

# CEHURD 2015 EVENTS DIGEST

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

5 Health clubs established in 5 Universities around Kampala

Over 1000 people benefited from the free services from the health camp held in Buikwe

Supreme court orders constitutional court to hear the maternal health case, petition 16

Constitutional court rules in favour of petition 64 that acknowledge human rights of mentally challenged persons.

Journalists awarded grants to write stories on Sexual and Reproductive Health

## Maternal Health is a Constitutional Right

It is the real issue, all women have to be concerned, parents, women, hopeful parents, children, everyone is a stakeholder in the maternal health concerns of our country.

As CEHURD, many partnerships were formed like partnership with Rural Women Empowerment (ARUWE), West Nile Legal Initiative for Community Empowerment (WENLICE) among others. But the organisation is not just making partnerships, successful advocacy at national level is making headlines as well as strategic litigation in the maternal health cases . Also, a number of cases on health and human rights violations were opened



Advocates jubilate after successful judgement of petition 16 at the supreme court

and litigated and subsequently closed where as others are pending judgement.

The most prominent judgements in the advocacy for maternal health was the ruling by the supreme court on petition 16, which is a case on maternal deaths in hospitals. Earlier, judgment on the same case had been struck down by a 2012 ruling by the Constitutional Court that it had no mandate to hear a case regarding the alleged violation of health rights and the rights of women. However, it was ordered by the Supreme court to hear and give judgement to the case in

its design as a human rights case. It was filed by families of two mothers who died in child-birth along with the Center for Health Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) against the Attorney General in 2011 (Constitutional Petition No. 16 of 2011), arguing that non-provision of maternal health services in Uganda violated the Constitution. The Attorney General argued on preliminary objection that issues relating to health rights were “political questions”—matters that the Judiciary had no authority to address. Constitutional Court agreed with the State’s objection and dismissed the case. The Supreme Court’s ruling struck down the Constitutional Court’s judgment, which therefore means that the original case can now be heard on its merits. It was ecstatic for all civil society that advocates for maternal health, women in Uganda, parents and all stake holders in this fight when the supreme court recognised the petition as an important case to pursue and take forward on grounds of human rights as a maternal health rights. We look forward to more similar developments around this case and maternal health in general come 2016.

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## ADVOCACY FOR CLEARER LAWS ON ABORTION-UGANDA

On Monday 28 September 2015, Center for Health Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) through the Coalition to Stop Maternal Mortality due to Unsafe Abortion, marked the Global Day of Action on Safe and Legal Abortion. The global trending hash tag on social media was #BustTheMyth that all messages on myths and facts on abortion were attached to while sending out to followers on social media. A petition was read in line with the theme; Because every woman and Girl



Counts and a campaign to have 1million signatures was launched. The campaign seeks to have one million signatures which will be presented to parliament through the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda and entire legislative council, to consider having a proper and clear law on abortion.

Dr.Kiggundu and the late Dr.Collins were the campaign ambassadors. everyone concerned and believes that maternal health should be given priority in our country, is encouraged to sign the petition which is also available online. The launch of the One Million signatures campaign escalated the need to further address the silent problem of unsafe abortions especially in the third world where stigma is prominent



One of the Press conferences held in the year

*“Through sports events like the Kadogo cup that was held in Kiboga-Kyankwanzi district, SRH services were brought closer to the thousands of youth. Services provided during the Kadogo cup 2015, free HIV/AIDS testing and counselling services and free condoms were given, as well as sensitisations on issues of abortion stigma, SRHR and access and acceptability of modern contraception methods.”*

## Coalition to Stop Maternal Mortality due to Unsafe Abortions

The Coalition to Stop Maternal Mortality due to Unsafe abortion (CSMMUA) is an umbrella association of advocates leading efforts to address the contribution of public health crisis to unsafe abortions in Uganda. Founded in 2012, with the Secretariat at CEHURD, In 2015, the Coalition engaged in advocacy, Media Fellowship and trainings, education, research, policy and legal reforms, stigma and negative values, support to health workers as well as analysis, to tackle preventable maternal deaths caused by unsafe abortion..On a sad note,it lost a prominent advocate, the late Dr.Collins in 2015 who was very instrumental, may his soul rest in peace. In 2016, the coalition envisions change in unfriendly environment to a conducive environment for service delivery; increased access to safe services for prevention and management of unwanted pregnancy, reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality, and reduction of abortion stigma. It has membership support from; Health Gap, PACE ,Marie Stopes, Uganda Women Parliamentarians Association, THETA, Youth Plus Policy Network, Law Advocacy for Women in Uganda, Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, Pathfinder, HEPS , Reproductive Health, Federation of Medical Students Association Uganda, FIDA, Uganda Private Midwives Association, Association of Obstetrics&Gynaecologists in Ug, IPAS Africa.,Guttmacher Institute,Women's Link Worldwide,Health Gap,Planned Parenthood, Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights ,Health workers and others.

Members of the coalition in a training



## Economic Cultural and Social Rights Conference 2015

CEHURD in partnership with the Initiative for Social Economic Rights (ISER), the Public Interest Law Clinic (PILAC) at Makerere School of law, Human Rights Network of Uganda (HURINET), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) convened the second National Conference on Economic Social and Cultural Rights at Makerere University. This annual conference convened over 500 participants such as; policy makers, Judicial officers, independent statutory bodies, human rights practitioners, health workers and activists, academics, researchers, development partners, community groups and members of the general public, to share developments of issues regarding the subject

Guests at the ECSR conference 2015



## Health Camp 2015

It was celebrations in Buikwe District when a range of free services were extended to the locals and neighbouring districts . With the harsh tag [#Health-Camp2015](#) that made rounds on different social media platforms, it was the event on everyone's lips thanks to CEHURD and partners like Pepsi

that provided shelter and Drinks, Reproductive Health Uganda, Nakasero Blood bank, Marie Stopes,



different public and private health centres such as St. Francis Health Care Services Kawolo hospital ,Kisimba Muslim Mission,Ebenezer optical centre , Zziwa Memorial, St.Charles Lwanga among others.

It was indeed a successful collaboration that benefited and gave locals a chance to get advise and health tips. The camp that lasted a week from 12th to 16th October 2015, was hosted by Najja Subcounty and it attracted thousands to the services. All this was made possible due to financial support from Hivos, SAAF and Open Society Foundations.



Court session during the hearing of the maternal health case on petition 16

# Launch of the one million signature campaign

Stigma, negative values and attitudes against abortion are not yet history in Uganda, hence the campaign to sensitise more on the issue. With collaboration from Uganda harm reduction network, victims of unsafe abortions gave testimonies on the reality of the matter and the demand for safe abortion services this, along with social media engagements at the launch on 28th September 2015, myths and misconceptions of abortion were addressed and therefore seeking redress. The Campaign



Dr. Kiggundu addressing guests at the campaign launch

launched the collection of One million signatures to petition speaker of parliament to have a law reform on abortion, to prevent women from dying due to unsafe abortion. This therefore challenges everyone who believes in maternal mortality and mobility to append signatures in order to make a swift collection of the One Million for the Speaker of the 10th Parliament to give the issue prominence.

## MDD FOR SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION

CEHURD in collaboration with the District Education Officers of Kiboga and Kyankwanzi, as well as Our lady Technical and Vocational Institute (OLATV), with support from HIVOs conducted a music dance and drama competition amongst four secondary schools (two from Kyankwanzi and two from Kiboga districts) with an aim of reaching out to in and out of school adolescents on issues of abortion stigma, access and acceptability of modern contraceptives and information on sexual reproductive health and rights. Students across the two districts and neighbours attended the colourful competition held in Kiboga



*“Eight Fellows from different media houses majorly print were awarded media grants of over three million to cover stories on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights”*

## Partnership with the Media

Routinely, CEHURD has engaged media on different platforms through press conferences and on average the organisation held over 24 press conferences in 2015, shared over 8 opinion articles in print media, attended tv and radio talk shows and sponsored journalists to cover different health rights stories in the East Africa region, equally training them to cover issues on Sexual and Reproductive Health. A lot of the health advocacy issues and processes that CEHRD has been taking lead on have made head-

lines in news, igniting the public to discuss on social media, like the launch of the One Million signature campaign that generated more than One Million impressions on twitter, to the debate on some of the litigation issues the organisation has taken on., which media platforms embraced.



CEHURD staff vetting journalists for grants

# Health Clubs in University:



Prof BEN (right) with Mr. Kabanda after successful judgements made on petition 16 and 64

During the year 2015, CEHURD engaged over 5 universities in health and advocacy activities through the existing health clubs, that were created in universities such as; Nkumba, Makerere, Uganda Christian University, Kampala International University and later Kyambogo University. The clubs are governed by committees that ensure that initiatives taken to them by CEHURD are sustained at the Universities, this is equally a platform to groom leaders and health advocates.

Some of the activities students of the health clubs at the universities take part in include; health camps and retreats, sensitisations through workshops and I.E.C distribution on different health issues, marathons, membership, health trainings among others. CEHURD supports all initiatives of the health and human rights initiatives of the clubs which also includes capacity building and free trainings regarding different health conditions and lifestyles. Health clubs made one year since initiation and have over 50,000 members. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has taken the onus to support CEHURD and ensure that these clubs serve the purpose for which they were created and sustained. Every year a committee is elected to ensure continuity of the program



Above: Handing over I.E.C to Nkumba Below: Makerere health club members in a photo



*“Between 9th and 10th April, 2015, CEHURD hosted values clarification meeting with lawyers proposed to be part of the Legal Support Network and 15 lawyers were valued clarified and trained on key legal issues pertaining to abortion.”*

# Engaging Stakeholders Nationally

Consultation meeting with partners in health



Due to the different efforts from the team in 2015, stakeholders at all levels have been engaged in health rights issues. This has been through dialogues, meetings, mediations, colloquiums. Governments officials, Law makers, Policy influencers, Advocates, Civil Society, Media have all been extensively engaged on different platforms and issues regarding health rights advocacy.

over 35 stake holders attended an advocacy dialogue on how local council and religious leaders as well as CSOs and other stakeholders can participate more meaningfully in districts’ budget processes and on how to influence change towards improvement in delivery and access to better health services, so as to reduce on preventable deaths in mothers and children. This and so many other engagements have resulted into gathering baseline information on Maternal health as well as Sexual and reproductive Health services in the different communities. Equally, different government bodies and Civil Society Organisations have been engaged in consultations on health goals in the post-2015 Global development framework, access to medicine and information which have given gist to most of the health rights advocacy issues.

Other engagements and lobby activities that elevated health rights issues in order to gain momentum for them at national level and even international level, included but not limited to involving members of parliament, different ministries that are at the frontline of implementation of health programs such as the Ministry of Health, agencies such as the United Nations, embassies such as the American embassy, the Dutch embassy, the Swedish embassy and prominent individuals in the country who all got to appreciate the engagements and initiatives to make them part of the advocacy for health and human rights by CEHURD. Come 2016, we look forward to an even wider base of national stakeholder partnerships and engagements on the health rights issues but most importantly, build rapport with new leaders that will be voted into power for the next 5 years and therefore the need to bring the new leadership on board with all the health rights issues such as maternal health including sexual and Reproductive Health.

Strategic Meeting on access to medicines



Pupils of Manafwa in a debate on SRHR

## LAWYERS SHOULD GO TO COURT-SAYS HON.JUSTICE GASWAGA

In order to build capacities of the CEHURD staff regarding issues of criminal case proceedings, general court procedures as well as orientation on the same for the rest of the team at CEHURD. A lot of capacity building was invested in to ensure this. Trainings, during the staff retreat that happened twice the year were made on strategic litigation, broadly including how to handle cases and the dos and don'ts for court among many issues. This included a visit from the Hon. Justice Gaswaga who shared experiences as an advocate and gave lessons to the team on how to mänge through as advocates. He gave a first touch experience on being a judge, expectations and how one can become a prominent and respected judge, and the expectations judges have from practising advocates/lawyers and general public. He encouraged the team to always institute cases with clear objectives and encouraged advocates not to fear court but rather look forward to going to court, represent and argue out cases.



CEHURD staff take a photo with Justice Gaswaga after a session with the judge

## MOOT COMPETITION

2015 closed in with yet another moot competition for students from different universities in Uganda that teach law. For that case on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015, the second Annual Moot competition that was hosted by Makerere University School of Law, was held and it attracted six universities including; Makerere, Nkumba, Uganda Christian University, Bishop Stuart, Islamic University in Uganda and Kampala International University that showed prowess in the competition after scooping the top award beating the rest of the teams to it. The focus of the competition was to empower law students with the skills and knowledge to transcend the knowledge acquired from the legal training to engage with the practical aspects of human rights. over 14 judges with the lead Judge being Justice Kenneth Kakuru presided over the competitions giving the whole experience a touch of professionalism and reality of court sessions to students. This was financed by KIOS and made possible by CEHURD with support from partners like PILAC and the different university law students communities.



A team of judges including Hon. Justice Kenneth Kakuru pose for a photo after the competition

## Community Health Advocates Arm (CHAs):

In order to monitor progress and developments in Health rights as well as impact of CEHURD's work in communities, CEHURD initiated Community Health Advocates an arm to bond with the community through individuals, who live in these communities. Also known as CHAs, the community health advocates have throughout 2015 been supported to take forward community led advocacy and sensitization to ensure that some of the identified problems and misconceptions around access, lack of information on SRH are foregone. Over 20 individuals from different communities have been trained from the districts of Kiboga, Kyankwanzi and Buikwe in order for them to front health advocacy issues and work closely with the organization to identify the gaps in communities. Human rights abuses in these communities have been addressed and through the CHAs locals are given a platform to front challenges and issues in regards to health rights or even report abuses that demand justice. CHAs also helped the organization extend knowledge on maternal health to these communities in 2015.



Community Health advocates during one of the trainings on health rights advocacy



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### TIPS TO IMPROVE TEAM WORK

Don't let individuals get lost in the shuffle. Even though a team is a collaborative effort, each member should be allowed to feel a sense of ownership and accomplishment. Members should be rewarded for a job well done, and given encouragement and guidance when they need additional help completing a task.

- Let each team member actively take part in the decision-making process. Making each member feel integral to the group's success is crucial for the team's morale. Minimize the importance of rank; instead take advantage of the entire group's talents and skills to contribute to its overall success. However, there must be one clear leader who can make the final decision if the team can't agree.
- Keep the balance of work equal. One or two team members shouldn't be shouldering the burden for the entire group. Everyone should have a manageable and relatively equal workload. Build a foundation of trust and mutual respect. Each team member should be encouraged to share his or her opinions openly and respect everyone else's point of view -- even if they don't agree with it. Maintain open lines of communication. Everyone in the team should share ideas or express concerns with one another and with the company's management. When conflicts arise, take a positive approach.

### Tips for Running Effective Meetings

Email an agenda 24 hours in advance.	Arrive 5 minutes early	Start and end on time.
Come prepared.	<b>No smartphones.</b>	Bring paper and a pen.
Share all relevant data.	<b>Stay on topic.</b>	<b>No interrupting.</b>
	<b>Be brief and concise.</b>	<b>Silence = agreement</b>
<b>No side conversations or comments</b>	<b>Disagree without being disagreeable</b>	<b>Challenge ideas rather than people.</b>
	<b>Everyone participates.</b>	
<b>Follow-up by email within 24 hours.</b>		

## KEEPING FIT ENERIZED CEHURD STAFF



During the year 2015, it was a culture for all at CEHURD to get out their exercise kits and participate in the monthly Aerobics. This was due to the demand that the staff,volunteers,interns and so on who spend most of the time behind the desk as well as travelling up and about to manage and participate in different activities are able to stay fit and healthy. The exercises that took place every after work that is 5:00pm every once a month, were spearheaded by the executive director of the organization who believes in fitness and wellness of everyone and encouraged all to participate in the activities for their own good. Indeed most people ended the year on a health note besides the few cases of poor health that were recorded, this activity not only energized but helped keep staff in good shape. Hoping for the same in 2016.