



grassroots
justice

Fighting Poverty with Justice

A New Program to Expand Access to Justice

Millions of poor around the world are denied the rights, freedoms, public services and economic opportunity that good laws and policy provide because of an inability to access justice -- single mothers are denied inheritance because they cannot prove paternity of absentee fathers; farmers are evicted from their land because they cannot prove legal ownership; families are denied access to health and school services because they do not have valid identification; workers toil in unsafe conditions because they do not know their rights. Unfortunately in most developing countries pro-poor lawyers are too few in number and too costly to assist the poor to defend their rights and fight injustice.

Grassroots Justice, a Haki Network program, is a new initiative to expand enforcement of laws meant to benefit the poor by using market concepts to increase the quantity and access to affordable legal services. Grassroots Justice is based on the premise that demand for basic legal services for the poor is high and unmatched by supply. Various market failures, such as the high cost of a legal education, restrictions to entry into the legal market, and a lack of pro-poor focused innovations have kept supply artificially low. By developing a cost-effective, easily replicable model Grassroots Justice will tap into a vast, neglected market and in the process provide essential basic legal services to millions of poor and vulnerable.



Grassroots Justice community paralegals provide affordable, professional services that are tailored to the needs of their clients

Combining Social Entrepreneurship and Human Rights

Similar to the revolution microfinance created in access to credit for the poor, Grassroots Justice will develop highly-reduced legal service models that make access to justice affordable for all. Grassroots Justice will achieve this through a cost-effective legal assistance model that uses local community organizations and paralegals to charge small fees for basic, but essential legal services such as land ownership registration, land dispute resolution, inheritance, work discrimination against women, administrative appeals for access to public services, and other important legal issues. Grassroots Justice will harness the existing efforts and community presence of local NGOs across the Haki Network to create a replicable program that can be franchised, on demand, throughout poor communities and those without access to affordable legal services.

Human rights protection and legal assistance and empowerment are recognized as an important objective of international development and rule of law assistance. However, most if not all interventions are unsustainable, donor-dependent programs that have limited reach outside of the scope of their funding. The demand for legal services for the poor is too great to be met by donor funds alone. Haki recognized this gap and in response developed Grassroots Justice as a unique global for-profit local, community justice platform that uses markets to increase access to legal services in countries where lawyers are rare and expensive. Market-based legal services create financial incentives that increase the quantity of services, demand accountability and improve the quality of services, and empower recipients as paying clients. Grassroots Justice is also unique in that it has the ability to quickly expand and be brought to scale across an existing global network of local legal service organizations. Grassroots Justice works in close partnership with existing international development actors and global law firms to enhance our ability to form coalitions around our objectives.

Impact

Grassroots Justice's will create a global movement that increases access to justice for millions of poor by providing affordable legal services that increases enforcement of pro-poor laws and strengthens the rule of law for sustainable, inclusive economic development.

Team

Grassroots Justice is operated by a team of lawyers and leading international development and human rights experts with a combined 60+ years of experience. The Grassroots Justice team has hands-on experience working as legal aid lawyers, international development project team leaders, and rule of law expert consultants for major international institutions in over 80 countries on all continents.

Grassroots Justice's Services

Land and property rights. Legal orientation, counseling, advice and representation to enforcement national property laws to strengthen the rights of the poor over their land and resources.

Land mapping and adjudication. Mapping, surveying and registration of land parcels and resource rights for poor, indigenous and vulnerable communities and individuals.

Gender inclusion and equity. Representation and litigation on behalf of women that have been discriminated at their workplace and for ownership of land and property.

Women's Inheritance. Counseling and mediation with families over women's rights to inheritance of property.

Labor rights. Investigation and prosecution of labor exploitations, intimidation and dangerous working conditions.

Identification and Access to Public Services. Legal assistance to access identification documents and to challenge unequal access to public services, particularly for ethnic minorities and female-headed households.

Mediation and Conflict Resolution. Community mediation and conflict resolution, particularly in conflict-affected environments to rebuild peace and the rule of law.

Legal Education Outreach and Awareness Raising. Free legal education and legal awareness campaigns to educate citizens on their rights and encourage greater civic engagement.

