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**The Legal Aid and Innovation Conference (LAICON) – Celebrating a Decade of
Accelerating Justice through Legal Innovation. What's Next?**

CONCEPT NOTE

1.0. Introduction & Background

Access to Justice is a critical component of governance in a society that upholds the Rule of Law. UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16:3 argues for promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensuring equal access to Justice for all. However, access to Justice in many developing countries is undermined by several factors, including social relations environment, physical location, inability to reach services, costs, the digital divide, and lack of legal information. Most Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS) services remain in urban areas and the central region – creating physical barriers that may result in those in need not attempting to close the distance gap, hence choosing to relinquish their rights.

The remedy for reducing access to Justice challenges lies in rethinking what is possible. Through innovation, processes can be made efficient and more accessible for the communities that need them. It is with knowledge and experience that BarefootLaw chooses to celebrate and recognise justice innovators at this year's LAICON.

1.1. The Justice Innovator Challenges

Since the beginning of 2022, with support from [*The Charles Stewart MOTT Foundation*](#), BarefootLaw has been researching innovative approaches, practices, methods, and services implemented in communities to expand and increase access to Justice. As an organisation that aims to empower people with free legal information through the innovative use of digital technology, BarefootLaw recognises the importance of synergies between various justice actors, both grassroots and mainstream, to collectively push the justice envelope. In the research methodology, BarefootLaw has also called on community justice innovators in Uganda, Kenya and Malawi to nominate their work in improving processes to access Justice. The scope of their justice Innovations was limited to cost reductions, procedures or processes, access to knowledge, improvements in attitudes and perceptions, and innovations towards solving physical barrier challenges. By the time of LAICON, nine (9) of the most impactful innovations chosen by the public will each have been supported with One Thousand United States Dollars (\$1000) to amplify their work. The Legal Aid Innovations Conference (LAICON) culminates all this Justice innovations journey undertakings.



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2.0. The Legal Aid Innovation Conference (LAICON), 2023

LAICON is an annual event and platform where best practices and innovations in legal aid are shared across the field to foster linkages among institutions, NGOs, and individuals with a creative approach towards access to Justice as a necessary catalyst for improved legal aid service provision. Additionally, this platform fosters an ecosystem of progressive legal aid/access to Justice actors who can work on collaborative projects beyond the Innovations Conference. It provides a space for sharing progressive thinking and will enable key actors and stakeholders to recognise and implement innovations in legal aid service delivery, especially low-cost initiatives that increase efficiency in accessing Justice.

The Conference offers Legal Aid Service Providers (LASPs) and Innovators a platform to showcase their innovations and discuss the growing trends in enhancing Access to Justice and Human rights. The first Conference's theme was *"Strengthening Collaborative Advocacy Platforms to Enhance Rule of Law, Legal Aid and Access to Justice for the Poor, Vulnerable and Marginalised in Uganda."* And the second, a hybrid event, was themed *"Exploring New Innovations to Enhance Access to Justice amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic."* This year's edition of LAICON is distinctive because it coincides with BarefootLaw's tenth anniversary, as we commemorate the cocktail of goods and bads that has made our journey to ten possible.

This year's LAICON theme is **Celebrating a Decade of Accelerating Justice through Legal Innovation. What's Next?** with the aim to bring together new and old justice innovators to reflect on their impact so far and deliberate on the future of Justice in Africa. For the first time since its inception in 2017, LAICON will explore and include justice opportunities in legal innovation showcase lessons and best practices in other African countries, including Uganda, Kenya and Malawi.

3.0. Overall Objective

To provide a platform to showcase and celebrate innovative legal aid models and approaches that can be applied and replicated within the justice system in Uganda, Kenya and Malawi.

3.1. Specific objectives



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- To provide a platform for all justice actors to share experiences, practices and lessons in order to improve service delivery;
- To raise more awareness on innovative legal aid models and reignite all stakeholders to embrace the approaches in legal aid service delivery.
- To foster dialogue and identify emerging innovations and best practices within the justice system for scaling up or replication.

4.0. Recognition and Appreciation

- We thank The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for supporting us to build the body of knowledge on innovation in Access to Justice in East Africa and Sub-Saharan countries.
- Our Partners that have fostered our implementation of the Justice Innovator Challenge: Hakii Institute (KE), Joan Mati (KE), The Gender and Justice Unit (MW)
- The Justice Innovators who participated in the Call for Innovators from Uganda, Kenya and Malawi.
- The Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS), The Local Governments of Jinja, Gulu and Kileleshwa Districts and all our Grassroots Partners
- The Staff of BarefootLaw staff who have been dedicated to service for the past decade.

Event Details

Venue: Kabira Country Club | Date: Tuesday 12th December 2023 | Time: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.