

BEYOND VICTIMISATION: EXPLORING AVENUES TO OVERCOME GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN KAMPALA MARKETS

UGANDA ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS (FIDA-U)

Kampala, UGANDA

Background

Formed in 1974, the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA Uganda) is a membership-based feminist organisation that provides legal aid services across a network of 15 offices and four justice desks. These offices are supported by lawyers, Community Legal Volunteers (CLVs) and local authorities.

FIDA Uganda functions as both a legal aid service provider for women and a membership organisation promoting the professional development of women in the justice, law and order sector. The organisation is affiliated with grassroots, national and international NGO networks focusing on human rights, legal aid provision.

The Gender Responsive Resilience & Intersectionality in Policy & Practice (GRRIPP) project implementor for FIDA Uganda is Linette du Toit Lubuulwa, a Programme Officer and Researcher. Linette holds an LLM in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa from University of Pretoria. Prior to joining civil society, she was a legal researcher at the Constitutional Court of South Africa, and the Supreme Court of Kenya.

Objectives

FIDA Uganda aims to support and empower women in ways that can break cycles of disenfranchisement and vulnerability. As a feminist organisation, under our Self-Actualisation Model of Empowerment (SAME), the organisation provides financial literacy and legal assistance to women, promotes financial independence, and reduces vulnerability to exploitation and violence.

FIDA Uganda also works to foster cultural change within key justice delivery institutions and duty bearers through the provision of training and technical support. FIDA-U monitors the performance of these institutions and makes recommendations, particularly through the Judicial Services Commission complaints system, to ensure that barriers in the justice delivery system are addressed.



Namuuka Nuruyat, a woman vendor and study participant working in Kamwokya market, Kampala, Uganda.

Credit: FIDA-Uganda

Lines of action

- Training 20 market women from Kampala markets as Community Legal Volunteers (CLVs), who refer and mediate cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
- A total of 24 cases of GBV had been handled by the newly trained CLVs between February 2022 – April 2022.
- Collaboration between Local Council leaders, Kampala Capital City Authority representatives, the police, and FIDA Uganda lawyers.
- The Nakawa market CLVs conducted a sensitisation session on sexual harassment and assault.
- Woman market vendor, Susan Tafumba, participated in a regional study on the role of legal empowerment groups in addressing GBV during the pandemic. Susan represented community paralegals from Uganda during an advocacy meeting held with 10 organisations from 7 different countries in Nairobi on 20th April 2022.
- FIDA-U presented the study on avenues of resilience for women in Kampala at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum held in Mexico in September 2022.

Methodology / Approach

FIDA Uganda applies legal and feminist approaches to eliminate root causes of gender inequality, advocates for the reform of abusive, discriminatory laws, policies, practices, and provides legal aid and human rights services to enhance access to justice for women.

Our approaches are also aimed at dismantling systems, practices, and structures that contribute to the unequal treatment of women. FIDA-U addresses various manifestations of gender inequality in Ugandan society.

The justice problems that we focus on are those that arise when women are denied their rights to land or property, maintenance and child support, access to and custody over children, and fair divorce or separation proceedings. We also address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, including in the context of war and conflict.

Impact

FIDA Uganda has enhanced access to justice for women, which included promoting women's socio-economic rights. It has also advanced gender-responsive governance and women's effective participation in public life.

Being a GRRIPP Africa grantee has accelerated the achievement of the change which FIDA Uganda envisions in that it has empowered and equipped women in the informal sector to make justice accessible for themselves and their colleagues, to stand up against market leaders and join leadership structures and to speak up against the normalisation of GBV in the market set-up.



Linette du Toit, FIDA Uganda Project Lead Kampala, Uganda.

Beyond Victimisation: Exploring Avenues to Overcome Gender-Based Violence in Kampala Markets

Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA Uganda)

Twitter: @FIDA_Uganda
LinkedIn: FIDA Uganda
Email: safeguarding@fidauganda.org
www.grippp.net

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