

# MIFUMI

## Tororo District passes the ordinance Bill 2008 on Bride Price.



Immaculate Akello after the bill had been passed

After a two week massive sensitization and consultations with the locals in the 20 sub-counties, the Tororo District local council members passed the proposed Bridal Gift Ordinance Bill on the 17th September 2008 that recognizes human rights and duly considers cultural values.

In brief, the ordinance clearly states that Bride price shall become a Bridal Gift, that is non-refundable.

The institution of bride price had certain values in the past but bride price as it is currently practiced has been commercialized and has far reaching Health, Economic, social, human rights and legal implications negatively affecting all people in our society.

The Tororo Youth councilor, Mr. Tony Okae said,

*“Several people approached us with the problems related to Bride Price, many families have been affected by the problems linked to Bride Price.*

*The most disgusting of all these practices is the refusal to bury a deceased woman until her bride price has either been paid or refunded.*

*Old and young men are imprisoned for either failing to pay or refund Bride Price. We are glad MIFUMI bravely started on this campaign because most of us were not sure of how the cultural leaders would react.”*



Directors, Simon Ndira (L) and Patrick Ndira chat with Hon. Opio S. Peter (center)

MIFUMI has for the last 10 years strived to protect women and children from domestic violence and abuse and on several occasions called for a reform in the Bride Price institution to do away with violations within it.

The organization has received this news with gratitude.

*‘It took me twelve years to realize that I was a woman; a human being and not a cow.*

*My daughter does not have to go through what I experienced after being purchased and reminded everyday by my husband and his relatives of how I was their property .’*

Catherine Omech, Tororo.



Hon. Sarah A.Okumu at the District Council debate

The executive Director of MIFUMI Atuki Turner had this to say:

*“The payment of bride price by men for their wives as demanded by custom leads men to treat their wives as near possessions from whom maximum obedience is extracted.*

*Whereas Young men and their families have to work hard to accumulate the wealth necessary to pay bride price,*

*Women, especially widows become vulnerable in the face of relatives who want to take away their husbands property and leave them with no support.*

*Girls are married off early to raise income for the family.*

*Refund of bride price does not take into account the contribution of the woman to the marriage, the children she has produced and the products of her labor.”*



Executive Director MIFUMI, Atuki Turner and LCV chairman Hon. Emmanuel Osuna

If the Bridal gift ordinance bill is passed, the road will be paved for MIFUMI to help more women trapped in abusive relationships because of bad practices of Bride price.

**PROTECTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE**

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## Three Villages to benefit from the Rural Solar Electrification

Sanjit Bunker Roy is an Indian social activist and educator whose barefoot College in Tolonia has trained two generations of villagers (over 100,000 people in 110 villages) without any formal paper qualifications to become health-care workers, solar engineers, hand-pump mechanics and teachers in their communities.

Roy Bunker believes that communities and governments should tap local wisdom before involving external experts.

In Tororo district, the villages of Mugana, Nagoke, and Miganja will be solar electrified for the first time.

Upon hearing about MIFUMI's struggle to empower the rural abused women during the MDG3 campaign, Roy Bunker visited some Villages in Tororo with the poorest people citing them as beneficiaries from the barefoot college solar electrification scheme.

MIFUMI's collaboration with the bare foot college in India helped identify four lucky women (two grand mothers and 2 widows) to be trained as solar engineers.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is donating 150 solar panels to each village.

When the Four women return from their 6 months training in India they will be able to install and service the solar panels in their villages.

This will cut down on costs of purchasing kerosene on daily basis and the environmental and health hazards associated with using kerosene for lighting.

Aketch Margret Opio, a grand mother and a widow at 52 years had this to say:

*'Honestly I never dreamed of anything this big in my entire life.  
I have never been to school, I have just been a good house wife working in my garden  
to provide food for my family.  
I am going to become an engineer, literate, be able to do something for my community,  
earn a salary and Provide for my family.  
Thank you MIFUMI and Thank you Roy Bunker.'*

MIFUMI's vision is a world where women and children are free from violence and oppression and where everyone has the opportunity to realize their full potential.

In pursuit of this vision, MIFUMI has undertaken sustainable improvement in the personal safety and security of disadvantaged women experiencing violence and abuse, with a primary focus on domestic violence and bride price violations.

MIFUMI uses a woman centered approach by making women empowerment the central point of its work. This approach is based on the belief that women must be the prime movers and shakers in the struggle for equality.



Aketch Margaret Opio



Anna Odoi



Loda Oketcho



Akumu Rose Othieno

# MIFUMI

## SimSim and Groundnut Production Empowering rural women.



Harvested Simsim

The Nagongera women's guild has supported hundreds marginalized women through its revolving loan scheme.

The loans range from 50,000/= to 300,000/= Ugandan shillings to help women to start up small scale businesses.

The loans have a small interest rate of 2% and the security is the women's guild to which the women are attached.



SimSim seeds

This loan scheme was not able to empower some of the women who had applied and received loans. Most of them defaulted because their husband demanded for the money and sometimes the women used the money to pay tuition for their children. Some women do not know what business makes profits or do not understand what it takes to run a business.

So MIFUMI through the enterprise Department decided to empower the women by identifying for them what activity would best generate an income for them within the rural setting.

MIFUMI zeroed down to farming. Simsim (sesame) and Groundnuts are high yielding crops with high market prices all year round. The climate in Tororo is perfect for these crops.



A man purchasing Mifeti paste.

Generally, the Enterprise Department of MIFUMI purchases the Simsim and groundnut seeds and pesticides and distributes them to the women.

Once the crops are harvested, the enterprise department purchases these produce from the women at a fair price to be processed into paste and later sold in the open market.

Further more, the Women farmers are welcome to shares in the Simsim /Groundnut processing plant.

This will benefit both the farmers and the project which will be able to sustain its self and pay some of the salaries of the workers.

The national World food Day Exhibition that took place on the 16/October /2008 in Tororo District saw the first processed product from the Simsim and Groundnuts; Mifeti paste.

Mifeti paste is the product name for the mixture of Simsim and groundnuts packed in a crystal clear bottle of 400grams. Mifeti is an acronym for MIFUMI Ethical Trade Initiatives.

The women were excited to see the fruits of their labor ready to hit the market for the first time

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## Atuki Turner; MDG3 Torch bearer.

In a function organized by MDG3 Uganda (3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium Development Goal), on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at the Serena Hotel, Atuki Turner, the Executive Director of MIFUMI was among the three women recognized for their extensive development work with women and children.

MDG3 promotes gender equality; their global "Call to Action" to "Do something extra for the women" drove them to choose three influential women who have fought to give face to fellow women and the girl child as torch bearers.

In her speech Atuki clearly stated that

*"... the face of poverty is the face of a woman. If poverty is removed then violence against women will reduce. Violence strips the woman of her dignity and erodes her self confidence as a human being worthy of love and respect."*

She committed herself to;

- Lobby for a law on Domestic Violence and Bride Price Violations.
- Create a yardstick for measuring Government intervention on violence against women.
- Ensure that violence against women is accepted as a serious human rights issue.

MIFUMI is committed to keep this torch burning for every woman.



Atuki Turner Displays the MDG3 torch

Visit our website.

[www.mifumi.org](http://www.mifumi.org)

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