

Case for Support 2024





United Nations SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

What we do

Protimos is a non-profit organisation. Our mission is to empower communities across Africa to protect their resource rights by using the law.

The challenge

Indigenous communities across Africa are often marginalised and at high risk of displacement and exploitation due to global development demands. These communities are adversely affected by the race to secure mineral, water and energy resources and the damage done by resulting climate change. Protimos lawyers challenge this injustice by enabling local communities to make effective use of the law in advocating for their own interests. The result is fairer and more sustainable development practices.

Our theory of change

Protimos was formed because we believe that impoverished, indigenous communities are entitled to the skills of trained lawyers. Communities need lawyers who will enable them to understand and protect their rights by accessing the legal process. The impacts of our work establish empowering regional precedents and ensure that community relationships with state, corporate and multinational entities become increasingly robust and equitable.

Our approach

We support community legal representation by establishing and financing in-country legal centres. These centres deliver legal education and training to local lawyers, and convene international peer-to-peer networks to support the continuing professional development of both junior and senior members of the legal profession.

In most of the world, indigenous people don't have from within their own ranks the kind of legal expertise that is required in today's world. What I see Protimos doing is helping to provide that legal empowerment in a fair and unique way.'

Programmes



Community Legal Empowerment

The heart of Protimos' mission is our Community Legal Empowerment programme, through which we establish in-country legal centres to train and mentor local lawyers. These lawyers go on to provide legal support and advice to their own communities, receiving additional guidance from our global network of international legal professionals. A cornerstone of our litigation strategy is the use of legal precedent. By carefully selecting test cases, we can establish precedents that empower not only our client communities but also others facing similar challenges- avoiding the need for more lengthy and expensive legal fights. The ripple effect of a single precedent can drive significant, lasting impact at scale, informing subsequent policy and showcasing the transformative power of strategic litigation.

Many more communities now seek Protimos' legal support. To match this growing demand, we must expand our reach over the next three years in key areas, impacting rights related to land, water, conservation, and more:

Area	People impacted	Issues being addressed
Lesotho	37,000	Water and environmental rights
Namibia	50,000	Land and environmental rights
South Africa	20,000	Water rights and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)
Tanzania	2,000	Land and conservation rights
Uganda	18,000	Resettlement and environmental rights
Zambia	2,700	Environmental and natural resource rights
Zimbabwe	15,000	Land and natural resource rights

Our ambitious plans will empower over 144,700 people across these nations to defend and assert their own resource rights, achieving true sustainable development and environmental justice.



Judicial Action Group

Founded in 2014, the Judicial Action Group (JAG) represents a voluntary, expanding professional network of distinguished Supreme Court judges from across the African continent. They are dedicated to addressing the complex legal and political challenges arising in their jurisdictions. JAG members take leading roles in developing key areas of the law which they identify as critical to the administration of good justice in their jurisdictions and the African region.

The JAG is ... bringing together people who have a shared belief that law is fundamental to the running of good societies ...'

Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws, QC, FRSA, HonFRSE

The Judicial Action Group has just embarked on an ambitious three-year programme of topics, focusing on critical issues such as terrorism, Artificial Intelligence, illicit financial flows, corruption, judicial bias, judicial review and judicial independence. The JAG programme is enriched by annual in-person summits hosted by JAG members in their home countries on a rotational basis and supported by quarterly virtual meetings. A highlight of this initiative is the ongoing publication of a multi-volume series exploring the African philosophy of ubuntu and its developing place within emerging law, internationally, regionally and domestically.

JAG members

Justice Tijjani Abubakar	Nigeria
Justice Barbara Ackah-Yensu	Ghana
Justice Awa Bah	The Gambia
Justice Mohamed Elghannam	Egypt
Judge Reginald Fynn	Sierra Leone
Justice Charles Hungwe	Zimbabwe
Justice Esther Kisaakye	Uganda
Justice Jody Kollapen	South Africa
Justice Isaac Lenaola	Kenya
Judge Molefi Makara	Lesotho
Justice Thomas Masuku	Namibia
Justice Luis Antonio Mondlane	Mozambique
Justice Nigel Mutuna	Zambia
Judge Zione Ntaba	Malawi

Atticus Fellowship Programme

The Atticus Fellowship Programme will help nurture the next generation of legal professionals dedicated to community development law. The programme offers young, progressive lawyers a structured, multi-year career pathway to establish themselves in practice within a network of like-minded peers. As specialists in the provision of culturally appropriate, community-centric legal services, our fellows go on to play a critical role in bridging the gap between local needs and global justice. Through this programme Protimos supports community development and environmental stewardship, envisioning a future where legal professionals are central to building a more equitable and healthy African society.

The benefits and highlights of an Atticus Fellowship

Year one

- (a) training from a global legal network
- (b) placements + relationship-building with global thought leaders
- (c) provision of a living stipend

Year two onwards

- (a) a salaried professional position serving their communities
- (b) regular in-person engagement with the global legal fraternity
- (c) individualised programme of Continued Professional Development

How we measure our impact

We measure our impact in various ways that are designed to be ambitious, visionary and responsive. We achieve this by:

- 1 ensuring that all legal strategy is carefully assessed on a continuing basis, keeping it effective and building a high rate of successful outcomes.
- 2 selecting cases strategically, to ensure that a successfully established case precedent will benefit a very large number of people, both immediately, and in the longer term with impacts upon policies and the law itself.
- 3 building good practice through our embedded relationships with communities, using a cross-disciplinary approach including architects, anthropologists, agronomists and social scientists.

Over the past decade, we at Protimos have demonstrated that our approach to legal empowerment is an effective model for achieving environmental justice and sustainable development for marginalised communities throughout Africa. As we extend our reach and grow our initiatives, we seek partners who want to invest in a legacy which allows every community to safeguard its own resource rights and shape its own future under the rule of law. With your support we will establish legal centres in Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Zambia, reinforce our Judicial Action Group, and expand the Atticus Fellowship Programme. Each of these elements is crucial to our comprehensive strategy for legal empowerment, ensuring that communities across Africa have the tools they need to protect their own interests and the environment.

The lawyers are waiting. The communities are desperate for help. Protimos needs the resources to be able to achieve this transformative work.



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