

Newsletter

Issue 3

January-February 2004

Feel Free

International Conference on Bride Price and Development

Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

February 16th – 18th, 2004, Kampala, Uganda

Theme: Coalition and action to safeguard the child and the family: *The Kampala declaration on bride price and development.*

We bring to you another edition of the Feel Free Network newsletter.

The previous newsletter of the Network was announced the forthcoming International Conference on Bride Price.

Feel Free Network for launch at the Conference

The Feel Free Africa wide Network will officially be launched at the International Bride Price Conference to be held 16th-18th February in Makerere University Kampala. The Conference, to be attended by delegates across the Globe including academics, politicians, experts, Inter governmental agencies and activists

against socio-cultural practices undermining women's rights and their development is the first of its kind specifically on bride price and development. Delegates will make a statement of declaration to reform bride price so as to reduce its role in perpetuating domestic violence and promoting gender inequality against women.

Over 180 register for bride price conference

Over 180 delegates from Europe, America and Africa have showed interest in attending the International Conference on Bride

Price and Development.

The Mifumi Project hosts the Conference, running from 16th-18th February, with the generous support of the GTZ on behalf of the Germany government.

Although the Conference organizers expected delegates to a tune of 100, so far 180 have sent in registration forms and or abstracts with confirmation of participation.

Mifumi's Conference Administrator, Saraha Akello states that the number of African delegates is 46, more than double the originally projected 20. " We have 16 registered delegates

from Europe and America", Saraha said. She also added that majority over 100 participants have registered in from Uganda.

Mifumi's Domestic Violence Survivor in International Posters

The photograph of a survivor of domestic violence, who received intervention through Mifumi Domestic Violence Project, has been found to be widely used by International agencies working against gender based violence.

The Photo of Anna Amweno, who survived death in the hands of her violent husband, Stephen Angura, has

Uganda Parliament to pass family law. Bride price not to be refunded

been widely used in a poster printed and published in partnership by FEMNET, GTZ, UNIFEM and HEINRICH BOLL Foundation.

“We were surprised to find a poster with a large photo of Amweno in Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre”, said Charles Osinde, one of Mifumi’s Advocacy Officers who recently visited Malawi on a networking visit.

The Mifumi Domestic Violence Intervention team, together with the organisation’s Executive Director were impressed that the photo of the abused woman was used to show the level of violence against women but were equally disappointed that Mifumi, which supported this survivor and took her photos for publicity of the extent of domestic violence was not acknowledged as a copyright.

Anna Amweno, from Mukuju sub county, Tororo was battered by her husband, Stephen Angura who also jagged the edge of a stool in her private parts. She lay unconscious for two weeks in Tororo Hospital. While in hospital, Anna lost her baby due to neglect.

Although Mifumi intervened to support Amweno in accessing justice, her abuser has never been brought to book for causing her physical defamation and mental impairment. He jumped Court bail and is still at large.

Many women have lost their lives in the hands of such violence partners. Anna Amweno is lucky to be alive, despite her loss of memory.

It is our hope that strengthening the Feel Free network and others aimed at the elimination of domestic violence will bring hope to women

suffering male perpetuated violence in the family.

Uganda’s DRB finally gets to the House

The long awaited Domestic Relations Bill (DRB) was finally discussed by the Cabinet and seconded to Parliament for debate.

The Bill, tabled in Parliament nearly five years after its first draft seeks to address the minimum age of marriage, cohabitation, bride price and matrimonial property among others. It also addresses polygamy.

Despite having this law ready for debate in Parliament, some sections of the public are already in opposition of provisions of the Bill that favor and promote The rights of women in the family. It is of paramount importance that members of the

Feel Free network, together with other networks aimed at promoting gender equality strengthen partnership and action to support this Bill and ensure that it is passed into law without watering down the provisions that enhance the rights of women.

“Pertinent issues in the Bill such as polygamy, inheritance and bride price should be handled with sensitivity to women’s rights”, said Jackie Asimwe, Coordinator Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET).

Mifumi is a member of UWONET that has been coordinating the campaign for the DRB to be passed into law.

The latest draft of the Bill, currently in parliament has adopted Mifumi’s stand of no refund of bride price. However, some sections of society feel that the practice should be abolished.

More African Partners Join the Feel Free Network

Over 15 activists and organizations from different countries in Africa have joined the Feel Free network.

This brings the total membership to the network to 85, with majority being grass roots organizations and the rest individual duty bearers with capacity to influence positive change in society.

The number of membership rose after a Feel Free networking visit by Mifumi staff and partners to four African countries that included Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Rwanda. Others have also joined as a result of call for papers to the forthcoming international conference on bride price.

Other members are from Burkina Faso, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Ghana and Togo.

Among the new organizations to the network include Masisikumeni (RSA),

WILDAF of (Togo), Women's Voice from Malawi, Mwangaza Action (Burkina Faso), RUMNET of Ghana and many others.

It was also clear that most organizations and individuals who have registered for the bride price conference are willing to join the Feel Free network.

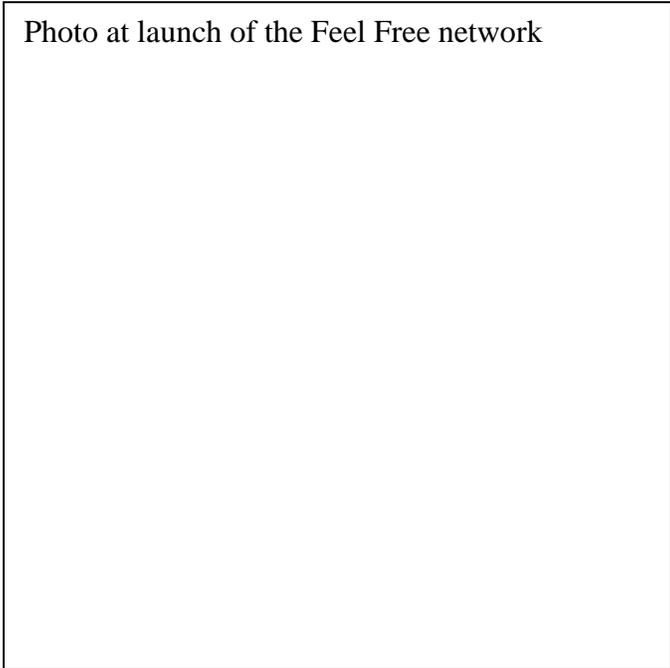
It is our hope that the international conference will offer opportunity to share knowledge and experience in various ways of combating violence against women in society.

To subscribe to the network, you can visit our website at www.mifumi.org or fill in the membership form and return to The Mifumi Project, P.O. Box 274, Tororo-Uganda.

Or email membership@feelfreenetwork.org.

To contribute article to the newsletter write

Photo at launch of the Feel Free network



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