Meet Zulfikar Bhuttoh, a Community Health Advocate (CHA), from Kisumu County. He is one of the 30 CHAs from five counties, trained to monitor the implementation of the right to health. The programme was funded by ARASA with an aim of promoting awareness and protection of human rights for the vulnerable and marginalised members of the community. Under the programme, CHA’s roles include: empowering communities on human rights and their right to health; identifying, reporting and ensuring access to justice for cases of human rights violations.

In the wake of rampant cases of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) within communities, paralegals with support of other civil society organisations, including KELIN, have sensitised members of the community on the importance of reporting such cases for justice to be realised.

Zulifikar has greatly contributed to the achievement of this objective.

He ensured that more than 15 cases were taken to court. So far, seven cases have been concluded and perpetrators convicted with the least among them sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. In one of the cases, after 31 months of relentless follow up in court, a chief was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for defiling a 14-year-old orphaned school girl in Seme Sub county. Currently, there is an ongoing hearing in which an Assistant Chief is facing related charges at the Maseno court.

“I have widened my technical know-how and gained confidence in handling cases of rights violations. This has enhanced my work in advocating for the protection of human rights and specifically for the welfare of persons living with HIV and TB in my community,” says Bhuttoh.

Bhuttoh is using the knowledge acquired through the programme to pursue his passion of sensitising and advocating for the rights of his community members.

“I desire to see my community members more assertive in demanding for their rights by ensuring that justice prevails at all times,” says Bhuttoh.