



Equal Opportunities Commission

EQUITY VOICE

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Ensuring an Inclusive Society for all



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EDITORIAL



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the first issue of the Equity Voice newsletter. This publication mostly highlights the seven year milestones of working to redress imbalances and promote equal opportunities for all. Since inception, our focus has been to include everyone in the development Agenda and leaving no one behind. We congratulate everyone that has been part of this great journey.

We celebrate our milestones with our stakeholders in Uganda and beyond and particularly our constituents; the Youth, Persons with Disabilities, Women, older persons, ethnic minorities among others. We also wish to recognize our mother ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), Parliament of the Republic of Uganda and our development partners for support in the execution of our mandate. Over the years, the effort and dedication of the members and staff of the equal opportunities commission in collaboration with various stakeholders culminated into a number of achievements, among which is; the Compilation and presentation of annual statutory reports on the state of Equal Opportunities in Uganda; Enforcement of compliance with Equal Opportunities and Affirmative Action; undertaking sector audits; executing social justice through

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Tribunal Mechanisms in dispensing justice for vulnerable group; censoring inclusive access; meaningful participation, promoting and enforcing compliance with Gender and Equity in all Sectors, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Local Governments (LGs) in accordance to the Public Finance Management Act (2015).

This Issue presents interesting reading with articles on the various EOC undertakings since inauguration. In it we share with the readers the humble beginnings of the EOC, the contribution of the previous and current members of commission and staff, achievements to date, interviews and perspectives from various stake holders on equalizing opportunities and affirmative action.

This being our first issue I encourage readers to look out for the subsequent publications. I extend my sincere gratitude to the writers and the editorial team for their tireless effort towards the production of this maiden newsletter.

To our distinguished readers, I wish you the best of reading as we look forward to a series of the Equity Voice quarterlies.

Aluta Continua!!!

Kamya Julius
Commissioner Education, Training and Information



On behalf of the Equal Opportunities Commission I would like to welcome you to the first Issue of the Equity Voice newsletter. I congratulate ourselves for having been able to publish our maiden issue. This newsletter provides the Commission great opportunity to interface with our various stakeholders and the general public.

This publication is in line with the EOC mandate, stipulated in the EOC Act 2007. Among other functions, the Commission is mandated to develop, conduct and manage information and education programs in order to raise public awareness on non-discrimination, equality and affirmative action. The newsletter comes in the wake of the need to sensitize the public about the mandate and programs of the Commission and will provide a platform through which the commission will amplify voices of the voiceless, share information on the commission's work and receive feedback from readers on equal opportunity related matters. This is in partial pursuit of redressing imbalances and promoting equal opportunities for all.

To this end the commission envisions a just and fair

Message from the Chairperson

society where all persons have equal opportunity to participate and benefit in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life.

I would like to recognize and extend my sincere gratitude to all our dedicated stakeholders who have continuously contributed and worked tirelessly to enable EOC implement and deliver successfully its mandate.

In a special way, i recognize the effort of our esteemed writers and editorial team for the valuable contribution towards this important milestone. I wish to also request that you continue contributing to the subsequent issues to be published. I congratulate the entire EOC fraternity for the successful breakthrough with this platform.

Lastly, I call upon the public to actively participate on the Equity Voice platform which will have updates and information through the

EOC website www.eoc.go.ug,
Facebook: EOCUG and
Twitter: EOC_UG pages.

I wish you pleasant reading.

Thank you.

Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi (Mrs)
Chairperson

“ I extend my sincere gratitude to all our stakeholders without whom the EOC success would not be possible. In a special way, i recognize the effort of our esteemed writers and editorial team for the valuable contribution towards this important milestone. I wish to also request that you continue contributing to the subsequent issues to be published. I congratulate the entire EOC fraternity for the successful breakthrough with this platform. ”

Word from the Ag. Secretary to the Equal Opportunities Commission



I wish to thank the various stakeholders who provided valuable contribution towards the production of this Newsletter. Specifically, I extend gratitude to the Department of Education Training and Communication for their technical contribution and taking lead.

The Equal Opportunities Commission is a constitutional body established by the EOC Act, 2007 “To give effect to the State’s constitutional mandate to eliminate discrimination and inequalities against any individual or group of persons on the grounds of sex, race, color, ethnic origin, tribe, creed, religion, social, or economic standing, political opinion, disability, gender , age or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom and take affirmative action in favor of groups marginalized.

The Commission’s core functions are spelt out in Section 14 of EOC Act 2007, to monitor, evaluate and ensure that policies, laws, plans, programs, activities, practices, tradition, culture, usages and customs of Organs of state at all levels, Statutory

bodies and agencies, Public bodies and authorities, private business and enterprises, NGOs, and Social Cultural Communities” are compliant with Equal Opportunities and affirmative action in favor of groups marginalized on the basis.

Currently, the Commission has 5 Members appointed by H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda, a Staff composition of 43 and comprises of five departments; Legal services and Investigations; Finance and Administration and Planning; Research monitoring and Evaluation; Education Training Information and Communication; Compliance and Reporting over the years the departments have registered significant success in enhancing the realization of the equal opportunities commission mandate.

The newsletter is intended to increase on the visibility of the EOC and keep you posted on the progress the Commission is making in extending social justice to the vulnerable and marginalized populace in Uganda. I therefore encourage our readers to utilize this information and share with the Commission any feedback relating to equal opportunities, marginalization and discrimination in society. The Commission commits to keep the readers abreast with the current affairs of the EOC programs, activities, and collaborative efforts with various stakeholders as well as key highlights on the achievements, challenges and future plans of the Commission.

Finally, the Commission is open and welcomes any comments in regard to this newsletter. I wish you pleasant reading.

Thank you

Prof. Olwor Sunday Nicholas

Members of the Commission



Mrs. Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi
Chairperson



Ms. Zaminah Malole
Member



Mr. Nduhura Dennis
Vice Chairperson



Mr. Patrobas Sirabo Wafula
Member



Prof. Olwor Sunday Nicholas
Ag. Secretary to the Commission



Mr. Joel Cox Ojuko
Member

PROFILES OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Mrs. Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi

Mrs. Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi is a lawyer by profession and the Chairperson of The Equal Opportunities Commission. Prior to her appointment as the Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission she had served as a Lecturer with Law Development Centre and then Technical Advisor GIZ on Strengthening Human Rights and Equal Opportunities respectively. She is a strong advocate of Human Rights.

During her time as the Technical Advisor, Ms. Muwebwa spearheaded the processes of Institutional Development of the Equal Opportunities Commission. She has undertaken several works in the area of promoting Gender equality and empowerment for all.

She is very passionate about issues of discrimination and marginalization especially of the vulnerable groups (Women, PWDs, Children and Youth). She strives to work on matters aimed at addressing legal, regulatory and policy barriers to ensure promotion of equal Opportunities. This is aimed at having a just and fair society whereas all persons have equal opportunities to participate and benefit in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life; hence promotion of inclusive economic development .

Mr. Nduhura Dennis Mwebaze

Mr. Nduhura Dennis Mwebaze is the Vice Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission. He is a professional Social Worker and Development specialist with over 20 years' experience in the Civil Society sector. He has a wealth of experience at a strategic and leadership level especially with international NGOs.

Before his appointment as the Vice Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission, Mr. Nduhura was the Country Director of Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD Uganda), an international NGO promoting Social Justice and long term Development in Africa. He is also a

Board Member with National Water and Sewerage Corporation.

Mr. Nduhura is a social worker by profession, with a Master's Degree in Development Studies. He has undertaken a number of post graduate courses in Strategic Leadership and Management, Corporate Governance, Financial Management, Human Rights, Gender, and Risk Management among others.

Mr. Ojuko Joel Cox

Mr. Ojuko Joel Cox is Member of the EOC representing Older Persons, and also holds an additional role of overseeing the Legal Services and Investigations Department of the Commission.

Joel is a Lawyer by profession and retired Principal Attorney. Prior to joining the Commission, Joel worked with Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs holding various positions of responsibilities. He has wide experience in human rights, corporate governance, litigation and Legal Advisory services. During his long tenure in the Civil service,

Mr. Ojuko diligently provided invaluable legal services to Local government and Central Government institutions, several public and corporate boards where he articulated gender equality and mainstreaming; as well as promoting constitutional mandate of eliminating all forms of discrimination.



Mr. Nduhura Dennis Mwebaze is the Vice Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission. He is a professional Social Worker and Development specialist with over 20 years' experience in the Civil Society sector. He has a wealth of experience at a strategic and leadership level especially with international NGOs.



Ms. Zaminah Malole

Ms. Zaminah Malole is a one of the pioneer Members of the Equal Opportunities Commission. Currently she represents Persons With Disability and Women on the Commission.

Ms. Zaminah Malole has served in various capacities as a Senior Administrator, Lecturer in the Faculties of Management Studies, Social work and Social Sciences in Islamic University in Uganda and other Institutions. She is also a Distinguished Fellow of Tilberg University in Netherlands and contributes to Research programs on “Globalization, Aging, Innovations and Care” (GAIC)

She has an extensive and outstanding experience in the field of accessibility and inclusion for the marginalized groups in development, Human Rights Based Approach in planning, Disability Management and Development.

As a seasoned educationist, she has also been instrumental in influencing Government to adopt legislation policies for special needs, physical accessibility, inclusion of Gender and Equity compliance in Government budgeting and planning, previewing of laws and policies to make them equal opportunity and affirmative action compliant.

Mr. Wafula Sirabo Patrobas

Mr. Wafula Sirabo Patrobas is a Lawyer and Banker by profession. He is a Member of the Commission representing the youth and oversees the Department of Research, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Patrobas is an advocate for Youth Inclusion, Empowerment and Development. He is passionate about leadership and is involved in Leadership Training. Prior to joining the Commission, he worked with a Bank. He is a Rotarian; part of a worldwide Rotary Fraternity.

While at the University, he served as a student leader on the Guild for four years and held different positions. He also served at the National Level as Caretaker President and National Speaker of Uganda National Student’s Association.

He is one of the pioneer Members of the Commission and has served since its inception in 2010. He has a wide range of experience in the private and public sector operations and management.

EOC Members after the swearing in ceremony at the High Court with the Chief Justice Bart Katureebe



Frequently Asked Questions about the EOC

By Sheila Ajok Lubangakene

What does equal opportunities mean?

Equal opportunities mean that everybody receives the same treatment and consideration in the enjoyment of rights and freedoms. This includes access to social services, education, employment, physical environment and participation in social, economic, cultural and political activities.

What is affirmative action?

It is a deliberate action or initiative taken in favour of marginalized groups to redress imbalances or discrimination on those grounds identified in the legislation.

What is marginalization?

Marginalization is a situation where a person or group of people are disadvantaged or excluded from accessing opportunities, resources or services, or from taking part in making decisions on matters concerning their lives.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is when a person or group is unfairly or less favourably treated than others on any of the above grounds. It can happen as a result of negative attitudes or prejudice towards an individual or group of persons. Sometimes discrimination occurs as a result of social or economic barriers, political circumstances or bureaucratic requirements that make it more difficult for some people to access opportunities or services.

What are examples of discrimination & marginalization?

Individuals or groups of persons can encounter unfair treatment in many aspects of their lives. Such unfair treatment might be regarded as discrimination under the equal opportunities legislation in the following examples amongst others:

- A disabled person cannot access a service in a building because, there is no ramp or accessibility for a wheelchair.

- A female colleague earns less than males doing work of equal value.
- Groups of individuals are subjected to cultural acts such as female genital mutilation, which impair their enjoyment of human rights.
- An older person or youth denied employment or access to services because of age.
- An individual living with HIV/AIDS is dismissed from his or her employment on the grounds of their health status.
- An expectant mother is denied a job on the basis of her pregnancy, or is denied maternity leave by her employer.

What does the law on equal opportunities say?

Under the equal opportunities legislation, it is unlawful to discriminate against any individual or group of persons on the grounds of:

What happens if equal opportunities laws are violated?

In each case, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) will examine & investigate to decide whether the treatment complained of amounts to a violation of equal opportunities legislation or goes against affirmative action and then will take appropriate action.

How can victims of marginalization or discrimination seek redress from the EOC?

An individual or group of people may lodge a complaint relating to discrimination, marginalization or any act which undermines or impairs equal opportunities. The complaint can be in writing or lodged verbally. The Commission will then consider or hear the complaint.

How can the EOC deal with people who contravene the law on equal opportunities?

Where a violation has taken place, the offending party:

1. may be cautioned and directed to rectify the situation
2. may be fined
3. A person may be imprisoned or be both fined and imprisoned

How can the complainant be protected?

The law protects people against being victimized after they have made a complaint about discrimination or marginalization. A complaint can also be made in confidence.



INTERVIEWS WITH FORMER MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

In a very special way the Commission wishes to remember and appreciate the wonderful contributions and devotion of the former Chairperson Mrs. Rita Matovu, former Member to the Commission, Late Mrs Erina Baigana. This maiden issue would have been incomplete without interacting with Mrs. Matovu and one of the family members of the Late Mrs Erina Baigana, *Ms Doreen Baigana*.

Equal Opportunities Commission



INTERVIEW WITH THE FORMER AND FIRST CHAIRPERSON OF THE EOC MRS. RITA MATOVU SYLVIA 2010-2015

By Petua Babirye Isabirye

Rita what is your career background?

I am a lawyer by profession. I began my career as a State Attorney from 1975-1984 and I am proud to say i was among the first ten women lawyers in Uganda. I was the first Civil Aviation Authority Corporation Secretary from 1992-1999. Between 1999-2014, I was in private practice, until my appointment as first Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission, in 2015 for a 5-year term.

What do you regard as your strong Career attributes that have made you rise up to your current status?

Most predominantly, I am a starter, very determined, a strong advocate of people's rights and passionate about fairness and social justice. As a student of criminal law and during my law practice, i practiced appeal and less of prosecution. During my tenure as State Attorney, i always opted for justice at all times

Why do you think you were appointed as Chairperson EOC?

My previous experience especially at CAA had a lot to do with it. I ensured the entity grew from scratch to where it is today. That could have contributed to the Presidential appointment and my ability to oversee EOC. CAA started without offices, but by the time of my departure it had fully established premises and to me this was a good kick start and a foundation for my future undertakings. As an ex officio of National Planning Authority, I contributed to the Vision 2040, NDP II to include the sector interventions ensuring equalization of opportunities.

During your tenure, what was the EOC staffing level?

In the beginning, EOC was constituted of the Chairperson, 3 Members and 2 Staff comprised of Enid the Secretary and Agaba the Office Attendant. Additionally, there were 3 seconded staff from MoGLSD. Notably, they were few staff who were committed to work. We later carried out recruitment of more staff technical staff and this rose to 34%.

What would you regard as your major achievements at EOC?

What was in place to guide the Commission's work, was the EOC Act, minimal financing and a small contribution from Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). This was the reason the EOC needed to source for funding and we were fortunate to receive support from GIZ, Ford foundation and DGF which enabled the Commission stretch its work beyond Kampala. This pushed for a need of increase in staffing to ensure activity undertaking and proper accountability of funds.

Development of tribunal rules and regulations together with the first Parliamentary Council which led to the eventual launch of the Tribunal Hall.

EOC acquired an independent vote during my tenure. I was also instrumental in drafting of policies that led to increase in funding from Government which enabled recruitment of EOC staff.

I am proud of my efforts towards establishment of

the Gender and Equity Certificate and also having played a role in ensuring the concept of gender is understood, as encompassing Women and Men in inclusion of their needs. Having contributed to this across publics, I felt I had achieved my purpose here. G&E certification also formed my main interest in advocacy. It was a gap if Uganda was to meet the International, constitutional and ruling party agenda of inclusive development and leaving no one behind. We lobbied with Parliamentary Committees of Finance, Gender and Equal Opportunities to have G&E certification.

In conclusion, I wish to thank His Excellency the President of Uganda, for establishing the EOC, Parliamentary committees, Development Partners, sister commissions, CSOs, MDAs, the current Members and staff of EOC, for carrying forward the Commission's work. In addition, FOWODE, HRCU, Professor Mbazira and ACFODE for partnering with the EOC and seeing it grow to its current state.

Above all, I would not want to depart without mentioning my Installation as the new President of the Lions Club of Entebbe 2017/18. I will always associate with EOC and its achievements and I believe you are yet to register more success stories and rise to greater heights.

INTERVIEW WITH A DAUGHTER TO ONE OF THE PIONEER MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION, REPRESENTING OLDER PERSONS 2010-2015- LATE MRS ERINA BAINGANA

By Petua Babirye Isabirye



Doreen Baigana (Daughter)

What is your relationship with Late Erina Baigana

The late Erina was my Mum, a close friend and role model that I ever lived to see.

What do you have to say about the late Erina's personality?

Mum had nine children and she taught all of us hard work. She did not easily give up on anything. She lived during the hard and challenging times of Idi Amin, but persisted.

Our father passed on in 1983 leaving her to fend for us single handedly. She was a perfect counselor and good listener who lent an ear to both young and old. We were more girls than boys and she instilled in us the value of hard work and belief in whatever a man can do, a woman can. She was a source of hope and encouragement.

Your mum was a career woman and worked in many capacities. What is your say on this?



Late Mrs Erina Baingana

Throughout her life, she was a public servant who worked passionately to see her career grow. She served the country devotedly never to have missed a single day of work. She mentored many young people in Human resource practice. After retirement she did voluntary work and served as a founder

member of UWESO, Reach the Aged Uganda and various consultancies Countrywide. She also served as Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Public Service and as a Secretary at the Public Service Commission.

What were the strong characteristics and skills that you think contributed to her appointment as a Member to EOC?

During her time at public service, she was very passionate about equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups. She was intelligent, insightful and a useful resource to the newly established EOC. Though elderly, she had a burning passion for EOC. She ably traversed across the country to survey issues and gaps related to Equal Opportunities. She always mobilized resources to ensure Equal Opportunities for all.

INTERVIEW WITH HON. ALEX NDEEZI

By Sheila Ajok Lubangakene and Juma Waira



Hon. Ndeezi, people do not know so much about you, yet you have served this country in various capacities. What do you have to say about yourself?

I am a Member of Parliament representing Persons With Disability (PWDs) for Central Region. I have served in different capacities and been in Parliament since 1996. I am a deaf person. I have served in the following committees;

Currently Chairperson Gender, Labour and Social Development committee, Former Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee member, Equal Opportunities Committee two terms in one term as Deputy Chairperson, Local Government Committee, Former Chairperson NUDIPU, Chairperson Uganda National Association of the Deaf (UNAD), National Council for Disability which is a statutory body, Politically I am a NRM member and former Central Executive Committee (CEC) member.

We championed the cause for the establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission after the Constitutional Review in 1995. However it did not come into place then. We continued to push for it to become an independent body even after the review had stated that it is merged with Uganda Human Rights Commission. I would like to thank 3 members who pushed for the passing of the EOC act and its inception. These were Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, Deputy Speaker Hon. Jacob Oulanya and Hon. Dora Byamukama.

You have been an advocate of gender issues yet the public has not appreciated gender issues. What do you have to say about this?

Addressing gender issues is a gradual process. We need to look at the trends, what was the people's thinking about gender issues 30 years ago and the reality today. In general, we have played an important role as gender actors. We still have a lot of work to do on this issue especially changing

their mindset and work hard on articulating our achievements and challenges. Although people might not appreciate gender issues yet, there is a percentage that does.

What is the role of the Gender, Labour and Social Development Committee in promoting Gender and Social Development in the country?

- Oversight role- Monitoring the performance of Ministries, Departments and Agencies.
- Legislative role-Scrutinizing bills before committees
- Budgeting and Advocacy role

Most MDAs are grappling with challenges of funding lately, yet Parliament is supposed to appropriate funds. What do you have to say?

It is true resources are limited but we need to look at prioritization, meaning if the cake is available for example, how much money goes to State house, Gender and other MDAs. This committee is trying to advocate for prioritization of resources for gender and social development related programmes like those covering youth issues.

You are head of the Gender and Social Development Committee of Parliament. What has your committee done in ensuring that MDAs perform better in as far as gender and equity planning and budgeting is concerned?

The most recent development is the enactment of the Certificate of Gender and Equity to track the allocation of resources to determine how much goes to different MDA's, to mainstream issues of Gender &Equity.

After determining the allocation the data obtained is being handled by Equal Opportunities Commission, EOC has been charged with handling the Gender and Equity certificate assessment and ensuring that all sectors are compliant to Gender and Equity budgeting and planning.

In the past it was hard to determine whether the budgets of the different MDA's were gender balanced, however this process has been eased and is on track.

What do you have to say about the Government PBB tool which to date seems to be complicated to adopt by the various MDAs?

We shall continue to advocate for the sector on our mandate.

We shall also use a multi layered approach however most officers are not yet acquainted with this tool. They need to be trained on use of this approach.

What legislation has are coming up to promote Gender and Social Development?

We are advocating for the minimum wage bill

We are advocating for the return of the marriage bill

What do you have to say about salary disparities in the Public and private sector?

We have been advocating for the establishment of the Salaries and Remuneration board EOC has done research on this and has shown us that actual gaps exist. Now we need to know who will help us address the gaps. The framework should be establishment of the Salaries and Remuneration Board. They should review salaries in both the public and private institutions and emphasis the minimum wage.

Besides Parliament, what do you do for fun? I

used to play football but got an injury way back, I am into farming, I am a Christian and I do a lot of work with Civil Society Organizations.



BACKGROUND TO THE GENDER AND EQUITY BUDGETING AND PLANNING



A CONTEXT OF FORUM FOR WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (FOWODE)
Can the Certificate of Gender and Equity Deliver Gender Equality in Uganda?

By Patricia Munabi

Discrimination against women has been and is still a key challenge for the advancement of good governance, accountability and human rights in Uganda. The Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) recognises that discriminatory practices in our patriarchal society hinder the full inclusion and participation of women and girls in development, and worse those with disabilities.

Over the last two decades, the government of Uganda has devised a number of commendable strategies, programmes, policies and laws to promote gender equality. Despite these efforts, however, gender inequalities persist. Inadequate allocation of resources in social services and poor implementation of laws and policies designed to address gender inequality, have negatively impacted on the lives of the women and girls in particular. Furthermore, lack of effectiveness in planning and monitoring on community needs have led to weak linkages between planning, policy formulation and budgeting. This has consequently caused marginalisation, and this has made certain sections of the society, not to benefit in service delivery.

Since 1999, FOWODE has been influencing budget processes to ensure that women, and other marginalized groups equitably benefit from government programmes. In 2004, the Government of Uganda (GOU) embraced Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), through the Budget Call Circular (BCC) directive on gender and equity. This required that all accounting officers at all levels of government show how they would address

gender and equity issues in their policies, plans and budgets. FOWODE's previous experience in gender budgeting work, reveal that sector responses on gender equality are highly variable. Sector advances, and commitments to gender equality frequently evaporate when the budget implications are considered. This means that, women who are a majority remain budgeting and policy formulation processes.

In relation to the Budget call circular, FOWODE in 2015, conducted a Gender and Equity Compliance assessment, which revealed that reasons for non or low compliance by some MDAs to gender and equity budgeting included among others; lack of sector tailor-made gender policies, strategies, action plans, low capacity among technical staff to execute the gender and equity budgeting, negative attitude for gender and equity in the MDAs, weak accountability mechanisms to ensure gender and equity budgeting, lack of gender disaggregated data which makes it difficult for planners to articulate gender and equity issues.

This has undermined decision-making with regard to gender and equity mainstreaming, small or no budgets in sectors for mainstreaming of gender and equity activities, and lack of enforcement of the BCC guidelines by MoFPED. Lack of a Law to enforce gender and equity budgeting among spending agents and Local Governments was comparable to sailing a ship without a rudder.

The Public Finance Bill that was introduced in 2012 provided FOWODE a good opportunity to lobby and advocate for the inclusion of some sections on gender and equity. The advocacy journey took 3 years for its fruits to materialize. We are proud to have in place the "Public Finance Management Act 2015" which mandates gender and equity compliance of plans and budgets. We attribute this success to the unrelenting efforts of key Legislators who heroically pushed for a gender and equity provision in this piece of Legislation. Of notable mention is the Rt. Hon Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga.

The PFMA now binds all Government MDAs, including LGs, to adhere to the gender and equity budgeting principles enshrined within it. The Act

provides for public financial management and macroeconomic management. Section 9(6) provides that the “ Minister shall, in consultation with the Equal Opportunities Commission issue a Certificate (a) certifying that the budget framework is gender and equity responsive and (b) specifying measures taken to equalize opportunities for women, men, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

The same Act under Section 13(15) articulates the same. The beauty of this Law is that Section 9 and 13 are a combination of planning and budgeting and are consistent with the principles of gender and equity budgeting that FOWODE has been advocating for since 1999.

There is no doubt that this piece of legislation will contribute to delivering gender equality in Uganda. The challenge remains as to whether MDAs and Local Governments are able to comply with it and whether the mandated institutions can ensure the full implementation of this law and deliver its desired expectations.

Who holds the mandate? Whose role is it? Who is to be held accountable? We all have a role to play. With persistent gender inequality Uganda is unlikely to move into middle income status by 2020. The time to act is now!

COLLABORATION OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION WITH THE DISABILITY FRATERNITY

By Juma Waira

National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) was formed on 14th November 1987 with a mission of creating a unified voice of PWDs in order to advocate for the equalization of opportunities in mainstream development processes. This is pursued through participation in policy planning, capacity building, awareness enhancement and resource mobilization. NUDIPU membership has since significantly grown and increased from 56 district unions to 112.

Since inauguration EOC and NUDIPU saw it fitting to partner and enhance fulfillment of their mandates.

PWDs are constituents of EOC and to that end the Commission as a statutory body mandated to eliminate discrimination and inequalities on the grounds of disability .In one of meetings convened early this year with NUDIPU, a number of strategies were discussed for enhancing mainstreaming disability issues in the Sector and Ministerial Policy Statements and budgets in line with the PFM Act 2015.

EOC and NUDIPU noted that a number of technical staff responsible for planning and budgeting in many of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies are not conversant with disability issues and therefore it was agreed to create awareness about the evolving concept of disability and its challenges to the technical staff in the various sectors.

NUDIPU made a case on the various categories of PWDs who have different needs and therefore requested the Commission to further acquaint the National Taskforce responsible for guiding the development of the assessment tools and guidelines for Gender and Equity with the knowledge of the different needs for the various categories of PWDs. A request was put to the EOC to select some members from Disability Peoples Organization to be part of the assessment team and also join the Commission technical staff during training and sensitization of the various sectors and Local Governments on Gender and Equity requirements.



Members of the Commission Ms. Zaminah Malole, Mr. Joel Cox Ojuko, Mr. Patrobas Sirabo Wafula, NUDIPU staff Ms. Esther Kyoziira – Programmes manager, Mr. Hassan Waddimba – Programmes Associate, Mr. S. Nkulinga and Ms. Angella Balabe.

Member Zaminah Malole chaired the session. She expressed gratitude to NUDIPU for spearheading

advocacy of equalization of opportunities and affirmative action of PWDs. She thanked them for the continued support and cooperation with EOC since inception. She informed the meeting that EOC would share all the information so far on the implementation of Gender and Equity for NUDIPU's input. She informed them of the ongoing capacity building for the sectors and local governments being conducted by EOC and some selected members on the National Taskforce.

She emphasized the importance of all the stakeholders to make input in the guidelines in Gender and Equity and however noted that whatever was to be included in the guidelines and assessment tools had to be in line with NDP II.

Member Joel Cox Ojuko informed the meeting that the Commission will invoke her powers to ensure inclusion of all marginalized persons in the budgets and plan

Member Patrobas Sirabo appreciated the collaboration between NUDIPU and EOC and also encouraged NUDIPU to fast track the issues on youth with disabilities. The meeting was concluded with a way forward and an action plan for both NUDIPU and EOC. Corollary to the aforementioned, EOC-NUDIPU, a reflection meeting with stakeholders from MDA's under the theme ***'How Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S) have addressed issues of Persons with Disabilities (PWD'S)*** was organized at Mackinnon Suites, Kampala on Tuesday 11th July, 2017. Representatives from Ministries of Agriculture, Works, transport, education and Gender made presentations on the progress of inclusion of PWD's in achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Chairperson EOC, Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi (Mrs) in her opening remarks emphasized the importance for the various stakeholders in Government and Non-Government Organizations to address inclusion and leaving no one behind in order to achieve the SDGs. To this end, she emphasized the importance of the EOC mandate as being very crucial in addressing the issues of marginalized groups and most especially PWDs.

She also requested for the support of NUDIPU and the stakeholders from the MDAs to work together with OC in order to reduce on the imbalances at the community and national levels.

The representative of the Executive Director of NUDIPU, Ms Esther Kyozi informed the meeting that, NUDIPU has been pursuing the agenda of implementing SDGs in all budgets and plans of MDAs, and was optimistic the workshop was going to yield more results for the cause. National Planning Authority has also been engaged in formulating and developing a tool for alignment of indicators to this plan. NUDIPU has also engaged with EOC in regard to Gender and Equity mainstreaming since they are responsible for the gender and equity certificate. We will continuously partner with EOC to strengthen this cause and help us dialogue on achieving programmes in line with the SDGs.

The EOC Member Ms. Zaminah Malole in her remarks expressed her gratitude to the stakeholders present. She stressed the need for the assistive devices for special needs students to be specifically sent to schools with children/students with special needs who require such equipment other than the reverse. She also urged the Special needs department in the Ministry of Education to consider developing a retainer policy for teachers of children with special needs given that the transfers of teachers greatly affect the children and students with special needs due to their few numbers.

Speaking at the meeting closure, Mr. James Ebitu the Director of Social Protection at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development representing the Minister of State for youth affairs stated that meeting was a sign of EOC's commitment and passion towards PWDs. He also emphasized that Government has made a number of strides by establishing policies to address issues of PWDs, National policy on Disability 2006 and the review of the Disability Act 2003 which are telling testimonies. He added that the Gender and Equity Mainstreaming approach and other specialized programmes will amplify this cause

**THE LANDMARK RULING THAT
EXTENDED THE EOC MANDATE
- ADRIAN JJUUKO VS ATTORNEY
GENERAL, Constitutional Petition No. 1
of 2009.**

By Julius Kamyá

During the course of his work as a human rights activist with the Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum-Uganda (HRAPF), Adrian Jjuuko came across the Equal Opportunities Commissions Act, 2007. He consequently took interest in it specifically with regard to its mandate in protecting marginalized persons in Uganda. However, on perusing the Act, he met with disappointment Section 15(6) of the Act, which provision bars the Equal Opportunities Commission from investigating certain matters.

In particular, Section 15(6) (d) provided that the Commission shall not investigate any matter involving behavior which is considered to be immoral or socially harmful, or unacceptable by the majority of the cultural and social communities in Uganda.

To Adrian Jjuuko, that restriction meant that the Act was entrenching discrimination against the very people the Commission is intended to protect. To that end, he lodged a petition at the Constitutional Court of Uganda, with a view of ensuring that the Commission protects all marginalized persons and minorities.

The issues for determination before the Court were three; (a) whether the petition was competent in law; (b) whether Section 15(6) (d) of the Equal Opportunities Commission Act breached the right to a fair hearing as enshrined under the Constitution; and, (c) whether the said Section was acceptable and demonstrably justifiable in a free and democratic society.

Counsel for the petitioners- Ladislaus Kiiza Rwakafuzi argued that the impugned provision violated several provisions of the Constitution of Uganda. These provisions are- Article 20(1) which guarantees that fundamental rights are inherent

and not granted by the State, and enjoins all agencies of government to respect, uphold and promote human rights and freedoms of individuals; Article 21(1) which guarantees equality of all persons before and under the law; Article 21(2) which prohibits discrimination; Article 28(1) which guarantees a right to a fair hearing; and Article 36 which guarantees protection to minorities.

Although the Attorney General was unrepresented, court labored to discuss the issues framed at length. On the first issue, court held that the petition was rightly before it as a public interest case. On the second and third issues, court largely agreed with the petitioner that the exclusion of some categories of people from the jurisdiction of the Commission would be discriminatory and a violation of their right to a fair hearing.

In the final result, court held that the provision violated several provisions of the Constitution by creating a class of social misfits and legislating the discrimination of persons regarded immoral, harmful and unacceptable. Court also found that the provision denied justice to a section of people by prohibiting the Equal Opportunities Commission from investigating matters considered immoral, socially harmful or unacceptable. Thus, the provision was declared null and void.

Thus, this court decision strengthened the promotion of equality of opportunities for all persons in Uganda irrespective of status.



THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION (EOC) EXPLORES CANADIAN COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

By Freda Apio

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is an independent constitutional body with powers to receive, investigate, hear and determine complaints against discrimination, marginalization and unequal treatment. These are in addition to other functions namely; monitor, evaluate, educate and sensitize among others. Following its establishment in 2007 under EOC Act, No. 2 of 2007, the EOC commenced operation in 2010.

Consequently, the EOC is on the path to reach its apex in executing the above functions efficiently and effectively. In this regard, a team from EOC visited key institutions in Toronto, Canada from 5th – 9th December, 2016, to learn best practices in complaints management, policy development and education among other good practices of an effective equality commission.

The EOC delegation was led by Ms. Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi (Chairperson), Mr. Dennis Nduhura Mwebaze (Vice Chairperson), and Members:- Mr. Joel Cox Ojuko Ms. Zaminah Malole, Mr. Patrobas Sirabo Wafula; one technical staff Ms. Bernadette Nalule Mudde (Commissioner Legal Services and Investigations) and Ms. Joyce Freda Apio (Human Rights and Governance Advisor GIZ/EOC).

The team visited key human rights institutions whose primary focus is on the protection of people against all forms of discrimination. These institutions included the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal), the Ontario Human Rights Commission (Commission), the Human Rights Legal Support Centre (Legal Support Centre) and other organizations including Equality Effect and the Law Society of Upper Canada. The team had extensive interactions, shared experiences and participated in tribunal hearing for cases during the visit.

Many important lessons were learned during the visit which relate to the different functions of the Commission key among them includes the need to define clear roles for staff involved in case management to ensure efficiency, effectiveness

and avoid conflict of interest; a well-developed legal support services is crucial for the success of complaints management; most Tribunal decisions should provide public interest remedies in order to address wider discrimination issues especially those of systematic nature; complaint procedures need to be well defined, simplified and relevant documents/forms made available to aid the process; and policy development and training which serve as strong proactive measures in eliminating discriminatory practices.

The EOC strongly believes that the adoption and implementation of these best practices and strategies will augment and strengthen their different functions and boost the Commission's ability to serve the public better especially the vulnerable people in accordance with its goals, set milestones and strategic plan 2013/14 -2017/2018.

The objective of the mission was to provide a hands-on experience to the members and staff on eliminating discrimination on prohibited grounds and ensuring equal opportunities for all; share experiences to leverage best practices for replication, and to enrich complaints management, monitoring, education and sensitization by the EOC.



The delegation from the EOC in a group photo with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario after their meeting. The EOC was represented by Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi (Mrs) - Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission, Mr. Dennis Nduhura - Vice Chairperson, Ms. Zaminah Malole - Member, Mr. Joel Cox Ojuko - Member, Mr. Patrobas Wafula Sirabo - Member, Ms. Bernadette Kizza Nalule - Commissioner Legal Services and Investigations and Ms. Joyce Freda Apio - Human Rights and Governance Advisor GIZ/EOC under facilitation from the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) and GIZ.

The key lessons learnt were;

- 1) Policy development is a key strategic area of focus for the Commission. These are developed through extensive research and consultations. These policies are updated regularly when new legislations that have implications on particular policies are enacted.
- 2) The Commission in Ontario had several simplified IEC materials. They were presented in booklets. It was resolved that the Commission should come up with new simplified and presentable IEC materials, like the investigation IEC material on police got from Ontario. It was further resolved that education and training needs to be widened so that we have many ambassadors to champion our cause.
- 3) The weekly meetings provide a second level gate keeping where they go through cases, review progress, and share legal opinions. This practice enhances teamwork. It is part of capacity building and increases efficiency.
- 4) Public interest litigation in some matters goes a long way in solving some discriminatory vices within the system that would otherwise go unchecked.

The delegation to Ontario learnt so many lessons that will definitely lead to an improvement in service delivery at the Commission. These lessons have already been highlighted within the report. With the continued support from all stakeholders, financial support from the Government of Uganda, development partners and teamwork from all staff and Members of the Commission, the Commission will get to great heights in fighting for the rights of the marginalized and discriminated citizens of the country.

The Commission is grateful to the development partners, Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and the Government of Uganda for facilitating this learning trip and pledge to put to use the positive lessons learnt in Canada.

THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION STRIDES SINCE INCEPTION; UNVEILING THE EOC PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

By Prof. Sunday Nicholas Olwor

On 8 July 2017, the EOC made seven years since its inaugural date. The Commission has since registered a number of achievements within the meaning of the key policy and legal frameworks that guide the implementation of its mandate, say the National Equal Opportunities policy (2006), the NDP I & II, the social Sector development Investment Plan, the NRM manifesto 2011, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), most recently the sustainable Development goals.

These frameworks informed the development of the two Equal Opportunities Commission 5 year Strategic Plan 2013/2014 and 2017/2018 respectively and programs as implemented to date.

EOC comprises of 5 departments namely; The Finance and Administration; Legal and Investigations department; Compliance and Enforcement department; Research and Monitoring department; and Education, Training and Communication department.

The Department of **Finance and Administration** headed by the Ag. Secretary, provides support services to the attainment of the Commissions goals and objectives. These include planning, financial management and accounting, human resource management, records management, procurement and logistics services, fleet management and general administration of the Institution.

The Commission has an independent vote and receives funding from the consolidated Fund, with an independent vote as well as development partners. The Equal Opportunities Commission budget has been improving steadily and apparently Government funding has constituted a bigger share compared to the development partner's budget, which was not the case at inception.

Implementation of the EOC strategic plan required

an independent premise, which has been acquired and adequate human resource critical for achieving the goals of the plan. In a bid to realise these aspirations, technical staff were recruited, thus bolstering the technical team and a number of support staff in a phased manner in consultation with MPS.

A comprehensive induction and orientation exercise takes place on recruitment in order to bring all staff on board with regard to the specific roles in line with the mandate, vision, mission and functions of the Commission. To date the Commission in collaboration with its stakeholders has conducted tailor made training and induction for its members and staff in areas of the Commissions mandate. The Human rights tribunal handling and ADR mechanisms and the in house training on assessment for gender and equity compliance, tailor made induction for the technical staff in line with each ones portfolio.

The **Legal and Investigations department** headed by the Commissioner Legal Mrs. Bernadette Nalule Mudde is responsible for registering, assessing and continues to investigate complaints in line with powers of the Commission stipulated in Sections 14 & 15 of the EOC Act. The Commission receives and resolves complaints that relate to marginalization and discrimination in order to enhance access to social justice by Ugandans.

The highest number of complaints received by the Commission is from the Central region (50.3%) and this is attributed to its proximity, followed by the Western and Eastern regions with 28.8% and 13.4% respectively. The Northern region has the least number of complaints with a share of 7.5%. Over the years, the number of complaints lodged has been increasing for both male and female clients. The rise in numbers is attributed to the Commission's countrywide sensitization programs on equal opportunities and affirmative action, among others. In FY2015/16, a total of 320 complaints were lodged, out of which 121 complaints (38%) were lodged by female clients as compared to 199 complaints (62%) lodged by males. The rights violated ranged from discrimination and marginalization based on age, sex, tribe, land ownership, employment and political opinion.

The Commission mainly relies on Tribunal circuit system and has to take services nearer to the people to overcome any expenses that maybe be incurred by our clients. It is also imperative that before conducting tribunal sessions upcountry, the commission commences with a pre-tribunal visit to consult with the complainants, the District Local Government (DLG) and Lower Local Government (LLG) officials. Most of the complaints have been resolved using the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) approach and is much appreciated by most of the complainants and defendants. The Commission looks forward to establishing Regional offices to bring services closer to the people.



The members of the commission during Tribunal Session at Wakiso district. Middle is the Chairperson Mrs. Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi, (Mrs) on her right is vice Chairperson-Mr. Dennis Nduhura, extreme right is member Joel Cox Ojuko and her left is member Wafula Sirabo Patrobas and Member Zaminah Malole on the extreme left.

The Commission established the **Compliance and Reporting department** to oversee compliance and which has tirelessly worked with other stakeholders; MoFPED, MDAs and CSOs to develop guidelines and tools which have led to the continuous and successful assessment of various MDA's of Government for Gender and Equity. The Commission assessed 16 Sectoral Budget Framework Papers (BFPs) for gender and equity (G&E) compliance in line with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 2015.

The commission undertook assessment of 135 Ministerial Policy Statements for FY 2016/17.

Following the first assessment, the national average compliance level with gender and equity requirements was 43%. Thereafter the MDAs that had not achieved the minimum score of 40% were given guidance on how to address G&E concerns in their Ministerial Policy Statements and requested to resubmit their MPS for assessment. Hence this improved the national average compliance level to 53%.

Ensuring compliance of BFPs to gender and equity concerns enhances inclusive growth (NDP II). Gender and equity responsiveness inspires and intensifies concerted efforts to empower all Ugandans to participate fully in economic growth and development.

The **Research, Monitoring and Evaluation department** undertakes research, conducts studies and prepares reports on a variety of issues that relate to Equal Opportunities and affirmative action. The Commission is supposed to submit reports on annual basis on the status of Equal Opportunities in the country.

Since inception, the Department has led the compilation of Annual reports on the state of Equal Opportunities for the period 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 to Parliament. The 2015/2016 Report combines information on EOC annual performance, the status or ratification and implementation of international instruments that relate to non-discrimination and equal opportunities, the state of equal opportunities in planning and budgeting and in the sectors of governance, education, employment and environment.



The Rt. Hon. Rebecca A. Kadaga receives the Annual Report on the status of EO for FY2015/16 from Mrs. Sylvia Muwebwa.

On the other hand, the 2014/2015 Report highlighted the performance of the Commission and the state of equal opportunities in Uganda focusing on four thematic areas in relation to the EOC 5 Year Strategic Plan (2013/2014-2017/2018, education, health, employment and governance.

The Commission has conducted audit exercises on compliance with equal opportunities in the delivery of health services, education services, operation Wealth Creation programmes and the recruitment of local government workers in the districts of Hoima, Buliisa, Nakapiripirit, Kalangala, Pader, Mityana, Sembabule, Kiruhura, Kamwenge, Kasese and Isingiro.

The Commission collaborated with UNAPID in line with its mandate and other supporting legislations and policies through the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation department undertook an Audit of public buildings to assess their accessibility and compliance to the UNAPID. Accessibility standards which are incorporated in the building and construction control act 2013, came up with recommendations to the various sectors to improve and ensure equal opportunities in service delivery.

Section 14 (c) of the EOC act mandates the Commission to conduct education and awareness creation on equal opportunities and affirmative action focusing on the vulnerable groups.



Vice Chairperson Mr. Dennis Nduhura (left) at a locus in Makindye



Members of the Equal Opportunities Commission listening to the Speaker's comments after the assessment of final results. Right EOC M & E team meeting with the head of Engineering at High Court, Kampala.

The Commission through the **Education, Training, Information and Communication Department** has taken on this important function by carrying out Intensive media campaigns, development and dissemination of IEC materials, sensitization and training of various stakeholders at Sub-county, District, regional and national levels in both the public and private sectors as well as holding public dialogues. The Commission has further used the electronic and print media to sensitize the various publics on equal opportunities, affirmative action, gender and equity mainstreaming and their relevance.

The Commission has developed and disseminated various IEC materials on understanding of equal opportunities for all; and taking affirmative action to redress imbalances in form of flyers, brochures on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), abridged version of EOC Act 2007, Tribunal Information posters, handouts on various thematic issues and fact sheets on Gender and Equity. To further enhance its branding, the commission officially launched its logo and Commission colors of purple and white used in customization of EOC brands. This has accelerated the visibility of the Equal Opportunities Commission at the national, regional and international levels.

Posters to guide the complaints handling processes.

The Commission holds **Public Dialogues** with the higher local Governments. The Commission has held Public dialogues in Luweero, Mpigi, Zombo, Ngora and Soroti to further sensitize and change mindsets for acceptance and appreciation of Equal Opportunities to date. 56 Lower Local Governments have been reached through sensitization workshops, in Kiboga, Lwengo, \

Kalangala, Luweero in Central, Luuka in the East, Oyam and Pader in the North, Nakapiripirit in the Northeast, Buliisa in the West, Nebbi and Yumbe in West Nile. The commission has held regional sensitization workshops for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), traditional leaders and religious leaders.


Similarly, the Commission has conducted several awareness campaigns on equal opportunities, affirmative action during engagements/workshops with various stakeholders, i.e. UN Human Rights, Ministry of East African Community Affairs, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), Uganda National Association of the Blind (UNAB), United Deaf Women's Organization (UDEWO), Action on

Disability and Development (ADD) International, Association of Micro Finance Institutions in Uganda (AMFIU), Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MoESTS), National Youth Council, National Council for Disability, Reach the Aged Association among others.

In an effort to increase visibility on its mandate, the commission participates in **National and internationally** gazette days that relate to the EOC mandate in the selected host districts. These included; Women's day on 8th March, the International Youth Day on 12th August, Older Persons Day On 1st October, International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December, Independence Day on 9th October, the Human Rights Day on 10th December and Labour Day on 1st May. These provide an avenue for advocacy and continuous educating of the public on the mandate of the commission and concepts of equal opportunities, Gender and Equity responsiveness affirmative action, discrimination, inclusion, as well as disseminating various IEC materials.



The new Members of the Commission undertook to launch a toll free helpline and a number of activities to be undertaken in the first hundred days which to date have been undertaken.



Equal Opportunities Commission

THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION TRIBUNAL

WITNESSES

- Witnesses are allowed by the EOC Tribunal to give evidence for either party, and they are protected by the law.
- A witness appearing before EOC will also get a transport refund

WHAT IS THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION (EOC)?

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was established by the Constitution of Uganda to assist all persons who are discriminated against or marginalized.

VISION

A just and fair society where all persons have equal opportunity to participate and benefit in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life.

MISSION

To give effect to the state's mandate to eliminate discrimination and marginalisation against any individual or groups of persons through taking affirmative action to redress imbalances and promote equal opportunities for all in all spheres of life.

DO YOU NEED TO HAVE LAWYER FOR EOC TO HANDLE YOUR COMPLAINT?

- No. EOC handles your complaint even if you do not have a Lawyer
- But you may choose to get a lawyer at your own cost

WHAT DOES THE EOC DO?

- Make sure that all Government, Non-Government and private business enterprises do not discriminate or marginalize any person or group of persons
- Receive or initiate, investigate and resolve complaints from any person or group of persons related to discrimination and marginalisation on the basis of: sex, age, race, ethnic origin, disability, tribe, creed or religion, health status, social or economic standing or political opinion
- Examine programmes and activities of all institutions to make sure they promote equal opportunities for all.
- Create awareness for all people to know, understand, accept and promote equal opportunities.
- Guide all government and non-government organizations to promote equal opportunities
- Etc.

WHAT INFORMATION MUST BE PROVIDED TO LODGE A COMPLAINT?

- Your contact details
- Contact details of the person or organisation you are complaining against
- A brief explanation of the alleged problem
- Date of the alleged problem
- Supporting evidence
- List of your likely witnesses
- Solutions you want from EOC

WHAT POWERS DOES EOC HAVE?

- EOC can order any person or organisation to appear before the Commission Tribunal and to tell the truth
- EOC can order any person or organisation to hand in any documents that may be required during investigation or hearing of complaints
- EOC can examine and retain any documents produced before the Commission
- EOC can convict any person who has refused to accept any orders of the Commission
- EOC can receive evidence in any form from records of courts if required to help the Commission provide a solution on a complaint
- Etc.

DO YOU NEED SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO LODGE YOUR COMPLAINT?

- Inform the Secretary and legal officers of EOC so that proper arrangements are made to assist you

THE EOC TRIBUNAL

- The EOC Tribunal is a 'friendly court' which receives, hears, and provides a solution to your complaint using simple and friendly methods e.g. mediation, negotiation etc.

SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

- EOC welcomes and receives complaints from persons or groups with special needs such as persons with disability, older persons, youth, women, ethnic minorities, children etc.

HOW CAN A VICTIM OF DISCRIMINATION OR MARGINALISATION SEEK A SOLUTION FROM EOC?

- As a complainant, write your complaint on paper or fill a form
- Bring your complaint in person to EOC offices, or send it by post, or call the EOC telephone numbers, or fill in an online form and submit it

EXAMPLES OF DISCRIMINATION AND MARGINALISATION

- A disabled person cannot access a service in a building because there is no ramp or accessibility for a wheel chair
- A female colleague earns less than males doing work of equal value under similar conditions
- Groups of individuals are subjected to cultural acts such as female genital mutilation which impairs their enjoyment of equal opportunity compared to others.
- An older person or youth is denied a job or access to services because of age.
- An individual living with HIV/AIDS is dismissed from his or her job on the basis of their health status
- A pregnant mother is denied a job on the basis of her pregnancy, or is denied maternity leave by her employer

Contact:

Equal Opportunities Commission
Plot 7 Luthuli Close, Buganda Bumpala, PO Box 21632 Kampala
Tel: 0414-232254 Email: info@eoc.ug Email: info@eoc.ug Twitter: @eoc_uganda

On such days, the Commission also provides for legal services through receiving and registering of any discrimination and marginalization complaints from the public which are later investigated and disposed off through our judicial proceeding.



Persons with Disabilities lining up at the EOC tent in order to lodge Complaints with EOC Tribunal during International Disability Day Celebrations.

Publicity through electronic media to popularize the work of the Commission alongside workshops sponsored by Government and our development partners. Radio and television talk shows are held on various stations across regions of Uganda. The Talk shows are intended to sensitize the public about the Equal Opportunities Commission and its mandate, issues of Gender and Equity as well as various topics specific to activities being undertaken.

The Commission continues to sensitize the public through the **print media** , newspaper , adverts, supplements, opinions and congratulatory messages which were published in the dailies i.e. New Vision, the Daily Monitor, Bukedde Newspaper as well as magazines such as the Women Magazine generated by Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Annual Agriculture Magazine. Use of social media is also used for publicity the Commission’s website, Facebook and twitter pages.

Publicity and visibility for the EOC is very critical in promotion and enforcement of equal opportunities and affirmative action. Members of the general public need to be continuously made aware of their rights to equal opportunities through awareness and sensitization in order for them to be empowered and actively participate and contribute to the economic and social development of their communities.

EOC ENGAGES IN THE SICKLE CELL/KABAKA RUN

By Petua Babirye Isabirye

The Equal Opportunities Commission besides promoting and ensuring equal opportunities for Ugandans also engages in Corporate Social Responsibility as a means of giving back to its respective constituencies.

The Commission participated in the Kabaka’s run that was organized to raise funds towards Sickle cell anemia. The run took place on 9th April 2017 at the Lubiri grounds. The intent of the Commission’s participation in the run was to support and advocate for the rights of People with sickle cells who are usually marginalized due to their health status.

Prior to the Run, the Equal Opportunities Commission hosted Mr. Robert Kabushenga, the Executive Director New Vision Publications for a meeting to discuss the plight of vulnerable people in society and the importance media plays in advocacy and sensitization of the masses on equalizing opportunity.

The Chairperson of the Commission in her remarks emphasized the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility and informed the Executive Director of Vision Group that the Commission staff and members had each pledged in their different capacities to participate in the upcoming Kabaka run.

In his remarks, Mr. Kabushenga expressed gratitude towards the Commission’s financial support intimating that the Sickle cell anemia is one of the ailments killing citizens across the country. He further informed the gathering, that there are many sickle cell patients dying in the country due to lack of finances, and financial aid made towards their well-being can make a positive impact in their lives.



Robert Kabushenga CEO Vision Group handing over the sports kit to EOC Chairperson Sylvia Ntambi Muwebwa (Mrs) to be adorned by the EOC family for the run

The CEO Vision group added that sports is one of the avenues which can be used to fight discrimination and create awareness about the fight against disease. It was at this meeting that Chairperson Equal Opportunities launched the health run as a compulsory activity for EOC staff. To support the event, the Chairperson also handed over a financial contribution towards supporting and treating sickle cell patients.

THE CIVIL SOCIETY BUDGET ADVOCACY GROUP (CSBAG) - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION (EOC) PARTNERSHIP ON GENDER AND EQUITY COMPLIANCE

By Petua Babirye Isabirye

The Civil Society Budget Advocacy group (CSBAG) is a Ugandan Non-profit organization that was founded in 2004 to bring together Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) at National and district levels with a view of influencing government decisions on resource mobilization and utilization to equitable and sustainable development. Since its inception, CSBAG has influenced the budgetary process in Uganda by ensuring that both local and national budgets incorporate views of the poor and that they are gender responsive.



After signing the EOC-CSBAG MoU at the EOC head office in Bugolobi with the Chairperson EOC, Member Zaminah Malole, CEO CSBAG Mr. Julius Mukunda and other CSBAG officials

This year the EOC and CSBAG signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen their partnership in ensuring compliance and continued advocacy for Gender and Equity mainstreaming.

Among other activities, EOC and CSBAG held a one week media public awareness campaign on Gender and Equity certification. It was climaxed by a joint media brief and networking event, held at Hotel Africana on Friday 19th May 2017. At the event, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) urged the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), to include Gender and Equity planning and budgeting requirements in the Budget Calendar, to enable the EOC to effectively assess government institutions' plans and budgets for Gender and Equity Compliance as required by law.

During the event, Chairperson of the Gender, Labour and Social Development Parliamentary Committee - Hon. Margret Komuhangi requested MoFPED to put more emphasis on the Gender and Equity certification, and to follow recommendations made by the Equal Opportunities Commission.

While addressing the audience, the Vice Chairperson to the EOC, Mr. Denis Nduhura, requested MDAs and Local Governments to take serious steps in mainstreaming Equal Opportunities and Affirmative Action in their respective policies, legislation, programmes and plans in order for Ugandans to attain inclusive and sustainable growth and thus achieve a middle income status by 2020.

The Executive Director CSBAG; Mr. Julius Mukunda, in his remarks mentioned that Gender and Equity compliance is essential in promoting inclusive growth and development to ensure collective socio-economic development. This however cannot be achieved if sectors and institutions are not compliant to gender and Equity.

In regard to the Non-compliant institutions and sectors, Member Zaminah Malole informed guests that the Commission has already submitted the results of the assessments to the Minister of Finance, as required by law and Parliament will

deal with the non-compliant sectors as provided for, in the Public Finance Management Act 2015.

It was reported that out of the 139 Ministerial Policy Statements which were assessed, 103 met the requirements and 36 failed. Member Joel Cox Ojuko implored the sectors that had not made it to utilize the equal opportunities expertise to further guide them on how to mainstream gender and equity issues in their plans and budgets. The sectors were further reminded by the Head of Department for the Gender and Equity that EOC was ready to do backstopping for them on request.



Members Zaminah Malole and other members of the EOC, addressing MDAs during the EOC-CSBAG reflection meeting at Hotel Africana.

The Vice Chairperson Mr. Dennis Nduhura addressing the MDA's. Seated are Member Joel Cox Ojuko and Member Zaminah Malole



Mr. Jjemba Evans, Principal Compliance Officer EOC addressing the stakeholders

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION ENGAGES WITH NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

By Juma Waira

EOC convened a consultative meeting with the National Youth Council Executive on 15th February 2017, at Unik- hotel Kyaliwajala under the theme ***“National Policy interventions on Youth Economic Empowerment-GOOD INTENTIONS, POOR RESULTS; LOCATING the Missing Link.***

The consultative meeting gave a platform for both entities to share and show case each other’s experience and achievements under the various interventions undertaken for youth, but also opened our minds to learning from the youth as part of the EOC constituents particularly the youth executive, in ascertaining what they would consider as impediments and gaps in youth focused government programmes.

The Ag. Secretary to the Commission Professor Sunday Olwor, in his remarks thanked participants for turning up for the meeting. He further called upon the NYC executive members to consider integrity, respect, self-control and peaceful conflict resolution as major skills that will make youth move forward. He stressed that youth are a key constituent in development, which the country looks upon if it is to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

He called upon the youth to focus, be creative, envision success and that this was the beginning of greater sharing between EOC and NYC.

The Commissioner Education and training, Information and Communication, Mr Julius Kanya, said, the meeting is a platform for the EOC and National Youth Council to discuss and effect realization of appropriate, inclusive and sustainable youth development programmes. To gain insight on how the EOC, and National Youth Council Executive Council, together, can jointly work towards improving the implementation of the existing youth government economic empowerment programmes.

He noted, that youth needed to appreciate who they are, and know they are representatives of a big team of other youth, that are looking after them, if they are to achieve in the development plans. He reaffirmed that the Youth are EOC constituencies per mandate, and therefore called on both institutions to appreciate each other as partners in fulfilling government plans and policies.

EOC by its mandate and tribunals has authority to register and listen to complaints of discrimination and marginalization, among the youth. Through monitoring of government programmes the EOC keeps its ears on the ground, to ensure the intended programme objectives are achieved or else make recommendations for redirections. Youth concerns require collective effort and proper documentation for follow-up purposes.

EOC Member, Mr. Wafula Patrobas Sirabo, said he was happy to see the Consultative meeting taking place and thanked NYC for honoring the invitation. He requested the youth to be patient and modest in demanding for their rights.

In his presentation, he noted that although the government has developed various programmes for the youth, their participation primarily remains low. Youth involvement in programmes focusing on them, would highly contribute to participatory outcomes, hence inclusive development. Upon this, the Member noted that the meeting was held to forge a way forward, on how the Youth can actively participate in the development Agenda. In context of the meeting, he said; this can only be achieved through formulation of joint action plans, for both NYC and EOC, hold responsibility in ensuring Youth active participation in the development Agenda.

He gave a background to the EOC as established by an Act of Parliament in 2007 as stipulated from the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. In 2010 the EOC 1st Commission came into effect, with a four-Member team that served a five year term. In January, 2016 H.E. the President of Uganda appointed a new fully constituted, 5 Member team, to spear head the EOC operations, with one Member representing the youth.



Members from EOC and NYC during the meeting

He further expounded on the EOC vision, mission, mandate, powers, functions and values of EOC. He encouraged the Youth to interest themselves in the EOC Act as it has a lot, to support the youth harness their opportunities in all spheres of life. In addition, he called upon the youth to be mindful of other categories of people around them, so that together they can benefit in the development plans, without conflicting with one another. He emphasized that equal opportunities should begin by individuals present at the meeting, and then subsequently be passed on to other marginalized.

The Chairperson National Youth Council thanked EOC for the interaction. She noted that it had been a struggle to implement the Youth mandate, amidst challenges, ranging from; political exclusion, unemployment, and silent battles between the young and old, in funding of youth programs. She further noted that the NYC mandate feeds into the EOC's mandate, and in this regard assured EOC on the willingness to warrant equal opportunities among the Youth, using the already established structures. She notably mentioned that, "It is time to put into practice what is required to bring forth noticeable change and meaning in Youth interventions."

The Executive secretary NYC highlighted the gaps in Youth policy development and the legal road block in reference to the **1995 Constitution** which he cited as a limitation for youth in taking up leadership positions, and thus limiting exploitation of their potentials.

Members of NYC noted that the engagement will create history of partnership between the NYC and EOC however the Youth economic empowerment programs have not impacted on the Youth, as they are not directly involved and this underscored the disconnect.

The youth are not involved in planning and oriented programmes targeting them like the Youth livelihood programs, low access to jobs, NYC funding is insufficient to enhance research, monitoring and evaluation, Limited sensitization, Limited access to information, reach out to all youth, stereo typing, negative character and low self-esteem among Youth and lack of specified youth leadership.

The participants recommended an enabling legal framework for youth participation, clear and equitable procurement processes and award of tenders /contracts, MGLSD and EOC to involve NYC in planning implementation and monitoring, NYC to work hand in hand with development partners in identifying key issues affecting the Youth, build capacity and enhance group solidarity, Incentive oriented quarter programmes, access to credit facilities.

Sensitization programmes, Youth mobilization at all levels, Quarterly information sharing, Advocacy campaigns for Youth concern, Joint resource Mobilization, benchmark on best practices for youth concerns, EOC to use her Quasi-Judicial powers to Lobby for youth empowerment. It was agreed that EOC takes lead in coordinating and enhancing future joint programmes with the Youth within set time frame and a Memorandum of understanding was requisite to bolster the relations.



Participants of the EOC–NYC consultative meeting at UNIK hotel on 15th February 2017 after the meeting.



EOC Engagement with the Judiciary

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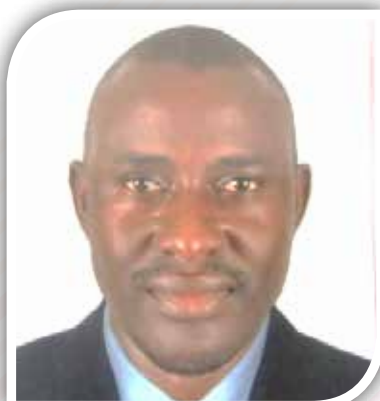
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Elizabeth Ogwal Akullo
Principal Legal Officer



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Asiimwe Henry Kasamba
Senior Assistant Secretary



Arihaihi Mary
Senior Personal Secretary



Kaawa Jesca
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Twine Hope Rebecca
Senior Compliance Officer



Irene Nafungo
Senior Compliance Officer



Mugabe Moses
Senior Monitoring & Evaluation Officer



Waira Juma
Senior Education & Training Officer



Kisembo John Mary
Internal Auditor



Bashashana Moreen
Records Officer



Kabagambe Bob
Procurement Officer



Kamahoro Enid
Personal Secretary



Susan Atukunda
Research Officer



Semigabo Stephen
Systems Admin



Irene Nassaka
Legal Officer



David Lewis
Legal Officer



Kiwanuka Saleh Mugabi
Driver



Sheila Ajok Lubangakene
Information & Communication Officer



Odongo David
Personal Assistant



Wayu Gilbert
Accounts Assistant



Musema Miragi
Tribunal Clerk



Balikagira Moses
Receptionist



Mutebi Raymond
Office Attendant



Tweheyo Israel
Office Attendant



Sarah Nassanga
Office Attendant



Kigozi Vincent
Driver



Olokojo Samuel
Driver



Oyiguru Patrick
Driver



Kyabi Fred
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Opio John Paul
Driver



Mwesigwa Yusufu
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