

# UGANDA

## SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE BUILDING AND PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE: COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES



Women around the world face significant challenges to their participation in peace building processes; beyond this, national level legal frameworks around women's peace building or prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) often do not filter down to the community level.

In Uganda, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is undertaking a global program entitled "Supporting Women's Engagement in Peacebuilding and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict: Community-Led Approaches."

The two-year initiative in Uganda, which was launched in April 2007, is part of a global UNIFEM program funded through a US\$6.5 million grant from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The following six conflict-affected countries are involved in the program: Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda.



*Women's Peace Coalition Marching to Parliament with the Women's Peace Torch*

### OBJECTIVES

With a budget of US\$1,096,000, the objectives of the UNIFEM program in Uganda are:

- To support women's capacities to engage in peace building and prevent conflict at the community level;
- To support women at the community level in preventing SGBV and responding adequately to the needs of survivors.

### ACTIVITIES

The program is being implemented in selected communities within Gulu, Kitgum and Lira districts in northern Uganda. Some of the key activities of this program include:

- Enabling women affected by conflict to influence peace building processes by training women in gender responsive negotiation, analysis, and communication skills.
- Supporting women's engagement in the Juba Peace

process through providing a gender advisor to the UN Special Envoy, and working to ensure that women's priorities are addressed.

- Supporting women to monitor the West Nile peace agreement and its impact on women and girls.
- Training community activists on SGBV prevention and response, psycho-social support and mediation.
- Supporting land management and administrative institutions to ensure a gender perspective in restitution of property rights and compensation.
- Strengthening the capacity of the police to handle SGBV cases, including developing training modules, providing private places for dealing with SGBV cases, and implementing SGBV Prevention and Response Performance Audits.

### SGBV IN UGANDA

While little information exists on the true extent and severity of SGBV, indicative studies suggest that:

- Nearly 41% of women attending the antenatal clinic in Kampala's main public hospital reported having been physically assaulted in the year before conceiving.<sup>1</sup>
- In a 2006 Uganda Law Reform Commission study of 3,523 women, 78% of women in the north, and 66% of women throughout Uganda as a whole, had experienced domestic violence.<sup>2</sup>
- Girls are pushed into early "marriages" as a respon-

se to poverty and insecurity in IDP camps; over 32% of girls aged 15-19 are in formal or informal marriages (compared to 6% of boys).<sup>3</sup>

The key types of SGVB experienced during the conflict were:

- Women and girls abducted into sexual slavery.
- Significant levels of rape of women and girls within IDP camps.
- Domestic abuse within camps and resettled communities.

cessation of hostilities is gender blind. The second truce which is on comprehensive solutions to conflict contains some articles that reference women's rights. Proposals for accountability, reconciliation and justice need to be made more gender-sensitive, and transitional justice institutions will be supported by UNIFEM partners to ensure adequate access for women.

UNIFEM expects that these positive changes will contribute to supporting the women of Uganda in building peace and preventing SGBV at the community level.

## PARTNERS

UNIFEM is working with the following partners to implement this program:

- Center for Domestic Violence Prevention
- Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
- Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association
- Local governments in Lira, Kitgum and Gulu districts
- The Uganda Women Peace Coalition
- Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI)
- Gulu Human Rights Foundation
- Kitgum Women's Peace Initiative
- Lira women's peace Initiative
- Concerned Parents Association
- Ministry of Internal Affairs including the Police Department
- Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs

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## ANTICIPATED CHANGES

- Women affected by conflict able to influence peace building processes (baseline: currently women are not adequately participating and influencing the peace building processes).
- Tolerance levels of SGBV at community level decrease (Baseline: there is impunity regarding sexual and gender based violence in the conflict affected areas).
- Peace process outcome documents reflect women's concerns and priorities. A baseline analysis notes the following: The truce signed at the Juba peace talks on



IDP Women, Lira District

<sup>1</sup>Kaye, D. (2001) 'Risk Factors, Nature & Severity of Domestic Violence among Women Attending Antenatal Clinics in Mulago Hospital, Kampala, Uganda,' Central African Journal of Medicine 485/6).

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Turyasingura Hope (2007) 'Responding to Domestic Violence: A Handbook for the Uganda Police Force,' CEDOVIP and Uganda Police Force: Kampala, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>UBOS (2001) Uganda Demographic and Household Survey 2001-2001, UBOS: Kampala.