



PUTTING THE POWER OF LAW IN PEOPLE'S HANDS

ANNUAL
REPORT

2018

NAMATI CONVENES THE GLOBAL
LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

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Implementing partners: Centre for Policy Research / Civil and Political Rights Campaign Group / Friends in Global Health / Green Peasants Institute / Haki Centre / Haki na Sheria / Il'laramatak Community Concerns / IMPACT (Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation) Trust / Janabhivyakti / Keonjhar Integrated Rural Development and Training Institute / Nubian Rights Forum / Samburu Women Trust / Than Lwin Thitsar.

Network partners: Alternative Law Groups / Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development / Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia in Latin America (ACIJ) / Bernstein Institute at NYU School of Law / Central European University / Council of Minorities / The Elders Foundation / Justice Center for Legal Aid / Kituo cha Sheria / Open Government Partners / Open Society Foundations / Open Society Justice Initiative / Pathfinders' Task Force on Justice / SDG 16 Data Initiative / Tamkeen / Transparency, Accountability, & Participation (TAP) Network / WALHI-Central Kalimantan.

Front cover: U Win Naing Soe, a community paralegal with Civil and Political Rights Campaign Group, one of Namati's partners in Myanmar.
All photos in this publication are the copyright of Namati unless otherwise indicated.

Right: Global Legal Empowerment Network member Victoria Koroma.

Below: Community paralegal Maruti Gouda (right) speaks with a client in Karnataka State, India.



Community paralegal Cacilda Fumo with her client's grandchildren in Maputo, Mozambique.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

These are dark days if you care about justice.

Power and wealth are extremely concentrated. The French economist Thomas Piketty found that on some dimensions our current era is the most unequal on record. And there are more slaves today—about 30 million—than at any other time in human history.

Authoritarianism and nativism have gained ground. We are seeing in many places an assault on basic liberties that previous generations shed blood to establish. And we are speeding towards global environmental collapse—in some cities and towns it hurts to breathe.

These realities can be overwhelming. Some days I feel overwhelmed myself. But the legal empowerment movement offers something rare and beautiful: a way forward. A strategy for pursuing justice that is working. You'll see it working in these pages.

You'll read about U Win Naing Htay, a paralegal in Myanmar who helped his community recover hundreds of acres of farmland that the dictatorship stole 40 years ago. Dispossessed families, who had fled to search for work, are starting to come home. U Win Naing Htay is part of a team of paralegals pursuing similar cases in seven states and regions across the country. Drawing on what we've learned collectively from that whole body of work, we managed in 2018 to make a harmful new national land law significantly less bad.

You'll read about Samson, who was born and raised in Kenya but denied an ID card because of his presumed ethnicity. A paralegal helped Samson secure an ID in six weeks, which meant his daughter, who'd been driven from school, could start studying again. Paralegals and communities across Kenya are using data from thousands of cases like Samson's to prove that Kenya's discriminatory system for administering IDs is unconstitutional.

This process of legal empowerment is not easy. We encounter corruption and steep power imbalances every day. Many paralegals in our community face threats of retaliation. But despite these challenges, we are seeing real progress against injustice in every country where we work. And we have a growing body of evidence now—summarized in a new book and a new policy brief we've just published—showing how legal empowerment can expand freedom, improve wellbeing, and reduce environmental harm.

The Global Legal Empowerment Network is the strongest it's been. Our members, spanning over 160 countries, are committed to bringing justice everywhere. We are campaigning together for the financing and protection that will allow us to do so.

I hope you'll join us.



With love and respect,

– VIVEK MARU, CEO

MARCH 2019



WHAT WE DO

Manisha Gosuami (left), a CPR-Namati paralegal, speaks with Ramesh Bhai Tandel, leader of the Kolak community in Gujarat State, India and a CPR-Namati client.

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 paralegals—also known as barefoot lawyers, or community legal workers—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 1,700 groups from every part of the world. We are learning from one another, advocating together, and joining forces to bring justice everywhere.

OUR 5-YEAR PLAN FOR TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

Namati is at an exciting time in our history. In our first phase (2012-2017), we demonstrated how legal empowerment and community paralegals can advance justice in diverse settings, and we built the first global community dedicated to legal empowerment. In our second phase (2018-2022), we,

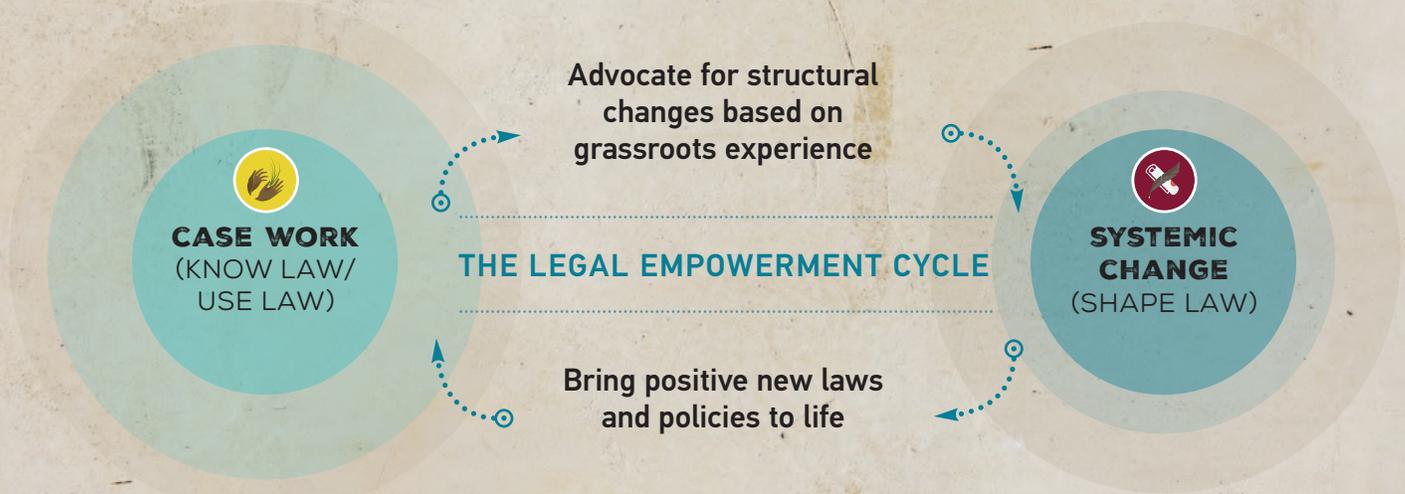
our members, our partners, and the communities we serve aim to achieve transformative impact in six countries and grow the Global Legal Empowerment Network into a powerful movement for justice. In the pages below you'll learn more about our ambitious goals and the progress we have made.

HOW WE CREATE IMPACT

IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE WE WORK DIRECTLY

- 1 / **Paralegals work with communities to solve problems at the grassroots:** protect community lands, enforce environmental law, and secure basic rights to healthcare and citizenship. These remedies improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of people every year.
- 2 / **The individuals who work closely with the paralegals learn about their rights and how to realize them using the law.** These 'active clients' often go on to support others in their communities, creating ripples of empowerment.
- 3 / **We draw on grassroots experience to advocate for changes that make the system better for everyone.** Paralegals rigorously collect data on every case they handle. We assess that information to identify where systems are failing and how they can improve. Namati, partners, paralegals, and community members use that analysis to advocate for reforms to laws and policies. We have achieved significant systemic changes in every country where we work. These changes can positively affect entire states or nations.

And the cycle continues... Once reforms are adopted, paralegals and communities bring the new laws or policies to life by using them to solve specific problems. It is through this cycle that we advance justice and democratize law.



THROUGH THE GLOBAL LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

- 4 / **We learn from each other to get better.** We foster learning among network members, online and in-person. By sharing evidence, challenges, and lessons from practice, our community becomes more rigorous and more effective.
- 5 / **We strive to transform the policy environment for legal empowerment.** Together with network members, we advocate for policies that will create the space and structures for our members to work effectively and independently.

A photograph of two women, Maria and Olivia, sitting together in a health center in Mozambique. Maria is on the left, wearing a blue top with a gold pattern, and Olivia is on the right, wearing a blue top and jeans, smiling. They are both looking towards the camera. The background is a plain blue wall.

Namati clients Maria (left) and Olivia, who worked with a community paralegal to address improper tuberculosis screening practices at their local health center in Mozambique.

GRASSROOTS LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

IN 2018, 155 COMMUNITY PARALEGALS WORKING WITH NAMATI AND OUR PARTNERS SUPPORTED 19,000+ ACTIVE CLIENTS* IN 5 COUNTRIES TO ADDRESS INJUSTICES INVOLVING LAND, ENVIRONMENT, HEALTHCARE, AND CITIZENSHIP.

TOGETHER, WE ACHIEVED REMEDIES THAT DIRECTLY **IMPROVED THE LIVES OF 350,000+ PEOPLE**, AND POLICY IMPROVEMENTS IN LIBERIA, MOZAMBIQUE, SIERRA LEONE, AND MYANMAR THAT **AFFECTED MILLIONS MORE**.

WE AIM TO SHARE EVERYTHING WE LEARN FROM OUR GRASSROOTS WORK WITH OUR WIDER COMMUNITY: IN 2018, WE PUBLISHED **24** POLICY BRIEFS, PRACTITIONER GUIDES, ACADEMIC ARTICLES, & REPORTS.

155

COMMUNITY PARALEGALS

19,737

ACTIVE CLIENTS*

2,012

REMEDIES TO INJUSTICES

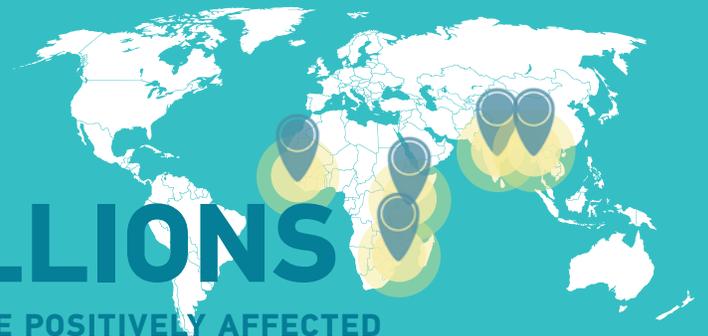
350,000+

PEOPLE WHO DIRECTLY BENEFITED



MILLIONS

OF PEOPLE POSITIVELY AFFECTED
BY CHANGES TO LAWS AND SYSTEMS



* 'Active clients' are the individuals who work directly with paralegals to solve a justice problem and are empowered to know, use, and shape the law in the process.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A LEGAL EMPOWERMENT EFFORT IN THE UNITED STATES

In 2018, we laid the foundations for work in the United States, the sixth and last of our focus countries for our current five-year phase.

Despite an abundance of lawyers, the U.S. has an access to justice crisis. An extensive scoping process led us to the conclusion that the greatest fit between need in the U.S and the value Namati can bring is in the area of environmental justice.

Historically, the U.S. environmental movement has focused on litigation and high-level advocacy. The communities who bear the greatest burden of harm—who are mostly poor and of color—have had little opportunity to use the law themselves.

In 2018, we recruited our first crew of legal empowerment advocates. In 2019, we're working with this group to help communities secure remedies to environmental injustice and develop a methodology that works in the U.S. context.



“When I got the ID I certainly did not believe it; I kept on looking at it.”

SAMSON



SECURING CITIZENSHIP IN THE FACE OF DISCRIMINATION IN KENYA

Millions of Kenyan citizens face a discriminatory vetting process when applying for identity cards due to their ethnicity. Without an ID, they cannot apply for a job, or receive a bank loan, or access healthcare. They are excluded from society.

Paralegals from communities facing discrimination across Kenya are helping people to navigate vetting and secure IDs. We are using data from all of those cases—over 2,000 thousand now—to build an argument, and a movement, that proves vetting is unconstitutional. Our ultimate goal is to end discrimination in the administration of identity documents nationwide.

IN 2018,

24

COMMUNITY
PARALEGALS
HELPED

463

ACTIVE
CLIENTS
TO SECURE
LEGAL
IDENTITY
DOCUMENTS,

WHICH ALLOWED THEM
AND THEIR FAMILIES—

939
PEOPLE

—TO ACCESS ESSENTIAL
SERVICES AND TAKE PART
IN SOCIETY.



Community paralegals with Nubian Rights Forum, a Namati partner, speak with a woman at a market in Nairobi's Kibera.

A FATHER WITHOUT AN IDENTITY

Samson's Story

“I tried to look for a livelihood as a laborer, but everyone interested in the job was asked to present their IDs and I did not have one.”



Samson proudly displays his identity card.

Life without an identity card was frustrating, but it got much more troubling for Samson when he became a father.

Samson first applied for his ID when he was 19. Despite having a birth certificate, the registrar turned him away, declaring he was “not from this community.” He tried different avenues but at each turn, he faced some discriminatory barrier. Eventually, he gave up.



Gideon, a community paralegal with Haki Centre, a Namati partner, helped Samson to secure his ID.

At 23, Samson married and soon after had two daughters. He struggled to provide for his family. “I tried to look for a livelihood as a laborer, but everyone interested in the job was asked to present their IDs and I did not have one,” says Samson. “[I] was hustling doing odd jobs ... Anything that could enable me to take care of my family.”

When his eldest child turned 5, Samson tried to enroll her in school but was told she needed a birth certificate. He couldn't get her one without having an ID himself. The sympathetic teacher gave him a year's grace period, but his renewed attempts to get his ID failed. His daughter was forced from school.

It became clear to Samson that he needed help. Friends told him about a community paralegal named Gideon.

Gideon helped Samson to understand his citizenship rights and how to navigate the administrative process. Together, they secured his ID card in six weeks.

“When I got the ID I certainly did not believe it; I kept on looking at it,” recalls Samson. “When I got home, I opened the door, put it on the floor and knelt down in prayer.”

Both of his daughters now have birth certificates and are in school. And while he has not gotten permanent employment, steady work, says Samson, is much easier to come by.

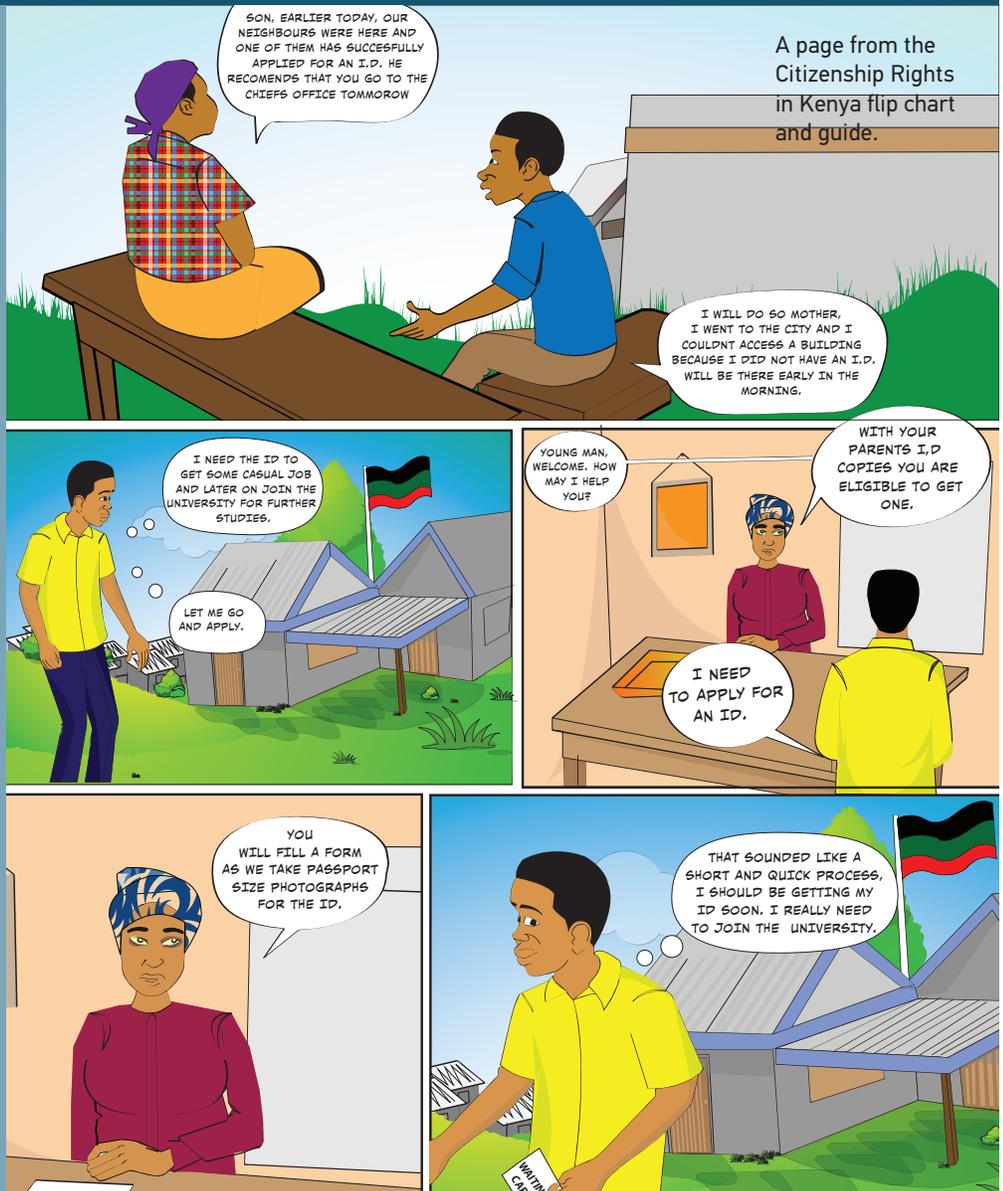
“...I opened the door, put it on the floor and knelt down in prayer.”

Read Samson's full story at <http://bit.ly/FWIss>

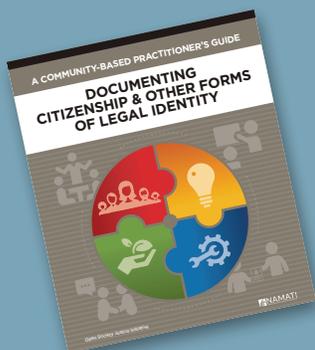
SHARING WHAT WE LEARNED

A Community-based Practitioners Guide: Documenting Citizenship and Other Forms of Legal Identity

Over 1 billion people globally lack legal identity documentation. Without it they cannot access rights like education, healthcare, and employment. This guide, developed in partnership with the Open Society Justice Initiative, is a comprehensive how-to-manual for setting up community-based paralegal programs that help people secure legal identity documents.



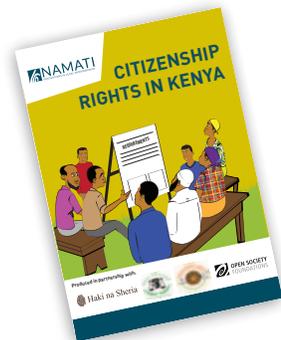
A page from the Citizenship Rights in Kenya flip chart and guide.



Download the manual at <http://bit.ly/CBPguide>

Citizenship Rights in Kenya - flip chart and guide

This illustrated guide for paralegals and communities explains, in simple terms, the laws and procedures relating to identity documents in Kenya.



Download the guide at <http://bit.ly/CRKfc>

DRAWING ON CASE EXPERIENCE TO PURSUE SYSTEMIC CHANGE (SELECTED)

Members of Kenya's Nubian community protest the county government's denial of a candidate for a job on the health committee based on their ethnicity.



Vices of Discrimination: The Impacts of Vetting and Delays in the Issuance of ID Cards in Kenya

This policy brief highlights the plight of Kenyans who face difficulties in getting identity cards due to their ethnicity. Drawing on data from over 1,200 cases handled by paralegals, it sheds light on how the discretionary and discriminatory processes they endure delay the issuance of their ID cards and how these increasing delays endanger their wellbeing and that of their families. The brief concludes with seven recommendations that can bring Kenya's citizenship policy closer to the principle of equality enshrined in the constitution.



Download the brief
at <http://bit.ly/VicesKenya>

Pursuing a just transition to digital ID

The Kenya government plans to move the country towards the use of a national digital population register and digital identity cards. This shift to digital could be an opportunity to eliminate discrimination. But as it's designed now, it is likely to make discrimination worse.

In August, Namati and partners submitted five key recommendations for changes to the proposed amendments to better protect the rights of all citizens, and worked closely with Members of Parliament to move these asks forward. The recommendations spurred debate on the floor of Parliament but were not ultimately adopted before the amendments passed into law. We are now pursuing other avenues, including litigation, to ensure a just transition to digital ID.



Learn more
at <http://bit.ly/DigitalIDk>



“I now know that each one of us has rights that must be respected.”

SILVIA



REALIZING THE RIGHT TO HEALTH IN MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique, like many other countries today, has progressive healthcare policies. But there are massive breakdowns in delivery: in many facilities, patients are treated abusively, or essential drugs are missing, or there is no running water. These failures are a core reason that Mozambique ranks among the worst in the world on health outcomes. Namati’s paralegals help people to understand health policy and to take action to address violations. And we have translated our grassroots experience into nationwide changes that have improved the health system for everyone.

Our five-year goal is to significantly reduce violations in four provinces, and to democratize health governance nationwide through the empowerment of village health committees.

IN 2018,

42

COMMUNITY
PARALEGALS
WORKED WITH

2,148

ACTIVE
CLIENTS
TO RESOLVE

TO RESOLVE

1,036

BREAKDOWNS IN HEALTHCARE
DELIVERY, IMPROVING
LIFE-SAVING SERVICES FOR

180,000+

PEOPLE.



A patient consults with a doctor at her local health facility.

PRESSING FOR PRIVACY RIGHTS

Silvia's Story

Silvia, a Namati client, took action when her local health center did not have a private space in which to get an HIV test and counselling.

“I entered into a state of panic. I didn't want these other people to know my status.”



It was not getting better. It had been months since Silvia's* symptoms had appeared and still, she was fatigued and feverish. She had lost 15kg and continued to find new sores on her skin.

She considered getting tested for HIV. “I knew the test was going to be positive,” says Silvia, “but I was afraid to know the answer.”

“I knew the test was going to be positive.”

After much deliberation, Silvia went to the local clinic. But when she was called into the testing room, she was unnerved to find a number of other people there, sorting through files. As Silvia recalls, “I entered into a state of panic. I didn't want these other people to know my status.” She left without getting the test.

The next day, she approached the village health committee (VHC) and the community paralegal who supports them. She had seen them before, talking to patients at the clinic. They assured Silvia that she had a right to privacy and arranged a meeting with clinic management.

The Clinical Director sympathized with Silvia but said there was nowhere else for them to keep the medical records; the health facility only had five rooms. They had previously tried to address the issue by putting in a small folding screen, but it failed to provide any real privacy. Silvia left the meeting thinking her only option for getting tested in private was to travel to the district capital—but knowing she didn't have enough money for transport. » continued over.



Read the full story and find out what Silvia is doing now at <http://bit.ly/PfPR>



Medical supplies at a health facility in Mozambique.



* Name changed

PRESSING FOR PRIVACY RIGHTS

Silvia's Story (CONTINUED)



Silvia (center), a Namati community paralegal (far right) and members of the village health committee worked with health facility staff to remedy the lack of patient privacy at the health center.



Read the full story and find out what Silvia is doing now at <http://bit.ly/PfPR>

Several weeks later, Silvia received a call from a member of the village health committee to inform her that the co-management committee, composed of health center staff and VHC members, had identified a solution to the privacy issue. They had determined that if the small storage room off of the reception

area was cleared out, it could fit a table, a couple of chairs, and the basic materials needed for HIV testing and counseling. Within four days, the new room was ready. “I was happy and relieved,” Silvia says of hearing the good news. “I really didn’t believe that they were going to resolve the problem.”

Silvia returned to the clinic and was tested for HIV—in private. Her results came back positive, and she was immediately referred for treatment. “Now I am doing very well,” says Silvia. And, what is more, she adds, “I now know that each one of us has rights that must be respected.”

DRAWING ON CASE EXPERIENCE TO ACHIEVE SYSTEMIC CHANGE (SELECTED)



18
FACILITIES BEGAN
IMPLEMENTING
HEALTH FACILITY
ASSESSMENTS

Hortência Alage, a Namati program officer, leads a session on health rights and policies with community members in Mozambique.

An innovative approach to democratizing healthcare governance — scaling-up nationwide

Since mid-2016, Namati’s paralegals have been supporting village health committees to conduct bi-annual health facility assessments. Committee members gather detailed feedback from communities and health workers, identify barriers to care, and develop plans to address them.

The process has empowered community members to break their silence and overcome grave violations, including bribery, breaches of privacy, and abusive

treatment. In 2017, after seeing firsthand evidence of its impact, the Ministry of Health agreed to adopt Namati’s biannual health facility assessments nationwide.

In 2018, we supported the ministry to scale up implementation. We helped to train ministry staff on the process in three provinces. Eighteen new facilities began implementing the assessments in 2018, with many more coming on line in 2019.



Left: Community paralegal Gracio Magule at a health center. Above: An elderly patient.



“Now we all know that Gram Panchayat can fight for justice.”

ASLAM*



CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND PRACTICE IN INDIA

In India, mining, industrial development, and other private and public projects damage the environment and endanger the livelihoods of local communities. Despite robust laws on the books, there is a very poor record of compliance. Paralegals on the Centre for Policy Research-Namati team support communities to understand and use the law to find remedies when projects violate regulations.

Our ultimate goal is to create, in partnership with paralegals and communities, a fundamental shift in the environmental regulatory framework: from (often corrupt) technocracy towards a system in which community insight and leadership is central.

IN 2018,

15

COMMUNITY
PARALEGALS
WORKED WITH

1,080

ACTIVE
CLIENTS

TO REMEDY

50

ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATIONS,
DIRECTLY IMPROVING THE
HEALTH AND LIVELIHOODS OF

150,000+*

PEOPLE.

* This is a conservative estimate based on directly neighboring communities.



A family from a village in Odisha, India impacted by the pollution from nearby mines. © HARAPRIYA NAYAK/KIRDTI

THE COUNCIL AND THE COAL GIANT

Aslam's Story

The conveyor belt of a large coal plant in Nana Mandha. The equipment and materials for its construction were scattered across the villagers' grazing land.

“... soon they will encroach our entire grazing land, and then what will happen to me and my fellow villagers?”



Machines, trucks, equipment, building materials. It was not an unusual sight in Nana Mandha village, surrounded as it is by power plants and steel mills. But when Aslam* spotted them spread across the land, he bristled. The acres they were covering were his village's grazing land.

“When I saw the illegal encroachment, I thought ‘Today if they have encroached certain portion of our grazing land soon they will encroach our entire grazing land, and then what will happen to me and my fellow villagers?’” recounts Aslam.

» This was not the first time the community held this coal plant accountable. [Read the full story](http://bit.ly/CCGas) at <http://bit.ly/CCGas>

Aslam brought the issue to the Gram Panchayat (village council), but they did not think anything could be done. The coal plant responsible was too powerful.

With the land overrun, many families migrated. Those who stayed were forced to spend a significant portion of their income on feed for their cattle.

Aslam decided to reach out to a community paralegal he knew for help. Together, they read through contracts, acts, and court orders, and confirmed that the law was on their side. They also discovered that the Gram Panchayat has the authority to remove any encroachment on their common lands.

With the land overrun, many families migrated.

With this new information he convinced the Gram Panchayat that they could use the law to take on the coal giant.

The case was not easy. For one, the government departments responsible for supporting the removal of illegal encroachments were unresponsive. But the council persevered.

After almost a year of issuing legal notices, they gave the company an ultimatum: “vacate the land or we, as permitted by law, will confiscate all equipment and materials on it.” The company vacated immediately.

Aslam no longer sees his community as helpless in relation to the industries that surround it. “This process helped us understand that the Gram Panchayat holds so many legal powers. Now we all know that Gram Panchayat can fight for justice.”

* Name changed

SHARING WHAT WE LEARNED (SELECTED)

Making the Law Count:

Ten Environmental Justice Stories by Community Paralegals in India

Written by community paralegals, this compilation highlights how legal empowerment strategies are being deployed by communities in India to demand environmental justice. These stories prove change really is possible when paralegals and affected communities work together.



Download the publication at <http://bit.ly/LawCount>

Cattle roam a municipal dump site in Gujarat, India.

© SHVETANGINI PATEL/UJJAS MAHILA SANGATHAN



Midcourse Manoeuvres:

Community Strategies and Remedies for Natural Resource Conflicts in India, Indonesia, and Myanmar

The growing demand for land by corporations and investors has fueled an explosion of land grabs and forced land conversions in Asia. This report provides an overview of the impacts these investor exploitations have had on vulnerable communities in India, Indonesia, and Myanmar, and details effective community-led strategies for demanding environmental justice.



Download the report at <http://bit.ly/Manoeuvres>

Around the Landfill Sites:

A Groundtruthing of Solid Waste Management Law Across Landfill Sites in Coastal Areas of Uttara Kannada District, Karnataka

This study is the result of an extensive community-led groundtruthing exercise to examine whether district municipal authorities in Karnataka followed administrative rules on collecting, transporting, processing, storing, and disposing of municipal solid wastes. It describes how paralegals supported affected members of the community to understand the law in order to assess compliance and seek remedies.



Download the study at <http://bit.ly/LandUKD>

DRAWING ON CASE EXPERIENCE TO PURSUE SYSTEMIC CHANGE (SELECTED)

Women collect oysters from the tidal shallows in the estuary of the Aghanashini River, Karnataka State, India.



Regulatory authorities, once again, ignored the fact that industrial non-compliance with environmental regulations is a major source of air pollution.

Defending coastal regulation



Read the op-ed
at <http://bit.ly/CoastReg>

In 2018, proposed amendments to India's Coastal Regulation Zone notification threatened to dilute environmental protections of the coastal regions in favor of real estate development, mass tourism, and industrial projects. In response, the CPR-Namati team made submissions to the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, highlighting that the amendments would endanger the already fragile ecology of coastal areas as well as the livelihoods of the fisher folk and other communities who work or reside on the coast. The team called for thorough and inclusive dialogue between the state and affected communities, and publicly advocated for changes to the amendments in an op-ed and a blog series.

How India can win against air pollution

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change released the National Clean Air Program (NCAP), a welcomed initiative to address the crisis of air pollution in India. However, NCAP did not adequately address the sources of pollution or take ambitious enough steps to tackle the problem. In a submission made to the Ministry, and in an op-ed in a leading India newspaper, the CPR-Namati team underlined that the regulatory authorities, once again, ignored the fact that industrial non-compliance with environmental regulations is a major source of air pollution. They highlighted examples of successful state-level legislation that can be used across the country and advocated for increasing public participation in the monitoring and enforcement efforts of pollution control boards.



Read the op-ed
at <http://bit.ly/opedAIR>



The families that had once fled are now returning to their land.

U WIN NAING HTAY



REVERSING DECADES OF LAND GRABBING IN MYANMAR

Land seizures and forced displacements were a major feature of the decades of military rule in Myanmar. Despite some steps towards democracy, many previously grabbed lands have not been returned to families who depend on it for survival. Community paralegals across seven states and regions support smallholder farmers to navigate complex administrative processes and engage in registration, dispute resolution, and other mechanisms to regain access to their grabbed land, and better protect the land they use.

At the systemic level, we are striving to democratize land governance: to replace a top-down and often repressive regime with one that respects the experience and voice of those who depend directly on the land.

IN 2018,

48

COMMUNITY
PARALEGALS
SUPPORTED

840

ACTIVE
CLIENTS

TO SECURE THEIR LAND RIGHTS, DIRECTLY IMPROVING THE LIVELIHOODS AND WELLBEING OF

7,500+

PEOPLE.



A farmer works in his fields in Myanmar.



FROM WITNESS TO PROBLEM SOLVER

U Win Naing Htay's Story



U Win Naing Htay, a community paralegal with Civil and Political Rights Campaign Group (CPRCG) in Bago Region, Myanmar.

© CPRCG/NAMATI

U Win Naing Htay was so inspired by the idea of law as a tool for justice that he began helping the paralegals with their cases.

In 1980, the Ministry of Electricity and Energy seized 920 acres of farmland, belonging to over 100 families, to build a fertilizer plant. They gave no warning and no compensation. And when they did not use 297 of the acres they seized, they kept them anyway.

U Win Naing Htay was a young boy at the time. His family's land was not among those grabbed, but he noticed that more and more of his friends were moving away. He asked his father why. The government took their land, he was told, they had no choice but to move in search of work. Little did he know that three decades later, he would help these families get their land back.

In 2010, Myanmar's military government began a shift towards quasi-civilian rule and slowly began amending laws. In 2013, Namati established a community paralegal program to help farmers understand and use the new land laws to regain and defend their land. U Win Naing Htay worked with a paralegal on a land dispute his family had. He was so inspired by the idea of law as a tool for justice that he began helping the paralegals with their cases.

In 2015, U Win Naing Htay became a paralegal and took on multiple cases—including one to secure the return of the 297 unused acres seized by the Ministry of Electricity and Energy 35 years prior.

U Win Naing Htay and his clients persistently wrote and visited various government departments and committees, pushing for action. Finally, the wheels of justice began to turn, and in February 2018, the government released all 297 acres.

The families that had once fled are now returning to their land.



U Win Naing Htay tends to his cattle.

© CPRCG/NAMATI

They had no choice but to move in search of work.



Read the full story of U Win Naing Htay and the case at <http://bit.ly/FWPSus>

SHARING WHAT WE LEARNED

How to Solve Land Grabs

Namati and its partners in Myanmar have supported farmers to challenge over 600 land grabs since 2013. Together, we have identified the relevant laws, regulations, and institutions, and the most successful methodologies. We developed this practical Burmese-language guide to share what we have learned.



Download the guide
at <http://bit.ly/solveLG>

A standard home for a farmer in rural Myanmar.



Challenged over **600**
land grabs since 2013.



Applying for the Right to Use Vacant, Fallow, and Virgin Land

In September 2018, the Myanmar government passed an amendment to the 2012 Vacant, Fallow, and Virgin (VFV) Land Law that stipulated that all smallholder farmers currently using VFV land must submit an application for the right to use the land by March 3, 2019. Anyone who fails to do so may be evicted. This manual serves to help farmers determine if an application for use of VFV land is in their best interest and if so, guides them through the process.



Download the manual
at <http://bit.ly/HVFVL>

DRAWING ON CASE EXPERIENCE TO ACHIEVE SYSTEMIC CHANGE (SELECTED)



NEARLY

20%

OF MYANMAR'S
POPULATION, ABOUT
10 MILLION PEOPLE, LIVE
OR FARM ON VFV LAND.

U Tin San Oo with his wife in Nattalin Township, Myanmar. Working with a paralegal, they were able to secure the return of their farmland after it was grabbed by the military.

Improving the Vacant, Fallow, Virgin Land Law—making a dangerous reform less harmful

Nearly 20% of Myanmar's population, about 10 million people, live or farm on land the government formally classifies as "vacant, fallow, or virgin (VFV)." This concept is a holdover concept from colonial days.

In 2018 the government began a process of significantly amending the VFV Land Management Law of 2012. The proposed changes would make a bad situation even worse, by actively dispossessing people currently using VFV land.

Namati and our partners provided urgent input to parliament across multiple drafts. We drew on our case

experience to illuminate the real-world implications of the proposed changes, and to suggest a more just way of dealing with VFV land.

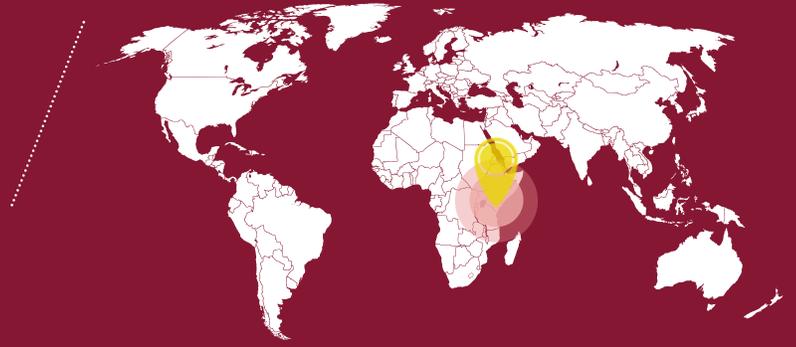
The final amendments, adopted in September, strongly favor connected insiders and may be very damaging to farmers. But Namati and our partners made a bad reform significantly less so.

We were able to secure four significant wins in the new law. Most important among these, customary land is now excluded from being defined as VFV land. Second, while insufficient in length, existing land users have a grace period to apply to use their land before it is opened up to applications from others. Third, the committees which administer VFV land will include civil society and ethnic minority representatives. Fourth, the administration of VFV land can now be handled at the state and regional level rather than the national level.



The law, he realized,
was on their side.

FRANCIS



PROTECTING COMMUNITY LAND RIGHTS IN KENYA

Around the world, farmers, pastoralists, and fisher people are often denied the power to manage their forests, pastures, rivers, lakes, and coasts. Meanwhile, there is an ever-increasing investment interest in exactly those resources.

Namati has worked to protect community land rights in several countries, including Nepal and Liberia. In 2018, we began to focus our efforts on a historic opportunity in Kenya. After years of struggle, Kenya passed the 2016 Community Land Act, enabling millions of people who depend on common lands to secure legal rights and strengthen the structures by which they govern those lands. But not a single community has registered their lands under the act. Namati and our partners are working to bring the law to life. Our 5-year goal is to directly help 75 communities secure over a million hectares of land, and to persuade 5 county governments to implement the law using a legal empowerment approach.

IN 2018,

9

COMMUNITY
PARALEGALS
SUPPORTED



5

RURAL
COMMUNITIES,



MADE UP OF

19,000

PEOPLE LIVING ON

100,000

HECTARES, TO STRENGTHEN
LAND GOVERNANCE AND
PURSUE LAND RIGHTS.



A Maasi women calls on members of Laikipia community to unite for pastoralists' land rights. © IMPACT KENYA

A HERDER, A PARALEGAL, A PROTECTOR OF THE COMMONS – Francis’ Story

Francis, a Maasi herder and Il'laramatak Community Concerns (ICC) paralegal.

© ICC/NAMATI



Francis started to talk to community members about the need to protect their land—and their right to do so.

Francis first heard the news in late 2017. The village leaders responsible for managing the community’s common land were reportedly holding secret meetings with private investors.

Francis, a 35-year-old Maasai herder, knew what would come next: the leaders would sub-divide, privatize, and sell off parcels of the community’s land, leaving the residents of Kuku B with nowhere to graze the cattle, sheep, and goats that are their source of income. He had seen it happen in neighboring villages. In fact, of the 52 communities with registered lands in the Kajidao county of Kenya, only 6 have kept their lands intact.

Around this time, Francis began participating in community land protection activities lead by Il'laramatak Community Concerns, a Namati partner, and in mid-2018 he joined their team as a paralegal. As he learned more about Kenya’s new Community Land Act, Francis became increasingly upset by the land committee’s years of mismanagement. But alongside his frustration, he found hope. The law, he realized, was on their side.

Francis started to talk to community members about the need to protect their land—and their right to do so. He mobilized them to resist the privatization, organizing meetings

and a peaceful demonstration that brought together hundreds of people. The [protest made national news](#), and the Ministry of Land and area Member of Parliament took notice. Soon after, the privatization was halted. The residents of Kuku B succeeded in defending their rights to the land and protecting their livelihoods.

Francis and his fellow paralegals are now supporting the community to finalize its bylaws, a tool community members can use to hold future leaders accountable.

» **Read the full story** and learn what Francis and his community are doing now at <http://bit.ly/HPPCFs>

Francis speaks to community members about land rights and governance.

© ICC/NAMATI



SHARING WHAT WE LEARNED

Power to the People: A Case Study on Participatory Local Land and Natural Governance in Nepal

From 2014 until 2016, the Community Self Reliance Centre piloted an adaptation of Namati’s legal empowerment approach to community land protection in 54 wards in Nepal. This report is an assessment of the project’s community impacts. We found that, when paired with legal education, local bylaws drafting processes can lead to genuine norm changes, authentic protections for the rights of vulnerable groups, and the alignment of national laws and local customary rules.

» Download the report
at <http://bit.ly/NepalCS>

Members of a community in Nepal participate in a bylaw drafting session.
© COMMUNITY SELF RELIANCE CENTRE/NAMATI



“Power to the people”



» Download the guides
at <http://bit.ly/CINGuides>

Community-Investor Negotiation Guides:

- 1 - Preparing in Advance for Potential Investors
- 2 - Negotiating Contracts with Investors

These two first-of-their-kind guides provide advocates with strategies to help communities protect themselves from unjust land-based investment projects and ensure their long-term prosperity is at the center of all negotiations. Drawing on lessons from dozens of contracts and experiences from around the world, they offer practical information and accessible legal guidance to understand and defend community land rights.

DRAWING ON CASE EXPERIENCE TO ACHIEVE SYSTEMIC CHANGE

OVER A

6TH

OF THE NATION'S
LAND MASS HAS
BEEN ALLOCATED
BY THE GOVERNMENT
TO CONCESSIONS

A man sits on
a fallen tree
in Rivercess
County, Liberia.
© SDI/NAMATI



Hundreds of Liberian communities have lost the lands they depend on for the livelihoods and their cultural identity. Thousands more were at risk.

Liberia's first Land Rights Act

In 2012, Namati partnered with the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) to help rural communities in Liberia better manage and protect their land.

In the 1950s, the Liberian government unilaterally declared that it owned all the land in the country. Since then, it has allocated over a sixth of the nation's land mass to concessions- for mining, timber, and rubber among others. Hundreds of Liberian communities have lost the lands they depend on for the livelihoods and their cultural identity. Thousands more were at risk.

Namati and our partner Sustainable Development Institute played a leading role in developing and advocating for the passage of Liberia's first Land Rights Act. The act recognized community land rights and mandated equitable, inclusive local land governance. After years of reviews, submissions, and collective advocacy, the bill was signed into law in September 2018.

The passage of this progressive law is a major victory, but as Namati's Rachael Knight and SDI's Ali Kaba highlight in an op-ed for Place, "the work has just begun." To ensure the law is implemented, government and civil society must now empower all Liberians to understand their rights and obligations under the new land law.



Read the op-ed
at <http://bit.ly/opedLRA>



“We have started reversing the entire ugly situation.”

MR. BANGURA



ADVANCING LAND & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN SIERRA LEONE

To spur economic growth, the government of Sierra Leone has been aggressively courting large-scale agriculture and mining investments. These have often led to the exploitation of communities and environmental devastation. Namati supports communities to protect customary land rights, challenge land grabs, remedy environmental harm, and, if they wish, negotiate fair deals with investors.

Our 5-year goals are to 1) significantly reduce environmental and social harm in 50 mining, agricultural, or development projects, and 2) change policy nationwide so that the people who depend on the land a meaningful voice in what happens to it.

IN 2018,

10

COMMUNITY
PARALEGALS
SUPPORTED
ACTIVE
CLIENTS
ACROSS

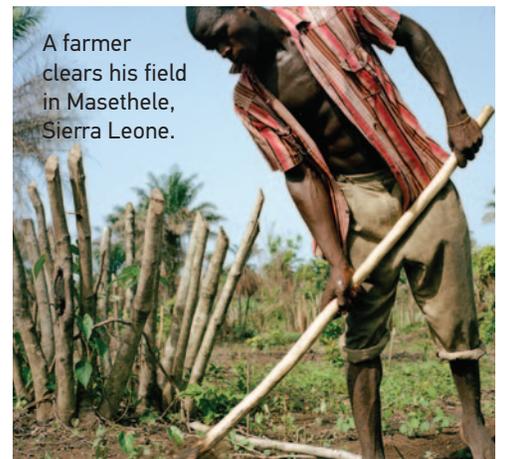
4

DISTRICTS

TO PROTECT COMMUNITY LANDS
AND NEGOTIATE FAIR DEALS
WITH INVESTORS, DIRECTLY
IMPROVING THE LIVELIHOODS
AND WELLBEING OF

9,000+
PEOPLE.

A farmer clears his field in Masethele, Sierra Leone.



FROM A LAND GRAB TO A FAIR DEAL

A Story from Masimra Town

Osman Bangura, chief of Masimra town and an active client on the Genesis Farms case.

“We were tricked into signing off our land to a foreign investor by some corrupt and self-centered politicians.”

It was a government official who introduced the Masimra community to Genesis Farms. The Dutch company wanted to lease 1,015 acres of the community’s land for 25 years for a yearly payment of \$150 USD. They would build a bridge, and schools and hospitals too, they said. And they’d plant two trees for every one they cut down.

Eight years later, the company has not fully paid their rent, built any bridge or schools, or planted a single tree to replace the 2600 it destroyed.

When the community raised these issues, the company said it was only bound by what is in the lease agreement, and those promises

were not included. The community had not known they had the right to review and negotiate the lease.

“We were tricked into signing off our land to a foreign investor by some corrupt and self-centered politicians for empty promises that were never fulfilled,” says Osman Bangura, chief of Masimra town. “This has significantly affected our household income and food security over the years. We were benefiting a lot from our land but...we can’t access [it] anymore. The pittance the company pays is not even enough to feed a household for two months.”

When the town learned of Namati, they reached out for assistance. Community paralegals helped them to understand the lease and the laws regulating investor conduct. Together, they planned a course of action.

After repeated requests, the company finally agreed to meet and, after numerous discussions, conceded to paying rent arrears totalling \$10,000, replanting the trees, and renegotiating the lease.

“With Namati on our side, we have started reversing the entire ugly situation,” says Mr. Bangura.



Genesis Farms’ combine harvests crops grown on Masimra town’s land.

Read the full story of the Masimra case at <http://bit.ly/FLGtFD>

DRAWING ON CASE EXPERIENCE TO PURSUE SYSTEMIC CHANGE (SELECTED)

LESS THAN

5%

OF SIERRA LEONE'S ORIGINAL FORESTS REMAIN

Trees charred from land clearing in Bombali District, Sierra Leone.



Namati and other organizations strongly criticized the decision, leading the government to announce the suspension of all timber concessions pending a review of the legal framework.

Protecting the country's forests

It is estimated that less than 5% of Sierra Leone's original forests remain. A few days after being sworn in, the newly elected president placed a temporary ban on the export of timber through an executive order, in line with his campaign commitment to environmental justice and land protection.

Namati wrote an open letter to the president proposing the ban be kept in place permanently. However, in June the government lifted the ban and timber merchants resumed business. Namati and other organizations strongly [criticized the decision](#), leading the government to announce the suspension of all timber concessions pending a review of the legal framework. Advocacy efforts to instate a permanent ban are ongoing.



Read the open letter here <http://bit.ly/opedOL>



Farmer Momodu Kanu stands in his fields in Masethele, Bombali District, Sierra Leone.

Timber ready to be exported from Africa.

© O.REK'S

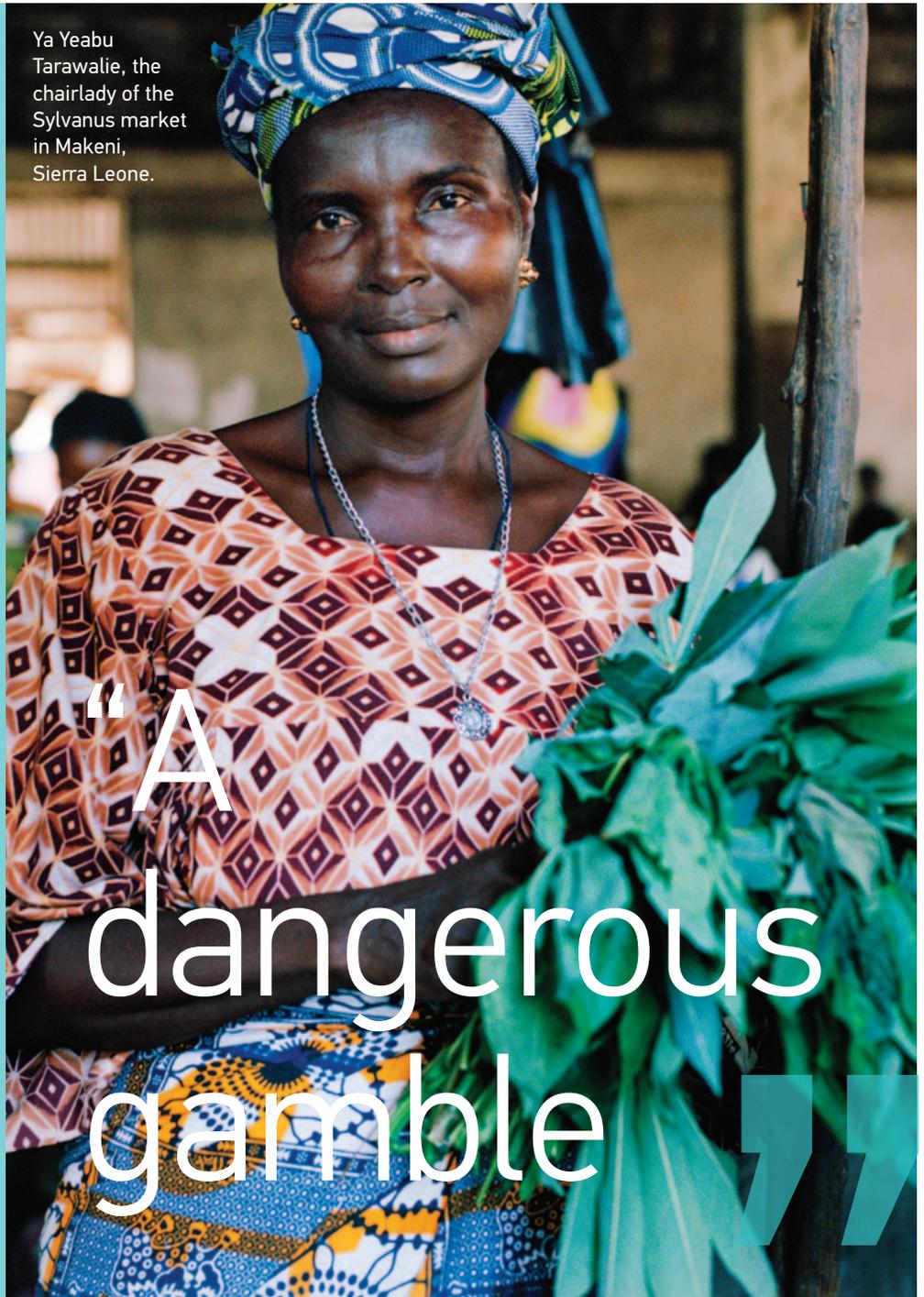
Putting people, not profit, at the heart of environmental regulations

In May, Namati Sierra Leone director, Sonkita Conteh, published an op-ed in a national newspaper declaring the country's unrestrained resource exploitation a "dangerous gamble." He called on the new government to commit to environmental regulations that put people ahead of profits, and justice ahead of development. Two months later, Namati held a meeting with the new head of the Environmental Protection Agency to propose concrete improvements to the functioning and response of his agency. Discussions and advocacy efforts are ongoing.



Read the op-ed here
<http://bit.ly/opedSER>

Ya Yeabu Tarawalie, the chairlady of the Sylvanus market in Makeni, Sierra Leone.



"A dangerous gamble"

Preventing harmful large-scale agricultural projects

Namati, as part of a working group of civil society organizations and government agencies, is contributing to the development of the first Investment Approval Process for Agric Businesses to be used by the federal Import & Export Promotion Agency. This process will be a critical tool for preventing the socio-economic and environmental harm that often results from large-scale agricultural projects in Sierra Leone. The group is on track to submit the final process to an Inter-Ministerial Task Force for approval in the first half of 2019.

A young mother
with her baby in
rural Mozambique.

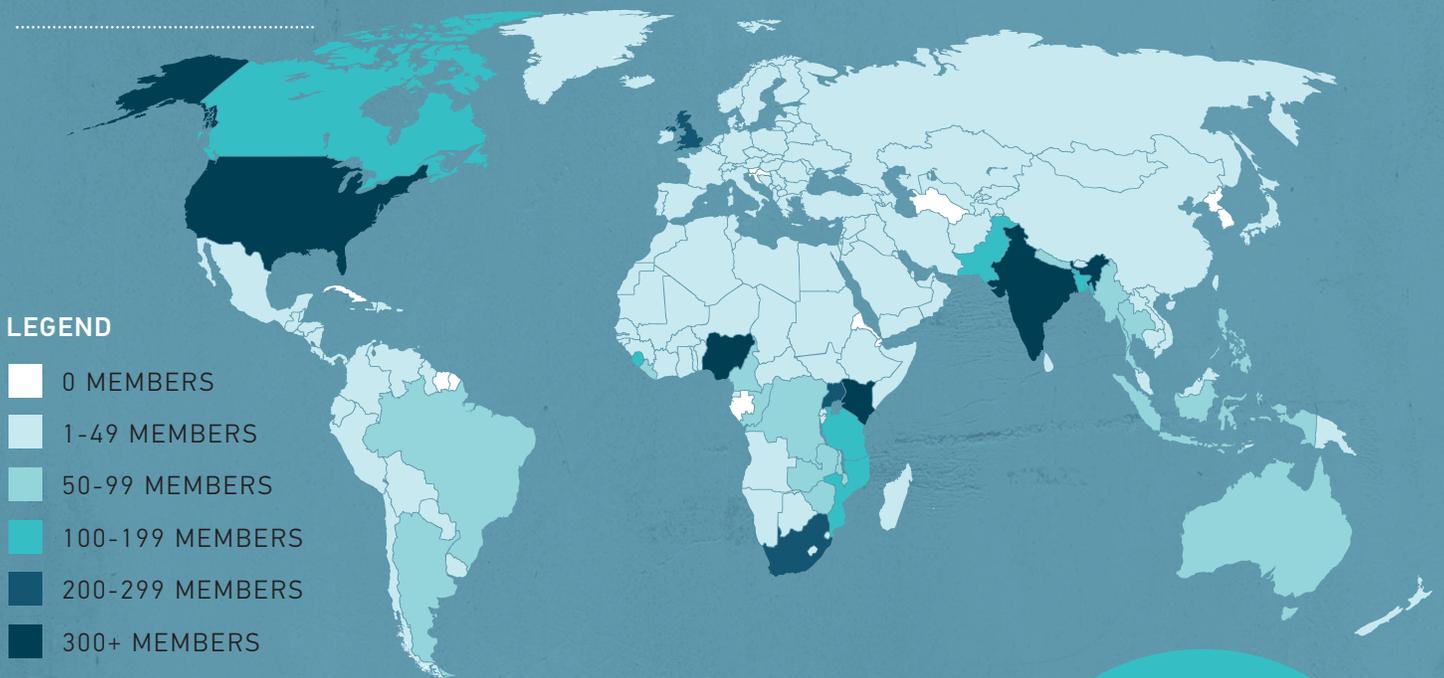
A young woman with short, dark hair is shown from the chest up, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a vibrant, patterned shawl in shades of blue, green, and brown. Her baby is strapped to her back, visible as a small head and shoulders. The background is a blurred, natural landscape with green trees and a hazy sky.

GROWING A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

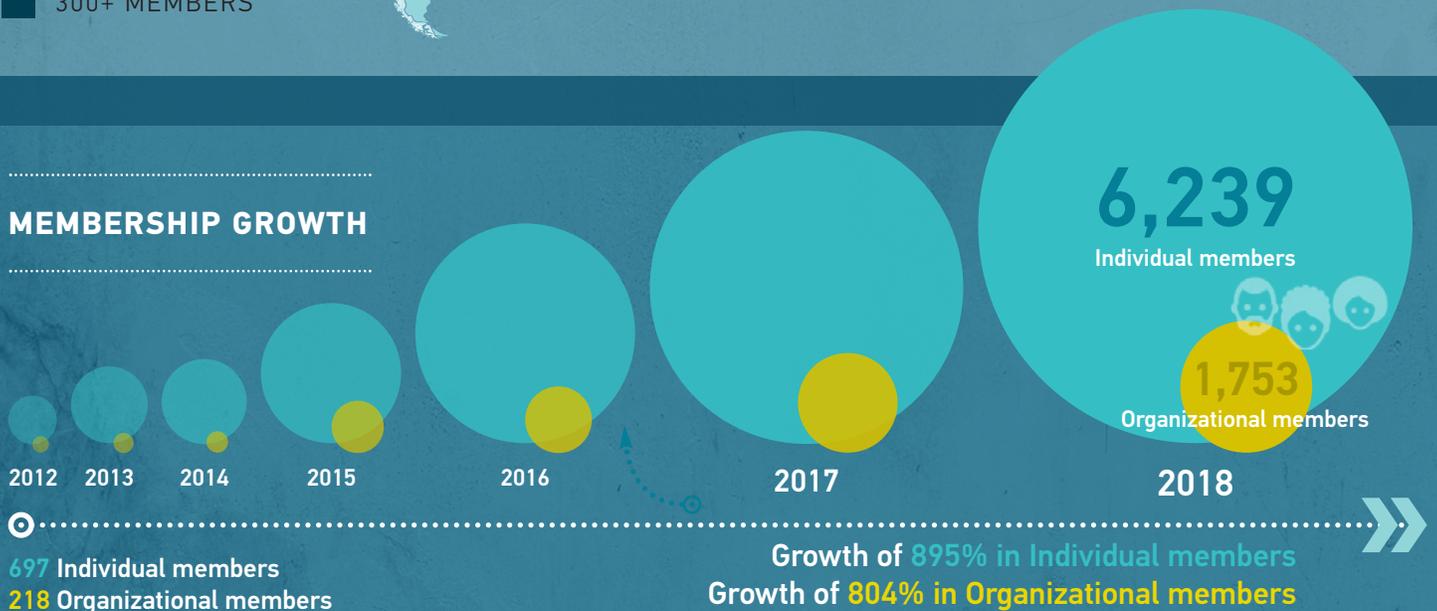
THE GLOBAL LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK IS THE **WORLD'S LARGEST** COMMUNITY OF GRASSROOTS JUSTICE PRACTITIONERS. OUR GOAL IS TO GROW THE NETWORK INTO A POWERFUL **MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE.**

OUR FIVE-YEAR GOALS ARE TO 1) SUPPORT 250 GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS TO MEANINGFULLY DEEPEN THE IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY, OR QUALITY OF THEIR LEGAL EMPOWERMENT WORK, & 2) INCREASE FINANCING & PROTECTION FOR JUSTICE DEFENDERS AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL & GLOBAL LEVELS.

GLOBAL MEMBERS



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH



Network member Liesl Muller of Lawyers
for Human Rights, South Africa.

© DARREL LOURENS



LEARNING & COLLABORATING

THERE ARE PEOPLE PURSUING LEGAL EMPOWERMENT IN NEARLY EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. BUT TOO OFTEN, WE WORK ALONE, WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF THE INSIGHT OF OUR PEERS. THE NETWORK IS DEDICATED TO ADDRESSING THIS GAP.

We help members connect online and in-person to learn from each other, discuss challenges and ideas, and share tools and research. Our goal is for at least 25% of our members to actively engage with the network in any given year. Active members include those who posted in the online discussion forum, downloaded a resource, visited the network site 5+ times, or participated in an in-person or virtual network event.

28.9%

**MEMBERS WHO
ACTIVELY ENGAGED
WITH THE NETWORK**

“[The learning exchange] was absolutely amazing. It helped me develop new ways of thinking of my work and challenges. It has connected me to many new people and networks who can benefit my work. I learned a lot about best practices and got new ideas from fellow participants.”

Liesl Muller, Lawyers for Human Rights, South Africa.

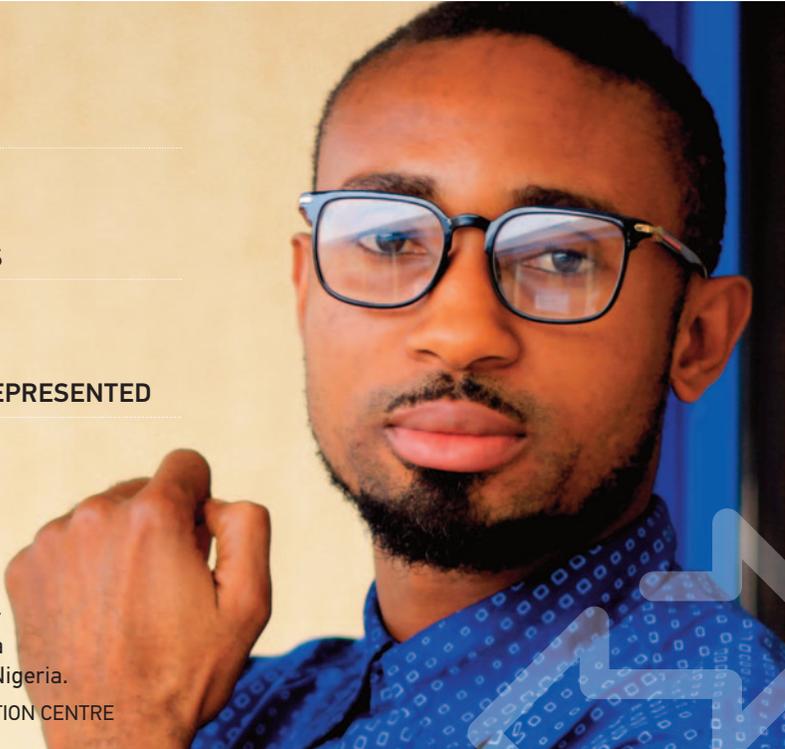
LEARNING EXCHANGES

Three years ago, the network held its first learning exchange. In 2018, we held our eighth and ninth. Participants spend time with paralegals and communities in the host country, and dive deep into each other’s experiences.

In February, members from nine countries in Asia and Africa came together in Sierra Leone to share practical

lessons on pursuing remedies in environmental justice cases. In October, we welcomed practitioners from across three continents to Kenya to discuss ideas, tools, and best practices for helping communities to secure their citizenship and legal identity.

Magic happens when our members come together in this way. Here’s what participants are saying:



2
EXCHANGES

34
PARTICIPANTS

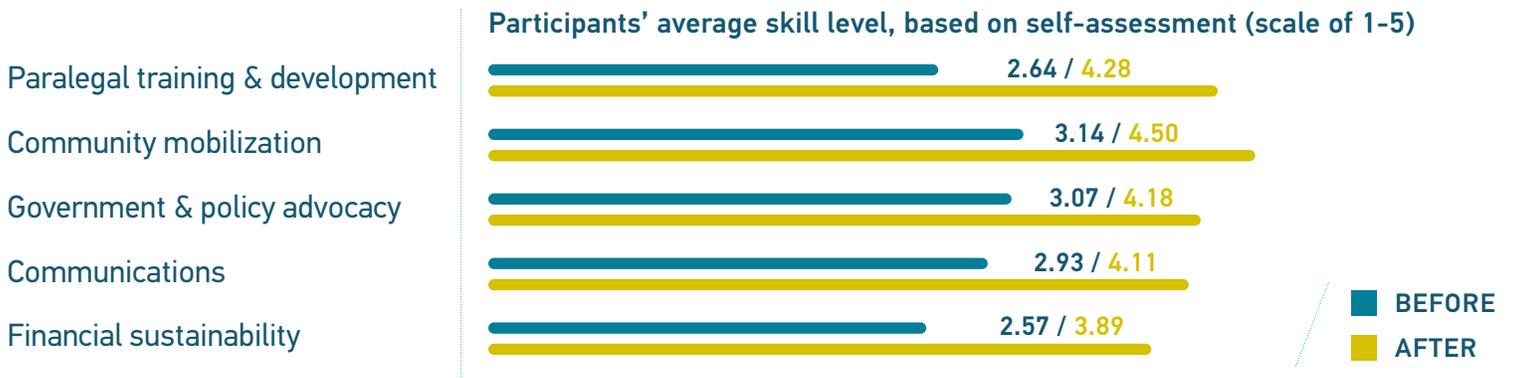
19
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

Network member
Bassey Bassey Ita
of GREENCODE, Nigeria.
© HIPCITY INNOVATION CENTRE

“As an organization, one of our challenges coming to the exchange program was how to build our legal support system. The program gave me a fresh perspective on how to handle the issues when I return back to the organization. [And] the financial sustainability plan session was amazing.”

Bassey Bassey Ita, Green Concern for Development (GREENCODE), Nigeria.

PARTICIPANTS’ SELF ASSESSMENT OF THEIR SKILL LEVELS - PRE AND POST LEARNING EXCHANGE



LEGAL EMPOWERMENT LEADERSHIP COURSE

In December, the network held the fourth annual Legal Empowerment Leadership Course. Held in partnership with Central European University, Open Society Justice Initiative, and Robert L. Bernstein Institute for Human Rights at New York University School of Law, the course

brings together outstanding practitioners, researchers, and government officials from all over the world. Our goal is to cultivate a global cadre of leaders who are committed to legal empowerment and connected with each other.



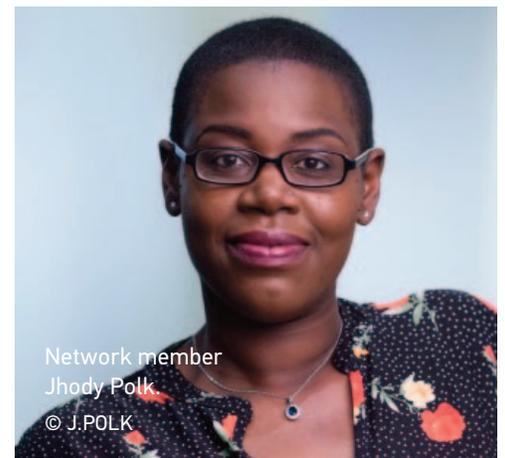
Anthony Marzan, executive director of KAISAHAN, the Philippines, asks a question during the 2018 Legal Empowerment Leadership Course. © DANIEL VEGEL/CEU

100%

PARTICIPANTS WHO,
IN AN ANONYMOUS SURVEY,
SAID THE COURSE WILL
HELP THEIR ORGANIZATION
IMPROVE ITS WORK

"This week has been confirming and empowering! I have never been more proud to be in trenches doing the work of empowering people to reach their highest potential. The *why* is easy, but the legal empowerment 2018 course definitely provided the *how!*"

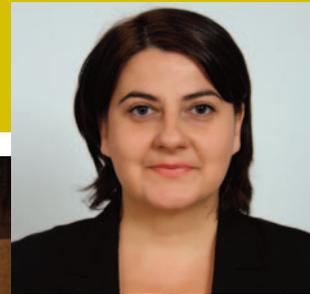
Jhody Polk, Jailhouse Lawyer Initiative, USA



Network member
Jhody Polk
© J.POLK

“The course was a unique opportunity to get to know and connect with exceptional personalities and activists, from countries that I thought we did not share common things and challenges. I was convinced in the opposite, that we have many common things that in the future will connect us. ... The organizers have made our stay here and learning one of the most beautiful and useful experiences that I will remember always.”

Blagica Kirov, Echo (Educational Humanitarian Organization), Macedonia



Network member
Blagica Kirov.
© B. KIROV

Participants listen to a session on strategic communications at the 2018 Legal Empowerment Leadership Course. © DANIEL VEGEL/CEU



798 / 100
APPLICANTS / COUNTRIES

63 / 35
PARTICIPANTS / COUNTRIES

4.49 AVERAGE

PARTICIPANT RANKING OF THE
USEFULNESS OF THE COURSE,
ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 5

ONLINE LEARNING

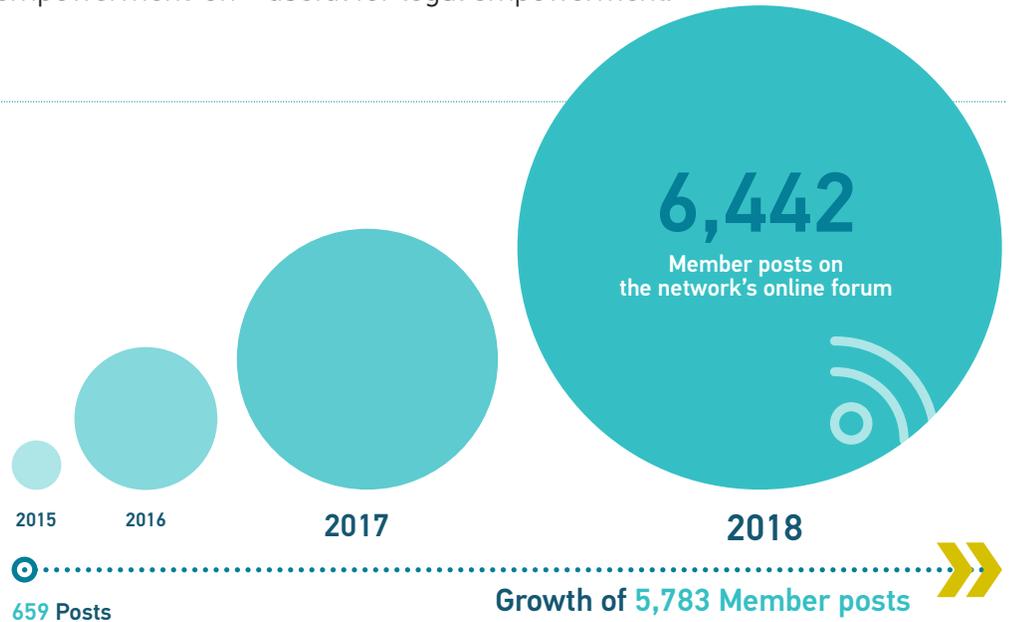
Providing members with opportunities to connect and learn virtually is essential for a network of our size and geographic scope. We host a dynamic discussion [forum](#), the most extensive [library](#) on legal empowerment on

record, and interactive [webinars](#) that explore issues ranging from how community paralegals can take on environmental injustice to new ways technology can be useful for legal empowerment.

DISCUSSION FORUM

“I wrote a [post] that caught a lot of attention and spiked so many interesting conversations around the globe that I was able to learn about other countries laws and situations.”

Anonymous, 2018 survey respondent, USA



RESOURCE LIBRARY

“The resources on community and citizenship rights and so many others related to land and indigenous rights have been extremely relevant in beefing up our program design.”

Anonymous, 2018 survey respondent, Australia

“The network helped us to find different materials like paralegals handbooks that inspired us to develop our own.”

Anonymous, 2018 survey respondent, Rwanda

6,588

DOWNLOADS
IN 2018



Namati partners and their clients celebrate the launch of a new community land protection resource in Kenya.

TOWARDS A SHARED LEARNING AGENDA FOR LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

In April, in partnership with the Bernstein Institute for Human Rights at New York University School of Law, we hosted 30 practitioners and academics at an interactive workshop to begin the process of developing the first-ever [shared learning agenda](#) for legal empowerment. The agenda will focus the efforts of hundreds of organizations in the same direction, allowing us to collectively address knowledge gaps that no single organization could take on alone. By prioritizing key questions, it can guide innovation and promote evidence-building around effective strategies for legal empowerment. We plan to launch the shared learning agenda in 2019.



Network members participate in Shared Learning Agenda convening at NYU School of Law.



© J. WERU

“Creating a joint learning agenda gives the opportunity to practitioners to work closely with researchers to reflect upon their work and to build upon it.” Jane Weru, Akiba Mashinani Trust, Kenya

DIFFUSING LEADERSHIP THROUGH REGIONAL ANCHORS

As the Global Legal Empowerment Network evolves, so too must our leadership. In 2018, two outstanding organizations began to serve as “anchor members” for their regions: Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia in Latin America (ACIJ) and Alternative Law Groups (ALG) in Southeast Asia.

ACIJ and ALG are growing network membership within their geographic areas, developing local opportunities for practitioners to meet and learn from each other, and spearheading regional advocacy campaigns.



Maria Generosa Misleng of Alternative Law Groups speaks at the Southeast Asia regional planning event.

© PATRICIA ALVAREZ/ALG

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Namati provides in-depth technical assistance to network members in places where we identify an acute need and an extraordinary opportunity to make an impact.

JORDAN

More than one million Syrians have fled conflict in their country and are now residing in Jordan. Over 600,000 of them are registered as refugees. The response to this crisis has largely been humanitarian, but many of the most profound needs involve law and justice, for example, labor rights and access to identity documents. Namati supported three Jordanian organizations—Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, Justice Center for Legal Aid, and Tamkeen — to develop the first community paralegal effort in the country, to help refugees and host communities address justice problems. The group shared lessons they learned about recruitment, training, and data collection in a [six-page reflection note](#).

20%

OF JORDAN'S
INHABITANTS ARE
SYRIANS THAT HAVE
FLED CONFLICT IN
THEIR COUNTRY

A young Syrian refugee living
in a camp in Amman, Jordan.

© MELIH CEVDET TEKSEN



Community paralegal Nahid Parvin with
her mother in Market Camp, Dhaka.

BANGLADESH

Approximately 300,000 Urdu-speaking Biharis still live in refugee camps built by the Red Cross in 1972. Despite being citizens of Bangladesh under the law, many of them struggle to secure legal identity documents due to discriminatory treatment. Without ID, they are unable to access basic services like education or healthcare. Namati helped partner Council of Minorities to train some camp residents to work as paralegals. In 2018, 17 paralegals helped 1,900+ people secure identity documents. As in Kenya, our collective goal in Bangladesh is to end discrimination in the administration of identity documents altogether.

INDONESIA

More than 70% of the land in Central Kalimantan province has been granted to oil-palm plantations and extractive industries. Many of these projects threaten people's livelihoods and the rainforest. Namati is [supporting WALHI-CK](#) to develop the first community paralegal program in the province dedicated to land and environmental justice. WALHI has a presence throughout Indonesia; if the effort goes well there is potential to apply this approach in many other parts of the country.

Working in a Palm oil plantation.
© IZLAN SOMAI

MORE THAN
70%

OF THE LAND IN CENTRAL KALIMANTAN
HAS BEEN GRANTED TO OIL-PALM
PLANTATIONS & EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES.

Victoria Koroma, a community paralegal with AdvocAid, conducts a prison visit in Kenema, Sierra Leone.

TIPPING THE SCALES TOWARDS JUSTICE FOR ALL

Visit the [Justice For All](http://www.justiceforall2030.org) site at www.justiceforall2030.org



IN 2015, OUR COMMUNITY DID WHAT MANY SAID WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE: WE GOT JUSTICE INTO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS). LEADERS FROM 193 COUNTRIES COMMITTING TO MAKING “ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL” A REALITY. THIS MARKED A MAJOR SHIFT IN HOW WE DEFINE DEVELOPMENT.

But despite this normative victory, community paralegals and other grassroots justice defenders remain grossly underfunded and are increasingly under attack. At least 321 defenders were murdered in 2018—up from 312 documented killings the year before. Meanwhile, donor funding for justice has declined by 40% over the last 4 years.

Network members voted overwhelmingly for our community to prioritize advocating for solutions to these concerns. In response, we launched a new global campaign in 2018: Justice For All.

Justice For All is calling for world leaders to make good on their promise made at the UN by funding and protecting grassroots justice defenders.

 **JUSTICE FOR ALL**



TIPPING THE SCALES TOWARDS JUSTICE FOR ALL



The Launch

The campaign launched on World Social Justice Day 2018, at an event in Buenos Aires attended by hundreds of justice defenders, government officials, and members of The Elders and the Task Force on Justice. To correspond with the launch, Mary Robinson and Ernesto Zedillo published an impassioned [op-ed in Quartz](#) in support of the campaign's demands.

10 Weeks of Action

In 2008, the UN Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor released a landmark report, finding that “at least four billion people are excluded from the rule of law.” The Commission urged the world to support those working at the grassroots to improve access to justice.

In the 10 weeks leading up to the 10th anniversary of the report, we spotlighted the work our community has done in the past 10 years to close the justice gap and highlighted the continued lack of financing and protection for grassroots justice defenders.



The Task Force on Justice convene in Buenos Aires.

Task Force on Justice

Our CEO, Vivek Maru, joined the new international [Task Force on Justice](#), as a representative of Namati, the Global Legal Empowerment Network, and the Justice For All campaign. The Task Force, which is co-chaired by ministers from three governments and Hina Jilani of The Elders, aims to spur greater action on access to justice. Vivek has strived to ensure support for a bottom-up, legal empowerment approach in particular.

“I am asking you to make the policy and financial commitments to offer every person equality under the law and before the law. ... Let’s work together and be innovative together and fight together for access to justice for all.” **Mary Robinson - Chair of The Elders, Former President of Ireland.**



Mary Robinson addresses Justice 2030 attendees.
© OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

Escazú Agreement campaign

Justice For All joined Amnesty International, Civicus, the Access Initiative, Principle 10, and many other civil society groups in successfully campaigning for 15 Latin American and Caribbean governments to [sign the Escazú Agreement](#). The treaty is the first one in the world to feature specific, binding provisions for the protection of environmental justice defenders.



Natalia Gomez of Civicus and Lizardo Cauper, President of Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana.
© CIVICUS

Justice 2030 at United Nations General Assembly

Network member Walter Flores spoke about the critical financing and protection issues facing grassroots justice defenders at the Justice 2030 event during the UN General Assembly. President Bio of Sierra Leone, George Soros, World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva, Task Force on Justice co-chair Hina Jilani, and her fellow Elder, Mary Robinson, also spoke, calling on world leaders to take action to ensure access to justice for all.



Kituo cha Sheria hosts a Justice For All event in Nairobi, Kenya.

10 Days of Action

In the 10 days following the 10-year anniversary of the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, grassroots campaign partners in 8 countries organized local actions to advocate for increased financing and protection for justice defenders.



A farmer in Karnataka State, India.

Making the Case - Campaign Policy Brief

With inputs from our global community, we developed a policy brief offering 20 recommendations to policymakers, donors, and multilateral institutions on how to finance and protect the grassroots justice defenders who provide essential legal support to communities.

Download the policy brief at <http://bit.ly/JFAbrief>

A participant takes the microphone at the Legal Empowerment Leadership Course.

WRITING & SPEAKING TO GROW THE FIELD

WE AIM TO COMMUNICATE TO POLICYMAKERS AND PEOPLE ACROSS THE GLOBE THE VITALITY, THE HEARTBREAK, THE HOPE, AND THE URGENCY OF LEGAL EMPOWERMENT. IN 2018, WE PUBLISHED OR WERE FEATURED IN **63** OP-EDS, NEWS ARTICLES, PODCASTS, RADIO OR TV PROGRAMS, AND VIDEOS.

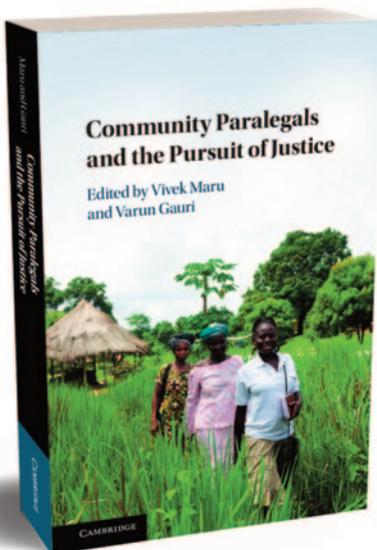
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

“Community Paralegals and the Pursuit of Justice”

What would it take to deploy paralegals at scale to improve access to justice globally? In the first book on the subject, Vivek Maru, Varun Gauri, and their co-authors have collected vivid stories of paralegals helping people to take on injustice in six countries. From these stories emerges evidence of what works and how.

What people are saying: “A must-read... If ‘access to justice’ is an abstraction to you, it won’t be once you read the stories in these pages of paralegals and clients seeking justice. Those stories are unforgettable. They hold lessons for all of us.” **Mary Robinson** - former President of Ireland, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, current chair of The Elders.

“[A] powerful ... guide to understanding one of the most promising emerging fields in the world today... Each individual story is inspiring, and the global potential of this profession to change countless lives is thrilling.” **Ricken Patel** - Founder and CEO, Avaz - The World in Action.





WASHINGTON POST

“The World Bank shouldn’t hide when it funds projects that harm communities”

Namati’s CEO, Vivek Maru, argues that the U.S. Supreme Court should hear the claims of fisher people from Kutch, India, whose livelihoods and environment were destroyed by a World Bank-financed coal plant. He goes on to call for multilateral banks to pioneer “a new global norm for the private sector”: dedicating a small fraction of total lending to finance independent legal support for communities affected by industrial development. ([The Supreme Court ended up granting certiorari 12 days later, and ruling in favor of the fisher people in February 2019](#)).



TED RADIO HOUR (NPR) “How Can We Make Legal Support Accessible To All?”

In an interview with host Guy Raz, Vivek Maru explains how community paralegals around the world are changing the relationship between people and the law by making it something that everyone can understand, use, and shape.



OZY “Sierra Leone’s Small Towns Learn to Fight Against Land Grabs”

Journalist James Courtright profiles how villagers in Sierra Leone are partnering with Namati community paralegals to take a stand against multinational companies polluting and exploiting their lands.



OPEN GLOBAL RIGHTS

“A shared learning agenda takes legal empowerment to the next level”

Erin Kitchell, Namati’s Director of Global Learning and Practice, examines how a shared learning agenda can focus the efforts of hundreds of legal empowerment organizations in the same direction, allowing us to collectively address knowledge gaps that no organization could take on alone.



DNA “Public is absent in India’s environmental policy-making”

Within a span of two months, India’s Ministry of Environment publicized three policy documents that would shape environment and forest governance in the country. The Ministry released the drafts for public comment, but as CPR-Namati’s Kanchi Kohlin and Manju Menon discuss in this op-ed, the overlapping timeframe and manner in which the government set up these participatory processes have “made it very challenging and even counterproductive to engage.”



STANDARD TIMES PRESS “How not to conduct large-scale land investments: lessons from the Malen/Socfin land dispute in Sierra Leone”

In telling the story of of Socfin Agriculture Company Ltd’s disastrous large-scale land acquisitions, Namati’s Sonkita Conteh shows how investors in Sierra Leone are leveraging relationships with the government to secure leases to land without the informed consent of the families or communities who own it.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

11th Hour Project

American Jewish World Service

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Climate Justice Resilience Fund

David and Lucile Packard Foundation

David Weekley Foundation

Duleep Matthai Trust

Dume Wolverine Foundation

Horace Goldsmith Foundation

International Development Research Centre (*Canadian Crown Corporation*)

International Fund for Agricultural Development

Mekong Regional Land Group

Montpelier Foundation

MyJustice

Open Society Foundations

Peery Foundation

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Skoll Foundation

UK's Department for International Development (DFID)

US Department of State: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

WALHI

White & Case LLP

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

And to our many individual supporters across the globe.

Large image: A mother and her children pose with their birth certificates, secured with the help of a community paralegal in Malindi, Kenya. Medium image: Community paralegals from Kenya (first and third from left) pose with learning exchange participants from Thailand (second from left) and Indonesia. Small image: A fisherman from Karnataka, India.

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.



Community members from a fishing village in Gujarat state, India. Nearby industries dump untreated chemical waste into the Kolak river, causing a collapse of fish stocks in the river's estuary.

Odete* (right) nearly died when her local clinic refused to treat her for tuberculosis. Fortunately, Namati paralegals, Margarida (left) and Chadreque (not pictured), helped her to understand and exercise her rights to basic healthcare. Namaacha District, Mozambique.



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