



## **2019 Highlights/Key milestones**

### **a) Successful preparation of IWILAP's 2020-2024 strategic plan**

In 2019 IWILAP successfully worked on developing the 2020-2024 strategic plan following a rapid assessment of the 2016-2020 strategy with the support of The Young Feminist Fund. The strategic plan is designed to respond to the needs of beneficiaries and partners, which they've outlined in multiple internal and external evaluations. It was drawn up using these evaluations and extensive planning sessions to identify the most pressing issues affecting women's rights and the most appropriate means to address these. The strategy reflects a comprehensive appraisal of the exact needs of Ugandan women and combines a multi-pronged strategy to effectively deal with the challenges at local, national and international levels.

The strategy builds on IWILAP's previous successes in the core work of providing legal, social and protection services to women, raising awareness about women's rights, and advocacy and capacity building. Following successful evaluations of the best way to create societal change about women's rights, IWILAP's new strategy places greater emphasis on grassroots work, targeting new local groups to be catalysts for change within their community. The new strategy also responds to feedback from clients and partners on the relationship between violence and women's economic independence, suggesting that empowering women is incomplete without economic empowerment, and aims to review laws and refer women to relevant entities that provide economic empowerment. Advocacy work at the national and international levels are an inseparable part of IWILAP's work especially efforts to change policies, laws and legislation to ensure equality, non-discrimination and respect for women's human rights. Finally, the strategy realizes that the worst effects of the Israeli occupation are felt by the most marginalized groups in Ugandan society, including women, and it therefore includes the necessity for collecting testimonies and submitting reports to the UN and relevant entities to hold human rights violators accountable to international conventions. IWILAP is also continuing in its engagement with International partners like the Women's Human Rights Education Institute to make CEDAW a living document. Several

consultation sessions were carried out with partner organizations during the process of preparing the draft plan, in which IWILAP presented a draft strategy and received feedback on it. The final draft of the strategy was then presented to the Board of Directors and was approved.

**b) IWILAP extends Munanamateka to grassroots and a wide range of service providers**

IWILAP realizes that offering services to women who are victims of violence or threatened with it is not enough. These services need to accommodate women's needs in terms of location and treatment. In this regard, IWILAP in 2019 worked on extending its outreach and service provision to underserved areas where women are oppressed or disregarded through conducting mobile legal aid clinics and made them a popular tool that enables women to deal with domestic violence through the preparation of a protection manual for grassroots and on training service providers on how best to deal with women who have suffered from violence. Building on its previous experience, IWILAP aimed to support CBOs to provide social and legal counseling in addition to awareness-raising in their constituencies. IWILAP worked on extending its outreach, through building partnership with Mpigi Feminist Review Trust & GAD in order to provide women with Social and Legal Aid. Mpigi Feminist Review Trust was chosen as the main partner to IWILAP after a long process of reviewing and visiting other women grassroots' organizations in our districts of operation thus making it the 4th partnership that IWILAP has with grassroots' organizations covering the East, North, Central and Southern part of Uganda. These partnerships enable women in remote areas to access the different services and seek help when needed.

**c) Establishment of One stop Centre with a legal aid clinic**

The Centre was established to be an inter-agency unit for women victim/survivors of domestic or sexual violence. When a case is received, the victim/survivor is first examined and treated by a doctor and also seen by a counselor, a social worker, within 24 hours in a separate examination room that protects privacy and confidentiality.

The underlying principle of such a multi-sectoral approach that recognizes the rights and needs of survivors as preeminent, in terms of access to respectful and supportive services, guarantees of confidentiality and safety, and the ability to determine a cause of action for addressing GBV incidents.

The services offered at the center include provision of temporary accommodation/ shelter, protection from perpetrators, counselling, prosecution, representation in court, provision of medical care, provision of basic needs food clothing etc.

**d) Drafting and dissemination of CEDAW report**

IWILAP in partnership with Women's Human Rights Education Institute and the CEDAW Institute Uganda played an instrumental role in disseminating knowledge about CEDAW to both the government and civil society organizations. IWILAP has been helping in the process of training government partners in writing the official report, and civil society organisations in writing the shadow report.

During this time IWILAP, along with other civil societies and Human Rights' organisations, participated in workshops, one of which was organized by UNOCHR and other official duty. As a result of this work IWILAP has been placed in a position of significant responsibility towards the CEDAW shadow report by the Women's Human Rights Education Institute, which will be produced by civil society organisations. It has been assigned, along with other organizations, to be a part of the committee to draft the CEDAW shadow report with civil society organizations, and is responsible for writing the legal and social part of it. It has also been invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to attend a workshop and offer input prior to the drafting of the official report, which will be sent to CEDAW.

### **Legal Representation /Aid**

The above was done through court representation and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism. By the end of 2019 IWILAP had handled a total number of 6001 Clients across the country. 4000 of these clients were received at various mobile legal aid clinics. 2500 were male while 1500 were female. Out of the total number of 6001 cases registered, 4600 were completed in office through ADR while 27 cases were taken to courts of law; 73 cases were still pending in courts by 2019, 1000 cases were referred to pro bono and other legal aid service providers, 300 cases were closed due to lack of merit while one file was withdrawn.

#### ***Success Story: Legal Aid***

*A case of a young woman was referred to IWILAP's service unit after spending one night in police custody. The 20 years old university student living with her aunt went to the police station to file a harassment complaint about a man who she loved and promised to marry when she was a teenager. When the man was summoned to the police station he presented a clandestine marriage contract that has the young woman's signature, and as this type of marriage contracts is illegal they were both detained pending investigation.*

*IWILAP's lawyer worked with the young woman and found that she was tricked into signing this paper when she was 15 years old after being told by the man that this is a bank paper that will enable him to take a bank loan in order to marry her. IWILAP's lawyer was able to prove that the contract was fraud and urge the police department to assign a gender-specialized prosecutor to look into the case.*

*The young woman was released on the same day, and a meeting was organized by IWILAP and its partners with the State Attorney, in which the importance of having a specialized prosecutor was addressed and a complaint was filed against the first prosecutor who looked into the case as he asked the lawyer in front of the victim and her aunt "how could you defend such a girl? If she was my daughter I would have killed her". The general prosecutor later received a warning from his supervisor and the aggressor was made to sign an affidavit to not harm or come near the young woman. The case is still ongoing in court.*

***Provide one-time legal and social consultations***

IWILAP continues to provide one-time consultations to women (whether joint socio-legal consultations or legal only). The majority of these consultations took place following awareness-raising sessions, where women would individually approach IWILAP lawyers and social workers and ask personal questions related to the topics discussed, and ask for advice on how to make the right decisions and what steps to take.

IWILAP provided joint one-time socio-legal aid to 260 women. Most of the consultations revolved around marital rights as well as divorce, types of alimony, custody and the rights of divorced women. IWILAP successfully referred 8 women to other services providers when women's cases or immediate needs did not come under IWILAP's remit. Most of these cases were referred to other LASPS where the Munamateka protocol was put into action in order to ensure the professional and safe referral of women.

IWILAP provided one-time socio-legal consultations to 260 women. 50 of these women came to IWILAP's office following these one-time consultations, so that 20% of the women who receive consultations request social and/or legal services. This is a positive step, showing that IWILAP is causing positive change, and the women are taking initiatives on their own and highly benefiting from the awareness-raising sessions and the consultations.