



The Uganda Reach The Aged Association

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Submission on Access to Justice to the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing by Uganda Reach the Aged Association

The constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for independence of the judiciary. The Supreme Court is the final court of appeal. There is also the court of appeal which hears appeals from the high court.

The justice, law and Order Sector (JLOS), a sector wide approach was created by government to bring together institutions with closely linked mandates administering justice and maintaining law and order and human rights.

There are judicial and non-judicial mechanisms in place for older persons. The judicial mechanisms are presided over by legal professionals at various levels. There are magistrates and judges at various levels.

The non-judicial mechanisms are the local Council courts. The elders also have a role to play. The elders are involved in settlements of disputes between families and clans. They usually cover cases related to land, livestock and petty crimes within their communities.

These non-judicial mechanisms are largely used by older persons to seek redress for denial of their rights.

Availability

The government of Uganda enacted the local government Act which provides for structures of local councils. There are guidelines which were developed to guide the local council courts. There are village council courts commonly known as local Council I. If one is not satisfied with the outcome of the lower local council, there is an opportunity to appeal to local council II at parish level.

Accessibility:

JLOS which brings together different institutions mandated to administer justice make outreaches to create awareness on the roles of the established judicial system. There are civil society organizations which provide legal aid to the vulnerable including older persons. The paralegals have been instrumental in the area of will writing by the older persons.

Other older persons are supported through alternative dispute resolutions. In order to empower the older persons legally, paralegals tool kits and legal aid manuals have been developed.

There are specific challenges older persons face and they include:

- Illiteracy/ low levels of education
- Chronic poverty- most of them cannot afford court fees.



Vision: A dignified self-fulfilled poverty-free ageing Uganda

Mission: To champion the realization and preservation of a dignified quality of life for older persons in Uganda

Location: Plot 1685, Block 230, Kireka - Namugongo Road

- Problem of ageism by stakeholders.
- Fear and stigma.
- Hearing dates are usually not favourable where a case is adjourned several times
- Accessing files is a serious problem. They are usually lost by court officials.
- "Mob justice" especially meted on older persons who the community believe they carry out witchcraft including rain makers.

Good practices

- Legal aid provides legal education
- Development and dissemination of tool kits and legal manuals

Alternative dispute resolutions are very useful especially to older persons who have stigma and fear

Equality and non- discrimination

- The establishment of the judicial and non- judicial systems.
- Establishment of complaint desks at various levels of the judicial system
- Provision of legal aid to the poor and vulnerable including older persons

Accountability

The government established the Judicial Service Commission which has an oversight role and ensures the justice system functions in accordance with the principles of independence and impartiality. The Uganda Human Rights Commission follows up cases where human rights are being abused in the court system.

The law council also follows up and disciplines errant judicial officers in the court system

Yours Sincerely



PP
Frederick Ouma Bwire
Chief Executive Officer

