

THE RWIZI-NETWORK



**ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REPORT
FOR
THE FINANCIAL YEARS
ENDED
2020-2022**

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LIST OF ACROYNMS

AHRAJ:Action for Human Rights and Access to Justice

ACOYDE:Action for Youth Development

AFF:Alive Again Foundation

BTCC:Bigodi Turacos for Conservation Centre

CECU:Civic Education Coalition in Uganda

DENIVA:Development Network for Indigenous and Voluntary Associations

DPI:Defenders Protection Initiative

CSOs:Civil Society Organizations

FRAHECA:Fragile Hearts Care and Empowerment Foundation

FCU:Freedom Centre Uganda

GMF:Gijii Mercy Foundation

HOPEFFU:Hope for Peaceful Families Foundation Uganda

HRCU:Human Rights Centre Uganda

HRDs: Human Rights Defenders

KHF:Kavijo Health Foundation

NCHRDs:National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

MRF:Mbarara Rise Foundation

PWDs: Persons with Disabilities

RACD:Real Agency for Community Development

RSU:Rainbow Shadows Uganda

RHI-CODE:Ruhira Humanists Initiative for Community Development

Rwizi-Net:Rwizi-Network

SKY TV: Sky Television-Mbarara

TOTs: Training of Trainers

UNNGOF:Uganda National NGO Forum

YFC:Youth Fraternity for Change

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The years 2020, 2021 and 2022 has been years of growth for RWIZI-NET. The organization continued to demonstrate commitment to promoting democratic governance, Human Rights and fostering realization of Climate Justice in South western Uganda.

RWIZI-NET sustained her focus on creating space for CSOs and citizens to effectively engage in governance and decision making through demanding Transparency and Accountability, and particularly by continuing to develop skills and knowledge of citizenry in the Region.

Significant achievements made by RWIZI-NET from 2020-2022 include:

Finalizing the organization's 5-year strategic plan 2023/2027, which was approved by the Board. The plan will guide RWIZI-NET's work during the next five years.

Development of a 3-year Resource Mobilization strategy to guide the organization's fundraising initiatives

Revision, development, and adoption of the relevant policies such as financial policy and procedures policy, Human resource policy, Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, Anti-Money Laundering policy, and ICT policy among others which were approved by the board.

Working in partnerships and coalitions with the CECU, National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda, DPI, HRCU, Defend Defenders, and the Media to implement interventions to achieve common objectives.

Continued building of capacity for CSOs and citizen to demand for effective service delivery, public accountability, and inclusion of vulnerable and minority groups in society, achieved through effective citizen participation in governance, monitoring serve delivery, promotion of human rights, research, documentation and advocacy.

I am grateful to all partners, and the Board of Directors who continue to give management strong leadership and support to work hard to ensure that the organization achieves results.

I also acknowledge the role of RWIZI-NET's members for their sustained interest and oversight which ensures that RWIZI-NET remains true to its core mandate of promoting Democratic Governance, Human Rights, and Fostering realization of Climate Change. I am proud of the staff of Rwizi-net who has worked tirelessly with a deep sense of commitment. This guarantees that RWIZI-NET meets its targets. Please keep it up!

Special appreciation goes to all our partners for their support of our work. Our funding partners who have shown unwavering faith in our work have continued to provide resources and technical support without which our Programmes would be difficult to implement. We continue to look to you for increased partnerships in all ways.

May God bless you

FOREWORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The years aforementioned are yet other great ones for RWIZI-NETWORK. We continued to strategically position ourselves at the Centre stage of governance, human rights and climate justice at local, regional and national levels to increase citizen's engagement. We are committed to realizing an empowered civil Society that is responsive and fosters achievement of democratic governance, human rights and climate justice in western Uganda.

At the national level, RWIZI-NET continued to nurture partnerships formed over the years with policy makers, political leaders, and other civil society actors across the sectors. We worked more collaboratively with our partners and were thrilled about some of the results achieved by such an effort. One key milestone was a Strategic Plan 2023-2027 whose development process included many of our partners. The new Strategic Plan will guide efforts to build the capacity of CSOs, as well as stimulate citizen participation in demanding Transparency and accountability. It was exciting to work with communities of southwestern Uganda to build the capacity of citizens to monitor and engage their leaders on issues of public service delivery and increased civic education and participation. One achievement has been bridging the gap between leaders and citizens. The communication and engagement channels so established must be allowed to flourish if we are to see benefits in Citizen Participation.



I commend the Board of Directors for their unreserved commitment and support, their deep knowledge, and their rich experience which were critical to the years' achievements. I appreciate the staff who worked tirelessly throughout the year to ensure that we delivered on our targets, despite the often impossible deadlines. I thank all our development partners and others who continue to believe in us and what we do and provide financial, technical, and moral support.

Warmest Regards

ABOUT US

The Rwizi-Network is an all-inclusive Sub-regional not-for profit organization legally established in Uganda as an alliance of diverse grass root self-governing voluntary organizations (NGOs and CBOs) in south western Uganda (East Africa) united as civil society in the common pursuit of, **Democratic Governance, Access to Justice, human rights** and **Climate Justice** to achieve equitable development and **through contributing to UN SDGs goal16.**

Rwizi-net's strategic interventions include;

- (i) Capacity Building,
- (ii) Partnerships and collaboration building,
- (iii) Advocacy,
- (iv) Promoting Access to Justice
- (v) Research and Documentation,
- (vi) Human rights awareness and promotion.

The Network currently covers the southwestern region of Uganda **comprised of districts such as Mbarara City and District, Ibanda, Sheema, Bushenyi, kazo, Kiruhura, Ntungamo, Buhweju, Isingiro, and Rubirizi and steadily growing in membership and coverage.**

Rwizi-Network strives to empower grassroots CSOs to demand public accountability, engage in Civic Education to increase human rights awareness, monitor service delivery, and climate justice and action while prioritizing citizen participation.

VISION

Effective, responsive, accountable, and transparent institutions centering citizen participation

GOAL:

An empowered civil Society that is responsive and fosters the achievement of democratic governance, human rights, and climate justice in western Uganda.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To build the capacity of CSOs and citizens to demand effective service delivery, public accountability, and inclusion of vulnerable and minority groups in society, achieved through effective citizen participation in governance, monitoring service delivery, promotion of access to justice and human rights, research, documentation, and advocacy.

AIMS/OBJECTIVES

1. To advocate and promote implementation of actions and policies needed to ensure citizen effective participation and demand for democratic governance, access to justice, human right and climate justice in Uganda.
2. To create an inclusive platform for CSOs in south western Uganda to effectively coordinate their advocacy and campaign activities to enhance democratic governance, access to justice human right and climate justice.

3. To build strong partnerships and collaborate with National, Regional and International institutions to promote democratic governance, access to justice, human rights and climate justice.

4. To build the capacity of grassroots CSOs including HRDs, women, youth, people with disabilities, and other minority groups in the region to participate in monitoring service delivery for inclusive and sustainable development outcomes.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES AVAILED TO OUR MEMBERS AND CLIENTS

ACTIVITIES

- Documentation and publication of resource educational materials
- Capacity building/training
- Advocacy.
- Citizen Participation forums
- Media Engagement
- Budget and contract monitoring
- Partnership building
- Human rights promotion, monitoring and documentation

SERVICES

- Legal Aid
- Community Legal Empowerment
- Amicable Dispute Resolution
- Referral and Psychosocial support
- Technical skills for vulnerable groups
- Digital safety skills

BENEFICIARIES REACHED WITH OUR SERVICES

Technical skills: 40 people

Digital security skills: 260 people

Legal aid: 5 people

Referral services: 3 people

FINANCING

1-Funder: Austrian Embassy in Kenya

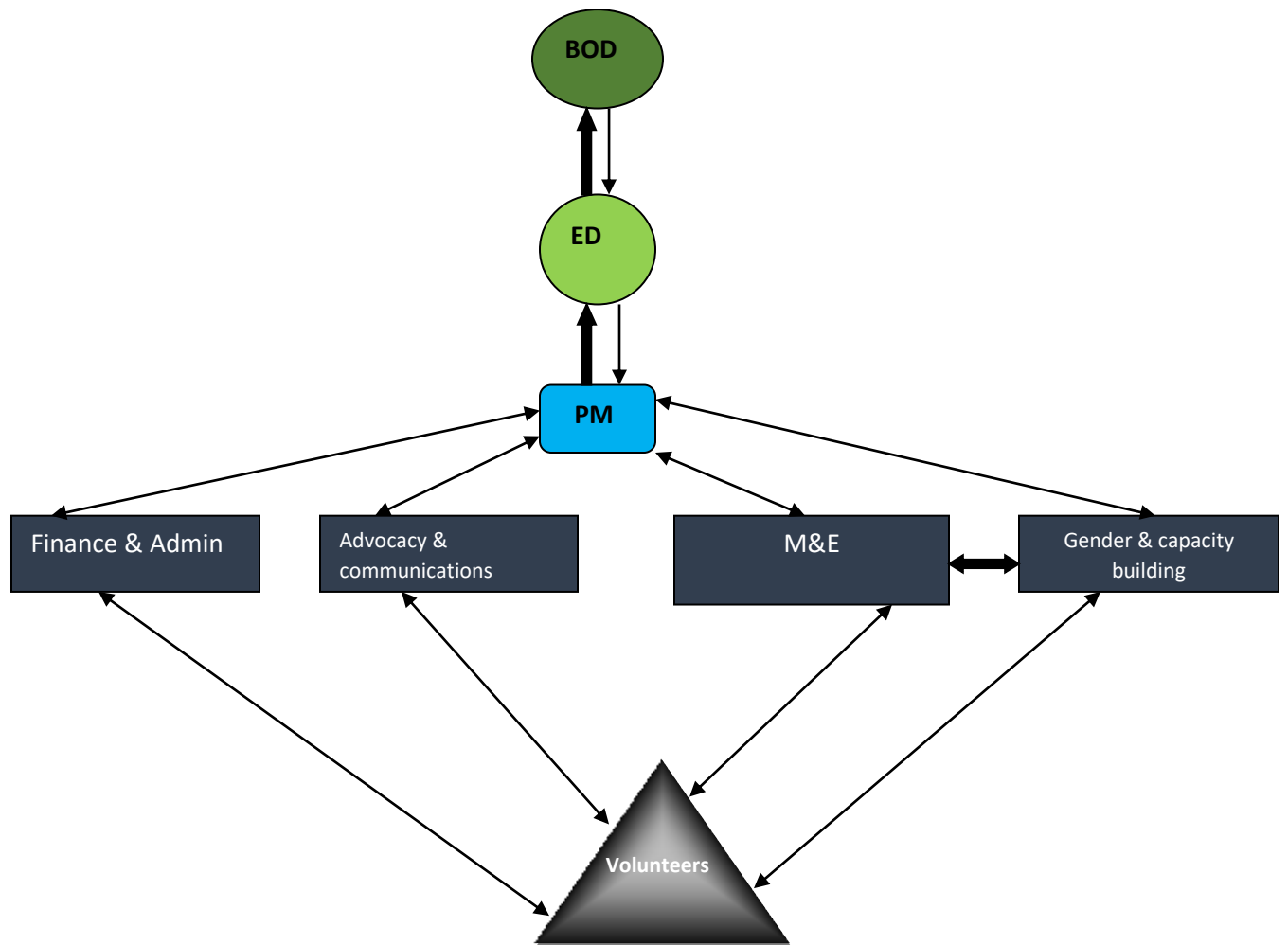
2-Tactical Tech

\$ 40,000

INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP/ ORGANALGRAM OF THE RWIZI-NETWORK

Organizational structure of the Rwizi-Network

The organization has a board of director and four working departments of **Finance and administration, gender and Capacity building, Programs, advocacy and Communication and M&E**; it is further detailed in the administrative structure below.



Staffing statement:

Rwizi-net has no foreign staff employed in the organization; all our staffs are local Ugandan citizens.

ORGANIZATIONAL/INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT.

Throughout the years, the Organization has continued developing its capacity through a number of interventions laid to strengthen its internal and external capacity as well as to position its self strategically among which include;

During 2020, the Organization recruited and sustained an office administrator who is charged with the day to day running of the secretariat, 2 community volunteers who has played a vital role in community mobilization and liaison of the organization with the community member's todate.

We managed to purchase and equip the secretariat with 3 desks and chairs, a cabin, and 2 laptop computers for staff members to use in the course of implementation of the day-to-day activities of the organization.

We continued facilitating staff member's capacity development by delegating them to relevant trainings and workshops which enhanced the knowledge and skills of 3 staff thus contributing to the effective and efficient implementation of the organization's mission and goals.

During 2021, the Organization managed to recruit and sustain the Finance officer who is charged with the proper allocation of Organizational resources in collaboration with the Programs Manager.

We also managed to develop organizational policies such as Human resource policy and financial policy that guide the operations of the organization so as to ensure transparency and accountability during the implementation of its activities.

During 2022, we managed to recruit and sustain a Senior Programs Manager who is charged with the development and implementation of organizational programs in collaboration with other departmental heads.

We have managed to develop and adopt other policies such as the Monitoring and Evaluation policy, ICT policy, Data Quality and Management policy, Anti-Money Laundering and Financing Terrorism policy, procurement policy, Governance policy, and the code of conduct which was approved by the board of directors.

During this year, we continued facilitating the capacity development of our staff members by delegating them relevant training and workshops which include; Resource mobilization, Quality Assurance Certification Mechanism (QuAM), NGO policy regulatory framework (CSO position paper in the NGO policy), Civic Education Policy Framework at UPIMAC hosted by CECU, NGO relations with corporate bodies that is Centenary Bank and strategic planning training workshop among others all which has greatly boosted the capacity of our staff members thus improved and quality service delivery.

Lastly, one of the key milestones achieved during this year is the development of a five (5) year strategic plan from 2023-2027 and a 3-year resource mobilization strategy that will guide the organization's direction and resource mobilization for the coming 3 to 5 years and these were approved by the board of directors.

OUR WORK: PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

During 2020, through collaboration with CECU and WACSOF, we managed to engage in civic education (Voter Education and or rights) of the recently concluded 2021 General Elections of the Republic of Uganda whereby we conducted trainings in various districts of South Western Uganda i.e. Mbarara City and District, Ibanda, Isingiro and Kazo districts. During implementation of this project we reached 600, 300, 300, and 300 community members with voter education respectively making a total of 1,500 members targeted and reached thus improving citizen participation in free and fair elections around the region.

We conducted 4 radio talk shows about voter education and rights in collaboration with the electoral commission using the government-free radio airtime at Crooze FM and Endiigyito FM that reached over 2,000 listeners and received 100 call-ins seeking clarification about the topics of civic education.

Throughout 2021, the Organization faced a number of challenges as a result of adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that saw restricted movements and public gatherings resulting from the total lockdown that was imposed on the country by a directive issued by the president of the Republic of Uganda on the 18th day of March 2020. We adopted working from home but in mid-year, we collaborated with Youth Fraternity for Change (YFC) and Freedom Centre Uganda (FCU) in the distribution of COVID-19 relief (Food and in-kind donations) that impacted the livelihoods of over 700 community members in Mbarara city.

We also engaged in an election observation mission still under collaboration with the mentioned development partners in which we recruited and trained 45 short-term and long-term observers on how to carry out their activities during fieldwork and how to report back using the system known as ODK that was used for data collection. The team of observers was comprised of 3 long-term observers (LTOs) and 12 short-term Observers (STOs) from each of the three districts i.e. Mbarara, Ibanda, and Kazo districts where the mission was carried out.

A report to that effect was generated and submitted to the development partners for onward submission to the relevant authorities that is the Electoral Commission and the donors.

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY.

Throughout 2020, we successfully managed to advocate and raise awareness of HRDs and community members' Human Rights during the crisis of the novel pandemic Covid-19 that resulted in increased Human rights abuses and violations caused by lockdowns and prolonged periods of family togetherness and restricted movements. The beneficiaries among others include;

Supporting Human Rights Defenders

In 2020, Through our human rights defender support programme – which includes practical and expert training, advice and advocacy support, facilitating access to high-level policy and decision-makers, and civil society strategy building and coordination – we provided defenders with knowledge, networks, and resources to amplify their impact through Providing training, strategic advice, and advocacy support to 8 defenders (3 women, 5 men, and 2 non-binary defenders) over a period of three days, Working on

issues including women's rights, LGBTI rights, migrant and refugee rights, and human rights. The program, therefore;

- ✓ Helped defenders become more influential, equipping them to better use international and regional human rights mechanisms to achieve change on the ground
- ✓ Provided defenders with solidarity and stronger networks of influence, protection, and support.

During 2021, in collaboration with the Human Rights Centre- Uganda (HRCU), we managed to develop, translate, and disseminate Human Rights related Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials totaling over 1000 in different local languages for easy access to information that saw over 1000 community members' awareness of their Human Rights and where to seek redress from raised.

In the same year, we registered a drastic increase in the number of referrals to relevant mandated institutions of the victims of abuses and violations of their fundamental rights. We saw the numbers increase from 12 during 2019 and 2020 to 22 this year and this implies that the Organization's notable work done on the ground is being noticed by community members as a result of registering referrals from referrals on the same note we take the honor to thank all people involved in this and continuously urge you to proceed with the commendable work you are doing thereby creating increased impact in regard to Human Rights defense and Advocacy in Southwestern region, the nation and the globe at large.

During the year 2022, we continued to promote and advocate for the fundamental Human rights of all categories of people including Children, women, men, youth, the Elderly, and the LGBTQI community through research and documentation, promotion and protection, capacity strengthening of CSOs and creating an inclusive platform for Advocacy and citizen engagement all which impacted the livelihoods of over 2000 community members through increased awareness and advocacy.

As a result of the continued shrinking civil society space that saw some donor communities exist, the country has not only affected us organizations but also the citizens as a result of reduced interventions laid by CSOs intended to put Human Rights abuses and violations to an end. This saw the much-needed interventions and efforts of the organization seem fruitless due to the availability of limited resources allocated to certain programs regarding Human Rights Advocacy.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

Throughout the years 2020 to 2022, the organization managed to implement several interventions aimed at the realization of climate justice includes;

Participation in the Save River Rwizi campaign an ecosystem that provides livelihoods to over 10,000 people living along the wetland from over five different districts that is Buhweju, Sheema, Mbarara, and Rwampara among others.

During 2022, we managed to disseminate information to raise awareness regarding curbing the adverse impacts of climate change through conducting 2 radio talk shows in collaboration with Youth Fraternity for Change (YFC-Uganda) and IEC materials that saw over 500 community members' awareness raised.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

Throughout the reporting period, Rwizi-network has partnered and networked with different local and national organizations including; Civic Education Coalition in Uganda (CECU), the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders (NCHRDs), Human Rights Centre-Uganda (HRCU), the National NGO forum (UNNGOF), Defend Defenders-Uganda, Development Network of Voluntary Indigenous Associations (DENIVA), Defenders Protection Initiative (dpi), media, social influencers among others.

We have also participated in preparations of a number events that includes;

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS day that was celebrated from Mbarara city for two days starting 8-9th day of December 2022 at Mbarara University grounds with support from the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda (NCHRDU).

REGIONAL HRDs FORUM hosted in Mbarara city at Rwizi Arch hotel for 4 days in the month of May, 2022 convened many HRDs around Western Uganda with the support of Human Rights Centre Uganda (HRCU).

Warmest thanks and credit goes to all our dear esteemed development partners without whom it would have been a hard nut to crack to achieve our intended objectives of creating an inclusive platform of all voluntary organizations, increasing citizen participation, and impacting the livelihoods of the vulnerable and marginalized groups of people that are our constituency.

OUR KEY RESULTS AREAS

KRA 1: COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:

Strategy 1.1: Strategically positioning Rwizi-net and strengthening its institutional capacity to ensure the voices of remote minorities, women, PWDs, and the youth are amplified.

Strategy 1.2: Institutional development for remote and peri-urban based good governance and human rights-focused NGOs and CBOs to engage in monitoring of emerging Human rights and democratic governance issues across the sub-region.

Strategy 1.3: Strengthening and creating a sustainable platform for CSOs in the region to meet, network, organize, and thrive in their endeavors

Outcome for community and institutional capacity development

By ensuring a strong infrastructure of membership, effective secretariat, accountability, communications, and institutional alliances, Rwizi-net will become a robust and well-informed sub-regional network. It will have the people and systems needed to advocate for and support the implementation of evidence and rights-based responses in community development. To this end, member CSOs will be able to freely share experiences, ideas, and information working towards a unified, regional, and sustainable CSO network in western Uganda for the realization of human rights, climate justice, and democratic governance.

By strengthening sub-regional CSOs and mentoring of emerging human rights advocates/HRDs with increased capacity, Rwizi-net as a sub-regional CSO movement amplifying the voices of remote and peri-urban based communities, will have the high-quality knowledge and skills needed to successfully engage in policy-making and programming above all calling for an enabling environment and scale up of access to social and economic wellbeing for people in the Region. Emerging member CSO leaders will have enhanced leadership skills and will be able to effectively represent their constituencies/individuals, community, regional and national policy-making, and program development. This, in turn, will strengthen and sustain a unified, regional sustainable CSO have enhanced leadership skills and will be able to effectively represent their constituencies/individuals, community, regional and national policy-making, and program development. This, in turn, will strengthen and sustain a unified, regional sustainable CSO movement in the region.

KSA 2: POLICY ADVOCACY, RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Strategy 2.1: Promoting rights and evidence-based policies and Programmes, for and by CSOs and Human Rights Defenders.

Strategy 2.2: Participating in the development and dissemination of rights-based research, knowledge management, and learning.

Strategy 2.3: Strengthening Collection, analysis, and dissemination of service delivery data/Information

OUTCOME OF ADVOCACY RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Policy-makers and program managers will have a better understanding of the rights and needs of different groups of people; develop rights- and evidence-based Programmes and policies; and implement programs and policies that contribute to a more enabling environment for service delivery targeting vulnerable groups. By ensuring meaningful and well-informed CSO involvement in policy-making, reviews, and programming, combined with the mobilization of other stakeholders and movements, Rwizi-net will ensure the development and implementation of policies and programmes that are rooted in the realities of vulnerable groups and, in turn, bring concrete benefits.

HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH (HRBA)

The network applies key HRBA principles of Non-discrimination, Participation, Accountability, and Transparency with clear linkages with Human Rights.

Rwizi-net focuses on empowering rights holders, including those who are particularly marginalized, to claim their rights and demand accountability. Focus on strengthening the capacity of duty bearers to fulfill their obligations. Foster a constructive dialogue and process between rights-holders and duty-bearers.