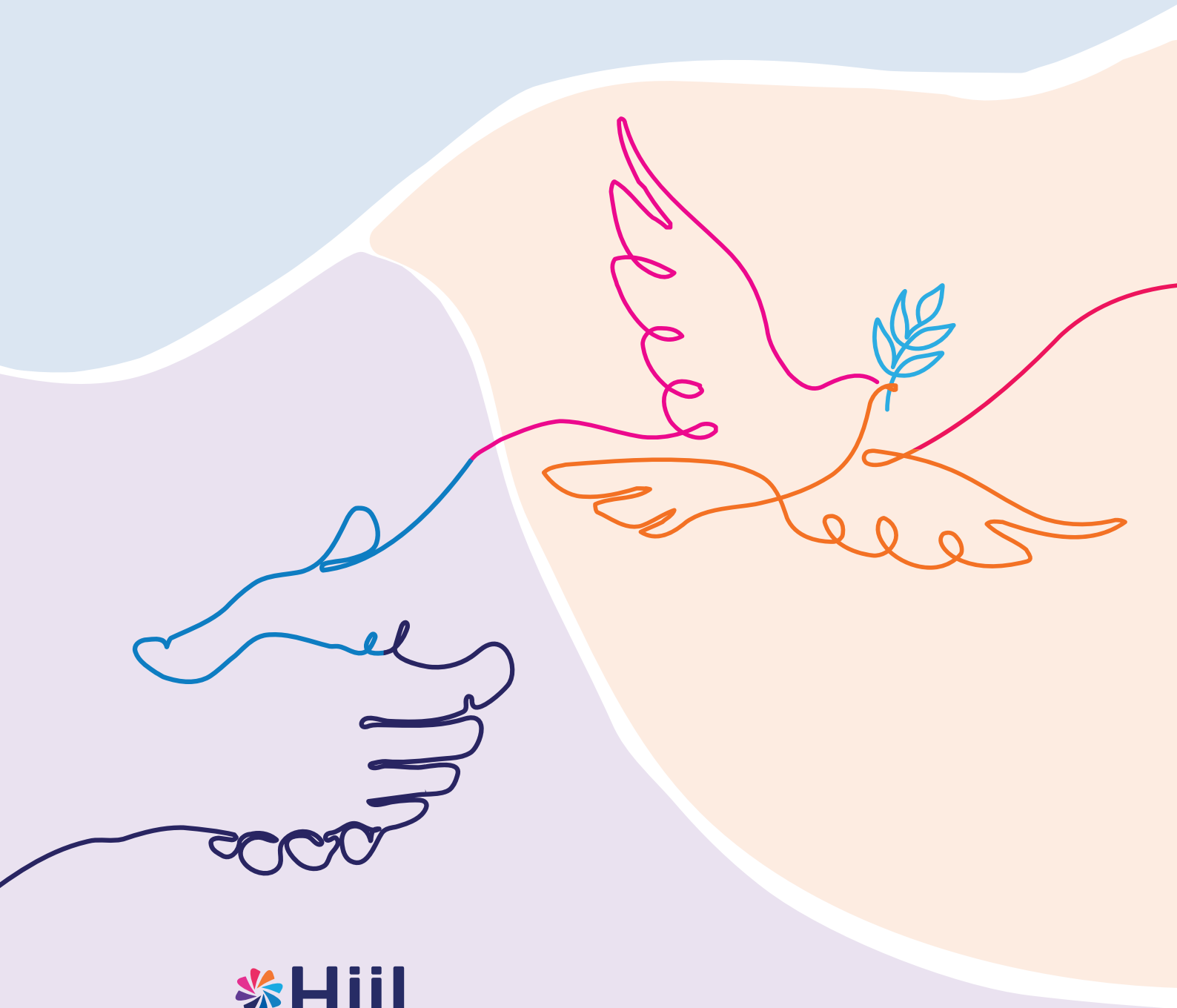


# Strengthening people-centred justice in 2021





# Table of contents

4

These times of crisis need better justice systems

6

2021: a year of achievements and learnings in people-centred justice

18

Making Ogun State the safest place to live, work and do business in Nigeria

20

Placing people at the centre of justice delivery in Uganda

22

Using research and innovation for conflict resolution in the Netherlands

24

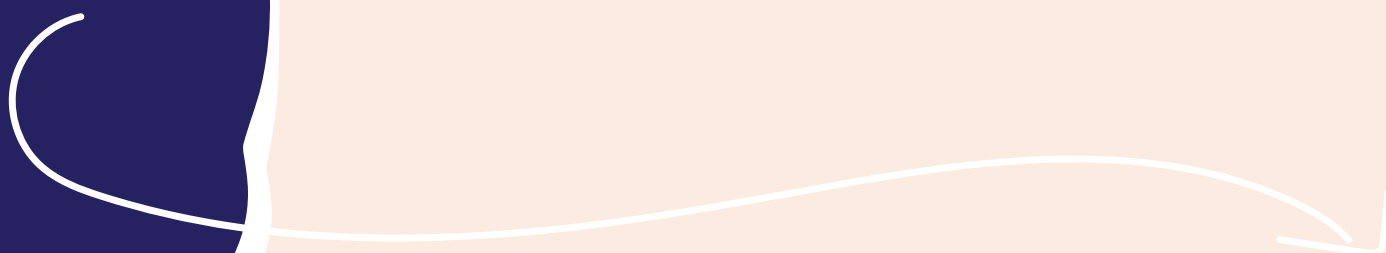
Looking ahead

25

The organisation HiIL

28

Partners and Donors



# These times of crisis need better justice systems

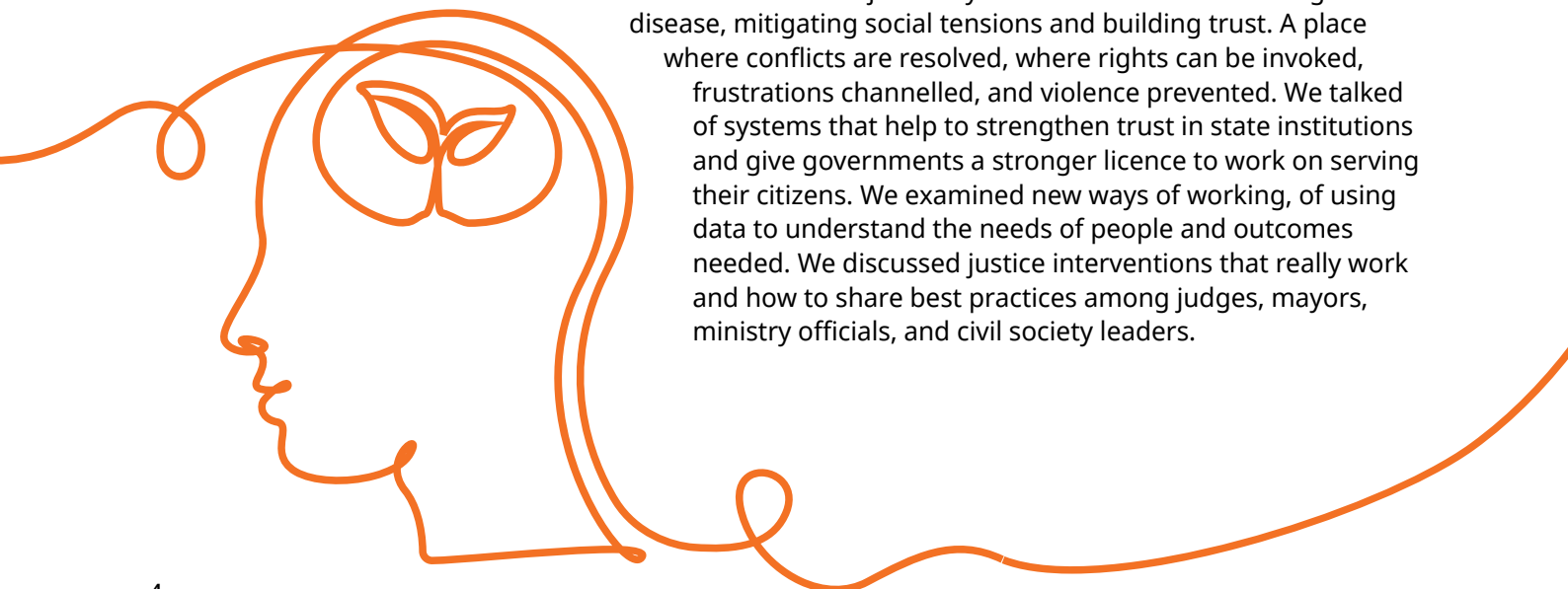
Losing your job. Losing your land. Losing your house. Falling back into the informal economy. No access to public services. A chronic lack of safety. Subject to corruption and violence.

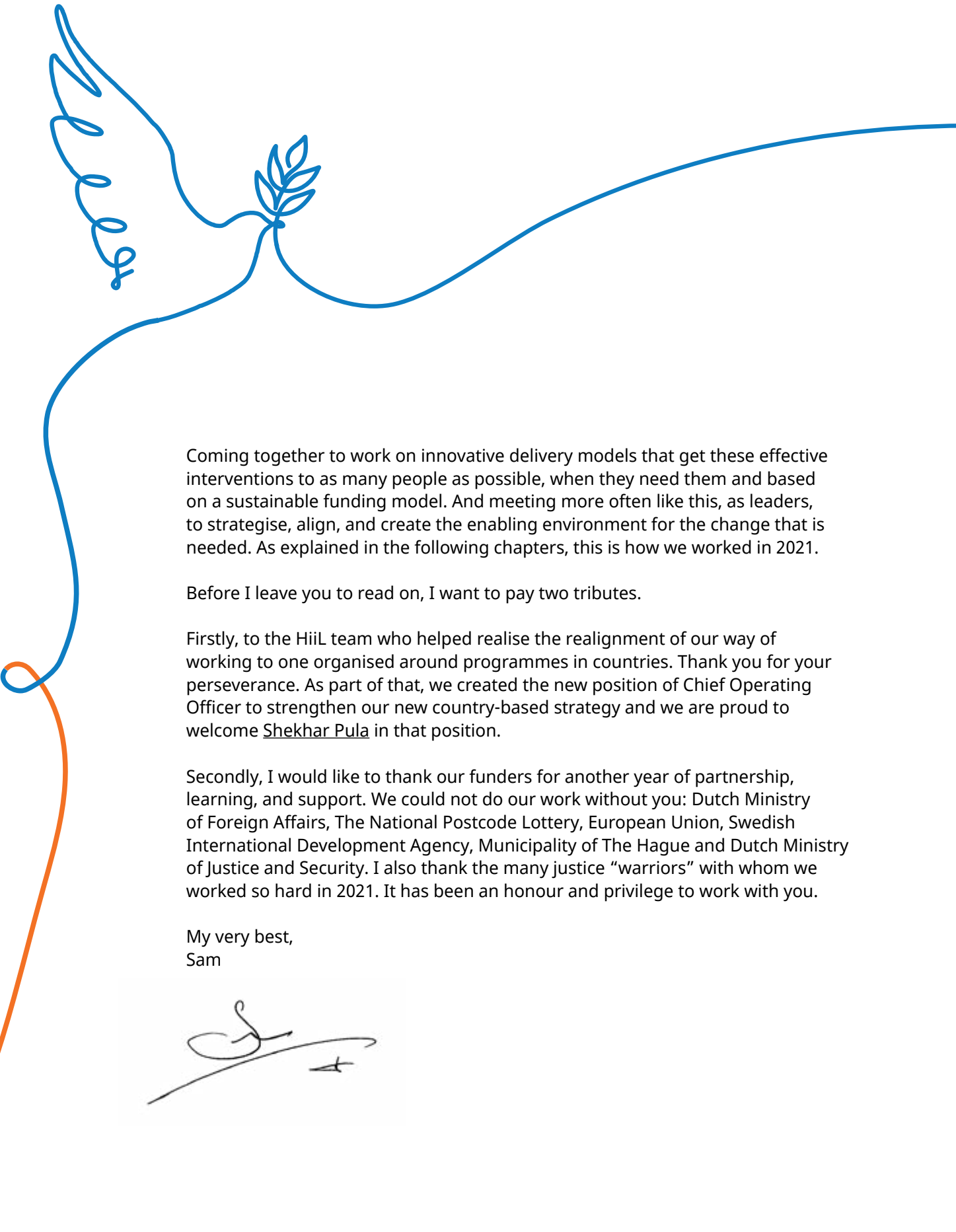
This was 2021 for hundreds of millions of people whilst facing a full-blown pandemic. The justice gap remains as large as ever. In fact, all indications suggest it is bigger than it was in 2020 with the most vulnerable affected the most. In his report, *Our Common Agenda*, the United Nations Secretary-General refers to an “ever deeper crisis of trust” caused by the fact that institutions, both national and international, do not deliver enough. He explicitly includes justice systems which, in his words, “deliver only for the few.” Using the word ‘crisis’ is, I think, legitimate.

My first trip following the lifting of the Covid-19 travel restrictions came at the end of 2021. With a small HiIL team we arrived on the island of Djerba in Tunisia for an in-depth conversation with a carefully selected group of key justice stakeholders composed of a mayor, local civil society leaders, district court judges, officials from the Ministry of Justice, and local business leaders, together representing a diverse population. We had convened to look at data concerning justice needs and to consider what would be central to an innovation lab.

Our conversations once again made it clear that courts were too far away for most people; that judges struggle with rules, procedures, and resources; and that civil society leaders work hard to give voice to needs of people and to offer help where possible, but that it is never enough. Mayors want to act but they have no real powers over justice. Ministry officials who want change but are bound by procedures, rules, and political parameters. But, on a more hopeful note, we also saw a deep motivation to work on change and fast emerging clarity on outcome-based goals around the most pressing justice needs.

We talked about what justice systems could be. A vaccine against disease, mitigating social tensions and building trust. A place where conflicts are resolved, where rights can be invoked, frustrations channelled, and violence prevented. We talked of systems that help to strengthen trust in state institutions and give governments a stronger licence to work on serving their citizens. We examined new ways of working, of using data to understand the needs of people and outcomes needed. We discussed justice interventions that really work and how to share best practices among judges, mayors, ministry officials, and civil society leaders.





Coming together to work on innovative delivery models that get these effective interventions to as many people as possible, when they need them and based on a sustainable funding model. And meeting more often like this, as leaders, to strategise, align, and create the enabling environment for the change that is needed. As explained in the following chapters, this is how we worked in 2021.

Before I leave you to read on, I want to pay two tributes.

Firstly, to the HiIL team who helped realise the realignment of our way of working to one organised around programmes in countries. Thank you for your perseverance. As part of that, we created the new position of Chief Operating Officer to strengthen our new country-based strategy and we are proud to welcome Shekhar Pula in that position.

Secondly, I would like to thank our funders for another year of partnership, learning, and support. We could not do our work without you: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The National Postcode Lottery, European Union, Swedish International Development Agency, Municipality of The Hague and Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. I also thank the many justice “warriors” with whom we worked so hard in 2021. It has been an honour and privilege to work with you.

My very best,  
Sam



# 2021: a year of achievements and learnings in people-centred justice

*People-centred justice* strengthens justice systems by putting people and the outcomes they need at the centre, and not institutions. HiIL's two-year Strategy 2020-2021 is our assessment of what we could do best to provide more people-centred justice in line with our mission. Seven goals defined our path in the past two years to promote people-centred justice. While not everything was achieved and some things turned out differently, we did make good progress. The table below outlines the strategic goals that were set and provides a headline assessment of the results achieved. This is followed by a more in-depth examination organised around HiIL's integrated people-centred justice approach.

2020-2021 Strategic Goals	Achievement highlights and learnings
1. We support 4-6 governments and other stakeholders to increase the availability of user-friendly justice.	In 2021, we facilitated justice transformation processes in 4 countries - Uganda, Ogun State (Nigeria), Imo State (Nigeria), and the Netherlands. Justice transformation processes were ongoing in Tunisia, Ethiopia, and regionally, in Tunisia, Lebanon, Morocco, and the UAE. These processes involved a diverse group of national justice leaders, who jointly set people-centred justice targets, with pathways to achieve them. We learned that the process from agreeing on people-centred justice goals to embedding these into a national strategy or policy that is fully funded and implemented is a complex process.
2. Two gamechanging justice innovations able to operate on the basis of a sustainable funding model, with 50 innovations in the pipeline.	In 2021, we rolled out the first Justice Innovation Lab in Uganda and produced a prototype of a Community Justice Clinic. The CJC's are a way to increase and improve justice at the grassroots level. They connect formal and informal justice providers and increase the quality of interventions. Fundraising to implement a pilot is under way. We learned that finding funding for pilot programmes that come out of innovation labs can take some time as it is not a concept that funders are familiar with. As a result, time is lost. In parallel, we supported 16 gamechangers to grow their innovative justice solutions so as to expand the supply base of justice services to our programme countries. The environment within which these innovations need to scale is complex and often unfriendly. Really scaling remains a challenge.



3. Our data on justice needs, our research on what works and on justice sector trends allow us to support effective innovation strategies and serves as a pipeline for effective innovations in HiiL projects and beyond.

In 2021, the process of doing the Justice Needs and Satisfaction surveys was streamlined and revised to reflect outcomes for people; it is applied in 4 countries (Burkina Faso, Niger, Uganda, and the United States). We delivered evidence-based best practices on the top 5 justice problems (family, land, employment, neighbour, and traffic accidents) and our Uganda Family Justice Catalogue was welcomed and adopted by 27 justice organisations in the country. Many justice practitioners are not familiar with evidence-based work and we need to continue to learn how to engage them effectively.
4. HiiL is a learning organisation that constantly evaluates and improves when needed its methods.

In 2021, we standardised our Theory of Change and Logical Framework and set up the pilot for the Result-based Management System. A tailored Measuring Evaluation and Learning framework was developed for all projects according to donor requirements. These will all continue to be developed and improved in 2022.
5. We are effectively engaged with our key stakeholders on the need for user-friendly justice and how it can be realised.

Both globally and in the countries where we work, we are engaging better with justice practitioners and leaders to increase and strengthen the network of people-centred justice. This has been accomplished through our improved website, social media presence, newsletters, webinars for funders and other stakeholders, the Innovating Justice Forum, speaking engagements, publications, and through an enhanced client management system.
6. Our funding base has grown and is more diverse.

Between the beginning of 2020 and the end of 2021 our funding base increased. We won two large multi-year programmes: a five-year extension of our partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a five-year programme in Niger. We continue to strive for a more diverse funding base.
7. Our people and operational support structures are in order.

In 2021, we realigned the organisation to work on the basis of programmes in countries, and not on the basis of areas of expertise. The position of COO was created and filled. We introduced more data to work towards more evidence-based project management and shared services. The Employee Needs Survey was started to collect staff feedback on the organisation as well as on their wellbeing.

In 2021, HiiL further developed its programmes with an integrated, evidence-based, and innovation-driven approach. The five core elements are the collection of data on the needs and experiences of people, moving to evidence-based practice, supporting game-changing justice services, creating an enabling environment, and ensuring engagement to nurture change. This comprehensive approach serves as the foundation for our work in 2022 solidifying people-centred justice in six programme countries and helping to realise SDG 16.3 – promoting the rule of law and ensuring access to justice for all.

## Working from *data*

Data is the foundation of HiiL's work. We conduct research to understand the needs and experiences of people. Through our Justice Needs and Satisfaction survey — a flagship product of HiiL — we measure society's most pressing justice problems, how these affect lives, and whether individuals can find resolutions. With our partners, we have developed actionable data insights, and turned data and insights into digestible, shareable products that can be used in evidence-based decision-making. This is the foundation for moving towards more people-centred justice.

In the first comprehensive study of its kind, HiiL partnered with the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS) to map out the legal problems people across the United States face in their everyday lives. In Uganda, we carried out an electronic Justice Needs and Satisfaction survey to gather insights about the dynamics of people's justice needs. HiiL carried out data collection and analysis in Burkina Faso and Niger, and the reports will be launched in 2022. Collectively, we gathered justice journeys of 26,290 people, and this allowing us to better understand the justice problems of 422 million people in these countries, including 331 million in the United States.

Three deep dive reports were issued, providing an in-depth understanding on unique innovations (gamechangers) in the justice sector, and on the justice situation in Ogun State, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. More than 600 people were trained in HiiL's approach on using data and knowledge.

Our Justice Dashboard, which displays HiiL's research, has registered 4,696 visits, double the number of visits in 2020. Not only are more people visiting our website, they are using our data and knowledge. In 2021, reports published by HiiL were downloaded 2,104 times, a 23% increase from 2020. The impact of our reports has also extended far beyond our programme countries to a global outreach of academia, media, corporate, and international policy deliberations.




HiiL is unique in collecting quantitative bottom-up justice data, which remains a solid entry point for policy level discussions and stakeholder engagement. Our reports have spurred dialogue on justice sector reforms and initiated evidence-based programming. Our stakeholders confirmed that HiiL's data are convincing, credible, neutral, and representative of citizens' concerns and expectations. Leaders in the area of justice, such as the President's Office in Uganda and donors such as the Swedish International Development Agency, have quoted and referenced HiiL data in policy dialogues and advocacy. This is also true for publications. For example, in Assumpta and Kiwanuka's *Institutional Vulnerabilities, Covid-19, Resilience Mechanisms and Societal Relationships in Developing Countries*, HiiL's report on *Justice Needs in Uganda: Legal Problems in Daily Life* (2016) was quoted to establish an understanding of Uganda's justice system. The ABA Journal published an article which cited our 2021 report on the Justice Needs & Satisfaction study in the United States.

We continue to learn and improve our data collection methods. The Covid-19 crisis presented a unique opportunity to test more agile ways to understand the needs of people and their experiences. We developed an eJNS module which gathers quick data on the justice needs of a non-representative sample and allows us to quickly grasp the status of access to justice. eJNS studies were conducted in Burkina Faso and Uganda.

Another area of methodological improvement is found in the drive towards actionability of the data and the insights this generates. Important improvements were made and we have learned that while interactive data visualisations help bring people-centred justice data to life, both 'showing' and 'telling' are needed for justice practitioners and policymakers to understand and make use of our findings. This means supplementing charts and graphs with written analysis, as well as personal narratives to give readers insight into the human lives the data represent. These improvements are seen in how we communicate and present data on the Justice Dashboard.

"Recognising the value of the eJNS methodology, we are confident that the eJNS has clear value for JLOS and for justice in Uganda going forward. The methodology can be replicated as part of our people-centred efforts. Moreover, its results show clear pathways towards action. We appreciate HiiL's efforts to share its knowledge and experience about the eJNS with JLOS and look forward to further collaborations." - Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS)

## Evidence-based practices



HiiL takes evidence-based work to the justice sector by gathering, developing and sharing best practices of what generally works to prevent or resolve a justice problem. Together with local partners, we develop and look for best ways to share practices so that they are widely used to improve the work of justice practitioners. HiiL has produced best practice guidelines on family, employment, land, neighbour, traffic accidents, and related problems, as well as a Family Justice Catalogue for Uganda; these are all available on our Justice Dashboard. To date, there have been 51 recommendations on key interventions that are most crucial to solving such problems.

In 2021, we started to disseminate our guidelines directly to relevant government agencies, NGOs, and donor agencies in programme countries. In Uganda, for example, we set up implementation plans with 27 justice organisations, including 12 from the Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS)<sup>1</sup> and 15 from the Legal Aid Service Providers Network (LASPNET)<sup>2</sup>. Thanks to this, at least 260 family justice practitioners now have access to the Uganda Family Justice Catalogue and apply it in their work.

The success of HiiL's Uganda Family Justice Catalogue is not limited to our programme. Several organisations have decided to make it a cornerstone of their service provision. For example, the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA) informed us they have incorporated the Family Justice Catalogue in their training and working materials, and LASPNET established a learning platform for their legal aid workers to interactively engage with our guidelines.

Many justice practitioners are not familiar with evidence-based work and we need to continue to learn on how to engage them effectively. In developing the recommendations for guidelines, we learned there are universal elements of 'what works' in dispute resolution that can be applied to different contexts. However, we must connect more closely to local or regional contexts to better engage with the targeted practitioners. As such, HiiL will place greater focus on gathering local best practices and this will, in the long term, improve our database. Furthermore, we will ensure that more diverse groups of local experts are involved in the development process of the guidelines in order to capture a diversity of perspectives.

---

1 The JLOS is the government agency set up for a sector-wide approach to bringing together 18 institutions with closely linked mandates to administer justice, maintain law and order, as well promote and protect human rights.

2 The LASPNET is a national member NGO that provides strategic linkages and a collaborative framework for legal aid service providers, harmonises and standardises legal aid services provision, and lobbies and advocates for a favourable legal and policy environment.

# Scaling gamechangers

More than 139 justice innovators have participated in the Justice Accelerator over the years. In 2021, 84 of these gamechangers were in operation, giving many people access to justice. As these startups grow and mature, an ever-increasing number of people turn to justice innovators to prevent or resolve their problems.

In 2021, mature startups reported a huge number of beneficiaries. Work is ongoing to better understand what this means in terms of preventing and resolving the most pressing justice needs. If we look at the type of services provided to beneficiaries, legal information plays an important role in people's journey to seek justice, followed by digital platforms and services (FinTech, InsurTech).

In 2021, 16 startups from Africa, the Middle East and Europe participated in HiiL's Justice Accelerator programme. At the end of the year, they pitched their gamechanging justice innovations to a panel of judges in a bid to win the top three cash prizes of €20,000, €10,000 and €5,000. The first gong went to [THR Media](#), a social enterprise that uses new media and technology solutions to help women and girls break free, to find shelter and to recover from sexual and gender-based violence.



With Justice Innovation Labs, HiiL offers a process to our partners to develop fundable projects to establish or improve national gamechangers. In 2021, we conducted a Justice Innovation Lab in Uganda. Through a series of structured sessions, a diverse group of stakeholders has developed a financially sustainable project on Community Justice Clinics that will help communities to prevent and resolve land, family, and neighbour conflicts. This project is in the process of securing funding for the pilot phase, during which several clinics will be rolled out and further developed. After the pilot phase, and once the model is fully mature, a full country-wide roll out is anticipated.

HiiL continues to support the development of justice innovation through the Justice Accelerator and Justice Innovation Labs. From our Justice Innovation Labs we have learned that an effective solution must be context-driven, align with relevant policy planning, and build on and add value to the existing justice sector infrastructure.



Ownership by a diverse and key group of justice stakeholders (from the private and public sectors) of the process is key to the sustainability and relevance of the solutions found.

From the Justice Accelerator, we have learned that developing a growing pipeline of justice startups – from early stage to scaling – requires significant regional ideation, incubation, and community building activities. However, startups completing the Accelerator Programme are often not investment-ready, hence a follow-up on customised scaling programme is an important offering.

Startups show in practice how new justice services work in the local context, that they can be built on sustainable business models, and relate to HiiL's gamechanger models and national people-centred justice goals. Overall, we have learned how this gamechanging research translates to local realities delivering more impact on the ground.

## Creating an enabling environment

For people-centred justice transformation to succeed an enabling environment is necessary. This means there must be the political will to make change happen and to keep moving in the right direction. This involves setting clear strategic goals, based on clearly defined justice outcomes. Achieving scale for gamechanging innovations requires new types of institutional collaboration, reforms to laws and regulations, and creative financing models. To this end, HiiL convenes groups of stakeholders to help reduce barriers to progress and create the necessary conditions for dialogue and collaboration.

HiiL has played a major role as an enabler of advocacy and dialogue for people-centred policy making and programming. Its justice transformation process has progressively improved over the years. Our approach to playing a facilitating role has strengthened buy-in from local stakeholders and has been instrumental in developing effective strategies based on data. Giving full respect to the leading role of local stakeholders has created the necessary political space towards an enabling environment for justice innovation.

We have found that convening those at the leadership level is an entry point to begin to address what is needed in order to support a progressive transition towards people-centred justice. In 2021, we convened stakeholder teams in seven countries – in which 14 dialogue sessions took place – with around 130 stakeholders, the majority of whom are in leadership positions in the justice sector, judiciary, civil society organisations, academia, and the private sector. A special effort was made to include traditional leaders and community elders, as well as to ensure that women and youth were adequately represented. Two high-level strategy documents were written; the first for Ogun State in Nigeria has been published and the second for the Netherlands will be issued soon.

Some transformation processes have yielded initial results. In Ogun State, Nigeria, for example, the priorities set by justice leaders during the stakeholder dialogues have been incorporated into justice service provisions. Ogun State has set up the Ibi-Isadi Response Services, for which the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Committee was set up and a coordinator appointed, a toll-free emergency hotline planned, and Shelters identified by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development across senatorial districts.

In Uganda, the JLOS Annual Report 2020-2021 details how JLOS institutions have worked towards e-justice and digital transformation. HiIL has been complimented for its collaboration with JLOS in developing an innovation culture within network institutions. Elsewhere, the integration of people-centred outcomes into national frameworks, justice sector plans, and other projects are at a preliminary stage of discussion to gauge what is realistically feasible. In time, we expect that our capacity to monitor and evaluate will grow, leading to better methods to track outcomes.

Our work with stakeholder teams in 2021 taught us many lessons. We directly experienced the tremendous value of creating safe spaces in which justice leaders from different parts of the system can engage with their citizens' needs and experiences. These leaders often need to navigate challenging environments and priorities. We are improving our programme methods to respond in a more supportive manner to such contexts.

At times of national hardship, we have seen justice leaders prioritise people-centred justice and strengthen new and existing partnerships. We learned how challenging it is to move from well-intentioned goals towards focused and actionable targets which are framed and measured in terms of outcomes for people. The next step, implementing those targets into organisational strategies and connecting them to budgets and work plans, has proven difficult and HiIL is committed to learning more in this area. Finally, it is clear that the outcomes of stakeholder dialogues are not always linear. We have examples of unexpected movement and results that differ from what was initially anticipated.



*The Ogun State Civil Justice Transformation Strategy Launch, Nigeria*

# Strengthening the network: *engagement*

In order to keep the change going, we aim to connect and strengthen networks for knowledge exchange and celebrate the success of people-centred justice initiatives. We support innovators and institutions who prioritise people-centred justice and who practise an inclusive approach that reinforces 'our common agenda'. Delivering on this promise, however, requires a shared ambition based on values, principles, and a common language. We are dedicated to leading these efforts through community engagement and knowledge exchange.

Through strategic engagement and community building, we dismantle silos and inspire changemakers to support the accomplishment of SDG16.3. When goals are set in a people-centred justice programme, it is necessary to account for whether these are met, especially within the conservative nature of the justice sector. This involves setting up an ecosystem to ensure leaders of the justice system maintain their commitments to achieving the promised outcomes, and that lessons learned are implemented. This should also bring more funders into the arena: states, philanthropic organisations, as well as from the private sector. We help anchor changes through a network of people and organisations at the national and international levels; a network that captures and shares best practices, brings in more funding, and speaks out for SDG 16.3 in realising people-centred justice.



## 17 donors

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands	UNHCR	GIZ	Dutch Postcode Lottery	Mott Foundation	NYU CIC	
Municipality of The Hague	Picnic	EU	SIDA	IAALS	World Bank	Dutch Embassy Rwanda
Dutch Embassy Niger	Ministry of Justice and Security, the Netherlands	UNDP Tunisia	South Sudan	Nuremberg Academy		

## 16 general cooperation

OECD	IDLO	Pathfinders	WJP	Open Gov Partnership	UN Secretariat	The Elders	Namati
Clifford Chance	Wolters Kluwer	Arag Legal Insurers	Thomson Reuters	The Justice Leaders	UNDP	USAID	IAALS

## 49 local cooperation

Uganda 11	Mali 2	Nigeria 18	Ethiopia 1	The Netherlands 9	Tunisia 8
--------------	-----------	---------------	---------------	----------------------	--------------

## 8 interested countries

Morocco	Jordan	UAE	Sierra Leone	Colombia	Kenya	Yemen	Lebanon
---------	--------	-----	--------------	----------	-------	-------	---------



Over the years, HiiL has spared no effort to strengthen the global network of people-centred justice. In February 2021, we organised the [11th Innovating Justice Forum](#), welcoming high-level government officials from 16 countries and 577 professionals from around the world. At least 144 side events took place and over 170,000 people interacted via social media. We also held four Regional Consultation Meetings with officials representing ministries of justice from Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, and the UAE. Participants discussed shared challenges and opportunities in people-centred justice programming, and agreed on the parameters of an informal mechanism for collaboration.

Our role as changemaker in the people-centred justice network is increasingly gaining international recognition. In 2021, upon invitation, we provided 14 high quality inputs to international conferences and publications. This included the EU Presidency Conference on E-justice, Justice Leaders Summit, OECD A2J Round Table, Assembly of States of the ICC, Global Week of Justice, and the Global Dialogue of Justice Leaders, among others. At present, about 30 people from HiiL's network are part of the Pathfinder's People-Centred Justice Network.

Our contribution has broadened support for people-centred justice. An increasing number of donors are funding such programmes, led by HiiL and peer organisations. In 2021, we had 17 donors, several of which were new.<sup>3</sup> Sixteen international organisations cooperate with HiiL through regular meetings and exchanges. A total of 49 local organisations joined HiiL in programme delivery, of which 18 are based in Nigeria and 11 in Uganda. The number of countries expressing interest in HiiL's programme is also growing. The UAE, Morocco, Jordan, Colombia, Kenya, Yemen, Lebanon, and Sierra Leone have all connected with HiiL. Through this network approach, we have built a competitive advantage in supporting the people-centred justice movement and advancing a network committed to SDG 16.3.

<sup>3</sup> Donors include the Dutch Embassy in Rwanda; Dutch Embassy in Niger, and the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security.



*Family Justice Catalogue workshop in LCC Ntinda, Kampala, Uganda*

## A country-based approach

The close of 2021 marked the end of HiiL's 2020-2021 strategic period. During this time, we further developed and refined our methods, realigning HiiL's organisational structure to the newly established country approach with a global research and innovation programme.

To meet the needs of our new country-based strategy, we realigned the organisation in Autumn 2021 to focus on our country programmes. A Programme Director is now responsible for all activities implemented in each respective country, while the new Chief Operating Officer leads operations across HiiL. This approach facilitates HiiL's ability to have greater impact on the ground and concentrate on achieving important 'turning points' that can cement a people-centred justice.

HiiL's internal realignment has allowed us to increase the effectiveness of our internal knowledge development and transfer by organising our teams into 'practices'. These practices draw from experiences in the field (what works) and combines this with international research on effective justice intervention. Established at the end of 2021, practices will be fully implemented in 2022.

In addition, HiiL saw the need for a collective space where staff could gather to explore, exchange, and reflect on topics of interest that arise while fulfilling HiiL's mission. Our internal change initiatives team, set up during the realignment transition, will develop interactive exchanges over the course of 2022.

Overall, HiiL is determined to evolve based on experience and knowledge gained through the implementation of our programmes. Organisational learning will remain a high priority.





Insights gained from various country projects have shown that anchoring these projects in a country framework is the best way to make change happen. The interaction between data, the collection and sharing of best practices, scaling innovations, and creating an enabling environment makes a difference on the ground. The following three stories of people-centred justice in Nigeria, Uganda, and the Netherlands demonstrate the importance of a country-based approach.



# Making Ogun State the safest place to live, work and do business in Nigeria

Sola is the owner of a small family business. To expand her business, she bought land to build a new shop – a step forward from her original small kiosk. Sola paid for the land, received a Certificate of Occupancy from Nigeria’s Ministry of Lands, and broke ground to build her new business. Several weeks later, however, another person showed up with a second Certificate of Occupancy for the same plot of land. Confusion ensued and additional costs mounted as Sola was forced to resolve the dispute.

Unfortunately, Sola’s experience is not unusual in Nigeria. Estimates indicate that the country is faced with 25 million legal problems each year, including a growing number of land disputes. HiiL’s Justice Needs and Satisfaction survey shows that 17% of Nigerians report such disputes as having a severe impact on their lives. And although nearly three-quarters of Nigerians seek information or advice for their justice-related problems, much more can be done.

Against this background, HiiL and former Attorney General (AG) of Ogun State, Akingbolahan Adeniran, initiated a series of high-level consultations aimed at transforming the civil justice system. “Ogun State is an important economic and commercial hub neighbouring Lagos,” said Akingbolahan. “The AG’s office hears regularly from citizens who wish to improve the ease of doing business in our state.”

Recognising that business and justice are inextricably linked, the year-long Civil Justice Transformation Lab, a key tool of HiiL’s global mission to realise people-centred justice, developed a strategy and a report that outlines ‘what works’. Land, neighbour and family disputes were identified as the most pressing civil justice needs. Addressing each of these led to the development of the following four Civil Justice Transformation goals that could be achieved within a two- to three-year timeframe.

Goal 1: Ogun people will make land title registration more flexible, transparent and technologically driven to prevent land disputes.

Goal 2: Ogun people will increase their use of informal and local dispute resolution mechanisms to resolve neighbour issues.

Goal 3: Ogun people will have access to improved resolution of family disputes.

Goal 4: Ogun people will have fast and effective access to protection in the event of domestic violence.



*Stakeholder Dialogue in Ogun State, Nigeria*



Each goal features accompanying indicators (19 total) and three pathways that contribute to the broader ambition of Ogun State; namely, to transform attitudes, promote technology, and deploy (gamechanging) activities in the administration of civil justice.

Speaking at the May 2021 launch of the strategy in Abeokuta, Governor Prince Dapo Abiodun regarded efficient administration of justice as an important pillar and indicator towards the ease of doing business in any society.

*"It is our vision for Ogun State to be the safest place to live, to work and to do business,"* he declared.

As a practical guide, the Civil Justice Transformation strategy also emphasises new models and decentralising approaches to realise people-centred justice. This includes financing and implementing gamechanging services that will make Ogun State's justice sector affordable, accessible, and easy to understand.

"Delving deeper into the efficacy of the gamechangers reframed the debate," said Ijeoma Nwafor, HiIL's Justice Transformation Country Representative in Nigeria. "That discussion showed the importance of creating an 'enabling environment' that places people's needs ahead of institutional conveniences and the complacency of bureaucratic bottlenecks."

Organised in parallel with the stakeholder dialogues, the gamechangers lab facilitated a blueprint for Justice Transformation. By linking gamechangers to the ease of doing business and promoting people-centred justice, the lab allowed participants to think outside the box and to explore holistic solutions to improve life, work, and business in Ogun State.

Additionally, raising awareness of the importance and value of people-centred justice was a fundamental achievement and presented a successful SDG 16.3 example for realising justice for all. The Civil Justice Transformation strategy offers a comprehensive path forward for making people-centred justice possible not only in Ogun State, but across Nigeria.



# Placing people at the centre of justice delivery in Uganda

People-centred justice in Uganda has come a long way in seven years. In that time, HiiL's work has reinforced what many on the ground already knew and experienced: formal institutions were not delivering justice that was affordable, accessible, and easy to understand for the average Ugandan citizen.

In 2016, our Justice Needs and Satisfaction survey shed light on the justice gap in Africa's eighth most populous country. This data sparked a spirited conversation among justice leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs, researchers and law graduates, and the public at large about people-centred justice.

It is a truly unique story: Uganda is one of only two countries that has undertaken two Justice Needs and Satisfaction surveys and one electronic version, thus proving its strong commitment to data-informed decisions. As a result, Uganda has an impressive innovation ecosystem and is home to numerous successful justice innovators. There is a clear desire to improve how justice works for people, from magistrates and teachers to the JLOS network. "Innovators in Uganda have built a strong ecosystem amongst themselves. Small hubs like 'innovation villages' are forming, where (HiiL-supported) innovators gather and exchange ideas", explained Tim Verheij, Justice Sector Advisor at HiiL. The legal aid sector in Uganda also leads in evidence-based work, e.g. the Family Justice Catalogue, a guideline designed to resolving family problems.

Consider John's story. Forced off his family's land due to war, he returned to find a stranger had settled on six acres of his property. When direct conversations with the 'encroacher' failed, John and his family sought help from the Area Land Committee. This council — an informal mechanism with historical relevance to the community — mediated the dispute by convening the competing parties, which included John and his family. Following a series of interviews, the committee confirmed support and recognition from 25 individuals who legally and officially corroborated John's claim to the land.

## So, what works?

John's story is evidence of positive change in Uganda. However, the formal justice system remains inaccessible to the majority of Ugandans. This is the result of increased backlog, physical distance, and lack of trust. Nonetheless, community justice in Uganda is responding to people's needs. In addition to Area Land Committees, Community Justice Clinics are prioritising people-centred justice.

They are the outcome of HiiL's Justice Innovation Lab in 2021 and empower local council courts, trusted justice leaders, and thoughtful innovators to actively bring about transformational change. As a result, Ugandan justice leaders are prioritising Community Justice Clinics and connecting them with the formal justice sector to increase access to justice.



Photo: The Road Provides / Shutterstock

Through its information portal, a Community Justice Clinic gives people and their support networks access to accurate, easy-to-understand, and actionable information and self-help advice. This includes referrals to community justice providers. Each Community Justice Clinic is supported by a core staff, available in person, online, or via a toll-free helpline to assist users in accessing all services.

*“Hiil’s approach towards innovating justice cannot be overemphasised. It offers the justice users and actors the opportunity to define and map out their own justice needs before taking the lead in framing interventions suitable to the local context,”*

said Badru Walusansa, Director of Programmes at Legal Aid Service Providers Network (LASPNET), a coalition dedicated to expanding access to justice.

## The Business Resilience Programme

In addition to Community Justice Clinics, Hiil’s Justice Accelerator launched in March 2021 the Business Resilience Programme in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has negatively impacted justice sector startups. The programme supports seven justice startups – Bataka Courts, Evidence and Method Lab, Yunga, Legal Hub, Zzimba Games, Justice Bot, and Legit – that had previously completed Hiil’s Justice Accelerator programme.

“These organisations are vital to the innovation ecosystem in Uganda,” said Rachael Ampaire Mishambi-Wamahe, Hiil’s Programme Manager in Uganda. “The Business Resilience Programme offered tailored support based on the needs of the startups and ensured their viability and scalability during the COVID-19 crisis. Without it, Uganda’s justice sector would have suffered dramatically.”

Looking ahead to 2022, Uganda’s embrace of innovation and decisions that are backed by data promises to be a significant turning point in justice delivery. The entrepreneurial approach, combined with a growing need to solve problems and the political energy of justice leaders will offer important social and economic benefits to the country. These benefits reinforce the tangible and unique value of making justice available to all.



*Business Resilience Programme, Kampala, Uganda*

# Using research and innovation for conflict resolution in the Netherlands

A nasty divorce, a labour dispute gone sour, the consequences of an accident, or nuisance from a neighbour – these situations can bring people into serious trouble over a very long time. Justice practitioners are struggling to help people to resolve these issues. Costs are high, children pay a price, jobs are lost, and relationships are broken.

*Each year in the Netherlands, individuals report 2.4 million serious conflicts and small enterprises 1 million disputes.*

According to survey research, a decreasing proportion of these disputes is resolved by agreement or decision in a fair way (32% in 2019, down from 45% in 2009). Unresolved conflicts prevent people from functioning properly, come at the expense of social cohesion and individual health, and require a lot of time, energy and money.

Together with 19 partners in the justice research and innovation sector, HiiL is developing a programme to tackle this situation through coordinated research and innovation. A step-by-step development of best practices, informed by research, should help justice practitioners to increase resolution rates for the most pressing justice problems. Innovation in delivery models can ensure that more people benefit from effective assistance. During 2021, this programme development has been supported by the Municipality of The Hague and the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security.

The emerging proposal would assist the courts, legal professionals, and social-therapeutic helpers to resolve by 2030 80% of serious legal issues faced by small enterprises and citizens through amicable agreements or decisions. The partners believe this can be achieved by improving the effectiveness and optimisation of combining personal advice, facilitation, mediation, adjudication, and specialised interventions under judicial direction and in line with legal norms. A key goal is to reduce the legal complexity for people seeking a solution and to facilitate equal access to justice, especially when facing powerful parties.

An example is how to improve the prevention and resolution of disputes between neighbours, which research has shown is the most common justice problem people experience. In early 2022, HiiL began an innovation lab that focuses on nuisance issues in neighbourhoods, with the aim of combining current services and procedures into an integrated and effective pathway for justice.



*Stakeholder dialogue of the Changing Justice Gears project, the Netherlands*

## Better justice, happier people and economic growth

In developing the proposal for the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security, we learned much on the value of equal access to justice. Economists from Ecorys, an international research agency, analysed data on the economic and social effects of resolving justice problems quickly and effectively. If our proposal is implemented, this would lead to a contribution of 0,15 % of Dutch GDP. Every euro invested would generate € 18 in productivity gains and reduced transaction costs. It is estimated that a further € 60 would result in improved wellbeing and savings of healthcare and social services costs. Clearly, people-centred justice is not a zero sum game. It helps people in need, strengthens justice systems, increases overall wellbeing, and leads to growth in the economy.

One would think that people-centred justice would arise naturally. There is clearly supply and demand, but it requires cooperation. Partnerships are extremely important, but can be fragile. There is little long-term funding for sustainable relationships between key players. While there are many initiatives, both in policy and in practice, a connective network is lacking in which all these organisations and their respective activities can find and support each other. This compartmentalisation also impedes collective financing structures that are necessary to realise shared justice goals and the delivery of people-centred justice.

At the same time, constructive and inspiring conversations are taking place. One such example is the stakeholder dialogues of the *Changing Justice Gears* project. Over the course of several dialogue sessions, a group of 30 stakeholders, with various affiliations to the criminal justice system, explored how interventions and processes could be improved. For the participants from the criminal justice sector, these dialogues provided to be a unique opportunity for in-depth discussions on these themes, especially as many of them find little time for such fundamental reflection in their busy day-to-day professional lives. The aim was to develop a strategy for a more meaningful criminal justice system in terms of outcomes for offenders, victims, professionals, and society alike. 'Not the offence, but the person should be the central focus in finding meaningful solutions. In those cases where social or health problems are a relevant factor, the social and health domains should be involved. The criminal justice system can then play an instrumental role in support of the interventions from social or health care professionals,' one participant suggested.

The lesson learned is that comprehensive research and innovative efforts to improve the performance of the justice sector can have a considerable positive impact on the economy and wellbeing of the population. People-centred justice requires that the focus of practitioners and policymakers be on the actual outcomes for citizens – and that these be measured, monitored and continuously improved upon – rather than on the presumed outcomes based on laws that prohibit or prescribe behaviour.

"Justice practitioners want to be effective and valued. The benefits for people and the economy are huge, the business case is positive. The justice sector is crucial for resolving conflicts peacefully. The leaders in the sector now need to come together, and decide how to invest in R&D and innovation. In the end, this is about making the democratic and rule-based system work. Not only for the assertive few, but for all people equally," explained research director Maurits Barendrecht leading HiIL's work in the Netherlands.



# Looking ahead

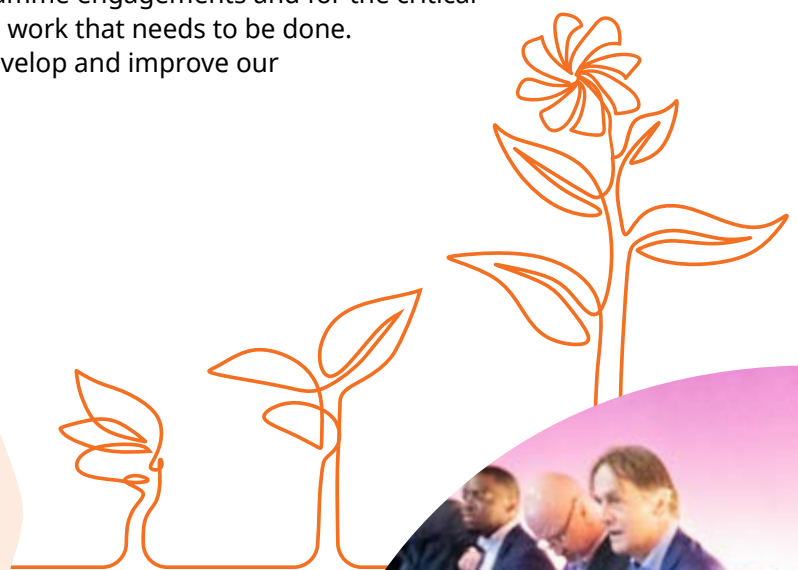
HiiL's 2020-2021 Strategy period, was a time of growth in which we further developed and refined our methods, and realigned HiiL's organisational structure to our new country approach with a global research and innovation programme.

The development and refinement of our methods in 2022 are based on research and learnings from the latter half of 2021. We saw that the justice marketplace is underdeveloped and unfriendly for users, and that justice sector leaders are unsure about what to do. System change is needed, but the pace is slow. The impact of this problem is becoming clearer and more painful.

Our research and learning helped us to develop more rigorous and comprehensive ways of working. Building on the five elements of people-centred justice programmes – the collection of data on the needs and experiences of people, moving to evidence-based practice, developing gamechanging justice services, creating an enabling environment and ensuring engagement and accountability – we tested new methods; some are at an early stage, others are more advanced. This work will continue.

We have adopted a guiding principle for 2022-2024: in the countries where we work, we aim for a 'turning point' towards people-centred justice. Each context is unique, but generally a 'turning point' is reached when a country has laid the foundation for implementing the core elements of people-centred justice. We want to help set in motion a genuine and sustained transformation from an institutional focus to people-centred justice. This "people first" approach, with its five elements, is HiiL's way to achieve this. At the time of writing, our focus countries are Uganda, Tunisia, Nigeria, Niger, Ethiopia, and the Netherlands. We will continue to develop our methods, in particular around innovation labs and stakeholder dialogues. We will work hard to engage more funding partners for larger, multi-year programme engagements and for the critical research and innovation work that needs to be done. Lastly, we will further develop and improve our strategic engagement.

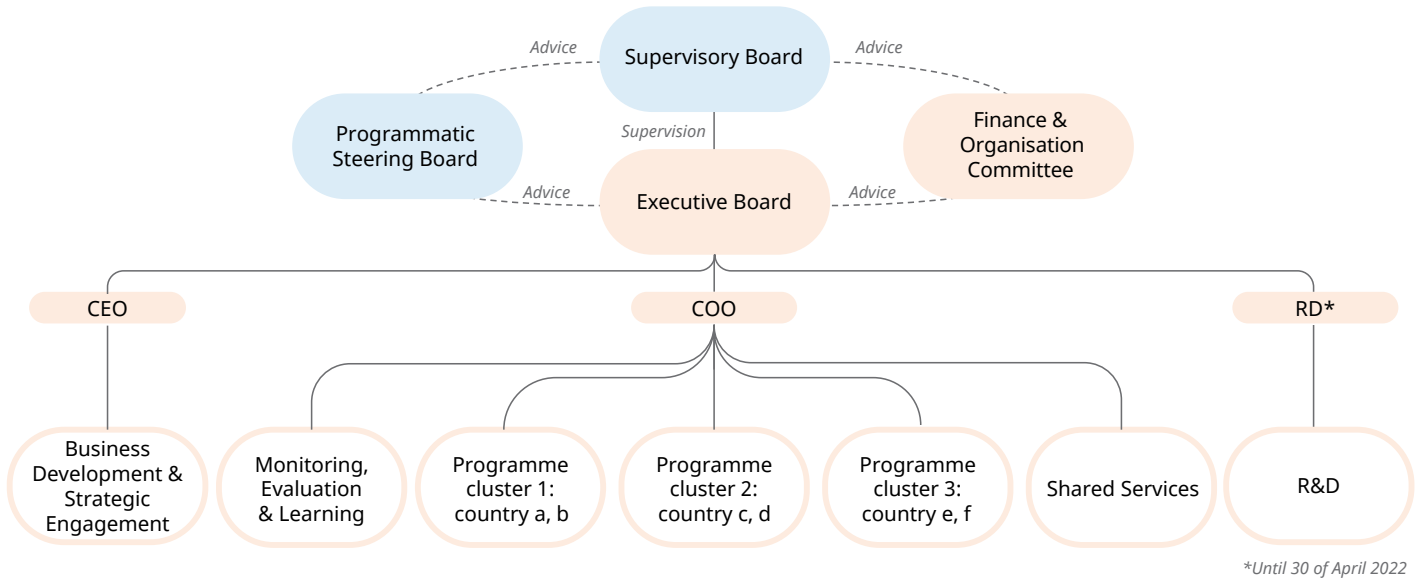
Our values continue to guide us: we are friendly rebels who think outside the box, but who are deeply grounded in reality and embrace diversity. We put people at the centre of everything we do, including running an organisation in which people grow and feel well.





# The organisation Hiil

## Hiil management and department structure



## Governance & management

We are delighted to have appointed Dr. Priscilla Schwartz, the former Attorney General of Sierra Leone, as member of our Supervisory Board, who joined on 16 March 2021.

- ➔ the Supervisory Board, which provides overall strategic supervision and advice. It also approves the annual budget and the annual accounts of the past year;
- ➔ the Executive Board, which is responsible for the execution of the strategy and daily management. They went from two to three members and are part of a senior management team that does this;
- ➔ the Programmatic Steering Board, which advises the Supervisory Board and the Executive Board on strategic issues of substance.



## Supervisory Board

In 2021, the Supervisory Board consisted of the following members:

- Mr. Haro Schultz van Haegen (Chair)
- Ms. Leoni Cuelenaere
- Dr. Priscilla Schwartz
- Mr. Edmond Wellenstein
- Ms. Frederieke Leeftang (1 July 2021- 8 December 2021)

The Supervisory Board met four times in 2021 to discuss the progress of the organisational activities. Detailed information about the Supervisory Board members can be found on the HiIL website.

## Executive Board and Senior Management Team

In 2021, the Executive Board consisted of Sam Muller (Chair) and Maurits Barendrecht (Director Research & Development), who were joined by Shekhar Pula (COO) in November. In 2021 the Senior Management Team had the following members:



**Sam Muller**  
CEO and chair



**Shekhar Pula**  
COO



**Maurits Barendrecht**  
Director Research  
& Development



**Claudia Heemskerck**  
Director Shared Services



**Britt van der Donk**  
Director Project  
Management

The Senior Management Team meets every three weeks to discuss HiIL's daily management, organisational goals and strategy.

## Programmatic Steering Board

In 2021, the Programmatic Steering Board consisted of the following members:

- Prof. Gillian Hadfield (Chair)
- Ms Giuliana Ortega
- With the passing of Innocent Chukwuma, there was one vacant seat, which was filled by Paul Kimalu, as per 3 December 2021.

The Programmatic Steering Board met twice in 2021.

A photograph of a man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, speaking and gesturing with his right hand. He is seated at a table. In the background, a purple banner with the text 'JUSTICE IN UGANDA' is visible. The image is partially framed by a white curved border on the left and bottom.

# Partners and Donors

We value highly the role of partnerships in achieving SDG 16.3 and HiiL's mission.

HiiL's people-centred justice programmes bring a unique and tangible value. We strive to make justice systems more people-centred, by working together with actors who want to change the justice sector for the better. These include general cooperation partners globally and local partners in the countries where we work.

In line with our strategy, HiiL diversified and increased its funding base in 2021. We continue to work towards more multi-year, large-scale partnerships in the public and private sectors. We are delighted to have concluded our third long-term multi-country partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, our main donor. We would like to thank all the partners we have worked with and who have placed their trust in us.

We are learning that it is challenging to involve funders from the private sector in the people-centred justice transformation that HiiL stands for. Most of the funding comes from ODA sources. Yet funding from other sources is critical for success. In particular to fund the research and development that is needed for people-centred justice programming. We are working to develop cases for support and value propositions for this and welcome more engagement in this field.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
The Netherlands



European Union



Sweden  
Sverige

Swedish International  
Development Agency



UNHCR  
The UN Refugee Agency

United Nations  
High Commissioner  
for Refugees



Dutch Postcode  
Lottery



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

United Nations Development  
Programme



The Hague

Municipality of  
The Hague



IAALS



Mott Foundation



World Bank

PATHFINDERS

FOR PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

NYU | CENTER ON  
INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION

University of New York  
(Center on International  
Cooperation)



Ministerie van Justitie  
en Veiligheid

Ministry of Justice and Security,  
The Netherlands

...and other  
partners



The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law  
+31 70 762 0700  
info@hiil.org  
www.hiil.org