

## Hear Us Out-voices that speak for thousands (VOICES AGAINST DEFILEMENT) Report

*"A 3 months study about the rising rates of Defilement in Uganda despite the existing laws with emphasis on geographical location and age.*

**1/8/2013-1/11/2013**



*Thousands of Innocent boys and girls are defiled in Uganda with most of the cases never reported to police or solved despite the existing laws intended to protect these innocent children from defilement.*

**Abstract;** In 1990 at the climax of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Uganda, the government revoked sections of the law in order to protect population from infection of HIV/AIDS especially the children. Issues of defilement and child marriage were on top of the list with the maximum sentence of death considered.

Despite the existence of strong laws and the recent sentencing guidelines, defilement cases are on the rise with 7,690 cases reported in 2011 with most not reported to police. Quoting Inspector General of Police (Lt.Gen.Kale Kayihura), “Parents use this case to defeat justice and achieve monetary gains.” The failure of the law in regard to defilement has had a direct impact on the increasing levels of teenage pregnancy with Uganda having one of the highest rates in the world at 24% of her teenage girls.

Defilement has an adverse effect to the psychological, health and social development of a victim and her/his family. Ignorance of the law, lack of a birth registration policy, poverty, corruption and cultural rigidity has denied the victims and their families any form of justice. Ignorance of immediate responses to defilement and accessibility to health center for the Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Treatment has also led to some of the defilement victims to acquire HIV/AIDS.

This study was carried out in 7 districts covering target group from Urban Centers, Rural Centers, Semi-Urban Centers, Children ( 8-20 years), policy makers ( police, judiciary & local leaders) with more than 2300 individuals directly taking part. The study was intended to come with the gaps that have resulted into the failure of the existing laws to curb the issue of defilement in Uganda. The study also went ahead to ascertain individual concepts about defilement and level of sensitization especially amongst the young people. 1764 young individuals between (8-20) were directly engaged in the study through sensitization and an essay/poem writing competition to empower their knowledge and fight against defilement. The study also included various community leaders from Yumbe, Maracha, Kampala and Kaliro Districts. The general public was also engaged through 2 Radio Talk Shows organized by Radio Pacis in Arua District and A Poetry & Music Evening on 1<sup>st</sup> October at the Uganda Museum.

My special appreciation to Justice Mike Chibita (DPP), Radio Pacis, Open Mic -Uganda, Frontline Ministries (Calvary Chapel) Maracha District local leadership, Arua District Central Police Station, Golden Treasure PS, Lodonga Girls PS, Atatur PS, Kireka Grammar PS, Faith High School, Kijomoro SS, Offude Modern SS, Nyadri Urban SS, Kings College Namugongo, Hilton High School, Nabbingo Girls School, Nsambya Girls SS, Rubaga Girls SS, St. Catherine SS, St. Augustine SS, St. Clare Girls SS. The team from Writing Our World (project partners) and Amani Initiative who sacrificed their time and resources to make the project/study a success.

*“The world is an evil place, not because of the evil people but because of those who do nothing about it”*

**Ochatre Nixon**



**Member, Board of Trustees**

**Amani Initiative**

## 1.0 Background to the study

Defilement is one of the highest crimes against children in Uganda with research showing that more than 600 children are defiled weekly in Uganda yet only 7,690 cases were reported to police in 2011. Defilement has an adverse impact on the psychological and personal life of the victims and his/her family. It leads to higher chances of teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDs, loss of education, psychological trauma, and child marriage which have long term direct impacts on the lives of the victims. Due to poverty, corruption, cultural rigidity and ignorance, most of the cases are never reported to the police or solved leaving the children to suffer in silence.

*“In 1990 at the climax of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Uganda, the government revised and revoked sections of the law relating to sex. Section 122 was amended to read: “Section 122 of the code is amended in subsection (2) by replacing the words ‘fourteen years’ with the words ‘eighteen years’ and deleting the proviso to that subsection”. Section 123 was also amended to read “123 (1) Any person who unlawfully has sexual intercourse with a girl under the age of eighteen years is guilty of offence and liable to suffer death” [1].*

Defilement cases seem to be more common in the rural communities where the rates of child marriage are high and are considered to be normal in the community and family due to poverty and ignorance of the law. *(this is an assumption the study is meant to ascertain)*

The study was carried out with the objective of ascertaining why the existing laws have failed to realize solutions to the issue of defilement in Uganda.

## 2.0 Methodology

This was a cross-sectional study that utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection directed to a scope to include opinions from individuals from urban centers, rural centers, semi-urban centers, Age group (8-14, & 14-20), experts from various related CSOs and government workers. The scope also went ahead to include street children who are sexually abused with no one to report to. The study included three core data collection methods as illustrated below;

### 2.1 Observation

Observation as a data collection method involved visiting 15 homes and communities directly affected by defilement in Maracha District and areas around Kampala.

### 2.2 Interview

Interview as a data collection method included interviewing individuals from some CSOs, government workers, policepersons (Child Protection Unit), Radio Talk Shows, parents of the victims and the victims themselves.

### 2.3 Questionnaire

Questionnaire as a data collection method involved taking through young people categorized between (8-14 and 14-20 years) and 44 street children in Kampala. In total 823 individual responded to the study questionnaire covering 10 questions directed towards ascertaining the level of information about defilement, birth registration, and many others.

### 3.0 Study Findings & Interpretation

#### 3.1 Causes of Defilement

##### 3.1.1 Introduction

Defilement has been ranked as one of the highest forms of sexual abuse against children in Uganda, with around 80 % of the culprits being someone the victims knows and trusts. Aggravated defilement (where victim is below 14 years) are a shame to the public and the perpetrators usually have no definite reasons to why they carried out such inhuman acts. Some base their reasons on the influence of drugs or insanity. Parents have entrusted their children to people whose motives they are not sure of for instance house maids, neighbors even their own relatives. This has put these children in situations that can easily lead them to being sexually abused.

Defilement of teenagers between (14-19) years is mainly caused by ignorance of the law related to defilement, poverty, poor dressing, failure to identify the right age of the girl and also the provocative influence of some the teenage girls. Inability of parents/guardians to guide their teenage children about issues related to sex has also had an influence in the cause of defilement.

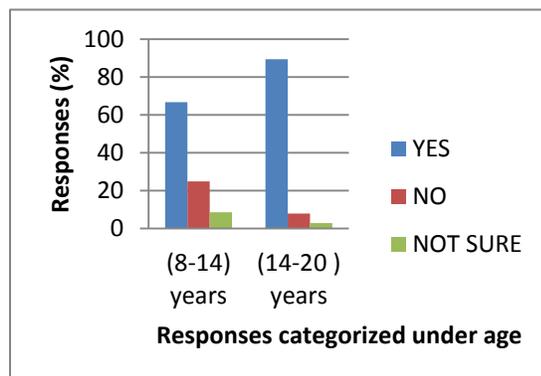
#### 3.2 Knowledge of the term defilement and the laws related to defilement.

##### 3.2.1 Introduction

Defilement in Uganda is considered as a crime under the Uganda Penal Code and it is a situation when an individual above 18 years forcefully or willingly has sexual intercourse with a boy or girl below 18 years. This study aimed at finding out whether the respondents had an idea of the various components of the definition of defilement.

##### 3.2.2 Findings based on Age

192 (8-14 years) and 525(14-20 years) individuals from 7 districts representing urban and rural centers were asked if they knew or have ever heard of the meaning of defilement.



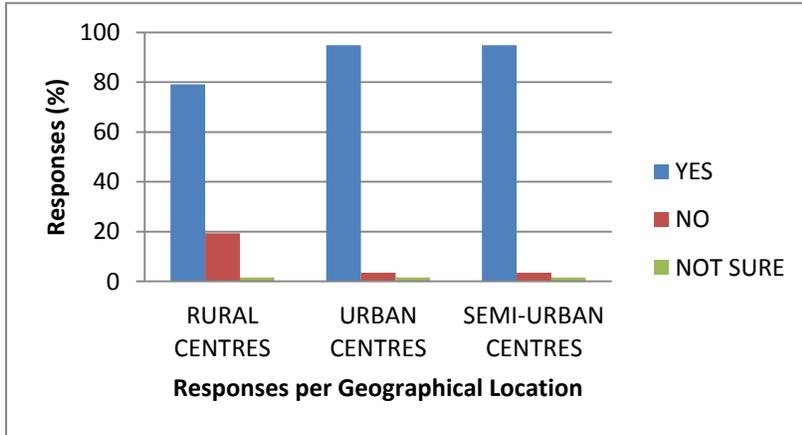
66.7 %, 24.9% and 8.4% responded (YES, NO & NOT SURE) respectively for Ages (8-14) and 89.3%, 7.8%, & 2.9% responded (YES, NO & NOT SURE) for Ages (14-20)

Despite of the knowledge of the meaning of defilement, most of the respondents were not conversant with the laws related to defilement and other facts such as consent and gender for an act to be considered as defilement. This has a big impact to their personal view of the subject and their ability to report such cases.

Table 1; Responses to the Question (Do you know the meaning of defilement) based on age.

### 3.2.3 Findings based on geographical location

191 (rural centers), 313 (urban centers) & 210 (semi-urban centers) individuals were asked if they knew or have ever heard of the meaning of defilement.



79 %, 19.4% & 1.6 % responded (YES, NO, NOT SURE) for the rural centers. 94.9%, 3.5%, & 1.6% responded (YES, NO, NOT SURE) for urban centers. 94.9%, 3.5% & 1.6% responded (YES, NO, NOT SURE) for semi-urban centers.

21 % of individuals in rural centers as compared to only 5.1 % in urban or semi-urban centers do not know the meaning of defilement or the laws related to it.

**Table 2 Responses to the Question (Do you know the meaning of defilement) based on age.**

laws related to it.

## 3.3 Community perception of defilement

### 3.3.1 Introduction

Defilement is a considered as a crime in Uganda. This section aimed at finding out what different communities perceived of defilement. The methodology of the study included interviews, and observation

### 3.3.2 Findings based on geographical location.

The highest percentage of respondents from urban centers recognized defilement to a crime that should be punished in courts of law. The existing laws have not implemented making the fight against defilement hard. In most rural communities; defilement especially for girls between (14-18) years is considered to be a normal thing which is common in the community. There are many incidences of teenage pregnancy but are never looked at as defilement cases.

Poverty and ignorance of the law are the highest causes of defilement in rural communities with idleness and drug abuse topping the list in urban centers

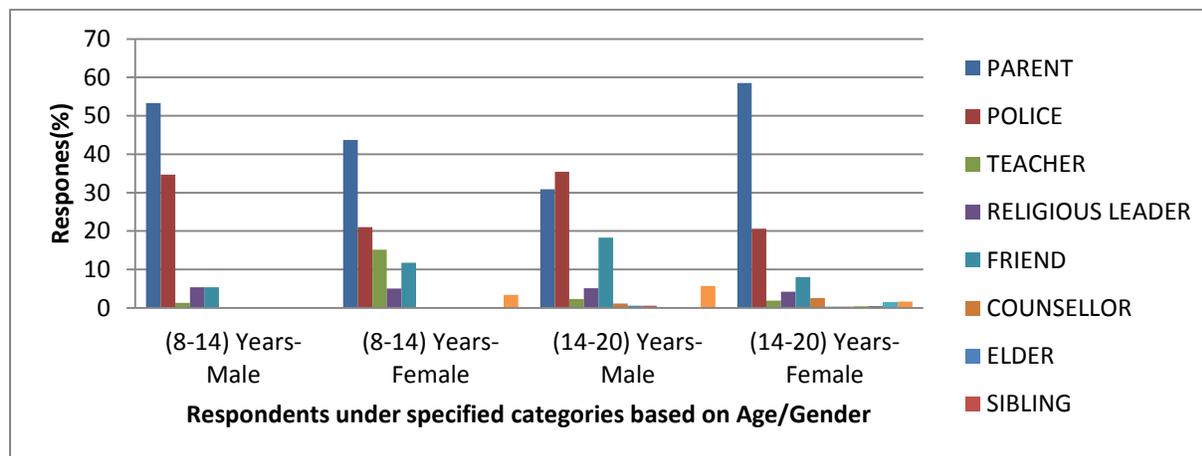
## 3.4 Reporting of defilement cases.

### 3.4.1 Introduction

The major hindrance in solving of defilement cases is the failure of the victims or their relative reporting them to concerned parties as early as possible. This has denied them justice and given an opportunity for the perpetrators to continue abusing them. Through using the questionnaire and interview method we asked communities if they could report defilement cases and whom they would be more comfortable to report to.

### 3.4.2 Findings based on Age

75 ( 8-14 yrs.) male, 119 ( 8-14 yrs.) female; 175 (14-20 yrs.) male and 311 (14-20 yrs.) female were asked whom they would feel more comfortable to report to incase they were defiled or someone they knew was defiled. Their responses are illustrated in the chart below;



**Table 3; % responses to the question, "Who will you feel more comfortable to report a defilement case to?"**

The highest respondents (58.5%) amongst female respondents between (14-20) years are more comfortable reporting to their parents with the highest percentage for teachers being 15.1% for female respondents between (8-14) years. 18.3% of male respondents between the ages (14-20) constitute the highest percentage for preference to report to a friend.

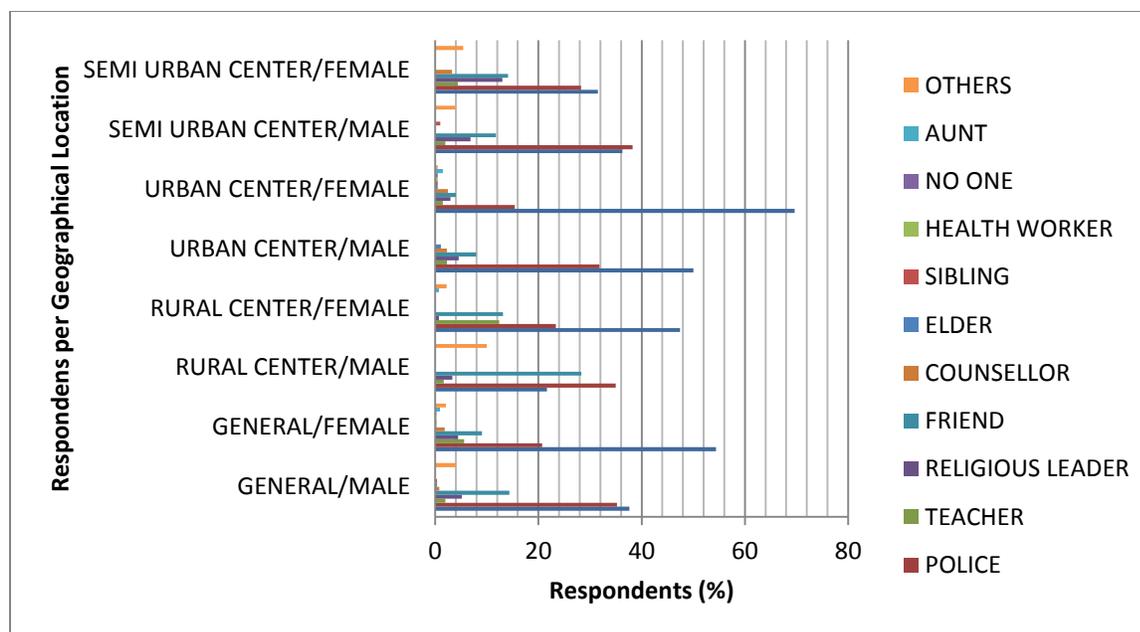
To justify reasons for the low confidentiality between teachers and their students in issues related to sexual abuse, Ms. Kevin ( Senior Woman Teacher, Kireka Grammar PS ) said, *" Most of the pupils are not confident to open up to the teachers about their personal problems, the P.7 & P.6 pupils feel that they are old enough to solve their issues."*

### 3.4.3 Findings from the street children in Kampala

Through working with Frontline Ministries (Calvary Chapel) we involved 43 street children from Kampala under this topic. Despite the findings that most of the teenage girls and boys are regularly sexually abused and exploited on the street. Most of the cases are never reported. 84% of the respondents argued that the police just ignore their cases and the rest resort not to even waste their time reporting them.

### 3.4.4 Findings based on geographical location

137 female and 60 male teenagers from rural centers of Uganda, 88 male and 201 females from Urban Centers and 102 male and 92 female from semi-urban centers were asked whom they would feel more comfortable to report defilement cases to. Their responses have been summarized in the table below;



**Table 4; Respondents (%) per geographical location/gender responding to whom they are more comfortable to report to in case they have been abused or know someone who has been abused.**

### 3.5 What the law says about defilement.

#### 3.5.1 Introduction

“Defilement is an offence and can't be settled out of court. Anybody trying can be charged with obstruction of justice.” Justice Mike Chibita, Director Public Prosecution (DPP), Government of Uganda. According to the Penal Code Act defilement is considered as an offence and can only be charged in courts of law.

#### 3.5.2 Existing National Policies and law

The **National Constitution of 1995** provides for the protection of all children from all forms of exploitation such as defilement. In August of 2013, the judicial body also established new sentencing guidelines to streamline punishment for various crimes. The table below shows the new sentencing guidelines for defilement cases;

Offence	Recommended Sentence	Maximum Sentence	Minimum Sentence
Aggravated Defilement	35 years	Death	30 years
Simple Defilement	15 years	Life	3 years
Attempted Defilement	9 years	18 years	1 year
Defilement of idiots and imbeciles	7 years	14 years	8 months
Permitting Defilement	2 ½ (years)	5 years	3 months

Defilement cases where victims are between (14-18) years of age can be handled by the Chief Magistrates Court at the District level and between the ages of (14 and below) can only be handled by the High Court. Once a defilement case has been reported, it becomes the states responsibility to

provide the victims with the lawyers and transportation to the courts of law for hearing of the cases. Unfortunately due to the high number of such cases and limited funds most of these cases have dragged for a long time leading to the victims and their parents resorting to other means of compensation other than using the law.

Bail for defilement suspects is considered as a constitutional right though it has been misinterpreted and misused by the victims’ relatives/witnesses and suspects respectively. Suspects under bail have usually used this opportunity to interfere with evidence or jump bail and some of the witnesses due to the ignorance of the law have thought that suspects on bail have been released due to corruption.

### 3.6 Factors restricting reporting & solving of Defilement cases?

#### 3.6.1 Introduction

During our study we learnt that 86.4 % of young people between the ages of (8-20) years are able to report defilement cases, we also learnt that they usually feel more comfortable reporting to their parents. Defilement is a crime that is part of our families, communities and we always see it but usually tend to ignore its existence. This study mainly adopted the questionnaire, interview and observation approach to come to the findings below;

#### 3.6.2 Responses from the young people

We interacted with over 760 school children and asked them whether they would report a defilement case in case the culprit was their relative. The study also tried to check gaps in the police force and issues related to birth registration. The responses from the school were collected in a percentage format and illustrated in the table below

Response	Overall	Rural	Urban	Semi-Urban	(8-14) years	(14-20) years
YES	86.36996	87.42138	97.10145	79.6034	81.05263	88.27977
NO	10.01391	12.57862	0.966184	14.16431	13.68421	8.695652
NOT SURE	3.616134	0	1.932367	6.232295	5.263158	3.024575

**Table 5 Responses (%) from young people from the Question, “Would you report a defilement case in case it was your relative?”**

The above figures show the willingness of the young people to report defilement cases but existence of a gap between the people whom they report to and the police. Most of these cases are reported to the parents who usually decide not to report to the police.

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*“Due to poverty parents see their daughters as a source of wealth. Defilement cases are seen as a source of income by the members of the community and are only reported to the police only if the two parties fail to reach to an agreement.” Sgt. Wikoru Osuwa Lamerika, Child Protection Unit (Yumbe Police Station)*

The issues of ignorance and poverty are most common in the rural communities of the country yet in the urban settings we learnt that corruption and the protection of the integrity/status of the culprit was some of the most common causes to the failure of reporting of defilement cases.

### 3.6.3 Gaps in the Police Force

In both urban and rural communities we visited 6 offices of the Family & Child Protection Unit (sections *at the Police Station responsible for cases of defilement*) were we learnt that they faced a mutual problem of being under staffed. One of the Central Police Stations had only one individual to manage the whole district with a lot of responsibilities and tasks attached.

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*“Maracha District has inadequate man power to meet the demands of the district especially in the issues related to defilement. Many criminals(defilers) take this as an opportunity to exploit these teenage girls and many parents also use this as an opportunity to generate some income for the family.” Drate Judith, Community Development Officer, Maracha District*

### 3.6.4 Gaps in the birth registration Policy

A birth registration certificate is very important in handling of a defilement case whereby without it, it becomes easier to manipulate the age of the victim in an attempt to dismiss the case from court.

RESPONSE	OVERALL	URBAN CENTER	RURAL CENTER	SEMI-URBAN CENTER
YES	72.186837	97.10144928	68.96551724	67.41573034
NO	13.375796	0.966183575	24.13793103	10.6741573
NOT SURE	14.437367	1.93236715	6.896551724	21.91011236

**Table 6; Individuals (in %) between 8-20 years from different geographical regions with birth certificates**

## 3.7 What has been done to solve the issue of defilement

### 3.7.1 Introduction

The campaign against defilement cases has faced a lot of opposition from the communities and victims parents due to cultural rigidity, personal interests from the cases, lack of substantial evidence, corruption, and ignorance of the law. This has made it impossible to come up with solutions despite the existing laws and policies. Through tremendous effort by some sectors of the society, the fight against defilement though slow is prevailing.

### 3.7.2 Civil Society Organization Solutions

CSOs have advocated for policy reforms to facilitate faster hearing of defilement cases. This was seen under the judicial reforms which saw defilement cases (14-18) years being able to be heard at the Magistrates Court at the District level hence reducing on the back log of cases at the High Court.

CSOs such as UNICEF have tried to engage the community members in adopting a birth registration policy through encouraging births at the health centers, financial and technical support to the government.

Sensitization of communities and young people has also been adopted in an effort of creating a preventive remedy to the problem at hand though still at a small scale.

### **3.7.3 Government Solutions**

Once a defilement case has been reported to the police, it becomes a state case with the state taking over the responsibility of providing lawyers, and facilitation for the witnesses during the hearing of the case.

The judiciary has established judicial reforms in an effort to streamline sentencing guidelines for defilement cases; this has also been supported with scrutinizing the credibility of the bail request by a defilement suspect before bail is granted. The government under its Judiciary-wing (Police force) has a mandate of arresting and investigating defilement cases in the community. The government through the police has introduced a policy of community policing which has advocated for easier solving of defilement cases and also sensitizing the community members about the laws regarding defilement.

The government solutions have been hindered by the overwhelming number of cases with fewer resource allocations. This has led to most of the cases dragging which are then usually dropped by the accusers. The police is also blamed for failure to take action against defilement cases carried out behind their nose but decide not to take action because the case has not been officially reported to them by the victims.

### **3.7.4 Other Solutions**

#### **I. School Solutions**

Majority of children in Uganda spend more than 8 months in a year at school under the board section arrangement. This puts them in a situation whereby they have to look up to their teachers about issues related to defilement and protection from the vice. Unfortunately these same teachers have also turned around and abused them. Under the study we learnt most schools have not established efficient structures that can enable to students to report cases of defilement incase need arises.

The highest percentage of school children who were more comfortable to report defilement cases was 15.1 for the category of females between (8-14) years, with the other categories having less than 2% of the respondent

#### **II. Media Houses**

The media has played a great role in the creating awareness of the prevalence of defilement in Uganda. Media houses such as NTV and New Vision have covered stories of defilement at least every two publications. This has strengthened efforts of individuals, organizations and government in the fight against the problem at hand.

#### **III. Parents and community members**

Parents and community members have the major responsibility in the fight against defilement. This can be through protecting their children from becoming victims and also helping their abused children attain justice through directly supporting court procedures. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in some

incidences where the parents end up abusing them and also with the support of the community members; decide to deny the victims justice through settling the cases out of court.

Parents have played a big role in advising and guiding children in issues of sexual and reproductive health, advising them about how to dress well and keeping them out of situations/ environments that can put their children at risk of being abused.

## **4.0 Main Conclusion & Recommendation**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

#### **4.1.1 Introduction**

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*Thousands of Innocent boys and girls are defiled in Uganda with most of the cases never reported to police or solved despite the existing laws intended to protect these innocent children from defilement.*

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The key role of the study was to identify key gaps leading to the above note and come up with sustainable solutions to the issue of defilement in Uganda. The conclusions will be aimed at supporting the findings from the study.

Through observation and interviews, it was learnt that defilement cases are higher in the rural communities of Uganda as compared to the urban communities. Most families in the rural communities have at least one daughter pregnant before 18 years. Unfortunately the situation is considered to be normal because of ignorance of the law and cultural rigidity in regard to marriage/pregnancy. The rural police stations also face a hindrance in terms of under staffing of the Child Protection Unit which makes it impossible for them to cover cases of defilement in the district/community.

Despite of the high percentages (66.4%) of individuals between (8-20) years of age who have been sensitized about defilement either at home or school there is still need for continued sensitization especially for the members of the community. We also learnt that only 2% of the respondents were comfortable to report issues of sexual abuse to their teachers which is an alarming percentage since most children in Uganda spend the most years of their teenage life at school.

Poverty, lack of programs to support the victim in case she becomes pregnant, lack of trust in the legal system and corruption were found to be some of the highest causes for the failure by the victims and their families to seek the legal system for justice.

## **4.2 Recommendation**

### **4.2.1 Introduction**

These recommendations are based on the findings from the study. Some of the recommendations might already be in implementation by some sections of the intended users though still at a small scale. These recommendations are intended for all individuals, organizations, and government bodies with an aim of coming up with sustainable solutions to the issue of defilement in Uganda

#### **4.2.2 Recommendation to schools**

By virtue of their existence as an institution of learning, schools have the mandate of providing their children a holistic and friendly learning environment. This environment should be in position to support learning under issues such as defilement with emphasis on the laws about defilement and procedures to follow when abused or when in a situation of uncertainty about the intentions of someone.

During the study we learnt that school children are less comfortable to talk to their teachers in case of incidences of sexual abuses. The highest percentage for teachers was only 2% under the category of female respondents between (8-14) years.

Schools should establish an environment whereby the school children can freely open up to a particular individual for counseling and advice. The school should also design programs that will empower children to open up and stand up for their rights.

#### **4.2.3 Recommendation to community leaders**

Community leaders are the community instruments for leadership and justice. With this position they have mandate to guide their community and advocate for justice based on the national laws when handling defilement cases brought to them.

The leaders should engage their members such as religious institutions in sensitizing them about defilement especially in the laws guiding defilement cases through inviting the police and child based organizations dealing in issues of defilement. They can also adopt community programs which engage former defilement convicts to spear head the fight against defilement through sharing their prison experiences as a way of discouraging other community members from becoming defilement culprits.

27.8 % respondents between (8-20) years do not have birth certificates with the percentage higher in rural communities at 30.8 % . Community leaders should encourage their members to seek birth certificate for their children from a government/mission hospital if the child was born there or from the Sub-County Chief/Town Council Clerk if the child was born at home or elsewhere.

#### **4.2.4 Recommendation to parents/guardians**

The major responsibility of protection of children from any form of abuse lies in the hands of the parents/guardians. The findings of the study indicate that most children are more comfortable to report to their parents in cases of sexual abuse. Parents should not misuse this confidence that the children have in them through using these cases as an opportunity to generate wealth.

Parents are also advised to only leave their children in the care of an individual they trust and always establish an environment that can encourage their children to open up to them in case of issues of sexual abuse. This is through spending some time talking and listening to their children since some of these cases happen in the homes that they share with their children but due to hectic work schedules and lack of communication with their children; the cases are never reported.

#### **4.2.5 Recommendation to children**

75% of 85% of cases of abuse to children are usually carried out by the people that children know and trust. These statistics put children in much danger because it becomes hard for them to protect themselves.

The study findings brought to our knowledge that 86.36 % of respondents are willing to report defilement cases even though the culprit is a relative. Despite of these statistics many children are still being abused in silence. Our recommendation to the children is to always report suspicious behaviors to someone they trust, keep our from uncomfortable places, dress up well, not allow gifts/lifts from strangers or suspicious people, avoid use of drugs and not walk in dark places alone.

#### **4.2.6 Recommendations to CSOs, CBOs, FBOs and NGOs.**

CSOs, CBOs, FBOs and NGOs have the responsibility of working hand in hand with the government, community members, victims and their parents in the fight against defilement and other forms of sexual abuse inflicted onto children. These organizations should adopt programs that will be effective in the fight against the vice without having a negative impact on the dependents of the victims.

Organizations should adopt programs that will aim at discouraging individuals in the community from committing defilement. This can be through empowering former prisoners of defilement to share their jail experiences during sensitization campaigns. This as a preventive approach will make the general public realize that defilement is a crime punishable by courts of law and whose outcome has long term negative impacts to the culprit's family hence discouraging potential defilers.

Programs aimed at economic empowerment of families of the victims in case of incidences where the defiler is the bread winner of the house or the victim becomes pregnant and is not in position to look after her child. This will encourage such families to support court procedures against defilement.

Providing support to the victim's family in form of transport to courts of law, pro-bono law services and counseling will facilitate justice for the victims of defilement.

#### **4.2.7 Recommendation to the Government**

During the study, we learnt that 33.4 % of the school children have never been sensitized about defilement from home or school with the numbers slightly higher at 39.8 % from the rural communities. School sensitization programs will play a vital role in informing the young people about how to protect themselves and also what the law says about defilement. This will not only protect them but will also discourage from committing defilement at later stages of their life.

Through community sensitization clinics, the government can sensitize the community members about defilement and the laws related to the act. Emphasis should be attached on the issue of obstruction of justice through conniving with the culprits to solve the defilement cases out of court. During the community sensitization, information related to bail for the defilement suspects, courts of law hearing defilement cases, categories of defilement cases, and responsibility of the government in supporting justice for the victims should also be introduced to the community members.

As per the new sentencing guidelines, some of the set guidelines seem to be rigid for instance the death sentence as a maximum sentence for aggravated defilement. This sometimes discourages the victims of parents from reporting such cases to police in case of incidences where the defiler is a father to the victim this could also be revised to reduce some of the harsh sentencing guidelines.

The government should also adopt programs which will advocate for the economic and psychological support for the victim and victims parents. This is appropriate in incidences where the victim becomes pregnant and the culprit has been sentenced. The burden of raising the child ends up in the hand of the victim and her family.

Uganda has established laws and policies which define defilement as penetrative sexual intercourse between an individual above 18 years with an individual below 18 years. The sex can either be done willing or forced. The act is considered as being criminal and only punishable in courts of law. Despite the existence of these policies, many young girls and boys continue to be defiled right in the sight of the police which is responsible in implementing these laws. This has undermined the effort in the fight against the vice and also encouraged more individuals from practicing it. Understaffing of the police personnel under the child protection units is one of the causes to these findings and a gap that the government should work if it's to achieve her ability to protect her citizens from defilement. The police personnel should also been sensitized about the laws surrounding defilement so as they are in position to use this information to make technical decisions in the communities. Arresting of individuals who connive with the defilement suspects to solve defilement cases out of court should also be implemented by the police to emphasize the point that defilement is a crime and can only be solved in courts of law.

Defilement cases are usually delayed due to lack of logistics by the government to support the hearing of such cases in courts of law. To reduce this burden, the government should work hand in hand with civil society organizations directly linked to child protection and advocate for more funding from the government budget. Dragging of defilement cases as the result of case back logs facing the magistrates and judges could also be solved by increasing the number of magistrates to handle some of the cases.

*Lastly defilement is one of the highest causes of teenage pregnancy, early marriage, HIV/AIDs amongst children, school dropout amongst girls, imprisonment of bread winners of homesteads leading to poverty and poor leaving conditions of the dependents. Fighting against defilement will make the world a better place for humanity.*

*The fight against defilement will only be possible and successful with a combined effort and decision of the children, parents/guardians, civil society organizations, community leaders, religious institutions, cultural leaders, schools, and former convicts of defilement.*

**Believe in the Change You can Create!!!**