



REFUGEE LAW PROJECT

QUARTERLY REVIEW

Our Issue

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UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking visits

In February 2023, we hosted the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children. Prof. Siobhán Mullally in her capacity of Co-Principal Investigator for the Irish Research Council-funded COALESCE policy research project on 'Forced Migration, Human Trafficking and Gender Equality in Uganda' jointly implemented by the Irish Centre for Human Rights Centre (ICHR) at the University of Galway and the Refugee Law Project (RLP) of Makerere University's School of Law since 2019.

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FILM LAUNCH

“KURUDISHA NGUVU” (BRINGING BACK THE STRENGTH)

There is a new film in our archive! We launched it during the just concluded Fifth South South Institute held in Kampala. Kurudisha Nguvu is about André Lufungula, a male victim-turned-survivor of conflict-related sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo who fled to Uganda in 2008. Lufungula speaks of his struggles as a survivor of CRSV and his journey to recovery.

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KURUDISHA NGUVU BRINGING BACK THE STRENGTH

André Lufungula, a male survivor of conflict-related sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, fled to Uganda in 2008. There, with medical and psychosocial support, he slowly recovered his strength.

When you are the target of sexual violence,

MtM builds our capacity in hosting Human Rights Film Festivals

As we ended 2022, we were invited to a training on organizing Film festivals conducted by Movies that Matter (MtM) a Netherlands based entity. Together with 14 other participants from across the East African region we were taken through a rich programme over a period of 5 days: From knowing how to set up a human rights film festival, understanding the East African Human Rights context, Strategic Communications, fundraising and partnerships to measuring impact.

Human Rights Programming has taken a twist World over with many Human Rights Festivals across the world. Such festivals use themed films to raise awareness about human rights issues and encourage public debate on the ways to address them.



Not forgetting that they are a huge platform for film makers to distribute impact films far and wide. At RLP 'Wakimbizi Film Festival' fits the profile of a human rights festival. It is with this background that I was invited to attend this training.

Not only did the team stay in the workshop but we had the opportunity to go out to some cinemas such as Unseen and Alliance Francaise where we actually watched films and discussed them at length. Great stuff Movies that Matter! Be sure the next Wakimbizi Film festival will see lots of improvements, thanks to the learnings.

*By: Martha Akello
Programme Manager, Media for Social Change,*

Kurudisha Nguvu launched at SSI

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In this documentary André, his wife and his son narrate and reflect on how these experiences of conflict-related sexual violence impact on their individual and collective futures.

Sexual violence in conflict is a vice that has for long been used as a weapon of war globally. In our African context, it is used to minimize and show superiority or power over certain groups of people.

When sexual violence is meted out on women, it receives attention because in many cultures women are regarded as a weaker sex. But when it is meted out on men it's hardly talked about because of the cultural barriers that regard men as the stronger sex. Men are also supposedly able to defend themselves and so when this happens to them, it is often confused with homosexuality, a taboo in the African setting.



Prof. Mullally visits

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Prof. Mullally was in company of Dr Gillian Kane, the Postdoctoral Research Fellow attached to the COALESCE project then based at the ICHR - University of Galway in Ireland.

The team held a host of conversations with RLP staff (both in the Kampala and Kiryandongo Field Office) as well as state (Office of the Prime Minister, Local Government and Police officers) and non-state (UNHCR and Implementing Partner officials) actors in the management of refugees. The research team also interfaced with forced migrants themselves (different RLP support groups in Kampala and Kiryandongo) who had previously undergone the screening and participated in one of COALESCE policy roundtable dialogues.

The team finally wound up the visit with a breakfast dialogue that brought together a small group of thought-and-practice leaders (stemming from inter/governmental institutions, the civil society, the market and the academia) to reflect on the lessons learnt from the project as well as on the ways in which to redirect focus and action to fill the more glaring gaps in addressing trafficking in persons among various constituencies of Uganda's forced and voluntary migrants.

*By: David Tshimba
Senior Researcher*

How do we make our universities refugee inclusive



During the first quarter of the year, we've held two trainings with 58 university personnel on refugee rights and the dynamics around access to Higher Education for refugees whose education has been disrupted by conflict. Participants were drawn from five universities – four of which offer the Mature Entry Scheme as a pathway to university. These include Gulu University, Bugema University, Islamic University in Uganda, Makerere University and Kyambogo University.

Participants were drawn from Admissions Board Committees, Mature Age and Pre-Entry Examinations Committees, Dean of Students, University Counselling units and Staff from Academic Registrar's Departments

- The trainings have contributed to increased knowledge on the unique challenges facing refugee students within the universities. During the trainings, students that were part of the Foundations for All Blended bridging programme shared testimonies of their struggles trying to re-join higher institutions of learning especially through the Mature Age Entry pathway.
- The trainings have raised awareness on key issues that refugee students are faced with either trying to join university or while within the university.

15by30 agenda: Working towards increasing access to higher education for refugees

In January, We took part at the UNCHR Higher Education forum and the University of Sanctuary Conference. Both Conferences were hosted by the University of Edinburg in Scotland and they focused on supporting access to higher education for refugees.

The world is seeing an increase in numbers of refugees. Unfortunately, only about 5% of refugees have access to higher education world over. There are many challenges that refugees are faced with that make it difficult for them to access higher education. Key among them is the lack of academic papers since most of them leave their countries without papers.



The two conferences focused on how universities in the United Kingdom address the refugee challenge. Presentations looked at how universities are addressing problems faced by refugees. In attendance were refugees, universities, policy makers, NGO's and academics with the sole purpose of finding ways to reach the globally agreed UNHCR target 15% of refugees being able to access higher education by 2030.

During the Conference, RLP with partners at the university of Edinburgh showcased the toolkit developed under the Foundations for All project. The conferences were great learning platforms that gave insights to us at RLP on the kind of discussions we would bring back home to the convening's and trainings we are currently having with universities on addressing access to higher education for refugees whose education has been disrupted by conflict

By: **Martha Akello,**
Programme Manager, M4SC



Promoting inclusive education: Ssekatawa's story

Meet Bernard Ssekatawa 17, a pupil with special needs. Ssekatawa is a pupil in Old Kampala PS. We met him through one of our community sensitization sessions in Nankulabye, a Kampala city suburb where we discussed if children with special needs can study in the same school or class as those without special needs.

Ssekatawa has a physical Impairment with one of his legs shorter than the other which affects his mobility. On a visit to his school, we noted that Ssekatawa hadn't reported to school from the time the term began. We reached out to his mother, she said she had financial constraints that made it difficult for her to take him to school.

Our team further followed up with Ssekatawa and we realised he wasn't actually interested in going back to school sighting the inaccessibility of his classroom which is on the third floor of the building. There are no lifts on this building.

"It's hard going up and down those stairs during break, lunch or whenever I need to ease myself" Ssekatawa shares with frustration.

Through the *Improving Access and Retention into Inclusive Education for Refugee Children with disabilities* supported by Comic Relief Ssekatawa was supported to access an orthopaedic doctor who recommended and issued him a shoe raise that has improved his mobility with less strain. RLP also followed up with his school and the teachers agreed to relocate the P7 class to the ground floor to accommodate Ssekatawa.

To support Ssekatawa better, Prossy Namanda 33, Ssekatawa's mother has also been enrolled into a parent's program to improve



her understanding of disability. Ssekatawa's story is testament to that once children are offered the right support they can live learn and strive.

*By: Edwin Okello
Special Needs Assistant.*

Working on audio visuals for the Interpeace project



In March we were represented by King Kabafunzaaki in a meeting organised by Interpeace for the Advocacy Colleagues from the Youth Lab project in Kigali. The two day meeting was meant for partners to come together to develop a script for an advocacy audio visual material for the cross boarder youth dialogues.

Fortifying community truth in the Age of Synthetic Media

Freshly returned from a 2-days' workshop in Nairobi - Kenya organized by our long-time partner, Witness on March 22nd and 23rd. The theme of the convening was: ***“Fortifying community truth in the Age of Synthetic Media”***. For those as busy as I am on content development you will agree that new technologies in the fast-ever-changing world is something we constantly shelve, with the hope of revisiting at a later time. I have since learnt that the tendency is dangerous unfortunately, as

it steadily edges and relegates one to the corner of “Old Skool”. Before you know, you are out of touch, technologically needy and vulnerable to digital attacks and exploitation. As I joined other 25 participants, my thoughts lingered around how I would involve refugees in the remote parts of Uganda in this AI discussion. My work over the years has revolved around content generated from remote refugee settlements in Uganda, conducting filmmaking trainings among refugees and host youth.



Key words stuck for me while in attendance; AI (Artificial Intelligence); Internet; Synthetic Media; VR (Virtual Reality); Deepfakes; Shallow Fakes; Misinformation; Disinformation; Silicon Valley; Liar's Dividend; Fact-Checking; Journalism; Human Rights; Authoritarian Governments...

The two days opened my eyes to the fact that today more people have access to smartphones and internet at the palm of their hands making them more accessible anytime, anywhere. With volumes of information flowing through the same gadgets at a pace we will never keep up with, which makes it a technological threat specifically for those in need of control but also a massive opportunity for software development in the growing AI and tech industry.

As a filmmaker in the field of human rights, we are bound to safe guard the clients and respondents to ensure we “Do No Harm”. Confidentiality therefore becomes paramount in our work. So, understanding the possibilities generative AI tools are able to manipulate gets harder for human rights defenders such as myself.

By: **Otim Patrick**
Video Advocacy Manager



South North Exchange Visit – Taking archiving lessons from Switzerland



In March 2023, a team of two staff members working on our online Archive had an exchange visit to Switzerland dubbed the South North Exchange visit organized by Eirene Suisse. Innocent Oling and Diana Ajok share the experience!

The team visited the University Museum in Lausanne, Castle at the Church in Lausanne, Cinematheque Suisse, Mines de Sel de Bex & Boutique des Mines, Women's Library, Charlie Chaplin Museum, Chamblandes High School, National Parliament of Switzerland, Private life archives Iconography, Iconography center, Radio Television Suisse, Archives Cantonales Vaudoises, The Chillon Castle which was both a fortress and a home. The Chillon Castle is the most visited historical monument in Switzerland. It owes its renown to the surrounding landscape, nestled between Lake Geneva and the Alps.



They were also invited to a meeting with partners with Eirene Sussie and held discussions on the safety of the archive and the access to the materials on the archive.

“During our various visits at the different institutions, we discovered the importance of not only focusing on digitizing and ensuring that the digitized formats are safely stored and made accessible to the public but also to ensure that the original copies in the original formats are safely stored in conducive environments,” Oling Innocent.

The team adds that they learnt that all the Archives' institutions in Switzerland were heavily supported by the State. The state sometimes is not only obligated to provide financial but also infrastructural support and yet these institutions maintain their independence from the interferences from the State. It is very interesting to learn that with this level of State support, individuals are willingly compelled to donate important personal belongings for safety and long-term future preservations. The same cannot be said about the state of governance and support for similar institutions in Uganda.

By: Innocent Oling & Diana Ajok