



LASPNET

LEGAL AID SERVICE PROVIDERS' NETWORK



ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

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IDEOLOGY

A Centre of Excellence for Legal Aid

OUR IDENTITY

Our Vision

A free and just society.

Our Mission

To Provide Effective Advocacy, Networking and Collaboration for sustainable Legal aid services, Human Rights, Rule of Law 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 provide strategic linkages and a collaborative platform for legal aid service providers (LASPs) in Uganda and maintain a common front to relevantly interface with Access to Justice Sub-Programme.

Strategic Pillar

Lobbying and Advocacy
Networking, Coordination and Partnership
Research and Knowledge Management
Institutional Strengthening and Development of LASPNET

OUR VALUES

- ▶ Team work
- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Transparency and Accountability
- ▶ Inclusiveness
- ▶ Creativity & Innovativeness
- ▶ Excellence

OUR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS 2022 - 2023



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



LIST OF ACRONYMS

A2J	Access to Justice
ADC	Australian Development Cooperation
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ASF	Avocats Sans Frontiers
CEHURD	Center for Health, Human Rights and Development
CEOs	Chief Executive Officers
CIPESA	Collaboration on international ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSSA	Civil Society Strengthening Activity
EU	European Union
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
HRs	Human Rights
ICNL	International Centre for Not for Profit Law
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IDLO	International Law Development Organization
IIMS	Integrated Information Management System
IRCU	Inter-Religious Council of Uganda
LASPNET	Legal Aid Service Providers Network
LASPs	Legal Aid Service Providers
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NLAB	National Legal Aid Bill
PTD	Pre- Trial Detention
RAJA	Rights And Justice Activity
ULC	Uganda Law Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
WDHR	Wakiso District Human Rights Committee

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Our major advocacy work was hinged on fast tracking the enactment of the National Legal Aid Bill.
”



1.0 FOREWORD BY BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Esteemed members and partners, I am honored to share with you the LASPNET Annual Report for the period 2022/2023. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to appreciate the membership for trusting us to diligently serve the Network during our first year in office since 21st October 2022

During the period under review we have scaled down on the Networks operation as this marked the post DGF funding era and as result our institutional programming and that of some of our member LASPs has been negatively and immensely affected. Like the saying goes, desperate times call for desperate measures, the need for a new Development Partner to fund the legal aid sector is quite inevitable as it requires strengthening resource mobilization efforts within our respective institutions.

Despite the DGF funding gap, we commend our development partners that journeyed with us throughout the period under review hence sustaining the work of the Network. These included: the European Union (EU), International Development Law Organization (IDLO), United Nations Programme (UNDP), Freedom House (FH), OXFAM and Internews.

Related to the above, during the reporting period, LASPNET received another major donor that is the United Nations Organization on Drug and Crime (UNODC) which will be implementing a five-year programme titled "Strengthening Crime Prevention and the Criminal Justice Programme in Uganda." Effective 1st August 2023, under the UNODC programme, LASPNET will sub grant different implementing partners such as Uganda Law Society (ULS), Law Development Centre (LDC), Justice Defenders (JD) and The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiIL).

Our major advocacy work was hinged on fast tracking the enactment of the National Legal Aid Bill. A key milestone was for Parliament to grant the Private. Mover, the Hon. Silas Aogon, the opportunity on 23rd May 2023 to present the Bill for the second reading despite the hurdle of lack of political will we still encounter with the Office of the Attorney General.


Furthermore, one of the key critical areas of concern to the Board of Directors is institutional sustainability. This year we operationalized the Organizational Development and Sustainability Committee (ODSC) which has been armed with responsibility of spearheading our fundraising efforts for the Legal aid house under the able leadership of Ms. Flavia Zalwango, Committee Chairperson & Member on Merit LASPNET Board.

It's also my humble appeal to the membership to support the various Legal Aid House fundraising initiatives including crowdfunding, selling of tangible items and the forthcoming fundraising dinner.

Finally, LASPNET's contribution towards justice reforms was recognized by the Chief Justice in his speech at the new law year. In the same vein, our Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa was appointed on the Judicature (Legal Representation at the Expense of the State Rules) Committee to purposely oversee the implementation of state funded legal aid. The Network therefore remains grateful to all Justice Actors and Institution that continued to trust and believe in it's work.

Finally, I wish to commend our development partners (both past and present), the Board, membership, stakeholders and the Secretariat for your unfathomable support towards the Network. On a similar note we appreciate our allies, strategic partners like Greater North and Parliamentary Forum (GNPF), as well as the media for always casting light on the advocacy work of the Network.

I wish you an insightful reading of our Annual report.



Karen Saidi
Board Chairperson



“
The major highlight under our Research and Knowledge Management unit under the reporting period was being engaged by the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) to conduct the National Gender Assessment for the Access to Justice Sub Programme.”



2.0 THE ANNUAL STATEMENT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Dear partners, members and stakeholders, with gratitude, I am happy to share with you the LASPNET's Annual report for the period July 2022 to June 2023. I wish to note that during the reporting period, LASPNET continued to leverage on its Strategic Plan (2021-2025) to consolidate its mandate of enhancing access to justice for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized.

As shared by the Board Chairperson, the period under review was challenging for the legal aid sector following the exit of DGF and as such we didn't accomplish much as anticipated especially under our institutional programming thematic areas. That notwithstanding LASPNET had the profound opportunity to contribute to a series of DGF close out engagements including review meetings and the exit event which was held at the Residence of the EU Ambassador on 26th May 2023. On behalf of the Legal Aid Service Providers (LASPs) and the people of Uganda who benefited from DGF services, we are eternally grateful for the support rendered to us over the years by DGF and our special appreciation goes to the people of Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, European Union and Austria. We thank them for the generosity and contribution made through their taxes to sustain DGF as a basket fund.

Further to note, the EU funded Gender Based Violence project in Mukono, Kayunga and Buikwe came to an end during the period under review. The project was momentous as it created everlasting impact in the districts of implementation. In fact, we received good appraisals documented as appreciation letters from the Local Government requesting for project extension. Whereas the extension was beyond us as LASPNET, we were courteous enough to escalate the requests for project extension to our development partners – the European Union and we are hopeful that they will act on them.

Our advocacy efforts for the national legal aid bill 2022 continued and we registered some milestones as shared by the Chairperson. However, despite the achieved milestones, it's safer to say that our efforts to advocate for the enactment of the NLAB continue to be watered down by various political interests. This has in turn propelled us to deploy other tactics such as engaging religious leaders under their umbrella body – Inter Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) to enlist their support for a state funded legal aid scheme. Fortunately, we have been energized by the displayed support of the religious leaders

towards having the NLAB expedited. Among their promises was to prioritize discussions on the legal aid bill during their interface with H.E the President of Uganda as well as dedicating special prayer sessions towards the NLAB across all denominations. In the same spirit, UNDP has supported us to develop a new Advocacy Plan (2023/2027) which we will use to shape all advocacy efforts of the Secretariat and the membership.

The major highlight under our Research and Knowledge Management unit during the reporting period was being engaged by the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) to conduct the National Gender Assessment for the Access to Justice Sub Programme. The study provides a comprehensive gender analysis of gender services for key various justice institutions including Uganda Police Force, Uganda Prisons Service, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Judiciary. Under this study, we extended opportunity to some of our staff, individual members and LASPs specifically the Islamic Women's Initiative for Justice, Law and Peace (IWILAP). We shall continue to grow the unit as part of our sustainability strategy.

Under Networking, Coordination and Partnerships, we continued to sustain our development partners including IDLO, EU, UNDP, OXFAM, Freedom House and Internews. Most importantly, we welcome UNODC as our new development partner for the next five years. On the part of admission of new members into the Network, the 13th AGM admitted a total of three (3) members namely; Women Rights Initiative (WORI), Center for Women and Children's Reintegration (CEWOCHR) and Advocates for Natural resources and development (ANARDE) in addition to seven (7) new Honorary members and eleven (11) Individual Associate members. This expansion in membership is anticipated to spur growth of the Network.

Finally, we appreciate the support offered by Internews towards strengthening our organization capacity development capacity through a series of resilience and sustainability sessions. We acknowledge that this support came at a time when it was needed most. Arising out this support, the Secretariat was able to develop a staff wellness plan which highlights several interventions intended to enhance staff wellbeing. We were also able to develop an Information and Security Management Plan and Protocols (ISMPP) which provides clear-cut information security guidelines for the staff and organization at large.

The challenges ahead remain insurmountable including ensuring that we identify an institutional donor that can continue with the work of DGF, raising and mobilizing resources for construction of the legal aid house as part of fulfilment of our undertaking under the institutional sustainability plan as well as strengthening the HR structure following a demobilization that came with DGF exit. We are looking up to the Board and membership to continue providing oversight and insights that can propel us to another level.

I wish to thank all our development partners who have provided financial and technical support, our Board of Directors for the strategic oversight and guidance of our membership and stakeholders as well as the LASPNET Secretariat team for your resilience, hard work and support that has seen us sail through the hard times. With your support and commitment, we remain committed to achieving to our mandate

I invite you to read and enjoy our annual report.



.....
Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa
Chief Executive Officer



3.0 THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



7 Radio Talk shows



9 Capacity Building initiatives



43 Paralegals trained



14 TV Talk shows



5 Board meetings & 6
Committee meetings



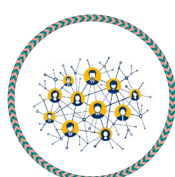
2 Cluster meetings



33 Lawyers and 31 Paralegals
facilitated and Coordinated
under the ADA Project



1,594 IEC materials on Access
to Justice and Corruption, GBV
delivered



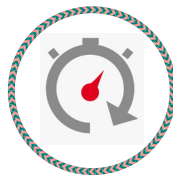
75 Networking & partnership
meetings



1 Research



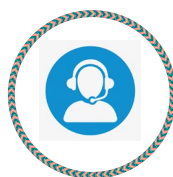
313 Cases handled and closed
while 264 referred under
the LASPNET Call Center.



15 Rapid Response Cases
handled and closed



10 Rapid response Lawyers
continued to provide Legal
Rapid Response



27 Call Centre Agents enrolled
and supported the Mobile UNDP
Call Centre

4.0 THE YEAR 2022-2023 IN PICTURES



1

1. A group photo of the Ugandan Delegation to South Africa during the Benchmarking Visit for the NLAB held from the 21st to 27th August 2022.



2

2. A cross section of participants pose for a group photo during the sustainability reflection workshop held on the 19th to 20th September 2022 at Garuga Lake Resort Hotel.



3

3. A group photo of members who attended the 8th CEO's Forum 2023 held on 26th May 2023 at Imperial Royale Hotel – Kampala.



4

4. The Interreligious leaders and other stakeholders pose for a group photo during the Prayer & Advocacy Breakfast Meeting on NLAB 2022 held on 27th June 2023 at Sheraton Hotel –Kampala.



5

5. Incoming and outgoing Board members during the Orientation and Handover ceremony held from 15th to 17th December 2022 at Forest Park Resort, Buloba.



6

6. LASPNET staff celebrating birthday babies of the quarter January – March 2023.

5.0 A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS INTO THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT OF LASPNET FOR THE YEAR 2022/2023

This year's LASPNET (2022/2023) Annual Report makes a comparative analysis of the operating environment and its impact on LASPNET programming in the last one (1) year. The analysis is based on three (3) indicators namely; Membership composition, Manifestation of CSO threats and Challenges affecting LASPs.

a) Membership composition

In the reporting period, LASPNET received three (3) members including Advocates for Natural Resources and Development (ANARDE), Women Rights Initiative (WORI) and Centre for Women and Children's Reintegration (CEWOCHR). Furthermore, a total of seven (7) new honorary members and eleven (11) Individual Associate members were admitted into the Network at the 13th AGM which is an increase compared to the previous reporting year July 2021 to June 2022 where a total of two members namely Centre for Health Human Rights Development (CEHURD) and Urban Refugee Rights Programme (URRP) were admitted. The expansion is attributed to the categorization of the membership adding in the "individual membership category" which was intended to strengthen the Network as well as recognize the role played by different individuals towards the growth of LASPNET. It was during the same AGM that a resolution was passed to increase the membership subscription from UGHS 200,000 to UGHS 300,000 and an amendment made in the constitution to include new categories of membership including special and life membership.

b) Manifestation of CSO threats

CSO threats in the last one (1) year mainly included the shrinking civic space that has neither spared donors. The exit of DGF and later non-renewal of the contract of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights Office (OHCHR) is a testament that the funding landscape of local CSOs especially those engaged in governance and accountability work hangs in balance. This implies that an ordinary Ugandan will increasingly find it difficult to access justice in addition to accelerating inequalities between the "haves and have-nots." The overregulation of the sector complemented by bureaucratic processes involved in NGO compliance especially in regards to filing the Beneficial Owners Information with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) is still a challenge. This process is tedious and time consuming and yet not all CSOs have internal legal compliance officers.

c) Challenges affecting the Legal aid Sector Sustainability

Sustainability of the Network and its members the (LASPs) remains a sticky issue especially following the exit of DGF that initially funded the biggest chunk of legal aid service provision in Uganda. More than before due to funding gaps created by DGF, our institutional programming has

been negatively impacted. It is quite saddening to see a number of LASPs scaling down operations while others have closed down completely. This has had a general effect on access to justice including the increasing numbers of inmates in prisons. Such a state of affairs justifies the rationale for having a state funded legal aid scheme which would guarantee sustainability of legal aid service provision amidst the absence of external donor.

The operating context for CSOs in Uganda has arguably shifted from shrinking to closed, and this has affected many NGOs engaged in human rights, access to justice and rule of law sector. It's therefore imperative for sector reflections with donors and government to underscore the fact that the NGO sector's role towards socio-economic development is immense and therefore the need for a favorable operating environment is quite inevitable.



6.0 HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Informed by the above operating environment, LASPNET has continued to leverage and consolidate its niche of being at the forefront of promoting Legal aid as a vehicle for enhancing access to justice in order for LASPs to deliver standardized legal aid services to the poor and vulnerable persons. This has been achieved through the Network's strategic thematic areas which include; Networking, Coordination and Partnerships, Lobby and Advocacy, Research and Knowledge Management and strengthening Institutional Capacity of its staff and membership. Under this segment, the report gives key highlights under each theme in summary.

6.1 Networking, Coordination and Partnerships

In the year 2022/2023 LASPNET sustained its collaborative platforms in several ways which among others included;

- > LASPNET participated in the Local Advocacy Forum and Baseline launch convened by ASF on 19th February 2023 at Sheraton Hotel.
- > Support visits were conducted in the districts of project implementation including Arua, Gulu, Kitgum, Lamwo, Hoima, Masindi, Kampala and Wakiso districts by ASF and LASPNET from the 20th to 30th March 2023.
- > LASPNET convened an inception planning meeting with selected partners under the UNODC Strengthening Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program on 3rd May 2023 at Protea Hotel.
- > LASPNET held Pre-trial detention project coordination forums with penal chain local actors and legislative providers from the 23rd to 31st May 2023 at Imperial Royale and Kolping Hotels respectively.
- > LASPNET on the 22nd June 2023 at Hotel Africana convened a stakeholders' consultative dialogue between formal and informal justice system actors for input into the draft Alternative Justice System Strategy and ADR Policy.
- > On 23rd May 2023, represented by the CEO, LASPNET participated in the 32nd session on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, Austria.

6.2 Research and Knowledge Management

In the reporting period, LASPNET undertook key research to strengthen evidence-based advocacy as well as provide relevant information for use by its members which included among others;

- > UWONET engaged LASPNET to conduct the National Gender Assessment for the Access to Justice Sub Programme which was carried out in the period of 26th March to 4th April 2023.
- > LASPNET provided research into the stakeholders Access to Justice engagement meetings which among others included the National dialogue on Informal and Formal justice held on 19th August 2022, Hotel Africana.

6.3 Lobby and Advocacy Engagements

On Lobby and Advocacy front, LASPNET achieved some of the following;

- > LASPNET attended the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee meeting and offered support to the private mover to submit a rejoinder to the learned Hon. Attorney General on 28th September 2022.
- > LASPNET convened district joint Advocacy dialogues between local councils and LASPs on Gender Based Violence case management in Tororo and Kyegegwa districts on 11th and 15th May 2023 respectively.
- > LASPNET convened a stakeholder's engagement with religious leaders to rally their support in advocating for the fast-tracking the enactment of the state national legal aid law by Government on 27th June 2023 at Sheraton Hotel.
- > A Lobby and Advocacy plan 2023/2027 developed for LASPNET and it's members.
- > Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights were enhanced through several media and related information forums.

6.4 Institutional Strengthening and development

In the reporting period, LASPNET built the capacity of its members through the following;

- > Two Trainings of Advocates and Paralegals were conducted on 27th to 28th February and 2nd to 3rd March 2023 respectively in Entebbe at Admas Grande Hotel.
- > LASPNET convened virtual meeting on institutional and organizational resiliency and sustainability on 15th February 2023.
- > The 8th CEO forum and Launch of the fundraising drive for the Legal Aid House convened on the 26th May 2023 at Imperial Royale Hotel.
- > LASPs trained in Organizational Resiliency and Corporate governance from 12th to 14th October 2022 at Eureka Hotel.
- > LASPNET and Partners trained in Resource mobilization.
- > LASPs continuously supported in the use of the IIMS by strengthening their capacities to capture, analyze and disseminate data on Access to Justice, make useful referral and strengthen Paralegal service delivery through providing information to LASPS and Paralegals.
- > The USSD code developed and functionalized as an enabler for paralegals to upload cases offline onto the IIMS especially by those without smart phones.

7.0 THE YEAR 22/23 IN DETAIL

7.1 NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIP

Through the Networking and Partnership building thematic area, LASPNET continued to sustain its existing partnerships with both state and non-state actors and attracted partnerships through engagement meetings aimed at responding to various human rights and rule of law issues in the country. This section highlights various networking and partnership activities undertaken during the reporting period.

7.1.1 Participated in the Local Advocacy Forum and Baseline Launch for Kampala and Wakiso districts

LASPNET attended and participated in the Local Advocacy Forum and launch of the baseline research on Pretrial Detention in Uganda that was convened by Avocats Sans Frontiers (ASF). This was held in Kampala on 19th February 2023 at Sheraton Hotel Kampala and the CEO featured as one of the panelists. The forum was intended to deliberate on the trends and patterns of Pre-Trial Detention, identify challenges and formulate recommendations.

It was attended by stakeholders who among others included; Judicial officers, representatives from the Uganda Police Force, Uganda Prison Service, Legal Aid Service Providers and Private practitioners from the districts of Kampala, Wakiso, Lamwo, Arua, Gulu, Kitgum, Hoima and Masindi. The issues raised at the forum include continued arrests of suspects before investigation; limited awareness about bail/bond and its application; illegal detention of

civilians in Military Court martial among others. In the same vein, stakeholders made various recommendations such as the need to conduct more Local Advocacy Forum (s) to discuss issues of PTD as well as the need to consider opening up more LASPs within Masindi.

7.1.2 Support visits conducted in the districts of project implementation by ASF and LASPNET



LASPNET and ASF staff members in a group photo with Paralegals, Lawyers and Prisons officers at Arua Central Prison.

Subsequently in the reporting period LASPNET together with Avocats Sans Frontiers (ASF) conducted five (5) support visits in the districts of Arua, Gulu, Kitgum, Lamwo, Hoima, Masindi, Kampala and Wakiso districts from the 20th to 30th March 2023. The visits were intended to provide a platform for LASPNET, ASF and on ground LASPs in the different districts of implementation. During the visits, LASPNET and ASF were able to identify lessons learnt, opportunities and challenges under the Pre-Trial Detention (PTD) project.

7.1.3 Convened LASPs inception – planning meeting under the UNODC strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice program



All participants posing for a group photo after the inception meeting at Protea Hotel – Kampala

LASPNET in partnership with UNODC on 3rd May 2023 held a half-day inception planning meeting at Protea Hotel Kampala for selected partners (Uganda Law Society, Justice Defenders, HiiL and Law Development Centre) under the upcoming UNODC program titled *“Strengthening Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program.”* The UNODC project among others is purposed to respond to organized crime and related threats through among others increasing access to quality legal aid services for vulnerable groups. The meeting was attended by 24 participants (10 Female: 14 Male) including HiiL, JCU, ULS, Justice Defenders, LDC, LASPNET staff and UNODC team.

During this meeting, LASPNET’s Chief Executive Officer Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa appreciated UNODC for having entrusted LASPNET to sub-grant the aforementioned partners under the UNODC project. *“We thank UNODC for knowing and following what we do in Uganda. By dispensing away all the technicalities and giving us a vote of confidence is something we don’t take for granted. We commit to contribute towards successful program implementation in the next five (5) years”* she said.

She further underscored the timeliness of the project noting that it would help to respond to the spiral of violent crimes in Uganda which are attributed the drivers of crime to mental health, drug abuse, depression among others but sometimes people fail to know the real causes.

Therefore, she was confident that the different interventions implemented by partners will go a long way in reversing the crime trends. She implored partners to make sure they come out of the 5-year program with testimonies of transformation in the project implementation districts.

Ms. Diva Mukisa, the Associate Programme Management Officer at UNODC at the meeting appreciated LASPNET for convening the inception partners meeting and stated that the UNODC program aims at strengthening the criminal justice system to respond to organized crime and related threats through four interrelated outcomes namely: *Strengthening mechanism for court administration and case management; increasing access to quality legal aid services for vulnerable groups; promoting of alternatives to imprisonment; Crime prevention among the youth; Prevention of violent extremism; and the Protection of the economy of Uganda from illicit financial flows and money-laundering.*



The UNODC representative Ms. Diva Mukisa – Project Coordinator addressing the participants.

¹ Justice Centers Uganda (JCU), Law Development Center Clinic (LDC/LAQ), Uganda Law Society (ULS/LAP), Uganda Law Society (ULS/LAP), Justice Defenders (JDU)

Ms. Karen Saidi, the Chairperson Board on the other hand as she closed the meeting, appealed to the LASPs to ensure they effectively implement the project to the satisfaction of the donors and project beneficiaries

7.1.4 Participated in the 32nd session on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna

On the 22nd May 2023, LASPNET represented by the Chief Executive Officer attended the 32nd session on crime prevention and criminal justice at St. Vienna International Center in Vienna, Austria. She was part of the Uganda Justice Sector Delegation which was led by Lady Justice, Jane Adobo, Director Office of the Public Prosecution and included the Chief Registrar Judiciary, Sarah Langa Siu, JLOS Senior Technical Advisor, Rachel Odoi Musoke, Assistant Inspector General of Police, Research Planning and Development, James Ochaya and Commissioner of Prisons, Planning and Policy, Aggrey Aturwaniire.

At the meeting the Commissioner General of Prisons, Can. Dr. Johnson Byabashaija made a presentation on the remarkable achievements in implementing the transformative Nelson Mandela Rules in Uganda Prisons Service. He informed the session about the importance of the Nelson Mandela Rules for those in custody and how the Uganda Prisons Service has adapted it in the staff training curriculum at all levels in the Prisons Staff College and Training Schools. Similarly, the CEO was offered the opportunity to comment on the status of legal aid service provision in Uganda.



Dr. Sylvia Namubiru interacting with Ms. Rachel Odoi-Musoke, Senior Technical Advisor GSP formerly JLOS, together with other delegates of Uganda's delegation.



Can. Dr. Johnson Byabashaija at the meeting. Photo credit @ ugandaprisons.go.ug

7.1.5 Pre-Trial Detention Project Coordination Forums with Penal Chain Local Actors and Legal Aid Service Providers.



Participants pose for a group photo during one of the Coordination forums at Imperial Royale Hotel Kampala on 31st May 2023

During the period from 23rd to 31st May 2023, LASPNET convened coordination forums with penal chain local actors and other Legal Aid Service Providers (LASPs) at Imperial Royale Hotel

and Kolping Hotels in the districts of Kampala, Wakiso, Hoima and Masindi respectively.

The primary objective of the forums was to share experiences and create strategic linkages between LASPs and penal chain local actors to address pre-trial detention.

In all the districts of Kampala, Wakiso, Hoima and Masindi, the events were attended by a total of 163 participants (71 female : 92 Male) The participants included key Strategic Partners within the Governance and Security Program (Formerly JLOS Institutions) including the Judiciary, Human Rights Committee, Uganda Prisons Service, Remand Homes and Uganda Police as well as LASPs such as Legal Aid Project of Uganda Law Society (LAP-ULS), FIDA - Uganda, Legal Aid Clinic of Law Development Centre (LAC-LDC), Uganda Christian Lawyers' Fraternity (UCLF), Muslim Centre for Justice and Law (MCJL), Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), Justice Centers Uganda (JCU) and the Refugee Law Project (RLP).

The critical concerns raised in the forums includes the delicate balance between securing the procedural whereas the key recommendations included the need for continued advocacy for the NLAB to provide access to legal aid to marginalized and vulnerable groups as well as calling upon the Judiciary to practice its mandate of exercise ***"Article 23[6][a] of the Constitution where every accused person has the right to apply for bail"***.

7.1.6 Convened a Stakeholders' Consultative Dialogue between Formal and Informal Justice System Actors to input into the draft Alternative Justice System Strategy and Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy. "

LASPNET with support from IDLO and Sweden Sverige on 22nd June 2023 at Hotel Africana convened a consultative dialogue between Formal and Informal Justice Actors to provide input into the draft Alternative Justice System Strategy and Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy.

The Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy aspires to serve as a tool-box for enhancing Access to Justice for all, provide for, create synergies and support informal justice systems such as; traditional institutions, a case backlog reduction/caseload management measure, localize justice and justice delivery and to create a framework that promotes ADR as vehicle for timely resolution of disputes while preserving critical relationships.

The consultative meeting was graced by total 44 participants (18 male: 26 female) participants drawn from the formal and informal justice system notably IDLO, LASPs, Religious institutions and the Buganda Kingdom.

At the meeting Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa , the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of LASPNET underscored the critical role played by Legal Aid Service Providers and other informal justice system actors in shaping the ADR mechanisms and hence ought to be consulted in the process of developing the Alternative Justice System strategy and Alternative Dispute Policy.

In the same realm, Ms. Freda Joyce Apio - the Program Manager at IDLO appreciated government for fast tracking the development of the Alternative Dispute Resolution policy (ADR)

and Alternative Justice System (AJS) Strategy.

Dr. Henry Onoria, the consultant in his presentation of the draft Alternative Dispute Resolution policy (ADR) and Alternative Justice System (AJS) Strategy empathized that the two documents were aimed at promoting public awareness and encourage use of ADR in Uganda, streamlining the quality and innovation in ADR practice, through research, knowledge development, community of practice, and leveraging of ICT.

During the plenary session Owekitiibwa Christopher Bwanika, the Attorney General of Buganda Kingdom urged the drafters of the Policy and strategy to benchmark from Kenya which has a comprehensive legal framework for regulating mediators while Ms. Carol Idembe from the Inter Religious Council Uganda equally called upon lawyers to effectively embrace mediation since it's less costly compared to litigation.

Ms. Karen Saidi - LASPNET Board Chairperson implored stakeholders to ensure that there are functional mechanisms where the poor and needy can seek legal redress.



A group photo of participants after the breakfast meeting at Hotel Africana

7.1.7 Provision of legal aid services through the Call Centre

a) The GBV Mobile Toll-free lines

LASPNET in partnership and with support from UNDP Spotlight Initiative, continued to maintain and functionalize the six (6) multiple Toll-free lines from UTL that facilitates the on-spot legal aid services in various spotlight districts including Kampala, Arua, Amudat and Kyegegwa.

The GBV Mobile Toll-free lines are manned by five (5) call agents stationed in various spotlight districts who were trained on customer care, client satisfaction and reporting.

During the reporting period, a total of 246 cases (64 male, 182 female) were handled through on spot legal advice, counselling and appropriate referrals to ULS, LDC-LAC, Uganda Police, LC and CDOs. These cases were related to Domestic violence, Child neglect, Assault, Drug abuse, land disputes, defilement among others.

A table below shows the multiple toll-free lines for the GBV Mobile Call Centre;

No.	District	Toll free line
1.	Amudat	0800111460
2.	Kyegegwa	0800111461
3.	Arua	0800111462
4.	Kampala	0800111463
5.	Kampala	0800111459
6.	Kampala (Main)	0800111401

b) LASPNET's Main Call Centre

In the period under review, LASPNET with support of IDLO continued coordinating partners such as: PILAC, UCU, LDC and ULS who provided call

centre agents to man the Call Centre. During this period, a total of 577 cases (342 Male: 235 Female). Majority of the cases received under the call centre included among others; domestic violence, theft, defilement land disputes and human rights abuse. These were given on spot advice and or referred to the nearest Legal Aid Service Provider.

Some of the Clients feedback:

"I am grateful to the LASPNET call centre that reached out to my husband who abandoned me in hospital before and after giving birth on suspicion that the baby was not his. When he was talked to by the LASPNET Lawyers, he accepted to clear the hospital bills and provide support" Says Nyaragire Monica, Buikwe District.

"I thank the LASPNET Call Center that referred me to Justice Centre Mengo where my mother was able to regain possession of her rental properties from her relatives" remarks Janet Nyakato, Wakiso District.

"Thank you LASPNET for standing with me during the hard moment I was going through in reservicing my loan that had accumulated despite my condition of having got an accident and being permanently incapacitated amidst COVID effects and yet the money lender was unwilling to adjust his terms. Your referral to Justice Center Mubende helped to mitigate the loan from 6 million to 1.4 million through Court. I am forever grateful" asserts Lubega Fred, Gomba District.

7.1.8 Sustaining Collaborations and Partnerships to Influence Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights

Throughout the reporting period, LASPNET ably participated in various engagements organized

by its members, partners-both state and non-state actors in a bid to enhance service delivery in the justice sector. A total of 63 (sixty-three) external membership and partner's meetings were attended by the Board and Secretariat and key among these included the following;

- > The CEO attended the launch of the Annual Access Justice report convened by JLLOS on 6th December 2022 where the CEO presented a paper providing a CSO perspective on the launched.
- > The CEO attended the Lawyering for Change convened by ASF in Brussels on 13th October 2022 where she presented a paper titled "How to reposition justice at the heart of social and political regulation."
- > The High-Level Symposium on GBV convened by the UHRC on 9th December 2022 was attended by Ms. Maria Kaddu, the Research and Knowledge Manager.
- > IDLO Regional Conference on Land and Conflict held from the 24th-26 October, 2022 at Speke Resort, Munyonyo which attended by the CEO and DOP.
- > The Women Judges Conference held on 26th October, 2022 at Speke Resort, Munyonyo which was attended by the CEO.
- > The CSOs leaders' dialogue held on 29th November 2022 attended by the CEO.
- > Europe Day held on 9th May 2023 at the EU residence attended by the CEO.
- > Preparatory mission for the finalization of Denmark Uganda country program 2023-2027 held on 18th May 2023 at the Denmark Embassy and attended by the CEO.
- > DGF closure event held on 30th May 2023 at the Residence of EU ambassador at Kololo Hill.
- > The Thirty-second of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) held from 22nd to 26th June 2023 in Vienna

attended by the CEO.

- > The launch of the civic space index report 2022 held on 20th June 2023 attended by the DOP.

7.1.9 Strengthening ongoing partnerships, New Development and Strategic Partners

In the reporting period, LASPNET continued to work with several partners such as GNPf and UWONET among others. Furthermore, one (1) new Development Partner came on board to support the Network in addition to the ongoing Development partners. The Project interface with partners is further elaborated below;

7.1.10 New Development Partner

a) Internews

LASPNET received funding from Internews to implement a six-month project titled the *“Resiliency plus project.”* The project involved the development of an Information and Security Management Plan and Protocol (ISMPP); convening a training of stakeholders on the utilization of the ISMPP which was held on 12th July 2023 at Piato Restaurant. The training was attended by a total of 39 (19 Male: 20 Female) participants including selected LASPs and Staff facilitated by technical support of Mr. Ben Kerry, an ICT expert; convening a resource mobilization training;

The project is credited for having strengthened the resilience of staff and selected members including Human Rights Focus (HURIFO) Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) and Platform for Labor Action (PLA), as well as putting in place a staff led social welfare committee at the Secretariat.

7.1.11 Activities conducted under Exiting Partnerships

a) European Union

Building on its partnership, LASPNET continued to implement the EU two-year Project titled *“Empowering formal and informal justice system actors to handle and respond to GBV in Mukono; Kayunga and Buikwe districts.”* Some of the main activities implemented during the close out of the EU project were as below;

- > In the month of October, 2022 LASPNET under the EU Project concluded the GBV awareness campaigns through Radio Talk Shows and Mobile Caravans in the districts of Mukono, Kayunga and Buikwe hence creating awareness on the GBV response and prevention in the target districts.
- > Similarly, LASPNET participated in the activities convened by Buikwe district through awareness raising on GBV during the 16 days of activism against GBV on 8th December 2022 at Buikwe district Headquarters.
- > In addition to the above, LASPNET coordinated a successful EU end of project evaluation which aimed at assessing the outcomes and impact of the LASPNET- GBV project for the period Nov. 3rd 2020 to 2nd Nov. 2022. The implemented activities contributed towards the successful EU project closure including being successful in securing the retention of the project vehicle.



Third from the Right is Ms. Olivia Nakawombe from LASPNET undertaking a FGD as part of the end of EU project evaluation.

b) UNDP Spotlight initiative

Building on the existing partnership with UNDP, LASPNET continued to implement the Spotlight Initiative titled *“Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls”* 2019-2022. The Spotlight Initiative came to an end in December 2022 however the Network secured a cost extension to which the following activities were implemented including; Coordinating the UNDP mobile call centre, conducted monitoring visits to LASPs namely PILAC, UGANET, JURIA, UCLF and JCU implementing the Mobile Legal Aid Clinics in Kasese, Kitgum, Tororo and Kampala. During the period between August 2022 and December 2022, a total of 671 clients (452 F: 219M) benefitted from the legal aid services offered during the MLACs in form of awareness, legal advice and referrals.

Furthermore, through operationalization of the GBV toll free line, a total of 91 clients (64F, 27M) were in position to access remedy as part of the recovery mechanisms for violence.



The Chief Guest inspects the exhibition table of LASPNET during the MLAC in Kasese District



A group of dancers entertain participants during the MLAC in Kitgum District

Coordinated a series of activities in line with the commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism which among others included; A total of 10 soft copy fliers with short messages on VAWG from LASPNET staff and members were designed and disseminated across medial platforms; A total of 35 orange shirts with the theme, *“UNITE! Activism to end violence against women and girls”* and LASPNET, UNDP, Spotlight Initiative as well as Orange the World logos were designed and worn by LASPNET staff as they shared their call to stop GBV message as part of the campaign against GBV; and a total of five short videos featuring CEO LASPNET, Board Chair LASPNET, LASPNET Staff, clients of the UNDP project under the MLACs and people from the general public were shot and disseminated on various social media platforms. The videos contained varying messages all geared towards elimination of violence against women and girls.



LASPNET staff pose for a group photo at the LASPNET Secretariat as they commemorate the 16 days of Activism on 1st December 2022

7.1.12 Ongoing projects/ partnerships

a) Australian Development Agency- Avocats Sans Frontiers

LASPNET in partnership with Avocats Sans Frontiers (ASF) with funding from ADC continued to implement a two-year (2020-2022) project; *“Protecting procedural and constitutional rights through access to justice.”* The project seeks to enhance access to justice and human

rights through promotion of procedural rights for pre-trial detainees.

Key among the project activities undertaken in the reporting period include;

- > Continued coordination and facilitation of Human Rights Monitors. A total number of 479 clients (427 male: 52 female) were supported. The project identified and recruited additional 9 Advocates and 3 Paralegals. A total number of 25 Advocates and 31 Paralegals from LASPs such as FIDA-U, ULS and LDC continued to support the project.
- > A total of six (6) coordination forums in the districts of Arua, Gulu and Kitgum on the 5th, 7th and 9th December 2022 and Hoima, Masindi & Kampala on 23rd, 25th and 31st May 2023 respectively were convened. The forums were intended to share experiences and create strategic linkages between LASPs and penal chain local Actors to address emerging issues.
- > A total of 4 support visits to LASPs working under the project as well as stakeholders from the Governance and Security Programme were conducted. These were held from the 18th of June 2023 to 23rd June 2023 in the districts of Arua, Gulu, Kitgum and Lamwo among others.

b) Freedom House- RAJA Project

LASPNET continued to implement the Rights and Justice Activity Project. The project was being implemented in collaboration with various sub group members who include FAPAD, ULS, PILAC and RLP. Some of the activities implemented under the Freedom House project included

- > Engaging a consultant, Dr. Ibrahim Kasirye to develop a cost benefit analysis paper on the national legal aid bill 2022.
- > Additionally, LASPNET facilitated FAPAD to convene a community dialogue held at Ongica B Village, Anai Parish, Lira sub-county on the 7th July 2023. It was attended by 109 (46 Female: 63 Male) participants including District officials, Police and LASPs. The dialogue aimed at creating a platform where the community members would engage the duty bearers on human rights, access to justice and rule of law issues including the mandate of their institutions.

c) International Development Law Organization (IDLO)

LASPNET continued to implement the IDLO project titled; "Supporting Legal Aid Service Providers (LASPs) to enhance access to justice for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized in Uganda," aimed at promoting community justice initiatives. Some of the main activities implemented under the IDLO project included

- > Conducted a training on organizational resiliency and corporate governance.
- > Conducted a National Advocacy dialogue on Informal and Formal Justice Actors on 19th August 2022.
- > Undertook Benchmark visit on NLAB to South Africa on the 21st to 27th August 2022.
- > Convened a Breakfast Prayer and Advocacy Meeting for the National Legal Aid Bill 2022 on 27th June 2023 at Sheraton Hotel -Kampala.
- > The 8th CEO forum and Launch of the fundraising drive for the Legal Aid House held on 26th May 2023 at Imperial Royale Hotel.



- > Facilitated the operations of the LASPNET Call Centre among others.

d) Civil Society Strengthening Activity (CSSA)

LASPNET with the support of CSSA project facilitated and coordinated the convening of the following activities;

- > CIPESA strategic meeting to devise advocacy strategies and tactics to challenge some provisions of the Computer Misuse Amendment Act of 2022 on 3rd October 2022 at Skyz hotel;
- > Convened one (1) radio talk show on 21st October 2022 at Akaboozi Ku Biiri to interrogate the role of NGOs in promoting national development while ensuring compliance with the various legal and regulatory framework.
- > One (1) NGO Forum reflection and planning meeting on CSO operating environment and status of implementation of SDGs which took place on 16th November 2022 at NGO forum offices.
- > Conducted the regional paralegal support visits in the Eastern and Northern region.
- > Supported a total of 15 legal rapid response cases; as well as facilitated the coordination of the 3rd National Conference on CSO enabling environment.

e) OXFAM- VOICE Linking and Learning

LASPNET continued to coordinate Strategic Link to implement the OXFAM funded linking and learning project. The main activities implemented under the project during the report period included;

- > Convening of a two days Annual Linking and Learning event at Country Lake Resort

– Garuga, from 29th to 30th November 2022 aimed at sharing experiences,

- > Facilitate and enhance shared learning and promising approaches of work among grantees and rights holders. It was attended by 44 participants;
- > Held online grantee support meetings;
- > The Linking and Learning Facilitators (LLFs) participated in three (3) Global E-meets on the 5th April, 6th June and 4th July 2023 to give updates in respect to the implementation of project activities in their countries, among others.
- > The Community of Practice meeting with grantees held on 27th June 2023 with grantees including SORAK, JOYI Uganda, GWED-G and HRAP on the utilization of the Community Scorecard.

7.2. RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

LASPNET has continued to strengthen its evidence-based research and knowledge management thematic component. In the reporting period ending July 2023, some of the researches and reference tools undertaken include;

7.2.1 LASPNET research into stakeholder A2J engagement meetings

During the period under review, the secretariat made several researches on topical issues providing information on Access to justice and rule of law and for position papers as below; The Secretariat undertook research that fed into the development of the position paper and meetings as follows;

- > A position on the NLAB 2022 which was presented to the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee on 9th November 2022.

- > A research paper providing perspectives to the JLOS Annual Access to Justice Report 2021/22.

7.2.2 UWONET engaged LASPNET to conduct the National Gender Assessment for the Access to Justice Sub Programme

In the reporting period, LASPNET was engaged by UWONET to conduct a National Gender Assessment for the Access to Justice Sub programme anchored under the 'From Access to Equality (FATE)' project. The research study seeks to among others interrogate the utilization of the Gender Bench Book by the Judiciary; highlight the gender responsiveness of the various justice institutions as well as assess the existing gender gaps in access to justice.

In a bid to partake this research study, LASPNET put up a formidable team led by the CEO as the Lead Consultant and external consultants such as: Dr. Ibrahim Kasirye of Economic Research Policy Centre; Ms. Asha Mwanga, the Executive Director of Islamic Women's Initiative for Justice, Law and Peace (IWILAP) and Mr. Vincent Mutonerwa, an Individual member of LASPNET.

Upon its completion anticipated in October 2023 the research will help to inform advocacy for policy reform and practice change in regards to provision of gender sensitive justice by the Access to Justice Sub Programme institutions.



Mr. Micheal Mugisha during a Focus Group Discussion with GBV Survivors at Kiryandongo

7.3 LOBBY AND ADVOCACY

In the year ending July 2023, LASPNET with support of development partners who included IDLO, Freedom House, ADA among others implemented various advocacy interventions aimed at enhancing Access to Justice; Human rights and Rule of Law as heightened below;

7.3.1 Advocacy for complementarity between formal and informal justice system actors

LASPNET convened a National Advocacy dialogue on 19th August 2022 at Hotel Africana under the theme "Re-affirming the complementarity of the Formal and Informal justice systems in a bid to enhance Access to Justice for the Poor, Vulnerable and Marginalized in Uganda." The dialogue which was graced by Hon. Nobert Mao, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs was attended by 52 participants (38 Male and 14Female) drawn from formal and informal justice systems, International Development Law Organization (IDLO) and LASPs such as World Voices Uganda, Uganda Law Society, Inter religious Council, Muslim Center for Justice and Law, Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) and Media.

At the dialogue Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa presented a paper titled "A Synopsis on the



Seated in the middle is Hon. Nobert Mao, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs at the dialogue together with other dignitaries

role of formal and informal justice systems as dispute resolution mechanisms and how to strengthen them to deliver meaningful Justice; the lessons and recommendations from the regional engagement meetings in Western and Northern Uganda.” The paper provided several recommendations intended to strengthen the linkages between formal and informal justice actors such as the need to formally recognize informal justice systems, Integrate and acknowledge informal justice systems within the formal justice systems; the need to provide technical support and assistance to actors within informal justice systems; the need to create referral pathways between both formal and informal justice systems as well as the need to undertake comprehensive research exploring the complementary role of Formal and Informal Justice System.

underscored the importance of empowering informal justice systems through trainings and funding to help decongest the formal justice system which is currently grappling with case backlog. He concluded by pledging to work with Legal Aid Service Providers (LASPs) to ensure that that the National Legal Aid law is enacted.

The recently launched Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy and Strategy can be attributed to the above engagement.



Above is the panel discussion and Owek. Christopher Bwanika submitting on the Concept of Justice under the Kooti ya Kisekwa Justice system in Buganda and how it systematically feed into the formal justice system.



In a veil is Ms. Barbara Kilei the Country Director of IDLO attending the National Advocacy dialogue

Ms. Barbara Kilei the Country Director of IDLO in her remarks implored LASPs to be innovative and seek to build linkages with formal and informal justice actors for effectiveness in access to justice delivery. The panel was instituted by Mr. Pulkol Tebanyang, from Etem/Ekokwa Karamojong regions, Owek. Christopher Bwanika, the AG Buganda Kingdom, Ms. Theo Webale, the Chairperson World Voices Uganda and Mr. Lokwiya Francis from the Acholi Peace Initiative. While addressing the forum, Hon. Nobert Mao, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs

7.3.2 Benchmarking visit for the NLAB conducted in South Africa

LASPNET working with Legal Aid South Africa with support from IDLO undertook a learning visit on 21st-27th August 2022 to South Africa. The visit was attended by a team of 10 delegates (7 Male: 3 Female) including Dr. Sylvia Mukasa Namubiru (CEO LASPNET); Mr. Arthur Nsereko (Board Chairperson LASPNET); Hon. Silas Aogon (MP Kumi Municipality & Private Mover); Hon. Lillian Obiale Paparu (Seconder); Hon. Asuman Basalirwa (Seconder); Mr. Gard Benda Ntegyereize (CEO WVU); Mr. Moses Okwalinga (CEO ULS); Ms. Joyce Freda Apio (IDLO); Mr. Samson Asimwe (IDLO); Mr. Badru Walusansa (LASPNET). Additionally, during the visits, the delegates interacted with various legal aid actors in South Africa including Legal

Aid South Africa as the hosting organization from where the delegates learnt the history of legal aid in South Africa, its current budgetary appropriation, quality assurance in legal aid service provision among others.

Other actors engaged during the visit include the Community Advise Organization of South Africa (CAOSA); Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS); Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI); RIGHT2KNOW; Legal Resource Centre (LRC) and Section 27. The lessons drawn from those actors included the need to invest more in strategic litigation as well as working in coalitions to harness synergies. Some of the recommendations drawn from the visit included;

- > The need to execute an MoU between LASPNET and LSA for strengthened collaborations and partnership;
- > The need to strengthen quality assurance in legal aid service provision through monitoring the services delivered by Advocates;
- > The need to fast track the enactment of the National Legal Aid law as well as;
- > The need to challenge unconstitutional laws through strategic litigation.

One of the outcomes from the visits was the efforts undertaken by the Private Mover of the NLAB (Hon. Silas Aogon) on 28th September 2022 to introduce the Bill on the floor of Parliament for the first reading.



A group photo of the Ugandan delegation to South Africa on a benchmarking visit for the NLAB.

7.3.3 Residential Meeting with the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee

LASPNET convened a Residential Retreat with selected Members of the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee (LPAC) from 11th to 13th November 2022. The meeting which took place at Best Western Hotel in Entebbe and was attended by 35 (19 Male: 14 Female) participants including MPs of the LPAC; Drafters; Movers; Legislative Advisors; National Working Group and LASPNET staff. The meeting was purposed on briefing the Members of the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs about the NLAB, its intention, contents as well as historical advocacy journey. Following the Residential retreat, LASPNET and its members (FIDA, Justice Defenders, CEHURD, ULS and AVV) were invited by the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee to present their views on the National Legal Aid Bill. These views were consolidated into the committee report which was submitted to the office of the Speaker of Parliament.

7.3.4 LASPNET attended the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee meeting with the Learned Hon. Attorney General



Hon. Aogon Silas the mover of the bill during a second reading of the NLAB 2022.

The Learned Hon. Attorney General (AG) Kiryowa Kiwanuka appeared before the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee on 14th February 2023 to purposely present Government's position

on the proposed National Legal Aid Law. In his presentation, the AG argued that Government is not ready to implement a state-funded legal aid scheme on grounds that it would impose a huge financial burden on the nation coffers amidst the prevailing national budget constraints. According to the AG, funding legal aid would lead Government to expend about UGx 48 billion which is currently unavailable.

The AG's position has however been counteracted by an empirical study funded by Freedom House titled; *"Socio-economic cost benefit analysis paper on the NLAB."* The preliminary findings from this study have revealed that the estimated budget for funding a national legal aid scheme is UGx 30m. LASPNET intends to disseminate this research paper to key stakeholders including the Executive, Parliament, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

Subsequently on 24th February 2023, Hon. Silas Aogon, the Private Mover for the NLAB in company of LASPNET's CEO and Lobby and Advocacy Officer returned to the Legal and Parliament committee with a comprehensive written submission highlighting the rationale of the NLAB as well as responses to the AG's position.

The Private Mover demystified to the committee that a state funded legal aid scheme is imperative in promoting socio-economic development. He further argued that it would propel equality, fairness and national security which are springboards for Uganda's development. The committee utilised the submissions from the Private Mover to enrich their report to the Speaker of Parliament prior to the second reading of the NLAB.

7.3.5 District Joint Advocacy Dialogues between Local Councils and LASPS on Gender Based Violence (GBV) Case Management in Tororo and Kyegegwa Districts

LASPNET with support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the Spotlight Initiative Programme conducted two joint dialogues in Tororo and Kyegegwa on 11th and 15th May 2023 respectively.

The two events were graced by a total of 107 participants (44 female: 63 male) including district leadership and LASPS.



A group photo of all participants during the meeting at Tororo district headquarters.

The Deputy CAO in Tororo district, Mr. Joseph Magiri appreciated LASPNET for choosing Tororo district to conduct the dialogue meeting between LCs and LASPS, noting that the district is currently grappling with GBV incidences. Similarly, Mr. Byamukama John Kisoke, the District Chairperson of Kyegegwa in the same measure commended LASPNET for extending the dialogue to Kyegegwa district where GBV is prevalent.

Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa, the CEO of LASPNET, in her presentation provided statistics from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics of 2022, indicating 51% of women between 15-45 years of age were exposed to gender-based violence. In addition, she hinted about the 2022 Annual Police Crimes report, where a total of 17,698 cases of Domestic violence were reported to Police in 2022 compared

to 17,533 cases reported in 2021 thus giving a 0.94% increase in the volume of Domestic Violence cases registered. Similarly, from January 2023 to September 2022, members of the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) GBV Sector Working Group (SWG) had already handled 4,513 reported incidents of Gender Based Violence in 13 refugee hosting districts in Uganda, Tororo inclusive.

While giving statistics about GBV, the District Probation Officer of Tororo district Ms. Alamai Suzan mentioned that since 2019, they have had a high number of GBV cases for instance, in 2022 to date, they received 982 walk-ins' cases with intimate partners violence standing at 69% as teenage pregnancies was at 29%.

"Therefore and with support of European Union Spotlight Initiative, the district managed to identify harmful traditional practices such as child marriages/ defilement, domestic violence, rape, denial of property ownership, child labour among others. There has also been increased awareness and advocacy through dialogues, radio programs, spot messages, as well as adopting different approaches such as communication development; improved on data management through Uganda helpline and Gender Based Violence IIMS." She added.

On the other hand, Mr. Nyakabwa Augustine, the Probation Officer of Kyegegwa district revealed that since 2020 – 2022, the district registered a total of 13315 number of teenage pregnancies similar to Tororo District. He cited some of the drivers including negative cultural and religious practices, poverty, moral and cultural decays, poor enforcement of laws, alcohol and drug abuse among others.

The key recommendations generated from both dialogues included the need to intensify sensitization programs, to strengthen the referral pathways network, sustain the strong coordination between the CAO's office and to maximally utilize the existing community structures, involving male as well as strengthening the collaboration between cultural and religious institutions with major service providers.

At the dialogue, the Tororo District Councillor Mr. Opoya Noah implored members to keep on sensitizing the masses about the dangers of domestic violence as well as fighting poverty which is a root cause of GBV in families. Whereas the District Woman Councilor and Secretary of Works who represented the RDC of Kyegegwa tasked participants to be champions against GBV within their villages.



A group photo of all participants in front of the Kyegegwa District headquarters' main building

7.3.6 Government urged by Religious Leaders to fast-track the enactment of a state National Legal Aid Law

The Legal Aid Service Providers' Network (LASPNET) together with the Inter Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) in support of International Development Law Organization (IDLO) and Sweden Sverige (SIDA) convened a Breakfast Prayer and Advocacy Meeting for the National Legal Aid Bill 2022 on 27th June 2023 at Sheraton Hotel -Kampala.



Mr. Joshua Kitakule, the Secretary General IRCU making his remarks

The meeting was intended to among others to orient senior religious leaders on the rationale of a state funded legal aid scheme as well as harness their support towards the ongoing advocacy efforts for fast tracking the enactment of the National Legal Aid Law 2022. It was attended by a total of 90 participants (53 Male: 37 Female) who included key dignitaries like Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda the presiding Apostle of the Born-Again Churches in Uganda, Monsignor Dr. John Kauta- Secretary General of Uganda Episcopal Conference, the Former Attorney General- Hon. Fredrick Ruhindi, Hon. Silas Aogon- the private mover of the bill, Hon. former MPs; Hon. Lyandro Komakech and Bichetero Veronica among others.

Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa, the CEO of LASPNET while presenting the advocacy journey for the NLAB 2022 emphasized the fact that the process of advocating for the legal aid law in Uganda been protracted characterized by both success stories and challenges especially absence of lack of political will to fast track its enactment. Her appeal to the religious leaders to engage with key policy makers in discussions related to the enactment of the NLAB.

Ms. Karen Saidi – the Chairperson LASPNET Board of Directors noted that the demand for legal aid services is on the rise as most Ugandans

still cannot afford a lawyer. She reiterated that LASPNET has for a long time advocated for the enactment of the NLAB through working with partners such as IDLO. Fundamentally and aware of the critical role of the religious leaders, she implored with them to utilize their various platforms to voice the need for the NLAB.



Some of the Religious leaders that graced the meeting paying attention to the proceedings.

Mr. Joshua Kitakule, the Secretary-General IRCU, stressed that the cost of accessing Legal Aid in Uganda is on the rise and the country cannot depend on donor aid forever. He implored the meeting to focus on the objectives and how religious leaders can address the pressing concerns of access to legal aid services.

Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda the presiding Apostle of the Born-Again Churches in Uganda delivered the key note address on behalf of the Chairperson of the Council of the Presidents of IRCU. Standing out from the key note address was the fact that provision of legal aid and justice is deeply entrenched in various religions whether Christianity or Islam and therefore religious leaders should interest themselves in advocating for the enactment of the NLAB.



Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda speaking about the importance of the Legal Aid Bill

Linking the bill to the IRCU values, Apostle Serwadda mentioned that the Bill resonates with IRCU's mandate which is a divinely peaceful, united, prosperous Uganda' where all people enjoy full health and freedoms for the common good.

Dr. Serwadda also noted that Uganda being a poor country with many living below the poverty line of 1 US dollar per day, the need for the NLAB can be overemphasized. She highlighted that there are many people on remand who cannot get timely justice in courts due to exorbitant legal costs coupled with case backlog due to overwhelming court cases. He therefore called upon both the Executive and Parliament to fast track the enactment of the NLAB into law.

Hon. Aogon Silas, the current Mover of the NLAB also appealed to the religious leaders to leverage their prowess and engage various policy makers on the need to fast track the enactment of the NLAB.

While Former Attorney General, Hon. Fredrick Ruhindi as he closed the meeting emphasized that the bill is highly needed by society and must be given priority observing that the UGX 47 billion is not a lot of money for government appropriation. He further urged LASPNET and

IRCU to organize and meet H.E the President of Uganda over the NLAB.

Generally, the religious leaders committed to causing a meeting to brief His Excellency the President of Uganda, drumming the cause on their pulpit in addition to a highly recommended key stakeholders and public initiative and working together as stakeholder to push the National Legal Aid agenda.

7.3.7 LASPNET developed a new Lobby and Advocacy Plan 2023/2027

LASPNET with the financial support from UNDP Spotlight Initiative project engaged a consultant, Mr. Joseph Nyakana to develop the Lobby and Advocacy plan for the Secretariat and Membership. The Advocacy Plan is aimed providing a road map with key strategies for shaping the Network's advocacy engagements.

7.3.8 Leveraging on Cluster meetings to support Research and Advocacy

In the reporting period, a cluster meeting was held, these were: One (1) virtual social cluster meeting was convened on 8th November 2022 attracting a total of 15 members including PILAC, IRCU, CEHURD, AVV and JCU. The meeting was purposely intended to seek members' views on the NLAB Subsequently, the membership working group was able to contribute to the development of a position paper with members' input and further submission to the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee that was made on the 9th November 2022 on the content of the National Legal Aid Bill 2022.

7.3.9 Continuation with Coordination of Rapid Legal Response Mechanisms for HRDS

In the period under review, LASPNET with support of EWMI & ICNL supported three (3) rapid response lawyers drawn from LASPs such as AFCOD, MCJL, LDC-LAC among others. They handled 15 students from Makerere University who were provided with legal rapid response following their demonstration demanding university management to release their final exams that had been withheld by the university. As a result of this intervention, all the students were granted Police Bond.

The above progress notwithstanding, the Rapid Response project remains scaled down due to the exit of DGF. As such the Secretariat intends to revive the project under the other prospective Donors.

7.3.10 The A2J, Human rights Petitions and Position papers

In the reporting period, LASPNET prepared three petitions as highlighted below;

- > A position paper on the NLAB 2022 was prepared and submitted to the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee that was made on the 9th November 2022.
- > The paper on CSO perspective for the JLOS Annual A2J report was prepared and presented by the CEO at the joint Government of Uganda-Development Partners' A2J Annual Review meeting held on 6th December 2022 at Speak Resort Munyonyo. This paper on CSO perspective for the JLOS Annual Access to Justice report 2021/2022 was highly appraised for its objectivity at the JLOS Annual Review meeting.

7.3.11 Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights enhanced through media and related information forums

LASPNET has continuously utilized various media platforms including: Newspapers; Radio and TV to educate, sensitize and advocate for Access to Justice; Rule of Law and Human Rights especially for the poor and vulnerable Platforms. The media has been pivotal in providing free space to LASPNET and enabling its continued visibility in a bid to further its mandate to enlighten the populace on aspect of access to Justice rule of law and human rights. Therefore, the engagements captured during the reporting period include the following;

a) Media publicity carried out for LASPNET events

Having stayed relevant on access to justice, human rights and rule of law issues, LASPNET enjoyed free media services in the local dailies and online newspapers. In the reporting period, a total of 6 media coverage and mentions were captured reporting about LASPNET's work and events. More of the media publicity can be viewed on some of the following links.

- > The Daily Monitor News Paper of 29th June 2023.
- > Gov't urged to accelerate formulation of National Legal Aid Law <https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/news/govt-urged-to-accelerate-formulation-of-natio-163666>
- > On YouTube channels (BBS TV) https://youtu.be/jmRqXSO_aU and on YOUTUBE Channel: <https://youtu.be/-gFDr3fG6VI>
- > Salt TV talk show: https://www.youtube.com/live/fVrF5Qss_i0?feature=share
- > <https://youtu.be/MRUuzRNdJiw>
- > <https://twitter.com/bbstvug/1673733745713594382?t=vk7QClnN7QZretQK-PA8bLQ&s=08>

b) Radio Talk shows

A total of seven (7) radio talks shows were held to educate the public on various access to justice and human rights issues such as GBV, NLAB among others as elucidated below;

- > Three (3) radio talk shows were conducted on various radio stations including KFM, CBS and Akaboozi Ku Biiri to discuss various topics including the Ambayo case and commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV.
- > On 27th June 2023, LASPNET featured on radio one on an evening programme called Spectrum and it was represented by Counsel Suzan Nabirye of Legal Aid Clinic of Law Development Centre (LAC-LDC) and Mr. Andrew Lugoloobi of Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) where they discussed the outcomes of the Prayer Breakfast Meeting with Religious Leaders at Sheraton Hotel about advocating for NLAB2022 that happened on the same day.
- > With support of IDLO, LASPNET coordinated two radio talk shows for MIFUMI and UGANET on 106.8 Rock Mambo FM and 87.9 Akaboozi FM on 8th & 17th May 2023 respectively. The talk shows enabled both organizations to popularise their cost-effective legal aid models that is the Survivor Centered services and Rising Woman and Wellness Shelters.

c) Television Talk shows

In the reporting period, 12 TV talk appearances were aired under the partnership with various media houses;

- > TV talk show was attended by the CEO on Salt TV on Monday December 2022 discussing a topic titled "Okufuna Obwenkanya Kikyasoboka mu Ggwanga"
- > Ms. Nakawombe Olivia- The LASPNET's Lobby & Advocacy Officer and Mr. Osapiri John of IRCU on 28th June 2023 appeared on Dream TV evening programme dubbed "Ekiri Mu Ttu" to discuss the said Prayer Advocacy meeting.

- > LASPNET appeared in news on local TVs such as BBS TV, Spark TV, NBS TV, and NTV as well as both in the daily newspapers and online especially during the Prayer Breakfast Advocacy Meeting about NLAB2022 at Sheraton Hotel;
- > A radio talk show on QFM held on 30th January 2023 in Lira to discuss the role of NGOs in socio-economic development while focusing on legal and regulatory compliance with support of CSSA Project. The panelists included FAPAD and Lira NGO Forum.
- > A special report about legal aid bill – Public access to legal possible – on NBS TV on March 2023 – (<https://youtu.be/iMGjgKyleygg>) featuring the CEO.
- > Advocates for justice calls on gov't to pass the legal aid bill – 30th Jan 2023 on UBC TV (<https://youtu.be/CA0odIb0TWZc>) featuring the CEO.
- > Women's Day Celebrations on 8th March 2023 on Salt TV (<https://youtu.be/hKsS2y9bBgA>) featuring the CEO
- > Dr. Sylvia Namubiru appeared on CBS FM 89.2 on Women's Day as an Anchor for the at 5:00pm news.
- > Dr. Sylvia appeared on KFM 93.3 on VPN Talk show on 7th February 2023

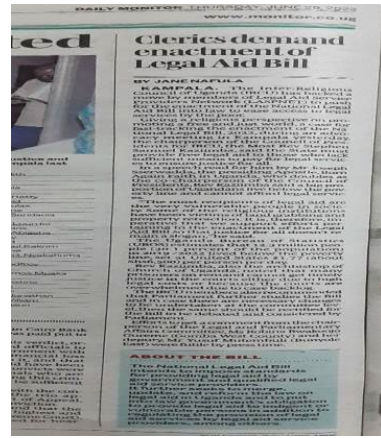
d) Use of documentary and Short videos

In a bid to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism, a total of five (5) short videos were produced featuring LASPNET staff, the Board Chairperson elect and young children sharing their views on the 16 Days of Activism. These videos were widely shared on the Network's social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.

e) On line Articles

LASPNET featured in an article produced by Mulengera news on 14th December 2022 summarizing CEO's paper presentation on CSO perspective on the Access to Justice Report launched by JLOS on 6th December 2022.

MEDIA ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENTS IN PICTURES



7.4 INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

LASPNET has continued to enhance its performance standards through institutional development of the Secretariat and its member organizations. This was done through capacity-building initiatives including holding trainings meetings, IIMS utilization, undertaking targeted organizational resiliency and resource mobilization. The details below illustrate some of the actions undertaken;

7.4.1 LASPNET held a sustainability reflection workshop for DGF partner LASPs

With funding support from DGF, LASPNET convened a two-day Sustainability Reflection workshop from 19th and 20th September 2022 at Garuga Lake Resort hotel. The workshop was attended by a total of 53 participants (33 male: 20 female). It was among others graced by Ms. Nicole Bjerler, the Head of Facility at DGF as well as Ms. Martha Nanjobe, the Deputy Learning and Programme Manager and the Programme Manager Sphere III.



A panelist making her submissions during the sustainability workshop

The workshop was three-fold featuring deliberations on sustainability of DGF interventions, experience sharing of the lessons learnt from South Africa and a training of LASPs on organizational sustainability and resilience. A multitude of innovations and sustainable models implemented by LASPNET and LASPs such as

FIDA-UG, ACTV and PLA were shared during the workshop.

During the experience sharing session from South Africa, participants were fascinated by the level of growth and development of the South African Legal Aid sector. They appreciated the factors that have contributed to the above growth which among other include; the political will, respect for constitutional democracy; sufficient funding, professionalism and quality assurance of legal aid services. From this session, many participants confirmed that they had learnt a lot.

"I wish to thank Dr. Sylvia Namubiru for her strategic leadership that has positioned LASPNET as one of the most vibrant Networks bringing together over 50 Legal Aid Service Providers (LASPs). I am sure LASPNET wouldn't have been what it is today, without the support of DGF." Mr. Ali Aluma, Programme Manager, UMSC.

The key recommendations that arose from the workshop included the need for LASPs to invest in developing institutional sustainability plans; the need to strengthen the capacity of Uganda Law Council to effectively discharge its mandate; the need to support struggling LASPs to develop internal systems and the need to fund efforts geared towards fast tracking the enactment of the National Legal Aid law.



Ms. Nicole Bjerler, the Head of Facility giving her remarks at the sustainability workshop

7.4.2 LASPs trained on Organizational Resiliency and Corporate Governance

In an effort to strengthen Organizational resiliency for its members, LASPNET with support from IDLO conducted a thematic training of LASPs in organizational resiliency and corporate governance. The training took place from 12th-14th October 2022 at Eureka Hotel Kampala. The training was attended by 35 participants (15 Female: 20 Male) from LASPs such as HURIFO, UCLF, KCOBPA and ULS. The participants were trained on various modules including the "Organizational resilience in the context of Legal Aid Service Providers" by Ms. Isabella Akiteng; "Experience sharing on sustainability; Perspectives from ActionAid Uganda" by Mr. Xavier Enjoi and "Introduction to corporate governance amongst LASPs" by Mr. Joseph Nyakana. By far and large, the participants appreciated LASPNET for the training since they were equipped with knowledge and skills in organizational resilience and corporate governance to better manage their institutions.

7.4.3 Advocates and Paralegals Training

ASF in partnership with LASPNET convened a training for lawyers and paralegals in Entebbe at Admas Grande Hotel on 27th to 28th February and 2nd to 3rd March 2023 respectively.

The training was intended to enhance the capacity of Lawyers and paralegals in a number of capacities namely: the protection and promotion of procedural and constitutional rights of pre-trial detainees; enhance the Lawyers and Paralegals' skills in use of the monitoring tool –KOBO tool kit; capacitate the Advocates and Paralegals on data quality assurance as required by the new protocol for legal aid; discuss and address the concerns raised through the project monitoring and in the satisfaction survey.

The training was attended by a total of 27 advocates and 31 paralegals from the different LASPs. The outcome of this training was the increased knowledge and skills of Advocates and Paralegals on how to effectively respond to PTD cases.



A group photo of participants after the training at Admas Grand Hotel

7.4.4 Strengthening CSO legal and regulatory compliance facilitated through;

a) Convening a Radio talk show:

LASPNET with support from Civil Society Strengthening Activity (CSSA)-East West Management Institute (EWMI) held a radio talk show on QFM to discuss the role of NGOs in socio-economic development while focusing on legal and regulatory compliance. The panelists included Ms. Grace Achot, a Programme Manager at FAPAD and Mr. Dickens Ogwal, the Executive Director of Lira NGO Forum. The radio talk show helped to among others demystify the work of NGOs especially in Lango Sub region. It further led to increased knowledge and understanding of the various legal and regulatory frameworks that NGOs ought to comply with in the execution of their work.

b) Hosting a URSB Virtual Training for CSOs

LASPNET in Partnership with DENIVA Uganda with support from CSSA-EWMI conducted a virtual information sharing session for Beneficial Owners information. This training was facilitated by Counsel Peter Mageliah, the Executive Director of DENIVA and Mr. Fredrick Olinga, the National QuAM Coordinator.

The training was overwhelmingly attended by 300 participants (65 female, 72 male and 163 others) from LASPs and the entire CSO sector who were trained on how to file the Beneficial Owners Information. Some of the feedback comments arising from the session and captured;

"The virtual training helped us a great deal to register our organization's Beneficial Owner's Information."

7.4.5 LASPNET convened a virtual meeting on institutional and organizational resiliency and sustainability

LASPNET held a virtual meeting under the Resiliency Project on 15th February 2023. This meeting was a follow up of ROCCS physical and virtual meeting that was held on 10th

February 2022 by Resiliency Coaches; Ms. Susan Njambi and Ms. Jackie Asimwe at the Secretariat. The first meeting involved sharing reflections about LASPNET's desired sustainable initiatives under situational analysis, entrepreneurial mind and wellbeing. As a result of this meeting the Secretariat developed a roadmap and work plan to inform its resiliency journey. Furthermore, the LASPNET welfare committee was birthed out of that one-day reflection session.

7.4.6 The 8th CEOs FORUM and Launch of the Fundraising Drive for the Legal aid house

With funding from International Development Law Organization (IDLO), LASPNET convened the 8th CEO's Forum was held on 26th May 2023 at Imperial Royale Hotel under the theme *"Taking stock of emerging trends in the Legal Aid Sector while reimagining institutional resilience and innovation for effective service delivery"*.



Ms. Fatima Kange, Executive Director CEHURD speaking and other panelists during a panel discussion at the CEOs Forum

The meeting was attended by 62 participants (32 Male: 30 Female) from LASPs, individual members and LASPNET staff. Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of LASPNET, during her speech stated how LASPNET had religiously maintained the culture of convening CEO Forums for the last eight (8) years and commended IDLO for funding this activity. She commended LASPNET for the relentless advocacy efforts for the NLAB despite the dwindling funding resources, in addition to imploring LASPs to continue investing into innovative approaches

for providing legal aid service as they wait for the enactment of the NLAB 2022.



Hon. Lady Justice Eva Luswata who was the guest of honor flanked by Ms. Karen Said- the current Chairperson of LASPNET Board during the 8th CEO's Forum 2023

During this meeting, members were given opportunity to deliberate on the report delivered by the CEO and other issues as well as a panel discussion that constituted of Ms. Lydia Bwiite, Platform for Labour Action, Mr. Boaz Ongodia Manager Call centre at UGANET, Ms. Fatia Kiyange, Executive Director CEHURD and Ms. Betty Balisalamu, Executive Director WWM. The discussion provided the LASPs individual sustainability and resilience mechanisms.

In her closing remarks, Hon. Lady Justice Eva Luswata, appreciated the organizations and all the Advocates who decided to offer themselves to advocate for the indigents rather than work as private practitioners. She recognized the diversity of LASPs' legal services offered such as health (HIV), Labor, Refugee camps among others. She took special recognition of the different innovations undertaken by different organizations to overcome the challenges before them and continue to offer services to the rightsholders.

She emphasized the importance of Networking and Cross-learning and hence implored the participants to seat down with other Network Members and learn from each other on how to improve in different aspects of their thematic areas.

Key outcome of this meeting was the launch of the fundraising drive for Legal aid service spearheaded by Hon. Lady Justice Eva Luswata.



Hon. Lady Justice Eva Luswata officially launches the fundraising drive to build the Legal Aid House

Her Lordship later in her speech, acknowledged the great work done towards acquiring a permanent home and encouraged the participants to actively participate in the fundraising drive to ensure the network constructs its own house since it will help to cut a lot of expenditures at the Secretariat. To realize this, the Hon. Lady Justice Eva Luswata contributed 1.5M towards the construction of the Legal Aid House making a total pledge of UGX 6,300,000/=.

The critical recommendation and action points from the 8th CEO's meeting included continuing fundraising for the Legal Aid House, undertaking a media advocacy campaign to engage the public to hold the MPs accountable for the delay of the National Legal Aid Law, LASPNET to engage Uganda Law Council (ULC) on fast tracking regulation certification of paralegals, holding an engagement meeting with LDC to discuss emerging issues in the legal profession and LASPs to integrating psychosocial support services into legal aid service provision and delivery.



Her Lordship Justice Eva Luswata addressing Members during the launch

7.4.7 Development of the ISMPP and convened a training of stakeholders on its utilization

LASPNET with support from the Resiliency Plus project, the training of stakeholders in the ISMPP was held on 12th July 2023 at Piato Restaurant and attended by a total of 39 (19 Male: 20 Female) participants including selected LASPs and Staff. The facilitators for the training included Mr. Ben Kerry Mawejje and Mr. Brian Byaruhanga and the areas covered included digital security, digital assets, digital technology and digital identity. Overall, the training contributed to increased understanding of digital and information security management by the participants.

7.4.8 LASPNET and partners trained on resource mobilization

LASPNET together with other Resiliency Plus partners participated in a series of resource mobilization trainings facilitated by Partners Global Coaches (Susan Njambi and Jackie Assimwe). The trainings among others encouraged partners to identify local fundraising opportunities and to this end, LASPNET was able to experiment this avenue through launching a fundraising drive for the establishment of the Legal Aid House to accommodate LASPNET's offices.

7.4.9 A training Curriculum for LASPs developed with support of IDLO

LASPNET developed a Training Curriculum for LASPs in Uganda. This curriculum is intended to offer a comprehensive set of learning objectives, content, materials, and methods of delivery, methods for assessing participant attainment of knowledge and skills acquired from various trainings. It further covers modules such as Social Work, Artificial Intelligence as well as Oil and Gas among others. The curriculum underwent a review and approval process by the donor and LASPs and its effective implementation will contribute towards standardized service delivery.

7.4.10 Election of New Board at the 13th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and admission of new member organizations

The Network convened its 13th AGM on 21st October 2022 both virtually and physically at the Secretariat.



A group photo of participants at the 13th AGM held at LASPNET secretariat

The AGM was attended by a total of 56 participants drawn from LASPs such as UCLF, FIDA, LDC, PLA, HRCU among others. During the AGM, the Secretariat presented the Annual Report 2021/22, Financial Report as well as the Membership Report 2021/22 to the AGM.

The 13th AGM ushered in a new Board of Directors where Ms. Karen Saidi was elected as the Board Chairperson to steer the organization for the next

two years (2022-2024). The newly elected Board is comprised of Ms. Karen Saidi (Board Chairperson); Mr. Okwalinga Moses (Vice Chairperson); Ms. Nayiga Grace (General Secretary); Mr. Adrian Ddungu (Treasurer); Her Worship Nasasira Nahabwe (Western Representative); Ms. Prossy Imela (Central Representative); Ms. Balisalamu Betty (Eastern Representative); Ms. Elizabeth Alyano (Northern Representative); Ms. Flavia Zalwango (Member on Merit) and Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa (Ex-officio). More significantly, from 15th to 17th December 2022, all the new Board members were oriented and trained on their roles and responsibilities at Forest Park Buloba.

Furthermore, the AGM admitted a total of 11 individual associate members and 14 honorary members. Three (3) organizations were also admitted to the Network that is Women Rights Initiative (WORI), Advocates for Natural Resources and Development (ANARDE) and Centre for Women and Children's Reintegration (CEWOCHR).

In order to enhance institutional sustainability, the AGM resolved to establish a committee that will further the Network's aspiration of constructing a LASPNET home. In addition, the AGM passed a resolution to appoint Ms. Ddamba Associates as the new external Auditors of LASPNET subject to renewal on annual basis.

Finally, the AGM was crowned off by social interaction for the Staff, Board and Members who were entertained to a live band and refreshments in a bid to enhance wellness as well as celebrate the successes registered by the Network in the year 2022.



The new board elect pose for a photo with the returning officer Mr. Aaron Besigye (5th from left)



Above are the Staff dancing to the band after the 13th AGM



The CEO together with other board members being entertained by the band after the 13th AGM.

7.4.11 The Secretariat Capacity Strengthened to deliver on LASPNET mandate

The Secretariat staff was supported with a total of 2 capacity development opportunities. These included:

- i) A training on the ISMPP, its significance at Individual and Organizational level.**

As noted earlier, LASPNET convened a training on the utilization of the ISMPP. The training was held on 12th July 2023 at Piato Restaurant. Overall, the

training contributed to increased understanding of digital and information security management by the participants. As well as Staff and management capabilities enhanced on strategies for strengthening personal and organizational security.

ii) Training of Staff in Resource Mobilization

LASPNET together with other Resiliency Plus partners participated in a series of resource mobilization trainings facilitated by Partners Global Coaches (Susan Njambi and Jackie Assimwe). The trainings among others encouraged participants to identify local fundraising opportunities and to this end, LASPNET was able to experiment this avenue through launching a fundraising drive for the establishment of the Legal Aid House to accommodate LASPNET's offices. The launch took place on 26th May 2023 at the sidelines of the LASPNET 8th CEO's Forum held at Imperial Royale Hotel.

iii) Training in Corporate Governance

LASPNET together with other stakeholders such as FIDA-U, ULS, UWONET, Penal Reform International among others attended a four days capacity building training on Corporate Governance held from the 28th to 31st March 2023 at Nile Village Hotel, Jinja with support of IDLO. The training was aimed at equipping the participants with knowledge and skills in Corporate Governance and apply the same at the institutional level.

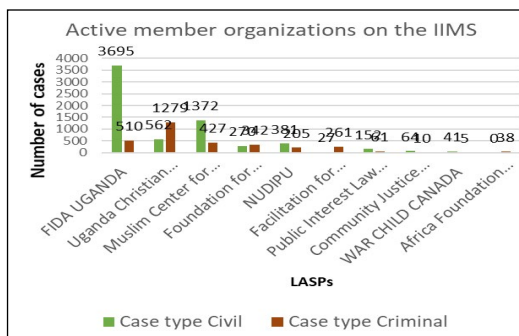
7.4.12 LASPs continuously supported on the use of IIMS

Under the reporting period, a total of Twenty-Seven (27) organizations remain enrolled on the IIMS but low in utilization and with only nine (9) LASPs that include MCJL, UCLF, FIDA-Uganda,

CJAF, HURIFO, PILAC, AFCOD, WVU, LDC-LAC among others logging in and entering cases. The main cause for the low usage recently can be attributed to lack of consistency by some LASPs, limited Human resources, low adaptability to technology and in some aspects loss of funding especially for LASPs that were mainly funded by DGF and in addition to some members who were deregistered during the reporting period.

a) Cases Registered on the IIMS System

Therefore, arising from the continued support to LASPs, and consultative meeting, a total of 10208 cases were entered into the IIMS up from 10188. Out of those entered 6200 were civil cases against criminal which stood at 3988. The gender stood at 3373 for as male cases and 6815 female. Overall FIDA Uganda featured as the most regular user of the IIMS with highest number of cases entered into the system followed by MCJL.



FIDA Uganda – 4205
 UCLF – 1841
 MCJL – 1799
 FHRI - 612

b) The USSD developed, validated and functionalized on the IIMS

LASPNET with IDLO support successfully integrated a USSD code into the IIMS to ease its accessibility by especially paralegals without smart phones

or poor internet to be able to utilize the referral pathway by using short codes to report cases which will be uploaded to the online application for referral. During the reporting period, fifteen (15) paralegals were trained on the utilization of the paralegal pathway through zoom meetings. Additionally, twenty (20) paralegals were contacted to ensure that they upload their cases on paralegal pathway. As a result, a total of 5 cases were uploaded into the system mainly from UCLF and MCJL paralegals. The nature of cases uploaded on the IIMS were related to civil and criminal.

7.4.13 LASPNET Board and Committees meetings convened

A total of two (2) board meetings were held in reporting period, six (6) committee meetings and four (4) task force meetings were held as below;

- > Preceding the 13th AGM, four (4) Board task force meetings were conducted to facilitate the Board, Management on strategies for convening a successful 13th AGM.
- > In addition, six (6) committee meetings were held virtually namely: the Planning and Programmes committee meeting held on 27th March 2023; Public Interest Litigation committee held on 28th March 2023; Governance and Administration committee held on 29th March 2023; Organizational Development and Sustainability committee held on 30th March 2023; the Finance and Audit committee held on 31st March 2023 and the Governance and Corruption Monitoring committee held on 3rd April 2023 to provide oversight. And these were climaxed with a board meeting on 4th April, 2023.
- > One Board orientation meetings held on 16th to 17th December 2022 at Forest Park Resort Buloba as well as one board meeting on 4th April, 2023 held virtually.

7.4.14 A Synopsis of membership activities

During the reporting period, various LASPs participated in numerous membership activities such as capacity building trainings, legal aid open days as well as advocacy meetings which are highlighted in the score card below.


CRITERIA FOR MEMBER RECOGNITION AT THE 13TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN LASPNET EVENTS: JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023

NO.	LASP	Annual General Meeting (21st Oct)	16 days of Activism (Oct-Dec 2022)	Monitoring Visits to LASPs under MLCs (Oct.-Nov. 2022)	GBV Dialogues (May 2023)	Coordination forums with penal chain local actors in Arua, Gulu & Kitgum districts (4th -10th Dec 2022)	Periodic support visits to LASPs & Stakeholders in the districts of Arua, Gulu, Kitgum, Kampala & Wakiso. (19th-30th March 2023)	Partners Coordination forum at Imperial Royale Hotel (31st May 2023)	Periodic support and monitoring visits to LASPs and stakeholders in the districts of Arua, Gulu, Kitgum, Lamwo and Hoima (18th June-July 30th 2023)	Benchmark Visit to South Africa (20th - 27th August 2022)	Round table Stakeholders' consultative dialogue between Formal & Informal Justice System actors on the draft AJS5 & ADR Policy at Hotel Africana (22nd June 2023)	8th CEO's Forum held at Imperial Royale Hotel (26th May 2023)	Media Advocacy Campaign on LASPs Community based Cost-Effective Legal Aid models held Aboozzi ku Biri FM (17th May 2023)	Utilisation of the IIMS	Payment of Membership Subscrip	Total	Ranking	
1	AAV	1										1	1			4	4	
2	ACTV	1	1													1	5	3
3	CEWOCHR	1														1	4	4
4	CI/AF/LUG						1								1	1	5	3
5	CREED	1														1	4	4
6	FHRI															1	4	4
7	FAPAD															1	5	3
8	ID	1														1	4	4
9	HRCLUG	1														1	5	3
10	URRP	1														1	4	4
11	PIIAC			1												1	5	3
12	WWM	1														1	4	4
13	RLP					1										1	4	4
14	UGANET	1		1												1	4	4
15	WORI	1														1	4	4
16	CEHURD	1														1	4	4
17	HURIFO	1														1	3	5
18	IRGUG	1														1	3	5
19	IMILAP	1														1	3	5
20	PLA	1														1	3	5
21	AFCOD															1	3	5
22	AHURIO				1											1	3	5
23	ANARDE	1														1	3	5
24	COLAID	1														1	3	5
25	KCORBA	1														1	3	5
26	LAPD	1														1	3	5
27	LEMUJ															1	3	5
28	NUDIPU															1	3	5
29	NWU															1	3	5
30	ARELIMONK															1	3	5
31	CEDO															1	3	5
32	CJA															1	3	5
33	HRAPF															1	3	5
34	JCU	1														1	3	5
35	JURIA															1	3	5
36	IMFUMI															1	3	5
37	LULA	1														1	3	5
38	LULS	1				1										1	3	5
39	FIDA	1														1	3	5
40	LAC/LDC	1														1	3	5
41	MCIL	1														1	3	5
42	UCLF	1														1	3	5

Key to the Score colours

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Guiding notes:

* Active participation means being a participant, a trainer, presenter, discussant, undertaking research, volunteering to attend meetings on behalf of, or serving as a member of the Board of Directors.

* Feedback means providing timely responses to requests for information and involvement or participation, sharing ideas on how to improve legal aid provision and the network in particular.

*A = Attendance (1 mark) *Y = Yes (1 mark)

The highest possible score for General participation in LASPNET activities is 1 for each activity and for IIMS is 5

Highest Scores:

1) General participation in LASPNET activities: 1. ULS

2) IIMS Utilisation: 1. FIDA-Uganda - 4,205

2 UCLF - 1,841

2 LAC/LDC

3 FIDA Uganda

4 MCIL

3 MCIL - 1,799

Scores for Board participation in LASPNET's activities for the period July 2022 to June 2023

Sn.	Board Activities	Date for the Activity	Ms. Karen Saidi	Mr. Okwalinga Moses	Ms. Nayiga Grace	Mr. Adrian Ddungu	Ms. Prossy Imela	Ms. Balisalamu Betty	Ms. Elizabeth Alyano	HW. Nasasira Bridget	Ms. Flavia Zalwango
			Chairperson - Board	Vice Chairperson	General Secretary	Treasurer	Central Representative	Eastern Representative	Northern Representative	Western Representative	Member on Merit
1	Board Orientation Meeting	15th - 17th Dec. 2023	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	Board Meeting	4th April 2023	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	Organisational Development and Sustainability Committee	30th March 2023	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
4	Governance and Administration Committee	29th March 2023	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
5	Planning and Programs Committee	27th March 2023	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
6	Public Interest Litigation Advisory Committee	28th March 2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
7	Audit and Finance Committee	31st March 2023	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
8	Advisory Committee on Governance and Corruption	3rd April 2023	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	LASPs Inception Meeting under UNODC	3rd May 2023	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	Joint Advocacy dialogue between LCs & LASPs in Tororo	11th May 2023	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
11	PTD coordination Forums Masindi	25th May 2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
12	8th CEO's Forum & Fundraising Drive of LAH	26th May 2023	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
13	PTD Coordination Forums for Wakiso & Kampala	31st May 2023	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
14	Stakeholders' Consultative dialogue on ADR Policy	22nd June 2023	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
15	Breakfast prayer & Advocacy meeting for NLAB 2022	27th June 2023	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

7.4.16 THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022/2023



Ms. Karen Saidi
Chairperson



Mr. Okwalinga Moses
Vice Chairperson



Ms. Nayiga Grace
General Secretary



Mr. Adrian Ddungu
Treasurer



Ms. Elizabeth Alyano
Northern
Representative



Ms. Prossy Imela
Central
Representative



H/W. Bridget Nasasira
Western
Representative



Ms. Balisalamu Betty
Eastern
Representative



Ms. Flavia Zalwango
Member on Merit

7.4.17 LASPNET SECRETARIAT TEAM DURING PERIOD UNDER REVIEW (JULY 2022 TO JUNE 2023)



Dr. Sylvia Namubiru Mukasa
Chief Executive Officer

She is the overall Senior manager who and responsible for providing overall Administrative and Strategic leadership to the secretariat. In addition, she oversees the day to day running of the Programmes and financial sustainability. She also links the organization to key stakeholders and board members.



Mr. Badru Walusansa
Director of Programmes

He is a senior manager responsible for overall development, programming and functioning of the Programmes department through provision of technical and supervisory support to the programs team.



Mr. Geoffrey Lutaaya
Director Finance and Administration

He a senior Manager responsible for overall development and functioning of the finance and administration department where he provides technical and supervisory support to the finance team.



Ms. Stella Namiiro
Research and Knowledge Management Manager/
Project Coordinator UNODC

She is the Manager responsible for research and knowledge management at LASPNET. In addition, she is also responsible for coordination and implementation of the UNODC Project.



Ms. Nakawombe Olivia
Lobby and Advocacy Officer

She is the officer responsible for Lobby and Advocacy functions of the Network.



Mr. Martin Ojambo
Information and Technology Officer

He is a technical officer 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.



Ms. Justice Nambowa
Training and Membership
Officer

She is the officer supporting the Training and Membership component of the Network and is currently the responsible Project coordinator for the implementation of the IDLO project



Mr. Mubiru Peter Mutebi
Networking, Partnerships
and Coordination Officer

He is the Officer responsible for maintaining, developing and coordinating memberships partnerships as well as branding and communication.



Ms. Namulinde Joy
Finance and Administrative
Officer

She is a manager responsible for Administration, procurement of logistics and Assets management and finance management of assigned projects.



Ms. Maria Kaddu
Program Coordinator EU
Project

She provided a coordination support of the EU project as well as served as the RKMM



Mr. Mawanda Hakim
Program Coordinator Oxfam
Project

He is the Officer providing coordination support to the Oxfam Voice Linking and Learning Project.



Mr. Kyanja Denis
Inhouse Counsel ADA

He is the Project officer responsible for coordination of the ADC-ASF project.



Ms. Linda Gidudu
Program Assistant UNDP
Project.

She provided project a coordination support of the UNDP project.



Ms. Nalwiga Scovia
Finance Officer

She is the officer responsible for all accounting processes and financial management of the organization's funds. In addition, she provides finance and accounting support to the CSSA Project.



Mr. Kenneth Okao
PA- 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.



Mr. Keitirima Duncan
Coordinator Call Centre

He is the Project officer providing coordination of the Call center agents as he supports day to day running of activities in the call Centre unit.



Mr. Fabiano Onyango
ICT Assistant

He is the project Assistant responsible for providing ICT support services to the organization.



Mr. Barongo Barnabas
Project Accountant

He supports with administrative and accounting functions of the ADA project.



Mr. Mutebi Alvin
Project Assistant RAJA

He provided coordination support to the implementation of the RAJA Project.



Mr. Gabriel Kasule
Driver

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

LASPNET VOLUNTEER TEAM



Mr. Rica Byaruhanga
M&E Advisor

He is a part time technical officer that has provided M&E support functions to the Network.



Ms. Susan Lumu Nabirye
Senior Legal Advisor

She is a part time technical officer that has provided her services on a needs basis since December 2022.



Ms. Nakazibwe Doreen
Volunteer ADA

She joined in December 2022 and provides Volunteer support to the ADA project.



Ms. Shamira Nantale
Volunteer Reception

She joined in January 2023 as a support Volunteer staff responsible for providing front desk management.



Ms. Georgia Nabakooza Atwijukire
Volunteer Lobby and Advocacy

She provided volunteer support to lobby and advocacy since January 2023.



Ms. Namuli Cynthia Leonora
Volunteer Call Center

She joined in February 2023 and provides volunteer services to the Call Center.



Mr. Obote Emmanuel Nyanga
Volunteer Lawyer - EU

He joined in April 2022 and provided his services to the GBV project under EU.



Ms. Nakalyana Edith Mukisa
Volunteer Call Center Agent

She provides support services to the LASPNET Call center since April 2023.



Mr. Ssemuwemba Simon
Volunteer ADA

He provided volunteer support to ADC Project since 27th January 2023.



Mr. Paul Sebagere
Volunteer Driver

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

8.0 ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNT, RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

8.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

During the reporting period, LASPNET registered the following achievements;

- > Retention of asset like vehicles donated under the DGF and EU supported project.
- > The continued trust from the stakeholders such as the Judiciary where the LASPNET CEO was put on the task force for the Anti-Corruption Strategy, and on the State funded Legal Representation implementation committee.
- > Expansion of membership through enrolment and admission of new members into the Network including ANARDE, WOR1, CEWOCHR as well as individual members
- > The launch of fundraising drive geared towards mobilization of funds for construction of the legal aid house.
- > Development of the training curriculum for LASPs and the ISMPP, which is intended to provide a sustainable and unified approach to capacity building for LASPs and associates

8.2 CHALLENGES

In the reporting period, several challenges were encountered during implementation which included;

a) Loss of LASPNET Institutional Donor

The subsequent loss of LASPNET institutional donor after closure of DGF remains a great challenge to the institution. This has affected the maintenance of our programmes as well as the implementation of the LASPNET Strategic Plan (2021/2025). Furthermore, it has created a burden

of maintaining and retaining some institutional staff.

b) Political Interference with the ongoing private members' process to enact the NLAB 2022

The protracted advocacy efforts for the NLAB have faced resistance and opposition from Government through the Office of the Attorney General. This has demoralized efforts and actors behind the advocacy especially the donors that provide financial support. With the dwindling funding, it leaves more worry on how the advocacy efforts will be sustained hence affecting access to justice for the marginalized.

c) Delayed approval of Prospective projects

There have been cases of delayed disbursement of project funds despite having approved our proposals especially under OXFAM and UNODC projects. This has thus affected timely project implementation.

d) Overregulation of the CSO sector

This is manifested in the complicated yet required NGO legal and regulatory framework. It has further been complemented by the bureaucratic processes involved in filing the Beneficial Owners Information with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB). The processes are not only tedious, costly but also time consuming especially to organizations without internal legal compliance officers.

e) Continued closure of LASPs offices and scaling down in operations

Following the exit of DGF, many organisations have been challenged to continue with the operations due to a huge funding gap. This has also resulted into closure of some LASPs offices and loss of some institutional staff.

f) Piecemeal and Short-term funding

This has been evidenced on short term projects/ funding especially projects running for months or a year. This short-term funding has affected meaningful and impactful programming as well as retention of staff.

8.3 LESSONS LEARNT

a) Organizational Resilience

As a result of the Resilience Plus project, staff and other partners learnt how to navigate and remain steadfast as well as committed to serving the organization amidst funding constraints.

b) Securing sustainable funding sources

Following the continued funding gap created by DGF, it is vital to explore other funding sources in a bid to secure an institutional donor.

c) A Social Enterprise approach

It has been witnessed that the reliance on only donor funding is unsustainable, and therefore the need to integrate a social enterprise approach in our work would increase income inflows into the organization. This can be done through undertaking of Research as well as Investments in assets among others.

d) Collaborations and Partnerships

The approach of collaboration with like-minded stakeholders is a great tool in pivoting advocacy initiatives for any organization. A case in point was the collaboration between LASPNET and IRCU that increased the advocacy momentum for the enactment of the NLAB by religious leaders.

8.4 Opportunities

a) Continued trust from the public, media and strategic partners

This has greatly aided LASPNET to remain a key influencer in the area of access to justice; human rights and rule of law.

b) Strengthened organizational resilience

This has been harnessed from the Resiliency Plus project funded by Internews which has had a significant impact on the institutional and staff resilience.

c) Adopting a Social Enterprise Approach

This approach presents an enormous opportunity for income diversification but is also an enabler for institutional sustainability.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In every challenge is a hidden opportunity and or lessons to exploit for better outcome. Therefore, and whereas we cannot stop challenges, the same can be mitigated through undertaking several remedies as highlighted below;

a) There is need to encourage volunteer lawyers to continue to provide Legal Rapid response and

respond to Human Rights violations which are still rampant.

b) There is need for LASPs to team up and leverage their expertise to undertake joint fundraising.

c) There is need to continue undertaking resource mobilization through identification of an institutional donor as well as social enterprises to diversify on the financial risks of organizations.

d) There is need for all stakeholders to support the fundraising initiatives for the construction of the Legal Aid House by contributing resources, technical support and or expertise. This is because the Legal Aid House will contribute towards institutional sustainability of LASPNET.



9.0 CONCLUSION

Moving forward, LASPNET will leverage the existing opportunities to consolidate itself as the centre for legal aid excellence in Uganda. Significantly, efforts to ensure institutional sustainability will continuously be pursued while putting more emphasis on securing an institutional donor.

LASPNET remains grateful to all its Members; Strategic Partners and our Development Partners, staff and well-wishers who have relentlessly supported its the operations and growth amidst the challenging working environment.

LASPNET further commits to continue with resource mobilization in order to sustain its operations as well as achieve its overall mandate.

Pictorial



A panel discussion by representatives from Judiciary, ODPP, Police, WDHR, and Prisons during the Coordination Forum meeting by ASF at Imperial Royale Hotel



Speaking is Owk. Christopher Bwanika during a consultative meeting with stakeholders on the ADR policy at Hotel Africana. On the right is Ms. Frida Apio of IDLO.



Dr. Sylvia Namubiru addressing stakeholders during the GBV dialogue between LCs and LASPs in Kyegegwa District



Above are some of the Magistrates from Mwanga II, Buganda Road, Kira Courts and Mr. Elly Kasirye, Chairperson (R)WDHRC during the Coordination Forum meeting



LASPNET Staff, Officers of Police & Paralegals pose for a photo during the ASF - LASPNET Pretrial Detention Visits at Ayivu East -Police in Gulu District



HW Kosia Ksibayo, the Chief Magistrate of Masindi being interviewed during the UWONET Research



Joint dialogue meeting between LCs and LASPs held at the Tororo district Council hall



Participants pose for a group photo during the Annual Linking and Learning Event at Country Lake Resort Garuga



Advocacy prayer meeting for the NLAB 2022 at Sheraton Hotel



A group discussion at the joint dialogue meeting between LCs & LASPs in Kyegegegwa District



An exhibition table for ACTV and Justice Defenders during the 8th CEOs Forum



Above are pullup banners for some of the LASPs that attended the 8th CEO Forum at Imperial Royale Hotel

10.0 MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS

This section highlights some of the interventions implemented by our member organizations based on the information provided for the period under review (July 2022–June 2023[The information provided relates to Lasps that provided their reports on time upon request or those accesses on line. The information about the LASPs not featuring can be accessed on their website or won annual reports²).

NO	LASP	Activity detail
1	Uganda Network on Law, Ethics and HIV / AIDS (UGANET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With support from TASO-Global Fund, UGANET conducted mobile Legal Aid camps in 18 districts between July 2022 and June 2023, where 630 clients (F: 410 and M:220) received free legal services inform of legal Advice, Court representation, ADR, psycho-social support and safety for GBV survivors. • UGANET worked in 10 universities to support university students understand GBV, identify cases and seek for support. In each university 30 GBV champions were trained and rolled out to champion prevention and response to GBV cases within the university communities. • In Partnership with the District Human Rights Committee of Wakiso conducted Legal Aid outreaches in Wakiso and Kakiri from the 16th to 17th August 2022 where free legal services were provided. • Worked with 131 community paralegals in 40 districts to provide free basic legal services to vulnerable communities through outreaches, case management, ADR and referrals. • Trained accredited legal Aid service providers to provide services for key vulnerable populations, adolescent girls, young women and persons living with HIV, TB, and malaria-affected individuals. UGANET was excited to interest 112 legal Aid service professionals in HIV Human Rights and the Law. • Held two High level Advocacy dialogues to review the HIV legal Environment on the 13th December 2022 with participants from; ODPP, ULRC, UHRC, Police, Judiciary, Civil society. • Held a symposium with Lawyers in private Practice to interest them in litigating and supporting HIV related matters. 130 advocates committed to increase support provided to Persons Living with HIV and other vulnerable communities.

² The information provided relates to Lasps that provided their reports on time upon request or those accesses on line. The information about the LASPs not featuring can be accessed on their website or won annual reports

2	Facilitation for Peace and Development (FAPAD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAPAD monitored and documented 213 cases (127F, 86M) of human rights abuse. The land cases were the most reported. • FAPAD held eight (8) community dialogues on access to justice on 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th March 2023 with attendance of 285 (F:127, M:158) participants. These dialogues were partly supported under the RAJA project LASPNET led consortium that was funded by freedom house • Held 5 radio talk shows on Justice and rule of law attracting a listenership of over 20,000. This happened on 4th March, 20th March 2023, 12th May, 6th and 23rd June 2023). • Provided on spot legal advice to 50 indigents (15F, 35M) especially on land purchase, custody etc. • Developed jingle messages that were played 90 times on radio QFM 94.3 with a wider coverage of over 10,000 people aimed at promoting access to justice for the marginalized persons.
3	African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted prison visits such as Kitalya Prison • Carried out two (2) medical Legal camps in Mukono and Lira Districts. • Held 11 community awareness dialogues on torture prevention and accountability in Masaka, Kampala, Gulu, Luuka, Kasese districts. • Conducted a National Dialogue on Election Violence under the Theme; "Democratic and Peaceful Elections in Uganda; a prerequisite for National Development" on 25th November 2022. • Participated in the commemoration of the 26th United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. • Participated in the review of the Shadow report at the United Nations Committee Against torture 75th General Session during the review of the Uganda state Report. • Provided holistic rehabilitation services to 842 survivors of torture and gender-based violence. Legal advice to 219 survivors of torture; 27 cases referred to open up civil suits in courts of law as well as providing expert witness in 4 civil cases.
4	Human Rights Focus (HURIFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained (70) Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) on civil rights and responsibilities. • HURIFO handled 61 cases relating to land, family maintenances among others. • Conducted 8 mobile legal aid clinics in Acholi Sub-Region and a total of over 3000 community members were reached. • Conducted a training in digital documentation and reporting.



5	Human Rights Centre Uganda (HRCU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRCU offered Legal support to both HRDs and non HRDs. A total of 108 (62M, 46F) cases were handled. • Carried out networking forums for youth human rights defenders in Kitgum. One of the forums attracted a total of 50 participants (35 M, 15 F). • Carried out seven (7) Radio programmes and talk shows in Kitgum, Mbarara, Bundibugyo and Mbale districts on the concepts of human rights defenders and access to justice for youth human rights defenders. • Conducted four (4) Community dialogues on the NGO Regulatory framework on the NGO Act. 2016; NGO Regulations 2017; Composition and effectiveness of Sub County NGO Monitoring Committees and; and access to justice for human rights defenders. • Participated in the 5th Annual Women Human Rights Defenders' Conference, 2022.
6	Advocates for National Resources and Development (ANARDE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Public Interest Litigation, a suit was instituted against four companies that are carrying out illegal sand mining in the Lwera wetland • Supported advocacy for inclusion of community development agreements in the Mining and Minerals Act 2022 • Conducted outreach with key stakeholders and communal land Associations on negotiating Community Development Agreements. • Conducted a legal outreach in Kosiroi mining site in Tapac sub county Moroto where Tororo cement company Ltd has been extracting limestone for close to 20 years. • Conducted a mobile legal aid clinic in Tapac Sub County. • Convened a dialogue with Karamoja MPs' about the Mining and Minerals Bill, 2022. • Convened a meeting about field monitoring of business-related human rights violations with Uganda Human Rights Commission.
7	Women with a Mission (WWM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWM documented a report on the national baseline study on the legal and policy environment on access to SRHR, HIV/AIDS Services and Information by Female Sex Workers. • Carried out a baseline study on the legal and policy environment on access to SRHR/ HIV services and information on Female Sex Workers (FSW 2/2/23). • Documented 40 cases involving Female sex workers and women who use and inject drugs.

8	Women Rights Initiative (WORI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held a community sensitization on Radio BABA FM in preparations for the annual Probono day. • Conducted community recreation activities in villages such as Namagera village and other communities. • Carried out three ADR meetings that were positively concluded on child custody and maintenance as well as administration.
9	Uganda Law society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized Probono days aimed at bringing free legal aid services to the communities such as one held on the 9th November 2022 • Released the Rule of Law Reports that extensively unveiled both the Rule of law developments and breaches in the country namely January to March 2023, April to June 2023 among others. • Participated in the first ADR Summit 2023 organized by the Judiciary and Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs held on the 26th to 27th June 2023 at Mestil Hotel. • Convened the Young Lawyers Symposium 2023 with support of BDO Uganda from the 22nd to 23rd June 2023 at Fairway Hotel
10	Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA – Uganda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in the celebration of the International Day of Women Judges, a side event on the role and contributions of women justice professionals to the rule of law, on 16th March 2023 • Participated the Women's Day celebrations at Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Timu Sub-County on 11th March 2023 organized by Timu Child and Youth Development Center. • On 8th March 2023, FIDA-U hosted a delegation of Danish Ambassador to Uganda Her Excellency Signe Winding Alberg. • Sensitized Kasangati Women's Prison inmates on plea bargain on the 26th June 2023. • Convened a stakeholder's dialogue on Protecting Women's Property Rights in Cohabiting relationships held on the 23rd June 2023 at Golf Course Hotel.



11	Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted students from the department of History, Archeology & Heritage studies, College of Humanities & Social Sciences, Makerere University on the 20th July 2022 • FHRI held its 24th Annual General Meeting which also doubled as the 11th General Assembly at the Human Rights House, Nsambya on the 27th of August 2022 • Opened its new Legal Aid offices in Bushenji District on 20th October 2022. • Convened the Second District Roundtable dialogue on Improving Justice Delivery held at Nsiika, Buhweju District on 20th April 2023. • Public lecture on the role of lawyers in safeguarding human rights and promoting social justice at the Islamic University in Uganda Females Campus on 7th June 2023. • On 17th June 2023 visited Nyamushekyera Prison with the Resident judge His Lordship Justice Allan Nshimye to sensitize the accused on plea-bargaining. • On 21st June 2023, organised a capacity building session for Local Council 1 leaders on basic law and human rights in Bumbaire at Bumbaire Sub-County headquarters by the FHRI Legal Aid Office-Bushenji.
12	Platform for Labour Action (PLA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 1st May 2023 joined the Uganda workforce to commemorate the International Labour day by issuing a Public Statement. • Submitted a position paper on the proposed employment amendment Bill 2022 (Bill No. 2) to the Parliamentary Committee on Gender, Labour & Social Development on the 6th June 2023
13	Refugee Law Project (RLP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 10th May 2023, RLP organised High-Level dialogue on access to higher education for refugee students with a specific focus on what the possible pathways for students whose education has been affected by conflict could be, in Gulu. • On 16th May 2023, RLP engaged third year law students of Makerere Law School on Refugee Rights & Protection. • Held the 2nd National Mental Health Conference 2023 under the theme 'Prioritizing mental health through community involvement on 24th May 2023. • Trained Peace Fellows under the project - Cross Border Dialogue and Youth Empowerment for Peace in the Great Lakes Region: Phase III on 29th May 2023. • On 31st May 2023 held an orientation and information session for the new EFA intake 2023 at old Kampala primary school. • Appeared NBS TV morning show at 9:00AM - 10:00AM for a discussion on DAC 2023 on protecting and promoting children's rights in the digital era on 16th June 2023.

11.0 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

LEGAL AID SERVICE PROVIDERS' NETWORK (LASPNET)

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

for the year ended 30 June 2023

The Directors of Legal Aid Service Providers' Network (LASPNET) are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of LASPNET at the end of each financial year and of the operating results for the year then ended. In respect of those financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the organisation will continue in operation.

The Directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of LASPNET and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with accounting policies and guidelines of LASPNET and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors are ultimately responsible for the internal controls. The Directors delegate the responsibility for the internal controls to management. Standards and systems of internal control are designed and implemented by management to provide reasonable assurance as to the integrity and reliability of the financial statements and to adequately safeguard LASPNET's assets.

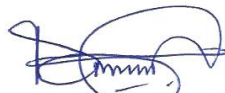
The Directors accept responsibility for the annual financial statements, which have been prepared using appropriate accounting policies supported by reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates, in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and the requirements of the Companies Act 2012. The Directors are of the opinion that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of financial affairs of LASPNET and of its operating results for the year ended 30 June 2023. The Directors further accept responsibility for the maintenance of accounting records, which may be relied upon in the preparation of the financial statements, as well as adequate systems of internal control.

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

Approved by the Board of Directors on 25th October 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



MS. KAREN SAIDI
CHAIRPERSON



MR. ADRIAN DDUNGU
TREASURER

Independent Auditor's Report
to the members of Legal Aid Service Providers' Network (LASPNET)

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of **Legal Aid Service Providers' Network (LASPNET)** as set out on pages 11 to 48, which comprise the Statement of Financial Position **as at 30 June 2023**, the Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Cash flows and Statement of Changes in Funds for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of LASPNET as at 30 June 2023, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with **the Organisation's** accounting policies set out on Pages 15 to 25 and donor requirements.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). 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 the Organisation in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Uganda, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Key Audit Matters

Key audit matters are those matters that in our professional judgement were of most significance in our audit of the financial statements of the current period. These matters were addressed in the context of our audit of the financial statements as a whole and in forming our opinion thereon, and we do not provide a separate opinion on these matters. We have determined that there are no key audit matters to communicate in our report.

Other Information

The Directors are responsible for the other information. Other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Independent Auditor's Report
to the members of Legal Aid Service Providers' Network (LASPNET)

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of Directors for the Financial Statements

The Directors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and for such internal controls as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the **Organisation'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 Organisation or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organisation'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 are 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 the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these 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 financial statements, 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.

Independent Auditor's Report
to the members of Legal Aid Service Providers' Network (LASPNET)

- 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 Organisation's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Directors.
- 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 or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organisation's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw 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 company 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 reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

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 audit 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 not be communicated in our report because the adverse consequences of doing so would reasonably be expected to outweigh the public interest benefits of such communication.

Independent Auditor's Report

to the members of Legal Aid Service Providers' Network (LASPNET)

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

The Companies Act, 2012 requires that in carrying out our audit we consider and report to you the following matters. We confirm that:

- i) We have obtained all the information and explanations, which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of our audit.
- ii) In our opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the Organisation, so far as appears from our examination of those books; and
- iii) The Financial Statements are in agreement with the books of account.

Other Matters

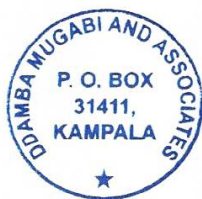
The financial statements of LASPNET for the year ended 30 June 2022 were audited by another auditor who expressed an unqualified opinion on those statements on 14 October 2022.

Report on other Requirements

The Engagement Practitioner on the audit resulting in this independent auditor's report is CPA Christine N. Ddamba - P0472.

Christine Ddamba

Christine N. Ddamba.
Engagement Partner



Ddamba Mugabi and Associates

Ddamba Mugabi and Associates
Certified Public Accountant
Kampala, Uganda

26 October 2023

Date



LEGAL AID SERVICE PROVIDERS' NETWORK (LASPNET)

Statement of Financial Position at 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 Ushs.	2022 Restated Ushs.
ASSETS			
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property and Equipment	3	85,000,000	85,000,000
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and Bank Balances	4	446,847,636	1,363,599,490
Receivables	5	-	16,850,000
		446,847,636	1,465,449,490
TOTAL ASSETS		531,847,636	1,465,449,490
FUNDS AND LIABILITIES			
FUNDS			
Capital Fund	6	85,000,000	85,000,000
General Funds	7	15,842,124	(52,350,413)
Restricted Funds	8	378,007,471	1,190,696,729
TOTAL FUNDS		478,849,595	1,223,346,316
LIABILITIES			
Payables	9	52,998,041	242,103,174
		52,998,041	242,103,174
TOTAL FUNDS AND LIABILITIES		531,847,636	1,465,449,490

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 25th October 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:



CHAIRPERSON



TREASURER



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

LEGAL AID SERVICE PROVIDERS' NETWORK (LASPNET)

Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023		2022
		Actual Ushs.	Budget Ushs.	Restat Actual Ushs
INCOME				
Grants	10	2,356,142,349	3,488,523,491	4,267,683,316
Other Income	11	220,240,169	287,824,314	68,740,000
Total Income		2,576,382,518	3,776,347,805	4,336,423,316
EXPENDITURE				
Programme Costs	12	1,954,371,901	2,448,883,764	1,841,776,000
Staff costs	13	1,010,444,036	937,988,358	2,017,318,000
Administration Costs	14	201,031,358	235,338,374	314,517,000
Total Expenditure		3,165,847,295	3,622,210,496	4,173,611,000
Deficit) / Surplus for the year		(589,464,777)	154,137,309	162,812,316
Balance as at 1 July		1,138,346,316	-	990,805,000
Refund to donors		(155,031,944)	-	(15,271,000)
Balance as at 30 June		393,849,595	154,137,309	1,138,346,000



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 Legal Aid Service Providers Network

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