



PUBLIC INTEREST REGIONAL COLLOQUIUM TO REVIEW THE ROLE OF PEOPLE DRIVEN JUSTICE IN AFRICA.

Kituo Cha Sheria with support from MISEREOR convened a Public Interest Regional colloquium with leading legal empowerment organizations in the East, Horn and Southern Africa region on the 7th and 8th of March 2022 to discuss and review the role of people driven Justice in Africa. The discussions were structured in the form of panel and plenary discussions highlighting the state and development of people-driven justice within the country, experience-sharing from other African jurisdictions and diverse actors within the access to justice chain.



Hon. Justice Martha Koome, EGH Chief Justice & President of the Supreme Court of Kenya giving her key note address virtually at a VIP room within crown plaza hotel.

While giving her keynote address on the role of the Judiciary in promoting community-driven justice, Hon. Justice Martha Karambu Koome, EGH Chief Justice & President of the Supreme Court of Kenya laid out the current and future plans by the Judiciary to enhance people-centered justice in Kenya. These include avenues that are cost-friendly (pro-poor justice approaches) such as Court Annexed Mediation, Alternative Justice Systems and the Small Claims Courts.

To achieve the goal of providing access to justice for all, the Hon. Chief Justice Martha Koome emphasized on the need to place justice at the heart of sustainable development, put people at the centre of justice systems and move from justice for few to justice for all.

She emphasized that People-centred justice is a justice system that puts people at the heart of everything it embodies. This includes a Judiciary that allows people to be actively involved in access to justice. A Judiciary that is truly accessible, which meets the public needs and inspires confidence.



Participants following the proceedings at Crown Plaza Hotel

"People-centered justice means that there must be conversations with the people, enquiring about their justice journeys; their needs and how accessible and affordable justice systems are. Everyone must have an equal opportunity to access justice and the Judiciary is at the fore in widening the doorways of justice." Hon. Martha



Hon. Justice Martha Koome, receiving a gift hamper from Justus Munyithya, Chairperson BoD Kituo cha Sheria



Aimee Ongeso (Right), Dr. Linda Musumba (middle) and Dr. Nancy Baraza (left) engage in a panel discussion during the colloquium held at Crown Plaza Hotel, Nairobi.

In their definition of legal empowerment and people driven justice, the panelist comprising of Aimee Ongeso of NAMATI-Kenya, Dr. Nancy Baraza and Human Rights lawyer Mariam Alo of Nigeria, elaborated how Legal empowerment can be distinguished from legal aid which bases centrality on the advocates while legal empowerment does not downplay the role of the advocates, it promotes a more people driven approach.

“Legal empowerment is therefore the process of building the capacity of the people to know their rights, know the remedies available for threats and violations of their rights and the avenues to seek redress.” Said Dr. Nancy Baraza. According to Aimee Ongeso, legal empowerment ensures that communities are able to use the law to their benefit in addressing their legal challenges. she added that Paralegals are important in legal empowerment efforts owing to the trainings they receive and the trust built within the communities they work in

The panelists were Senior Counsel John Chigiti, Justice Mlambo of South Africa and Valarie Zvuiya of the Legal Resource Foundation, Zimbabwe.

Senior Counsel John Chigiti acknowledged that public interest litigation has achieved great success for communities such as the acknowledgment of the right to vote for prisoners, the right to housing and amendment of law on lawful evictions and the recognition and protection of intersex persons. However, Chigiti noted that the drawbacks on public interest litigation is the time and resources required to research, file and litigate public interest cases as well as the challenge in implementation of the judgments delivered by court which further hinders access to justice.



Mary Airo, the National Coordinator of the Paralegal Society of Kenya (Right) giving her contributions.



Jedida Wakonyo Waruhiu, Commissioner of the National Steering Committee on Implementation of AJS Policy (left) making her contributions.

Place of informal justice systems

The panelist acknowledged that Informal justice systems are in most African communities a way of life for the people and are embedded in culture and values of Africans that speak to the amicable and speedy resolution of disputes with minimal costs incurred by disputing parties.

“The power of the people was also highlighted in the Huduma Namba case that brought out the importance of the community in the drive for justice. It was clear that without the community, the Petition would not stand.” Aisha Khagai, Namati Kenya. Clifford Msiska, Chairperson and Executive Director-PASI stated that Alternative Justice Systems are highly recognized in Malawi and in most cases, paralegals offer services such as mediation through the co-referencing of cases between the formal and informal justice systems ensuring non-complex cases do not have to go through the lengthy court process and complex matters first reported to paralegals for resolution are referred to the formal court systems.

Other discussion centred on role of the State of Institutions in promoting community driven justice with the panelists comprising of Fresiah Githumbi, a representative from the Office of the Convenor of the Open Government Partnerships, Philip Thigo and the Head of HiIL Innovation Hub, Erick Kariuki emphasizing on the need for State and non-state collaboration which had been made possible through the Open Government Partnerships which for the first time has an access to justice commitment that is being worked on jointly by State institutions, non-state institutions and academia and has elements of alternative justice systems and making virtual courts more accessible to the poor and indigent.

While discussing on the role of CSO's in promoting people driven justice, the panel comprising of Mr. Collins Odhiambo – LSK Deputy Director, Kibera's Justice Center coordinator Jamia Abdulrahim and the National Coordinator of the Paralegal Society of Kenya, Mary Airo ecommended taht Paralegals should be educated on the Advocates Act to ensure they appreciate the law that governs the practice of law in Kenya. The panelists also suggested that paralegals should consider coming up with draft regulations as opposed to having other bodies regulate their mandate.



Group photo of the attendees shortly after the closing ceremony of the colloquium.

Other guests and panelists included Kituo cha Sheria Board Members; Justus Munyithya - Chairperson Board of Directors, Mercy Wambua, Fatma Dubow, Dr.Linda Musumba, Dr.Annette Mbogoh - Executive Director, Kituo cha Sheria; Mariam Alo - Senior Staff Attorney , Justice and Empowerment Initiatives, Lagos Nigeria, Dr. Victor Lando Ogwang, Volunteer Advocate with KITUO, Jedidah Wakonyo - AJS Commissioner, Aisha Khagai – NAMATI, Hon. Lady Justice Hellen Wasilwa, Hon, Justice Mlambo Judge Constitutional Court and Chairperson CAOSA-South Africa, Valerie Zvuiya, Advocacy - Research and Strategic Litigation Coordinator, Legal Resource Foundation Zimbabwe.

STAKEHOLDERS' INCEPTION MEETING AHEAD OF OUR RESEARCH PROJECT



Group photo: Kituo Fraternity together with key stakeholders and partners who will be involved in the research project

Kituo Cha Sheria on 31st January 2022 conducted an Inception Workshop at Heron Portico Hotel in Nairobi, to kick-off a three-years research project that will evaluate the impact of legal empowerment programming, the use of technology within the justice sector during the COVID- 19 pandemic and formalization of paralegals through recognition, training, financing and accreditation. The virtual side event themed People-Centered Justice brought together paralegals, and organizations that support paralegals, from across Africa, policymakers, and state officials to continue a continent-wide conversation on how they can work together to support and bolster the important work of community-based paralegals.

The meeting brought together (in-person and virtually) key stakeholders and partners mainly the legal aid service providers, state and non-state actors who will be involved in the research to share their understanding of the research project goals, deliverables and workflow.

The partners applauded this move and pledged to cooperate with Kituo towards successful implementation of the research project. Among the partners that were present include; the Judiciary, community paralegals, LSK and Prison Officers, Namati, African Centre for Excellence for Access to Justice (ACE-AJ) And The Legal Aid Forum (LAF) in Rwanda.

While giving an overview of the research project, Dr. Annette Mbogoh Executive Director Kituo Cha Sheria, emphasized on the importance of an evidence-based research to inform future

programming on legal empowerment and the need to conduct empirical research that will identify gaps and recommend strategies that can bring transformative and systemic change.

The scope of the project will be Kenya and the entire East Africa region. Lessons from other parts of Africa on these three questions will be shared as best practices.



Participants following the proceedings during Inception workshop at Heron Portico Hotel in Nairobi.

The research findings will not only inspire change in attitudes and practices among the public, state and non-state actors but also inform future programme design, innovation and strategy on legal empowerment.

The project that also seeks to enhance learning in the East Africa region on legal empowerment was launched by the Kituo BoD Chair Mr Justus Munyithya.

The project is supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

KITUO ENGAGES PRISON STAKEHOLDERS AND IEBC ON ELECTION PREPAREDNESS OF INMATES



Members of Prison Sector Working Group together with Kituo staff during the engagement meeting held at the Best Western- Meridian Hotel Nairobi

Kituo Cha Sheria on 15th December 2021 held a consultative meeting with the Prison Sector Working Group to discuss the electoral preparedness and gaps in the participation of inmates in the 2022 general elections.

The meeting that was held at the Best Western- Meridian Hotel Nairobi also saw prison stakeholders discuss the challenges faced by prisoners in accessing justice, and how the digitization of the Judiciary has affected access to justice for the prisoners during the Covid -19 pandemic. Of special interest was the effectiveness of the court process in prisons during the covid-19 and the compliance of the Covid-19 protocol as well as devolving legal aid services to all 134 stations



Group Photo: Members of Prison Sector Working Group together with Kituo staff

The stakeholders also engaged the IEBC on the measures they have put in place to ensure that all prisoners are registered to vote in the upcoming poll.

MEETING WITH SOUTH SUDAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK



Group Photo of Kituo Staff together with South Sudan Human Rights defenders Network taken shortly after the meeting held at Kituo Head Office in Nairobi

In line with the vision to enhance our regional engagement on access to justice, Kituo Cha Sheria on 29th January hosted a team from the South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHRDN) who visited on a benchmarking mission.

The delegation was welcome by Dr. Annette Mbogo, the Executive Director- KITUO, Valary Ang'awa- Coordinator Advocacy, Governance and Community Partnerships programme and other Kituo officers.

Dr. Annette emphasized the importance of such exchange programmes as one of the key pillars in enhancing access to justice for the poor and marginalised. She also highlighted on the possible areas of collaboration and partnership for the teams.

Zoha Mazrooei, the Civic Engagement Project Team leader at the Nonviolent Peaceforce and who led the delegation reiterated the need for further cross-learning and collaborations.

The SSHRDN delegation of 11 comprised of CSO leaders, lawyers, activist, journalists and advocacy specialists



Valarie Anga'wa, Coordinator Advocacy governance and community partnership giving her welcoming remarks.

AJS SYMPOSIUM TO TAKE STOCK OF THE AJS MECHANISM PROGERSSSION IN THE COUNTRY



Valarie Anga'wa Coordinator Advocacy Governance and Community Partnership giving her presentation during the AJS Symposium held at the Starbucks Hotel, Eldoret.

Kituo Cha Sheria in partnership with other stakeholders on 22nd November 2021 conducted an Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) Symposium at the Starbucks Hotel, Eldoret. The symposium brought together 62 participants comprising of 54 paralegals, 24 from Uasin Gishu, 24 from Trans Nzoia and 6 from Mombasa Counties to discuss experiences, best practices, and progress on implementation of the AJS policy both locally and regionally.

The symposium provided a platform for AJS practitioners to engage with the National Steering Committee on the Implementation of the AJS Policy (NaSCI-AJS). Through this engagement, the AJS adjudicators and commissioners build their capacity on the use of AJS to enhance access to justice for the poor and marginalized.

While giving her opening remarks, Dr. Annette Mbogoh the Executive Director Kituo Cha Sheria applauded the AJS adjudicators and commissioners for the work they're doing to foster peaceful co-existence in their communities.

"The symposium will inform the participants of progression the AJS mechanisms in the country and the different ways in which the beneficiaries using it to resolve disputes in the community?" Added Dr. Annette.

Kituo Cha Sheria through the support of Ziviler Friedensdienst / GIZ has been implementing an AJS project in Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia Counties since 2017, and in Mombasa County in 2021.

The project aims to foster forgiveness, reconciliation, and co-existence in counties that are susceptible to post-election violence. The project is currently in its third phase. In the first and second phases, Kituo Cha Sheria facilitated trust-building between host communities and survivors of the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya.



Group Photo: Kituo Cha Sheria staff together with AJS Paractitioners and members of the National Steering Committee on the Impelementation of the AJS Policy.

KITUO TAKES PART IN THE 9TH FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY FORUM IN MARRAKECH, MOROCCO



KITUO's Executive Director Dr. Annette Mbogoh (second from right) together with other panelsits during the 9th freedom from slavery forum held in Marrakech, Moricco

Kituo cha Sheria participated in the 9th Freedom from Slavery Forum in Marrakech, Morocco organized by Free the Slaves. The global forum began on 27th March 2022 and ended on 30th March 2022. This year's theme is "Revitalizing the Anti-Modern Slavery Movement: Enabling Local Responses and Coordinating Global Solutions." The Forum brought together a wide range of leaders including survivors of modern-day slavery, NGO executives, government representatives, academics, UN agency representatives and the corporate sector.

On 28th March 2022, Dr. Annette Mbogoh, the KITUO Executive Director, and Cromwell Awadey, Executive Director of International Needs, Ghana, co-facilitated a vibrant workshop discussion that identified, enriched and reflected on the regional priorities for Africa to combat modern-day slavery. Later, Dr. Mbogoh presented the Africa regional priorities to the broader plenary session in a panel discussion that also involved sharing and analyzing of priorities from the Middle East and North Africa, North America-Europe-Caribbean, Asia and the Latin America regions. The panel was represented by Ritz Lee B. Santos III (Executive Director, Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, (BALAOD), Philippines), Jenny Carolina Moron Reyes (Coordinator, Movimiento de Mujeres Dominico-Haitianas (MUDHA), Dominican Republic, Linda Al-Kalash (Executive Director, Tamkeen, Jordan) and Adrian Alexander (President, Caribbean Umbrella Body for Restorative Behaviour, Trinidad and Tobago). It was moderated by Diep Vuong (President and Co-Founder, Pacific Links Foundation, Vietnam).

The Africa regional priorities highlighted included the need to enhance public awareness on safe migration, modern-day slavery and trafficking in persons at global, regional and national levels. Further, the use of community-based structures was identified as crucial in the fight against modern slavery.

At the same time, addressing the underlying factors such as poverty and under-development was seen as key in the fight. The Africa region identified the need for international cooperation to support implementation of the UN SDG 8.7. The implementation of laws and policy relating to forced migration and exploitation was emphasized. Finally, the regional blocs e.g. the East Africa Community, COMESA etc were viewed as good entry points for reaching bilateral agreements that harmonize the standards for migration. Through its programmes on forced migration, direct legal services and paralegalism, KITUO will continue to promote human rights standards in labour and migration.



KITUO's Executive Director Dr. Annette Mbogoh (in white Blazer) pose for a photo together with other leaders who attended the Freedom from Slave forum.

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS PAYS COURTESY VISIT TO KITUO



KITUO FMP staff, Executive Director Dr. Annette Mbogoh and OSF representatives pose for a group photo shortly after the meeting.

Kituo was excited to receive one of our development partner, Open Society Foundations (OSF) represented by Khairunissa Dhala who paid us a courtesy call on 25th February 2022 at our head office in Nairobi. Dhala was received by our Executive Director Dr. Annette Mbogoh and officers from our Forced Migration Programme who briefed her on the current project that Kituo is implementing on refugee matters including intended participatory action research on durable solutions for refugees in Kenya. The research project is supported by Open Society Foundations. The meeting also forged future partnership. We appreciate the support of our development partners which go a long way in promoting access to justice for the poor and marginalised.

SENSITIZATION FORUMS IN JOMVU KISAUNI, NYALI AND KISAUNI

The Mental Health and Psycho- Social Support team on 10th to 11th March 2022 conducted an awareness creation exercise for communities in Jomvu Kisauni, Nyali and Kisauni. The team also sensitized the community members on the new Refugee Act 2021 which came into force on 17th February 2022. The communities were able to interact with Kituo's psychosocial counselors, Alice Kwenda, Shem Alubala, who provided an insight into the kind of work they do as well as distinguish Kituo's Forced Migration Team and state departments that deal with refugees.

KITUO ATTENDS THE SECOND NATIONAL LEGAL AID CONFERENCE



Miss Diana Ndashiki presenting during the second National Legal Aid Conference at Naivasha Simba Lodge

Kituo Cha Sheria Programme Officer, Miss Diana Ndashiki presented a paper on the Use of Strategic Litigation for the Protection of Human Rights during the COVID-19 Pandemic at the second National Legal Aid Conference that was conducted at the lake Naivasha Simba Lodge in Naivasha County. The four days' conference that began on Monday 29th and ended on Friday 3rd brought together academics, civil society, legal professions, human rights defenders and policy makers to engage in policy and human rights discourse under the theme: "Access to Justice for all in a Socio-economic Crisis: Lessons from a Global Pandemic Covid-19." The conference was organized by Egerton University Faculty of Law through the support from the European Union in Kenya and UNDP Kenya.

KITUO'S FORCED MIGRATION PROGRAMME CONDUCTS PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT EXERCISE TO INFORM PLANNING FOR THE URBAN REFUGEE PROGRAMING FOR 2022

On 19th November 2021 Kituo's Forced Migration Programme (FMP) staff together with other officers from the UNHCR, GIZ, and Refugee Affairs Secretariate (RAS) held a consultative meeting ahead of the participatory assessment exercise that will inform planning for the Urban Refugee Programing for 2022.

The 2021 participatory assessment exercise through the Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) framework aimed at ensuring that persons of concern (PoCs) are able to participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives and those of their family members and enjoy their rights on an equal footing. The differences between people, whether actual or perceived, can be defining characteristics that play a central role in determining an individual's opportunities, capacities, needs and vulnerabilities.

Although this assessment provides qualitative data as opposed to quantitative data, which allows to have more accurate information in terms of figures and numbers, it is important to note that the information was collected in a participatory method based on age, gender and diversity principles.

This exercise is expected to provide UNHCR and partners with disaggregated information on how protection risks and challenges differ from one group to another, which groups of people are more affected by certain issues, what capacity and resources PoCs have, how they want to solve and respond to their protection concerns, and what are the priority areas of action.

Therefore, it is crucial to incorporate the findings from this assessment during the programing course of 2022. This assessment will also serve as the baseline to measure gaps and examine to what extent these issues are responded to in the next assessment. The recommendations noted above will be worked on in the course of 2022 as part of efforts aimed at reducing protection risks and strengthening PoCs' capacities. The exercise was conducted in three major towns Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru.



Kituo Staff together with officers from UNHCR, GIZ and RAS during the consultative meeting.



Hon. Lady Justice Maureen Onyango, Judge Employment and Labour Relations Court giving her key note speech

SOCIAL DIALOGUE ON IMPROVING ENFORCEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN WORKPLACES

Kituo Cha Sheria on 9th November 2021 Participated at a Social Dialogue on Improving Enforcement and Accountability in Workplaces meeting that took place in Nairobi. As a justice stakeholder, Kituo engaged the other stakeholders in the workshop that aimed at improving inspectorate Services and compliance with labour laws through social dialogue.

Kituo was represented by Ms. Tracy Wachira, a Legal officer. In attendance were key stakeholders among them being Hon. Lady Justice Maureen Onyango, Judge Employment and Labour Relations Court among others. Among other objectives, the workshop sought to

1. Review the Inspectorate Services and how to improve them
2. Discuss the gaps and constraints in Occupational Safety and Health, and Labour Inspectorate Services; and
3. Explore the viability of integrating Occupational Safety and Health and Labour Inspections.

KITUO CHA SHERIA FETED AT THE LAW SOCIETY OF KENYA ANNUAL AWARDS 2022



Kituo Cha Sheria, Chairperson of BOD Mr. Justus Munyithya and Mercy Wambua, KITUO's Board Member, receives the KITUO's award from LSK representative

KITUO bagged the coveted Fr. Kaiser Human Rights Award during the colourful LSK Annual Awards-2022 held on 25th of March, 2022 at the Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi. The award is named in honour of the late Father John Anthony Kaiser; a Roman Catholic priest who died in August 2000 and was touted as a study in courage, determination and sacrifice on behalf of the weak, oppressed and downtrodden.

At the Awards ceremony, KITUO was recognized for having greatly impacted the lives of indigent and marginalized communities through our human rights programmes and interventions. Some of these include Kituo's involvement in strategic litigation cases that have contributed towards jurisprudential development of human rights including the prisoners' right to vote in elections, the protection of refugees rights, safeguarding of housing rights of dwellers of informal settlements, the Building Bridges Initiative case, police brutality, 1998 US Embassy bombing, Marsabit toxic waste and access to digitized justice for self-representing indigent litigants.

KITUO was also considered for demonstrating innovation in our programs, allowing the organization to remain relevant within the context of a dynamic environment. KITUO has been at the forefront in embracing the use of ICT in legal empowerment programmes. KITUO has advocated for law reform nationally, regionally, and globally. The enactment of laws and policies such as the Constitution of Kenya 2010, the Legal Aid Act 2016, the Land Act 2012, the National Peace Policy among others were spearheaded by KITUO alongside other collaborative partners. In addition, KITUO has jointly with other organizations submitted policy statements on human rights to the African Commission for Human and People's Rights, Universal Periodic Review and the Kenyan Parliament.

Due to our extensive experience in legal empowerment and human rights work, KITUO has been recognized as a leading actor and trailblazer regionally and globally. In Africa, KITUO serves as a founding member of the African Centre of Excellence for Access to Justice, which is the only Pan-African organization promoting justice in the continent. Globally, KITUO sits in the Network Advisory Committee of the Global Legal Empowerment Network representing the East Africa region. KITUO coordinates learning, community building, and advocacy of Legal Empowerment Network members in East and Southern Africa. In addition, KITUO is the co-chair of the Access to Justice Cluster under the global Open Government Partnerships platform. Jointly with other justice organizations, KITUO has been co-implementing the access to justice commitment in Kenya's fourth National Action Plan.

KITUO is honored to have our efforts in promoting access to justice for the poor and marginalized recognized by the Law Society of Kenya.



Hellen Namisi the chair of the HIV & AIDS Tribunal, Mr. Justus Munyithya Chairperson of BOD Kituo Cha Sheria and Mr. John Mwariri pose for a photo with the award.



Kituo Cha Sheria Staff following the colourful LSK Annual Awards-2022 held on 25th of March, 2022 at the Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi.

PEOPLE CENTERED JUSTICE

*"The Africa we Want:
Increased financing and
recognition of community
based paralegals"*

12 November 2021

2PM GMT / 3PM WAT / 4PM CAT / 5PM EAT



Dr. Willy Mutunga
Ambassador for People Centred Justice



Tshenolo Tshoedi
Community Advice Offices South
Africa (CAOSA)



Bamidele Ibikunle
Legal Aid Council of Nigeria



Clifford Msiska
Africa Centre of Excellence for Access to
Justice



Atieno Odhiambo
Legal Empowerment Fund



Stanley Nyamanhindi
SADC Lawyers Association

On 12th November 2021, Kituo Cha Sheria represented by Dr. Annette Mbogoh (Executive Director) joined the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, organizations in a virtual side event on Access to Justice. This was part of the NGOs FORUM 2 69th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, organizations in Africa led by the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (Gambia), Namati, Africa Centre of Excellence for Access to Justice, Paralegal Alliance Network (Zambia), Legal Resources Foundation (Zimbabwe), Paralegal Services Institute (Malawi), Community Advice Offices (South Africa), The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies and the Legal Empowerment Network.

The virtual side event themed People-Centered Justice brought together paralegals, and organizations that support paralegals, from across Africa, policymakers, and state officials to continue a continent-wide conversation on how they can work together to support and bolster the important work of community-based paralegals. A significant amount of access to justice work in Africa is led by community-based paralegals who work directly with communities. However, two main challenges hinder this significant work of justice: financing and legal recognition of community-based paralegals.

The session was inspired by AU Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want 1, which identifies justice as a key aspiration for member states. Agenda 2063 is to a great extent, aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); which are designed as a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". Of particular relevance is Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063 which, through one of its enabling goals, correlates significantly with SDG 16. Their correlation amplifies the commitment to access to justice, on the continental and the global level, of the member nations of the African Union who also belong to the United Nations.

While giving his key note address, Prof. Willy Mutunga acknowledged community-based paralegals as an important pillar in building the bridge of integration. community-based paralegals speak the languages of the community, they are well committed to cultures and the sense of restorative justice,

and can act as record keepers of alternative justice systems to ensure judgment passed under these systems are filed in formal courts so that they become judgments that can be enforced in the future." Said Prof. Willy Mutunga

Mutual learning between the formal and alternative justice systems is critical in making law more responsive to the needs of people. This exchange has the great potential to enrich jurisprudence. The formal systems could borrow a leaf from the alternative justice systems where procedures are less rigid, conflict is resolved through consensus and restoration is a preferred outcome of a dispute. In this way we decolonize the formal courts and make the path to justice an empowering one; focused on people.

Among the contentious issues discussed included the Sustainable funding as a key to achieving access to justice for all, the role of the state in recognizing and working with community based paralegals.

The outcome of this conversation was presented at the 69th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and People's Right to form the basis of advocacy on increased financing and recognition of community based paralegals and how this relates to achieving the AU 2063 Agenda.

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KITUO TRAINS REFUGEE LED ORGANIZATIONS' REPRESENTATIVES ON MENTAL HEALTH



Shem Alubala, Psychosocial Counselor leading the training

Kituo Cha Sheria through the forced migration programme conducted 6-days training for refugee-led organizations representatives on Mental health, Mental illness, trauma, secondary trauma and self-care, loss and grief and interpretation of Refugee law.

The training was conducted from November 29th to December 6th 2021 by Kituo's psychosocial counselors, Alice Kwenda, Shem Alubala, and Ronald Baraza (Legal officer Mombasa office) through the support from Giz CPS SIF. The team also mapped existing MHPSS structures in the coastal region.



Participants take part in group discussions during the training.

Psychosocial support is an important component in mental health, growth and development of refugee led organizations' representatives and refugee community at large. The aim of the training was to achieve appropriate care, protection and social integration. It is essential to address trauma, stigmatization, mental illnesses or diseases, loss and grief. This can be achieved by offering psycho-educative trainings to build the capacity of an individual or a group on specific topics.

THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN



Kituo's Executive Director Dr. Annette Mbogoh (Middle), Jamiah Abdulrahim, Community paralegal (left) and other partners during a procession at Kibera grounds to launch 16 Days of activism against Sexual Gender Based Violence.

The 25th November kicked off the 16 days of activism against sexual gender based violence.

Kituo Cha Sheria in partnership with the Kibra Gender Advocacy Network officially launched the 16 Days of Activism at the Kibra DC Grounds.

The event started with a procession and a group yoga session before finalizing with a football tournament. While officially opening the ceremony, Kituo Executive Director, Dr. Annette Mbogoh reiterated the need for all stakeholders to work together towards championing an end to GBV.

The event was also attended by other partners such as Plan International Kenya, Beacon of Hope, Coptic Hospital and Kibra Community Justice Centre among others.

Kituos Social Media campaigns

Kituo actively conducted a social media campaign to raise awareness on gender based violence and human rights. Kituo's social media platforms featured informative posts, infographics and videos on Sexual Gender Based Violence and human rights. The 16 days of activism campaign posts reached a total of 13,990 people and 7,902 engagements on Facebook while on Twitter 6,790 post reach and 2,044 engagements.



Kituo Staff take part in creating SGBV awareness

Kituo Marks the International Day of Disabled Persons

On 3rd December 2021 Kituo Cha Sheria through the Mombasa regional office joined the world in celebrating International Day of Disabled Persons at Kwale. The theme was 'Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible, and sustainable post-COVID-19 world'. KITUO's program officer Mr. Zedekia Adika championed for inclusion of disabled in Kwale county assembly and court users' committee.



A participant giving a speech during the International Day of PWD celebrated at Kwale county

10th December 2021 marked the end of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence. Kituo Cha Sheria marked this day with free legal aid clinic in Kisumu County. The clinic was carried out at Nyando Community Justice Centre and Kogony Bright Light Hall where KITUO's advocates, volunteer advocates and paralegals in Kisumu offered free legal advice to the general public on all legal related issues.

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT ON ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES AND EXTRA JUDICIAL KILLINGS



Valarie Anga'wa, Coordinator Advocacy Governance and Community Partnership issuing press statement at Jamia Mosque in Nairobi

On 8th November 2021, Kituo Cha Sheria joined the Muslim leadership in the country, the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) and other civil society organizations at a joint press statement on enforced disappearances and extra judicial killings held at the Jamia Mosque in Nairobi.

The meeting followed the disappearance and release of Prof Hassan Nandwa who was reported missing on October 29. Professor Nandwa was found on the same day after he was released and dumped at midnight in a bush in Mwingi, Kitui county from where he dragged himself to seek assistance.



Muslim leaders, LSK representatives, Kituo Cha Sheria and other civil organization issuing a joint press statement at Jamia Mosque in Nairobi

Prof Nandwa was abducted by individuals who held him against his will, leaving his family traumatized and in a state of agony. Kituo condemned in the strongest of terms possible this gross human rights violations and any action by the state purporting to curtail justice and infringe on the rights and freedom of Kenyans.

KITUO CONDUCTS LEGAL AID IN NAROK AND BUSIA



Boniface Muinde, Legal Assistant attending to clients during a free legal aid clinic in Busia County

In line with our objective of empowering the general public on legal matters, Kituo Cha Sheria in conjunction with Busia Volunteer Advocates and Volunteer Advocates in Narok County conducted a free legal awareness and #LegalAid clinic on 17th November 2021 at Busia Law Courts and 24th November 2021 at the Eserian House Narok.

The team provided legal aid services to and advise persons with all legal related issues, identified cases for possible mediation and litigation and utilized the available redress mechanism. In Nakuru, a total of 10 clients were attended to while 15 clients in Busia. A large number of the cases reported were on land, Gender-Based Violence and property ownership and succession.

Kituo's Programme Officer Martha Ogutu making a presentation on behalf of the Civil and Political Rights Cluster on Access to Justice at the Launch of the Human Rights Scorecard during the 3rd Cycle Compendium and Commencement of Development of the First Annual Human Rights Report (Kenya Stakeholders Coalition on the Universal Periodic Review)

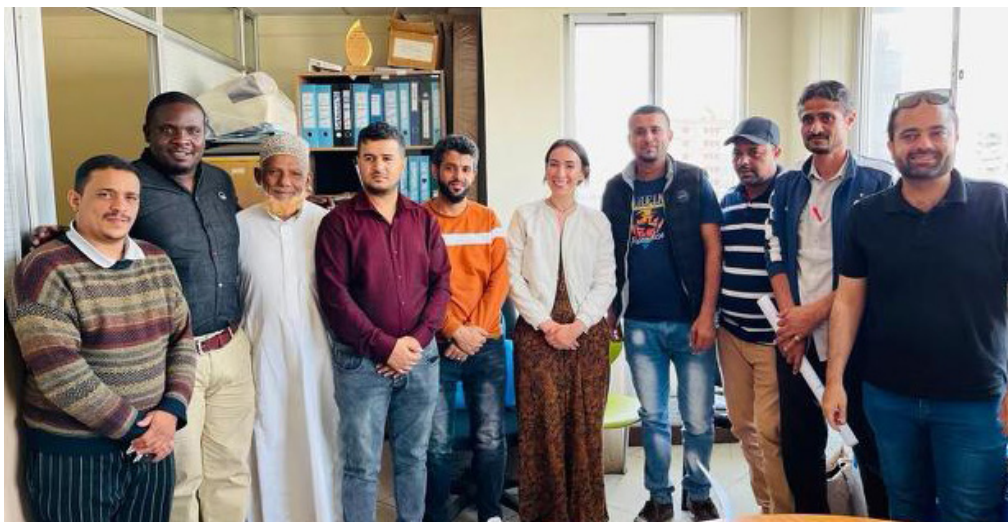


Development partners, GIZ-CPS visit Kituo



2021 paid a courtesy visit to Kituo Cha Sheria. The two had a brief meeting with Kituo staff, Martha Ogutu and Janet Kavulavu, who are local experts in the AJS Project. The discussions revolved around AJS project that Kituo has been implementing through the support of Ziviler Friedensdienst / GIZ for the year 2021 in Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia Counties. The meeting also forged future partnership in 2022.

KITUO EMPOWERS YEMENI REFUGEES



Group photo: KITUO Forced Migration Programme staff (Shem Alubala, second from left and Larissa Truchan) together with Yemeni refugees

Kituo Cha Sheria's Forced Migration Programme hosted an intensive 9-session support group to empower Yemeni refugees currently residing in Nairobi. The purpose of this support group was to mentally empower the refugee participants through use of psycho-social support, as legal empowerment is often not enough for refugees who have faced difficult situations to such an extreme extent in their home countries and in Kenya.

By introducing participants to healthy coping mechanisms and reframing negative ways of thinking, the support group mentally empowered the refugee participants, providing them with the tools to pursue meaningful and positive livelihoods now and into the future.

This particular support group was offered to 10 Yemeni refugee men of all ages. Though the Yemeni refugee community in Nairobi is only composed of around 200 people total, the Yemeni refugees deeply appreciated Kituo's willingness to recognize their existence, as there is a common misconception that Middle Eastern refugees do not flee to East Africa. One participant, Mohamed Al-Hakim, discusses his decision to flee his home country of Yemen to Kenya, a country which he expresses gratitude towards for allowing him to reside as a refugee, in an essay he wrote after completing the support group:

"In these hours of 2015, I was preparing to travel outside Yemen the next morning with a friend on a trip whose decision came as a surprise. In search of safety and a decent life, in search of a country that would accept me as a human being, not like a Yemeni passport that does not allow me to travel to any country. I left behind me a homeland in which the houses are destroyed and prisons which are full of all the oppressed; a homeland where the sound of the bombing in the air is a daily routine; a homeland where education and health have stopped; a homeland where children, women and the elderly die without warning; a homeland in which young people are thrown into the incinerators of death and the depths of prisons; a homeland where the law of the jungle prevails and the strong eat the weak. My journey will be better than my homeland, as I took the animal ship to Somalia, then to the Kenyan capital, Nairobi."



Said Abukar (Interpreter) leading the session

Compounding the challenges that refugees typically face in their home countries and as a result of being a refugee in Kenya, the Yemeni refugees often revealed that they face additional challenges primarily due to being Arab. These challenges often take the form of police harassment, bribing for services guaranteed by law, unlawful arrests, language barriers, and negative stigmas used to justify discrimination and violence. Despite the challenges Yemeni refugees face while living in Nairobi, Mohamed Al-Hakim writes about his deep appreciation Kenyans as a people, and his disappointment in his own Yemeni people:



"What attracted me most to Kenya is its hard-working people... The whole family in Kenya works and everyone is responsible for providing their own daily sustenance. And every time I reflect on the lives of Kenyan people, despite all the manifestations that different peoples suffer from, I can't help but shed tears of regret and heartbreak for my country, which denied and cursed my people of grace, my people who followed Satan in search of kingship and immortality..."

After 9 intensive support group sessions, the Yemeni refugees expressed that their participation in the support group positively impacted their mental well-being, effectively empowering them mentally. While psycho-social support is not the end-all solution that will solve every single one of the Yemeni refugees' problems, the support group has facilitated their mental health journeys, contributing to their abilities to partake in meaningful and positive lives.

KIBOS COMMUNITY TO SEEK FULL COMPENSATION FOR THEIR INJURIES AND LOSSES AFTER THE HIGH COURT DECISION.



Group photo: Kibos Nubian Community members together with Kituo staff and Volunteer advocates at the Milimani Court Kisumu

Kibos Nubian Community members can now breath a sigh of relief after Justice Ombwayo dismissed the application by the Kenya Railways to stay execution of a judgment delivered in favor of the Kibos community. Justice Ombwayo upheld the judgment delivered in August 2021 in favor of the community paving way for the Kibos community to now seek full compensation for their injuries and losses in the civil court.

The Honorable Justice Anthony Ombwayo was in agreement with the reply to the application and submissions by Kituo Cha Sheria legal team representing the victim community, led by advocate Tracy Wachira and Joshua Odhiambo Nyamori that the Applicant, Kenya Railways Corporation failed to demonstrate that substantial loss would result to it unless the Judgement is stayed pending the intended KRC appeal to the Court of Appeal.

The Honorable Judge further determined that such an order would be tantamount to suspending the Constitutional rights of the victim community members - including the right to housing, right to property and right to access justice by suing for compensation - as already affirmed by the Honorable Judge in his Judgement last year.

Justice Ombwayo declined to recognize the attempted forced eviction and allowed the victims to build temporary structures for shelter. In his final Judgement, the Honorable Judge affirmed the community's ownership of the disputed land, tracing the nubians' claim to ownership of the Kibos land to the 19th Century when the British Colonial Government relocated their forebears from the current Kisumu Airport area.

The Honorable Judge went further in his Judgement to affirm the rights of the victim community members and indicted the State and its agencies and officers for violation of Constitutional rights including rights against discrimination, against indignity, against cruelty and inhuman treatment, right to information, right to property, socio-economic and cultural rights and fair administrative justice, among others.

Kituo is enjoined as an interested party together with Hakijamii Esrc acting for the Petitioners in the Kibos case that saw more than 3,500 individuals in Kibos village in Kisumu illegally evicted to pave way for the rehabilitation of the old railway line from Nakuru to Kisumu.



Advocate Tracy Wachira (Left) Kituo Volunteer Advocate Joshua Odhiambo Nyamori (Middle) and Jamia Abdulrahim, paralegal (right) chatting after the case determination.

PARALEGAL REFRESHER TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY PARALEGALS FROM VIHIGA AND MOMBASA



Kituo Cha Sheria Volunteer Advocate leading paralegals training at Rhodis Hotel in Vihiga County

With the new cases, developments in legislation and policies, paralegals need to keep updating their knowledge and skills to best operate. Kituo Cha Sheria on 21st – 26th of March conducted a Refresher Trainings for the Paralegals in Vihiga county.

The five days training, saw 25 paralegals from Vihiga Community Justice Centre trained on Land Laws, Labour Laws, Family Law and Succession, Human Rights, Gender Law and SGBV, Landlord and Tenants, Environmental Laws, Refugee Laws as well as the e-Filing System.

The training has been organized by Kituo's Advocacy Governance and Community Partnerships Programme supported by Embassy of the Netherlands in Kenya under a joint objective to promote access to justice for the poor and marginalized.



Zedekiah Adika, Programmes Officer leading paralegals training in Marereni.

Mombasa regional officers conducted a similar training for the paralegals from Wema Social Justice Centre and Marereni Magarini sub county. The refresher training also aimed at equipping the community paralegals with skills and knowledge to serve their community members. The trainings were supported by UNDP and American Jewish World Service Programme respectively.

Paralegal refresher training is Kituo's model that gives the paralegals the chance to keep their mind active and without losing the knowledge and skillset they already have. This ensures that paralegals are aware of the latest regulations and have proper understanding of the law.

AFRICAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOUNDING MEMBERS CONVEN IN LILONGWE, MALAWI CHAT THE STRATEGY FOR THE CENTRE FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS.



The Founding members of the African Centre of Excellence for Access to Justice during a meeting in Lilongwe, Malawi.

The founding members of the African Centre of Excellence for Access to Justice on 10th March 2022 convened in Lilongwe, Malawi for an in-person reflection and review meeting to chat the strategy for the Centre for the next two years.

The two days' meeting focused on strategy planning, membership and participation of the African Centre in crucial justice platforms at regional and international levels.

The founding members of the Centre are: Paralegal Advisory Service Institute -PASI (Malawi), Timap for Justice (Sierra Leone), Legalaidforum Rw (LAF) (Rwanda), Kituo Cha Sheria-Legal Advice Centre(Kenya) and Community Advice Offices South Africa - CAOSA (South Africa).

The representatives of the founding members in the meeting are: Clifford Msiska (Chairperson and Executive Director-PASI), Andrews Kananga (Executive Director-LAF), Dr. Annette Mbogoh (Executive Director-Kituo cha Sheria), Dr. Simeon Koroma (Executive Director-TIMAP) and Tshenolo Tshoedi (Executive Director-CAOSA). The vision and mission of the centre to amplify the African voices for justice regionally and internationally.



The Founding members of the African Centre of Excellence for Access to Justice pose for a group photo shortly after their meeting.

ALTERNATIVE JUSTICE SYSTEM (AJS CHAMPIONS TRAINING ON MEDIATION



Community paralegals in Mombasa undergoing mediation training at White Rhino hotel in Mombasa

Kituo Cha Sheria in collaboration with the Mediation Training Institute (MTI) on 21st to 26th March 2022 took the Community Paralegals in Mombasa county through Mediation course at White Rhino Hotel in Mombasa. The training aimed at equipping Community Paralegals with ADR skills and inculcate the spirit peaceful resolution of disputes.

The five (5) day training involved all mediation and Alternative Dispute resolution actors at the coast and included 6 of Kituo's own AJS champions. The trainees were taken through the course content by mediation instructors from CIARB the first four days and in the final day they had to conduct mock mediation sessions.

At the culmination of the training the participants were awarded certificates that would be proof of enhanced mediations skills as well as providing an opportunity for them to become court annexed mediators. The training was supported by GIZ-CPS programme.

Kituo take part in Public Participation Forum on the proposed Huduma Bill 2021

Kituo Cha Sheria was part of the CSOs that participated in a 2-day Public Participation Forum on the proposed Huduma Bill 2021 in Naivasha. The forum brought together different CSOs, National Assembly Committee on Administration and National Security, the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, the Huduma Namba Secretariat, IEBC, the Immigration Department among other agencies. The House Committee collected different stakeholders' views on the Bill that has already attracted mixed reactions ranging from data privacy concerns to the lack of a digital identity policy in Kenya. The Huduma Bill 2021 seeks to provide a primary law on civil registration and legal identification management through the use of Huduma Namba.



Kituo's officer Jacqueline Jephchirchir Strathmore University students who visited KITUO's stand at during the Career Fair at the university. KITUO partnered with Strathmore University's Career Development Services in the fair to sensitize the students on Kituo's work in promoting access to justice for the poor and marginalised.