



HRAPF

HRAPF MARCH NEWSLETTER.

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE IN THE FACE OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC.

Special points of interest:

- Enhancing Access to Justice.
- Community Capacity Engagements.
- Media Advocacy .
- Strengthening Human Resources.

Thank you for taking the time to read our March newsletter. The month has been quite eventful, with increased activity across our program areas, despite the COVID-19 pandemic biting hard. Whereas we have taken precautionary measures to ensure the safety of our staff and clientele by shutting down our office premises and having staff work from home, our legal team has continued to assist clients with their legal issues. This has however not been without challenges, especially due to the presidential directives on

COVID-19, which have greatly restricted movement, and have had far reaching effects on the communities that we serve, pushing them further into the margins of society.

We also engaged communities, key stakeholders and partners on pertinent human rights issues, including the implications of Uganda's COVID-19 response on the rights of vulnerable and marginalised communities. Get more details of all these engagements as you enjoy reading this issue of our newsletter.

ENHANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE.

OUR LEGAL AID CLINIC IS OPEN

HRAPF WISHES TO NOTIFY OUR CLIENTS THAT OUR LEGAL AID CLINIC IS STILL FULLY OPERATIONAL DURING THIS PERIOD, HANDLING ALL EMERGENCY LEGAL MATTERS

PLEASE CONTACT US ON: 0800 130 683 (TOLL FREE), 0706-536-303 (DUSHEK, KAMPALA), 0706-536-304 (MATEICA, KAMPALA), 0700-536-225 (KAMPALA, KAMPALA), 0700-236-526 (IRETUA, WEGORARA - EASTERN REGION)



Please don't hesitate to contact us for legal assistance

This month our legal aid clinic received 56 cases, with our legal team assisting clients to pursue remedies in 15 LGBT cases, 19 sex worker cases, 6 cases involving Persons Who Use and Inject Drugs, (PWUIDs) 7 land matters, 2 cases involving People Living with HIV

(PLWHIV) and 7 abortion related cases. In addition to police and the courts of judicature, we also made use of the communal justice systems, specifically the Local Council leaders (LCs), to get justice for clients. The LCs were especially key to protecting our clients' proprietary interests, as they success-

fully mediated 2 land disputes. Despite the restriction on movement that has been imposed by the presidential directives on COVID-19, we have continued to assist our clients when they get caught up in the criminal justice system.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY ENGAGEMENTS

Through our Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) program, we continued to build the capacity of key stakeholder communities, ranging from duty bearers to marginalised and Most at Risk Population groups, to deal with and address a myriad to human rights issues

Training Duty Bearers

We engaged police officers within Kampala district on the legal regime governing abortion, and the rights of LGBT persons. During the trainings on the legal and legal and policy regime on

abortion, we highlighted tegral aspect of the right the parameters within to life, the right to abortion is permitted in health, and the right to Uganda. We also empha- freedom from discrimi- nation and inhuman ligations that the state has and degrading treat- towards ensuring access to ment. safe abortion services for women and girls, as an in-

Training police officers on the legal regime governing abortion is key to curbing the high incidence of unsafe abortion in Uganda, which, according to our 2016 study on the human rights implications of criminal abortion laws, can be attributed to the arbitrary arrest of health workers that provide safe abortion services within the existing legal parameters.

The training on the rights of LGBT persons was held at the Police Headquarters, in conjunction with the Police Directorate of Human Rights and Legal

Affairs. Among the key issues emphasized were the concepts of marginalization in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and the legal and human rights regime that relates to LGBT persons in Uganda

Coalition Building

We continued with efforts to build the coalition to decriminalise and declassify petty offences in Uganda. The advocacy unit was able to schedule a meeting with Mr. Mark Bugembe, popularly known as Buchaman, the self-styled “Ghetto President”, and the presidential advisor on Ghetto Affairs.



Key stakeholder engagement Ending abortion stigma:

We held a public dialogue on the legal and policy framework on abortion in Uganda, with 91 students at Clarke International University. The dialogue highlighted the underlying societal atti-

tudes and practices that have led to a rise in the incidence of unsafe abortion in Uganda, and how the law can be used as a tool to address them.

On the right, is a picture of the University Dialogue.



Media Advocacy

Our key media advocacy engagements for this month include:

Press statements on the women’s day and zero - discrimination day, which you can find on our website:

<https://www.hrapf.org/index.php/10-hrapf-news/85-the-reward-for-non-discriminatory-legislation-lies-in-the-full-enjoyment-of-human-rights-for-all>

Participation in the NBS *Morning Breeze* show, where one of our Program Directors, Ms. Flavia Zalwango talked about HIV stigma, in commemoration of Zero Discrimination day. You can get the full interview here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUUv_OMg9Vg&feature=youtu.be



Program Director Research and Advocacy participates on the NBS Morning Breeze show.

Community Outreach.

In the month of March we reached out to 193 members of our target communities in Kampala, Mbale and Mpigi. In Kampala and Mbale, we reached out to 57 members of the LGBT and sex worker community, with whom we dis-

Still in Mbale District, we reached out to 34 Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW), who were educated on sexual reproductive health and rights, and the legal and policy

cussed the Sexual Offences Bill 2019, highlighting the clauses that have significant implications on their rights. We also engaged them on the key findings of the baseline study on the existing policy gaps on access to SRHR for

framework on abortion in Uganda.

In Mpigi district, we reached out to 100 women, men and children living with and affected by HIV, and sensitized them about

LGBT persons in Uganda. We had the District Health Officer address the participants on the measures the government has put in place to address the issues affecting key populations and their access

their rights and the various avenues through which they can access justice.



Ms. Flavia Zalwango discussing the Sexual Offences Bill.

We were able to reach out to communities in Mpigi, Mbale and Kampala. Hope Bunori, Advocacy officer sensitizes the Mbale Community members on the sexual offences Bill in the picture below;

Institutional Support for Community-led organisations.

This month we assisted two organisations to get incorporated as companies limited by guarantee. We also conducted assessments for statutory compliance for 20 Key Population (KP) or-

ganisations. The Program also assisted one organisation to file their annual returns with the Registrar General of Companies.



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Op-Ed pieces by our Executive Director published in the Observer on 11th March 2020 in commemoration of International Women's Day. <https://observer.ug/news/headlines/63837-rights-of-all-women-matter>

the New Vision of 30th March 2020, on the human rights implications of Uganda's COVID-19 response: https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1517189/decongest-prisons-police-cell-curb-spread-covid-19

A press statement released on 30th March 2020, calling for the protection of human rights in the COVID-19 response:

<https://www.hrapf.org/index.php/resources/other-publications/126-hrapf-press-statement-on-human-rights-and-covid-19/file>

Strengthening Human Resources.

Ensuring that we continue to effectively serve our clientele and target communities is no walk in the park. Therefore, finding a balance with activities that rejuvenate our energies is key. This month, we had the

chance to practice meditation and yoga, which helped staff shed off a load of stress and tension that comes with unbaiting hard work.



Staff participate in a yoga class

It is sad to note that the month of March ended somberly with the official closure of the HRAPF offices after the Ministry of Health and the President issued directives on social distancing, in order to curb the spread of COVID-19. HRAPF had its last official physical meeting before sending off staff to work from home.



The last staff meeting held by the HRAPF Team .

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