



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CLINIC

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

LAW SCHOOL

CLIENT CHARTER

A. WHO WE ARE:

The Public Interest Law Clinic (PILAC) is the premier University Based Law Clinic in Uganda. Established in 2012 and accredited to provide legal aid services by Uganda Law Council, PILAC seeks to promote Social Justice through hands-on experiential learning as well as exposing students to “live” cases of individuals who have been confronted by the law in its varied manifestations.

OUR VISION

A legal profession alive to the social justice needs of the vulnerable.

OUR MISSION

To promote social justice through legal education, research, legal aid, public interest litigation and building strategic partnerships.

OUR VALUES:

- Equitable access to justice
- Non- discrimination
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Community empowerment

B. OUR SERVICES

PILAC seeks to link university law students to the community through the provision of services tailored to enable students working with advocates to meet the social justice needs of the community as they learn. Through the Legal Aid Clinic, law students under the supervision of advocates have a chance to gain practical experience by working on cases on real clients who approach the clinic. Our services as attorneys are;

- Legal counselling
- Court representation
- Alternative dispute resolution
- Legal awareness and training
- Public Interest Litigation
- Research

OUR CLIENTS:

The Legal Clinic serves the urban poor communities around the University namely in Kikubamutwe, Katanga, Kivulu and Kikoni as well as Prisoners in selected prisons in Mubende and Wakiso districts and the rural poor in Lwengo District.

HOW CAN YOU APPROACH US?

Clients can walk- in to the clinic or call us by telephone or talk to our para-legal in the community or through referrals from another organisation.

WHEN WE RECEIVE A CASE THROUGH A PHONE CALL, THROUGH OUR PARALEGAL OR REFERRAL? WE WILL;

- Invite you to come to our office at an agreed date and time

- Interview you to gather additional information
- Require you to fill in an application form for legal aid services
- Make an initial needs and merit assessment
- Communicate grant or decline of our services without inordinate delay
- Provide our services to you as agreed and instructed

C. WHEN WE RECEIVE THE CASE IN PERSON? WE WILL;

- Interview you to gather material information
- May require you to produce additional documentation
- Require you to fill in an application form for legal aid services
- Make an initial needs and merit assessment
- Communicate grant or decline of our services without inordinate delay
- Provide our services to you as agreed and instructed

D. WHEN DOING A NEEDS AND MERIT ASSESSMENT, WE CONSIDER;

- The client's means to afford legal services on his or her own
- Reasonability of grounds for initiating or defending the matter or public interest
- Prospects of success or recovery in the matter
- Social status of a client as elderly, widow, orphans, children, persons with disability, internally displaced persons, prisoners, refugees and persons living with HIV/AIDS
- Nature of case as land dispute, inheritance, succession, domestic violence, bail and plea bargain.

E. OUR COMMITMENTS.

In a bid to ensure client satisfaction, we will;

- Identify ourselves when we speak to you;
- Act honestly, ethically and with professionalism at all times;
- Treat you with courtesy and understanding;
- Be sensitive to cultural and linguistic diversity;
- Protect your interests from third parties
- Ensure that our service is accessible by taking into account the location of the center, the physical facilities provided and the hours of opening;
- Respond promptly to your request for service;
- Ensure proper storage and filing of your documents
- Recognize your rights to dignity, respect privacy and confidentiality;
- Respond to your requests for information in a way that is easy to understand;
- Wherever possible, provide interpreters and/or other assistance required by you to ensure good communication.
- Act on your instructions and where impracticable; reasonably and in your best interest.
- Ensure that all your work which is undertaken by a student or paralegal is properly supervised by a lawyer or advocate.

F. THE CLINIC MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HELP YOU

- If you give us incomplete or inaccurate information;
- If you do not cooperate with the students and Advocate assigned to your case
- If you do not provide us with the materials or information required to effectively pursue your matter;

- If you do not provide us with truthful and accurate disclosure of all transactions, dealings, relationships or incidents that we assess as relevant to your matter including your criminal record and previous court appearances;
- If you refuse to accept our advice;
- If you indicate to us, or we form the view that you have lost confidence in us;
- Any ethical grounds which we consider require us to cease acting for you, for example, conflict of interest;
- For any reason outside our control which has the effect of compromising our ability to perform the required work within the required time frame;
- If your matter is outside our areas of expertise;
- If in our sole discretion, we consider it is no longer appropriate to act for you;
- If you do not attend appointments or court appearances without making prior arrangements with us;
- If you or any other person with whom you have a family, domestic, personal or social relationship, insults, abuses or uses offensive or threatening language at any member of the staff (including any volunteer) of the Centre.
- If you do not appear in court when called upon to do so.
- If you do not follow up your case for a continuous period of six months without reasonable excuse

G. FEES AND COSTS:

PILAC offers legal services free of charge. However, to the extent that is just and reasonable and having regard to the means and merit test, the client may be requested to meet part of the expenses involved in the course of provision of services. Any monies or costs due to a client shall be passed on to the client but in the event that the client is liable to costs, the same shall accrue accordingly.

The clinic's liability only extends to fault occasioned by the willful and gross unprofessional misconduct of its employees and no other.

H. REVIEW OF OUR SERVICE:

We will:

- Give clients an opportunity to have a say about the way we provide services;
- Maintain compliance with the standards set out in this Charter and those required by the regulator;
- Regularly review our service delivery against those standards;
- Undertake to continually identify and address ways in which we can make the service better;
- Regularly liaise with our funding bodies and provide reports to ensure financial and service delivery accountability.

FEEDBACK, SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS:

PILAC actively encourages our stakeholders, clients and service users to provide us with feedback, suggestions or complaints. You may do so in writing by email at pilac@lists.mak.ac.ug or verbally to the supervising staff member, the Head of Legal Aid Clinic or the PILAC Coordinator.

THE PILAC COMPLAINTS PROCESS:

PILAC is committed to ensuring that any person using PILAC services has the right to lodge a complaint and to have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.

- A staff member will inform you that your complaint has been received.
- Your complaint will be examined within 7 days of receipt.

- Your complaint will be investigated and a resolution will be sought. The PILAC Coordinator, the Head of Legal Aid, or the Supervising Advocate will be responsible for handling the complaint.
- You may be contacted for more information. You have the right to a support person at any stage of the complaints process. Support people may include a friend, advocate, community elder or an interpreter if required.
- You will be informed of the outcome
- If you are not satisfied with the investigation and proposed resolution of your complaint, you can report the matter to Law Council

YOUR COMPLAINT WILL BE DEALT WITH:

- Seriously,
- Quickly,
- Confidentially and
- Without affecting your right to get more help from the Clinic

OUR ADDRESS

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