

barefootlaw

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WORD FROM OUR FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 01

REACHING FURTHER = MORE PEOPLE CAN RESOLVE THEIR LEGAL PROBLEMS 02

Legal Services 04

The Legaltech 05

REACHING FURTHER = CONTINUOUS LEARNING 08

TOGETHER = REACHING FURTHER 11

Our Impact 13

SUPPORT FROM OTHERS = REACHING FURTHER 18

MORE OF WHAT WE LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2023 20



WORD FROM OUR FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

That went by fast!

Another year filled with activities, success stories, a myriad of legal questions, new team members joining and milestone after milestone. The cycle continues, and with every activity completed, it is easy to lose ourselves in the orbiting work without stopping to look back, celebrate the good work done, reflect on what did not work well in order to learn, unlearn and strategize better for the future. This report is our way of doing just that.

2022 was characterised by BarefootLaw extending our services further to unconnected communities through innovations that this report delves into in later chapters. Against this background, the theme for the 2022 BarefootLaw Annual Report is ***"Reaching Further".***

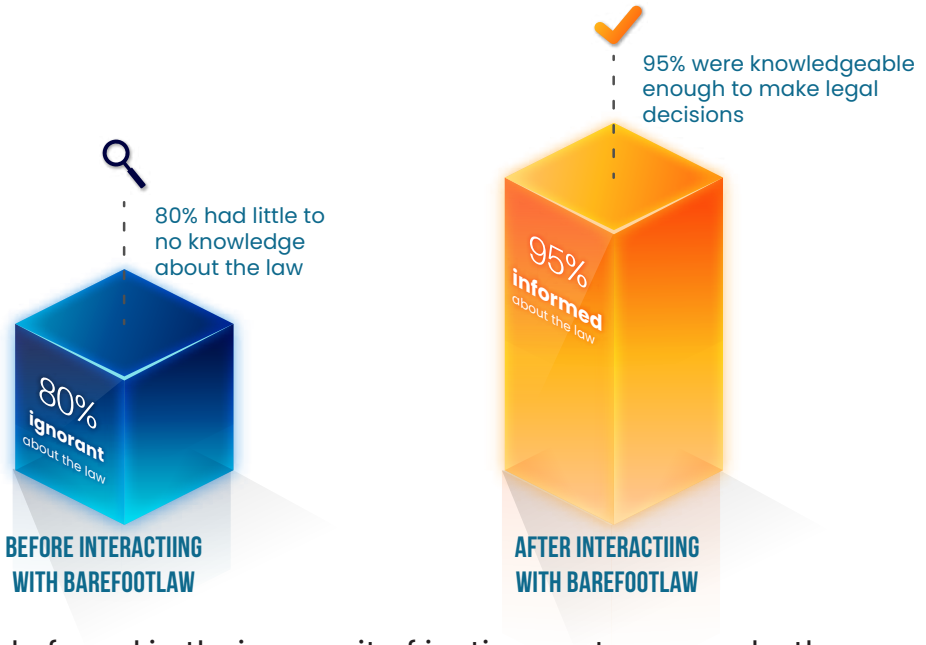
All our work towards reaching further is guided by the BarefootLaw Strategic Plan 2022- 2026 whose overarching goal is ***"to – through technology and innovation – get the law to protect more vulnerable persons and communities."***

The report narrates our 2022 journey in innovating with technology to reach more unconnected communities with legal guidance and information, share insights from the users of our different service platforms, and glimpse into our exciting future.

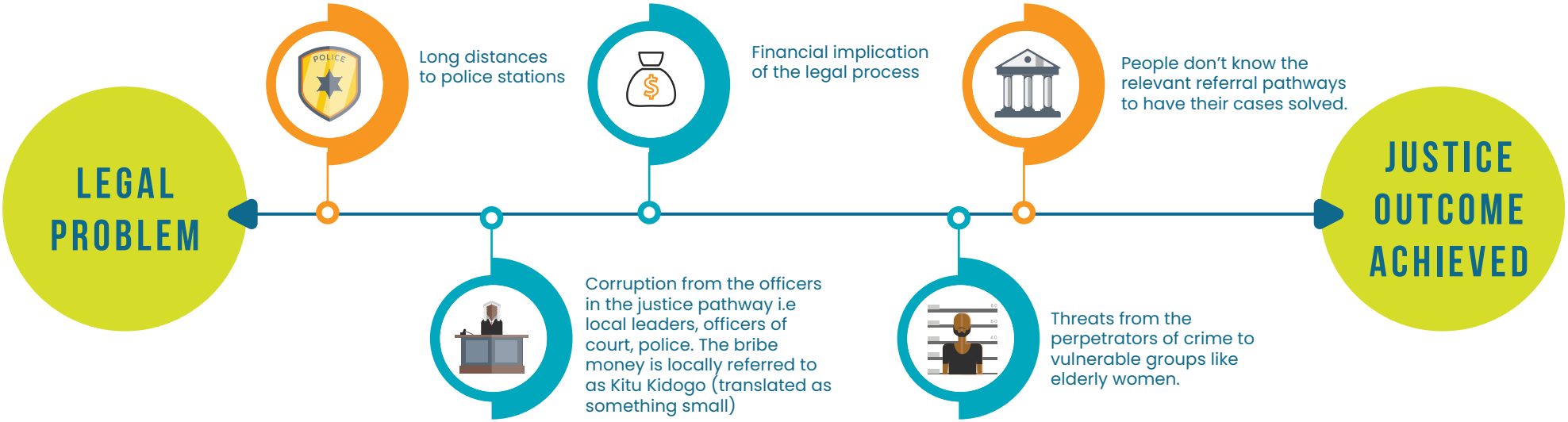


REACHING FURTHER = MORE PEOPLE CAN RESOLVE THEIR LEGAL PROBLEMS

Lack of access to justice continues to be a significant hindrance to persons and communities achieving their full potential within Uganda and the African continent. In 2022, the legal matters reported to BarefootLaw ranged from land, family matters, rights to access property, and domestic violence, among others. A representative proportion of eight in ten people who reached out to us knew little to nothing of the law relating to the legal problem they faced, whereas after interacting with us, 95% were knowledgeable enough about the legal implications of their problem and able to make a decision regarding how to resolve it.



A survey we held in February 2022 further exposed the challenges people faced in their pursuit of justice. put on a scale, the challenges faced were as displayed below:



To guide more people towards resolving their legal problems, BarefootLaw has included more people-centred approaches to extend quality legal services as far as possible to the reach of grassroots communities. These include learning where our users consider the worst bottlenecks to be through participatory action research and complimented by design thinking processes when developing our interventions.

LEGAL SERVICES

The 2022 internal strategy for the Legal Services Team included,

01 USER SATISFACTION



to focus on improving user satisfaction through improving the quality and timeliness of responses (efficiency and effectiveness).

02 DIVERSIFICATION



to employ new methods and tools for reaching users, diversification of content, audience and platforms to increase access to our services.

03 CAPACITY BUILDING



to develop, invest and put in place tools, collaboration systems and processes to improve the productivity of the Legal Services Team.

04 ACCOUNTABILITY



to develop an accountability system to guide the team towards the accomplishment of goals.

With this strategy, the goal to increase the number of people receiving legal information and guidance for everyday legal problems was nothing short of content heavy.

Over twenty (20) legal word-form content posts were created and disseminated weekly, topical videos curated for our YouTube and Instagram audiences monthly, and radio talk shows and jingles published for our users without access to internet. We even introduced WhatsApp as a new channel mid-year and processed over 700 legal problems through it.

THE LEGALTECH

Technology is the means by which BarefootLaw reaches a large proportion of the people we impact. Overall, the IT and Legal team have managed to maintain an uptime of over 90% for all platforms and services used internally.

The Nodes desktop and mobile software were deployed to twenty (20) BarefootLaw partners this year. The software can work offline and online, allowing users to make appointments with our lawyers.

WINNIE

Winnie, our AI lawyer, has significantly improved this year. At the start of the year, she recorded decreased performance, but with time she continued to learn and we noticed an improvement in accuracy during the course of the year.

With a few changes in the second quarter and third, we, are on our way to having 100% accuracy in a couple of years. This will eventually mean improved responses from the AI and an increased response rate from the BarefootLaw lawyers.



WHATSAPP FOR LEGAL BUSINESS

Based on feedback we have received over the years, we introduced WhatsApp as a platform for legal information sharing and direct guidance to our users.

Since the January 2021 social media ban in Uganda, BarefootLaw's content on the platforms suffered a decrease in reach and engagement on content on the social media platform. We, therefore, needed to re-strategize our approach towards how we use socials to reach our users.

A New Vision 2020(Ugandan newspaper) report states that 19 million Ugandans are connected to the internet; 2.5 million of these are social media users, and of that percentage, 98% use WhatsApp. It is arguably the most popular messaging platform in the land. This made WhatsApp a wonderful potential communication team with our users, and so we created an account on the app.



The uptake of the platform has been overwhelmingly good with an average of sixteen (16) legal problems resolved weekly. The response time for both the users and lawyers has significantly increased. This can be attributed to the fact that users have access to their handsets and are ready to engage relatively quickly.

SNEAK PEEK INTO OUR TYPICAL DAY IN THE INBOX...

Person X

Greetings counsel, I need legal advice on this. I sold a business to a friend a year ago. We agreed on a payment but he has refused to pay my balance. The issue here is he claims some workers I had paid to work for me absconded when I sold off the business to him which affected the business in regard to cash flows. Is this a strong ground to deny him paying my agreed balance?



BarefootLaw Lawyer Response

Dear (name), a purchase agreement should reasonably require that your employees are retained under new ownership and management. It would also be prudent for the new management to renew the employment contracts of those employees. According to the facts you have stated, this friend has to pay you the amount agreed, even if the cash flow was affected. One of the options you have available to you is to write to them a demand letter stating what you had agreed on in the purchase agreement, the amount of money agreed upon, how much has been paid and the balance left, give them a period within which to pay the money left. The both of you could then agree on a new payment plan on how and when the balance will be paid. You also have the option of taking this matter to the Small Claim Procedure Court (found at Magistrates Courts) to claim for your money if it is below 10 million. If you need any further guidance or have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

Kind regards.



Person X

Greetings Barefoot lawyers I did lodge a small claim case in court. We later reached a settlement consent agreement on ... (date withheld for privacy) pending payment from my friend. Thank you for the concern



REACHING FURTHER = CONTINUOUS LEARNING



BarefootLaw operates with the understanding that to get justice, people must first understand their rights and how they can lawfully obtain them. We make this possible by employing technology to help us provide education to the public through our many content items we publish daily. We use the most straightforward (free SMS and call services) to complex systems (Internet-based and Artificial Intelligence) to disseminate information and provide guidance, to help make access to justice a reality for people and their communities, with a focus on the poor and marginalised. In the spirit of building the body of knowledge on innovations in access to justice.

BarefootLaw set out to research the current state of justice in Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania . In a short project titled Accelerating Innovations in Access to Justice through Research, BarefootLaw is undertaking a more extended two-year study on innovative methods of legal services in Uganda, Kenya and Malawi.



"In our study of access to justice in Kenya, Malawi, and Tanzania, we learnt how the different circumstances of the countries may influence perceptions towards access to justice. For example, in Tanzania and Malawi justice points are not as accessible as Kenya. In Kenya there appeared to be a willingness to open up to more legal services, while in Tanzania, the 2017 Legal Aid Act can be interpreted as more prohibitive. In Malawi the justice system's inefficiencies have the effect of accentuating the gender divide to the detriment of women," Timothy Kakuru, the BarefootLaw Director of Programs and Impact said during the launch of the findings.

Some of our other research endeavours included;

01

What Justice means for children living in the slums of Kampala.

This study focused on the children living in the slums of Kampala, specifically Kireka, and their experiences in accessing justice, challenges, and recommendations from a user perspective.

02

The Pursuit of justice for self-representing litigants in the Uganda judicial system.

This study was aimed at understanding the experiences of self-representing litigants, judicial officers, and opposing counsel. It documents the thoughts, challenges, and recommendations for accessing justice with a focus on self-representation.

03

The State of Access to justice in Rural Uganda.

This was a comparative study that focused on determining the challenges of accessing justice in Five districts (Gulu, Lira, Hoima, Jinja, Mubende & Kasanda). In it, we compared the average cost of access to justice in various districts, the average distance travelled to Justice convergence points like courts police and the like, the incremental cost of accessing justice with the increase in number of justice referral pathways and more.

04

Land Disputes in Uganda.

The scourge of land disputes in Uganda cannot be overestimated especially in rural communities. This study aimed at finding the biggest challenges to land disputes, associated bottlenecks for the marginalised communities and the possible remedies.

Note: All these reports will be accessible to the public in 2023.

THE FUTURE LOOKS LIKE...

In the following year, we look forward to many things including the following:

1. dedication of more resources to research and research reporting,

2. a conference where we can showcase our findings over the past few years including publishing our research work.

3. We are also looking forward to improving our data collection methods and trying some new techniques such as snowball sampling, and passive covert observation, among others.



TOGETHER = REACHING FURTHER



With a mission to facilitate access to Justice at the grassroot level, in 2022 we embarked on a quest to increase our presence at the community level. Through partnerships with community-based initiatives, we have supported these organisations to extend legal support to their target populations. Through virtual training, mediation and consultations with lawyers, these communities can reach amicable and legally informed resolutions to their legal issues.

BEYOND UGANDA'S BORDERS

The year's targets have been eye-opening for BarefootLaw. We have learnt a lot as we set out on a new path of expansion. Having set deliberate foothold with expansion into new countries, we are proud of our work expanding to Kenya, and setting Malawi and Tanzania in motion.

Kenya happened! We got a working partnership with government in Kenya, an MOU that enables us to implement our scale activities into Kenya. We undertook research across three countries (Kenya, Tanzania, and Malawi) during the year, and in December, shared the research results at a successful event in Nairobi as mentioned in the previous chapter

THE FUTURE LOOKS LIKE...

We intend to learn fast as we stay the course, appreciating that some results take time. There is an incredible team at hand ready to work to success and look forward to unleashing the full potential.

Building the multi-national scale efforts of BFL and operating in more than one country.



OUR IMPACT

Within 2022, we were able to invest more resources in learning and innovating than ever before in BFL's history. As far as data collection is concerned, we faced challenges relating to disease outbreaks such as Ebola, mid-year and ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

We had to ensure that our data collection activities were carried out only after careful consideration and safety measures were put in place. . We used multiple methods of data collection to assure qualitative data even when unable to interact in person with the respondents. We have persisted in our pursuit of getting qualitative data from users who have had their legal problems resolved and are now aware that we have a response rate of at least 30% and with some users above 50%. We continue to work on ways to improve this for better knowledge of the results of our work.

> Impact is the positive change that occurs in the lives of our users after receiving and utilising the information and guidance that BarefootLaw provides them and their communities. We prioritise the most vulnerable communities when providing our services.

Here are some interesting stats from our work and findings;

7,567,476
Number of times our information has been accessed in 2022 across our online platforms

3,387
Cases and inquiries handled

60
Districts covered in Uganda

121,237
New users

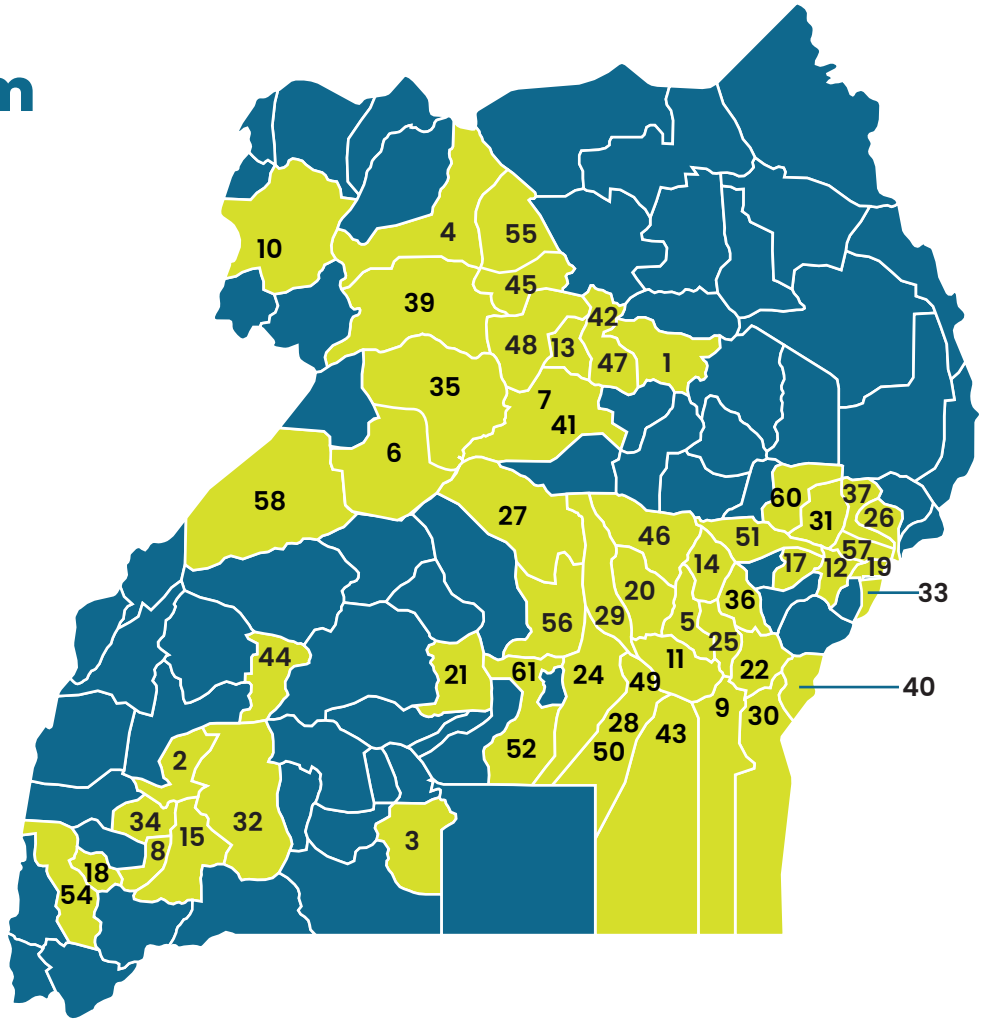
2,519
Users accessed our services through outreaches.

80
Local leaders trained

55
Number of community outreaches held

80
Successful mediations

05
5 SACCOs trained



KEY

1.Alebtong 2.Ibanda 3.Masaka 4.Amuru 5.Iganga 6.Masindi 7.Apac 8.Sheema 9.Mayuge 10.Arua 11.Jinja 12.Mbale 13.Bala(Kole) 14.Kaliro 15.Mbarara 16.Budaka 17.Kampala 18.Mitooma 19.Bududa 20.Kamuli 21.Mityana 22.Bugiri 23.Kamuro 24.Mukono 25.Bugweri 26.Kapchworwa 27.Nakasongola 28.Buikwe 29.Kayunga 30.Namayingo 31.Bukedea 32.Kirihura 33.Namisindwa 34.Buhweju 35.Kiryandongo 36.Namutumba 37.Bulambuli 38.Kole 39.Nwoya 40.Busia 41.Kwania (Apac) 42.Ogur(Lira) 43.Buvuma 44.Kyegegwa 45.Omoro 46.Buyende 47.Lira 48.Oyam 49.Buikwe 50.Lugazi(Buikwe) 51.Palisa 52.Entebbe 53.Luuka 54.Rukungiri 55.Gulu 56.Luwero 57.Sironko 58.Hoima 59.Manafwa 60.Soroti 61.Wakiso

We followed up with 349 users in 2022 selected by means of random sampling through our Reach out to You initiative in order to ascertain the value of our services to them. Through these follow-ups we get to learn a lot about how useful our services have been, how far the users went to taking action and resolving their legal problem. We learnt the following.

83% of the users who through the follow-ups we made in 2022 were in a state of ignorance at the point of first contact with us according to our lawyer notes with only 10% of them having basicl legal knowledge and the rest (7%) preparing to act and seeking either validation or affirmation of their decision.

After interacting with BarefootLaw at length, we found only 5% of the users still appeared to still be in a state of ignorance whereas 45% were at a stage of taking action and 5% having taken action and waiting for results . 15% of respondents were still preparing to act. 30% of the respondents had managed to resolve the legal problem.

This shows us that there is a significant difference in the lives of the people who contact us. Most are moved to do something about their legal problem.

It is important to note that follow-ups are done after the user has had a chance to make a decision on what to do about their legal problem and has had at least 3 weeks to act on it.

OUT OF 349 USERS

BEFORE BFL OUTREACHES

83% IN A STATE OF IGNORANCE

10%
HAD BASIC KOWLEDGE ON THE LAW

07%
PREPARING TO ACT OR SEEK VALIDATION OF DECISION

AFTER BFL OUTREACHES

05% IN A STATE OF IGNORANCE

30%
HAD MANAGED TO RESOLVE LEGAL PROBLEMS

45%
TAKING ACTION OR WAITING FOR RESULTS

15% WERE STILL WAITING TO TAKE ACTION

PROJECTS



Representatives of the FATE Consortium interviewing the women's saving group "Mon Pe Camo ki Coo" invited by BarefootLaw in Kole.

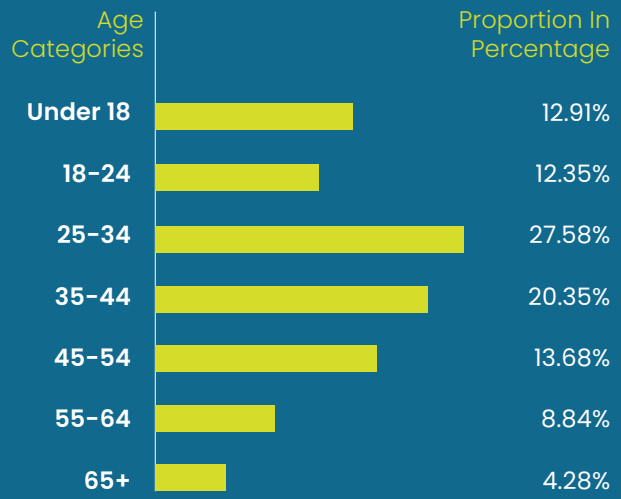
- From Access To Equality (FATE): In this project, BarefootLaw is equipping community partners with a web and mobile software called The Node's Software, which works offline and online, allowing users to make appointments and speak directly with our lawyers. It also provides free content on the law, which can be used to teach people the law on various topics.

-Foundations For Scale Study: carried out a study in Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi on the environment surrounding access to legal services in the countries. Three country reports were created.

-Accelerating Innovations in Access to Justice Through Research: Identified 41 justice innovators with legal solutions in communities across Uganda.

FATE HIGHLIGHTS

1620 Women trained using the INODES platform



MOTT HIGHLIGHTS

1/ 37 Innovators nominated

2/6 YEARS
average number of years of existence for the innovators

3/ 51%
non-tech based legal innovation and 49% tech based legal innovation

BarefootLaw Lawbox





Our lessons over the years led us to open up what we have termed “The LawBox”, which is a shipping container fabricated and remodelled into a cost-efficient, high-impact tool in which technology can enhance access to justice in rural and hard-to-reach communities.

We are happy to report that it has already started impacting the community. Of the three hundred and seventy-six (376) people that have visited the LawBox either out of curiosity or to seek guidance on a legal issue, we have resolved eighty-six (86) cases. It has enabled unique virtual trainings, such as Business and compliance-related legal sensitizations with Village Savings and Loan Groups, Local Council courts and many others.

We are still learning and look forward to sharing the deeper story of the LawBox with you next year.

376 PEOPLE
have visited the LawBox.

86 CASES
have been resolved.



SUPPORT FROM OTHERS = REACHING FURTHER

A big **Thank you!** to all our partners and funders



As an African-led non-profit, we are incredibly fortunate to get support from partners who continue to believe in our vision of access to justice for all and our model for delivering our services.

We retained and continued to actively engage with, our current partners. This involved frequent updates on our activities in addition to the agreed-upon reporting. Beyond this, with the reduction of travel restrictions, some of our partners were able to physically meet our team and see our work in action.

We were also able to get new partners on board, we are happy to announce and welcome – **Segal Family Foundation, Azurit Foundation and Sint Antonius Stichtung Projecten.**

MORE OF WHAT WE LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2023



Scale
There is a lot still to do with nodes, and we look forward to 2023 to build it out as a scaling strategy.

Exploring the lengths tech can go to in all the dimensions of A2J
We pride ourselves on innovation – innovating with tech. In the spirit of building back better, we took the lessons learnt in using digital technology to connect. We have been tinkering with an innovative approach to improving access to justice in marginalised rural populations in northern Uganda and from our learnings and experience look forward to launching it in 2023.

BarefootLaw@10
A decade of BarefootLaw is definitely worth celebrating! Started from the bottom – Gerald as a law student sharing legal content on his Facebook page – Now we are here! – a multi-award-winning organisation, having reached over 950,000 users with free legal guidance. March 2023 marks 10 years of BarefootLaw, and we are excited to celebrate our journey with you. We have a series of talks, content, Corporate social responsibility campaigns and events lined up to celebrate this milestone.

2022 WAS A SUCCESS THANKS TO ALL OF YOU;

WE LOOK FORWARD TO 2023 WITH YOU!

For more information you can reach us via;

@Barefootlaw

0785824078

0392177405 / 0755149984

0800220000*(toll free)*

ask@barefootlaw.org www.barefootlaw.org

Barefootlaw Kampala (Head Office)

020-0-902705 / 039-3-254691

Plot1 Muwafu Road, Ministers' Village,
Ntinda, Kampala, Uganda.