










# People-Centered Justice & Data

Justice data provide vital information on people’s legal problems, justice journeys, and outcomes, and serve as the cornerstone for the evidence base on what works to meet people’s justice needs, close the justice gap, and strengthen the rule of law. Justice data are also important for establishing feedback loops between service users and service providers and helping USAID and its partners to continuously improve rule of law programming and related people-centered justice approaches.

A variety of quantitative and qualitative methods that can help USAID, partners, and practitioners gather the information for designing and delivering people-centered justice services. The table below provides a description of common sources of justice data, advantages, and logistical considerations for each, as well as illustrative examples of how different Missions have used these data as part of their rule of law programming and related people-centered justice interventions.

| DATA SOURCE   | ADVANTAGES  | CONSIDERATIONS   | EXAMPLE   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Quantitative Sources of Justice Data:</b> The sources below are best suited to describing prevalence and trends in legal problems, journeys, and outcomes using data that can be quantified.   |   |  |   |
|  <p><b>Population Survey:</b><br/>Surveys administered to the general population. The most common types of general population justice surveys are crime victimization surveys and legal needs surveys.</p>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers a comprehensive and empirical overview of people’s legal problems and justice journeys</li> <li>Captures legal problems not reported or taken to formal justice institutions</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time and budget required to administer a population survey</li> <li>Technical capacity to design and administer the survey and analyze its results</li> </ul>   | Under the Ukuk Bulagy (UB) Activity, USAID/ <b>Kyrgyzstan</b> conducted a Justice Needs Survey, which included surveys to 1,500 respondents across UB’s three pilot districts to collect data on the most prevalent legal problems.   |
|  <p><b>User Survey:</b><br/>Surveys of users of justice institutions and services. This can include people who have used courts and legal aid services for example, as well as people being detained for criminal offenses.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Captures experiences and challenges faced by actual users of justice institutions and services</li> <li>Can be used to inform design tools such as journey mapping</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessing a sufficiently large and representative sample of justice service users</li> <li>Partnerships with institutions and service providers necessary for surveying users</li> </ul>                        | USAID/ <b>Kosovo</b> ’s Justice Activity carried out court user exit surveys, which asked about court efficiency, fairness, and satisfaction with services. These surveys were used for action planning to improve court users’ experience, in combination with other data. |
|  <p><b>Practitioner Survey:</b><br/>Surveys administered to justice system officials or practitioners, such as judges, lawyers, or legal aid providers.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ideal for capturing data on the quality of legal frameworks and policies, and their implementation</li> <li>Helpful for understanding institutional and procedural barriers to justice delivery</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessing a representative sample of practitioners</li> <li>Necessary partnerships with institutions and service providers for surveying practitioners</li> </ul>   | USAID/ <b>Ukraine</b> ’s Justice for all Activity conducted a nation-wide online survey of legal aid and social support practitioners as part of a larger study of legal needs in Ukraine during the war.   |
|  <p><b>Administrative Data:</b><br/>Data collected by justice system institutions in the course of their everyday activities, normally for management purposes.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data are often publicly available at low or no cost</li> <li>Data often cover longer periods of time, allowing for longitudinal analysis</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity of justice institutions to collect and publish data regularly</li> <li>Clarity of data definitions and collection methods</li> <li>Data may not be disaggregated by population or geography</li> </ul> | USAID/ <b>Colombia</b> ’s Inclusive Justice Activity uses data from the National Police, National Legal Medicine and Forensic Institute, and Prosecutor’s Office to monitor violence and human rights violations in 76 municipalities.                                      |

<sup>1</sup> Definitions and discussions of data sources draw from the following sources: (1) Haugan, G., Davis, M., Albornoz, M., Mijares, A. 2023. *MEL Practitioner Guide: Alternatives to Survey Measurement for Activity and Context Monitoring: Use Cases from Latin America and the Caribbean Citizen Security Programming*. Washington, DC: USAID. <https://bit.ly/3PH7xUY>; (2) OECD/Open Society Foundations. 2019. *Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice*. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://bit.ly/3PKTsG0>; (3) Praia City Group on Governance Statistics. 2020. “Access to and Quality of Justice.” In *Handbook on Governance Statistics*. <https://bit.ly/3pB4pzn>; and (4) World Bank. 2020. *Understanding People’s Perspectives on Identification: A Qualitative Research Toolkit*, Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://bit.ly/3PMIXCF>.

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|---|--|--|---|
|  <p><b>Observational Data:</b><br/>Data collected by individuals trained to observe and note practices or characteristics of interest. In the justice context, this is most often done in the context of court or trial observation.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide objective insights on procedural justice and due process</li> <li>• Can be collected at a high frequency and are available in near real-time</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining issues of interest that can be rated objectively</li> <li>• Need for standardized tools ensure consistency and reliability</li> <li>• Access to courts/process of interest</li> </ul>   | <p>Under the Rule of Law Project, USAID/<b>Serbia</b> developed methodologies for observing and recording time and cost savings to quantify impacts of e-justice improvements on court proceedings and operational efficiency.</p>  |
|  <p><b>Alternative/Big Data:</b><br/>Datasets built using crowdsourcing, social media, or other online or app-based activity. While less common in the justice context, these data have been used for estimating legal problem prevalence or to gauge interest in justice services.</p>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides real-time, high frequency data</li> <li>• Can capture large populations with geographic precision</li> <li>• Can be low cost for publicly available platforms or information</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representativeness of platform users</li> <li>• Subjectivity and lack of standardization of posts and reports</li> <li>• Platform integrity (i.e., distinguishing between real and false posts/reports and state censorship concerns)</li> </ul>    | <p>USAID/<b>Serbia</b> used Google and Facebook analytics to analyze user interest in content on specific legal problems, and used this data to tailor legal information and new public content to these legal problems and relevant services.</p>  |
| <p><b>Qualitative Sources of Justice Data:</b> The sources below are best suited to providing an in-depth understanding of justice experiences and justice barriers, and for explaining perceptions, motivations, and dynamics not captured in quantitative data.</p>   |  |  |   |
|  <p><b>Focus Group Discussion (FGD):</b><br/>Facilitated, semi-structured group conversations used to understand perspectives and experiences. In the justice context FGDs are often conducted with small groups of citizens or service users and may focus on particular geographies or subgroups.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideal for understanding beliefs, experiences, and reasoning of ordinary people and service users</li> <li>• Cost effective relative to population and user surveys</li> <li>• Cost effective relative to individual interviews</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to convene groups of 6-8 individuals with desired characteristics (e.g., court users, women with land disputes, etc.)</li> <li>• Some justice issues (e.g., GBV, crime victimization) may be too sensitive for group discussions</li> </ul> | <p>USAID/<b>Serbia</b>'s Rule of Law Project worked with the Belgrade Centre for Security Police to conduct 15 FGDs across Serbia with people who had recently interacted with courts to understand their views on judges' communication, clarity of court documents, and justice system integrity.</p> |
|  <p><b>Key Informant Interview (KII):</b><br/>In-depth interviews with experts or practitioners in some aspect of the justice system who are well positioned to speak about specific touch points of the justice system or the experiences of particular groups.</p>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captures informed opinions and experiences of justice experts</li> <li>• Provides valuable insights on justice system operations and policy implementation</li> <li>• Can be used to inform design tools such as journey mapping</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to identify and access justice experts, practitioners, and leaders</li> <li>• Cost and time effectiveness relative to FGDs</li> </ul>   | <p>As part of its action planning for a Justice Innovation Network, USAID/<b>Kosovo</b>'s Justice Activity conducted 19 KIIs with civil society, lawyers, academics, donors, and others on opportunities and barriers for innovation in the justice sector.</p>   |
|  <p><b>Document or Case Review:</b><br/>A systematic review of written information, such as case documentation. The review is often organized around key themes or research questions that can surface common trends.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can highlight common issues, practices, and process concerns affecting particular justice system institutions and actors</li> <li>• Typically low-cost depending on the volume of documentation</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to documents of interest (e.g., case files, policy memos, court transcripts, etc.)</li> <li>• Quality of available documentation</li> <li>• Requires an analysis framework for surfacing common trends</li> </ul>                            | <p>USAID/<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>'s Ukuk Bulagy Activity conducted a review of complaints received by the Disciplinary Commission under the Council of Judges in order to formulate recommendations for systematic approaches to addressing common complaints.</p>   |