals form a dynamic, creative frontline that can squeeze justice out of even broken systems.

Namati and our partners train and deploy community paralegals to take on some of the greatest injustices of our times. Together with the communities we serve, we strive to translate the lessons from our grassroots experience into positive, large-scale changes to laws and systems.

Namati convenes the Global Legal Empowerment Network—over 1,300 groups from every part of the world. We are learning from one another, advocating together, and joining forces to bring justice everywhere.

HOW DO WE THINK ABOUT IMPACT?

1/ At the case level, we track whether our clients achieve practical remedies to injustice. See figures for remedies and stories of individual cases in the pages that follow.

2/ At the systems level, we track whether we are able to translate grassroots experience into improvements in law, policy, or practice. These changes can positively affect entire states or nations. Below you’ll learn about ongoing advocacy in several countries and important wins in India and Mozambique.

3/ In the network, we track whether members are improving or expanding their work based on learning from other network members or from Namati. We also focus on the proportion of our members who are active in a given year—this is a good proxy for whether the network is offering value.

COMING SOON - Measuring Empowerment:

We aim to increase the agency of the people we serve. Our message is “we’ll solve this together” rather than “we’ll solve this for you.” We are rolling out a client follow-up mechanism across every country where we work, which will allow us to track what clients are learning and how they’re becoming better equipped to advocate for themselves.

Our message is ‘we’ll solve this together,’ rather than ‘we’ll solve this for you.’
GRASSROOTS LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

IN 2017, NAMATI AND OUR PARTNERS WORKED DIRECTLY WITH 20,000+ CLIENTS IN 9 COUNTRIES TO ADDRESS INJUSTICES INVOLVING LAND, ENVIRONMENT, HEALTHCARE, AND CITIZENSHIP.

WE ACHIEVED POLICY IMPROVEMENTS IN INDIA AND MOZAMBIQUE THAT AFFECT MILLIONS OF PEOPLE.

WE AIM TO SHARE EVERYTHING WE LEARN FROM OUR GRASSROOTS WORK WITH OUR WIDER COMMUNITY: IN 2017, WE PUBLISHED 27 POLICY BRIEFS, PRACTITIONER GUIDES, ACADEMIC ARTICLES, AND REPORTS.

AT A GLANCE

9 COUNTRIES { BANGLADESH, INDIA, KENYA, LIBERIA, MOZAMBIQUE, MYANMAR, SIERRA LEONE, UGANDA, ZAMBIA

195 COMMUNITY PARALEGALS

20,236 ACTIVE CLIENTS*

500,000 + PEOPLE DIRECTLY BENEFITING FROM REMEDIES IN PARALEGAL CASEWORK

MILLIONS PEOPLE POSITIVELY AFFECTED BY SYSTEMIC CHANGE WINS

* "Active clients" are the individuals who work directly with paralegals to solve a justice problem and become more empowered to know, use, and shape the law in the process.
But there was an issue: the records revealed two people registered to the same ID number. This raised suspicion, particularly because of his ethnicity.

Mahmoud is a member of Kenya’s predominantly Muslim Nubian community. Despite having citizenship under the law, members of the community face discrimination when applying for ID. “The other ones when they go, they are not asked for all these other documents like we are asked,” explains Mahmoud. “But if you are Muslim or a Nubian that’s when all kinds of questions come flying.”

With no driver’s license, Mahmoud lost his job as a lorry driver. And with no ID, he was unable to find other work. This was the situation Mahmoud, his wife, and six children faced for the next 29 years. Decades of attempts to resolve the situation failed.

Finally, Mahmoud found the support he needed. Working with a community paralegal from Nubian Rights Forum, a Namati partner, he was able to secure his ID. Mahmoud is now happily back at work behind the wheel of a lorry.
When Mariamo arrived at the health center, her labor pains were intense. Without performing a physical exam, the night nurse declared her not yet ready to deliver and returned to the staff quarters to sleep. Four hours later, Mariamo gave birth to her son—with the assistance of the health center cleaner. “The cleaner went to call the nurse, but she came back alone. My baby was left for a long time with his head stuck—a part was already outside. I had already given up hope of surviving.”

Namati’s community paralegal and members of the village health committee conducted a routine visit to the maternity ward the following afternoon. Mariamo told them her story. Several days later, they held a community education session on the rights of patients seeking maternal health services. Two women shared experiences similar to Mariamo’s.

The village health committee and community paralegal met with the health center director to raise these concerns. The director gave the nurse a formal warning and called a meeting with all maternity ward staff to discuss the health risks resulting from negligence and disrespectful treatment. The situation improved significantly. Both the hospital and the health committee continue to monitor the ward to ensure everyone receives safe and humanized care.

ADVOCATING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGES (selected)

Ministry of Health adopts a national strategy on bribery in the health sector
Bribery in the health sector is a widespread problem across Mozambique. It can result in the denial of proper or timely treatment and may prevent patients from seeking care in the future. Namati played an instrumental role in drafting a national strategy for addressing bribery in health facilities. The policy was approved by the government in 2017. It is the first of its kind in the country.

Ministry of Health adopts health facility assessment tool
Over the past two years, Namati has conducted bi-annual health facility assessments, which empower communities and health committees to more proactively identify and address collective problems. Recognizing the impact of this approach, Mozambique’s Ministry of Health formally adopted the methodology in 2017 and asked Namati to support its implementation across the country.
The stone crushing unit operated 16 hours a day. For over two years, it enveloped the farming community of Bogribeil in a thick cloud of dust, threatening the villagers’ health and destroying their crops. “We used to earn INR 130,000 annually by farming,” says B.T. Gouda, referring to his family, “but the last two years we could only earn 50,000 a year.”

The community thought the company’s actions were unfair, but it was not until paralegals from CPR-Namati visited that they realized the company might also be breaking the law.

Gouda and a number of other community members began working on the case with the paralegals, researching laws, gathering evidence, and ultimately, filing a complaint. In 2017, the Pollution Control Board directed the company to comply with regulations and pay the community compensation.

“We are very happy with the outcome,” says B.T. Gouda. “It is a victory of the common man. ... I used to think that I will never be able to stand in front of a higher rank officer and speak, but the knowledge of law and clear evidence gave me the confidence to not only question the authorities but demand remedy courageously.”

Practice Guide for Environmental Justice Paralegals (Version 2.0)
The CPR-Namati team breaks down how paralegals and communities can advance environmental justice in this practical guide.

Sand Mining in Coastal Areas: Legal Procedures to Follow in India
CPR-Namati outlines how to map the laws that regulate riverbed and coastal sand mining and which government institutions in India to approach.

State government improves access to information on mining
Gujarat’s Industries and Mines Department adopted a rule recommended by CPR-Namati: information about auctions of mineral mining concessions must be shared via various local mediums. Communities will now be better able to voice their concerns ahead of such decisions.
Daw Nan Shan has supported her family for 28 years by growing and selling vegetables. But in December 2016, the military declared that they needed her farmland and that of five others in the area. The military demanded that the farmers sign a document saying they voluntarily agreed to give up their land. The farmers refused.

A week later, the military took the land anyway.

Daw Nan Shan found out when a neighbor came to tell her that tractors had entered her property. “I was so stunned that I couldn’t speak for a few minutes,” she recalls. “When I came to my senses, I went to my farm and said ‘please don’t destroy it’ and they replied saying ‘this is inside the military area, and we have to do according to the order from above.’”

Daw Nan Shan contacted a community paralegal working with Namati’s partner Than Lwin Thisar. Together, they wrote a letter to the authorities. After six months of persistent follow up, Daw Nan Shan got her land back, and with it, a new sense of power. As she says, “I didn’t have confidence before in going to see the government and raising my issue, but now I think I can do it.” Read more
District officials approached Okello Alex* with an offer to buy land from him. Okello agreed. But there was an issue: it was not his to sell. The land was communal farmland that belonged to Alemere community—a fact that both Okello and the officials knew but chose to ignore.

In the past, the land had been managed by the Cooperative Society, which Okello had chaired. But between 2013 and 2015, the residents of Alemere worked with Namati’s partner Land Equity Movement Uganda to better protect their community land and resources from the greedy interests of companies and powerful individuals. They adopted bylaws, elected leaders, and harmonized boundaries. It was determined then that the land belonged to the community. Okello had been a key part of this process.

A year later, he denied all involvement. He claimed the society held a legal title to the land and threatened to have any community leader who resisted the sale arrested. The community, however, now had bylaws, maps, and knowledge of Ugandan law. They contacted their Member of Parliament to confirm the alleged deed did not exist, then demanded a meeting with the district officials. With the power of law in their hands, they took a stand against the authorities and won: the sale was terminated. Read more

**Sharing What We Learned** (selected)

**Lessons from the Field: Oral to Written – Practical Processes in Documenting Community Land Rules**

A new brief provides insights on how staff from Land and Equity Movement in Uganda (LEMU) are addressing increasing land rights violations by supporting community-driven rules-writing processes.

**5 Lessons Learned from Applying a Legal Empowerment Approach to Community Land Protection and the SDGs**

Rachael Knight argues that communities working to protect and defend their land rights are advancing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the most local level.
ADVANCING LAND & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN SIERRA LEONE

A team of paralegals worked with communities to negotiate 11 fairer deals with large-scale mining and agricultural investors and resolve 3 environmental grievances.

Over the past 25 years, the expanding mining operations of Sierra Rutile Ltd. have destroyed the community’s farmlands, gardens, streams, and rivers. Residents no longer have reliable access to a sufficient amount of food or drinking water. Their survival now depends on the company’s water trucks. “Our situation continues to grow worse,” says 52-year-old Mr. Massaquoi.

In the mid-90s, Sierra Rutile announced that they would relocate the community, but they did nothing. For years, the company ignored the requests and demands of the community. So when the people of Foinda heard about Namati, they reached out immediately.

Namati’s community paralegals worked closely with the villagers to identify what laws the company was violating and develop a plan of action. After almost two years of persistent advocacy, the involvement of regulatory agencies, and ultimately the threat of legal action, the company has finally taken steps to relocate the community.

FOINDA is the only home that most of its villagers have ever known. It is their ancestral land. It is where, for generations, they have raised their children and buried their loved ones. Yet, they are desperate to leave.

Children watch as trucks dig up the land around Foinda community. © JERRY ROTHWELL/ NAMATI

SHARING WHAT WE LEARNED (selected)

Constitutional Review Goes Up in Smoke – And the People Lose Again
In an op-ed that appeared in multiple news sources, Sonkita Conteh reviews the failed promises of the Sierra Leonean government’s constitutional review process, underlining the need for a legitimate and citizen-based decision-making process.

Reducing Inequality through Grassroots Legal Rights Networks
In this World Economic Forum video, Sonkita Conteh examines the “broken promises, mass displacement, and pollution” created by large-scale land grabbing and how community paralegals are using a legal empowerment approach to help turn the tide.

ADVOCATING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGES (selected)

Now That the Sierra Leone Land Policy 2015 Has Been Officially Launched...
Sonkita Conteh writes an open letter to the President of Sierra Leone calling on his administration to lead the land revolution by making strong financial and legislative commitments that build on the momentum of the National Land Policy.
GROWING A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

THE GLOBAL LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK IS THE WORLD’S LARGEST COMMUNITY OF GRASSROOTS JUSTICE PRACTITIONERS.

Legend

5,102
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

1,370
ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS

160
FROM COUNTRIES

137
FROM COUNTRIES

“The network has helped me to connect with other members and learn from them how they are doing their legal empowerment work and the challenges they face and how they have addressed such challenges.”
- ANONYMOUS (ANNUAL NETWORK MEMBER SURVEY RESPONDENT)

“My frame of mind has been improved and now I do not think that I am the only one doing this work in my small town and that I am part of a global and networked movement of change makers.”
- ANONYMOUS (ANNUAL NETWORK MEMBER SURVEY RESPONDENT)
“There are so many ways we have benefited from the network that I cannot exhaust the list,” Fatima says with a laugh.

“There is the resource library, there is the discussion [forum], and then there are the learning opportunities. Every single time there is an opportunity, we do not hesitate to apply. I have attended the exchange in Bangladesh and the [Legal Empowerment Leadership Course].”

Fatima and her colleagues at Isa Wali Empowerment Initiative are a passionate crew, dedicated to improving access to justice for women and children in Nigeria. They are constantly looking for ways to deepen and improve their work. Fatima is quick to share examples of how the network has helped.

“When we were looking at developing legal education classes, we ran to the network. We looked at resources from various parts of the world, what everybody is doing and then contextualized it for our own needs. When we were looking for code of conduct for paralegals, again we ran to the network. We posted to the discussion forum asking for ideas and people shared, people were forthcoming, and that has translated into a document we are currently using. We had a partnership as a result of the network and because of that partnership we were able to produce a documentary with one of their funders on access to education for girls and girl child marriage.”

– LEARN MORE ABOUT FATIMA, ISA WALI AND THE THOUSANDS OF OTHER INSPIRING MEMBERS THROUGH THE NETWORK’S ONLINE DIRECTORY.

Our goal is for at least 25% of our members to be active in any given year. Active members include those who posted in the discussion forum, downloaded a resource, logged into the network site 5+ times, or participated in a network event.

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<tr>
<th>ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUM &amp; RESOURCE LIBRARY</th>
<th>LEGAL EMPOWERMENT LEADERSHIP COURSE</th>
<th>REGIONAL EVENTS</th>
<th>WEBINARS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1,634</strong> FORUM POSTS</td>
<td>Held in partnership with Central European University, Open Society Justice Initiative, and New York University School of Law</td>
<td><strong>68</strong> PARTICIPANTS</td>
<td><strong>13</strong> WEBINARS HOSTED</td>
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<td><strong>364</strong> RESOURCES ADDED</td>
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<td><strong>1,568</strong> TOTAL RESOURCES</td>
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<td><strong>5,620</strong> DOWNLOADS</td>
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<td>Two <a href="#">online resource guides</a> created.</td>
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Participants of the 2017 Legal Empowerment Leadership Course. © DANIEL VESEL/CEU
In 2017, we supported over 200 network members from 30 countries to learn how to use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Open Government Partnership, and other international mechanisms to support national advocacy for legal empowerment.

In June, members from 13 Latin American countries gathered to discuss the delivery of equal access to justice under the SDGs. Together, they developed recommendations for public institutions, the private sector, and international bodies. The resulting Declaration of Villa Inflamable for Access to Justice and Legal Empowerment has 37 signatories and is a vital tool in advancing justice and legal empowerment across the region.

The biennial Grassroots Justice Prize competition recognizes grassroots organizations, large and small, across the globe, that are working to put the power of law in people’s hands. In 2017, we offered three prizes of US$10,000 each, celebrating courage, innovation, and scale and sustainability in the field of legal empowerment.

The winners:

» **Kav LaOved (Israel)**
  – #WalkTogether Prize for Courage

» **Nossas Cidades (Brazil)**
  – Achmed Dean Sesay Memorial Prize for Innovation

» **Campaign for Migrant Worker Justice (USA/Mexico)**
  – Nomboniso Nangu Maquubela Memorial Prize for Scale and Sustainability

“The greatest importance of this award is the message that reaches the authoritarian sectors in Brazil... DefeZap is not alone. The international community that defends the rule of law and human rights not only knows about our work but recognizes quality in what we do.” – GUILHERME PIMENTEL, FOUNDER OF DEFEZAP, NOSSAS CIDADES
GROWING A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

WRITING AND SPEAKING TO GROW THE FIELD

We aim to communicate to policy makers and people across the globe the vitality, the heartbreak, the hope, and the urgency of legal empowerment. In 2017, we published or were featured in 55 op-eds, news articles, podcasts, and videos.

TED TALK
“How to Put the Power of Law in People’s Hands”
With stories of paralegals and communities from India, Kenya, and New York City, Namati’s CEO, Vivek Maru, argues that we won’t overcome any of the great challenges we face—authoritarianism, inequality, environmental destruction—if ordinary people aren’t able to know, use, and shape law.

FOREIGN POLICY
“Only the Law Can Restrain Trump”
Namati’s CEO, Vivek Maru, shares his ideas on how to achieve legal empowerment at scale.

PLACE (Thomson Reuters Foundation)
“Negotiating Large-Scale Land Deals in Sierra Leone: A Paralegal Approach”
Sonkita Conteh, Director, Namati Sierra Leone, describes how paralegals are supporting rural communities to protect their land and natural resources from the interests of powerful investors.

WIRED UK
“To Stop the Relentless March of Climate Change We Must Empower Those Most at Risk”
Namati’s CEO, Vivek Maru, explores the critical connection between legal empowerment and the global environmental crisis.

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT PODCAST
“Can Legal Aid Change Power Dynamics? Experiences from India, Sierra Leone, and Elsewhere”
Namati’s India co-director Manju Menon, Sierra Leone director Sonkita Conteh, and CEO Vivek Maru reflect on the potential of legal empowerment with Carnegie’s Sarah Chayes.

(Taped before a live audience in Washington, DC.)
GRASSROOTS LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

With implementing partners, we develop methods by which community paralegals and clients tackle major justice challenges.

Insights from throughout the network inform our own continual experimentation.

These methods are applied by a growing network of organizations.

Paralegals work with communities to bring positive new laws and policies to life.

Global Legal Empowerment Network

We foster learning and collaboration across the legal empowerment community.

Systemic Change

We secure positive, large-scale changes based on insights that emerge from grassroots experience.
THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

11th Hour Project
American Jewish World Service
Centro de Colaboração em Saúde
(with support from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention)
David Weekley Foundation
Duleep Matthai Trust
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Horace Goldsmith Foundation
International Development Research Centre
( Canadian Crown Corporation)
Knowledge Management Fund
(Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Mekong Regional Land Group
Montpelier Foundation
Open Society Foundations
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Peery Foundation
Public Welfare Foundation
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Skoll Foundation
UK’s Department for International Development
US Department of State: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
WALHI
White & Case LLP
And to our many individual supporters across the globe.

RECOGNITION

Vivek Maru and Sonkita Conteh were named Social Entrepreneurs of the Year by the World Economic Forum. Sonkita Conteh was selected for the Bishop Desmond Tutu Leadership Fellowship.
Namati is a Sanskrit word that means “to shape something into a curve.” Martin Luther King Jr. said: “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” We call ourselves Namati because we’re dedicated to bending that curve.

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NAMATI

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www.namati.org