

The Other Voice



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It matters too!

Why the media in Uganda need a gender policy

Most media houses present a slanted view of women and development issues

THE OTHER VOICE TEAM

Practitioners in Masaka District appealed to their managers to create and implement gender policy lines to regulate text and image presentations.

A call was made at a recently held sensitization seminar on rights under based violence organized for journalists and a cross-section of grass-roots women under the Smart Women's Project in Kingo Sub-County, Masaka. One journalist who preferred anonymity for fear of losing his job: "As we strive to submit balanced reports to our editors but our bosses seem to enjoy a slanted view against women and development issues in the media, unfortunately results in misrepresentation and sometimes violation of women's rights".

He appealed to the organizers, Uganda Women's Association (UMWA) for support from UNFPA and the National Refugee Committee (ARC) to support programs aimed at influencing the reporting in Uganda".

Issa, NTV Reporter and Editor of the Masaka Journalists Association emphasized that no media outlet should hurt any category of women and said he was happy that his own outlet presents balanced stories. He urged to pursue the recommendations of the seminar. The journalists appreciated the interface with the grassroots and urged other development organizations to emulate UMWA's approach of forming society through consultation, dialoguing between stakeholders and those who are often thought of as not important.

Joseph Kalungi, Bureau Chief of the group, Masaka said the interface with community women, the victims of gender based violence, and journalists with an opportunity whether as journalists, we had to use our profession's mission and fairness.

Earlier, journalists had been accused of misrepresenting women in the media, saying many headlines condemn women while the texts are neither balanced nor fail to contextualize issues especially if the story is on gender based violence. Said Molly Nabbanja, Kabukolwa



I have 'discovered' Domestic Violence at 82!

Ms. Lutaaya, 82:

IT is only at the age of 82 that I realize that violated women have a right to report such incidences to police. In our days we took wife beating as a norm. After the community dialogue, I made time and discussed peace making in the home, with my grandchildren and their spouses. I'm however disappointed that some cases reported to Local Council authorities are never attended to; either the leaders themselves who are supposed to be role models are violators themselves, or they fear to arbitrate couples that they are friends to.

I was also very happy that many children and the youth actively participated in the community dialogue, because these are Uganda's future parents, and if they learn early to cultivate peace and tolerance, they will consolidate these in their marriage lives. I recommend that men, who are mostly the violators, are specially targeted say in their drinking places. It is also important that in future, couples are especially encouraged to participate in these dialogues.

A couple play-out a scene depicting domestic violence during a recent UMWA workshop on the 16 days of activism against gender based violence. Doesn't the media need to censor pictures that glorify violence against women?

Earlier, journalists had been accused of misrepresenting women in the media, saying many headlines condemn women while the texts are neither balanced nor fail to contextualize issues especially if the story is on gender based violence. Said Molly Nabbanja, Kabukolwa

village: "Can you imagine some of you journalists said you are ashamed of revealing which media house you work for, because of the stories and pictures your media publish? It is a shame that media in Uganda today violates women everyday. But government does not touch you. I

challenge you to change the way you have been presenting women and their concerns so that next time we meet you will be happy to identify with the media house you work for".

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INSIDE

COFWAWE teams up with religious leaders

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Many women face emotional violence

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Campaign against mob justice starts with you

By SARAH MUWANGA

At 22 years, Rebecca Matovu (not real name) is a widow. She has two children to take care of but no job. Her husband died at the hands of residents who suspected him of stealing a motorcycle commonly known as boda-boda. He was lynched before being burnt beyond recognition.

Since then Rebecca has gone back to stay with her parents in the village, in Kayunga District as she could not afford renting a house in Nakulabye, a suburb of Kampala. In tears Rebecca says, "I don't know how I will take care of these children. They are sickly especially the youngest of three months and I have no money to take her to the clinic. I'm a school drop out without any skill. President Museveni should help us and fight mob justice. My husband was innocent".

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OPINION

Don't let financial stress escalate violence

Yes, human rights activists tell us that the unequal power relations in the home that tend to elevate the male gender is the underlying cause of gender based violence. Granted! But to many, one of the visible causes is poverty and alcoholism which is why *The Other Voice*, at the beginning of 2012, a year expected to be abound with financial stress, wishes to caution family members against slipping into violence.

Despite the rosy statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics that poverty levels have gone down, what is visible and felt in almost everybody's pocket is financial stress. It was very clear during the December festive season that thousands of ordinary people did not afford a commodity (meat) highly associated with Christmas.

Parents and guardians had to skip celebrations to get back to work in search of school fees. Financial and economic experts have predicted that in the year 2012, prices will continue to skyrocket despite the Uganda Shilling 'appreciating'.

But as financial stress continues to press us, will it mean that violence at home should be abated?! For us at *The Other Voice*, we say NO, let each one of us at home or workplace, analyze the situation, work harder, dialogue, mutually respect each other, and spend within our means!

Happy 2012!

'Some men don't know that beating their wives is a crime'

Robert Kakumbi, Cashier, UTODA Masaka:

Your project is great. When will you establish an office here in Masaka? All the people who have read the message on the T-shirt you gave me last week (Peace in the Home? Translates to peace in the Nation) ask about where they can get help because they say they need to talk to somebody for help. You know here in Masaka, men beat their wives everyday, but even men are victims. You hear them planning to do havoc to their spouses if she/he doesn't change his/her behaviour. Most of us did not know that beating a wife is a crime. But give us stickers to put on vehicles so that the public can be educated more.

Taking stock of the 16 days of activism

FOR over ten years over 160 countries, Uganda inclusive, have been commemorating the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence (GBV).

And so it was, before the close of last year. November 25th – December 10th as designated by the UN General Assembly, 1999. Civil society organizations and government departments organized actions to raise consciousness about, and called for action to end GBV. Uganda's national theme: From Peace in the homes to Peace in the Nation: End Violence Against Women formed part of the campaign messages of the many participating civil society organizations with 17 supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

through the American Refugee Committee (ARC), to raise the voice against GBV, even higher!

Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) armed with about UGS 34 million, thanks to UNFPA and the International Solidarity Foundation (ISF), designed and implemented innovative actions in two districts: Kampala and Masaka. Spot messages and programs ran on two radio stations, messages depicting anti-GBV were published on T-shirts, banners, fliers and caps, and distributed. Road shows / media drives punctuated by short dramas at intervals, were conducted through villages, streets and trading centres.

Taxi parks and markets

were not spared. Community dialogues also blended with music and drama were conducted at public places like trading centres and places of worship.

A joint awareness raising seminar on rights and the manifestations of GBV for journalists in Masaka, and the grassroots women from the Smart Women's Group, Kingo Sub-County was another activity that formed part of the 16 days of activism.

But just how effective are such campaigns? Are the desired changes achieved? Are human and other resources spent during the campaign worthy the cause? Any lessons, and what are the emerging issues? The Other Voice shares responses from the field.

I was able to explain the way the media works



Ali Mambule, a journalist with Bukedde newspaper and Bukedde T.V, still recalls what the local women said during the training for journalists. He says: It was innovative for UMWA to train journalists together with grassroots women from the Kingo Smart Women's Group because they represented the general community who are our major sources of information.

The seminar gave me an opportunity to explain the way the media operates. But most importantly it made me change the way I treat my wife and the way I now write stories. I have since started looking out for stories that promote women and development. Right now I'm compiling articles on a woman in Kingo who has seven children but four are physically handicapped. I picked interest in the story because the woman was having very little support from the husband and facing many challenges. I also tipped fellow journalists on this incident, who also joined me! I'm sure this was an influence from the training I received in Kingo.

'Go to the villages'

A man from the Masaka taxi park shouted: "I support your work but you should get the campaigns off the tarmac roads and go deep in the villages, that is where the biggest problem is".

We do not cover up Domestic Violence



Mubiru Joseph, an Assistant Police Officer Kingo Police Post says:

Networking in the fight against domestic violence is one thing we crave for as the police. Many times police is condemned for covering up domestic violence cases but that is not true. We have now had an opportunity to explain ourselves during the community dialogue and we welcome other avenues to share with the public. We are ready to work with the media and the general public to fight crime including domestic violence in this country. I was greatly impressed with the participatory method of the seminar that had the journalists and the grassroots women who are the major victims of violence, in one room, dialoguing on how best to prevent violence. This should be emulated by other development agencies. Nobody has the monopoly of knowledge.

Include children in campaigns against violence

Betty Nabbale, 50 years, a Member of the Smart Women's Group:

Our group has intervened in homes where violence was apparent. But it is not easy as men do not respect us, they would rather be spoken to by fellow men, who unfortunately are not part of our Smart Women's Group. But occasionally we involve local leaders in our visits. My experience in this work is that family members who do not communicate, cannot develop, and alcohol can escalate violence. We shall include children and the youth in our campaigns against violence because when the communities hear voices of the young sharing the scars they have had to suffer due to domestic violence, I believe many of us would transform.

Nassiwa, Community Activist, Kyankwazi: "Such interventions are most needed at the grassroots level".

Lugayizi, Community Activist, Wakiso:

The most urgent target for such a campaign is the local council leaders who are perpetrators themselves but wield a lot of power. They frustrate us in our activism.

Journalists interview DPC Ocheng at Kisaasi after community dialogue



Seek advice from your community

Ocheng Simon, DPC Kiira Road Police Station:

Instead of emphasizing police when you have a case on domestic violence, I'd rather you first went to community members and sought it out, as they are closer and the case affects them all. If that fails, then seek police intervention, but I also pledge to improve community-police relations so that when you bring a case to the police station, we are attended to expeditiously, without intimidation or bribing anybody.

I appeal to all actors in this field to provide legal and rights awareness to the local communities, because which we cannot go far in the future to curb domestic violence.

Media hold key to Gender-based Violence

Sebayiga Timothy, Radio Simba / The Monitor: I have to commend UMWA for the innovative seminar held on November 25th, 2011. Bringing professionals like journalists under the same roof with grassroots women to discuss how Gender Based Violence (GBV) can be addressed was super.

It was important in the sense that as journalists, we were able to appreciate the women's concerns. I understood about the people we write about but rarely giving their issues a deeper analysis. In only ten days after the seminar, I have been able to file over ten stories about GBV to Radio Simba, and two to The Monitor.

My networks have also enlarged, and I have used profitably. Recently I was attending a budget conference in Lyantonde, and was approached by two women, also attending the same. They told me we had met in Kingo, eight days ago in a workshop on GBV. They wanted me to help them get space on the radio to address development issues as well as talking about their Smart Women's Group in Kingo. I'm happy I managed to connect them to Radio Equator to do two programs.

On the platform by Radio Simba Masaka as a development specialist, I speak about GBV, the current issue of Parliament. The argument is that homes of national Uganda has a position in the Southern Buganda region can help in the given the nature afterwards.

A few days of activism changed people's lives

Joseph Kibirige, one of the Activists:

I was amazed at seeing people narrating their personal testimonies voluntarily. For example, at the taxi park, Mr. Mawanda Bashir without fearing what his friends would think, said that he had temporarily left his home for a hotel because his wife had violated his rights when she used his phone to insult his female bosses, for allegedly being in love with him. Bashir said: I had warned my wife several times against calling people whose phone numbers I have but she defied this. So instead of beating her, I decided to leave home for an indefinite

period until I cool down. I'm avoiding to beat her. Thanks to your campaign message which went: 'If Annoyed, Don't Beat!' Secondly, I cannot forget to remember the negative attitude we experienced before we started the road show from the taxi park. There was a group of people who threatened to disable our project vehicle if we refused to leave the taxi park or stop "shouting silly" messages on the loud speakers. But on going back during the feedback session, we were pleasantly surprised by the warm welcome and many questions that we met at the taxi park, and informed us they wanted to have

seminars on the theme of working for peace at home. And how some of them had counseled their colleagues on domestic violence.

Boda-boda cyclists, is another group that amazed me. Notoriously known for crime against women, this time during the feedback session, they reported how they had become champions of no violence against women. How they stop fellow cyclists from whistling, touching women's behinds or any other form of teasing against women. It is amazing how a few days activity immediately changed people's lives.



Joseph (Left) and Sammy strategise during one of the feedback sessions.

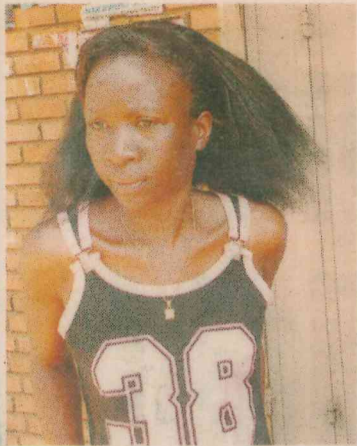
Journalists need to understand each other

Saddam Kitatta Kaaya, a Journalist with WBS TV:

"The interaction with women in Kingo helped me create rapport with ordinary women and understand their issues more broadly and sensitively. I specifically appreciated the interface with the rural women because they face complicated domestic violence, they do not know where to report while others think domestic violence is a way of life. I recommend that UMWA conduct more workshops of this nature in the Southern region. We need partnership with the communities as it helps us to

understand each other developmentally together". However, training should be secluded places to ensure maximum impact and should be The more we have an issue, the more interested in that area, and is the ANPCA supported training media reports for some time journalists are sensitively al

ism against gender-based violence



Jacinta Bwanika, a journalist with Bukedde TV:
"I was encouraged and motivated to give priority to women issues. Also important is to do a follow up on these stories."

Jonathan Paul Kakeeto, Grade III Teacher with 12 years' experience:

The drama skit acted during the dialogue was a true scenario in most of our homes. Personally I have seen many men selling off crops, or fruits, belongings to their wives without consultation, and they take all the money, reasoning that they paid bride price, and that the land where crops are grown does not belong to women.

What is even more disturbing is that women keep quiet and take it as a norm, doesn't matter even if they are thrown off a property they have stayed on for all their lives. As a leader, we shall ensure that talks on GBV are integrated in our executive and larger community meetings.



Jonathan Paul Kakeeto (Centre) narates his intervention as a journalist in the fight against violence.

provided to the Masaka Journalists Association Radio Equator to talk about issues that affect us. We have since the seminar in Kingo, used it to and recently drove the message across, link with us of domestic violence that involved a Member

Work with communities

discuss and work more such conducted in a alangala, to centration, and about become specialize in example UNICEF child abuse went on more more dren.



I was inspired

Monica Serwanja from Kingo village says:
I got a lot of inspiration from the facilitators of the community dialogues when they said all answers are good and valid. This struck me and challenged me at the same time. That motivated us to speak our minds and break the silence on GBV.

Now I want to flash domestic violence out of my home before I help other people. The problem is that my husband is a drunkard, and does not pay fees for the children.

We fight verbally because of his drinking and it is bad for the children. I even shared this with the journalists and one of them promised to write about my experience to help others cope with husbands who drink.

But so far so good, using the knowledge I got from the previous seminar and dialogue on GBV, I'm doing good. I have even left him at home preparing lunch because now we started listening to each other.

'Let's fight the myths too'



Joseph Kalungi, LC V Chairperson, Masaka:

The theme of the 16 Days of Activism is good and valid because if there is peace in the home, it will trickle down to the children and the community at large. For me development is equality between man and woman, and until this is realized, Uganda and Africa in general will be left behind. But children too have a role in bringing peace in the home, so they should be part of the anti-GBV campaign and the development equation. Interventions like commemorating the 16 Days of Activism should go beyond the sub-county down to the villages. We should also fight the myths and beliefs which perpetuate domestic violence. As Masaka District, we shall try as much as possible to mainstream GBV education in our programs.

Nabukeera, 15:
"My mother is the only one taking care of us, eight children. We cannot respect our father!"



Many women face emotional violence

Namugera Philocy: Chairperson Smart Women Group, Kingo, and also a leader in Church, says:

Children from violent homes, can easily be identified, they are withdrawn, lack self confidence and sometimes are violent themselves. Their friends tease them and imitate the father's drunk behaviour in school, sometimes giving them negative nicknames.

I learnt that many people are experiencing violence without knowing. To me emotional violence can be more dangerous and it is what many women are facing. Interacting with journalists as equal partners was one of the exciting thing that happened to me.

My appeal to UMWA is to conduct more trainings of this kind for women to integrate information and media work in their daily activities.

As the Smart Women's Group in Kingo, we decided to design another play to educate our community on the dangers of domestic violence and how it impacts on the wellbeing of the whole family. It will be shown in schools during the visitation days to inform parents that the way they behave affects their children.

We shall continue working with the Sub-County Chief and area local councils to integrate GBV activities in the area plans.

Nude pictures escalate violence

Gertrude Lwanga, Secretary for Information Smart Women has participated in various trainings on domestic violence and says:

I was happy to see many people share and talk about their experiences on the matter. I was also happy to be in the training with journalists, but the time for the training was not enough. There was a lot that we wanted to tell them and they also wanted to hear more from us. I put it to them that publishing nude women pictures escalates violence.

Local women and journalists can partner and deliver people out of poverty, ignorance and misery. UMWA should continue to build the link between the two groups because there is need for a strong force to fight violence in our home and societies.

A one Fabius, 18: "You cannot sleep if you hear your mother pleading with dad to stop beating her. Even when you are going to school, that cry keeps coming back and it disturbs you. you cannot concentrate at school!"

A one Naigudde, 16: "When father beats mother, I cannot concentrate in school. After all everybody would be pointing at you, and making fun of you".

Magdalene Nazziwa from Kakunyu village says: As a widow I learnt that because of the stress we go through in raising the children single-handedly, we violate their rights because we tend to be very tough on them. So I have talked to fellow widows to stop using force against their children

Nazziwa, a youth from Masaka:
"I cannot sleep when I hear a faint cry from my mother pleading with my father to stop beating her. Me and my siblings no longer respect our father. We don't even want him to come at school. We don't want to be with identified with him. The children laugh at us. But after this play we have watched, I'm determined to confront him".

Emerging issues....

- 1 They may not be the cause of domestic violence, but children are one of the groups that are most affected by this vice. But they too have a big role to play in its prevention. They therefore need specific and urgent attention. Strategic interventions to this group whether in or out of school are therefore urgent.
- 2 The media is a mirror of society, therefore the journalists like the rest of the general public still believe that GBV is justified and the women's position should be below the expected. Until this mindset is impacted on, transformation in society will not be a reality. To achieve a gender responsive media to deliver meaningful development where a nation enjoys gender equality, requires specific intervention in the media. This calls for not only constant training in human rights but also monitoring how the media reports. Also important is the importance of influencing the journalism curriculum to prepare the professionals in responsive reporting. A gender policy is also an urgent requirement as a legal benchmark in the media.
- 3 It was established that most of the violators do not participate in activities aimed at transforming society. It is therefore important to strategically impact on this group by taking the campaign to where they live, work or socialize.
- 4 Likewise, programs specifically targeting men as actors in the prevention and fight against domestic violence, need to be designed, and urgently.
- 5 Journalists and grassroots women dialoguing on GBV, and how it can best be prevented and fought was found to be a good practice which other development agencies can emulate.
- 6 For sustainability purposes, local organizations with structures up to the grassroots such as the Smart Women Groups can be good targets for multiplier effects.

Abusive behaviour in the home affects me at school

Nakawuki Josephine, 16:
"When your peers get to know about your father's abusive behaviour, they laugh at you and you cannot pay attention in class, getting the lowest grades at the end of the term. And you don't wish that your father, comes to school for whatever reason be it clearing school dues".

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Mob justice taking much more than a single life



Body of Jane Rose Nassuuna (54) who was stoned and later axed to death by a village mob on Monday September 27, 2005 after briefly 'trying and convicting' her in the LC court. To date, her family still await justice for loss of a bread winner.

From Page 1

REBECCA'S mother laments the loss of a son-in-law. "He was not rich but he endeavored to buy for us at least soap, tea leaves and other basics especially on Easter and Christmas days. Government should stop this madness of roasting people like chicken", the 49 old year woman cries out.

Rebecca and her mother are two of the many voices crying over the loss of their relatives due to mob justice. They appeal to peace-loving Ugandans and the police to fight mob justice which is contributing to misery among families and increasing the burden of widows and orphans in this country.

Lack of Trust in Police

Mohammed Ndifuna is Coordinator, Human Rights Network-Uganda. He says: "Last year we did a study on crime and how people report cases to police and one of the findings was that Ugandans have lost confidence and trust in the police. People said they despair when they see suspects being released on bond yet they know they are guilty to the bone".

Ndifuna adds, "The report also shows that the people have little trust in the judicial process, accusing them of unfairness and being slow, reason: they have resorted to taking the law in their hands. The result is what we see; an increase in incidents of mob justice; with many people meeting their death but HURINET and other human rights defenders condemn the killings and urge the public to desist from this crime. We acknowledge that women are directly affected but in general it is the nation losing young and productive people".

In response to the increasing incidences, Ndifuna says his organization is undertaking a sensitization campaign against mob justice and its dangers, and to build people's confidence in police and to encourage citizens to report crime and respecting the rule of law and human rights.

Police Working Hard Against Mob Justice

"The truth is that we are working very hard to end crime and many perpetrators have been arrested and prosecuted. The 2010 Police Annual Report shows an increase in cases reported to police", says Idi Ibn Ssenkumbi, Central Police Station Spokesperson, dismissing claims that suspects are released illegally.

Saying that police alone cannot fight mob justice alone, Ssenkumbi urges all leaders to join police against the vice, adding, citizens should be sensitized about the right to life and the responsibility of citizens to report crime to the relevant authorities. Boda-boda cyclists and youth leaders should especially be targeted as it is that group that is most engaged in violent acts due to drug abuse, idleness and drunkardness.

He believes parents can play a special role in the struggle against mob justice by providing information to police and bringing up children with good morals. Most human rights activists talked to, appealed to Parliament to legislate against mob justice while calling upon the public to report police misconduct.



Ms Catherine Othieno,
Director of COCFAWE

COCFAWE partners with religious leaders to fight social injustice

We don't need sex warriors!

By TOV TEAM

IT is interesting how times are changing! Paternal aunts who used to provide "sexual and reproductive health education", at least in as far as how a newly married woman can satisfy a man's sexual urge, is concerned, may be fading out. In their place have come organizations that do not focus on one gender but the whole family.

Men and women, girls and boys are strategically targeted with empowering messages, call it sexuality empowerment. In Wakiso, COCFAWE conducts sex and reproductive health programs in the midst of both sexes who are free to ask questions however 'embarrassing' they may sound.

COCFAWE Director, Catherine Othieno says: Paternal aunts commonly known as 'ssengas' had assumed a role that they lacked proper training in, and ended up giving wrong information to couples most times causing or escalating domestic violence.

Sick mothers or women who had spent barely a week after delivery, would suffer ruptures because men wanted sex". She asks: What reaction would you expect from a man nurtured to be powerful and even having control over the woman's sexual organs to receive a No from a woman when he feels like sex?

The role of the ssenga has been to teach women satisfy men. But is this empowerment? A ssenga would never advise a woman about delaying a pregnancy but instead would condemn her for planning her family.

Othieno says, "I condemn the ssenga's approach as it only disempowers the woman instead of creating an atmosphere for negotiation and understanding for both sides.

To me this is sexuality empowerment. Such a process facilitates open communication and dialogue, contributing to peace and harmony. We should all discourage situations where women envisage men as sex warriors, and men look at women as servants. Couples should endeavour to learn and appreciate each other."

By REBECCA BIRUNGI AND TOV TEAM

CONCERN for Children and Women Empowerment (COCFAWE) has embarked on a new approach. They are partnering with religious leaders to transform lives as part of its campaign to reach out to the communities in Busukuma, Wakiso District.

Catherine Othieno, COCFAWE Executive Director says that, over 80 religious leaders participated in one of the partnership activities, a five-day meeting aimed at integrating HIV/AIDS into church and mosque program activities.

Citing COCFAWE'S mission as to facilitate empowerment of families and communities for improved quality of life of children, women and men by promoting participation, dialogue and solidarity using the psychosocial approach, Othieno says:

"It is the participatory approach and promotion of dialogue which has yielded the fruits of involving religious leaders into the COCFAWE's program which seeks to see that they become gender sensitive while preaching in mosques or churches' adding, religious leaders have a willing audience who take their word with respect rarely questioning it, and if COCFAWE encourages them to mainstream the program activities in their pastoral work, we would have used one stone to kill two birds.

Religious Leaders not Gender Sensitive

Gender activists note that most religious leaders are not gender sensitive while preaching. For example a woman is told to be submissive but the same leaders remind the male spouses about their responsibility to provide for their families but when they fail to do this, religious leaders rarely raise a finger.

HIV/AIDS is still a challenge to Public Health Specialists

From Page 3

Ms. Teddy Kakeeto, the Head Teacher of one of the Primary Schools in Kingo:

I can confidently say that both my husband and I profoundly benefited from the community dialogue, and later on during the feedback session. Issues that we normally see in our own lives and those near to us were depicted in the play, and many identified themselves with them. Personally I grew up in a violent family, saw my dad physically abusing my mother, who later had to cope with a broken finger for



A cross-section of COCFAWE members and religious leaders at a recent workshop in Busukuma.

According to evangelist and Director of the Bible Society Mbuya Hannu Happonen, tackling the epidemic requires a multi-sectoral approach through mainstreaming HIV/AIDS programmes into church/mosques. In his book entitled "Opportunity in crisis-basic lessons on HIV/AIDS" he quotes scripture 1 Cor 7.26 where Paul gave his advice to the Corinthians: and imploring that the bible encourages us to make 'the most of every opportunity'.

Hannu therefore contends that the epidemic has caused an opportunity crisis which requires religious leaders to guide the brethren on what to do by addressing the issues in the community. COCFAWE has also seized the opportunity and is using the same book as a training manual with religious leaders in an effort to raise their knowledge levels on reproductive health issues and their roles.

One participant said, "Every Sunday,

I look forward to going to church to be consoled. I carefully listen to the Reverend and take everything he says as a gospel truth without questioning it". Meanwhile Robert Kagwire, the District Focal Person notes that the HIV prevalence is high among married couples. According to a 2009 report by Uganda AIDS Commission, out of the 1.8 million HIV infected Ugandans, majority are married and higher among female adults, of 30-35 years and male adults of 35-40 years. It states that married couples account for about 43 percent of the new infections and that people with multiple partners and are not married, account for about 46 percent of new infections.

He appeals to COCFAWE to strengthen its partnership with the religious leaders because he says these are 'trusted' people and are critical in the HIV/AIDS fight.

Acknowledgement!

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Bride price!

Norah Nansasi: Reporter with Eddoboosi:

"I think our parents should stop asking for bride price as it is used by men to control and mete violence to their spouses.

Kiita Gloria of Kyalumbi:

The training gave me the courage and confidence to intervene in homes where domestic violence is happening to give advice. This is something that many people feared to do before the community dialogue.

Gertrude Lwanga, Secretary for Information Get Smart has participated in various trainings on domestic violence and says:

Local women and journalists can partner and deliver people out of poverty, ignorance and misery. UMWA should continue to build the link between the two groups because there is need for a strong force to fight violence in our home and societies. We will do all we can to continue with the struggle. Mobilizing Get Smart Women to do a play and show it in the community does not require lots of finances and like my chairperson stated we are going to do more. When I met with these journalists, I told them they contribute to domestic violence because they put those nude pictures of women and stories in the newspapers.