



# Financing People-Centered Justice: From Rhetoric to Resources

*A World Social Summit side event*

November 5, 2025 | 9:00 am - 10:15 am (ET)

Virtual via Zoom | <https://nyu.zoom.us/j/99059952477>

- **Format:** (Online on Zoom) moderated panel presentation/guided discussion + audience Q&A.
- **Registration:** [Register here](#)

This event is hosted by the Pathfinders' Justice for All program at New York University's Center on International Cooperation, the Justice Action Coalition, The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Uganda), TAP Network, and the African Center for Excellence on Access to Justice.

## Overview

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes the goal of a just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met. Justice is an underwriting goal for all of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to the [Justice for All report](#), we need access to justice if we are to end poverty, reduce inequality, reach the furthest behind first, create conditions for shared and sustainable prosperity, or promote peace and inclusion.

And, to harness the potential of justice we need a people-centered approach. People-centered justice is an encompassing approach to justice that places people and their needs at the core. It requires a deep, consultative understanding of the challenges people face and the context in which they face them. This knowledge in turn, informs appropriate, innovative solutions that are inclusive and impactful.

Transforming justice systems to become more inclusive, people-centered, and responsive is essential to both the promise of the 2030 Agenda and to the goals of the [World Social Summit](#), which seeks to accelerate action on poverty eradication, the promotion of full employment and decent work, and social inclusion, ensuring that no one is left behind in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

However, despite growing recognition of the role of justice in advancing social and economic rights, financing for justice remains critically underprioritized in national budgets and international development assistance. Other sectors, such as health and education, have had success in making the best use of limited resources: scaling up services, prioritizing front-line services, and focusing on outcomes to improve lives.

This side event will bring together diverse voices to explore how financing can be mobilized, reallocated, and targeted to support people-centered justice as a core enabler of social development. It will spotlight high-impact, low-cost models of justice service delivery implemented by grassroots actors and community-based organizations, drawing on real-world innovations that are delivering results in challenging contexts. It will also share technical insights on budgetary pathways for financing people-centered justice, including through national planning. Perspectives from government representatives will offer practical reflections on integrating justice into broader development financing strategies.

## Why This Matters for the World Social Summit

The World Social Summit offers a critical moment to reaffirm justice as a public good and a pillar of the renewed social contract. Financing people-centered justice is not only about strengthening justice institutions it is about making social and economic rights real in people’s lives. Whether enabling access to identification, protecting women and children from violence, resolving land or labor disputes, or facilitating inclusive access to services, justice lies at the intersection of social protection, inclusion, and empowerment. Ensuring adequate and sustained financing for this work is a prerequisite for inclusive development and a just transition.

This event will build momentum toward that goal by offering a space for collective reflection, knowledge exchange, and policy alignment on how to shift from rhetoric to resources so that people-centered justice becomes not just a shared aspiration, but a funded priority.

## Key Themes and Guiding Questions

- What innovative, cost-effective models are communities and grassroots actors using to deliver people-centered justice?
- What can the justice sector learn from other sectors that have succeeded in effectively mobilizing and utilizing resources?
- How can public budgets and development cooperation be leveraged to fund justice more effectively?
- What are the barriers to financing justice and how can they be overcome through policy and partnership?
- How can justice financing contribute to broader goals of equity, inclusion, and resilience?

## Format

The session will feature a short, focused panel discussion, followed by an interactive Q&A. Panelists will include government representatives, grassroots justice innovators, and technical experts. Together, they will explore viable avenues for financing people-centered justice, sharing both practical experiences and strategic insights to inform action at global, regional, and national levels.

## Agenda

### Opening Remarks

- 🇸🇪 **Shahid Korjie, Coordinator, Justice Sector Coordination Office, Government of Sierra Leone**



## Panelists

- **Justice Action Coalition Financing Framework:** Marcus Manuel, Senior Research Associate, ODI
- **Healthcare Sector Perspectives:** Tom Hart, Senior Research Fellow, ODI
- **Frontline Justice Perspectives:** Leonie Mutoni, Coordinator, Africa Centre of Excellence for Access to Justice
- **Philanthropy Perspectives:** Atieno Odhiambo, Director, Legal Empowerment Fund



## Moderator

- [Anoushka Sinha](#), Young Justice Leader, Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies

## About the Justice Action Coalition

[The Justice Action Coalition \(JAC\)](#) is a multi-stakeholder alliance of countries and organizations that is working to achieve measurable progress in justice outcomes for people and communities by the third SDG summit in 2027 and beyond.

## About Pathfinders Justice for All

[Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#) is a cross-regional and member state-led, multi-stakeholder coalition committed to advancing action on peace, justice, equality and inclusive institutions through the Sustainable Development Goals and beyond (SDG16+). It is convened by 46 governments, works with over 100 partners across civil society, the United Nations (UN), and regional and international organizations, and is hosted by the Center on International Cooperation at New York University.

The [Justice for All program](#) acts as an impact hub, convening countries, civil society, and multilateral and regional organizations to close the justice gap by accelerating action on people-centered justice. This program provides a platform to exchange innovative practices on data collection, evidence-based policy making, and effective use of resources to bridge silos and transform justice systems in preventing and resolving people's common justice problems.

## About the New York University Center on International Cooperation

The [Center on International Cooperation \(CIC\) at New York University \(NYU\)](#) is a think tank and research center that, for over two decades, has been a leader in applied policy, connecting politics, security, justice, development, and humanitarian issues. Our mission is to inform and strengthen collaborative approaches and/or collaboration among national governments, international organizations, and the wider policy community to build trust, prevent and respond to crises—and advance peace, justice, and inclusion at all levels. Learn more on [our website](#) and @nyuCIC on social media.