

## Anti-FGM Coalition

In 1999, LHRC conducted a research on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Tanzania and there after held a national workshop where its findings were released.

Members who took part in the workshop decided to form a coalition to fight FGM in Tanzania. A committee was formed and the Center was given a mandate to coordinate coalition. members of the committee mainly from NGOs, government and international organizations. They were requested to prepare a plan, fundraise for it and spearhead the campaign. A proposal was prepared and was sent to various funders but most of them were of the view that the coalition should join hands with the government to enable it be part of the implementation agents once the plan is ready.

Immediately after, some members organized a regional network against FGM, a move which led to networks which had previously on been inactive waking up. Unfortunately, the national coalition which LHRC had attempted to coordinate did not materialize. Nevertheless the Centre remained persistent in its pursuit against FGM. The relentless efforts led to a contact with an organization based in the USA namely Equality Now. The association endeavors to work on Women's Rights. The two teamed up and managed to come out with a campaign on the enforcement of the law against FGM.

With its determination on the Anti-FGM campaign LHRC teamed up well with Equality Now and the later offered financial support and capacity through visits and sharing of experiences from other countries. Through this relationship, it was possible to team up with other organizations in Tanzania who fought for the same cause. They held various meetings where they discussed how they could join forces to make the campaign bigger and effective. The team then decided to work together in a campaign against FGM. It was a bit difficult but there was a possibility of having a plan with shared roles. Each organization played its part and the climax was on the Zero Tolerance to FGM. The day was observed in Dodoma in 2005 February where a public rally was held and graced with speeches by the Minister for Community, Development, Gender and Children Affairs. Testimonies were given by survivors and affected people as well as campaigners. This one event by a coalition was a very good lesson on how human beings can work together for a common goal. From then onwards the coalition has been active and meet regularly to organize activities and events. Ever since its establishment, the coalition has been commemorating zero tolerance to FGM on February 6th with Equality now maintaining its financial support for the cause. Furthermore, some organizations have been facilitating the coalition financially to hold regular meetings to plan for activities and events.

So far, activities that the coalition has conducted include the commemoration of the African Child Day (16th June 2007), holding a capacity building workshop to 30 members of parliament who come from areas with high prevalence of FGM (November 2007). Funding for this workshop was obtained from EASSI (The Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women). In 2007, one of the activities conducted during Zero Tolerance day was a graduation ceremony of 100 girls through an alternative rite of passage meaning girls who pass through the transition of childhood to adulthood without having to undergo genital mutilation. Popular Tribunal (Temporary coalition) Women's Dignity Project, in collaboration with TAWLA, LHRC, TAMWA, KIWOHEDE, CHODAWU, WILDAF, TGNP, WLAC, FAWETZ and KIVULINI organized a Popular Tribunal (PT) on girls and women's lives hold in Dar es Salaam on November 6-8, 2007. The aim of this tribunal was to raise public awareness and influence policy and legal change on specific threats to girls and women's lives. The three specific issues were gender-based violence, abuse of house girls and maternal mortality and morbidity. LHRC chaired the legal/ judicial committee.