

### Constitutional court Judges Hear Bride price Case



On September 8<sup>th</sup> 2009, Uganda's constitutional court on parliamentary Avenue was filled with members of the public, press and petitioners from all parts of the country for the hearing of MIFUMI's Bride Price petition.

For nine years, MIFUMI has been addressing the issue of payment of Bride Price as one of the leading causes of domestic violence.

In 2007, MIFUMI submitted a petition on Bride Price to the constitution court.

MIFUMI wants the constitutional court to declare bride price unconstitutional on the grounds that Bride Price as practiced in most of Uganda's community reduces women to objects of trade and denies them their human rights.

The petition states that the payment of Bride Price interferes with the Ugandan Constitution.

For instance, the demand and refund of Bride Price by parents and relatives of the bride and groom as a condition to a

marriage interferes with free consent of the man and woman intending to marry. The payment of Bride Price also creates inequality in marriage and subjects a woman to cruel and degrading treatment by the man who treats her as a commodity that must give total submission.

While young girls have been sold off by their parents into early marriages, this practice has been the reason women in eastern Uganda and Southern Africa being denied burial because their widowed husbands may not be able to raise Bride Price.

Following MIFUMI's campaign on Bride Price, Tororo District passed the Tororo bridal gift ordinance that makes the payment of Bride Price a gift that is not demanded and cannot be refunded.

MIFUMI's successful work has also been the contributing factor to the newly enacted

Divorce and marriage bill currently being debated in parliament that where one of

the sections addresses the issue of Bride Price.

As MIFUMI awaits the final ruling of the judges any time soon, the impacts of this campaign have been nationwide and according to the recent polling by one of the local publications; The Daily Monitor of the 1304 voters, 739 want a change in the practice of Bride Price.

#### **Bride Price; a leading cause of Abuse of Women.**

According to the 2008 statistics, from the M&E department of MIFUMI, of the 552 cases reported at the MIFUMI advice centers, 273 are Bride Price related (statistics exclude statistics of common assault, some of which reflect Bride Price as a back ground cause of this assault).

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## EDUCATION

### **Air Balloon Hill Junior School Visits MIFUMI**



L-R: Jae Edwards, Mr Onyango Bernard-H/M and Natalie Cole

In April, two teachers from Air Balloon Hill Junior School- Bristol UK visited MIFUMI Primary School.

Jae Edwards and Natalie Cole spent the Easter weekend with pupils of MIFUMI primary school.

They brought along with them gifts from Pupils of Air Balloon Hill Junior School to the children of MIFUMI Primary School.

### **Pupils Awarded scholarships**



L-R: Abbo Justine, Owere Patrick and Nyafwono Caroline were awarded Scholarships for excelling in the 2008 P.7 leavers exams.

The MIFUMI Primary School scholarship Scheme is an initiative by Meg Wyld and her friends to benefit needy Children.

## **HEALTH**

### **A MIFUMI COBES PARTNERSHIP**

MIFUMI Health Centre has hosted over four groups of medical students from Makerere University as well as international and East African universities on the community based education and service programme(COBES).

The overall purpose of COBES is to enable students gain knowledge and skills and appreciate real life conditions by of utilizing available resources, addressing the needs and concerns the community and developing strategies in solving various community's problems as part of their training to become competent health professionals.

The most striking findings from the Tororo community survey carried out by the students revealed the high prevalence of Malaria (75%) and non-

satisfactory health seeking behaviors among community members.

The student's most significant contribution to the community has been Health education in common diseases, nutrition, environmental hygiene and sanitation and gender-related aspects of health.



COBES 2009 team, Health Center staff at MIFUMI Health Center

### **Child Health Care Days Plus:**

Every six months, MIFUMI Health Center participates in the national Child Health Care Day plus programme. Originally, this one - month programme was established as routine maternal and child health interventions at all static health units and outreaches. However, in November 2004 it was decided that the Child Health Days should be used to serve communities and schools with additional treatments of vitamin A, and deworming tablets to children below the age of five to help boost their immune system.

This April's Child Day plus, MIFUMI Health Centre attended to over 500 children.

## Legal Aid basket Fund Trains Domestic violence advisors

A total of 49 Duty Bearers consisting of the Law enforcement such as Police, Local Leaders, Sub county Chiefs, District Councillors and Probation officers attended a two day training on Domestic Violence organised by the Legal Aid Basket fund II (LABFII) project of MIFUMI.

The training that took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> September targeted this group because they are part of the Community Safety Forum (CSF); a team of men and women working within the 20 sub counties of Tororo as duty

bearers holding each other accountable and to ensure that perpetrators and state agents do not act with impunity. MIFUMI's training was targeted at involving these duty bearers in new initiatives to tackle violence in the community.

LABF project with support from DANIDA is implementing a project titled Empowering Independent Domestic Violence Advisors in Tororo District. The Project's goal is to empower communities and Leaders against Domestic Violence.



Some of the duty bearers that attended the training

## UNDP donates solar equipments through MIFUMI



L-R: Rose Othieno and Anna Odoi two of four the Solar Engineers

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has donated upto 1,019 units of solar equipments to Kirewa Women's Forum (KWF).

Speaking to the members of the group in Tororo, Mr. John Stephen Okuta, Program Assistant- UNDP said the use of solar electricity will reduce the burden of poverty on the beneficiaries in rural areas as the villagers will not spend on expensive kerosene but instead use this money to address other

pressing needs like health and education requirements for their families.

Last year September 2008, Roy Banker, founder of Barefoot College through a "Framework of Agreement for Partnership in Solar Electrification of Villages" with the GEF SGP, and in collaboration with MIFUMI, learnt of KWF; a community based organization and appreciated the kind of work they were doing. KWF (supported by MIFUMI) is a community watchdog addressing issues surrounding women rights in the community and helping the women access justice at clan and local council levels.

As part of the programme, four grandmothers were selected to train solar engineering last September in India. They are now installing solar panels in their villages.

## MIFUMI Debates Bride Price on the BBC world Service.

The recent Campaign on Bride Price carried on from local press, Tv and radio stations to the internationally acclaimed BBC.

On Wednesday 23 September 2009, Atuki Turner, Executive Director MIFUMI was hosted on BBC world service 'Africa have your Say' to debate the issue of Bride Price.

The talk show was listened to by over 3000 people with over 200 respondents around Africa.

Bride price may be a valued cultural practice, but it has become an insufferable practice sometimes costing people their lives

## Sure Start certifies 120 girls as Karate instructors in their communities



Girls at karate training

MIFUMI's Sure Start project has successfully trained 120 girls in four schools in Tororo District as Karate and Tae-kondo instructors. These rather uncommon girl sports have left a positive impact on their lives.

The most visible being their newly

found confidence in class, their communities and with their peers and boys.

These girls will replicate this training in their communities by each training 15 girls in their communities who will in turn train other girls.

### Reaching Teenagers through the children's congress.

Started by MIFUMI's VOICES free programme, the children's congress has been a great tool that has been used to reach children and educate them on their rights and on the roles they can take up in their communities.

Children educate each other through debates, drama and act as watch dogs for their fellow teenagers and report all forms of abuse to the duty bearers.

### Girls sports NGOs Meet in Nairobi

MIFUMI's Sure Start Project was among the ten organizations from Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Netherlands and the USA that met in Nairobi to share experiences and learn from partners how to effectively use sports in advancing the status of girls and women in their communities and using sport to address gender based violence.

Janet Otte represented MIFUMI at the meeting

### VOTE OF THANKS

MIFUMI is a development Women's Rights NGO working to protect women and children from domestic violence and Bride Price violations.

MIFUMI would like to pass a vote of thanks to all the survivors who have walked in to their advice centers seeking for help, community leaders and duty bearers for executing justice, media houses for addressing the issue of Bride Price to the national and international publics, quasi member organizations, friends and well wishers for selflessly supporting MIFUMI's cause on human rights.

Our special Thanks go to all the Donors who have generously supporting the organization without whom our efforts would be fruitless.

Thank you

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