

# Improving Access to Justice through People-Centered Justice in Georgia

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East-West Management Institute

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- International rule of law advisor at EWMI, USAID ROLP in Georgia
- Court system advisor to Minister of Justice in Australia
- Established PCJ court in Australia (Mental Health Court)
- Senior academic at RMIT University, Melbourne
- Author of *Judicial Self-Governance in the New Millennium* (2020, Springer)
- President-elect of IACA



# Session outline

- People-Centered Justice (PCJ) – what is it?
- **Engaging with and serving the community** as the driving force
- Strategies for mainstreaming PCJ at Georgia Rule of Law Program

PCJ: Tailoring premises, procedures (laws?), services, relationships and activities to needs of justice seekers and their communities



# Tailoring premises, procedures, activities to justice seekers and communities: therapeutic courtroom



# Improving the experience of the community at every justice system 'touchpoint', not just courts



# Mainstreaming PCJ Strategies at Georgia ROLP

1. Promoting **better cross-institutional engagement** within the justice sector
2. Building capacity to **measure and meet community needs and attitudes**
3. Embedding **'PCJ thinking'** within traditional justice institutions (courts, universities, legal profession)
4. Promoting **innovative ways of educating, and engaging with, the community** about justice and legal issues

## I. Promoting better cross-institutional understanding and engagement



- Promoted judges' and mediators' work to expand court-annexed mediation
- Supported Ombudsman's office and NGOs to pursue strategic litigation
- Result: 45 important legal precedents in areas of
  - domestic violence,
  - children's rights,
  - employment rights,
  - freedom of expression etc.

# Cross-institutional engagement in justice sector



- Annual Court Management Seminars
- Bringing together court staff, researchers, judges, lawyers, policy think-tanks, international experts
  - Court governance
  - Measuring workloads
  - PCJ
  - Quality of justice
  - Jury management

# Universities and courts



- Established legal clinics at Georgian universities that work with courts
- One clinic trained students to monitor domestic violence cases
- Another clinic studied the difference between judicial impartiality perceived by litigants vs neutral observers
- Procedural justice was seen as most important to litigants
  - Judges' active listening skills
  - Judge's 'reputation'
  - allowed the parties to express themselves
  - ensured clear comprehension, plain language

## 2. Equipping justice institutions to measure and meet a range of community needs (not just dispensing justice)



# Webinar on measuring users' experiences

## Section 1: ACCESS TO THE COURT

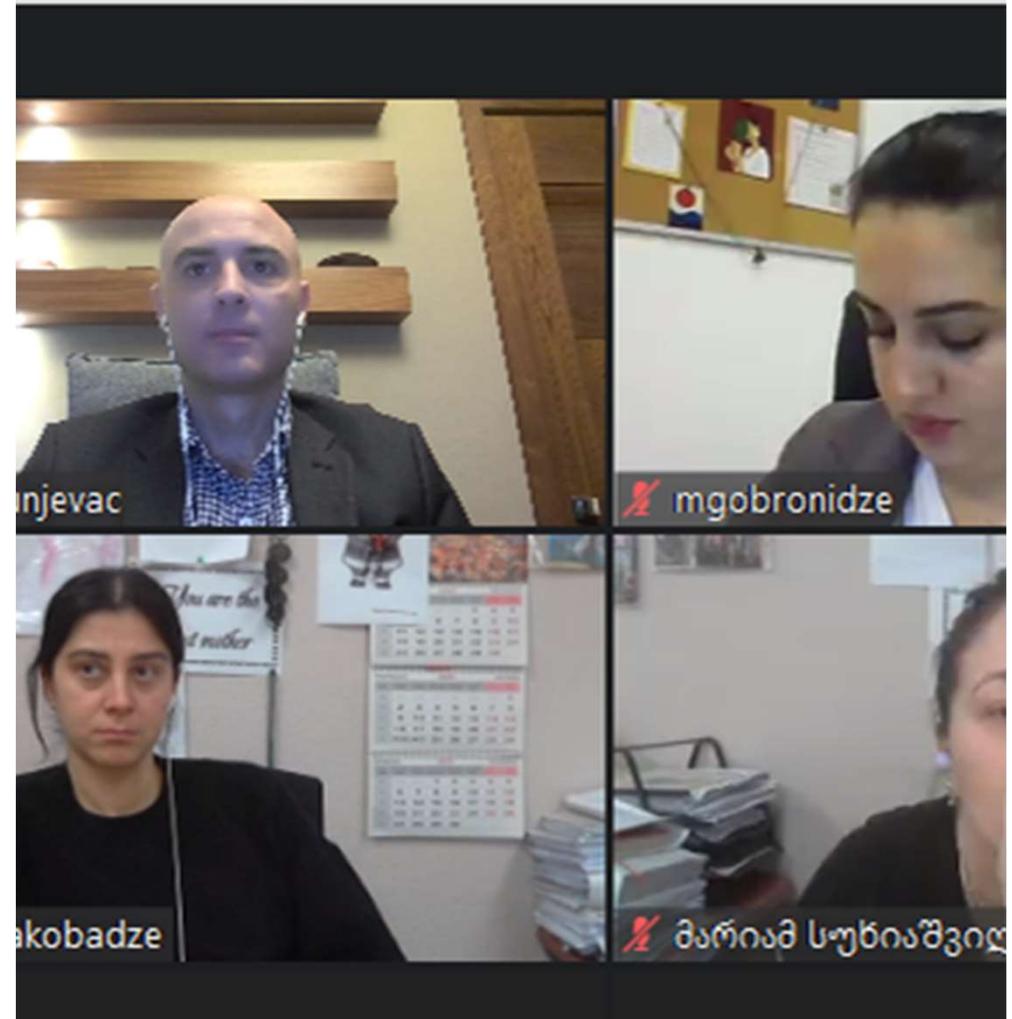
1. The forms needed were clear and easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
2. I was able to get my business done in a reasonable amount of time	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
3. Court staff paid attention to my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
4. I was treated with courtesy and respect.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
5. I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
6. The court's website was useful.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

## Section 2: FAIRNESS

1. The way my case was handled was fair.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
2. I was treated the same as everyone else.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
3. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made decision.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
4. The judge had all the information necessary to make good decision about my case.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
5. As I leave the court, I know what to do next about my case.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

## Section 3: WEBSITE SURVEY

1. I checked the website	Yes	No
2. If no, then you need not fill out any more answers		
3. If Yes:		
a. Was the website useful	Yes	No
b. What were you looking for: _____		
c. Did you like it?	Yes	No
d. Where did you go on the website? (list icons/windows)		
___ 1. What's New	___ 7. Rules & Other Publications	
___ 2. Forms	___ 8. Cases & Judgements	
___ 3. Fees	___ 9. Statistics	
___ 4. Calendar	___ 10. Palau Bar	
___ 5. Organisation	___ 11. History of Judiciary	
___ 6. Services	___ 12. FAQ	



### 3. Promoting 'PCJ thinking' - non-traditional approaches within traditional institutions

- PCJ workshops for university professors
- Introduced innovative course offerings
  - Street Law Programs
  - Innovative Justice School for uni students
- Promoting new ways of teaching in the future
  - 'flipped classroom'

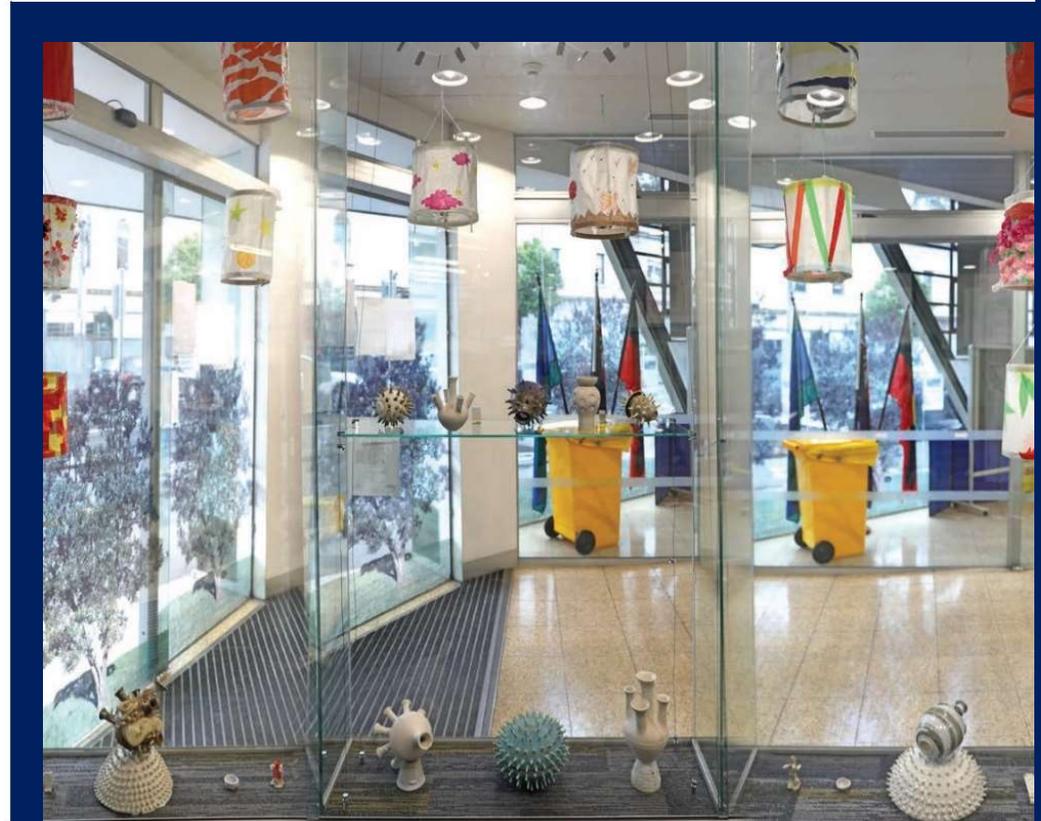
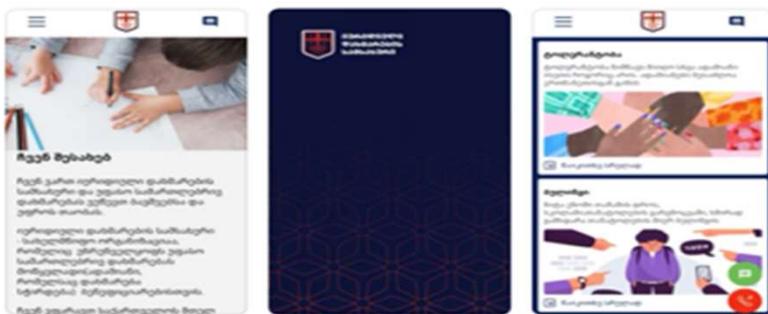
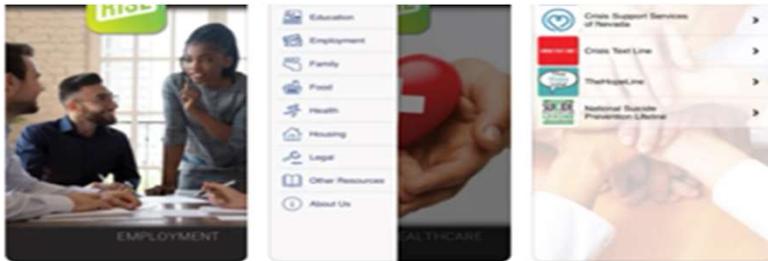


### 3. Promoting 'PCJ thinking' in justice institutions



- Development of Community Engagement Plans
- Judges, staff working together to identify community needs
- Planning PCJ activities:
  - Surveys and focus groups
  - Mock trials
  - 'A day in the court'
  - Staff attending a public event/informational campaign

# Promoting 'PCJ thinking'



Legal Aid Service mobile App

Community events, art exhibitions, children's sports, providing social spaces, BBQs

## 4. Promoting new ways of educating the community about justice and legal issues



- Community outreach in rural areas by legal professionals
- Justice ‘gamification’ initiatives for youth
- Creation of interactive justice surveys
- YouTube, Radio Liberty broadcasts by judges, lawyers, professors

# LAS Mobile Visits in Highlands Villages



- With our support, LAS reached out to more than 250 Adjarians from the highlands
- They learned about women's rights, human trafficking, and the free services available from the Legal Aid Service (LAS).

# Promoting new ways of educating youth: justice board games, theatrical plays



# Judges, Professors YouTube Podcasts

**J-Talks**  
30 მარტი / MAR. 30, 16:00

**USAID** EASTWEST  
LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

**მენდერული სამართლიანობა სასამართლოში** GENDER FAIRNESS IN COURT

**მზია თოდუა**  
უზენაესი სასამართლოს მოსამართლე (ყოფილი)  
და  
**პროფ. იაგო კაკაჩიშვილი**  
სოციოლოგიის მეცნიერებათა დოქტორი, სოციოლოგიისა და  
სოციალური მუშაობის დესარტამენტის დირექტორი, ისე

**MZIA TODUA**  
Supreme Court Justice (Retired)  
hosted by  
**PROF. DR. IAGO KACHKACHISHVILI**  
Head of the Department of Social Work, TSU

**1:05:20**

**J-Talks | მზია თოდუა: გენდერული  
სამართლიანობა სასამართლოში**



# Domestic Violence Quiz: Help a friend

- We funded the creation of a quiz to assist people whose personal information has been exposed, leading to threat of domestic violence.
- Informational blackmail, threats by partner, etc
- More than 25,000 people have filled out the quiz to date

Quiz: Can you help a friend?



Photo: cover

25,065  
Read more

312  
Share



<https://go.on.ge/3i>



Present article



Violence against women in various forms remains an unsolved problem to this day. A number of women have been victims of blackmail and threats by a partner, ex-partner or other people.

# People-centered approach builds trust

- Every user interaction with justice system either **enhances** or **erodes** trust.
- PCJ approach **enhances trust** between justice institutions and its communities
- Conversely, lack of trust **reduces** their **confidence in the legal system** and its outcomes



See Karpen & Senova (2021)12(3) IJCA 7