



IBJ Youth Initiative

Youth Initiative Module Guide

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1. About IBJ

International Bridges to Justice (IBJ) is a NGO dedicated to protecting the basic legal rights of ordinary citizens in developing countries. Specifically, IBJ works to guarantee all citizens the right to competent legal representation, the right to protection from cruel and unusual punishment, and the right to a fair trial. Founded in 2000, IBJ has 7 country programs in Burundi, Cambodia, China, DR Congo, India and Rwanda. It has represented over 31,000 individuals worldwide.

The Problem

Investigative torture typically occurs in developing countries that lack the necessary legal safeguards to protect citizens after arrest or initial detention. These detainees have yet to be proven guilty in a court of law, but they are tortured to coerce confessions. Individuals who cannot afford bail or a lawyer may face months, even years, of horrific conditions before their case is examined in court. Lengthy pre-trial detention is a systematic problem, usually stemming from the lack of access to free legal representation.

Juvenile Justice

Youth within the justice system are among the most vulnerable to abuse, especially in developing countries. During questioning, police may threaten to maim, beat, or injure a child. This abuse can severely affect a child's physical and mental health, causing long-term developmental damage.

One such child is Paulin, a 17-year-old in the Democratic Republic of Congo, from a small town called Birava-Cishugi. When he was 14 years old, he purchased a pair of boots for 80 cents, which unknown to him were stolen goods. The police arrested Paulin for theft despite his mother testifying his innocence. He was detained for over 3 and a half years awaiting trial before IBJ found him in August 2016 and began working to get him released from horrific prison conditions. The length of time he was detained for was grossly disproportionate to the crime he was accused of, and led to him spending his most formative years inside a prison cell. Without free legal assistance, Paulin may never have been able to regain his freedom.

The Solution

IBJ protects individuals' legal rights by providing direct legal representation to people too poor to afford a lawyer, strengthening the capacity of justice sector officials to properly implement laws, and bringing lawyers together to improve their legal skills. In particular, IBJ tries to protect children from mistreatment in prisons through rights awareness campaigns across the country. These campaigns result in greater knowledge of and respect for human rights.

These actions are implemented not only in the 7 countries where IBJ has permanent programs, but also by IBJ's 59 JusticeMaker Fellows, who are active in 38 countries. Furthermore, IBJ offers several training resources for lawyers and human rights defenders, including the IBJ Criminal Defense Wiki, an online library of criminal defense information, and eLearning, which contains educational modules for lawyers. Furthermore, IBJ produces defense manuals for lawyers and scorecards for evaluating justice systems.

With your enthusiasm and commitment to social justice, you can play a key role in building the movement to end torture. The IBJ Youth Initiative is committed to working in partnership with young people to raise awareness of the issue of investigative torture and promote access to justice for all.

2. The IBJ Youth Initiative

What is the Youth Initiative?

This program mobilizes youth as stakeholders in IBJ's mission to uphold the legal rights of individuals worldwide, where torture is used as an investigative tool. We aim to develop a network of Justice Advocates (JAs) across the world to promote access to justice. As part of this initiative, we encourage our Justice Advocates to form Youth Chapters, engage in activities designed to raise awareness of legal rights and help fundraise for IBJ.

Justice Advocates and Youth Chapters

A Justice Advocate is someone who is part of IBJ's Youth Initiative and wants to engage in the fight to end torture as an investigative tool. When a Justice Advocate starts a group at their school or university, the group is called a "Chapter."

3. Skills Development

By becoming a Justice Advocate you are:

- **BUILDING AWARENESS** of the basic legal rights of ordinary citizens around the world and the obstacles that prevent these laws from being properly implemented during arrest and detention.
- **ENGAGING** others within your community to take action against injustice within their legal systems.
- **FACILITATING CHANGE** at the grassroots level, starting with your local community. When you conduct legal research and assist in the development of training resources for lawyers, you help increase the capacity of lawyers to protect human rights.

By participating in the IBJ Youth Initiative, not only do you gain valuable skills for your academic and professional life, you also actively contribute to the world of your future. Participating builds your skills in:

- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ Initiative
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Research
- ✓ Problem Solving
- ✓ Organization and Time Management
- ✓ Peace Making
- ✓ Teamwork

4. Structure of the Youth Initiative

Application Stage

You can become involved in the IBJ Youth Initiative in 3 ways:

- by applying as an individual Justice Advocate,
- by creating a Youth Chapter with friends, or
- by applying to join an existing Youth Chapter.

You can find the application form on <http://www.ibj.org/programs/youth-initiative/>.

If you are interested in getting involved with IBJ through the Youth Initiative as part of an existing program at your school or university, please email us at youth@ibj.org.

After completing your application, IBJ will review it and send you an email confirmation of your registration as a Justice Advocate. You will then receive supporting materials that will serve as a guide for your work as a Justice Advocate.

Activity Stage

You are now ready to start your activities as a Justice Advocate.

- You are expected to complete at least 3 activities, examples of which are detailed below.
- At the end of the initiative, you will submit a report detailing your program to the IBJ Youth Initiative Coordinator.
- IBJ will then send you a certificate of recognition, which you can add on your CV/resume!

5. Activities

Here are some activities that you can undertake as a Justice Advocate; whichever activities you choose, your contribution is crucial in the fight for access to justice:

❖ **Conduct Legal Research**

Do you want to hone your research skills, learn more about national legal frameworks, and see your work published on a globally recognized platform?

IBJ is always looking for social science and law students to contribute to the Criminal Defense Wiki, an online platform specifying national legal procedures. Inform IBJ which country you want to research, upon completion, IBJ will review the content before publishing it online.

❖ **Fundraise for IBJ**

Are you passionate about access to justice and want to help spread the message about the need for better human rights safeguards in justice systems? Support lawyers working at the front-line of preventing abuses by raising funds through a sponsored charity run, a formal event, a charity auction, or a student variety show. Remember, your primary goal is to get others interested in access to justice and to raise awareness about IBJ's work and mission.

❖ **Form a Society**

What better way of raising legal rights awareness than founding a new society on your campus? You can host debates about human rights, access to justice, and prison conditions throughout the world. These can be complemented by fundraising events to have a wider impact.

❖ **Connect with Country Programs.**

Do you want to assist our country programs in planning rights awareness campaigns, help to document success stories, or conduct legal research for them? We connect you to our country programs and lawyers, youth, and human rights defenders on the ground passionate about access to justice.

❖ **Connect with JusticeMakers**

IBJ has 59 JusticeMakers in 38 countries throughout the world. Is one of them in your region? Contact IBJ to put you in touch with local JusticeMakers to assist them in the development of their project and raise further awareness of access to justice.

❖ **Letter Writing Campaign**

The objective of a letter writing campaign is to reach the influential figures within your community and explain why you are supporting IBJ in our efforts to end torture as an investigative tool and gain early access to justice. The goal of this campaign is to explain the mission to those who can affect change.

❖ **CrowdRise or another funding platform of your choice**

Online platforms help people learn more about what we doing while raising funds for a good cause. For more information on how to kick start a CrowdRise campaign for IBJ, go to: <http://www.crowdrise.com/online-fundraising>.

❖ **(Online) Petition**

Create your own (online) petition to bring attention to a particular issue related to access to justice. Creating momentum for your chosen topic can bring both awareness and action. For example platforms of online petitions, go to: www.change.org

❖ **Movie nights**

Host a movie night on campus and show films about human rights or collaborate with the Film Society to appeal to a wider audience. You can fundraise by charging an entrance fee. For film ideas, go to: <https://ff.hrw.org/>

Checklist before you start any activities

- 1) What activity are you planning?
- 2) Establish how you will measure the success of the activity.
- 3) When and where are you planning to organize it?
- 4) Do you have permission to use the location?
- 5) How will you advertise the event and who is your audience?
- 6) How many people will organize this event? Does everyone know their roles and responsibilities?
- 7) How many people will be participating? If you are unsure of numbers, approximate the attendance.
- 8) Will you have to prepare marketing materials for your activity?
- 9) If you expect to incur expenses, it may be useful to create a budget.

Explaining IBJ's cause

IBJ's operation can be difficult to explain; here is a 3-step process that may help:

1. **Issue:** Torture occurs all over the world, especially in developing countries. It is often used because it is the cheapest and easiest method of extracting a confession.
2. **IBJ's solution:** IBJ works with criminal defense lawyers, law enforcement and governments to make systematic change across the justice system on a local and national level.
3. **How you can help:** By fundraising and raising awareness of the issue of lack of access to justice, you are contributing to IBJ's mission of ensuring greater respect for human rights around the world. Your actions support ordinary citizens, our lawyers on the ground, and our country programs in Burundi, Cambodia, China, DR Congo, India, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

6. Justice Advocates around the world

IBJ Youth Initiative in Bukavu, DR Congo

A key part of IBJ's newest country program in the DRC is the involvement of youth. Congolese law students at the Catholic University of Bukavu are finding new creative ways to raise awareness about legal rights. Working closely with the IBJ Congo program coordinator, they are assisting in organizing rights awareness events, documenting case stories and preparing material for justice roundtables.

Justice Advocates Bhavni and Mindy in Cambodia

Mindy Hsu and Bhavani Khemka organized a group of students to go to Cambodia and observe IBJ lawyers working with clients who had been wrongly accused of crimes in Banteay Meanchey and Siem. Witnessing the unjust treatment of Cambodians and IBJ's work helped students see the impact of their chapter's work.

Joshua Browder iPhone App

Joshua, a British student, developed iPhone applications for several nonprofit organizations. This software is now used as the interface for IBJ's eLearning initiative, a global knowledge and learning platform designed to institutionalize criminal defender standards worldwide.

C4SI Challenge

Students at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, as part of Collaborate for Social Impact (C4SI), took part in an 8-week challenge on social innovation in the realm of access to justice. IBJ's challenge: How do we develop Geneva's position as a global soft-governance Hub to bring together the international community to shine a spotlight on Access to Justice under UN Sustainable Development Goal 16? At the C4SI Demo Day, the IBJ team was selected as the winner among 11 teams by a panel of judges, giving them the opportunity to put their proposed solution into action.

Interfaith Peace Vigil

On 26th June 2014, International Day Against Torture/Torture Survivors Day, we mobilized our Justice Advocates around the world to hold peace vigils with their families and friends to raise awareness.

Crowdrise

In October 2014, all IBJ Youth Chapters were involved in a campaign on CrowdRise for the Skoll Foundation's annual fundraising challenge. They helped raise money and awareness against the use of torture as an investigative tool.

1M93 Youths for Justice Campaign

The 1M93 'Youths for Justice' Campaign signifies 1 million and 93 youth in a global movement calling upon governments to act now against torture – especially against people their own age. 93 signifies the countries that have signed the declaration of the United Nations that everyone has a right to be free from torture. IBJ Justice Advocates researched Juvenile Torture in their own countries and started a petition to raise awareness.

Internship Program with William & Mary Law School

IBJ collaborates with the Center for Comparative Legal Studies and Post-Conflict Peace Building at William and Mary Law School to give exceptionally qualified law students the opportunity to gain experience in IBJ's headquarters and offices as interns. These internships are critically important for students seeking concrete field experience as building blocks towards careers in international law and human rights.