



FREEDOM AND ROAM UGANDA

A newsletter of LBQ struggles, activism, events and health.

Freedom and Roam Uganda, welcomes you to the first issue of our quarterly newsletter! Please share and get to know more about the struggles of LBQ people as they continuously fight and advocate for their rights in Uganda. Thank you

Our Big Story

Farug celebrates women's day amidst intimidation from Uganda police.

Friday 8 March 2019 will be a historical day in our lives and the organization. FARUG as an LBQ oriented organization with all the mandates had the right to celebrate women's day 2019. With all the love, courage and efforts, we held our initiation meeting on 27/Feb/2019 where we discussed on how we shall address that day. This was followed by a final meeting on 5/03/2019 where we listed the activities that were stated for that day, we also shared responsibilities as staff. Among the responsibilities was to notifying our area Local council Chairperson about our event.

As law abiding citizens, we headed to the chairman on Wednesday 6th march 2019 to notify him about our coming celebrations. The chairman instead referred us to the Officer in Charge Kigowa police post of whom they share the same office. The OC ordered us to write a notification letter that clearly stated the activities of the day. I quickly wrote this letter and took it back as directed. The OC promised to call me back that day but he never called, he instead allocated another officer who called me late in the night asking me to come for the letter that was now addressed to the Division DPC. To cut the story short, we were sent to different police offices but all was in vain! We were not able to hold our celebrations at our home, FARUG premises. **women's day celebrations**

Even after being disturbed the whole morning, we were not stopped from celebrating our struggles, we had our health camp successfully held where LBQ people got screened under Hepatitis B, Sexually transmitted diseases, breast and cervical cancer, HIV testing and counselling, general health care and management as well as referrals for severe cases and a mobile clinic. We only counselled the fitness workouts due to the inconveniences caused by police. The health camp was led by Reach out Mbuya as the service provider. We had the statement read by Farug Communications officer (this statement can be accessed from our website) and lots of fun from the photo booth.



Participants expressed their views on the theme of this year's women's day celebrations. The turn up was amazing as LGBTIQ people blessed the occasion and came together to "balance for better".

The celebrations took place at Most at risk populations network, (MARPS net) premises who on a short notice positively responded to our call. Sexual Minorities Uganda funded the activities that braced the celebrations.



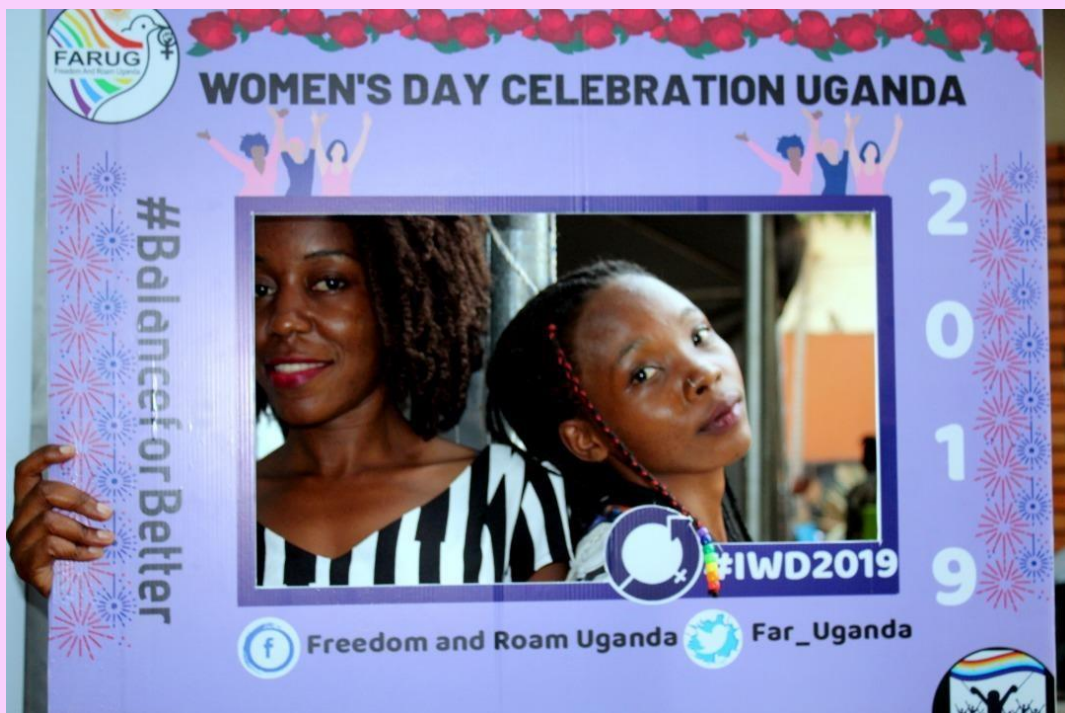
Our communication officer addressing the participants



The Executive Director FARUG, (Second left) and Other Leaders from the LBO fraternity addressing participants.



Admin and Communications at the health corner.



Members enjoying the photo booth, #balanceforbetter

Kick for Equality

As we organized activities at our office premises, there were other activities taking place, Centre for women’s rights Uganda (CWRU) organized a football match that embraced women from different diversities and organizations. FARUG managed to organize a football team that competed to the finals! Our team was called Rainbow Queens and “Solidarity” the pitch name. The theme for these games was “kick for equality” and this did not stop our girls from kicking the soccer ball to the finals!



Kicking for equality (Rainbow queens in Black)



HEALTH CORNER

FARUG conducts breast and cervical cancer screening.

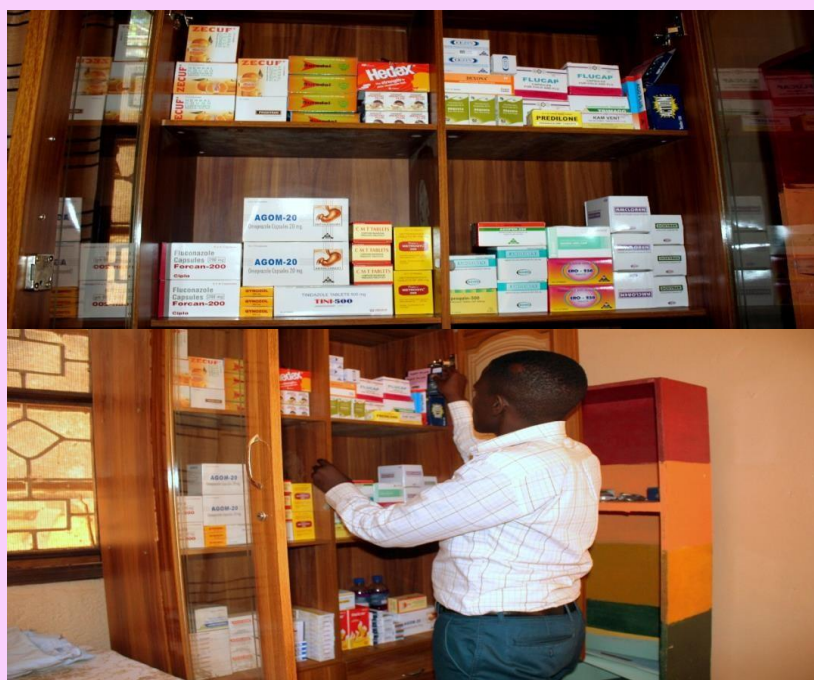
On 25 January 2019, FARUG held a breast and cervical cancer screening activity that was aimed at improving lives of LBQ people due to the fact that they face hardships and discrimination when they go to general hospitals for health care. Secondly these tests are expensive in hospitals so as FARUG we organized for this activity to enable them access the service for free and in a non-discriminative environment.

One of the importance about these screenings is, they can diagnose other sicknesses that the beneficiary didn't know about and yet they needed immediate medical attention. Therefore, those who were diagnosed with severe illnesses were referred for further management, those found highly suspicious of having cervical cancer were referred for confirmatory tests and those with manageable conditions were prescribed treatment medicines.

LBQ people turned up from different organizations hence strengthening our networks and a unified voice that will strengthen our advocacy. We thank/credit our network organization Sexual minorities Uganda (SMUG) for funding this activity and for its continuous support to FARUG whenever we call for a hand.

OUR MINI CLINIC

We are glad to inform you that our mini clinic is now stocked with the "Over the counter" drugs, please feel free to pass by for drugs and remember our referral services are still on with our own professional health service provider ready to serve you with a genuine smile and touch, in a non-discriminatory environment. Special thanks go to Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) for positively responding to our call.



FROM BALANCE FOR BETTER CAMPAIGN



#BalanceforBetter #IWD2019

It means, " Equal opportunities for all.What a man can do a woman can do and even better."

-Diane Bakuraira



#BalanceforBetter #IWD2

It means, " Stop for a moment and imagine a life where all men and women are equal. My yoke is for woman. I will give my all to empower her."

-Elizabeth Nabunya



#BalanceforBetter #IWD2019

"Coming from an African context, women have always been regarded as the "weaker sex" and told that their only place is in the kitchen. So, Gender Balance to me is when we can all be granted the same pathway to opportunities, services and resources in different spheres of society without one's own gender identity and/ or expression being a hindrance."

-Kalungi Diana



#BalanceforBetter #IWD2019

It means "There is difference between inclusion and diversity.

Diversity is understanding that we have a problem around representation and equality.

Inclusion is recognising that the solution to the problems we encounter, involves everyone to be at the table and not just clones of one kind."

-Kakande Cameron





LGBTI Members From different organizations graced this year's Women's Day celebrations

In our Social news

Online campaign

FARUG is running an online campaign on lived realities of LBQ women. LBQ women have been subjected to double discrimination and torture both as general women and LBQ women. In the employment sector they have been denied opportunities to work and those working are facing several forms of violations ranging from sexual harassment to under pay or no payment at all. Women have always been given the least positions in offices and companies even when they have the best qualifications for a given/available job.

This campaign therefore targets issues affecting LBQ in all spheres of life where we document their stories with the purpose of seeking for justice, advocating for equal rights, sensitize communities and service providers as well as helping LBQ women realize and accept their diversity and sexuality.

ADVOCATING FOR EQUAL RIGHTS!

Our health coordinator was part of the Mbarara health workers training in march and this aims at making health services accessible to LBQ persons from all regions of the country. This project is headed by Sexual Minorities Uganda under PITCH project.

Our welfare officer attended a leadership training organized by MEMPROW and this enriched her knowledge on understanding human rights and how-to best advocate for the rights of marginalized persons (women).

Our Executive director attended a security meeting that is also targeting strengthened security for gender and sexual minority activists in Uganda. She was also part of the women human rights defenders training that looks forward to enhancing better skills on defending and protecting women rights. The ED further attended a meeting on harnessing strategic collaborations towards mainstreaming SDGs into key population programming in Uganda.

Our health coordinator attended the second CREA conference “Reconference” that targeted addressing today’s most challenging social – political issues and their intersections with feminism, art and technology.

With a commitment to build inclusive feminist visions of justice, Arthur expressed his views through a panel discussion under a theme; “REDEFINING FEMINISM IN SPORTS” Under his abstract “ME TOO I CAN”, he shared some of the challenges he encounters as a transgender man on a women’s rugby team. Arthur is not the only person being discriminated on grounds of his sexuality and gender identity but a number of his team mates with different sexual orientations face discrimination by other team mates.

However, they have all stood strong to participate in sports of their choice irrespective of the discrimination, hate speech and denial of several opportunities that arise in their clubs. “ME TOO I CAN” is a story that ignites courage in people who have lost hope, ho feel like giving up, who feel unloved and unwanted. With persistence, zeal and self-love, one can achieve their goals, one can pursue their dreams and one can gain the lost love!

At the conference, Arthur’s story was complimented as a story that can change one’s life for the better and realize their capability in all areas of their preference. In Uganda many queer talents have been lost due to the stigma created and the rampant discrimination in the sports clubs existing. One is considered a menace when identified as an LGBTI person. This conference took place in Kathmandu Nepal and more than 500 participants from the globe attended.





ED attending interfaith conference in Canada.



Admin at CREA conference