



Ubuntu
Law and Justice Centre

ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 2021-JUNE 2022

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ACRONYMS

UBUNTU: Ubuntu Law and Justice Centre

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

UHAI: East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Intersex

TEU: Transgender Equality Uganda

COSF: Children of the Sun Foundation

UFF: Uganda Feminist Forum

ICASA: International Conference on Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) & Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's) in Africa

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

SRHR: Sexual Reproductive Health Rights

EAC SRHR: East African Community Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

ART: Antiretroviral therapy

PrEP: Pre-exposure prophylaxis

PEP: Post-exposure prophylaxis

WONETHA: Women's Organisation Network for Human Rights Advocacy.

UNESO: Uganda Network of Key Population Service Organisations

ABOUT US

Ubuntu Law and Justice Centre (UBUNTU) is a queer African and feminist non-governmental organisation registered in Uganda that seeks to embrace legal innovation and provide healing to our diverse communities, utilising full-circle justice solutions.

UBUNTU was founded in 2019 by a mélange of human rights lawyers and activists to promote justice and equality for marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons.

Our work encapsulates the African understanding of the human being as a whole and relational being, thereby locating our oppression within the broader context of the societies in which we live.

Our philosophy is ubuntu, the very essence of humanity that reflects our interconnectedness and calls on people to treat one another with respect regardless of their differences encompassing diversity, solidarity, compassion, respect, and dignity for all. We view healing justice as meeting the holistic needs of a human being, from the enforcement of human rights to the fulfilment of socio-economic justice and restorative healing. We inculcate globally-oriented solutions like the SDGs and human rights-based approaches into our programming.

For example, a sexual or gender-diverse person in conflict with the law will probably have faced other oppressive situations, like eviction, ostracisation, unemployment, and violence.

Also, a poor woman with a disability may further be relegated to the margins of society because of the discriminatory and patriarchal structures deeply entrenched in women's oppression and exacerbated by her intersectional identities.

Our strategy, therefore, is to offer holistic, cohesive, and synergistic approaches that not only provide innovative legal remedies but also respond to root causes and underlying challenges to the situations faced by our communities. By providing a combination of legal services bolstered by sustainable socio-economic justice remedies and safe and healing spaces, UBUNTU offers all-inclusive responses for healing justice and transformative solutions for our communities.



MISSION STATEMENT

To provide healing justice and transformative solutions for marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons by creating safe and healing spaces, providing legal services, and sustainable socio-economic justice remedies reinforced by knowledge generation, policy advocacy, and strategic partnerships.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To provide legal empowerment and access to justice solutions through quality and timely legal responses for marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons, including the provision of legal services and addressing discriminatory and harmful laws, policies, and practices.
- To mobilise and engage marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons towards the promotion and protection of their dignity and rights.
- To provide socio-economic and gender justice remedies for marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons in order to ensure holistic and healing responses to the impact of legal and social oppression.
- To strengthen institutional and financial capacity and operational efficiency for effective organising.

PROGRAMME AREAS

- Legal Empowerment & Access to Justice Program
- Community Mobilisation and Engagement
- Access to socio-economic and gender justice remedies
- Institutional Capacity Strengthening

VISION
A WORLD WHERE
MARGINALISED AND
UNDERPRIVILEGED PERSONS
ARE SAFE, WELL PROTECTED,
AND LIVE WITH DIGNITY.

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

1

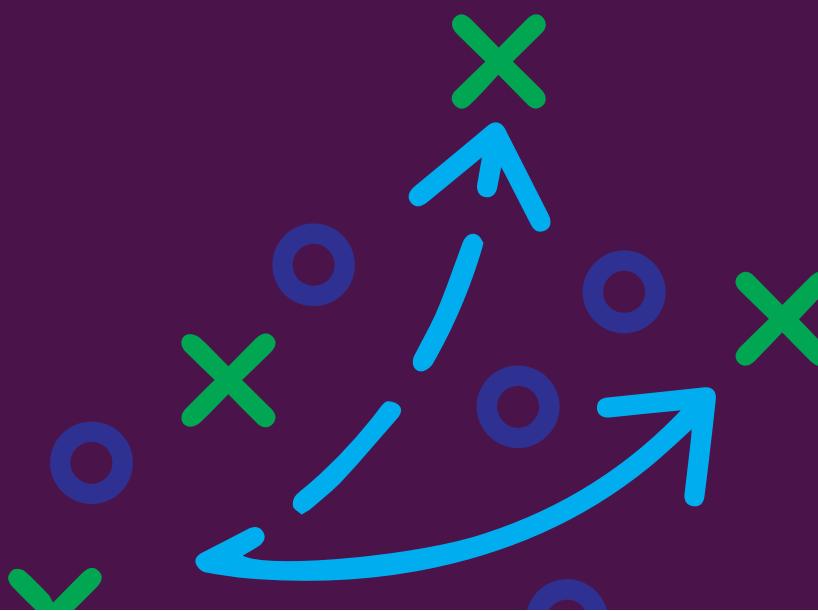
Legal Empowerment & Access to Justice Program

- Provision of legal services, including pro bono legal, paralegal, and other pre- and post-trial support;
- Conducting legal research and production of knowledge on discriminatory and harmful laws, policies, and practices and existing gaps in human rights protection;
- Norm setting to propose and advocate for needed laws, policies, and practices that protect marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse people;
- Strategic litigation against discriminatory and harmful laws, policies, and practices that impact marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse people;
- Advocacy and engagement at the national, regional, and international levels for specific protections, promotion, and respect of human rights;
- Utilising existing administrative, legal and quasi-judicial structures to seek specific protections and promotion of human rights;
- Promoting a culture of accountability and responsibility amongst formal and informal justice actors and ensuring that marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons are prioritised by the state for legal aid and support.

2

Community Mobilisation and Engagement

- Awareness creation and legal education amongst women and sexual and gender-diverse persons on laws, human rights, health justice, dignity, digital rights, and ubuntu.
- Production of simplified and popularised versions of laws, policies, principles, norms, and judgments that impact marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons.
- Community outreaches and training to diverse communities of marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons, particularly in urban, peri-urban rural and remote areas.
- Engagement with communities to theorise and politicise feminism (e.g., personal is political), sexuality, rights and Africanness.
- Research, documentation, production and telling stories of marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse people.



3

Access to socio-economic and gender justice remedies

- Providing safe and healing spaces which utilise farming for agrotherapy and healing.
- Facilitating medical and mental healing responses to cases of violence and violations.
- Advocating for integral and complete lives for marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons, like access to family and familial rights, property rights, etc.
- Utilising the SDGs framework to promote rights for marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons.
- Conduct research, knowledge production, and advocacy on the socio-economic realities of marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons.

4

Institutional capacity strengthening

- Strengthening effective accounting, human resources, and other institutional policies, procedures, systems, and structures.
- Ensuring strong and effective governance bodies with a diversity of expertise.
- Building and strengthening leadership at all levels of the organisation, including developing management and staff capacity.
- Promoting the sustainability of the organisation.
- Regularly reflecting on the organisation's work to improve programming and progress on the implementation of our strategic objectives.



ANALYSIS OF THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT OF UBUNTU FOR THE YEAR 2021 – 2022

In this annual report for 2022/2022, management has contextualised the emerging trends that have defined the operating environment and informed Ubuntu's interventions for our communities during the year.

COVID 19 PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic continued into 2021 and was undoubtedly a major trend that impacted our work as we witnessed continued socio-economic disparities among the LGBTQ+ and sex worker communities in Uganda. In 2020 Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum published a research report on a study done during March – June of 2020 highlighting the impact of COVID-19 regulations on access to justice for LGBT people and sex workers, and one of the recommendations made to Civil Society Organisations working on issues concerning LGBT persons and sex workers encouraging other legal aid clinics to extend services to LGBT people and sex workers to enhance access to justice for Key Populations in Uganda during crises like the COVID-19 lockdown.

PUBLICATION

Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum, "The impact of covid-19 related restrictions on access to justice for key populations in Uganda: A case study of LGBT persons and sex workers in Kampala and Wakiso districts", Kampala, June 2021; page 53.

<https://www.hrapf.org/index.php/resources/re>
(Accessed September 2022)

From 7th June 2021, the government declared another countrywide 42-day lockdown which was partially lifted on 31 July 2021. During this period, Uganda's security forces beat, extorted, and arrested people for allegedly failing to comply with the government's Covid-19 restrictions. As a result, the Key Population community was once again hard hit as the purported protectionary measures were used to target LGBTQ+ individuals, and sex workers as the majority did not have permanent jobs that could be sustained in light of restrictions on movement, including night-time curfew which affected poor, vulnerable and marginalised persons disproportionately.

PUBLICATION

Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum, 'The impact of covid-19 related restrictions on access to justice for key populations in Uganda: A case study of LGBT persons and sex workers in Kampala and Wakiso districts', Kampala, June 2021; pages 26, 29.

<https://hrapf.org/index.php/resources/reports/202-report-on-the-impact-of-covid-19-restrictions-on-access-to-justice-for-key-populations-in-uganda-a-case-study-of-lgbt-persons-and-sex-workers-in-kampala-and-wakiso-districts/file> (Accessed May 2022)

CONTINUED POLICE RAIDS, DETENTION AND POLICE BRUTALITY

On 31 May 2021, a group of 44 young LGBTI persons were arrested over allegations of being a part of a gay wedding. At Nansana police station, they were charged with 'doing a negligent act likely to spread infection of the disease,' a rarely used offense that was often used to arrest and harass LGBTIQ persons during the lockdowns. While in detention at the police, over a dozen LGBTQ persons were subjected to anal examination without their consent despite assurances to the lawyers and activists by the stations' leadership and senior officials from the Police that this would not happen, as the circumstances did not warrant anal examinations.

ARTICLE

African Human Rights Commission, 44 Arrested at Shelter in Uganda Under Suspicion of Being LGBTQI with forced Anal Exams.

<https://www.africanhrc.org/single-post/44-arrested-at-shelter-in-uganda-under-suspicion-of-being-lgbtqi-with-forced-anal-exams>

(Accessed September 2022)

Forty-two (42) individuals, were remanded to Kitalya maximum prison, and by 7th June 2021, they were all released on cash bail and non-cash bail. An initiative of The African Human Rights Media Network, Uganda court OKs bail for 42 arrestees, June 5, 2021.

ARTICLE

An initiative of The African Human Rights Media Network, Uganda court OKs bail for 42 arrestees, June 5 2021.

<https://rightsafrika.com/2021/06/05/uganda-court-oks-bail-for-42-arrestees/>

(Accessed September 2022)

CONVERSION THERAPY

As we continue to witness the growing international momentum for an end to conversion therapy, the practice of attempting to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity, the practice is still ongoing unabatedly in some countries. Specific cases in Uganda are reported of individuals being forced into Butabika Mental Referral Hospital for unregulated therapy by family members and others who provide referrals for controversial anti-gay therapies and counseling activities by the hospital. In some instances, those who have been through it regard their experiences as torture or cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.

PARLIAMENT PASSES THE SEXUAL OFFENCES BILL

On 3 May 2021 the parliament of Uganda passed the sexual offenses bill. This law purportedly aimed to streamline the laws regulating sexual offenses in Uganda and revise penalties for some offenses. The law was criticised for its provisions that could exacerbate violence against LGBTQ+ individuals and sex workers.

ARTICLE

Kuchu Times Editor, Ugandan parliament passes sexual offences bill, criminalises sex work and same sex relations, May 4 2021.

<https://www.kuchutimes.com/2021/05/uganda-parliament-passes-sexual-offences-bill-criminalises-sex-work-and-same-sex-relations/>

(Accessed September 2022)

However, on 11 August 2021, the president rejected the law on the grounds that a number of the clauses in the Act are already captured and provided for in the existing country's lawbooks

ARTICLE

Parliament Watch Uganda, Museveni rejects the law on sexual offences, August 11 2021.

<https://parliamentwatch.ug/news-amp-updates/museveni-rejects-new-law-on-sexual-offences/>

(Accessed September 2022)

ORGANISING OF THE “ANTI-RIGHTS” MOVEMENT

The global organising of the anti-gender and anti-LGBTQ+ opposition against gender equality and equity, SRHR, and LGBTI and the strategies and tactics of this movement have evolved in response to changes in the political and social landscape. The anti-gender movement in Uganda has been highly active in challenging SRHR and LGBTI rights. These religious and moral fundamentalists mobilise policymakers and other stakeholders, spread false information, and create fear and panic around issues of human rights, abortion, planned parenthood, sexuality education, and feminism that eventually frustrated the passing of the EAC SRHR bill. The impact and threats of these local and international developments on our communities and work have informed our involvement in anti-gender monitoring in Uganda to develop a broad understanding of what we are dealing with and what we can do to counter the anti-gender campaigns.

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF GLOBAL LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Positive and negative political, social, cultural, and economic global developments continue to influence the status of LGBT rights as a human rights norm. The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution calling on member states to protect against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

However, in Africa, 33 countries, including Uganda, criminalise LGBTQ+ identities. Such criminalisation continues to reinforce legal discrimination, and social, political, and economic marginalisation experienced by LGBTQ+ Africans. And because these protections are unevenly enshrined in law worldwide, and anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination persists, foreign embassies and aid organisations within the region continue to navigate growing sensitivities and public backlash around programmes supporting LGBT rights and sexuality education.

The U.S.'s disengagement from promoting human rights during the administration of former President Donald Trump (2017-21) played a role in slowing LGBTQ+ advocacy efforts. However, when President Joe Biden, took office, he vowed to restore US efforts to support LGBT rights abroad, alluding to the possible use of financial sanctions against countries that criminalise homosexuality in a February foreign policy memo.

Human Rights Watch reported that the United Kingdom became vocal over trans rights, as an unusual alliance of social conservatives, some feminists, and their supporters on the left have aligned in disavowing transgender identity based on an essentialist view of gender as immutable, and presenting it as a threat to women and children, and the protection of women and trans people's rights as a zero-sum game.

ARTICLE

Human Rights Watch, Global Trends in LGBT Rights During the Covid-19 Pandemic by Graeme Reid, February 24 2021.
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/24/global-trends-lgbt-rights-during-covid-19-pandemic>
(Accessed September 2022)

UNRESOLVED COMMUNITY CONFLICTS

As with any social movement or communities, conflicts have been on the rise within the LGBTQ+ and sex work movements arising from fundamental differences, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and assault, toxic workplaces, and other forms of violations perpetrated by community members on fellow community members. And with no defined system of resolving such issues without going to the police, it is becoming destructive as it has resulted in an increase in cases of toxic relationships, blackmail, high turnover, depression, and burnout. This greatly informed our work on post-conflict mediation in intimate, friendship, or employment relationships.

THE LACK OF A SOCIAL CUSHION

In many cases of arrest, individuals rely on their social support systems as a coping mechanism to deal with and overcome the impact of being arrested; this includes getting sureties, money, and food supplies. LGBTQ+ persons and sex workers are more often than not socially isolated and excluded in everyday life because of their sexual orientation or gender identity or the nature of their job. many are estranged from family, friends, and neighbourhoods; lacking such support potentially increases one's vulnerability to health challenges and prolonged detention.

UBUNTU acknowledges that social support plays an influential role in access to justice for marginalised persons. Generally, the above-mentioned and many more trends at the global, regional, national, and community levels mostly informed our interventions around rapid legal responses, gender opposition monitoring, community engagement, and building meaningful partnerships throughout the year.

SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE AND INCREASED STATE SURVEILLANCE

Ugandan authorities use formal and informal means to restrict the work and harass and intimidate human rights organisations and activists. For example, in February 2021, the government of Uganda suspended the operations of the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) despite being their biggest donor fund established by eight development partners over allegations that the government did not have oversight over it.

On August 10, 2021, the National Bureau for Non-governmental Organisations indefinitely suspended 54 civil society groups, including Chapter Four, on a range of grounds, including allegedly operating with expired permits. The High Court was to later on 9th May 2022 lift Chapter Four's suspension, saying it was "irregular."

Several LGBTQ+ - led organisations, including UBUNTU, have been victims of frozen bank accounts by the Financial Intelligence Authority. Many other organisations, such as Sexual Minorities Uganda, have been denied registration by the Uganda Registration Service Bureau as their names and work are deemed undesirable and contradictory to the law. UBUNTU has further experienced challenges registering with the National Bureau for Non-governmental Organisations because of our objectives and nature of work. Many other

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR KEY MILESTONES



The context analysed above notwithstanding; UBUNTU continued to leverage and consolidate its niche of enhancing access to justice for key populations in Uganda during the year. Our four strategic thematic areas include; legal empowerment and access to justice, community mobilisation and engagement, access to socio-economic and gender justice remedies, and institutional capacity strengthening. Coupled with our ten strategic interventions, provided a compass to the organisation for developing projects, proposals, and activities during 2021/2022 as shown in the section below.

LEGAL EMPOWERMENT & ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROGRAMME

The overall objective of this strategic intervention is to provide quality and timely legal empowerment responses for marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse people, including the provision of legal services and addressing discriminatory and harmful laws, policies, and practices in Uganda. This is done by providing pro bono and pre-and post-trial legal services, conducting legal research and production of knowledge, and strategic litigation in partnership with other stakeholders and legal aid service providers to enhance access to justice services for Key Populations in Uganda. Under this programme, we employed three robust strategic interventions to achieve our objective and aim. In this section, we share our milestones during the year under review.

PROVIDED LEGAL SERVICES, INCLUDING PROBONO, LEGAL, PARALEGAL AND PRE- AND POST-TRIAL SUPPORT.



Under this strategy, UBUNTU's portfolio as a household legal aid service provider for LGBTQ+ persons and sex workers has greatly improved within our target communities as various individuals and institutions increasingly refer cases to our office. Within the year, a total of sixty-nine (69) cases were registered, including LGBTQ persons, sex workers, and 12 community-led organisations that were recorded to have benefited directly from the legal aid services provided through our walk-in legal aid clinic and our different referral systems. With the skills and expertise of our lawyers and paralegals, we have handled 66 cases to completion by the end of the year through providing pre- and post-trial support and pro bono legal assistance and advice. The remaining 3 cases are ongoing and shall all be handled to completion.

An analysis of the total number of cases handled in 2021/2022 indicates that the matters dealt with include criminal arrest in nature, gender-based violence, name change, threatening violence, theft of property, unlawful eviction, employment matter, lawful eviction, cyber harassment, conversion therapy, breach of contract, change in particulars, death due to natural causes, unresolved conflict, military detention for wearing a military uniform, theft of property, malicious damage reported by Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) against Elisah Mukisa, and a general inquiry in trafficking of persons against SMUG, tenancy disagreement at office space as the nature of the cases involving our target communities

The action taken in all the cases handled over the course of this reporting period benefited a total of 139 clients. Eighty-eight (90) of these were LGBTQ+ persons, 24 were sex workers, 12 people who use and inject drugs, and 13 were LGBTQI+ and sex worker-led organisations. It should be noted that because of the targeted arrests among LGBTQ+ persons and sex workers communities, mass arrests through police raids contribute to the higher numbers of clients; for example, in June 2021 when 39 members from the LGBTQ+ community were arrested after a police raid at a party that was organised at a shelter, and prior to that a house party was raided by police and a number of sex workers arrested. In addition, people who use and inject drugs were indirect beneficiaries of the legal support to sex workers and LGBTQ+ persons.

The nature of action taken in criminal arrest matters included legal representation by skilled and experienced paralegals and lawyers. Through our grassroots network, we mobilised and facilitated sureties in criminal arrests with and without prosecution, paid court fees, and fines, and supported clients to report for their police bond and court bail obligations by facilitating their transport and physically escorting them on their reporting dates. We successfully secured releases on police bond in several cases and secured court bails in several others. And because we consistently remind our clients of their bond and bail obligations, many police bonds and court bails were canceled after the issues were resolved at police and court cases dismissed in our client's favor.

In some court cases, clients were fined, and they avoided jail terms because of our interventions. In gender-based violence incidents, clients were provided with legal representation, facilitated to access medical first aid and treatment, and referred for psychosocial support through our vast referral channels. In threatening violence cases, clients were accompanied to report incidents at different police stations as a preventative intervention and provided with relevant and resourceful information such as referrals for relocation support.

In addition, the delivery of our gender recognition and affirming support services enabled transgender and gender-non-conforming persons to access name change services.

In the cases of theft of property and evictions whether unlawful or lawful, clients were given legal advice in person at Ubuntu Offices and Office hotline/phone. A community court session was held in an employment matter involving former staff of a community organisation, and a consensus was reached that the organisation, as a former employer, should pay the client's outstanding arrears, and a payment plan was agreed upon. In a case of cyber harassment, the client was given legal advice and counseling which helped her manage the stress the harassment was causing her.

In the breach of contract case, the client was given legal advice, and mediation was conducted to settle the matter. In the case of conversion therapy, the client was given legal representation and was released from Butabika hospital after management feared a potential lawsuit against the institution for misdiagnosing the client. A community court session was proposed for the unresolved conflict but was declined after the client decided not to pursue the case further. UBUNTU offered legal guidance on the due process to be followed by the Board and staff of Blessed Rwenzori Uganda after the demise of their Executive Director. UBUNTU also specifically ensured that a post-mortem was done to ascertain the cause of death and, in coordination with other partners, ensured the security and safety of community members who traveled for burial.

IN JUNE 2021 WE SUCCESSFULLY FUNDRAISED FOR SUPPORT TO MOBILISE AND FACILITATE 78 SURETIES IN THE CASE OF THE 39 INDIVIDUALS.

UBUNTU secured a community sos phone number to increase access to our legal aid services. It is rotationally managed by the legal empowerment and access to justice team, who provide advice and referrals to the walk-in legal aid clinic or other partners.

In June 2021, we successfully fundraised for support to mobilise and facilitate 78 sureties in the case of 39 individuals. This support included financial facilitation to meet the courts' requirements including LC letters, photocopy of national IDs, and transport to and from court whenever needed. We also managed to provide food and refreshments to the clients, sureties, and lawyers during the lengthy court process till the clients were granted bail.

CONDUCTED LEGAL RESEARCH AND PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE ON DISCRIMINATORY AND HARMFUL LAWS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES AND EXISTING GAPS IN HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION.

We conducted one (1) baseline study on compliance among LGBTQ+ and sex workers-led organisations in Uganda. This study aimed at determining the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perceptions (KAP) on compliance among LGBTQ and sex work organisations in Uganda.

The study targeted thirty-one (31) organisations and was undertaken to determine the KAP on access to justice for our target community organisations as part of a project aimed at legal capacitation and compliance support for community-led organisations. One of the key findings was the need for many of these organisations to comply with the various statutory obligations. It was also identified that compliance support is much needed to shield many of these grassroots organisations from the penalties of such non-compliance as a barrier to freedom of association.

UBUNTU further undertook desk review research on compliance laws and procedures governing non-profit organisations in Uganda.

STRATEGIC LITIGATION AGAINST DISCRIMINATORY AND HARMFUL LAWS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT IMPACT MARGINALISED WOMEN AND SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE.

UBUNTU actively engaged in advocacy on strategic litigation and built strategic partnerships by participating in four (4) consensus-building meetings for strategic litigation issues. These included a strategy meeting on mental health and state-sponsored violence preceding the arrest of the COSF 20 with The Taala Foundation; on sexual rights, strategic litigation in collaboration with The Taala Foundation and Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (ISLA); CSOs Regional Dialogue on Strategic Litigation for Freedom of Expression organized virtually by International Senior Lawyers Project; and attended a “thinking and critiquing” meeting on a proposed decriminalisation approach organised by The Westminster Foundation for Democracy in partnership with the Taala Foundation and Femme Forte Uganda.



COMMUNITY MOBILISATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The overall objective of this strategy is to mobilise and engage marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons towards the promotion and protection of their dignity and rights. The aim is to enhance the capacity of our target communities and key stakeholders to participate effectively in human rights advocacy and governance at the grassroots. Through this programme, UBUNTU works to increase awareness of laws, human rights, health justice, dignity, and Ubuntu among our target communities and the communities they live in. The programme employs the following strategic interventions to achieve its objectives: awareness sessions, legal education, production of simplified and popularised versions of laws, policies, principles, norms, judgments, and community outreaches, particularly in rural and remote areas. The following are the successes achieved by the programme in 2021/2022.

AWARENESS CREATION AND LEGAL EDUCATION AMONGST WOMEN AND SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSE PERSONS ON LAWS, HUMAN RIGHTS, HEALTH JUSTICE, DIGNITY AND UBUNTU.

UBUNTU was actively involved in monitoring legal trends and conducting an awareness session on the current trends in the laws and how they affect our communities. In February 2022, UBUNTU facilitated a hybrid dialogue with community-led CSOs and regulatory bodies on freedom of association and regulatory compliance. The dialogue was aimed at equipping the grassroots CSOs working with sex workers, gender, and sexual diverse persons in Uganda with knowledge on compliance and how to navigate barriers to freedom of association through regulatory compliance.

The organisation was further involved in reviewing and tracking Uganda's progress against human rights, health, and SRHR commitments. UBUNTU also participated in building strategic partnerships by attending the 9th convening of the UFF, represented at the 21st ICASA 2021 convening, and participated in the advocacy of the EAC SRHR bill in Uganda.

UBUNTU joined three (3) networks, coalitions, and working groups to ensure the inclusion of our communities' issues; these include the GBV network, the coalition to decriminalise petty offenses, and the RRT on opposition monitoring. And facilitated two (2) legal awareness sessions with transgender women and transgender men organised by Anna Foundation and Initiative for Transformational Empowerment, respectively.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH TO DIVERSE COMMUNITIES OF MARGINALISED WOMEN AND SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSE PERSONS, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS.

UBUNTU conducted three community outreach activities to remote and rural areas of Mbale with Eastern Region Women's Empowerment Organization (ERWEO), Arua with West Nile Rainbow Initiative (WERAIN), and Kasese with Blessed Rwenzori Uganda (BRU). During these outreaches, a total of sixty-two (62) community members were empowered with legal skills and human rights knowledge. In March, we conducted an awareness session with the 39 individuals arrested from the Happy Family Youth shelter on the different policies and how they affect them and highlighted their rights and responsibilities.

PRODUCTION OF SIMPLIFIED AND POPULARISED VERSIONS OF LAWS, POLICIES, PRINCIPLES, NORMS, AND JUDGMENTS THAT IMPACT MARGINALISED WOMEN AND SEXUAL AND GENDER-DIVERSE PERSONS.

2 audio-visual messages on compliance obligations were developed



ACCESS TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND GENDER JUSTICE REMEDIES

The overall objective of this strategy is to provide socio-economic and gender justice remedies for marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons in order to ensure holistic and healing responses to the impact of legal and social oppression. The aim is to improve access to social and economic services by our target communities. Through this programme, UBUNTU works to increase the visibility, agency, and advocates for integral and complete lives for marginalised women and sexual and gender-diverse persons, like access to safety and wellness support, family and familial rights, property rights, sexual and reproductive health, and rights, etc.

PROVIDED SAFE AND HEALING SPACES WHICH UTILISE FARMING FOR AGRO-THERAPY AND HEALING

Beyond providing legal responses, UBUNTU, in collaboration with the FAMACE collective, has managed to provide a safe and healing space at the FAMACE healing studio and urban homestead located in Kampala with a resource center and wellness activities including gardening to over 20 individuals who are dealing with different shocks in the life of violence and abuse.

These included clients we have dealt with while handling the SGBV, threatening violence, and conversion therapy cases. FAMACE is an underground community care project run by a team of freelance queer activists in Kampala. The project uses farming, art, mindset change, archiving, collaboration, and ethical-human-centered design to facilitate individual healing, self-awareness, and sustainable personal development.

FACILITATED MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALING RESPONSES TO CASES OF VIOLENCE AND VIOLATIONS

Working through an appropriate referral system, we have facilitated two (2) sex workers to access safe abortion services in cases of sexual assault by clients. We also did hospital visits for transgender clients who have been physically assaulted because of their identities during our legal interventions. And on a case-to-case basis, we refer clients for PrEP, PEP, and ART to various friendly services.

In June 2021, we managed to fundraise for mental health support services through The Taala Foundation for the 44 individuals who were arrested while attending a party at the Happy Family Youth shelter in Nansana.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

Lastly, the overall objective of this strategic intervention is to strengthen institutional, financial capacity, and operational efficiency for the effective running of the organisation. This is done by strengthening effective accounting, human resources, and other institutional policies, procedures, systems, and structures; ensuring strong and effective governance bodies with a diversity of expertise; building and strengthening leadership at all levels of the organisation, including developing management and staff capacity; promoting the sustainability of the organisation; and regular reflection on the work of the organisation to improve programming and progress on implementation of our strategic objectives. The strategic intervention aims to develop and operationalise structures, policies, and practices to enhance and ensure the organisation's accountability, transparency, and sustainability.

**STRENGTHENING
EFFECTIVE
ACCOUNTING, HUMAN
RESOURCES, AND
OTHER INSTITUTIONAL
POLICIES,
PROCEDURES, SYSTEMS
AND STRUCTURES**

With an institutional capacity strengthening grant from UHAI, management has built a committed staff through staff recruitment and retention. Within the year, we recruited nine (9) staff and retained seven (7). We further managed to get well-facilitated office space in compliance with the requirements to operate as a legal aid service provider in Uganda. In addition, DPI provided Ubuntu with technical support in getting this office space by doing a security assessment of various locations we had identified, ensuring we got a safe and secure location that would be easily accessible to all our target communities in their diversity.

We developed financial and human resource manuals, salary scales, and performance indicators. We adopted QuickBooks, an internationally recognised financial system, strengthening effective accounting, human resources, and other institutional policies, procedures, systems, and structures across the organisation.

We also ensured statutory compliance by filing annual returns, applying for registration with NGO Board, and paying staff PAYE and NSSF. In addition, we have applied to the NGO board to be registered by the bureau and for the FIA certificate. In addition, we have engaged a certified auditor who has embarked on auditing our books of accounts, a report shall be availed as soon as it is done.

**ENSURING STRONG AND
EFFECTIVE
GOVERNANCE BODIES,
WITH DIVERSITY OF
EXPERTISE.**

A diverse board was appointed and inaugurated and we are currently in the process of developing the Board manual with tenures and TORs as well as TORs to delineate the role of the founders/founding directors clearly.

PROMOTING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ORGANISATION

During the year, UBUNTU responded to ten (10) calls for proposals that included and developed a relationship with one donor, UHAI. These included proposals to four (4) from UHAI-EASHRI, and one (1) from Mama Cash, UN Women, Fund for Global Human Rights Legal Empowerment Fund, Safe Action Abortion Fund (SAAF), African Women's Development Fund, and Open Society Foundation-Africa. With support from UHAI, we operated a secure and well-maintained office space in a safe and accessible environment.

We also received support from UHAI to develop a Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2026. We held several staff meetings to strategise our priorities for the next five years and develop the annual work plan and budget.

This strategic plan had the direct input of our target communities through four (4) consultative meetings with members from the target communities in Mbale, Arua, Kasese, and Kampala districts in a process that was supported by two consultants.

The activity also helped increase the organisation's visibility and the work we do with our target communities due to this collaborative engagement with a number of partner organisations. Our strategic plan sets out our analysis of the context in which we are working, the changes we are making in our programming to ensure our work is as effective as possible in these challenging circumstances, our theory of change, and our planned areas of work and priorities for the coming four years.



Our mission

To provide justice and transformative solutions for marginalised women and sex and gender diverse persons by creating and healing spaces, providing legal and sustainable socio-economic

gener



GOVERNANCE

THE SECRETARIAT

The following staff members served the organisation during the year 2021/2022:

1. Fridah Mutesi – Executive Director
2. Shawn Mugisha
3. Gloria Mugabekazi
4. Dorah Bishagenda
5. Derrick Kiiza
6. Winnie Kisakye
7. Aminah Namutebi
8. Racheal Nabakka
9. Caroline Muchuma
10. Peter Aziku- Security person

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A five-member board was appointed and inaugurated. The members include:

1. Beyonce Karungi
2. Diana Natukunda
3. Joy Asasiira
4. Prof. Sylvia Tamale



OUR COMMUNITIES, DONORS & PARTNERS

**WE THANK YOU FOR
YOUR CONTINUED
SUPPORT**

For more information, please visit our website

Website: www.ubuntujustice.org

Office line: +256 393 256 064

WhatsApp/Signal: +256 708 199 178

E-mail: info@ubuntujustice.org

