

Title Card:

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Magandang araw po! That's good day in Filipino. My name is Marlon Manuel. I am a senior advisor at Namati. And it is my honor to welcome you to Legal Empowerment 101. We are so glad that you have joined us. In this course, we are going to share how justice seekers know the law, use the law and shape the law. How they are combining the power of the law with the power of the people to make real and lasting change.

More than half the world's population lack meaningful access to justice. People are driven from their land, denied basic services and intimidated by violence. The recent pandemic has exposed what these deep breakdowns in our systems look like. From prisoners subject to mass infections, to migrants at risk of hunger, to people whose lands were grabbed by corporations who treated a crisis like an opportunity. The need to respond is urgent.

At Namati and in the Legal Empowerment Network, we have seen how grassroots justice groups use legal empowerment to resolve justice issues for individual cases and pursue systemic changes to reshape unjust systems. For more than 2 decades, I have worked in the Philippines with farmers, fisherfolk, workers, indigenous communities and other marginalized groups.

I started my legal empowerment journey in a legal resource organisation called SAlegal.

And then later, I became the coordinator of the alternative law groups or ALG; a coalition of legal empowerment organisations in the Philippines. In this course, you will learn how legal

empowerment groups like SAlegal and ALG support communities to take steps along the legal empowerment cycle to know the law, use the law and shape the law.

You will have the opportunity to engage deeply with a few case studies to unpack how the process of legal empowerment has been successful in different contexts. You will also be introduced to members of the legal

empowerment network who will share the methods and strategies they use to work alongside communities where they work. You will learn how numerous justice organisations have bonded together in the legal empowerment network to advocate for new global norms for justice.

During this process, you will be challenged to identify and consider how an injustice in your own community, in your own context might be tackled by legal empowerment. In each section, you will find short videos followed by brief quizzes that will check your understanding. The discussion prompts at the end of the sections will ask you to share how you might be able to apply what you've learned in the section that you have completed to problems of injustice where you live and work.

I encourage you to engage with each other's discussion posts and to offer your advice, recommendation, inspiration or encouragement or even to ask questions. The more actively you participate in the course, the more we will all learn and grow from each other's experiences.

In this first section, we ask that you watch a brief animated video to get an overview of how legal empowerment can be used to address real life challenges. Then you will answer some

questions that will help us understand what you already know about legal empowerment. We want to start with where you are with your own experiences. Lastly, please add a discussion post that introduces yourself and shares an experience of how you see the law as out of reach or not working fairly for people where you live or work.

Again, welcome to Legal Empowerment 101. We are glad that you are here and if you are ready let us start.