

Gender Based Violence

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Gender Based Violence

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**A just society where there is
gender equality
and equity**

ACFODE MISSION

**To Promote Women’s
Empowerment, Gender
Equality and Equity in Uganda
through Advocacy, Networking
and Capacity Building of
both Women and Men**



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EDITORIAL



If Gender Based Violence (GBV) was previously endemic, it has eventually turned an epidemic in Uganda with the female gender taking the biggest toll.

Research reports show that many women are often victims of domestic violence, sexual violence,

sexual exploitation, trafficking and forced early marriage. The police report of 2008 reported that a total of 137 cases of domestic violence. These were however only fatal cases that had resulted in death. This means that cases of GBV are often reported only when they result in death.

The same report says that 1,536 cases of rape had been reported to police in 2008. Of the 1,536 cases, 239 suspects had been arrested and charged, of which 3 were convicted, 3 persons acquitted, 11 discharged while 222 were awaiting trial by end of 2008. What should be of even more concerns to all of us is the increasing number of homicides in the country, where especially women are reported to be killed by their jilted lovers or estranged husbands.

Quite often, many of these abuses are swept under the carpet in the name of culture, customs and traditions yet articles 32 (2) of the 1995 Ugandan constitution expressly prohibits any laws, cultures, traditions and norms that go against the dignity, welfare or interest of women. Uganda is party to international human rights treaties which expressly prohibit violence against

women. These include; the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women.

In this issue, we explore the broad theme of Gender Based Violence, focusing on the various forms of violence that women continue to suffer in the various spheres of life. Uganda is getting flooded with mobile telephone companies; there have been many accolades lauded to be resulting from these mobile phones. What remains silent is that the mobile phone is a death trap that has been added on the causes of domestic violence. We bring to you those silent voices of school drops who have suffered exploitation in Kampala's mushrooming arcades and many more.

Enjoy the reading

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THAT MOBILE PHONE COULD GET YOUR RELATIONSHIP ESTRANGED OR END YOUR LIFE!! - *By Aramanzan Madanda*



With such a mobile phone, many people can reach friends and family faster than had been before

Over the last 15 years, the world has been awash with the wonder mobile phone technology. Its rapid growth and adoption has defied expert predictions especially for poor countries. Various sources indicate that the developing countries have two-thirds of global mobile subscriptions with Africa having the world's fastest growing mobile phone market. Though telecom statistics are suspect, Uganda now has an estimated 8 million subscriptions, with numbers that have been doubling roughly every six months since 1996.

At the introduction of mobile phones in Uganda in mid 1990s, they were a preserve of top business executives and politicians. This was because of the prohibitive connection cost of three million shillings plus service fees, limited access days and charges for both receiving and calling. Moreover because receiving was

equally charged, giving out one's number was restricted to only valued connections. Owners of the then brick-sized phones mostly of the Swedish Ericson models moved with a swagger with their wonder technological symbols of wealth, prestige and status.

Even when poor people today still consider the phone a symbol of status and importance, the dropping costs to where a phone can be acquired at only Shs20,000 implies even those with mediocre incomes can acquire the wonder machine.

The good side of phones has been articulated by telecom companies, NGOs, researchers and the media. Air time selling has placed money in the hands of poor women and their families. Phone ownership has enabled domesticated housewives to expand their virtual space. Some have done profitable businesses over phones without leaving their compounds. Phones have helped to link women to their friends and family faster than it would otherwise be, thereby reducing isolation. In domestic brawls, women have used their phones to text or call for help. In agriculture, women have crossed gender boundaries and joined men in the hitherto male dominated marketing of their products as they can check for prices right on their handsets. With the introduction of mobile money, financial help has been received on phone sets. But the biggest beneficiaries have remained the telecom companies and government tax departments that earn in billions of shillings daily.

What is rarely emphasised by those interested

in propagating “success stories” is the downside of mobile telephony. Beyond the health risks of developing tumours due to ultra violet exposure or the impact of base stations, there are serious gender implications of mobile phones. For instance, whereas mobile phone businesses have put money in the hands of women, simultaneously domestic conflicts have arisen as their spouses demand a share in the money or accuse their wives of concealing earnings.

Additionally, whereas phones have expanded the virtual reach of domesticated women, because they can call their spouses, friends and relatives at “anytime”, there are reports that they have also reduced face-to face interactions thereby deepening physical isolation and domestication. Even when women can juggle between public presence and home management through constant phone contacts, the tool has also become a monitoring instrument as they are expected to instantly account for where they are.

In many cases, phones have been infidelity instruments. It is not that mobile phones cause sexual promiscuity. If this was the case, there would not have been sexual immorality before mobile phones. But phones multiply the chances by introducing virtual romantic relationships outside the scrutiny and restrictive watchful eye of the moral public. It provides a semblance of secrecy for those with a name to protect as silent communications can go on in the full view of the rest of the family members through SMS without any clue.

Yet, unlike hidden face-to-face contacts, phone communications leave evidence trails



Winfred and husband during good times. She was later killed by same husband over a text message

right from call lists, to saved messages that have been new bases of domestic scuffles. My doctoral research in Mayuge and Iganga shows that about half of phone adopters, the majority of them women, have conflicted with their spouses around phones including quarrels, battering, maiming, separations and divorce. Many lived under the fear of suspicious spouses whenever they received calls or SMS messages especially from the opposite sex. In fear some women use their phones in secrecy.

Ugandan musicians and media houses have highlighted phone use related conflicts amongst women and men. The New Vision of 15th December 2005 carried a story of a woman who had been killed by the husband over a suspected love message. As the paper noted “in a feat of anger, [the man] grabbed a bottle and smashed his wife’s head”. Phones have been confiscated, smashed or destroyed because of alleged “improper” use.

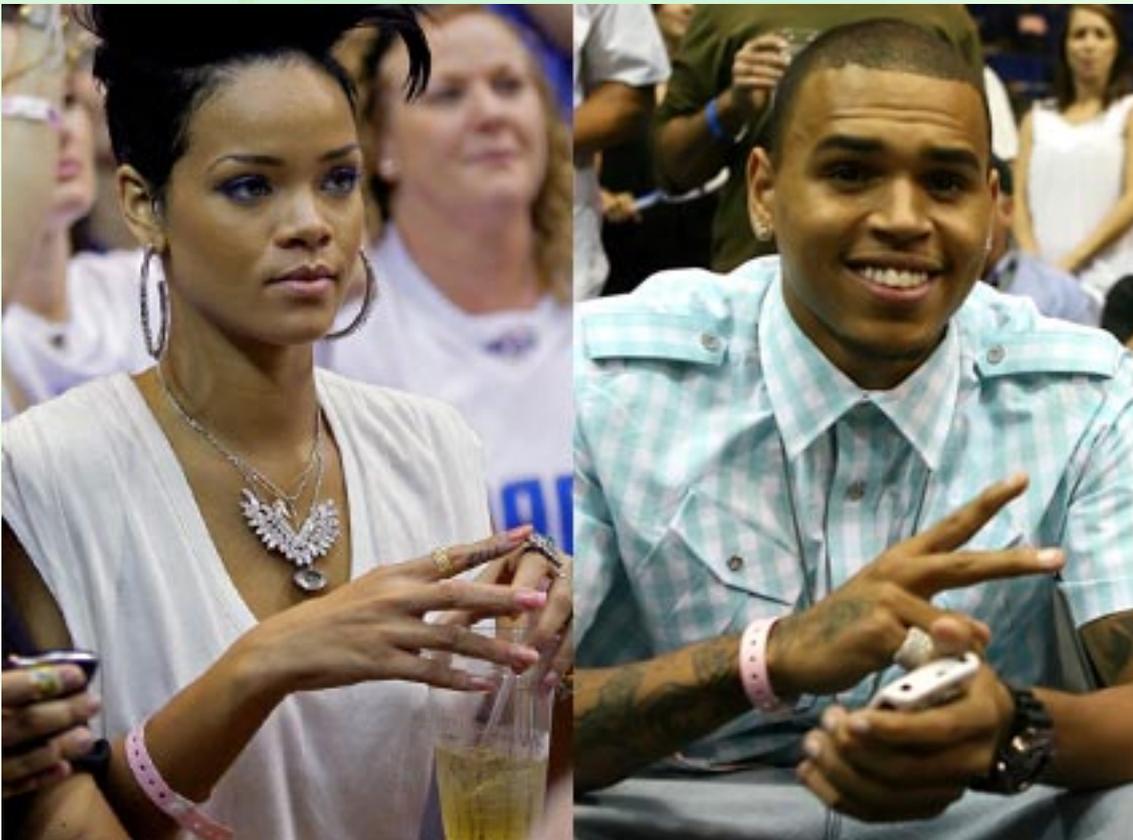
Yet the eight million subscribers in Uganda who are enriching telecoms and government seem to have no remedy. Meanwhile telecoms are in frenzy, sponsoring star musicians to bolster their market and profits ignoring the fact that domestic violence limits

use. Government is licensing more companies to increase tax revenues without paying any attention to domestic relations which would limit such brawls. It would be in the interest of good business if corporate social responsibility by telecoms also addressed domestic gender relations. Moreover government needs to understand that whereas technology is beneficial, it also

has its down side. It can, if not tamed, escalate criminality not just in the homes but even beyond. For instance, robbers and criminals may use the technology to coordinate highway robberies or house break-ins.

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SPEAK OUT UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS - By Margaret Vuchiri



Rihanna (left) was assaulted by her partner Chris Brown (right)

Every time I wake up in the morning, there is this cry of agony ringing in my muddled head. It is a scene from one of those annoyingly predictable Nigerian movies that, nevertheless, reflect reality. The movie is about a woman who suffered repeated beatings from her husband but in public – where no one knows her plight – they were the perfect couple; she the loyal, smiling wife and he, the loving, caring husband. Behind closed doors, she would sit

up all night, sobbing – in anguish, after receiving her daily supply of slaps and kicks. Absurdly, it is the abused woman who pleads for forgiveness, begging her husband not to throw her out.

This movie brings to mind the story of 21-year-old Rihanna and her boyfriend Chris Brown, 19 – both

successful singers who are adored worldwide. Recently, reports emerged how Brown allegedly turned violent after Rihanna confronted him about a text message from his old girlfriend. He allegedly hit Rihanna's head against the car window, bit her ear and fingers and got her in a headlock until she began to black out. Brown also reportedly told her: "I'm going to kill you".



Protestors against gender based violence march on one of Kampala street

For those who saw the horrific pictures of Rihanna's awfully battered face on the Internet, it must be incomprehensible that she refused to co-operate with police and reconciled with the man who openly threatened to kill her. But it seems all battered women — rich, poor, illiterate or educated, think when they are abused, somehow, it must be their fault. Many Internet bloggers, women inclusive, are actually blaming Rihanna for 'provoking' Brown. Ridiculously, Brown's songs are getting increasing airplay as Rihanna's self-esteem takes a knocking.

Like most victims, Rihanna has already lost this contest. She threw away an opportunity to not just help herself but other women never to let a man hit them again, and by shrugging off the assault, she's lost respect (for loving her abuser more than herself) and

her confidence and career may diminish.

But Rihanna's behaviour is familiar, isn't it? Most battered women have this overwhelming love (or fear) for their tormentors and get trapped in brutal marriages, convincing themselves that the man will change. Many successful women end up with men who humiliate and depress them. This is especially demeaning to women who were raised to believe that chastity and self-respect would bring true love.

Although, unlike many Ugandan women suffering in silence, Rihanna's popularity made her plight world news, which may save her because Brown knows the world is watching. That makes her luckier than our Ugandan sisters whose stories never even make it to the press.

For the sake of those women who are not brave enough to speak out, we must give domestic violence serious attention. The entire Ugandan society, especially the abused women, has become docile to the level that we seem to have resigned to fate. We need to ask ourselves what kind of generation we are breeding for the future of this country. Take for example a child who watches his mother being beaten daily. Such a child will grow up believing – strange as it may sound – that a recalcitrant woman just needs a thorough whacking.

Reasons why men beat their wives are varied but society tends to focus more on collecting data, thus diverting attention from the staggering cost of this hideous crime on society. Whether it is a result of social, psychological and economic factors or a struggle between the sexes, domestic violence must not be allowed to flourish. The Domestic Relations Bill, which has been shelved for over 40 years, must be passed sooner than later. If this government gave just half the attention it pays to fighting the opposition, terrorism or even petty crime to protecting vulnerable women, we would have taken giant steps by now.

From cultural beliefs that keep women subdued, to the schools that treat girls as feather brained; all these things combine to make women passive and unable to stand up to abusive men. To address domestic violence, it is vital to liberate women from ignorance through education. Education will equip women with knowledge and skills that will empower them economically.

We must raise massive awareness and education campaigns that will compel everyone to do something –you and I, government, and the police must not turn a

blind eye to domestic violence. It should concern us when a neighbour – woman, man or child– is being abused. Government should also fund support services to assist victims who may need to be helped to report abuse and, where necessary, seek refuge. This will require laws that provide adequate protection for women in this country. And it is everybody's duty to speak out – until the violence stops.

One of my favourite authors, Ben Okri, must have been thinking about battered women who choose to persevere in abusive relationships when he wrote *An African Elegy*. An extract from this poem reads:

We are the miracles that God made
To taste the bitter fruit of Time.
We are precious.

And one day our suffering

Will turn into the wonders of the earth.



These are things that burn me now

which turn golden when I am happy.

Do you see the mystery of our pain?

That we bear the poverty

And are able to sing and dream sweet things.

And that we never curse the air when it is warm

Or the fruit when it tastes so good

Or the lights that bounce gently on the waters?

We bless the things even in our pain.

We bless them in silence.

Now, if this does not sum up the stamina of a battered woman who carries on with grace, then what does?

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GENDER VIOLENCE IS A GROWING CONCERN - *By Gerald Businge*

Women activists in Uganda are appealing to the government to expedite the passing of laws and implement policies that will protect women and girls against gender based violence reported to be on the increase.

Several media and research reports have shown that many women are often victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, forced prostitution (survival sex), human trafficking, forced and early marriage, as well as harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation.

Some of the effects resulting from Gender Based Violence include gynaecological disorders, unwanted pregnancies, adverse pregnancy outcomes, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/Aids, mental distress and stigma.

"Violence against women has become a cancer and the government should allocate more money in combating it," says Rita Aciro, the Coordinator of Uganda Women's Network. She says women are increasingly facing gender-based violence in physical, sexual, economic and emotional forms.

Police report on GBV

For the first time, the police in 2008 recorded cases of domestic violence as separate crimes in its annual Crime Report released in March 2009. A total of 137 cases were reported to police in 2008. But these figures show only cases that resulted in death. This means that most GBV cases are reported only when they result in death. Many GBV incidents in form of violence, assaults, and sexual related crimes continue to be unrecorded.

It is only in the category of homicides that the police have carved out specific domestic violence related cases. The figure of 156 domestic violence cases does not say how many of these were women, but the Inspector General of Police, Maj. Gen. Kale Kayihura says the majority of the victims are women.



Jenipher Alupot of Pallisa reported to have been forced to breast feed pupies

In comparison, the police recorded only four terrorism crimes. But apart from already having an Anti-Terrorism Act in place, many laws have been made and more are still being made to boost the fight against terrorism. A case in point is the Interception of Communication Bill which seeks to legalise the interception of communication suspected to pose a security threat to the country. Also, while only 11 election related offences were reported to police in 2008, there is widespread concern over electoral malpractices from all political actors yet Gender Based Violence on escalation is not attracting the same attention.

Why victims don't report assault

Tina Musuya, the Executive Director of the Center for Domestic Violence Prevention, says the increasing cases of violence against women that are being reported are just a tip of an iceberg of the many atrocities that are being committed against women. She says



Commemorative plaque of victims of violence

many cases are not reported to authorities due to social acceptance of GBV, the stigma most abused women face, fear of more violence from partners, failure by police to act on the perpetrators, absence of a relevant law to punish GBV among other reasons.

Musuya says the government should expedite the passing of the Domestic Relations Bill and the Sexual Offences Bill that will give more protection to both men and women in the home setting. The laws have been under consideration for more than 40 years.

Women activists are concerned that the

government is not doing enough to protect women from acts of GBV and to help victims recover from gender based violence.

According to the World Health organization, that gender based violence is a serious human rights and public health concern. The WHO says while men and boys may also be affected, research indicates that sexual and gender-based violence predominantly affects women and girls.

Is GBV on the rise?

Apart from domestic violence, other GBV cases are on the increase. The Police Crime Report for 2008 shows that 1,536 cases of rape were reported in 2008, compared to 599 cases in 2007, indicating a more than 100% increase. Of the 1,536 cases, 239 suspects were arrested and charged, of which 3 were convicted, 3 persons acquitted, 11 discharged and 222 were awaiting trial by end of 2008.

Defilement was the leading sex related crime reported in the country with 8,635 cases registered in 2008, compared to 12,230 cases in 2007. According to the report, 4,124 suspects were arrested and taken to court, of whom 333 were convicted while 3,791 cases were pending in court. The difference between cases reported and those arrested points to a big gap in implementing anti-GBV laws when they are finally put in place. Uganda currently has strong laws to punish rape and defilement, with a death sentence as the maximum penalty. But no one has ever been handed the death penalty for all the rape and aggravated defilement (girls below 16 years) cases.

But there is a general trend of increasing

violence in the country that is not just related to gender. The Police Crime Report for 2008 shows that the number of homicides reported and investigated was 2,753 compared to 1,927 cases in the year 2007.

Intimate partner violence affecting families, communities

But more focus is being drawn to the subtle domestic violence, with crimes of passion where intimate partners harming or killing each other is becoming common. Domestic violence has been noted as a fundamental abuse of women's rights and has serious consequences for women, their families and the development of their communities.

Ketty Nandi, the Officer in Charge of Child and Family Protection Unit at Kampala Central Police Station says that domestic violence greatly affects the care and wellbeing of children in a home. "Normally the children suffer when there is violence in the home. Some children are even abandoned and this creates a big problem in the communities," Nandi says.

She says apart from the limitation of few police units and officers, the police also lack enough funding for investigations, capacity to carry out forensic examinations as well as slow legal process.

This is especially true in northern Uganda where more than 20 years of war have greatly disrupted the health, law enforcement and justice system in the areas, leaving many victims of GBV to just suffer. Several reports on the conflict in northern Uganda have noted sexual and GBV as one of the most pervasive violations of the rights of women and girls. Among others, women and girls have faced



Parliament of Uganda yet to pass laws against domestic violence

rape, forced pregnancies, forced abortion, trafficking, and sexual slavery.

Government response to GBV

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has been working on a national strategy on Gender- Based Violence which the Minister Gabriel Opio says is meant to put in place community based measures against gender based violence.

The government has ratified several international treaties about gender-based violence, and the Ministry of Health in its health care guidelines has recognised the need for special care for survivors of gender- based violence. But according to a study by Reproductive Health Matters, Health Services for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Northern Uganda, these commitments by the government are yet to be translated into adequate services in Uganda.

Because of the many cases of GBV in northern Uganda, different civil society organisations have supported the formation of Coordination Committees. The committees are chaired by the respective local governments. But some local leaders are not keen on the efforts,

with many saying investing in fighting GBV is not necessary.

“They say we are wasting money and that it should instead go to building roads and schools destroyed during the war. What they are telling us is that GBV is not important, while women and girls have been severely affected by the war,” says Betty Akulu of the Women and Rural Development Network (WORUDNET) which is based in Pader.

Yet health personnel and experts interviewed in another research by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) considered sexual abuse of girls below 18 years of age, regardless of whether sex was consensual and irrespective of the male’s age, to be a significant problem. Schoolgirls were reported to be frequent targets of sexual harassment. Intimate partner violence was also common and considered to be a private issue as embedded in the culture of not discussing what goes on in ‘the bedroom’.

What’s driving the incidence of gender violence?

The culture of women being subordinate to men, and women having to accept “some violence”, especially beating from men, has been with us as long as the oldest Ugandan can remember. Yet cases of GBV were not as pervasive in the past as they are today.

A 2003 study by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health on Domestic Violence Levels in Uganda found that approximately one in three women living in rural Uganda reported being physically threatened or assaulted by her current partner. The findings suggested strong links between the risk of domestic violence and alcohol consumption and women’s risk of HIV from their male



IDP Camps where violence is reported to be more rampant partners.

Role of HIV and alcohol

According to the study report, women whose partners frequently consumed alcohol had approximately four times higher risk of recent domestic violence than women whose partners did not drink. In addition, women who perceived their partner to be at high risk of HIV had almost four times greater risk of recent domestic violence, compared to women who perceived their partner to be at very low risk.

“Fear of HIV infection may lead women to avoid sex with their partner, which in turn may precipitate violence or physical abuse,” the research notes.

This study found startling perception justifying violence on women. A higher percentage of women than men believed beating to be justifiable. The report indicates that 16% of men and 28% of women believed beatings to be justified when a woman refused to have sex with her partner. Also, 27% of women said beating is justifiable when a woman adopts contraception without permission of her partner. 60% of men and a striking 87% of women believed that beating was justified



Poverty in homes escalates Violence against women

if the woman was unfaithful.

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, says many factors like long distance to water sources and firewood lead to gender-based violence. When women take long while collecting water or firewood, the men suspect their wives to be unfaithful and end up beating or threatening the wives, which can spiral other forms of violence.

The situation in IDP camps

The IRC study in northern Uganda, Understanding the causes of gender-based violence done by Roselidah Ondeko and Susan Purdin found that domestic violence is one of the negative consequences of enforced idleness and the ensuing frustration in Internally Displaced People's (IDP) camps.

The Reproductive Health Matters study says that the harsh living conditions in the camps and alcohol abuse are the major precipitators of gender-based violence. Many respondents mentioned that early or forced marriage was a common practice for economic survival and security of parents and sometimes the young girls. It was noted that early marriages in

Uganda have become acceptable as a solution to cope with shame and stigma faced by any girl that has been sexually abused. But the study notes that early marriage increased the risk of intimate partner violence. In all instances of violence, girls with mental and other disabilities were deemed to be the most vulnerable group.

Poverty and unemployment

Some people believe that poverty and unemployment or loss of jobs is also a major cause of GBV, especially in homes. Lack or loss of a job means a man has no income to provide for the family. Many women have been beaten, killed or maimed for demanding household provision from husbands who are unable to provide for the families. Poverty and/or unemployment also make many men lose focus and mostly end up in alcoholism, which is the number one cause of GBV. **Adenover Shifungu** also leads to a general sense of helplessness and lack of meaning in life which makes it easy for people to commit GBV crimes. Poverty has also been noted to make women and girls depend on men (and to accept violence) while it also exposes many girls to sexual exploitation.

The IRC study found that girls, who drop out of school, skip school to sell alcohol in bars and discos expose themselves to risks of sexual abuse.

"When girls are forced by poverty to work as maids in homes, male members of the household may sexually abuse them ...When a woman loses her husband, one of his male relatives may demand sexual favours or steal her property," the research reads in part.

Cultural factors

GBV is also strongly linked to bride price, with many a man feeling he has a right to do to his wife as he pleases because the man paid (bride price). Recently, a man (hunter) in Pallisa forced his wife to breastfeed puppies for some years, citing that after all he had paid two cows for her bride price. This case rekindled the calls for abolition or redefinition of bride price since it is a major source of women's vulnerability. Other cultural practices like Female Genital Mutilation practised mainly among the Sabinu in Kapchorwa and Bukwo districts are still ongoing to the detriment of women.

Priorities for action

All GBV survivors are entitled to appropriate care, including:

- Emergency contraception (EC) to prevent pregnancy Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to minimise HIV transmission
- Treatment for STIs
- Care of wounds and injuries
- Counselling and other psychosocial support
- Collection of forensic evidence with

consent of the survivor

- Referral to legal and social support services within the community

Communities can work together to prevent and address GBV through:

- Involvement of women in settlement planning and resource distribution
- Identifying individuals or groups that may be at higher risk of GBV, such as single female-headed households and unaccompanied minors
- Sensitisation of community members, especially those in influential positions, to reduce the social acceptance of GBV
- Ensuring appropriate and accessible legal and social support services as well as informing the displaced community of the location and availability of these services
- Developing a confidential reporting



System

Source: Fact sheet: Gender Based Violence,

UNFPA

Ends Ultimate Media

Violence Driving Girl Child Out of School - *By Sheila Naturinda*

She never thought that her dream would come true, even as she had made a mistake and given birth to a baby mid way her education ladder however, when the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education results were released, smiles beamed on her face. She had scored 13 points. It was a miracle to tell for 19 year Fatuma Nansamba whose headmaster had almost denied her space to sit her final examinations because she had prematurely

gotten pregnant. She was frustrated by the way the head- teacher and supposed parent had treated her even throughout her examination papers and the way she had been discriminated and isolated from the conventional 'pure' students. Even when she missed a whole term of study, she was patient because she knew that one day the sun would shine again and indeed it shone on her when her results came!

Fatuma is however not alone as many girls have been abused, discriminated against by their own people in the society they live in. Gender-based violence and discrimination is rampant in Ugandan schools and other societal organs and in most cases the repercussions are always dire. And due to the socio-cultural factors in Uganda, these young women are more vulnerable to the violence because it manifests itself in various forms and practices. Feminists think that society has a role to play in bringing up the best in the girl child if there is to be a much needed change. Given chance, the girls have always proved their worth going by their performances at school in their final examinations.

In last year's exams, 45.9 percent of the candidates who sat for Uganda Certificate of Education exams were females. The performance at UACE exams was 64 percent compared to the boys' 65.7 percent, which makes a slight difference given the situation some of the girls go through at school sometimes at the hands of their male teachers and fellow male students. So, in such a dismal problem like Fatuma was in, the existing laws and policies are not looked into by policy makers; rather girls and women are left to



Looking ahead to a bright future. Some young girls suffer societal discrimination by being forced into early marriage

find their level.

In 2008 Parliament passed the Education Act 2007 that seeks to have all children get equal opportunity to and at school but society has to assist in pursuing such a mission.

The new minister for Youth and Children Affairs (also Katakwi Woman MP) Jessica Alupo says government has got the will, capacity and the necessary resources to bring out the best in a girl through girl child education but in most cases society does not cooperate with the government. "It is when society accepts to erase all forms of discrimination against the girl child that we shall realise the outcome," she says. Forum for Democratic Change Vice President Salaamu Musumba says on the contrary, that government should

come in immediately to correct the societal evils that have forced girls to run away from school and others to always absent themselves from the day-to-day activities at school.

Cases of defilement, rape, early marriages, child labour and child trafficking are some community hazards that have stood in the way of girls' education. Following the release of UNEB results of 2008, the minister for education and sports Geraldine Namirembe Bitamazire said it was a big achievement that female students had sat for the

exams. Ms Musumba however says the type of education government has provided is just remedial. She likens it to first aid and/or relief to the girl child because it doesn't holistically address the challenges of the girl child.

"The government has only stopped at taking these children to school but what type of environment is at school? Is it capable of handling the growing needs of these female students or it is static?" she asks. She adds: "We need to have gender disaggregated data to enable us get a common ground when dealing with girl children," she says. Many girls, like those orphaned by HIV Aids, those that stay in slums, and those affected by war, have lived for almost the bigger part of their lives in dire situations in their societies.

Ms Musumba says that these particular girls need some relief from government. There is need to first understand what their needs are rather than be taken in a bandwagon with others who in most cases are okay and have grown up in better environments.

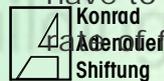
For Wakiso Woman MP, Rosemary Sseninde, a lot has been done to have girl children benefit from school. "We have UPE and USE

and they can equally compete with their male colleagues regardless of the former cultural belief that always had the girls get a small portion of the family's understanding of education,"



When young girls like these get pregnant, they are thrown out of school

she says. Ms Sseninde however acknowledges the fact that even with government's universal primary and secondary policy, there are still many challenges that have to be contended with including the high female school dropout.



All in all, what should be known is that to have a female child as a future achiever through the education system needs collective responsibility between government, society and girls themselves.

THE FEMALE FACE OF EXPLOITATION - *By Olive Eyotaru*

Millicent Nalwoga has lived in Kampala for close to a year. Having decided to leave the confines of her poverty stricken family's home village in Katikamu, Luwero district in search of a better life, Nalwoga, with the help of an aunt, secured a job as a hair dresser. She learnt how to plait hair from a neighbour, having not gone far in education.

The Primary Five dropout got a job at a small

salon located in the alleys of Gazaland Plaza. Her dream of working in Kampala had finally come true. Little did she know what was to befall her! Two months into the job, her employer started acting funny. Initially, the agreement was that for every person plaited, the proceeds would be split 50% between them. She was also supposed to earn 1500 shillings for every customer she brought to the salon.

Instead, her employer decided that Nalwoga would earn 30% of the money made and scrapped the 1500 shillings commission. This trend has continued to-date and Nalwoga feels cheated. The 23-year-old single mother says the money she earns right now is too little to cater for her two daughters yet she has no other place to go to.

Asio Faridah, on the other hand, owns her 'small' salon in one of the rooms in a building on Ben Kiwanuka Street. A former food vendor, Asio saved about 700,000 shillings to set up her salon in early 2007. Apart from struggling to take care of her 5-year old daughter, she has to endure the rising costs of her business. Rent, in particular, is driving her off the edge of business.

"My landlord keeps increasing the rent any time he wants. Keeping up with his demands is strenuous yet I have other needs to cater for," Asio laments. She says that apart from that, most of the tenants are subjected to all sorts of harassment, especially from the Kampala City Council law enforcement officers.

"They come any time and demand for licences and all sorts of papers we are sometimes not sure of. When they demand money, I have to pay them so that I do not lose out on my business," Asio explains.

Nalwoga also complains of harassment from the enforcement officers, saying that some of them masquerade as KCC officers with the intent to extort the little money they have made for the day.

"It is common knowledge that some of these

people connive with the real KCC enforcement officers to rip us off," she charges.

Apart from that, both women say that the working conditions are unbearable as the salons they work in are just behind open sewerage pipes, which burst any time due to pressure exerted by passersby.

These two women's experiences are only a drop in the ocean of the challenges that thousands of women in Uganda face. Apart from being subjected to hard labour, they are not reaping the benefits of their hard work. In one way or another, this kind of situation is known as economic violence. Economic violence is described as any act that harms a girl or a woman's financial well-being or a situation where a person uses money to control a woman.



Economic violence includes withholding food or money as punishment, preventing a woman from earning an income, taking away money or goods that a woman has earned, among others. It is also described as a situation where a person is denied to earn a living; given low pay and in worst forms forced to hand over his/her labour proceeds to his/ her superiors.

Whereas many look at violence as a physical or emotional blackmail, economic violence is real. A stroll into one of these plazas will manifest the real face of economic violence. Enter a salon and about 10 girls are crowded inside, all fighting for space. Just outside the salon door is another set of girls fighting for veranda space. The stairs have not been spared either. Young girls who cannot afford the ever-increasing rent in shops opt for the third best option. They then endure the



Girls in saloons are often exploited by their land lords as well as Kampala City Council

interruption that comes from the continuously bypassing shoppers.

Nalwoga explains that every property owner is now looking at making abnormal profits and their easiest prey are the women. In truth, the economic cost of violence against women is astronomical. Apart from the woman being exploited, it deprives her of a chance to earn an income to cater for her family's needs.

According to Kampala Woman MP, Hon. Nabila Ssempala, the complaints about the Kampala City Council enforcement officers are not new. Ssempala says that several traders have complained to her about the way these officials extort money from them, especially if they (officials) know you have no licence.

"In a situation where authorities condone areas or businesses that are unplanned or ungazetted, they see a loophole for exploitation," Ssempala says.

Such situations, the legislator says, make the property owners or enforcement officers have the mentality that they are doing these women a favour by letting them operate illegally.

In one incident, a girl narrates that once these KCC officials pounce on these girls, accusing them of being idle and disorderly, they are arrested and arraigned in a small 'court'. They are only released after paying a 'fine' ranging between two to ten thousand shillings failure of which earns the girls a night in a makeshift prison.

Now if that is not economic violence, what word can describe this evil? Ssempala believes that Parliament needs to come up with stringent laws that streamline areas where women can earn a living for themselves

"Such areas will enable women to work well knowing that they are safe from any kind of exploitation, especially from the men," she says.



Such gaps filled by government, women will be empowered to earn a living and sustain their livelihoods.

However, there is need for instruments and bodies that protect women's economic rights such as the Equal Opportunities Commission. Objective XIII of the 1995 constitution says that 'the state shall endeavour to fulfill the fundamental rights of all Ugandans to social justice and economic development and shall in particular ensure that, XIII (b); all Ugandans enjoy rights and opportunities and access to education, health services, clean and safe water, work, decent shelter,'. If government held this objective, it would go a long way in addressing the inequalities that women are grappling with.

A law on domestic violence will also help to

approach not only violence against everyone but also gender discrimination. The attainment of gender equality and women empowerment will require a comprehensive approach to overcome gender-based discrimination in laws and policies.

As for the law enforcement officials, KCC should send genuine people with identity cards to prove that they are really doing their job of enforcing the law. It is not right to subject these girls to more misery when they are struggling to make ends meet.

REAL LIFE EXPERIENCE OF A HAIR DRESSER

(Even when she has and continues to go through the storms of life Sarah Nakibuule (not real name) remains optimistic, her dream is to see her children through school) She shared her story with
Rukia Makuma

My name is Sarah Nakibuule. My father lives in Jinja but his mother is in Kiboga. Kiboga is where I was also produced and grew up from. But right now I stay at Nansana. I don't know why my father did not manage to educate me yet we are few, we are only two. I am the only born of my mother, but later my father produced my sister with a step mum. I studied only up to S1 and even that S1; it wasn't my father responsible for my fees. It was just other people. I really wanted to study and was bright but didn't get the chance. It is true my father didn't have a lot of money but even then he wasn't bothered. Instead it was my uncle who paid my fees but he was also more concerned about his own children.

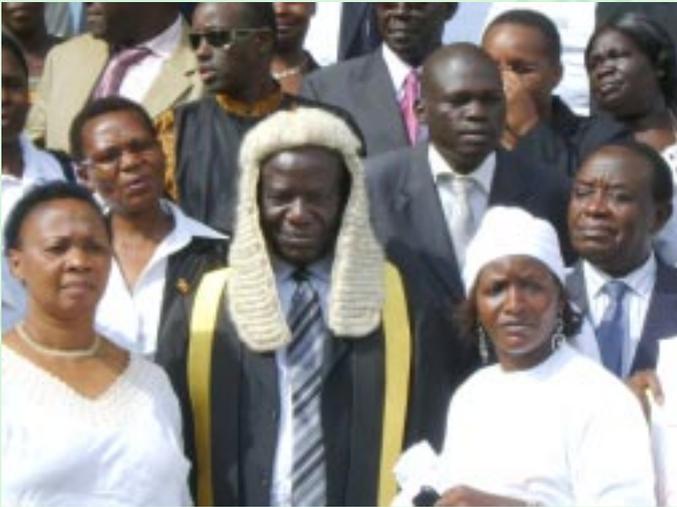
My father decided to marry me off when I was 14 years, by fifteen I had got pregnant. I think that at that time there were no laws against child marriages because I had people complaining in hospital. They even thought I wouldn't deliver the baby but thank God I managed. I had the second and third child and by then I was eighteen years. I started working, but my husband wasn't in gainful employment, he was a casual labourer. I started farming; I reared cattle and did small business at home. It is from this income that

the family survived. Then my husband started misbehaving. When he saw me doing all this he gave up working completely. I started a kind of shop where I could sell things in little amounts, but he would take away everything. He would pick items from the shop at will and never pay yet I wouldn't deter him because I feared him.



When my husband fell sick he refused to treat me. Then one day when I decided to go to hospital, the man beat me up accusing me to be coming from boyfriends. I felt so sad. Later I overcame this and decided to talk to him about working together. He accepted so I went to FINCA and borrowed six hundred thousand. I suggested that we make a dairy business; I spent two hundred thousand on rent, and gave him the remaining money to buy other items such as saucepans. When he went to consult his brothers, they told him that I had become very 'bright'! They said that with such business, I was now going to associate with prostitutes and other men were going to take me away. When he came back, he said that he didn't have the money I had given him and accused me of infidelity. Remember I had already paid two hundred thousand as rent. Now he refused to

PICT



Front: Hons. Jane Alisemera, Edward Ssekandi and Nabilah Sempala during the petition at parliament



Members of ACFODE at a general meeting on 27th June, 2009



Mr. Zedekia Karokora, LC 5 Chairperson Rukungiri closing ACFODE workshop



Hon. Winnie Matsiko, Woman MP Rukungiri at ACFODE workshop



Justine and Maria at The People's Space Africana during a civil society week



One of the participants emphasises a point during a community dialogue in Lira

ORIAL



Members of the CEDAW committee Atiira sub-county, Soroti District.

Suzan Adong, former Chairperson of CEDAW committee, Atiira sub-county unfortunately passed away. RIP



Dora Byamukama (EALC Representative) lights a fire during the vigil for victims of violence held at parliament on 6th March, 2009



Ms Angela Koenig (left) representative from Eirene with Ms Regina Bafaki, Executive Director of ACFODE signing a partnership



Participants pause for a photo after a workshop in Rukungiri



Members of ACFODE attending a vigil in the parliamentary gardens

surrender the remaining money moreover there was also the FINCA loan to be re-paid. He asked me to choose between marriage and work. I decided to leave amidst a lot of misery. When I got home I tried all possible means to ensure that I worked. I started off with twenty thousand shillings from which I started off work in order to re-pay the loan from FINCA.

I borrowed more money and started a hair salon. It had started picking when I got another man. Remember that I had chosen not have any man till then because I wanted to get some one I would love and some one responsible. So this man came my way, he is a very responsible person, he is now a councillor at the district and every one knows him. He told me he was going to marry me. He made me take a blood test for HIV, he was very systematic in whatever he was doing. Now it seems this man's wife was very tough but the man hid this from me because as soon as the wife leant that we were married and that the man had converted me to his faith (I had then converted to Islam and was given the name Shakia) the woman got tough on him. She made his life very hard. She would command him to bring him at my door at night. Some times I would reach home and people would ask me whether I had committed any offence. They would then tell me that the councillor and wife had been there looking for me.

At this time, I had once again conceived with this man but this partner also abandoned me without any help. The only advantage then was that I was working and the salon generated some little income for me. The problem came at the time of delivery. When I

went to Mulago Hospital, they told me they had detected that the foetus had died and told me that they were going to operate on me. They admitted me.

This became problematic because now I couldn't work and yet the man responsible for the pregnancy had now turned against me. By this time, he had even started buying supposed enemies to pick quarrels with me. He wanted them to abuse me so that his wife would know that the affair with me had ended. I came to learn that it was the LC5 chairperson who came to my aid and told this man that if I died, they would all be embarrassed.

While at Mulago, I rang him and he came over and gave me Shs150,000 but told me not to go back to Kiboga. He told me that his wife was planning to pour acid on me. I believed him because this wife had already attempted so before.

I remained at Mulago. Remember I had left all my things in the salon. I had just left and he was now telling me not to go back to Kiboga. Shortly after, I heard that all my property had been stolen. Fortunately I had a normal delivery, but my child had been affected by the pressure I had. His one eye is squinted. After delivering, I went to Kibuye at my grandfather's place. When the man heard that I had delivered, he again came over and said he would rent a place for me. He even advised that I get a house on Nansana road because it would be convenient for him to send me food from Kiboga. He only did this for the first month I rented this house. As I speak now, I can take over three months reminding him of the rent.

Meanwhile I had not told my father anything about my dilemma hoping things would work out and I settle with this man. So I didn't want to share with my relatives that the man was mistreating me. My father came to learn about it through rumours. Remember when I left Kiboga, the children dropped out of school because then I had no money to pay their fees. My father then brought the children and dumped them to me. I looked for the relative of their father where I took them.

It is then that I got this place to work; I usually take them help whenever I get some resources. Their father is there, married but just hopeless. I tried to use the law to force him help his children but the law enforcement also advised me against it because there was basically nothing to get from him. Instead I made sure that I secure his land for my children. They made him sign an agreement not to sell off the land but recently, I heard that he had sold it.

I have spent here about three months; the good thing is that we earn money on a weekly basis. The other advantage is that when you

plait hair you earn the money that same day. Money for plaiting is shared half way with the salon owner. Then of course you have to share that half with the person who has helped you plait the hair. We get 20% of the money done on retouch, every week; a person calculates what she has earned in the week.

There are problems such as deductions when a customer complains that she has received bad service; the boss arrives before we have cleaned the salon and a lot more things. Many times you can work a whole week without payment because all the money will have been deducted.

But I am hopeful that in future I can make enough money to be able to teach my children and go for adult education. The important thing is that I need enough money because I have to help my children; I also want to be near them because every time I put them far, I find them in bad condition. They are in P.6, P.5 and P.4. Right now, I am a little happy because I can raise some little money to take care of my children.

LET US ALL JOIN HANDS IN PROTECTING WOMEN

By Monicah Amoding

The global advocacy and awareness-raising effort on ending violence against women has drummed up necessary support for legislation in many countries and is increasingly building a global movement of people who demand that ending violence against women be a top priority for governments everywhere. The Uganda Women's Movement joined the rest of the world during this year's International Women's Day and days proceeding this day



A protest against wife battering

to drum up support from Parliament to legislate on violence against women.

There is documented evidence indicating that violence against women not only constitutes a gross violation of human rights on the affected persons but also



Members of the womens movement at parliament gardens on 6th March, 2009

has enormous social and economic costs, and undercuts the contribution of women to development, peace and security. It further poses a serious threat to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

Women in Uganda have in the past one decade been engaged in activism against violence and have demanded that Government puts into place legislation that protects them from all forms of human rights violations. Change is slow in coming but in the last three years, members of parliament, religious and cultural leaders, communities and the general public have been engaged in activities aimed at preventing the vice of gender- based violence.

This year the Women's Movement chose to mourn rather than celebrate during the International Women's Day. . Women leaders

from Civil Society and those in Parliament noted that despite Government's proclaimed public support for the rights of women in Uganda, it had not translated its rhetoric into action

by putting in place the much needed gender legislation such as the Domestic Relations Bill, Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence bills to protect women.

However, there is hope that soon things will change for the better. With the past activism, a wave of change has swept across Parliament with most of the sections of parliament increasingly getting more supportive of these Bills. Members of Parliament for example participated in the lighting of the candle in memory of the fallen women and men who have died as a result of Gender-Based Violence. This candle will act as a reminder for MPs to urgently legislate on the pending gender bills. This candle is still lit in parliament until the day a law on domestic violence and other related issues are passed

by the 8th parliament. As a result of this activism, the Domestic Violence Bill was discussed and passed at Cabinet level and is scheduled to be tabled before Parliament. It is said that the Domestic Relations Bill will also come back to parliament within this year.

Violence Against Women is a very serious public health, socio-economic and political problem in Uganda and the world requiring urgent interventions, investment and legislative attention. In the words of the UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, 'We must unite. Violence against women cannot be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance, by any political leader or by any government. The time to change is now. Only by standing together and speaking out can we make a difference'.

In Uganda, a lot has already been said by various stakeholders. What is lacking are the right and needed actions. Government, parliament, police, religious leaders, civil society and individuals all need to play their roles in harnessing the environment that prevents violence in the community. Let us all put our hands where our mouths are and save the millions of our mothers, sisters, aunties and friends who are dying because of gender related violence.

The Writer is the Policy & Communications Officer at Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: SIGNS OF A BATTERING PERSONALITY

Wife battering is a common phenomenon of violence against women in Uganda and other developing countries. Men who batter come from all socioeconomic backgrounds, tribes and walks of life. The abuser may be a blue-collar or white-collar worker, unemployed or highly paid. He may be a drinker or nondrinker. Batterers represent all different personalities, family backgrounds, and professions. In summation, there is no "typical batterer."

The majority of batterers are only violent with their wives or female partners. For example, one study found that 90% of abusers do not have criminal records, and that batterers are generally law abiding outside the home. It is estimated that only about 5 to 10% of batterers commit acts of physical and sexual violence against other people as well as their female partners.

Why do men batter women?

Typically, when trying to understand why men batter their spouses or partners, people want to look for what is "wrong" with them, believing they must be sick in some way. However, battering is not a mental illness that can be diagnosed, but a learned behavioural choice. Men choose to batter their partners because the choice is there to make and, until quite recently, there has been no consequence for these actions.

Battering is the extreme expression of the belief in male dominance over women. To understand why men may choose to batter women, it is important to look at what they get out of using violence. Men use physical force to maintain power and control over their relationships with their female partners. They



Violence often makes victims feel valueless

have learned that violence ‘works’ to achieve this end. Many batterers grew up in homes where they or a sibling were physically abused or where their mother was abused by their father.

In one batterers programme in United States, for example, 70% of participants came from violent homes. In fact, witnessing domestic violence as a child has been identified as the most common risk factor for becoming a batterer in adulthood. While many batterers have substance abuse problems, there is no evidence that alcohol or drugs cause violent behaviour. In fact, batterers may abuse their partners when they are intoxicated as well as when they are sober. Battering incidents involving alcohol or drug abuse may be more severe, however.

Many women are interested in ways that can predict whether they are about to become involved with someone who will be physically abusive. Usually battering occurs between a man and a woman, but lesbians can be battered too. Organisations that strengthen sisterhood in the United States (www.strengthenoursisters.org) have identified the behaviours that are seen in

people who beat their girlfriends or men. Below is a list of behaviours, the last four signs listed are battering. But many women don't realise this is the beginning of physical abuse. If the person has several of the other behaviours (say three or more) there is a strong potential for physical violence — the more signs a person, the more likely the person is a batterer. In some cases, a batterer may have only a couple of behaviours that the woman can recognise, but they are exaggerated (e.g., will try to explain his/her behaviour as signs of his/her love and concern, and a woman may be flattered at first; as time goes on, the behaviours become more severe and serve to dominate and control the woman.

Jealousy

At the beginning of a relationship, an abuser will always say that jealousy is a sign of love; ^{Konrad} ^{Adenasey} ^{Shifting} however has nothing to do with love, it's a sign of possessiveness and lack of trust. He/she will question the woman about who she talks to, accuse her of flirting, or be jealous of time she spends with family, friends or children. As the jealousy progresses, he/she may call her frequently during the day or drop by unexpectedly. He/she may refuse to let her work for fear she'll meet someone else, or even do strange behaviours such as checking her car mileage or asking friends to watch her.

Controlling behaviour

At first, the batterer will say this behaviour is because he/she's concerned for the woman's safety, her need to use her time well, or her need to make good decisions. He/she will be angry if the woman is ‘late’ coming back from the shopping, work or an appointment. He/she will question her closely about where she

went, whom she talked to. As this behaviour gets worse, he/she may keep all the money or even make her ask permission to leave the house or room.

Quick involvement

Many battered women dated or knew their abuser for less than six months before they were married, engaged, or living together. He/she comes on like a whirlwind, claiming “you’re the only person I could ever talk to,” “I’ve never felt loved like this by anyone.” He/she will pressure the woman to commit to the relationship in such a way that later a woman may feel very guilty or that she’s “letting them down” if she wants to slow down involvement or break-off.

Unrealistic expectations

Abusive people will expect their partner to meet all their needs; he/she expects the woman to be the perfect wife, mother, lover, and friend. He/she will say things like “if you

love me, I’m all you need — you’re all I need.” She is supposed to take care of everything for him/her emotionally and in the home.

Isolation

The abusive person tries to cut the person off from all resources. He/she accuses people who are the woman’s supports of “causing trouble.” He/she may want to live in the country without a phone, may not let her use a car (or have one that is reliable), or may try to keep the woman from working or going to school.

Blames others for feelings and problems

He/she will tell the woman “you make me mad,” “you’re hurting me by not doing what I want you to do,” “I can’t help being angry.” H/she really makes the decision about what he/she thinks or feels, but will use feelings to manipulate the woman. Harder to catch are things that “you make me happy,” “you control how I feel.” He/she may make mistakes and then blame the woman for upsetting him/her



ACFODE joined a procession on 6th March 2009 to petition the speaker of parliament against domestic violence

and keeping him/her from concentrating on the work. He/she will tell the woman she is at fault for almost everything that goes wrong.

Cruelty to Animals or Children

This is a person who punishes animals brutally or is insensitive to their pain or suffering; he/she may expect children to be capable of doing things beyond their ability (whips a two-year old for wetting a diaper) or he/she may tease children or young brothers and sisters until they cry (60% of men who beat the women they are relating with also beat their children). He/she may not want children to eat from the table or expect to keep them in their room all evening while he/she is home.

Verbal Abuse

In addition to saying things that are meant to be cruel and hurtful, this can be seen when the abuser degrades the woman, cursing her, running down any of her accomplishments. The abuser will tell the woman that she's stupid and unable to function without him/her. This may involve waking the woman up to verbally abuse her or not letting her go to sleep.

Rigid Sex Roles

The abuser expects the woman to serve them; he/she may say the woman must stay home, that she must obey in all things — even things that are criminal in nature. The abuser will see women as inferior, responsible for menial tasks, stupid, and unable to be a whole person without a relationship.

Explosiveness and Moodiness

These are typical of people who beat their partners, and these behaviours are related to other characteristics like hypersensitivity.

Men who have a problem with violence exhibit drastic personality changes. Much of the time, they are gentle and loving husbands and fathers. This is the personality with which the woman fell in love originally and continues to love. Periodically, sometimes in rather predictable cycles, he seems to metamorphose into an ogre. This is doubly treacherous to the partner because others do not believe her when she speaks of monstrous acts. Many women are confused by their abuser's "sudden changes in mood" — they may think the abuser has some special mental problem because one minute he/she's nice and the next he/she's exploding.

Past Battering

This person may say he/she has hit a woman in the past, but they made him/her do it. The woman may hear from relatives or ex-spouses/girlfriends that the person is abusive. A batterer will beat any woman they're with if the woman is with him/her long enough for the violence to begin; situational circumstances do not make a person an abusive personality. Forty-two percent of the abusers of those victims interviewed by Strengthen Our Sisters, (US organisation that gives support to abused women) were abused as children. Fifty-three percent had seen violence in their homes. Of those who had witnessed violence, 75% had seen their fathers beat their mothers. To the researchers, these findings indicate that battering is a problem both for families and for society generally.

Threats of Violence

This could include any threat of physical force meant to control the woman: "I'll slap your

mouth off," "I'll break your neck." Most people do not threaten their mates, but a batterer will try to excuse threats by saying "everybody talks like that."

Breaking or Striking Objects

This behaviour is used as a punishment (breaking loved possessions), but is mostly used to terrorise the woman into submission. The abuser may beat on the table with his/her fist, throw objects around or near the

woman. Again, this is very remarkable behaviour — not only is this sign of extreme emotional immaturity, but there's great danger when someone thinks they have the "right" to punish or frighten their wife/girlfriend.

Adopted from

http://www.strengthenoursisters.org/signs_battering_personality.html,

<http://www.asafeplaceforhelp.org/battererprofile.html>

with minor editorials by George Kanyomozi

'DIRTY MONEY' WHEN GIRLS EARN THROUGH STRIP TEASE!

By Gerald Busingye

The controversy surrounding the use of women's bodies as a source of living is as old as the debates within the women's movement. A section of radical feminists for example think that women have a right to use their bodies the way they feel like after all they argue, there is no difference between sex solicited for an income and the one done on a marital bed. Another section of feminists however argue that using women's bodies in what ever form is a form of sexual exploitation on women.

Citing USA reports on the growing trend of women, www.womenlink.com writes that either through choice or force, many young girls are applying to work in porn films, stripping naked for magazines or dancing naked in the red lights. Many clubs are seeing double the number of applicants this year than over the last years. The girls in this industry are reported to be making an obscene amount of money, often far more than what they previously earned.

What are your thoughts? Should young women use their bodies to make ends meet? Below are some views adopted from www.womenlink.net as well as from our own

Ugandans?

Anne Caroline Drake (quoted on www.womenlink.net) says:

The darkest night of my life was after a job interview in 1982. I graduated first in my class and had an MBA with distinction. The man interviewing me hadn't graduated from college. We worked in human resources, the folks who are supposed to prevent sexual harassment.

The only "credential" that mattered to him was whether or not I'd sleep with him as a term and condition of employment.

So, I went to law school only to discover that the same was true in law firms. I refused to prostitute myself and was replaced by women who were willing.

The only satisfaction I got was telling a potential employer that if I was going to have to work "overtime" that I expected to be fully compensated at the going rate of a high class call girl. I'll never forget the shocked look on his face.



Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung

Lacey (quoted on www.womenlink.net) says:

Every girl in the sex industry is someone's daughter and might be/is/will be someone's wife. But even the sadder truth is that many of those women and girls did not have a choice in the matter, instead they are victims of sex trafficking, sold by their parents, tricked by pimps or just kidnapped.

SLB says

I wonder why it is women who have to consider this question while men don't. No one asks men, "would you strip down and sell your dignity in order to support your kids and wife?" It's the women who are being lured into jobs that could destroy their lives and their spirits by this economic downturn. And if they are young and desperate enough, they may not even know (or consider) the costs until many years later. I think it's a tragedy.

A cross section of Ugandans had this to say:

Prof. Joy Kwesiga (Vice Chancellor, Kabale University)

"It is not right for girls to dance naked. These are young girls who are not empowered. They are being exploited. Such girls have no self esteem to know what they are doing is wrong. The money girls earn for performing nude is too little. Such girls do not know or appreciate that they can earn a living from other activities other than dancing nude. May be such girls



haven't considered who they are as individuals- as valuable human beings.

There are also artistes performing while dressed scantily. While adults are free to put on the clothes they want, you have to mind about the community and avoid dressing half naked. You can dance, and people appreciate you even if you don't dance in the nude or wear scanty clothing. We need more awareness and building self esteem of such young ladies. They need to know that the quick small money they are making is not worth selling their self esteem."

Keturah Kamugasa (Editor with 'The New Vision' and Sociologist)

"Life is full of choices, some good and some bad. For the girls who dance nude, the choice they have made is

to use their bodies to make a quick buck. They do not

stop to think about the

consequences.

The shame and degradation that comes with public nudity completely

escapes them in a

bid to survive. Are they being exploited? Yes, if they are under age. But, if they are 18 and above, then they are not. That is the path they have chosen. The nude dancers are just as crude and desperate as their pimps and spectators. For what would possess a respectable person to watch girls dancing naked?"

Silver Kyagulanyi (Musician and Song Writer)

"I think the major problem is that our morals



as a society are on a decline. Many young girls think it is their right to perform nude or half naked. Things like human rights have become an excuse for being uncivilised. Some of these young ladies feel they want to express themselves as such, and as society, we seem to care less. If the audience doesn't say it is bad, the girls will continue to do. People attending such shows instead cheer.

Since the competition is high in the entertainment industry, some artistes are doing it to get attention. It is the young untalented performers who do such things like nude shows or dressing half naked, because a talented artiste does not need such stunts to get attention.

But the major issue of concern is that there are many people who like these nude shows. It is a whole battle that deals so much with who we are as a society. We are shopping too much rubbish from the west including their lifestyles like nude performances. We need the audience to be selective of what they consume. If these nude shows are organised and no one turns up, the people dancing nude cannot perform to themselves."

Marriam Ndagire,
(Musician, Film Director)

"I'm not ok with artistes dancing half naked or girls dancing nude or striptease. I cannot comment more than that."



Emanuel Mwaka Lutukumoi (Minister of Youth and ICT, Acholi Kingdom)

"On moral grounds, it is not right at all. It spoils morals especially of our children. People should go slow on globalisation- don't just

adopt every western culture to the extent of performing naked or half naked. You have to mind about the public good."

Angela Katatumba (Musician)

"Most young girls in the entertainment industry feel pressured to perform half naked in order to make it in the industry. It is important to understand that one doesn't have to be half



naked in order to dance and be appreciated. You need to know what your goals are in joining the entertainment industry before falling for such pressure. As artistes, we are supposed to be role models and send relevant messages in whatever we

do. It is self defeating to send such a wrong message by dancing nude or half naked. It is important for young artistes to say no to such pressure of performing naked or half naked. You can say I will be a singer and be successful without taking off my clothes.

Some of the girls are exploited because of the pressure they are facing from the promoters, producers, marketers and especially the media. If you are at a performance, it is the photo of the girl with the shortest skirt or most revealing dress that will be run in the media. I believe artistes should be mentored to enter the entertainment industry when they have goals so that nobody can sway them to do wrong things."

Jane Alisemera Babiha (Chairperson, Uganda Women Parliamentary Association, also Woman MP, Bundibugyo district)

"As a woman MP and leader in this country,

these young girls are being exploited. Why should it be the bodies of young girls to be shown in public for money? Why should girls be degraded to that level? Why don't the men also undress and dance naked? It is real exploitation of women. These girls can do better if they are given alternative forms of earning a living. These girls need to be told that to dance and be appreciated, one doesn't have to be nude or half naked."



Hezron Batayobu (Businessman)

"What these girls do when dancing nude is appreciated by people who like to watch them. Supply is a response to demand. Whatever we say, nude shows will remain there because it is within the demand of human nature. The issue is not whether it is okay or whether the girls are being exploited but that it is supply in response to demand. Many people want to look at something like that. The morals come in later."

Ragga Dee (Musician)

"It is not right for the girls to dance half naked. You cannot dance vulgar and you say you are entertaining people. Even my children look at some of these videos of artistes dancing half naked and they yell "Daddy, these musicians are doing something not good". We all know that being nude or naked in public is bad."



Opira Ambrose (security guard)

"There is no exploitation at all. There is a lot of moral degeneration in this age where people are no longer concerned about preserving morals. These girls dance nude willingly and they are not exploited. As adults, they do it with their own consent and without force."

Juliet Nantume (phone attendant) –

"Poverty forces girls into such acts of nude dancing. Many of them go into such acts because they are looking for money. There is nothing like rights."

David Munulo (Education student, Makerere University) –

"There is no doubt there is exploitation. Looking at the money collected from the nude shows, it is not proportional to the money given to the ladies that actually do the strip dance. However, if the ladies are paid well, then they have the right to get involved."

Maureen Mbabazi (shop attendant)

"What I can say is that nude dancing is so evil. It is even more than exploitation. It is a breakdown of morals."

Amanda Shaban, (Leader of Amanda Angels, the key group behind Ekimansulo)

"People like what we give them. I am not an armed robber. My show is only for adults, not young people, not teenagers, not for kids."



*Amanda Shaban,
'Ekimansulo' group leader*

A TALE OF TWO RAPES *By Pierre Tristam*

About 18 months ago in Qaif, a Saudi Arabian city in the eastern part of the country, a 19-year-old woman ran into an old boyfriend who'd promised to give her back an old photograph he had of her. She wanted the photo back because she was getting ready to marry someone else. She went to the old boyfriend's car. Both were stopped by seven men. Both were gang-raped by the men, several times over. One of the seven men filmed the rapes on his mobile phone. Police got hold of the footage. That should have been enough to put away the rapists.

Not in Saudi Arabia. The prosecution and the judge presiding over the case ignored the footage. Four of the rapists were sentenced to one to five years in prison, along with up to 1,000 lashes—not for rape, but for kidnapping. The rape charges, the court claimed, could not be proved.

And the woman who was raped? She was sentenced to 90 lashes. Her crime: riding in a car with another man not her husband. The woman was, naturally enough, incensed. She protested. "At the first session, [the judges] said to me, 'what kind of relationship did you have with this individual? Why did you leave the house? Do you know these men?' They asked me to describe the situation. They used to yell at me," she told Human Rights Watch. "They were insulting. The judge refused to allow my husband in the room with me. One judge told me I was a liar because I didn't remember the dates well. They kept saying, 'Why did you leave the house? Why didn't you tell your husband where you were going?'"

And for that, the court doubled her lash

sentence, to 200, and added six months in prison for good measure. The court also suspended her lawyer's licence to practise law. The reason: "Judges of the Qatif General Court," The Times reported, "have accused him of trying to tarnish the court's image by talking to the media." Lashes, The Times notes, "are meted out in increments because offenders could not survive hundreds of lashes at once. The administrator of the punishment is supposed to hold a Koran under his arm so he cannot swing the whip too fiercely; lashes are not supposed to leave permanent scars. The sentence is frequently delivered in public, often at the entrance to a jail."

Not that those qualifiers diminish the brutality of the practice, or its misogyny, or the court's . But that's Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia, where it wouldn't even be accurate to compare the law to something Medieval—unless the comparison was with Christian Medieval law. In Medieval Islam, none of this would have been tolerated, and even less so in the Prophet Muhammad's time. Muhammad would have regarded as barbaric and unacceptable such treatment of women, who were, in his eyes, on equal footing with men in all matters moral, social or commercial. (the Saudi Justice Ministry, bowing to the embarrassment of international outrage, agreed to "review the case.") But Saudi Arabia is far from the only outpost of Byzantine barbarism when it comes to reviling women, punishing the innocent and excusing rapists.

Adopted from <http://middleeast.about.com/b/2007/11/27/a-tale-of-two-rapes.htm>

WHY CRIMINALISING HIV TRANSMISSION IS BAD PUBLIC POLICY

(This is an edited version of 10 Reasons Why Criminalisation of HIV Exposure or Transmission Is Bad Public Policy written by Ralf Jürgens, Jonathan Cohen, Edwin Cameron, Scott Burris, Michaela Clayton, Richard Elliott, Richard Pearshouse, Anne Gathumbi, and Delme Cupido) - George Kanyomozi

Uganda is struggling to have HIV and AIDS Control Bill to curb the spread of HIV in the country which is reported to be on an increase with now one million Ugandans living with the virus. Recent years have seen an increase in the number of prosecutions for HIV exposure or transmission, particularly in Europe and North America. In parts of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, legislators have created new HIV-specific criminal offences, and prosecutions are on the rise.

The push to apply criminal law is often driven by the wish to respond to serious and legitimate concerns about the ongoing rapid spread of HIV in many countries, coupled by what is perceived to be a failure of prevention efforts. These concerns are legitimate and need responses. However, a closer analysis of the complex issues raised by criminalisation of HIV exposure or transmission reveals that criminalising it is unlikely to prevent new infections and may have many potential adverse consequences for both public health and human rights.

Below is a slightly edited version of ten reasons why applying criminal law to HIV transmission is an unjust and ineffective public policy, except in cases where individuals purposely or maliciously transmit HIV with the intent to



Esther Kisakye presenting a paper on HIV/AIDS and a legal framework in Uganda at a workshop in Hotel Equatoria organised by ACFODE

harm others, in which case existing criminal laws are sufficient.

1 Applying criminal law to HIV exposure or transmission can't reduce the spread of HIV. Policy makers sometimes argue that applying criminal law to HIV exposure or transmission can reduce the spread of HIV by incapacitating or rehabilitating particular offenders, or by deterring others from transmitting HIV. In fact, applying criminal law to HIV risk behaviour has never been shown to incapacitate, rehabilitate, or deter offenders.

Incapacitation: In order to slow the spread of the HIV pandemic, vast numbers of people would have to be incapacitated from having sex, sharing syringes, or engaging in other risk behaviours, which no HIV-specific criminal law could possibly do. Indeed, imprisoning a person with HIV does not even prevent that individual from spreading HIV. HIV risk behaviours are prevalent in prisons.

Rehabilitation: There is little evidence to suggest that criminal penalties for conduct that

transmits or risks transmitting HIV will “rehabilitate” a person such that they avoid future conduct that carries the risk of transmitting the virus. Most cases of HIV transmission are related to sexual activity and/or drug use – human behaviours that are complex and very difficult to change through the blunt tool of criminal penalties.

Deterrence: Most people living with or at risk of HIV already believe it is morally right to protect others, and do their best to be safe. In any case, it is unlikely that criminal sanctions will act as a significant deterrent to behaviour that may result in HIV transmission, for a number of reasons including; during the time when there is the greatest risk of HIV transmission (the first months following infection), most people do not know their HIV status, limiting the preventive value that any criminal offence could have and most people who test positive to HIV substantially reduce any behaviour that would transmit HIV, particularly if they receive good-quality voluntary counseling and testing.

2 Applying criminal law to HIV risk behaviour can actually undermine HIV prevention and treatment efforts

Applying criminal law to HIV transmission could discourage people from getting tested and finding out their HIV status, as lack of knowledge of one’s status could become perceived as the best defence in a criminal law suit. Indeed, in jurisdictions with HIV-specific criminal laws, HIV testing counsellors are often obliged to caution people that getting an HIV test will expose them to criminal liability if they find out they are HIV-positive and continue having sex. These same counsellors are sometimes forced to provide evidence of a person’s HIV status in a criminal

trial. This interferes with the delivery of health care and frustrates efforts to encourage people to come forward for testing.

3. Applying criminal law to HIV transmission promotes fear and stigma.

Nearly thirty years of combating HIV/AIDS has reinforced the importance of breaking the silence around the pandemic, talking openly about HIV, and encouraging people to live positively. Applying criminal law to HIV transmission does the opposite. It reinforces the stereotype that people living with HIV are dangerous criminals, rather than people endowed with dignity and human rights. The introduction of HIV-specific criminal laws, as well as individual criminal prosecutions against people with HIV for conduct that transmitted or risked transmitting HIV, has often been accompanied by inflammatory and ill-informed coverage or commentary by high-profile figures such as prosecutors, government officials, or legislators. This rhetoric can only discourage people from coming forward to seek HIV tests and talk openly and honestly about AIDS.

4 Instead of providing justice to women, applying criminal law to HIV transmission endangers and further oppresses them.

Policy makers, and indeed some women’s groups, sometimes support the application of criminal law to HIV transmission for the reason that it might protect women and girls from HIV infection. Many women acquire HIV in marriage and other intimate relationships, including where rape and sexual coercion has occurred. These women deserve justice. However, applying criminal law to HIV

transmission does nothing to address the economic, social, and political marginalisation that are at the root of gender-based violence and women's HIV vulnerability. On the contrary, these laws are likely to be used to prosecute women more often than men. There are at least three reasons why this is so:

More likely to know their status: Because they engage with the health system more (including during pregnancy), women are typically more likely to know their HIV status than men—particularly as governments move towards provider-initiated HIV testing and counselling in pre-natal settings.

More likely to be blamed for HIV: Women are already routinely blamed for bringing HIV into families, and criminal laws would only provide another tool to oppress them. Women are more likely to be blamed by their intimate partners and by their communities for “bringing HIV into the home” than men, and this can result in eviction, ostracism, and loss of property and inheritance.

Mother-to-child transmission: Some laws criminalising HIV transmission or exposure are drafted broadly enough to capture women who transmit HIV to a child during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

5 Laws criminalising HIV exposure and transmission are drafted too broadly and often punish behaviour that is not blameworthy.

Many laws criminalising HIV exposure and transmission are poorly drafted; capturing behaviour that society has no interest in punishing and placing innocent people at risk of prosecution. For example, some criminal laws require that people with HIV inform “all sexual contacts” of their status, meaning they



Participants at a workshop on HIV/AIDS at hotel equatoria

could be jailed for not revealing their HIV status before kissing someone or engaging in other behaviour that carries no risk of HIV transmission.

Still others criminalise any “omission” that results in HIV transmission, meaning that failure to get an HIV test and learn one's status could be a criminal offence—without any inquiry into whether HIV testing was even available. Such over-breadth is further evidence that criminal laws against HIV transmission or exposure are not drafted with public health and human rights in mind.

6. No matter how they are drafted, laws criminalising HIV exposure and transmission are often applied unfairly, selectively, and ineffectively.

Not surprisingly, where HIV-specific criminal provisions exist, only a tiny fraction of actual cases of HIV exposure or transmission will ever be prosecuted. The immense discretion and unpredictability in which cases are prosecuted makes it virtually inevitable that prosecutions will be arbitrary and unjust.

Risk of selective or arbitrary prosecution: Given the stigma that still surrounds HIV and

the persistence of HIV-related discrimination, it is likely that criminal sanctions will be directed disproportionately at those who are socially and/or economically marginalised.

Likelihood of conviction without sufficient evidence: Proving that an accused person was HIV-positive at the time of an alleged offence, as well as proving who infected whom, is a serious challenge. In a sexual relationship, the one blamed for transmitting HIV will most likely be the one who first learned of her status, not the one who was first infected. Even if the accused person was infected first, it could have been a third party who infected her sexual partner. To prove guilt, scientific evidence of transmission by the accused person is required.

Invasions of privacy: There is concern that the confidentiality of medical records kept by health professionals or counsellors could be breached in the attempt to establish someone's HIV status during a criminal prosecution. Breaching confidentiality may reduce the willingness of HIV-positive people to discuss risk behaviours with counsellors, agree to an HIV test, or seek treatment of other sexually transmitted diseases that increase the risk of HIV transmission.

7. There are better ways to punish behaviour that truly is blameworthy.

A frequent reason advanced by policy makers for criminalising HIV transmission and exposure is that people who transmit HIV under certain circumstances deserve to be punished, because their behaviour is morally wrong and harmful. Indeed, criminal law is society's principal means of punishing morally blameworthy behaviour.

The application of criminal law, however, requires the presence of a "guilty mind" or acting with the purpose to harm another person—which is, in the case of HIV transmission, highly exceptional. In those cases where the application of criminal law may be appropriate, existing laws that are not specific to HIV are sufficient to punish those who act with the purpose of transmitting HIV. For example, laws against sexual assault, endangerment, and criminal negligence can and have been applied to HIV transmission or exposure. In applying these non-HIV-specific laws, however, care must be taken to ensure they are not applied too broadly.

8. Criminalising HIV exposure and transmission sidesteps real challenges of HIV prevention.

Support for the application of criminal law to HIV exposure and transmission tends to occur in places where there is insufficient progress, political will, and resources to provide proven and effective HIV-prevention services to all who need them. In some countries, governments are reluctant to implement effective and human rights-based HIV prevention measures that may be controversial and resource-intensive—such as scaling up HIV testing and counselling, improving reproductive health care, and establishing harm reduction programmes—yet want to appear to be "doing something."

9. Instead legislators should reform laws that stand in the way of HIV prevention and treatment.

The law can be a powerful tool in addressing HIV transmission if it is used to empower vulnerable groups and guarantee their access to services, not to punish them and drive them further to the margins of society. In most

countries, removal of legal barriers to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support would be a positive step for legislators to take in addressing the pandemic. Laws that prohibit discrimination against people living with HIV provide redress against violence and guarantee equal access to HIV services are also needed.

Rather than introducing laws criminalising HIV exposure and transmission, countries need to reform laws and policies that stand in the way of evidence-informed prevention and treatment efforts, including providing justice to women.

- Remove legal barriers to women's equality and pass laws protecting women's rights to be free from violence and discrimination
- Remove legal barriers to condoms and comprehensive sex education, needle and syringe programmes, effective drug dependence and other evidence-informed strategies designed to reduce HIV risk
- Enact comprehensive anti-discrimination laws that protect people living with HIV/ AIDS or at risk of infection
- Involve community voices and scientific experts in the lawmaking process to ensure that HIV legislation is based on the best evidence rather than misguided fears and stigma



GRIM HUMOUR: TREAT WOMEN EQUALLY

A man breaks into a house to look for money and guns. Inside, he finds a young couple in bed. He orders the guy out of bed and ties him to a chair. While tying the homeowner's wife to the bed the convict gets on top of her, kisses her neck, then gets up and goes into the bathroom.

While he's in there, the husband whispers over to his wife: 'Listen, this guy is an escaped convict. Look at his clothes! He's probably spent a lot of time in jail and hasn't seen a woman in years. I saw how he kissed your neck. If he wants sex, don't resist, don't complain. Do whatever he tells you. Satisfy him no matter how much he nauseates you. This guy is obviously very dangerous. If he gets upset he'll kill us both. Be strong, honey. I love you!'

His wife responds: 'He wasn't kissing my neck. He was whispering in my ear. He told me that he's gay, thinks you're cute, and asked if we had any Vaseline. I told him it was in the bathroom. Be strong honey. I love you, too.'

ACFODE ANTHEM

Chorus

*Let us work for Uganda
ACFODE working serving all women
Calling for their commitment
ACFODE for gender equality and equity*

It is time for development
Let all the women support each other
Through networking and advocacy
To guide the nation develop the people

Chorus

We shall work with the communities
Let all the people support the girl child
Through education and other ways,
Empower the women build for the future

Chorus

ACFODE for gender equality and equity



Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung

Gender Based Violence

Acfode

Breaking through, Building up and Binding.



ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Gender Based Violence