



# *Justice*Makers

un projet de International Bridges to Justice

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## **Press release on the JusticesMakers fellows' projects at mid-term.**

IBJ would firstly like to thank all the winners of the JusticeMakers competition for their collaboration, commitment and hard work.

Below is a summary of the first halves of the winning projects, including the JusticeMakers' current activities and impact on their communities.



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## **1. Francis KONE, *Fighting against abusive pretrial detention by accelerating legal procedures* – Ivory Coast**



Francis Kone's project began with a meeting with the Director of Civil and Criminal Affairs (DAPC) and the Director of Penitentiary Administration (DAP) in order to discuss collaboration with them for the implementation of the project. He is proud, after 4 months of running the project, of an increased awareness among Ivorian authorities of the reality of the abuse of pretrial detention.

The JusticeMakers fellow and his team visited prisons in Boukaé and Doala in order to identify the prisoners in need of assistance. Fifteen cases have been identified and are currently being processed and analyzed by a lawyer and the magistrates in charge of the files, for which working sessions were organized to include both lawyers and magistrates.

In addition, Francis Kone organized a seminar and workshop on "Strengthening the capacities of criminal justice actors and civil society in respect of the fundamental rights of the detainee." A total of 30 participants, including public prosecutors, judges, correctional officers, social workers, lawyers and members of Amnesty International participated in the two-day event. The workshop focused on the fundamental rights of defendants with the aim of making concrete proposals to accelerate judicial proceedings and facilitate relationships between stakeholders in the criminal justice system and members of civil society.

The conclusion drawn by Francis Kone at the end of these four months is that there has been very little administrative efficiency between clerks and magistrates; the internet connection of the offices are unreliable and documents at all stages of the criminal process are handwritten, leading to administrative slowness. Legal aid is almost nonexistent and, most of the time, inefficient. Finally, the amount of cases far exceeds the number of magistrates needed.

## 2. Gontran WALE SOME, *Joining by Justice* – Burkina Faso



Gontran Wale Some began his project, *Joining by Justice*, with a trip to Geneva where he took part in mediation training and met with various people who advised him on the implementation of his project. He has hired a communications intern to create a logo for his association and to design numerous social media pages to further the impact of his project. Whilst in Geneva he also registered the *Friends of Joining by Justice* association, based in Switzerland.

In addition, Mr. Wale Some and his team carried out their first rights awareness activities concerning the rights and duties of detainees during the event, “72 Hours for the Detained” at the Diébougou Detention Center. They created and distributed 1,000 copies of a checklist on the rights and duties of detained people. To use the words of the JusticeMaker Fellow: *‘It is essential that everyone speak the same language. Raising awareness of human rights, placing them in the right context, and clarifying the role of each one of them is the first objective we have set for ourselves.’*

## 3. Ibrahima DIALLO, *National conference on torture and unlawful detention* in the Republic of Guinea – Guinea Conakry



For his project, Ibrahima Diallo launched what would be the first national conference of many. He and his team have planned 6 more conferences to be held before March 2018. Guests will include the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Security, a number of human rights defenders, the Minister of National Unity and Citizenship, and the Minister for Social

Action for Women and Children amongst others. The conferences focus on the prevention of torture and illegal detention. He commends the effective participation of all relevant actors and their commitment to human rights.

In addition, he conducted awareness campaigns by distributing leaflets and banners and hosting public debates in 5 communes in the city of Conakry. He has also pleaded with the Ministry of Justice regarding the detainees at the Central House and the civil prisons of the 33 prefectures of the country regarding cases which involve those in prolonged preventive detention without lawyers and those who have served their sentences but who have not been released.

#### **4. Dieudonné MUNGUWAMPAGA, *Legal assistance to women and children who are victims of torture and ill-treatment in unofficial detention centers in the province of South Kivu – Democratic Republic of Congo***



The first stage of the project led by Dieudonné and his team was to monitor the detention facilities, known as ‘cachots et amigos’, through a collaboration with the Kabare prosecution office. They visited 9 of these detention facilities and the conditions were described as deplorable and unhygienic.

As a result of these visits and with the aid of provincial health authorities, 10 detainees were able to receive healthcare.

Additionally, 10 cases of women and child victims of torture were considered, two having been dismissed and closed, and seven still pending.

Finally, our JusticeMakers Fellow and his team organized an activity on the popularization of international and national legal texts on the criminalization of torture and a rights awareness workshop. They also co-organized the training of officers’ judicial police, members of civil society, certain local authorities, prison officers, and the commissary commander of the Congolese National Police. The topics covered were: the drafting of the minutes of the hearing, the detention by the judicial police officer and the criminalization of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment in Congolese criminal law.

In all, there has been a training and dissemination of legislation on the criminalization of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, and nine awareness-raising events on the rights realized during the monitoring of places of detention. In addition, the training was broadcast on radio and television by RTNC Bukavu. The estimated number of people reached is 5,000.

Dieudonné is pleased to have been able to successfully advocate for the magistrate’s visit to places of detention in order to ban or substantially reduce cases of abuse, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

## 5. Thérèse DONU, *Justice for All* – Togo



Thérèse DONU organised, within the framework of her project, an awareness session on the topic “Equality and non-discrimination in access to justice”. Numerous associations for Human Rights Defence and members of the judiciary participated in this event.

The participants expressed their satisfaction at the end of the workshop and are now able to identify the legal instruments related to access to justice, such as identifying cases of abuse, knowing the different means to accessing justice, and knowing the competent authorities to contact in case of abuse. In total, 43 persons took part in the workshop.

This workshop was widely publicized by the local media, notably by the national TV channel at 8 and 10 PM, and by websites such as [www.lfrii.com](http://www.lfrii.com) and [www.africardv.com](http://www.africardv.com), among others.

Following the workshop, Thérèse then organized a roundtable with the leading LGBTQI organisation in Togo.

Thérèse also promoted her activities through radio programs which were periodically broadcasted by Pyramid Fm, currently one of the most listened-to radio stations in Togo, which also broadcasts directly online. She was interviewed by newspaper journalists about her work on September 20, 2017.

Additionally, Thérèse DONU and her team took 5 cases from the Lomé prison thanks to the establishment of a hotline to respond to cases of abuse; a telephone number for the mobile platform WhatsApp was also established to serve this purpose.

Our fellow states that the main obstacle to justice is the stigma surrounding LGBTQI people and the inability of the victims to trust free legal assistance. She is very pleased to help a large portion of the population and to have initiated the project successfully, thanks in part to the existing awareness of IBJ and the JusticeMakers program since before start of the project.

## **6. Noellie GAGLO, Action for effective legal representation of accused persons in Lomé Civil Prison– Togo**



Noellie Gaglo began her project by meeting the detainees of the Lomé civil prison to discuss the JusticeMakers project. She stressed the importance of access to a lawyer for all detainees. This meeting took place at two levels; the first session was held with the members of the Alert Club, a group of detainees mainly composed of spokespersons for detainees, and a second

session was held with the women detained in the women's ward of the civil prison. To quote our laureate: *"the beneficiaries sent their congratulations to the coordinator of the project and expressed their total support for the action, which for them is a first because it takes into account the concerns of women detainees. One of the women said 'For once, I have a lawyer who will assist me. Thank you to International Bridges to Justice for having thought of us. In any case, hope is allowed.'"*

Noellie Gaglo then presented her project to the Director of Prisons and Reintegration so that he could take part in and facilitate the implementation of the project. In addition, the laureate and her team created a database for the defendants, following various projects and obtaining the release of seven people since July. Finally, they prepared 2 training modules on human rights, the first on the detainee and criminal procedure in Togo, and the second on how to write a compelling letter requesting a hearing or a temporary freedom (for 30 and 34 participants, respectively). The first module, in the words of the laureate, *"allowed prisoners first to understand the fundamentals of human rights, then to familiarize themselves with the main international, regional and national human rights instruments and to improve their knowledge of the rights of the detainees"*.

These trainings received more-than-satisfactory feedback from the organizers and participants. One of the participants also noted, *"If only if we had learned earlier about these rules and principles of human rights protection, we would not be subjected to all these forms of violations and abuse..."*

Finally, to date our laureate has succeeded in providing legal assistance to 86 people, including 47 women.

She welcomes the significant impact of this project on its beneficiaries and the improved understanding of members of the criminal justice system of the realities of the prison environment.



## **7. Khadi SY, *Women and African prisons*– Burkina Faso**

In order to implement her project, Sy khadi enlisted the assistance of 2 lawyers.

She deplores the slowness of the prison system which leads to long periods of preventive detention. Through her work, Sykhadi has found that the inability to conduct investigations and the sheer lack of judges increases the length of the proceedings.

For her project activities, Sy khadi visited the prisoners of la Maison d'arrêt et de correction de Ouagadougou (MACO) twice a week to help those in need as frequently as she could. Thus, during the beginning of her project, Sy Khadi and her team provided assistance to 43 women of the MACO and closed 25 of these files. Our JusticeMakers Fellow also conducted 18 informational sessions on human rights at the MACO with about 120 people in attendance (including judges, clerks, prosecutors, the director of the MACO, the chief of security, the steward, female and male prison guards, and the social action of the MACO.)

She also undertook many initiatives to improve the conditions of detainees such as the repair and installation of showers and toilets and the distribution of medicine and food (such as milk and vegetables) every two weeks. She also oversaw the creation of a center called "L'ESCALE" to welcome women who have been rejected by their families since their detention.

Our laureate's primary concerns with MACO are over population, mistreatment of the prisoners, torture, lack of food, diseases, prisoners' inability to go outside, and unsanitary conditions.

## **8. Amadou Papa BA, *Civil and political rights outreach in Mauritania* - Mauritania**

The project of Ba Papa Amadou started with documentary research on the civil and political rights in Mauritania with the help of domestic and international texts. This research allowed him to build up a credible argument concerning these rights. Thanks to this work, he is now able to organize rights awareness workshops.

In terms of fieldwork, our fellow, together with his team, was able to visit various prisons, make observations on the conditions therein and establish statistics on prison overcrowding and on the situations of detainees. He has visited the Dar Naim Prison, the Women's Prison and the Reception and Reintegration Centre for Children in Conflict with the Law (CARSEC). Following these visits, he then provided legal aid and closed the cases of three women.

## **9. Charlotte TCHAKOUNTE, *Association of Lawyers for Social Integrity, Female Talent and Excellence* - Cameroon**

During the first part of her project, Charlotte Tchakounté assisted various detainees by providing them with legal aid services. Some of the beneficiaries of her assistance included those held in police stations and gendarmeries (5 women) and those who were already in prison (7 inmates).

She also organized an exchange workshop on torture for 32 participants including lawyers, notaries, and journalists. The outcome of this workshop was the formal writing of a plea for the Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture. Charlotte was able to convince the participants that the official opening of prisons to organizations as recommended by this protocol would be beneficial for the improvement of detention conditions in Cameroon. Following this event, Charlotte participated in a radio interview at the Radio Vie Nouvelle sur les Droits de l'Homme.

Charlotte's primary concern with the legal system in Cameroon is its slowness, the lack of cooperation between police and prison guards, and the deplorable conditions of places of detention.

## **10. Gisèle SANGUA, *Access to Justice for All* – Democratic Republic of Congo**

Gisèle's principal activity is the monitoring of cases of the detainees in Kassapa Prison, Lubumbashi. This approach is incredibly efficient and means that Gisèle and her team now have all the information regarding the inmates in the prison. The team creates a file for every detainee complete with the information regarding their date of arrival, the reason of the imprisonment and their status (pretrial detainees, convicted).

This process is also useful for the magistrates and the prison registration services for archiving purposed.

This information also allowed the team to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the prison administrative system, and help them analyze the causes of the overcrowding issues in prisons in the DRC.

In 3 months, Gisèle and her team handled 215 cases (10 women and 205 men), which included 60 individuals in regular detention and 155 in pre-trial detention.