

Title Card:

Abigail Moy

Director, Legal Empowerment Network

Hello, my name is Abigail Moy. I'm the director of the legal empowerment network. I'm excited that you are taking this course. Today I want to share with you the story of our network. Legal empowerment is not a new idea.

As you heard from Hector and Tshenolo, organizations, individuals and movements have been using legal empowerment tools to counter injustice and oppressive regimes for decades. The story of the legal empowerment network is one that recognizes our collective history. It is a story of people coming together and finding strength in our common approaches, reinforcing each other's work and amplifying each other's voices.

It is a story of constant struggle and perseverance against local challenges and global forces.

(Text on screen)

TIMELINE OF THE LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

2010

First convening of like-minded actors

In 2010, a group of justice defenders from a handful of countries including Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Jordan, Ecuador, India, Moldova and more began coming together. At the time, we were all working in our respective countries, isolated and unaware of similar work being done elsewhere. We came to realize that despite working in strikingly different contexts, we had far more in common than we could ever have imagined.

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One shared approach of Legal Empowerment

Network:

Community Paralegals: Grassroots advocates knowledgeable in law and organizing

One shared approach was the use of community based paralegals or their equivalent; grassroots legal advocates knowledgeable in law and policy and skilled in community organizing, negotiation and advocacy who found practical ways to support their communities in overcoming injustice.

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TIMELINE OF THE LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

2010

First convening of like-minded actors

2012

Launched Global Network

By 2012, we had launched a global network dedicated to legal empowerment, convened by namati and lead by grassroots justice champions across the world. During our first few years, we focused on familiarizing ourselves with each other's work and values. It was a time for building relationships, scoping and learning.

We hosted a number of regional convenings in Dhaka - Bangladesh, Kampala - Uganda, Buenos Aires - Argentina, Jakarta - Indonesia, Amman - Jordan. The atmosphere at these meetings was electric. People discovering for the first time that they had sisters and brothers in spirit. Allies in the fight for justice worldwide, whom they had never known existed.

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TIMELINE OF THE LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

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First convening of like-minded actors

2012

Launched Global Network

2015

Shared Learning & Exchanges & Launched Global Campaign

After three or so years, we began experimenting with more complex activities. We hosted our first of many learning exchanges with inaugural ones in South Africa and the Philippines. We organized our first annual leadership course in Budapest, Hungary. These were opportunities for practical hands-on learning through extended site visits or intensive study with practitioners around the world.

Participants came away with concrete ideas and techniques that they experimented with in their own organizations. I've spoken to members who returned home to make quick adjustments like optimizing their case management systems or improving community outreach and others who completely overhauled their structure and strategy, whether to more effectively confront the need for system wide change, forge productive partnerships with governments and other stakeholders or expand the scope of their work.

At this time, we also launched our first global advocacy campaign. Fighting for the inclusion of justice in the United Nations 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

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Key, historic victory for our Network:

securing a place for justice in Sustainable

Development Goals 2016

This resulted in a key historic victory for our network, securing a place for justice in sustainable development goal 16; also known as SDG 16. Many experts said this would be impossible, that justice was too contentious, too political for multilateral agenda, but hundreds of our network members took action to argue otherwise in New York and in national capitals around the world and we won.

The fight did not end there however. While the SDGs offered an important starting point, its rhetoric on justice was not backed up with action. After the launch of the SDGs, most of them were accompanied by major financial commitments, not so for goal 16. We launched the justice for all campaign in 2018 to remedy this oversight.

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Over the next three years, in countless national and international forums and intimate meetings and high level events, online and in person, network members urged policymakers, donors and multilateral institutions to fund and protect the grassroots justice defenders who provide essential legal support to communities. This groundswell of voices not only changed the global narrative

and discourse on development and access to justice, but it also rallied significant resources to our movement. Last year, as a direct result of network members' calls to action, the world's first legal empowerment fund was launched.

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2021

First Legal Empowerment Fund Launched

It aims to raise \$100 million over 10 years for grassroots justice efforts worldwide. The legal empowerment fund takes up the torch of the COVID-19 grassroots justice fund, another of the campaign's key achievements which raised one million dollars supported 60 network members from over 30 countries with rapid response, flexible grants during the height of the pandemic.

These financial resources are crucial to our work, but only part of the fuel needed to drive our movement for justice forward.

As of today, over 10,000 people representing 3,000 grassroots justice organizations in 170 countries have joined the legal empowerment network.

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Legal Empowerment Network in 2022:

Over 10,000 people and 3,000

**organizations committed to
collaborative learning
and collective action**

We are all committed to collaborative learning, community building and collective action as a means of building solidarity and power and advancing justice for all of our communities.

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Next steps for Legal Empowerment Network:

Deepen regional engagement

Drawing out thematic priorities

Strengthening network leadership

Growing and evolving together

As our network celebrates our 10th anniversary, we look forward to deepening our regional engagement, drawing out key thematic priorities, strengthening and diversifying network leadership, and overall growing and evolving together.

Thanks for joining us on this journey. I hope to see you as we take our next steps.