

Strengthening Human Rights in Uganda

Equality, Dignity and a Safer Society

Background

After independence, Uganda experienced brutality and disorder. The stability of the last 25 years has improved living standards, but fundamental deficits still exist in the implementation of human rights although they are guaranteed by the Constitution (e.g. the freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, the right to vote, non-discrimination, the right to life, and the protection of personal freedom. In the past two years, several bills reached parliament which – should parliament adopt them – would limit tremendously civil and political rights. Women suffer under traditional stereotypes, with gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and child trafficking still reported. Interethnic tensions have manifested in torture, displacement and delayed reparation. Discrimination and attacks experienced by vulnerable minority groups constitute a special challenge.

It is against this background that the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has commissioned GIZ with the implementation of the Strengthening Human Rights Project.

Our objective

The human rights project has the objective to improve the observance of human rights in Uganda, especially the rights of disadvantaged groups. It therefore improves the capacities of state and non-state actors to make better use of protection mechanisms and accountability procedures.

Project name	Strengthening Human Rights in Uganda Project
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Uganda
Lead executing agency	National Planning Authority
Duration	10.2011 – 12.2013

Our Approach

The project addresses this objective on different levels; At the **policy level**, it supports the National Planning Authority of Uganda (NPA) for the integration of the rights-based approach into the national development planning and sector policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP), the Vision 2040 and the sector investment and district development plans.

At the **implementation level**, it advises the Uganda Human Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission to enable them better fulfil their mandate. Furthermore, support is given to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and the School of Statistics and Applied Economics (SSAE) at Makerere University for the gathering of relevant data and development of governance and human rights indicators to enhance informed policy formulation.

At the **level of civil society**, the project supports the professionalization of human rights related media works to strengthen public discourse and opinion building on human rights. In addition to this, support is given to five civil society organizations to actively participate in human rights education and governance discourses at local and district levels. A special



President Yoweri Museveni launching Uganda's Vision 2040 in April 2013; The project partner REACH utilizing participatory theatre as a tool for engaging communities in the Sabini region on harmful practices such as FMG.

Pg 2: Margaret Sekaggya, Special UN Rapporteur on the Rights of Human Rights Defenders, and Rita Matovu, Chairperson EOC, giving feedback to the NPA on Uganda's Vision 2040; Mediation session on a land dispute in Mppigi District by the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kampala.



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emphasis is put on the rights of children, people with disabilities and women.

The benefits

Strengthening Capacity for the use of Rights-Based Approaches to Development Planning

Today, the NPA applies rights-based approaches to plan the countries development; adherence to human rights thus was a major priority, which guided the formulation of the recently launched Vision 2040 and the ongoing Mid-Term-Review of the National Development Plan (NDP). GIZ supports the NPA to integrate adequate human rights indicators into the result monitoring framework of the NDP.

To serve as an example, the NPA now not only fulfils basic international human rights principles on employment but also applies the rights-based approach at the workplace.

Enhancing Capacity of Government Institutions for the Promotion, Monitoring and Protection of Human Rights

Core management and administrative systems were introduced to the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). Additionally, the commission developed and operationalized a five year strategic plan. As a result, EOC is now more visible and aggrieved members of the public lodge their complaints at the commission.

The project supported the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) in developing an electronic Complaint Management System for a speedy resolution of the huge backlog of cases. Staff was trained in Alternative Dispute Resolution and UHRC was able to reduce its case-backlog considerably.

Strengthening the Demand for Human Rights

Today, there is a more vibrant public dialogue and substantial

awareness on human rights and governance, which was fostered through ongoing capacity development for civil society and journalists in rights-based approaches to programme development, monitoring, reporting, human rights journalism, and media discourses.

Examples from the field

On the World Press Freedom Day, one of the project's partners, the Uganda Journalist Association (UJA) organized a press discourse to sensitize the government and civil society on the safety of journalists and press freedom.

In communities where Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Gender Based Violence are predominant practices, participatory theatre is employed to break the culture of silence. Constructive engagement between practitioners of FGM on the one hand and the cultural leaders and victims on the other are now possible. Taboo topics such as marital rape and other harmful socio-cultural norms and practices are openly discussed.

The project strengthens the capacity of people with disabilities (PWDS) to mobilize resources and sustain advocacy for continued social inclusion. In Masindi and Mukono districts, affected people formed community associations for income generation activities, such as goat and poultry farming. First resources were provided by the district authorities. Additionally, study scholarships were facilitated for some PWDS through the help of trained duty bearers at sub-county level.

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