



THE WOMEN'S PROBONO INITIATIVE (WPI)

WHO WE ARE

WPI is a feminist organization that started as a dream by two lawyers and has now grown into an organization with more than 10 staff that provides legal representation, feminist-legal empowerment programs, research, and other forms of support. WPI's staff are mainly young women, who are using this space to challenge the status quo and/or narrative of gender equality, and using the law as a tool that can be used creatively to advance conversations, shift attitudes, change policies, legislation, and practice.

Since our formation, WPI has so far handled over 1000 cases through legal representation, legal advice through our toll-free lines, community legal aid clinics, and Public Interest Litigation (PIL) for women and girls all over Uganda. WPI's activities aim to address the systemic injustices against women and girls, with a distinct focus on reversing discrimination on the basis of gender and sex. WPI has over the years had specific initiatives to address the denial of sexual and reproductive health rights for sex workers, women living with HIV, and those unable to access health care and/or safe abortion. WPI also works with women refugees, female survivors of gender-based violence (SGBV), and human trafficking both in the country and abroad. In addition to providing free legal representation, WPI aspires to serve as a knowledge hub for up-to-date information and analysis on various forms and causes of violence and exploitation of women and girls, and solutions to address this.



Our Vision

A just and equitable society where women and girls are free from all forms of discrimination and violence.



Our Mission

To advance gender justice through promoting autonomy, voice, and influence of women and girls in legislation, policy, and practice.



Accountability:

We are accountable to our clients, the communities we work with, and to our partners.

Dignity:

We believe in and uphold the dignity of all individuals, and particularly strive to create a workplace that will provide an environment in which all who encounter us are left feeling respected and treated in a dignified manner.

Non-discrimination:

We believe in the equality of all persons, and demonstrate this through our active implementation of diversity and inclusion in our clients and networks. As a feminist organization, we deliberately and consistently work to be an organization that values equity, celebrates diversity, and challenges all forms of discrimination. The work is aimed at challenging power relations by centering women's voices and agency. We, therefore, apply an intersectional lens in all our work. We believe women should be equipped to determine what justice is on their own terms.

Transparency & Integrity:

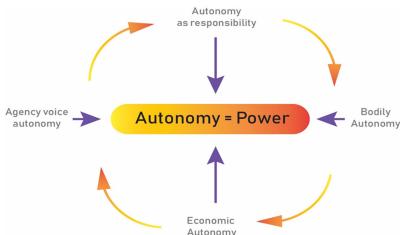
We are open and transparent in all we do and in our communication. We are particularly keen to be transparent stewards of resources that are entrusted to us for our work. We also strive to build relationships based on trust and mutual respect. We trust that our clients, partners, and staff will maintain their commitment to our mission and vision, and will be held accountable to high standards in this regard. We are our sister's keeper.



Autonomy of Women and Girls

WPI understands the autonomy of women and girls as an all-encompassing concept that centers on ensuring that women and girls have the POWER to make decisions on all matters that concern them and their wellbeing. Specifically, the autonomy that WPI will champion is mainly comprised of four key elements:

- I. Agency and Voice Autonomy
- II. Economic Autonomy
- III. Bodily Autonomy
- IV. Autonomy as Responsibility.



See Figure 1 below:

Agency and Voice Autonomy: Encompasses the ability of every woman and girl to be able to take charge of their life stories, which requires challenging the culture that women, their initiatives and their rights are defined and/or seen through the lens of men. Women and girls should be able to inform and/or influence policy based on their lived realities, experiences and aspirations. Their voices should be heard, and their perspectives should be respected.

Economic Autonomy: At the core of power is the ability to own and control economic resources, in their various forms. The quest for economic opportunity for women should be safe and dignified-devoid of exploitation, violence and discrimination. Women should have access and control of economic opportunity and resources that will enable them make meaningful choices about their lives.

Bodily Autonomy: The right of a woman or girl to make independent decisions about her own body and reproductive functions. This is at the core of the right to equality and privacy, and includes intimate matters of physical and psychological integrity.

Autonomy as Responsibility: Autonomy comes with power, and any power should be managed and/ or used responsibly- for the betterment of one's life, community and society at large. Ultimately, society is better off when women, men, girls and boys are able to live together, respect each other and together work for a more equitable and just world.

WPI notes that the intersection of vulnerabilities that make it difficult for women to exercise autonomy and should be a critical part of assessment and/or addressing autonomy. Women's life experiences make them susceptible to abuse and different challenges.



Approaches to our work

Our overall goal is to advance gender justice and challenge all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls in Uganda. The expected outcomes from interventions are to have:

- I. Supportive communities that work collectively to promote gender equity and protect the rights of women and girls with the following outputs:
- a) Institutions and other stakeholders collectively and actively promote awareness about the rights of women and girls.
- b) Increased access to information about the rights of women and girls by communities in different parts of Uganda.
- c) Various forms of community groups were established to promote the rights of women and girls.

- II. Policies and legislation that address inequalities and the persistent violence against women and girls with the following outputs:
- Studies/Research that provides a better understanding of the context of women and girls, and changing trends/ dynamics.
- b) PIL cases strategically selected and executed.
- c) Concerted advocacy campaigns conducted for more gender-responsive policies and legislation.

III. Younger female lawyers and activists championing autonomy for women and girls, individually and as part of collective efforts of the women's movement in Uganda.

- Empowering/holistic legal support a) services for WPI clients.
- b) Mentoring young women lawyers at select Universities to value and advance autonomy for women and girls in Uganda.
- Developing a program of work on c) feminist lawyering for lawyers.
- d) Increased feminist-litigation leadership/ attorneys in Uganda.

IV. WPI initiatives result in an increased number of women freed from violence and exploitation.

- WPI creative lawyering initiatives, a) including PIL, to protect the rights of women and girls.
- Joint CSO initiatives to advocate for b) changes to policies and practices that exploit women and girls.
- c) Joint initiatives to advocate for improved funding to track and protect Ugandan women exported to provide domestic labor in the Middle East.
- d) Research that captures voices of women with lived experiences on best practices to improve the livelihoods of young women involved in care work/domestic labor.

For more information about our work, please visit our website www.womenprobono.org or reach us on:

Our Toll-free line: 0800220645



@womenprobono



The Women's Probono Initiative (WPI)



wpi.uganda

Email: info@womenprobono.org wpiugandaltd@gmail.com

Tel: +256 (0) 200 909061

+256 (0) 759 719586

+256 (0) 777 610412

"Nobody warned you that the Women whose feet you cut from running would give birth to Daughters with Wings."

- Ijeoma Umebinyuo