

» Hiil East Africa Hub

2020 Year In Review

© 2020 The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without full attribution.

Message From The Justice Accelerator Head- East Africa

As we turn back the pendulum to reflect on, commemorate and bid farewell to 2020, we entrust ourselves to the duty of holding space to the lives that have been lost, the devastation the pandemic has caused but most importantly, we enshrine ourselves to the continued fight to building a better world for everyone.



Eric Mwangi Kariuki

Justice Accelerator Head - East Africa

*"Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will **lead others to join you.**"*

- Ruth Bader Ginsburg, US Supreme Court Justice.

Justice remains at the heart of our socio-economic development and it is important we assume the responsibility of addressing the long-term drivers of inequality. In the *Justice for All report* released in 2019, the Task Force on Justice noted that 1.5 billion people had a justice problem that they could not resolve. Marginalized communities, already poorly served by justice systems, faced the highest risks while vulnerable groups continued to be disproportionately affected.

Whilst health remained the focal point of the global response this year, justice was equally on the front line. Justice actors continued to face daunting responsibilities as they designed, implemented, and enforced new measures to prevent the spread of infection while fighting against the risk of human rights abuses. Furthermore, the economic downturn that ensued made common justice problems become more prominent. Disputes over housing and land, employment disputes, problems with debt, domestic violence, and access to public services became more exacerbated.

However, despite the myriad ongoing challenges, there is a ray of hope as new impactful innovations, collaborations and partnerships emanate to tackle these problems. As such access to justice continues to be a key priority for HiiL East Africa in our ongoing work to find and support innovative solutions that help ordinary people prevent and resolve their justice problems. We will not be able to reduce this justice gap without significant action and reform by the legal profession, adoption of innovation and putting people at the center of the justice system.

This year we had the pleasure of supporting three Justice Innovations from East Africa: One from Kenya and two from Tanzania through our Justice Accelerator Programme, that were directly leading this transformation. One of these was ESS Legal Assurance that has provided legal services to more than 1200 people and SMEs through an affordable subscription model. The other is Sheria Kiganjani which is a mobile application that provides Tanzanians with an opportunity to access legal information in an easy and understandable way and in a language they understand. And finally Tenrent which provided 200 tenancy agreements to tenants working with 5 landlords in Nairobi.

Moreover, we recently selected 4 new justice entrepreneurs to join our 2020/21 cohort.

Lastly, financing for access to justice is also central to closing the justice gap. Funding for access to justice has declined by 40% in the last 4 years and the economic downturn puts even greater pressure on financing. Hence, we look forward to working with more local and regional partners and donors in the coming years to support our work.

As we look towards the future, *justice has a central role* in building a fairer world after the pandemic. It is time for a commitment to justice in its broadest sense – as a system that protects those who need it most, that promotes fairness in the economy, and that strengthens the bonds which bring us together as a society.



This year has been like something from a movie scene! The year where we spent the most time locked up in houses involuntarily, we learnt to bake banana bread and cinnamon rolls, we started yoga and home workout routines then we fell off. We hoarded toilet paper and food stuff like there was an upcoming apocalypse and fought each other to get the last items on the supermarket shelves.



Masks have become a part of our outfits with some people choosing to match the fabric of their clothes to their mask #SWAGG!

Children stayed home and learnt through zoom, where their attention was competing with the many distractions in the house. Our meetings now with backgrounds of our beds or kitchens and with constant phrases like, *"Can You See My Screen? Can you Hear Me?"*

It has also been a year where we have experienced injustices like police brutality that has unfortunately led to the loss of lives and the abuse of human rights. Many people also lost their jobs/ businesses as a result of the dipping economic status accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

As an institution we advocate for justice for all people and we continue to work towards our vision to ensure that by 2030, 150 million people are able to prevent and resolve their most pressing justice problems.

Though the year was turbulent, there is a lot to be grateful for and we choose to look back, thankful that we have gotten this far and hopeful that whatever 2021 throws our way, good or bad, we have the tenacity to face it. As an organisation we are grateful for our partners, innovators and wider audience. You are awesome!

Hiil East Africa - Who We Are, What We Do

Hiil (The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law) is a social enterprise devoted to user-friendly justice. That means justice that is easy to access, easy to understand, and effective. We will ensure that by 2030, 150 million people will be able to prevent or resolve their most pressing justice problems. We do this by stimulating innovation and scaling what works best. We are friendly rebels focused on concrete improvements in the lives of people. Data and evidence are central in all that we do.

2020 Key Activities:

Sankalp Africa Event:

We participated in the Annual Africa Sankalp Forum hosted by Intellectap on 27th - 28th February 2020. The event themed around scaling entrepreneurship for the achievement of the SDGs brought together a wide number of participants across Africa and Asia. Innovators, Donors, Investors were well represented at the event and provided a unique opportunity to initiate a conversation on SDG 16.3 Access to Justice.

Whilst there has been tremendous effort for other SDGs especially around poverty eradication, energy access, health and agriculture, access to justice remains an elusive point of departure. The key takeaway is how we articulate the value for innovation and entrepreneurship around issues of justice and more so how we intersect with the other SDGs. Overall a unique opportunity to learn, share and connect.



From left to right: Donald Maasa(LegIT), Simba Mubvuma(Lawbasket), Kwame Yeboah (Approve) and Paul Kwesi Damalie(Approve)

Africa Lawtech Festival:

On 6TH-10TH March, we participated in the Africa Lawtech Festival hosted by the Lawyers Hub in Nairobi, where Hiil was an official partner. This event brought together stakeholders in the Justice and entrepreneurship ecosystem, Technologists and Policy makers.

The event also hosted other special events such as Global Legal Hackathon, Nairobi edition, Legal Tech Academy and the Digital Rights Concert presented a unique nexus to address issues around policy, innovation and technology in Africa. As the core partner for the Global Legal Hackathon, Eric was at the forefront of mentoring 8 innovators who were pitching. Lastly five of our current previous Justice innovators participated. These were: Barefoot Law and LegalIT from Uganda, Lawbasket from Zimbabwe, Wakili Mkononi from Kenya and Approve from Ghana.

Our Impact: Innovating Justice Challenge:

On 10th June 2020, East Africa together with the rest of the regions launched the Innovating Justice Challenge. We ran a 8 week long digital campaign seeking to get startups across East Africa to apply for the challenge for a chance to get selected to join the Justice Accelerator.

Throughout the campaign we were able to engage with our social media audience as well as increase awareness about prevailing justice issues in the region. We were excited to get 74 completed submissions from the region. The applications came from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania,



Hiil East Africa Podcast Launch:

We launched the *Hiil East Africa Podcast*, where we hold conversations with relevant stakeholders on how to make justice accessible to the community.

[Click here](#) to listen to previous episodes.

Startup Lobbying Podcasts:

On 30th June & 7th July, 2020 in collaboration with Metta Nairobi, we had a two-part series podcast session where the discussion was centered around how startups can be involved in the policy making process.



PLAY

Part one of the discussion was with:

- » Ali Hussein- *Co Founder & CEO Kipochi*
- » Linda Bonyo- *Founder & CEO Lawyers Hub*
- » Daniel Ngugi- *Head Legal & Administration Twiga Foods*
- » Eric Kariuki- *Regional Representative Hiil*

The panelists showcased why it is important for startups to take a proactive stand to engage the government in the law making process despite the struggles they face such as limited capital, high tax rates and global pandemics like COVID-19. It is also key for startups to understand the regulations within the sectors they operate in and engage in public participation to engage with the government regarding public affairs. Startups were reminded that they cannot operate in a grey area, that they operate in a society where the government has to regulate therefore it is prudent for startups to be on the forefront of policy making as partners to regulators and lawmakers.



PLAY

They highlighted the importance of SMEs through the private sector representatives engaging with the government to highlight the policy gaps there are.

They also discussed steps that can be taken to influence policies such Startup acts, and the strategies startups can employ for aggregating and speaking in one voice to influence laws. The panelists encouraged startups to engage in advocacy to ensure that their voices were heard by policy makers.

Part two of the discussion was with:

- » Florence Kimata- *Business Reform Specialist, Ministry of East Africa Community*
- » Patrick Tonui- *Regional Representative GOGLA*
- » Victor Ogalo- *Head of Policy Research, Analysis & Public-Private Dialogue KEPSA*
- » Eric Kariuki- *Regional Representative Hiil*

Creating a Suitable Environment

For Juvenile Inmates :

HiiL East Africa came together with Wakili.sha Initiative on 17th July to host a webinar discussing how to create a suitable Environment for Juvenile inmates in celebration of Nelson Mandela Day- a day set aside to honor the former South African president and his values, through volunteering and community service. Wakili.sha Initiative is an organisation focused on increasing access to justice to children that are in conflict with the law.

The discussion highlighted the challenges that juvenile inmates face under the law and the steps that can be taken to protect juvenile inmates from such injustices. According to the Kenyan law, children as young as 14 may also be sentenced to adult prisons by juvenile courts or transferred to adult prisons from approved schools. Courtrooms and prisons often present an intimidating and frightening environment for children and their cases are often rushed without properly explaining to the children where they are being sent, the duration of their sentence and the laws they have broken. Most boys that have been sentenced receive no academic education at all and are assigned to work where they perform hard labor around the prison grounds, and train in tailoring, carpentry, sign writing, brick making, and agricultural work. A very small number are placed in a schools for standards seven and eight only.

Communitas:

In August, we incorporated Communitas Limited as a local non profit in Kenya. Communitas is dedicated to finding and supporting the world best justice entrepreneurs in East Africa. In collaboration with the Hague Institute for Innovation (HiiL), we endeavour to bridge the justice gap and provide justice that is affordable, fast, accessible, easy to understand and one that delivers fair outcomes.

Communitas Mission: **By 2030, 50 million people are able to prevent and resolve their most pressing justice problems in East Africa.**

Communitas believes that in order to have impactful, people-centered justice we need to work on systemic, scalable solutions for governments, organisations, and justice entrepreneurs. That is:

- » We help governments and organisations make justice innovation strategies.
- » We help promising justice entrepreneurs scale and increase their impact.
- » We create enabling ecosystems that minimize justice barriers, enhance justice outcomes and create jobs.

Justice Innovation In Kenya

On 27th August 2020, 10th Constitution Day of Kenya, the Alternative Justice Policy was officially launched by the Hon. Chief Justice of Kenya, David Maraga. The launch took place in the presence of the Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) Task Force among the members of the judiciary. The Policy and the Hackathon that followed showcased HiiL's contribution in different facets of fostering justice innovation through its unique methodology and way of working.

The event was the culmination of a 3-year engagement with the Judiciary in Kenya which had initially commissioned HiiL with the creation of a Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey (JNS) in 2017. The JNS aimed at understanding justice needs of the people in Kenyan.



“The launch of the AJS Policy proves the transformative nature of the judiciary. It joins mediation and arbitration that have already been rolled out with tremendous success”.

- Hon. Anne Amadi - Chief Registrar of Kenya Judiciary

Alternative Justice Systems Task Force - The mandate of the Task force was to develop a policy to mainstream Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) to enhance access to, and expedite justice delivery. The AJS Taskforce put together a Policy on Alternative Justice Systems, which relies heavily on the findings of the HiiL JNS (Page 9 of the Baseline Document, Page 3 of the Policy Framework).

■ Policy:

The AJS Policy provides far-reaching changes to promote and enhance the mainstreaming of emerging and cross-cutting issues in AJS legislation, policy and mechanisms. This includes procedural and substantive legislative changes while stressing the importance of innovative ways to integrate AJS with the traditional justice delivery mechanism.

■ Legal Hackathon:

To add to this synergy of research leading to transformation on the ground, HiiL's work on justice innovation was furthered by a Legal Hackathon. Along with the launch of the Policy, Lawyers Hub Kenya was invited to organise a Legal Hackathon to inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship in justice delivery as well as to create and support new initiatives. Lawyers Hub is a technology-policy organisation and an active collaborator of the HiiL Justice Accelerator and its supported innovators in the region.

The winner of the Hackathon, project "Justice" by Allan Mutuma and team, were supported by HiiL with a prize amount of 1.000 EUR. Their winning idea aims to facilitate the Alternative Justice System policy by linking disputants with village elders, local church leaders and acknowledged conflict resolvers via a web based platform supported by a USSD code.

Alternative Justice Policy Launch

From organising the Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey to supporting the Hackathon to developing new justice innovations - HiiL's approach of research, providing justice leaders with data to bring transformation and forming part of the local ecosystem to inculcate innovation - came alive to further user-friendly justice.



Africa Legal Innovation Awards 2020:

At the just concluded **Africa Legal Innovation Week 2020**, held virtually from the 1st - 4th of December, the organizers, *Africa Law Tech* recognized Eric Kariuki - *Justice Accelerator Head (East Africa)* among 50 Africans making great strides in legal innovation at the Africa Legal Innovation Awards, 2020.

Bootcamp & Kick Off Event:

We had a Bootcamp training session that took place from the 22ND - 28TH of September which brought together 7 StartUps that had been shortlisted from the interviews conducted earlier in the month. The participants of this training were the startups from the Innovating Justice Challenge that were in the process of being selected for the Accelerator programme. The startups were observed for the judges to get a better understanding of the startups, as well as the entrepreneurs in lead, try to better understand where they need help and what HiiL can do to help them.

After the Bootcamp we had the Kickoff Pitch event that we labeled "Grass Root Voices: Bridging the Justice Gap," it doubled up as a red table discussions presenting different perspectives on Activism, Innovation, Research & Policy development as means of bridging the justice gap, and, as a pitch event where the selected startups presented what their startup does for an opportunity to join the HiiL Justice Accelerator (HJA) Academy.

2020/21 Justice Accelerator Cohort:

We selected four startups from the 74 East African applications for the Innovating Justice Challenge to join the Academy. The Academy is HJA's flagship training in the Accelerator programme. The Academy takes place once per cycle and usually happens in The Hague but due to the COVID-19 global situation, it is being held virtually. Hence this year's Academy includes 25 sessions delivered to the global cohort of 22 StartUps across 5 regions by the HiiL Justice Accelerator team and a network of knowledge partners over the course of 5 months.

The Academy sessions kicked off on 25th November 2020 and will run for the period of the Accelerator Programme. Topics are diverse and will include: lean analytics, impact measurement, commercial strategy, marketing, financial modeling, partnerships and fundraising. The participants of the Academy tend to be founders or senior management of the startups.

The four selected participants for the accelerator programme cut across different sectors we have:

- » Shema Steve - *Exuus Limited* (www.exuus.com)
- » Innocent Tshilombo - *Kakuma Ventures* (www.kakumaventures.com)
- » Marita Mutemi - *Peleza International* (www.peleza.com)
- » Muiruri Wanyoike - *Utatuzi Centre* (www.utatuzicenter.com)



exuus

Shema Steve

Exuus

Through flagship product Save - A digital wallet for collective saving scheme, our goal is to enable grassroots communities to achieve universal financial inclusion.



Innocent Tshilombo

Kakuma Venture

Kakuma Venture enables African refugees to become Entrepreneurs by establishing businesses that employ, empower and serve refugees through capital leasing and access to connectivity.



Marita Mutemi

Peleza

Through our "Know your employee" solution, we check your hires' credentials giving you objective and timely information into their skills, competencies, capabilities and character to make an informed hiring decision.



Muiruri Wanyoike

Utatuji Centre

Utatuji Centre is a startup that provides preemptive and proactive dispute resolution through the combination of technology and alternative dispute resolution strategies.

Outlook For 2021:

As we launch the new East African Hub our activities will still be centered on our mission of finding and supporting justice entrepreneurs who are helping people prevent and resolve their justice problems.

Specifically we will focus on:

- » *Finding and accelerating 5 Justice Innovators from East Africa through the HiiL Justice Accelerator Programme*
- » *Building a vibrant community of change makers in the justice and entrepreneurship ecosystem through our Justice Nexus events*
- » *Building meaningful partnerships with different stakeholders to further our mission.*

We look forward to an exciting year and hope to deliver fulfilling outcomes to multitudes of people who face injustice in the region.



The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law
E-mail: justinnovateEA@hiil.org
www.hiil.org

    [HiiL Justice Accelerator EA](#)