



CANADA'S JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 2021 PROGRESS

225
new A2J projects
in 2021

In Canada, the Action Committee adopted its nine Justice Development Goals (JDGs) after working collaboratively with people across the country to examine how to advance A2J.

These nine goals map out a path to improve A2J that everyone, whatever they are working on, can use to align their work. Whether individuals working to meet local meet needs, or as governments responsible for funding decisions, we can each see how our actions can advance A2J. We can align our work, driving towards a more inclusive and accessible system.

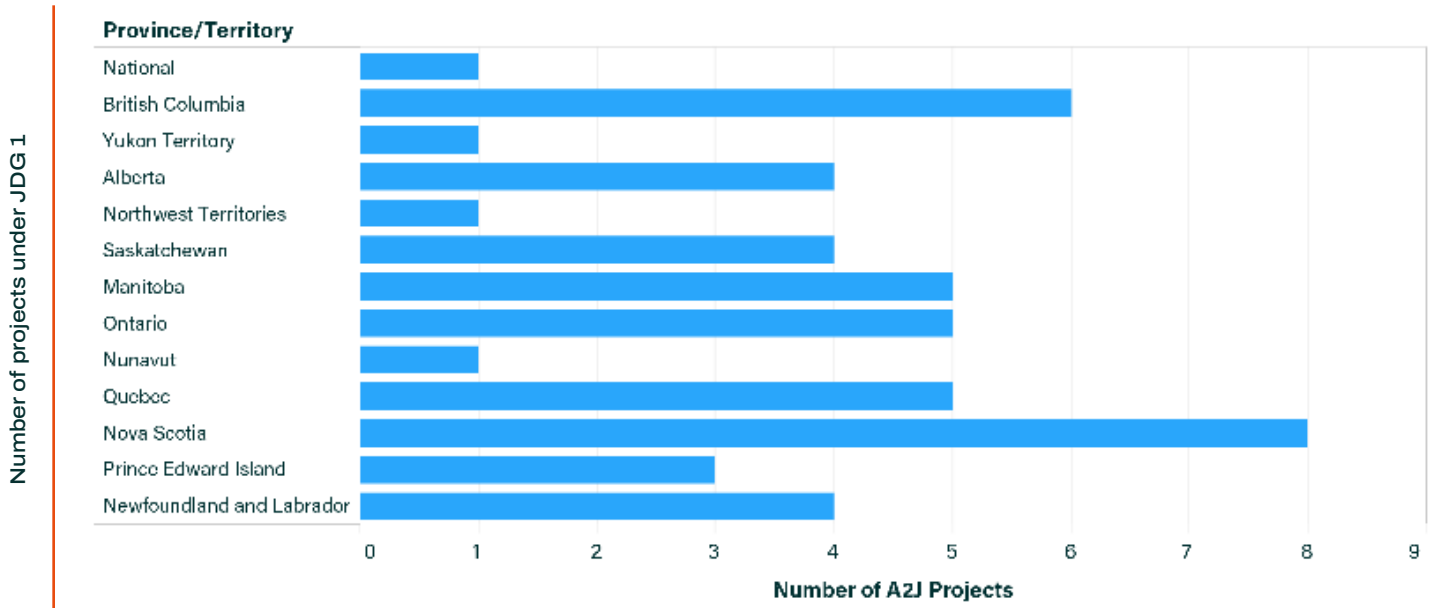
**Number of people impacted
by 2021 A2J projects:**

6,254,736

To learn about each of these 225 projects and see other insights into national A2J progress, read the 2021 digital report on the Justice Development Goals at justicedevelopmentgoals.ca

ADDRESS EVERYDAY LEGAL PROBLEMS

In 2021, A2J organizations continued to find creative ways to respond to the increase in need for information on COVID-related legal issues while also expanding the circle of people receiving focused legal support through projects that worked with people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, seniors, people experiencing sexual harassment or violence, artists, people in rural and remote communities, and people living in poverty. Over 5.9 million people were supported by A2J projects under Goal 1 in 2021.



1.1 EDUCATE EARLY

Provide targeted, free, accessible public legal education about frequent legal issues, different types of solutions and the process of enforcing rights.

1.2 PREVENT

Foster legal capability so that people can spot legal issues early, get preventative or proactive help and anticipate, avoid or manage frequent legal issues.

1.3 OFFER A CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Develop and expand legal services to include the full continuum of information, advice, help lines, online services, in-person services, and partial or full representation.

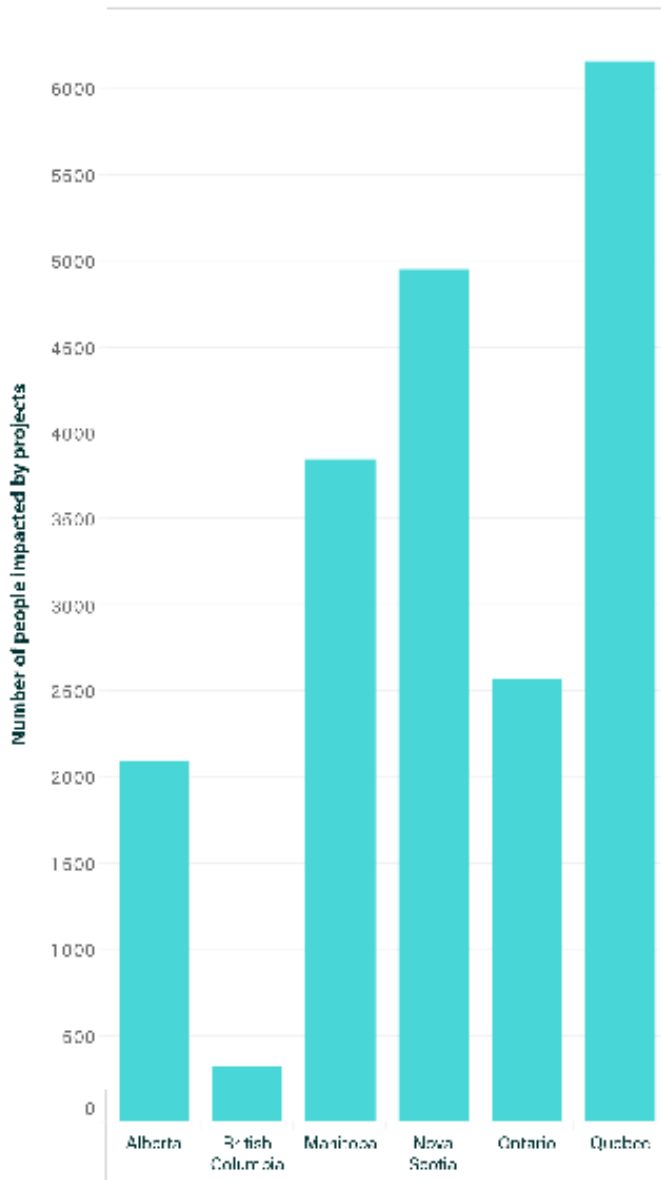
1.4 REFLECT CANADIAN SOCIETY

Put the services people need in the communities where they live with the resources to address the barriers they face.

MEET LEGAL NEEDS

In 2021, many projects focused on linguistic access to legal services, in French, Indigenous languages and the other languages spoken in the community. Other projects expanded the ways in which legal services can be provided, through students and law faculty, regulatory sandboxes, clinics and groups of lawyers engaging in focused community support, and through different fee structures.

Number of people impacted, by jurisdiction



2.1 FOCUS ON LEGAL NEEDS FOR EVERYONE

Focus on addressing service gaps for basic, essential legal services including family law, wills, employment, housing and consumer issues.

2.2 ENCOURAGE INNOVATION

Develop and expand alternative ways to get legal help including different kinds of professionals, partnerships or ways of doing business.

2.3 EXPAND SCOPE OF LEGAL AID

Make legal aid available to more people and for a wider range of legal problems.

2.4 FOCUS ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Emphasize the responsibility of lawyers and paralegals to fill access to justice gaps.

MAKE COURTS WORK BETTER

In 2021, courts continued to respond to the demands created by the pandemic by continuing and accelerating streamlined processes and new channels of access. Courts also began to capture data that would support learning with respect to the impact of online hearings and other pandemic changes.

3.1 ENSURE ACCESS TO COURTS

Courts must be adequately staffed and located where people live to make sure people can get access to a judge when needed, especially when fundamental and constitutional rights are at stake.

3.2 PROMOTE MULTI SERVICE CENTRES

Courthouses should offer mediation, dispute resolution, and informal or non-legal services to make it easy for people to access cheaper and simpler options at any stage of the process.

3.3 HELP PEOPLE WHO ARE REPRESENTING THEMSELVES

Courts should offer services, including early resolution and information services, for people who are navigating the legal system alone.

3.4 MANAGE CASES EFFECTIVELY

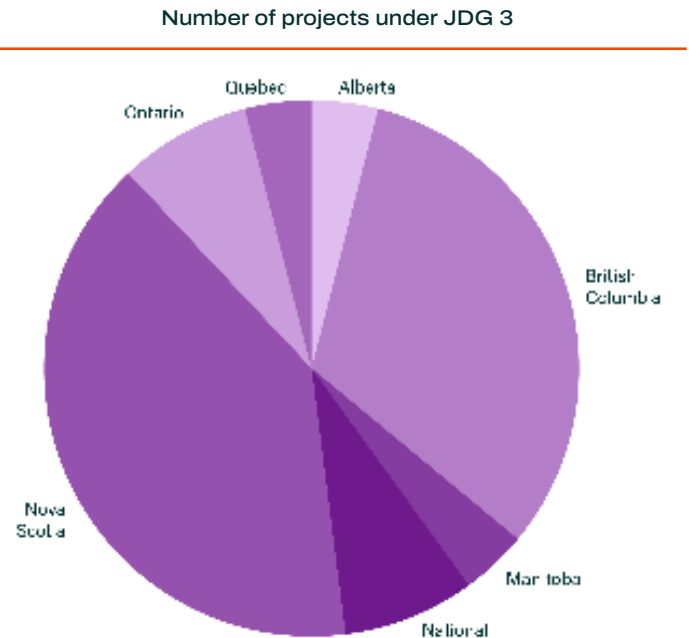
Timelines, simplified procedures, shared experts, and limited number of witness should be agreed to, or insisted on by judges, to make better use of court time and encourage early settlement.

3.5 BE ACCESSIBLE AND USER-FOCUSED

Courts and procedures need to be modernized to reflect people's needs, including better use of technology where it can make the process faster or easier without ignoring the needs of vulnerable people.

3.6 PROTECT JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

Ensure system improvements do not interfere with a judge's ability to make independent, ethical decisions to protect people's rights.



Access to Justice Week

Access to Justice Week took place across the country from October 25 to 29, 2021. Given the virtual nature of the activities this year, we expanded our reach and participation, with six nation-wide events, and simultaneous regional activities in eight participating provinces.

Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, hosted free, virtual events highlighting community justice work and the importance of inclusivity in providing legal services.

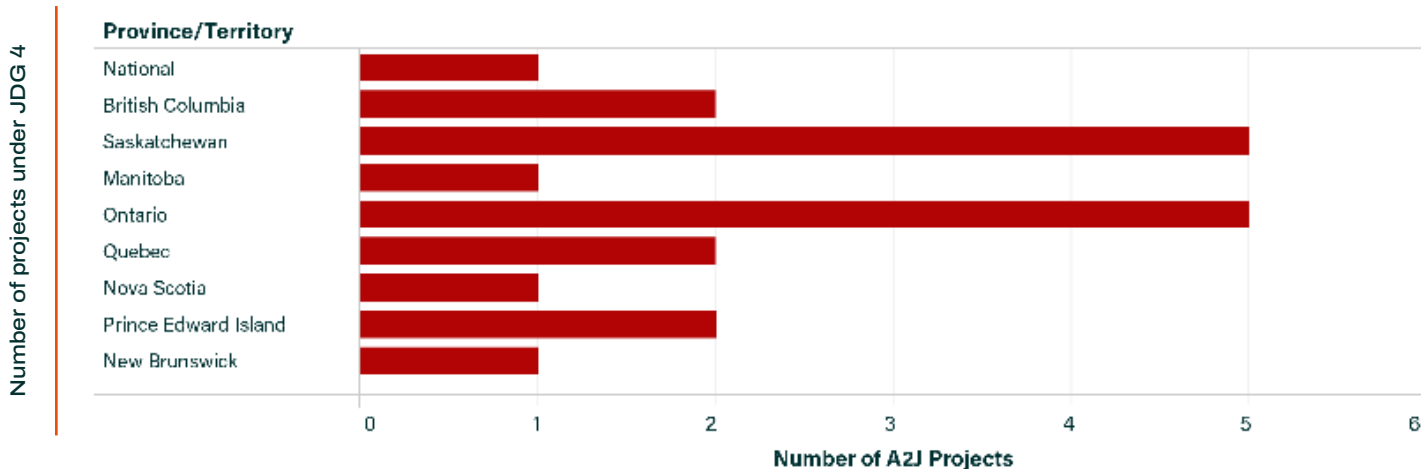
The theme for the week was inclusivity, with a focus on truth and reconciliation. Participants engaged in sessions on responding

to the TRC calls to action, access to justice from Indigenous perspectives, and engaging in reconciliation mapping. Other sessions included rural access to justice, disability justice, serving clients with mental health needs, and digital justice, among others.

The Action Group on Access to Justice reported that **Ontario had 2670 attendees** that participated in the **6 national** and **19 Ontario programs**.

IMPROVE FAMILY JUSTICE

In 2021, the family law sector continued to reform processes and approaches, supporting early resolution, options for representation and safety supports for family members. The exploration of new priorities, including brain science and child wellbeing, and multidisciplinary service models, continued to inspire dialogue and innovation.



4.1 OFFER A BROAD RANGE OF SERVICES

Make family law services easier to find, including triage, early intervention, integrated and collaborative processes, parenting and financial services.

4.2 PROMOTE CONSENSUAL RESOLUTION

Develop and expand proactive management of family issues and more consensual approaches and services, maintaining a focus on safety.

4.3 INNOVATE

Educate people about less adversarial approaches and experiment with new services and processes to create opportunities for consensus resolution.

4.4 RESTRUCTURE FAMILY COURTS

Locate all of the aspects of family law in the same place, including separation, custody and access, and divorce, ideally under one judge.

Mark your Calendar!

Access to Justice Week 2022 will take place **October 24 – 28th**.

Listing of the events will be available on the Action Committee’s website at justicedevelopmentgoals.ca/events



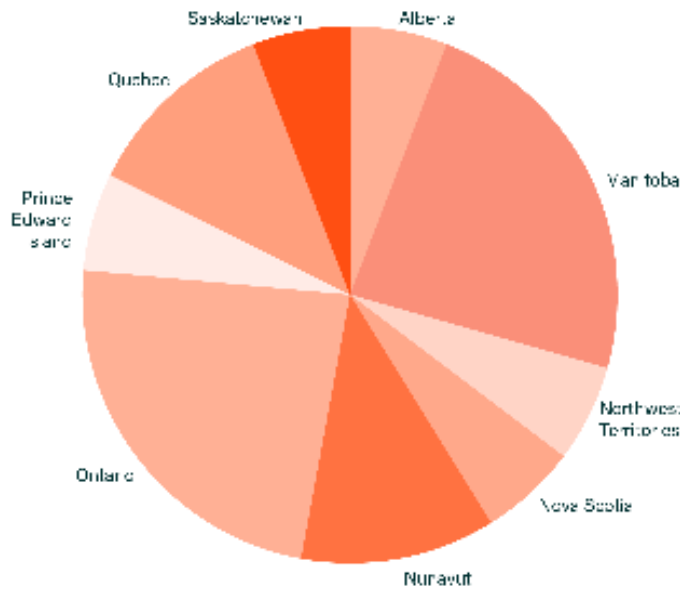
2021 saw more A2J research and publications, advancing the knowledge, data collection and discussion of across Canada.

Links to reports on access to justice are available on the Action Committee’s website at justicedevelopmentgoals.ca/resources.

WORK TOGETHER

In 2021, A2J Week expanded its national momentum, with the simultaneous participation of 5 provinces. A2J community collaboration across country also grew in different ways, including a new funded A2J coordinator position in Manitoba, community consultations in northern and Indigenous communities, and sector-wide work on anti-racism and anti-colonialism.

Number of projects under JDG 5



5.1 ESTABLISH COORDINATED EFFORTS

Bring all of the organizations involved in access to justice in each province or territory together to focus on local solutions.

5.2 INCLUDE EVERYONE

Involve the major institutions (courts, governments), professional groups (lawyers' associations), community groups and non-profits (clinics, PLE providers), academics and individuals to find new creative approaches.

5.3 BE BOLD; TAKE ACTION

Local and national coordination must lead, take action and inspire others to tackle access to justice.

5.4 WORK WITH INSTITUTIONS

In addition to coordinating across the justice system, access to justice should be a serious focus within judges' organizations, lawyers' and paralegals' associations, courts and institutions.

5.5 COORDINATE ACROSS CANADA

Keep momentum and sustained attention to these issues across the country to complement local and regional activity.

Taking Action on Reconciliation

17 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action relate to justice and span the accountability of all justice sector organizations. For the first time in 2021, the Justice Development Goals Annual Report survey asked a question about what justice sector organizations are doing to respond to the calls. 73 organizations provided responses, acknowledging the clear need for action in the sector and sharing their work.

Planning

Training

Consultation

Process change

Test cases

Intentional staffing

Funding

Internal and external staffing, language changes

Content changes to libraries and resources

Culturally competent representation

Framing meaningful responses has taken time, with some organizations engaging in research and internal assessment as a first step to devising an action plan. These organizations have undertaken assessment with guidance from advisory councils with Indigenous members and in collaboration with Indigenous community members.

Almost all of the organizations responding to the survey shared that they had engaged in internal education and skill building on cultural competency and anti-racism and had rewritten their materials or purchased new materials to ensure that public legal education and legal services were culturally appropriate.

A number of organizations focused on building justice services that increased access to Indigenous laws and legal orders.

“Legal Aid BC’s Reconciliation Action Plan guides its reconciliation efforts and contains 20 strategies and 52 associated actions organized under three pillars: Education, Equity, and Empowerment. All departments have reconciliation performance measures to fulfill. In 2021, LABC strengthened these measures and gathered the data collected so far by every department to determine how the organization is doing. This quantitative and qualitative data is being compiled into a report expected to be released in 2022.”

“Recognizing that 85% of Nunavut’s population is Inuit, the Law Society of Nunavut has taken a number of initiatives to support reconciliation. We have worked closely with Inuit advisors to ensure that our public legal education materials, workshops, correspondences, and other services are culturally relevant to Inuit, trauma-informed, and available in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun. In addition, the Law Society of Nunavut is revising its mandatory and supplementary reading list for its membership to include more culturally appropriate materials so members can be better informed about the history of Inuit in Nunavut.”

“Our Sahwoo mohkaak tsi ma taas (Blackfoot for Before being judged) program delivers legal advice, information, and support to Indigenous clients in a culturally appropriate way, with Indigenous staff, cultural space, and connection to Indigenous Elders. Staff of this program also deliver education to Calgary Legal Guidance staff and other lawyers in the Calgary community regarding Indigenous culture, history, legal systems, and the experiences of Indigenous people in Canadian legal systems. Calgary Legal Guidance served on the advisory committee that established the Calgary Indigenous Court in 2019 to provide culturally relevant, restorative, and holistic system of justice for Indigenous individuals, and Sahwoo mohkaak tsi ma taas program staff continue to support and represent clients appearing at the court. All our activities related to reconciliation and Indigenous legal services are guided by an advisory council made up of Indigenous Elders from local nations.”

BUILD CAPABILITY

In 2021, legal education for students honed in on new issues for students such as cyberbullying and sexting, and dialogue on legal and ethical issues that arise during a pandemic. The legal community targeted education on anti-racism, reconciliation and cultural competency.

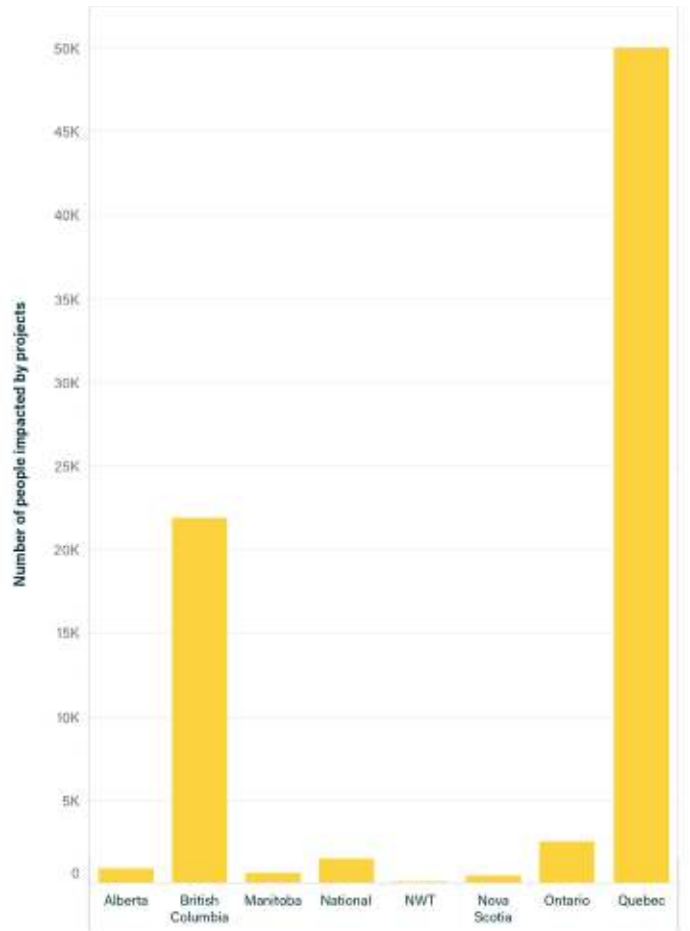
6.1 EDUCATE LAW STUDENTS AND LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

Offer training on access to justice, emerging approaches, changing social situations and the skills to meet people’s needs, both at the start of and throughout legal careers.

6.2 EXPAND JUSTICE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

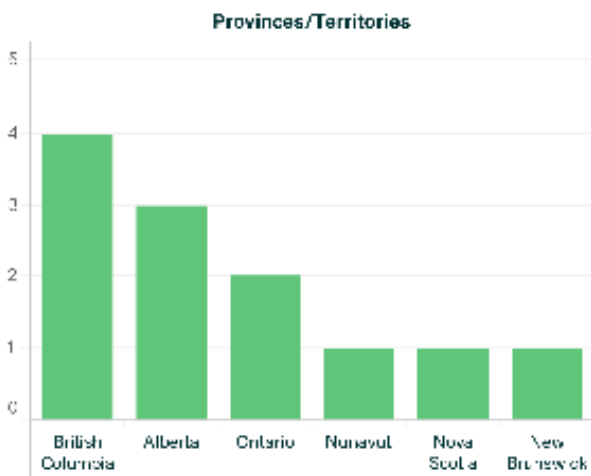
Introduce legal capability into elementary and secondary schools to prepare people for legal issues in their lives; Offer training about access to justice issues in post-secondary programs to integrate legal, health, social and education services.

Number of people impacted, by Jurisdiction



INNOVATE

Number of A2J projects under JDG 7



A2J innovation this year focused on collaborative community-based responses to sexual violence and pandemic challenges. Legal tech innovation continued to push boundaries including AI service delivery and virtual family advice.

7.1 KEEP TRACK OF WHAT IS WORKING

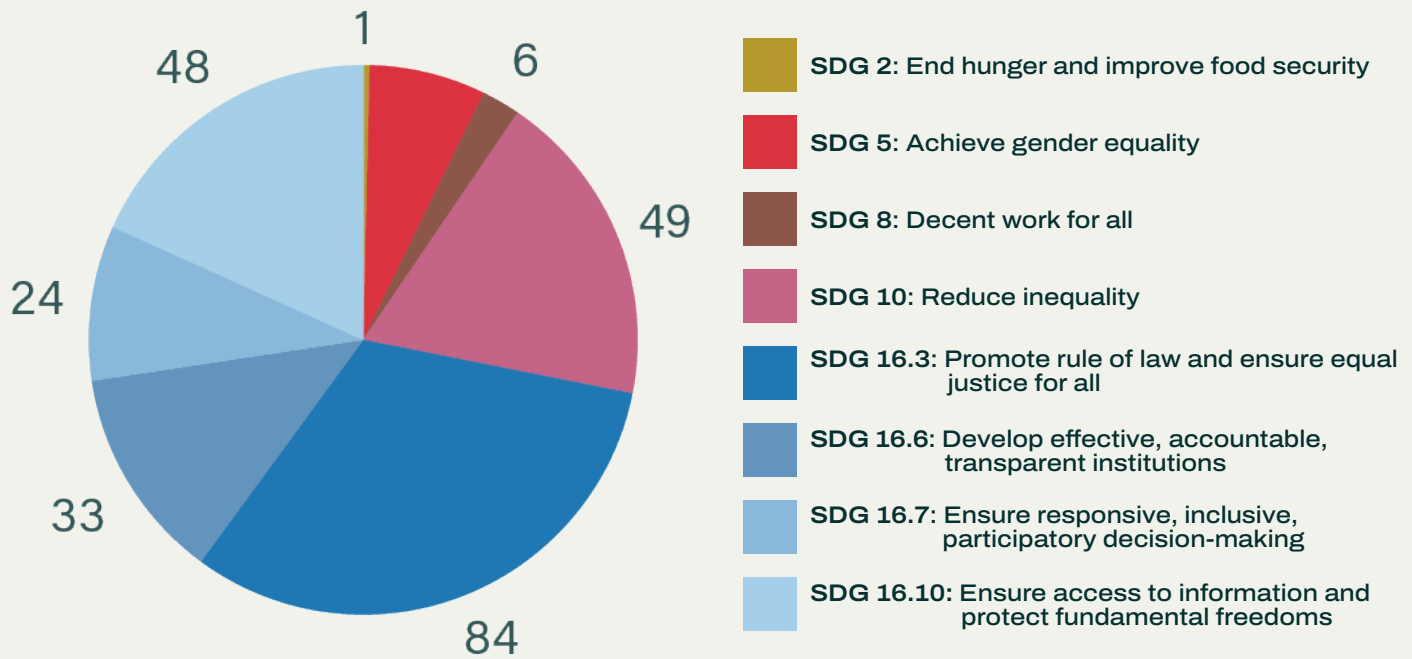
Create a culture of innovation in the justice system by focusing on new ideas and learning about successes and failures.

7.2 SHARE GOOD IDEAS

Promote the sharing of new models, ideas and successes to expand the impact of innovation.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

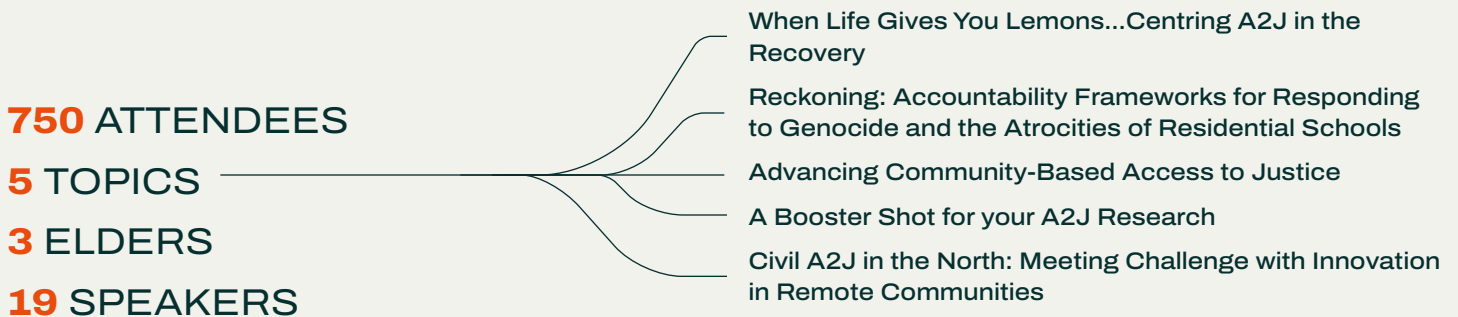
This year we asked how Canadian organizations are advancing the SDGs:



The Action Committee developed Canada's Justice Development Goals (JDGs) to align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the United Nations as a blueprint for addressing big global challenges, from poverty and climate change to gender equality and education. UN member states use the SDGs to track progress in key areas, and help people see how their work is connected to these big goals at the local, national, and international level.

People-Centred Justice Series

In 2021, the Action Committee hosted the People-Centred Justice Series connecting people across the country and looking at critical A2J issues. These events were funded by Employment and Social Development Goals Canada.



Recordings of the events are available on the Action Committee's website at justicedevelopmentgoals.ca

ANALYZE AND LEARN

Evaluation, data collection, needs/gap assessments were a high priority in A2J in 2021, with projects focusing on developmental evaluation, community consultation, and comparative analysis of the costs and benefits of community-based justice, alternative dispute resolution in family, legal coaching and refugee services. Statistics Canada and the Department of Justice Canada released the results of the Canadian Legal Problems Survey and companion qualitative studies.

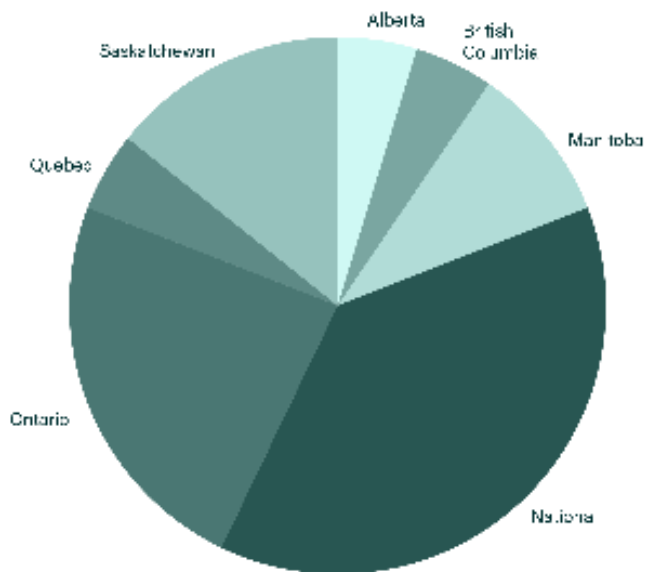
8.1 DEVELOP METRICS

Establish benchmarks and standardized metrics to build a shared understanding of legal services, models and needs.

8.2 WORK WITH RESEARCHERS IN ALL FIELDS

Coordinate research between institutions and universities, and between social scientists, economists, system users, and legal institutions to better understand the issues.

Number of projects under JDG 8



IMPROVE FUNDING STRATEGIES

Governments, law foundations and other institutions invested more money than ever in A2J projects, spurring activity across the country. Maintaining and expanding funding levels for those needing access to justice was a key priority for advocates and leaders during the pandemic.

\$386,948,458

Amount of money organizations reported as specifically dedicated to A2J projects

\$79,488,918

Amount of money granted by Law Foundations in 2021 as reported in published Annual Reports.

9.1 KEEP TRACK OF WHAT IS WORKING

Learn what the real costs of legal issues are and divert funding to prevent legal issues and minimize the demand on other social services.

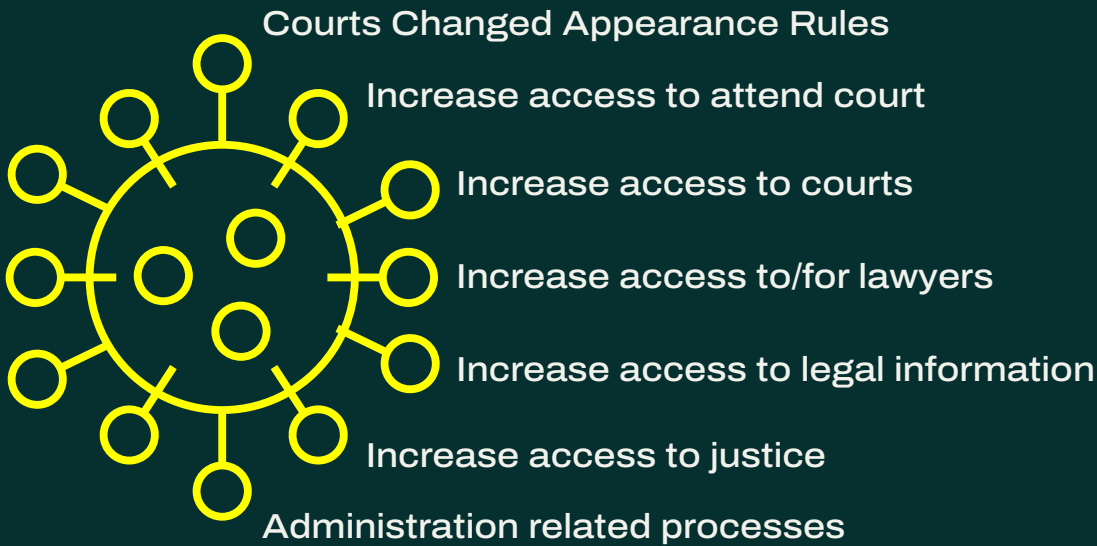
9.2 BETTER FUND LEGAL AID

Increase funding of legal aid, to make more people eligible and to expand the types of legal problems that are eligible.

9.3 MAKE SURE THEIR MONEY LASTS

Maintain the focus on access to justice to ensure that improvements can be sustained and changes are funded indefinitely.

Lessons of the Pandemic



The COVID-19 pandemic continued in 2021 and maintained the virtual nature of justice services. As we moved through this second year, changes we assumed would be temporary became more entrenched and long-lasting. Within the justice system, people consistently reported both opportunities and challenges in navigating the pandemic.

The shift to virtual service delivery resulted in people having more accessible and convenient access to legal services, legal information, and the courts. By offering remote court appearances, hearings and meetings, people have been able to participate without the barriers of distance, cost, and hours of access.

The shift to virtual operations brought significant systemic change including adopting and adapting technologies, such as appearing in court by telephone or video conferencing, and bringing some modernization to the justice system, such as online applications and live online chat support.

But the pandemic also magnified the social inequities that existed prior to COVID-19. This shift to virtual operations resulted in service disruptions and inequitable access for some, particularly for people

experiencing vulnerabilities, and for those without ready access to high-speed internet, technology, and equipment. Remote hearings also require additional time, staff, and protocols to run efficiently.

Maintaining more equitable access to the justice system requires a mix of remote and in-person options for courts and tribunals, flexibility when people are struggling with a technology issue or access, and readily available assistance through call centres and other live supports.

It is important to adapt the service offer for more vulnerable clients, both in terms of infrastructure and technology and in terms of processes, to properly support all types of needs. It is necessary to maintain a remote/technological judicial service offer to improve access to justice. Funding to modernize the justice system is essential.

- Barreau du Quebec

Organizations that reported their 2021 Access to Justice activities to advance the JDGs

- 31** Non-profit organizations
- 24** Public legal education organizations
- 18** Professional Associations or Regulator of lawyers, paralegals or notaries
- 12** Governments
- 11** Funders of A2J projects
- 10** Law Schools or Law Professors
- 9** Legal Aid Plans
- 8** Legal Aid Clinics
- 6** Law Student Clinics
- 6** A2J Researchers
- 5** Courts (judiciary)
- 4** Provincial / Territorial A2J Collaborative
- 3** Court Administrations
- 2** Private lawyers or law firms
- 1** Advocacy Group

To learn about each of these 225 projects and see other insights into national A2J progress, read the 2021 digital report on the Justice Development Goals at justicedevelopmentgoals.ca



Action Committee on
Access to Justice
in Civil and Family Matters