



Hortência, one of Namati's Right to Health program officers, works with community members in Inhambane, Mozambique.

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PUTTING THE POWER OF **LAW** IN PEOPLE'S HANDS

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2016

**NAMATI** CONVENES THE GLOBAL LEGAL  
EMPOWERMENT NETWORK





1,000

ORGANIZATIONS

150

COUNTRIES

In 2016, the Global Legal Empowerment Network grew to nearly 1,000 organizations advancing justice across 150 countries.

Namati and our implementing partners worked directly with over 15,000 clients to address pressing justice challenges in 8 countries.

15,000+

CLIENTS

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AUBREY WADE, NAMATI

### Dear Friends,

We are engaged in a vital struggle, in a brutal time. With authoritarianism and nativism rising, Namati and our many partners around the world are fighting to protect basic rights.

We are working with communities who have been vilified and excluded to secure the documents that prove their citizenship. We are working with farmers to recover land that was stolen from them by corporations or by their own governments. We are challenging broken health systems and unlawful pollution.

In the last five years we have proven that community paralegals and their clients can take on some of the toughest forms of injustice and win. And we have built the first global network dedicated to legal empowerment – now nearly 1,000 groups from 150 countries.

We are called in this moment to do much more. Our world is profoundly unequal. Authoritarians are responding to this inequality by scapegoating minorities and promising to turn systems upside down.

We have an alternative: deepening democracy rather than giving up on it. Transforming institutions rather than abandoning them. Succeeding in this struggle is going to require much more of us, from many more of us. I hope all of you will be a part of it.

With love and respect,

– VIVEK MARU, CEO



### Implementing partners:

Association of Human Rights Watch & Defense / Centre for Policy Research / Civil and Political Rights Campaign Group / Community Self Reliance Centre / Council of Minorities / Green Peasants Institute / Haki Centre / Janabhivyakti / Karen Environmental and Social Action Network / Kenya Land Alliance / Keonjhar Integrated Rural Development and Training Institute / Kivulini Trust / Land and Equity Movement of Uganda / Nubian Rights Forum / Ogiek People's Development Program / Petauke District Land Alliance / Share Mercy / Sustainable Development Institute / Than Lwin Thitsar / Upper Chindwin Youth Network / Wajir Human Rights Network



Ruma and her daughter outside their home in one of the camps of the minority Urdu-speaking community in Bangladesh.

© LAURA GOODWIN, NAMATI

1,912

LEGAL IDENTITY  
DOCUMENTS

**A team of 33 paralegals supported individuals from historically excluded communities in Kenya and Bangladesh to secure 1,912 legal identity documents.**

## SECURING CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS IN THE FACE OF DISCRIMINATION BANGLADESH



Ruma's daughter was approaching school age, but there was a problem: her daughter didn't have a birth certificate. Ruma couldn't enroll her in school without one.

Ruma lives in one of the camps of Bangladesh's Urdu-speaking community, a minority group whose citizenship was not confirmed until 2008. Residents of these camps often do not understand their citizenship rights or how to get their documents, or they face discrimination when applying.

Fortunately, Ruma learned of Namati's partner, Council of Minorities, and their community paralegals who could help her through the process. It was intimidating at first, Ruma admits, but she's glad she did it. "I got the certificate of my daughter and I can admit my daughter in school," she says happily. Ruma now plans to help others get their documents and realize their rights to citizenship, too. [Read more](#)

## PROTECTING COMMUNITY LAND RIGHTS SIERRA LEONE



Fanta Sia Nyanda awoke to shocking news. The local chiefs had sold her family's land, and that of 70 other families in Nimiyama Chiefdom, to a Chinese rubber company. For most of the families, farming this land was their entire livelihood.

Namati paralegals worked with the families to understand their rights – what the chiefs had done was illegal under Sierra Leonean law. When negotiations failed, they took the case to court – and won. In a landmark judgment, the court restored all 1,486 acres to the families and ordered that they be paid a compensation equivalent to US\$85,000.

Fanta was overjoyed. "The law has come to our aid," she said. "We now have confidence that the courts can work for us." [Read more](#)

Fanta was one of over 70 clients whose land was returned after a high court ruling.

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90+

COMMUNITIES

**A team of 8 paralegals assisted more than 90 communities in negotiations with investors.**



Kenya Land Alliance facilitator, Yusuf Uleta (left), reviews a draft map with a chief of Handaraku community.

© MARENA BRINKHURST, NAMATI



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COMMUNITIES

**A team of 240 paralegals worked with 46 communities across 6 countries to adopt clear rules for local land governance.**

## PROTECTING COMMUNITY LAND RIGHTS KENYA



Community land is vital to the people of Handaraku, in Tana River county, Kenya. As pastoralists, they have depended on the common pastures and rivers to raise their cattle for generations. But their status as stewards of the land is undocumented. Companies and powerful individuals take advantage of communities like this, grabbing their resources and displacing families.

By working with Namati, the Kenya Land Alliance, and Oxfam, the people of Handaraku learned to use Kenyan law to protect their rights. In 2016, they documented their land governance by-laws and used GPS mapping to record the boundaries of their lands. In the words of Mzee Dido, a community mobilizer and elder: "this mapping and our community by-laws will protect our lands from investors coming to grab lands." [Read more](#)

## REVERSING DECADES OF LAND GRABBING MYANMAR



For decades, the Burmese military seized land across Myanmar. In Eastern Shan province, they took Daw Mya's land to plant teak trees for their private profit. When the government began to address these seizures in 2012, Daw Mya made multiple appeals for her land and was ignored. In 2015, she met a paralegal from Namati's partner organization, Than Lwin Thitsar. Together, they collected official records and presented their case directly to the military. When negotiations failed, they wrote to every local body involved in land rights issues. Their letters led to an investigation. In 2016, a military-controlled civilian body ruled in Daw Mya's favor. After nearly 20 years, her land was returned. Daw Mya's victory sparked investigations into eight more cases nearby – all of which returned land to the rightful owners. [Read more](#)

A woman farms her land in the village of Dwar Ther Hle, Myanmar.

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5,000+

INDIVIDUALS

**A team of 75 paralegals working across 4 states in Myanmar helped 5,000+ farmers secure administrative recognition of their land rights, including obtaining the return of seized land in 25 cases.**



The village head of Muldwakarka  
stands outside Ambuja Cement factory.

© VIJAY RATHOD, CBR-NAMATI

20

REMEDIES

A team of 7 paralegals worked with 600+ clients in India to achieve  
20 improvements in industry compliance with environmental regulations.

## CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND PRACTICE INDIA



For years, the improper handling of coal and cement at Ambuja Cement's jetty polluted the air near the Muldwakarka Port in Gujarat, India. Villagers worried that the dust posed health risks and farmers complained that it damaged their crops and fields.

The community wanted clean air and crops but was unsure what to do. "We knew the Pollution Control Board was responsible but we did not know where to go, which officer to meet and how to complain," explains village head, Kishore Chagan Sikotaria.

By working with a paralegal from a joint Centre for Policy Research-Namati program, the community learned how to collect and present evidence for their case. The Pollution Control Board ordered Ambuja Cement to comply with existing environmental guidelines. Soon, Kishore says, the air was clearer than it had been in years. [Read more](#)

## REALIZING THE RIGHT TO HEALTH MOZAMBIQUE



Mozambique has a policy: elderly patients should receive priority attention at all health facilities. But in 2016, Namati community paralegals heard stories about this policy being ignored. Elderly patients were neglected, even mistreated at some facilities.

71-year-old Rosita was one such patient. "I would leave my home at 4:30 a.m. to arrive at the health center by 6, but often I waited until 11 to be seen," she explains. "They would say to us, 'You're practically dead. Why are you here? You're just taking up space.'"

Namati worked alongside village health committee members to sensitize clinic staff to elderly needs and the health risks of ignoring them. Together, they made changes, including adding priority seating in crowded waiting rooms. Elderly patients like Rosita are now getting the care they deserve. [Read more](#)

508

RESOLUTIONS

Elderly women at a community  
meeting in southern Mozambique.  
© ELLIE FEINGLASS, NAMATI

A team of 26 paralegals worked with 2,000+ community members to resolve 508  
breakdowns in healthcare delivery in Mozambique, including improvements  
to quality of care, access, and supplies.

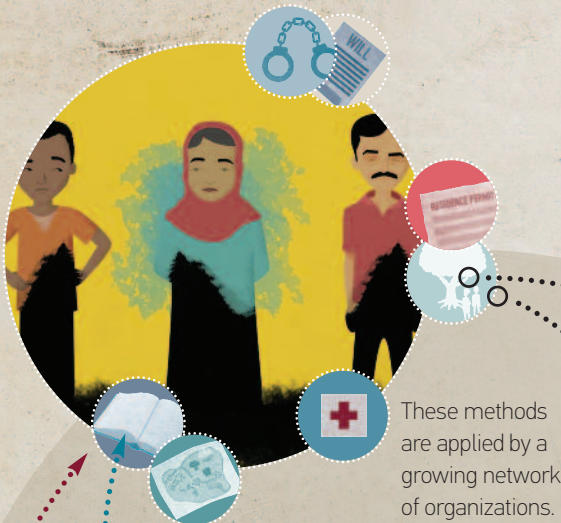


## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



### GRASSROOTS INNOVATION

With implementing partners, we develop methods by which community paralegals and clients tackle major justice challenges.



These methods are applied by a growing network of organizations.

Insights from throughout the network inform our own continual experimentation.

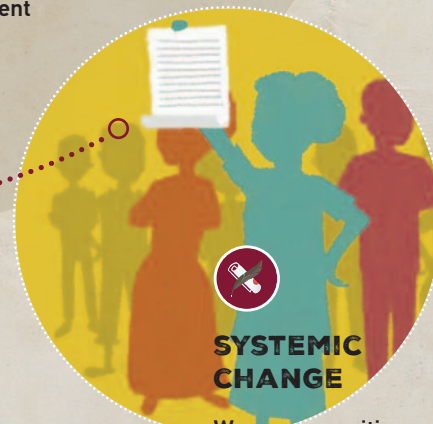


### GLOBAL LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

We foster learning and collaboration across the legal empowerment community.

National and global coalitions advocate for large-scale structural changes based on data from grassroots experience.

Paralegals work with communities to bring positive new laws and policies to life.



### SYSTEMIC CHANGE

We secure positive, large-scale changes based on data from grassroots experience.





## GLOBAL LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

The [Global Legal Empowerment Network](#), which Namati convenes, is the world's largest community of grassroots justice practitioners and advocates. In 2016, the network grew to nearly 1,000 groups from 150 countries, an increase of 80%. We learned from each other on our online discussion platform and at in-person events such as the [2nd annual legal](#)

[empowerment leadership course](#) and learning exchanges in [Tanzania](#) and [Kenya](#). From Nigeria to Argentina to the Philippines, members persuaded governments to act on the historic commitment to access to justice in the Sustainable Development Goals. Together, we are building a global movement working to advance justice throughout the world.



## SYSTEMIC CHANGE



Our paralegals collect data on every case they handle. This creates a powerful map of how laws and systems are working in practice, something often no one else has. In 2016, we used that information to successfully advocate with our clients for 12 systemic changes that affected hundreds of millions of people.

- » **Mozambique** approved a five-year strategy for improving the quality of health services. Namati played a key role in its drafting, successfully advocating for a more active role for village health committees and communities in assessing health services and resolving grievances.
- » Namati and partners established a coalition for the protection of citizenship rights in **Kenya**. The group has made recommendations to the Registration of Persons Bill and submitted a letter with 1,000 signatures to 40 Members of Parliament demanding improved access to citizenship documentation for all and limitations to discretionary processes that lead to discrimination.
- » Paralegals and clients compelled the fisheries department of Karnataka state, **India** to [issue an order](#) to bull trawlers to comply with a regulation prohibiting them from fishing up to 12 nautical miles off the coast, in the territorial waters of the state. Strict implementation of this order will improve the livelihoods of 60,000+ traditional fisherfolk.
- » **Myanmar's** new National Land Use Policy incorporated [recommendations made by Namati](#), including permitting joint land registration, acknowledging customary land rights tenure, and promoting women in land decision-making processes.

## Publications

Namati is a learning organization. We publish and share lessons from everything we do. In 2016, we authored or co-authored over 40 publications, including policy briefs, practitioner guides, articles, and op-eds.

- » Our team draws on years of multi-country experience in our step-by-step [“how to” guide](#) for grassroots advocates working to help communities protect their land.
- » Our [right to health manual](#) is recognized as an official training guide by the Ministry of Health in Mozambique.
- » Namati’s CEO and policy director propose indicators for [measuring access to justice](#) in THE GUARDIAN.
- » Kanchi Kohli and Manju Menon from Namati-CPR explain why India’s environmental regulations won’t work unless communities have a meaningful role in enforcement in THE HINDU.
- » Sonkita Conteh of Namati Sierra Leone describes how [paralegals can counteract the power imbalances](#) that characterize natural resource exploitation in THIS IS AFRICA.
- » Our CEO gives the closing talk at the Oslo Freedom Forum, titled [“Rule of Law for All”](#).

## Media Coverage

We are dedicated to raising the global profile of legal empowerment around the world. In 2016, Namati and/or the Global Legal Empowerment Network were featured, quoted or interviewed in the media over 60 times.

- » [“A New League Of ‘Barefoot Lawyers’ Will Transform Justice In The Next 15 Years”](#) - FORBES.
- » [“It takes more than a law to ensure equal land rights for women”](#) - REUTERS.
- » [“Sierra Leone Land Grab Thwarted”](#) - BBC AFRICA.
- » [“Poor law: The rise of paralegals”](#) - THE ECONOMIST.



## Thank you to our supporters

Open Society Foundations / UK Department for International Development / Skoll Foundation / Centers for Disease Control / USAID / David Weekley Foundation / International Development Research Centre / Development Alternatives, Inc. / Omidyar Network / 11th Hour Project / European Climate Foundation / Lipman Prize for Social Entrepreneurship / Oxfam / Peery Foundation / Packard Foundation / Columbia University / American Jewish World Service / Public Welfare Foundation / Ashoka

## Recognition

Recipient of the 2016 Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship.  
Finalist for The Wharton School’s Lipman Family Prize.



Namati is a Sanskrit word that means “to shape something into a curve.” Martin Luther King Jr. said: “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” We call ourselves Namati because we’re dedicated to bending that curve.



### NAMATI

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