



The author of this month's newsletter is Dr. Heidee McMillin, a professor in the Justice Studies program at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho. She teaches courses in victimology, violence and gender, and research. She has experience as a victims' court advocate, shelter advocate, and hospital advocate.

Dr. Heidee serves on the Idaho Offender Intervention Program committee which approves and oversees all batterer intervention programs in the state, and she is an Idaho Department of Correction mentor in the Free2Succeed program where inmates are matched with community members to help them integrate into society. We are delighted that Dr. Heidee is an active, volunteer member of Ourganda's local domestic violence committee.

Tomas Answers the Question: Is It Possible to Trade Violence for Kindness?

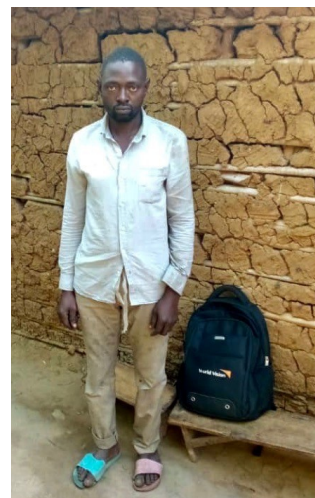
A Snapshot of the Problem

Uganda's most recent Police Annual Crime Report identified 17,533 cases of domestic violence in 2021, the third highest crime reported to police. This number, however, includes only the cases that were reported. Many more cases are not reported to police. Why? Victims fear violent payback by their partner if they report the violence, or they fear that the police won't do anything to help. These fears are based on real life experience.

The Story of Tomas

In our August newsletter, we shared a story of a victim who reached out to Ourganda for help. She had been repeatedly beaten and had reached out for help from family, friends, and the local police. Her cries for help brought sympathy from people who loved her, but nothing at all from the police. The husband, she was told, "was within his rights" to beat her (and their son), since women in Uganda are property, purchased with a dowry.

Ourganda became her lifeline. Our domestic violence leader, Esther, and her husband, Vincent, rallied volunteers from Ourganda's local Mankind Club. These brave men physically carried Tomas to the local police station and insisted they follow the law and arrest him. Tomas was arrested and, with the tenacity





of Esther, the abuser went through the court process. He was found guilty and sentenced to 6 months in jail.

What Happened Next?

During his time in prison, Vincent visited Tomas, built a relationship with him, prayed with him, and offered him another way to live if he agreed to trade violence for kindness. This included help with employment once he was released.

Just weeks ago, Tomas completed his jail sentence, stepped into the sunlight of freedom, and returned home to his wife and son. **He has stopped drinking alcohol.** He no longer associates with those who cause trouble in the village. And this is the message he shared with Esther, Vincent, and members of Ourganda's Mankind Club: **"It must have been God who used you to interrupt my life in that way."**

We know full well that following through on such a huge life decision is an important endeavor that takes time and support. Esther has appointed one of our Mankind Club members to serve as his accountability partner, and a female advocate stays connected with his wife and keeps in contact with Esther. If further intervention is needed, Ourganda's local team is ready.

Will Tomas stand firm in his commitment to exchange violence for kindness? Will he from now on direct his energies toward something productive? Might Tomas even join his local Mankind Club and become an active protector of women and children? It looks hopeful. **We will keep you posted.**

Confronting 32 More Offenders

Ourganda's reach is much greater than just this one case. In November alone, Esther and those working with her confronted 32 offenders. She and her team lovingly but firmly explained that things have changed; domestic violence is no longer allowed in our villages. Offenders can choose between being arrested and going to prison, or directing their energies toward kindness and being productive.

Please Do Two Things

First, watch three short videos at www.ourganda.org/videos (Uganda IPV - Intimate Partner Violence). In only a few minutes, you will learn how families and communities can prevent family violence, protect victims, and hold offenders accountable. Second, decide how you would like to get involved.

Dr. Heidee



A Note from Ourganda's Director

We are thankful and encouraged - even delighted - at the progress we see. In addition to the good news Heidee shared with us above, we just learned that Tomas is helping his wife with household duties including carrying water for the family. We will never get tired of saving and extending lives in western Uganda!

Here's how you can help: You can join Esther's team and our Mankind Clubs by partnering with them financially. You can make a one-time gift - or, even better, a monthly donation. Every penny you designate for the domestic violence program directly empowers Esther to protect more victims and help offenders change their behavior.

Thank you, Thank you. Thank you!



Ron Gladden
Founder and Director