

# RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN ACCESS TO JUSTICE



## Why Does This Matter?

- Without the protection of the law, billions of people lack the safety and security that they are entitled to.
- People in both developed and developing countries don't have access to the resources required to engage the law to address their legal problems.
- A lack of access to law and justice has serious short-term and long-term consequences for individuals, families, communities and societies.
- A lack of access to justice is financially, economically, socially, emotionally and physically costly.

## The Global Justice Gap is a Complicated Problem To Solve.



**Justice has a PR problem.**

People don't view access to justice, in particular access to civil and family justice, in the same way that they think about access to **healthcare, education** or other **social services**. **But...** experiencing an everyday legal problem is a common issue in high-, middle- and low- income countries alike!

- Almost **50% of adults in Canada** experience 1 or more civil or family justice problems in a given 3-year period
- There are over **100 million Americans** living with civil justice problems
- Every year, **1 in 4 Australians** will experience a legal problem that is serious enough to require a lawyer
- 3 in 10 people surveyed in Scotland** reported experiencing at least 1 legal problem within the previous 3 years
- 1 in 3 people over 16 in the UK** reported having a civil justice problem

- In a 2-year Period:**
- 74%** of people in Ethiopia
  - 75%** of people in Austria
  - 79%** of people in the Czech Republic
  - 69%** of people in Brazil
  - 69%** of people in Finland
  - 75%** of people in Italy
  - 84%** of people in Pakistan
  - 81%** of people in Portugal
- experienced civil justice problems**

## ...and those are just a few examples!

The consequences of having a legal problem are especially hard-hitting for ethnic and religious minorities, the poor and other vulnerable populations.

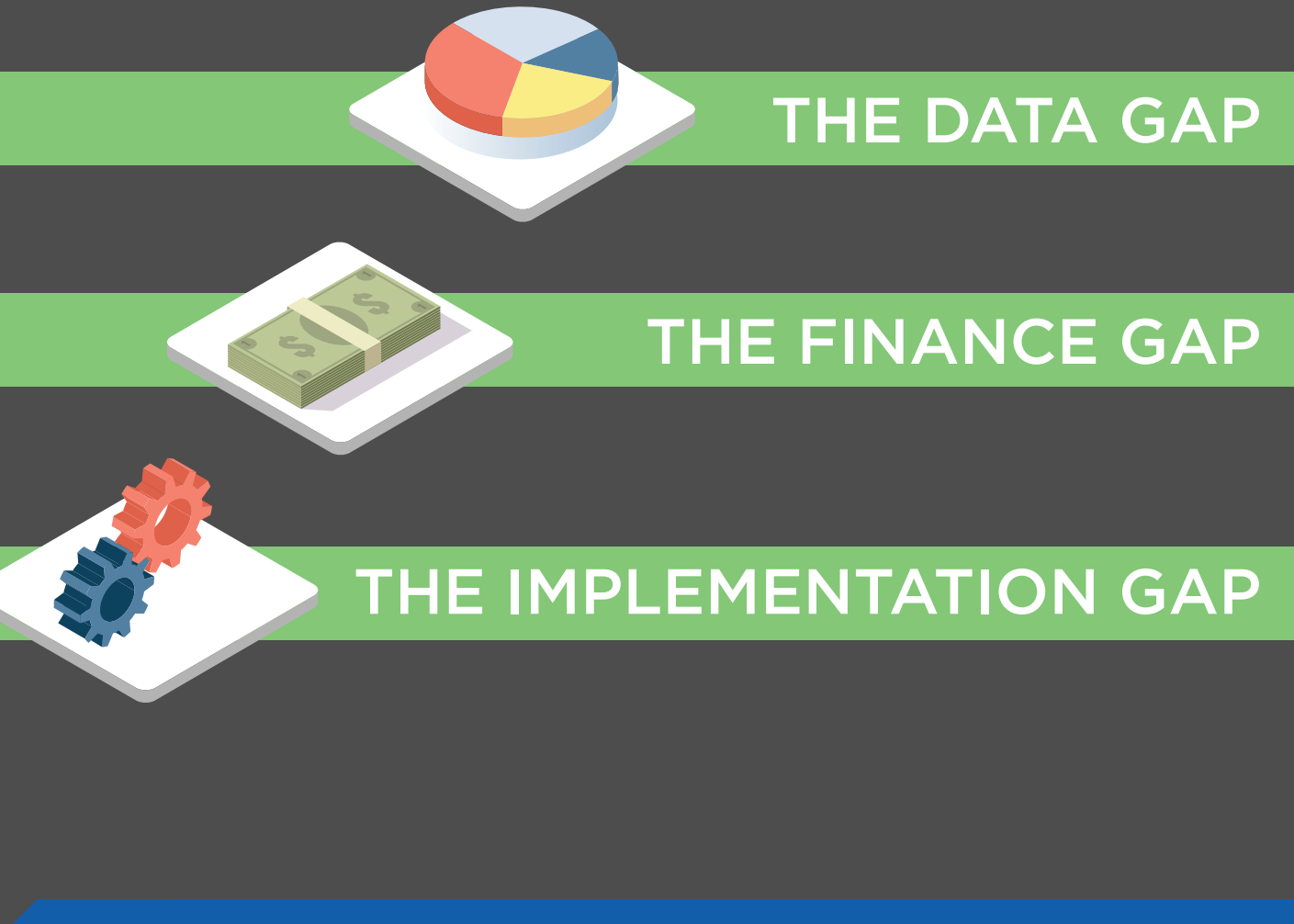
## So what's being done to address this problem?

Governments, grassroots organizations, academics, researchers, lawyers and others are working in different ways in different countries to try to make it easier to resolve legal problems through formal and informal channels.

Plus, for the first time **EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE** is included as a goal in the United Nations' global agenda! (SDG 16.3)

## Looks like we're on the right track then?

This is all important work but we still have a long way to go to address **THREE MAJOR BARRIERS** to equal access to justice:



### These Gaps Mean:

- Lack of actionable data
- Lack of awareness of the seriousness of the crisis in access to justice
- Lack of public knowledge of what constitutes a legal problem
- Lack of cost-effective, accessible avenues to deal with legal problems
- Misconceptions about the costs and benefits of providing access to justice
- Lack of coordination and collaboration among justice system stakeholders
- Resistance to change in the legal sector

## Let's take a closer look at the finance gap.

Spending cuts are common in the justice sector. They are often done as a way to save money that is then reallocated to other sectors and programs.

**BUT**

We looked at lots of studies on justice spending, costs and benefits from around the world and they all point to the same conclusion:

**Spending on justice saves more money than it costs!**



**UNITED STATES**

**Civil Legal Aid**

**US \$1 (CAD \$0.74) spent generates approximately:**

- Florida **US \$7.19** (CAD \$9.72)
- Texas **US \$7.42** (CAD \$10.00)
- Pennsylvania **US \$11.00** (CAD \$14.86)
- Tennessee **US \$9.23** (CAD \$12.47)
- Alaska **US \$5.00** (CAD \$6.76)
- Utah **US \$9.23** (CAD \$12.47)
- Virginia **US \$5.27** (CAD \$7.12)
- Montana **US \$10.61** (CAD \$14.34)
- Oklahoma **US \$7.75** (CAD \$10.47)
- Louisiana **US \$8.73** (CAD \$11.80)
- Georgia **US \$8.00** (CAD \$10.81)
- California **US \$8.14** (CAD \$11.00)

**UNITED KINGDOM**

**Civil Legal Aid**

**UK £1 (CAD \$1.73) spent generates an estimated:**

- Civil legal aid for housing problems: **£2.34** (CAD \$4.05)
- Civil legal aid for debt problems: **£2.98** (CAD \$5.15)
- Civil legal aid for benefits problems: **£8.80** (CAD \$15.22)
- Civil legal aid for employment problems: **£7.13** (CAD \$12.33)

**SCOTLAND**

**Legal Aid**

**£1 (CAD \$1.73) spent generates approximately £11 (CAD \$19.03)**

**CANADA**

**Pro Bono**

**CAD \$1 spent generates approximately Ontario: CAD \$10**

**Family Law Collaborative Settlement Processes**

**CAD \$1 spent generates approximately BC/ON/AB/NS: CAD \$1.12 - \$2.06**

**Family Law Mediation**

**CAD \$1 spent generates approximately BC/ON/AB/NS: CAD \$1.00 - \$2.78**

**Youth Justice**

**CAD \$1 spent generates CAD \$5.52 over 1 year CAD \$10.13 over 3 years**

**AUSTRALIA**

**Community Legal Centres**

**AUD \$1 (CAD \$0.95) spent generates approximately AUD \$18 (CAD \$17.03)**

**Youth Justice**

**AUD \$1 (CAD \$0.95) spent generates approximately AUD \$3.50 (CAD \$3.33)**

**SOUTH AFRICA**

**Community-based Paralegals**

**Every R1 (CAD \$0.09) spent generates approximately R6.01 (CAD \$0.54)**

One of the main barriers to improving access to justice is a lack of funding for justice programs and services **BUT** research shows that **spending on justice saves more money than it costs.**



There are also other benefits that come from investing in justice:

- More efficient courts and lower court costs
- Lower unemployment rates
- Lower eviction rates
- Reduced homelessness

**Reduced government spending on social assistance, employment insurance and healthcare**

## The benefits of spending on justice far outweigh the cost of the investment!