

IS CHILD ABUSE ON THE RISE?

From time immemorial adults have been entrusted to act as protectors to the young, teach them their first steps in life, watch them grow and celebrate every step they pass through. Why then have some adults abandoned their role and turned out to be the children's worst nightmare?

According to the Saturday Vision newspaper of November 6th Demintilla, a resident of Kampala earns her living by looking after the babies of low income women in the neighborhood. One day a client named Sarah abandoned her baby and did not return. Demintilla waited two months and handed over the baby to the police.

That is just one of several stories that have flooded the media in recent months. Cases of child abuse seem to be on the increase with at least one story each week about parents abandoning children at bus stops, using children as begging baits and beating children to death over theft of insignificant sums of money.

But the cancer that is eating and likely to consume our children at the moment is defilement. Watching and reading about the innocence and trust adults have broken in committing these atrocities against these small souls is heartbreaking.

We have observed with interest the fact that this crime is on the rise country wide and MIFUMI as a women and child rights agency has seen an increase in the number of child abuse cases encountered in recent months.



Last month MIFUMI saw significant increase in number of child neglect and defilement cases with some of the victims as young as eight years.

Between the months of August and October, MIFUMI Haven, a shelter for abused women and children received 13 child cases of defilement and 10 others subjected to several other forms of abuse some of which were referred by Tororo Police.

A case in question is one William*, 12 years of age.

William lived with his grandmother in Malaba; she wanted him dead because he is HIV positive. Many times she tried to kill him but neighbours intervened. So he

decided to run away from home ending up in the MIFUMI Haven. William has been resettled with a relative who is more accommodating.

MIFUMI wants to see children having a fulfilled childhood and appeals to all child actors all over the country step up their action even more to curb this increasing trend of child abuse. Children are silent victims to many forms of abuse and it is everybody's duty to hold perpetrators accountable.

*not his real name

Contributing to the attainment of the 2015 MDGs



PUPILS of MIFUMI Primary school

In 2008, Atuki Turner, Executive Director of MIFUMI was chosen as one of the three torch bearers for the 3rd Millennium Development Goal (MDG3) in Uganda for her remarkable struggle in the fight to end violence against women and children; and in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.

Today MIFUMI's work goes far beyond the MDG3. MIFUMI believes that equality can only be possible if the other MDGs addressed concurrently with the MDG3.

MIFUMI has contributed a lot to other MDGs in its work in the community as well throughout the country.

In an effort to eradicate extreme poverty as stipulated by MDG1, MIFUMI has supported survivors in establishing village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). Through the MIFUMI Ethical Trade initiative (MIFETI), Women willing to farm have been provided with seeds (sesame and groundnuts) and upon harvest, MIFETI buys the produce from the women at a fair price to produce a tasty and delicious paste known as ODIPLUS. MIFUMI believes poverty to be a great contributor to violence and abuse in homes.

To ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girl alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (MDG2), MIFUMI is addressing the issue of girl child education through her Sure Start Project which encourages young girls facing social problems to remain in school longer.

MIFUMI with generous support and donations from friends has supported MIFUMI primary school, a rural community school by providing incentives to teachers, equipping the school Library with reading materials and resources for both teachers and pupils, building staff quarters and more classrooms. MIFUMI also runs a scholarship programme to help bright but poor students remain in school.

MIFUMI is securing the right to basic health for all by ensuring the established MIFUMI Health Centre

addresses other millennium goals aimed at reduction of child mortality, improvement in maternal health and prevention of HIV/AIDS malaria and other diseases.

At the Health Centre, mothers are able to have safe deliveries, HIV positive mothers get free counselling and care during delivery, common diseases like malaria are also treated and the community are sensitized on how to avoid or reduce the risk of getting such diseases.

The most debated issue around today is global warming. The 7th MDG aims to ensure environmental sustainability by integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

MIFUMI through her solar project and generous support from UNDP and Global Environmental Facility have been able to solar electrify 199 homes provide lighting to many homes in rural villages. Through this, women have been empowered and trained as engineers to install and maintain solar panels and Solar power itself is a more environmentally friendly means of lighting.

It is said a journey of a thousand miles starts with one step. Governments alone cannot attain the MDGs without the involvement of all the stakeholders, duty bearers and NGOs.

MTG VISIT SURE START PROJECT and challenges them to a football match...

Moving the Goal Posts (MTG), an all girls football team was in Uganda to visit the all girls Karate club- SureStart Project of MIFUMI Tororo.

SureStart is an all girls project that uses karate around community schools to eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development by increasing awareness of their needs and potential through gender training around community schools in Tororo.

While MTG is a girls' football and development organization based in Kilifi, Kenya. It has over 3000 members aged 15-26. Football acts as a mobilizing force to bring girls together and has the potential to build collective power for marginalized groups.

MTG visited three schools which run the SureStart project to learn how sports have positively influenced the girls in the programme. At Police Primary School they were able to see the pupils carry out a karate demonstration that left them impressed at the level of confidence exuded by the girls. They also saw the girls undergo gender training and demonstrate a clear understanding of gender issues.

At Mifumi Primary School MTG was welcomed by a group of enthusiastic girls with dance, poems and a karate demonstration. They were also able to see a young girl called Sarah Awor who has used her knowledge of karate to influence the lives of other students in her school. She has trained 25 students in karate in her new school.

While in Tororo, MTG visited a number of other projects run by MIFUMI. While here, they interacted with a number of team heads and other staff who told them how their work all contribute to the goal of the organization. They visited MIFUMI Advice Centres, Mifumi Health Centre, The Haven, The Family and Child Protection Unit of the Police (CFPU), MIFUMI Ethical Trade Initiative (MIFETI) among others.

MTG was impressed with the work MIFUMI is doing with the children and the fact that SureStart project is also considering forming karate clubs in the communities so that girls who are not necessarily in school could also benefit from the karate and gender training.

The Sure Start project currently operates in nine community schools with over 1000 girls benefiting from its activities.

During their departure, MTG dared SureStart to a football game. The physically fit team (SureStart) took on the challenge and drew 2:2.



MTG members dance to the tune of Kirewa Young Mothers (survivors group)



Barbara Ayo, Trainer with SureStart shows member of MTG how the Feel Free training is done.



Girls show off their Karate skills.

A RADIO SOAP OPERA, HERE TO INFORM AND ENTERTAIN...

In her efforts to achieve gender equality Atuki Turner has written articles, defended women in court, petitioned the constitutional court, given public addresses, participated in demonstrations and campaigns. Her efforts have won her both local and international awards and recognition.

In yet a new project to try and address gender and social issues, Atuki has embarked on information packed and humor filled Radio Soap Opera called **MAKO-MERE**.

MAKO-MERE is lightly translates as 'Making Friends' was cast on location in an imaginary village **Awendo** with local cast. The audience will relate with one or two characters and the issues the soap is address affect every Ugandan. **MAKO-MERE** is targeted towards creating behavioural change. The soap will hit national radio airwaves soon and will not only keep the audience glued to their Radio sets but also leave them laughing.

The scripts for **MAKO-MERE** were written by Ugandan writers guided by international Award Winning Novelist, Short stories and Playwright, Professor Jane Rogers and the casting by renown editor Clive Brill and Atuki Turner.

MAKO-MERE will make you see life in a different perspective and you will soon start making friends.

www.mifumi.org

SHE BROKE THE SILENCE

When the abuse became intolerable after years of marriage, Abbo Flumera decided to leave with her children.

Florence had lived in an abusive relationship for over 30 years but even after she left, the psychological effects did not go away. The road to recovery for Flumera was long.

Flumera needed a lot of counseling which MIFUMI provided.

Sadly, last month, October 28th, Flumera passed on at the age of 32.

She was one of the survivors who signed the affidavits petitioning the constitutional court to revise the payment of bride price in Uganda.

She will be remembered by many as a beautiful soul that did not want to see any woman go through what she had. Flumera is survived by 3 children.

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MIFUMI

Protecting women and children from domestic violence