

Daraja - Shared Services Platform



How Yusuf Lule's Human Rights Agenda is Reshaping Mombasa's Activism



Executive Summary

Human Rights Agenda (HURIA), under the leadership of Yusuf Lule, is revolutionizing activism. With a focus on countering violent extremism, enhancing access to justice, and promoting community-led climate change adaptation, HURIA demonstrates how transparency, collaboration, and evidence-based approaches can drive meaningful change in human rights work.

In the world of human rights activism, change often comes through confrontation. But in Kenya's coastal region, Yusuf Lule and his organization, Human Rights Agenda (HURIA), are proving that collaboration can be an equally powerful force for transformation.



"I believed we could work together for the community, and not against each other," Lule explains, outlining the philosophy that has guided HURIA since its inception 11 years ago. This approach, focusing on partnership rather than antagonism, has become HURIA's hallmark in addressing some of the most pressing issues in the region.

HURIA's work spans three critical areas:

1. countering violent extremism,
2. enhancing access to justice, and
3. promoting community-led climate change adaptation. In each of these spheres, the organization's impact is tangible and far-reaching.

Take, for instance, HURIA's access to justice project in Mombasa. Funded by the United Nations Development Programme through the European Union, this initiative has been running since 2019. By partnering with police stations across the county, HURIA has fostered improved relationships between law enforcement and local communities. The results are particularly evident in areas like Bamburi, Kisauni, and Changamwe, which have historically experienced sporadic violence and organized crime.

"You can't do human rights work in the dark," Lule asserts, emphasizing HURIA's commitment to transparency and accountability. This philosophy is reflected in the organization's robust communication strategy, which includes regular reports, a public strategic plan, and a digital media presence built on authenticity and inclusivity.

HURIA's influence extends beyond Mombasa. In Kilifi County, the organization is spearheading a climate change sensitization campaign in partnership with the local government's Disaster Management Unit. This initiative has led to the implementation of resilience projects in Ganze and Magarini, as well as education on drought-resistant agriculture - critical interventions in a region increasingly affected by climate change.



However, HURIA's success hasn't come without challenges. Lule identifies "mission-drift" as a significant risk facing NGOs, where organizations veer from their stated missions in pursuit of funding or relevance. To combat this, HURIA has developed sustainable governance and accountability frameworks, aided by its partnership with the Daraja Shared Services Programme by the Global Development Incubator..

"Daraja has helped us find the right funding fits for some of our projects," Lule explains. This collaboration exemplifies the importance of shared service platforms in facilitating a shift towards local organization empowerment, as emphasized by Tania Ngima of the Livelihood Impact Fund.

HURIA's success is also rooted in its strong organizational culture. With an impressive staff retention rate - having lost only two core members in the last decade - the organization prioritizes employee development through regular training and a robust management structure.

Lule's journey to human rights work was unexpected. Originally trained as a medical technician, he found his calling after attending a human rights workshop in 2005. This diverse background has informed his unique approach to activism, blending scientific rigor with a deep commitment to social justice.

As HURIA continues to grow and evolve, Lule's vision of *"human rights activism with a difference"* is becoming a reality. By prioritizing collaboration, transparency, and evidence-based approaches, HURIA is not just defending human rights - it's redefining what effective activism looks like in the 21st century.



*In case of any questions or feedback, please reach out to **Kim Matu - Associate Director, Global Development Incubator** - on kim.matu@globaldevincubator.org and we will get back to as soon as possible.*

Thank you for your partnership and collaboration.

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