



YEAR 5



Legal Empowerment Leadership Course

1-6 December 2019 | Budapest, Hungary

Background



A 2018 COURSE PARTICIPANT:

"The group session was a good space for exchanging ideas and applying the learnings of the day. It also gave us a chance to engage with other participants who you would otherwise not have a chance to engage with in such a big group."

Around the world, more than five billion people—two-thirds of the world's population—are living outside the protection of the law and lack meaningful access to justice. They are unfairly driven from their land, denied essential services, excluded from society, and intimidated by violence.

Legal empowerment seeks to turn this tide. It is about enabling people to understand, use, and shape the law. From at least the 1950s, when community paralegals in South Africa began helping people to navigate and resist apartheid, legal empowerment has grown into a global movement. Today, grassroots legal advocates in the Philippines are helping farmers to take part in nationwide agrarian reforms. In Argentina, shantytown residents are pursuing legal remedies to bring clean water and other essential services to their communities.

World leaders increasingly agree that access to justice and legal empowerment are crucial to ensuring equitable and inclusive development, a recognition that led to the integration of justice in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Every year the legal empowerment field becomes more robust, with greater evidence of what works. The 2019 Legal Empowerment Leadership Course is a unique opportunity to take stock of our collective knowledge and build upon it to strengthen a global movement for justice.

The aim of the course is to cultivate a global cadre of leaders who are committed to legal empowerment, and who share a common understanding of the field, including history, methodology, and evidence. A faculty of respected practitioners and academics lead course participants in an in-depth exploration of key themes, including the conceptual framework of legal empowerment, community organizing and social movements, and the role of grassroots legal advocates in realizing systemic change. The participatory nature of the course also emphasizes peer-to-peer learning through small group work.

The course is a collaboration between the CEU's School of Public Policy (SPP), the Open Society Justice Initiative, Namati, and the Robert L. Bernstein Institute for Human Rights at New York University School of Law.

Course structure



A 2018 COURSE PARTICIPANT:

"This course improved my critical thinking skills on how to organize legal empowerment programs and how to build social movements at a community level. In addition, I improved my networking skills in the field."

The course is structured to nurture and deepen participants' knowledge of legal empowerment, offering a space of reflection to strengthen their methodology and impact. Participants identify a concrete challenge, growth opportunity or research question before the course, and then develop an action plan during the course with the help of co-participants and faculty. The course is organized as follows:

1. PREPARATORY WORK

Participants review selected readings in advance of the course. They also prepare and submit one of the following:

- a) a problem statement, describing a challenge area or inquiry facing them in their work, or
- b) a proposal for research or action that they wish to workshop throughout the course and beyond.

2. IN-PERSON PARTICIPATION

The course requires in-person attendance at Central European University over five days, from December 1st (afternoon) through the 6th.

3. PARTICIPATORY CURRICULUM

The course relies on extensive participation from participants and combines four types of sessions: case studies, cross-cutting sessions, skills-building modules and small working group discussions.

► Case studies

The course features a comparative exploration of common themes across three case studies. Themes include legal empowerment methods; training, supervision of frontline staff; learning and evaluation; use of organizing, media and communications; financial sustainability; and role of grassroots advocates in realizing systemic change. Case study topics include:

- **The paralegal movement in the Philippines.** How the movement of community-based paralegals have adapted and innovated over the decades, to bring about large-scale change in the Philippines.



- **Legal Empowerment, Land Rights and Environmental Justice.**

This session focuses on legal empowerment programs that work with communities for the defense of land rights and the pursuit of environmental justice advocacy.

- **Legal Empowerment and Gender Equality.** How women-led organizations comprised of grassroots advocates, lawyers, and activists have adopted legal empowerment strategies to advance women's rights and gender equality advocacy.

► **Cross-cutting sessions**

Cross-cutting sessions address foundational challenges and questions faced by the legal empowerment community.

- **Session I: Introduction to legal empowerment.** This introductory session explores what we mean by legal empowerment. It addresses basic concepts, history, and philosophy. The session offers a vocabulary and a set of questions that are referenced throughout the course.



- **Session II: Legal empowerment, organizing and social movements.**

This session explores how legal empowerment groups combine strategic litigation and legal services with community organizing, and how paralegals and legal empowerment practitioners constitute an essential part of social movements.

- **Session III: Recognition, regulation and funding of paralegals.**

This session examines advantages and disadvantages of government recognition, regulation and public and non-public financing of the work of paralegals based on policies and experiences of different countries.

- **Session IV: Community-driven data collection and analysis for advocacy.** This session examines how grassroots advocates, lawyers, and activists have designed community-led data collection projects to define and generate data that reflects their realities, and how this data is essential to human rights advocacy.

► **Skills-building modules**

Modules include power mapping, innovative financing, monitoring and evaluation, and popular education techniques.



► Small working group discussions

Each afternoon, participants come together in small groups to apply the day's lessons to their individual challenge or research question. Experts and instructors are available during this time for consultation and support in developing their action plan.

4. POST-COURSE

After the course, each participant submits their final reflections on their problem statement, or a revised version of their proposal. In either case, candidates should detail a course of action for acting on, or exploring further, what has been learned over the last few days. Faculty and experts will provide follow-up support. All participants also become members of the Global Legal Empowerment Network in advance of the course and remain in contact through our online community discussion forum. There, you can pose questions and support others with their action plans to ensure that our cohort of learners remain engaged in future efforts to strengthen their work.

A 2017 COURSE PARTICIPANT:

"This was a superb training and I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to participate. The invigorating, compelling and inspiring content made this one of the best trainings I have ever attended. Being around a group of intellectually brilliant advocates was a true joy. This is the first time in many years that I feel proud to be a lawyer. I enjoyed all of the sessions and appreciate the diversity of presenters, topics and approaches."



Participants



A 2018 COURSE PARTICIPANT:

*"During our daily work at our organization,
we do not get the chance to reflect.
This course really helped me to analyse and
amplify the work we are doing."*

The course is intended for people whose work and interests are directly related to legal empowerment.

This includes:

- exceptional paralegals and leaders of civil society and community organizations who are running, or wish to run, legal empowerment programs;
- parliamentary leaders and government officials (ministries of justice or development, centralized planning units, NHRIs) with the power to support or regulate legal empowerment efforts;
- development agency representatives working on legal empowerment at an international or country level;
- academics and researchers interested in working with legal empowerment programs.



Course information



A 2017 COURSE PARTICIPANT:

*"This is a fantastic coming together of passionate
and compassionate people I hope it stays alive
and continues to grow!"*

ARRIVAL, ORIENTATION SESSION AND DINNER RECEPTION: Sunday, 1 December 2019

The course will be held at the **School of Public Policy**, on the campus of the **Central European University** in Budapest, Hungary.

The full cost of participation in the course is **EUR 2,000.– (incl. VAT)**.

This does not include travel and accommodation (lunch and coffee breaks during the course will be provided).

A limited number of scholarships covering travel, accommodation and the full cost of tuition will be available on a competitive basis. Note that scholarships will not be available for applicants from donor institutions.

Interested individuals should complete the [application form](#) by **8 August 2019**.

There, you will be asked to submit

- a short problem statement, describing a challenge area or inquiry facing you in your work, or
- a short proposal for research or action that you wish to workshop throughout the course; and
- your CV.

The course will finish on **6 December**.

Faculty



A 2016 COURSE PARTICIPANT:

"Before participating at this course, I had fragmented pieces of knowledge related to legal empowerment. Today, I feel like this knowledge filled all the gaps of the puzzle and I understand much better how I should work from this day on. Being able to learn from my colleagues from different countries, to talk with them about their challenges and opportunities made me feel more empowered."

COURSE DIRECTORS



Vivek MARU

Vivek founded Namati in 2011 to grow the movement for legal empowerment around the world. Namati and its partners have built cadres of community legal workers – sometimes known as “barefoot lawyers” – in ten countries. The advocates have worked with over 65,000 people to protect community lands, enforce environmental law, and secure basic rights to healthcare and citizenship. Namati convenes the Global Legal Empowerment Network, more than 1,000 groups from 150 countries who are learning from one another and collaborating on common challenges. This community successfully advocated for the inclusion of access to justice in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

From 2003 to 2007, Vivek co-founded and co-directed the Sierra Leonean organization Timap for Justice, which has been recognized by the International Crisis Group, Transparency International, and President Jimmy Carter as a pioneering model for delivering justice services in the context of a weak state and a plural legal system. From 2008 to 2011, he served as senior counsel in the Justice Reform Group of the World Bank. His work focused on rule of law reform and governance, primarily in West Africa and South Asia. In 1997–1998 he lived in a hut of dung and sticks in a village in Kutch, his native place, working on watershed management and girls’ education with two grassroots development organizations – Sahjeevan and Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghathan. Vivek graduated from Harvard College, magna cum laude, and Yale Law School. He writes regularly in academic journals and in the press. He also directs the Legal Empowerment Leadership Course at Central European University and New York University School of Law.

Vivek serves on the board of trustees of the global advocacy organization Avaaz, the international advisory council of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, the advisory board of the evaluation firm ID Insight, and the boards of the Constitutional Accountability Center and the International Senior Lawyers Project. He was an affiliate expert with the UN Commission on Legal Empowerment and is a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Vivek received the Pioneer Award from the North American South Asian Bar Association in 2008. He was named an Ashoka Fellow in 2014 and a “legal rebel” by the American Bar Association in 2015. He, Namati, and the Global Legal Empowerment Network received the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship in 2016. In 2017, the Schwab Foundation named Vivek and Sonkita Conteh, director of Namati–Sierra Leone, two of its Social Entrepreneurs of the Year. Vivek studies capoeira angola with Dale Marcelin at Universal Capoeira Angola Center.



Marlon J. MANUEL

As Namati's senior adviser to the Global Legal Empowerment Network, Marlon has more than two decades of experience in legal empowerment work, having devoted practically his entire career to social justice and human rights lawyering. He has combined grassroots education activities with active involvement in strategic litigation on human rights and public interest issues, policy reform work on social justice legislation, and justice system reform programs on improving access to justice. From 2008–2017, he was the

Coordinator of the Alternative Law Groups (ALG), a coalition of twenty (20) legal resource NGOs in the Philippines with distinct programs that are primarily concerned with the pursuit of public interest, respect for human rights, and promotion of social justice. Marlon is deeply involved in justice and human rights education, not only as a law school professor, but also as a grassroots community educator, continuously practicing and advocating the principles of education for people empowerment as he work with farmers, workers, and other vulnerable groups. He is a professor at the Ateneo de Manila University School of Law, where he received his JD in 1994. He received his BSc degree in Management (Major in Legal Management) from the College of Arts and Sciences of the same university.

FACULTY



Matthew BURNETT

Matthew is a policy officer with the Open Society Justice Initiative, where he focuses on legal empowerment, technology and innovative financing. Previously, he was director of the Immigration Advocates Network, a groundbreaking collaboration among leading immigrant rights organizations in the United States. He played a key role in launching the organization and growing it into a recognized leader on innovative approaches to increasing access to justice for immigrants and building the capacity of immigrant-serving

organizations. Prior to his work at the Immigration Advocates Network, Matthew represented asylum seekers in the United States and served as law clerk to Justice Z.M. Yacoob of the Constitutional Court of South Africa. He holds a JD with concentrations in poverty law and public international law, and a joint BA in philosophy and the comparative history of ideas.



Sukti DHITAL

Sukti is the Executive Director of the Robert L. Bernstein Institute for Human Rights at New York University School of Law, an academic center committed to the advancement of legal empowerment through innovative research, education, and advocacy. She is a human rights lawyer with extensive international law experience in the fields of economic and social rights. Previously, she was the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Nazdeek, an award-winning legal empowerment organization committed to bringing access to justice closer to marginalized communities in India. At Nazdeek, Sukti worked closely with affected community members and social movements to advance labor, food, health and housing rights through a community-driven approach, with a focus on indigenous and Dalit women. Prior to Nazdeek, she was the Director of the Reproductive Rights Unit at the Human Rights Law Network, India where she assisted in securing landmark social and economic rights judgments including *Laxmi Mandal v. Deen Dayal Harinagar Hospital & ORS*, W.P.(C) 8853/2008, the first decision by a national court to recognize maternal mortality as a human rights violation. Sukti has also worked at the American Civil Liberties Union's Reproductive Freedom Project and the firm of Bingham McCutchen LLP.



Denise DORA

Denise is a lawyer and human rights activist with more than 25 years of experience in areas of gender and access to justice. She is the founding member of THEMIS (Gender Justice and Human Rights), a feminist organization that develops legal empowerment programs for women community leadership. Denise holds an LLM in international human rights law from the University of Essex, and an MA in history and politics from Getulio Vargas Foundation in Rio de Janeiro. She worked for the Ford Foundation as a senior program officer responsible for the Human Rights Program in Brazil from 2000 to 2011, and has served on the Advisory Committee of UN Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Currently, Denise is a senior partner of Dora, Azambuja & Oliveira, a law firm specialized in civil society legislation, discrimination and human rights as well as a board member of Conectas Human Rights and Land of Rights.



Zaza NAMORADZE

As the director of the Open Society Justice Initiative's Berlin office, Zaza oversees activities on legal aid and defendants' rights and legal empowerment and capacity. He previously served as staff attorney and, later, deputy director of the Open Society Institute's Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute, where he designed and oversaw projects in constitutional and judicial reforms and student law clinics and human rights litigation capacity building in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Zaza has

worked for the Center for the Study of Constitutionalism in Eastern Europe, the Central Electoral Commission of Georgia, and was a member of the State Constitutional Commission of Georgia. He graduated from the Law Faculty of Tbilisi State University, studied in the Comparative Constitutionalism Program of the Central European University, and earned an LLM from the University of Chicago Law School.



Margaret L. SATTERTHWAITE

Margaret is a Professor of Clinical Law, Faculty Director of the Robert L. Bernstein Institute for Human Rights, and Co-Chair of the Center for Human Rights and the Global Justice at New York University School of Law. Her clinical work focuses on advancing human rights by making rights advocacy accountable to affected communities, and her research interests include economic and social rights, human rights and counterterrorism, methodological innovation in human rights, and vicarious trauma among human rights

workers. Before joining the academy, she worked for a number of human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights First, and the *Commission Nationale de Verité et de Justice* in Haiti. She has authored or co-authored more than a dozen human rights reports and dozens of scholarly articles and book chapters. Margaret serves on the boards of Digital Democracy and the Global Initiative for Economic and Social Rights.





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