



LASPNET
LEGAL AID SERVICE PROVIDERS' NETWORK



**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2019-2020

CONTENTS

IDEOLOGY	2
OUR IDENTITY	2
OUR VALUES	2
LIST OF ACRONYMS	4
1.0 FOREWORD BY CHAIRPERSON	5
2.0 REMARKS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	7
3.0 THE YEAR IN NUMBERS	9
4.0 THE YEAR 2019-2020 IN PICTURES	10
5.0 A SCAN THROUGH THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT	11
6.0. HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	13
OUR YEAR IN DETAIL	19
7.0 NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIP	19
7.2 RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	32
7.3 LOBBY AND ADVOCACY	37
LASPNET IN THE MEDIA	45
7.4 STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	47
7.4.9 Board Pictorial	58
8.0 CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNT, RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES	64
8.2 LESSONS LEARNT	65
8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	65
9.0 CONCLUSION	67
10. MEMBERSHIP FOCUS	68
11. AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	73



IDEOLOGY

A Centre of Excellence for Legal Aid.

OUR IDENTITY



OUR VISION

A free and just society.



OUR MISSION

To provide a platform for effective networking and collaboration to enhance legal aid service delivery and access to justice for the most vulnerable and marginalized people.



OUR GOAL

To improve networking, collaboration and coordination among legal aid service providers in Uganda.



MANDATE

To strengthen coordination and networking of LASPs, harmonization and standardization of legal aid service provision by the different service providers, lobbying and advocacy to facilitate a favourable legal and policy environment.

OUR VALUES

Justice:

We believe that all human beings are entitled to equality, righteousness, equity or moral rightness.

Team work:

We promote collaboration and coordination for the delivery of legal aid services among service providers to achieve a common purpose and goal.

Commitment:

We are committed to supporting legal aid service providers and the general citizenry to access justice.

Collaboration:

The common link between LASPs is a responsibility of forming a common front in advocacy and service provision as a united entity.

Non-discrimination:

LASPNET and its members serve all irrespective of origin, sex, age, disability, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation or geographical location.

Human rights:

Our Programmes focus on the rights of human beings as provided by the UN Charter and the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

OUR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS 2019 - 2020



LIST OF ACRONYMS

A2J	Access to Justice
ACP	Assistant Commissioner of Police
AGM	Annual General Meeting
CEOs	Chief Executive Officers
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CORDAID	Catholic Relief Development Aid
DGF	Democratic Governance Facility
HRs	Human Rights
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
ICNL	International Centre for Not for Profit Law
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IDLO	International Law Development Organization
IIMS	Integrated Information Management System
LASPNET	Legal Aid Service Providers Network
LASP	Legal Aid Service Provider
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NLAP	National Legal Aid Policy
ODPP	Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
ULC	Uganda Law Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



1.0 FOREWORD BY CHAIRPERSON

Dear members and Partners, it's my distinguished honour to share with you the LASPNET Annual Report for the period 1ST July 2019 to 30th June 2020. I would like to thank the membership for entrusting me with this enormous task of steering LASPNET over the last two years since 26th October 2018. In that regard, I would like to mention that my term of office as a Board Chairperson has officially come to an end. I therefore opine that together with my board we leave behind an indelible mark towards the growth of the Network.

This reporting period was punctuated with a remarkable milestone of celebrating 15 years of LASPNET's existence in coordinating legal aid service delivery in Uganda. Since this is no mean achievement to the Network, I take pride in the journey thus far. The story of LASPNET@15 should inspire us since it demonstrates hard work; resilience; growth and trust that the Network has gained since its establishment in 2004. Needless to appreciate the support of our Development partners; Strategic

partners and members with whom we have continued to pursue LASPNET's vision of a free and just society.

I must acknowledge that during the reporting period, the Network was able to achieve on many on fronts under its four programmatic areas of Research and Knowledge Management; Lobby and Advocacy; Networking Coordination and Partnerships and Institutional Capacity building. The outstanding achievements are mainly making headways with advocacy for the National Legal Aid Bill (2020) through enlisting the support of the Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga as at the time we hold this AGM. We believe that her support brings an array of hope that this law will soon be enacted.

As we begun the year 2020, just like all sectors and other organizations, the Network was hit by the novel COVID-19 pandemic which severely affected programming. First of all, the COVID 19

lockdown was characterized with gross human rights violations orchestrated mainly by Local Defence Units (LDUs). On the other hand, Lawyers were exempted from working; expectant mothers faced challenges in accessing medical facilities as was the case with many families finding it hard to access food.

The above challenges notwithstanding, the Network remained afloat and issued several petitions and press statements which influenced a number of reforms including allowing a quota of 30 Lawyers to operate during the lockdown; prevailing over LDUs to refrain from torturing civilians; putting a waiver for expectant mothers to access medical facilities without any hinderances.

As part of our Board mandate we have supported to provide oversight and governance role in terms of ensuring that we remain relevant to our membership expectations; steering the development of polices and keeping sound accountability framework for the organization. It is also prudent for me to observe and acknowledge that the Network has remained relevant to its mandate through the generous giving of our development partners who include LASPNET's premier Donor the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF); United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP); International Centre for Not for Profit Law (ICNL) and OXFAM. Our Development partners have continuously provided both financial and technical support towards actualization

of the Network's mandate and we are forever grateful to them. I am also glad to report that as we wind up our tenure, the Network received additional funding from the International Law Development Organization (IDLO) and another strategic partner known as Catholic Organization for relief and Development Aid (CORDAID)

To this end, I would like to appreciate you all for the rendering me the opportunity to serve. Just to emphasize is that for the milestones, challenges and opportunities we met along the way it is a shared responsibility for all the members of the Network. Accordingly, let me take this opportunity to appreciate my fellow Board Members, Management and Staff under the able leadership of Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the unwavering support while I executed my roles as the Board Chairperson.

As I conclude, I take this opportunity to welcome the new Board Members. Taking up leadership on the LASPNET Board is one of the most enriching experiences one can ever have. I therefore implore you to maintain the pace of the Network, serve passionately and ensure that the Network is on course amidst the dynamic operating environment.



Ms. Sandra Oryema
Board Chairperson



2.0 REMARKS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I am delighted to share with you our Annual report for the period July 2019-June 2020. The year 2019 was memorable to the Network because we celebrated 15 years of existence at helm of coordinating legal aid service delivery in Uganda. The 15-year celebration was a clear indicator that LASPNET continues to be one of the strongest influencing Networks within the Civil Society Sector. This report therefore provides a reflection of our milestones, challenges and opportunities as we strive towards realization of LASPNET's mandate.

In the reporting period, LASPNET has maintained and intensified its central role of coordinating, strengthening Networking and Partnerships, improving efficiency, standards and sustainability of legal aid through Research and Knowledge Management, Lobby and Advocacy as well as Institutional Capacity building. Relatedly, the Network has innovated new ways of enhancing access to justice for the poor and vulnerable such as establishment of the Call Centre Facility; Social Web Application and intensifying legal rapid response mechanism to promote respect of human rights.

Further and with continued support from DGF, we ably conducted evidence-based researches under Research and Knowledge Management which in the reporting period focused on the Impact Assessment Report of the LASPNET corruption Monitoring Project 2016-2019, undertook an In-depth research on the Cost-Effective Legal Aid Models for LASPs, Legal Aid Practitioners Manual; an Action Research tracking Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 16 which is yet to be finalized and Paralegal Voice Magazine in addition to topical researches related to addressing human rights violations .

We continuously undertook capacity building interventions which included: training on Trial Advocacy, media training for Journalists and Editors, Resource mobilization and governance training for LASPs amongst others. All these trainings were aimed at enhancing the capacity of LASPs to offer standardized quality services.

Suffice to note, LASPNET has continued to lobby policy makers and government to fast track enactment of the National

legal aid law spearheaded by our partners GNPF. To effectuate this, a breakfast meeting with the Legal and Parliamentary Committee was convened purposed at providing a status of the Legal Aid Law to MPs in order to generate robust strategies to fast track this Law before the end of the 10th Parliament. This meeting culminated into our meeting with Hon Speaker of Parliament and subsequently occasioned the grant of leave to introduce a Private Member's Bill. Similarly, another piece of legislation we advocated in the year 2019-2020 was the Administration of Justice Bill which was intended to provide for an independent Judiciary. It is worthy to note that our efforts in association with other stakeholders under the Coalition for Strengthening the independence of the Judiciary were not in vain because the Administration of Judiciary Act was finally passed into law and assented to by the President on the 25th June 2020.

In the wake to respond to the unprecedented effects of COVID-19 pandemic on access to justice and legal aid service delivery, LASPNET developed new innovations such the Situational room which is intended to provide respond to victims of human rights violations and abuses; the Social Web Application for providing online legal support to clients with legal problems and recruitment of Social Media Influencers to support the Network in tapping into various social media spaces to influence change through advocacy. This is a clear testimony that the Network remains a Center for Legal Aid Excellence and is alive to the ever-

changing operating context in legal aid service provision such as the COVID 19 pandemic.

It's worthwhile to report that as of 30th June 2020, LASPNET Corporate Strategic Plan 2015- 2020 came to an end necessitating the need to develop one to steer the future strategic direction of the Network. The process of development of a new strategic plan has already commenced with an in-depth mid-term assessment and evaluation of the Strategic Plan with support from members and stakeholders. As I conclude I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to our premier donor, the DGF for faithfully funding the Network for the last 12 years. We further commend other development partners such as IDLO, ICNL UNDP and CORDAID for their tremendous financial and technical support towards the Network.

Still, we commend our membership organizations for the trust, our outgoing Board of Directors for the effective leadership and commitment and to the staff for their hard work and resilience that has contributed to the growth of LASPNET.

I invite you to read and enjoy our annual performance for the period July 2019 to June 2020.



Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa
Chief Executive Officer

3.0 THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



9 Radio Talk shows



4 Board meetings & 9 committee meetings



67 Journalists trained



4 Press statements released & **2** Petition on Rule of Law, Human Rights and Access to Justice



55 Networking & partnership meetings



791 Number of Cases handled in the Call Center.



4 Lobby meetings



43 Legal aid advocates trained



10 Capacity Building trainings



6 TV Talk shows



6 Cluster meetings



6 Court orders executed



6 Researches and Publications on Access to justice and rule of law



412 Rapid Response Cases Supported



1974 IEC materials delivered



9040 IIMS cases supported by LASPs

4.0 THE YEAR 2019-2020 IN PICTURES



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1. H.E William Carlos, Ireland Ambassador at LASPNET@50 Dinner presenting an Appreciation Award to DGF for being the outstanding institutional donor of LASPNET. Receiving it on behalf of DGF is Mr. Esben Harbor, the Programming Learning Manager Sphere 3, as Hon Justice Remmy Kasule looks on.

2. Participants at the launch of the Call Centre on 5th December 2019 being taken through its operationalization.

3. Dr. Sylvia receiving an appreciation award for promoting A2J for the vulnerable from National Association of Women Judges of Uganda (NAWJU) on 12th December 2019 at Protea Hotel.

4. Hon Adolf Mwesige, Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs receives signature books at the Breakfast meeting with the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs committee on enactment of the legal Aid law held on 29th June 2020 at Sheraton Hotel, Kampala.

5. LASPNET staff handing over an appreciation award to their CEO for the outstanding leadership and mentorship during the LASPNET @15 Dinner.

6. Hon. Justice Duncan Gaswaga, Deputy Head of Commercial Division of the High Court and LASPNET Honorary member pays a courtesy visit to LASPNET.

5.0 A SCAN THROUGH THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON LASPNET PROGRAMMING

In the reporting period, LASPNET continued with the implementation of its new DGF funded project titled “To Strengthen Collaborative Advocacy Platforms to Enhance Rule of Law, Legal Aid and Access to Justice for the Poor, Vulnerable and Marginalized in Uganda.” The project implementation period is three years (April 2018-April 2021) in which LASPNET intended to contribute towards strengthened governance processes that respond to and protect citizens’ rights; as well as increased protection and fulfillment of legal and human rights for poor, vulnerable and marginalized persons. Additionally, LASPNET with support from ICNL and in partnership with Chapter Four and Freedom of Expression Hub implemented various interventions under the Justice Speech project which begun in 2018. Further, under the UNDP Spotlight Initiative LASPNET embarked on the implementation of a project titled “Elimination of GBV

among women and girls.” In the year 2019-2020 LASPNET noted the increasing coverage of legal aid in districts from 70 to 80 districts in which services were extended to Kitgum; Pader and Nabilatuk where legal aid clinics have been opened by LASPs such as Uganda Law Society (ULS) and Justice Centres Uganda (JCU) with support from UN Women. Subsequently, according to the JLOS Annual Performance Report (2018/19), access to state funded legal aid services increased from 26% in 2016 to 39.02% in 2018/19. Although this drastic increment is vital in improving access to justice for the poor and vulnerable, it’s still limited compared to the percentage of Ugandans in need of legal aid services. We therefore urge the public and development partners to exert pressure on government to enact the Legal Aid law which is holistic in terms of scope to include criminal and civil cases, geographical coverage and sustainability.

JLOS Annual Performance Report (2018/19)

Access to state funded legal aid services

26%
2016

↓
39.02%
2018/19

Utilizing the Lobby and Advocacy Strategy (2017-2020), LASPNET has continued to lobby and advocate for the enactment of the National Legal Aid law through working closely with Greater North Parliamentary Forum where several consultations have been undertaken. In addition, the enactment of the Administration of Justice Bill (2020) into law was step in the right direction in strengthening the independence and welfare of the Judicial officers.

The above positive developments notwithstanding, LASPNET takes note of increasing security threats ranging from kidnaps, to murders as well as restrictions on Freedom of Expression which includes gagging of media houses; and brutal arrests of activists and HRDs LASPNET responded to many of these incidences by releasing a press statement on the rampant spate of kidnaps where it committed

to provide free legal services victims through the Legal Rapid response mechanisms.

It is also worthy to note that the outbreak of COVID-19 poised unprecedented disruptions on the socio-economic and political fabric of different economies. In order to prevent the spread of the virus government put in place measures which among others included a ban on public movement; closure of courts and subsequently a total lockdown. Its however important to note that the lockdown led to escalation in SGBV cases. Further, the closure of service institutions including Courts and LASPs coupled by non-recognition of Lawyers as essential service providers greatly affected Access to Justice. situation that hindered Access to Justice.

6.0. HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

LASPNET has continued to consolidate its coordination role and networking of LASPs to deliver standardized legal aid services to the poor and vulnerable persons. This section of the report therefore provides milestones under LASPNET's thematic areas which include; Networking, Coordination and Partnerships; Lobby and Advocacy and Research and Knowledge Management.

6.1 Networking, Coordination and Partnerships

- ▶ LASPNET maintained its existing partnerships with different stakeholders which include; NSSF, UCBA, ASF, EOC among others.
- ▶ LASPNET launched the Lwengo Legal Aid pilot extension Model to Kayunga District.
- ▶ The Network held a corporate dinner in celebration of its 15 years of existence at Imperial Royale.
- ▶ LASPNET with funding from ICNL organized a Regional stakeholders' dialogue on Freedom of Expression and Access to information.
- ▶ LASPNET launched the Call Centre Facility to enhance access to justice for the poor and vulnerable on 5th December 2019.
- ▶ Establishment of the Situation Room to respond to human rights violations related to COVID-19 pandemic.

6.2 Research and Knowledge Management

LASPNET undertook key researches to inform policy and advocacy change and these include;

- ▶ LASPNET produced an Impact Assessment of its Corruption Monitoring Project (2016-2019);
- ▶ Produced the Legal Aid Practitioners Manual;
- ▶ Conducted an in-depth research on the Cost-Effective Legal Aid Models by Legal Aid Service Providers;
- ▶ Action Research to Track the Status of Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 in Uganda;
- ▶ Simplified Guide on Freedom of Expression and the right to Access to information in Uganda;
- ▶ Inaugural Paralegal Voice Magazine.



6.3 Lobby and Advocacy Engagements

On this front, LASPNET achieved the following;

- ▶ The Network continued with the implementation of its Advocacy Strategy (2017-2020) aimed at fast tracking the enactment of the National Legal Aid Bill 2020 and other pro-poor laws.
- ▶ LASPNET with support from UNDP under the Spotlight Initiative convened a Women and Girls’ groups’ interactive meeting to obtain their views on the proposed Legal Aid law.
- ▶ LASPNET in partnership with the Greater North Parliamentary Forum (GNPF) convened a Breakfast meeting with the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee on the 29th June 2020.
- ▶ Coordination of the Legal Rapid Response scheme of lawyers to support victims of human rights violations.

6.4 Institutional Strengthening and development

LASPNET conducted several capacity building interventions for its members which among others included;

- ▶ Trial Advocacy Training;
- ▶ Media training for journalists, Advocates and Editors,
- ▶ Governance and Resource Mobilization for Senior Management of LASPs and LASPs Board of Directors among others.
- ▶ In terms of the Network’s institutional growth, new development partners including IDLO and CORDAID and a new member that is NEW PLAN was brought on board.

FEATURE STORY:

Legal Aid Service Providers Network Celebrates 15 years in Existence

The Network celebrated 15 years of existence with a theme ***“Celebrating Legal Aid service delivery in Uganda, consolidating gains, drawing on lessons and opportunities for improved access to justice for all.”*** The celebrations come a long with a review of its interventions in the fields of access to justice, human rights and rule of law which has highlighted a lot of achievements. Throughout its existence, the Network has gained a proven track record of enhancing access to justice for all and such, LASPNET’s contribution in the above fields has been recognized by different stakeholders including the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) in 2016 and Muslim Centre for Justice and Law (MCJL) in 2017.

Events to mark the 15 years of LASPNET included the Community legal aid Outreach held on the 23rd October 2019 at Nakawa Market and a Prison Visit on the same day; PRE-AGM conference and Corporate Dinner on the 25th October 2019 at Imperial Royale Hotel.

Community Legal Aid Outreach at Nakawa Market

The community Legal aid outreach held at Nakawa Market commenced with a matching exercise from the assembly point in Lugogo KCCA grounds to the outreach venue. It was led by Hon. Justice Remmy Kasule, Judge of Court of Appeal and also the Chief celebrant; renowned professional kickboxer Golola Moses; LASPs and stakeholders.

In his remarks before flagging off the participants, Justice Kasule appreciated LASPNET for celebrating 15 years of long-standing commitment of enhancing access to justice for the poor and vulnerable. He further noted that the Nakawa Market Legal Aid Outreach was a good gesture espoused by the Lawyers and Advocates to leave their offices and



The Hon. Justice Remmy Kasule, LASPNET Chief Executive Officer and Golola leading the matching.

take legal aid services closer to the people. Mr. Charles Okuni, the LC I Chairperson commended LASPNET for selecting Nakawa market to be part of its 15-year celebrations and noted that many market vendors were in need of legal aid services.

Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa, the CEO of LASPNET appreciated Hon. Justice Remmy Kasule whom he regarded as the champion of legal aid in Uganda for accepting to participate in the Nakawa Legal Aid Outreach and noted that his participation was a sign of humility and unwavering commitment to LASPNET and the vulnerable. Dr. Namubiru expounded more on LASPNET's mandate and emphasized the fact that it has been at the forefront of advocating for the National Legal Aid law that will enable the indigent to access free legal services. It's on that note that she urged the public to exert pressure on their MPs and demand for the enactment of the proposed Legal Aid law.

LASPNET Board Chairperson Ms. Sandra Oryema, appreciated the different LASPs that participated in the outreach and these included the Public Interest Law Clinic (PILAC); Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CEPIL); Muslim Centre for Justice and Law (MCJL); Justice Centres Uganda (JCU); Community Justice and Anti-Corruption Forum (CJAF) among others. With emphasis, she noted that Lawyers should ensure that the needs of the clients are addressed and further

contacts of those LASPs shared with the public for future consultation.

The Hon. Justice Remmy Kasule underscored the need for a state funded legal aid scheme to facilitate access to justice for the poor and vulnerable. He requested the Chairperson to provide space for the establishment of a human rights desk within the market to handle disputes related to rights violation. Regarding the same, he cautioned the public against mob justice which he said is rampant within the public and as a result advised them to follow the right channels to resolve their disputes. The market vendors appreciated Justice Kasule with a package and also christened upon him the title of "Peoples' judge." His speech was later followed up with provision of legal aid by the LASPs.

LASPNET holds a Corporate dinner to Celebrate 15 Years of Existence

On the 25th October 2019, LASPNET held a dinner to sum up the celebrations. This dinner took place at Imperial Royale Hotel and attracted various guests ranging from Diplomats; Development and Strategic partners; Government; JLOS; LASPs and Media.

Ms. Sandra Oryema, the LASPNET Board Chairperson informed the guests that LASPNET's journey is a testimony of hard work, resilience and experience. She noted that amidst the shrinking civic

space, LASPNET has managed to make its niche and apparently is one of the formidable and vibrant Networks in the Uganda. She however urged the Network to focus on sustainability and adapt innovative approaches in the delivery of legal aid with the use of cost- effective legal aid models.

On the other hand, Justice Remmy Kasule, Court of Appeal Judge and one of the Honorary Members of the Network in his remarks thanked LASPNET for organizing a colourful dinner which brought together different actors to reflect on the journey of legal aid provision in Uganda. He further noted that he was glad to witness LASPNET celebrate this milestone because he was a part of its journey since inception. In more 15 years to come, Justice Kasule urged LASPNET to continue influencing enactment of key legislations to enhance access to justice for the poor and vulnerable including the passing of the Legal Aid law.

The Irish Ambassador, H.E William Carlos was the Chief Guest and in his key note, thanked LASPNET for reaching thus far. He recognized the Network for being at the epitome of access to justice through its coordination role of Legal Aid Service Providers in Uganda adding that it is for that reason that Development partners such as the DGF always want to associate and support the Network. The Ambassador also added that over

the years, LASPNET has been pivotal in advocating for key reforms such as the Legal Aid law which is intended to ensure provision of free legal services to the indigent by the state. He urged LASPNET to consolidate its gains and remain afloat in the access to justice space. Lastly, he read out the Irish Prayer and dedicated it to the Network.

“May God hold you in the palm of His hand May your days be many and your troubles be few, May all God’s blessings descend upon you, May peace be within you, May your heart be strong, May you find what you’re seeking wherever you roam.”



L-R Dr. Sylvia N Mukasa, Ms. Sandra Oryema and H.E William Carlos at the Dinner.

The CEO of LASPNET, Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa highlighted some of the milestones the Network has achieved over time. These include increment in donor funding; influencing various policy reforms such as the Legal Aid Law and Children’s Amendment Act; establishment of strategic partnerships with NSSF;

EOC; ULGA; UCBA among others. In addition, the Network has undertaken several researches key among them include the Cost Benefit Analysis (2015); Poverty Vulnerability Marginalization in the Context of Access to Justice (2016); Annual Access to Justice Trends Analysis reports and Access Justice Rule of Law and Security Needs of Refugees in Arua and Isingiro (2018).

In spite of the great strides made by the Network, she added pointed out some of the challenges faced by the Network. These included changing donor priorities which has eventually led to lack of funding by LASPs; shrinking civic space such as continued office break-ins and delays by Parliament to enact the Legal Aid law. She summed up her presentation by

stating that in the next 15 years, LASPNET envisions having its own home and leveraging possible opportunities such as being a member of the East Africa Legal Aid Network, to influence reforms at the regional level and beyond.

During the dinner, several personalities and organizations were awarded for their contribution towards the Network. These included among others: Justice Remmy Kasule (Legal Aid Ambassador Award); Mr. Musa Modoi (Legal Aid Ambassador Award); Ms. Anne Kampire (Founder Award); JLOS (Strategic partnership Award); DGF (Development partner Award); MCJL and UCLF (Active Membership Award) and Mr. Kenneth Lukwago (Media Personality Award).

OUR YEAR IN DETAIL

7.0 NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIP

LASPNET has continued to harness partnerships with both state and non-state actors to enhance Rule of Law, Access to Justice and Human rights especially for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized. In the reporting period, the Networking and Partnerships activities were undertaken as provided below:

7.1.1 LASPNET launches the Lwengo Legal Aid Model Extension in Kayunga District

On the 27th August 2019, LASPNET in partnership with the Public Interest Law Clinic (PILAC), Uganda Christian Lawyers Fraternity (UCLF), Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), Muslim Centre Justice and Law (MCJL) and Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA) launched the Lwengo legal aid pilot extension project in Kayunga district. The launch was officiated by Her Worship Irene Akello, Grade one Magistrate Kayunga on behalf of the Resident Judge Mukono, Justice Margaret Mutonyi. It was attended by over 50 participants including project implementing partners, District Councilors, justice system actors, JLOS representatives at the District, Secretary General of

the Local Government Association and residents of Kayunga.

The Chief Guest applauded the district for providing UCLF with office space to set up their legal aid clinic where the vulnerable and indigent would seek free legal advice and services. She further noted that the legal aid clinic would help reduce case backlog. Whilst on the other hand, Her Worship Akello decried the high level of ignorance of the law among residents and the lack of representation that makes many shun court. She therefore called upon the clinic and lawyers to carry out sensitization and awareness creation session to empower the public with legal knowledge and their rights.

Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa, the Chief Executive Officer of LASPNET noted that the sustainable legal aid model was first piloted in Lwengo and due to its traction, it was considered for scaling up in other districts including Kalangala and Omoro. She further urged the district leadership to embrace the innovation and ensure that it's effectively implemented if access to justice for the poor and vulnerable is to be realized.



A group photo of the participants who attended the launch. Seated in the middle is H/W Irene Akello who officiated the launch.

Ms. Josephine Sebulima, the Membership Manager of ULGA on behalf of the Secretary General commended LASPNET and other partners for extending a much-needed service to the local governments. She called for joint efforts to strengthen the capacity of local governments to deliver efficient services relevant to the people’s needs. She further urged the local leaders to give space to the lawyers to sensitize people and improve their understanding of the law. The launch ended successfully with the signing of the MOU by Kayunga district and with the partners.

day was attended by 3 LASPs namely; CJAF, RLP, & LAP-ULS who exhibited their works. As a result, 85 participants received legal services and 79 signatures were collected demonstrate the need to enact the Legal Aid Law.

7.1.2 LASPNET and NSSF Convene Legal Aid Open Day

On the 6th December 2019, LASPNET in partnership and with support from the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and DGF convened the fourth legal aid open day at Kakyeeeka grounds Mbarara District. The event was officiated by His Worship Amos Kwizera, Registrar High Court Mbarara. The legal aid open



The Chief Guest H/W Amos Kwizera signs in the Legal Aid petition booklet as the LASPNET regional representative Mr. Frank Byamugisha (Uganda Prisons Services ACP) and LASPNET staff look on.

Relatedly, on the 14th November, 2019 LASPNET with support of UNDP convened a legal aid outreach under the theme ***“Promoting Legal Aid Accessibility and Access to Justice for all,”*** in Vurra Sub County grounds, Arua

district. The Outreach was presided over by Mr. Stephen Abunyang the Regional Community Sensitization Officer (RCSO) on behalf of H/W Daniel Lubowa, the Chief Magistrate of Arua. In attendance were 234 participants who included other key dignitaries such as Mr. Nyeko Thomas, DISO Arua and Mr. Adaku Nackson, LC III Vurra Sub-county among other leaders.

Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa, in her remarks noted the rationale of Legal Aid outreaches as avenues for bringing justice closer to the public. She highlighted that there are insidious barriers affecting access to justice such as high litigation costs; language barrier; procedural aspects and corruption which need to be dealt with in order to improve access to justice for the poor and vulnerable. Finally, she urged vulnerable persons including women, youth and PWDs to seek knowledge about the law and their rights.

Mr. Abunyang appreciated UNDP for supporting the Access to Justice activities for the poor and vulnerable. He noted that the delays in passing the legal aid law has had social, economic and political constraints access to justice for the poor and vulnerable. Whereas Mr. Nyeko called upon the residents of Vurra to utilize the LASPs in the region but also cautioned LASPs against inefficiencies especially not concluding matters brought to them.

During the outreach over 250 signatures were collected as an appealing signal to MPs requiring them to fast track the enactment of the Legal Aid law. In addition, participants raised several concerns related to inheritance of property; rights of spouses during and after dissolution marriage; child neglect and failure of parents to provide and meet educational needs of their children; delays in disposal of cases both at Legal Aid Clinic and in Courts of Law and corruption in the judicial system.



Participants pose for a group photo at the Outreach.

Additionally, on the 4th October 2019, PILAC in partnership with LASPNET, GNPf organized its annual legal open day at Makerere University Freedom square grounds under the theme **“Equal justice for all.”** The legal open day was aimed at providing free legal services to the general public where over 200 clients were attended to. The Network mobilized a total of 9 LASPs who included: CJAF, HRCU, HRAPF, AAV, FIDA, LAP/ULS, LAC /LDC, MCJL, SODANN and LASPNET to participate in the legal aid outreach.

7.1.3 Execution of court Orders Project (Ongoing).

LASPNET in partnership with the Uganda Court Bailiffs Association (UCBA) continued to implement the Execution of Court Orders Project aimed at supporting the poor and vulnerable to complete the justice chain through enjoying the fruits of their judgements. In the reporting period, LASPNET received 12 cases from LASPs such as Justice Centres Uganda, FHRI, LDC-LAC, and CJAF. So far 6 cases have been executed.

2nd National Stakeholders dialogue on Execution of Court Orders

On 27th November 2019, LASPNET in partnership with UCBA organized the 2nd National stakeholder's dialogue at Imperial Royale Hotel under the Theme: ***"The role of Court bailiffs in promoting A2J in Uganda: Drawing on lessons learnt and opportunities from the UCBA / LASPNET Execution Project."*** The dialogue was officiated by the Hon. Justice Duncan Gaswaga, the Deputy Head of Commercial Division who by then was the Head of Execution and Bailiffs Division. In his address, he highlighted improvements at the Division, which include among others the; open door policy,

installation of CCTV camera to enhance transparency and accountability and reorganization of the registry to avoid loss of files with plans underway to digitize the system. Relatedly, he emphatically called upon all stakeholders to work with the Division to ensure effective execution processes as well as Bailiffs to fully embrace Pro-bono initiatives.

The dialogue was also characterized with presentations on the progress report on the LASPNET execution of Court Orders project which was presented by Mr. Walusansa Badru, Research and Knowledge Officer on behalf of the Executive Director LASPNET; panel presentations from His Worship Ayebare Tumwebaze, Mr. Kayensige Brian, a Court bailiff, Ms. Gorreth Ayebare, Centre Manager Justice Centres Uganda and SP Sentamu George William from the Land and Protection Unit Kibuli who shared their experiences and lessons learnt from the Execution project.

Notably from their presentations,



A group photo of participants at the National Stakeholders Dialogue on Execution of Court Orders. Seated in the middle is Hon. Justice Duncan Gaswaga (Former Head execution and bailiffs division.)

they stressed the importance of Bailiffs providing free services to strengthen access to justice. The other issue of concern raised was corruption amongst some bailiffs.

It was also recommended that UCBA strengthens public awareness about the role of Bailiffs. The dialogue was closed by Mr. Ronald Basoita, the President of UCBA, who called for more engagement meetings with all stakeholders involved in execution in order to ensure the project meets its intended objectives.

Induction of Court Bailiffs in Partnership with UCBA.

Subsequently, LASPNET with support from DGF on the 23rd September 2019 held an induction training for newly licensed court bailiffs inclusive of LASPNET bailiffs at Silver Springs Hotel. The training was attended 80 bailiffs (69males, 11 females). As a result of the training over 10 Bailiffs expressed interest to join the LASPNET Pro-bono scheme of Execution of Court Orders.

Bi-annual meeting Court Bailiffs and Advocates on Execution of Court Orders.

On the other hand, on 13th March 2020, a bi-annual meeting for bailiffs and advocates was held at Piatto Restaurant.

The meeting aimed at taking stock and review of the progress made under the project. Arising out of the meeting, it was recommended that LASPNET and UCBA continue to build the capacity of LASPs, bailiffs and other stakeholders on execution processes.

At this meeting, the President of the Uganda Court Bailiffs Association Mr. Basoita Ronald stressed the need to enroll more bailiffs onto the project to help in timely execution of cases but also continue to inculcate the spirit of pro bono among bailiffs.

7.1.4 Provision of mediation and legal advisory services to complainants before the Land Commission of Inquiry:

LASPNET through its partnership with the Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters provided legal advisory services to 1 client whose case was handled by PILAC. The matter was referred back to the Land Commission of Inquiry for further management.

Prior to the completion of its tenure, the Land Commission invited LASPNET to make a presentation on the findings of its report titled “The Situational Analysis of Compulsory Land Acquisition and Management”.

7.1.5 LASPNET jointly organizes the Land Awareness week with Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development and Buganda Land Board

In the reporting period, LASPNET in partnership with Ministry of Lands, Buganda Land Board (BLB), Action Aid and other land actors organized the Land Awareness Week from the 22nd -26th July 2019 under the theme **“Land Rights; a means to economic transformation and social justice.”** The event aimed at strengthening community resilience in land management and administration in Wakiso.

The land awareness week was preceded by a stakeholder meeting at the District Headquarters graced by LCV Chairperson, Mr. Matia Lwanga who launched the week with a march to Kikokiro Sub County. At the different sub counties, LASPNET and some of its member organisations set up stalls and legal aid mobile clinics where they provided legal advice and answered various participants’ queries in relation to land and other legal matters.

Mr. Simon Kabogooza, from Buganda Land Board thanked Wakiso district administration for welcoming land awareness week into their jurisdiction. **“it is an immense responsibility for organizations to educate and sensitize people on issues of land rights. He informed the meeting that land conflicts**



L-R Ms. Jennipher Achaloi AAIU, Mr. Dennis Obbo MLHUD, Mr. Matia Lwanga LCV Wakiso and Mr. Simon Kabogooza BLB at the launch of Land Awareness Week in Wakiso.

cannot be resolved without teaching people their rights, freedoms and obligations as land owners/occupants as well as where and how to get assistance in cases where their rights have been trumped upon.” He added.

In addition, LASPNET mobilized 7 LASPs HRCU, LAP/ULS, MCJL, UCLF, FHRI, PLA, NETPIL to provide lawyers who offered legal services to the various indigent people and participated in the long week activities in the areas of contention.

7.1.6 Launch of the LASPNET Call Centre

LASPNET with support of DGF and in partnership with PILAC, UCU, LDC and ULS established a Call Centre facility on the 5th December 2019 to provide fast responder services in form of on spot legal advice, counselling in order support an effective referral system. The event was presided over by Ms. Martha Nanjobe, Deputy Programme Learning

Manager of Democratic Governance Facility and attended by partners from Judiciary, ULC, LASPs and Media. The Chief guest appreciated LASPNET for the new innovation noting that it will help in strengthening referral mechanisms while reducing on forum-shopping by clients. However, challenged the Secretariat to monitor and establish lessons on the operationalization of the Call Centre.

Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa, the Chief Executive Officer of LASPNET, commended DGF for the financial support towards the establishment of this facility. She further emphasized that the Call Centre is an enabler to improving and reducing costs incurred by clients to access legal services. This is because, in order to access legal services, the public is only required to

make calls at a free cost through the toll-free line (0800- 100155) and hot-line (0417-893500).

Since its establishment and as at the end of July 2020, the Call Centre had received a total number of 791 cases where 599 cases were closed through on spot legal advice while 122 cases were referred to LASPs and are still ongoing. The nature of cases received in the Call Centre were mainly related to family and children, criminal and land matters.

Furthermore, LASPNET has continued to popularize the Call Center through development of flyers, sharing the toll-free number on various platforms such as radio, television, social media platforms which include, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.



Ms. Martha Nanjobe (DGF) ready to launch the Call Centre



A picture of the Call Centre Coordinator supporting the Call Center agents while attending to a client.

7.1.7 Enhancing Collaborations and Partnerships to influence Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights

Collaborations and Partnerships is core to LASPNET’s mandate and as such the



Network has strived to ensure that it contributes towards this aspect through, participating in various engagements organized by its partners, both state and non-state. A total of 55 meetings were attended by the Secretariat staff and key among these included the following;

» The 2020 Hill innovating Justice conference on financing Justice convened by HiiL 3rd -5th February 2020 in the Hague Netherlands which was attended by Dr Sylvia N. Mukasa the CEO.

» The Chief Executive Officer participated in a zoom webinar on legal aid approaches for the marginalized and indigent persons in the wake of COVID19 pandemic organized by International Commission of Jurists and NAMATI on

30th April 2020.

» A meeting that was organized by the court users for the family division of the High Court of Uganda in a bid to improve service delivery on the 26th of September, 2019 at the Family Division in Makindye.

» A Portfolio Review Meeting that was organized by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) at the Ministry’s Hall on the 19th of September, 2019 to assess progress, discuss the implementation challenges and agree on remedial actions for further improvement under the Portfolio.

» The Chief Executive Officer participated in a consultative meeting organized by the Chambers of the Chief Registrar to discuss the draft guidelines on Land evictions on the 31st of July, 2019 at the Imperial Royale Hotel.

» The Chief Executive Officer attended a high policy round table discussion organized by the International Development Law Organization on the 5th of September, 2019 at the Serena Conference Center in order to discuss Gender Justice and the promotion of rule of law and sustainable development.

» The Strategic Scoping CSO consultation meeting for the “stand for her land” global campaign organized by LANDESA on 2nd October 2019 and hosted by World Bank offices.

7.1.8 Strengthening ongoing collaborations and welcoming New strategic partners

LASPNET works through collaborations, networking and partnerships with both state and non-state actors to enhance Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized. In the reporting period, the Network was able to consolidate its current partners including NSSF, EOC, UCBA and ULGA. In addition, it also welcomed 2 new partners on board as highlighted below;

7.1.8.1 OXFAM-Voice Linking and Learning

LASPNET received an Extensional grant from Voice through OXFAM Uganda to implement a project named “Connecting Voices” for a period of 6 months from April to October 2020 which implements Voice Linking and Learning activities. Under this Voice linking and learning project, LASPNET partners with Strategic Link (SL) Consult Limited (a consultancy firm with technical expertise) to advance the use innovative approaches to linking and learning that not only amplify voices of the marginalized groups but also builds capacity of the different grantees involved to support delivery of high-quality, data-driven interventions by the grantees.

Activities undertaken by LASPNET and Strategic Link during the reporting period include: Conducting for support field visits which were conducted by the Voice Linking and Learning Facilitators for 15 Voice Grantees across the country i.e. in the Greater North (Acholi, Lango, Karamoja regions), West Nile region, Mid-Western (Mubende) and Eastern Uganda (Tororo and Mbale). The support visits took place from 1st – 9th March 2020 and provided the Grantees with an opportunity to share their experiences; good practices and challenges with the VL&L Facilitators for documentation.



The Project Coordinator Linking and Learning (Mr. Hakim Mawanda) interacts with the some of the stakeholders during the visits in the North.

7.1.8.2 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Building on the existing partnership with UNDP, LASPNET signed a partnership agreement with UNDP to implement the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2019-2022. The Spotlight Initiative is aimed at capitalizing on existing programmes and interventions addressing Harmful Practices, Violence Against Women and Girls and Sexual Reproductive Health Rights in Uganda.

Under this project, LASPNET convened a National Engagement meeting with Uganda Women Parliament Association (UWOPA) and Women & Girls group representatives on 25th November 2019 at Hotel Africana. The meeting sought to engage Women MPs and enlist their support and views into the proposed Legal Aid law. The meeting included Development and strategic partners; MPs and LASPs in attendance.



Participants pose for a group photo at the National Consultative Meeting.

Also, to note is the development of one (1) Short video featuring Women groups and MPs on 5th June 2020. This video was developed with an aim of amplifying women and girls' voices in the demand for the enactment of the Legal Aid law.

7.1.8.3 INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR NOT FOR PROFIT LAW (ICNL)

In the reporting period, LASPNET received funding from ICNL to implement the "Just Speech Project" for the period January-December 2019. Following the end of the first project phase, ICNL extended its partnership with LASPNET for a period of 6 months (January-June 2020). The project is aimed at protecting freedom of expression and access to information in Uganda. It is implemented with other partners namely; Chapter Four and Freedom of Expression Hub.

Regional stakeholder's Dialogue

In the reporting period, LASPNET organized a Regional stakeholders' dialogue on Freedom of Expression and Access to information under the theme: ***"Promoting Access to Justice for journalists: Perspectives from East Africa on how to build a resilient legal aid response mechanism."***

The dialogue took place on 29th- 30th August 2019 at Best Western

Hotel Entebbe and was attended by a total of 70 delegates from different East African countries namely Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan. More still, the delegates were drawn from different sectors including: Development partners; CSOs; Government MDAs; Judiciary; Academia; Paralegals and Media.

Hon. Mwesigwa Rukutana, the Deputy Attorney General and State Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, officiated the dialogue in which he observed that all countries in East Africa are alive to Freedom of Expression, Speech and rights of Access to information as stipulated in their constitutions. He however noted these rights come with obligations that all persons need to observe and respect. As he concluded, he urged all stakeholders to propose practical strategies that governments can pursue to strengthen the promotion of the Freedom of Expression and Access to Information.

The key note address was delivered by Mr. Lawrence Mutte, the African Union (AU) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to information, who observed that there is need to balance between justifiable limitations and the enjoyment of rights guaranteed by the African Charter of people and Human Rights (ACHPR) and different Constitutions across the region. He

further emphasized that states should work towards decriminalizing repugnant laws that undermine the exercise of Freedom of Expression.

The dialogue also featured notable Speakers and panelists who included: Mr. Robert Kirunda, a Lawyer and Law Don at Makerere University; Mr. Demas Kiprono, Campaign Manager Safety and Dignity, Amnesty International Kenya; Mr. Victor Bwire from the Media Council of Kenya; Hon Justice Lydia Mugambe (Judge), Mr. Nicholas Opiyo of Chapter Four, Ms. Catherine Anite of Freedom of Expression Hub and Mr. Anthony Wesaka of Daily Monitor and others from Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan.



Participants from the East African region in Panel Discussion on Access to justice for media practitioners/Experiences and challenges faced by Legal Aid Paralegal Networks in protecting freedom of expression.

One of the outcomes of the dialogue was a Communique which highlighted the need to utilize the East African Community Bodies to ensure uniform approach through engaging the EAC legislative assembly for passing of laws that promote Freedom of Expression and Access to information; Repealing of laws that undermine Freedoms of Expression; Speech and Access to information and utilizing international and regional

Development of IEC Materials on Freedom of Expression and Access to information

In addition, a Pocket handbook was developed to provide simplified basic information to Journalists with Knowledge on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information. Further, the handbook contains frequently asked questions and legal provisions covering national, regional and international laws on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information. As a result, the handbook will help its users understand the enjoyment of the limits within which such freedoms can be exercised.



Signing of the live painting on freedom of Expression

7.1.8.9 INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION (IDLO)

On 25th June 2020, LASPNET welcomed a new Development Partner, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) to implement a one-year Project titled “Supporting Legal Aid Service Providers (LASPs) to enhance access to justice for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized in Uganda.” The project is part of the wider Community Justice Programme (CJP) being implemented by IDLO with financial support from the Swedish International Development



human rights mechanisms such as Universal Peer Review Mechanism, AU Special Rapporteur and East African Court of Justice to document and report violations of the aforementioned rights.

Cooperation Agency (Sida). The CJP seeks to enhance the accessibility, quality and sustainability of justice services delivered at the national and community levels in Uganda. Under the CJP, IDLO is providing financial and technical support to several organizations including LASPNET, Uganda Law Society (ULS) and FIDA Uganda.

The key activities include; developing a research and publication policy, translation of the paralegal handbook into local languages, training of paralegals on the utilization of the IIMS system among others.

CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION FOR RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT AID (CORDAID)

In the reporting period, LASPNET received funding from CORDAID to undertake a Joint Action research together with the Transcultural Psychological Organization (TPO). The study focuses on interrogating the connection between Mental Health and Psych-social Support service provision to (S)GBV responses in West Nile (Adjumani; Yumbe and Arua). The research is still on going.

7.2 RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

One of LASPNET's core mandates is to undertake evidence-based research aimed at providing timely information that can be utilized by stakeholders to inform decision making and improve service standards. In the reporting period, LASPNET developed several researches which have increasingly been sought after by key stakeholders in JLOS, Academia, Development partners, media and the public. Some of the researches include;

7.2.1 Development of the Legal Aid Practitioners Manual.

LASPNET developed a Legal Aid Practitioners' Manual aimed improving the quality of legal aid services available to the poor, vulnerable and marginalized and to increase awareness of good practices in practitioners' line of work. The Manual covers aspects which include among others; the legal and policy framework on legal aid, international best practices of legal aid, legal aid models, office and client management, referral, basic information on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR); comprehensive legal aid service delivery; ethical standards ("dos and don'ts") to be adhered to by LASPs in the provision of legal aid, among others.

7.2.2 LASPNET develops an Impact Assessment Report on the Corruption Monitoring Project 2016-2019.

LASPNET developed an Impact Assessment report of its Corruption Monitoring Project (2016-2019). The report was validated on the 22nd October 2019 at the Secretariat and the findings were disseminated to stakeholders during the Pre-AGM Conference on the 24th October 2019 at Serena Hotel Kampala. The report sought to take stock of what the corruption monitoring project has achieved so far. Some of the project milestones which include among others: the increased awareness on corruption through development of over 20,000 IEC posters which have been translated into 4 local languages in Luganda, Luo, Runyankole and Lugisu; over 30 radio talk shows have been aired on 6 radio stations namely CBS; Radio One; Crooze FM; Open Gate FM and Mega FM in collaboration with JLOS institutions i.e. Judiciary, IGG, ODPP, Police; JSC.

Relatedly, the report made recommendations such as fast-tracking automation to minimize corruption tendencies; capacity building for Judicial and Police officers in investigations and case management; enactment of pending legislations such as Witness

Protection, Legal Aid law and Judiciary Administration Bill as well as the development of reporting templates for tracking progress on implementation of the JACS.

7.2.3 Online Survey report for Lobby and Advocacy Needs of LASPs

LASPNET with funding from UNDP commissioned the online survey on Lobby and Advocacy Needs of LASPs and Secretariat Staff. The survey revealed that majority of the LASPs lack adequate knowledge and skills in Lobby and Advocacy; Have no Advocacy strategies and lack financial resources to undertake Lobby and Advocacy initiatives. The above findings will inform a thematic training of LASPs on Lobby and Advocacy.

7.2.4 In-depth Assessment of Cost-Effective Models of legal aid in Uganda

LASPNET undertook an in-depth assessment of Cost-Effective Models of legal aid in Uganda with the intention of identifying existing cost-effective legal aid models implemented among LASPs in the provision of legal aid; establishing cost effectiveness and sustainability of such models in legal service provision and; hinderances experienced in implementation of these cost-effective legal aid models; The report was validated in August 2020 and is undergoing refining and finalisation by the consultants before

it can be used as a reference document for LASPs and stakeholders.

7.2.5 Action Research Tracking Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 in Uganda

LASPNET undertook an Action research tracking Implementation of SDG 16 in Uganda which provides information on the SDG 16 mainly indicators 16.3: 16.5 and 16.7. The study findings revealed that Parliament has enacted enabling legal and regulatory frameworks to promote human rights and rule of law including the Human Rights Enforcement Act (2019) and Transitional Justice Policy (2019). Further, the report acknowledges that JLOS has undertaken efforts to fight corruption through effective implementation of the JLOS Anti-Corruption Strategy (2012). On the other hand, it notes persistent challenges that continue to bedevil access to justice such as increased impunity; diminishing trust among JLOS institutions such as Courts of Law and Police and urbanization of access to justice services. The report was finalized and is waiting to be launched in November 2020

7.2.6 LASPNET compiles the Inaugural Paralegal Voice Magazine

On the 4th -7th February 2020, LASPNET undertook regional visits to the Western and Eastern regions to collect paralegal stories. The information collected was used to compile the Paralegal Voice

Magazine which was launched at the National Paralegals Dialogue that took place in August 2020.



Patros posing in a photo with her children along with Mr. Mwase (KCOBPA) and LASPNET research team on the 4th February 2020.

7.2.7 LASPNET Convenes the 5th Annual PRE-AGM Conference

On 25th October 2019, the Network convened its 5th Annual Access to Justice Conference under the theme; ***“Joining efforts to fight corruption in the justice system as a Pre-requisite to enabling the poor, vulnerable and marginalized Access Justice,”*** at Hotel Africana. The event was officiated by Hon. Justice Remmy Kasule, the Court of Appeal Judge and Law Council Chairperson Emeritus who delivered the key note address.

In his address, he underscored the fact that corruption remains a severe impediment to the realization of Access to Justice. Noting that Justice institutions such as Police and Judiciary have not been spared by the vice. Further, he recommended practical mechanisms and strategies to effectively fight corruption which among



others include: increased funding for anti-corruption agencies particularly under investigations and case management; leveraging modern technologies to fight sophisticated corruption; enacting comprehensive legislations on Witness Protection and Asset Recovery; adopting investigative journalism.

Relatedly, the key note address was discussed by Professor, Frederick Ssempebwa, Senior Counsel and Founding Partner of KATS Advocates and Ms. Cissy Kagaba, the Executive Director of ACCU. She argued that the fight against corruption can be meaningfully achieved through a coordinated approach by anti-corruption agencies. On the other hand, Professor Frederick Ssempebwa argued that corruption is not only limited to the justice sector and therefore it should be viewed from a wider perspective starting from the family unit. He further added that CSOs such as LASPNET still have an uphill task of building the capacity of the public to report corruption.



Participants pose for a group photo during the pre-annual general meeting at Serena Hotel.

At the Conference, the Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa shared the position paper on the Access to Justice trends of 2019 where she reported new positive developments in the justice sector such as the intensification of technology and automation of Courts, launch of the video conferencing facility in Courts, launch of the Judiciary Performance Enhancement Tool and Judiciary Toll-Free Customer Feedback. She further highlighted the continuous challenges affecting the dispensation of access to justice and these include: inadequate man power, corruption in the Justice system, unfacilitated Court mediators, inadequate funding of the judiciary and delay of disposal of cases among others.

Furthermore, Dr. Ibrahim Kasirye, the Consultant who undertook the development of the Impact Assessment report on the Corruption Monitoring Project highlighted project milestones, challenges experienced in implementations as well as recommendations such as fast-tracking automation to minimize corruption tendencies; capacity building for Judicial and Police officers in investigations and case management; the development of reporting templates for tracking progress on implementation of the JACS among others.

The report findings were later discussed by four panelists who included; Mr. Musa Modoi, Technical Advisor of Human Rights and Accountability JLOS; Mr. Richard Kayira, Deputy News Editor Bukedde TV; Ms. Winfred Ahimbisimbwe, Assistant DPP in charge of Prosecutions and Quality Assurance and ACP Anatoli Muleterwa, in Charge of Community Policing, Uganda Police Force.

Some of the key policy recommendations that arose from this conference include; The need to pass stringent policies including Asset Recovery to deal with the corrupt as well as continuous sensitization of the public to report corruption.

7.2.8 LASPNET contributes to the discourse on Access to Justice and Rule of Law

In the reporting period, LASPNET developed more than 5 presentations and position papers relating to access to justice which were shared in different fora. These include;

» A paper on the findings of the Situational Analysis Report on Compulsory Land Acquisition and Management presented to the Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters on the 13th September 2019.

On 15th June 2020, the Chief Executive Officer discussed a paper on Uganda Justice System and how it is aiding,

slowing or failing the Child rights in commemoration of the day of African Child at a meeting convened by High Sound Children.

» The Chief Executive Officer made a presentation on the importance of audits in good cooperate governance and accountability at the DGF 6th Partnership Conference held on 2nd & 3rd October 2019 at Xanadu Mackinnon Suites.

» The Chief Executive Officer participated as a panelist at the parallel session during the 6th Annual Conference on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 26th September 2019 held on 26th September 2019 convened in partnership with PILAC, ISER, EOC, UHRC, and SHUREA.



The CEO (Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa), Mr. James Nkuubi (Lead Consultant) and the team from the secretariat submitting the report findings to the Land Commission.

7.3 LOBBY AND ADVOCACY

LASPNET has increasingly strengthened its Lobby and Advocacy arm through undertaking several initiatives including continuous advocacy for the Legal Aid law and Judiciary Administration Bill then; utilizing media to sensitize the public about laws and implementation of the Break the Silence on Corruption campaign.

7.3.1 Progress on advocacy for enactment of the National Legal Aid Law and Judiciary Administration Act

During the reporting period, LASPNET held 6 Strategic meetings on the Legal Aid law. Key amongst them included; 2nd Pre-legislative scrutiny meeting held on the 15th -16th July 2019 at Country Lake Resort Hotel Garuga; Drafters retreat held on the 18th -20th July 2019 at Country Lake Resort Hotel Garuga; National Consultative Meeting with Women and Girls Groups on 19th November 2019; UWOPA Consultative Meeting on 25th November 2019; Follow up Strategic meeting held on 2nd March 2020, with the Private mover of the Legal Aid law, Hon. Lyandro Komakech at Parliament; and a breakfast Meeting with the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee on the 29th June 2020 at Sheraton Hotel. All the above meetings provided an opportunity to policy makers, drafts team, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MojCA), development partners and LASPs to

review, refine and harmonize their views on the draft Legal Aid law before its presentation in Parliament.

Notably the Breakfast meeting with the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee which was presided over by Hon. Adolf Mwesige, the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs on behalf of the Speaker of Parliament, demonstrated more resolute by MPs to enact the Legal Aid.



Hon Adolf Mwesige receiving signature collection books from the Board Chairperson at the Breakfast meeting with the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee.

Relatedly, LASPNET continued to collect signatures with the intention of amplifying people centered advocacy on the National Legal Aid law. In the reporting period, over 8000 signatures were collected out of the overall 1 million. Furthermore, 35 fact sheets on the Legal Aid law and Administration of Justice Bill were disseminated at different fora including conferences, launches and legal aid open days.

With regard to strengthening the independence and welfare of the Judiciary, LASPNET as a member of the Coalition in Support of Judicial Independence was instrumental in advocating for the enactment of Administration of Justice Act which was assented to by the President on 2nd June 2020.

7.3.2 Establishment and operationalization of the Public Interest Litigation Committee.

On the 17th June 2020, LASPNET convened the inaugural Public Interest Litigation Committee which is aimed at providing strategic guidance and technical support on advocacy and public interest litigation matters. The meeting elected Mr. Arthur Nsereko, Head NETPIL as Chairperson and Ms. Shiela Muwanga as the Co-Chairperson. Other committee members include; Counsel Robert Kirunda, of Kirunda & Company Advocates, Counsel Gawayo Tegule and Counsel Eron Kiiza, a Human Rights Defender working with Kiiza Mugisha & Company Advocates; Dr. Adrian Jjuuko, Executive Director HRAPF.

7.3.3 Leveraging on Cluster meetings to support Research and Advocacy.

During the reporting period, four cluster meetings were convened and are as follows;

7.3.3.1 Land and Social Justice Cluster meetings.

On the 9th August 2019 LASPNET convened the Land Justice cluster to deliberate on the Road's Bill Act passed in May 2019. It was attended by LASPs from, CJAF, ULA, AFCOD among others. One of the recommended action points from the meeting was preparing of position paper on the Roads Bill law that was not addressing the plight of the poor as a strategy to influence modification of the law.

Similarly, the Social Justice cluster meeting was held and it mainly focused on the proposed amendments of the Succession Act. Further, on 3rd September 2019 at another social justice cluster meeting was held in collaboration with Platform for Labour Action at their offices to discuss the proposed amendment in the NSSF Amendment Bill 2019. Arising out of the meeting, a position paper was drafted and presented before parliament by Ms. Grace Mukwaya, the Executive Director Platform for Labor Action. The paper proposed among others parliament's consideration to offer clients a midterm access of 30% NSSF savings.

7.3.3.2 Combined cluster meetings held to discuss plans for 2020

On 13th February 2020, LASPNET convened a combined cluster meeting

which was attended by several LASPs such as PLA, MCJL, ACFOD, WVU, CJAF, IRCU, PILAC and APP. The meeting aimed at reflecting on 2019 activities of LASP; status of implementation; challenges and recommendations and to plan for the year 2020. The meeting agreed among others to support Platform for Labour Action to undertake and generate data on the impact of Ugandan labour migrants on families; communities and the country at large and MCJL was tasked to develop guidelines and handbook on gender and human rights standards in the Quadhi courts.



LASPs deliberate on key issues at the combined cluster meeting.

7.3.4 Coordination of Legal Aid Rapid Response Mechanisms

Owing to an increase in human rights violations especially for HRDs, youth and Activists, LASPNET undertook provision of legal rapid response to the affected persons in accessing justice. This intervention continues under DGF and other specialized projects such as the

Just Speech Project funded by ICNL. In a bid to have the mechanism strengthened, LASPNET convened 4 meetings with Rapid response Lawyers. These are highlighted below;

7.3.4.1 The Bi-annual Meeting for Rapid response Lawyers

On the 30th January 2020, LASPNET convened a bi-annual meeting with rapid response lawyers. The meeting aimed at reviewing and taking stock of the cases handled, challenges experienced by advocates and recommendations on how to strengthen the rapid response mechanisms. A key resolution from the meeting was the recommitment from Advocates to avail themselves to continue providing rapid response ahead of the 2021 forthcoming elections.

7.3.4.2 Two online meetings for Legal Rapid response lawyers convened

In the reporting period, two online meetings were convened for rapid response lawyers on 16th April 2020 and 19th May 2020 respectively. The meetings were attended by participants drawn from NETPIL, CEHURD, LDC, FHRI, PILAC and UGANET among others. The meeting recommended establishment of a Situational Room at the Secretariat to provide emergency solutions to rights violations during the lockdown. This has since been established with

additional support from DGF and is currently operational. Furthermore, the meeting recommended petitioning of the Hon. Chief Justice making a case for the consideration of Legal services as essential services during the lockdown. The aforementioned petition was developed and signed by partners and LASPs such as Chapter Four; PILAC; UGANET; ASF; NETPIL among others. It was later disseminated to the CJ and other JLOS institutions on 23rd April 2020. As a result of this petition, on 4th May 2020 the President during his National Address was able to consider a quota of 30 Lawyers.

In relation to the online meeting held on the 19th May 2020, it was recommended that LASPNET writes a letter to the Commissioner General of Prisons requesting for permission to access Kigo and Kitalya Prisons to engage inmates who were unlawfully detained for failure to comply with the COVID 19 Presidential directives. The letter was delivered on 22nd May 2020

As a result of LASPNET coordinated Rapid response intervention, a total of 412 cases were handled for the period of April to June 2020 of which 272 suspects were supported by the LASPNET rapid response Lawyers. Majority of the handled cases were from CPS, Jinja road and Kira police stations and they entailed Disobeying the Presidential directives, Theft, Assault, Criminal Trespass, Domestic violence and Cyber Harassment, among others.

As a result of this intervention, many victims of the Covid-19 social evils, SGBV and, suspects allegedly violating covid-19 directives were able to Access Justice through securing bail, legal advice and representation. One prominent Human rights activist benefiting from such intervention is Activist Nana Mwafirika.



One of our rapid response lawyers in action bailing Nana mwafrika from Kira Police station under the rapid response project.

7.3.5 LASPNET Interventions in light of COVID-19.

Following the outbreak of the Pandemic, LASPNET adopted innovative ways to address the increasing human rights violations that arose from COVID19 lockdown. Key of the innovative approaches was establishment of a Situational Room.

On 12th May 2020, LASPNET with additional support from DGF approved established a Situation room to provide rapid response and emergency solutions to issues concerning Civil, Political, Social and Economic rights amidst the ongoing lockdown for the period June to December 2020. The Situational room is interlinked

to other LASPNET applications such as the Call Centre, Social Web application and the Integrated Information Management System.

In only 2 months of its establishment for the period May to June 2020, the Situational room attended to a total of 22 clients (16 Male: 6 Female). These were referred to different member institutions such as Justice Centers Uganda and Human rights Centre Uganda among which all the cases have been closed.

7.3.6 Utilizing media platforms and other forums to enhance Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights.

LASPNET has continuously utilized various media platforms including: Newspapers; Radio and TV to advocate for Access to Justice; Rule of Law and Human Rights especially for the poor and vulnerable Platforms. The media engagements include the following;

7.3.6.1 Newspapers publications

A total of 4 commentaries on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information were published on 17th, 18th, 22nd and 27th June 2020 in the Daily Monitor Newspapers. The topics issued on included; Media Award Galas to recognize journalists; Journalists, media owners tipped on vital campaigns; Scientific elections and campaigns a blessing to the media; Court cases against journalist over

Bobi Wine stall. These were authored by Mr. Wesaka Anthony, a Journalist with Daily Monitor a beneficiary from LASPNETs capacity building trainings under the Just Speech Project supported by ICNL.

7.3.6.2 Press Statements released

LASPNET developed 4 press statements addressing issues of rights violations; law enforcement brutality, recognition of lawyers as essential as follows;

» On 9th September 2019, LASPNET released a Press Statement condemning spate of murders and kidnaps and among others called upon Security Agencies to investigate and provide conclusive reports on the same. It was attended by the media including NTV, NBS, Bukedde and BBS. The Board Members that participated included: Mr. Vicent Mutonerwa, Mr. Anthony Mutimba. Other participants from LASPs included: CEHURD, Action Aid and LASPNET Secretariat Staff.

» On 27th March 2020, LASPNET in partnership with its partners Avocats San Frontiers (ASF), Chapter Four and Muslim Centre for Justice Law issued a Press statement highlighting the plight of prisoners and therefore called upon the observance of their rights during the lockdown. As a result, the President pardoned 833 prisoners on 27th April 2020. The full statement can be accessed on <https://chapterfouruganda.org/articles/2020/03/27/rights-detainees-wake-covid-19-pandemic>

» A Press Statement was issued on 2nd April 2020 addressing the President on the prevailing Human Rights Violations during the lockdown. The salient issues highlighted in the Press statement included; Calling upon the President to exempt Lawyers and allow them continue operating during the lock down, among others. Consequently, the President in his address, cautioned LDUs to refrain from torturing the citizens; instructed the State House Anti-Corruption Unit to investigate into allegations of corruption in the distribution of food relief and allowed pregnant women have been allowed to move without first seeking permission from RDCs.

7.3.6.3 Petitions

LASPNET submitted 2 petitions as follows;

» On 4th May 2020, LASPNET issued a Petition to The Hon. Chief Justice making a case for the consideration of Legal services as essential services during the lockdown. The aforementioned petition was developed and signed by partners and LASPs such as Chapter Four; PILAC; UGANET; ASF; NETPIL among others. Following this petition, a quota of 30 Lawyers under the Uganda Law Society to provide legal services during the COVID lockdown was considered. The full petition can be accessed via <http://laspnet.org/blog/555-laspnet-petition-to-join-on-classification-of-legal-services>.

» On the 25th June 2020, Legal Aid Service Providers Network (LASPNET) and its partners, Network of Public Interest Lawyers (NETPIL), Muslim Centre for Justice and Law, Community Justice Anti-Corruption Forum, Uganda Christian Lawyers' Fraternity (UCLF) and Girl Guides Association of Uganda petitioned the Government to re-open schools during the partial lockdown before the situation of learners in Uganda becomes worse. Arising out of this, LASPNET was invited to make a presentation on the same Office of the Prime Minister.

7.3.6.4 Radio Talk shows

A total of 11 Radio talks shows were held as follows:

» On 8th July 2019, the Chief Executive Officer and Mr. Solomon Muyita, Judiciary Communications Officer were hosted on Bukedde Radio to discuss Judicial Corruption following the investigative report released by the Vision group on how corruption manifests itself in court

» The Chief Executive Officer together with Mr. Solomon Muyita the Judiciary Communications Officer were hosted on Radio One Spectrum talk show on 22nd July 2019 to discuss judicial corruption and LASPNET's intervention to fight corruption within the sector.

» On 30th July 2019, Chief Executive Officer, Judiciary Communications Officer and Ms. Suzan Aisia Musooli attended a

radio talk show on Baba FM to sensitize the public on the existing channels to report corruption incidences in the justice system.

» The Chief Executive Officer was also hosted on KFM VPN talk show together with MP Abbas Agaba of Kitagwenda County to discuss the spate of murders in Uganda.

» The Executive Director and Commissioner of Police Namutebi Hadijah were hosted on Bukedde Radio (Mugobansonga) on 30th September 2019 to discuss Access to Justice by vulnerable person at Police stations specially to expound on the issue of Police bond and how it is implemented by the law enforcement officers as well as the corruption tendencies associated

with this provision for Police Bond.

» On 16th October 2019, the Chief Executive Officer together with Mr. Frank Baine were hosted on Radio One Spectrum to discuss prison decongestion and ways on how to reduce congestion in prison. The talk show also provided an opportunity to speak about LASPNET @15 and activities to be undertaken including outreach to Luzira on 23rd October 2019.

7.3.6.5 Talk shows

» Mr. Badru Walusansa, RKO together with Mr. Solomon Muyita, Judiciary Communications Officer and Counsel Julius Galinsonga were hosted on Akabinkaano talk show on Bukedde TV on 8th July 2019 to discuss the findings of Vision Group Investigative story on judicial corruption.

» The Chief Executive Officer was hosted on Bukedde TV (Ekimeeza Programme) on 25th January 2020 to discuss access to justice issues including avenues through which the public can report corruption. Through this forum, the CEO was able to share LASPNET’s Toll Free number (0800100115) which helped to increase on the number of Call in clients with legal problems.

» The CEO was interviewed by Bukedde TV on the Kimeeza talk show popularly known as



“Kimeeza” where she sensitized the public on issues of mob justice. The talk show was broadcasted on 18th January 2020 and severally on Sunday evenings through January and part of February 2020.

» The CEO together with Ms. Susan Baluka of HRAPF attended the NBS Morning Breeze Talk show on 1st May 2020 to discuss the Impact of COVID 19 on Access to Justice.

» Furthermore, she also appeared on Bukedde TV (Akabinkanno) on 11th May 2020 to discuss the Impact of the COVID 19 on Maternal Health rights and functions.

» The above media engagements were paramount in sensitizing the public on Access to Justice and Rule of Law.

7.3.6.6 Influencing reforms through Social media advocacy (Tweet Chats)

In the reporting period,

LASPNET organized a Twitter Chat on 10th April 2020 to discuss the relevance of legal aid services during the COVID 19 lockdown. The Chat was moderated by Mr. Gabriel Iguma (Radio One) whereas the panellists included Mr. Anthony Masake and Mr. Peter Magelah (Chapter Four); Ms. Pheonah Wall (ULS) and Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa (LASPNET).

Related to the above, LASPNET recruited 2 social media influencers to undertake online advocacy campaigns as well as harness digital foot print of the Network.



LASPNET IN THE MEDIA



7.3.6 Monitoring corruption in JLOS & the “Break the Silence on Corruption Campaign

The Break the Silence on Corruption campaign seeks to empower the public to report corruption within justice institutions such as Police, ODPP and Judiciary. Further the campaign is anchored in the Corruption Monitoring Project funded by DGF aimed at supporting the implementation of the JLOS Anti-Corruption Strategy (2012).

In the year under review, the Break the Silence Campaign was expanded to Karamoja and Lango regions sub regions. In addition, a total of 10,000 posters were translated into four local languages of Ngakaramjong, Lugisu, Langi and Lugbara. So far 1737 Anti-Corruption posters were disseminated to Judicial Service Commission. They were further re-distributed at the Anti-Corruption Community barazas conducted by JSC in Masaka; Masindi and Hoima districts.

High-Level Stakeholders Dialogue

In relation to the above, on 23rd November 2019, LASPNET with support from DGF convened the High-Level Stakeholders Dialogue at Imperial Royale Hotel to share findings of the Impact Assessment Report for the Corruption Monitoring Project with different JLOS Institutional Heads; Managers and Policy Makers. The

Dialogue was a follow up of the Annual Access to Justice Conference held on 24th October 2019 where the different justice system actors discussed the findings and proposed different strategies to fight corruption in the justice sector.

The Dialogue was presided over by the then DPP, the Hon. Justice Mike Chibita and also attended by key dignitaries from DGF; GIZ; State House Anti-Corruption Unit; JLOS; Police; JSC and LASPs

In his remarks the DPP, Hon. Mike Chibita appreciated LASPNET the undertaking the corruption monitoring project and noted that it has helped to strengthen accountability reforms in the justice sector. He however noted that legal frameworks alone cannot entirely eradicate corruption hence emphasizing the need to promote ethics and integrity. He recommended automation and the enactment of stringent legislations such as Asset Recovery and Witness Protection as deterrent measures of corruption.



A group photo of the participants that turned up for the High-Level Stakeholders Dialogue

The meeting highlighted the need for collaboration between the state and non-state actors in the fight against corruption; conducting evidence-based studies to measure corruption vs the use of perception studies. The Uganda Police Force (UPF) also committed to follow up the Corruption Institutional reports submitted to them by LASPNET in order to ensure that the loose ends are tied.

In the reporting period, LASPNET continued to document Corruption institutional reports and shared them with 3 JLOS institutions that is Police, Judiciary and ODPP. Such reports document both good practices and corruption practices as reported by the Monitors. As a result, Vision Group used some of the findings from these reports to beef up their investigative stories on corruption within the Judiciary.

7.4 STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the reporting period, LASPNET worked towards addressing issues affecting the effective functioning of the members and Secretariat to deliver on their respective mandates. Below are some of the key achievements.

7.4.1 LASPNET Convenes the 4th Annual CEO's Forum

The 4th Annual LASPNET CEO's Forum was held on 19th June 2019 at Imperial Royale Hotel under the theme: ***"Rethinking Transparency & Accountability as a Bedrock for Building Sound and Sustainable Civil Society Organizations."*** The meeting provided a platform for institutional heads of LASPs and Development partners to interact and receive feedback from previous

CEOs meeting; share best practices, experiences and challenges on corporate internal governance; and jointly develop key strategies on building internal systems and structures for strengthening transparency & accountability amongst CEO's.

The meeting was attended by 48 participants drawn from a wide section of stakeholders including: Development Partners, Chief executives of CSOs, strategic partners, government MDAs and JLOS, honorary members; The Key note speech on ***"Building resilient organizations amidst changing priorities and dynamics."*** was delivered by Hon. Flavia Nabugere Munaaba, Executive Director, PDAU



A group photo of the participants that turned up for the CEO meeting at Imperial Royal Hotel.

The meeting comprised of expert panelists including Mr. Godber Tumushabe of the Great Lakes Institute for Strategic Studies (GLISS), Mr. Mwambusya Ndebesa of Makerere University; and the Ag. Executive Director of the NGO Bureau, Mr. Stephen Okello.

7.4.2 Annual Support Regional Visits to Members

The Secretariat conducted annual Peer Learning support visits and regional engagement meetings to LASPs in the different regions of the country. The visits for the year 2019 were conducted from 24th July-20th September 2019. The intention of the meetings were to provide an opportunity to interact with LASPs on issues related to their operations and membership concerns; identifying capacity building gaps to inform interventions; and track progress made in strengthening access to justice and rule of Law and devise strategies to

ensure sustainability of the members among others.

The visits highlighted emerging issues that continue to affecting access to justice which among others include: Case back log and delayed hearing of cases; poor remuneration of mediators; limited scope of services offered by LASPs; perceived and real corruption especially with some courts and police stations; poor infrastructure and limited facilities at court and detention facilities and lack of sustainability of LASPs. Several recommendations were made and key to these include; strengthening internal accountability mechanisms by LASPs; undertaking peer learning exchange visits amongst regional members as well as putting in place a membership monitoring unit that can undertake impromptu visits and evaluations exercise in a bid to strengthen standards and compliance of LASPs.



Members pose for a photo during the Eastern region PLE visits.

Key highlights of the 10th AGM was the admission of a new member known as New Plan Group working in extractives with a legal aid arm and the title of Executive Director was changed to Chief Executive Officer given the current status of the Network.

Participants posing for a group photo at the 10th Annual General Meeting

7.4.3 The 10th Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The 10th Annual General Meeting was held on the 25th October 2019 at the LASPNET Secretariat. It was well attended by 50 participants with representation from 28 member organizations. The Chairperson, Ms. Sandra Oryema emphasized the need for LASPs to embrace innovations given the ever-changing trends in the delivery of access to justice and legal aid; on the other hand, she encouraged members to engage the Secretariat on areas of partnerships to promote and increase visibility of their interventions.

Participants posing for a group photo at the 10th Annual General Meeting

7.4.4 Membership and stakeholder's capacity development Programmes

LASPNET facilitated 5 capacity building trainings for its members as highlighted below;

7.4.4.1 Media training for Journalists and editors

On the 11th -12th July 2019 at Imperial Royale Hotel, LASPNET conducted the annual media training for Journalists and Editors on access to justice issues and human rights reporting. The training equipped over 40 Journalists and Editors with knowledge on Access to Justice and Human rights reporting.



7.4.4.2 LASP Advocates Skilled with Trial Advocacy

The Trial Advocacy Training is an annual program organized by LASPNET in collaboration with Justice Advocacy Africa (JAA). It is geared towards deepening skills of advocates in legal aid to contribute to strengthening the judicial system through providing better services. The Annual Trial Advocacy Training of LASPs was held at Law Development Centre on the 2nd-6th September 2019, that benefitted 40 Advocates including 15 LASPs and 25 Advocates from JAU. It was facilitated by senior practitioners from Justice Advocacy Africa and our Local faculty. The training equipped LASP advocates with relevant skills, knowledge and values needed to be competent and confident litigators. The areas that were covered during the training included Examination in Chief, Cross Examination, submissions among others.

7.4.4.3 LASPs senior Management and Board of Directors trained on Governance and Resource Mobilization

LASPNET convened 2 thematic trainings on Governance and Resource Mobilization on the 22nd & 23rd August 2019 and 30th -31st January 2020 in Jinja and Garuga respectively. The trainings focused on strengthening LASPs' capacity in efficient resource mobilization and building

strong governance structures to achieve organizational goals and objectives in a bid to enhance their sustainability.

The training covered areas of practices, principles of governance, leadership, delegation, accountability and sustainability; resource mobilization; Donor relationship management and strategies of effectively managing multiple donors amongst others. The training was attended by senior management and board members drawn from organizations like LEMU, KCOBPA, AAV, PDAU, UCLF, FAPAD, ARELIMOK, JURIA, LAPD, CJAF, LAC/LDC, AHURIO, CRR and AFCOD

Furthermore, the training helped to increase the participants on participants' knowledge and skills in resource mobilization; good governance and organizational sustainability. As a result, the participants made commitment to utilize the information shared and knowledge acquired to internally improve and strengthen their governance structures and recommended that LASPNET to consider periodically undertaking capacity building with a focus on senior management and Board of directors of organizations.

7.4.4.4. Refresher Training for Journalists and Advocates on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information

LASPNET with funding from ICNL conducted a two-day refresher training for Advocates and Journalists on freedom of Expression and Access to Information. The training took place on the 5th and 6th March, 2020 at Imperial Royale hotel aimed at equipping Journalists and LASPs with more knowledge and understanding of the concept of Freedom of Expression and Access to Justice for improved impact reporting and response mechanism.

The training was facilitated by experts on media freedom who included: Ms. Catherine Anite of Freedom of Expression Hub; Mr. Peter Okello (Uganda Media Council); Mr. Eron Kiiza, Public Interest Lawyer; Mr. Wasswa John Baptist of Makerere University and Mr. Paul Kimumwe, of Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA).

The areas covered during the two days training included; Situational Analysis on Freedom of Expression and Access to Justice; and technics for undertaking Investigative Journalism among others.

7.4.4.5 LASPs sensitized on Electronic Case Information Management System (ECMIS)

On 2nd June 2020, LASPNET in partnership with the Judiciary coordinated an online zoom Awareness meeting on ECCMIS. The latter is an Electronic Case Information Management System intended to improve efficiency in the Judiciary by allowing the public to access Court services without having to physically be at the Court. The meeting was intended to among others introduce ECCMIS to LASPs such as MCJL, PLA, FIDA, RLP, PILAC, ASF and CEDO in addition to the Secretariat team. The meeting was opened by Hon. Justice Stephen Egonda Ntende, the Chairperson of the Steering Committee on ECCMIS while closing remarks were given by Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa, the LASPNET CEO.

Other speakers included Hon. Justice Geoffrey Kiryabwire, Chairperson ICT/Law Reform, Ms. Julian Rweju, the ECCMIS Technical Adviser who took the participants through the layout and functions of the system. Other participants included Mr. David Kikabi, the Project Manager and members of the Judiciary ECCMIS technical team. The meeting provided an opportunity for LASPs to know the ongoing efforts of the Judiciary to automate court processes; share their views on the system and how it can be improved.

7.4.5 Secretariat Capacity Strengthened

The staff were supported with a total of 2 capacity development opportunities, which included;

Building institutional and individual brands.

LASPNET held the Annual Management, Staff Review and Planning retreat from 9th to 12th December 2019 at Brovad Hotel in Kalangala. The retreat was intended to among others take stock of the year's performance including how staff had applied and used the knowledge of the previous capacity development to improve on their performance.

During the retreat, staff were offered an opportunity to rethink working strategies to ensure effective project implementation for the year 2020.



LASPNET staff pose during the annual staff retreat on Kalangala Island in 2019.

Mr. John Jacobs, an organization capacity development specialist delivered a

motivational speech hinged on “Realizing the potential that lies within everyone.”

He emphasized the issue of personal development through creating an impressive brand that is valuable in the workplace. Further, Mr. Jacobs took staff into practical sessions to demonstrate and appreciate the power of team work.

7.4.5.1 Staff Orientation and team building;

On 18th -27th March 2020, four new Secretariat staff who included; Director of Programmes; Monitoring and Evaluation Officer; Networking, Coordination and Partnership Officer and Training and Membership Officer were undertaken through a Staff orientation training. The training was later crowned up with a motivational and team building training which benefited all the Secretariat staff.

7.4.5.2 LASPNET recruits Short-term Staff during COVID-19.

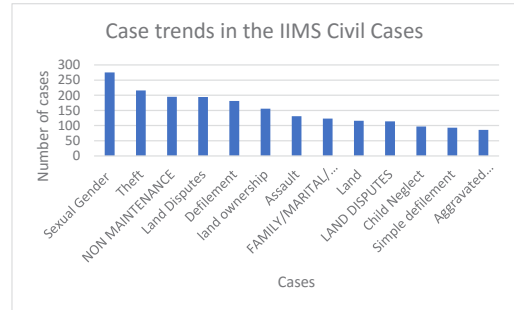
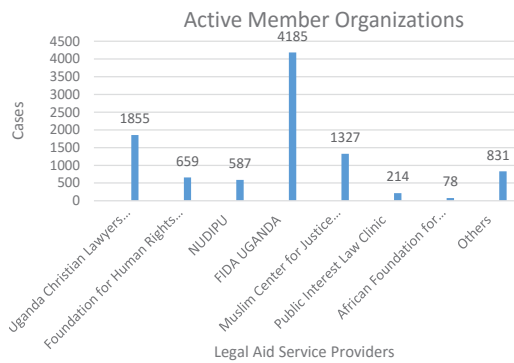
Upon establishment of the Situational Room on 1st June 2020, LASPNET recruited six short term staff who include; Situational Room Coordinator, Document Specialist, Online Legal Advisers and Social Media Influencers. The staff are to support in identification and providing rapid response and emergency solutions to issues concerning Civil, Political, Social and Economic rights amidst the COVID-19 lockdown.

7.4.5.2 Staff Health training on COVID-19.

On the 23rd March 2020, a health training was conducted with Staff concerning the prevention and measures to undertake against Corona Virus Disease. The training was conducted by a doctor from IAA Medical Insurance Service Provider. The training was attended by 19 staff and as such received firsthand knowledge on how to curb exposure and spread of COVID19 pandemic. The outcome of this training was increased knowledge on COVID 19, its spread and prevention.



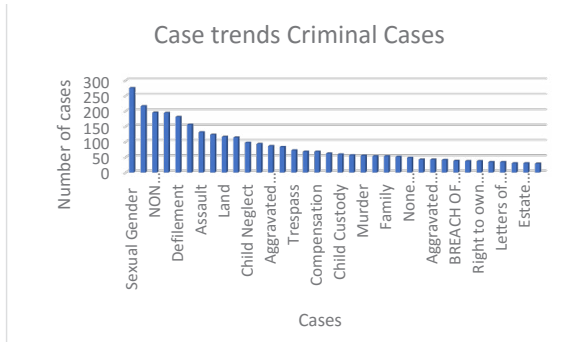
as they arise through phone and social media platforms like WhatsApp. In the reporting period, LASPNET conducted Annual IIMS Visits on the 10th June 2020 to 23rd September 2019 to support members with data entry and train them on how to use the IIMS as well as assess their Utilization. This year's visits have been aimed at members trained on the IIMS functionalities to effectively utilize the system.



7.4.6 LASPs supported on IIMS utilization

Currently, the IIMS has a total of 32 organizations enrolled although 21 organizations are active and using the system. In a bid to improve usability members have been trained on its utilization and troubleshooting of issues

A total of 9040 cases were entered into the IIMS by 18 LASPs which include: MCJL, UCLF, FIDA-Uganda, NUDIPU, FHRI, HURIFO, PILAC, WCC, ASF, AFCOD, JURIA, CJAF, WVU, FAPAD, YLR, LDC-LAC. Of those entered 5975 were civil cases against criminal at 3086.



Efficiency; Teamwork; Diligence and Punctuality. Mr. Badru Walusansa was voted as the best staff of the year 2019 and awarded with a plaque and monetary gift. The second runner up was Ms. Daphine Achen, Project Assistant Research and Knowledge. The dual has since received promotion to Director Programmes and Research and Knowledge management officer respectively.

In relation to the above, LASPNET has upgraded the IIMS to support, referral functionalities through including a database for paralegals. The database is intended to provide a resource of paralegals supporting client referral techniques; evidence gathering, case management including client’s engagement and feedback mechanism amongst others.

7.4.7 Staff Motivation through rewarding Best performing staff of the year

Annually, the Secretariat rewards the best performing staff of the year. This practice acts as a motivation and retention strategy to staff. Recognition of the best staff of the year is done through staff voting on the online Human Resource Management System and usually whoever emerges as the best staff must have aggregated the highest results from 4 quarters. The voting criteria used in voting includes:

7.4.8 LASPNET Board and Committees

A total of 4 Board Meetings were held in the reporting period to discuss policy and provide oversight function to programmes, activities, finance monitoring, supervision of recruitment, attending to membership issues as they emerge and provide oversight to the monitoring corruption project. In addition, a total of 8 Committee meetings have been held including Planning and Programmes Committee; Audit and Finance Committee; Governance and Administration Committee, Advisory Committee on Governance and Monitoring and Public Interest Litigation Committee to provide oversight. Below is the LASPNET Board and Committee Meeting Score Card for the period July 2019-June 2020.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE SCORE CARD RATING PARTICIPATION IN THE NETWORK'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD JUNE 2019 TO JULY 2020										
Sn	Name	Designation	Number of Board meetings attended	Roles Delegated on the Board Committee	Member	Committee Chairperson	Number of Committee meetings	Number of Events / Meetings officiated at (Trainings, PLE visits etc)	Average Rank Score	Other Responsibilities
1	Ms. Sandra Onyema	Chairperson	4	1	1	1	4	7	68%	2 Member Planning and Programmes Committee
2	Mr. Mutonerwa Vicent	Vice Chairperson	4	1	1	1	5	9	79%	1 Chairperson - Governance and Administration Committee, Advisory
3	Ms. Sheila Muwanga	General Secretary	4	1	1	1	4	8	70%	3 Chairperson Planning and Programmes Committee + Audit & Finance Committee
4	Ms. Grace Nakulira	Treasurer	4	1	1	1	3	0	65%	5 Chairperson - Audit & Finance Committee
5	Ms. Sharon Twikirize	Central Region Representative	3	1	1	1	2	1	30%	9 Member Governance & Administration Committee
6	Mr. Francis Odongyoo	Northern Region Representative	2	1	1	1	2	3	65%	8 Member Planning and Programmes Committee
7	Mr. Barekensi Franco	Western Region Representative	2	1	1	1	3	2	50%	7 Member - Governance and Administration Committee
8	Mr. Joseph Mwase	Eastern Region Representative	4	1	1	1	5	2	65%	4 Member - Planning and Programmes Committee
9	Mr. Anthony Mutimba	Member on Merit	3	1	1	1	2	2	60%	6 Member - Audit & Finance Committee
Total Possible Score			4	1	1	1	5	10	100%	
Advisory Committee on Monitoring Corruption in Justice Law and Order Sector										
Name	Designation	Number of Committee meetings attended	Committee Member	Committee Chairperson	Number of Committee meetings attended	Number of Events / Meetings officiated at (Trainings, PLE visits etc)	Score	Rank		
1	Mr. Vicent Mutonerwa	3	1	1	1	3	50%	1		
2	Mr. George Muzzi	3	1	1	1	4	45%	2		
3	Ms. Cissy Kagaba	1	1	1	1	4	25%	4		
4	Ms. Suzzaane Abia Musooli	3	1	1	1	4	45%	2		
5	Mr. Samuel Herbert Nsubuga	2	1	1	1	3	40%	3		
6	Mr. Shem Byakagaba	0	1	1	1	4	25%	4		
Total Possible Score			4	1	1	3				
Key to the score by colors		Excellent		Very Good		Good		Trial		

7.4.9 Board Pictorial



Ms. Sandra Oryema
Chairperson



Mr. Vicent Mutonerwa
Vice Chairperson



Ms. Shiella Nabacwa
Muwanga
General Secretary



Ms. Grace Nakulira
Treasurer



Mr. Mutimba Anthony
Member on Merit



Ms. Sharon Twikiriza
Central Representative



Mr. Franco Barenkensi
Western Representative



Mr. Mwase Joseph
Eastern Representative



Mr. Francis Odongyoo
Northern Representative

7.4.10 Secretariat Staff for July 2019 – June 2020

Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa
Chief Executive Officer



She is the Head of the Secretariat responsible for overall Administrative and strategic leadership. In addition, the CEO oversees the day to day running of programmes and financial sustainability. She also links the Organization to other key stakeholders and board members.

Mr. Badru Walusansa
Director Programmes



He is responsible for overall development and functioning of the programmes department as he provides technical and supervisory support to the programs team.

Ms. Nsambu Christine
Director Finance and Administration.



She is responsible for overall development and functioning of the finance and administration department where she provides technical and supervisory support to the finance team.

Ms. Nadhifah Muhammed
Executive Assistant



She provides administrative support to the office of the Chief Executive Officer and the secretariat.

Mr. Kanya David
Finance and Administration Officer



He provides financial management and administrative support to the secretariat.

Ms. Nakawombe Olivia
Lobby and Advocacy Officer



She provides support in coordinating Lobby and Advocacy activities for the network.

Ms. Osuna Jackie
Networking Partnership and
Coordination Officer



She is responsible for maintaining and developing existing memberships and partnerships through communication and information sharing of key activities to network members. She also plays a role in capacity development of membership as well as liaising with partners.

Ms. Achen Daphine
Research Knowledge and
Management Officer



She coordinates research in key areas vital for LASPNET interventions and Programme development. She is also the focal person of the FGG corruption monitoring and Execution of court orders with in the network.

Mr. Ojambo Martin
Information and
Technology Officer



He is responsible for managing and day to day maintenance of the computer systems within LASPNET. He is more specifically responsible for the smooth running and functionality of the Integrated Information Management System (IIMS) at LASPNET.

Mr. Rica Byaruhanga
Monitoring and Evaluation
Officer



He supports the functioning of the M&E system through development of tools, frameworks, results monitoring, planning, reporting, supporting project evaluations, quality improvement initiatives, data use, data quality, assessments, capacity building and feedback for program improvement among other duties.

Ms. Nambowa Justice
Training and Membership
Officer



She supports the Training and Membership component of the Network and is currently responsible for the implementation of the IDLO project.

Ms. Joy Namulinde
Accounts and
Administration Assistant



She provides support to the finance and administration officer in financial accounting and reporting standards. Secretariat logistics and administration.

Ms. Ruth Kwagala
Program Assistant
Research and Knowledge
management.



She supports the research and knowledge management officer but as well leads the Just Speech ICNL project at the secretariat.

Mr. Kenneth Okao
Project assistant
Membership



He provides support to the programmes especially managing membership records and database. He further maintains the documentation and archiving of the records and continuously updates the membership directory of the network.

Ms. Nabiryo Emily
Program Assistant Lobby
and Advocacy



She provides support to the programmes department in the docket of lobby and advocacy.

Mr. Mawanda Hakim
Program Coordinator Voice
Linking and Learning



He provides support to the Oxfam Voice Linking and Learning Project.

Ms. Ndagire Jane
Project Accountant
Linking and Learning



She provides support to the finance and administration department with her main key focus under the voice Linking and Learning Project.

Mr. Keitirima Duncan
Coordinator Call Centre



He provides coordination of the Call center agents as he supports day to day running of activities in the call Centre unit.

Mr. Ntensibe Isaac
Situation room Coordinator



He supports in the day to day running of the situation room activities through offering fast responder services to call in clients.

Mr. Wameyo Chrispo
Document Specialist



He is responsible for documenting and analyzing case recorded in the situation room and the social web application.

Mr. Kabugo Sulaiman
Online Legal Advisor



He offers on spot legal advice to clients with legal issues through the social web application.

Mr. Kevin Ajuna
Social Media Influencer



He supports in publishing and sharing content of activities that are usually carried out with in the network and as well look out on any cases that are recorded on social media that might require the secretariat attention.

Ms. Nathanela Kigozi
Online Legal Advisor



She offers on spot legal advice to clients with legal issues through the social web application.

Mr. Shaban Khamisi
Social Media Influencer



He supports in publishing and sharing content of activities that are usually carried out with in the network and as well look out on any cases that are recorded on social media that might require the secretariat intervention.

Mr. Ainebyona Albert
Volunteer Call Center



He supports the Call Center unit in attending to call in clients as well ensuring the day to day activities are running smoothly.

Ms. Nalwiga Scovia
Program Assistant



She supports the secretariat in keeping records as well as archiving documents by creating & maintaining company databases to ensure quick retrieval of information such as files, signed documents and many others.

Mr. Barnabas Barongo
Volunteer Finance



He assists the Finance department in day-to-day book keeping and data processing, Updating the cash books, prepare cash transaction vouchers, assist in sorting, labeling and organizing of Finance files and Stamp all the finance payment vouchers as well as sourcing for quotation in support of procuring items.

Ms. Achieng Proscovia
Volunteer Records Management



She provides support to the programmes department, front desk management and other administrative functions as assigned at the secretariat.

Mr. Eguru Ivan
Driver



He provides reliable and safe driving and delivery services to LASPNET.

Mr. Rutayisire Hassan
Driver



He provides reliable and safe driving and delivery services to LASPNET.

8.0 CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNT, RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

During implementation we encountered a number of challenges. Some of these include:

8.1.1 Continued shrinking civic space and the attack on Freedom of Expression and assembly.

The operating environment is characterized with increased impunity of security agents against HRDs and Activists as they undertake human rights work. The situation is likely to become tense and worse as we translate into the electoral period. Others have faced arrests and smear campaigns for instance. During the Makerere students riots in October 2019, over 20 journalists were brutally assaulted and sustained injuries, teargassed, arrested and released without charges, while others blocked from accessing the news. Some had their gadgets confiscated or forced to delete their recordings.

8.1.2 Continued delays in remittance of Subscription fees by the members.

Payment of subscription is still not being affected in time by some LASPs. As at 30th June only 20 out of the 55 LASPs had cleared their dues as of 30th June 2019. This is partly attributable to the

Outbreak of COVID-19 which left most member organizations crippled and unable to effect payment hence leaving the Network dependent on development partners which is not a sustainable status in the long run as well as the resource constraints faced by many LASPs affecting their operations and sustainability.

8.1.3 Delay in project implementation as a result of the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Many activities especially those that require physical interface such as Legal Aid Open days; Conferences and Meetings were affected by COVID 19 and the subsequent Presidential directives of banning public movement and gatherings. 8.1.4 Continued delay to fast track the enactment of the National Legal law.

While there was increased lobby and advocacy efforts, in the reporting period we continued to experience delays in fast tracking of the legal aid law. However, towards the close of year in June we harnessed efforts of the parliament and the meetings have led to tangible results including the grant of leave to the private mover.

8.1.5 Limited capacity of member LASPs to adapt digital innovations

The ever-changing context of access to justice and legal aid service delivery requires adaptation to new innovations especially digital innovations. However, this remains a preserve of urban LASPs to the detriment of the rural LASPs where internet infrastructure is limited.

8.2 LESSONS LEARNT

8.2.1 Capacity building of LASPs to adapt to digital innovations to enhance service delivery.

LASPNET has learnt there is need to build the capacity of LASPs in ICT Utilization to enhance service delivery amidst unforeseen risks. In addition, to the above, COVID has challenged us to broaden our risk analysis and develop comprehensive mitigation plans to respond to unforeseen crises and pandemics.

8.2.2 Utilization of Rapid Response Mechanism as a Tool for Protection of Human Rights

We learnt that it is critical to invest more in Legal rapid response as we draw closer to the election period. This is because elections are often marred with violation of human rights. Collaboration with like-minded organizations was critical in amplifying advocacy issues on Human

rights; Access to Justice and Rule and Law amidst the COVID period.

8.2.3 Develop comprehensive institutional risk assessment plan

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19, we learnt that we need develop institutional risk plans in order to respond to emergency crises and pandemics

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.3.1 There is need for continuous capacity building of LASPs in ICT utilization such as Zoom; Webinar and E-conferencing so as to improve on their ability to remain relevant and vibrant during catastrophic situations such as COVID 19.

8.3.2 Drawing from the Lessons learnt following the outbreak of COVID, LASPNET & LASPs should consider developing comprehensive institutional risk assessment plans in order to respond to emergency crises and pandemics

8.3.3 LASPs should collectively join efforts and continuously engage policy makers to pass the legal aid law and for the government to provide funding for legal aid service provision in Uganda.

8.3.4 As we draw towards volatile period of elections, we implore more LASPs should engage in rapid response as well as public interest litigation amidst

the growing human rights violations and impunity. Additionally, there is need to continuously strengthen the capacity of media practitioners on how to cover human rights and access to justice issues.

8.4 OPPORTUNITIES

8.4.1 Increased media visibility and Advocacy for Human Rights, Rule of Law and LASPNET has increasingly consolidated its niche through coordination of LASPs to improve standards in the delivery of legal aid and access to justice. As a result, the Network has remained alive to its core mandate hence making it a reference point by the media in areas of human rights, access to justice and rule of law. In addition, LASPNET enjoys free airtime for both print and broadcast media and as well share media opportunities with the members.

8.4.2 Availability of funding opportunities for LASPs to expand their reach in using innovative approaches to enhance service delivery in the community.

8.4.3 Increased support of policy and law makers towards advocacy of enactment of the long overdue National Legal Aid Law. This has been achieved with support of the

9.0 CONCLUSION

LASPNET has achieved several milestones in its thematic areas of research and advocacy, networks and coalition building as well as institutional development. This has propelled effective coordination of LASPs to ensure improved delivery of legal aid and access to justice. The Network therefore aspires to sustain the above achievements for the next years to come with funding from all its development partners.

More focus will be put on building the capacity of LASPs through trainings in areas such corporate governance and resource mobilization, lobby and advocacy trainings, use of ICT in enhancing delivery of services in order to ensure standardized services. We should however be cognizant that as the network grows, opportunism and pressure to deliver amidst shrinking civic space are some of the challenges likely to be encountered.

In conclusion, we are very grateful to all our development partners: DGF, ActionAid, OXFAM, ICNL, IDLO, CORDAID and UNDP; the strategic partners as well as the membership with whom we continue to walk the journey.

10. MEMBERSHIP FOCUS

Under this part of the report we share key milestones of activities undertaken by some of our members as well as issues emerging for attention by responsible stakeholders. The information shared is for only organizations that shared their information during the reporting period. The rest of the cases handled have been reflected above under our IIMS system.

African Centre for treatment and Rehabilitation for Torture Victims

In 2019, ACTV provided holistic rehabilitation services to 2,020 survivors of torture, an increase from 1,070 in 2018. This increase was as a result of the organization deepening its outreach activities in the Karamoja sub-region. ACTV was able to reach out to survivors of torture in Karamoja who had experienced torture during the disarmament process but had never received rehabilitation.

The Expected outputs of their interventions included;

- Increased community sensitization and outreach within the targeted communities;
- Improved capacity of key actors to handle torture and rehabilitation services for victims.
- Human rights Awareness enhanced.

They experienced the following challenges;

- Justice delayed is justice denied". This related to unprogressive court cases due to endless adjournments. This puts a strain on clients emotionally and affects ACTV financially.
- In the few successful cases, delayed award of compensation has in some instances led to the relapse of clients. Three (3) of the cases that were successfully awarded are not yet compensated.
- ACTV had to create awareness among the new members of the Human Rights Committee of Parliament about issues of torture to follow through the advocacy work started by the former committee members towards the Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT).
- Reintegration of survivors of torture without a livelihood component is not sustainable.
- The utilization of Form 4 in the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act Regulations 2017 has not yet been affected, thus hampering the effective documentation of torture.
- Annual requests for permission to access places of detention delays the provision of services to survivors of torture.
- Access to justice in the Karamoja

sub-region is still hampered by the inadequate number of Judicial Officers in the sub-region.

Recommendations

The Uganda Human Rights Commission Tribunal should be fully constituted to ensure that cases are resolved and survivors of torture compensated.

- Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS) should prioritize the implementation of the PPTA 2012 and the Regulations 2017, especially the utilization of Form for the effective documentation of torture.
- Continued capacity-building for criminal justice actors, especially security agencies, on non-coercive techniques of interrogation and effective documentation of torture.
- The Government of Uganda should expedite the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), which would provide for the establishment of a national preventive mechanism to monitor places of detention.

Human Rights Centre Uganda

Through its legal aid unit, HRCU provided legal advice, legal assistance, counselling, Court representation to Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and made referrals

to partner organizations through an established and strong network with other legal aid service providers like LASPNET.

Clients responded to where categorized as walk-ins, call-ins on its toll-free line 0800-333000, referrals from other human rights institutions/organizations or as emergency response cases.

In addition, legal aid has been provided through media engagements like radio talk shows, incorporation of provision of legal aid services in all activities done by HRCU, IEC materials dissemination, partnerships and networks, the legal aid services are also made easily accessible to all persons.

Capacity Building; Human Rights Centre Uganda (HRCU) undertook several capacity trainings on personal and digital security training, Human Rights Based Approach to implementing laws, regional and national protection mechanisms/ human rights instruments, research, monitoring and documentation among others. The trainings are organized in partnership with focal point persons in different districts who identify capacity needs and also mobilize participants that need capacity building.

MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Public interest Law Clinic; is implementing a two-year project targeting school of law students (makerere) and indigent communities of Katanga, Kivulu, Kimombasa, Kikubamutee, Kasokoso and Kikoni, Mubende district and Wakiso.

In the reporting period, they have been able to conduct 45 community outreaches, capacity of over 250 students skilled and built. Also, they have undertaken over 15 prison outreaches in 4 prisons including: kitala, kitalya, kaweri and muinaina prison. More still, they have continuously provided legal aid and counselling to walk in clients and others referred by Nakalema Commission of the State House. In addition, they have created sensitization on different radio stations.

Refugee Law Project; through its Access to Justice programme which seeks to ensure that forced migrants access appropriate forms of justice and live dignified lives. The Programme brings legal aid services closer to forced migrants, builds the capacities of state and non-state actors on issues of forced migration, advocates for reform in law, policy and practice, and empowers forced migrants to better demand and defend their rights.

In the reporting period, RLP successfully organized the 3rd Regional Conference on forced migration under the theme

“Refugee Futures: Establishing Frameworks for Analysis Within the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa.”

The conference explored local integration practices within the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa Region and how they have enabled refugees to settle in host countries. It focused on the initial reception of refugees, employment, education, self-reliance, citizenship, language training and long-term integration.

In addition, they were able to offer legal representation in 1,380 cases benefiting 1,531 (1,415M & 116F) individuals. 1,435 were refugees, 96 were from host communities. Cases were identified through detention monitoring, visits to Police stations, direct walk-in and referrals from partner organizations. To this end, they were able secure convictions in 114 cases, 174 cases were dismissed for want of prosecution, 23 cases were acquitted, 30 were cautioned, 104 cases reconciled/mediated at court and 50 cases were dismissed pending arrest. Through legal representation and advice, forced migrants in detention were released from prison and helped integrate within their communities

RLP was able to resolve 528 cases were resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution specifically through mediations benefitting 1,982 individuals (808F, 1162M, 12 Children). These

included; domestic violence, theft, witchcraft, family disputes, breach of contract, debt recovery. Mediations led to quick disposal of cases and strengthened relations between families especially for cases involving domestic violence

Further, they equipped the women leadership skills and positive coping mechanisms for South Sudanese refugees and host community women were promoted. For example, in Bidi bidi refugee settlement, for example; 66% (40/61) of the trained women subsequently acquired at least one role in the various refugee community structures; 30 attained Refugee Welfare Council leadership positions during the elections, 5 were selected as community interpreters, 2 acquired positions as Village Health Teams, 1 food monitor, 1 advisor, 1 child care giver facilitator. Because of that, women's participation in public speaking and public life was enhanced. Relatedly, capacity of state and non-state actors to deliver justice was enhanced through trainings. State actors included judicial officers, police, prison and UPDF officers, while non-state actors included cultural and religious leaders, paralegals, community interpreters and Refugee Welfare Councilors.

The use of paralegals and community interpreters led to identification and referral of cases to RLP for legal aid. Following the trainings, the paralegals are mediating minor cases such as minor

fight within the communities and non-payment of debts. Criminal cases are referred to RLP and police. They also do follow-up on successfully concluded cases. During this period, the paralegals mediated 87 cases.

Through increased advocacy and engagement of OPM, UNHCR and other partners, 5 positions were gazetted for women out of the 11 positions in the RWC structure in the 2019 elections in Yumbe. This 45% representation is a huge improvement on the 10% baseline. The positions were gazetted at all levels; RWC 1, RWC II, and RWC III. The positions gazetted included Vice Chairperson, Secretary for Education, Secretary for Finance, Secretary for Health, Sanitation and Nutrition, Secretary for Women Affairs.

Uganda Network on Law Ethics and HIV/AIDS (UGANET)

In the reporting period, 121 community paralegals from 41 Districts spread throughout all regions, mentored and facilitated paralegals with resources and tools to enable the communities access justice. These paralegals have a clear reporting system for them and they report cases and outreaches conducted on a monthly basis.

In the reporting period, we have conducted Legal Aid outreaches at Health

Centres, ART clinics and hospices in 40 districts in Uganda targeting PLHIV, TB and other key populations. In addition, 6 mobile legal aid camps were conducted especially before lockdown in districts of Namutumba, Kitgum, Moroto, Kalangala, Mayuge, and Kagadi Districts. Hence about 1000 cases have been handled both through camps and through call centre, outreaches and walk-ins. Other cases handled included strategic litigation cases on HIV criminalization and so far, 3 have been concluded successfully and 5 are ongoing.

During lockdown, in a bid to remain relevant and support our communities UGANET birthed two ideas that brought great strides. These were the: UGANET toll free Call Centre that supported Lawyers and counsellors to work from home and support clients online and on calls as well as the UGANET wellness centre called

“RISING WOMAN” that was established, approved by Government and opened to support GBV survivors. Currently, UGANET runs several campaigns aimed at ending violence against women following reports of GBV and SGBV in the media during lockdown.

Platform for Labour Action;

In the reporting period, PLA has conducted over 38 employer- employee orientation sessions and work places inspections in the 7 districts of operations with the objective of ensuring that workplaces are observing Standard Operating Procedures as well as the welfare of workers. In addition, they have been able to conduct legal aid at Police, assist suspects to acquire police bond, conduct community awareness sessions through community radios on Rock Mambo, CBS, Ddembe among others.

11. AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Page : 6

LEGAL AID SERVICE PROVIDERS NETWORK AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2020

MANAGEMENT ASSERTION ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.

This section represents LASPNET management's confirmation of its statutory responsibility for information in the financial statements and information provided during the course of the audit.

LASPNET management is required according to its Constitution to prepare financial statements for each financial period that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the organization as at the end of the financial period and of its income and expenditure. LASPNET management is responsible for ensuring that disbursements are utilized for the purpose of the organization. Management is also responsible for ensuring that the organization keeps proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable assurance its financial position, Management is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the organization.


Management accepts responsibility for the preparation of quarterly accountability reports submitted to the different donors, which were prepared using appropriate accounting policies and estimates in conformity with the funding guidelines. Management is of the opinion that all the accountability reports for the year ended on June 30, 2020 give a true and fair view of its operations and that the regular accountability reports have been used as a basis for preparation of the income and expenditure statement for LASPNET as of June 30, 2020. LASPNET management certifies that there were no irregularities in the administration of the funds and that the financial statements of the organization for the year ended June 30, 2020 are free from material misstatements. Management further accepts responsibility for the maintenance of the accounting records that may be relied upon in the preparation of financial statements as well as adequate systems of internal controls.

Nothing has come to the attention of management to indicate that the organization will not remain a going concern for at least twelve months from the date of this statement.

This assertion is certified by the management of LASPNET on 22nd Oct 20 and signed on its behalf by:


Chairman


Treasurer


Chief Executive Officer

Date 22nd October 2020

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Legal Aid Service Provider's Network (LASPNET)

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the Financial statements of Legal Aid Service Providers Network set out on pages 9 to 20 which comprise the statement of comprehensive income, statement of financial position as at 30th June 2020, statement of changes in accumulated fund, statement of cash flows and the notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Legal Aid Service Providers Network as at 30th June 2020 and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and the requirements of the Ugandan NGO Act.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) and Guidelines issued by the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda (ICPAU). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of Legal Aid Service Providers Network in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Uganda, and we have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of the Management and Those Charged with Governance of the Financial Statements.

The Management is responsible for the preparation of the Financial Statements in accordance with the IFRSs And for such internal control as the management determines is necessary to enable preparation of the Financial Statement that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the company or cease operations or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Company's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Financial statements as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the Financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- > Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the fund accountability statement, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT.....contd

- > Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- > Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- > Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events and conditions that may cast doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw your attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- > Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may be reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

Key Audit Matters

There were no key Audit matters to be reported under Audit during the year.


From the matters communicated with those charged with governance, we determine those matters that were of most significance in the audit of the financial statements of the current period and are therefore the key matters. We describe these matters in our auditor's report unless law or regulation precludes public disclosure about the matter or when, in extremely rare circumstances, we determine that a matter should be communicated in our report because of the adverse consequences of doing so would reasonably be expected to outweigh the public interest benefits of such communication.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

As required by the NGO Act 2017, Sec 30(4) we report to you based on our audit, that:

1. We have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purpose of our audit;
2. In our opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the NGO so far as appears from our examination of those books; and
3. The NGO's statement of financial position and statement of comprehensive income are in agreement with the books of account.

The engagement partner on the audit resulting in this independent auditor's report is CPA Owora Fredricks - P.0223


 CPA Owora Fredricks
 Osillo & Co

Date: 22/10/2020

**LEGAL AID SERVICE PROVIDERS NETWORK
AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2020**

STATEMENT OF INCOMES AND EXPENDITURES

	Notes	2020 Budgeted Ushs.	2020 Actual Ushs.	2019 Actual Ushs.
Incomes				
Grants.	3	3 986 214 787	2 506 490 552	3 998 487 360
Member's Contributions.		-	5 300 000	6 450 000
Other income	3	43 645 000	90 986 042	129 814 157
Total Income		4 029 859 787	2 602 776 594	4 134 751 517
Expenditures				
Collaborative, Advocacy platforms to enhance rule of law, legal aid and access to justice for the poor, vulnerable and marginalised in Uganda				
salaries, wages & Benefits - DGF	4	1 006 181 769	1 007 710 071	999 554 880
Rental Expenses - DGF	5	-	30 000 000	29 000 000
Enhance Capacity of Legal aid service providers - DGF	6	734 962 095	317 097 845	238 316 030
Strengthen the coordination and synergies among LASPs - DGF	7	8 738 000	670 000	3 826 500
To promote research and policy advocacy - DGF	8	284 961 082	162 332 404	91 291 300
Strengthen the institutional Development - DGF	9	217 471 863	141 610 287	168 933 830
contribution to the JLOS Anti -corruption strategy - DGF	9	328 919 669	208 308 368	110 506 800
US Embassy project	10	-	-	7 860 000
United Nation Development fund (UNDP)	11	131 698 156	142 123 770	470 882 065
The International Centre for Not -for -Profit Law (ICNL) project	12	171 053 433	174 809 199	59 320 719
Action Aid FGG II Project	13	29 771 386	5 335 000	12 389 434
Oxfam Linking and learning	14	773 195 800	556 272 684	77 437 078
Cordaid Project	15	58 426 168	2 100 000	
Oxfam- Voice		-	-	657 008 050
Other expenses (partnerships)	19	43 645 000	54 015 600	74 768 792
General Administrative Expenses	17	240 835 367	116 823 010	98 323 929
Bank charges and commissions expenses	18	-	18 356 675	15 561 364
Total Expenditure		4 029 859 788	2 937 564 913	3 114 980 771
Surplus/ Deficit for the year			(334 788 319)	1 019 770 746

**LEGAL AID SERVICE PROVIDERS NETWORK
AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2020**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30TH JUNE 2020

	Notes	2020 Ushs.	2019 Ushs.
ASSETS			
Non Current Assets			
Property, Plant & Equipment		-	-
Current Assets			
Cash & Bank balance	2	1 354 494 429	1 634 353 387
Trade Receivables & Other receivables	16	16 850 000	-
		<u>1 371 344 429</u>	<u>1 634 353 387</u>
Total assets		<u>1 371 344 429</u>	<u>1 634 353 387</u>
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Equity			
Capital Fund b/f	21	1 581 127 235	561 356 489
Surplus for the year		(334 788 319)	1 019 770 746
		<u>1 246 338 916</u>	<u>1 581 127 235</u>
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	20	125 005 513	53 226 152
Total equity and liabilities		<u>1 371 344 429</u>	<u>1 634 353 387</u>

The report of the Auditors is on Page 6

The notes on Pages 9 to 20 form an integral part of these financial statements.

The accounts were approved by the board on 22nd October 2020

..... Chairperson BOD

..... Chief Executive Officer

..... Treasurer BOD

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