

Mapping Legal Inclusion

The Legal Inclusion Mapping Method: A Country-Specific, Action-Oriented Tool to Implement SDG 16

Inclusiveness is pivotal in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve the agenda of ‘*leaving no one behind*’. Without legal inclusion people will undoubtedly be left behind, as legal inclusion lays the foundation for the achievement of the other **Sustainable Development Goals** ([Annex 1 SDGs Interconnectivity](#)). SDG 16 reflects this by introducing an inclusive approach to the legal/justice/public domain.

SDG 16 of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 reads:

*“(A) To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development,
(B) provide access to justice for all and
(C) build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”*

All three objectives reflect the inclusive character of the SDGs, which underlines the role of ‘Legal Inclusion’ as a pre-condition for reaching the other SDGs.

What is Legal Inclusion?¹

“The situation in which people and nature a) have their basic legal needs satisfied through adequate registrations, contracts, or their ‘status’ demonstrated in any other form, which enables them to b) enjoy legal protection by means of effective access to remedies and the court system, and c) have access to the rights, benefits and entitlements of the society in which they live.”

The Legal Inclusion Method is a tool that maps vulnerable persons in a country to empower them into becoming full citizens, and for nature ([Annex 2 Nature](#)) to be protected. For the purposes of the Mapping, these two are referred to as ‘**excluded groups**’ ([Annex 3 Excluded groups](#)), so as to contrast them with ‘**included groups**’ and allow stakeholders to identify where action is necessary.

The national legal framework already in place usually provides its citizens with rights and protection. However, it often is the case that due to a lack of legal-administrative documents or of status recognition otherwise ([Annex 4 Basic legal needs](#)), excluded groups are not able to access those rights and enjoy legal protection.

On the basis of the definition of Legal Inclusion, a country-specific Legal Inclusion Indicator Framework has been developed to:

- 1) Map the Legal Inclusion situation of a country;
- 2) Define Comprehensive Legal Empowerment Plans with stakeholders at all levels, and
- 3) Provide an Implementation Tool and Progress Monitoring Framework on SDG 16

The Legal Inclusion Mapping Method was developed by Microjustice4All ([Annex 5 Microjustice4All](#)) to offer SDG 16 stakeholders a tool to implement SDG 16 and stimulate cooperation to achieve legal inclusion. The first mappings have started in 2018 in Bolivia, Kenya, Serbia, Egypt and Jordan. Microjustice4All currently focuses on the mapping of vulnerable persons as excluded groups, and is looking for environmental organizations as partners to map nature.

¹ Definition derived from SDG 16 for the purpose of the Legal Inclusion Mapping, and based on the 22 years of experience of Microjustice4All

Challenge and Opportunities

Legal Empowerment work is essential for the legal inclusion and protection of excluded groups. Despite its importance, it has been overlooked by the development and humanitarian-aid sector, but SDG 16 offers an opportunity to structurally include it in donor funding schemes.

SDG 16 offers an opportunity to enhance legal empowerment activities worldwide as it incorporates 'Legal Inclusion' as a goal on the international agenda. Legal inclusion requires well-focused legal empowerment work in which stakeholders join forces. This is the reason an operational framework for the implementation of SDG 16 was developed:

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The Legal Inclusion Mapping Method

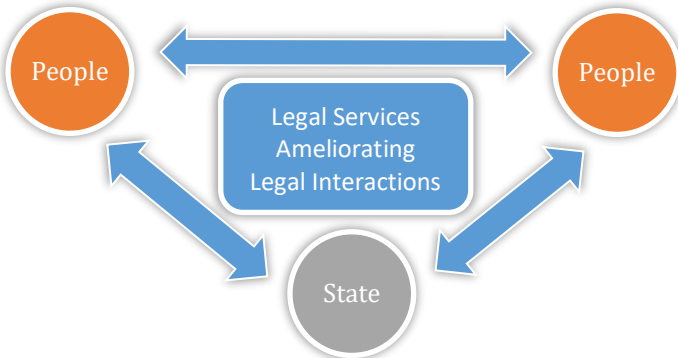
The Legal Inclusion Mapping Method is an extensive country-specific and action-oriented **three-part program**:

- The **Legal Inclusion Mapping**
 - a) examines a country's overall situation of legal inclusion/exclusion, and
 - b) identifies the country's excluded groups, as well as the needs for their legal empowerment, pointing to solutions.
- The **Comprehensive Legal Empowerment Plan to Achieve Legal Inclusion** is a solution-based program that takes the results of the Mapping's analysis to implement sustainable and inclusive solutions to meet the excluded groups' legal needs. The Plan involves stakeholders in the specific excluded groups as well as in the legal and government sector.
- The **Progress Monitoring Framework on SDG 16** comprises an Implementation Plan establishing targets and a timeline for the implementation of recommended: a) modifications and introduction of innovative tools for the legal-administrative and institutional framework; b) innovative standardized, scaled-up legal service provision for the various target groups. It monitors and measures progress through periodical update mappings vis-à-vis the baseline established in the mapping (until 2030).

How Does the Legal Inclusion Mapping Work?

Legal Inclusion Indicators

The Mapping Method makes use of three sets of indicators. These relate to the three agents of legal interactions: people, legal services and the State. It measures their ability to contribute to legal inclusion.



The Mapping Process

The Mapping examines the situation of vulnerability of excluded groups, and offers a diagnosis of their legal issues to find solutions within the legal-administrative framework to resolve these issues. In other words, the Mapping Research ([Annex 6 Methodology](#)) identifies a country’s **Justice Gap** and provides a Comprehensive Legal Empowerment Plan to address it. This Plan is drafted based on ‘**What Works**’ as seen in existing legal empowerment programs across the world.

The table below shows how the mapping method provides an implementation plan for SDG 16 in its totality and a progress monitoring framework.

| Agents of legal interactions | Country Mapping on basis of legal inclusion indicators | Mapping legal inclusion situation of Excluded Groups in Country per group | SDG 16 |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|
| People | Society | Excluded group | Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development |
| State | Legal and Institutional Framework | Legal and Institutional Framework applied to excluded group | Effective, accountable and inclusive institutions on all levels |
| Legal Services | Legal Services | Legal Services available to excluded group | Access to Justice |
| Outputs | | | |
| | Comprehensive Legal Empowerment Plan to achieve Legal Inclusion | | Implementation Tool & Progress Monitoring Framework for SDG 16 |

The Method’s approach of simultaneous mappings across the globe allows for **cost-efficient** operations, improved consistency, as well as, mutual learning and **innovation**.

The legal inclusion mapping teams engage with stakeholders on various levels from the start. This ensures that relevant institutions and organizations in the mapped countries are consulted and bought-in from the beginning of the mapping process to develop a broadly backed Comprehensive Legal Empowerment Plan.

This approach strengthens national legal-administrative institutions on the basis of the needs of marginalized populations while increasing legal security for all groups and individuals in society.

Implementing & Monitoring Progress on SDG 16: 2018-2030

The Legal Inclusion Mapping Method can be applied in any country at any given time. It provides Mapped countries with the necessary tools to attain SDG 16 in a sustainable manner. The Method ensures all variables are taken into account for the Comprehensive Legal Empowerment Plans to be implemented in a sustainable way by the involved stakeholders, keeping track of progress made on this tailor-made comprehensive framework.

Global Network for SDG 16

Making the Case

The advantage of the Legal Inclusion Mapping is that it is a relatively inexpensive program to achieve legal inclusion, fundamentally impacting the other SDGs. In fact, a countrywide Mapping can already be conducted with a budget of 150,000 US\$, and the Mapping results are guaranteed within six months. The Legal Empowerment Plans will recommend sustainable and cost-efficient modifications of the legal-administrative framework, as well as legal empowerment programs that will foresee the legal security of the country with little external funding.

Call for Action

Sustainable Development Goal 16 can only be accomplished if there is national, regional and international cooperation to support legal inclusion. This is why this implementation tool actively promotes the creation of a global network between the stakeholders involved in SDG 16.

There is an urgent need for national and international **policy support** for legal empowerment to achieve legal inclusion. Strong policy support would facilitate a broader use of the Mapping tool, which would allow for more stakeholders to unite to **start a Mapping** in a new country or **join existing teams**, for **partners to take on** the Comprehensive Legal Empowerment Plan in a particular country, and for **partners to develop** the Mapping method alongside fellow stakeholders.

Stakeholders from the following sectors are invited to use the Legal Inclusion Mapping Method as a tool to reach legal inclusion, and become a part of a Global Network for SDG 16:

- Policy makers and funding organizations
- Research institutes; universities; statistical agencies
- Humanitarian and development agencies
- Lawyers, legal and/or human rights organizations
- Experts in public communication/lobbying/advocacy
- Experts in ICT and innovation
- Environmental protection experts and institutions

The more experts involved, the faster the Mappings and Comprehensive Legal Empowerment Plans can be implemented globally, which allows Global Goal 16 to be met in record time!



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