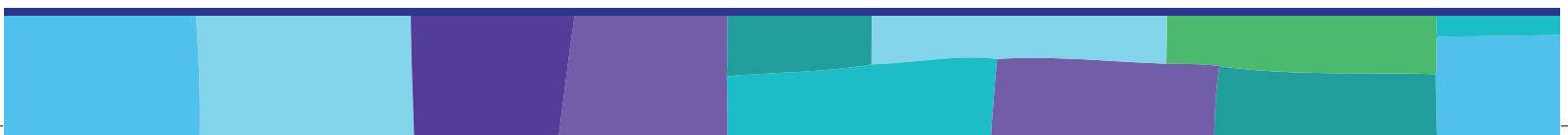




# **FORMATIVE RESEARCH ON SOCIAL NORMS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN UGANDA**

**DECEMBER, 2018**





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## ACRONYMS

<b>ARB</b>	Applied Research Bureau
<b>BCC</b>	Behavior Change Communication
<b>CSEC</b>	Commercial Sex Exploitation of Children
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>IDIS</b>	In-depth Interviews
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate Partner Violence
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>SNAP</b>	Social Norms Analysis Plot
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>VAC</b>	Violence against Children
<b>VACS</b>	Violence against Children Survey
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence against Women and Girls
<b>UDHS</b>	Uganda Demographic Health Survey
<b>UWONET</b>	Uganda Women's Network



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The changing faces of VAWG

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) has stood in the way of women's equality, affecting them physically, emotionally and economically. Its' continued prevalence demands, among others, the re-thinking of existing development approaches that have exclusively focused on extra-social influences on VAWG- leaving out social motivations that could explain violent behavior common to a particular group. This study is anchored in the emerging development paradigm that seeks to understand the social motivations that influence VAWG. It sought to establish how communities understand, shape, interpret, and transmit social norms that promote VAWG and how these interpretations influence policy and practice.

## Methodology

The study was guided by the Bicchieri's social norms theory which advances an understanding that individuals are not isolated nor are their actions and opinions from the people surrounding them (Bicchieri, 2006). The social norms analysis plot framework was employed. This was critical in identifying key components of the social norms of interest. A qualitative design was chosen because it provides the easiest approach to identifying the presence of social norms. The study focused on physical, sexual, economic, and bride price related violence. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and individual interviews including key informant interviews. This research was carried out in the 7 districts of Lira, Arua, Isingiro, Kabarole, Kamuli, Kotido, and Kampala. The final selection of study districts was based on regional representation criteria.

## Social Norms that influence VAWG

A system designed to protect perpetrators  
Findings suggest that physical violence is a social norm. The communities hold onto a social expectation that a man has to hit a woman under particular circumstances. There are also sanctions once someone refuses to do so. Evidence also suggests that there are social norms that underlie physical violence. These might not specifically relate to physical violence but contribute to the shared expectations around the man's use of violence. These norms commonly relate to the existing gender order framed within the patriarchal system. For these particular norms, physical violence towards women and girls is sanctioned when someone transgresses given behavioral expectations.



The study findings also reveal exceptional circumstances where women and girls can break given social norms surrounding physical violence. Someone would be allowed to report a case of violence once her experience goes beyond what is considered appropriate or when both parties to the union decide to. The elders could also intervene if the cycle of violence continues. However, the behavioral rules limit the role of elders to reconciling the two parties and restoring the gender order. The norms have a close relation to community values and the need to keep the family together.

Women and girls (and men) resist behavioral rules. However, non-compliance is often frustrated by different structural constraints- for example poor access to legal services. Perpetrators are supported by family structure, especially their parents.

The manifestation of particular behavioral rules is changing, though retaining their role and meaning. For example, now women have paid house helps to support them in- accomplishing their roles. However, the meaning of the norms has not changed as women still supervise the house helps in this gender ascribed role. We also observed several misperceptions that are created by social norms- for example a violent husband providing a safe space for raising of children and a survivor of violence not being able to start a new relationship etc.

### Aggressive masculinity and sexual entitlement

Ritualized rape (particular to Kotido) is a social norm as there are expectations that a man/boy should rape a woman/girl to win her hand in marriage. There are also sanctions once one fails to do so. However, other types of sexual violence (including marital rape and child marriage) are not social norms. They are, however, held in place by social norms- some of which are not specifically relating to sexual violence but contribute to the shared expectations around men's use of violence.

These norms are informed by the patriarchal system that prizes aggressive masculinity and sexual entitlement for men. The sanctions presented by these norms could also include other types of violence such as the physical and emotional. The study findings also present exceptional circumstances where given behavioral expectations can be suspended. There are instances where a woman is permitted not to have sexual relations- when in her menses, during post-natal period and when she is sick.

Social norms assign women and girls responsibilities but deny them of rights. This is particular to marital rape and the norms that call for "decent dressing". A married woman is expected to give in to the spouse's sexual advances almost all the time. Women are denied their right to control their bodies. The norms also demand for the policing of women bodies

as they define what they should wear. On the other hand, norms provide men with rights—a right to have sex when he chooses to. This fuels the community’s understanding of perpetrating violence as an exercise of a man’s right rather than violation of the survivor’s rights. There is strong contestation from women and girls (and men) on given behavioral rules that social norms prescribe. These contestations are embedded within particular moral values. Sexual violence is understood as immoral. This finding reveals that not all social norms are embedded in community values, some are rather in contradiction of the prized values.

Changes in the manifestation of given norms (though the meaning of the norm had not changed) are evident. This was particular to ritualized rape where girls did prefer perpetrators of rape of a given character. There is also adoption of alternative positive norms e.g. in Kotido urban center, girls were opting for education rather than being married off. This was supported by strict law enforcement and increased access to education facilities.

### Economic violence: Resources in the hands of men

Economic violence is a social norm. It is expected of a man/boy to have control over women/girls access to economic resources. This is deeply entrenched within the patriarchal system that prizes the man over the woman, and gives decision making power and control of resources to men. Violating these norms also calls for various sanctions that could include other types of violence, especially physical and emotional. The research found no exceptions where one would be allowed to transgress norms underlying economic violence.

Women and girls constantly negotiate these norms. There is continued engagement of women beyond the domestic space. However, men still control decision making within the homestead. We also observed contestation by men on particular behavioral rules (e.g. ownership of land by widows), however these contestations are frustrated by patriarchal structures i.e. elders, community leaders.

### Bride-price and the itemization of women

There are social norms that underlie bride-price that contribute to the shared expectations around men’s use of violence. The transgressions of these norms calls for sanctions that could include all types of VAWG. We did not find exceptions under which one can forego behavioral expectations related to bride-price. The social norms have a close association with values that define a good wife.



Social norms that underlie bride-price redefine the character of woman from human to an item (i.e. property). They also define a timeline within which one should complete given obligations e.g. procreating. The norms also define bride-price as a gift that has to be reciprocated through manual labor.

The study findings also provide indications of social norm change. We observed that some men and their families no longer demand for the bride wealth from the family after separation. This is often done to avoid preempting the spouse's family decision to seek legal redress. We also noted several misperceptions that social norms create for example the thinking that most men and their families would demand for bride-price after separation.

### Transmission and perpetuation of social norms

Study findings suggest that social norms are transmitted through socialization as individuals are introduced to gendered identities (e.g. girl's assigned roles within the domestic space). There are different fields where socialization occurs and thus one can learn, unlearn and adopt an alternative social norm. Social norms are also transmitted through ritualized behavior that is performed in daily interactions (e.g. kneeling before elders, wearing long dresses). Further, social norms are spread through sanctions—when one transgresses a given behavioral rule or rewards when someone complies with a given behavioral rule. It is through these processes that individuals are introduced to roles, relations, stereotypes, actions, identities. Social norms are sustained through the routinized performance of these actions.

### How Social Norms Influence Policy and Practice

Social norms provide society with a framework within which they interpret the content (principles, articles) of bills/policies. Supporting the bill/policy would require that the proposals within maintain social order or build onto the existing social sanctions. Implementation of the law would also require that one appreciates the legal regime. Law enforcement officers are often integrated into the social network of the community and have greater appeal for social sanctions rather than legal sanctions. Also, social norms create a culture of silence around issues of violence. This makes victims second guess their decision to seek for support from law enforcement institutions.

### Conclusion

Social norms regulate actions that distribute power, opportunities and resources among women and men. These norms define acceptable boundaries, as set by hegemonic

masculinity, within which VAWG can happen. Evidence collected suggests women and girls (and men) constantly perform and negotiate the existing behavioral rules. Women and girls could think of contesting the specific norms. However, alternative norms could rule out the different pathways that she would have opted for.

There are women and girls who exercise their agency to challenge the existing norms. However, often structural constraints frustrate their efforts. The limited feminine capital, which happens to be regulated by social norms, constrain women from resisting or questioning the existing social norms. They would rather take a rational decision to comply with the norm. This results into the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity that could then be enacted in a more violent form. However, we also note that the reproduced masculinity could be performed in a more cautious manner as men realize that they can be held accountable for their actions.

That notwithstanding, women and girls' resistance to negative social norms could result into social norm change. This usually occurs when structures of opportunities flourish. Institutions (including but not limited to law enforcing agencies and education institutions) would be supporting women and girls' agency to challenge the social norm but also providing safe spaces where women and girls can resist but also perform alternative positive norms. Additionally, continued resistance to a social norm could also result into differences in manifestation of the norm. However, the meaning of the norm does not necessarily change.

Therefore, campaigns meant to address social norms that influence VAWG should support the negotiation processes being undertaken by women and girls (and men). This could be done by directly engaging institutions (including but not limited to law enforcing agencies, education institutions) in building the agency of women and girls to challenge existing negative social norms but also building the capacity of these institutions to provide safe spaces where women and girls can resist but also perform alternative positive norms.

### Recommendations on the messaging, design and implementation of the 'ENOUGH' campaign.

- There is growing evidence that campaigns featuring positive messages about health and wellbeing including social norm change tend to be more effective than those with negative messages. Therefore, OXFAM and partners should implement a positive social norm campaign/positive messaging strategy through;
  - Clarifying or correcting misperceptions that are created by social norms
  - Emphasizing positive benefits for adopting alternative social norms

- Facilitate individuals, groups and communities to maintain positive social norm/behavior change maintenance motives, emphasizing positive outcomes of new/alternative norms, providing behavioral options which are enjoyable, inspiring individuals to redefine themselves in line with new/alternative positive norms that are gender equitable and at variance with VAWG.
- The study findings show that different stakeholders are involved in the negotiation of social norms. Therefore, the messaging should target various audiences using multiple channels so as to create the desired impact. These campaigns should embrace multi-channel, multi-sectorial and multi-media outreach and advocacy campaign to raise awareness and change attitudes to VAWG.
- The campaign messaging should also be continuous and consistent rather than a one-off campaign with focus on both initiation of social norm change/behavioral change as well as maintenance of the change. Two major evidence reviews conclude that one-off awareness campaigns are ineffective (Fulu, Kerr-Wilson et al 2014; Arango et al 2014) in sustaining social norms change and behavioral change.
- There is need for OXFAM and partners to adopt multi-component community-based interventions that work with men, women, youths, leaders and service providers to shift harmful social norms around gender roles and relations, intimate partnerships and the acceptability of violence.
- The campaign should be multi-level taking into account the relationship between the individual, the community and the societal levels (socio-ecological model) to facilitate agency of individuals, groups and communities to develop/initiate and maintain positive/alternative norms through reshaping the environment and making gender equitable options salient and attractive.
- There is need for OXFAM and partners in their campaign messaging and programming to combine economic empowerment interventions for women with gender transformative training and engagement of male partners and family members. This is meant to build the socio-economic capital of women and girls. Most campaigns have been focusing on one or the other but without systematically and combining the two streams and therefore missing the synergistic benefits associated with the duo thronged programming.
- The study findings show a close relation between harmful social norms and prized community values. Therefore, the messaging should differentiate between values and social norms so as to allow the participants to discuss the negative social norms.





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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1

Formative Research on Social Norms and Violence  
against Women and Girls in Uganda

## 1. Introduction

This study builds on existing evidence on the drivers of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). It explores how communities understand, shape, interpret, and transmit social norms that promote VAWG and how these interpretations influence policy and practice.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Violence Against Women and Girls

VAWG is “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (General Assembly Resolution 48/104 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993).

Globally, VAWG is widespread and persistent. According to UN Women, the most universally common forms of VAWG are: domestic and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), sexual violence (including rape, defilement), sexual harassment, emotional, and psychological violence. Other wide spread forms include: sexual exploitation, sexual trafficking, and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), forced and child marriage. There are also less documented forms: crimes committed in the name of honor, prenatal sex selection, female infanticide, economic abuse, political violence, dowry/bride price related violence, and acid throwing (UN Women, 2012).

In Uganda, VAWG is prevalent and manifests in a multitude of ways within the domestic and public spaces. Some reports suggest an increase of domestic violence cases, for example the 2017 Uganda Police Annual Crimes Report indicate a 16.7 percent increase in cases of domestic violence reported between the years 2016 and 2017. The districts of Tororo, Kumi and Jinja continue to register the highest number of cases reported. Women and girls comprised 75 percent (71% women & 4 % girls) of victims that had reported a case of domestic violence (Uganda Police, 2017).

Sexual violence is prevalent, in particular IPV. The Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS) 2016 key indicators report indicates that one (1) in five (5) women aged 15-49 (22%) had experienced sexual violence at some point (UBOS & ICF, 2017). The 2011 UDHS provide more detail on who the perpetrator of violence is. For ever married women aged 15-49, the main perpetrators of sexual violence were a current husband/partner (55.4%) or former husband/partner (17.7%) (UBOS & ICF, 2011).



The 2015 Violence against Children Survey (VACS) report indicates that one in three girls (35%) aged 18-24 and one in four girls (25%) aged 13-17 years had experienced sexual violence during their childhoods. The most frequent perpetrators of sexual violence against girls aged 18-24 are neighbors (27.9%), strangers (20.4%) and intimate friends (20.0%) while the most frequent perpetrators of sexual violence among 13-17 year old girls are neighbors (30.9%), strangers (22.8%) and friends (19.8%) (MGLSD, 2015).

Rape and defilement are common types of sexual violence against women and girls. The 2017 Uganda Police Annual Crimes Report lists defilement as the leading sex related crime in Uganda. The districts of Lira and Gulu continue to register the highest cases of defilement. Rape is somewhat equally prevalent. In 2017, 1,335 cases of rape were reported compared to 1,494 cases in 2016 (Uganda Police, 2017). It should however be noted that the statistics provided by the Annual Police Report only cater for cases reported. This implies that the prevalence of rape and defilement could be higher than indicated.

Commercial Sex Exploitation of Children (CSEC) is prevalent. The VACS indicates that one (1) in six (6), (15%) 18-24 year old females who had had sex before age 18 reported exchanging sex for material support in childhood. Among girls 13-17 years that had had sex in the past 12 months, 18.8% had received material support or other help in exchange for sex (MGLSD, 2017).

Women and girls also experience physical violence. The 2011 UDHS reports that 56.1% of all women aged 15-49 had experienced physical violence by any perpetrator for at least once since the age of 15. For the married women aged 15-49, the main perpetrators of physical violence were a current husband/partner (60%) or former husband/partner (18.9%). This is also indicative of high rates of IPV in Uganda (UBOS & ICF, 2011).

The 2015 VACS indicates that six (6) in ten (10) females, (59%) aged 18-24 and four (4) in ten (10) girls, (44%) aged 13-17 had experienced physical violence during their childhoods. For 18-24 year olds, "parents or adult relatives were the most common perpetrators of physical violence during their childhoods". Meanwhile, girls also "often suffered violence by adults in the community, with one (1) in three (3) girls (31%) experiencing physical abuse by community members, most often from female teacher. For girls aged 13-17, adults in the community were the most common perpetrators of physical violence, with male teachers being by far the most frequent perpetrator of physical violence" (UBOS & ICF, 2011).

Another widespread form of violence particular to children is forced and child marriage. Nearly one (1) in every two (2) girls in Uganda is married before the age of 18 (MGLSD, 2015).

The prevalence of child marriages is highest in northern Uganda estimated at 59% followed by Western region (58%), Eastern region (52%), East central (52%), West Nile (50%), Central (41%), South West (37%), and lowest in Kampala (21%) (UNFPA, 2013).

Economic abuse is prevalent. A significant proportion of women do not have control over their earnings. The UDHS 2011 noted that 14% of currently married women who earn cash have their husbands as the main decision makers for how cash earnings are used (UBOS & ICF, 2011).

Furthermore, emotional violence is prevalent. The VACS indicates that “one (1) in three (3) 18-24-year-old Ugandans suffer emotional violence during their childhoods while one (1) in five (5) 13-17-year-old children had experienced emotional abuse in the year preceding the survey. For 18-24-year-old females, the most common perpetrator of emotional violence in childhood was the mother or stepmother (41%). In the year preceding the survey, the most common perpetrator of emotional violence against 13-17-year-old girls was the mother or stepmother (33%) and fathers or stepfathers (22%)” (MGLSD, 2015).

Bride price related violence is a common practice. A study conducted by MIFUMI (an NGO and women’s rights agency based in Uganda working on domestic violence and poverty alleviation) and two United Kingdom research groups (the Violence against Women Research Group – University of Bristol, and the Centre for the Study of Safety and Well-Being-University of Warwick) revealed that 65% of interviewees suggested that bride-price has mainly negative impacts. Almost 35% associated it with both negative and positive impacts while those suggesting mainly positive impacts were less than 1%. Among the various negative effects, bride price was identified with feeding into the abuse and maltreatment of the wife. This report observes that while the study participants indicated that domestic violence is a complex issue that cannot be adequately explained by bride price, 84% of the interviewees, known to have experienced domestic violence and abuse, believed that bride-price had been an important element in the violence experienced (Hill et al., 2009).

Additionally, VAWG in Uganda manifests through FGM. A 2017 survey report on FGM indicates that close to three (3) in every ten (10), (27%) of the females surveyed had been circumcised, with Moroto district registering the highest proportion at 52%. The “prevalence of FGM among females’ increases with age. It is lower among females aged 15-24 years (8%) compared to those aged 25-34 (26.3%), 35-44 (57.9%) and 45 years and above (68%).” (UBOS & UNICEF, 2017).

## 2.2 Social Norms and Violence Against Women and Girls

Social norms are “rules of behavior such that individuals prefer to conform to them on condition that they believe that- (a) most people in their reference network conform to them (empirical expectation), and (b) that most people in their reference network believe they ought to conform to them (normative expectation)” (Bicchieri, 2016).

They are prescriptive perceptions about behavior common in the community or injunctive perceptions about what behaviors are desirable in the community. Social norms are salient and often talked about in the community – either praising those who conform or castigating those who do not. They help to determine collective understanding of what are acceptable attitudes and behaviors. For a social norm to have impact, there must be a reference group whose opinion an individual seeks before making a decision. The members of a reference group may be close in proximity or they may be far away (Cooper & Fletcher, 2013).

There is evidence that social norms influence VAWG. They assign “strict gender roles based on stereotypes of men as providers and women as caregivers, prizing physical strength, aggression and sexual experience in men, and submissiveness, passivity and chastity in women. This leads to harmful constructions of a dominant masculinity based on power, control and (hetero) sexual entitlement over women, and the socio-cultural acceptance of violence and abuse as a way to assert dominance. These unequal social norms are reinforced by patriarchal practices and structures that maintain gender inequality across our relationships, communities, institutions, and societies” (UN Women et al., 2016).

## 2.3 Research Gap

There is a vast amount of literature that explains why given population groups engage in violent behavior towards women and girls. A larger percentage of the drivers presented could be categorized as personal or individual influences which are often shaped by the environment where women and girls live and the personal situations they are predisposed to, for example conflict situations and refugee environments (Schlecht et al., 2013).

These drivers have much to do with the non-social environment. This could explain the development program’s fascination with tackling the non-social factors through mainly women empowerment programs. Unexpectedly VAWG continues to be prevalent and in some cases on the rise.

The continued high prevalence of VAWG demands re-thinking of development programs and research that informs programming. Most development programs give ample

considerations to beliefs about the non-social environment and many measure self-efficacy beliefs and their change but comparatively few consider beliefs about the social environment which is central at understanding social norms". Few measure the "individual attitudes and behaviors but don't discuss the expectations that members of the group expect of one another which are central to social norms" (Mackie et al., 2015).

This study moves beyond the common conceptualization of drivers of VAWG and explores the social motivations (i.e. social norms) that influence VAWG. It explores how people's beliefs about others, their social expectations within a reference group, and social approval or disapproval and sanctions encourage violent behavior against women and girls.

## **2.4 General Objective of the Study**

To establish how communities understand, shape, interpret, and transmit social norms that promote VAWG and how these interpretations influence policy and practice.

Specific objectives for the study

1. To identify social norms that promote VAWG in Uganda
2. To understand the different narratives around social norms that promote VAWG in Uganda
3. To understand the ways in which social norms that promote VAWG are transmitted and perpetuated
4. To understand how societal interpretations of social norms influence policy and practice
5. To make recommendations on the messaging, design and implementation of a campaign that will address social norms that promote violence against women and girls.

## **2.5 Significance of the Study**

The formative research is anchored within Oxfam's, "ENOUGH: Together We Can End Violence against Women and Girls" campaign. The campaign aims to challenge and replace the long held misconception that men are superior to women and girls. To achieve this, Oxfam will support individuals and communities to understand the drivers of violence and build their capacity to say "ENOUGH" to harmful attitudes and behaviors. Oxfam will also work to ensure women's rights organizations and movements are supported, and to increase and lobby for implementation of laws and policies aimed at ending VAWG.

To ensure that the campaign strategies are effective, information was needed to provide a deeper understanding of the attitudes and behavioral practices (i.e. Why a particular behavior is practiced, what is the social norm underplaying it, who are the influencers for change etc.) and identify context specific social norms, attitudes and behaviors that lead to perpetuation and acceptance of VAWG. The formative research provides evidence and policy and practice recommendations that shall support the formulation of messages that will effectively communicate that “enough is enough” and that it is time to effectively tackle the root causes of VAWG.





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## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3. Introduction

This section describes and evaluates current knowledge on social norms and VAWG. It specifically presents on how harmful social norms lead to VAWG, transmission and perpetuation of social norms, influence of social norms on policy formulation and implementation, and social norm change.

#### 3.1 Harmful Social Norms and Violence Against Women and Girls

There is a consensus among scholars and development practitioners that there is no one single cause of VAWG. Rather, VAWG is caused by an interplay of factors that range from the political, social, economic, cultural and individual behavior. However, at the root of all VAWG is patriarchal attitudes that require that women behave in a certain way and if they do not behave as expected, they are forced into submission through violence and other societal sanctions. These patriarchal attitudes exist in most societies, including Uganda. They are driven by social norms that are shared beliefs about others, rotating around what people believe others do or think or expect from them (Joro, 2016; DFID, 2016). Social norms therefore prescribe what ought to be done even when this is different from what is being done (Paluck, 2009; Cooper & Fletcher, 2013).

A study by WHO (2010) did report of a behavioral expectation that a man has a right to assert power over a woman and is considered socially superior. Odimegwu & Okemgbo (2003) links this behavioral expectation to the gender role ideology that stresses that the man is the head of the woman, not only because he paid a dowry to own her, but because God has made him superior to the woman.

Violence is often, although not always, a part of dominant constructions of masculinity in many societies. If there are social expectations that men control women, then physical and sexual force are often seen as “legitimate” ways to exert this control. This control also extends to punishment and sanction of those who repel, dissident or transgress the norms. This definitely happens with influence from a reference group. A study by Voices for Change, (2015) reported that friends are a reason for beating women. A man is encouraged by his friends to show that “he is in charge”, particularly in cases of frequent arguments between the woman and the man. CARE, (2017) also report that most husbands use violence because they fear ridicule by their male peers for being seen as not in control of their wives. As men are exercising their power, women should always be submissive. A study by Carlie & Trott (2017) indicated that 69.2% husbands may use force to reprimand their wives because men should be in control of their families.

An Ethiopian study highlights that intimate partner violence (IPV) is a shameful topic and it is expected that one should not openly discuss it. It is a “taboo” subject (Allen & Raghallaigh, 2013; Carlie & Trott, 2017). Women may not voice concerns about husbands’ violence out of fear of stigma, community exclusion, and a desire for family cohesion (Abeya et al., 2012). A woman who complains about her husband’s violent behavior is considered a disloyal wife by her in-laws and if a woman does not tolerate violence from her husband, she is dishonoring her family and should not be welcomed home yet intervening in a family’s affairs is disregarded by the community (Carlie & Trott, 2017).

In a study by Carlie & Trott, (2017) in Nepal, 71.3 percent of the study participants believed that a person who intervenes when a woman is being beaten by her husband would be meddling in the couple’s private affairs. Similar findings can be found in a study by Gossaye et al, (2003), where nearly half of women said family members should not become involved when a woman is experiencing IPV. In yet another study by Daruwalla, (2015) it was noted that the natal family does not have to support a woman who experiences violence while in marriage.

A man has a right to physically discipline a woman for “incorrect” behavior (WHO, 2016). This is yet another social norm that influences VAWG. Some studies reveal that beating is justifiable when the woman insults or dominates their husband, when she has not given birth, when she denies a husband sex, answers back to the husband or does not complete her work in the satisfaction of the husband. The beating is meant to be a corrective measure (UN Women et al., 2015).

A study conducted by SURGE, (2018) in Lira district in Northern Uganda also reported on other reasons that would justify the beating of a woman; if she is unfaithful to the husband, spends much time gossiping, refuse sexual relations and neglects taking care of the child. In another study by SURGE, (2018a) in Gulu district, 64.9% women reported that a husband is “justified in hitting or beating his wife” in one or more of the five scenarios. 36.8% if a wife “refuses to have sex” with her husband; 49.6% if a wife “neglects the children; 43.7% if a wife “argues with her husband”; 42.4% “if she burns the food,” and 42.3% “if she goes out without telling her husband.

A study by Cislighi & Heise (2016) in India found out that 90 percent of men beat their female lovers or wives because they thought that their friends would disapprove of them if they told them that they did not beat their lover if she did something to deserve it, such as cheating on him or answering back. If men don’t beat their wives when they are wrong, friends would ask them whether they are still men. When they discover that their friends are not brave enough to beat the wife, they advise them to go to the bar, drink a couple of



beers and go back home and beat the woman. The same study revealed that a man who does not beat his lover would lie to his friends to avoid being called less of a man.

The decision making powers in a home rests in the hands of the man. This is yet another social expectation. The decisions may include household purchases, daily purchases, how to use man's earnings, how to use woman's earnings, sexual relations, and how many children to have (Miedema, 2015). In a study by Clark (2013), 71% of the study participants believed that a man who makes important decisions jointly with his wife will be considered weak by his family and friends. The role of a woman in decision making is supposed to be complimentary and supportive (Deitch-Stackhouse et al., 2015).

It is a common belief that when a man has paid bride price, the woman has become his property which could result into violence. A study by Hill et al., (2009) in Uganda reported that approximately 84% of the interviewees who were known to have experienced domestic violence and other forms of abuse believed that bride-price had been an important element in the violence they had experienced. Also majority (90%) of the expert, duty bearer and agency study participants believed that there was a connection between domestic violence and bride-price.

The principal ways in which bride-price promotes VAWG are; man often feeling that he 'owns' the woman and she is therefore his servant and if the wife does not do the husband's wishes, he may feel entitled to punish her; the man may lack any feelings of respect for his wife due to the payment made; if a wife leaves due to domestic violence or marriage problems, her family often cannot repay the bride-price and therefore ask her to return to the husband (Ibid, 2009).

It is believed that FGM practice gives a girl acceptance by her peers; makes a girl acceptable for marriage, makes a woman "complete", while many others believe that a girl is not able to produce children if she is not cut (UBOS, 2017). There are persons who also hold onto a belief that FGM leads to economic benefits. Others believe a girl that is cut is clean and faithful to her husband (Carlie & Trott, 2017).

In other communities undergoing FGM is seen as a way of ensuring that girls are ready for marriage and remain obedient and respectable. Although women often decide to practice FGM on "their daughters and/or state they want to undergo FGM, they do so since it is seen as an act of submissiveness to their husband. A man that does not get his wife circumcised is not a complete man" (Oxfam, 2017).

There are "different expectations regarding appropriate behavior for men and women when it comes to deciding when, how and with whom to have sexual intercourse". Girls are

responsible for protecting their virginity until marriage. They believe virginity at marriage is the most valuable part of being a woman; girls that lose it are ruined as she would be sanctioned throughout her life. Sex during marriage is regarded as primarily about reproduction and the woman's obligation to satisfy the man's urges. It's his right to sleep with his wife and not about women having sex for their own pleasure" (Ibid, 2017). It is often more acceptable for men to have extramarital affairs, masturbate, ask for sex and enjoy certain forms of bodily pleasure, such as orgasm than women (Centre for Reproductive Health, 2008). It is hard for women to express their sexual desires to men. Society would view such women as promiscuous or vulgar (Carlie & Trott, 2017).

### **3.2 Transmission and Perpetuation of Social Norms**

There is evidence that the transmission and reinforcement of social norms could happen through ritual and ritualized behavior. Ritualized "behaviors reliably signal an intentional mental state giving credibility to verbal expressions while emotionally binding people to each other and group-based values. Early ritualized infant-caregiver interactions and the family routines and rituals that emerge from them are primary mechanisms for transmitting social norms vertically from parent to offspring, while adult community rituals are a primary mechanism by which norms are reinforced horizontally within the community" (Rossano, 2012).

Social norms could also most likely develop informally. They could emerge gradually as a result of "repeated use of discretionary stimuli to control behavior" (Hackman, 1992; Chong, 2000). Sanctions equally play a key role in the transmission and perpetuation of social norms. The norms once shunned could encourage reprimands, warnings or othering. The social pressures to uphold central social norms can be very strong, and only those with real determination and courage can risk facing censure and gossip that accompanies abandonment of norms (CARE, 2017). This could encourage someone to adopt expected behavior or continue with a given sanctioned behavior (Gerber & Macionis, 2011).

The role of the media, including the new media, in the transmission of social norms has been documented. Media "provides new information that persuades individuals to accept it (individual channel), but also, media informs listeners about what others learn, thus facilitating coordination (social channel)" (Eric, 2016).

### **3.3 Social Norms and Law/Policy Formulation and Enforcement**

Social norms provide society with a lens through which they judge the procedural fairness and legitimacy of laws and policies. If society views the law as legitimate, it more likely



that they will comply with it. A legitimate law or policy must ensue from a legitimate and recognized authority, and the procedures through which the authority makes decisions must also be seen as fair and appropriate for the society members. It should be clear that the law is consistently enforced and that the enforcers are perceived as honest by the community. The opportunity to take part in the legal or policy decision making process, to argue and be listened to, and to have one's views taken into consideration by the authorities would all serve to motivate law and policy abidance (Bicchieri & Mercier, 2013).

It is evident that successful laws have to be sufficiently close to existing social norms. Taking a case example from Gabon and Senegal, the government wanted to promote monogamy among its people. Rather than criminalizing polygamy, the new law still allowed a choice between monogamy and polygamy. In Ghana, to protect women and children's inheritance rights, a moderate law proved more effective than previous extreme laws. The moderate law makes a distinction between self-acquired and lineage property (with the latter being kept in the father's family line), thus respecting the customary distinction between the two while simultaneously pushing for better protective legislation, allowing women to keep self-acquired property (Wathen & MacMillan, 2012). Legislation and social norms is an important area of study that this research recommends.

When a new legal norm imposes harsh penalties against an accepted social norm, law enforcement officers will be less likely to enforce the legal norm, and prosecutors will be less likely to charge. In some cases people, including those the laws are meant to protect, may stand up and challenge these laws. This was witnessed in Uganda where a section of women came up to challenge the Marriage and Divorce bill which had a potential of protecting their rights in marriage. Juries too could make decisions that will ultimately reinforce a social norm that was intended to be changed. Mild penalties should be more effective and enforceable. These gently orient individuals toward a condemnation and eventual abandonment of the "sticky norm." Where laws are not seen as addressing a "real problem", even law enforcers may be reluctant to apply them. For instance, in the case of domestic violence in Uganda, the police often advise victims to reconcile rather than following up with prosecution (Kahan, 2000).

### 3.4 Social Norm Change

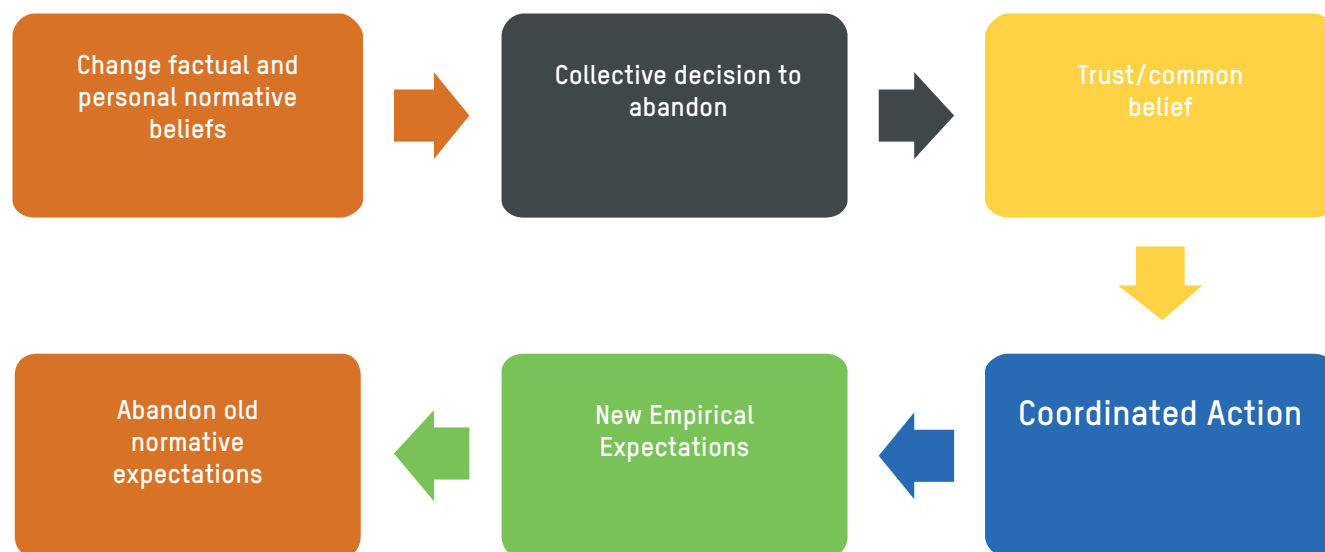
Altering social norms is a complex and long-term process. As such it requires an enabling environment, at multiple levels. Interventions targeting social norm change must be participatory, inclusive of positive alternative messages and must be carried out holistically. A critical review of the literature produces a number of frameworks for social norm change. However, this study chose to highlight three; Bicchieri's, DFID, and the Dynamic frameworks for social norm change.

## Bicchieri's Framework for Social Norm Change

Bicchieri explains that individuals must first recognize that there are problems with the current norm. Here, people might have good reasons to change, but they do not actively voice them. However, those who present the new information about the norm must be trusted. The source of the new information must be a recognized expert or a trusted authority with no obvious mysterious motives. The source must be credible and authoritative, even such a source may lose credibility if people disagree with the message. This means it should be a coordinated effort involving all credible, authoritative and trusted people and sources of information to change the norm.

To change a norm, there must be new empirical data. However, no amount of empirical evidence, per se, will change a moral normative belief. These are usually deeply held values, such as honor, purity, fairness, or justice. What usually happens is that people can change the embodiment of these values. To change these beliefs, the facts themselves must be changed. When facts significantly change, this change may induce a big shift in people's personal normative beliefs and, eventually, social expectations. Important to note is, changing personal normative beliefs is not strictly necessary to abandon a social norm. One may still be convinced that marriage would be the best option for young girls, but realize that the social and economic constraints have changed. Now, one observes that most girls get an education, find jobs, even husbands (Bicchieri, 2017).

**Fig. 1. Bicchieri's Framework for Social Norm Change**



*Source: Cristina Bicchieri, 2017*

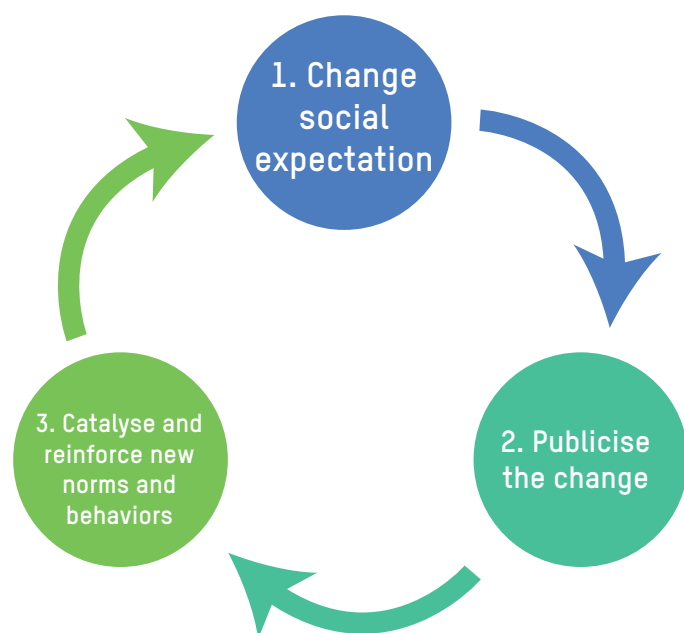
## DFID Framework for Social Norm Change

This framework proposes a three stage process that a program should adopt in-order to effect social norm change. First, the program must change social expectations regarding the behavior within the reference group. This could be done through: raising awareness about inaccurate beliefs, if any, so as to dismiss misconceptions; shifting individual attitudes towards harmful behavior so as to weaken existing norm; promoting public debate and deliberation around the norm; promoting a positive alternative; and providing opportunities for public and collective change.

At the second stage, the program should publicize the change. This could be done through: rigorous publicizing of role models and the benefits of the new behavior; there should be a deliberate attempt to avoid reinforcing the negative behavior; and the program should develop a diffusion strategy to catalyze broader societal change.

At the third stage, the program must work towards catalyzing and reinforcing new positive behaviors and norms through: providing opportunities for new behavior; and creating new rewards (e.g. creating a sense of belonging to a group of early adopters endorsed by aspirational role models and ambassadors) and sanctions (through Legal and policy change) (DFID, 2016).

**Fig. 2. DFID Framework for Social Norm Change**

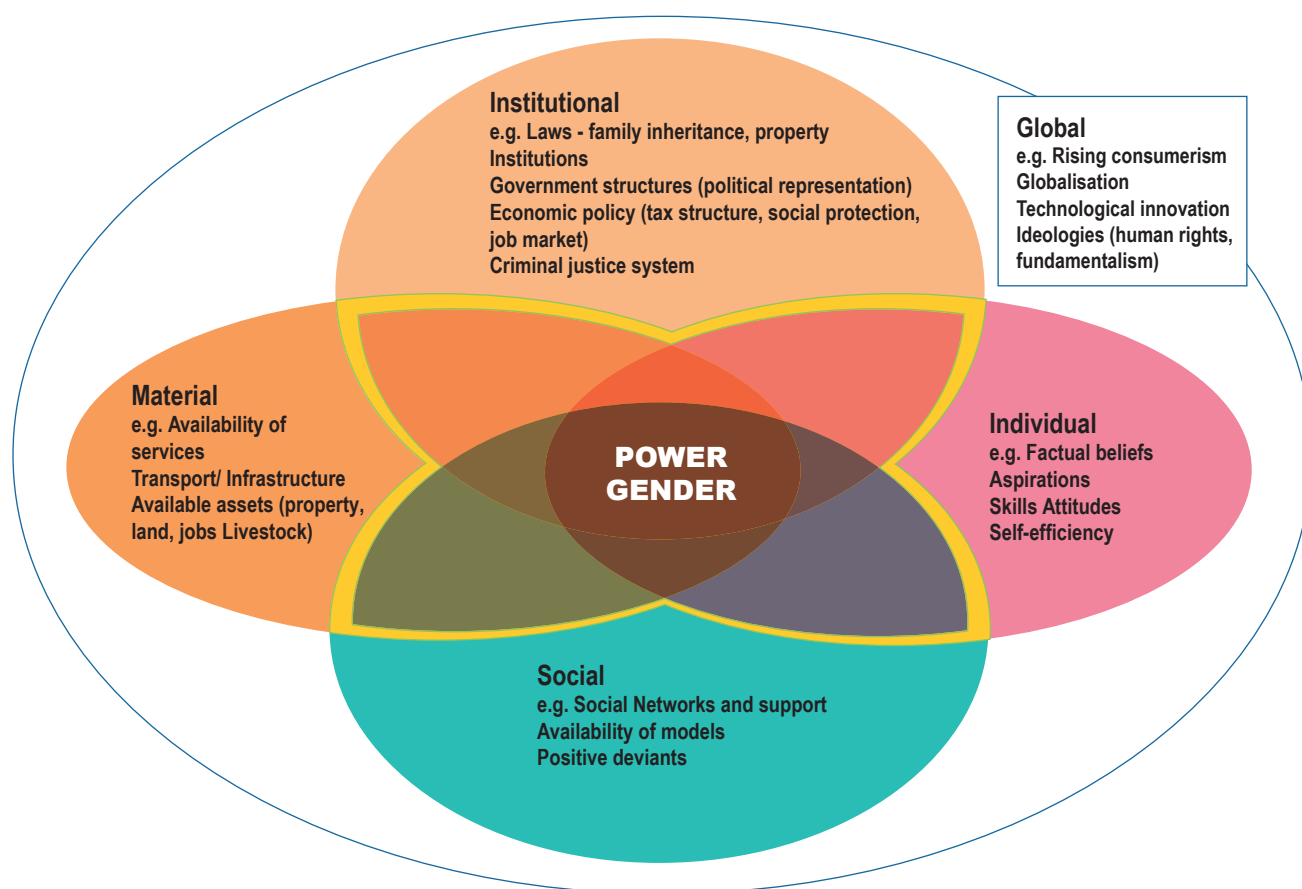


*Source: DFID, 2016*

## The Dynamic Framework for Social Change

The dynamic framework “encourages practitioners to look at the dynamic interactions between different domains of influence and how those interactions contribute to harmful practices. It helps to recognize, in particular, the combined influence of various factors in each domain, suggesting that interventions should aim to achieve cooperation with other actors working at different points of influence”. In respect to social norms, the framework encourages practitioners to recognize the multi-faceted potential of working with norms at both the individual, collective, and institutional levels. This implies that “norm-based strategies should be located within the wide array of factors that must be considered when designing prevention programs” (Cislaghi & Heise, 2018).

**Fig. 3. The Influence of Social Norms Visualized on the Dynamic Framework**



Source: Cislaghi, B. & Heise, L. (2018)

## 4. Theoretical Framework

### Social Norms Theory

Social norms theory is premised on the understanding that individuals are not isolated nor are their actions and opinions from the people that surround them. Decisions about what to believe and how to behave are not made in a vacuum, but rather one's perception about what others do and what others expect one to do can have a strong influence on how that person chooses to act (Denny & Nkwankwo, 2015).

Bicchieri labels these empirical expectations (beliefs about what others do) and normative expectations (beliefs about what others think one should do). To Bicchieri, people would opt to conform to a norm if both these social expectations are in place (Bicchieri, 2006).

Social norms are maintained by social influence that is by “anticipation of social approval or disapproval for one's actions, also called positive and negative sanctions”. Individuals that would opt not to observe a given norm would face backlash. This usually entails “losing or conferring power and status in the community” (CARE, 2017).

### The Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) Framework

The study employed the Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) framework. This was critical in identifying key components of the social norms of interest; the empirical expectations, normative expectations, sanctions, sensitivity to sanctions and exceptions (see table 1 below).

**Table 1: Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) Framework**

Components of a norm	Definition
Empirical Expectations (EE)	What I think others do
Normative Expectations (NE)	What I think others expect me to do (what I should do according to others)
Sanctions	Opinion/reaction of others (to the behavior) Specifically others whose opinions matter to me
Sensitivity to sanctions	If there is negative reaction from others (negative sanction) would the main character change their behavior in future? Do sanctions matter for the behavior?
Exceptions	Under what circumstances would it be okay for the main character to break the norm (by acting positively)?





OXFAM



## METHODOLOGY

## 4.1 Overall approach

The study adopted a qualitative phenomenology design. The decision to adopt a qualitative approach was guided by the DFID guidance note on social norms which clearly articulates that “the easiest way to identify the presence of social norms is through qualitative research and conversations with local level stakeholders. Qualitative methods provide an opportunity to discover some of the nuances and specific contexts in which social norms operate” (Scott et al., 2016). A qualitative approach supports constructing of social reality, pays respect to cultural meanings, it is interactive, quite sensitive to context and the researcher is not detached from the study (Barbour & Scostak, 2005).

The study focused on four types of violence namely; physical, sexual, economic, and bride price related violence. The decision to focus on these types was reached through a discussion between the client (UWONET & Oxfam Novib in Uganda) and Applied Research Bureau and was largely informed by the lack of social norm information on these particular types of violence.

## 4.2 Study Sites

This research was carried out in the 7 districts of Lira, Arua, Isingiro, Kabarole, Kamuli, Kotido, and Kampala. The final selection of study districts was based on a regional representation criteria.

## 4.3 Study Participants and their Selection

The study targeted participants at different levels (please see table 2 below for detail).

**Table 2: Study Participants**

Data collection method	Participants
Focus group discussions	-Youth, 15-24 (girls and boys) -Adults (women and men)
In-depth Interviews	-Survivors of violence specifically physical, economic, sexual, and bride price related violence -Women & girls with disabilities



<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Local leaders</li> <li>-Staff from NGOs/CBOs addressing VAWG</li> <li>-Cultural leaders</li> <li>-Religious leaders</li> <li>-Law enforcement officers</li> <li>-Representative from the association of women judges</li> <li>-Representative from the Uganda Women’s Parliamentary Association (UWOPA)</li> <li>-Representatives from the ministry of gender labor and social development</li> <li>-Staff from the community based services department</li> <li>-A Social media influencers</li> </ul>
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## Selection of Participants

The study participants were selected using non-probability sampling procedures. This was done purposively. At the community level, community informants such as Secretary for women affairs, Secretary for children affairs, para-social workers, members of child protection committees, as well as staff of Non-Government Organizations/Community Based Organizations that handle VAWG were contacted to identify women and girls that have undergone violence/abuse. These served as starting points in the identification of the study participants at the community level.

### **4.4 Study Sample**

The precise number of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), and Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) was largely determined by the principle of data saturation – where inclusion of any other respondent was not adding any new information on social norms and VAWG. The study comprised of 28 FGDs with youth 15-24 and adults; 35 in-depth interviews with women and girls survivors of violence, including 7 with disabilities; 29 interviews with local leaders, staff from NGOs/CBOs, cultural leaders, religious leaders, law enforcement officers, a representative from the association of women judges, a representative from the Uganda Women’s Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), a representative from MGLSD , staff from the Community Based Services Department and a social media influencer (see Annex 1).

### **4.5 Data Collection Methods**

## Literature Review

An initial review of literature was carried out by the Policy and Research Coordinator of Oxfam in consultation with partners and critiqued, strengthened by a consultant.

The study also included the assembling of a number of documents for review to further strengthen what was available.

### Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs were held at community level with adult and youth/adolescent community members. Each FGD was facilitated by two members of the research team – one to moderate the discussion, and the other to take notes. Separate FGDs were held with male and female participants. The research team sought consent of adult study participants while for adolescents within childhood years, the consent of their parents/caregivers was obtained and followed by their individual assent. With the consent (for adults) and assent (for children) of FGD participants, the discussions were audio recorded. FGD guides were used to facilitate the group discussions. The FGD guides included vignettes of hypothetical scenarios that helped in diagnosing whether a norm exists and effectively elicit beliefs and expectations. These were utilized because the questions that were being asked were socially sensitive and subject to social desirability issues (Finch, 1987).

### **In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)**

In-Depth Interviews were conducted with women and girls (including persons with disabilities) that have been abused. The intent was to explore individual unique experiences of abuse/ violence. In-Depth Interview guides were used to facilitate the discussions.

### **Interviews**

Un-structured interviews were conducted with local leaders, staff from NGOs/CBOs addressing VAWG, cultural leaders, religious leaders, law enforcement officers, a representative from the association of women judges etc. (see table 2 above). The intent of having such interviews was to have an understanding of the specific context and specific nature of the norm and exactly when it operates among whom, and how interpretations of these social norms influence policy and practice (Ibid, 1987). With the consent of participants, the discussions were audio-recorded. Interview guides were used to facilitate the interview.

## **4.6 Data Analysis**

The study employed the framework approach to qualitative data analysis. The approach takes on a two-step process; data management and interpretation.

The study carried out data management through applying a theme based approach. Codes and categories were developed by considering each line of 2 selected transcripts for each type of violence, in an attempt to find out areas of agreement (social approval) and contention (disapproval). Key phrases were highlighted and comments written in the margins. Key phrases were summarized using the participants own words. Categories were then developed from the key phrases. It is from these key phrases that a coding matrix was generated. The coding matrix and transcripts from which the matrix was developed were then reviewed by the principal investigator. Any additions to the matrix were highlighted in yellow and notes added within the margins. The matrix was shared with experienced qualitative researchers who engaged in the review of the rest of the transcripts, and in the process developed additional categories (inclusive of areas of agreement and contention on issues). The team then reviewed the existing areas of approval and disapproval and grouped together those that were similar to form initial themes. Subsequently descriptive and explanatory accounts were developed out of the coded data.

#### 4.7 Ethical Issues

Ethics in this study were framed around series of relations and responsibilities, namely: relations with and responsibilities towards research participants; the Ugandan government; and the wider society.

The ethical commitment to informed consent and assent was held in high regard within this study. All responses given by participants in the study were treated with utmost confidentiality. Study participants were informed of this. The privacy of potential participants was protected as far as is practicable. The real names of the participants were not used to identify the participants and limited information about the location of the participants was used. Potential participants were informed of their freedom to withhold information they might have considered sensitive or that which would make them uncomfortable to discuss. Even where participants had already consented to being interviewed, they were informed that they could choose not to answer particular questions. All interviews took place in venues that offer privacy.

Other ethical concerns e.g. securing permission from the local authorities (formal permission being sought from the Chief Administrative Officer); periodical review of the ethical capabilities of the research team; adapting a gender lens in allocating interviews/ FGDs to research assistants were put into consideration.

## 4.8 Study Limitations/Challenges

- The study employed a cross sectional methodology which does not allow the utilization of a life cycle approach that permits the mapping of the process of social norm change. Oxfam and partners should consider implementing a research project employing such a methodology if they are to properly document the social norm change process.
- Some of the in-depth interview participants initially identified in Kampala and Kabarole asked for payment in return for the information that they were to provide. They were thus disqualified from the study. This implied looking out for other participants which lengthened the earlier planned data collection timeline.





## STUDY FINDINGS

## 5. Introduction

There are several types of VAWG, however this particular study focused on physical, sexual, economic and bride-price related violence. Like other forms of violence, these particular types are situated with and shaped by social norms. This section presents the social norms that promote physical, sexual, economic, and bride-price related VAWG.

### 5.1 Social Norms that influence Physical Violence

#### A man beats a woman under given circumstances

Study participants across the study districts thought that men beat their wives/live-in partners under particular circumstances. For example, women that cannot fulfil or fail to fulfil their ascribed gender roles are punished. The study participants did not view this sort of act as physical violence but a means of disciplining or instilling discipline.

Some women do things which keep telling the man, please beat me, please beat me, most women are un-tidy – the house is all disorganized, the bedroom, the compound. You find that by the time you were getting married he was very clean, but you want to force him to become un-tidy. So he beats you up – Female youth FGD participant Kabarole

There are limits to what counts as “disciplining”. It is rather controlled and expected to achieve a given outcome, a woman recognizing her mistake and consequently meeting the different gender expectations.

What happens in a home is controlled and we discipline our wives. We don’t beat to hurt but to discipline. We have to punish them so that they get to the correct path – Male FGD participant Kamuli

Some male participants, particularly from Isingiro, interpreted this act to mean a display of love and affection. It was explained that it is only someone that cares that will point out someone’s wrong doings and punish her for engaging in such behavior.

If a child you loved did something bad wouldn’t you punish her? You do because you love her – Male FGD participants Isingiro. Women say that if their husbands don’t beat them, they will not be certain if they love them – Key Informant UWOPA

### The justification for one to “discipline” the woman is also embedded within proverbs.

Spare the rod and spoil the child... one should punish one who deserves to be punished, it is like correcting someone who gets onto a wrong path, this is where beating a woman is acceptable – Youth male FGD participant Isingiro

The decision to “discipline” is often not a one off, it rather happens after a series of demands for one to change. It could also be out of the continued commentary from the man’s close network on the spouse’s behavior that contrasts the set gendered expectations. The man then rather decides to “discipline” the woman for bringing unto him shame.

It is never an easy decision... your friends could keep on talking about your wife and how she is behaving like a young girl who does not know what is expected of her. So it reaches a stage when you feel ashamed being with your friends because at one point they will comment about how your wife behaves. So it is wise to beat her so that she changes – Male FGD participant Kampala

This mostly happens after a number of interactions with the woman on the same. When she fails to heed to the request, the man decides to discipline her – Interview with Cultural Leader, Arua

The act of disciplining is expected to happen within the home even in instances where transgression of gendered expectations happened beyond the confines of a homestead.

So when she continues quarrelling I ignore her and when we both return home I beat her – Male FGD participant Isingiro

Male youth study participants, specifically from Kamuli, were of the view that wife beating was a fairly new innovation that came out of the diminishing role of the structure (paternal aunties) meant to counsel daughters in union. It was opined that the paternal aunties largely limit their role to preparing women for marriage and not providing counsel to them when in marriage. As a result, the men are left with no other corrective measure than beating their spouses.

They used not to beat women in the past as it is now days. If a woman annoyed a man they would call her Aunt who would advise the woman. But these Aunties are no longer interested in counseling their daughters, they only prepare them for marriage. So the man has no other choice but to beat the woman – Male Youth FGD participant Kamuli



Even though it's a norm for a man to beat their spouse, doing so was perceived shameful by some men. They thought that this would dent their image among their friends, family and the community. When they choose to talk about what happened they rather deny beating the woman.

I think Fred is going to tell his friends that he beat his wife. He would rather say that we had a misunderstanding and then I decided to leave the home and come to you so that I cool down – Male FGD participant Lira

In instances where it is visible that the spouse was beaten, the man could lie about what really happened so as to justify his act. He could choose to blame the woman for engaging in immoral behavior (e.g. extra marital affairs, theft) so as to gain sympathy.

If it was I, I would say that my wife stole my money or I found her with another man. People will then listen to me... they will be on my side – Male FGD participant Arua

It should however be noted that men often don't lie to their parents when asked of why they beat their spouses. They say out the truth. This is not the case when the interaction is with the spouse's family. They say out what would be acceptable to the parents.

Most of the married people, about '80%' tell their parents the truth... But they can't say the same to the wife's parents, they find a good reason to tell her parents – Female FGD participant, Isingiro

There are male study participants who were of the view that there was no ground on which wife beating is acceptable. They did acknowledge that this could happen however advised that men should desist from engaging in such acts.

It is not a good thing at all and there isn't any reason one should give for engaging in it. I advise my fellow men not to beat their wives – Male FGD participant Kampala

### Experience of physical violence is a domestic matter that should not be shared

Across the study sites, study participants were of the view that communities disapprove of married/cohabiting women that share their experience of physical violence (and other types of violence).

The act of physical violence is known to bring shame to the family. The couple would have transcended the ideals of a good family, one that lives in harmony. Such an experience is

rather kept a secret. One of the study participants would cite a Luganda proverb “eby’omunju tebitootoorwa, wabula bibeera bya munju” literally translated as what happens in a home should not be said out, to emphasize the fact that domestic matters should not be shared.

Family matters are usually considered private ... They always say, ‘a woman should not tell the whole world what they are going through’ – Survivor of Violence Kampala

However, women often transcend the stated norm as they share their experience with persons whom they can confide in. Others report their experience to the law enforcement officers. Notably, often the persons with which the experience is shared reiterate that this is a domestic matter that should not have been shared in the first place and ask of the woman to handle the issue with the spouse.

I did talk to a few people in our community about my marriage issues, that is my mother and some other old lady who happened to be my neighbor. She still told me that such matters are not supposed to be talked about with anyone. I did cry and suffered in silence – Survivor of Violence Arua

Other persons with which one confides in rather blame the woman for what happened to her. This is common when the woman transcended given gendered expectations. The person (s) confided in, specifically family members, could choose to visit the man and apologize on behalf of the family for the behavior of the woman and make promise that she will become a better spouse.

If you are beaten for being “big headed”, they will just send you back to your marital home claiming that you were in wrong. They will even come home and apologize to the man for sending him someone who cannot behave well – Female FGD participant Kampala

In instances where the person who was confided in reaches out to the man, it is possible that the man would physically abuse the spouse. He would blame the woman for revealing what is happening within their home but also shaming him. This could force the woman into choosing to keep silent about her experience when she does through another episode of violence.

Whenever my neighbor talked to my husband about what I had told her, he would become more aggressive. He would severely beat me up and told me to stop shaming him. I then decided to keep quiet, I could not tell anyone – Survivor of Violence Arua

Men who chose to share their experience as perpetrators of abuse are often sympathized with and their gesture interpreted as an act of courage. This is because men are thought about as persons that never disclose what is happening in their life and only do so if the case has got to the extreme. As they do share their experience, the men justify their engagement in violent behavior and women are faulted for leading the man into perpetrating abuse. The blame is also extended to the family for not raising up their daughter well.

If a man reports... then just know that the girl's family did not groom her well and that is the reason as to why the man is beating her up – Male FGD participant Kabarole

It should be noted that there are circumstances under which one can break the norm. It could be acceptable for a woman to share their experience when acts of violence continue or when the kind of abuse being inflicted on the woman goes beyond that that is socially acceptable to that that threatens her life. There are however limits on who to share the experience with, elders from both the woman and man's family.

But if a man continues beating her up, it is okay for the family to get into their matters. And by the way some men beat up women as if they want to kill them, if that happens then the family would be right to come in to rescue the woman – Male FGD Participant Arua

### No one should intervene in a marital matter

It is a common perception across the study sites that “outsiders” should not intervene in any matter between married persons. Literally physical violence (and other types of violence) towards a married/cohabiting woman by the spouse is a private matter that does not call for the intervention of the “outsider”. If the woman views her experience as violent and unfair, she is expected to seek audience with the spouse, talk about and resolve the issue at hand. She is rather not expected to call for the intervention of the outsiders and neither are outsiders expected to intervene in a “small” matter, as one of the male FGD participants put it, ‘a rather small matter that does not require another person's intervention’.

There are instances when someone decides to intervene. Often, men interpret this as an act aimed at destroying or disrupting family relations and the blame is often shifted to the woman even in instances when she was not aware of this person's intention to intervene in the situation.

Whenever the chairpersons would come in to talk about what was happening to me, that man would complain that the chairman wanted to destroy our relationship... he would also blame me, that I was the one who asked the chairman to confront him, yet I was not the one – Survivor of Violence, Kabarole

It is common for law enforcement officers to intervene in the matter. However, often their role is not to bring to book the perpetrator but to reconcile the two parties. The woman is encouraged to find it within her to forgive the spouse. In cases where the woman requires medical attention, the spouse is required to meet the health bills until the woman regains good health.

When married the members of the community will just keep quiet because it's their family business – Female Youth FGD Participant, Kotido

If it was between you and your husband, the officer will just say aah, aah, you go back to your husband's home – Female FGD participant, Isingiro

However, this should not be interpreted to mean that community members including men condone the act of physical violence. There are sections of the community that hold onto an understanding that abusing a woman is not acceptable. They rather encourage men to desist from any kind of violence. They are also willing to intervene if both parties, specifically men request for their intervention.

Generally here, people don't encourage any form of violence against women and girls, though they don't normally intervene or interfere unless when asked to do so by the parties involved – Interview with Cultural Leader, Kabarole

There is no time when physically abusing women and girls become acceptable, never – Male youth FGD participant, Kamuli

There are also exceptions under which one is allowed to break the norm. In instances where violence persists, it's expected that elders within both the woman and man's family intervene, though their role is to reconcile the two parties so that they live on harmoniously.

When a man beats you today, the other day and the other week, your family can call onto his family and they talk to the man to see that this does not happen again – Female FGD Participant, Lira

## A woman should tolerate physical and other forms of violence

The study findings across the study districts reveal that communities expect women to tolerate physical and other forms of violence perpetrated by the spouse. The tolerance to violence is a comment on how well a woman was prepared for marriage by the paternal Aunt. Paternal Aunts are expected to encourage women to be strong and brave as they go through acts of violence. The intent is to take care of children but also to have children grow with their father.

A woman that is able to keep into such a relationship is one who was prepared well by the Senga (paternal auntie). You have to be there for your children, another woman cannot take care of them as well as you could do – Survivor of Violence, Arua

When women confide in someone about what is going on, they are reminded on what is expected of a woman, to be resilient. In instances where a woman decides to leave the homestead, she is advised to be resilient for the sake of raising her children and preserving the family, and family honor. They are also promised that the situation will change in the nearby future. This hope further builds their resilience to violence.

I talked to my mother and told her about the situation I was going through and she advised me to stay in marriage and take care of the children. I also talked to the chairman, he also said the same, stay in marriage, I was really abused, I was tortured but I was strong – Survivor of Violence Kamuli

There are women who finally decide to leave the abusive relationships. These however are often blamed and ridiculed for their decision. This is even worse for those that leave children with their spouses. They are labelled as irresponsible mothers and often reminded that another woman would be married and she would not care for her children as she would.

I did leave that relationship. I could not tolerate it anymore. The problem was that I left my children with the man. My mother kept on blaming me for that... she would tell that that man would marry soon and the woman would not treat the children well – Survivor of Violence, Kampala

However, some fathers to the mistreated women would welcome their children back home and often have their back in case other family members blame them for what happened.



Truthfully my father was happy that I finally decided to come home... one day he found my brother blaming me for what happened and he asked him never to think of me in that way – Survivor of Violence, Kampala When I knew that my child was being mistreated, I asked her to come back home. She took some time to decide to but she finally did – Male FGD participant Lira

Female study participants that had gone through abuse were against the idea that one should tolerate mistreatment. They would say that the promise that men would change is ideal. Those that finally left the abusive relationship also realized that they could start new relationships and contrary to what was being said, their partners were providing good care to their children.

You should not wait, if you see that this is common, it is better you leave, men never change – Female FGD participant Isingiro

My Ssenga (Paternal Aunt) kept on telling me that children need a father to grow, she thought that other men could not be fathers to my children... I left, got a new man and is taking care of my children – Female FGD participant, Kabarole

### Women and girls have to behave in a way that upholds men's domination

Women and girls are expected to behave in a manner that upholds male domination within the domestic and public spaces. A cultural leader in Isingiro did refer to men as “kings” in and out of the home. They are entitled to respect and obedience.

Women are vested with a responsibility to see that their behavior towards a man is respectful and cognizant of the fact that men are superior. This has to be displayed within all daily interactions. Any behavior that undermines male domination calls for an aggressive response specifically physical violence. Lack of recognition for male domination is also a sufficient and an acceptable justification for physically abusing a woman and or girls. When a woman chooses to return to her family following physical abuse and it's known that she disrespected her spouse, the family is expected to arrange for her return and apologize to the man for poorly raising their daughter.

When I try asking her she responds arrogantly and you know what comes next, a beating. You slap her once or twice because of disrespect – Male FGD participant Kamuli.

She was not respecting me at all, I beat her and she went to her family. The father called and I explained what happened, the father apologized to me and sent her back -- Male FGD participant Lira

When a woman challenges the status quo and goes through violence, she is blamed for what would have happened to her.

Sometimes girls are the ones that bring about being physically abused, they want to be our superiors – Youth male FGD participant Kamuli

Male FGD participants across the study sites would reiterate that at no point should a man tolerate any form of disrespect from the woman.

She disrespects you, you discipline her – Male FGD participant, Lira

No compromise when it gets to that, you show that you are powerful, I show you what it means to be a man – Male FGD participant, Arua

It's hard to find a man who can tolerate such, what follows is a slap – Male FGD participant Kampala

### Payment of bride price implies transfer of rights of control and ownership

Payment of bride price symbolizes a transfer of rights of control and ownership of a woman from her family to the man. The man will now be responsible for the wellbeing of the woman but also approve of the decisions she makes, discipline the woman in case she engages in something not expected of a wife/woman. The woman is also cognizant of this fact and is expected to be submissive to the man. Submissiveness entails agreeing with the man's wishes at all points in time even when you hold onto a differing view. Sections of society expect that at no point should a woman disrespect a man that paid bride price. In instances where disrespect is shown, a man is known to discipline the spouse. Disciplining of this type is properly defined. It has limits. The man is not expected to injure the woman.

When bride price is paid, he has the right to beat me but not to the extent to injuring me – Female Youth FGD participant Kotido

Ladies are usually seen as belonging to the man. A woman whose dowry or bride price has been paid becomes his property – interview with cultural leader Arua

It was reported that as men beat their wives, they remind them of the items that they offered to their families.

Some men will get angry and beat the woman and as they do they tell them of how much they took to her family – Male FGD participant Kampala

Women felt offended by the fact that men often reminded them of the items they took to their families and were wishful that these could be returned and finally leave this relationship. Study participants from Isingiro, Kabarole and Kotido were particularly troubled with the fact that items shared were so valuable that their families could not afford to return them. This kept them in abusive relationships.

You get to think of the things they brought, cattle... and our fathers cannot allow to give them back, so you keep on with that man because of that – Female FGD participant Kotido

In our culture, someone is expected to bring cows, not 1 or 2 but about 5. So when you want to separate with the man, he will ask you for his cows... truthfully where you will get them – Female FGD participant, Isingiro

This however does not mean that all men (and their families) demand for the bride wealth back. They rather see the leaving of the woman as an opportunity for a fresh beginning.

I was really fed up with her, the moment she left, I was relieved... some asked that I ask for my cows but I no longer cared about that – Male FGD participant Isingiro

### Men and women perform different roles

A man and woman are expected to play different but complementary roles within the community and in particular the homestead. In instances where one cannot meet a given role, he or she is ridiculed and labelled less of man/woman, more of a child. Men usually respond violently when they are reminded of their responsibility. On the other hand, women are punished for not performing a given role.

Men choose to booze and come home to demand for food from women, yet most don't leave money to buy food. Once they don't find food, they get angry and when reminded that they didn't leave money behind, they at times end up beating their wives – Interview with religious leader Kabarole

R7... A man can buy food and the woman fails to prepare it, even fails to bathe children, so why wouldn't one beat her

R6... My responsibility in a home is to look for money, my spouse has to fetch water

among other things, when I ask her why she has not fetched water, she responds arrogantly and end up beating her  
Male youth FGD participants, Kamuli

That said, study findings across the study sites indicate that women often perform gendered roles prescribed for men. However, it is not common for men to perform prescribed gender roles of women. Also, prioritizing completion of a male role does not provide guarantee that a man would not threaten to beat or beat a woman for not performing her ascribed role.

Our men are funny, you help him with finding food for the home but when he gets back home and there is no warm water, he still wants to beat you – Female FGD participant, Kampala

Some study participants, male and female, were however of the view that clear cut distinctions between roles was no longer feasible. The continued entry of women into the job market meant introduction of house helps that perform roles that were previously taken on by women.

Many families now have maids, so things like preparing warm water are dealt with by the maids – Female FGD participant Kampala

### Reporting case of violence to the police casts a bad spell onto the family

A woman who decides to report a case of physical violence and other types of violence to the police would have cast a bad spell onto her family. When asked to explain more about what they meant, they would explain that a woman would have put into prison the breadwinner and thus children and other household members would be bound for hard times. It is also seen as a way of constraining oneself from benefitting from a position of being a wife, someone that is supposed to be provided for by the man.

She told me if I report my husband and he gets imprisoned, I will have brought upon a curse on to my kids and family, and she advised me not to do it. She asked me who would provide for them – Survivor of Violence Kampala

Female study participants did note that women that often do so are discriminated against mainly by the peers of the spouse. Those that choose to seek support from their families but also the in-laws are reminded of their decision of having the breadwinner imprisoned. Some are told that the only support that can be provided is for children and this could only be got if they are out of her care.

I did report him to police and he was imprisoned... it reached a time when I needed help with the children but whoever I reached out to refused. They told me I was to blame for what is happening – Survivor of Violence Isingiro

Discussions with law enforcement officers would reveal that often women choose to withdraw the case when they realize that the children will not have a breadwinner. They were however concerned that this practice builds a cycle of violence within a home as men get to know that they can never be held accountable for their actions.

We get a lots of cases which are later withdrawn. It gets to their mind that this is the person that has been looking after the family – Interview with police officer Kamuli

## Discussion

The findings suggest that physical violence is a social norm. The communities hold onto a social expectation that a man has to hit a woman (specifically one in union) under particular circumstances. There are also sanctions once someone refuses to do so.

Evidence also suggests that there are social norms that underlie physical violence. These might not specifically relate to physical violence but contribute to the shared expectations around the man's use of violence. These norms commonly relate to the existing gender order (i.e. gender roles, gender relations, gender identity, gender stereotypes) framed within the patriarchal system. For these particular norms, physical violence towards women and girls is sanctioned when someone transgresses given behavioral expectations.

The narratives surrounding the different social norms suggest that physical violence is a domestic and private matter. The norms define the ideal place where matters of violence have to be resolved and by whom. This creates a sub-culture of silence around matters of violence. Women and men encourage this sub-culture out of fear of stigma and discrimination within the community. It was noted that behavioral rules that demand for silence were being enacted when the man's gender capital was severely threatened that is his dignity and respect within the community.

The narratives also suggest that norms prescribe physical violence as an appropriate means to discipline those that transgress gender expectations. The norms also describe how this type of violence should be enacted and defines limits within which it should be enacted. Furthermore, the norms conflate the concepts disciplining, love and affection which normalizes physical violence. There are also indications that values underlie social norms. Individuals thus comply with given social norms so as to uphold given values. The



interpretation of social norms is supported by proverbs. The norms also build the woman's resilience to violence as they define marriage as an ideal structure within which children are to be raised.

The study findings also reveal exceptional circumstances where women and girls can break given social norms. Someone would be allowed to report a case of violence once her experience goes beyond what is considered appropriate or when both parties to the union decide to. The elders could also intervene if the cycle of violence continues. However social norms limit the role of persons that intervene to that of reconciling the two parties and restoring the gender order.

A further review of the narratives reveals that women and girls transgress these norms. Some however fail to sustain the transgressions because of the different structural barriers for example lack of adequate financial capital to cater for the family. It is evident that women often proceed to withdraw criminal proceedings against the spouse which creates ground for continuity of violence. It is however also possible that the intensity and frequency of the violence could change as the perpetrator realizes that he could be held accountable for his actions. Others do sustain the transgressions with support of the family structure notably their fathers. It is then that women realize that different prescriptions made by social norms are mythical as they are able to get into new relationships where their children are well taken care of.

The study also notes that the manifestation of given social norms is changing- for example norms on gender roles, as house helps are supporting women in accomplishing their roles. However, the meaning of the norms has not changed as women still supervise the enactment of their prescribed roles.

## **5.2 Social Norms that influence Sexual Violence**

### **A married man is entitled to sex all the time**

A married man is entitled to sex at all times except when the woman is in her menses, has just given birth or sick. The woman is thus expected to meet this entitlement. Sex is known as one of the cardinal reasons as to why people look out for companions through marriage. Whether willing fully or not, a woman is expected to give into the spouse's request. Sex is also one of the parameters through which happiness in marriage is gauged. The lack of it or denial of the same could mean an unhappy relationship. It could also imply that the woman is promiscuous. Some study participants made it clear that there is nothing like marital rape, it is rather an act to remind the woman of her conjugal role. They would further

explain that the decision to do so is not by choice but rather logical since they would not want to cheat on their wives.

...the main reason that takes us into marriage is sex, how can you talk of refusal to give into a man's request – Female FGD participant Kampala

...it's your obligation as a woman to play sex with your husband – Woman councilor, Kampala

Some participants, including men, were however of the view that this should not be the case. They recognized the fact that beyond times when a woman is in her menses, giving birth or sick, there are other times when a woman could refuse to engage in sex. Many cited when she is stressed. Some would go on to explain that having sex with a woman who is disinterested is not enjoyable. They would also disagree with the argument that this prevents men from cheating. They rather find cheating as a choice that happens even when women give in to the requests for sex at all times.

Well that is what they say, but that should not be the case... women are humans as we are, they at times feel like not having sex and we should respect that... men claim that this would push them into cheating but men cheat even minutes having sex with their spouses – Male FGD participant, Lira

### Marital rape is a taboo subject

Marital rape is not a subject that one can talk about, even with the spouse. One of the study participants would comment that 'what happens in the bedroom, stays in the bedroom'. Sex is known to be sacred. Anything that seems to disrupt that sanctity is rather not talked about, even to the partner. Talking about it would recollect accounts of shame and a reminder that one is unhappy within her marital home. It is also a comment on how well a woman meets her conjugal role in a home. It is something that someone you confide in would rather not understand because married/cohabiting women are expected to please their husbands sexually. The person confided in would proceed to ask questions that point towards a woman being blamed for denying a man sex. Questions like, why did you refuse? Did you understand well the vows you made in church?

No one will understand me, people think when you are married, and it's a must you are supposed to please your husband in bed. I can't even tell anyone about it... Actually you are the first person I have told about it – Survivor of Violence Kampala

Some female participants would reveal that even though marital rape happens, there is no local concept that can be used to refer to the act. They thus find it hard to find the rights words to describe what would have happened to them.

The whole of my life, I have never heard of a word that is used to refer to that type of act... indeed it is so hard to find that one word to use to tell someone that your husband forced you into sex – Survivor of Violence Arua

Some male participants were quick to mention that this does not happen to women alone but also women force them into having sex. They would thus conclude that they would be returning the favor when women tell them that they don't want to have sex at that time.

You could be knowing but these women also force us into having sex... anyway you are married so you allow. So it comes a day when it's you who wants to have sex, there is no way I will listen to her that she does not want to have sex. I gave in to her request, she should also give in – Male FGD participant Kampala

### Women and girls should dress decently

Women and girls are expected to dress decently and this has been well defined. Decent dressing is also tied to who a good woman/girl is. Women and girls have been made to understand that they seduce men when they dress indecently. Sections of society also find indecent dressing to suggest that a woman wants to have sex with a man. Some men approach such a woman/girl with that in mind and if she refuses, the man could proceed to rape/defile her and justification shall be provided that the man was seduced. The close network and other sections of the community will blame the woman/girl for seducing the man through indecent dressing. The woman/girls family would also be blamed for raising such an indecent person.

People will say, she deserved to be raped, what was she showing? She was searching – Female FGD participant Lira

There is a time when they raped a girl... but there are people who said, that girl has been wearing short clothes, it's okay that she was raped" – Female FGD participant Kamuli

Presenting a justification of indecent dressing however is not sufficient to other population groups. Such sections of the population rather turn the blame onto the man for engaging in unacceptable behavior.

That is not good enough, that kind of man is so pathetic, how can you rape someone's daughter and blame it on dressing – Female FGD participant Lira

### Sexual activity that happens in given social spaces and at given time of the day cannot be termed as sexual violence

There are social spaces which are known to host sexual activities. Any woman/girl within this social space (particularly lodges) is known to have intent to engage in sexual activity. In instances where a woman/girl claims to have been raped/defiled in such social space, there would be doubts on how true her statement is and society shall turn the blame on her for being in a place where men's sexual desires are quenched. Women/girls are also expected not to move beyond a given time of the night. In instances where she is violated, society will shift a blame to her and ask why any sane person would move at a time where possibility of rape/defilement is high.

It is acceptable because the place you are working hosts men that go for a rescue... where they satisfy their sexual desires – Female FGD Participant Kamuli

Okay people will tell you that you're the one to blame or it is your fault because the time you were moving was late or that you sent your daughter when it was too late – Female FGD participant Kabarole

There were however differing views on the matter. Women and men did opine that such spaces are not limited to sexual activity but also to other activities including of economic nature. They find this norm as an excuse for those with a well-known intention to forcefully have sex with women. They would also blame their acts on being poorly raised up.

We always here that talk but really what kind of persons gives such an excuse. They are just poorly brought up – Female FGD participant Lira

Those people's intention is clear. They just want to rape women – Male FGD participant Kampala

### Man as a weaker sex when it comes to sex

Men are socialized as persons that are strong in all areas apart from sex. When it comes to sex, men are known to be a weaker sex. They are known to have a higher sex libido, known to be persons that can be easily seduced/tempted into having sex.

Society expects women to be cognizant of this fact and thus stay away from acts that would be interpreted as seductive for example wearing skimpy dresses.

... A man cannot withstand seeing woman's thighs, when he does so he would say, 'these are nice thighs'. So this forces a man into forcefully having sex – Female FGD participant Lira

... Men are put into a state of overthinking what could be inside those short dresses. They end up imagining themselves having sex with these girls and in the end rape them – Female FGD participant Kampala

Male study participants would agree to this social belief but would refer to it as a misgiving that is brought about by women and girls. They would blame the women and girls for putting them in such a position.

I totally agree. My friend these girls bring about that. They make you so weak to the extent that you get to your knees – Male youth FGD participant Isingiro

### Accepting a gift from a man/boy is confirmation of the woman/girl's willingness to have sex

Gifting women/girls is a common practice among men intending to begin a relationship with a woman/girl. Acceptance of the gift is rather interpreted as a confirmation that the woman/girl will reciprocate by allowing to have sex with the person that has provided the gift. Refusal to heed to the man's request for sex would generate thoughts and acts of rape/defilement. The man will continuously demand for the payment of the "debt" and would name call this person e.g. a de-toother, "someone who accepts a gift in pretense that she will it pay it back by having sex". A woman/girl who is sexually violated after such an occurrence would not make her case for rape/defilement since the man would just be picking up his "debt".

...The other thing is, sometimes a guy can spend a lot of money and time on a girl expecting sex in return but the girl refuses, so when this guy forces her into sex, this is totally understandable since he deserves a chance to at least collect his money he spent – Male FGD participant Kampala

...If she has taken money from the ten of us, we rape her and get our money, haven't you heard of 10 men raping one woman, that's how it happens – Male Youth FGD participant Kabarole

Female study participants recognized this as a common perception among men and boys. They would also caution married women never to accept gifts from any man as it will get a time when they demand for sex.

There is a time I accepted a rolex from some young boy. I ate it and thought that was the end. But since then he started making sexual advances yet he knew I was married – Female FGD participant Kampala

### Unmarried women/girls that are raped should marry the perpetrators or let go of what happened

Unmarried woman/girl that has gone through rape is expected to marry the perpetrator or let go of what happened. This was particular to Isingiro and Kotido. The explanation is that she has already shared her body with the man and is left with nothing to cover up. In Isingiro it was reported that the marriage process is facilitated/led by influential women within the village. In instances where the woman/girl did not conceive, she is asked to move on and forget about what happened.

....He has already raped you, you go and get married – Male FGD participant Kotido

.... Some women will say, he raped you but you didn't get pregnant – why don't you just ignore him? – Female youth FGD participant Isingiro.

### Men grow mature at a slower pace than women, it will reach a time when they behave as adults

Women and girls are told that men grow mature at a slower pace that they do. They should thus not be surprised to find a man engaging in an unexpected "childish" behavior. Women are asked to be patient with the man as he would change at a given point in time. Within times they act "childish", women are encouraged to forgive them and pray that they change. They are urged to be tolerant and promised that their tolerance will not go unnoticed. The man would appreciate her resilience at that point when he is mature. This would also be a basis for a happy union thereafter.

Was told to stay, that my husband will change some day and will thank me for staying with him in the tough times and for taking good care of my kids – Survivor of Violence Lira

She asked me to be patient and stay in my marriage and take care of my kids. She added that one day, this guy is going to grow up and he will change his ways and regret his behavior – Survivor of violence Arua



### Raping a woman/girl suppresses interest of other men

This was particular to Kotido where it is thought that forcing a woman into sex and it becoming known within the community would fend off other men that had interest in that particular woman. It is seen as an act of affection towards the woman and the man is expected to approach the family of the woman and ask for her hand in marriage. One of the participants would refer to it as the first step towards marriage.

Some friends think that they are preparing to get married in future. Raping a girl is an indication that she is already your wife and no other men can marry her – Female Youth FGD participant Kotido

It would require you to have sex with her first so that boys give up on their pursuits – Male youth FGD participant Kotido

The female youth participants however had preferences for whom would force them in such an act. They did prefer a handsome looking man and someone who was attending school.

R2... It happens, we cannot deny that but if at all it happens- I would wish that person is in school

R7... I agree with her, but also he has to be handsome

Female youth FGD participants Kotido

### A girl is ready for marriage when she starts growing breasts

This social belief was also particular to Kotido where growing of breasts is interpreted to mean more than just a normal development process to an indication that a girl is ready for marriage. There are instances where she is forced by her own family to have sex.

If the girl starts developing body parts like breasts, she can be forced by her family to have sex – Female FGD participant Kotido

The study findings however reveal that this practice is uncommon among families that live within urban areas. It was argued that these families are well aware of what the law prescribes and the implications for engaging in such a practice. Girls within these areas also had easier access to education which delays their entry into marriage.

Things are changing, we engage the communities and they know that this is not acceptable. Those that do, face the wrath of the law... so these girls stay in school until that time when they are ready for marriage – Interview with police officer Kotido

### Forcefully having sex with a disabled person is helping her out of her misery of sexual inactivity

Sections of society believe that disabled people have minimal to no chances of having a sex partner. In cases where someone forcefully has sex with woman/girl with disability, it would be explained that the man was just helping her out to have a feel of sex.

When they found out, some said that the man was just helping me out and that they should not blame him for what he had did – Survivor of Violence Lira

### Discussion

The study findings suggest that ritualized rape (particular to Kotido) is a social norm as there are expectations that a man/boy should rape a woman/girl. There are also sanctions in place. However other types of sexual violence (including marital rape and child marriage) are not social norms. They are however held in place by social norms, some of which are not specifically relating to sexual violence but contribute to the shared expectation around the man's use of violence. These norms are informed by the patriarchal system that prizes masculinity. The sanctions presented by these norms could also include other types of violence namely; physical and emotional. The study findings also present exceptional circumstances where given behavioral expectations can be suspended. A woman is permitted not to have sexual relations when in her menses, during post-natal period and when she is sick.

The narratives collected suggest that social norms normalize acts of sexual violence specifically marital rape. Marital rape is understood as an exercise of a man's right. They also present men and boys with rights to sexual activity but with no associated responsibilities. On the other hand, women are provided with responsibilities but with no rights. The norms also provide for circumstances where a man, in a patriarchal society, can be referred to as a weaker sex- easy temptation into sexual acts. The intention is not proclaiming domination of women or the two sexes being at the same level but to justify man's use of violence. The study observed strong contestation from men and women on what given social norms prescribe. These contestations were embedded within particular community values. This finding reveals that not all social norms are embedded in community values, some are rather in contradiction of the prized values.

The narratives also reveal changes in manifestation of given norms (though the meaning of the norm had not changed). This was particular to ritualized rape where girls did prefer perpetrators of rape of a given character. There is also adoption of alternative positive norms within given populations groups. This was also particular to Kotido where girls were no longer being married off when they started growing breasts. This was attributed to strict law enforcement and also introduction of education facilities within the communities.

### 5.3 Social Norms that influence Economic Violence

#### Possession of, control over and allocation of monetary resources within a household is a preserve of the man or husband

There is an expectation that a man possesses, controls and allocates monetary resources within a household. This implies that a woman is supposed to declare and handover her earnings to the man as she awaits for the man's decision on how the money could be spent. This norm more or less cut across all study sites.

If I want some money, he is the one to make that authorization. I will have to ask it from him – Female FGD participant Lira

In some communities, it was reported that there are gender-role reversals characterized by men relegating the breadwinning responsibility to women. In Arua and Lira for instance, women were said to actively engage in production and selling of market items such as dry cassava, sim-sim, vegetables, and other stuffs. While some men were said to complement their wives in breadwinning for the family, others rather felt relieved and left the responsibility to the wives. In the circumstance, men still assumed the responsibility of custodianship of the sales made by the women and decide on how to allocate this money. For instance, when a woman wants to go shopping, she has to request for the money from the man.

#### Women do (should) not own land

A woman/girl does (should) not own land. This was common across all study sites. In various communities, women do not or are perceived not to have the right to own land. Particularly, in cases of customary land tenure system where land rights are passed on from one generation to another within a clan system and following a patriarchal system, women and girls are left out. It was commonly pronounced that "traditional" fathers/men perceive that since girls will marry with time, they will find land wherever they marry. Thus they miss out on the shares from natal families.

Similarly, at their marriage destinies, they are discounted among those eligible to get a share of the family land of their husbands even upon the death of the husband on two accounts. First, they are not part of the husband's clan and thus considered ineligible for any share. Secondly, they are female who under the customary practice cannot become heirs to their husbands, something that would perhaps qualify them for inheritance of customary land.

The above notwithstanding, distinctions were made between women's and girls' right to access, utilize and own land. Access and utilization of land by women were more acceptable than ownership.

Generally, most women and some members of community were vehemently in support of women inheriting their husbands' land and property especially where the widow has children with the deceased, and have worked together to acquire the land and property in question.

First of all, she has remained a single parent so she needs support from the late husband's property to raise the children – Male FGD participant Kampala

Since the children are still young, she has a right to protect the children's property until they are old enough to understand and manage their property themselves – Female FGD participant Kabarole

However, the pressures from community leaders, family members and elders who are against women's inheritance frustrate them blatantly. Some of these consider that woman should only have accessibility and utilization rights but not necessarily ownership rights that could even enable them to lease or sell the land. Arguably, while in some cases the decisions of community leaders, family members and elders against granting the women full ownership rights are well intended and in the best interest of the children, in other cases they are selfish.

### Women should not work outside the domestic sphere

Women expect or are expected to work within the domestic sphere.

Just like men don't want their wives to own anything, they don't allow them to work beyond the home – Female FGD participant – Isingiro

I have a sister. she is dating some man. He once told her that when they get married – she will have to stay home as he works – Female FGD participants Kabarole

Arising from the above, the social norm that women's space is the domestic sphere reigns among some men. This form of economic violence becomes more pronounced where men believe that they can compensate their wives the money they should have earned at the workplace. This practice reduces women's space of interaction to the household. It also depicts lack of recognition of satisfaction that comes with work as well as other economic opportunities associated. These could take a form of acquisition of other skills essential for economic survival, and linkage to other livelihood opportunities.

### Women must respect and agree to their husband's financial and other decisions

Women are expected to respect and agree to their husband's financial decisions however bad the decision could be. Even in instances where a man decides to sell family land, the woman is expected to keep silent. Talking about the issue would be seen as being disobedient or disrespectful to the husband. Their silence is a sign of respect to the man.

Society's expectations of women in many ways situate women in a state of economic violence.

A man is a man, it does not matter what kind of decision he has made. A woman has to agree to it – Male FGD participant Kotido

...men are always right, we should always accept that – Female FGD participant Lira

R3... a woman's decision to be silent is a foundation of a good relationship since a good relationship is based on love and secrecy, so Lydia's decision of going silent is a foundation for a strong marriage

R7... they are men, they control everything in the family, they are on top so women should bend down, bow before them – Female FGD participants Arua

### Boys are more valuable to the birth family while girls benefit the husband's family more

The social norm that distinguishes the value of boys and girls to the birth family was found to expose girls to economic violence through denial of education opportunities. There was a widely held belief that boys are born to stay with the birth family while the girls are temporary as their stay with their parents and siblings is offset at marriage. The

girls are thus perceived to benefit their husbands and husbands' families more than their birth families. Thus, any decisions about investment are taken factoring this widely held belief. The violence unravelling from this norm becomes bare when it comes to allocating economic opportunities between boys and girls.

Parents also take girls to school but at times due to difficult economic times, the parents withdraw them from school as boys continue. In some cases, girls are asked/forced to take alternative paths e.g. hairdressing as the boys continue with their studies – Male FGD participant Kampala

Whereas vocational and apprenticeship training cannot be discredited as bad or inappropriate for girls, the fact that education opportunities are prioritized for boys against girls means a lot. The economic opportunities that the two paths (that of the boy versus for the girls) present may be very different in favor of the boys. Secondly, withdrawing the girls from school and or inducing them to join apprenticeship training could make them more vulnerable to early marriage, another form of VAWG.

### Women should not be included in making financial decisions

Sections of society think that women should be excluded from making financial decisions. This was premised on the shared view that women are a weaker sex and “mature late” when it comes to financial matters. Thus, it is a held norm that women should not be involved in making financial decisions unless they are proven mature to make sound financial decisions. The concern however, is there is hardly a clear procedure or parameter to determine maturity.

A woman can be above 18yrs but behave like a kid, they cannot even handle family properties left under them. So it's better to leave them out of such matters – Male FGD participant Kamuli

### Discussion

The study findings suggest that economic violence is a social norm as there are expectations that a man/boy has control over women/girls access to economic resources. These norms are deeply entrenched within the patriarchal system that prizes the man over the woman. The social norms are also closely related to community values which prioritizes the male species. The transgression of these norms also calls for various sanctions that could include other types of violence namely; physical and emotional. The study did not find any exceptions where one would be allowed to transgress norms underlying economic violence.



The narratives collected suggest that norms normalize economic violence within the community. The behavioral expectations suggested by these norms are meant to protect the patriarchal system. The norms also define the space where a woman should enroll her productivity, the domestic space. Women and girls constantly negotiate these norms. As a results, manifestation of given norms is changing, however the meaning is not. There is continued engagement of women beyond the domestic space, however largely men still control the decision making within the homestead. The study also observed contestation by men on particular behavioral rules (e.g. ownership of land by widows), however these contestations are frustrated by patriarchal structures i.e. elders, community leaders.

In respect to land, the social norms rather make land rights a sensitive and contentious issue in Uganda. The social norms and stereotypes in many ways situate men at an advantage and women at a disadvantage in access to, use, ownership of, control over, and decision-making about land. The findings are in congruence with available evidence suggesting that in Uganda, women's attempts to control, transact, and own land, are resisted and sanctioned by the community and the clan as misbehavior (Asiimwe, 2014). Accordingly, such women are judged as breaching the social norms and thus cannot anyhow be tolerated. Society further perceives and treats women who purchase land as "having 'sinister' intentions, using the land to run away from her marital home or as a place to 'entertain' other men". Again the practice of women owning land which also translates into power is construed as deviant and improper behavior since "proper" women are socially expected to be satisfied with what their husbands or other male relatives can provide them. They are further expected to take whatever is given to them with gratitude and teach their daughters to do the same.

The findings are further augmented by Kabahinda (2017), observing that social norms are blind to the fact that women as the primary users of land and provide the bulk of "non-contractible" agricultural labour in Uganda ought to have meaningful access, control, inheritance and ownership rights. Instead, norms position them under men's dominance of land including the majority of decisions related to land use and management (Burke and Kobusingye, 2014). This reiterates the belief/assumptions that women are dependent on men and cannot own land in their own right under customary tenure not only heightens the insecurity of women's land rights under customary law but also situates them as secondary land rights holders.

## 5.4 Social Norms that underlie Bride Price Related Violence

Payment of bride price is recognized under the law of customary marriages Registration Decree. In Uganda, as in many African societies, the customary practice involves payment in cash or property by groom and his family to the bride's family. It is considered symbolic, and marks the union of the two families, it is a symbol of friendship. Some perceive it as a way of thanking the bride's family for raising and taking good care of her; a form of compensation to the bride's parents for her absence; a sign of contract /commitment that a man would marry the girl and live with her; proof of the groom's ability to take care of the wife and the family; and a sign of generosity on the side of the man; a tool for cementing the marriage. For some of these reasons, the practice cuts across social classes defined by income, level of education, rural, urban, and across cultures and ethnicity. Hence, it forms a central feature in many of the marriages in Uganda in that even when the bride or groom in question may not believe in it, the parents and/or relatives demand for it as a matter of compliance with the customary obligation (Alupo, 2004).

Cherished as a form of social identity; a pillar for stabilizing marriages as the couple felt socially responsible and settled (Oboth, 2004); and an agent of improving the groom's and bride's family, the customary practice has in greater proportion come under scrutiny for various reasons. Alupo (2004) contends that even as the practice is seen to symbolize friendship, in reality it represents the transfer of productive and reproductive service to the man's family. Oboth (2004) identifies the custom with negative effects such as women being forced to live in a loveless marriage because the parents cannot afford to refund the bride-price in case she divorced. To some commentators, bride price is not only associated with violence against women but constitutes a form of violence in its right (Alupo, 2004; cf. Rees et al., 2017; Kaye et al., 2005; Oumo, 2004). Some concerns question the legality of the practice while others attend to the public health and human rights concern as well as the economic and social effects of bride price.

This study identified various social norms that underlie the practice of bride price;

### A woman has no right to leave the man's home after he has paid bride price

In the different study sites, it was widely held that once a man has paid bride price, the woman (wife) has no right to leave for her home in form of separation. In other words, the woman cannot initiate separation/divorce. Such a right is a preserve of the man.

If the man has not paid the bride price, you have the right of leaving that home, but not when he has paid the bride price – Female FGD participant Kamuli

Bride price thus reduces the woman to the physical and mental confines of the man/husband. By implication, it allows no fault lines through which woman facing violence can fall through to escape the violence.

...in the lay man's language she is your property – Male FGD participant, Lira  
Leaving means refunding the dowry which in most cases was partly used to organize the marriage ceremony and the remainder shared among the family members, relatives and neighbors.

This not only torments the individual woman but also her entire family. The fact that the family may be unable to refund the dowry, the message sent to the woman is to keep in that relationship at whatever cost. In some cases, violence grows to a point of death.

However, study participants cited cases where women whose bride price was paid decided to leave relationships as they found the condition no longer bearable. Some were forcefully picked from their marital homes by their families. In all cases that were cited, no man and neither his family demanded for the bride wealth. This was rather seen as a rational decision because demand for the bride wealth could preempt the family's decision to seek legal redress.

I know of a woman who had refused to leave the man, his father came by and took her away – Female FGD participant Kabarole

When you ask for it, the family will also take the case to police, so you better keep quite – Female FGD participant Lira

### Work and compensate what was paid as bride price

There is a social belief that bride price is a payment to the girl's family in compensation of all the contributions she would have made to her family but which have to be transferred to the husband's family. As such, bride price opens the door for subjection to hard work, which in some cases could be inhumane, in the name of compensating what the man's family incurred on bride price.

The groom expects his wife to work and compensate what was paid as bride price – Male FGD participant Kampala

The groom's parents want you to really work hard, but if you're not working, that's when they start abusing you, they can even suggest that the husband gets another woman – Female FGD participant Kamuli

The family of the man sometimes, even against the desire of the man (husband), subject the woman to a test in form of hard labor just to have her prove that she is worth the bride price paid. If she does not pass the test, the family advises the man to marry another wife. In some cases, the considered better wife is suggested to the man by the family members.

### If a man pays bride price, the woman must immediately start producing children

One of the expectations of the man's family that the woman has to bear with is having children as soon as possible when bride price is paid. Whereas even those for whom bride price has not or is yet to be paid are expected to bear children, the pressure is more enormous upon the women whose men have paid bride price. One study participant illustrates this;

When the man finishes paying the bride price, he expects that you're now going to produce for him children. Should it happen that you finish 1 or 2 years without a child, he will think you are barren and start mistreating you, and definitely the community will support him – Female youth FGD participant Kabarole

Notably, the insults are not hurled by just the husband but his family at large. As reported, some family members remind this woman that she did not come to "fill up the toilet" but to procreate. The more time unfolds without indications of a baby, the greater the pressure on the man (from his family) to get a second wife or to chase this wife with compensation of bride price.

### "Ekibegho" in Busoga

Related to the above, in Busoga, once a man pays bride price, it was reported he articulates his expectations to the woman and the woman's family. One of the expectations is the woman bearing children. Just in case the woman takes longer than expected to bear children or is not in agreement with the number of children the couple should bear or she bears children of the same sex particularly girls, some men push their way to get another wife but this time a niece to his wife. This is called "Ekibegho" in Busoga. While some study participants shared that "Ekibegho" is procured by wife for fear of a total stranger coming into the family as a second, third or fourth wife, it constitutes a form of violence against the woman. This is related to bride price in the sense that sometimes, the man may not be expected to pay more bride price especially if the man makes a strong case before his in-laws for taking a second wife from the same family.

### A man is free to do as he pleases once he pays bride price

Arguably, some men perceive that after paying bride price, they feel they are not indebted to anyone, not even their wives or the wife's family. Among other things, men feel they are free to even engage in extramarital affairs without being questioned.

There is that situation where you catch a man in wrong for instance cheating but instead of him being apologetic he beats you claiming you were spying his movements, claiming he paid you off and he can afford to pay off another woman in case you feel you cannot bear with his conduct – Female FGD participant, Lira

When you have paid bride price, there is no one to follow you in whatever you do – Male FGD participant Kotido

To this effect, bride price can be said to reinforce masculine and feminine positions in society which more often than not put the men at an advantage compared to women. It was unraveled that in some instances, some women justify abuse from men on account that they paid bride price.

Like for my case, since he (my husband) paid bride price, he has the right to beat me but not to a point of injuring or killing me – Female FGD participant Kotido

### A woman whose bride price has been paid must obey and respect her man to the latter

Bride price tilts status of the man and woman to a state of imbalance. Higher status and power are skewed towards men. It challenges any possible egalitarian marital relationship between men and women. It raises men to order givers and reduces women to order takers. As order givers, they set a frame of expectation within which women should fit. This includes where women can and cannot go, who they can and cannot visit, and so on. They go on to prescribe the punishments that any deviation from the frame of expectations attracts.

There are other men that when you go to visit your fellow women, he beats you, questioning you why you went wherever you went. Just because he paid bride price he wants you to keep home, no moving. He wants to rule you from home – Male youth FGD participant Arua

To some women this is intolerable and any attempts to question this social order as it would be interpreted as a sign of disrespect and undermining authority.

### Bride price must be returned in case woman chooses to separate from the man

Separating from a man would imply returning the dowry which in most cases was partly used to organize the marriage ceremony and the remainder shared among the family members, relatives and neighbors.

There are some cultures where they ask back the bride price that if a woman considers leaving marriage and goes back to her family, then they (girl's /woman's family) have to pay back regardless of the years that the woman spent in marriage and thus her current age. They have to pay back - Key informant, MGLSD

This not only torments the individual woman but her entire family. The fact that the family may be unable to refund the dowry, the message sent to the woman is to keep in that relationship at whatever cost. However, as earlier noted women leave relationships and bride price is never demanded for.

### A man is expected to pay bride price

When a man (and or his family) does not pay bride price, it would be a sign of disrespect to the girl's parents and family and that when a man (and or his family) does not pay bride price, he is regarded to have stolen/kidnapped the girl or woman. In such cases, some men would not like to be labelled so even when they do not believe in paying bride price, let alone having the means to do so. Such men reportedly would go out of their way to fulfill this social obligation and societal expectation. However, the burden is handed to the woman for whom bride price was paid involuntarily or even after incurring debts. These women were said to be victimized psychologically/emotionally, physically and economically. Economically, the women are turned into means of production (labour) without being accorded the right to control over the proceeds from the produce.

... at the time I was not doing well at all but agreed to go to their family... imagine I just borrowed the money. So when she came home I saw to it that she works so hard so that she also feels what I went through – Male FGD participant Kampala

### Girl's purpose in a home is to bring in bride price

This social belief came out strongly in Kotido. Girls were grown with a purpose of raising bride wealth. It is also known that girls collect more bride wealth when they are younger and thus it is better to marry them off early. Older girls are known to attract less bride wealth.



Sexual abuse in this community is acceptable to some extent, men say that they produce girls so as to get cows in return and they tend to marry them off early because when she grows bigger, less bride wealth will be got – Interview with representative, Cooperation and Development Kotido

## Discussion

Social norms that underlie bride-price create shared expectations around man's use of violence but also prescribe sanctions where violence is exercised on women. The study also did not find exceptions under which one can forego behavioral expectations related to bride-price.

The narratives surrounding social norms on bride-price related violence suggest that norms redefine the character of woman from human to an item (i.e. property). They also define a timeline within which one should complete given obligations e.g. procreating. The norms also define bride-price as a gift that has to be reciprocated through manual labor. The social norms are also closely related to values that define a good wife.

The study findings also provide indications of social norm change. The study observed that some men and their families no longer demand for the bride wealth from the family after separation. This is often done to avoid preempting the spouse's family decision to seek legal redress.

These findings find support from earlier studies. Oboth (2004) notes that parents and/or relatives demand bride price for clear reasons. In the traditional times but also in some contemporary rural societies, girls perform(ed) a number of gender roles such as producing food stuff from the garden, collecting firewood and water etc. Hence, as a girl left home for marriage, she left a vacuum seen through deprivation of the parents all the contributions she was making in the home. Bride price thus had to fill that vacuum. In contemporary times, some parents look at the exorbitant cost of raising their daughters and the investments made towards them. The parents and relatives thus reason that the bride will be transferring all her worth to the bridegroom's family hence the need for compensation. However, this payment/compensation is not free of consequences. According to Kaye et al. (2005), bride price indicates that a woman was "bought" into the man's household. This reduces her household decision-making roles, limits her independence and perpetuated unequal gender power relations.

## 5.5 Transmission and Perpetuation of Social Norms

### Socialization

When asked how they got to know of given social norms, the participants at most times mentioned their friends, parents, relatives, neighbors as persons from whom they learnt about a given social norm. A further description of how it happened would point towards the process of socialization.

Some indicated that right from infancy, they were or have seen parents treat their children in particular ways. One of the participants would make reference to the clothes parents tend to buy for their children. She would say that “a mother would buy a black or any other dark color clothe for her boy child, but when it gets to the girl child, she would buy pink, light blue and other light colored clothe”. She would note that parents that opt to buy dark colors for their children could be scolded and thus many decide to follow the trend of buying particular types of clothes for girl children.

Other participants would mention of the various behavioral expectations specific to the male and female child. They would reveal that as they were growing up, their parents assigned particular responsibilities to them. For example, for households that owned cattle, it was the sole responsibility of the boys to look after the animals. The girls were expected to wash the plates, prepare food, and wash clothes or any other task within the homestead. One participant would talk about how his father was all the time away from the home yet the mother stayed within to cater for the home. She would reveal that that made her understand that her role falls within a home and that of a man/boy is outside of a home.

It was also revealed that parents and other community members often offered rewards for given behavior. For instance, a young girl who could kneel and greet a man by the road side would be praised for being well-behaved. One that would not would rather be scolded and the family would be constantly blamed for raising such an ill-mannered child.

As children grow older, they happen to be introduced to other social spaces e.g. schools. There are several other behavioral expectations that are demanded from them within these spaces. But also the earlier learned behaviors could be reinforced or unlearned within these spaces.

When I was young I was told that women should sit when legs are closed. When I got to school, my teacher beat me for siting with my legs wide open. I learnt to keep them closed since – Female youth FGD participant Arua

When children attain the different stages of development, they are further encouraged or discouraged to act in particular ways that reflect given ethnic, gender or work identities. They start to categorize themselves as belonging to given groups that demand that they behave in particular ways.

### Ritualized behavior

When a child or an adult is going through the socialization process, his or her reference group could introduce him or her to given behavior (actions and utterances) that has to be rolled out within his or her daily interactions e.g. kneeling before an older person. This action/behavior is supposed to be performed in prescribed manner i.e. one would have knelt if his/her knees reach the ground, if that does not happen, one would not have performed the action. It is also expected that this action would be routinely repeated at each and every moment one meets an older person. In the instance that one fails to perform the action, he or she could face different sanctions e.g. being punished by the parents. Its repeated performance normalizes behavior and thus one can easily engage in it unconsciously.

Such routinized behavior/actions attract the attention of other people. These people could as well decide to perform similar behavior or imitate what someone is doing. The study participants were of the view that this was common among young children. However, a deeper discussion with the participants would reveal that indeed imitation does not stop in childhood. One of the participants would give an example of the former vice president of Uganda, Gilbert Bukenya who would imitate the actions of the president. Such a person would then encourage others to perform similar behavior through approval or disapproval of actions that differ from what he or she had got to learn.

### Sanctions and rewards through non-verbal behavior

Enacting sanctions and providing rewards are constituent parts of the socialization process and the performance of ritualized behavior. This has been highlighted in the above paragraphs. That said, the study found out that non-verbal behavior comes out quite strong in the transmission and continuation of social norms. Discussions from the field revealed that the manner in which someone behaves could trigger facial and other bodily expressions that would communicate one's approval or disapproval. In instances where the expression communicates disapproval, the individual starts questioning the facial expression and could as well seek for explanation from someone as to why his action collected such a response. What could proceed is the suspension of "alien" behavior and adoption of behavior that appeals to the majority.

There is a day I was moving in town, I had just come into this place. I did spit by the road, my, my - this woman gave me a very disturbing look. I went to my Muganda friend and told him about what happened. He told me that the Baganda don't do such... From then, I never spit by the road side - Male youth FGD participant Kampala

## 5.6 How Social Norms Influence Policy and Practice

The question of how social norms influence policy formulation was partly approached through selecting FGD participants from Kampala that we rather thought hold onto given social norms that were influencing VAWG. It was then presented to them select articles of the marriage and divorce bill (2009), in particular Article 114 (2) which states that a spouse may deny the other spouse the right to sexual intercourse on reasonable grounds; Article 123 (1) which states that the spouse in any form of marriage recognized under this Act shall have the capacity to acquire his or her own separate property during the subsistence of the marriage; Article 124 (1) which states that spouses shall have equal access to matrimonial property; Article 130 which states that where a spouse or cohabitee gives property to the other spouse or cohabitee during subsistence of a marriage or cohabitation, there is a rebuttable presumption that the property belongs to the receiving spouse or cohabitee.

Male participants that took part in the exercise outrightly rejected each and every article that was read. One participant would comment that "indeed that is why it is called the marriage on one hand and then divorce on the other." The study did note that the arguments against the proposals within the bill expressed the existing social beliefs within the community. For example, when Article 114 (2) on denying the spouse sexual intercourse was read out, the men posed a number of questions i.e. what brought her to marriage? So, what does she expect me to do? These questions have a direct linkage to the expectation that a woman has to have sex with the man at all time without fail.

The female participants that were engaged in this exercise rather welcomed the proposals and were indeed wishful. Some were however hesitant to agree to some proposals as they thought this would bring about violence in the home. Some thought that having a right to refuse sex would bring about an impression of not being happy with your marriage or being taken as someone who is promiscuous. The women also often made reference to their parents when submitting on given articles and often asked what their parents would think of them when they hear that they behaved in a given way as proposed by the articles. Subsequently the women were asked if they would agree to such a bill. No woman outrightly came out to say that they would. They explained that what the bill was proposing was the ideal, what they look up for in marriage. However, this would not work since it would disrupt social order.

Yes and no, everyone has a dream and indeed that is what we dream of. That is what we see in soaps (soap operas). The reality is, things are totally different, and that cannot work. We grew in a given way and that cannot be altered – Female FGD participant Kampala

One of the key informant would also argue in quite similar line that the fear for disruption of social order would keep the women at bay of supporting given laws. In the end they come out publicly to oppose them.

The Muslim women came out and told us that for them, they prefer having their husbands marry four women. They were against the idea of a man marrying one woman – Key Informant, UWOPA

In regard to social norms and their influence on implementation of laws/policies, study participants argued that norms create a culture of silence on the part of the victim, her family and community. The community would prefer any other action than reporting the case to police. There is a common belief that a person who reports his spouse to the police would have brought about a curse to the family.

A man married a young girl last month forcefully but the local leaders did not report the case to us, they never think it is right to do so – Interview with police officer Kotido

It was also found out that law enforcement officers decide to follow the societal sanction rather than the legal sanction. It was explained that some interpret the action as non-criminal and thus cannot appreciate the weight of the legal sanction. They rather find it to be too harsh for a crime that would attract a lesser punishment from the community to which the law enforcement officer is party.

You go to a police station and then this man sends you back – he tells you that police do not handle family issues that I should go to my parent – Female FGD participant Arua





OXFAM



## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION



## 6. Discussion

Social norms provide a framework within which hegemonic masculinity<sup>1</sup> and hegemonic femininity<sup>2</sup> is constantly performed and negotiated. Social norms do regulate actions that distribute power, opportunities and resources among women and men, and define acceptable boundaries, as set by hegemonic masculinity, within which VAWG can happen.

Women and men begin to learn these rules of behavior early in life through gendered practices. This provides them with knowledge and competencies on how masculinity and femininity is to be performed. The learning of the norms could happen through socialization, performance of ritualized behavior or experience with sanctions and rewards.

Evidence collected suggests that some women could choose to comply with the existing social norms. There are also those that think of contesting particular norms, however the alternative norms could rule out the different pathways that this person would have opted for (cf. Chambers, 2005). For example, women often think of reporting the spouse to the law enforcement agencies but they choose not to because alternative norms describe the act as one that brings about a bad spell.

There are women (and men) that exercise their agency to challenge the existing norms. The findings provide cases where women embody themselves with masculine qualities (e.g. engaging in the job market) as a protest to the limitations the social norms provide. However, often this does not disrupt the gender order since the practice results into the reproduction of patriarchy and enacting of an alternative social norm (cf. Schippers, 2007). Taking a case example of a woman having access to financial capital, often the spouse retains the decision making responsibility on how the funds are to be used.

There are also women that resist the behavioral rules prescribed by social norms until a point when structural limitations force them into reconsidering their earlier decision. Women were reporting cases of abuse to the law enforcement bodies, however some would rescind their decision because they could no longer fend for their children. The limited feminine capital, which happens to be regulated by social norms, constrain women

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**1** Schippers (2007) defines hegemonic masculinity is the qualities defined as manly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.

**2** Schippers (2007) defines hegemonic femininity consists of the characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.

from resisting or transgressing the existing social norms. This results into the reproduction of patriarchy that could then be enacted in a more violent manner. However, the study notes that the reproduced patriarchy could be performed in a more cautious manner as men realize that they can be held accountable for their actions.

The study findings suggest that resistance to negative social norms could result into adoption of positive normative behavior. For example in Kotido, girls particularly in urban areas, were delaying to get into marriage. This however depends on quite a number of factors including knowledge, agency and aspirations; ongoing socialization processes specifically when women and girls meet new roles models, mentored into new activities; increased access to economic, cultural and social capital which can support explore alternative social norms; and access to structural systems e.g. education systems, legal structures, alternative religious organizations etc. (cf. Lundgren, 2018).

Additionally, continued resistance to a social norm could also result into differences in manifestation of a given norm. However the meaning of the norm does not change. For example, women were hiring house helps to meet their ascribed gender roles, however they still retained the supervisory role. This is also another means through which patriarchy was being reproduced.

Our findings provide evidence of misperceptions created by social norms that encourage the culture of silence but also the building of negative resilience towards VAWG. For example, some think that men will ask for the bride-price back, others think that they will be not be able to get into another relationship, others think that a homestead headed by the father of the children is the safest place for the growing their children among others. During the discussions, there were instances where the majority of the participants (including men) contested given behavioral rules. It is thus possible that the persons that mentioned those particular rules incorrectly assumed that majority of people within the community accept it.

The study results also suggest that social norms provide society with a framework within which they interpret the content (principles, articles) of bills/policies. The different societal expectations do support the process of organizing arguments for or against the bill/policy. Sections of society would be able to establish the correctness of the bill/policy by weighing its characteristics against its potential to maintain or disrupt existing social order (cf. Bicchieri, 2017). Supporting the bill/policy would require that the proposals within maintain social order or build onto the existing social sanctions.

Study findings also reveal that social norms influence implementation of laws/policies. Law enforcement officers are persons that are integrated into the social network of the community. They do understand the context including the different societal expectations and often choose to enact social sanctions than those that are legal. This could be because they have not been properly socialized by the state to come to appreciate the legal regime. Also, social norms create a culture of silence around issues of violence. This makes victims second guess their decision to seek for support from law enforcement institutions.

## 6.1 Conclusion

The findings suggest that social norms prescribe behavioral rules to be followed within the community BUT these are constantly being negotiated under the different layers of the social ecology. This often results into one of the following: compliance to the social norm; reproduction of the social norm, hegemonic masculinity or hegemonic femininity; differences in manifestation of a social norm (though the social norm retains its meaning); or adoption of alternative positive norms. The resultant option is dependent on the woman's or girl's access to the requisite social, economic and political capital.

Therefore, campaigns meant to address social norms that influence VAWG should support the negotiation processes being undertaken by women and girls (and men). This could be done by directly engaging institutions (including but not limited to law enforcing agencies, education institutions) in building the agency of women and girls to challenge existing negative social norms but also building the capacity of these institutions to provide safe spaces where women and girls can resist but also perform alternative positive norms.

### Recommendations on the messaging, design and implementation of the “ENOUGH” Campaign

- There is growing evidence that campaigns featuring positive messages about health and wellbeing including social norm change tend to be more effective than those with negative messages. Therefore, OXFAM and partners should implement a positive social norm campaign/positive messaging strategy through;
  - Clarifying or correcting misperceptions that are created by social norms
  - Emphasizing positive benefits for adopting alternative social norms
  - Facilitate individuals, groups and communities to maintain positive social norm/behavior change maintenance motives, emphasizing positive outcomes of new/alternative norms, providing behavioral options which are enjoyable, inspiring individuals to redefine themselves in line with new/alternative positive norms that are gender equitable and at variance with VAWG.

- The study findings show that different stakeholders are involved in the negotiation of social norms. Therefore, the messaging should target various audiences using multiple channels so as to create the desired impact. These campaigns should embrace multi-channel, multi-sectorial and multi-media outreach and advocacy campaign to raise awareness and change attitudes to VAWG.
- The campaign messaging should also be continuous and consistent rather than a one-off campaign with focus on both initiation of social norm change/behavioral change as well as maintenance of the change. Two major evidence reviews conclude that one-off awareness campaigns are ineffective (Fulu, Kerr-Wilson et al 2014; Arango et al 2014) in sustaining social norms change and behavioral change.
- There is need for OXFAM and partners to adopt multi-component community-based interventions that work with men, women, youths, leaders and service providers to shift harmful social norms around gender roles and relations, intimate partnerships and the acceptability of violence.
- The campaign should be multi-level taking into account the relationship between the individual, the community and the societal levels (socio-ecological model) to facilitate agency of individuals, groups and communities to develop/initiate and maintain positive/alternative norms through reshaping the environment and making gender equitable options salient and attractive.
- There is need for OXFAM and partners in their campaign messaging and programming to combine economic empowerment interventions for women with gender transformative training and engagement of male partners and family members. This is meant to build the socio-economic capital of women and girls. Most campaigns have been focusing on one or the other but without systematically and combining the two streams and therefore missing the synergistic benefits associated with the duo thronged programming.
- The study findings show a close relation between harmful social norms and prized community values. Therefore, the messaging should differentiate between values and social norms so as to allow the participants to discuss the negative social norms.

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## ANNEX I: FGDS/IDIS/INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

### FGDs

		Arua	Isingiro	Kabarole	Kamuli	Kotido	Kampala	Lira
Youth 15-24	Girls	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Boys	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Adults	Women	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Men	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

### IDIs

	Arua	Isingiro	Kabarole	Kamuli	Kotido	Kampala	Lira
Survivors of violence	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Women & girls with disabilities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

## Interviews including KIs

Arua	Isingiro	Kabarole	Kamuli	Kotido	Kampala	Lira
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child, Family Protection Unit</li> <li>• Probation office</li> <li>• Religious leader</li> <li>• Cultural leader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probation officer Isingiro</li> <li>• District community development officer</li> <li>• Woman councillor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L.C 3 women representative</li> <li>• Minister of Culture, Tooro Kingdom)</li> <li>• Representatives from Joy for Children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community development officer</li> <li>• Official from Plan International</li> <li>• Women councilor</li> <li>• Religious leader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LC 5 councilor</li> <li>• Religious leader</li> <li>• Official from Cooperation and development</li> <li>• Police officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GBV Shelter manager Mifumi</li> <li>• Woman Councilor Bukoto</li> <li>• Religious leader</li> <li>• Representative from MGLSD (Principal Social Development Officer on Family in the department of Culture and Family Affairs</li> <li>• Representative from the association of women judges</li> <li>• Social media influencer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community development officer</li> <li>• Cultural leader Otiruba clan</li> <li>• Child, family protection unit officer</li> <li>• Religious leader.</li> </ul>

## ANNEX II: TOOLS

### FGD Guide

#### Type of Violence: Physical Violence

#### Category of Participants – Men & Women, Boys & Girls

1. What is your understanding of physical violence?
2. What are the different forms of physical violence that you know of?  
Probe for: hitting, pinching, hair pulling, punching, slapping, beating, threats with an object, murder
3. When and how does physically abusing women and girls become acceptable in your community?  
Instruction to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how & from whom they got to know of the stated 'fact'
4. How is physical abuse of women and girls justified in your community?  
Instructions to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how they got to know of the justification (s) and from whom.
5. Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for a man or boy to physically assault a woman/girl?  
Instructions to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how they got to know of such circumstances and from whom.

Instruction: Question 3, 4, & 5 would have generated norms, beliefs, attitudes surrounding physical violence. Take a 5 minute break to generate a list of norms, beliefs, attitudes that the participants would have talked about. The next questions require that you make reference to each and every norm, belief, attitude that would have been mentioned.

6. Do most men or boys in your community physically assault women and girls if/ because .....

Instruction: Explore each and every norm, belief, attitude earlier mentioned

7. Do most of your male friends think that it is okay to physically assault women/girls if ...

Instruction: Explore each and every norm, belief, attitude earlier mentioned

**Instruction: Read out vignette to the participants**

I will tell you of a story of a man named Fred and his wife Lydia. Let's pretend they are from this village. I don't want you to think about the real Fred and Lydia who live here. We could have chosen other names, but for now let's stick to those. I would like you to listen to the story carefully and discuss the questions that follow. Fred is a well-respected gentleman within the village. He owns the biggest retail shop, owns a fleet of boda bodas within this village and the next, and employs about 10 other people in his different businesses. Many young boys in the village look up to him. He is an inspiration to many.

Fred and Lydia met years before Fred became the man he is now. They have toiled together and made it in life. Lydia had gotten to know that Fred was emotionally involved with some other woman within the next village. Lydia right away came by their shop where Fred was at the time. Shouting on top of her voice, she asked Fred why he had chosen to engage with another woman. She would attract a mammoth crowd as she kept speaking on top of her voice. Fred kept asking that she keeps her voice down but she would not heed to his request. She would later leave and as she left she promised Fred that this was not the end to it. When Fred went back home, Lydia yet again started shouting on top of her voice. Within minutes Fred started slapping and kicking Lydia for disrespecting him. Fred was of the view that Lydia deserved to be beaten. After the beating, he left the household and met a group of male friends and neighbours and told them that his wife disrespected him. They then asked, what did you do to her?



- Do you think he is going to say that he beat her or not?
- What will the male friends think of the fact that he's beaten his wife?
- What if Fred met his wife's family/his family, do you think he would say that he beat her or not?
- What will the wife's family/his family think of the fact that he's beaten his wife?
- What if Fred never beat his wife, do you think he would have told the truth that he indeed never beat her?
- What would most men in Fred's position do?
- What would most other men expect Fred to do in this situation?

(Ask male participants) John, Fred's close friend is of the view that men should not beat up their wives

- What would most men say about John's opinion?
- Would the opinions and reactions of John's peers make him change his mind about his opinion about wife beating?
- Who are (if any) the relevant other individuals that matter to John in respect to wife beating and thus whose position/opinion on this matter may make John change his stand?
- Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for Fred not to beat his wife?

(Ask female participants) Lydia is so furious about Fred's behaviour. She decides to report him to the family protection unit at the nearest police station.

- What would most other women say about Lydia's decision?
- Would the opinions and reaction of other community members make Lydia change her mind about reporting Fred?
- Would most other women in Lydia's situation make similar decision?
- Who are (if any) the relevant other individuals that matter to Lydia and thus whose position/opinion on this matter may make Lydia change her stand?
- Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for Lydia to report her husband?

## FGD Guide

### Type of Violence: Bride Price Related Violence

#### Category of Participants – Men & Women, Boys & Girls

1. What is bride price?
2. Is it a common practice for men and their families to pay bride price to the bride's family?
3. Who determines the nature and amount of bride price to be paid?
  - a. Does the groom have a say in the negotiation of the nature and amount?
  - b. Does the bride have a say in whether or not her future husband should pay bride price?
  - c. Does the bride have a say in the negotiation of the nature and amount of bride price?
4. After a man and his family have paid bride price and eventually married the groom, what are the implications for the groom? Probe for:
  - a. The man and his family's perception and treatment of the women.
5. When and how does bride price make it acceptable for men to be violent towards women?  
Instruction to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how & from whom they got to know of the stated 'fact'
6. How does the community justify this kind of violence against women?  
Instructions to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how they got to know of that justification and from whom.
7. Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for a man that has paid bride price to be violent towards his wife?  
Instructions to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how they got to know of such circumstances and from whom.

Instruction: Question 5, 6, & 7 would have generated norms, beliefs, attitudes surrounding bride price related violence. Take a 5 minute break to generate a list of norms, beliefs, attitudes that the participants would have talked about. The next questions require that you make reference to each and every norm, belief, attitude that would have been mentioned.

8. Do most men that have paid bride price violent towards their wives because .....
- Instruction: Explore each and every norm, belief, attitude earlier mentioned

9. Do most of your male friends that have paid bride price think that it is okay to be violent towards women because .....

Instruction: Explore each and every norm, belief, attitude earlier mentioned

**Instruction: Read out vignette to the participants**

I will tell you a story of Fred and his wife Lydia. Let's pretend they are from this village. I don't want you to think about a real Fred and Lydia who live here. We could have chosen other names, but for now let's stick to those. I would like you to listen to the story carefully and discuss the questions that follow. Fred and Lydia met 7 years back. They had a big traditional wedding. The function is still being talked about at this time. Fred came along with a lorry of goods that he offered to Lydia's family. Noticeable were the 10 cows and 15 goats that were offered to the family. It is on this function that community members got to see Jose Chameleon perform for the first time within this village. The community members have since named the road to Lydia's father's home as 'omulodi' literally translated as 'the rich' because of the function that happened years back. 7 years down the road, Fred finds out that Lydia cannot conceive (get pregnant).

- What do you think about Lydia's situation?
- What would most community members say about Lydia's situation?
- What would Fred's family/Lydia's family say about Lydia's situation?

Months later Fred starts beating Lydia for any little mistake she would have done. Lydia did tell her family & Fred's family of Fred's behaviour. Lydia's family & Fred's family would arrange a day to meet Fred.

- Do you think Fred is going to admit to his wife's family/his family that he indeed beat up Lydia?
- What will the wife's family/his family think of the fact that he beat up Lydia?
- What would most men in Fred's position do?
- What would most other men expect Fred to do in this situation?

John, Fred's close friend is of the view that Fred should have never beaten up his wife.

- What would most men say about John's opinion?
- Would the opinions and reactions of John's peers make him change his mind about his opinion?

- Who are (if any) the relevant other individuals that matter to John and thus whose position/opinion on this matter may make John change his stand?
- Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for Fred not to beat his wife?

As time went on, Fred did inform Lydia's family that he could no longer stay with their daughter and he would be sending her back.

- Would most men take a similar decision?
- Do you think that most other community members would expect you to send Lydia back to her family?

Lydia does not welcome the idea of going back home. She feels she had invested a lot of time in her relationship with Fred

- What would most other community members say about Lydia's decision?
- Would the opinions and reactions of the others make Lydia change her mind?
- Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for Fred to send away his wife?

Fred insists that Lydia should go back to her parents. Lydia decides to report him to the family protection unit at the nearest police station.

- What would most other women say about Lydia's decision?
- Would the opinions and reaction of other community members make Lydia change her mind about reporting Fred?
- Would most other women in Lydia's situation make similar decision?
- Who are (if any) the relevant other individuals that matter to Lydia and thus whose position/opinion on this matter may make Lydia change her stand?
- Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for Lydia to report her husband?

**END**

## **FGD Guide**

Type of Violence: Sexual Violence

Category of Participants – Men & Women, Boys & Girls

1. What is your understanding of sexual violence?
2. What are the different forms of sexual violence that you know of?

Probe for: touching in a sexual manner without consent, forced sexual intercourse, using a weapon to force compliance, beating sexual parts of the body

3. When and how does sexually abusing women and girls become acceptable in your community?

Instruction to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how & from whom they got to know of the stated 'fact'

4. How is sexual abuse of women and girls justified in your community?

Instructions to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how they got to know of the justification (s) and from whom.

5. Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for a man or boy to sexually abuse a woman/girl?

Instructions to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how they got to know of such circumstances and from whom.

Instruction: Question 3, 4, & 5 would have generated norms, beliefs, attitudes surrounding sexual violence. Take a 5 minute break to generate a list of norms, beliefs, attitudes that the participants would have talked about. The next questions require that you make reference to each and every norm, belief, attitude that would have been mentioned.

6. Do most men or boys in your community sexually assault women and girls if/because

.....

Instruction: Explore each and every norm, belief, attitude earlier mentioned

7. Do most of your male friends think that it is okay to sexually assault women/girls if/because ....

Instruction: Explore each and every norm, belief, attitude earlier mentioned

### **Instruction: Read out vignette to respondent**

I will tell you of a story of John. Let's pretend John resides in this village. I don't want you to think about the real John who lives here. We could have chosen any other name, but for now let's stick to John. I would like you to listen to the story carefully and discuss the questions that follow.

John is a caretaker of one of the houses in this village. The owner entrusted him with staying in this house as he finally prepares for entry with his family. One evening Jane was passing by the house. John called onto her. She came by. John told her of how beautiful she was. Jane was furious about what John had said. She abused John. John slapped her, dragged her into the house and forced himself onto her.

- Would most men in that community make a similar decision?
- Do you think that most other men would expect John to force himself onto Lydia?

The next day John met his friends. John and his male friends openly talk about everything that happens in their lives. He then told them about Jane and how she reacted after being told that she was beautiful. His friends were anxious to hear what really happened after the talk. They asked him, what happened afterwards?

- Do you think he is going to say that he forcefully had sex with Jane?
- What if John and Jane were married, would John tell his friends that he forcefully had sex with Jane?
- Jane was below 18 years, would John tell his friends that he forcefully had sex with Jane?
- What would the male friends think of the fact that he forcefully had sex with Jane?
- Probe for: if opinion would vary if John and Jane were married or if Jane was a minor
- What if John met someone else than his friends, do you think he would have told them that he forcefully had sex with Jane?
- Probe: ask whether he would do the same if Jane was his wife/ Jane was a minor
- What would these people think of the fact that John forcefully had sex with Jane?
- Probe for: if opinion would vary if John and Jane were married or if Jane was a minor
- What if John never had sex with this Jane, do you think he would have told the truth that he indeed never had sex with her? If no, why not?
- Probe: If he would if Jane was his wife/if Jane was a minor

Fred, John's close friend is of the view that men should never have forcefully have sex with women/girls.

- What would most men say about Fred's opinion?
- Would the opinions and reactions of John's peers make him change his mind about his opinion?
- Who are (if any) the relevant other individuals that matter to John and thus whose position/opinion on this matter may make John change his stand?
- Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for Fred to forcefully have sex with a woman/girl? Probe: If it is his wife and why? If it is a girl below 18 and why?



The following day the Jane would meet her girlfriends. The girlfriends would notice scratches on her arm. They then asked, what happened to you?

- Do you think she told them that she was raped by John?
- Probe for: if Jane would open up if John was the husband; if Jane would open up if she was a victim of defilement
- What will the female friends think of the fact that John raped her?
- Probe for: what the friends would think if John was Jane's husband; if Jane is a victim of defilement

Let say that Jane did tell her friends. The friends did advise that Jane reports John to family and child protection unit of the nearby police station?

- What would most community members think about the friends advise to report John?
- Probe: Would the opinion vary if Jane and John were married? If Jane was below 18 years?
- Would the opinions and reactions of community members make Jane change his/her mind about reporting John?
- Who are (if any) are the relevant other individuals that matter to Jane whose position/opinion on this matter may make Jane change her stand?
- Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for Lydia not to report Fred?
- Probe: If Fred and Lydia were married and why? If Jane was below 18 and why?
- Would most women in the community agree with Jane's & her friend's decision?
- Probe: Would their opinion change if Lydia and Fred were married/Lydia was below 18 years.
- Would most women expect Jane to make such a decision?
- Probe: Would their expectation change if Lydia and Fred were married/Lydia was below 18 years.

## FGD Guide

### Type of Violence: Economic Violence

Category of Participants – Men & Women, Boys & Girls

1. What is your understanding of economic violence?
2. What are the different forms of economic violence that you know of?  
Probe for: exclusion from financial decision making, controlled access to employment/education, limited/no access to productive resources (e.g. land)
3. When and how do the following become acceptable in your community?
  - Excluding women & girls from financial decision making
  - Controlling access to employment/education
  - Limited/no access to productive resources (e.g. land)

Instruction to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how & from whom they got to know of the stated 'fact'

4. How are the following justified within your community?
  - Excluding women & girls from financial decision making
  - Controlling access to employment/education
  - Limited/no access to productive resources (e.g. land)

Instructions to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how they got to know of the justification (s) and from whom.

5. Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable to;
  - Exclude women & girls from financial decision making
  - Control women's/girls access to employment/education
  - Limit women's/girls access to productive resources (e.g. land)

Instructions to interviewer: Ask participant (s) how they got to know of such circumstances and from whom.

Instruction: Question 3, 4, & 5 would have generated norms, beliefs, attitudes surrounding economic violence. Take a 5-minute break to generate a list of norms, beliefs, attitudes that the participants would have talked about. The next questions require that you make reference to each and every norm, belief, attitude that would have been mentioned.

6. Do most men or boys in your community exclude women & girls from financial decision making; control women's access to employment/education; limit women's/girls access to productive resources because ....

Instruction: Explore each and every norm, belief, attitude earlier mentioned

7. Do most of your male friends think that it is okay to exclude women & girls from financial decision making; control women's access to employment/education; limit

women's/girls access to productive resources because ....

Instruction: Explore each and every norm, belief, attitude earlier mentioned

### **Instruction: Read out vignette to the participants**

Next I will tell you a story of Fred and his wife Lydia. Let's pretend they are from this village. I don't want you to think about a real Fred and Lydia who live here. We could have chosen other names, but for now let's stick to those. I would like you to listen to the story carefully and discuss the questions that follow.

Fred and Lydia have been together for the past 12 years. Fred rears cattle while Lydia grows and sales farm produce in the market. At the end of the day Lydia is expected to report to her husband the amount of money she would have earned in the day. The man would then decide on how Lydia could utilize her daily earnings. Lydia is hurt about the fact that it's her husband to decide on how her earnings would be used.

- What would most other women like Lydia do in this situation?
- What would most other women advise Lydia to do regarding her sentiments?

Let's return to the story. Lydia decides to keep silent about her husband's practice of deciding on how the money should be used.

- What would most other women say about Lydia's decision?
- What would other community members say about Lydia's decision?
- Would the opinions and reactions of the other women make Lydia change her mind about her decision?
- What if Lydia went against his husband, what would other women say about Lydia's decision/action?
- What would other community members say about Lydia decision?
- Would the opinions and reactions of the other women make Lydia change her mind about her decision?
- Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable to take on such a decision?

Months later Lydia's husband passed on. She brings to the attention of the clan leaders, family members and elders her well-intended decision to inherit her husband's/family land and property so as to continue raising their children.

- What would most other women say about Lydia's decision?
- What would most family, clan members and elders say about Lydia's decision?
  - What would other community members say about Lydia?
  - Would the opinions and reactions of the other women make Lydia change her mind about her decision?
  - Would the opinions and reactions of the family, clan members and elders make Lydia change her mind about her decision?
- Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable to take on such a decision?

Following the demise of Lydia's husband and the fact that some clan members and elders were against the idea of Lydia inheriting her husband's/family land and, Lydia then asks the family that she continues utilizing her fallen husbands land. The family refuses her to do so.

- Do most families in this community refuse widows to utilize land?
- Do most community members think that widows should not utilize family land?

Let's return to the story. One of the elders think otherwise. He was of the view that Lydia should be given access to the family land.

- What would most community members say about the elder's opinion?
- Would the opinions and reactions of the other community members make the elder change his mind about his opinion?
- Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable to have widows have access to land?

**END**

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## In Depth Interview Guide

### Category of Participants – Survivors of Violence

1. How prevalent is violence against women and girls in this community?
2. Let's talk about your own experience. I know a lot comes to someone's mind just after being abused. Take me through what you thought about moments after.

Probe: Are there decisions you thought of making but could not to because of fear of disapproval within the community

3. Did you talk to anyone about your experience?

Probe:

- Who did you talk to?
  - Why did you choose to talk to that person and not anyone else?
  - What stopped you from opening up to those other persons?
4. (If opened up to anyone) Did the person that you opened up to provide any advice on what you could do?

Probe:

- If yes, what kind of advice did that person provide?
  - Did you take on this person's advice?
  - If yes, why? If no, why?
5. How did/would the community you lived in at the time react if they got to know that you were abused?
6. How was/would the person who abused you treated by the community members?
7. Are there circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable within the community for a man/boy to abuse a woman/girl?

**END**

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## Interview Guide

### Category of Participants – Local leaders, Cultural leaders, Religious leaders

1. How prevalent is violence against women and girls in this community?
2. Are there circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable within the community for a man/boy to engage in violent behaviour towards women and girls?
3. Which social motivations explain men's/boy's engagement in violent behaviour towards women and girls? Probe for: social approval within the community
4. How is violence against women and girls justified within the community? Probe for: social justifications
5. What social sanctions are in place that motivate men/boys to engage in violent practices against women and girls?

6. How do social approvals, disapprovals, sanctions within this community impact on the enforcement of laws meant to protect women and girls who have been abused?
7. How can social norms influencing violence against women and girls be addressed?

**END**

## **Interview Guide**

**Category of Participants – Staff from NGOs/CBOs addressing VAWG; Law enforcement officers; Judicial officers; Parliamentarians; Local and Central Government officers**

1. How prevalent is violence against women and girls in this community?
2. Are there circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable within society for a man/boy to engage in violent behaviour towards women and girls?
3. Which social motivations explain men's/boy's engagement in violent behaviour towards women and girls? Probe for: social approval within the community
4. How is violence against women and girls justified within the community? Probe for: social justifications
5. What social sanctions are in place that motivate men/boys to engage in violent practices against women and girls?
6. How do social motivations (approvals, disapprovals, sanctions) surrounding violence against women and girls influence the formulation policies and laws that further violate the rights of women and girls?

Probe for:

-If social norms could explain the formulation of the Anti-Pornographic Act; Directive by the Ministry of Public Service on dress code of female employees

-If social norms are one of the impediments to the passing of the marriage and divorce bill

7. How do social norms impact on the enforcement of laws meant to protect women that have gone through violence?
8. How can social norms influencing violence against women and girls be addressed?





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# FORMATIVE RESEARCH ON SOCIAL NORMS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN UGANDA

