

# MENDING FAMILIES

Unusual champion stops alcohol and starts ending violence



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



Spotlight Initiative



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When 27-year-old Christine Akello was selected as a community activist, the residents of Adea trading centre in Adea parish of Morulem sub-county were shocked and mocked her. How could Christine, known for being a major alcoholic be the champion for the campaign to end violence against women and girls? To the locals, this was a recipe for disaster, and they were convinced that she would fail. Christine had changed her life and received training from the Communication for Development Foundation Uganda (CDFU). She was determined to continue in this change and soon became a role model for the people in her village.

Barely months after attending the training and being a changed person, Christine's husband noticed and appreciated the change in his partner and was so moved that he decided to wed her in church. A church wedding in many communities in Uganda is highly valued, and so this was a reward in many ways for Christine.



AKELLO CHRISTINE ORYONO (27YRS)  
from Ayeye, Morulem S\_C Abim district,  
farmer married with 4 children, a community  
activist CDFU project.



This was the beginning of Christine disapproving her critics who had branded her a good-for-nothing person and whose marriage would fail in a short time. She had previously been a troublemaker in her home and the neighborhood, who was also violent and aggressive to her husband. But Christine changed, and is now a treasured peacemaker not only within the family but the entire community of Adea.

At one point, Christine's husband had resorted to merely visiting home to check on the family very briefly, and then quickly return to his work place in Kotido, but as Christine changed, he too relented and comes home more regularly. As a couple, they have since learned to even share household chores.

In Christine's own words from her learning, "I was touched when I realized that the training focused on ensuring that we choose to make happiness not violence, and I decided to choose happiness at home." After the training, Christine contacted her husband and told him everything she had been learning, and asked his forgiveness, promising a new chapter for their lives as a family.

In Adea Morulem, Christine is recognized as an authoritative peacemaker, and she continues to lead efforts in helping women to turn away from alcoholism, and encourages them to join savings groups and get involved in constructive activities such as composing songs.

Christine is now seen as a hero in her village and is respected by the young and old because of her abilities to reconcile couples and mend families that are on the verge of breaking up.

