



NEWSLETTER



Kituo cha Sheria Launches Groundbreaking Three-Year Study on Transformative Impact of Legal Empowerment in Kenya

We are thrilled to unveil the findings of our three-year research study, *Evaluating the Impact of Legal Empowerment Programmes on Access to Justice for the Poor and Marginalized in Kenya*.

The launch event was graced by Chief Justice Emeritus David Maraga, who commended Kituo cha Sheria for its steadfast commitment to advancing legal empowerment. In his keynote address, Justice Maraga emphasized,

“The research report is more than just a publication; it is a powerful testament to the resilience of countless individuals who struggle daily to access justice. It reflects the tireless work of legal empowerment practitioners dedicated to bridging the justice gap and ensuring that no one is left behind.”

The study highlights the effectiveness of legal empowerment programs in increasing access to justice, particularly among marginalized communities. It outlines the critical role of paralegals as first responders who bridge the gap between communities and formal justice institutions. Furthermore, mechanisms such

as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and community justice centers have proven invaluable in resolving disputes, especially in rural areas.



“The research report is more than just a publication; it is a powerful testament to the resilience of countless individuals who struggle daily to access justice.” Justice Emeritus David Maraga

“We are hopeful the findings will shape sustainable legal empowerment strategies for a more just and inclusive society.”

Mr. Justus Munyithya, Chair of the Board of Directors at Kituo cha Sheria, also noted during his remarks, “The research showcases how participatory, community-driven solutions enhance access to justice.”

Speaking at the event, Mr. John Mwariri, Acting Executive Director of Kituo cha Sheria, expressed optimism about the future of legal empowerment:



Chief Justice Emeritus Hon. David Maraga, unveiling of the study report at the launch event

The study was conducted by Kituo cha Sheria, in partnership with the African Centre of Excellence for Access to Justice and the Grassroots Justice Network, with support from IDRC / CRDI.

Scan QR Code for the FULL report





Kituo Cha Sheria and LAF Launch Report on Justice Digitization Post-COVID in Kigali

The Study report, titled “A Comparative Study on Digitization of Justice following COVID-19 in Kenya and Rwanda,” was launched on December 5, 2024 in M-Hotel Kigali, Rwanda by Rwanda’s Legal Aid Forum (LAF) in collaboration with Kenya’s Kituo Cha Sheria. This was a culmination of a comparative qualitative research on Digitization of Justice during post COVID in Kenya and Rwanda supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

The objective of the launch was to bring all the stakeholders in the research process to showcase and celebrate the achievements made. This also provided a good forum for the dissemination of all the research outputs. Given that the attendants came from far and wide it was an opportunity to share the hard copies which would reach in places where the populations are not accustomed to soft copies.



KITUO representatives and the Legal Aid Forum team displaying the newly launched study report in Kigali- Rwanda

The event was attended by representatives from government institutions, civil society organizations, lawyers, development partners, the solicitor general from Rwanda Judiciary, High court Judges from both countries, LAF Director, Chairman of Africa Center of Excellence (ACE) and Researchers from Kituo cha Sheria and LAF



KITUO programme Officer James Adala (centre) with other Panelists engaging in a discussion during the launch in Kigali- Rwanda

The event showcased the success of the three-year research project and the launch goes a long way in validating the findings. Other research outputs like the policy brief would be handy in adopting policies for the pertinent sector and players in the justice space. The ceremony was also an invitation to dialogue, collaboration, and collective action. By exchanging insights, strategies, and experiences, there is a reinforced mission to build inclusive, responsive, and resilient justice systems using technological advancements to empower, promote equity, and deliver justice for all.

Scan QR Code for the FULL report





LAUNCH OF REPORT HIGHLIGHTS ROLE OF COMMUNITY PARALEGALS IN KENYA AND ZAMBIA- LUSAKA

This report concludes a three-year initiative by Kituo Cha Sheria, in partnership with the Paralegal Alliance Network, ACE-AJ, Grassroots Justice Network, and with support from IDRC. It brought together stakeholders from Kenya and Zambia—including ministries of justice, civil society, and grassroots organizations—to explore the formalization of community paralegals.

It was clear that the collaboration between Paralegal Alliance network, the legal aid board Zambia, the ministry of justice and the community paralegals plays a vital role in promoting state recognition and regulation of the service at the aim of enhanced access to justice for all. The vulnerability of the community compositing of the indigent community from the research showed confidence of accessibility to legal information through the community paralegals.

The most impactful role community paralegals play in the community is advocacy and legal advice to the community. The African Centre of Excellence on access to justice unites the



KITUO BOD, Chair, Mr. Justus Muniyithya (third right) and the Legal Aid Forum team displaying the newly launched study report in Lusaka- Zambia

countries in the African continent where the Centre works with grass root justice organization seeks to bridge the gap between formal justice and the informal justice. It seeks to promote access to justice and the rule of law by uniting civil societies in Africa. The report demonstrates how community paralegals how paralegals have played a role in fighting gender based violence and other justice issues in the community.

Scan QR Code for the FULL report



KITUO CHA SHERIA ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE AND INCLUSIVITY AT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORUM

On January 23, 2025, Kituo Cha Sheria participated in a public engagement forum held at County Hall, Parliament Buildings, to discuss two key constitutional amendment bills:

- **The Proposed Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Bill, 2024**
- **The Proposed Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Bill, 2022**

As a leading voice in access to justice and legal empowerment, we were honored to represent marginalized communities, ensuring their perspectives and concerns are included in the constitutional review process. Our participation reaffirmed our commitment to advocating for a fair, inclusive, and just legal framework that upholds the rights of all Kenyans.

Kituo Cha Sheria remains dedicated to championing justice and inclusivity. At County Hall, we stood alongside communities whose voices are often unheard, amplifying their concerns and pushing for meaningful reforms.



Kituo legal officers, Patricia Nekoye and Martin Njuguna, presenting views on proposed constitutional amendments during a public forum at County Hall

As discussions unfolded, it became clear that the fight for justice is far from over. Yet, with unwavering determination and the continued support of those who believe in equality, we will keep advocating for the rights of the marginalized, empowering the poor, and ensuring that every Kenyan has access to justice.



KITUO Leads Training on Alternative Justice Systems in Samburu

On March 20, 2025, KITUO, in collaboration with the National Steering Committee on Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) and the Judiciary, held a comprehensive training session on AJS in Samburu. This initiative sought to equip local communities with the knowledge and tools necessary to resolve disputes effectively while ensuring broader access to justice.

The training in Samburu was a dynamic session where community leaders, local justice actors, and residents were taught how to utilize AJS to address conflicts and disputes, without the need to rely solely on formal courts. It introduced participants to various methods of conflict resolution that are deeply rooted in community



Samburu residents during AJS training in Samburu



Samburu residents participating in group discussion during AJS training in Samburu

norms, but also aligned with national laws to ensure that outcomes are just, transparent, and equitable for all parties involved.

This training is a step toward a more equitable future where justice is not just a legal concept but a lived reality for all. The collective efforts of Kituo cha Sheria, NaSCI AJS, the Judiciary, FAO, and the EU are a powerful reminder of the importance of working together to uphold fairness, equity, and access to justice for all.



Hon. Viola Muthoni (centre) posed for a photo with A.g Coordinator, Mombasa, Miss Glory Kairi and Mr. Tirus Makumi of KITUO

Strengthening Small Claims Court Operations in Mombasa

On February 22, 2025, the Kituo cha Sheria team held a courtesy call with Hon. Viola Muthoni, an adjudicator at the Mombasa Small Claims Court. The meeting, aimed at exploring collaboration opportunities, focused on advancing the operationalization of the small claims court in Mombasa. The project, supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands through UNDP Amkeni Wakenya, seeks to enhance the court's efficiency and raise awareness to improve access to justice for local communities. Both parties discussed strategies to increase public awareness, streamline court operations, and foster community engagement to ensure broader access to justice.



LAUNCH OF THE LEGAL EMPOWERMENT JOURNAL Volume 1 Issue 1 of 2024

On December 10, 2024, the much-anticipated launch of the inaugural edition of the Legal Empowerment Journal (LEJ), themed “Legal Empowerment: Linking Theory to Practice,” took place at the Kenya School of Law in Karen, Nairobi. This groundbreaking publication showcases diverse stories from authors across the globe, highlighting innovative approaches to advancing legal empowerment. With generous support from IDRC, the event brought together legal practitioners, scholars, and policymakers to reflect on the critical role of legal empowerment in bridging the gap between theory and practice.

The keynote address by Professor Kivutha Kibwana set the tone for an engaging evening, emphasizing the transformative potential of linking legal theory to practical, community-driven solutions. The journal celebrates the voices of authors committed to empowering marginalized communities through law, underscoring the importance of inclusive and participatory legal systems. The launch marked a significant step toward fostering dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders committed to advancing access to justice and community empowerment.



KITUO Board member, Dr. Elkana Kimeli (left) with stakeholders during the launch

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KITUO team led by A.g ED, Mr. John Mwariri (second right) posed for a group photo with Miss. Kamila of Misereor after a successful meeting in Mombasa

KITUO Hosts Misereor for Review Visit in Mombasa

On February 7, 2025, Kituo Cha Sheria had the pleasure of hosting Miss. Kamila, the Misereor Representative in Kenya, for a stock-taking visit at our Mombasa regional office. This visit was a significant moment to reflect on the progress made in our collaborative efforts to advocate for the land rights of marginalized communities.

During the visit, our team shared key milestones achieved through Misereor's invaluable support, highlighting successful legal interventions, community empowerment programs, and policy advocacy efforts aimed at securing land rights for vulnerable groups. Kamila engaged with our staff, learning firsthand about the challenges faced by communities and the impact of Kituo's work in ensuring access to justice.



KITUO team led by A.g ED, Mr. John Mwariri during the review meeting with Miss. Kamila of Misereor in Mombasa

One of the visit's highlights was an interactive session with community representatives who have benefited from Kituo's legal aid and advocacy initiatives. They shared their experiences, emphasizing how legal empowerment has transformed their fight for land ownership and tenure security.

Kituo Cha Sheria remains deeply grateful for Misereor's unwavering commitment to social justice. Their support has been instrumental in strengthening our mission to defend the rights of the marginalized. Together, we continue to work towards a just society where land rights are protected and upheld for all.

KITUO and Mombasa Court Empower Local Leaders



Participants posed for a group photo after a capacity building session

KITUO, in partnership with the Mombasa Small Claims Court, conducted a capacity-building session for chiefs, village elders, religious leaders, and police officers. This was made possible by the support from Embassy of the Netherlands in Kenya through UNDP Amkeni Wakenya. The training aimed to enhance their knowledge on the Small Claims Court and its jurisdiction while strengthening referral pathways among stakeholders. As the key community representatives and the first point of contact for many community cases, they are now better equipped to guide and refer the cases to the nearest community justice centre or our offices for appropriate legal assistance.

Heinrich Böll Stiftung Visits KITUO



Chair, BOD Mr. Justus Munyithya presenting a gift to Ms. Damaris Bonareri after a successful meeting (From left, Mr. Ulf Terlinden and Ms. Damaris Bonareri, Mr. Mosongo Maosa, Mr. Justus Munyithya and A.g ED, Mr. John Mwariri)

On February 11, 2025, Kituo Cha Sheria hosted Heinrich Böll Stiftung Horn of Africa representatives Mr. Ulf Terlinden and Ms. Damaris Bonareri for strategic discussions on strengthening Refugee Interventions Programme.

The meeting focused on enhancing access to justice, legal aid, and policy advocacy for refugees and asylum seekers. Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to sustainable, rights-based support for displaced communities.

Kituo expressed gratitude for the partnership, while Heinrich Böll Stiftung emphasized the importance of dignity and resilience in refugee protection efforts.



KITUO staffs, BOD members , stakeholders and project beneficiaries posed for a group photo with IDRC Director Miss Caroline Ford (sitted third left) after a succesful meeting at KITUO headquarter

IDRC Director Miss Caroline Ford Visits Kituo cha Sheria

On March, 18, 2025, Kituo cha Sheria hosted a high-profile courtesy call by the DIG-Director, IDRC/CRDI, Miss Caroline Ford, at Kituo's ground. The visit was aimed at assessing Kituo's ongoing research projects and reinforcing the commitment to future partnerships in advancing access to justice for the poor and marginalized communities through research-driven interventions.

Miss Ford was accompanied by Dr. Martha Mutisi, IDRC's Senior Programmes Officer, and was warmly received by Kituo's leadership, including representatives from the Kituo Board of Directors led by the chair of the board Mr. Justus Munyithya. Also in attendance were Aimee Ongeso from Namati, a key partner in legal empowerment initiatives, Andrews Kananga, Executive director The Legal Aid Forum Rwanda, a representative from the paralegal movement and project beneficiaries.

During the meeting, discussions centered on Kituo cha Sheria's research efforts in legal aid and community-based justice programs.

Miss Ford acknowledged Kituo's impactful work and reaffirmed IDRC's commitment to supporting research initiatives that foster sustainable solutions for vulnerable populations.



IDRC Director Miss Caroline Ford planting a tree at KITUO head office

Kituo's leadership expressed appreciation for IDRC's support and reiterated their commitment to evidence-based advocacy. They emphasized the importance of sustained partnerships in scaling up innovative solutions that address systemic legal challenges. The concept of legal empowerment and research are the new approaches in the building community power and strategies to address justice issues across the region.



Legal Aid and Education Programme team posed for a group photo after training in Nairobi

Gratitude for Continued Support

We sincerely thank Misereor for their steadfast support of the Legal Aid and Empowerment for People in Need in Kenya project. Their partnership has been key in advancing justice for vulnerable communities.

A special thank you to Mr. Edwin Osundwa, whose expertise and dedication greatly enriched the midterm evaluation of the project. His valuable insights and recommendations will play a crucial role in strengthening our efforts .

Together, we remain committed to empowering those in need and building a more just and equitable society.

LAUNCH OF THE MOMBASA REFUGEE JUSTICE CENTRE



Chair, BOD, Mr. Justus Muniyithya cutting ribbon during the official launch of Mombasa Refugee Justice Centre in Mombasa

On 29th January 2025, KITUO, with the support of HIAS_Kenya, successfully launched the Mombasa Refugee Justice Centre. This significant event followed the completion of comprehensive training for refugee paralegals in Mombasa, who will play a pivotal role in ensuring the legal rights and protection of refugees in the region.

The launch ceremony was graced by Kituo's Board Chair, Mr. Muniyithya, who emphasized the critical role of the new center in empowering refugees. He highlighted the Refugee Justice Centre as a crucial platform for organizing refugee communities and a vital resource to address their unique protection and social needs, particularly in urban areas where refugees often face numerous challenges.

In his address, the Acting Executive Director of Kituo, Mr. Mwariri, assured the refugees and stakeholders present of Kituo's ongoing commitment to promoting the welfare of refugees across the country. He reaffirmed that the center would serve as a beacon of hope and support for those seeking justice and assistance in navigating the complexities of refugee life.

The launch event was attended by a wide range of key stakeholders, including representatives from the National Legal Aid Service (NLAS), the Department of Refugee Services (DRS), the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), the Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK), the Kenya Police Service, and student leaders. Their presence underscored the importance of collaboration in addressing the legal, social, and protection needs of refugees in Kenya.

The Mombasa Refugee Justice Centre marks a new chapter in the fight for refugee rights in Kenya, offering a dedicated space for legal support, community organization, and advocacy. The successful launch sets a strong foundation for ongoing efforts to empower and uplift refugee populations in urban settings.

Volunteer Advocates Training and Recruitment

KITUO, in partnership with Misereor, held a Volunteer Advocates Training and Recruitment session in Kwale County to expand access to justice for marginalized communities. The training emphasized the role of volunteer advocates in providing pro bono legal support to those unable to afford representation. Participants learned how their skills could help bridge the justice gap.

Alongside the training, KITUO hosted a legal aid clinic offering free legal advice and support to community members. This initiative reinforces KITUO's commitment to legal empowerment and ensuring that financial barriers do not deny anyone access to justice.



Volunteer Advocates Training session in Kwale

2025 Open Government Partnership Meeting



Open Government Partnership meeting in progress at Nairobi

The Grassroots Justice Network, in collaboration with the Kenya Judiciary, African Centre of Excellence for Access to Justice, Kituo Cha Sheria, and the Legal Resources Centre, hosted a side event showcasing how intentional engagement in justice processes enhances open government. Through powerful community stories and expert insights, the event underscored how transparency, accountability, and active citizen participation are strengthened when justice systems are inclusive and accessible from the grassroots up.

Strengthening Land Rights and Climate Resilience in Kwale



Mr. Felix Koech, programme officer at KITUO leading capacity building session in Kwale

Kituo Cha Sheria, in partnership with the European Union (EU) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), organized capacity-building sessions in Kwale County to address key challenges in land governance and climate change adaptation. The focus of the meeting was on empowering local communities with the knowledge and tools to navigate the Community Land Act and build monitoring systems for climate change resilience. Participants were also introduced to the concept of Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) as a means of resolving land-related disputes.

By integrating legal knowledge, promoting effective land governance, and advocating for AJS, the initiative aims to create an inclusive and accessible justice framework that directly benefits the community. This holistic approach not only strengthens land rights but also enhances the resilience of communities to climate change by enabling them to take proactive measures to protect their land.

Kituo Cha Sheria's efforts emphasize the critical importance of land as a foundational resource for community survival and development. Through this program, they are laying the groundwork for sustainable and equitable land management systems that will secure the future for generations to come.



Capacity building session in progress at Kwale



GIZ Team visits KITUO

On January 27, 2025, Kituo cha Sheria was honored to host representatives from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Endy Hagen and Millicent Oloo. Their visit reaffirmed our shared commitment to advancing justice and empowering communities across Kenya.

During the meeting, we shared updates on ongoing projects and highlighted the progress made in promoting access to justice. Our team also presented powerful stories of individuals and communities positively impacted by initiatives supported by GIZ, emphasizing the value of strong, sustainable partnerships. GIZ commended our team's dedication and shared ideas for continued collaboration and scaling up efforts.

The meeting celebrated past successes and laid the groundwork for deeper partnership in building a just and empowered society.



Kituo Cha Sheria Hosts Jim India of ASF Kenya

KITUO was delighted to host Jim India from Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) Kenya at Kituo Cha Sheria Headquarters in Nairobi on January 31, 2025. As one of our valued donors, ASF plays a crucial role in advancing access to justice in Kenya.

The visit provided an opportunity for insightful discussions on programmatic development, where we explored potential collaborations to further strengthen our partnership. We are excited about the possibilities ahead and the positive impact we can make together. Kituo Cha Sheria looks forward to continuing this meaningful work with ASF Kenya to create a greater impact in the pursuit of justice.

KITUO Partners with Continental Leaders to Strengthen Access to Justice in Africa



From Left: Clifford Msiska (PASI Malawi), John Mwariri (Kituo Cha Sheria Kenya), John Bangura (TIMAP Sierra Leone), Andrews Kananga (LAF Rwanda) posed for a photo during African Centre of Excellence Annual Meeting

KITUO cha Sheria was proud to join like-minded institutions at the African Centre of Excellence (ACE) – Access to Justice Founding Members' Annual Meeting. This gathering brought together justice champions from across Africa to reflect on 2024, share lessons, and plan strategically for 2025.

Discussions ranged from impactful program insights to strengthening partnerships and enhancing cross-border collaboration, all rooted in a shared commitment to justice.

As a key partner to ACE, KITUO contributed to shaping the next chapter of the Centre's work—ensuring that marginalized communities across Africa can access justice, claim their rights, and live with dignity. The collective energy and shared vision reaffirmed a powerful truth: justice for all is not just a goal—it's a shared responsibility.

Review Meetings of KITUO Community Justice Centres in Mombasa

On the 30th of January, 2025, a series of pivotal review meetings were held across three prominent Community Justice Centres in Mombasa, marking an important milestone in the pursuit of justice for marginalized communities. The centres—Stretchers Youth Organization, Wema Justice Centre, and Kisauni Constituency Development Initiative (KICODI)—each serve as crucial pillars in the local justice system, providing access to legal services and support to individuals who otherwise might not have the resources to seek justice.

The purpose of the meetings was multifaceted. First and foremost, we aimed to conduct a comprehensive review of each centre's progress. This involved examining the key successes they had achieved in the previous months, focusing on their impact within the communities they serve. The discussions shed light on the invaluable work being done by the paralegals, who are often the first point of contact for individuals in need of legal assistance.

The review aimed to identify ways to improve the efficiency of justice centres by streamlining processes, boosting collaboration, and strengthening their capacity to serve communities. Strengthening these centres is vital to ensuring continued access to justice, especially for the most vulnerable.

The meetings in Mombasa highlighted the critical role of community-based justice initiatives. These centres empower individuals—particularly the marginalized—to navigate complex legal systems. With ongoing support and strategic improvements, they can remain a beacon of hope and a driver of justice for all.



Chair, BOD, Mr. Justus Muniyithya (in black cap), A.g ED Mr. John Mwariri (left) and A.g Coordinator, Mr. Joshua Barake (second left) posed for a group photo with stakeholders during their visit in Mombasa



Mombasa paralegals conducting their normal operations at Mombasa Justice Centre

Paralegals Training in Mombasa

On March 6, 2025, KITUO, in collaboration with the Mombasa Small Claims Court and supported by UNDP's Amkeni Wakenya program, hosted a vital refresher training for community paralegals, Kongowea business representatives, and home-based caregivers in Mombasa. The event aimed to bolster the capacity of local actors to navigate and utilize the Small Claims Court system effectively.

The training covered key aspects of the Small Claims Court process, including how to file claims, the importance of legal documentation, and the rights of individuals in accessing the court system. Additionally, participants learned how to apply Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) techniques—mediation and negotiation—to resolve disputes outside of the courtroom. This not only helps in clearing court backlogs but also provides a more accessible, cost-effective, and community-driven method for resolving disputes.

Community paralegals, trained through KITUO's Justice Centres, are now equipped with the skills and knowledge to assist local residents in accessing justice. They act as guides, helping individuals understand legal procedures and facilitating smoother interactions with the court.



Paralegals in group discussion during the Paralegal Training session in Kongowea- Mombasa

KITUO Leads Awareness Campaign on Small Claims Court in Nyali and Changamwe



KITUO, Mombasa team, conducting Small Claims Court awareness in Nyali, Mombasa County

On March 25, 2025, KITUO actively engaged in community chief barazas in the Nyali and Changamwe regions, aiming to educate local residents about the Small Claims Court and its jurisdiction. This outreach effort followed a series of training sessions for National Government Administration Officers (NGAOs), who play a critical role in administering and facilitating local governance. The chiefs raised concerns about the community's limited awareness of legal resources like the Small Claims Court, prompting KITUO to extend its educational efforts through these influential community forums.



Area chief addressing the residents of Changamwe during the Small Claims Court awareness campaign in Mombasa County

The chief barazas, held regularly for addressing community concerns, became an ideal platform for sensitizing the public on the legal processes and procedures of the Small Claims Court. Through this initiative, KITUO sought to demystify the court's accessibility, showing how it can be used to resolve disputes in a timely and cost-effective manner. The sessions focused on explaining the types of cases the court handles, its simplified processes, and how residents can effectively use the court to seek justice for minor claims, without the need for extensive legal representation.

By leveraging the trusted influence of the chiefs, KITUO aimed to bridge the gap between the legal system and the community, ensuring that even the most vulnerable residents were aware of their rights and the resources available to them. The effort reflected KITUO's commitment to increasing legal literacy, empowering individuals to resolve disputes independently, and fostering a more informed and just society.

SMALL-SCALE IN-PERSON LEARNING EXCHANGES IN ZAMBIA AND SENEGAL

Kituo in conjunction with the Grassroots justice network and IWEI (Isa Wali Empowerment Initiative) led a Learning exchange as the GJN regional anchor East and Horn of Africa.

The Africa Learning in-person exchanges, informed by the Building Community Power course, offered 18 participants—eight from Francophone countries and ten from Anglophone countries—the opportunity to go deeper into the learnings, share experiences, and collaborate with their peers from diverse contexts. Anglophone participants were hosted by the Paralegal Alliance Network in Zambia, while Francophone participants were hosted by Natural Justice in Senegal.

The Anglophone exchange brought together participants from Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Liberia, Malawi, and Zambia. These included representatives from Reshape Community-Based Organization, Vihiga Community Justice Centre, Nakuru Community Justice Centre, KAYPAT, and Land and Equity Movement Uganda (LEMU). They were joined by Lift for Citizen's Development and Advancement and We The People from Nigeria, Accountability Lab from Liberia, CHREAA from Malawi, and the Society for Gender Justice from Zambia.



KITUO representative addressing paralegals at One stop shop in Chamuka Village- Zambia



Paralegals brainstorming session at Chamuka village in Zambia

Meanwhile, the Francophone exchange welcomed participants from Benin, Togo, Guinea, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Participating organizations included ONG Future for Future, Justice and Prospérité For All, Health Access Initiative, and AMAF from Benin; ONG ADHD from Togo; ONG-MERCOM-GUINEE from Guinea; and VISION DES FILLES LEADERS POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT and Alternatives Ménages, Nature et Marchés (AMEN) from the DRC.

Key highlights of these learning exchanges were the peer-to-peer review of proposals and the opportunity for participants to refine their proposals based on feedback from communities and fellow practitioners. Participants also had the chance to see firsthand how communities build power within their specific contexts.

The Legal Empowerment Fund has committed to fund all 18 projects beginning in April 2025.

The Reflection Meeting on the Small Claims Court

Kituo cha Sheria recently convened a reflection meeting in Mombasa with key justice actors to assess the success of the Small Claims Court, focusing on its impact on enhancing the ease of doing business for informal traders. The meeting provided an opportunity to evaluate how the court has contributed to a more accessible legal environment for small-scale entrepreneurs, particularly in resolving disputes quickly and efficiently.

However, several challenges were highlighted during the discussions. Among the primary concerns were the stigma associated with using the court system, limited public awareness of its existence and benefits, inadequate facilities, and insufficient personnel, all of which have hindered timely access to justice, especially for marginalized communities.

To tackle these issues, participants worked together to develop a comprehensive action plan aimed at increasing public awareness and dispelling misconceptions about the Small Claims Court.



A.g Coordinator, Mombasa, Ms. Glory Kairi addressing participants during the Small Claim Court reflection meeting in Mombasa



Participants posed for a group photo after the Small Claim Court reflection meeting in Mombasa

The plan also focused on improving the efficiency of the small claims registry, ensuring that informal traders and other vulnerable groups can access justice without unnecessary delays or barriers.

The forum brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the National Legal Aid Service, the Ombudsman, the Small Claims Court, as well as advocates and paralegals. Their collective input was instrumental in crafting practical solutions to improve the court's accessibility and effectiveness for all, particularly the most underserved populations.

Peer-to-Peer Learning Meeting

On February 13, 2025, Kituo cha Sheria participated in a two-day peer-to-peer learning meeting with UNDP Coastal partners, a key event aimed at reflecting on the progress and challenges faced during the implementation phase of 2024. The meeting provided an invaluable platform for all partners to come together, share their experiences, and discuss the innovative strategies employed to overcome obstacles and ensure the successful delivery of activities within their communities.

The sessions were carefully structured to take stock of achievements, highlighting the impact of the year's work, while also acknowledging the challenges encountered. By engaging in candid discussions, the partners not only celebrated successes but also critically assessed areas requiring improvement. This exchange of knowledge allowed each organization to gain a deeper understanding of the diverse approaches that have been effective in advancing development goals in coastal regions.

As Kituo cha Sheria continues to collaborate with UNDP Coastal partners, the insights gained from this meeting will contribute to refining its strategies, improving impact measurement, and bolstering the documentation processes to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the implementation of future initiatives. This peer-to-peer learning experience underscores the importance of collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and mutual support in addressing the challenges faced by communities along the coast, with the ultimate goal of creating lasting positive change.



Peer-to-peer learning meeting in Mombasa



Launch of the Comprehensive Impact Assessment Report of the Mombasa Refugee Justice Centre

On February 1, 2025, we marked a significant milestone in advancing refugee rights and legal empowerment with the successful launch of the Comprehensive Impact Assessment Report of the Mombasa Refugee Justice Centre (Refugee Paralegals) in Nairobi. The event brought together refugee paralegals and representatives from Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs).

The report aims to assess the impact of refugee paralegals in promoting access to justice and provide policy recommendations to strengthen their role. It highlights their critical contributions in legal aid, dispute resolution, and bridging the justice gap for refugees and host communities. However, systemic challenges—such as restrictive policies and resource limitations—continue to hinder their effectiveness.

Key discussions focused on how to integrate refugee paralegals into the formal justice system, enhance legal aid frameworks, and push for policy reforms that protect the rights of refugees and host communities. Participants emphasized the need for stronger collaboration among civil society, government agencies, and international organizations to ensure lasting change.

The launch marked a significant step in amplifying the voices of refugee paralegals and reaffirming the commitment to justice for all. As the conversations continue, the report serves as a vital tool for advocacy, inspiring action toward more inclusive and equitable legal systems.



A.g ED, Mr. John Mwariri presenting a copy of the launched report to the participants during the ceremony.



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