

VOICE OF MIFUMI

March 2010

Economically empowering survivors through sustainable programmes



75% of all domestic violence and abuse cases reported to MIFUMI advice centres are closely related to poverty which MIFUMI recognises as both a contributory factor, and an effect of domestic violence.

The survivor is left with no choice because her abuser is also her care taker and sole bread winner. This creates a state of dependency on the part of the woman, so she chooses to stay.

This state of dependency is further escalated by the society we live in which restricts women from using family land and denies them the proceeds from their labour.

In order to address the problem of dependency, poverty and domestic violence, MIFUMI is economically empowering the women through various projects and programmes.

The Match Fund is an initiative by the MIFUMI domestic violence project whose sole objective is to economically empower survivors of domestic violence.

The Match Fund will provide the Survivor women's groups with finances on friendly terms.

This initiative will not only avail the women with funds to start up enterprising income generating activities but also help them establish governance structures, learn to manage money and work in groups.

450 survivors will directly benefit from the initial Match Fund.

The MIFUMI Ethical Trade Initiative (MIFETI) Agro- Processing plant is another initiative by MIFUMI with a strong market base for the women and has supported hundreds of

women farmers in Tororo district through its fair trade scheme of buying produce from women farmers who in many cases do not have a specified and constant market for their produce.

MIFUMI is also providing the women with the opportunity to put their creativity and skills to good use by allowing them to enroll in the Kirewa Young Mother's tailoring school where the women can freely access the sewing machines to make a living. This tailoring school has opened up other business opportunities for the women who have been contracted to make sweaters for MIFUMI Primary school.

Over 40 survivors have been employed at the newly established Dairy Farm. These women are also acquiring animal farming skills.

With these programmes in place, the women can contribute to the economic well-being of their families, have the opportunity to challenge themselves and to explore all the income generating enterprising ideas they may want to implement.

MIFUMI Health Centre, the Community Health Centre

For MIFUMI Health Centre provision of appropriate health care services with a focus on enhancing quality of life and protecting the rights of vulnerable persons is the ultimate mission.

The health centre with support from Big Lottery, UK, Ministry of Health Uganda, MIFUMI, World Vision and community goodwill has changed the face of health in the surrounding villages of MIFUMI.

In the last 8 months the Health Centre had made tremendous achievements. According to Sr. Athieno Goretti the In-charge of the health centre, there has been quite a good number of patient turn up in this period. A total of 6881 patients were attended to and were able to get their drugs and counselling sessions well.

The Health Centre team was able to visit all the surrounding villages within the catchment area. Two people were selected and trained from each of the four zones of MIFUMI parish and are able to carry out health assessment of individuals within their zones and refer to the health centre. The district has also posted a qualified midwife to the health centre.

There has also been an increase in the number of mothers attending antenatal clinics and Prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) than before together with their partners. A total of 304 patients attended antenatal, 250 PMTCT and 491 voluntary counselling and testing (VCT).

There is improvement in the communication system within individuals to community health workers who also report to the health centre their findings hence promoting early reporting of cases of diseases in the villages to the health centre.

The willingness of the community to go to zonal meetings scheduled by their own community health workers has promoted community awareness on health issues like family planning and oral rehydration salt preparation.



Winners of the 2010 MIFUMI scholarships

Despite the rural upbringing with basic scholastic material, Aketch Nanzirina, Omollo James, Auma Rosemary and Drileba Vincent were determined to make the best of the fact that they at least got to go to school. They emerged the best students in their schools and will directly benefit from the MIFUMI Scholarship scheme.

AKETCH NANZIRINA

Aketch Nanzirina was the best student at Mifumi Primary School in the 2009 PLE. Nanzirina comes from Mifumi village. She has 5 siblings. Her mother a single parent. She joined S.1 at St. Paul's college, Mbale.

OMOLLO JAMES

Omollo James sat for his primary leaving examinations at Mifumi primary school in 2009. He was the second best in the class of 2009.

DRILEBA VINCENT

He was the second best pupil at Rock view school. He got 8 aggregates. He raised money for his scholastic material by selling pancakes. He joined St. Peter's college, Tororo.

AUMA ROSE MARY

Auma's story of being abandoned by her mother at 5 months at a taxi park in Kampala is not what you see when you look at her happy face. Auma scored 7 aggregates and has joined Tororo Girls' school.

Many Thanks to Meg Wyld and her friends for giving these children the opportunity to be in school.

Helping AWOR JANE access Justice

This time I wished he had just killed me instead of humiliating me in front of my children.

Yes, I had withstood all the humiliation behind the closed doors because only I knew of the disgusting things my husband made me do. Even when he ordered me to renounce my Christianity, poured out a mug of alcohol and forced it down my throat and mocked me and my beliefs in the unseen gods.

I lied about the bruises and black eyes; because they were so many, I invented lies that sometimes, even in my pain amused me.

I was not going to walk out of this relationship for a number of reasons; My parents said my husband was going through a phase and he would change.

They also said a good woman is tolerant and patient and that girls my age were married and if I left, I would bring them shame, and on my part, I would become the village laughing stock. Words and slaps would not break my bones or kill me. The real reason I stayed was because of my children. For my children, I would do anything; I would walk through fire for them. Since I was a house wife with no means to support them, I had to stay here to protect them from their father.

My husband had turned me into his punching bag.

The children and I had gotten used to his drinking, but what he did on this night is what I never imagined in this lifetime.

It was the last straw and when it snapped, it took with it the only thing that kept me going, my dignity.



His slurred shouting awoke me from my sleep and I ran to open the door, he barged in reeking of alcohol and carrying some bottles in his hands.

He pushed the bottles to my chest and ordered me to drink all the alcohol he had carried home.

I took the bottles from him, locked the door and put them safely on the table. He grabbed me by the hand and repeated his order or he will force the alcohol down my throat again. But as he said this, he was actually already forcing it down my throat with his hand around my neck.

As I struggled to free myself he hit me on my head with his elbow, the next few seconds I was on the floor and he was kicking and punching me. The children were screaming; darkness engulfed me.

He ripped off my clothes, parted my legs, punched my private parts, lit a match stick and set me on fire.

The children and neighbors came to my rescue.

JUSTICE FOR AWOR JANE* (Not Real Name)

A neighbor reported the case of Awor Jane to police. Her husband was arrested for this but Jane was too frightened and withdrew the case. Her fears were that her father would never take her back; her husband would never let her leave with the children.

MIFUMI together with 200 members of the survivors' movement, the police and the Residential District Commissioner visited the home of Jane and met both her and her husband. The very remorseful husband apologized in front of the community, the elders, his wife and children vowing never to abuse his wife and children again.

MIFUMI has talked to Jane and is availing her with various options to build her confidence, enable her access justice, resettle her into a violence-free life and also economically empower her.

Don't Suffer in Silence



MIFUMI

Stop Violence Against Women

For Advice Call: 0753 781 122 / 0757 781 122
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MIFUMI's mission is to protect women and children from domestic violence and abuse and secure for them basic rights through Education, Health Care and economic self sufficiency.