

THE JUSTICE CENTRES

AN OVERVIEW
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BACKGROUND

Born out of a need to improve access to justice for the poor and vulnerable by;

- working towards uniform standards for LA service provision,
- Ensuring cost effective quality services,
- Ensuring that LA is brought to the grassroots where it is needed the most,
- Measuring impact against resource use,

BACKGROUND cont'd

- Encouraging increased cooperation, linkages and strategic partnerships with other LASPs.
- Creating an efficient referral and follow up system.
- Providing LA while at the same time empowering the vulnerable & communities to advocate for social and policy change.

BACKGROUND cont'd

On the other hand,

- Realizing that the primary duty of LASP lies with the state,
- Art 14(3)(d) of the ICCPR
- (d) To be tried in his presence, and to defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing; to be informed, if he does not have legal assistance, of this right; and to have legal assistance assigned to him, in any case where the interests of justice so require, and without payment by him in any such case if he does not have sufficient means to pay for it;
- General comment No 32 of the HRC

BACKGROUND cont'd

- Art 21 of the Constitution; Equal protection of the law
- Art 28 equality before the law.
- No comprehensive law on Legal aid yet
- No policy on legal aid yet.
- We are somewhat operating in a policy and legislative vacuum. This is why there is the on going process on the NLAP and Law.

Why JCU

- JCU was designed as a state legal aid clinic model that would enhance access to justice for the indigent people of Uganda with a focus on effectiveness, outreach, quality and cost efficiency.

What prompted this?

- There was no state legal aid apart from the SBS which covers only those whose offences attract death or imprisonment for life.

All agricultural produce done by poor

JUSTIFICATION

- JCs provide legal aid to individuals on a ‘one on one’ basis but also have a shift in approach to focus on structural and systemic issues that seek to prevent individuals from enjoying and claiming their rights; through root cause analyses; to provide evidence for planning and strategizing, advocacy and out reach to communities.

JUSTIFICATION cont'd

- JCs bridge the gap between supply and demand of justice by providing legal aid while empowering individuals and communities to claim their rights and demand for policy and social change at local and national levels.
- Seek to operate in areas that are highly lacking in basic legal aid services and there are no established legal aid providers.

Vision

- Vulnerable societies accessing quality legal services and realising their rights

MISSION

- To promote the rights of vulnerable communities through provision of quality human rights based legal aid, legal and human rights awareness, communities outreach, empowerment and advocacy.



Values

- Professional excellence
- Ethics and integrity
- Accountability
- Non Discrimination

OBJECTIVES

- To pilot Justice Centres as a successful model for comprehensive delivery of quality legal aid services in Uganda.
- To enable vulnerable individuals and communities to effectively resolve disputes using both litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
- To enhance awareness of human rights and empower communities to claim their rights from the appropriate duty bearers.
- To undertake human rights centred and evidence based advocacy for reform of Laws, Policies and Practices.

KEY ACTIVITES

- Legal advice
- Court representation,
- Alternative Dispute Resolution,
- Counseling and psycho social support generally,
- Referral and follow up with other relevant institutions,
- Legal and human rights awareness creation
- Advocacy both on at the local level and the legal aid policy framework at the national level.

CURRENT AREAS OF COVERAGE

- Currently five offices;
- National Coordination Office situate at High Court in Kampala. Chambers F6
- JC Tororo covers 10 districts: Tororo, Butaleja, Mbale, Bugiri, Busia, Manafwa, Kumi, Bukedea, Palisa, Sironko, Bududa and Soroti
- JC Lira covers 9 districts Lira, Apac, Oyam, Dokolo, Gulu, Pader, Amolatar and Kaberamaida
- Kampala Mmengo 2nd floor covers five districts: Kampala, Luwero, Mpigi, Butambala and Mityana
- Hoima covers five districts: Kibaale, Masindi, Hoima, Kiryandongo and Buliisa.

STAFFING

- Each Centre is equipped with three advocates, a psychosocial specialist, three paralegals and other administrative staff.
- JCs extend deeper into the communities through collaboration with community volunteers to complement our work.

How is JCU established

- By Standing Circular No. 1 of 2010 from the Chief Justice. The JCU is accommodated by the Courts of Judicature and is supervised by the Registrar High Court with a steering Committee membership comprising of JLOS institutions, Donor representatives, and LASPNET .

FUNDING SOURCES

- Government of Uganda.
- The Democratic Governance Facility(DGF)



Thematic coverage

- JCs cover all areas of the law provided one is among the most indigent Ugandans/ people in Uganda. This is determined through a Means and Merit test. Difficult to administer but we try.

How we work with Courts

- As a Judiciary project, JCU is at your service especially in the areas we are found.

Courts have used JCU to:

- mediate court matters
- Represent un represented litigants
- Create awareness on different issues e.g. land
- Take on state brief cases
- Support them on their prison role by bringing to them information on who is in prison when they shouldn't be.

How you can support JCU

- In all the above and every way you believe would increase access to justice especially for the poor.
- We would like to appreciate your worships that have support us through the times.

APRECIATION

Thank you all for
listening to me!

