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Community-Based Justice Initiatives Infographic

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Community-based Justice Initiatives

What are they?



Civic-oriented



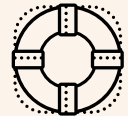
Locally accessible



People-centred



Embedded in the community



Legal help and information providers

Who are they for?



Underserved populations



Low- and moderate-income earners



Minority, marginalized, and vulnerable groups

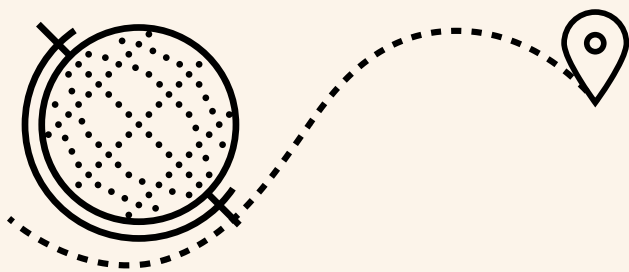


Other populations

Why do they matter?

They facilitate access to justice and non-legal problem resolution.

GLOBALLY



“In the absence of access to justice, people are unable to have their voice heard, exercise their rights, challenge discrimination or hold decision-makers accountable”

– UNITED NATIONS

Access to justice is important for the rule of law. It underpins and advances all other goals and actions that are necessary for a sustainable, just, and inclusive world.

DOMESTICALLY

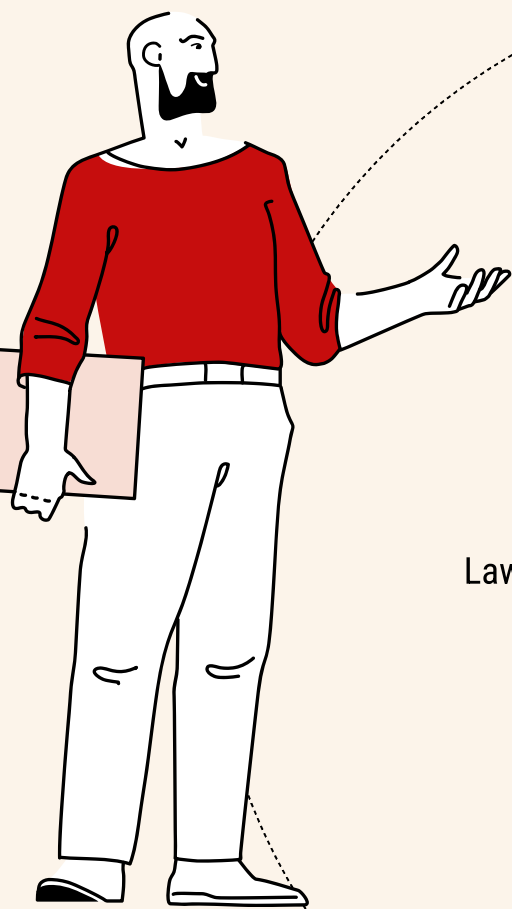
Across jurisdictions, country-level legal needs studies confirm the prevalence of everyday legal problems.

These problems result in serious economic and social costs and affect people’s ability to be active and engaged members of society.

LOCALLY

Everyday legal problems carry serious financial, health, and personal consequences for individuals.

The impacts can be long-lasting and life-altering for individuals and their families. They also often extend to the broader community and the demand for local supports and services.

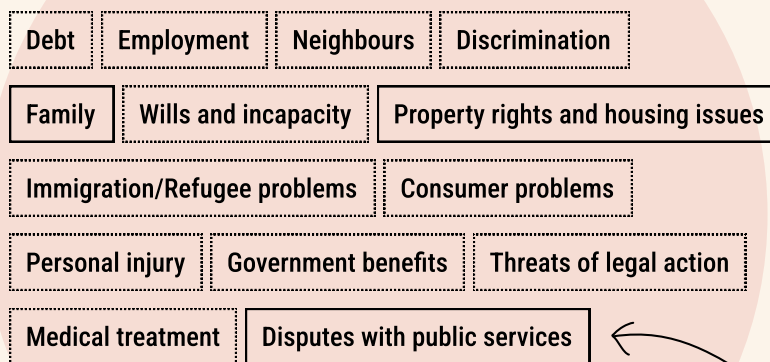


Who is involved?

Lawyers, paralegals, and other service providers and professionals

What types of legal problems do they address?

People turn to community-based justice initiatives for help with legal problems related to:



e.g., child support/neglect, marital disputes and spousal support/neglect

e.g., land disputes and landlord and tenant disputes

e.g., issues receiving a license or being charged excessive fees for a public service

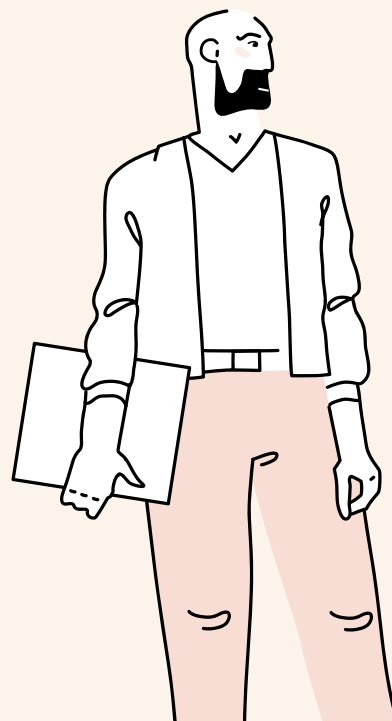
What do they cost?

COSTS TO THE PUBLIC PURSE

Some governments provide funding for community-based justice initiatives as part of a legal aid scheme or other public policy initiative.

Government spending on community-based justice initiatives varies.

Research shows that the economic and social benefits of government investments in community-based justice generally outweigh the costs to fund these initiatives.



OPERATING COSTS

+Pro bono/volunteer -Rent -Utilities -Salaries

Community-based justice initiatives generally incur expenses related to managing and maintaining their services.

These costs vary and might include things like rent, utilities and salaries.

Some community-based justice services also benefit from pro bono and volunteer lawyer and paralegal support and other in-kind supports.



INDIVIDUAL COSTS

+Free services -Transportation -Printing -Phone services -Physical health -Emotional stress

Most community-based justice initiatives provide services for free to eligible community members.

Many people report spending some money when resolving their problems through community-based justice initiatives. This spending often relates to things like transportation, printing and phone services.

There might also be temporal costs, physical health and emotional stress costs, other indirect financial costs, and intangible costs related to individual legal problem experiences.



Who do they benefit?

Research reveals a range of benefits for communities and individuals.

INDIVIDUALS REPORT NON-QUANTIFIABLE BENEFITS THAT INCLUDE:

Awareness of their rights

Knowledge of relevant laws

Restoration of relationships

Dignity

Just outcomes

COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM:

Social cohesion

Community wellbeing

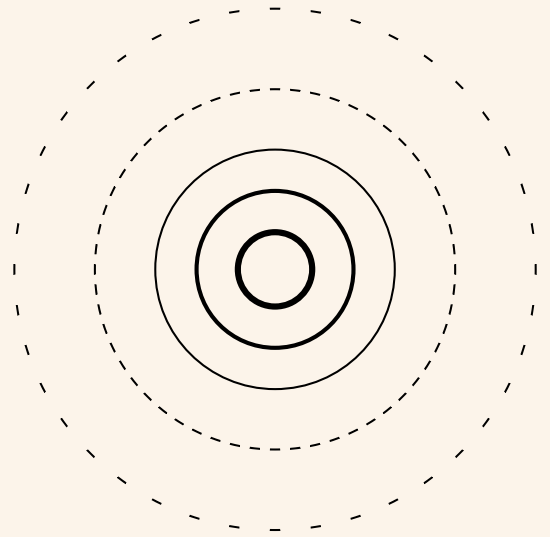
Reduced demands on public services

Including shelters and police services

How do they advance access to justice?

OUTREACH

Many community-based justice initiatives engage in outreach. They go into communities where they connect with people, learn about their legal problems, and offer realistic and appropriate steps to address them. This helps with unmet legal needs and early problem resolution.



TAILORED AND PEOPLE-CENTRED

Community-based justice initiatives are designed around the populations they serve and the features of the communities where they are located.

ACCESSIBLE

Community-based justice initiatives are locally accessible, affordable, and support meaningful access to justice.



TRUSTWORTHY

Community-based justice initiatives are widely viewed by justice-seekers as trustworthy.

FAIR

In some jurisdictions, community-based justice initiatives facilitate problem resolution for women in ways that are more equitable than other, more formal alternatives.



Recommendations

to better support community-based justice initiatives

1

Funding investments

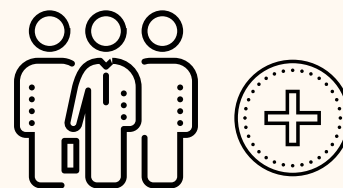
Community-based justice initiatives generate a high return on investment. An increase in sustaining funding has the potential to generate significant public cost savings.



2

Staff resources

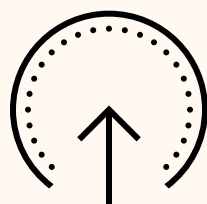
Many community-based justice initiatives rely on the tireless efforts of volunteer staff. Financial investments are needed to better support and increase staff for community-based initiatives.



3

Institutionalization

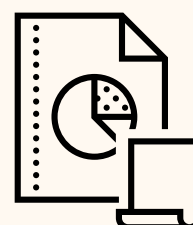
Many community-based justice initiatives lack formal recognition or are only able to operate in quasi-official ways. Integration of community-based justice initiatives into the broader justice framework, and as part of the conversation on access to justice could help these initiatives generate more support and funding.



4

Research

Action-oriented research can further support the case for public policy investments in community-based justice.



Community-based justice initiatives provide *extensive benefits* for individuals and communities.

These benefits far outweigh the costs of these initiatives. Users of community-based justice initiatives also view these services favourably.

Investing in and scaling community-based justice is integral for **equal access to justice for all.**

