

The Other Voice



It matters too!

Why the media in Uganda need a gender policy

Most media houses present a slanted view of women and development issues

By THE OTHER VOICE TEAM

MEDIA practitioners in Masaka District have appealed to their managers to formulate and implement gender policy guidelines to regulate text and image presentations.

The call was made at a recently concluded sensitization seminar on rights and gender based violence organized for journalists and a cross-section of grassroots women under the Smart Women's Group in Kingo Sub-County, Masaka.

Said one journalist who preferred anonymity for fear of losing his job: 'As reporters we strive to submit balanced stories to our editors but our bosses seem to enjoy a slanted view against how women and development issues in general should be presented in the media, which unfortunately results in misrepresentation and sometimes violation of women's rights'.

He appealed to the organizers, Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) with support from UNFPA and the American Refugee Committee (ARC) to design programs aimed at influencing the media reporting in Uganda.

Aliga Issa, NTV Reporter and Chairperson of the Masaka Journalists Association emphasized that no media product should hurt any category of people, and said he was happy that his organization presents balanced stories. He promised to pursue the recommendations of the seminar. The journalists appreciated the interface with the grassroots women and urged other development agencies to emulate UMWA's approach to transforming society through consultations and dialoguing between stakeholders including those who are often thought illiterate and not important.

Ali Mambule, Bureau Chief of the Vision Group, Masaka said the interface with local community women, the major victims of gender based violence, provided journalists with an opportunity to reflect whether as journalists, we had been pursuing our profession's mission of justice and fairness.

The LC V Masaka, Joseph Kalungi underscored the importance of the media but feared that its advancement may abuse people's relationships and escalate violence, if not well handled. He said: Many couples have split due to messages a partner finds in their telephone inbox or facebook account."



A couple play-out a scene depicting domestic violence during a recent UMWA workshop on the 16 days of activism against gender based violence. Doesn't the media need to censor pictures that glorify violence against women?

Earlier, journalists had been accused of misrepresenting women in the media, saying many headlines condemn women while the texts are neither balanced nor fail to contextualize issues especially if the story is on gender based violence.

Said Molly Nabbanja, Kabukolwa

village: "Can you imagine some of you journalists said you are ashamed of revealing which media house you work for, because of the stories and pictures your media publish? It is a shame that media in Uganda today violates women everyday. But government does not touch you. I

challenge you to change the way you have been presenting women and their concerns so that next time we meet you will be happy to identify with the media house you work for".

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COFWAVE teams up with religious leaders

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Many women face emotional violence

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Campaign against mob justice starts with you

By SARAH MUWANGA

At 22 years, Rebecca Matovu (not real name) is a widow. She has two children to take care of but no job. Her husband died at the hands of residents who suspected him of stealing a motorcycle commonly known as boda-boda. He was lynched before being burnt beyond recognition.

Since then Rebecca has gone back to stay with her parents in the village, in Kayunga District as she could not afford renting a house in Nakulabye, a suburb of Kampala. In tears Rebecca says, "I don't know how I will take care of these children. They are sickly especially the youngest of three months and I have no money to take her to the clinic. I am a school drop out without any skill. President Museveni should help us and fight mob justice. My husband was innocent".

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