

Dear colleague

Identifying the economic benefits of legal aid

The IBA and the World Bank are jointly funding a project to identify the economic benefits of legal aid and to produce guidance that any jurisdiction can use to calculate the benefits in their own country. This project has emerged from the work started in 2016 on producing a Guide to Legal Aid Principles in Civil, Administrative and Family Justice Systems, which was launched in Rome on 9 October, and which I attach for your information.

The intention of the new project is to identify the economic benefits of legal aid; set them in the wider context, with which we are all familiar, of the economic benefits of the rule of law, including access to justice; and establish how jurisdictions with widely differing circumstances, traditions and economies can calculate the economic benefits of legal aid.

Funding will be made available for experts to conduct the research, review the literature and write the report, but wider involvement is needed to ensure that the experts have access to as much relevant information from across the world as possible.

The report will be published at the IBA Annual Conference in Seoul in October 2019, but of course the World Bank needs papers much sooner than that.

I attach a paper, produced by the World Bank, intended to start the process of information gathering. It has not had the benefit of a widespread literature review, but nonetheless provides an excellent starting point for comment and response.

At the end of the paper you will see that we are asking that you assist the work by:

- Providing any existing research, policy, thought piece or other document relevant to identifying the economic benefits of legal aid, or the economic costs of not providing legal aid;
- Identifying potential economic benefits from legal aid that are not mentioned in the document;
- Making any other comments with a view to ensuring the final report is comprehensive, relevant for jurisdictions of all types and traditions, and of use to all governments and policy makers in developing or reforming their legal aid systems.

Relevant information can range from nation-wide studies of whole legal aid systems carried out by academics and professional researchers to small-scale studies carried out by practitioners looking at the effects of legal aid or its lack in the community served by the practitioners.

Information from, or about, jurisdictions under-represented in the examples in this document is particularly welcome, including civil law jurisdictions and those in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Europe and Oceania;

I hope very much that you will help us in this project, and please feel free to pass this request to practitioners, policy makers and academics in your country or elsewhere who you think would like to contribute.

All responses should be sent to Georgia Harley, who is leading on the project for the World Bank at gharley@worldbank.org.

All those contributing to the project will be acknowledged unless they let Georgia know, when submitting their contribution, that they do not wish to be named in the acknowledgements.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact me at lscottmoncrieff@scomo.com

Best regards,

Lucy Scott-Moncrieff
IBA Access to Justice and Legal Aid Committee