



Weekly

Jan 16— 22

Dear Reader, last week, Uganda witnessed the first Court judgment on a bride price refund case. The judge stated that it was improper to demand for bride price refund because the Supreme Court ruled that the practice was unlawful. Welcome to the Weekly!

The Triumph against Bride Price Refund!



The ruling by the Supreme Court against bride Price refund was a great stride in the campaign for women's rights and dignity. The photographs show some of the GBV survivors. They have since recovered and are leading lives of dignity! (File photos/Samanya)

When Kazo chief Magistrate's Court in Kiruhura District convened a family court on January 6th this year, everyone in attendance held their breath in a highly tensed environment. 32 year old Vincent had dragged his former wife Carol and his father in law to court demanding for a refund of bride price that he paid at the time he married.

Vicent wanted his two cows, four goats, four chicken and clothes back. Carol had left the marriage she describes as violent and abusive.

"He would spend all his days drinking . He would come back home and beat me", narrated the teary Carol as she showed scars she sustained during the two years she stayed in the marriage.

"My father feared that my husband would kill me one time. He advised me to go back home which I did. My husband dragged us to Police and eventually to court demanding that we refund the bride price."

The trial magistrate, Winnie Nankya dismissed the case, citing a Supreme Court ruling that outlawed refunding of bride price.

Upon hearing the judgement, the father and her daughter engulfed themselves in a warm and heartily hug, with tears welling in their eyes. It was victory at last.

Uganda's Supreme Court ruled that the practice of refunding a bride price on the dissolution of a customary marriage is unconstitutional and should be banned. The judges said it suggested that women were in a market place, and infringed on their right to divorce.

However, they rejected the argument that the bride price itself was unconstitutional.

Previously, if a marriage ended in Uganda as was the case for Carol and Vincent, Carol and her family were expected to refund the bride price - often paid in live-stock. It was argued that as women tend to have less wealth than their husbands, many became trapped in unhappy, abusive and violent relationships.

Carol and Vicent's case is the first bride price case to reach court since the practice was outlawed mid last year.

Nivatiti Nandujja, the National Women Rights coordinator sees this case as a major step in chipping away at a tradition that is detrimental to women. She adds that the judgement is a major step in chipping away at a tradition that is detrimental to women.

"However, the biggest numbers of rural women are not aware of these developments. Through our ten Gender Based Violence Shelters across the country, we are creating awareness about the new developments and encouraging women and their families to report cases of refund of bride price for legal redress", she said.

"The ruling we believe is going to inspire women to speak out or even walk out from violent relationships without fear of being asked to refund the bride price."

Traditionally, bride price was seen as an honour and a sign that the couple were entering into a respectful marriage. Unfortunately, the practice had been exploited to abuse women and girls, often forcing young girls in marriage only for their families to benefit from the bride wealth among others.

ActionAid commits to complete new Strategy!

Last week, the AAU Country Strategic Paper five(CSPV) drafting team met at Royal Suites in Bugolobi to check progress and produce a tentative direction for the development of the strategy. The meeting aimed at consolidating gains and fast tracking the CSPV development.

The meeting that was attended by the entire AAU leadership team reviewed the ActionAid global strategy and agreed on areas of alignment to AAU's CSPV. The meeting also analysed Uganda's comparative advantage in the sector, undertook a risk analysis of the work and agreed on resourcing issues.

It was agreed that the first draft of the strategy will be ready and sent out to stakeholders for review on February 18th. This will be followed by consultations with staff and partners. The second draft will be reviewed by the ActionAid Governing Board in April.

The CSPV development process is expected to end by June 2017 when the new strategy will be reviewed and endorsed by the AAU General Assembly.

AAU has been implementing its 4th Country Strategic Paper (CSPV), **Embracing Rights! Improving Lives!** This is coming to an end in December this year. As a result, the organisation embarked on a review and reflection process to inform the next strategy that is being undertaken by a 12 person drafting team supported by external facilitators.

Have you read: The women approaches to end inequality?



and approaches to reducing inequality.

The report is based on focus group discussions and interviews in communities in seven developing and emerging economy countries where ActionAid is active: Brazil, Haiti, Liberia, Nepal, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. Groups of women were asked how they experience inequality and, most importantly, how they are addressing inequality.

The report found that across the countries, when women take collective action on the many challenges facing them, they feel better equipped to address inequalities within their families and communities. This process is often accelerated for women whose first meetings are around income generating activities, and we have identified that women who are economically autonomous tend to be more involved in organising.

It was also found that when women's groups collaborate, their collective capacity to bring about change is strengthened. When women's voices and collective action are amplified, they are better able to impact and influence decision makers and those in power.

Read about the Ugandan Women experiences and approaches to reducing inequality that are extensively captured in the [report Here](#)

Do you experience inequality at your home, at your work place, in accessing social services? Write to us a blog about your experience and we shall proudly feature you. Send your blog to Samanya.kyategeka@actionaid.org.

WEEK AHEAD:

⇒ AAU's Country Director, Arthur will be in Arusha later this week for the Strengthening of Democracy meeting. Will shall bring to you the full account from this meeting in our next publication.

⇒ The Management and Audit Committee is currently having its first audit meeting of the year.