



EGERTON UNIVERSITY

FOLLAP

Faculty of Law Legal Aid Project

NEWS LETTER

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FOLLAP's STUDENT MENTORSHIP AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

IN THIS ISSUE:

The importance of mentorship in career development and why FOLLAP is the real deal.



Lacuna in access to justice for the poor and marginalized.



Role of Students in Access to Justice



The imperative nature of legal aid clinics to volunteer students.



VISION

Justice and equality for all

MISSION

Promotion of access to
justice for the poor and
marginalized to claim their
rights

OBJECTIVES

Enhancing Access to Justice
through Legal Aid on the
following:

Family Disputes

Children Cases

Land Rights

Criminal Cases

Matters of Public Interest

Governance and Public

Administration Issues

EDITORIAL

The Swahili have a saying; “mwana wa muhunzi asiposana, hufukuta” (Should the child of a smith not learn his father’s craft, they will at least learn how to rekindle the furnace).

The saying is about the power of mentorship. It means there is some special skill, however minute, you learn by staying close to an experienced person. History lists so many great figures that acquired knowledge through observation. Jesus was an apprentice of his foster father Joseph, up to the age of 30, so the good book says.

Aristotle was a student of Plato while Plato was a student of Socrates. The great philosophy books about them are partly mere conversations they had among themselves.

Dear FOLLAP Magazine reader, in this edition we explore the power of mentorship. We let our students, who are key beneficiaries of FOLLAP, tell how the project has helped mold them into what they are today.

Enjoy the read!

“I am proud to be associated with FOLLAP in a special way. I pay my tribute to Dr. Ruth Aura who has been the pillar of the program and a mentor to me. She saw the potential in me and gave me the platform to explore that potential through FOLLAP. I cannot fail to give special thanks to FOLLAP’s Project Manager, Robert Mutembei for adopting me into the program, FOLLAP’s Advocate Vallarie Kutima for the great lessons and guidance throughout my time at the project and Samuel Kimani, FOLLAP’s Monitoring and Evaluation Officer who was always present and available whenever we needed anything to make the project a success.”

Esperance Timothy Ogola

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“Twafikisha Haki Mashinani”

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Kevin Muiruri	Students' Representative
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Message from the Project Team Leader



Dr. Ruth Aura, FOLLAP Team Leader at a past function. As FOLLAP we thank all students for their efforts and hope to continue working with them.

When we launched FOLLAP three years ago, we had students at the center of the project. Under our clarion call of Taking the Law to the People the idea of involving students in understanding the challenges of access to justice that communities go through as they train to be legal professionals in the coming days.

It is because of this that we gave them key responsibilities in the project. We have involved them in legal aid clinics mentoring them on the need to take up pro-bono work. Through this, they have gotten to see the real legal work for which they are being prepared.

Students have also been involved in our legal aid conferences. We have given them opportunities to write and present papers at the conferences with the idea that they need to learn on how to be legal scholars as early as possible.

Besides, FOLLAP has involved students in its activities as Legal Assistants, giving them a chance to learn on office administration. We believe that these are avenues that will shape them immensely in their future careers.

As FOLLAP we thank them all for their efforts and hope to continue working with them.

The importance of mentorship in career development and why FOLLAP is the real deal

By Kioko wa Kivandi

When I was an undergraduate student at Egerton University pursuing a Bachelor of Arts, I developed a keen interest in Creative Writing. It is because of this that at third year, I chose to study Literature.

But something more. The Literature department at the time had a way of encouraging students to go beyond class room engagements in exploiting their potential. I picked this challenge.

It was thus under the tutelage of Literature department that I took part in my first ever international conference. It was hosted at the Njoro Campus and there I presented a paper titled 'Female Cultural Bondage: An Impediment to Achieving Gender Equity'. I was in second year.

The paper was a critical appraisal of Okot P'Bitek's Song of Lawino, a book in which the main character Lawino, laments that her husband, a child hood lover who has since acquired formal education has fallen in love with a modern lady, Clementine.

Lawino then bestows upon herself the role of reminding her husband of their culture asking how he fell in love with Clementine, who in her standards is mannerless. She becomes a custodian of culture and throughout the book, there's a key refrain which she keeps reminding her husband on matters culture: "The pumpkin in the old homestead must never be uprooted".

I equated Lawino to the modern-day woman who at times will keep on saying there are certain things she can't do because she is afraid of what people (read culture) will say. I wondered why she had not chosen to go to school like her husband.

I thus argued that by believing that they are

custodians of culture, while their husbands mess here and there, women lose the opportunities to claim the same rights as men.

Besides this, through the Literature department I interacted with the late Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye. Marjorie needs no introduction really. She was a great writer. Among her books is Coming to Birth which was a set book in secondary school a while back.

She had come for a stay at the Agricultural Resources Center (ARC) in Njoro Campus but to simply interact with Literature students interested in creative writing. I had at the time poems I had put together for a year or two. I shared this collection with her for her input.

In the collection, there was a poem I had written in memory of Wahome Mutahi. Mutahi used to write a satirical column dubbed Whispers that would run in the Sunday Nation. I was one of his avid fans and when he died, I was truly touched so I wrote a poem in his memory.

Marjorie liked this poem a lot. She thus asked me if she could hand it over to Mutahi's family. I responded in the affirmative. By the time I was clearing campus, this poem formed a chapter in a book that the family had produced in his honor.

I must say that that encounter with Marjorie inspired me in leaps and bounds. It was a great deal. It was from it that I decided to get published before I cleared campus. Thus, I continued working on the ideas she had suggested over my work and voilà, I published an anthology at fourth year. I was the only student during our class who ever got published as an undergraduate and I think I was the first ever student to attain such an achievement in the longest time. My interest in the media was also cemented this time.

Mentorship pays. It's a great deal. There is something so spiritual when you let a student interact with someone they look up to. The impact is godly.

I have been with FOLLAP since its inception and I have no doubt this is the kind of feeling Law students keep experiencing every time they are connected to practicing Advocates and Scholars in the Legal Sector.

FOLLAP is thus the real deal.

By Kioko Kivandi.



A FOLLAP Student Volunteer (left) attending to a client in the field.

My Experience at FOLLAP

I joined FOLLAP around June 2020 as a volunteer. We were just three months into the Covid-19 pandemic in the country and schools and colleges were shut down. Instead of going home just like everyone else did, I stayed behind and just luckily, I was adopted to the program after showing interest to be part of the team. My aim was to get the experience and be able to contribute in whatever little way I could in advancing the mission and vision of the program.

Through the Legal Aid clinics, I was able to meet and interact with clients with real issues requiring legal intervention for the first time. It was one of the best experiences I had. It was time to convert the theoretical aspects of law I had learnt in class to practice in real life situations.

My first ever Legal Aid clinic was in Bahati sub-county where we went to meet the people. So, we literally we were “Taking law to the people” as FOLLAP says in its slogan. I was a little timid at first. However, with time I was fully integrated into the system and learnt how to handle various cases and clients.

Sometime in November, 2020, I became part of the team in the position of a Legal Assistant. I loved the approach adopted by the project manager of incorporating students and advocates when handling clients. We would have at least two students and an Advocate in each table to handle clients. This was a genius move whose aim was to expose us (students) to the practice through learning from the advocates who already had experience in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and litigation.

Over time we would now be left alone to deal with clients and I can say we got the best of the training that enabled us deliver to the expectation of the Program. Through FOLLAP I was able to boost my confidence. I also managed to pick a few ethical issues required of me as a legal practitioner and I

got to interact with serious issues the society faces that needs the intervention of the legal minds pro-bono.

I am proud to be associated with FOLLAP in a special way. I pay my tribute to Dr. Ruth Aura who has been the pillar of the program and a mentor to me. She saw the potential in me and gave me the platform to explore that potential through FOLLAP. I cannot fail to give special thanks to FOLLAP’s Project Manager, Robert Mutembei for adopting me into the program, FOLLAP’s Advocate Vallarie Kutima for the great lessons and guidance throughout my time at the project and Samuel Kimani, FOLLAP’s Monitoring and Evaluation Officer who was always present and available whenever we needed anything to make the project a success.

It was a pleasure working with amazing people in FOLLAP. This is a project that should receive all the support it requires. Most of the time while walking through the streets of Nakuru I meet people I helped through the program and they are always grateful. This melts my heart and for sure I can confirm that FOLLAP is the best thing that ever happened to the residents of Nakuru. Given time and chance I will always be ready and willing to help in whatever little way I can to advance the vision and mission of FOLLAP.

By Esperance Timothy Ogola.



“Twafikisha Haki Mashinani”

How The Lacuna in Access to Justice for The Poor and Marginalized Is Filled by Students

By Kevin Muiruri

From my interactions with FOLLAP, I have come to appreciate the imperative role of students in promoting access to justice in Kenya which is in line with Article 48 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

Students can play a number of roles in promoting access to justice, both on their own and through their involvement in academic and extracurricular activities. In this article I will elucidate some of the specific ways that students can contribute to increasing access to justice.

Offering pro-bono services: They can do this either as volunteers at legal aid clinics or with organisations that offer the services to communities. Many legal clinics and pro bono organizations such as FOLLAP rely on the help of student volunteers to provide legal assistance to underserved communities. By volunteering, students can gain valuable experience and help to ensure that those who may not have the resources to afford legal representation can still get the help they need.

Participating in moot courts or mock trial competitions: These competitions give students the opportunity to hone their legal skills and knowledge, and can also provide a valuable service to the community by providing free legal representation to clients in need. FOLLAP has been running holding a moot court competition for the last two years. This is commendable and needs to continue.

Advocating for policy changes or reforms: Students can use their voice and platform to advocate for policy changes or reforms that will improve access to justice for underserved communities. This can include writing articles and newsletters with specific target audience

such as the legislators, participating in protests or demonstrations, or working with organizations that focus on social justice issues.

Educating others about their legal rights: Many people are unaware of their legal rights, particularly those who are marginalized or underserved. By educating others about their rights and how to access legal resources, students can help to increase access to justice.

Pursuing careers in the legal field: Students who are interested in pursuing careers in the legal field can work to increase access to justice by choosing to work at organizations that serve underserved communities or by advocating for policy changes and reforms within their professional roles



Francis Mulongo, a law student at a past function.

The Imperative Nature of Legal Aid Clinics to Volunteer Students

By Wendy Moraa

Students who attend legal aid clinics gain a number of valuable experiences and skills that can be beneficial for their academic and professional development in the future. Some specific things that students may gain from attending legal aid clinics are highlighted within this article. These experiences are drawn from my personal interactions within the legal aid clinic at FOLLAP.

Hands-on experience in the legal field:

Legal aid clinics provide an opportunity for students to work on actual legal cases and interact with clients, giving them valuable hands-on experience in the legal field. This can help students to develop practical skills and knowledge that they can apply in their future careers.

Improved legal knowledge and skills:

Working at a legal aid clinic can also help students to deepen their understanding of the legal system and develop specific legal skills such as researching, drafting legal documents, and advocating for clients.

Exposure to diverse perspectives and issues:

Legal aid clinics often serve underserved communities, which can give students the opportunity to learn about and work with individuals from different backgrounds and facing a variety of legal issues. This can broaden students' perspectives and help them to become more empathetic and understanding of the challenges faced by others.

Professional networking opportunities:

Working at a legal aid clinic can also provide students with the opportunity to network with professionals in the legal field, which can be valuable for building connections and finding job opportunities.

Personal fulfillment:

Attending a legal aid

clinic can also be personally fulfilling for students, as it allows them to make a positive impact in their community and contribute to increasing access to justice for underserved populations.

Overall, attending a legal aid clinic can be a valuable and rewarding experience for students, providing them with practical skills and knowledge, exposure to diverse perspectives and issues, and the opportunity to make a positive impact in their community.



The Egerton University Faculty of Law Legal Aid Project (FOLLAP) is Supported by European Union and UNDP through Amkeni Wakenya

The Challenges and Limitations of Law Students' Involvement in Increasing Access to Justice

By Josphat Nyabate.

Legal aid clinics are an important resource for increasing access to justice, particularly for low-income individuals and communities who may not have the financial resources to afford legal representation. Offering legal aid to communities in need is not a smooth process and there are barriers to be surmounted in the process. While using law students is a practical way to offer legal aid, there are several challenges that hinder their involvement in this noble endeavor. These challenges include but are not limited to the following:

Lack of experience and limited knowledge: Students, especially those who are just starting their legal education, may not have the necessary experience to handle complex legal cases or provide effective legal representation. Students may not have a complete understanding of the law, and may not be able to provide the same level of knowledge and expertise as a licensed attorney.

Professional liability: Students who provide legal aid may be at risk of professional liability if they make mistakes or provide incorrect advice. This can be a concern for both the students and the organizations that supervise them.

Limited resources: Students may not have access to the same resources and support as licensed attorneys, which can make it difficult for them to effectively represent clients.

Ethical concerns: There may be ethical concerns around using students to provide legal aid, particularly if they are not fully trained or qualified to handle certain cases. Despite these challenges, FOLLAP as a

legal organizations has established a solid program that allow students to provide legal aid to underserved communities, often under the supervision of licensed attorneys. These legal aid programs have proved to be an important way for students to gain practical experience and make a positive impact on their communities.



Peter Munyoroku, a former Egerton University Law student attending to a client.

The Role of Law Students in Conducting Legal Research to Address Access to Justice Issues

Austine Odhiambo Ouma

Law students can play a significant role in conducting legal research to address access to justice issues. Legal research involves identifying and analyzing legal sources such as statutes, court cases, and scholarly articles, in order to understand and apply the law to a particular issue. There are several ways in which law students can use their skills in legal research to address access to justice issues:

Identifying areas where access to justice is lacking: Law students can conduct research to identify areas where access to justice is particularly limited, such as in certain geographic regions or for certain groups of people. This can help identify areas of need and inform efforts to increase access to justice.

Analyzing the impact of laws and policies on access to justice: Law students can research the impact of laws and policies on access to justice, and identify potential ways to reform or modify these laws and policies to increase access.

Developing legal resources for underserved communities: Law students can research and develop legal resources, such as guides or fact sheets, that can help underserved communities understand their legal rights and navigate the legal system.

Assisting advocates and legal organizations: Law students can also assist attorneys and legal organizations in conducting legal research as part of their efforts to increase access to justice.

Generally, the role of law students in conducting legal research to address access to justice issues can be an important way

for them to make a positive impact on the marginalized and indigent communities and contribute to the efforts to increase access to justice.



Egerton Law students at a past events. Law students can also assist attorneys and legal organizations in conducting legal research as part of their efforts to increase access to justice.

The Role of Supervision in Effective Legal Aid Work by Students

By Maryam Cheyech

As a law student participating in the FOLLAP legal aid program, I have come to understand the importance of supervision in ensuring that the legal work we do is of high quality and meets professional standards. The supervising advocate of the project has provided valuable guidance and support as I have navigated complex legal issues and worked with clients, which has been especially important as I am new to legal practice.

I have also learned about the ethical considerations of using students to provide legal aid. While I have gained valuable experience and knowledge through my legal aid work, I recognize that there is a potential for professional liability and the need for guidance on ethical dilemmas. Working under the supervision of a licensed advocate has helped to address these concerns and ensure that our legal work as Egerton University students is ethical and professional.

I have also benefited from the learning opportunities that come with supervision. By working with and observing the practicing advocates in the field, I have been able to gain insights into the practice of law and learn from their experience and expertise. This has been a valuable part of my legal education and has helped me to grow as an upcoming mind in the legal professional.

Supervision can be an important factor in building trust with clients in legal aid work by students, and can help to ensure that the legal needs of the clients are met in a professional and effective manner. Trust is an essential component of the advocate-client relationship, and building trust with clients can be especially important when working with underserved communities who may be skeptical of or unfamiliar with the legal system.

Lastly, I have come to understand the importance of supervision in effective legal aid work by students. It helps to ensure that the legal work being done is of high quality, ethical, and supportive of our learning and development.



"By working with and observing the practicing advocates in the field, students are able to gain insights into the practice of law and learn from their experience and expertise."

- Maryam Cheyech

How FOLLAP Contributed to My Personal Growth.

By Christabel Njeri

As a law student at Egerton University, volunteering with FOLLAP, I had a great opportunity to experience personal growth. The Legal aid work by FOLLAP often involved working with underserved communities within Nakuru County and addressing complex legal issues, and these experiences challenged me to think critically and apply my legal knowledge in a real-world setting.

In essence then, FOLLAP's legal aid clinics gave me a platform for practical experience that helped me better myself. I had the opportunity to work with clients, conduct legal research, and navigate the legal system, which was valuable for me as I prepared for a career in the legal profession.

I also developed communication and problem-solving skills through my legal aid work, and had the opportunity to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds, which contributed to my personal development.

In addition to this, I had the opportunity to work with advocates and other legal professionals, observe their work, and learn from their experience and expertise. This provided valuable insights into the practice of law and helped me to grow as a legal professional.

Finally, the legal aid clinics, were a way for me to explore different areas of law and consider different career paths. It helped me to gain a better understanding of my interests and goals, and has informed my decisions about my future career.

LEGAL AID CLINIC
FACULTY OF LAW LEGAL AID PROJECT

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TUESDAY & THURSDAY
TIME: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
VENUE: Faculty of Law

VISION: Justice and Equality for All
MISSION: Promotion of Access to Justice for the Poor and Marginalized to claim their Rights

OBJECTIVE:
Enhancing Access to Justice through Legal Aid on the following:

- Family Disputes
- Land Rights
- Children Cases
- Matters of Public Interest
- Unfair Police harassment
- Criminal Cases
- Governance and Public Administration issues

amfeni KENYA

P.O. Box 13357 - 20100, Nakuru - KENYA



Antony Mundia, Egerton Law graduate and FOLLAP beneficiary addressing residents in Rongai Constituency, Nakuru County.





FOLLAP

Faculty of Law Legal Aid Project

Taking Law to the People

Enhanced Access to justice for the poor and **marginalized**

We envision Justice and Equality for all. Key strategies for this vision are removal of barriers for access to justice among the target groups, empowerment of the community to refer cases of human rights violations as well as to build capacity of community justice systems to operate effectively and efficiently.



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