



PARALEGAL VOICE MAGAZINE



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1.0 LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DGF	Democratic Governance Facility
JCU	Justice Centres Uganda
KCOBPA	Kamuli Community Based Paralegals
LASP	Legal Aid Service Provider
PAS	Paralegal Advisory Services
PLA	Platform for Labour Action
RLP	Refugee Law Project
ULS	Uganda Law Society

2.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

LASPNET would like to appreciate Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) for supporting the compilation and publication of the first Edition of the LASPNET Paralegal Voice Magazine.

We are also grateful to all Legal Aid Service Providers including Justice Centres Uganda; Platform for Labour Action; Paralegal Advisory Services; Kamuli Community Based Paralegals; Uganda Law Society; Refugee Law Project for allowing their paralegals to share with LASPNET their stories. We don't take such initiative for granted.

To the Secretariat team in their different capacities led by the Chief Executive Officer that put in a lot of effort to document and provide editorial support in the compilation of this Magazine, your contribution is much appreciated.



3.0 FOREWORD BY THE LASPNET CEO

I am delighted to share with you dear readers the Inaugural and first edition of the LASPNET Paralegal Voice Magazine 2020. In the Paralegal voice magazine, we profile voices and success stories of Paralegals in promoting access to justice especially at the community level. Overtime, Paralegals have been referred to as the bridge between the ordinary citizen and the law. This is due to the fact that navigating the justice system remains a complex experience for the ordinary citizens in contact or in conflict with the law. These ordinary men and women equipped with basic legal information and procedural skills have helped to resolve countless disputes in the communities where they serve.

Despite the fact that we have no targeted harmonized legal framework on Paralegals, they are recognized under the Advocates (Legal Aid to Indigent Persons) Regulations, 2007 which provides that "legal aid shall be administered by a lawyer, an advocate or a paralegal," and goes ahead to define a paralegal as a person who holds a qualification in law, other than a degree and who is recognized by the Law Council. We must appreciate that paralegals play a critical role through detecting crime, tracking human rights violations; creating legal awareness as well as supporting dispute resolution through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

It's also argued that paralegals bring justice closer to the people particularly in local communities thereby contributing to promotion of human rights and access to justice. Needless to mention, we have witnessed growth in the Paralegal Movement in Uganda with almost every Legal Aid Service Provider (LASP) training staff paralegals as well as Community Legal Volunteers. The above LASPs often organize periodic capacity building paralegal trainings covering different aspects of the law; human rights; client care and management; ADR and referral mechanisms.

It's however imperative to note that there are

compounding challenges faced by paralegals that tend to limit them amidst execution of their work. These include among others, lack of formal regulations for community-based paralegals; limited skills and knowledge about several aspects of the law; limited supervision and poor facilitation to support transportation especially in hard to reach areas as well as limited access to information from institutions such as Police; Prisons and Courts of Law. In addition, often times there is limited documentation on the work of paralegals, which leads to scarce knowledge source and limited appreciation of their work by justice actors.

To strengthen the work of paralegals especially through the LASPs, LASPNET developed resource documents including the Paralegal Training Manual and Paralegal Handbook. To profile and document the work paralegals undertake at various levels and in different facets, as a Network we have come up with Paralegal Voice Magazine to be launched at the first National Paralegal Dialogue. In the same realm, we are currently developing a centralized paralegal database which is intended to capture, store and analyze data from paralegals. All these interventions are leaned towards strengthening the work of paralegals, recognizing the critical role they play in promotion of access to justice and harnessing a culture of paralegalism in Uganda.

On this note therefore, I sincerely applaud DGF for continually funding the Network to undertake capacity building initiatives for our members including Paralegals and to the paralegals that shared with us their stories to feature in this first edition. I call upon you to cautiously contribute to this Voice Magazine so that we together lift up the banner of the great work played by these selfless volunteers.

Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa
Chief Executive Officer

4.0 EDITORIAL NOTE



Today the 28th August 2020, LASPNET has unveiled the "LASPNET Voice Paralegal Magazine." This is a publication that has been designed to periodically compile and document success stories shared by Paralegals who are in the community and or attached to various LASPs. The Magazine is intended to provide a platform for Paralegals to share their experiences, cases resolved and how they are changing the community and terrain of justice as well as challenges encountered during the execution of their work. In order to widely disseminate the Paralegal stories, this Magazine will be shared with different stakeholders starting at the National Dialogue for Community Paralegals.

Informed by the fact that many Paralegal stories go undocumented, LASPNET with funding from DGF in

February 2020 conducted two field visits in both Eastern and Western Uganda with an aim of engaging Paralegals to share their success stories. A total of 15 interviews were conducted ranging from staff and community paralegals. The Secretariat team that compiled these stories ensured that at least every paralegal interviewed is provided an opportunity to narrate one success story that they have contributed towards and ultimately enabled the community members to access justice.

The stories are further given catchy titles intended to compel the reader to comprehend these stories and be inspired to pick key lessons.

Badru Walusansa
Director of Programmes

5.0 PARALEGALS AS COMMUNITY CHANGE AGENTS

FACTS ABOUT PARALEGALS



The legal sector like many others has experienced a number of developments and one of the most fundamental developments is the creation of a group of legal support associates commonly known as paralegals. The term itself does not have universal meaning due to the diverse range of activities done by paralegals. The

Oxford English dictionary defines a paralegal as a person trained in subsidiary legal matters but not fully qualified as a lawyer. The American Bar Association defines a paralegal as a person qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, government agencies or other entity & persons specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.

In Uganda, the Advocates (Legal Aid to indigent persons) Regulations 2007 define a paralegal as someone who has received some legal training recognized by the Law Council. From the definition it can be noted that the law only recognizes paralegals with a Diploma leaving behind the community paralegals or Human Rights Advocates as they are commonly known within the communities they serve.

Paralegals offer assistance on legal matters and offer a support system to lawyers in the legal field. Paralegals today have become more prominent in the provision of legal aid services in Uganda than they are in other sectors of the law. A number of LASPs across the country have embarked on training and skilling paralegals and this has created a dependable force in the field of legal service provision.

The empowerment of paralegals has originally come from the lawyers and legal aid service providers who

take on the role of training them. In Uganda, there has been introduction of short legal courses by the Law Development Centre (LDC) that equip people with an introductory understanding of the law and hence makes them fit to become paralegals. Also, LASPNET has developed training Manuals and Handbooks with the intention that LASPs as well as paralegals within the community, can use the tools for reference purposes. It is this kind of skilling that makes people competent to become paralegals and assist in various areas of the legal.

One would ask, what is the importance of paralegals in Uganda? This question baffles many and there is need to address it here. Paralegals are at the fore front in the provisions of first -aid legal assistance to people in their communities. The ignorance of the law and its procedures coupled with the lack of financial resources to retain lawyers has for so long rendered many people helpless even in the face of small legal challenges. This is the predicament that community paralegals are solving in their work of legal aid service providers. Paralegals have become a prime source of information about court processes, procedures and fundamental human rights. They provide guidance on the appropriate legal remedies that people in communities can pursue given the nature of their legal problem. In addition to this, paralegals follow up on cases and advise on the available recourse if the result is not what was anticipated.

The advantage of the paralegal work force is that their services are free and they are more available and accessible than the lawyers who in most cases work for many or are too few to adequately serve the needs of the societies they intend to serve. The fact that paralegals have increased the level of access to justice in Uganda justifies the increase in the number of paralegals in the provisions of legal services.

Achen Daphine
Research and Knowledge Management Officer



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6.0 A SAMPLE OF PARALEGALS WORK IN UGANDA: SUCCESS STORIES

In this Inaugural Paralegal Voice Magazine, we profile the work of paralegals in the promotion of access to justice.

PARALEGAL SUPPORTS VULNERABLE CLIENT TO SETTLE A CLAIM THROUGH MEDIATION

Ms. Nakabanda Brenda, a Paralegal attached to the Paralegal Advisory Services (PAS) in Jinja was approached by a vulnerable client to find redress. The client had lost her son, a former Primary school teacher who had gone months without pay despite continuously offering his services at the school where he was employed. The paralegal who handled the matters had this to say:

"Monica (Not real name), aged 63, approached me while in a very deplorable situation, this was after losing her only son, who was a strong pillar in her life. Monica's late son was a Primary school teacher and her life largely depended on him. Until his death, the son was working with a certain primary school, although time came when he fell terminally ill and eventually could not work anymore. The son had arrears of 5 months in salary, and the mother tried her best to engage the school administration to claim for her son's money.

However, efforts to settle this claim became futile as all the offices she ran to couldn't render any support. In November 2019, Monica came to

PAS and registered her complaint. I took it upon myself to engage the school administration. We held a series of mediation meetings and fortunately the school agreed to pay the deceased's arrears to a tune of UGx 3,000,000/= (Three Million Shillings). The excited client could not believe it that her claim had been settled since initially she had allegedly been subjected to enormous threats by the Head teacher.

Just like Monica, many women especially widows continue to suffer injustices with limited knowledge of Legal Aid Service Providers (LASPs) out there to help at no cost. From my experience, the population in the Eastern region is still ignorant about where to report cases human rights and violations. Moreover, women are disproportionately affected by cultural practices that continue to marginalize and expose them to SGBV.

In its earlier days, PAS was very instrumental in responding to community problems especially those that required Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). By then we could be facilitated with resources including transport costs to penetrate the entire region and conduct community barazas focusing on human rights awareness. However, with the dwindling funding sources, the work of PAS has almost gone in abeyance.

Following the loss of funding under PAS, a significant number of paralegals have left the service and got engaged in other private business. It's only a few of us who have remained in the service and still visit prisons, police cells and courts to create human rights awareness sessions. The absence of PAS structures in the community as well as the criminal justice system continues to create a huge vacuum and women like Monica are to a disadvantage of accessing justice My humble appeal is that development partners should be rejuvenated PAS since it plays a critical role in the chain of justice.."

THE PLIGHT OF REFUGEES FORCED ME TO BECOME A COMMUNITY PARALEGAL

Mr. Bienvenu Migabo, a Congolese national and refugee in Nakivale refugee Settlement was motivated to become a Community Paralegal because of the many challenges that refugees encounter in their new host countries. Trained by Refugee Law Project of Makerere University, Migabo became a Paralegal in 2015 as he narrates the rest of his story.

"I pursued a Bachelor's Degree in Law for 5 years and was enrolled as an Advocate. Faced with challenges that come with settling into a foreign country including, language barrier, new culture and practices within the host countries, I was inspired to quickly train as a Community Paralegal in Uganda so that I would advocate for the rights of my fellow refugees.

Upon seeing an advert for paralegals by Refugee Law project, I applied and fortunately was considered. Since then, I have on several occasions been trained and equipped with knowledge about the existing national laws and policies and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

As a frontline defender in my right as a paralegal, I have been able



Migabo conducting a mediation session in Nakivale Refugee Settlement.

to intervene and settle disputes within the settlement. A case in point is one where I facilitated and conducted a successful mediation and restored a marriage that was almost wrecked due to consistent domestic violence specifically emotional abuse.

One of the successful cases I have handled as Paralegal was that of a fellow refugee identified as Bafaya Wisso Daniela. The former contacted me and narrated her

ordeal of constant domestic violence specifically emotional abuse meted out on her by the husband. The couple owned a bar at their home however with time, the husband got entangled with one of the clients without the wife's knowledge. He later made it official and publicly flirted with her in front of his wife. The client approached the Police within the Settlement who asked for money in order to settle the matter and reconcile the parties.

However, the Client refused to offer the money requested for and contacted me. I was able to offer counselling to both parties and the husband made an apology seeking forgiveness from the wife." That said, my experience as a paralegal within the refugee settlement has made me realize that paralegals are very important and as such their work in promoting access to justice ought to be recognized by the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS)."

PURSUIING ONE'S DREAM AND PASSION DROVE ME TO BECOME A PARALEGAL

Ms. Owembabazi Geraldine is a paralegal with over 10 years' experience attached to the Legal Aid Project of Uganda Law Society, Fort portal. She was trained by Uganda Law Society (ULS) as Paralegal and since then has turned out to be a reference point on many aspects within her community. She shared with LASPNET Her experience as a Community Paralegal as narrated below:

"My dream has always been supporting the poor and vulnerable to access justice. In order to pursue this dream, I had to undertake a Paralegal training which enabled me gain knowledge on how to conduct client interviews and cases at different levels, drafting documents for bail applications, conducting mediations at community levels, offer legal advice on simple matters, phyco-social support and counselling. The training further gave me a boost in self-confidence, presentation as well as communication skills. Still, I was able to improve on my research and writing skills. One of my successfully handled cases include that of a one Jean Jones (Not real names) who was charged with the offence of assault occasioning bodily harm to her mother in law aged 75 years.

Upon her arrest, she was detained at the Police Station and while there, I was contacted by her relatives and I proceeded to the Police station. At the Police, I advised both parties to agree and solve the matter through mediation. Good thing, they both allowed and I was able to help them settle the matter amicably.

Further, in the same case, I got the opportunity to sensitize the parties about their rights and the value in reconciliation. My greatest lesson was that parties to a dispute once sensitized about their rights and the law they can solve their issues without restoring to the formal justice system which as a result reduces case backlog.

Drawing from my experience as a paralegal some of the greatest challenges that we have encountered include among

others the absence of a legal framework that recognizes and regulates us, describes our roles and obligations as well as offence.

I would like to thank the Legal Aid Project of the Uganda Law Society for their tireless efforts, training opportunities and for their recognition of the skills that they imparted in me which I have used and further passed on to the community through sensitization and empowering them on the law."

A PARALEGAL IN LUWEERO DISTRICT SECURES COMPENSATION FOR THE FAMILY OF THE DECEASED ACCIDENT VICTIM

Paralegals remain critical actors in dispute resolution within most local communities. Often times, they are trained in conflict resolution, a skill they apply while handling disputes ranging from family, land and property disputes among others. A one community paralegal identified as Munaaba Iddu, attached to Muslim Centre for Justice (MJCL) narrates his experience in which he handled a successful mediation.

A PARALEGAL IN NAKIVALE REFUGEE SETTLEMENT RESTORES A BROKEN FAMILY

Refugee Law Project (RLP) continues to identify Refugees and train them as paralegals. This has evidently enabled these paralegals to support the refugee and host communities in responding to especially legal problems arising. Mr. Nimubona Thierry a refugee from Burundi and currently residing in Nakivale Refugee Settlement expounds more on his first-hand experience as a Paralegal and how he has impacted his community.

"My paralegal experience dates back in 2016 after having been identified and trained by RLP. Before joining the RLP paralegals, I was working as a Magistrate in my home country something that gave me a comparative advantage over others. I

"In early July 2020, I received a complaint from a one Tylor (Not real names) aged 28 years and a resident of Nateete. His father Aufi Nkuubi was knocked down by a speeding car at Katikamu, Luweero district. The deceased left 7 children, 3 of which are minors. An eye witness had written down a car registration number trailer Registration No. UBA 206F and now Fahad wanted help to approach the Trailer owner for compensation.

To support the complainant, I had to gather information about this case and approached Katikamu police station officer in charge and invited the manager of Balimwezo Group of company for a mediation.

*A mediation was conducted at Katikamu Police Station on 23rd July,2020 and Balimwezo Group of companies agreed to compensate the family of the Late with **UGx 25,000,000 (Twenty-Five Million).***

The family bought a piece of land with rental houses to collect and pay school fees for the minors."

The intervention of a Paralegal in Tylor's case is an example of lives improved economically through justice rendered at the community level."

applied to become a community paralegal within the refugee Settlement. The work I have undertaken as a paralegal within the Settlement has exposed me to many realities that refugees from diverse countries with different cultures go through most notably, ignorance about their rights and national laws.



Thierry after conducting a successful mediation. On the far end is the complainant and juvenile.

To me, the training was a window of opportunity which appeared at a time that I needed to enhance my English learning and speaking skills thus I could not pull down the shade. This professionally gave me an uplift, boosted my confidence since I had a chance to interface with the refugee community through sensitizing them about human rights and the legal system in Uganda.

I was able to support three juveniles who were arrested and charged with the offence of theft at Base camp III, commonly known as Somali village in Nakivale Refugee Settlement. The juveniles stole several spare parts of a car owned by Hawa Abdi a female Somali refugee of 38 years. The Complainant based on rumors stated that one of the juveniles was a notorious thief and suspects that he might have a hand in the disappearance of the spare parts. When the complainant intercepted the juvenile, he

first denied having stolen anything but upon further inquiry he accepted the allegations and even revealed 2 of his colleagues who were also arrested and taken to Kashojwa police post. While at the police, they admitted that they sold the parts to a metal buyer but refused to disclose his name.

The complainant at first wanted the three juveniles to be forwarded to CPS Kabingo however, it is at this point that I encouraged a mediation because the juveniles could neither pay for the spare parts nor could the metal buyer. Through the session, I convinced the complainant who accepted to forgive the juveniles and have them released."

Drawing from my experience, the work of paralegals has been useful in creating harmony within the community through using ADR such as mediation. mediation."

IT TAKES A PARALEGAL TO CREATE PEACE AND HARMONY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Mr. Mawerere Laston is a Paralegal working with Justice Centres Uganda and has since offered himself to support juveniles to Access to Justice. Laston is now a renowned personality within Jinja and the nearby sub-counties given self-less contribution to his community. He shared his experience and story delivering justice as a staff paralegal.

"I became a paralegal in 2017, and during our induction training facilitated by JCU, we were urged to become selfless during execution of our duties. Being stationed near court has made me win the trust of both clients and judicial officers. This is because often times I am invited to conduct legal awareness sessions especially about court processes before commencement of court business. At JCU, I was facilitated with a motorcycle which has enabled me to traverse various sub-counties in Jinja to conduct legal education and sensitization.

One of the success stories that I have handled include a married couple where a husband claimed that the wife had for long enough been stealing money from his phone. On this occasion, the wife moved out of the house with her husband's phone and only to return it with reduced balances. The husband became bitter and ordered for the arrest of the woman.



Mr.. Mawerere talking to the LASPNET research team.

I was called at the point when the woman was being detained in the police cell. Upon my arrival, I asked the husband to adduce evidence that it's the wife who had been stealing his money. In presence of the OC Station, the man availed his phone and we went through the transactions.

Surprisingly, as we perused the messages, and later checked with the customer care we found out that the money was rather being stolen by their elder son who always exploited the opportunity of stealing away his father's phone whenever it was in her mother's possession.

I counselled both parties and they reconciled. The woman later demanded for an apology from the man in presence of the LC 1 Chairman and OC Police station, something that the husband fulfilled. The son was cautioned against his cautions since they could potentially fuel domestic violence between his parents.

Although, I have passion for my work, it equally comes with a lot of challenges which include among others: Understaffing since I am the only paralegal at JCU Jinja serving a bigger geographical area; hostility from stakeholders, for example often times we are denied access to police detention facilities and on other occasions Lawyers always look at us as competitors and not complementary."

KAMULI COMMUNITY BASED PARALEGALS SUPPORTED A WIDOW TO REGAIN HER LAND

Kamuli district is one of the districts in Eastern region that are bedeviled by Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) against women and girls, characterized with early marriages as well as teenage pregnancies. In order to respond to some of those compounding issues, Kamuli Community Based Paralegals have continuously maintained a community presence to ensure that victims are helped to access justice in a timely manner. In this case, Mr. Joseph Mwase, the Founder of KCOBPA and the Eastern regional representative on the board of directors of LASPNET narrates how his organization was able to assist a widow to regain her land in 2018.

"We have handled very many cases related of deprivation of property rights from widows. However, there is one such a case that struck me and we had to do whatever was in our means to ensure that this vulnerable woman was helped. Protros (Not real name), aged 54, lost her husband 8 years ago and left her with 7 minors.

The only thing that the husband left behind were 6 house units and a piece of prime land in Kamuli town. Surprisingly, Patros in-laws



Patros posing in a photo with her children along with Mr. Mwase (KCOBPA) and LASPNET research team.

could not allow her take charge of the property on grounds that their culture doesn't permit women to own property since they can be married to other families. Therefore, the in-laws instead wanted to be the ones to manage the deceased's estate.

Vulnerable as she was, Patros didn't know where to run for help until when she approached our offices. We took on her case and engaged different authorities the Administrator General. Luckily enough we were able to support her secure Letters of Administration. Since then her in-laws never disturbed her again. Although, Patros is a single mother, she has been able to raise her children by providing as well as educating them."

COURT ORDERS A COMPANY TO REVERSE ITS DECISION OF LAYING OFF 3 EMPLOYEES

Mr. Senkya Ronald is a paralegal working with Platform for Labour Action (PLA). Part of his work is to reach out to local communities to create legal and human rights awareness. Ronald has played a critical role in advocating for the rights laborers. Below, he shares one of his success stories where he supported 3 casual employees who had been unlawfully terminated.

"Often times, we handle cases of casual laborers whose rights are violated by various companies within Jinja. One of such cases was when 3 employees working with Keshwala Group of Companies. The managers of this company had long enough mistreated their staff something which triggered a strike.

After the strike, the managers falsely accused 3 staff for fueling the strike and as a result terminated them from work. These staff reached out to our offices and sought for support. I referred them to the Labour offices in Jinja however, they were not helped. I then handed over this matter to our legal officers who then swung into action and drafted for court documents and further lodged a case in the Industrial court.

When the case reached the industrial case, the parties were first advised to pursue mediation, which they both agreed to. However, the mediation didn't yield results and thus the case continued in court. Due to the failure of the company to adduce significant evidence providing that it was 3 employees who had led the strike, court demanded that the trio is compensated and further reinstated on their jobs.

The company was able to respect court's decision and as a result the employees went back to work.



PLA staff pose in a photo after the engagement with the LASPNET research team.

I SAVED AN ELDERLY WOMAN FROM BEING EXCOMMUNICATED FROM THE VILLAGE OVER ALLEGATIONS OF PRACTICING SORCERY

Ms. Opedun Frances aged 40 years, is a Community Paralegal in living in Lira. She was trained as a Community Paralegal in 2013 by a missionary group identified as Helping Hand Samaritans from the United Kingdom. Frances' skill is in peace and conflict resolution and has supported many families to undergo through mediation. Below she narrates her story of how she saved an elderly woman from being excommunicated from the village.

"I hail from a community where majority of the families believe in Christian values. We were also lucky to have received a delegation in 2013 from the UK known as Helping Hand Samaritans. This group was instrumental in training 10 community members into Paralegal work. As one of the beneficiaries, I think I have lived up to the expectations through supporting the poor and indigent in my community.

One time, I was approached by an elderly woman in her late 70s. Samantha (Not real name) had on several occasions been seen practicing sorcery something which created her a lot of enemies in the village. Community members started leveling allegations against her conduct. On this fateful day, Samantha got embroiled in a heated conflict over a piece of land with her neighbor. The conflict

later translated into a bitter fight and as community members converged to stop the fight, Samantha was overheard warning her neighbor that she would be dead the next day.

Its was so unfortunate that the neighbor was the next day found dead in her house. Before burial could take place, the community members gathered at Samantha's house, starting beating her and declaring that she should be excommunicated from the village. To tame the situation, Samantha was saved by the LC1 Chairperson who immediately intervened and requested for a village meeting. The Chairperson invited me to the meeting and sought my counsel on how to handle the prevailing situation at the time.

In the meeting, I negotiated with the Community members to forgive Samantha for either her intended or unintended actions. I convinced the community members that Samantha had no elsewhere to go and excommunicating her from the village was not the best solution. I asked for a lighter punishment and the community members zeroed down to community service. She spent one full week cleaning the well and as such that's how she got saved from being excommunicated. From that experience, I gained courage that there is a lot more that Community Paralegals can do in promoting conflict resolution within the community."

7.0 WHAT STAKEHOLDERS' AND BENEFICIARIES SAY ABOUT PARALEGALS

"I used to work with Paralegals to create human rights awareness in the community. We also used to allow PAS to undertake routine monitoring and inspections of the Police cells. However, we don't know what befall PAS because it's no longer as vibrant as it used to be."

Mr. Mpanuka AbdelRahman
Community Liaison Officer
Jinja CPS

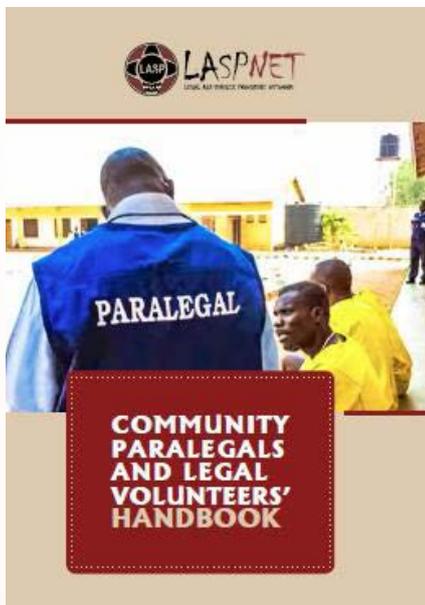
"Had it not been for a Paralegal to intervene and properly guide me on how to lodge a complaint in court, our family land was at the verge of being taken by a powerful investor."

Nassuna Asha
Resident of Masaka

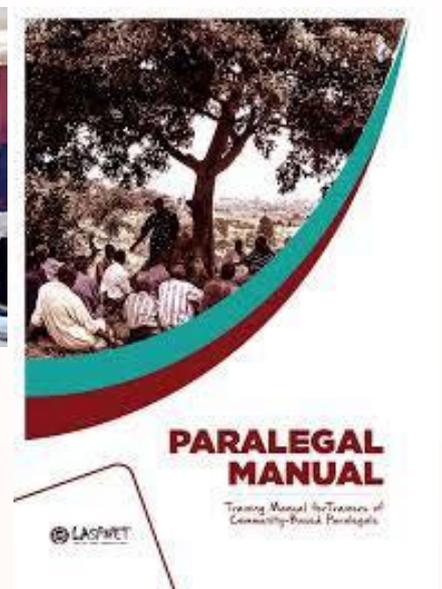
"Many times, suspects lack the basic legal and procedural knowledge about court processes. I therefore applaud paralegals for stepping to provide support to clients through advising them about court processes such as plea bargaining. I surely think Paralegals are a strong force in the chain of Access to Justice."

ASP Herbert Muhangi
Jinja Remand Prison

8.0 Zooming into our LASPNET's work on paralegals



LASPNET and ASF training for community paralegals in Hoima.



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9.0 POLICY ISSUES FROM THE VOICES OF PARALEGALS

Drawing from the shared experiences of stakeholders and paralegals, we share some of the policy recommendations to enhance paralegalism in Uganda.

- There is a need to fast track the development of paralegal regulations in Uganda. Attention should be given to both formal and informal paralegals by Uganda Law Council.
- Paralegal Advisory Services (PAS) was very instrumental in supporting prison decongestion and community awareness raising. However, due to resource gaps, PAS operations have scaled down. The JLOS and development partners are called upon to revitalize and resource PAS.
- LASPS should continue strengthening the capacity of paralegals through trainings and retooling them to effectively execute their roles and responsibilities. This should be backed up with close supervision and monitoring the work of paralegals to ensure quality services rendered.
- Adapting the practice of "paralegalism" in Uganda through promoting paralegal work at the grassroots, documenting and validating their work by the formal justice system. The judicial system can for example put in place mechanisms of registering consent agreements and or memoranda of understanding arising out of the informal dispute resolution mechanisms spearheaded by paralegals.

10. DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM THE NAMATI EXPERIENCE ON PARALEGALS

Namati is dedicated to putting the power of law in the hands of people. Below from the Namati website we reproduce verbatim the article written by Mr. Vivek Maru, the CEO of Namati.

Dear Friends,

We are engaged in a vital struggle, in a brutal time. With authoritarianism and nativism rising, Namati and our many partners around the world are fighting to protect basic rights. We are working with communities who have been vilified and excluded to secure the documents that prove their citizenship. We are working with farmers to recover land that was stolen from them by corporations or by their own governments. We are challenging broken health systems and unlawful pollution.

In our first five years, we proved that community paralegals and their clients can take on some of the toughest forms of injustice and win. And we built the first global network dedicated to legal empowerment—now nearly 2,000 groups from every part of the world. We are called in this moment to do much more. Our world is profoundly unequal. Authoritarians are responding to this inequality by scapegoating minorities and promising to turn systems upside down.

We have an alternative: deepening democracy rather than giving up on it. Transforming institutions rather than abandoning them. Succeeding in this struggle is going to require much more of us, from many more of us. I hope all of you will be a part of it.

With love and respect,

Vivek Maru
CEO, Namati

This article was accessed from the NAMATI website. Via <https://namati.org/who-we-are/>



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Paralegals		
1.	Mr. Mwase Joseph	Kamuli Community Based Paralegals
2.	Ms. Nakabanda Brenda	Paralegal Advisory Services
3.	Mr. Mawerere Laston	Justice Centre Uganda
4.	Mr. Bienvenu Migabo	Refugee Law Project/Community Paralegal
5.	Mr. Senkya Ronald	Platform for Labour Action
6.	Ms. Opedun Frances	Community Paralegal
7.	Munaaba Iddu	Muslim Centre for Justice and Law
Justice Law and Order Sector		
8.	Mr. Mr. Mpanuka AbdelRahman	Uganda Police Force
9.	ASP Herbert Muhangi	Uganda Prison Services
10.	Ms. Nasuuna Asha	Masaka
LASPNET Secretariat		
11.	Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa	Chief Executive Officer
12.	Mr. Badru Walusansa	Director of Programmes
13.	Ms. Achen Daphine	Research and Knowledge Mgt Officer
14.	Ms. Nakawombe Olivia	Lobby and Advocacy Officer
15.	Ms. Nabiryo Emilly	Project Assistant Lobby and Advocacy



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