



FREEDOM AND ROAM UGANDA

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

Freedom and Roam Uganda, welcomes you to the second 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 launches the Lived realities of LBQ Women Report

20 July 2019

FARUG took the initiative to carry out a country wide research about the Lived Realities of LBQ women in Uganda. This research was started in March 2019 under the support of woman Kind. Over one hundred LBQ women were reached and interviewed about their lived realities under the aspects of health, social living, economic, education and political involvement. This research was aimed at revising the targets of advocating for the rights of LBQ Women and their inclusion in the national programming without discrimination.

The Launch graced a number of activists, Human Rights Defenders, feminists, service providers and LBQ allies who thanked FARUG for the great work and level they have reached in the realm of advocating for LBQ rights. This book was launched by Solome Nakawesi an outspoken and vibrant feminist currently working as a consultant in the field of women's rights and feminism. This report was produced in both hard copy (report books) and soft copy where all participants were provided flash disks that had the book copied.



FARUG holds the first ever lesbian forum in Uganda (UGALEF)

19 July 2019

UGALEF brought together 50 LBQ activists, leaders, and members that went through the history of LBQ movement and why it was important to come together as LBQ women. This workshop had participants from as far as the north, east, south west, west and central Uganda. Many pioneers of the movement attended this workshop and they encouraged the young activists to demand for their spaces, embrace leadership positions and stand high to demand for their rights. Participants had an opportunity to interact and learn more from each other. This strengthened the network of LBQ organisations and individuals hence the birth of the LBQ consortium in Uganda. This was made possible with the help of WAVE project.



Participants take a pose with UGALEF bags

Annual general meeting

31 May 2019

The annual general meeting is a meeting that brings together members, board of directors and staff to share and learn about the progress of an organisation. FARUG on 31 May 2019 held her fifth AGM at her secretariat. Participants were given information on what has been transpiring in the organisation, asked what they would like to see in future and how they can be served better. Being a membership organisation, the AGM adopted the agenda.

Members were taken through the audits of the organisation, the programmes running, available funders and the increase in the number of members. The AGM gives members a platform to ask questions about their organisation and an opportunity to learn about the accountability of funds. To the love of the organisation, members fundraised for the membership basket and the funds are expected to help other members who may get problems when the organisation is not in position to offer help, identifying a project that can be started to provide employment and sustainability to members.

This AGM was for the year 2017/2018. Next AGM will be held in 2020.

After The AGM, members were embraced with a social gathering that was packaged with sensitization about transgenders and transitioning then the day was closed with socialising, Networking and more fun!



Members during the AGM and social gathering.

FARUG holds a directors Forum

5 June 2019

In commemoration of #PrideMonth2019, Freedom and Roam Uganda organised the first ever Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women Directors' Forum. Supported by Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa (OSIEA), the two-day convention took place at an undisclosed location.

The event was attended by various Executive Directors and Programs Directors from several LBQ organizations cutting across different regions in Uganda. These included KuchuTimes, FEM-Alliance, Kakyo Projects, Health and Rights Initiative, Eastern Region Women's Empowerment Organization (ERWEO), Rights4Her, RELLA Uganda, HER Internet and Rainbow Voices Mbarara.

As one of its aims, the convening focused on fostering personal development of LBQ women leaders by taking them through a journey of self-mastery. This session was to enable each participant create a personal 3-year strategic plan. It also saw representatives of the LBQ movement reflect on what direction they would love to see the movement grow.

The Programs Director of FARUG, Gloria DH El said, "We embraced a new phenomenon of using our own stories to create quotes for history instead of always quoting other people in their sessions and work. We artistically drew the kind of movement that we want to see."



Participants at the Director's Forum

Health corner

Mass HIV testing, treatment and care

June July 2019

In the struggle to continue fighting HIV and reaching the 95-95-95 global fund target for 2030, Farug continues to carry out mass HIV testing towards LBQ women. This Project funded by The Elton John AIDS Foundation under the Deep Engagement Fund started in June 2018. Farug's target was to reach 240 LBQ women from six districts of the country but due to the over whelming demand we ended up reaching 830 LBQ women with the services. This was packaged with sensitization on HIV and STIs, treatment and care, follow-ups for the positives newly linked to care and counselling.

In June and July 2019, we have managed to reach 120 LBQ women with these services in the districts of Jinja, Busia and Lira in the east and north regions respectively. At least a big number of LBQ women know their status now, those tested positive have been linked to care, those found positive but had given up on ARVs have been retained on treatment and then those who need HIV related services know where to go for help.



More health interventions

FARUG continues to attend the several EJAF meetings that are aimed at proper accountability and follow ups of the project and project funds. EJAF has accepted to continue funding FARUG for the next six months after identifying more demand for reaching more LBQ women with HIV related services.

FARUG was also part of the launch of the TB intervention new drug launch that that took place on 1st may 2019 at the Golf Course Hotel in Kampala.

FARUG was part of the ACCESS consultative meeting at fairway hotel that took place on 20 June 2019. This consultation was about how best LBQ persons can access Sexual reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) related services without hinderance and discrimination.

In the struggle of lobbying for more funds, FARUG also wrote a capacity assessment to mild may Uganda seeking for more support in both angels of financial and capacity building to enable easy reach and access to SRHR services.

We continue to run the mini clinic with the available services of HIV testing and management, cervical and breast cancer screening, Hepatitis- B screening and vaccination, STI screening and management, counselling and general medical care plus referrals. Lubricants and condoms are also available in plenty.

We are happy to report an increase in the number of LBQ women who are adhering to HIV treatment (ARVs) and increasing number of Behavioral change among both positive and negative people we have reached with HIV related services.

Our DIC Peer attended a Training of Young women on how address feminism in different aspects of walks of life in relations with Violence Against Young Women and Girls (VAW|G) across Africa that is meant to strengthen feminism amongst young women and girls as way of achieving their goals as feminists. This training took place in Mozambique and this was a great opportunity for her to interact, network and learn more from other young women and girls across Africa.



Social News

Advocating for equal rights

Community based approach for preventing violence against women and girls.

26 July 2019

On 26/07/2019 FARUG members who are beneficiaries of the MEMPROW trainings on violence shared a report on what they learnt with other members. Jean Karuhoko and Tatiana shared information on sexual and gender-based violence a lesson that benefited a number of members who did not attend the MEMPROW trainings. Members were taken through the different types of violence, advocacy, sex and the law and a broader view of gender-based violence.

The training was more of an interaction session where members were free to share their experiences as well as advising each other on how to undergo and respond to situations regarding gender-based violence.

These trainings help LBQ women know where to seek help when violated both from their former male partners and current same sex partners, work places, families and from societies they stay.



FARUG staff attend the Uganda Feminist Forum (UFF)

The Uganda feminist forum (UFF) is a space that brings together feminists from different walks of life, organisations, backgrounds and social status. A number of issues are discussed targeting the wellness of women and their rights.

Four FARUG staff were part of this organising, the Executive director was a moderator of a panel where the programmes director was a panellist.

Among the topics discussed was “the silence on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression”, “the fears within the LGBTQI community”, the fears and silence of the wider Ugandan feminist movement on LGBTQI issues”, and many more.

This convening gave space for sisters from the community to look inward and confront the fears that silence them, before looking outward.

Confession;

“My take away from the UFF was that I learnt how to silence my fears, how to love and care for one another and it also helped me learn on how to speak out for myself” -Eron.