

CONFRONTING DARKNESS

Deconstructing negative societal
patterns for good



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



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In the southern division of Moroto Municipality, there is “a darkness” and one that has often left 36-year-old Mary Fortunate Asio very unsettled. Asio lives in Kambiizi village in Camp Swahili, Chini Parish. The camp is shrouded by rampant theft, child molestation, child labour, and forced child marriages. It is a dark camp. Asio has always known this about her village and for a long time, desired to do something about it. To bring light to her community. She just did not know where or how to start.

In 2019, Mary attended a training organized by the Communication for Development Foundation Uganda (CDFU). The training equipped her with knowledge and gave her confidence to tackle the challenges in her village. She did not waste time getting to work on the issues plaguing the village, and this is how a new chapter began for the community. The high rates of violence, theft, defilement, and child labour have significantly gone down because of community dialogues and one-on-one engagement.



ASIO MARY FORTUNATE (36yrs) a farmer married with 2 children, a community activist cdfu project from kambiizi village, campswahilli chini parish, south division s_c moroto district.



“It was normal for locals in the area to sit together and solve matters of defilement amongst themselves while denying the victim justice.” According to Mary, men’s egos were what mattered, and they believed that because they were the stronger sex they should rule over women.

The situation in the Karimojong village was such that there were agencies, which would give handouts to people and this kept them in the position of beggars; powerless to dig themselves out of poverty. However, Mary believes that the approach by the CDFU is the best because it empowers the people to find solutions to their own problems. This same approach is the reason that the community has seen a decline in violence and a visible change in behaviour.

During Mary’s childhood, violence was part of life. Women were beaten for anything and everything, including the mistakes made by their children. Her efforts to change the society were met with stiff resistance from men, elders, and even some women who thought that the move was aimed at worsening the already bad situation. But over time, the situation has been turned around. The community is made up of approximately 1700 households and they need to be reached through house to house sensitization, which has proved to be an effective method. Mary’s hope is that activists like herself can find more and more support, especially in terms of mobility or transportation so that that their work is unconstrained.