



## HUMANRIGHTS FIRST RWANDA ASSOCIATION

### INTRODUCTION

Human Rights First Rwanda Association is registered in accordance with laws governing non-profit making organizations in Rwanda under law no 20/2000 of 26/7/2000. It is non partisan association and has an open membership of 50 persons composed of a group of human rights lawyers, University Professors, teachers and members of the community who form the general assembly.

Its main objectives are

- (a) To promote human rights education and provide legal assistance to poor and vulnerable groups in the Rwandan community at Large.
- (b) To empower individuals and groups to campaign for their own rights and the human rights of others.

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Human Rights first Rwanda Association since its inception in late 2005 has carried out a number of activities thus including organizing a workshop on the need of a legal aid forum, Danish Institute of Human Rights and other Civil society organizations.

This led to the formation of the Rwanda Legal Aid Forum which comprises of 36 organizations both local and international intervening in Justice and Human Rights in Rwanda..

Human Rights First Rwanda Association is the current chair of the Rwanda Legal Aid Forum.

Through our imitative of regional networking we are among the founding members of the East African Civil Society Forum (EACSOFF) and a current member of the Governing council. The forum brings together over 100 Non Governmental organizations from Kenya, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda.

Through EACSOFF we have been part of the wider campaign of denouncing illegitimate governments that take power through undemocratic means an example is the case of Zimbabwe and the Kenyan election crisis where we issued communiqués.

Through our advocacy campaigns we were involved in the campaign to allow civil society lawyers to represent their clients in courts of laws in Rwanda. We spear headed the drafting of a position paper and a communiqué to members of parliament from 10 civil society organizations highlighting the needs and plight of indigent, poor and vulnerable groups who have no means and have been denied access to justice.

In partnership with the Ministry of Justice, Danish institute of Human Rights, and three other NGOs we conducted a baseline survey on legal aid in Rwanda. The survey was aimed at identifying various gaps in access to Justice in the country and come up with various recommendations

**II A brief recap of the Activities undertaken by By Human Rights First Rwanda Association in 2012.**

We have been involved but not limited to the following activities:

- Promoted Sexual Minority Rights by hosting and Conducting an L.G.B.T.I. empowerment workshop in Byumba District.
- Providing Legal Aid to poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged segments in our community through Law Clinics that covers 2 Districts (Kamonyi and Ruhango Districts)
- Empowering women in Ruhango and Kamonyi District by educating and enforcing their Rights to Land.
- Recruited and Trained paralegals who will act as resource persons in matters of land, and Succession Rights.
- Bridged the Literacy gap between we the Legal Aid Providers at Human Rights First Association Rwanda and the vulnerable beneficiaries by producing a simplified manual on Land and Succession Rights.
- Training of local mediators (Abunzi) and local officials on human rights issues and the Procedural aspect in Law.

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- On International Criminal Justice Issues we trained Judges Civil Society and Regional Media on Criminal Justice and the Importance of the Rome Statute in curbing Impunity, War Crimes against Humanity, Genocide

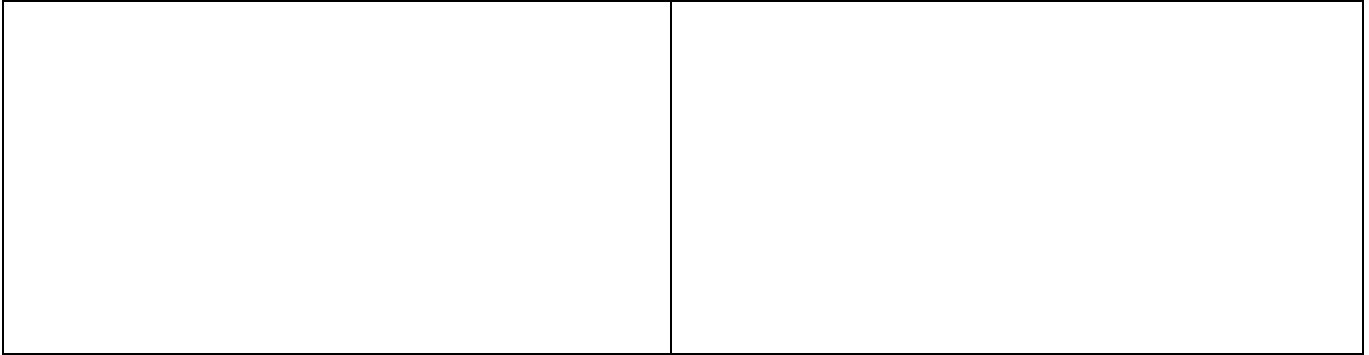
Below is a table highlighting some of the workshops and seminars organized by Human Rights First Rwanda Association H.R.F.R.A.

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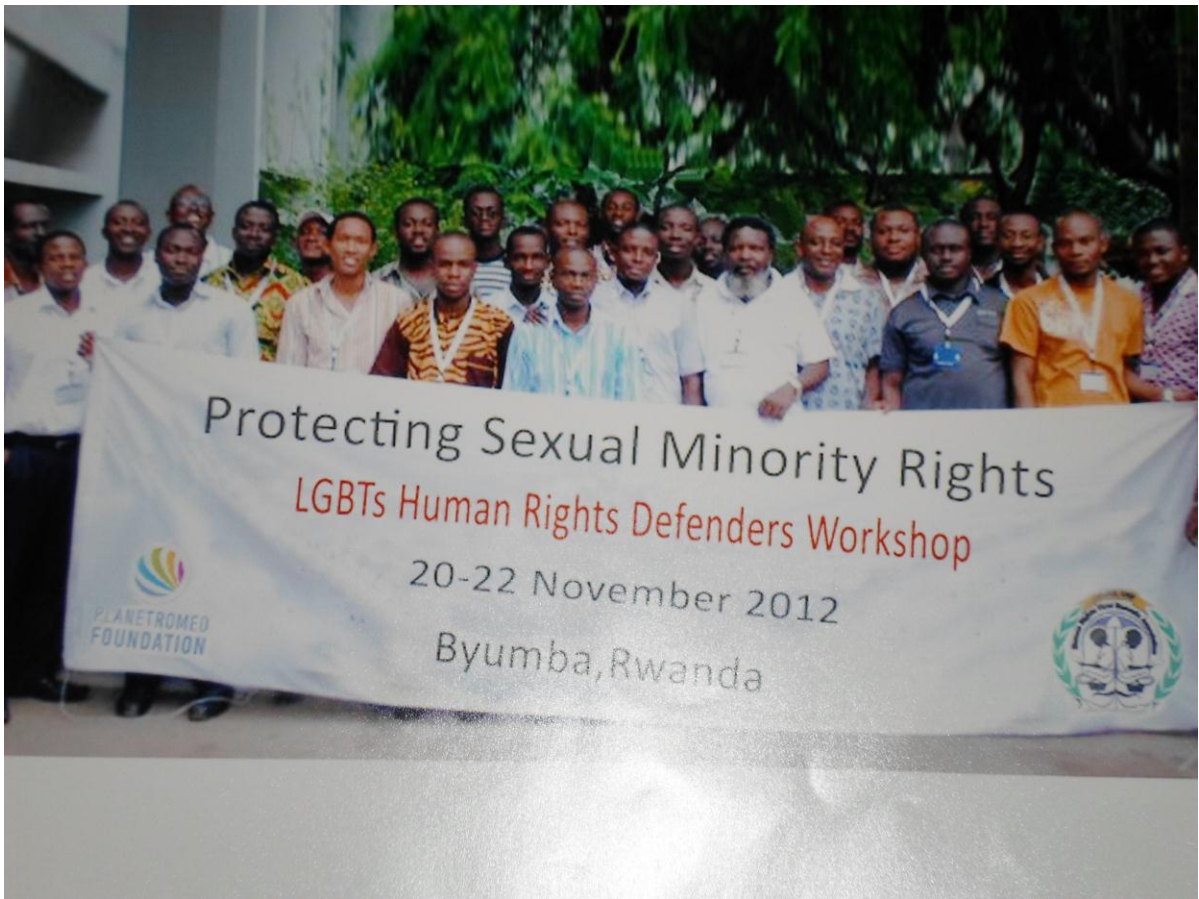
Activities Undertaken	Realized activities and Results
<p>Promoted Sexual Minority Rights by hosting and Conducting an L.G.B.T.I. empowerment workshop in Byumba District.</p>	<p>3 day Workshop in Byumba District where sexual Minority groups in Rwanda were trained on Advocacy. A strong Network of over 60 members was established on the promotion of L.G.B.T..I. Rights. Human Rights First Rwanda Association has been at the forefront in advocacy Through lobbying parliamentarians and members of the senate who are the republics law makers, for the removal of anti-gay person articles in the Penal Code but after the removal of such inhibiting articles we now engage with Sexual Minority Group on an advocacy role and offering legal assistance where need be.</p>
<p>Providing Legal Aid to poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged segments in our community through Law Clinics that covers two Districts (Kamonyi and Ruhango Districts)</p>	<p>Through our Liaison office in Kamonyi District over 2000 cases were received over 1000 of these were solved through mediation and Arbitration means as the pending ones await resolution through Public Interest Litigation by courts of Instance.</p>
<p>Empowering women in Ruhango and Kamonyi Districts by educating and enforcing their Rights to Land.</p>	<p>Through the Project Your Land Your Rights Two Hundred and Eight (208) titles were registered exclusively for Women in Kamonyi and Ruhango Districts. A total of Fifty seven (57) Cases purely on Eviction matters were resolved through our empowerment programme in both Districts.</p>
<p>Recruited and Trained paralegals who will act as resource persons in matters of land, and Succession Rights.</p>	<p>Four Hundred (400) Paralegals were recruited and Trained on Land and Succession Rights the same Paralegals were educated on a cross section of Rights Violation especially on Vulnerable segments of the community like Gender Based Violence (G.B.V.)</p>
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<p>Bridged the Literacy gap between the Legal Aid Providers the vulnerable beneficiaries.</p> <p>Training of local mediators (Abunzi) and local officials on human rights issues and the Procedural aspect in Law.</p> <p>On International Criminal Justice Issues we trained Judges, Civil Society Organization and Regional Media on Criminal Justice and the Importance of the Rome Statute in curbing Impunity, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity and Genocide</p>	<p>A simplified Manual on Land and Succession Rights was authored and produced by Human Rights First Rwanda Association .This Manual has been used as authority in resolving Land Disputes in Kamonyi and Ruhango Districts.</p> <p>The Abunzi who are Adhoc Local Mediation Committees serve to resolve cases at grass root level in a bid to avoid a backlog of cases at Court of first instance .Legal empowerment by Human Rights First Rwanda Association by educating them on Justice issues was realized by H.R.F.R.A. substantial and procedural law was also imparted to the members of these committees in Kamonyi District.</p> <p>Three Workshops were held where Judges Civil Society and Media Personalities across the Region from Kenya Uganda Tanzania Burundi Sudan The Democratic Republic of Congo as well as the Host country Rwanda, were trained on the Rome Statute its Ratification by the Republic of Rwanda in June August and September respectively.</p>
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**Protecting Sexual Minority Rights by Training Sexual Minority Groups on Advocacy and LGBTI Rights in Byumba District.**



**Training of Paralegals in Ruhango District**



**The Simplified Manual on Land Rights Designed Authored and Published by Human Rights First Rwanda Association**





**Training of Judges on Through The East African International Criminal Justice Initiative on the benefits of the Rome Statute.**



**OUTREACH TO VULNERABLE SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY BY HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST RWANDA ASSOCIATION**



**Paralegal Manuals used in Recording Cases**



