

The Network

A voice for the indigent persons in Uganda



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“ Why You Need Legal Aid and ADR ”

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

NAME OF ORGANISATION

ACRONYM

1. Abantu For Development Uganda	AFOD
2. Acid Survivors Foundation of Uganda	ASFU
3. Action Against Violence	AAV
4. Action for Poverty Reduction and Livestock Modernization in Karamoja	ARELIMOK
5. African Center for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims	ACTV
6. Alliance for Integrated Development and Empowerment	AIDE
7. Association of Human Rights Organizations	AHURIO
8. Avocats Sans Frontiers	ASF
9. Center for Legal Aid	CLA
10. Center for Public Interest Law	CEPIL
11. Community Justice and Anti Corruption Forum	CJAF
12. Community Legal Action and Integrated Development	COLAID
13. Defence for Children International	DCI
14. Facilitation for Peace and Development	FAPAD
15. Foundation for Human Rights Initiative	FHRI
16. Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum	HRAPF
17. Justice and Rights Association	JURIA
18. Kamuli Community Based Paralegals Association	KCOBPA
19. Land and Equity Movement in Uganda	LEMU
20. Legal Action for Persons with Disabilities	LAPD
21. Legal Aid Clinic of the Law Development Center	LAC
22. Legal Aid Project of the Uganda Law Society	LAP
23. Micro Justice Uganda	MJU
24. MIFUMI	MIFUMI
25. Muslim Center for Justice and Law	MCJL
26. National Union of Disabled Persons in Uganda	NUDIPU
27. Omaniman Community Development Initiative	OCODI
28. Platform for Labour Action	PLA
29. Public Interest Law Clinic	PILAC
30. Public Defender Association of Uganda	PDAU
31. Refugee Law Project	RLP
32. Retrak International	RETRAK
33. Street Law	SL
34. Teso Legal Aid Project	TLAP
35. Uganda Association of Women Lawyers	FIDA
36. Uganda Christian Lawyers Fraternity	UCLF
37. Uganda Land Alliance	ULA
38. Uganda Muslim Supreme Council	UMSC
39. Uganda Network on Law, Ethics and HIV/AIDS	UGANET
40. Uganda Youth Development Link	UYDEL
41. War Child Canada	WCC
42. World Voices Uganda	WVU



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Warm greetings to you all!

It is with great honor that I am once again at the helm of Legal Aid Service Provision in Uganda this time around featuring as the new Executive Director of LASPNET, a role I assumed starting April 2015.

I am grateful to you all for the warm reception, words of encouragement and overwhelming cooperation and support you have accorded to me and which I am already enjoying. I commend you all, especially the LASPNET membership for the unwavering services you continue to render to the indigent and disadvantaged and the quest for social justice that you continue to pursue in your respective forts.

I have no doubt that with all our efforts combined, the future for access to justice through legal aid service provision is assured for all in Uganda. I therefore take this opportunity to share with you our latest news letter for the period January to March 2015.

In this issue the LASPNET secretariat is providing you with highlights of what has been done through you our membership and stakeholders

in harnessing opportunities to strengthen our networks and creating synergies and cooperation within and outside, in order to ensure that the marginalized and the poor have access justice. Inside this issue you will read about :

- ⇒ The Stakeholders' Forum which LASPNET held to Improve Legal Aid Service Delivery. This was through convening a Human Rights Defenders meeting.
- ⇒ We Commemorated the world day of social justice, when LASPNET joined the rest of the world to call for equality in the education system of our country, particularly calling upon the restoration of the demolition of schools for the urban poor.
- ⇒ We also give you an insight of the newly elected Board of Directors that will steer LAPSNET to another level
- ⇒ The issue also provides insights on the question of legal aid making a call to expedite the bill on Legal Aid Provision
- ⇒ We also give you insights on the Bataka Courts and why they are becoming Popular
- ⇒ We have News from the Membership- Saying No to pre-trial detention for Juveniles because of its negative effect to child development and never considered to be in the best interest of the child.

As you flip through this newsletter don't forget the humorous quotes, interesting policy debates and insights on what is happening in the larger JLOS institute.

Enjoy Reading!

Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa

Executive Director

NEWS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

LASPNET ELECTS NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On Friday 21st November 2014 the Legal Aid Service Providers Network (LASPNET) elected its 4th Board of Directors. Mr. Sam Nsubuga, the Chief Executive Officer for the African Center for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV) became the new Chairperson for the Board of Directors, replacing Ms. Salima Namusoby, who has served in the position since 2012.

This was during LASPNET's fifth Annual General Meeting which took place at Protea Hotel. At the same meeting the LASPNET membership charter was reviewed, adopted and made operational for the



Ms. Salima Namusoby the outgoing board Chairperson handing over to the incoming Board Chair Mr. Herbert Nsubuga during the LASPNET Annual General Meeting to elect the New board of Directors at Protea Hotel Kampala

membership.

In his maiden speech as the board Chair, Mr. Nsubuga pointed out the need to work together to transform LASPNET from where the outgoing board has left it to even greater heights. He expressed his gratitude for being accorded the mandate to steer the organization's governance body and requested for

cooperation while transitioning into the new challenges.

He called upon all stakeholders and members to play a role in developing the next Strategic Plan as the current one will be ending this year.

The Justice for the Court of Appeal, her Worship Lady Justice Solome Balungi Bosa was the chief guest at the function. In her key note address, Justice Bosa emphasized the provisions of article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which provides for equality and freedom from discrimination, respect for human dignity and protection from inhuman and degrading treatment as well as the right to a fair hearing and prohibition of derogation from particular human rights and freedoms among others.

She urged the meeting to specifically embrace public interest litigation and bring as many cases as possible for the public good in the Constitutional Court and all other courts. "Achieving social justice should be one, if not the upper most aim in our work as Legal aid service providers", she said.

Ms. Namusoby, the outgoing board chair, thanked members for the support they had accorded her during her tenure as board chair and pledged working with and support the new board to continue from where she had left off.

The other new members on the Board are:

- Mr. Gard Benda, the new Vice Chairperson who replaced Mr. Fred Walulya
- Mr. Fred Walulya became the Honorable Secretary General, replacing Mr. Jaffer Senganda
- Mr. Anthony Mutimba is the new Treasurer in place of Ms Imella Prossy
- Mr. Paul Kavuma is the Representative for the Central Region replacing Ms Laura Nyirinkindi
- Mr. Fred Kahwa is the representative for the Western Region in place of Mr. Leonard Ampeire
- Mr. Phillious Karibwije is the Representative for the Eastern Region in place of Ms Salomy Awiidi
- Mr. Sam Odong is the representative of Northern Region in place of Mr. Paul Ngole
- Ms Dora Kiconco is the member on Merit

THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mr. Samuel Herbert Nsubuga
Chairperson



Mr. Gard Benda Ntegyereize
Vice Chairperson



Mr. Fred Walulya
General Secretary



Mr. Anthony Mutimba
Treasurer



Mr. Paul Kavuma
Representative– Central Region



Mr. Fred Kaahwa Kayondo
Representative Western Region



Mr. Phillious Karibwije
Representative Eastern Region



Mr. Samuel Odong
Representative Northern Region



Ms. Dora Kiconco
Member on Merit

MEETING WITH HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

L ASPNET sought to establish who Human rights Defenders are in Uganda; where are they located; what they do; and nature of cases that would require support and develop responsive strategies. In this respect, a meeting was held at Piato Restaurant, Kampala, on 6th February 2015.

One of the challenges faced by HRDs is the lack of coordination which leads to duplication. According to a report by the Human Rights Center, the greatest impediment to the work of HRDs is a restrictive legal framework especially in respect of the Non – Governmental Organizations Act, 2006 and its regulations, as well as other laws that hinder press freedom, freedom of assembly, association and demonstration. Most HRDs have been rendered vulnerable based on the constant fear of being prosecuted and yet they lack the means to defend themselves including collective measures within the sector to defend themselves. “The lack of awareness of the available protective mechanisms for HRDs also makes them vulnerable”, says the report.

At the meeting, the HRDs were urged to secure visibility in all their undertakings. “The first level of legal aid is securing visibility. For example while a lawyer is present at the police station where he is trying to secure bail for a client, there should be a journalist to cover the process in case it turns out violent in order to showcase the challenges faced by the HRDs in trying to fight for the rights of people”, said Mr. Nicholas Opio, a consultant lawyer.

LASPNET TRAINS ON TRIAL ADVOCACY

It is evident that the ability of advocates to present the factual and legal aspects of their cases persuasively so as to permit the Court to reach an enlightened and just result is one of the critical aspects of a system of justice. But a number of legal aid lawyers in Uganda have been critiqued for not having adequate trial skills other than promptness in filing applications and seeking adjournments.

Against this background, LASPNET organised a four-day Trial Advocacy Training for 32 lawyers from among the member organisations. It was a productive exercise of intensive work on the trial skills of trainees conducted at Esella Country Hotel by the training faculty of Justice Advocacy Africa from Monday 12th January 2015 to Thursday 15th January 2015. A total of 10 male and 22 female lawyers, from among the LASPs, were offered practical skills in court trial processes.

It was notable that the trainees mostly appreciated the exercises that enabled them to demonstrate effective *Opening Statement Skills* so as to explain a clear theory of the case and showing how the facts fit into the law so that the client wins. There was emphasis on use of a persuasive theme and the ability to tell an effective story while effectively dealing with the weaknesses of the case so as to turn them to strengths when possible.

COMMEMORATING THE WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

The debate on social justice has been around for decades but was concretized towards shared commitments and actions during the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1995, which resulted in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. At this summit, more than 100 political leaders pledged to make the conquest of poverty and full employment as well as stable, safe and just societies, their



Pupils of Nakivubo Blue Primary School taking a stand against the Demolition of Schools

overriding objectives. They also agreed on the need to put people at the center of development plans.

On November 26, 2007, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 20th February as the annual World Day of Social Justice, inviting Member States to devote the day to promoting national activities in accordance with the objectives and goals of the World Summit for Social Development. Observance of the World Day of Social Justice is intended to support efforts of the international community towards poverty eradication, the promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to so-

cial well-being and justice for all. Indeed, some progress has been made in the global campaign against poverty eradication;

During this year's commemoration of the World day of Social Justice, the UN put focus on ending human trafficking and forced labour in its different forms, including debt bondage, trafficking in persons and other forms of modern slavery. The Legal Aid Service Providers' Network (LASPNET) joined the call during a public dialogue which was organized on 20th February to highlight the plight of schools and the state of education especially that are overseen by the Government of Uganda.

Under the theme "***Take a stand; uphold the right to education for the urban poor***", LASPNET set out to appeal to Government to allocate more resources to the Ministry of Education and Sports so that the programmes for special needs education, guidance and counseling, planning and policy analysis, as well as physical education and sports are effectively implemented. LASPNET's outcry was to strengthen capacity of the Education Standards Agency, to play its supervision and oversight role.



The Chairperson LASPNET delivering a press statement during the celebration of the World day of social justice

FAREWELL TO THE OUTGOING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Mr. Richard Nsumba Muganzi, the out-going Executive Director for LASPNET

After 6 exhilarating years of dedicated service to the Network, Mr. Richard Nsumba Muganzi retired as the Executive Director of LASPNET at the start of April 2015, being replaced by a new and energetic persona in the field of legal aid and Human Rights Defence, Ms. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa.

Mr. Muganzi saw the birth and growth of the Network, and indeed leaves behind a legacy of having steered the organization's growth from a mere four membership institution to one which boasts of over 45 Legal Aid Service Providers. "I leave not only proud of all that has been accomplished, but also with deeply felt gratitude for all the people and horses who have made these years so profoundly wonderful", said Richard in his farewell speech while at the LASPNET secretariat.

Amidst challenges as well as achievements

within the various streams of work handled, Mr. Muganzi was able to soar through to provide profound leadership to the Legal Aid Service Providers Network, and indeed he is able to tell a story of an incredible odyssey that ended with giving LASPNET a name in bringing together Legal Aid Service Providers, coordinating them, building and maintaining synergies as well as supporting their efforts in lobbying and advocating for the promotion of access to justice for all.

In addition to Richard's significant achievements with delivery of programs and growing the network's support, he has also contributed the most in terms of putting his heart and soul into building the organization's vision, pursuing its mission, being a catalyst within the membership, and treating others with grace and respect—even under pressure. His diplomatic and public relation skills are legendary and will serve him well in the public sector.

We want to thank Richard for his many years of dedication and commitment to LASPNET, and for building bridges with diverse expertise and knowledge within the JLOS sector and other communities. He leaves a solid foundation of talented staff, dedicated board, and well-established, comprehensive programs at LASPNET to carry on the mission.

NEWS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

SAYING NO TO PRE-TRIAL DETENTION FOR JUVENILES

*By Josephine Kalege
Programmes Manager– Defence
for Children International.*

In Uganda, many children who commit crimes and are above the age of criminal responsibility which is 12 years according to the Constitution of Uganda, are deprived of their liberty and find themselves in pre-trial detention



Children at Kampiringisa Remand Home

centres like police lock ups, rehabilitation centres, remand homes among others. Much as these pre-trial detention centres could be the only way to confine these juveniles who have conflicted with the law, and are above the age of criminal responsibility, they should be used as a last resort, and for the shortest possible period of time.

However in many cases, these juveniles over stay in pre-trial detention for periods as long as six months and beyond, without accessing free, fair and timely child friendly justice which is contrary to the **Ugandan Constitution (article 23 (6))**, which protects an accused person's right to a 'fair, speedy and public hearing and also provides the time limits for

detention of person accused of crime and committed to High court a period of 180 days. This means that any detention beyond that period is illegal and it's a violation of human rights.

The long pre-trial detention hampers the development of the child, puts the child in a situation of lawlessness where rights and legal safeguards are not taken into account, and puts the child at an increased risk of becoming a victim of physical, psychologi-

cal or sexual abuse and torture.

It is also imperative to note that many of these children end up becoming hard core criminals due to their interactions with other offenders while in detention centres.

While in detention, access to quality education and other appropriate facilities like beds, mattresses are hard to come by due to the enormous challenges that such detention facilities are faced with. A case in point is Gulu Remand Home. Based in Gulu district, it is the regional juvenile detention centre for the entire Acholi sub region districts including Gulu, Amuru, Nwoya, Kitgum, Pader, Agago, Lamwo, and other neighboring districts. It is managed by Gulu local government and was constructed to accommodate 50 inmates (25 girls and 25 boys respectively). However due to high rates of crimes committed by juveniles in the region, the number of juveniles detained there often escalates leading to congestion of the remand home

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Coupled to that, the juveniles suspected of serious crimes such as murder, rape, aggravated defilement are not separated from petty offenders which in a way leads many to become hard core criminals in the future.

According to the In charge of the remand home, Joseph Kilama, at the beginning of the year, the number of juveniles was 73 for both capital and minor offenses. However the number had drastically reduced as some have been convicted and taken to Kampiringisa to serve their sentences, 9 juveniles escaped recently because they had over stayed at the remand home without accessing justice coupled with the fact that the remand home has no perimeter wall to fully safe guard these juveniles and other re known challenges like food shortage.

By the time of compiling this report, 43 juveniles waiting to access justice in the courts of law and out of these, 16 have committed minor offences, and the 26 committed capital offences including 3 for murder, 3 for rape and 20 for aggravated defilement. According to the Children Advocate in Gulu Walter Ladwor, the

alarming cases of defilement and rape committed by juveniles both reported and unreported to police is attributed to the former in human life style in the Internally Displaced People's Camps (IDPCS). "During the LRA war, many families moved to the camps for safe custody and small huts were shared with adults and children. Many times adults played sex as children were hearing or seeing them, and this explains why children are involved in early sexual activities due to the early exposure and trauma they went through", say Counsel Ladwor.

The In Charge of Gulu Remand Home noted that despite the fact that the high court sessions are in progress at Gulu regional high court circuit, some cases for juveniles who were committed to high court for trial were not cause listed due to lack of resources and this means an automatic extension of their stay at the remand home which contravenes their right to legal access as per the United Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In partnership with Save the Children International (**SCI**), DCI is implementing a **Youth Skills Enhancement Project (YSEP)** in the districts of Amuru, Nwoya and Gulu

districts. Its major objective focuses on a legitimate government developed with adequate capacity to establish and maintain child friendly justice systems and also to effectively establish linkages between the formal and informal justice structures as a way of enhancing justice to respond to the needs of children especially with minor offences and thus promoting the rights of children respectively.

Together with Save the Children International under the YSEP project, the Remand home has been supported with trainings in life skills training for juveniles to enable them cope with the life in the remand home and to enable them make informed decisions.

There is a collective need for government and all child actors in the region to ensure that the juveniles who are deprived of their liberty and detained at Gulu remand home with capital offences triable under high court, quickly access free and fair child friendly justice to enable them develop to their full potential.

NEWS FROM THE PRESS

A CALL TO EXPEDITE BILL ON LEGAL AID PROVISION

*By Anthony Wesaka
(Daily Monitor Correspondent)*

Government has been urged to fast-track the passing of the National Legal Aid Policy and Bill into law to help regularize the activities of legal aid providers.

Lady Justice Solomy Balungi Bossa of the Court of Appeal and the Constitutional Court made the remarks while opening the 5th Annual General Assembly (AGM) of the Legal Aid Service Providers' Network at Protea Hotel in Kampala on 21st November 2014.

She said: "I am reliably informed that a draft legal aid policy is awaiting adoption by cabinet and a legal aid bill is being drafted".

"This is long overdue and all key stakeholders need to appreciate that further delay will continue to impact negatively on access to justice for the indigent and vulnerable persons."

Bossa asked parliament and the finance ministry to amplify debates and expedite the adoption of the long-awaited National Legal Aid Policy and Bill. She noted that there are more than 40 registered legal aid service providers – both government and non-government actors – but that they were operating in the dark without any streamlined procedures, a situation she said was dangerous.

"Legal aid is a human right and a key ingredient of the right to a fair hearing and urged the state as a key duty bearer to respect, protect, promote and fulfillment of human rights of citizens, is expected to provide legal aid to those who are unable to afford paid legal services to enable them seek legal redress," she said.

Legal aid is the provision of free legal services to people who cannot afford those of a paid lawyer. It has been going on in Uganda for more than 40 years but mostly through the non-state actors such as the Uganda Law Society, Legal Aid Project and the Federation of Uganda Female lawyers (FIDA). The Advocates Act and Probono Regulations require that every practicing advocate dedicates at least 40 hours a year to serving people with legal aid problems where such people cannot afford to engage a private lawyer.

According to Bbosa, in Uganda, legal aid services have for a long time been provided by both the State and non-State actors without any comprehensive policy backing from the Government. "We ask for a policy to guide the providers and also help in accessibility." The judge explained that having a formal policy to regularize the activities of the legal aid providers is necessary since there are more than 36 per cent poor Ugandans who cannot afford the hired legal services of advocates.

Salima Namusobya, the outgoing board chair of the Legal Aid Service Providers' Network said there are few players in the country mainly because they do not have capacity to fund their activities.

"The policy and act will create a fund to help government provide legal aid services country-wide," she explained. The assembly also explored and discussed initiatives aimed at addressing major policy gaps, regulatory challenges and practical limitations to achieving the national legal aid priorities.

PICTORIAL



PICTORIAL



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- A- Participants of the Trial Advocacy Training taking a group photo at Esella Country Hotel
- B- Pupils of Nakivubo Blue Primary School taking a stand against school demolition during the World Day of Social Justice Commemoration
- C- Members, Development Partners, Stakeholders and Staff of LASPNET taking a group photo during LASPNET's 5th Annual General Meeting
- D- The Headmistress of Nakivubo Blue Primary School Ms. Agnes Mugisha, Making a speech
- E- Human Rights Defenders meeting to improve Legal Aid Service Delivery and find mechanisms on improving on the working environment. This was held at Piato Restaurant
- F- Participants following deliberations during the first breakfast Meeting of CEOs and Chairpersons of LASPNET held at Acadia Suits
- G- The former Chairperson of LASPNET Ms. Salima Namusobya at the 5th AGM
- H- Board members and staff of LASPNET during the meeting to welcome the new E.D, Ms Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa (5th from the right)
- I- Ms Salima Namusobya delivering her final speech as the Chairperson
- J- Handing over to the new Chairperson, Mr. Samuel Nsubuga
- K- The PRO for Kampala Metropolitan, Mr. Charles Onyango delivering a speech

THE QUESTION OF LEGAL AID PROVISION IN UGANDA

*By Jacqueline Zawedde M
Information and Communication
Officer– LASPNET*

In 2007, Sanyu, a 13 year old blind, deaf and mute Ugandan girl, was defiled and became pregnant. The minor, in her condition could not communicate the identity of her defiler. She gave birth to a baby boy in April 2008.

Four years down the road, the perpetrators of this injustice were still on the loose. In 2011, the Legal Action for Persons with Disabilities

(LAPD), a legal aid service provider, intervened in the case.

After taking DNA tests for Sanyu's son and comparing the results with those of the members with whom she was staying, it was discovered, to the uttermost disdain, that Sanyu's biological brother was the father of her son, and therefore the one who had committed the vile crime of defiling this incapacitated girl! Unfortunately justice could not take its full course because the

offender escaped from police custody and was later found dead. A vulnerable person's right to access justice had been undermined.

Giving assistance to people otherwise unable to afford legal representation and access to the court system, also known as legal aid, is regarded as central in providing access to justice



by ensuring equality before the law, the right to counsel and the right to a fair trial.

According to a report prepared by the Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor titled "Making the Law Work for Everyone", one of the four pillars of legal empowerment of the poor is the provision of access to justice and the rule of law.

Unfortunately In Uganda, tens of thousands of vulnerable, poor and indigent persons'

rights are violated, including the right to access justice and legal redress, on a daily basis. They are unjustly abused, exploited and denied social justice and other benefits in society. Yet, only a fraction of these are able to challenge these criminal actions in courts of law and to have access to a fair, timely and effective remedy.

Moreover they are not privy to the different legal aid services nor the legal service providers who can represent them without any fees attached. They are also not aware that access to justice is in itself a fundamental human right as set out in Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law."

Secondly, that it is a means to protect and enjoy other rights and thirdly, that for the right to access to justice to be truly enjoyed, a number of other human rights must also be

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protected, such as the right to information, the right to physical safety, the right to confidentiality and the right to privacy.

A United States Supreme Court Associate (Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg) once said, "Lawyers have a license to practice law, a monopoly on certain services. But for that privilege and



An indigent family in Bugiri District

status, lawyers have an obligation to provide legal services to those without the wherewithal to pay, to respond to needs outside themselves, to help repair tears in their communities.

In Uganda, a few lawyers have come up to offer services to the indigent without pay and those that have done so in the form of pro bono practice usually compensate for their nonpayment by providing services in a manner that could be described as less dedicated

or less professional than the standards level of practice. Even with the existence of state briefs where the state is constitutionally mandated to provide legal representation to the capital offenders at a minimal fee, the services have been met with minimal interest and haphazard implementation.

The Government has further established community sensitization programs as well as

forcefully directing advocates to offer free legal services. However all these initiatives and strategies have been frustrated by the limited number of legal practitioners who are

willing to offer legal aid freely or at a minimal fee and thus engaging more in private practice than Government practice.

While making reference to statistics that there is 1 lawyer for every 10,000 indigent people, Justice James Ogoola, the former Principal Judge of the High Court of Uganda, said, "that means, if we had 70,000 indigent people with various legal problems, you would have seven lawyers to serve all

of them. And if they gave each client just 30 minutes, it would take them seven months to meet with everybody, and that's working around the clock, 24/7, without breaks. It's no wonder the majority of low income people in our country don't bother to seek a lawyer, even when they have a very serious problem. And it is no wonder that the case backlogs in our courts of law are overwhelming. To lower these barriers to justice, we all have to do our share and part."

In this respect, a number of Non-State Legal Aid Service Providers (LASPs) have come up to fill the gap existing in the provision of free legal aid to especially the indigent and vulnerable persons, despite being a state obligation. Under the coordination of LASPNET, these non-state actors run legal aid clinics, community outreaches, pro-bono schemes, and paralegal initiatives.

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Research conducted by LASPNET and other like-minded organizations revealed that despite being a State obligation, legal aid service delivery in Uganda has largely been dominated by non-state actors with inadequate involvement or support from the government. This situation combined with the lack of a National Legal Aid Policy and institutional framework has led to noticeable challenges in coordinating the efforts to enhance service quality and improve human capacity among legal aid service providers. The majority of the legal aid clinics are established in urban centres with some little community outreach in the rural areas.

These actors are characterised by inadequate quality of services delivered, limited skills/capacity to meet the demand for legal aid services, poor standards and case management practices in handling clients, as well as lack of effective strategies for extending services beyond existing project actions and areas of geographical coverage. That notwithstanding, there have been deliberate efforts by LASPNET

and other stakeholders to strengthen non-governmental LASPs for shared engagement on legal aid issues.

Issues of legal aid as a constitutional right go beyond the single constitutional provision on the right to legal representation in capital offences and those attracting life imprisonment.

Legal aid requires looking at the bigger picture of access to justice and the realization of the entire spectrum of human rights as provided for in the national constitution, regional and international human rights standards. In this regard, and cognizant of the causative linkages of civil matters and crime, legal aid is necessary not just in selected criminal matters or only for court appearances but for all legal matters including civil ones; at all stages, and for empowering beneficiaries in legal and human rights awareness. Consideration should be made beyond the question of indigence, for special circumstances like gender-based structural issues impacting on delivery and access to Justice.

Government is urged to provide legal advice and legal representation to the people of Uganda in the same spirit in which it has extended agricultural extension services,

health services, and education services among others to the sub county level. There is also need for proactive and creative strategies for reaching out to people in Uganda to access the legal aid. There is an opportunity in utilising the LC court system which is accessible and is the first court of call for most people.

The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs should expedite the process of enactment of the national policy and legislation on legal aid with the aim of giving effect to state obligations provided for in the constitution, regional and international instruments ratified by Uganda.

NOTICE BOARD

SCHEDULE OF LASPNET UPCOMING ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD APRIL TO JUNE 2015

- ⇒ Conducting Field Visits to member organizations
- ⇒ Programme Based capacity building for members (conducting trainings)
- ⇒ Hold Joint Position building meeting with members, JLOS and Parliament to lobby and advocate for the Legal Aid Policy
- ⇒ Hold radio talkshows on issues of A2J
- ⇒ Convene Cluster meetings and Working Group meetings
- ⇒ Conducting periodic M&E visits to identify access to justice concerns by poor people, and affecting effective delivery of services
- ⇒ Holding press conferences on emerging A2J issues.

Call outs!!

DO NOT FORGET TO REGISTER FOR YOUR NATIONAL I.D IN ORDER TO TAKE PART IN THE 2016 GENERAL ELECTIONS.

GET YOUR VOTABILITY ON

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

Congratulations to **Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana** the Executive Director of FHRI for scooping the prestigious European Union Human Rights Defenders Award in recognition for his work as a human rights defender

NEW APPOINTMENTS

LASPNET congratulates the various new appointments which have happened in the different JLOS sectors as well as the membership. In particular, heartfelt congratulations go out to the new appointed **The Honorable, Chief Justice, Bert Katureebe**. May he have a fruitful and successful tenure in office.

Special congratulatory messages go out to the newly appointed Executive Director of LASPNET, **Ms. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa** who assumed office in April 2015.

Congratulations also go out to the following individuals:

1. **Ms Dora Mafabi** the new Programmes Coordinator of Avocats Sans Frontiere
2. **Ms. Agnes Wandira**– the newly appointed Clinic Manager of the Legal Aid Clinic of the Law Development Center

LASPNET warmly welcomes you all to the membership and wish you a fruitful tenure

OBITUARIES

In the last quarter, a number of important people in the public arena and elsewhere have departed from us, both naturally, but also through unfair and unjust means.

We pay our tribute to the family and friends of the Departed individuals below:

1. Mother of Ms Atuki Turner, the Executive Director of one of our member organizations (MIFUMI)
2. The Late Mrs. Joan Namazzi Kagezi– Assistant Director of Public Prosecution (was shot and died on 30th March 2015)
3. The Late David Ojok– Former Student at Makerere University (Was lynched by a mob on 13th April 2015)
4. The Late Bbale Francis– celebrated veteran news anchor at UBC (died on 2nd April 2015)
5. The Late Rosemary Nankabirwa– Former News Anchor at NTV

There were many more whom we cannot point out here but we do put them in our thoughts and may their Souls Rest in Eternal Peace.

LASPNET

The Secretariat,
**LEGAL AID SERVICE
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THE SOFTER SIDE

EDUCATIVE AND HUMEROUS LEGAL QUOTES

"Too many young Indigenous members of our community are being caught up in the criminal justice system, with an increasing number of cases resulting in notably unjust and undue outcomes, primarily due to the lack of resources available"
— Abdullah Reslan Lawyer

If you can think that you can think about a thing, inextricably attached to something else, without thinking of the thing it is attached to, then you have a legal mind
— Henry C Blinn

What's the difference between a good lawyer and a great lawyer?
A good lawyer knows the law. A great lawyer knows the judge.

"You seem to be in some distress," said the kindly judge to the witness. "Is anything the matter?"
"Well, your Honour," said the witness, "I swore to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, but every time I try, some lawyer objects."

"A Lawyer will do anything to win a case, sometimes he will even tell the truth."
— Patrick Murray

"We need a law that will permit a voter to sue a candidate for breach of promise." — Mark Twain, American Author and Humorist

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CARTOONS



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"Money? Ha! I'm a legal aid lawyer. The only thing in my wallet is an overdue notice for my student loans."

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The coordination unit for the LASPNET Secretariat is composed of seven team members who provide various services to assist in the Network's activities

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