



Collective Change



*The protecting of Women and Children's
Rights in Uganda project. [2020-2023]*



Acfode

Breaking Through, Building Up and Binding



**WE
EFFECT**

This project has received
funding from the
European Union





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Story- at a Glance

PROJECT:

Protection of Women and Children's Rights In Uganda (PWACRU)

ACFODE in partnership with We Effect and with financial support from the European Union implemented a three-year project titled "Protection of Women and Children's Rights in Uganda" which ran from July 2020 to June 2023. The project aimed to contribute towards the protection and promotion of women and children's rights through strengthened capacities of CSOs and duty bearers to eliminate violence against women and children in Uganda.

About us

ACFODE is a national women's rights organization founded on 19th November 1985 to provide a platform for effective debate and action on women's rights, empowerment and gender equality in Uganda. ACFODE's vision is a just society where gender equality is a reality, and the mission empower women and girls, and influence legislation and policy for gender equality in Uganda. ACFODE's core values include Integrity, Learning, Volunteerism, Respect, Teamwork, Equity and Fairness.

WE EFFECT is a Swedish non-governmental organization established in 1958. WE EFFECT works in 25 countries globally with headquarters in Stockholm. In Eastern Africa, WE EFFECT works with 37 partner organizations in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. WE EFFECT work is focused on reducing poverty and inequality within rural development, housing, access to land, equality, and financial inclusion sectors. This is done by strengthening the ability of member-based and democratic organizations to enable men and women living in poverty to improve conditions, defend their rights, and contribute to a just society.



Reach

Central region of Uganda.

Kalungu and Bukomansimbi



Southwestern Uganda

Rukiga, Kanungu, Kisoro
and Rubanda



Guideposts. two objectives:

To ensure a policy, legislative, and institutional environment that is supportive of women and children's rights by 2022 in the six targeted districts of Kanungu, Kisoro, Rubanda, Rukiga, Bukomansimbi, and Kalungu.

To enhance communities' capacities through partnership with local CSOs to challenge socio-gendered norms that perpetuate violence against women and children by 2022 in the six targeted districts.

Counting Pain

More than HALF.

In 2016/2017, about **51%** girls and **women** aged **15-49** had experienced physical violence at least once in their life (UBOS and ICF, 2018).

In addition:

24.2% girls of school-going age (**3-17 years**) who are not in school compared to **6.1%** of their male counterparts experienced sexual harassment, while

24.9% of girls in primary school compared to **8.9%** of boys have experienced sexual harassment (UBOS 2019).

The violence against children survey by the MGLSD (2015)

reports that **4 in 10** girls (**44%**) and **6 in 10** boys (**59%**) aged **13-17** experienced physical violence by 2014.

Teenage pregnancy in Uganda has stagnated at 25% since 2006 (UBOS & Macro International Inc, 2007; UBOS & ICF, 2018). According to UNFPA (2021), cases of teenage pregnancy in Uganda rose by **55%** during the **COVID-19** pandemic.

Perhaps tolerating it is even worse than when the majority think wife beating is acceptable. Up to **49%** of women and **41%** of men believe that a man is justified to beat his wife for specific reasons (UDHS 2016)

When survivors were bold enough to report, perpetrators were hardly ever tried for their crimes. **Only 30% of the rape cases reported to police in 2017 were taken to court; and only 1.5% of these cases resulted in a conviction.** Only 24% of the domestic violence cases that were reported to police resulted in convictions (UPF report 2018).

Crafting Change

Context and culture awareness were critical in crafting and choosing the vehicles and drivers of change. In conversations and collaborations with the community, we knew that we were touching on was sensitive yet widespread and something that everyone was fed up with. People needed believable authentic ways to tackle violence and rights abuses.



Model Couples approach

Evidence building on cases of violence against women and children.

Strategic partnerships

Lobbying and Advocacy

Capacity strengthening

SASA

Learning reflections and Peer support

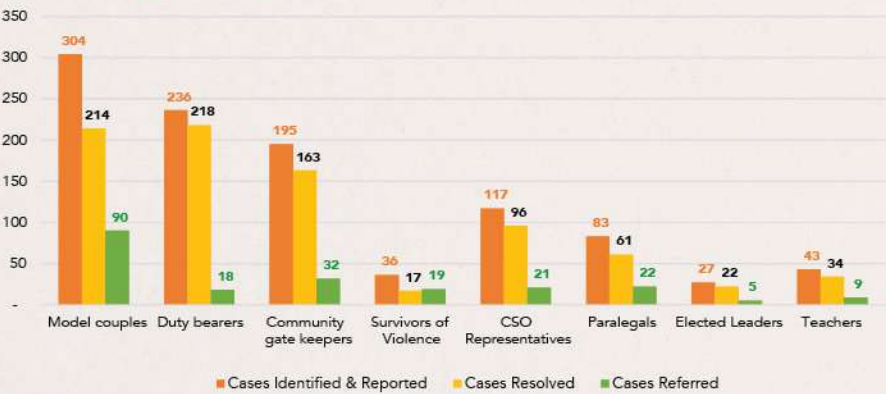
Media engagement

Economic empowerment (formation of small-scale business enterprises, provision of business incubation support, linkage to government and private sector, strengthening VSLAs).

To reach the community, we built capacity with these change makers. Their lives were never the same and they in turn took lead in changing others.

			
	Male	Female	Total
Model couples	755	1017	1772
Community gate keepers	1247	1581	2828
Paralegals	509	539	1048
Elected leaders	974	954	1928
Survivors of violence	9	61	70
Teachers	977	1307	2284
Duty bearers	968	1256	2224
CSOs	1046	1477	2523
TOTAL	6485	8192	14677

Case Management by Trained Actors



Indirect beneficiaries

vi

Female

56%



Male

44%

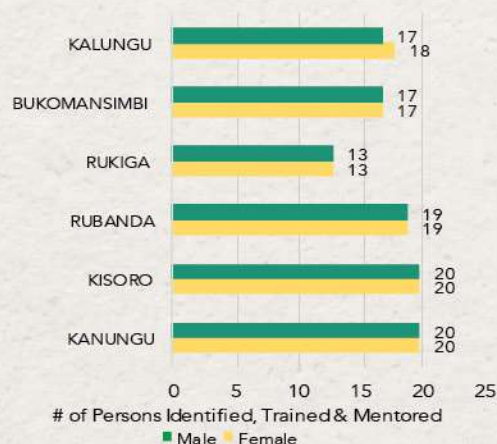


Expanded Awareness and Capacities

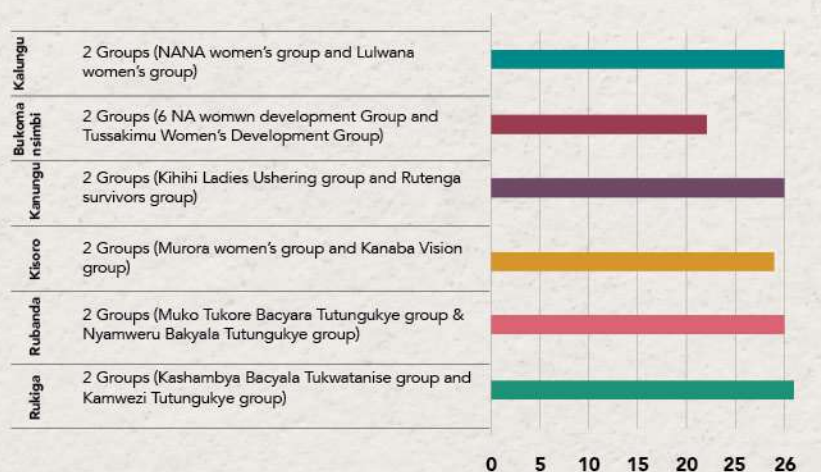
Increased awareness and capacities of community members, such as the model couples to prevent and mitigate violence against women and children.

Model Couples are a transformative approach used by ACFODE. It leverages respected change agents who have themselves improved their lives, denounced domestic violence, and are available to support others to achieve the same.

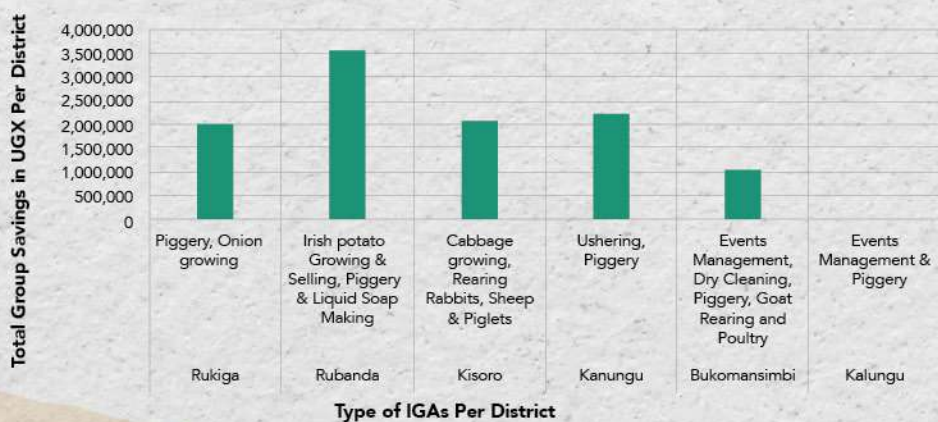
Model Couples Trained & Mentored Per District



Female Survivors Social Enterprises Formed



Survivor Women Groups Total Cumulated Savings by End of December 2022





Stories



Betty Hakusuma

Officer on a Mission.



AND LEGISLATION
LDA



Betty Hakusuma

Officer on a Mission.

Betty Hakusuma wore her badge proudly as the officer in charge of the child and family protection unit at the Central Police Station, Kanungu district.

Betty Hakusuma wore her badge proudly as the officer in charge of the Child and Family Protection Unit at the Central Police Station, Kanungu district. Helping protect children and families was something she believed in, however she had not realised the progress she had for. Betty had observed that the children were the most affected by violence since the wrangles between parents forced them to leave home and drop out of school.

When Betty participated in trainings with ACFODE on preventing and responding to violence against women and children, her zeal was reignited.

"We learnt how to work with the community to support the prevention of violence, as well as help families learn how to resolve conflict, reconcile and build peace in their homes and in their homes and in the community,"

Betty understands that it takes various actors to address violence. Working with various change makers, including community workers, model couples, and survivors of violence helps to promote peace and raise awareness about the consequences of violence in families. She collaborates with local radio stations as they are popular outlets in her village and reach a wider audience.

In addition, Betty believes in the power of exemplary living as demonstrated by model couples.

"The model couples live in the community and have earned the trust of the locals because they have witnessed the change in their lives. Model couples are so committed to giving families the time they need. Even in my own marriage, after seeing how these skills are helping couples, I decided to use them, and I am a better listener and communicator." — Betty

There has been a reduction in violence in her jurisdiction, with her office recording a drop from 1-13 cases per day to 3-4 cases across the district.

Last month alone, Betty worked with model couples to help reconcile four of the most difficult cases well documented for chronic violence. They finally agreed to get help from the model couples and have shown improvement in their relationship.

Officer Betty has now been at it for three years and is expanding her efforts to schools and markets to raise awareness about violence against women and children.



Alfred and Jeninah Musinguzi

Levelling Up





Alfred and Jeninah Musinguzi

Levelling Up



Alfred and Jeninah Musinguzi are residents of Kibaya village in Kihikihi town council of Kanungu district. The Musinguzi homestead was a home on fire. Fights always started and ended each day, and regular visits to the police did not resolve their problems.

Alfred found solace outside the home, in commercial sex workers, alcohol—anything that would numb him and offer escape from the chaos at home. Yet in hindsight, he is the first to admit that he and community members blamed Jeninah.

“I used to spend most of my money on prostitutes and alcohol and thought that I was doing good. My wife tried to invite people to talk to us, but they would refuse to listen to whatever she proposed and instead thought that she was big-headed.”

ACFODE's project recruitment for couples thought that the Musinguzis might benefit from the intervention, so they reached out to the couple.

Alfred and Jeninah Musinguzi are residents of Kibaya village in Kihikihi town council of Kanungu district.

The family that was on the verge of collapsing due to daily fights, alcoholism, and infidelity, but it is now a proud model couple.

“After the ACFODE training, I invited a friend to visit and talk to us; he advised me to give some freedom to my wife and also advised her to be flexible and respectful. That was when we started working as a team and bought our first cow, and we now have two.”

Alfred and his wife have also managed to plant two acres of coffee, which they think will, in the near future, help them raise school fees for their children.

The couple has been married for 24 years, but it only in the last three years that they have become more productive after overcoming their marital struggles.

“Ever since he stopped going to other women, there is peace in the home because he can now buy clothes and provide for our home. I used to cry every day, but we now sit and plan together for the family as he has enough time for us and the gardens.”



Edisa Nyiramugisha

All Gods Children





Edisa Nyiramugisha

All Gods Children

Edisa Nyiramugisha, a catechist at Nkunda Catholic Church in Kanungu district.

Edisa Nyiramugisha, a catechist at Nkunda Catholic Church in Kanungu district, learned through ACFODE trainings that it was her responsibility to support and care for all women and children, irrespective of religion.

Edisa learned through the trainings that women and children in her community were suffering. After the training, she realised that talking against violence had to be part of her message whenever she got the opportunity.

“I did not know that children need spiritual and mental nurturing. I also learned that women's hearts can be wounded. Now I usually take time to ensure that I understand the struggles that women are facing.”

In addition to Edisa's work of preaching the gospel of peace, reconciliation, and tolerance, the training has given her the ability to work with other local leaders and model couples to help struggling couples and communities find harmony again.

“ACFODE did good to also bring on board the local council chairpersons because initially they thought that they were being rendered idle, but now they understand the intentions and are very cooperative.”

Platforms such as church services, burials, parties, and meetings for church leaders are now places where we can share about the importance of couples working together as a team, thanks to ACFODE that has brought on board different stakeholders.



Prudence Kobusingye

A Collective Effort





Prudence Kobusingye

A Collective Effort

Prudence Kobusingye is a resident of Kihiki ward in Kihiki town council. Prudence was trained as a parasocial worker by ACFODE. She has been working with model couples, religious leaders, and local leaders to support survivors of violence.

"I have met different groups of people, including school-going children. I have encouraged them to always speak out and seek guidance from their teachers and religious leaders."

The approach of addressing challenges before they escalate is very good since this saves a lot of time and facilitates reconciliation.

"There is a retired soldier who lost almost all his property because of moving up and down in court and police fighting with the wife, Local leaders, police, and the court did not provide him with a lasting solution."

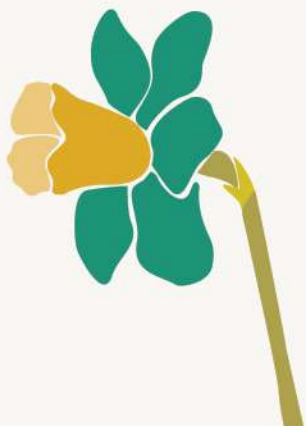
However, the situation in the area has been improving due to the interventions of ACFODE. Locals now appreciate the need to work together and are copying the model couples who have made contributed to this achievement.

Prudence
Kobusingye is a
resident of Kihiki
ward in Kihiki
town council.

Prudence is now concentrating on helping the survivors of violence by encouraging them to start small and equipping them with skills like making pancakes and chapatti so that they can earn an income.

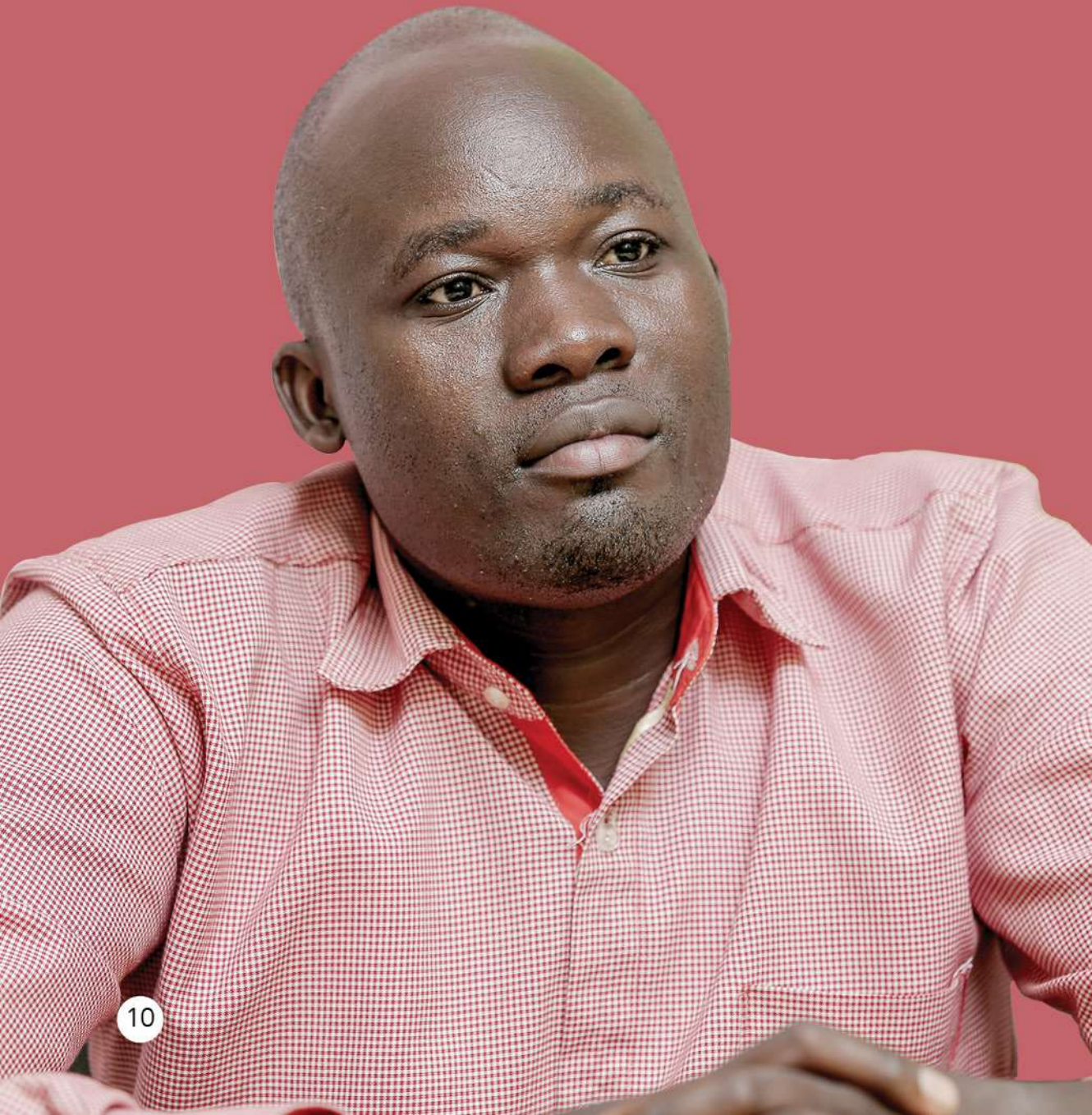
She formed a group of 15 survivors who are working hard to take care of their children after they were abandoned by their fathers.

Each member of the group saves 10,000 Uganda shillings every month to support fellow members in need.



Edison Igumba

Knowing How





Edison Igumba

Knowing How

Edison Igumba is the project lead at Kihiki Child Development Centre under Compassion International.

ACFODE supported us to stop violence.

Edison Igumba is the project lead at Kihiki Child Development Centre that is supported by Compassion International. Igumba and his team were trained by ACFODE on the rights of women and children as well as the skills to sensitise communities about the same.

Some of the training that ACFODE offered to Igumba's team included reporting the challenges arising from violence within homes, talking to carers and parents of children, addressing issues arising from alcoholism, land issues, reporting, and following up on rape and defilement cases, counselling for survivors of violence, and collaborating with police departments.

“When ACFODE came in, there were several cases, but with the human rights empowerment of women and children, we are now seeing a positive transformation. Additionally, ACFODE gave us reporting guideline posters showing us which cases should be handled in courts and at other levels.”

For this Compassion International team, ACFODE's targets supplement their work since they aim to create a brighter future for children.



Gideon Munyabuhoro

Going the Extra Mile





Gideon Munyabuhoro

Going the Extra Mile

Gideon
Munyabuhoro,
a teacher at
Kiruruma Primary
school in Kihiki
town council of
Kanungu district.

"ACFODE trainings equipped me with counselling skills."

Despite being so passionate about the wellbeing of children, Gideon Munyabuhoro, a teacher at Kiruruma Primary school in Kihiki town council of Kanungu district, did not know that he could take an extra step to counsel the pupils under his care.

Gideon is one of the few teachers in Kanungu district who were trained by ACFODE to champion the fight against violence against women and children. During the training, he learned about referral pathways and sensitization skills, and most important, how to best counsel pupils and engage their parents and guardians.

"I took the knowledge I gained from ACFODE and shared it with fellow staff at my school, and together we have formed anti, gender, based violence clubs in the school with the aim of ensuring that the violence is brought to an end, My hope is to also reach other schools with this same message."

Gideon also uses manilla paper and markers to write messages to fight against the abuse of women and children. This has increased awareness, as well training pupils to reach out to their peers.

While Gideon continues to share the skills he has learned and train others, he also works with religious leaders and model couples, who are also vital in supporting the fight against violence.



Winfred Mukandinda

Ending Silence





Winfred Mukandinda

Ending Silence

Winfred Mukandinda is the land rights officer at the United Organisation for Batwa Development.

"ACFODE equipped us with knowledge to train others."

Winfred Mukandinda is the land rights officer at the United Organisation for Batwa Development (UOBDU) in Kisoro district. Participating in the ACFODE training has strengthened her and her workmates' efforts in sensitizing communities about land issues as well as violence against women and children.

"We have been able to carry out sensitization of the locals on cross-cutting issues at least twice a month. We have targeted mainly women and children who are suffering in silence. They are now able to speak for themselves instead of dying in silence."

The challenge that Winfred and her coworkers face is that of attracting men to consistently attend the sensitization meetings, despite some showing interest.

Nevertheless, the ACFODE training has enabled them to carry out advocacy in Kisoro, Kabale, Lwengo, and Bundibigyo districts. Their advocacy efforts are bearing fruit.

"At the beginning, we used to interface with several cases of violence against women and children ranging from 2-3 every week, but now we interface with 0-1 per week."

The organisation has also formed women's rights defender committees, mainly comprised of women, to ensure that the cases are identified and followed up. Furthermore, the model couple approach is also proving useful in bringing healing to families.

"The model couple approach is a great initiative, and the people in the community are liking it because they are seeing real examples of people they live with. People have decided to abandon practices such as alcoholism as well as drug abuse."

With the training manuals provided by ACFODE, the team continues to refer to them for the right information, especially when dealing with the people at the grassroots.



Gideon Mfitumukiza

Phenomenal Results





Gideon Mfitumukiza

Phenomenal Results

Kisoro district has managed to bring down the number of cases of violence against women and children, thanks to intervention.

Gideon Mfitumukiza, the officer in charge of the Child and Family Protection Unit at Kisoro Central Police Station has noted a major reduction in cases of domestic violence, from between 65 and 70 to between 12 and 20 monthly.

"I was personally trained on how to handle issues involving women and children. This has helped me in my community policing outreaches where I get a chance of interacting with the locals directly, and this is doing wonders."

Gideon
Mfitumukiza, the
officer in charge
of the Child and
Family Protection
Unit at Kisoro
Central Police
Station.

Gideon, however, feels that the training by ACFODE should be extended to include all the local leaders in the entire district, because the areas where local leaders have been trained are registering great progress.



Sawiya Ndikuyeze Mugabirwe

The Refresher





Sawiya Ndikuyeze Mugabirwe

The Refresher

Sawiya Ndikuyeze Mugabirwe is the senior community development officer for Murora sub-county in Kisoro.

Sawiya Ndikuyeze Mugabirwe is the senior community development officer for Murora sub-county in Kisoro, where ACFODE is running a project to end violence against women and children.

Though she has been passionate about the wellbeing of women and children, the trainings by ACFODE have rejuvenated and equipped her to be more effective while executing her duties.

"The training strengthened me to first fight for my own rights and then embark on supporting women who tend to give up due to torture and fear of repudiation."

The trainings by ACFODE have enabled women to know that they can start small and be able to earn a living, as poverty is one of the leading causes of rights violations.

Some women in the area who had started developing suicidal thoughts have since managed to carry on with life. They have learned that they can face life without necessarily relying on men, who would at times take advantage of their challenges.

"The women have become more confident and have opened up. This means they are able to speak up and we can work together to find solutions to their challenges. Women also feel proud that they can earn money and support their households. Men these days are also looking out for women with whom they can work together."



Sawiya uses every available opportunity to sensitize communities about the need to end violence against women and children.

While she works with model couples to restore harmony in families, she also works with religious leaders and holds meetings with village savings associations to ensure that the message to end violence against women and children reaches as many people as possible.

"I am a passionate person; people are free to even find me at home, even if it is over the weekend, and this has enabled me to easily reconcile a good number of couples. I do not only help those from my sub-county; because people confide in me, I welcome them irrespective of where they come from."

Sawiya wants ACFODE to continue with the intervention in the district because the process of ending violence has to be continuous

Dinah Uzamukunda

Making Money





Dinah Uzamukunda

Making Money

Dinah Uzamukunda is a 24-year-old resident of Murora sub county in Kisoro District.

"I no longer only produce for consumption."

Dinah Uzamukunda is a 24-year-old resident of Murora sub county in Kisoro district.

Dinah, who is a survivor of gender-based violence, thought she had lost it all when she dropped out of school. The worst part was that her husband did not value her and eventually abandoned her. People thought she was done for and would resort to begging. But her life changed after she attended the training by ACFODE.

"I had low self esteem, but I now know that I am a useful person in my community and the county."

I am capable of changing the way the world looks at women by being able to work, earn, and contribute something."

Dinah is now involved in poultry farming, where she gets income from the sale of eggs, piggery, and goat rearing, which supplement her crop farming.

"I harvested five bags of Irish potatoes, which I sold for shillings 300,000 each and raised money for myself."

Other survivors of violence in her community are also following in her footsteps, and have formed the Murora women survivors' group, where they save shillings 5,000 every Sunday. The group, which started with seven members, now has twenty-three members. The group has so far managed to buy rabbits for members to enable them to produce manure for their gardens as well as have meat for their families.

Other milestones for the group include renting land where they are growing communal vegetables such as eggplants and cabbages.

The group plans to buy a sheep for each of the members as well as sewing machines to equip members with skills. ACFODE has helped these women to understand that they can save small amounts of money and grow big.



Constance Tukahirwa

Prioritizing School





Constance Tukahirwa

Prioritizing School

Constance
Tukahirwa a
teacher at Karago
primary school in
Karagao village.

ACFODE trainings have empowered Constance Tukahirwa (4), a teacher at Karago Primary School in Karagao village, Chibumba parish, Murora sub-county, with the skills to engage fellow teachers in rallying children against dropping out of school by explaining to them the impact and the challenges they risk being exposed to.

Constance had always been bothered by seeing children drop out of school but had not taken any steps towards finding out what could be the cause or even stopping it.

In the past, many children were lured to work in people's gardens, while females were lured into early marriage. This compromised their ability to make any decisions in their families, waiting for handouts, and made them vulnerable to violence.

After the trainings by ACFODE, Constance was supported by the school administration to ensure that the knowledge received from ACFODE was passed on to fellow teachers as well as pupils, and she made every effort to follow up on the pupils who missed school.

She learned that several girls dropped out of school because they lacked sanitary pads, while several boys were being lured to do casual work and earn quick money, cutting short their future.

Part of the effort by Constance has been to form clubs with the intention of fighting violence against women and children which are helping to spread awareness among the pupils, teachers, and the community.

She recommends that ACFODE organise regular trainings for all senior women teachers in the district so that they can effectively address the challenges faced by pupils, especially the girl child.



Jonath Kwiringira and Paulina Twizere

Better Together





Jonath Kwiringira and Paulina Twizere Better Together



Jonath Kwiringira and Paulina Twizere are residents of Kabyaza village.

Jonath Kwiringira and Paulina Twizere are residents of Kabyaza village in Chahafi parish of Murora sub county in Kisoro district.

The couple had always struggled with life and fought daily. They were also failing to feed their children. Their children were also out of school despite the presence of a government-aided school located less than a kilometer from their home.

Jonath had never thought of buying clothes for his wife and children. In addition to leaving them to fend for themselves, he spent the money on beer. But when ACFODE invited him together with his wife for their training, he realised that his actions were letting him and his family down and saw how other families were far ahead of him and his family.

"When I started doing right, the whole situation turned around, and my wife is very supportive. I now buy clothes, and recently I bought her a mobile phone for the first time ever since we were married."

Unlike in the past, Jonath now talks to his wife and consults her on the situation at home while he goes about his business, as well as on saving money. They make decisions together as a couple.

Next to their small house at home, fresh bricks litter the compound and have been spread to dry. The couple plans to make more bricks so that they can expand the house.

Pauline Twizere is pleased with the change in her husband. Many people in the village now admire and respect him and us.

"Some women come to ask me what I did for my husband to suddenly change into a responsible father, I tell them to respect one another and be responsible and make decisions as a couple through opening up to each other."



The couple's progress is visible to the community. They have goats tethered on the left side of the house and pigs in the stall behind their kitchen. They have also been able to send their children back to school.

Frank Hashakimana

A Change in Attitude for Boda
Boda riders





Frank Hashakimana

A Change in Attitude for Boda Boda riders

Frank Hashakimana
is a boda boda
cyclist from
Nyakagyezi trading
centre.

Frank Hashakimana (32) is a boda-boda cyclist from Nyakagyezi trading centre in Chahafi parish of Murora sub county, Kisoro district, who attended the trainings organized by ACFODE in Kisoro district.

Frank used to take women for granted, both in his business as a boda boda service provider and back at home. For example, during his work, he would touch female customers inappropriately. It is only at the ACFODE training that he realised that his behaviour was violating the rights of his customers.

"I now know that it is very important to respect women, especially the single mothers with whom we used to play around because we were sure no man would come in to protect them."

Frank, who is also the chairperson of the riders for Murora Stage, commonly known as a stage master now champions the fight against violations of the rights of women and children in the area by training fellow riders. This had earned them respect and confidence from their clients and area residents.



Rev. Gideon Kwitonda

Truth Telling





Rev. Gideon Kwitonda

Truth Telling

Rev. Gideon Kwitonda is attached to Murora Agape Pentecostal Church.

Rev. Gideon Kwitonda is attached to Murora Agape Pentecostal Church. Having been trained by ACFODE as a paralegal, he is using his position in the church and community to sensitise the locals about the rights of women and children.

Although he used to preach harmony in families, he did not know a lot about the rights of women and children.

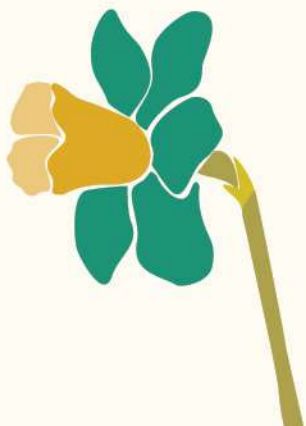
“The absence of fighting does not necessarily mean that there is happiness in the family, Our preaching was initially limited to encouraging people to always attend church and desist from fighting, but we did not look at other aspects that may compromise the well being of the people in families.”

The training by ACFODE reminded him that he had a responsibility to go the extra mile in opening the eyes of the members of the communities, irrespective of the religions that they subscribe to, as well as helping those with challenges know where they can seek redress.

He now uses the church services to preach to people as well as the home visits to tell people to avoid violence against women and children.

“There is a man who was very stubborn and used to misbehave and treat the members of his family badly. After several attempts to put him in order failed, we decided to engage the community development officer who helped us put him in order, and he is now a reformed man.”

Gideon and the men in the area now know that women and girls have equal rights as men.



Martin Tukamuhebwa

Above And Beyond





Martin Tukamuhebwa

Above And Beyond

Martin
Tukamuhebwa
works as a primary
school teacher in
Bigungiro parish.

Martin Tukamuhebwa (34) works as a primary school teacher in Bigungiro parish, Nyamweru sub county, Rubanda district. Although he had always been a dedicated teacher, he had done little to ensure that children's rights were not abused.

After completing the ACFODE training, Martin felt he wasn't doing enough as a teacher and that he needed to do more. He learned how to address issues stemming from violence against children, the causes of violence, and the steps he can take when he sees children who are victims of abuse.

"Through interactions with children and some excursions, I noticed that drinking, early pregnancies, and parental deaths were some of the biggest causes of the violence experienced by children and women."

After the training, Martin became more intention in speaking to pupils during school assemblies, as well as having one-on-one encounters with them, which allowed him to have great impact. Some of the children also approach him directly when they have problems and when their rights are being violated.

He believes that frequent counselling and the involvement of parents and children will go a long way towards ending child abuse.

He adds that ACFODE actors, such as survivors of violence, model couples, local leaders, and religious leaders, must collaborate to keep the momentum of fighting violence against women and children.



Francis Monday and Ruth Tumuheirwe

Police Regular





Francis Monday and Ruth Tumuheirwe

Police Regular



Francis Monday and his wife, Ruth Tumuheirwe, live in Rwashuju village.



Francis Monday and his wife, Ruth Tumuheirwe, live in Rwashuju village in Nyamweru parish of Nyamweru Sub County in Rubanda district. This couple boasts of a mid-sized house, a structure hosting a Friesian heifer, and a compound with several fruit trees.

Without listening to their story, it is hard for one to tell that the couple was prominent in the village for daily fights that on several occasions saw Monday incarcerated in police cells.

"I would come for the money after the tobacco had been sold, and I thought that everything belonged to me."

Francis' drinking habits escalated to the extent that he would go home and pour away the food prepared by his wife, leaving the entire family to go without supper. Tired of his actions, the wife and children were left with no option but to drag him to the police, where he would be held for between two and four days before being released.

"The neighbours were very tired of our fights and would just inform the authorities to come for me whenever I messed up."

Today, Francis is a totally changed person following the trainings by ACFODE. He realised that most of his challenges were a result of his consumption of alcohol and promised his wife not to drink it again. He has since kept his promise.

Unity prevails in their family and they are progressing well. The couple has been able to grow, harvest, and sell food together, as well as buy pigs and goats, then to pay school fees for their seven children.

"My younger brother had also become an alcoholic, but he has since changed. He regularly comes here for advice, and his wife is very happy that he is a changed man," says Francis.

For Ruth, the coming of ACFODE was a blessing to her family, to the extent that some people think that she bewitched her husband to bring an end to his past behaviour.

"Whenever we asked for anything like salt, it would be the beginning of a fight, but all that has changed because he even leaves money behind for us to get home supplies. The children usually ask me how I managed to change him because they do not believe that just the ACFODE training made the difference. But it's the truth."

After making peace and returning to their homes, they have been able to reconcile a total of five couples, using their own lives as examples of how to turn a bad situation around.

Denis Barekye

Setting Down the Law





Denis Barekye

Setting Down the Law

Denis Barekye, the Nyamweru sub-county community development officer.



ACFODE assisted us in developing a bylaw to safeguard children and women.

Nyamweru sub county in Rubanda District has managed to formulate an ordinance that seeks to protect children from abuse and rights violation.

Denis Barekye, the Nyamweru sub-county community development officer, had observed that for years, the sub-county had grappled with incidents of child labour, beating and torture, as well as underage betting.

With the intervention of ACFODE, that is changing. After the ACFODE training, Denis joined hands to raise awareness about children's rights. The leadership of the sub-county developed a strict legal document aimed at checking the vices which are a serious threat to the future of children.

Under the by-law, all bars in the sub-county cannot open before 2 p.m. and must close at 10 p.m., with a fine of shillings 100,000 or imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both, for those who are defiant.

The same bylaw imposes a fine of 500,000 shillings or imprisonment not exceeding six months for the owners of betting machines who allow children under the age of 18 to be involved in betting. A fine of 100,000 shillings and imprisonment for six months have also been put in place for those who employ children.

Denis and his team have conducted more sensitization of the communities after the training by ACFODE and have also received support from local leaders who think that the interventions will end violence, as abuse of alcohol has been one of the leading causes.

“Every day is a learning day. You get new skills and interact with more people, which enables you to do better, The model couples are very important since they make my work easier.”

The sub-county has created a database of those trained by ACFODE so that they can always work with them where need arises.

Women and children in the area are now very confident and capable of speaking out and challenging attempts to violate their rights.

Vanice Kyarimpa

Leaving The Past Behind





Vanice Kyarimpa

Leaving The Past Behind

Vanice Kyarimpa
is a resident of
Nangara village in
Nangara parish.

Vanice Kyarimpa (63) is a resident of Nangara village in Nangara parish of Nyamweru sub-county in Rubanda district.

Having experienced a violent marriage for decades and now living with her grandchildren, Vanice has, through the support and training provided by ACFODE, managed to put the past aside and move on with her life.

Vanice's hopes of one day living a stable life without confusion had waned, as she could not even plan to sit down and earn anything due to the frustration. Thanks to ACFODE, she is now engaged in growing cabbages, which have been bringing in some money, in addition to operating a restaurant at a nearby trading centre.

Vanice also mobilised 15 women who are also survivors of violence to start a saving group where they save shillings 2000 every week and shillings 6000 at the end of every month, which is used for internal lending at low interest rates.

At her house, the doors and windows that were destroyed by her former husband are visible and have been put together using wood and nails.

Vanice commends ACFODE for extending the project to fight violence against women and children to her sub-county, because the perpetrators of violence are now extra careful with their actions due to fear of being arrested. Local leaders, who did not care about the rights of women, now attach value to women and do not tolerate any act that violates the rights of women and children.



Davis Ariho

Expanding Networks





Davis Ariho

Expanding Networks

Davis Ariho, the coordinator of Hope Partners.

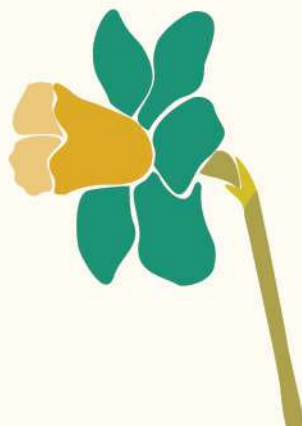
Davis Ariho, the coordinator of Hope Partners, an African civil society organisation based in Rubanda district, is grateful for the networking and learning opportunity that arose out of working closely with the ACFODE.

The training enabled Davis and his team to better understand gender issues, how they can best protect women and children by knowing more about their rights as well as how and where to refer cases that come up in the area.

“Some cases used to be messed up by police because the evidence was poorly handled, but now we know that incidents such as rape and defilement must be handled swiftly as well as getting medical evidence, which makes the case strong and hard to mess up.”

Davis and his team are now sensitising the locals to ensure that their children have birth certificates, which are vital preventing defilers from manipulating the system in the absence of birth certificates in order to escape justice.

“Parents and guardians should also be brought on board with the sensitization being widened, as they are the ones who can easily protect children from danger by reporting the cases and shunning violence.”



Rev. Arthur Tusiime

God's Calling





Rev. Arthur Tusiime

God's Calling

Rev. Arthur
Tusiime lives in
Kigara parish
ward.

Rev. Arthur Tusiime (73) lives in Kigara parish ward, Kamwezi sub county of Rukiga district. His skills in working with people were enhanced when he attended ACFODE's training.

The ACFODE training was an addition to his over forty years of service to the church, where his number one goal has been to ensure that people live happily.

"It is uncommon for the court and police to re-unite a couple whose troubles have escalated. Instead, their problems are exacerbated. To win a case, some people will tell lies. The model couple method allows for the opening of dialogues that, in the end, aid in reconciliation as couples recognise their faults and work together to repair their lives."

The training has improved his ability to address issues of violence against children who are banished from home. To this end, he has helped the families to reunite.

"As a religious leader, I have a platform in churches, at parties, burials, and other gatherings where people converge, but some couples come directly to my home for counselling. I use these opportunities to raise awareness about the rights of women and children."



Ambrose Twesigomwe and Mercy Kansiime

Family Centered





Ambrose Twesigomwe and Mercy Kansiime Family Centered



Ambrose
Twesigomwe and
Mercy Kansiime
are residents of
Kinyungu village.

We are taking good care of our family.

Ambrose Twesigomwe (33) and Mercy Kansiime (32) are residents of Kinyungu village in Kigara Parish of Kamwezi sub county in Rukiga district.

Now described as a model couple in their village, the two had previously struggled with their lives, as the family slowly but steadily lost direction. It was only after the training organised by ACFODE that their marriage life was turned around.

“I started saving with my wife and we started making joint decisions; as a result, we have managed to buy a piece of land where we constructed a small permanent house in addition to expanding our piece of land.”

ACFODE trained the couple in counselling, saving, human rights, and the referral pathways, in relation to violence against women and children. We also were introduced to the model couple approach by first going through counselling.

“The model couple has done great wonders because many couples are benefiting from the efforts to reconcile instead of spending a lot of time and resources in police and courts of law which at times escalate the disagreements instead of providing a solution.”

The couple now plans to put up houses for rent which they think will help them in raising money to payv school fees for their children.

Mercy, who is a teacher by profession, is surprised by the change and flexibility in her husband's behaviour. Ambrose even helps with house chores.



Marion Tumuhimbise

Economic Affairs





Marion Tumuhimbise

Economic Affairs

Marion
Tumuhimbise lives
in Kyogo village.

"I learned to explore my business potential."

Marion Tumuhimbise (40), who lives in Kyogo village of Kyogo parish in Kamwezi sub-county-Rukiga district, had always thought that in order to do business, she needed a lot of money to start. Marion did not take any step towards starting, but lamented about her desire to start, yet she had not saved even a single coin. She was also a survivor of violence.

However, Marion was selected by the ACFODE team to attend their training and this proved to be a turning point in her life.

"I no longer have time for lamenting because it does not help me. I think it is better to act on my ideas so that I can progress in life."

She partnered with her friends to form a group known as Kamwezi Tutunguke (development) women's group. They are engaged in productive ventures that include piggery and poultry.

The group expects to harvest their garden of cabbages planted on an acre of land in July 2023, which will earn them some good money because the harvest will take place during the dry season when demand is high due to the scarcity of other vegetables.



Pamela Kembabazi

A People Informed (Knowing
Better, Doing Better).





Pamela Kembabazi

A People Informed (Knowing Better, Doing Better).

Pamela Kembabazi,
Probation Officer for
Rukiga district.

Thanks to the efforts of ACFODE, the people of Rukiga district now know about the rights of women and children. The project has been operating in the sub counties of Kashambya and Kamwezi, which had the highest case numbers of violence against women and children.

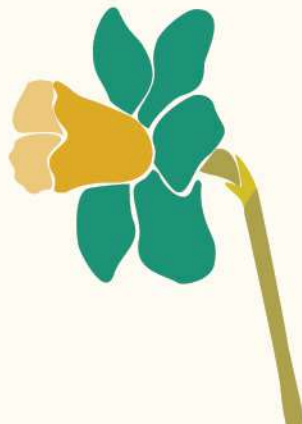
“When ACFODE sensitized the locals about violence against women and children, people and especially men began to see that women and children are also valuable members of society with whom they can build successful families and the nation.” – Pamela Kembabazi, Probation Officer for Rukiga district.”

Since the project's inception, ACFODE has made positive strides with the model couple approach, which facilitates reconciliation of couples by putting them in direct contact with other couples, allowing them to share the challenges they face.

ACFODE also works closely with religious leaders, local council leaders, and paralegals to champion the fight against violence against women and children.

Kashambya sub county used to register over 20 cases of violence per month, but now reports a decrease to between 5-7 per month.

“My wish is that the project is rolled out to the other sub counties of Ruvumucucu and Bukinda and the two town councils in Rukiga district so that everyone in the area learns about the effects of violence on individuals, families, communities, and Uganda.”
Pamela Kembabazi.



Kate Twikirize

A Champion Who Starts with Self.





Kate Twikirize

A Champion Who Starts with Self.

Kate Twikirize
in the village of
Kankiro.

Kate Twikirize (52) is a paralegal trained by ACFODE to champion the cause of ending violence against women and children in the village of Kankiro, Kyabuhangwa parish in Kamwezi sub county of Rukiga district.

Even though she is a local leader, doubling as woman councilor, Kate did not know much about the rights of women and did not feel confident enough to face perpetrators of violence against women and children.

“Men in the area used to sell off family land without obtaining consent from their wives. They would also spend money without their wives input.” Such decisions left many women and families in a financially difficult position.

After attending the ACFODE training, Kate is now able to sensitize women and convince men to involve them in decision-making. She has also applied the learnings in her own life.

“The first thing I did was to work on our marriage. I shared my earnings with my husband, and we started a joint savings plan. At the end of every year, we discuss our savings and decide on what to use it for.”

Kate believes that the training initiative by ACFODE is important because it involves different stakeholders with a strong commitment to the welfare of women and children.



Naris Twakire

A Champion Who Starts with Self.





Naris Twakire

A Champion Who Starts with Self.

Naris Twakire

Teacher, Kashekye
Primary School,
Kamwezi
subcounty.

Naris Twakire (42), is a teacher at Kashekye Primary School in Kyabuhangwa Primary School in Kamwezi sub county of Rukiga district. He has taken the decision to talk about violence against women and children as part of his teaching job.

Naris was trained by ACFODE to take a leading role in fighting violence against women and children. His efforts are yielding positive results because the children at his school now know about their rights and feel free to open up and talk about the challenges they face.

“Children’s rights are violated both at home and at school. In schools, some teachers think that they are disciplining pupils, when they are actually violating their rights.”

The regular engagements with teachers and training in counselling have empowered them to follow up with pupils who fail to turn up for lessons. The teachers have also developed a student-to-student peer approach to assist the hesitant pupils to gain confidence to share their challenges.

The churches in the area have become valuable allies, too, in Naris’ mission. They give Naris a platform to speak to the children and parents during church services, giving him a wider audience.

Naris’ advocacy has sparked a positive response from the headteachers who are now willing to appropriate some funds to buy emergency sanitary pads for the girls.

“If the ACFODE training is extended to the senior women, they will ensure that the girls have a comfortable stay in school.”



Florence Tumuheirwe

Taking Transformative Steps





Florence Tumuheirwe

Taking Transformative Steps

Florence
Tumuheirwe is
one of the ACFODE
trainees.

Florence Tumuheirwe is one of the ACFODE trainees empowered to support ending violence against women and children. Working with ACFODE has enabled her to fully utilize the potential of collaborating with various stakeholders and utilizing existing frameworks. She is also the Executive Director of Kigezi Women in Development (KWID), a civil society organisation operating in the Kigezi subregion.

At the end of the training, Florence was equipped with training of trainers skills to end gender-based violence, advocacy to promote women and children's rights, referral pathways to ensure access to support services, and accountability to hold duty bearers responsible for their actions.

“The training motivated me and my team to engage regularly with victims of violence.”

Florence and her team have been able to carry out activities towards better service delivery such as advocacy training of women's groups in Kyogo, Kyabuhangwa, and Nyakagyera to end violence against women; engaging village health teams to promote awareness around violence against women and children; collaborating with community legal volunteers to ensure that legal frameworks are upheld and perpetrators are held accountable for their actions; and, championing the model couple approach to restore peace and harmony among couples and families.

Having peaceful couples has reduced abuse against children. They are now receiving better care and support from their parents.

“There used to be lots of fights in families with some men not letting their partners come to our meetings, but now they allow their partners to be part of development in their areas.”



Edison Turyamureeba

Improved Abilities.





Edison Turyamureeba

Improved Abilities.

Edison
Turyamureeba
was one of the
people who attended
the trainings by
ACFODE.

Kamwezi community development officer Edison Turyamureeba was one of the people who attended the trainings by ACFODE, which were focused on ending violence against women and children.

Although Edison's work was mainly to engage with communities, the intervention by ACFODE was very timely and has made him more flexible and approachable.

As a result, he has been able to mobilise and encourage the locals to form more social groups, which makes it easier for them to be reached when there is any programme coming up.

"We are now receiving good reports about the handling of children by parents, guardians, and teachers as well."

He says that although there are commendable steps, some parents are not supportive, especially of the initiative aimed at popularising the school feeding programme.

Edison was trained in child protection, referral pathways, how to sustain the model couple groups, handling challenges at home, being exemplary, and how to handle special interest groups.

"The model couples are very helpful to them since it is a structure established at the grassroots. It is easy to contact them."

The model couples have also brought development to the area by organising themselves into groups to engage in modern farming as well as saving the proceeds from agriculture to improve their standards of living.



Aggry and Abia Muhangi

Couple- to – Couple, modelling
change in Rwashuju



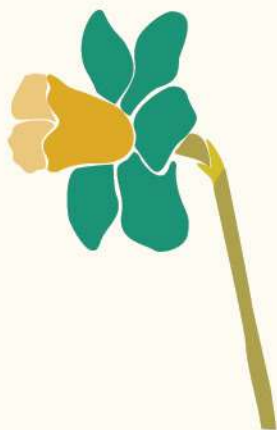


Aggry and Abia Muhangi

Couple- to – Couple, modelling change in Rwashuju



Aggry and Abia Muhangi of Rwashuju village.



In a community where domestic violence was rampant, Aggry and Abia Muhangi of Rwashuju village had one of the most volatile marriages. The parents of five fought daily, and their marital discord made it impossible to do household chores, grow food and work on income generating projects together. This translated into serious financial difficulties. The Muhangi's couldn't afford to send their children to school. Efforts of a local priest to mediate their differences proved futile. The couple-initiated divorce proceedings through the legal system, a process set in motion as far back as 2021.

Lucky for them, Francis Monday and Ruth Tumuheirwe a model couple who had undergone a remarkable transformation lived in the same community. They had once suffered the scourge of domestic violence and isolation themselves, but ACFODE's trainings had equipped them to turn their lives around. Inspired by their own journey of healing and unity, Francis and Ruth offered their neighbors, Aggry and Abia, nonjudgmental support. At this point the divorce was nearly final, Aggry had harboured a lot of anger due to multiple arrests as a result of violence. He knew he had done wrong but felt treated unfairly.

When Francis and Ruth reached out to them, Aggry would be in for a surprise at his own change of heart. "I knew about Francis and his wife, they had worked through many impossibilities, they managed to find common ground. This touched my heart. We had never done this, but it gave me hope", said Aggry

Abia was also moved by watching Francis and Ruth change their lives.

"Though I had been ready for a divorce, I realized that maybe we hadn't thought through all the options. Our culture doesn't promote divorce, and starting anew without my husband and children would have been very difficult," she reflected.

With the encouragement of the model couple, the Muhangi's decided to work on their relationship starting with their communication. They slowly rebuilt respect and commitment to safety even when they had conflicts. The model couple visited them regularly and talked through many practical ways they had learned to handle challenges.

Today, the Muhangi couple are firm on their reconciliation path, their once-fragile home, constructed from mud and wattle, and wrought with violence is being replaced with a more permanent home that they have worked hard to construct. Beyond that, there is peace.

"Our village used to be full of domestic violence, but our story has changed. Couples in distress now seek us out and find the support they need to heal." says Aggry.

Baker Mulumba

Bedroom Secrets





Baker Mulumba

Bedroom Secrets

Baker Mulumba,
the probation officer
for Bukomansibi
district.



Violence against women and children had become a common occurrence in Bukomansibi district, with the public regarding it as one of their little inconveniences that they can live with. This is because it was taboo to report what they considered “bedroom secrets”, causing victims to suffer in silence until the situation escalated, at times leading to loss of life.

Baker Mulumba, the probation officer for Bukomansibi district used to record a total of 50 cases every month, most of them coming from the sub counties of Kitanda and Bigasa, but when an opportunity for ACFODE came up to support the two sub counties change the narrative, he stepped up to receive the training.

Baker now has reason to smile since the number of cases of violence against women in the area has significantly declined to between 13 and 15 every three months.

Initially, the sub counties were grappling with issues of wife battering, parents abusing and torturing their children, child neglect, and denying women a chance to work and be able to participate in decision-making.

The communities have been educated and are now aware of the advantages of having a peaceful family and community at large, owing to the ongoing sensitization and awareness raising.

“The families have had their eyes opened and are demanding for their rights.”

Mulumba has worked closely with ACFODE officials, survivors of violence, model couples, community development officers, religious leaders, police, local council leaders at all levels, and parasocial workers to change the perceptions of the communities and be able to advocate for the district’s most vulnerable residents.

The district has now established child protection committees up to the sub county level to ensure that the children achieve their full potential.

“The committee meets once every three months to discuss the challenges facing the district and propose possible solutions, enabling us to jointly monitor and start the process of developing a by-law that addresses social needs and protects women and children from violence.”

The district currently boasts of a center where survivors of violence receive counseling and a chance to recover.

Hanington Muganga and Moreen Nakalema

Reckless Lives





Hanington Muganga and Moreen Nakalema Reckless Lives



*Hanington Muganga
and his wife Moreen
Nakalema live in
Muganju village.*

Hanington Muganga and his wife Moreen Nakalema live in Muganju village in Mukululu Parish of Kitanda sub county, where they are now treasured as a model couple.

The family that was once known for violence and poverty, Hanington and Nakalema, have taken remarkable strides out of poverty and are now a point of reference for other couples looking for a positive example. These days, the couple even mediates between couples with challenges in the village.

Hanington was formerly regarded as a violent and reckless alcoholic. When ACFODE conducted a training to end violence against women, Hanington and Moreen took part in it.

“My husband was a notorious drunkard. He would go days without returning home, leaving us worried about his safety. Today, he is the one counseling couples and always concerned about our children’s education.”

The family had reached the extent of struggling to buy salt, despite having a plantation of coffee. This was because the husband would sell off all the coffee before it ripened to pay for his daily drinking expenses. Additionally, he would beat Moreen every day.

“I was surrounded by drunkards who were misleading me. During the first training session, we were asked to sit as couples, and sometimes other participants laughed, but we did not because the very issues that made them laugh could make us sad. That is when I realized that violence had taken over my home.”

The couple is now working together, and Hanington has not only started a poultry project for his wife, but he has also opened a shop for her next to their home to enable her to get some money. The wife now manages the family’s finances and participates in decision-making on financial expenditures.

Hanington and his wife had a good coffee harvest that enabled them to host a church wedding in October 2022 and buy another piece of land on which they have planted more coffee.

The couple continues to prioritise helping families create more peaceful and prosperous lives.



Sophia Namanda

SIX N – Responsible Spending





Sophia Namanda

SIX N – Responsible Spending

Sophia Namanda of Nakatete village.

Sophia Namanda of Nakatete village, Mitigyera Parish of Kitanda sub county Bukomansibi was in a terrible state after surviving violence. She did not want to be alive. Previously, Sophia would spend whatever money she earned without thinking of saving for the future.

When she was selected for the ACFODE training, she had the opportunity to reconsider life. She began to think about her life and what she could do to improve it with the skills she obtained at the training.

Sophia joined the SIX N group of women who combined efforts to encourage saving among themselves and support each other with their projects where need arises. The group shared evenly four million shillings, which the women used as capital for their respective businesses.

She now rears pigs and weaves baskets, which she sells to improve her income.

“I used to spend irresponsibly and believed that I was destined to be poor. The day I started saving, I learned that the most important thing is to start, and everything will return to normal.”

Today, Sophia is the treasurer of the group and vets those who borrow money, manages the group's finances and records without difficulty.

“What I will not forget about ACFODE is that I learned to speak in public and save money. I can face life's challenges without fear.”



Jimmy Ssejengo

Prevention of Violence is better
than Legal Action





Jimmy Sejjengo

Prevention of Violence is better than Legal Action

Jimmy Sejjengo is the second in charge of the child and family protection unit of the police at Bukomansimbi central police station.

Jimmy Sejjengo is the second in charge of Child and Family Protection Unit of the police at Bukomansimbi Central Police Station. Despite his role, he did not consider that a preventive approach to eradicate violence against women and children was more beneficial than wait for people to come in and report cases of violence.

It was not until ACFODE came into the picture that the police began to work closely with the parasocial workers and the model couples to change the narrative in the area.

ACFODE helped couples to understand the need to work together and open up about their income and expenses in families. The training showed Jimmy that reaching out to the communities and teaching them about human rights, the responsibilities of parents, and how challenges can be solved without violence was a better approach to curbing violence against women and children.

Jimmy works with religious and local leaders who have made his work easy, especially by giving him a platform to teach the locals about the advantages of effective communication and joint decision-making in families.

“Protecting the rights of children and women is not a one-day journey. My responsibility is to continue working with the locals, district leaders, and other stakeholders to ensure that the violence is wiped out. I hope ACFODE can consider extending to more sub-counties in Bukomansimbi so that the rights of women and children are protected.”



Sheikh Ssemakadde Wasswa Ntambi

Amplifying Sermons Against Violations of
Women's and Children's Rights.





Sheikh Ssemakadde Wasswa Ntambi

Amplifying Sermons Against Violations of Women's and Children's Rights.

Sheikh Ssemakadde Wasswa Ntambi is the head of the Muslim community in Bukomansimbi district.

Sheikh Ssemakadde Wasswa Ntambi is the head of the Muslim community in Bukomansimbi district. While he has been an advocate for the rights of women and children, attending the ACFODE trainings made him realise that he needed to amplify this message.

He learned from the trainings the extent of the challenges and violence faced by women and children and is now a peace ambassador working hard to ensure that people share information and make decisions that develop their homes instead of working in isolation.

"Helping couples to reconcile is very important; religious leaders also have families, and starting from your own home to put things right is very important because the neighbours learn from us."

Sheikh Wasswa is convinced that the model couples approach introduced by ACFODE has played an important role in ensuring that violence comes to an end as well as helping couples to reconcile and open a new chapter in their lives.

He continues to raise awareness about women's and children's rights and uses every opportunity to amplify the message.



Brian Kasumba

Movement Building, a Collective
Effort Against Violence





Brian Kasumba

Movement Building, a Collective Effort against Violence

Brian Kasumba is a senior probation officer.

Brian Kasumba is a senior probation officer who also attended the ACFODE trainings on rights abuses and ending violence against women and children.

He gained skills which helped him to work more efficiently while also collaborating with other advocates.

“It is a collective effort by various change makers in the community. I have prioritized awareness raising in the community, streamlined my case management processes, worked closely with my colleagues in the police child and family protection unit, and other change makers in the community, especially the model couples and para social workers. No one can do it alone.”



Brian's face lights up as he relays milestone changes, such as the model couple approach which is working wonders and miracles. It has helped troubled couples to sit together and talk through their challenges. Many have left their past behind, choosing peace for themselves and their children.

There is now a total of 74 parasocial workers in Kalungu district, and they are very vital in following up on incidents of violence against women and children, as well as helping people to know their rights and the referral pathways that help people seek redress in case they do not get justice at lower levels of leadership. Brian's office is able to respond quickly to incidents since the social workers in each region often report them.

An advocacy in Action Call Centre was established.

“We convinced the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development, to give us a district action centre where anyone can call and report so that the matter is addressed immediately.”

While the district continues to face challenges with resettlement of victims of violence can, the district has seen a reduction in juvenile offenders, from sixteen every three months to between four to six.

Moving forward, the district plans to adopt these approaches across sectors and areas that were outside the project area.

Beatrice Tumusiime

Everything For Us – With Us – ‘Community Policing’





Beatrice Tumusiime

Everything For Us – With Us – ‘Community Policing’ in Action

Beatrice Tumusiime, the officer in charge of the Child and Family Protection Unit at Kalungu Central Police Station.



Beatrice Tumusiime, the officer in charge of the Child and Family Protection Unit at Kalungu Central Police Station, has been able to take policing to the communities, thanks to the training that she received from ACFODE about rights of women and children.

Using networking skills, she collaborates with community development officers, parasocial workers, religious leaders, model couples, and local leaders, enabling her to teach the communities about the importance of treating all members of the family with respect. For Beatrice, ending violence against women and children is front and centre of her efforts.

“This strong network of people lives with the locals and therefore has a lot of mobilization power. I have met people whose challenges would have escalated if it had not been for the meetings and community gatherings we organise. They now have confidence to speak out after learning about their rights.”

Some perpetrators of violence have come forward and publicly denounced violence after attending such gatherings. They realize that violence in a family cannot allow any form of development to prevail. In addition to not having their basic needs met, the children also suffer because some of their parents accuse them of taking sides.

Furthermore, the model couple’s mediation skills have prevented multiple calls to the police and saved marriages at the brink of dissolving. District-wide implementation of the model couple approach would be an effective measure in reducing violence against women and children.

“I have linked people with minor issues to the volunteers, such as the model couples, and this has prevented their disagreements from escalating. It has instead enabled them to identify the root causes and come up with immediate solutions.”

One of the things that remains to be worked on is setting up a dedicated shelter for victims of violence, especially for those children who are abandoned.

Abubaker Makumbi Salongo

Pathways to More Peace





Abubaker Makumbi Salongo

Pathways to More Peace

Abubaker Makumbi Salongo used to work as a community development officer.

Although Abubaker Makumbi Salongo used to work as a community development officer, he struggled to sensitize communities.

After attending the ACFODE training aimed at ending violence against women and children, his ability to mobilize communities, counsel, and refer cases that were beyond his jurisdiction was strengthened.

To sensitize communities, he collaborates within influential people in the district, such as religious leaders, cultural leaders, women, youth, the police, and model couples, all of whom have been brought together by the trainings organized by ACFODE.

Abubaker's success in community sensitization is largely due to his ability to effectively leverage the power of networking. Abubaker says that the training enabled him to understand that he needed all the people on board if violence against women is to end.

"Attacking women and children was commonplace in the neighbouring communities of Kito C, Buwemba, and Kiwamu, but this is coming to an end thanks to the model couples trained by ACFODE who educate people and show them how to live more peacefully."

Today, the cases of violence in these areas have dropped from between 10-15 to between 3-5 every three months.



Mark Bandwaniza

Getting Things in Order





Mark Bandwaniza

Getting Things in Order

Mark Bandwaniza
a catechist priest.

A catechist priest chooses a transformative practice.

Mark Bandwaniza (43), a catechist priest, had to open a new chapter of his life after attending trainings by ACFODE.

Having been chosen among the few religious leaders in the area to attend the trainings aimed at ending violence against women and children, Mark realised that there was no way he was going to authoritatively tell people to do good, if his own life was not in order. He was struggling financially, and his home was not clean.

While Mark learned about human rights and acquiring skills to counsel and mediate between couples, he also learned that he had to repair his toilet facility and make sure that his income is stable.

“When I got back home, the first thing was to repair my toilet facility. There is no way I would start telling people how to be clean when my house was a mess.”

He learned that poverty was one of the leading causes of violence, because couples fight over the few resources they have.

“People cannot listen to you when you are poor, and this made me work harder and also ensure that my wife gets more resources to improve her farming.”

Mark then chose to use his position as a religious leader to speak out against domestic violence at church and social events such as burials and weddings. The priest continues to mediate between couples that are struggling and those who wish to reconcile and practice safe behaviors.

Mark has trained fellow religious leaders with the permission of his superiors. The hope is that the trainings he attended cascade down to the villages to reach more community members.



Agnes Naluyombya

Safe Schools, A Teacher's Journey.





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Agnes Naluyombya is the primary three-class teacher and head of the Infant Section at Bulwadda Primary School.

Agnes did not know that besides teaching, she had the responsibility of ensuring that the children she was teaching were not experiencing violence at home or at school, and that they stayed in school.

By attending trainings organized by ACFODE, she learned more about children's rights and how to protect them from harm.

"I was able to get closer to the pupils, and they began to talk about the challenges that they go through at home."



At the school, Agnes worked with the school administration and pupils to form clubs which provide a platform for awareness raising on all forms of violence, peer support, and referral pathways to support survivors.

The school currently has four clubs, which include Green Apple, Blue Melon, Red Tomato, and Yellow Mango. Each club is led by a teacher who is the patron.

The clubs, with 35 members each, are championing the fight against violence by reaching out to children with challenges and ensuring that the authorities intervene.

Agnes has also involved fellow staff in the fight against violence, and they sensitize parents to desist from practices that violate the rights of children.

"There are some pupils who had dropped out of school, but I went to their homes and met with the parents and guardians. They are now back in school."

The sensitization of parents regarding the rights of children should be amplified and be made regular. This will help the children know their rights and become responsible parents in the future.

Evalista Nakyetibe

What Dreams Lie Ahead





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*Evalista Nakyetibe
a resident of
Bulwada village.*

Evalista's struggles began with a teenage romance gone bad. She became pregnant at the end of high school and had to drop out of school. At the time, her boyfriend offered to marry her, but Evalista's parents opposed the idea vehemently. The two went ahead and got married but things turned violent rapidly. By the time she had her third child, her husband had escalated his violent behavior. He brutalized her and abandoned her in a rented room with no food or source of income.

Evalista was selected to be part of the training for survivors of violence provided by ACFODE.

"The training by ACFODE was a turning point in my life. I decided to use part of the transport I received to help me attend the training to buy two hens, which I later sold to buy a pig, and I have been selling its piglets to support my family."

Evalista realized that she had plenty of time during the day that she could use to increase her income. She secured a job at a private nursery school where she currently teaches and gets money to supplement the money, she gets from the piglets sale and farming of maize and beans.

Today, Evalista is committed to advocating for women, showing them that there is hope after abuse, and that they too can make money and support their homes. She actively participates in her community to empower and elevate other women.

"As women who have been trained by ACFODE, we formed the NANA Women's Group, and this has helped us to raise money to hire land, which we use to grow beans and maize as well as vegetables. We also plan to start bigger piggery and poultry projects.



Fred Matovu and Specioza Matovu

Becoming an 'It' Couple





Fred Matovu and Specioza Matovu

Becoming an 'It' Couple

Fred Matovu
and Specioza
Matovu
residents
of Kiwawu
village.

Fred Matovu and his wife, Specioza, are residents of Kiwawu village in Kyamulibwa sub-county, Kalungu district, and were the envy of their village. They are a progressive couple popular for establishing thriving businesses, including zero grazing of cattle, and growing coffee and vanilla. Their outward image led to them being chosen by ACFODE to be trained as a model couple to help other couples in the community.

At the ACFODE training, Fred learned some things that he had taken for granted. Like the normative roles at home where his wife did the house chores.

"I believed that helping out my wife with home chores was unmanly."

Fred realized that despite the outward image of their marriage, there were things he could improve in their marriage.

"Specioza used to do all the home chores by herself and that is why she was always exhausted at night. I now help her, for example at dinner time, by setting the table and making juice."

To better support his marriage, he is communicating better and makes sure they make decisions together including their savings and future projects. He has also given her land for her own use, to grow coffee, sell, and use the money for her personal needs and improvement.

"One of the joint projects that we have embarked on is constructing a house for our elderly mother. We have started laying bricks so that we can replace the over 30 years old house."



Fred and Specioza now reach out to other couples in their communities, having adjusted some of their own normative thinking around gender roles in the family. The training also allowed them to gain knowledge around safeguarding against and eradicating violence against women and children.

"Violence and family breakups were the order of the day in our community. It is impossible for the family that fights every day to sit and dine together."

Increasingly, there is peace and harmony in our community because of the model couple approach introduced to us by ACFODE.

For Specioza, the past three years following the training have been incredibly special.

"Despite how close we were, my husband believed that he was not supposed to help me around the house, but now he helps in ironing clothes and other chores. We talk about everything." Specioza recommends scaling up the model couple approach to benefit more couples and families.

Reflections

As we close this phase of the project and look ahead, we summarize our achievements, what we hope will live on, what we learned, and what gems we can offer as recommendations for the future.

ACHIEVEMENTS RECAP

- Positive changes in duty bearers handling VAW/C.
- Improved referral system.
- Strengthened CSO capacities to address VAW/C.
- Mediation and sensitisation by social actors hence increased awareness on VAW/C.
- Establishment of talking compounds in schools.
- Formation of GBV prevention clubs in schools.
- Improved livelihoods among survivors of violence.
- Improved saving among model couples.

SUSTAINING CHANGE

- The community-based structures (model couples' associations, gate keepers' associations, survivors' groups) mobilized and organized through the project influence will continue to voice out gendered human rights concerns, proactively advocate for survivor centred services and engage their constituencies in the promotion of women and children's rights.
- Some of the project beneficiaries such as the model couples and survivors of violence are members of sub county committees and council. They will continue to use those platforms to advocate for women and children's rights as well as mobilizing other project beneficiaries to become members of the committees.
- The savings groups where survivors of violence belong will continue to hold monthly savings meetings where they can talk about issues affecting them and agree on strategies to solve them. They have joint Income Generating Activities that will help them to continue saving, bond more and remain committed to the cause.
- The bylaws developed are anticipated to continue addressing identified issues causing VAW/C such as alcoholism.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Inception meetings held at the beginning of the project were crucial in understanding the districts of operation and selecting sub counties to operate in.
- Signing MOUs with the district ensured compliance and promoted good working relationships.
- Promoting gender transformative approaches such as the Model couple approach was instrumental in preventing VAW/C.
- The multi-stakeholder inclusive and empowerment approach conceptualized during the project design was effectively implemented by ACFODE.

TOWARDS THE FUTURE, OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase funding to end violence against women and girls, enabling mental, physical, and financial empowerment.
- Consider gender mainstreaming in all departmental budgets to solve budget inadequacy issues.
- Emphasize the retention of girls in schools, promote their educational opportunities and prevent early marriages.
- Champion women's economic empowerment by encouraging their participation in government programs and accessing development funds.
- Consider establishing a GBV shelter so that the survivors have safer places to run to in case of severe violence.
- Integrate the different structures, such as model couples, into the district committees and other platforms/ forums.
- Continuous awareness creation about the bylaws and ordinances that relate to the protection of women and children is necessary for effective implementation and adherence.
- Address the issue of teenage pregnancies, which is a leading cause of increased school dropouts, especially among girls.
- Strengthen coordination mechanisms for protection of women and children's rights.
- Increase budget allocation to the Community Development Department to enable them raise awareness on women and children's rights and other gender- related issues.



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