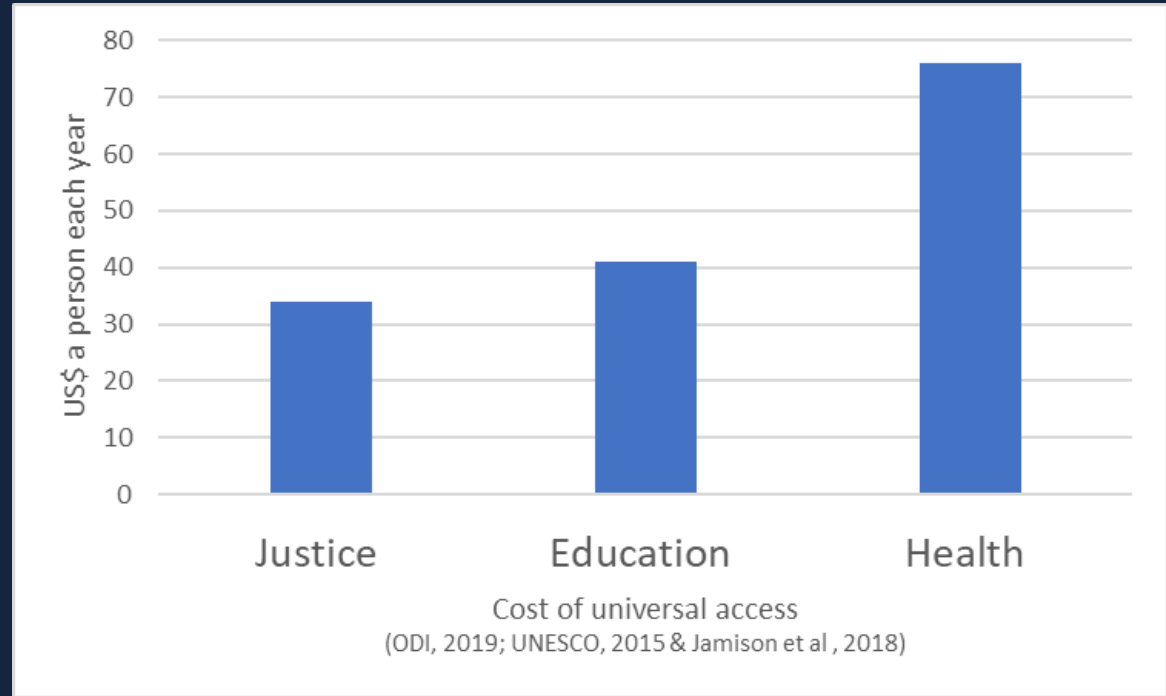# *Financing universal access to people-centred justice*

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Senior Research Associates

New York, 13 July 2023
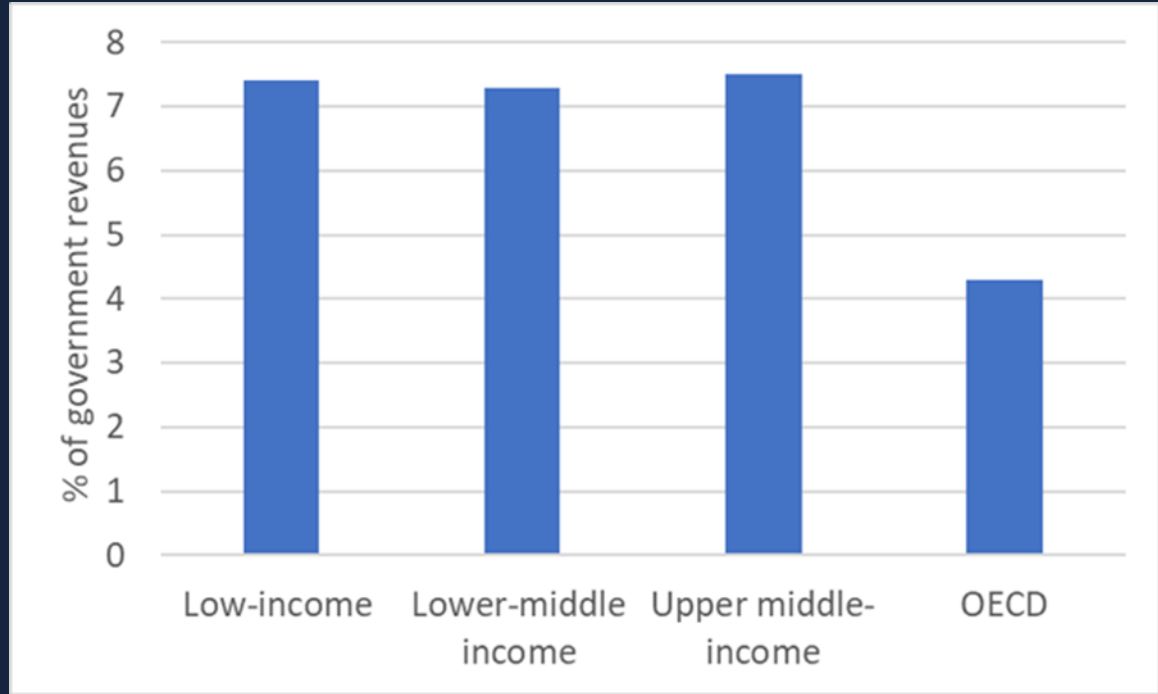
Key finding 1: A universal basic, people centred-justice system is affordable

Cost of universal access in lower income countries (average US$ a person a year)

Cost of universal access
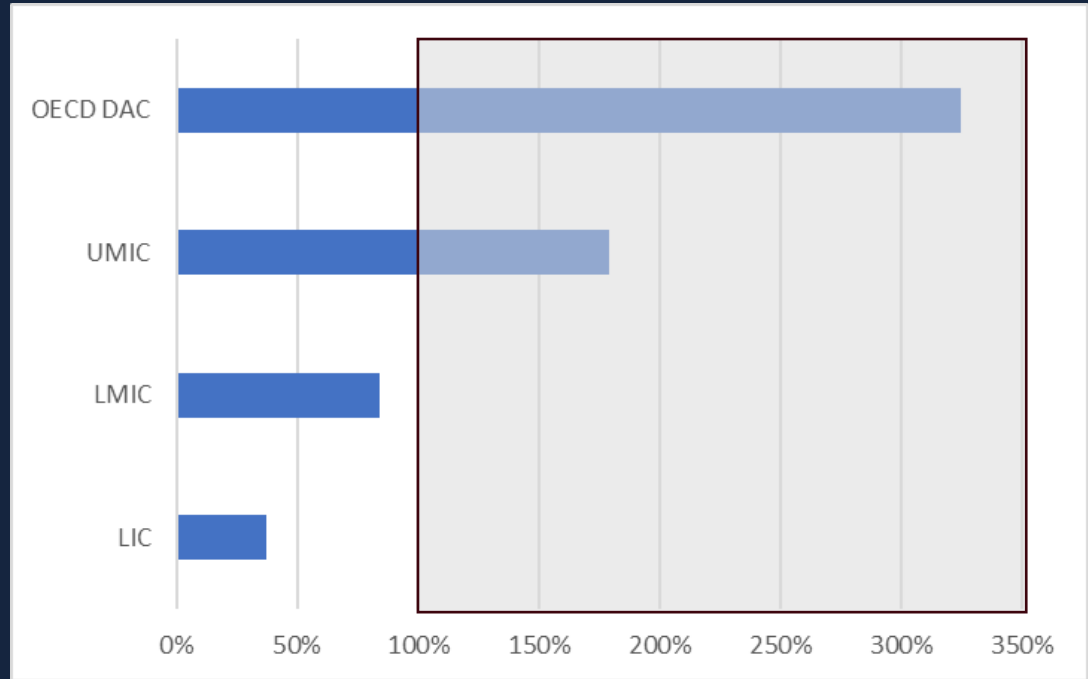(ODI, 2019; UNESCO, 2015 & Jamison et al , 2018)

ODI Think Change

Key finding 2 - Lower-income countries are already prioritising justice in their spending

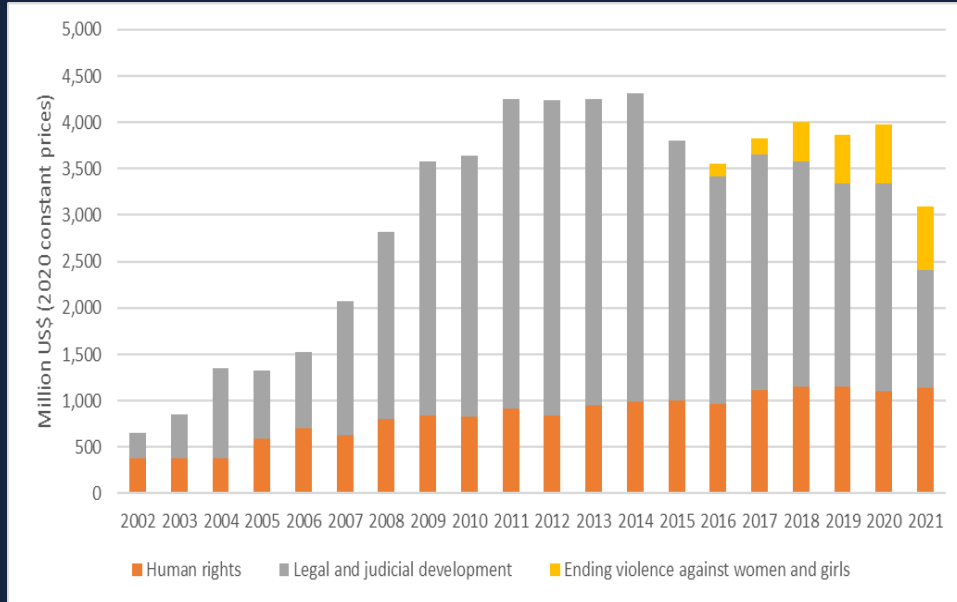Current levels of spending relative to total revenues

Key finding 3: Poorest countries face greatest financing gap

Current levels of spending on justice relative to costs of universal basic justice system

Key finding 4: Aid to justice continues to fall - by 27% over last 10 years

- Justice share of aid has also halved over last 10 years from 2.9% to 1.4% - this compares with 4.3% share of donors' own national budgets for their domestic justice systems

- Justice aid increasingly focused on specific issues - human rights and VAWG

- Justice aid averages $1 per person per year (cost is $20 per person per year)

Key finding 5: Front line services are relatively cheap – 5% of basic people-centred justice system

1. Criminal justice defenders

Prisoners in Malawi
Source: Malawi Paralegal Advisory Service Institute

2. Legal advice, assistance and dispute resolution services for communities and individuals

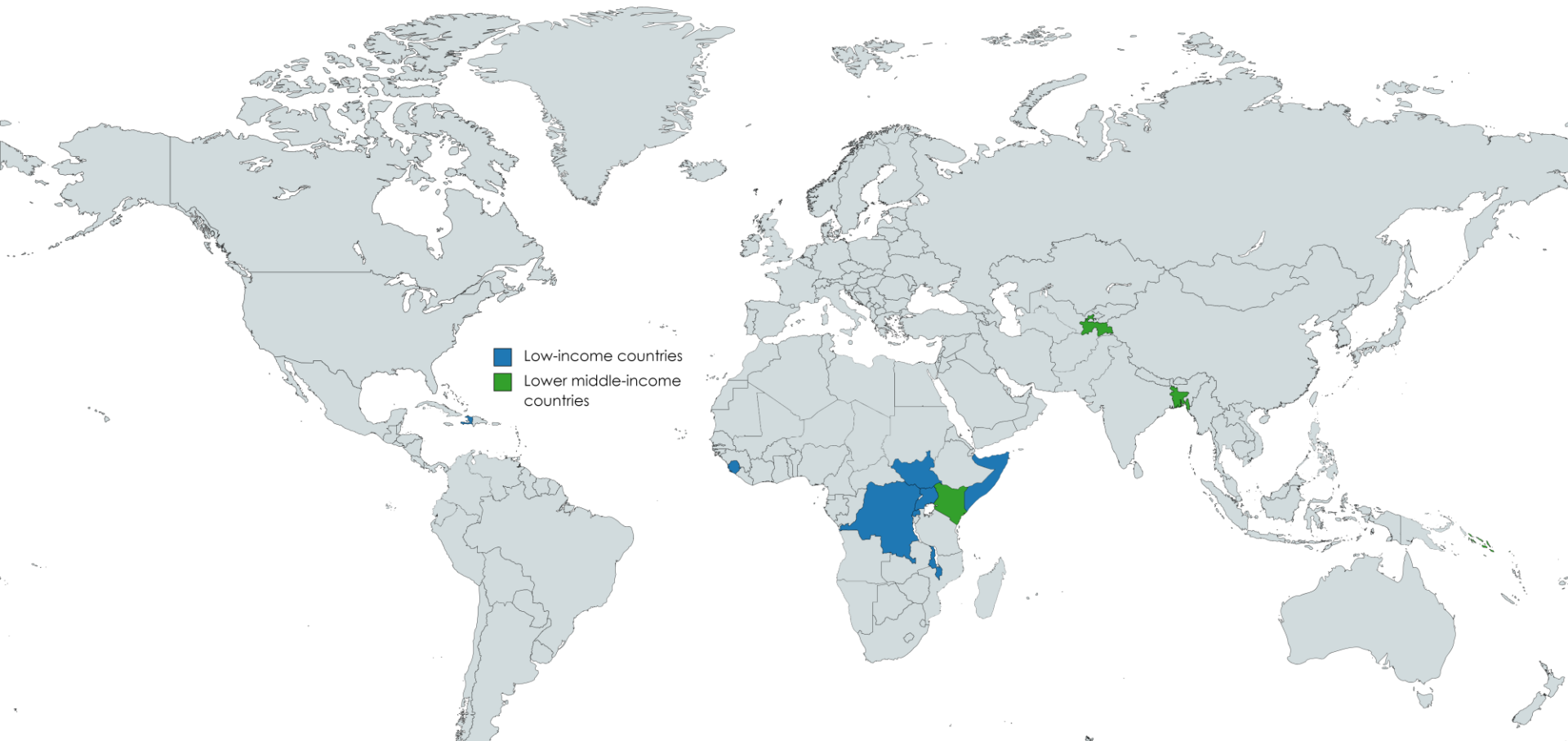Legal advice centre and paralegals – Nairobi, Kenya. Source: Namati

ODI Think Change

Key finding 6: Latest research has confirmed multiple local innovative front-line people-centred justice service examples with low unit costs

Low-income country benchmark: $20 per case

Lower middle-income country benchmark: $50 per case

- Some at $100 - $500 per case
- But now eleven examples below ODI benchmark
- AND twelve examples of new/small scale interventions that might fall below benchmark if scaled

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Data on unit costs: analysis of 25 front-line justice services in 12 lower-income countries

Low-income countries
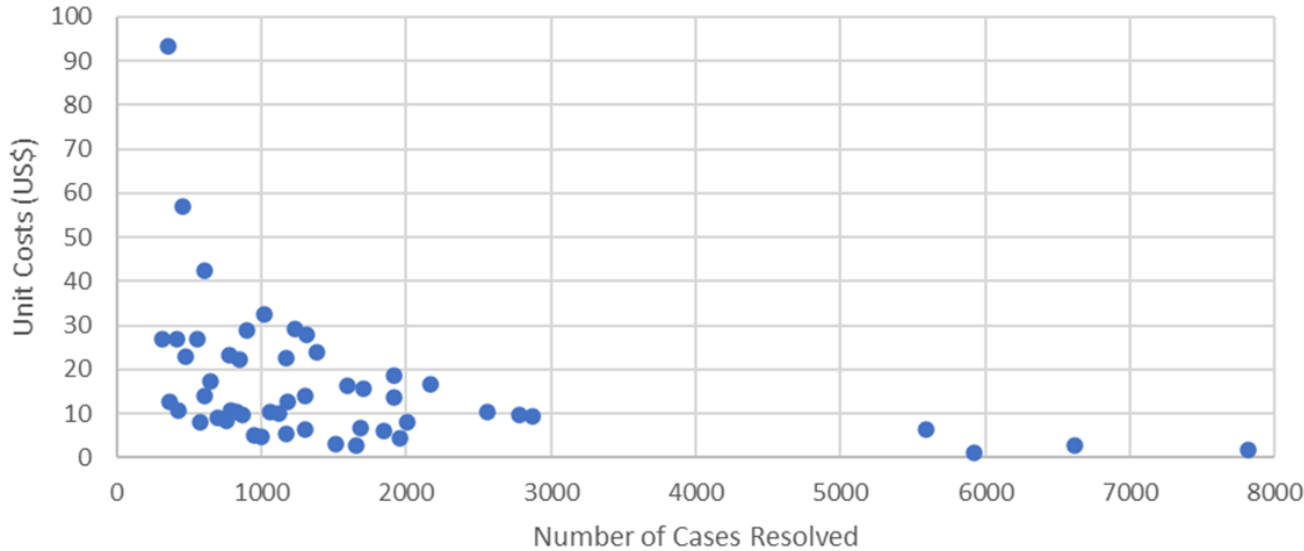
Lower middle-income countries

Key finding 7: New methodology enables assessment of coverage relative to needs

Country	Organisation	% needs for legal advice and assistance being provided
Bangladesh	BRAC	1%
Malawi	PASI – village mediation	3%
Rwanda	Five CSOs	10%
Sierra Leone	Legal Aid Board	52%
Uganda	LASPNET	7%

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Key finding 8: Scale delivers sustainable costs

Malawi village mediation - unit costs

Annual case load	Median $ cost per case
<1,000	17
1-3,000	10
>3,000	2

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Key finding 9: Scale determines SDG impact

Same model – different level of effort – dramatically different level of impact

Country	% unsentenced detainees supported each month as % of unsentenced detainees	% prisoners that are pre-trial detainees
Bangladesh	4%	76%
Uganda	12%	55%
Malawi	96%	18%

ODI proposals for discussion

Researchers

1) Undertake regular legal needs surveys in lower income countries

2) Further develop methodology to measure service coverage relative to needs

3) Gather and publish data on unit costs

Funders

1) Support research - fund research and publish unit costs

2) Only fund pilots that have prospect of sustainably scaling - set benchmark unit costs as guide

3) Allocate 10% of aid to fund front-line services – final three slides illustrate what that could mean in practice

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Example 1: Scale-up criminal justice defenders

Criminal justice defenders for all unsentenced detainees across all low-income countries at Malawi level to reduce unsentenced rates to 20%

$19 million a year (1% of justice aid)

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Example 2: Scale-up community-based legal advice, assistance and dispute resolution services to universal coverage

Community-based legal advice and assistance in all low-income countries to meet justice needs as identified in legal needs surveys

$230 million a year (8% of justice aid)

Example 3: Scale-up research

Legal need surveys in every low-income country every three years

$3 million every 3 years (0.03% of justice aid)

Thank you

Current and future research

https://odi.org/en/insights/investing-in-what-works-to-deliver-sdg-163-and-people-centred-justice-in-lower-income-countries/

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