

MINDSET SHIFT

New thoughts on weddings and home ownership birth harmony



OGWANG MOSES (32YRS) Community activist CDFU project, Farmer and married with 5 children, from kakere village Kalaki S_C, kalaki district,



In Kakere village in Kakere parish of Kalaki sub-county, Kalaki district, there is a gentleman called Moses Ogwang. He is 32 years old and a community activist trained by CDFU.

Ogwang used to think that church weddings are a waste of time and money. He also thought that development in terms of building a house is a waste of money. He lived as a man who did not give much thought to putting up a solid home for his family. In fact, for Ogwang, life at home and his community was characterized by daily fights and he did not attach any value to women, including his visually impaired daughter.

One day, Ogwang heard about the Communication for Development Foundation Uganda (CDFU) training through some community development officers and decided to attend the sessions. It was at this training that his thinking was challenged, following which he changed the way he did things. He enrolled his visually impaired daughter in school, and sought joint financial decision making with his wife. He began to see the value of his wife and daughter and welcomed their input in how the home should be run. They learned to resolve matters in the home peacefully. Even more, Ogwang embraced the idea of building a house for the



family. Together with his wife, they are pooling resources to set up a permanent house.

People in the community at first thought that Ogwang had been tricked by the wife and that she had managed to fool him into doing household chores. The people's concern was to the extent that the Local Council 1 (LC1) chairperson paid him a visit and demanded that Ogwang walk with him. As it turned out, Ogwang's community thought that all domestic chores belong to the woman, even if she falls sick, and that women did not have any authority in as far as decision making was concerned, for example, on how money is spent. As if this was not enough, the community also believed that land could only belong to a man or male child.

This way of thinking has led to many failed marriages in Ogwang's village, and rampant domestic violence against women. "I am ashamed that I used to be one of these people, and I used to also get drunk and beat my wife. It was wrong. I was wrong."

The training by Communication for Development Foundation Uganda (CDFU), has taught Ogwang that women and girls play a vital role in society and he now respects them very much.

For someone who thought weddings were a waste of time

and money, Ogwang proudly wears his wedding ring. He says that on top of the training he received from CDFU, the premarital counseling he received prior to the wedding also strengthened the new change in him; the new character. He now plays the role of mediator between couples especially those who have had disagreements during the COVID-19 Lockdown.

Working closely with the community development officers and the program officer for CDFU, he has been able to reach out to many people in his village and surrounding areas, teaching them that violence cannot bring happiness. He is now at the forefront of mobilizing communities to participate in activities such as cleaning and clearing the boreholes and community access roads.

Ogwang's community remains reluctant to embrace change and male involvement is still low, especially in farming, community work, and household chores. He would like to see more sensitization being rolled out in the community and use of media, especially radio programs to bring awareness to locals. For him, trainings like the one he attended are vital because they equip the participant or individual with firsthand information on how to improve their life.