

CREATING AWARENESS OF THE RIGHTS TO INHERIT PROPERTY BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN OYAM DISTRICT:

Introduction

Uganda has laws that govern inheritance of property for every individual equally. So in case one has abused another ones right, he/she faces penalty from the law as required. The laws are implemented by the authorities that are police and local council (LC) at the lower levels to enhance equality among all people let it be she/he is disabled or not disabled.

PWDs are discriminated against by not allowing them to inherit their properties as required by law by people with no disabilities perceiving that they are unable to handle the properties like any other person. The Disability Act 2006, Land Act 1995 and the Constitution of Uganda 1995 have policies that talk about land inheritance for all citizens, regardless of whether they are disabled or not. In spite of having these legislations in force, they are not disseminated and because of the inadequate distribution, poor reading culture, and cultural beliefs, persons with disabilities are still denied their inheritance.

Do the PWDs know their right to inherit any property?

According to a research carried out in Oyam district in 5 sub counties that is Oyam town council, Ngai, Otwala, Acaba, and Atura in 2011, out of 150 persons with disabilities interviewed only 10 knew their rights to inherit property and 140 people with disabilities were ignorant about their rights. Contrary to research findings, a few LCs were aware of the rights of PWDs because of the awareness created by local government and development partners. For example, High Force International (HFI) targeted LC 1, 2, 3 in the town council and as a result land wrangles concerning PWDs were very few and only 5 cases were reported in the last 8 months.

Despite these cases being few, the LCs responded positively together with police and helped the PWDs who were involved in the 5 cases and 3 of them were able to get their rightful property. This involved a blind woman who finally inherited the land that was given to her by the late husband, another was a boy with physical disability aged 20 who inherited a cow given him by the late mother and the third was a lady with physical disability who finally got a motor cycle left by her late husband which had been taken by her late husbands' brother.

Conclusion

Awareness creation starts with LCs 1, II, III plus other service providers in the community and by disseminating the different government acts, like Disability Act 2006, Land Act 1995 and the constitution of Uganda 1995 because they all indicate the rights all people including the persons with disability.

In addition the PWDs should know their rights to inherit properties and massive community awareness should be done to advocate for their own rights.

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