

FIDA UGANDA

ANNUAL REPORT 2008



EMERGING STRONGER
our story of belief and resilience



FIDA spent most of 2008 in reflection reviewing where FIDA

This annual report begins with a focus on ourselves: as an organisation of women in order to be strong for others whom we serve. Emphatically, at the time when FIDA organisation, picked up the pieces and began to rebuild again. It is that solidarity, emancipation of women and protection of children.



Organizational Development

FIDA-U took bold steps to re-organise itself and overhaul the organisation in terms of institutional structure, strategy and systems to meet the demands of the human rights and governance landscape in Uganda, East Africa and as well as internationally.

- Strategic Work Plan for 2009-14
- Review and revision of HR and Finance Manual
- Organization and management restructure
- Expansion of membership base



Access to Justice

This is FIDA's main area of work representing clients and mediating in disputes. It involves defending women's rights and redressing abuse. Outreach work enables FIDA to hear women's experiences directly.

- Legal cases from clinics
- Redefining societal gender roles
- Sexual and reproductive rights for women



Legal Education

This covers diverse legal education programmes for paralegals, religious organizations, communities and law enforcement agencies. To assist them in understanding the law and how to resolve issues earlier. It includes producing simplified materials which break down aspects of the law on women's and child rights for communities to understand more easily.

- Paralegal training
- Law enforcement agencies training
- Community awareness on law



The new FIDA

After the process of self reflection and setting new policies and structures the organization focussed on moving forward with positive new strides by:

- Team building – between the staff, board and trustees
- Re-branding – what FIDA means as a household name in Uganda
- Networking – with local, regional and international women's organisations to advocate for SGBV
- Gala dinner – to engage the wider especially male legal fraternity
- Launch of Victims Fund – to support victims of violence

nts of 2008

DA has come from and where it is going as an organization.

lawyers. We found it imperative to strengthen ourselves as an organisation
DA-U was ailing, it is women lawyers' belief in the importance of reviving our
ownership and belief in self that we intend to capitalise on, as we struggle for the

“FIDA-U offers me a sense of belonging
and relevance in shaping society.”
Chairperson

“
Client

“FIDA-U is our baby.”
President of the Trust

“I owe FIDA-U the best of what I
have become. I am paying back to it.”
CEO

Special thanks

Ford Foundation: Tade Aina, Willy Mutunga and Carla Sutherland for institutional development funding a rare funding in the current donor landscape

Wellsprings Advisors for having supported Hope Chigudu and Ms. Ellen Sprenger for stewardship of our growth

The donors who stood by us in our deepest hour of need: DFID, AWDF, Plan International, TDH, AUF-A

Energized by our sisterhood as women lawyers Energized by our sisterhood as women lawyers Energized by our sisterhood as women lawyers

Reaffirming our identity Reaffirming our identity Reaffirming our identity



Organizational development

- Mission, vision and specified objectives were agreed
- Strategic Plan for work focus for next 5 years developed
- Definition of thematic areas with defined outputs for work
- Restructuring of HR, finance and operational procedures
- Setting of roles and responsibilities based on SMART growth

FIDA's Objectives

Objective
1

To consolidate gains in access to justice through the provision of legal aid, legal education, public interest litigation and advocacy for law and practice reform.

Objective
2

To promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women including combating and redressing effects of HIV and AIDS.

Objective
3

To promote economic justice and the rights of women through monitoring and advocacy within the framework of pro-poor development.

Objective
4

To contribute to transitional justice, peace building and effective political participation of women as decision makers.

Objective
5

To reposition FIDA-U as a sustainable human rights, governance and activist organisation.



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Legal advice to clients

The Legal Aid Clinic has assisted 1657 (203 men and 1454 women) with direct legal representation and counselling. The majority (1538) of cases were civil (119 were criminal), involving maintenance, registration of marriages, births, divorce, and administration of estates, including the rights of children.

Training

Paralegals were trained to resolve conflicts within communities, to reduce expenditure for the poor on transport and legal fees. This reduced backlog at the Local Council Courts. The targeted communities have noted less domestic violence, grabbing of property that belongs to widows and orphans, increased property sharing between husband and wife upon divorce and dialogue at the family level to collectively decide sale of matrimonial property.

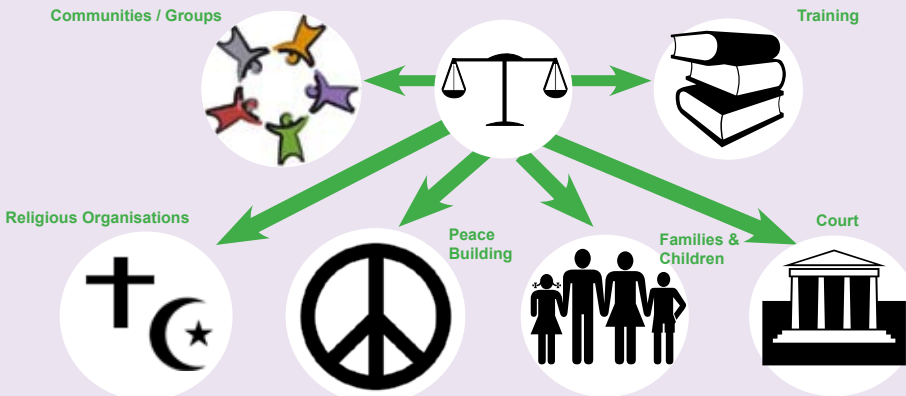
Strengthening relations within legal and community structures

Government law enforcement agencies were sensitized on civil law as they are mostly familiar with criminal law. They reported that sharing of information, joint training of the public, training of law enforcers resulted in better coordination and communication between the work of police officers and FIDA. Simplified materials on: making a will; procedures for separation and divorce; children and the family courts were produced in English and vernacular.

Legal education within communities took place through drama and training of Community Volunteers to create awareness between communities and leaders to ensure rights are promoted. The community dialogue with Members of Parliament opened doors for continued interaction for feedback on legislation and presentation of community issues to parliament.

Networking with local and international women's organisations

FIDA was instrumental in revitalising the women's movement to rally together on SGBV. To date FIDA has taken the lead in organising meetings of the Women's Movement, released press briefs, led a solidarity march to raise public awareness ending at the Parliament where a petition was presented to the Deputy Speaker and held advocacy meetings with high profile stakeholders responsible for delivering justice. Regional and international links were strengthened to highlight the plight of women refugees and GBV.





Gala Dinner

This was the first of its kind bringing together the legal fraternity, raising over 10m and engaging male support for sexual and gender based violence advocacy.



The Chief Justice of Uganda and the Uganda Law Society mobilised male lawyers on date to support **“Lawyers Against Sexual and Gender Based Violence.”**

FIDA-U creatively used celebrations as a mechanism to place women’s rights squarely within the realm of the human rights discourse.

The Uganda Law Society committed itself to treat victims of violence with courtesy and to refrain from asking for unnecessary adjournments which delays justice.



Lessons Learned

Need for documentation

FIDA plays a key role in documenting cases and experiences of women at grass roots level to ensure that their voices can be heard. It provides a safe platform for women to tell their stories of resistance against oppression and abuse in search of justice. By bringing these into the legal arena, FIDA transforms women's helplessness into powerful opportunities for mutual learning, exchange of ideas and surfacing of women's power. The documentation sharpens women's conceptual clarity to use law as a tool to achieve a world where women's rights are respected as part of everyday life, including family relationships. The data analysis would inform the transformation in cultural thinking, gender, ethnicity and the changing face of democracy within communities.

Multi-disciplinary approach

As a rights based organization, FIDA should invest in understanding power dynamics and adult learning theory and practice as well as develop the competence needed. Expertise in capacity building, adult education methods, political processes, and power dynamics beyond engagement with legal institutions and visible structures of authority are needed within the organization to ensure FIDA's mandate can be achieved.

Integration of paralegals

Planning meetings with the local government authorities need to regularly take place to integrate the work of the paralegals into that of the Community Development Officers. This will ensure greater ability at community level to resolve civil conflict amicably and reduce unnecessary cases being brought before the court.

Challenges with the law

Often FIDA faces the challenge to continue advocating and respecting the law which so often is unclear and does not deliver justice to women. This will involve much advocacy and lobbying with others to ensure the law is amended to adequately protect and enshrine the rights of women.

Values that Guide FIDA's Membership

- **RESPECT** for each other
- **LOVE** for FIDA-U as an organisation
- **TRUST** in each others' skills
- **ENERGY** to achieve the goals of the organisation
- **PROOF** to show that we are making progress
- **INNOVATION** to reach for the stars

WHO IS WHO IN FIDA

- Board of Trustees
- FIDA membership – Ugandan Women lawyers
- Executive Director
- Programme Managers
- Legal Officers

The Victims Support Fund was set up by several organizations led by CEDOVIP and supported by AWDF. It is managed by FIDA to support victims of violence with legal fees and ???



MISSION

**TO PROMOTE THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE
INHERENT DIGNITY OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN
USING LAW AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

CONTACT

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