



Global Perspectives on Advancing Community-Centered Justice

Note taker: Casey Mears

Speakers:

Panelists:

- Stacey Cram, Policy Director, [Namati](#)
- Maaïke de Langen, Program Lead, [Justice for All](#), [Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#), [NYU-CIC](#)
- Maha Jweied, Fellow, [NYU Center on International Cooperation](#); Former Head U.S. Department of Justice Office for Access to Justice
- Sabrina Mahtani, Senior Policy Advisor for Access to Justice, [The Elders](#)

Moderator:

- Matthew Burnett, Policy Officer, [Open Society Justice Initiative](#)

Notes:

Global Perspectives on Advancing Community Centered Justice

Sustainable Development Goals

- 17 Goals adopted by the UN in 2015
 - Universal - every country in the world should be working towards those goals
- Goal 16:
 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- Agenda for closing the justice gap in [Justice for All report](#)
 - Looked at surveys on global justice data

- 5.1 billion people in the world do not have meaningful access to justice
 - 1.5 billion have unresolved justice issues
- Most common justice problems globally :
 - Money and debt
 - Housing/ Land
 - Public services
 - Violence and crime
 - Family
 - Employment
- [Goal 16 had a domestic impact within the US, on access to justice as well as civil justice needs](#)
 - Systemic ongoing information on access to justice doesn't exist on a federal level
 - Used the parameters of goal 16 to launch a working group to understand data on civil justice
 - Close to launching supplemental information with the justice dept.

[Justice for all Campaign:](#)

- Call for justice to be an integral part of the agenda
- Elevate community voices from grassroots organizations around the world

The Elders

- Group of global leaders at different levels
- Nelson Mandela is the founder
 - Many other lawyers are Elders
- Access to justice is a main goal
- Work at the global level, encourage leaders to take a stand on justice
- Justice is a right, not a privilege
- Justice is necessary in achieving other goals (health, education, etc.)
- Focused on justice for women

COVID 19

- Justice for all campaign
 - Crisis is creating new problems, but mostly it's exacerbating problems that were already there
 - Creating new challenges (remote work, etc.)
 - No new funding
 - Went to people to ask them what is going on and what they need etc.

- 91 % of those who responded said they are still able to support their communities
 - 78% said they had ideas of how they could improve/ scale up their programs, but needed more money
 - Set up a fund: [COVID 19 Grassroots Justice Fund](#)
 - First grants went out the door recently
- Pathfinders
 - [Justice for Women Amidst COVID](#) report
 - “Shadow pandemic” issues related to domestic and gender based violence
 - Analyze impact of COVID as a health emergency, economic crisis, and social impact
 - [Health Emergency](#):
 - Justice actors on the front line
 - Advocating for prisoners
 - Health crisis and human rights crisis
 - [Economic Crisis](#):
 - People’s justice problems changed
 - Housing issues, money problems, family issues, crime etc.
 - Big switch to digital during pandemic
 - Positive and negative side
 - Innovations that have been shelved are suddenly possible
 - Justice system has been kicked from the 19th into the 21st century overnight
 - How to make sure people have access and skills?
- Advocaid
 - Sierra Leone
 - People arrested due to COVID restrictions, owing money
 - Aiming to create a more public health approach and less of a criminal approach
 - Advocating for people who are being detained to be released
 - Extra costs, having to provide protective equipment etc.
 - Providing legal advocacy via telephone, education by radio etc. Both increase costs
- Ministers of Justice met during first Global Week for Justice in October 2020
 - Acknowledge that system was broken before, and got harder because of COVID
 - Willingness to release people being held pre-trial

- Because of the pandemic people found the courage to reevaluate the system
- Governments are pivoting
 - Afghanistan, Canada, various cities in the US are demonstrating changes and opportunities in adapting to COVID
 - Turning crisis into opportunity

Summaries

- Emphasis on turning crisis into opportunities
- So many people talking about how their system wasn't working and creating solutions
- Need to put people at the center of justice
- Finding solidarity with global allies
- Learn and listen- share best practices, solidarity in global movement
- Donate money and time!
- Power in numbers - work takes energy and new energy can be found by working together
- Peer to peer
- Envision how international processes can create opportunities domestically
- Speak truth to power, talk to government workers, policy makers, push on international levers
- Everything is local now, we don't need to find money for smaller NGOs to travel to the UN, things are done virtually now, so take advantage of that

Questions:

How can State Access to Justice Commissions (locally) be used to make sure that community needs are represented on the global platform?

- Interesting examples in the US from climate activists
- Every year the UN reviews the progress of the goals
- State and local governments can subscribe to change even if the federal government does not

Recommendations for students/people just starting out to get involved?

- Internships - find an organization doing the work and get experience
- Opportunities in state and local gov to connect to the global framework
- Law schools are too oriented to formal legal structures, don't be afraid to unlearn some things!

- Find community grassroots orgs. because you will get more experience and learn more ([Namati Legal Empowerment Network](#) is a good place to look)
- Get involved in legal clinics, etc. at school - pressure your law schools to set something up

What is your one hope for 2021?

- See a more longer term legal empowerment fund
- See the US rejoin the global movement on access to justice and become a leader globally
- Resetting of some global norms - hope that understanding of injustice wasn't just a one-off thing. Hope to spread understanding. Maybe this crisis has created an opportunity to undo a lot and restart anew.
- Hope for a free and readily available vaccine
- Hope that new US administration will reconnect the federal government with the global justice community and that external pressure on them drives them to do so

Resources Shared:

- Slack Channel:
https://decolonizingjustice.slack.com/join/shared_invite/zt-j41huvtg-dQjFnejoXKKANeM3Nhd4FQ#/
- Decolonizing Justice Resource Guide:
<https://www.probono.net/decolonizingjustice/>
- Legal Empowerment and COVID-19 report:
<https://bf889554-6857-4cfe-8d55-8770007b8841.filesusr.com/ugd/6c192f9213bb27042541d6a5c251579aaa7753.pdf>
- From Stacey Cram: Here is the other report that Maaike spoke of:
<https://www.justiceforall2030.org/tools/grassroots-justice-in-pandemic-ensuring-just-response-recovery/>
- Justice in a Pandemic reports:
<https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/justice-in-a-pandemic>
- Justice for All report: <https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/report>
- Online space dedicated to COVID-19 discussion:
<https://community.namati.org/c/covid19/108>
- Open Government Partnership and Justice:
<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/policy-area/justice/>

- OGP Members (National and Local):
<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/our-members/#local>
- From the Global to the Local: Leveraging International Engagement to Advance Justice at Home:
<https://cic.nyu.edu/publications/global-local-leveraging-international-engagement-advance-justice-home>