



NAMATI



**BUILDING A
JUST WORLD
FROM THE
GROUND UP**

**A CASE FOR
INVESTMENT
IN NAMATI**

To stop grave threats to democracy, prevent environmental collapse, and overcome entrenched inequality, we need to build a just world from the ground up. Namati has found a promising approach to achieve this. By combining two of the most potent tools ordinary people have — the power of law and the power of organizing — we can deepen democracy and protect the planet.

Namati is seeking
US \$88M to unleash
this tandem power
worldwide.



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WHAT'S AT STAKE?

We're living in a precarious time.

In 2020 the global Democracy Index had its lowest overall score since *The Economist* began tracking it in 2006.¹ We are on course to experience catastrophic climate change, which will affect communities with less power and wealth the most.² And the world's richest 1 percent owns nearly two-thirds of all new wealth created since 2020.³

Law is one of the most powerful tools to protect people from resulting harm and advance justice. But for billions of people around the world, the law is broken. It's an abstraction — or worse, a threat.

It's easy to feel hopeless. But there is a path out of this, and millions of people are already walking it.

¹ (2020) 'Democracy Index 2020: In sickness and in health?', The Economist Intelligence Unit [online]. Available at: <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2020/> (Accessed 3 August 2023).

² Pachauri, R.K. and Meyer, L.A. (eds.) (2014) 'Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report', The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [online]. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/syr/> (Accessed 3 August 2023).

³ Christensen M.B. et al. (2023) 'Survival of the Richest: How we must tax the super-rich now to fight inequality', Oxfam [online]. Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/survival-richest> (Accessed 3 August 2023).

OUR SOLUTION

With funding of US \$88M, Namati and the Grassroots Justice Network (which Namati convenes) will build a powerful global movement for justice.

Here's what we aim to achieve in 2024-2028.



In 5-6 Focus Countries:

- Organize, equip, and support justice seekers to resolve breakdowns in healthcare delivery; obtain essential identification documents for citizens facing ethnic and religious discrimination; and secure the legal rights to govern the land they depend on and improve the social and environmental impacts of industrial projects in their communities. Through this grassroots casework, we will directly **improve the health, livelihoods, and wellbeing of 1.6 million people.**
- Building from that grassroots experience, **secure transformative systemic changes** – in both policy and implementation – that scale up access to dignified healthcare, reduce or end discrimination in administration of identity documents, democratize environmental governance, and enable a just and speedy transition towards a climate-resilient, sustainable economy.



Land & Environmental Justice

(Kenya, Sierra Leone, United States, and 1-2 countries in Asia)

Indigenous and rural communities often lack the legal right to govern their land. As a result, community voices and consent are missing in investment processes. Mining, agribusiness, and other private and public projects are damaging the environment and the health and livelihoods of local communities.



Health Justice *(Mozambique)*

Mozambique has progressive healthcare policies, but experiences massive breakdowns in delivery. Patients are treated abusively, essential drugs are missing, or there is no privacy during medical visits. The health and lives of millions of people are at risk.



Citizenship Justice *(Kenya)*

An estimated 5 million Kenyan citizens face discrimination when applying for identity documents due to their religion or ethnicity. Without an ID, they cannot go to school, apply for a job, or access healthcare. They are excluded from society and trapped in a cycle of poverty.

Globally:

- Build the Grassroots Justice Leadership Academy, a world-class institute and learning community dedicated to seeding and strengthening justice movements worldwide. We aim to **help 25,000+ community paralegals around the world and justice coalitions in 30+ countries to resolve specific cases of injustice and improve laws and systems.** At least half of these paralegals and coalitions will have an impact on land and environmental governance in particular.
- Win **new regional and global norms** that expand access to justice, respect the rights of communities to govern their lands and neighborhoods, and accelerate a just transition to a sustainable economy.



Meet

Hassan, a justice seeker-turned-community paralegal.

WHAT IS A JUSTICE SEEKER?

Community members who experience an injustice and partner with a community paralegal to actively pursue a remedy. In the process, justice seekers learn about law and organizing.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY PARALEGAL?

Organizers who demystify the law and help people navigate complex systems to achieve practical solutions to their problems. Trained in basic law and in skills like mediation, popular education, and advocacy, community paralegals form a dynamic frontline for justice.



A community paralegal facilitating a dialogue about health rights (Mozambique)

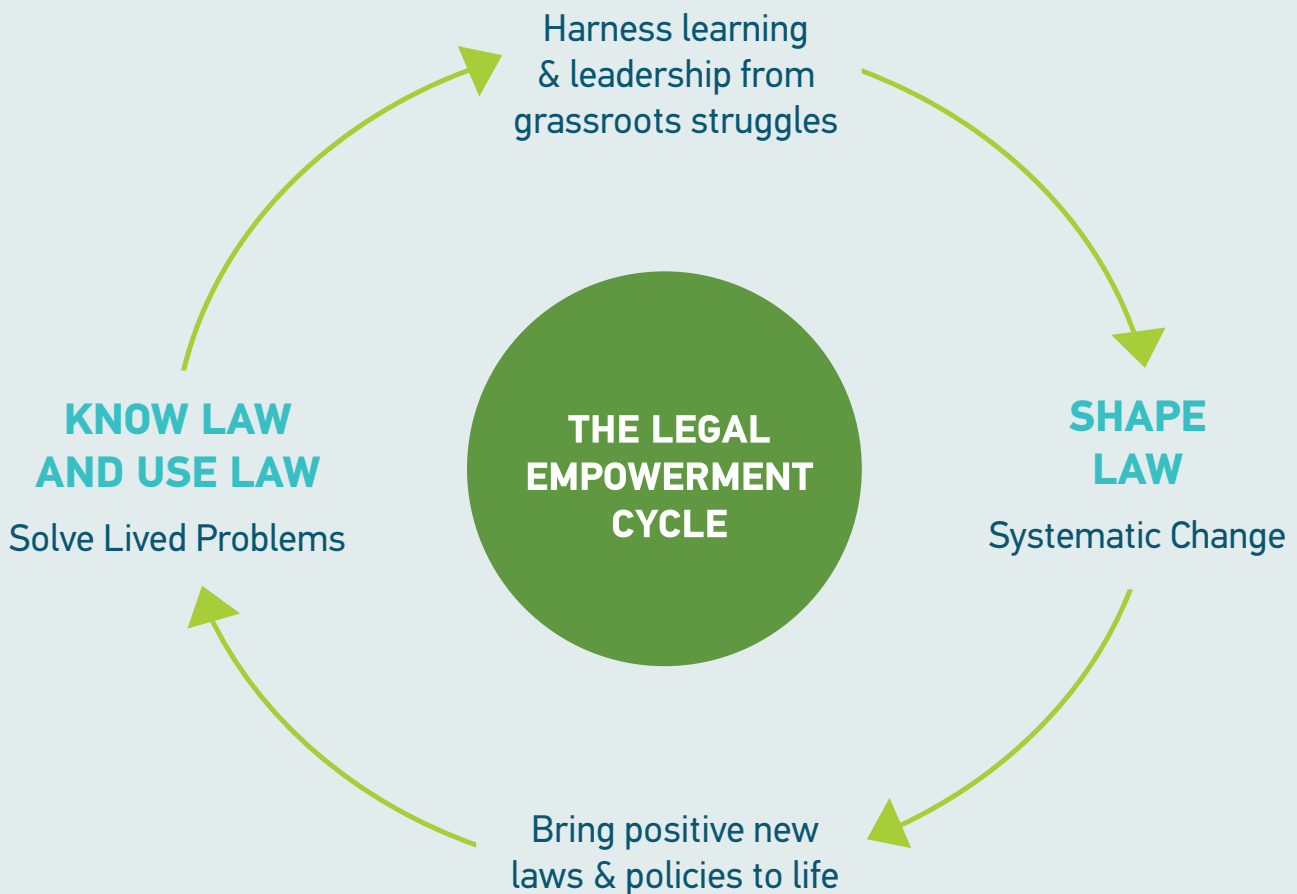
HOW WILL WE GET THERE?





TURN THE WHEEL OF THE LEGAL EMPOWERMENT CYCLE IN FOCUS COUNTRIES

At the heart of Namati's approach is the legal empowerment cycle: equipping ordinary people to know, use, and shape the law.



Know Law and Use Law

Our starting point is working with people who face a grave injustice. For example, a community in Baltimore, Maryland, that is overburdened by a cluster of industrial facilities, including an open, two-story coal pile that strews toxic dust across their neighborhood every day. Or one of the 5 million Kenyans who are citizens by law but can't acquire their legal identity documents because of ethnic and religious discrimination.

In response, **Namati trains and deploys community paralegals**. These paralegals are typically from the communities they work with. They speak the local language and understand the context. Community paralegals help justice seekers identify the harms they are experiencing; envision the solutions they want; engage in power analysis and legal analysis; and collectively engage institutions, such as ministry departments and ombudsman's offices, to seek those solutions. We have found that even where the legal system constrains rights and the laws on the books are poorly written, there are almost always useful hooks that people can use.

Throughout the process, paralegals work closely with justice seekers. Lawyers sometimes say to their clients, "I'll handle it for you. I've got you." Paralegals have a different message: **"We're going to solve it together, and in the process, we're both going to grow."**



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Read

[Maria's story](#)

Outraged by a demand for bribes, Maria, a grieving mother, worked with a Namati paralegal and the local village health committee to end illegal fees at her district hospital. Maria describes what legal empowerment means to her: "I am now no longer afraid to go to the hospital...I went back and told my family and my community that if ever someone asks you to pay money for care at the hospital, they are robbing you. People didn't know this before."

Shape Law

Communities, Namati, and our partners and allies pursue systemic reforms, using two primary levers that emerge from grassroots casework:

➤ **Learning:** Paralegals track detailed data on every case they work on. In the aggregate, this data offers a portrait of how systems are working in practice. We bring communities together across their specific cases to study that information, identify how existing laws and policies are falling short, and envision and pursue specific improvements.

➤ **Leadership:** Justice seekers who have built muscles of engagement by taking on lived challenges are a powerful force for systemic change. Armed with evidence and an understanding of their own power, justice seekers partner with Namati and our coalition to advocate for systemic reforms.

This is a deeper version of democracy, in which we don't just cast ballots every few years but take part daily in shaping the laws, policies, and institutions that affect us. By listening to the experiences of ordinary people who are trying to make the rules and systems work, institutions can become more just and more effective for everyone.



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Watch
[People Rising:
Beside the Water](#)

This short documentary features Mrs. Binta Monya Jalloh from the Zimmie Chiefdom of Sierra Leone. Mrs. Jalloh and her neighbors combined the power of law with the power of organizing to void a land lease agreement that they never consented to. Lessons and leadership from communities like Mrs. Jalloh's led to [two groundbreaking laws](#) that radically improve communities' ability to protect their land rights and pursue sustainable development.



Pastoralists participating in a discussion about local land management and governance (Kenya)

Back to Know Law and Use Law

When we win positive reforms, we work hard to ensure they are implemented effectively. Namati and our partners raise public awareness about the new rules and systems. Paralegals help communities use the new legal hooks to solve concrete problems. And where it is strategic, we offer technical help to implementing agencies like land commissions.



When we win positive reforms, we work hard to ensure they are implemented effectively.



Watch
[The Road to Securing Land Rights in Kenya](#)

In 2019, representatives of 11 Indigenous communities from across Kenya marched to the Ministry of Lands and secured government commitment to deploy necessary personnel to implement the historic Community Land Act at scale. Namati helped organize the march from behind. Watch [The Road to Securing Land Rights in Kenya](#) to learn how communities have worked to ensure that their rights are upheld.

STRATEGIC
PILLAR

2

STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND CULTURE IN FOCUS COUNTRIES

In turning the legal empowerment cycle, everyday citizens strengthen the foundation of democracy. They come together across differences to move forward on collective challenges.

In our focus countries, Namati will bolster our efforts to strengthen democratic values and culture in the following ways:

Organizing more boldly

We will focus on building powerful and diverse coalitions. Coalitions create collective power that can prevail on tough national justice issues. They also offer an opportunity to scale up the community paralegal approach beyond the communities where we are deploying paralegals directly.

In the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, for instance, we are investing in deep relationship building, community organizing, and grassroots leadership development. By focusing on connecting with residents, we are laying the foundation to grow a large-scale collective effort that stretches beyond already-active advocates and that can effectively leverage a critical mass to push for reforms that properly address the interlocking challenges of environmental, racial, and economic injustices.

Fostering deliberative, grassroots governance

We see significant potential – even in circumstances of repression, corruption, and/or extreme partisanship – in grassroots democratic institutions: village health committees in Mozambique, for example; community land management committees in Kenya and Sierra Leone; and municipal governments in the United States.

Community paralegals and justice seekers will work closely with these grassroots governance mechanisms. Drawing on the leadership and learning that emerges from those experiences, Namati will pursue measures to strengthen the functioning of these structures across entire states and nations. And we will organize committee members into state or national associations (the Community Land Owners Association of Kenya, for instance, and an association of village health committee members in Mozambique) for greater influence.



Ivy City residents marching to demand the shut down of a toxic chemical plant in their neighborhood (USA)

Assisting government bodies to strengthen their implementation capacity

Namati and our partners do not consider ourselves a substitute for, or extension of, state functions. However, we will collaborate with public institutions to ensure robust implementation of major reforms. In Mozambique, for instance, we will help the Ministry of Health design initiatives and train key government staff to guarantee the delivery of dignified healthcare nationwide. In the United States, the historic Inflation Reduction Act made billions of dollars available to build infrastructure that helps communities thrive. However, communities most in need of those funds often face some of the biggest barriers to accessing it, leaving them further behind. Namati will assist under-resourced local governments and communities with envisioning change, identifying and pursuing funding sources, tracking funding implementation, and analyzing the entire funding process.



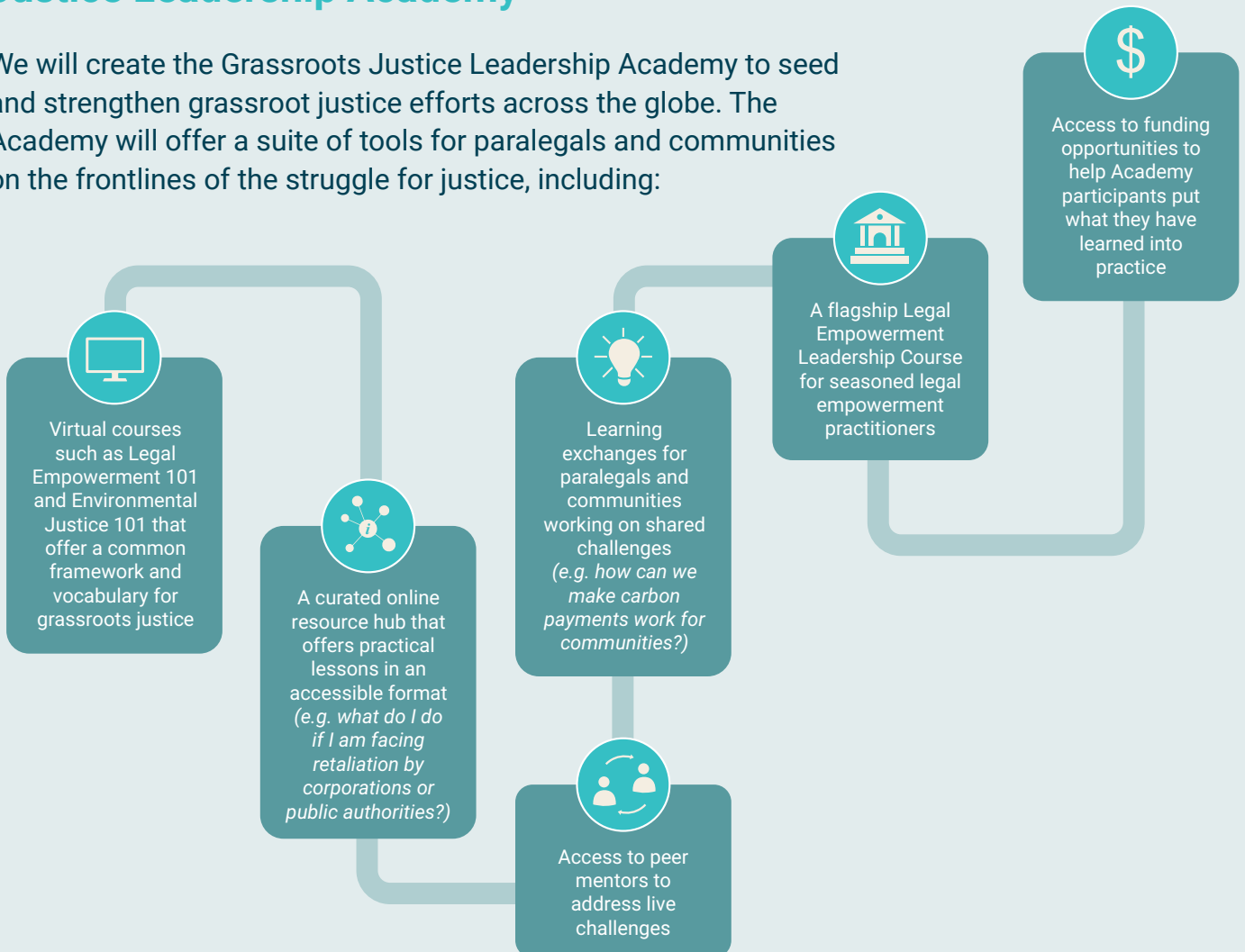
STRATEGIC
PILLAR
3

FOSTER SOLIDARITY, LEARNING, AND COLLECTIVE ACTION ACROSS BORDERS

By learning from each other, grassroots justice groups worldwide can become more rigorous and effective. By coming together across our specific contexts and working as a united movement, we can overcome stark power imbalances and win new norms for justice.

Building the Grassroots Justice Leadership Academy

We will create the Grassroots Justice Leadership Academy to seed and strengthen grassroots justice efforts across the globe. The Academy will offer a suite of tools for paralegals and communities on the frontlines of the struggle for justice, including:



Fostering collective action across borders

Namati will mobilize global collective action on select, strategic opportunities, in particular on land, environmental, and climate justice.

Over the last 18 months, we have convened 20 leading members of the Grassroots Justice Network focused on land and environment. We have converged around a common set of demands: **securing the right of communities to govern the places where they live, empowering communities to lead the transition to a sustainable economy, and protecting communities and environmental defenders from retaliation and violence.**

We will prioritize two policy arenas to advance these demands: corporate accountability and climate finance.

We will advocate that communities, especially those who have been systematically marginalized, are empowered to manage common natural resources, make informed decisions about outside investments, and take part in the enforcement of social and environmental protections.

We will call on governments at all levels to finance and make shifts in policy that reduce or eliminate destructive activity, accelerate more sustainable alternatives, and increase resilience at the scale and pace necessary to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. A significant proportion of such financing should go not to corporations or governments but to communities facing harm.



“
Together, we will advocate for securing the right of communities to govern the places where they live, empowering communities to lead the transition to a sustainable economy, and protecting communities and environmental defenders from retaliation and violence.



WHY INVEST IN NAMATI?

Catalytic impact of legal empowerment

When ordinary people combine the power of law with the power of organizing, they can not only achieve concrete solutions to lived challenges, they can also build towards fundamental changes in laws and systems. A review of nearly 200 academic studies about the impact of legal empowerment found that:

“**...legal empowerment, in all its myriad forms and wide range of contexts, works.** In total, 97 per cent of the studies reported at least one positive change. Even programs that failed to make the changes they were designed for had other, unexpected positive effects on communities, individuals, and the law.⁵

Moreover, the types of remedies our paralegals and justice seekers achieve are **proven to improve people's health, livelihoods, and wellbeing.** For instance, a review of multiple legal empowerment programs found positive health outcomes, such as HIV prevention and a decline in substance abuse.⁶ Another study reviewed 80 forest areas across Asia, Latin America, and Africa, and found that secure community rights were associated with better livelihood and environmental outcomes.⁷

⁵ Goodwin L. and Maru V. (2017) 'What Do We Know about Legal Empowerment? Mapping the Evidence', Hague Journal on the Rule of Law, 9(1) [online]. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/IMNW2> (Accessed 3 August 2023).

⁶ Footer et al., "A Meta-Narrative Literature Synthesis and Framework to Guide Future Evaluation of Legal Empowerment Interventions," *Health and Human Rights Journal* (2018).

⁷ Chhatre and Agrawal, "Trade-offs and Synergies between Carbon Storage and Livelihood Benefits from Forest Commons," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106 (2009).

Our track record

In a typical year, our paralegals work with more than 25,000 justice seekers: individuals who partner most closely with paralegals to pursue a remedy to their community's lived problems. Since 2012, paralegals and justice seekers have achieved concrete remedies to thousands of injustices in the six countries where Namati and our partners work. Those remedies **directly improved the health, livelihoods, and wellbeing of over 1.5 million people.**

Building on this grassroots experience, movements in each of those countries have envisioned, demanded, and **won dozens of systemic changes**, including, in Sierra Leone, one of the world's most progressive laws on land and environmental justice; in Myanmar, legal recognition of the customary land rights of ethnic minorities; and in Mozambique, a nationwide-system for ensuring community participation in the governance of healthcare.

Globally, we have a decade of field-building experience to draw on. Namati co-founded and convenes the Grassroots Justice Network (formerly the Legal Empowerment Network). The Network has grown from 48 people who could fit in one room to **the world's largest community of grassroots**

justice defenders, with over 12,000 members from 3,400 organizations, spanning 170 countries. This community successfully advocated for the inclusion of justice in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our continued demand for better financing of grassroots justice efforts led to the launch of the world's first donor-led **Legal Empowerment Fund** in 2021, which aims to mobilize US\$100 million.

“ Sebastian Pilo, Co-Director, Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia: “[Because of funding mechanisms like the Legal Empowerment Fund] Thousands of organizations will be able to access funding to develop our work, funding that we did not have before and that will now be within our reach to support our activities, make them sustainable and have a better impact on the communities we work with.”

To date, more than 5,000 members have participated in the Network's virtual and in-person learning opportunities. Nearly 90% of those who attended our flagship Legal Empowerment Leadership Course and international learning exchanges over the past 5 years have reported that they deepened the impact, sustainability, or quality of their organization's work as a result.

140+
paralegals
working directly
with Namati

helped communities
achieve grassroots
remedies which
positively affected
1.5 million
people

and built from those to secure
30+ changes
to laws and policies that
strengthened rights for over
100 million people
across 8 countries.

A world-class team

Between 2012 and 2022, Namati grew from a crew of 18 people to **170+ teammates across 10 countries**. Our diverse team is united through an unyielding commitment to the mission and an abiding sense of humanity.

Since our founding in 2012, **we have grown our budget by an average of 18% each year**. By 2022, we were working with US\$13.5 million and **40 funding partners**. During this ten-year period, the four entities that constitute Namati attained a total of 33 clean audits – over US\$80 million in spending. Namati has a perfect score on [Charity Navigator](#) and has earned [Guidestar's](#) Platinum Seal of Transparency.

2021 and 2022 saw back-to-back major investments into our work: a US\$25 million award from MacKenzie Scott, followed by US\$20 million for our winning application to the Racial Equity 2030 competition hosted by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Our work has been featured in [The New York Times](#), [The Washington Post](#), [Democracy Journal](#), [Amanpour & Co](#), [The Guardian](#), [Devox](#), and [WIRED](#), among others. Vivek Maru, Namati's CEO, gave a [TED Talk](#) in 2017 which has been viewed over 1.3 million times.



Abigail Moy

I get to be a part of change that matters. It never gets old. Every day, I'm building something new, in the company of dreamers and doers. Even after ten years, we haven't lost that ambitious yet practical spirit – that thirst for justice, tempered by strategic thoughtfulness. It gets things done, and it keeps us moving forward.

Abigail is the Director of the Grassroots Justice Network and joined Namati in 2012 but was involved in its creation before we formally existed.



David Arach

Namati's dedication to putting the power of law in the hands of people really inspires me and keeps my energy burning. I don't think I would ever find any organization whose mission seats so well with my passion. Also, the organizational culture at Namati is one in a million, I feel so proud to be working with the team at Namati to serve humanity.

David Arach in 2016, the year he started with Namati's Community Land Protection team in Kenya.

Our work has been featured in

The New York Times

The Washington Post

DEMOCRACY
A JOURNAL OF IDEAS

TED

Amanpour & Co.

The Guardian

devox
Do Good. Do It Well.™

WIRED



1616 P Street NW, Suite 101
Washington, DC 20036, USA
namati.org



@globalnamati

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT



Sonia Park
Director of Strategic Engagement
✉ soniapark@namati.org

Namati is a Sanskrit word
that means “to shape
something into a curve”.

Martin Luther King Jr.
popularized “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.