



**INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS**

# Annual Report 2013

*“A roof over one’s head, safe drinking water, adequate food, accessible quality education, adequate health care, a dignified and secure livelihood ... these are not only development goals, they are basic human rights.” (AWID)*

Plot 60 Valley Drive, Ministers Village, Ntinda | P.O. Box 73646 Clock Tower, Kampala-Uganda  
Tel: +256 414 581 041 | E-mail: [info@iser-uganda.org](mailto:info@iser-uganda.org) | Website: [www.iser-uganda.org](http://www.iser-uganda.org)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

About the Organization.....	4
Objectives .....	4
Our Vision.....	4
Our Mission .....	4
Core Values.....	4
GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP .....	5
STAFFING .....	6
2013 OVERVIEW .....	7
ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING.....	9
<i>Press Commentaries in Print Media</i> .....	9
<i>Press Statements</i> .....	9
<i>Radio Talk shows</i> .....	9
<i>Research Papers /Articles</i> .....	10
<i>Video Advocacy</i> .....	10
EXPLORING PARTNERSHIPS.....	10
CAPACITY BUILDING FOR STAFF .....	11
SOME KEY ACHIEVEMENTS .....	12
CHALLENGES .....	12
FINANCIAL INFORMATION .....	13

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2013 has been a year of maturity for ISER having started business in 2012, and we are very happy with what we have managed to achieve. We have registered a number of successes, met several challenges, and learned many lessons during the reporting period. We have established cooperation with a number of government and non-government actors willing to cooperate and work together to promote Economic and Social Rights (ESRs) in Uganda. ISER is successfully getting the concept of ESRs into the public domain in Uganda, with key implementing institutions realising the gap and expressing the importance of doing more work in this field.

A Uganda Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) survey published in November 2013 by the World Bank shows that the quality of education and health services remains weak, posing serious challenges to the country's long-term social and economic progress as outlined in its Vision 2040. The findings of the survey prompted the secretary to the Treasury Keith Muhakanizi to call for radical reforms to improve the poor public service delivery which is crippling development, and attributed poor public service delivery to bad governance.

Working on ESRs in Uganda remains a daunting challenge. For example there is the tendency to perceive development and human rights as opposing concepts that cannot co-exist in Uganda, and entities seeking to ensure respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights are considered as anti-development. However, the future looks bright with some positive developments in the country. There is ongoing policy review and formulation that may have a positive impact on the promotion of ESRs in the country. Uganda is coming up with a National Action Plan (NAP) on Human Rights, and the second 5-year National Development Plan (NDP II) where there is emphasis on incorporation of a Human Rights Based Approach. Furthermore, a new tool "Check List for Human Rights"- an initiative of the Parliament Committee on Human Rights was launched on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to provide a mechanism for MPs to cross check whether bills before Parliament comply with human rights.

The judiciary is more open to discussing its role in public interest litigation. Specific to ESCRs, the judiciary with support from the UN Human Rights Office is in the process of developing a training curriculum on ESCRs that will be incorporated in their training programme.

During 2013, we learned that awareness-raising and capacity building is a crucial first step towards the implementation of social and economic rights. Findings from the baseline survey on perceptions, knowledge and understanding of economic social and economic rights in Uganda indicated that although many people have heard of the term, these rights are hardly understood, especially when it comes to their enforcement. Notably, it was difficult to get individuals to fill out the key informant questionnaire that targeted people with sufficient knowledge on ESCRs.

*Namusoby Salima*  
*Executive Director*

### **About the Organization**

The Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) is a registered not-for-profit human rights non – governmental organization (NGO) in Uganda. ISER was founded in February 2012 to ensure full recognition, accountability and realization of social and economic rights primarily in Uganda but also within the East African Region.

### **Objectives**

- To promote a human rights based approach to the design and implementation of legal and policy frameworks relating to social and economic rights
- To build awareness about economic and social rights and explore strategies for securing their realization
- To broaden individuals' and communities' access to economic and social rights in Uganda
- To strengthen community participation in the design and implementation of social and economic policies and programs that affect them
- To ensure government accountability for social and economic rights through community empowerment and
- To mobilize and build capacity of NGOs and the media to advocate more effectively for social and economic rights including using regional and international mechanisms.

### **Our Vision**

ISER works to facilitate and promote social justice through human rights. We seek to promote the universal right of every human being to health, education, access to clean water and sanitation, housing and the right to work.

### **Our Mission**

Our mission is to promote the effective understanding, monitoring, implementation, accountability and realization of economic and social rights in Uganda.

### **Core Values**

- Equality and non-discrimination
- Independence
- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Transparency

## **GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP**

ISER has a Board of Directors that plays oversight and advisory functions for the organization. The Founding Board members were carefully selected to suit the expert needs of the organization, and each member is a distinguished professional in their field of work. Currently the Board consists of six members. ISER's Executive Director; Ms Salima Namusobya, sits on the Board as an ex-officio and Secretary to the Board. The ISER's Founding Board of Directors are:

**Kibira Denis** - A Pharmacist, Researcher and Activist, Denis possesses extensive experience in public health systems, pharmaceutical policy, research and advocacy, regional and global health and trade environment. Denis has Bachelor of Pharmacy degree from the Rajiv Gandhi Technical University in India, a Master in Business Administration degree from Uganda Martyrs University, Advanced Health Management Program with Yale School of Public Health/ Foundation for Professional Development, Post Graduate Diplomas in Total Quality Management and Public Health Management, a Diploma in United Nations and International Understanding and several short courses in Pharmaceutical Policy Analysis, Access to medicines and Intellectual Property, Medicines and Insurance coverage from institutions such as Harvard School of Public Health and WHO Collaborating Centre on Pharmaceutical Policy (Boston).

He currently works as Deputy Director at the Coalition for Health Promotion and Social Development (HEPS Uganda). He is also National Coordinator of the Medicines Transparency Alliance (MeTA). Denis coordinates the Stop Stock outs Campaign, a civil society initiative to increase access to medicines since 2008.

**Nabasiye Lillian** - Lillian has over eight years of professional experience in the water Sector with a special focus on change management and development of quality management systems. Currently, she works as a Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Advisor in Rwenzori Portfolio. She is actively engaging the local governments, private sector and NGO's to improve access status within the region. Previously, she worked as the Area Engineer for National Water and Sewerage Corporation in Jinja. Lillian holds a Bachelors Degree in Civil Engineering from Makerere University and a Masters Degree in Sanitary Engineering (UNESCO-IHE). She is currently a doctoral fellow at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, School of Engineering; College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology, Makerere University.

**John Ekwamu** - John is an Education Consultant, a long serving teacher and trainer having served in different capacities as Head teacher in upcountry schools in Eastern Uganda, and currently working with the Aghakhan Foundation as a Senior Education Program Officer.

**Kenechukwu Esom** - International Board Member, Kene is a Policy Coordinator (Law and Human Rights) at the African Men for Sexual Health (AMSHeR) in South Africa. He is a Barrister - at - Law and holds a Master of Law (LLM) in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa from the Centre for Human rights, University of Pretoria. Kene has been involved in providing legal aid and advocacy for various marginalized communities including, unaccompanied/separated children, refugees and asylums, survivors of sexual and gender –

based violence and sexual minorities. Prior to his career as a human rights lawyer, Kene had stints in criminal law practice and the military. He is involved in the academia and has authored a number of journal articles.

**Idayat Hassan** - International Board Member, Idayat Hassan is a lawyer and development practitioner with over nine years experience promoting good governance and democracy in Nigeria and the West African region. She currently works with the Centre for Democracy and Development in West Africa where she develops and implements programs with the outcome of promoting the rule of law and democracy within the region. Prior to joining CDD West Africa, Idayat was the coordinator of the anti – corruption coalition network, Movement Against Corruption, a DFID sponsored Coalition for Change comprising over three hundred civil society groups in Nigeria. She has a wealth of experience in the areas of; access to justice, socio and economic rights, human trafficking, elections and constitutional reforms, and security sector reforms. Idayat holds an LLM from the EU Academy of Legal theory, has attended several courses internationally and was recently a visiting scholar at the Columbia University Law School.

**Nantege Gladys** - Gladys is a certified public accountant. She currently works as a finance manager with FINCA Africa Regional Office based in Uganda. Gladys has served in different regional and International financial institutions in various capacities. She has over 10 years experience in financial reporting, budget management, credit analysis, cash flow management and strategic analysis.

**Saphina Nakulima** - Saphina is a lawyer with four years experience in human rights and forced migration. She is an advocate of the High Court of Uganda. Saphina holds an LLM (Human Rights), a Bachelors Degree in Law from Makerere University and a Post Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Law Development Centre in Kampala- Uganda.

## **STAFFING**

At the end of 2013, we had 5 full time staff namely Ms. Namusobya Salima (Executive Director), MS Angella Nabwowe (Programs Manager) Ms. Shamim Asiiimwe (Communications and Administrative Officer), Mr. Joshua Kisawuzi (Community Outreach Officer) and Mr. Odong Peter Omita (Office Assistant).

## 2013 OVERVIEW

In 2013, ISER managed to accomplish the following:

### NEW PROJECTS:

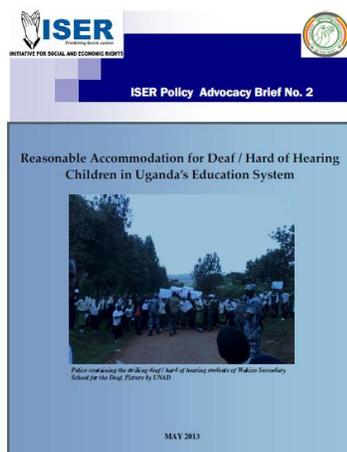
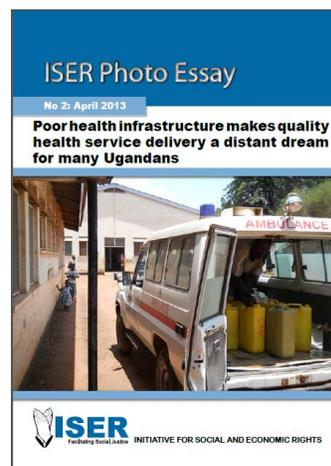
We secured funding for 2 new projects;

1. Promoting Economic and Social Rights in Uganda - Anonymous Donors
2. Innovation for Civic Engagement in Social and Economic Rights in Uganda - Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa (OSIEA).

### PUBLICATIONS

In April 2013, ISER published a policy advocacy note about the Public Finance Bill 2012 entitled *“Shortchanging social and economic rights: Why Parliament should not pass the Public Finance Bill, 2012 in its current form”*. In this publication, we argue that while the Public Finance Bill makes some very good proposals, especially on reporting and accountability, there are significant omissions, and specific provisions which if passed in their current form will negatively impact on social and economic rights in this country. The note was published as part of wider efforts by the CSBAG to respond to the proposed Bill.

In April 2013, ISER also published a Photo Essay under the title **“Poor Health Infrastructure makes quality health service delivery a distant dream for many Ugandans”**

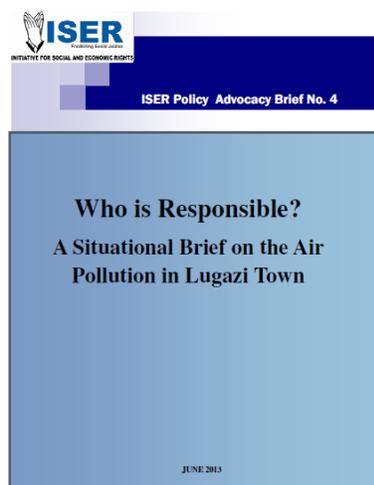
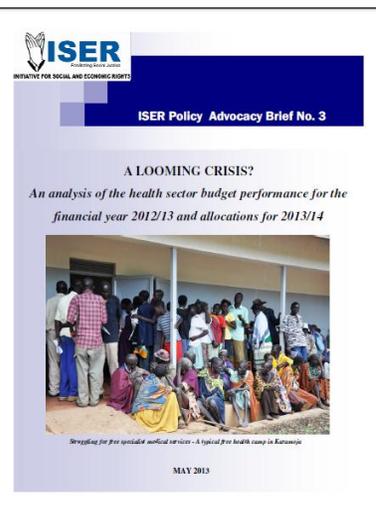


In May 2013 ISER published a policy advocacy brief about the inclusion of the deaf in Uganda’s education system entitled; *“Reasonable accommodation of the deaf children in Uganda’s education system”*. In this brief, our argument is that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) have a right to education under the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and that all stakeholders should work to ensure their inclusion in the education system.

## ISER Annual Report 2013

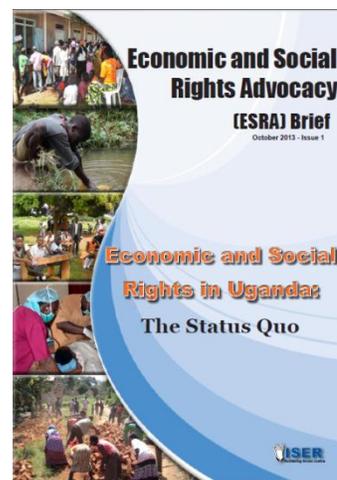
The Policy Brief is being used for advocacy purposes with the Ministry of Education.

**“A LOOMING CRISIS: Health sector budget performance for the financial year 2012/13 and allocations for 2013/14”** is another policy advocacy brief published by ISER in May 2013. In this brief, we argue that health sector budget provision and performance does not reflect the commitment made by government to achieve universal access to health care service delivery especially to the most vulnerable groups who mostly reside in the rural areas.



In June 2013 ISER published a policy advocacy brief about air pollution in Lugazi town entitled; **“Who is responsible? A situational brief on the air pollution in Lugazi Town”**. In this brief, our argument is that violation of the right to a clean and healthy environment adversely affects the enjoyment of a broad range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food and water. We also received a legal opinion from E-Law that we used to supplement the Brief.

In October 2013, the inaugural issue of the Economic and Social Rights Advocacy (ESRA) Brief was published under the title **Economic and Social Rights in Uganda: The Status Quo**. This brief is dedicated to Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRS) advocacy in Uganda.



## ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING

### Press Commentaries in Print Media

In February 2013, the ISER Executive Director published an article in the Daily Monitor entitled; **“Participatory budgeting will deliver essential social and economic services”**. This article makes a case for deliberate and systematic efforts to ensure public participation in setting budget priorities, budgetary allocations and monitoring government expenditure.

On 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013, in commemoration of the UN world Toilet Day, our Communications Officer published an article under the title **“Schools should provide separate latrines for male, female students”** that highlights how poor sanitation affects the right to education especially of the girl-child.



On 10<sup>th</sup> December, in commemoration of the International Human Rights Day, our Communications Officer published an article under the title **“There’s need for Government and NGOs to work together”**

### Press Statements

ISER, together with the Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs) Coalition had a press statement on 20<sup>th</sup> September under the title **“Industrial Action by UNATU: Government’s Failure to Adhere to Teachers Demands is a Serious Blow to the Public Education System”** in regard to the teachers’ strike. It was a call to all stakeholders to rally behind the teachers and push for the realization of the right to education in Uganda.

### Radio Talk shows

On 6th August 2013, ISER in partnership with Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) had a one hour talk show on a local radio station (Akabozi 87.9FM) to discuss how corruption affects service delivery especially for women in the health and education sectors.

## *ISER Annual Report 2013*

On 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013, ISER was hosted on Radio Simba 97.3FM to discuss the human rights to access to water and sanitation and how this impact on other rights like health and education. This was in commemoration of the UN World Toilet Day.

### ***Research Papers /Articles***

***Litigating the Right to Health in Uganda: The Necessity for Innovation and Activism:*** The ISER Director worked on this paper to be published in a book chapter edited by Ebenezer Douraje of the Community Law Centre at the University of Cape Town, and published by the Pretoria University Law Press.

***Navigating the Access to Information Challenge in Health Rights Litigation in Uganda.*** This perspective essay was published in a special issue of the International Journal on Health and Human Rights of Harvard University.

### ***Baseline survey on Perceptions, Knowledge and Understanding of Economic and Social Rights (ESRs) in Uganda***

The study was carried out from 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2013 to 15 October, 2013 to establish the levels of awareness, knowledge and understanding of economic and social rights in Uganda.

The survey findings are already informing ISER's interventions for example regarding legal and policy reform, awareness raising and capacity building in terms of content and geographical focus across the country.

### ***Video Advocacy***

ISER produced a documentary ***“Keeping Us Away – Sanitation and Girls’ Learning”*** which highlights how sanitation in schools affects learning. The ISER team trailed Inspectors of Schools during routine inspection and corroborated information to the effect that many schools have very poor sanitation facilities. The documentary features interviews with the Minister of State for Health (Hon. Sarah Opendi), Chairperson of Uganda National Examinations Board (Fagil Mandy), Hon. Joseph Sewungu (long serving teacher and MP for Kalungu West and member of the education committee in Parliament) among others. Excerpts from this documentary were serialized and broadcast on NBS Television and various radio stations in commemoration of the UN world Toilet Day 2013.

## **EXPLORING PARTNERSHIPS**

ISER has joined some key networks and coalitions that engage in issues of social and economic rights and this has helped in sharing experiences and also joint advocacy. ISER had joint advocacy engagements with the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), the ESCRs Coalition and the Civil Society Coalition on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

We have also established links with technical staff within the Parliament of Uganda including the legislative counsel who legally advise the different committees of Parliament and the Parliament budget office. This has enabled us have easy access to information coming out of Parliament and the Draft Bills before Parliament. It also allows us easy access to the legislators.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR STAFF**

The ISER Executive Director participated in a litigation surgery on the right to education organized by INTERIGHTS in Nairobi, Kenya from 19 – 22 February 2013. The objective of the litigation surgery was to identify and provide substantive support to cases on the right to education that could be pursued before domestic or international fora and to build relationships with lawyers undertaking such cases.

From 5- 11 May 2013, the ISER Programs Manager attended a course on judicial enforcement of socio-economic rights in Africa presented by the Advanced Human Rights Courses Programme, of the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. The course was a great opportunity to learn more and get first hand experiences of interventions geared at equitable and accountable utilization of national resources and



monitoring government's progress towards the realization of economic social rights. At the same training, ISER made contact with practitioners to contribute articles to the ESRA Brief.

From September 16-20, 2013, ISER's Executive Director attended the annual Harvard Course on Health Rights Litigation at the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University in the USA. The course created the opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas about the latest jurisprudence as well as strategic thinking on health rights litigation from around the world, with a multi-disciplinary group of participants, and to foster a network of human rights advocates around these issues.

ISER's Executive Director attended an advanced short training on Justiciability of ESCRs organized by the Institute for Human Rights at the Abo Akademi University in Turku Finland between 18<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013. Attending the course enabled Salima to have further discussions with representatives of KIOS who also attended the course, and the subsequent conference on human rights and development

## **SOME KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Registration of the organization:** ISER completed its registration with the National Board for Non – Governmental Organization (NGO) Board as a not-for-profit local human rights NGO in Uganda. It was registered (registration number 9195) to operate under the Non-Governmental Organisations Registration Act (CAP 113) hence becoming a legal person under the laws of Uganda.

**Development of organization policies:** ISER has so far developed the Financial Manual, Human Resources Manual and Employee’s Handbook, and these have guided in the management of the organization.

**Strategic plan:** The draft five year strategic plan was presented to the Board at the Annual General Meeting and approved. The strategic plan provides overall strategic direction to the staff and Board of Directors of the organization

**Office premises:** At the end of June 2013, ISER moved to a spacious and more secure location on plot 60 Valley Drive, Ministers Village, Ntinda. This new location has enough space to hold meetings with stakeholders thus minimizing costs that would be incurred in holding meetings at hotels. We also have some good office space to accommodate staff, volunteers and interns.

**Website:** ISER established a website ([www.iser-uganda-org](http://www.iser-uganda-org)). We have tried to keep the ISER website ([www.iser-uganda-org](http://www.iser-uganda-org)) updated with a number of resources to attract researchers, students and other people interested in social and economic rights. We also now have an active twitter account ([@IserUganda](https://twitter.com/IserUganda)).

## **CHALLENGES**

**Limited coverage:** As a newly registered entity, our registration documents limit us to working in Kampala until after one year. We have therefore not been able to establish links or do any work outside of Kampala. In May 2013, we submitted an application for registration renewal covering a period of three years with countrywide operations.

**Limited resources:** There are very few funders who are willing to give grants to new organizations. Though the staff number increased from two to four full time staff, this number is still inadequate and thus delays completion of tasks and implementation of some projects. We have stepped up our fundraising drive and we are hoping to have three new funders on board in 2014.

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**The Initiative for Social and Economic Rights  
Financial Statements**

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
	<b>USD</b>	<b>USD</b>
<b>3 Income</b>		
Grant-FGHR	5,000	5,000
General Fund/ Founders fund	8,465	3,849
Grant-Anonymous	75,000	-
Grant-OSIEA	30,000	-
	<u>118,465</u>	<u>8,849</u>
<b>4 Expenditure</b>		
Research and Advocacy	11,123	183
Office supplies	1,381	-
Transport-local	454	420
Utilities	410	-
Communication	812	67
Printing and publications	2,152	370
NGO board registration, subscription	211	892
Office maintenance	266	103
Stationery	31	57
Staff capacity development-international travel	6,123	79
Community outreach	2,336	-
Personnel cost	19,700	1,347
Consultancies	7,392	-
Office rent	4,224	2,852
Bank charges-Ugx account	135	25
Bank charges- Usd account	277	20
Audit and accountancy fee	320	246
Depreciation	1,597	478
	<u>58,944</u>	<u>7,139</u>