

# JUSTICE TRANSFORMATION LABS

New approaches are needed to close the global access to justice gap. This is something that global leaders committed to by adopting the SDG Agenda 2030, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16.3 - “Equal access to justice for all”. HiiL and Reos Partners have developed such a new approach. It helps justice leaders develop evidence-based justice innovation strategies and empowered coalitions to implement them. In this note we set out how it is done.

## A landmark report

The Task Force on Justice, convened by the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies published a [landmark report](#) in July 2019. The report points out that today’s justice systems are not fulfilling the task of helping people to solve their justice problems. At any one time 1,5 billion people can’t resolve their justice problems. 4,5 billion people live excluded from the law and 253 million live in conditions of extreme injustice. Half of women find it pointless to report a case of sexual harassment. Globally, this access to justice gap affects more people than some of the big diseases like malaria and tuberculosis. It has a high impact on their lives and society: from violence to seriously damaged relationships and business conflicts. It affects essential needs to be safe, to have a family, to earn a living, to plan, to be healthy, and to be a true community.

## The transformation needed

HiiL has found that business-as-usual approaches, including more courts, more lawyers and more litigation cannot provide enough capacity to reach SDG target 16.3. It will require new leadership, innovation, resources, and overall a transformation to a people-centred approach.

As outlined in the Justice Task Force report, a people-centred approach to justice:



But how do you *do* this?

# The Justice Transformation Lab

HiiL, in partnership with Reos Partners, offers an innovative strategy to deepen and accelerate this transformation, called Justice Transformation Labs. Justice Transformation Labs take a systemic, collaborative, and experimental approach to justice, combining evidence-based and stakeholder-driven approaches. These labs are usually implemented at country level in partnership with leading national stakeholders but can also be designed as sub-national or multi-local, transnational processes.

The key elements of transformation labs include:



## 1. Knowledge gathering on justice needs, trends, and existing solutions

*The Justice Task Force report emphasizes the need to nurture a culture and build a system that can learn from data about justice problems and evidence about what works, while eliciting and responding to feedback from users and being accountable for quality and fairness.*

In the Justice Transformation Lab, data is collected early in the process about the everyday justice problems that matter most to people. This data offers a crucial evidence base to orient strategy development, decision-making, and prioritization. In addition, knowledge is gathered on the justice landscape, trends, and existing solutions, as well as mapping other justice innovation/transformation processes underway that the lab needs to complement, build on, and feed into. Local stakeholders are engaged in data collection in a participatory manner, so they feel more ownership of the results and are able to support the process as it evolves.



## 3. Multi-stakeholder engagement and ownership

*The Justice Task Force report emphasizes the importance of a diverse and inclusive justice system that draws on the strengths of a broadly defined justice “workforce”, including justice leaders, justice professionals, other formal service providers, informal or volunteer justice actors, justice innovators and defenders, and other sectors.*

While there is no single institution that leads and coordinates this entire multi-faceted justice workforce, Justice Transformation Labs offer a space where this diversity of actors can come together to learn, familiarize themselves with the data, set goals, design and pilot innovative strategies, and build collaborative partnerships. The diversity of participation in the labs is not only sectoral and gender-balanced, but also multi-level, bringing community-level stakeholders together with national level actors. These diverse groups of stakeholders, entitled “Stakeholder Teams” come together not in standalone events, but rather in a series of workshops over time, structured with a participative methodology and guided by experienced facilitators.



## 2. Supporting capacities of justice leaders

*The Justice Task Force report emphasizes the need to increase justice leadership, building skills in active listening, conflict management, data gathering, and the ability to think and plan collectively.*

Participating in the Justice Transformation Lab is inevitably a leadership development journey. Justice leadership is not seen as defined only by Ministers and Attorneys-general, but as something that is present and shared across the entire justice workforce. Stakeholders in the process build their understanding of evidence-based and people-centred approaches, and their capacity for creativity, innovation, dialogue, collaboration, and conflict transformation moving beyond adversarial dynamics. Further, they are the owners of all the outputs and the agents of the transformation.



#### 5. Support and incubation of innovations

*Unlocking the transformative power of innovation is one of the key levers of Justice Reform presented in the Justice Task Force Report. The report points out that for countries to benefit from justice innovation they need to make space for it to happen, and that the best innovations draw on a wide range of disciplines and perspectives - including the perspective of users themselves.*

The Transformation Lab supports innovation in multiple ways. It offers a structured method for multi-stakeholder innovation teams, focused on specific goals and targets, to iteratively design and prototype innovations in collaboration with justice users. It brings these innovators together with influencers who can support the scaling and institutionalization of the innovations. In addition, it scouts for, resources, and accelerates innovations that are already happening.



#### 4. A strategic approach

*A central message of the Justice Task Force report is that justice providers need to move from firefighting to a model where they develop strategies to achieve long-term goals.*

The Transformation Lab offers stakeholders an opportunity to build on evidence to set strategic goals and to work with foresight methods and system mapping to build a long-term, systemic perspective. This builds their capacity for taking a strategic and cross-sectoral approach, enables them to consider root causes and key leverage points, and helps them to think and plan collaboratively. The strategic outputs of the Lab (systems maps, goals, scenarios and/or pathways and prototypes) feed into strategies and plans of individual institutions as well as into the design of feasible, collaborative, and scalable innovation initiatives.



#### 6. Building networks

*The Justice Task Force report points out that international and national networks accelerate the dissemination of new ideas and approaches and that a new culture of collaboration is needed.*

The Transformation Lab develops relationships across traditional silos, leading to the development of justice leadership communities and accelerating the sharing of ideas and approaches. Stakeholders from different sectors and backgrounds, with different networks and spheres of influence, get to know each other closely over the course of working together on common tasks in the Lab. Sometimes this leads to productive implementing partnerships, other times it leads to being able to access each other easily when questions or opportunities arise to support each other. And sometimes it just allows stakeholders to be more familiar with the concerns and needs of other parts of the system and enables them to act and lead with this perspective in mind.

## Contexts for implementation

Justice transformation is needed across the world, in the “Global North” as well as in the “Global South”, in situations of peace and stability as well as in situations of fragility and protracted conflict. Transformation labs are relevant across all these different contexts, though they look different and need to be adapted to each situation.

In addition to national level justice transformation labs, it is also possible to develop topic-based multi-local labs, for example addressing issues such as gender-based violence, legal identity, corruption, or employment justice with innovation teams in 3-4 countries at a time, who learn from each other over the course of the process and offer lessons also beyond their own geographies.

Transnational learning may also be supported by immersive learning journeys where stakeholders from one context travel to another for a week of intensive learning including deliberate facilitation to develop actionable insights on how to apply these learnings to one’s own context.

### Results of the Justice Transformation Labs

Justice Transformation Labs are designed to lead to the following outputs and outcomes:



## Experience

The Justice Transformation Lab approach was developed based on many years of experience of both HiiL and Reos Partners. HiiL has been leading the field of evidence based justice innovation in many countries - including countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Reos Partners is a global leader in multi-stakeholder dialogues to resolve complex social challenges. Our most recent justice Transformation Lab focussed on Syria. We are now also engaged in a Lab in Mali. Much of the work is confidential and outside the limelight.

## The partnership

HiiL (The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law) is a social enterprise devoted to user-friendly justice. That means justice that is easy to access, easy to understand, and effective. We will ensure that by 2030, 150 million people will be able to prevent or resolve their most pressing justice problems. We do this by stimulating innovation and scaling what works best. We are friendly rebels focused on concrete improvements in the lives of people. Data and evidence is central in all that we do. We are based in The Hague, City of Peace and Justice. See [www.hiil.org](http://www.hiil.org).

Reos Partners is an international social enterprise that designs and facilitates systemic, collaborative, and experimental processes gathering diverse actors to address a complex challenge together. We apply a set of methods for systems change, multi-stakeholder innovation and foresight that have been tried and tested over 25 years and are at the same time constantly evolving. Founded in 2007 in South Africa, the team today operates both globally and locally, with offices in Cambridge (Massachusetts), Geneva, Johannesburg, Melbourne, Montréal, and São Paulo. See [www.reospartners.com](http://www.reospartners.com).

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