



MCJL

MUSLIM CENTRE FOR JUSTICE AND LAW

"Justice without discrimination"



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MCJL
Uganda



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

ADR - Alternative Dispute Resolution

AIDS- Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome GBV -
Gender Based Violence

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

JLOS - Justice Law and Order Sector

MCJL - Muslim Center for Justice and Law

VAW - Violence against Women

ULS- Uganda Law Society

LASPS: Legal Aid Service Providers Network

SOPs: Standard Operating Procedures

UJCC: Uganda joint Christian Council

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN

“
Working with a professional competent team is motivating and perpetually promotes a learning platform for both individuals and the organization at large. This report is evidence of the commitment exhibited by the staff and therefore a representation of progress for MCJL key milestones during the year.
”

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Muslim Centre for Justice and Law (MCJL), I am pleased to present the 2021 Annual Report that is characterized by unusual events of the Covid 19 pandemic and related issues. Despite the hurdles of the past two years, we successfully implemented our Strategic Plan 2016-2021, which is aligned to the MCJL Vision, “A Ugandan society that upholds universal faith-based principles in ensuring equitable access to justice, human rights and observance of the law.” In this new strategy, we focus our efforts on the enhancing access to justice for the poor and marginalized in selected districts of Kampala, Butambala, Mpigi, Bugiri, Mayuge, Omoro, Yumbe, Gulu and Lamwo.

During the year 2019, the Board embarked on the process of reconstituting the Board Committees in order to provide effective strategic oversight to the Board and the Senior Management in its implementation of the Organizations’ core programmes. The re-constituted Board Committees are; Programmes and Research Board Committee, Human Resources Board Committee and Finance and Administration Board Committee.

As ever, we remain committed to MCJL Vision, Mission and Values and have successfully been able to deliver on our mandate of promotion of rule of law, and human rights protection as well developing intuitional capacity for efficiency in service delivery. It is this commitment that drives the contemporary programs that MCJL implements which are geared towards ensuring access to justice for the indigents, vulnerable and marginalized in grassroot communities. Our success is deep rooted into cherished principles of accountability, mutual partnership and community engagement.

Working with a professional competent team is motivating and perpetually promotes a learning platform for both individuals and the organization at large. This report is evidence of the commitment exhibited by the staff and therefore a representation of progress for MCJL key milestones during the year.

I take the pleasure to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to my colleagues (the Members of the Board), for their team work, commitment to serve MCJL with diligence and being very reliable. I also thank the President and his entire Team of Senior and Junior Staff for serving MCJL so well, working unreservedly during these hard times of the Covid 19 pandemic and shrinking civil space to provide growth and sustainability to MCJL and for building useful networks for MCJL.

Finally, on behalf of the Members of the Board and the entire MCJL family, permit me to acknowledge the support from each one of you for the success we recorded in 2021. To our development partners, stakeholders, government allies, district leadership and donors’ agencies together with well-wishers, who

contributed financially and technically, we very much appreciate your support, without which we would not have been able to achieve the results we are reporting today. We continue to promise commitment towards playing the oversight roles in the governance of MCJL in the years to come.

Yours,

Musa Kabega

ChairPerson-Board of Directors

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report of Muslim Centre for Justice and Law (MCJL) for the year of 2021. I am glad to have a chance to offer an overview of achievements of our Centre during the last year to the public. We have had a tremendous positive change that has immensely however, since the outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic in Uganda in March 2020, there has been lockdowns and partial lockdowns that greatly affected project implementation and mode of community engagements, mentorship support visits and collection of process tools as stipulated in the manual.

During the lockdown, Omoro and Gulu districts experienced an increased number of GBV cases especially Sexual, economic and physical violence escalated in the region. These social disputes amplified the level of silent conflicts at domestic level, more so Violence Against Women (VAW). Due to the Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent lock down MCJL's activities in 2021 were not intensive. Whereas we continued with our program areas i.e. – Access to Justice, Human Rights Education & Good Governance, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Gender Based Violence Prevention, Women empowerment, Youth Economic Empowerment, Peace building and community dialogue, This year was also very active for MCJL at National level, in particular by steering the passing of the Qadhi Court guidelines into regulations to enabling the operationalization of Qadhi Courts in Uganda.

a harmonious working relationship with the district local governments. This promotes linkages with local governments for organized youth groups, enhances legal and human rights information through well mobilized groups for sensitization and trainings especially for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), Women and youth groups. The strategy builds a firm ground for smooth operations

Along with the implementation of its basic activities, MCJL has invested a lot of efforts and assets in further development of its human resource. Most of our staff have been passed through comprehensive and intensive program of capacity building in internal and external educations. Unlike previous years, MCJL has more employees, mostly as a consequence of the new DGF II Project that started in April. But in May, MCJL became richer by employing several young, professional and ambitious persons, who give us new, additional energy to move forward with even greater enthusiasm.

I am especially grateful for the Board's continued leadership and insights which has both been fundamental in guiding MCJL towards achieving its vision and mission in line with its strategic plan. I also want to thank to all our employees, volunteers and interns that contributed to Results realization presented in this Report.

Project Targets were set without anticipation of a pandemic like COVID-19 and related government restrictions that were put in place to prevent its spread in form of Stand Operating Procedures (SOPs). This affected implementation of activities and the project lifecycle had interferences including requesting for a No Cost Extension

Finally, in a special way, I would like to thank all our esteemed donors for their continued support. Without your support, we would not be able to put our heads and hands where our hearts are – in working to ensure that access to justice is enhanced.

As we head towards 2020, we are ready to score highly in realizing human rights but only considering that, all our partners continue that great relationship we have had in 2019 and even strengthen it more.

Sincerely,

President MCJL

MCJL Response to Covid 19

The world was struck with a deadly virus called Covid 19 that drastically changed the entire context of operation for all sectors, professional bodies and individuals across the world.

MCJL just like all the professional bodies was equally affected by the pandemic that required us to change context of operation, technique of interaction with clients as well as methodology of work to continue serving the indigents while at the same time taking cognizance of the restrictions involved.

In order to curb spread of the pandemic, government imposed standard operating procedures that required less interaction and contact with people. This affected or programs which involved legal education and outreach. This situation enabled us to think outside the box by changing our mode of operating while at the same time remaining relevant in the communities.

MCJL acknowledges the psychological, emotional, and financial effect that the pandemic has brought to the whole world. And to our indigent clients it did not make the situation any better because the lock down came with increase in transport costs that could not enable indigents to access our offices for legal services.

In response to the pandemic MCJL has still remained relevant in promoting access to justice and human rights protection. We have initiated several innovations a result including change of operational strategy:

MCJL introduced the use of community radios, locally known as bizindalo' to conduct legal education on topical issues that had affected people especially during the lock down. These programs were conducted by paralegals in the different districts of operation.

MCJL continued to provide legal support to the indigents using the toll-free line (0800256250) to provide legal advice, counselling and making appropriate referral for those indigents from outside our geographical areas of operation.

MCJL worked with the COVID-19 district and sub county task forces on prevention and response to COVID19 pandemic. MCJL supported the Task force with sanitizers and gloves to help in the prevention of spread of COVID19 in the communities of Omoro.

There has been a change in the way community resource persons have engaged community members. Instead of engaging community men and women or both in a group engagement they have resorted to engaging them in a door-to-door engagements, households and small groups of not more than 10 community members.

ABOUT MCJL (GRAPHICS)

MCJL is a local non-governmental organisation established in 2009 with the aim of building a just and tolerant society with people centered governance. Its primary target is the Muslim community in Uganda but by no means does this preclude other deserving communities.

MCJL implements programs of different social sectors including provision of legal aid services; legal and human rights education; and domestic violence prevention and mitigation

MCJL envisions a Ugandan society that upholds universal faith-based principles in ensuring equitable access to justice, human rights and observance of the law. Our mission is to facilitate observance of human rights, justice, peace, and good governance through promotion of public interest, civil liberties, and obligations under the law.

MCJL priority areas of intervention are Gender based violence prevention, women empowerment and sexual and reproductive rights promotion, Access to justice and advocacy for human rights aspects, Human rights promotion and good governance, Peace building and community dialogue.

Development Partners



THEMATIC AREAS AND AREAS OF FOCUS (GRAPHICS)

Vision

We envision a Ugandan society that upholds universal faith-based principles in ensuring equitable access to justice, human rights and observance of the law.

Mission Statement

We exist to facilitate observance of human rights, justice, peace, and good governance through promotion of public interest, civil liberties, and obligations under the law.

OBJECTIVES AND THEMATIC AREAS

Objectives

- To tackle domestic violence in Muslim Communities so that women are empowered to exercise greater control over decisions that affect their lives.
- To enhance access to justice for poor and vulnerable persons and promoting human rights approaches within the Muslim communities.
- To promote Peace Building and Multi-Faith dialogue among youth and duty bearers.
- To conduct Human Rights and Legal Education
- To carry out health promotion and advocacy

Core Values

1. Tolerance and accommodation of diversity
2. Popular participation and Social responsibility
3. Collaboration and Teamwork
4. High ethical standards and Professionalism

Introduction

In the Ugandan context, access to justice does not start from the police or justice sector, but rather from the village and community level. Some of the most important institutions for resolving conflict are not a part of the state apparatus. Rather, they are the traditional, customary or religious institutions, often consisting of clan elders and chiefs which remain ideally placed to help resolve the most common types of conflicts in Uganda.

The projects implemented were all premised on improving access to justice and legal protection of indigents in Muslim communities especially women and children and thus improve access to justice by creating local platforms that facilitate the involvement of Muslim vulnerable communities and also build the knowledge and capacities of the adjudicators of the Muslim informal justice systems in relation to the current legal framework to eliminate discriminative practices in their work. The major activities conducted were provision of direct legal aid through legal representation, legal advice and facilitating Alternative Dispute Resolution, capacity building for Muslim leaders, LC, community activists involved in adjudication of disputes among Muslims, legal education, radio talk shows about pertinent issues on human rights and access to justice, awareness-raising advocacy on different legal issues affecting Muslims.

Access to justice in Uganda leaves a lot to be desired especially as relates to women. Uganda, like other societies around the world, is a patriarchal society and traditions in such a society often weigh heavily against the interests of women. There are gender related barriers in accessing justice relating to gender biased laws, which are overtly discriminative; and gender-neutral laws where discrimination is veiled and needs to be corrected through laws that are protective of specific concerns of women or men. Gender related barriers in accessing justice are also related to physical accessibility to the agencies for administration and enforcement of law, the training and orientation of those responsible for administration and enforcement of law, the degree of gender sensitivity of both technical and non-technical officers in the system, the degree of technicality involved in the justice system, confidence in the justice delivery system as impartial and transparent and delayed delivery of justice.

In terms of operational context, Muslims in local communities made use of Qadhi courts although these courts have not yet been legally operationalized as required by the Constitution, to enforce Shariah laws on domestic related issues such as marriage contracts, spousal violence and inheritance.

In an effort to further strengthen the sustainability of access to justice in the community, MCJL facilitated the training of paralegals at the Law Development Center for the districts of Butambala, Bugiri, Mpigi, Mayuge and Kampala in 2019 and community activists in Omoro, Pader and Gulu districts. These are of significant value in supporting beneficiary communities within the Informal Muslim Justice System and therefore were present to give guidance, legal support and educate their community members on a regular basis even when funding was not available.

Muslim women are more often barred from accessing justice; their participation is minimal. This is attributed mainly to their perceived gender roles in the Muslim society, including but not limited to marital responsibilities at home, fear of their spouses, stigma, fear of public opinion, economic dependence, ignorance of the law, discriminative cultural practices and religious beliefs. This kind of oppression accelerates domestic violence in most homes and injustice tendencies against them. This is where under the women empowerment program several activities were conducted to minimize gender-based violence

in the districts of operation. MCL focus is on the vulnerable who include women and children. Women were therefore given special attention and a conducive environment to access legal and psychosocial services by changing society perceptions about the roles and rights of women.

The activities under this theme are conducted in Bugiri, Mayuge, Mpigi, Kampala, Butambala, Omoro, Gulu and Lamwo districts. They involve community sensitizations about human rights, lobby meetings, workshops, radio programs and prevention of gender-based violence using the SASA! faith approach have been employed to reach out to faith communities and other duty bearers. Justice, peace and dignity are fundamental to people's health and happiness. These three values are held deeply in Muslim and Christian communities, and the three cannot be separated from one another.

MCJL has a team of 15 staff and 50 paralegals competent to manage and implement the several access to justice projects. Organizational systems are already in place and functional to implement the project. We however, recognize the shrinking civil society space that brought about closure of some NGOs and suspension of one of our biggest funders DGF which affected our operation in terms of serving the indigents in the communities. There is also a need to further strengthen some aspects of our work such as advocacy. Capacity development will address weaknesses of systems and staff capacity through the development of new skills, improved practices and access to new resources. Staff will be trained in resource mobilisation, advocacy, financial management and monitoring and evaluation aspects that are necessary skills and knowledge for improved organisational systems and practice.

The Covid 19 pandemic also changed the context of operation where most of the strategic engagements like planning, reporting etc was coordinated virtually using social media and other platforms like zoom and google teams. Staff were required to work from home and in shifts at the offices to avoid congestion in compliance to the SOPs put in place to prevent spread of Covid 19. We continued to offer direct legal aid to walk in clients in our districts of operation but emphasis was put on the use of the toll-free line since most indigents were unable to access our offices due to inter district movement ban by government and high cost of transport for some.

Strategic Objective 1: PROMOTING ACCESS TO JUSTICE (picture plus graphics)



This was achieved through implementing the project *“Enhancing Access to Justice for the Poor and Marginalized Particularly in Selected Muslim Communities in Uganda”* in the districts of Mpigi, Bugiri, Mayuge, Butambala and Kampala in central and eastern Uganda. The project has made an impact on ensuring that the poor and vulnerable are able to access legal services on matters of land, family, contracts enforcement among others through legal advice and counseling, mediation of cases, court representation, in the targeted communities.

MCJL mandate to serve women and children was collaborated by the access to justice and women empowerment program alike. The women in development approach for gender mainstreaming was able to curb the social cultural practices that prevent women from acquiring necessary knowledge and skills to support their families and have economic independence. This created a favorable ground for women’s rights to be recognized in homes and society as a whole, thereby reducing domestic violence in homes.

Provision of direct and indirect legal aid to indigents

Throughout 2021, MCJL in the project districts supported 14,378 (8,253F; 6,125M) legal cases, including civil and criminal cases handled directly and indirectly by legal officers who offered court representation, legal advice and ADR services. Most clients preferred ADR compared to other methods, followed by legal advice. Other services provided included court representation, court annexed mediation, duty counsel lawyers; and legal advice through toll free lines, e-Law application social media pages and the SMS platform. (refer to FIDA for tabulation)

The project has supported indigents in the various communities with legal aid services in the form of free legal representation, counselling and advice, mediation, reconciliation and coaching on self-representation to the people who were not within our jurisdiction of operation. They also acquired knowledge about different aspects of law especially land, succession and inheritance, contracts enforcement, importance of formalizing marriage in addition to securing women's property and marital rights. Improved Capacity of mosque committees and LCs in handling Muslim related access to justice through trainings and publication of information related Islamic family law.

Enhanced professional Development of 8 MCJL legal officers by supporting them attend CLE workshops organized by Uganda law society (ULS). Laws and policies keep changing and the lawyers need to keep updated about the current legal trends.

Because of the joint legal aid clinics, there is an increased collaboration between other stakeholders and there is an exchange of knowledge between the Uganda Law Society and MCJL.

Prison visits to extend legal services to prisoners were not conducted because were denied access to prisoners despite the numerous efforts and protocol compliance that we went through. This was mainly due to the fact that SOPs had to be observed in order to prevent contraction of or spread of Covid 19. This hindered the already planned targets and these could not be easily achieved, even with a change in strategy

Capacity building for key stakeholders (refer to Fida) and distribution of information and communication materials on Islamic Family Law and family related statutory laws in Uganda.

As a result of the trainings, the capacity of the stakeholders on the use of restorative justice, ADR and provision of basic legal aid through mediation and advice was enhanced. They were called upon to refer cases out of their mandate to MCJL or to police particularly for capital offences like theft, criminal trespass, defilement, rape, murder or robbery.

A semi-annual meeting with the Muslim Justice Users Committee **Refer to tabulation enabled** community leaders like LC committee members, Imams, Amirats, sub-county chiefs and security persons like DISO to be empowered to apply legal and human rights principles while adjudicating cases in their jurisdictions. Building the capacity of existing community structures particularly mosques and LCs to deliver legal aid has proved to be cost effective, efficient and a sustainable legal aid service delivery model.

Through the semi-annual meetings with Muslim structures on GBV, Islamic leaders have used their training to champion the rights of women and girls; and fight discriminatory religious practices, especially under-age marriages, domestic violence prevention, promotion of harmonious homes, justice in property sharing upon divorce, application of human rights standards when adjudicating GBV cases.

The adjudicators in Informal Muslim courts have proper guidelines, logistics and resources on how these courts operate as well as procedures on how other JLOS structures in place can be utilized to access justice while at the same time making appropriate referrals for cases that cannot be handled at mosque level. Local community men and women have gained increased understanding of their rights and trust in the local justice structures like LC and mosques and this has restored their hope, many innocent people are out of prisons after trial due to MCJL's intervention, relationships/friendships have been restored due to the mediation services conducted by MCJL lawyers, clients have been compensated by their oppressors through recovery of debts, property and all these have positively impacted on the MCJL image in the districts of operation.

Stake holder engagements

The involvement of these stakeholders is also a mechanism of sustainability of legal aid provision to the poor and vulnerable persons in those districts. In a bid to extend sustainable legal services to the grassroots justice structures, 30 people were sponsored to study diploma in law at the Law Development Centre. 13 came from the local council committee and 17 were Qadhi Court adjudicators. This was aimed at enhancing the capacity of duty bearers in providing services related to improving access to justice for the grass root community members.

A lobby meeting for the operationalization of Qadhi courts under article 129 of the constitution was conducted with policy makers including MPs, LASPs, First Parliamentary Council, Law Reform Commission and Magistrates. Advocacy for institutionalization of Qadhi courts for adjudication of the Muslim personal law is still ongoing for purposes of streamlining their operation at various mosques. This process was however frustrated by the election of new Members of parliament and Covid 19 restrictions. There is also generally lack of political will to push the matter forward.

Community Outreaches and sensitization



Community outreaches and legal aid camps for communities in the target areas to cover various issues such as GBV prevention, the increase DV cases brought about by lockdown, teenage pregnancies, dangers of early marriages, children's rights abuses, child labor, sexual harassment, false imprisonment due to curfew restrictions, landlord tenant obligations and rights, debt obligations, Where and how to obtain justice, LC role in prevention of GBV, its jurisdiction and mandate, rights and obligations of couples in

marriage, the offence of threatening violence and grievous bodily harm, illegal terminations from jobs, empower community members with legal and human rights information; and work to shift harmful social norms.

Through the community engagements, over 53,906 (32,343F; 21,563M) individuals were reached through indirect services, including commemorating of important days like women's day celebrations, International Youth Day, and the 16 days of activism against GBV activities where messages were passed on our media platforms like face book and radio talk shows.

Opportunity was given to students for clerkship placement. Internship is an opportunity for law students or bar course students to get hands on skills of providing legal services and handling clients while acquiring additional knowledge about the law.

Key achievements (ULS Pg14)

- Access of free legal services
- Restoration of relationships through the ADR mechanisms
- Field follow ups and locus visits have helped resolve cases in a conclusive manner by reaching out to witnesses and assessing the situation on the ground.
- Networking with other organizations has given us good exposure enhanced visibility, better collaboration and networking opportunities and this has led to a good number of referrals.
- Improved the co-existence of harmonious relationships among families through trainings on GBV and HIV- Aids related topics.
- Legal aid to indigents brought about reduction of conflicts through use of ADR, peace, equality, enforcement of rights through reconciliation and timely access to justice for the poor and vulnerable.

Key highlights (number of direct and indirect beneficiaries) refer to FIDA

Pictures

Objective 2: GENDER, HUMAN RIGHTS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT (TROCAIRE)



“Promoting Peaceful and Harmonious Families as well creating human rights awareness”.

The project interventions focused mainly in the Muslim faith communities of Omoro (Bobi and Koro Sub counties) and Gulu city to ensure that women are free from violence and its associated HIV risks using continuous and various Engagements in the faith communities by community activists using the holy Quran quotes that promote peace, justice and dignity among men and women

With the closing up of the faith spaces, community activists used the house hold visits and one on one engagement whereby community men and women are now sharing roles and responsibilities in homes, making joint decision and respecting each other's decisions in their families, appreciating each other's efforts in economic ventures and recognizing the fact that everyone has a right to peaceful life, justice and dignity.

Community men and women are now able to speak openly against VAW and encourage one another to always seek for help in case faced with any kind of violence in their lives. They acknowledge that infringement of these is a violation of human rights and punishable by law. This has contributed to increased safety for women around issues of physical, sexual and economic violence both in public and private sphere specifically forms like beating, rape (marital and others), defilement, forced marriages and sexual harassment, partners selling off property without consent of the other, denial of access to family resources to women among others have tremendously reduced in the communities.

Capacity building of Community Activists and Advocacy Group members



In order to support the **women's empowerment at the community level** community activists have ben empowered with knowledge to disseminate to community members to enable them understand the misinterpreted verses of the Quran, appreciate benefit of nonviolence, gender equality, equity, the interconnection between VAW and HIV/AIDs to foster formal and informal networking that reach out to women affected by or living with HIV and offer support.

These have helped in creating a positive change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours, practices and has provided alternative skills of non-violence to community women and men.

Positive change in knowledge has been achieved through this program, shaping community member's attitudes, behaviour and better understanding of VAW and its vast consequences to all the circles of influence and helped them appreciate benefits of Non-violence, respect for one another, sharing roles and responsibilities, planning and budgeting together, helping one another to consider alternatives to violence that promotes healthy relationships in homes hence a safer environment for families.

Duty Bearers in target government and community institutions have acquired knowledge and understanding of what is required to implement GBV policy The RDC for example supported the cause by providing office of the CDO and police with fuel to follow up and handle cases of GBV from the grant they receive from the central government.

Women only spaces were created to help build the esteem of women and enhance their skills in resolving GBV in their homes and in the communities. These spaces already existed though their focus was not on GBV prevention so we utilized these spaces to talk about GBV prevention and its connection to HIV.

Religious leaders and community activists have also gained knowledge and skills on appropriate handling of disclosure for GBV victims and referral pathways, and women and men have gained access to information on referral pathways for GBV services.

Advocacy for GBV laws and policies

MCJL engaged in advocacy for implementation of the GBV laws and policies where the advocacy issues from Acholi sub region in the districts of Lamwo and Omoro are reported to ACFODE (action for development) to be discussed at national level for policy change and reviews at national level with the respective duty bearers. MCJL is a DVA coalition member with CEDOVIP and raising voices, MCJL attends the meetings and shares with other CSOs how to effectively engage communities on the prevention of GBV and any other associated risks.

Female Advocacy group members acquired skills through training on how to identify key advocacy issues in the community and also follow up commitments from duty bearers which supports women's empowerment at the community level

We have also realized increased engagements and commitments by Muslim leaders towards addressing issues on Gender Based Violence which in turn provided for platforms to Muslim women to advocate for their rights.

Due to change in attitudes, behaviors and practices related to GBV and associated HIV risks, there is an improved and more harmonious relationship among families through trainings on GBV and HIV- Aids related topics.

The physical presence of legal officers brought legal services closer to the grass root people who did not have information about how and where to obtain justice. This promoted easy and fast access to justice for the poor and indigent persons.

Religious leaders are involved

Objective 3: PEACE BUILDING AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM (JISRA)



This program covers the geographical area of Yumbe district in Northwest Uganda to promote interfaith and intercultural collaboration for peaceful co-existence among youth at risk of extremism in the district. The interfaith approach was used to contribute to the building of community trust and it has promoted the resilience in the community towards radical actions among the youth.

Inter-face Meetings with religious leaders facilitated intergenerational transition and mentoring of the youth on leadership within the faith structure.

The training of trainers on peace building faith-based Justice and referral pathways, Conflict Sensitivity for Inter-religious Action, Conflict Mitigation, Mediation and Negotiation, Partnership and Collaboration, Transformative Leadership resulted into practical and enforceable entry points that have made it possible

to build a good relationship with the diverse cultures and religious sects in Yumbe district. Ethnic, faith and gender conflicts have reduced within the communities in Yumbe Town Council especially in Kululu Sub County.

Objective 4: Conduct Monitoring and Evaluation



Monitoring and evaluation exercise was also conducted in the different districts of operation, especially during the end of project evaluation exercise where clients and staff were engaged to interact with stakeholders who revealed that they have established a working relationship with the legal aid clinic where they refer cases to be handled and they are always getting positive feedback about the quality of services offered. According to the reports from the different work stations, MCJL has obtained recognition, support and cooperation from all the district and JLOS stakeholders.

Internal monitoring of the projects was also carried out through weekly activity plans, monthly activity reporting, to track progress of cases handled, regular staff meetings were conducted to consolidate milestones and discuss challenges faced in order to devise strategies of overcoming them. Narrative reports for activities conducted were compiled and documented for tracking progress of implementation.

A client satisfaction analysis was also conducted to find out the level of satisfaction of clients about our services. It enables us to find out the issues that clients faced with using our services In order to guide on how to improve service delivery.

An end of project evaluation was conducted and the overall performance assessment revealed that project increased access to Justice for the poor and marginalized due to improvement on access to legal and human rights awareness, especially in the Muslim community. On average for every 10 cases registered 6 cases were given the due attention they deserved to logical conclusion.

Legal advice, mediation, lodging caveats on land, court representation and community outreaches are by far still the most relevant in the journey to accessing justice by the poor and marginalized.

Advocacy and Strategic engagements

Policy, Legal and Practice Change was influenced by MCJL initiatives were undertaken to influence policy, legal and practices in succession through the Domestic Violence Act- Coalition meetings organized by CEDOVIP. On 11th May 2021, MCJL made a presentation on the Position regarding the Succession (Amendment bill] 2018. The view of MCJL was that whereas largely the bill was largely a good law, the continuous and deliberate exclusion of interests of Minority undermines the principle of inclusiveness which is key in democratic governance. MCJL also proposed to coalition members that it was important for coalition Members to pick interest in understanding Muslim Family law for an objective assessment of the values and interests of the Muslim community.

MCJL also wrote and published a statement condemning the approach taken by the security organs of only arresting Muslims whenever a high-profile city murder occurred which in itself deepens Islamophobia. MCJL has argued that the approach of treating murder crimes as ‘terrorist in nature’ has not only affected Muslims who are sometimes subjected to torture, inhuman and degrading treatment in a bid to extort information from them, but denies innocent Ugandans who have died of such murders and their families a right to bring real culprits to justice because of the wrong institutionalized approach and policy by Ugandan security forces and office of Director of Public Prosecution. This can be accessed on <https://bit.ly/3yAYzwV>



MCJL pioneered and championed the effort to ensure legal reform on Article 129(1) (d) of the 1995 constitution that institutionalizes the operation of Qadhi courts. Several government agencies were engaged including ULRC to expedite the process of enacting the Qadhi courts bill. This initiative has kept MCJL in limelight as well as enabled the organisation to engage in advocacy at national level. MCJL secured a commitment by ULRC to consult with Office of the Solicitor General to provide an updated position on the side of Government about the Qadhi courts bill. Additionally, the Qadhi's Courts Bill was read in a ministerial statement by the Deputy Attorney General on 3rd May, 2021. The Minister acknowledged having consulted MCJL in the process leading to development of the Bill. The Hansard can be accessed on [HANSARDS 2021 MAY | Parliament of Uganda](#). A follow up meeting with Uganda Muslim Supreme Council was conducted on 23rd April, 2021, as a result of feedback from the Uganda Law Reform Commission on the status of the Qadhi Court Bill. The ULRC had written to MCJL clarifying that the Bill was at UMSC for further review by the Muslim community. During the meeting, UMSC was updated of the status per the ULRC communication. It was agreed that MCJL and UMSC work together in ensuring that the Bill gets back to Parliament for passing.



There is strengthened collaboration and networking at district where MCJL and the change agents attend and participate in district planning meetings, strengthening networking and collaboration at community level in terms of service delivery. Through the strategic engagements with duty bearers specifically the regional police (clo and the cfpu) we were able to secure a space on radio (radio favour 2 space a week, radio mega once a week and radio maria once a week) for the community men and women to raise awareness on GBV. Increased registration of cases the office of the CDO bobi was equipped with a laptop and attained an office.

MCJL networks and collaborates with other institutions at National and district level. MCJL works in collaboration with Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development at strategic level to ensure that gender issues are reflected in planning and reporting by all sectors. At the Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC), we are part of the Gender Technical Working Group.

MCJL EVENTS...TABULATION. (individuals, communities, institutions, civil society) and pictures

International Peace Day celebrations to bring youth issues to the attention of the international community and celebrate the potential of youth as partners in today's global society



Organize and conduct Bi Annual and Annual Music dance and drama as a strategy on peace building awareness. It will be a musical gala and competitive from the village level to the district for 5 years

16 Days of Activism campaign against GBV. Radio talk shows and transect walk was conduct to raise awareness about dangers of GBV and effects on the victims. A dialogue with community leaders enabled MCJL to confirm the commitments to fights GBV in the communities by the community leaders.



MCJL PUBLICATIONS/ RESEARCH

An assessment study on most harmful traditional practices (HTPs) in each religion/faith (with a gender and age perspective) was conducted. The study was conducted also with non-religious actors (healthcare facilities, schools' non-faith-based NGO, local authorities, among others).

MCJL ADVOCACY AND COLLABORATIONS

MOU with URSB



MCJL with support from Trocaire implements a strategy on advocacy for implementation of the GBV laws and policies where the advocacy issues from Acholi sub region in the districts of Lamwo and Omoro are reported to ACFODE (action for development) to be push at national level for policy change and reviews at national level with the different duty bearers. MCJL is a DVA coalition member with CEDOVIP and raising voices, MCJL attends the meetings and shares with other CSOs how to effectively engage communities on the prevention of GBV and any other associated risks.

MCJL Law reform initiatives

Qadhi courts bill. pics

MCJL public interest initiative

Accident victims. Press conference pics

Extra judicial killings of Muslims press conference.

Barriers to Success

Despite incredible gains in reaching community members and supporting women, many members in the project districts still hold patriarchal beliefs such as maintain women's dependence on their husbands or

partners for financial support and decision-making. Potential arbiters, such as clan leaders, are not exempt. They have been known to apply patriarchal norms in dispute resolution cases, hence the need for training focusing on the gendered norms within traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Survivors also often withdraw cases for fear of retaliation

Failure to access prisons in Eastern Uganda (Bugiri and Mayuge districts) in due course of implementation of the project cycle. The denial of permission to work in prisons without a clear justification hindered the already planned targets and these could not be easily achieved, even with a change in strategy. The intension of supporting criminal justice for cases that largely emerged from the Muslim community was partly affected and this caused fear of intervening in some cases. As mitigation measure, MCJL worked well utilizing the entered Memorandum of Understanding and engaged Counsel Rwakafuzi of Rwakafuzi and Co. Advocates to handle such cases and in return MCJL facilitated the process. Also, cases have been handled using duty counsel although with the COVID-19 pandemic, it turned into another hindrance to access inmates at court due to restrictions

Restricted movements as a result of the Covid19 pandemic affected implementation of activities like community outreaches that were planned to have gatherings. This limited the ability of people to know, demand and report human rights abuses. The online innovations to the challenge are not suitable for the vulnerable persons due to the limited access of gadgets, internet especially for the rural population.

Close of community mosques by the Government in response to prevent the spread of COVID-19. MCJL's paralegal structure is partly designed to work in mosques where clients report cases through Qadhi's courts. MCJL also uses the mosque structure to receive feedback about the human rights challenges affecting the Muslim community. The closure of mosques was therefore a big challenge especially for the vulnerable persons who seek justice through these structures.

The shrinking civic space that was evident as a result of suspension of DGF supported public events. Such events cause fear in the civil society world which limits the ability of CSOs to speak against and act against human rights violations. This left one of our funders, Trocaire ending the 5-year contract they had with MCHJL hence leaving a funding gap for the organization especially for the women empowerment program. High transport rates increased the cost per case to logical conclusion. During January to June 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic greatly contributed to an increase in public transport. This not only affects the lawyers but also the beneficiaries. Many clients fail to follow up their cases as a result of the exorbitant transport rates which they cannot afford. This leads to slow conclusion of cases. There are still pending cases that are ongoing in court and ADR which still require time and funds to ensure logical conclusion.

Emerging Issues

- The project on prevention of gender-based violence was extended to Gulu. We are yet to sign an MOU with the local government district officials.
- Research on gender responsiveness was conducted regarding the Muslim adjudication process. It enabled us to understand the differences in the lives of women and men and how they respond differently to the law.
- A module on Muslim family law was developed to guide police when handling cases of Muslims involving marriage, divorce, inheritance and guardianship at the family and child protection units.
- A private members bill was presented for review during a lobby meeting conducted to operationalize Qadhi courts under Article 129 (1)(d). This was at BMK House with policy makers. This calls for a follow up meeting where Hon. Muwanga Kivumbi and Hon. Latif Ssebagala will present an abridged version of the revised bill for endorsement by the Muslim Leadership.

Human Resources and Administration

New grants and operations resulted in the recruitment of new, capable staff from across the country to support the implementation of new programming. On the JISRA project in the first half of the year, 1 new staff was recruited;

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

DONOR	ACTUAL BUDGET	AMOUNT RECEIVED	EXPENDITURE
DGF	858,010,302	858,010,302	850,720,690
JIRSRA	188,856,637	188,856,637	157,131,495
TROCAIRE	258,611,822	258,611,822	254,928,780
TOTAL	1,305,478,761	1,305,478,761	1,262,780,965