

Foreword

Equal access to justice and legal empowerment are intrinsic goods; they are also fundamental components of inclusive development, good governance, public policy performance and the rule of law, as underlined by the UN Sustainable Development Agenda.

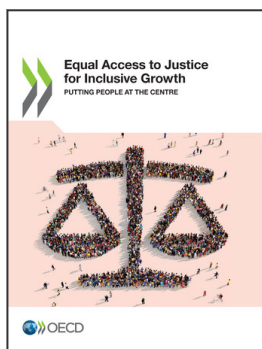
The law shapes and pervades the everyday lives of people and businesses. Lack of legal empowerment and unequal access to justice generate significant socio-economic costs for individuals and societies: they narrow economic opportunities, reinforce the poverty trap and undermine human potential. Poor, marginalised and vulnerable populations, including women, youth, disabled people, indigenous and migrant groups, and small and medium-sized enterprises, are disproportionately affected, leading to further disadvantage and inequality.

This report draws on over five years of research and collaboration with OECD Member and partner countries, focusing on the necessary steps to establish access to justice for all. These steps start with a better understanding of people's legal needs and how access to justice affects many areas of life, including physical and mental health, employment, productivity and family stability.

Justice systems are made up of a series of complex pathways or “justice chains” from the viewpoint of individuals, families and communities. The report provides guidance on how to effectively measure and address people's legal needs and incorporate people-centred perspectives when designing and planning responsive and integrated legal and justice services.

Under the purview of the Public Governance Committee, the OECD Public Governance Directorate established a platform for dialogue, the OECD Global Roundtables on Equal Access to Justice, to deepen and further our collective understanding of effective people-centred access to justice and the crucial role it plays as a contributor to inclusive and sustainable growth.

“Justice delayed for some is sustainable growth denied for all” could be a maxim of the Sustainable Development Agenda. To support countries in addressing this challenge, the OECD is ready to support current global efforts to bring justice closer to all people.



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Equal Access to Justice for Inclusive Growth
Putting People at the Centre

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