

VOICE OF MIFUMI

Securing women's confidence in the Justice system

August 2010



Uganda still lacks the capacity to address the majority of disputes and social transgressions that occur throughout the country worsened by a difficult to access formal justice system thus leaving the fate of many seeking justice in the hands of the traditional justice system.

There are some strong points with the traditional system of justice in a number of areas which include the low costs of operation and participation and the community still respect and believe in the system.

However, if international human rights principles of dignity, equality and social justice are to be meaningful, this system is still wanting.

Take for instance women's rights. It is evident that women's rights are not given adequate consideration in their search for justice in the traditional system of justice.

Cultures will automatically bias the kind of justice that will be dispensed to the woman.

Culturally, women are not

attributed any power in regard to decision making.

Therefore the possibility of them receiving equal participation and hearing within a traditional justice is minimal. The worst case scenario is when the justice dispensers fail to address issues affecting children which the elders push under the rug like it never happened and no one was hurt. Many criminal cases affecting children like early marriages, defilement and rape where the victims' families are compensated financially.

There is also a tendency of the traditional system of justice to blame victims for actions against them leaving the victim more damaged than confident in the system.

While the primary responsibility for protection lies with the state through the criminal justice system, ordinary people's experience of justice is also influenced by the traditional justice system.

Therefore states have a responsibility to set the standards for other dispensers of justice like

the traditional justice system to ensure adequate responsibility, accountability and equality and to identify some mechanisms of the local justice system that can to be incorporated into the formal justice system to be legally and nationally recognized.

MIFUMI in her work on addressing human rights injustices against women and children through community based approaches is trying to bridge the gap between the traditional and formal system of justice by involving both the local and traditional systems of justice stakeholders.

MIFUMI advocates for women's rights in rural communities and provides legal personnel to translate formal documents into the languages that are most commonly used by the communities in order to encourage them to participate in the formal justice system and to realise that some forms of justice dispensed by them violate the internationally agreed human rights.

POLICE CHILDREN TAKE UP LEADERSHIP ROLES

The children of Tororo Police Primary School are now taking on leadership roles and managing their Sure Start club on their own. The children who have always shown an exceptional level of confidence and commitment ever since joining the karate club under the Sure Start project of MIFUMI have been trained by Barbara Ayo, a karate trainer with MIFUMI.

The children of Police Primary School have been quick to learn the skill and are proactive enough to take leadership and management of the club upon themselves. They are committed to the sport to the extent that they train every evening in the absence of the lead instructor. If anybody took a walk to the police primary school at around 4:00pm, they would be sure to find the pupils training in karate, music, dance and drama.

This kind of attitude is good for the project especially as we move to movement building where we empower the children to manage their own affairs. This is a move in the right direction for the Sure Start project in its quest to build a vibrant group of youth who can stand up for their rights and the rights of their fellow children.

As the group leader Evelyn Alwoch, put it “We are not training for our instructor but for our own good. Let us take the sport as that which will benefit us in our own lives and in the future.”

The headmistress Claire Opoya Adikini, had this to say about her pupils, “they are so committed to the sport that the moment the bell goes they just change into the training kits and start training”

To show how determined these youngsters are, they organized themselves and participated in a demonstration during the golden jubilee by the Benedictine nuns at Nvangole in Tororo district.



Police children's School Karate Club.

I joined Karate in March 2009 when the Sure Start team visited our school and set up a club.

I thought this was just another new game that I needed to be involved in since I am a sports girl at school who jumped at any sporting opportunity that presented itself. I love sports and this one seemed interesting. It was karate.

Karate did not only teach me the physical exercise, it taught me many other disciplines that totally transformed my life.

During the karate training we were taught self discipline, self defence and a few weeks later, my confidence started to manifest. Even though I loved sports, I was shy around boys. Now I can challenge both boys and girls in both sports and academics.

Also, as a girl growing up in a traditional African community, I did not know that children had any rights until our gender trainer explained to us that children had rights too and we the girls were entitled to as much rights as boys. Armed with information on relationships, gender related issues and HIV/AIDS, I was ready to stand up against the myths that surround our participation as girls in the affairs that concern us.

At the end of the training, we were passed out as trainers in a colourful ceremony that marked the launch of the Sure Start project. I confidently led my team during the final school demonstration at the Lions Children's Park, Tororo.

The new members have elected me as their chairperson and junior trainer.

I have gained respect from the girls that I train in my school.

I am determined to stay in school so that I can help other girls.

I thank MIFUMI and *Women Win* for your continued support to my school and our Karate club.

**Awor Sylvia,
MIFUMI Primary School**

MIFUMI PRIMARY SCHOOL

The music festival is here!

The 2010 annual National music festival kicked off with excitement at MIFUMI Primary school as the children practiced to perfect their talents for the big day scheduled for August.

This annual event planned by the Ministry of Education and Sports Uganda runs for two months targeting all primary schools countrywide with competitions starting at sub-county.

The winners at national level walk away with a certificate of participation and the winning trophy.

With this programme, the Ministry and the schools are giving the children the opportunity to explore their potential to the fullest and to develop the talents.

The activities include traditional dances, folksongs, western set piece, sight singing, drama, poems, speech and instrumental composition.

This year's theme was 'The Benefits of the East African Integration'. MIFUMI primary school is highlighting economic, cultural, social and political benefits in their compositions.

Mr. Benard Onyango, headteacher MIFUMI primary school says; *'I am impressed with the creativity of the children and their talents. We are preparing them to win.'*



Beneficiaries of the MIFUMI scholarship schemes



AUMA ROSEMARY

Twelve year old Auma Rosemary's pathetic childhood is not what she carries around anymore.

Today she is determined more than ever to prove that there is a reason why she is alive. She wants to be a doctor to help people in her village.



DRILEBA VINCENT

In primary school, Vincent raised money for his scholastic material by selling pancakes. He emerged the second best pupil at Rock View Primary School, Tororo.

Many thanks to;

MIFUMI Uganda

The Government of Uganda

John Carnegie
Jersey Overseas Aid

Meg Wyld and the scholarship Team

Joseph Ndira and Air
Balloon Hill Junior School

Mike Nightingale

Jenny Carnegie

Abbi Martin

WomenWin

John Roberts

Grouville School

John Mark Carnegie

The many Friends of
MIFUMI Primary School

The Community of MIFUMI
Village

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