



WRITTEN PROFILES

Session 1: SOCIAL ROLES (Introduction)

SSALONGO ABUBAKER KYENDO

Ssalongo Abubaker Kyendo died in April 2005 after a long battle with AIDS. He is survived by his five daughters and his mother.

Ssalongo Abubaker Kyendo is thirty-nine and a father of five girls. He lives in a semi-urban district located just outside of Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. Ssalongo is HIV positive and a widower. He raises his children alone.

Ssalongo was born in 1965 to a family of nine. Although his family was poor, he managed to complete primary and secondary school, paying for school fees himself by baking and selling pancakes. After Senior 4, he dropped out of school and began selling household goods in the local trading centre.

In 1986, Ssalongo married 18-year-old Nankya Batesaaki. Together, they began a family and started a hair salon. The salon was the main source of their income until Nankya fell ill. After remaining bedridden for more than three years, Nankya died in 2001 from AIDS complications. Although Nankya had never been tested for HIV, her family was certain she had been infected.

After the death of his wife, Ssalongo decided to become his children's sole caregiver. Because he had previously sold the family salon in order to look after his sick wife, he no longer had any income. Despite pressure from his family and friends to remarry in order to have someone to take care of his children, Ssalongo decided to remain a single father.

"After my wife's death I decided to look after my children myself because I had seen how orphans were mistreated. I decided to look after them myself and think about marrying again after they were grown."

In order to survive, he turned to his family for financial support. Thanks to an uncle who lent Ssalongo two acres of land, Ssalongo was able to begin a career in farming as a means of taking care of his children. Ssalongo cultivates cassava, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and cabbages and sells the produce to the local markets. The money generated has been enough to help him maintain his home and pay his children's school fees.

Since his wife's death, Ssalongo always suspected that he too was infected with HIV. After suffering from bouts of fever that would not go away, he decided to go for an HIV test. His fears were confirmed when, in July 2004, Ssalongo tested HIV positive.

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Upon discovering his HIV status, Ssalongo decided that being honest with his children about his illness was the best thing to do and he disclosed his HIV status to them. Today, Ssalongo feels that being open with himself and his family has allowed him to plan properly for his children's future.

"Proving that I am infected has actually given me courage to work harder and prepare for the future of my children."

In addition to being the sole breadwinner for his large family, Ssalongo raises his children alone. Ssalongo starts each day by waking his children at 6:00 am for school. After the children leave, Ssalongo cleans his house and then leaves to work on his subsistence plot. At the end of each day, he returns home to prepare a meal which he eats with his daughters when they return from school.

"When my wife was still alive I left all the responsibility of looking after children to her, especially being girls. There are certain things I didn't even bother about. It is after my wife died that I realized I had to do every thing to raise the children. I thought the men's role was only paying the bills."

Today, Ssalongo believes that it is important that he makes sure that his children are taken care of by him, their father, in spite of the fact that he is often sick.

"These are my children and it is my responsibility to carry food from the garden and cook for them. Being a single parent has changed my attitude. A husband and wife should have equal responsibility. It is the responsibility of both of us to educate the children, to run the home, feed, dress and ensure the children are healthy."

While he sometimes faces challenges talking to his girls about issues of sexuality and personal hygiene, he has learned that being open with them is better. He feels that his daughters can come to him to talk about anything.

When Ssalongo first began to take care of his children on his own, he faced a lot of resistance from the community. Many of his neighbours questioned his decision to raise his children, even suggesting that they are now 'spoiled' because of all he does for them. Ssalongo remembers,

"Some said they would rather go hungry than have to cook and fetch food and water for their children. That is woman's work."

Ssalongo has come to believe that he made the right decision and now there are other men in his village who, after watching Ssalongo, take care of their children and share some of the roles of raising their families.

Ssalongo says,

"It is the responsibility of both husband and wife to take the children to hospital when they are sick. I want other people to learn from the

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responsibility I have taken over with my children and do the same in their homes. If a child is still in your home, you should know that it is your responsibility to feed, and maintain that child. I want people to know that a man can look after children just like the women."

Session 2: SOCIAL ROLES

NANTONGO TEOPISTA

In Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, there are approximately 1,000 minibus taxi conductors. Among these, only three are women. Nantongo Teopista is the *only* female conductor among 400 taxi conductors in central Kampala's bustling "New Taxi Park."

Nineteen-year-old Nantongo was born in a small village in Mubende District. Nantongo, along with her four brothers and four sisters, was raised by their mother. Their family was poor and survived only on the wages their mother earned from selling vegetables. Because the family could not support the education of nine children, Nantongo was forced to drop out of primary school and never returned.

At the age of 15, Nantongo moved to Kampala and found work as a housemaid. She worked seven days a week for a family of 13 doing all of the household chores for almost no wages. Over time, the work became too much and she quit after two years. Somehow, she was able to save a small amount of money which allowed her to buy a mattress and pay the first month's rent on a small house. Since she only had money to pay the rent for the first month she quickly began to look for another job.

Nantongo found work as a food vendor selling cooked food in a taxi park. Most of her clients were taxi drivers and conductors and she soon found that food vending had many challenges. For example, at times, customers did not want to pay her for food.

"And when they didn't pay, that meant my boss wouldn't pay me. Other times, plates got lost in the client's vehicles." She adds, "The customers used both abusive and obscene language but all the same I made some friends among them."

During this time, she was able to save a small amount from her wages which she kept with her landlord. At the end of each month, she used this money to pay her rent.

Nantongo's break came one day when one of the drivers did not have a conductor to help him. He asked Nantongo to help him for the day. She says: *"At first I was scared, but I accepted. That day we collected more money than his regular conductor had ever collected. He also noticed I was trustworthy."*

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The following day he called me to work again and I have worked with him every day since then.

As a taxi conductor, Nantongo is responsible for managing most of the logistics within the taxi. She makes sure the car is clean and while on the road she calls passengers to board by shouting the destination and collects their fares. Every day begins at 6 am.

At regular intervals, when the taxi returns to the taxi park to reload with passengers, Nantongo registers the taxi number. As a taxi conductor, Nantongo earns nearly 10 times what she made as a housemaid and a food vendor.

"On days when we get many passengers or when there is less traffic I earn more. On top of this, I am given a daily allowance for meals."

Although she has proven herself as a taxi conductor, Nantongo faces many challenges on the job. *"Sometimes passengers especially the men, abuse me."* One time one of them said to her, *"Who told you these jobs are for women? Go back to the dustbins!"* Some passengers have even thrown money at her. *"Others don't want to pay the full fare, but I insist and they pay,"* she says. Nantongo is not only challenged by passengers, but also by her fellow male conductors. Sometimes she suffers verbal abuse, especially when they see that she runs faster than them to register her vehicle, which ensures that her taxi can pick up new passengers first.

Nantongo says that ever since she became a conductor, her life has changed. She has learned how to better interact with people because she meets so many people with different personalities. She can also change a tyre and has started driving lessons. She is now more alert and no passenger is able to cheat her.

Nantongo believes that it was her boss, Mr. Katumba, who made it possible for her to gain the opportunity to be a taxi conductor. Because of this, she is very grateful to him. He remains a constant mentor and advisor on how to evade men who are difficult or who try to get her to engage in sexual relationships. Sometimes men leave their telephone contacts because they want to take her out after work. She never rings them. Nantongo says she is determined not to be taken advantage of.

Mr. Katumba said when he hired Nantongo, he intended to work with her for only one day. However, she proved to be intelligent, energetic and trustworthy. Katumba believes that employing young women also helps to protect their health. He says:

"When young women are employed, it reduces their vulnerability to risky behaviours such as going into sexual relationships for survival." Katumba adds, *"Nantongo has proved to many that, given a chance, women are just as capable of doing work that men do."*

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Despite the daily obstacles, Nantongo is proud of her job and the opportunities it has given her. She has made many friends amongst fellow drivers and conductors. She has also travelled to places she would not otherwise have had a chance to see and managed to save some money. The money she has saved has enabled her to renovate her mother's house in her village and pay school fees for two of her siblings. In the future, Nantongo intends to buy herself a plot of land and build a house. She even intends to buy and drive her own taxi one day.

Session 3: TRADITIONAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

LUCRETIA STEPHEN KIMARO (MRS. L.S. MARANDU)

Lucretia Kimaro Marandu was born in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania in 1949. After completing her primary education, she began training as a teacher at a teacher's training college in southeast Tanzania. She has been a primary school teacher for more than 30 years.

Shortly after beginning her career, Lucretia married Donatian Babu Marandu who was the District Agricultural Development Officer. They moved to a neighbouring rural area and began a family together. Lucretia gave birth to seven children, all of them girls.

"Having girls only annoyed my husband's family, and they often ridiculed Donatian," she says. After the birth of so many girls, Donatian's family began to pressure him to marry another woman so that he could bear a boy.

Lucretia believed that the children's gender was not the only problem Donatian's family had with her. She always felt that her in-laws - particularly her mother-in-law - never accepted the fact that she had a career as a teacher. To them, a working woman was not able to adequately perform the tasks of a "good wife," like cutting grass for the cattle or working on the farm.

Initially, Donatian refused to yield to this pressure but his family's persistence in encouraging him to find a new wife took its toll on their marriage. To make matters worse, Donatian began working as a farm manager away from home while Lucretia and the children were living with her in-laws. Without her husband's support, Lucretia was regularly bullied by her in-laws. They wanted her to leave because she had failed to bear them a male child who would inherit Donatian's property. They told Lucretia she was only capable of bearing "dogs" to her husband.

"We really quarrelled during this time and life with him [Donatian] was unbearable. I went to court to file for a divorce."

Lucretia later decided not to pursue the divorce as she began to focus on her work as a teacher.

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While living with her in-laws and with little support, Lucretia's only ally was her father-in-law. He was the only person in her husband's family who was against polygamy and did not support the idea of Donatien taking a second wife.

Over time, Lucretia's husband began to side with those who wanted him to marry again. As a result, Lucretia was chased from the home by her relatives after more than 10 years of marriage.

Lucretia remained on her own, but after four years of living in another village, she went back to her husband and begged for the chance to reconcile. He agreed and let her move back into the home.

Unfortunately, Donatien was diagnosed with diabetes soon after Lucretia returned. He soon became so ill that he lost his job and was moved from one hospital to another to get medical care. In between visits, Lucretia took care of her husband as best as she could. *"During all of that period he was sick, I took care of the children while I was doing my ordinary work of teaching."*

As Donatien's health worsened, the family began to make preparations for life without him. Donatien decided how he wanted his belongings and wealth to be divided after his death. However, he never wrote down these wishes. He told his daughters and Lucretia what they were, but only verbally.

After a long battle with diabetes, Donatien died in 2003.

"Immediately after the death of my husband, problems showed up very clearly, his family wanted to take quick action of burying him so that they could take all of the properties he had."

"Since I did not have a son - an heir, I was informed that it was not appropriate for me to organize the funeral and related activities. In addition, although I had mentioned that Donatien himself had wished to be buried near our home, my mother-in-law and brothers-in-law declared that I had no right to suggest so. I was told that I had no right to take the body even if I was the wife."

"But I proceeded to prepare a grave and buy a coffin. A serious fight erupted at the mortuary when I went for the body, and I had to be escorted home by the police - with a coffin, and flowers - but without the body. I knew, as other people did, that my in-laws' major interest was the inheritance of Donatien's estate. I was not ready to accept that - and especially for my daughters."

One of Lucretia's younger brothers and a friend came to her and suggested that she fight for her right to bury her husband in a court of law.

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"I went to file a case at the Primary Court in Moshi, only to be told the next day that the case had been moved to the District Court, and that my in-laws had a lawyer."

Lucretia also decided to look for a lawyer, and eventually found one through the District Magistrate.

Throughout the process, Lucretia endured many challenges. Many in her community told her to let go of the case and to avoid bringing 'mkosi' (bad luck) on her family. Abuse came from other women, church elders and even a female lawyer. One day, a crowd in the market place followed her home while booing her and left her alone only when they saw the police. Even Lucretia's own job was threatened because her employers felt she was spending too much time away making court appearances. Some days she worried that she would be attacked or even burned in her home.

Lucretia's husband's family also tried to intimidate her. Although sometimes Lucretia would be accompanied to court by five or six members of her family, her in-laws would always outnumber her by coming to court with 30-50 people every day. Throughout her ordeal, she felt supported and encouraged by her children. One of her daughters was even granted permission by her employer to walk her mother to court and appear as a witness when necessary. Her other daughters stayed at home to guard the house from attacks by Donatian's relatives.

"The case took 84 torturing days to be solved, with me and my girls praying that at least fairness rules the whole process."

Finally, after nearly three months of court battles, the court gave Lucretia the right to bury Donatian's body. *"We buried him on the 87th day."*

Lucretia believes that while her ordeal was hard on her children, it has made them stronger women.

"They have to be strong, as strong women, they have come up to have their own family and to take an example from me. They must become a good example of women in the society to fight for their rights. They were born by a woman who is fighting for women's rights."

Lucretia believes that the will to fight for one's rights begins with individual commitment. She also believes that when she won her case, she became an example for other women. Since her successful court battle, other women in Tanzania have since followed her example to demand the right to their inheritance.

Session 4: WOMEN'S AND MEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

SARAH AND ABEL CHIKWELAMWENDO

Sarah and Abel Chikwelamwendo are married and the parents of three children including a set of twins. Since Sarah - who is now 37 - was a young girl, she has suffered from bouts of various illnesses that have often left her unable to leave her bed. Her husband, Abel 44, has given her continuous support which includes making a joint decision with her to use family planning to limit the number of children they will have.

Since Sarah was seven, she remembers suffering from throat infections that she found unbearable. She visited many doctors who were unable to cure the throat infections. Unfortunately, because of her poor health, Sarah was forced to withdraw from school before completing primary school.

In 1991, Sarah and Abel were married. Although Sarah's throat infection seemed to lessen, she still often suffered from various illnesses that kept her in bed and limited her ability to do house work. Despite social pressure to leave her, Abel stood by his wife and refused to remarry.

During Sarah's second pregnancy, she suffered a serious bout of malaria. It was at this time that Abel grew even more concerned about his wife's health.

"She had malaria which nearly killed her while pregnant. When she recovered I made sure that she took some anti-malaria tablets and slept under a treated mosquito net to protect her from further malarial attacks," said Abel.

Sarah recalls how supportive Abel was when she was suffering from malaria.

"Each time I had an appointment to see the doctor, I was escorted to the hospital by my husband. He gave me all the encouragement and told me to have hope. When it came to taking medicine, he reminded me it was time for treatment."

Currently, Sarah works as a cleaner in a local church and Abel is an Office Orderly with the Ministry of Lands in Lusaka, Zambia. He says that he will keep his wedding vow to stand by Sarah even in poor health. He believes these vows encourage husbands and wives to love and cherish each other in good and poor health, for better and for worse.

Abel has been very caring and supportive. *"No matter how bad my condition got, he stood by me and took over all the household chores,"* says Sarah.

As a result of Sarah's recurring illnesses, Sarah and Abel decided that they would not have any more children in order to protect her health. Together they decided that using modern family planning was important. After visiting the

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local clinic for family planning information and counselling, the couple decided to use implants.

Abel believes that husbands should be active in discussing family planning decisions and making joint decisions with their wives.

"She suggested that she use implants. It was all out of consensus and consultation. Each time we used a new method, we both underwent counselling from the family planning nurse. Loving someone must go with the responsibility of caring for their health," says Abel.

Through love and support from her husband Abel, Sarah is doing much better and is grateful that her husband is responsible, supportive and encouraging.

"My husband Abel, I thank God for Abel. He has helped me very much during my sickness for a long time. When I'm sick, Abel gets closer to me in order for him to understand how I feel. I'm thankful because he understands."

"Marriage has it's ups and downs," says Abel, but *"whatever the situation, she is still my wife."*

Abel and Sarah work together to provide for and care for their family. For example, while Sarah cooks in the kitchen, Abel bathes their children. He also helps the children with their school work and Bible studies. Both Sarah and Abel have even returned to school to further their education and improve their lives and the lives of their children.

Session 5: STIs, HIV and AIDS

LUKE AND PROSSY SSEMWOGERERE

PROSSY Nakalema, 33, and Luke Ssemwogerere, 34, of Uganda are a remarkable couple. They have lived in a loving and nurturing marriage for 12 years as husband and wife in spite of the fact that Luke is HIV positive and his wife is not.

Luke, also known as Ssemwogerere, was born in Mityana district and was raised with his 5 brothers by relatives after his parents' separation. Unable to pay for his school fees, Luke dropped out of primary school and began to look for work.

At the age of 21, Ssemwogerere's relatives became concerned when all of his younger brothers had married and had begun families before him. In order to allay the rumours that he was impotent, an aunt arranged a marriage for him in 1992. Six months after his wedding, his new wife died. Because of her strange and prolonged illness, villagers said she had been bewitched.

Looking back, Ssemwogerere says he is very sure his wife died of AIDS but that they were all ignorant of the disease because they had no access to HIV/AIDS

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information at that time. Because of the resulting stigma of being a lone widower, Ssemwogerere left his home village and moved to Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

In Kampala, Ssemwogerere continued to work as a builder. In 1993, he met his second and current wife, Prossy Nakalema, through a mutual friend. The couple soon married and in 1994 they gave birth to their first child, Rogers. In 1996, they had a second child.

That same year, Ssemwogerere fell ill and was diagnosed with TB. While he remained on treatment for eight months, he was not able to recover. It was at this point that his doctors advised him to be tested for HIV. Ssemwogerere tested positive.

"I was terrified, but my major problem was how to tell my wife the bitter truth about my HIV+ status. I waited for the right time, but there was no right time and no easy way to say it," Ssemwogerere says.

Ssemwogerere says he decided to disclose his status to his wife because he had heard that one's life could be prolonged with treatment. He was certain that if just one of them survived (himself or his wife), there would be someone to raise their children.

When Ssemwogerere finally found the courage to tell his wife the truth about his health, Prossy cried endlessly. However, later that same year, she found the courage to take an HIV test herself. Her results came back negative. After six months she went for another test that also turned out negative. Since then, she has had several tests, the latest being July 2004, and she remains HIV negative.

Their 'discordant' HIV test results puzzled the couple but HIV counsellors helped them by linking them to other discordant couples in their community. Since 2001, Ssemwogerere and Prossy have been members of the 'Discordant Couple Club' at the AIDS Information Centre. Ssemwogerere now even serves as the publicity secretary of the club. The couple says meeting other people in the same situation has been very comforting to them.

Throughout their ordeal, what continues to surprise Ssemwogerere most is his wife's decision to stand by him even after finding out that she was free from the virus. He says:

"She is always there for me. I had lost hope; I thought I was going to die but I am now used to my situation. She consoles me a lot. I believe I am going to be able to raise my children."

Prossy says the thought of abandoning Ssemwogerere has never crossed her mind. To her, the fact that her husband is HIV+ and she is not is not a reason for her to desert her husband. They have always been in love and honest with each other. She adds:

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"There was too much love, dreams and history between us. The love which we have built for years is what I hold onto."

Prossy says they have never been closer or more deeply in love than today.

In order to maintain their discordant status, they have decided together to abstain from having sex and have done so since 1998. Although they considered using condoms, they made a mutual decision to limit their intimate relationship to caressing which they say gives them both sexual satisfaction. In their opinion, having sex is not the only way for them to express love for each other.

Prossy and Ssemwogere always make joint decisions together including the decision for Ssemwogere to go on Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART). Before Ssemwogere began ART, they discussed the pros and cons of the treatment and then made a decision together for Ssemwogere to get treatment. He says, *"It would have been difficult for me if I had started on ARVs [antiretrovirals] without my wife's consent because I really need her support to take all these drugs."*

Ssemwogere always updates Prossy on HIV and AIDS information he receives from the hospital.

Although Ssemwogere continues to work in construction, sometimes he is too weak to work and the family must survive on the proceeds from Prossy's small vegetable business. Through her work, she is able to contribute money to the cost of her husband's treatment.

The couple also made a mutual decision to go public with Ssemwogere's HIV status. They first disclosed their status to their children who have remained very supportive.

At first, Prossy was afraid that they would be stigmatized by their community. However, after discussing the issues around publicizing their status, they decided it was the best thing to do. Today, many people in their community approach them secretly for advice when they or a loved one are found to be HIV positive and for information about where to go for testing.

Now, Ssemwogere likes counselling others and sensitizing them about HIV/AIDS. He has also composed songs about living with the disease and wants to record them.

While they have been able to develop a sound support system of friends, family, and counsellors, the couple's lives have not been without challenges since Ssemwogere revealed his HIV positive status. Ssemwogere has experienced a lot of stigma from his relatives. He says:

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"When you are HIV positive, your relatives don't trust you anymore. They think you are useless; they don't involve you in most of the clan affairs because they count you dead."

Ssemwongerere also sometimes finds it difficult to secure construction work. Some people are reluctant to hire him because they are worried about what would happen if they hire him and he dies on site. Some potential employers have even gone so far as to publicly announce that he was dead.

Prossy and Ssemwogerere say that "gossip" is one of the things that made them go public. They did it so that people have less to gossip about them, because now it is out in the open. Also, they knew other discordant couples were experiencing similar issues and they believed that sharing their experiences could help these couples.

Prossy and Ssemwogerere believe that if couples, especially those that are discordant, do not communicate about HIV, they will damage their relationship. To Prossy and Ssemwogerere, discussing issues about HIV testing and status openly is important, particularly when making plans about your children's' future care and support and when ensuring access to proper HIV and AIDS treatment and services.

Even Prossy has had to deal with challenges, particularly from friends and relatives who have advised her to abandon her husband. She says that some believe she is at great risk if he were to rape her. Prossy says that her own mother still does not believe that Prossy is HIV negative but instead thinks Prossy is attempting to console her by claiming she is negative.

Although people have advised her to leave her marriage, Prossy knows that she will never consider it. *"If I were the one in my husband's condition, I would feel sad if abandoned."*

As a couple, they have found support from TASO (The AIDS Support Organization) - which provides services to those living with HIV and AIDS in Uganda - counsellors at the local clinic, their religious leaders, and through other discordant couples who live in their village.

They hope to one day build their own house and Ssemwogerere hopes to record his music.

Session 6 : VIOLENCE BETWEEN PARTNERS

FORTUNATA MAFUKA

Fortunata Mafuka was born in 1962 in Iringa, a district in the Southern Central highlands of Tanzania. She is the mother of three children and a nurse by training. After nine years of marriage to a physically abusive husband,

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Fortunata defied tradition and the objections of her family and left her marriage to seek safety for herself and for her children.

Fortunata married her husband Emmanuel in 1988 in an elaborate ceremony. She describes the wedding as "marvellous." At the time, Emmanuel worked in the army and Fortunata worked with the Tanzanian Railway Authority.

Everything was going well until Emmanuel became abusive after a few years of marriage. Fortunata also discovered he had several mistresses. Whenever Fortunata confronted her husband about his behaviour, he would beat her. In spite of the abuse, Fortunata decided to persevere in her marriage because of her children and her Christian wedding vows.

The violence persisted and became so severe that one time, Fortunata was beaten so fiercely that she lost consciousness.

"Being beaten, being bullied around - there came a time if I even asked him any question, or anything, I ended up being beaten."

Fortunata describes her face as 'broken' as a result of the years of abuse:

"I also got beaten until I lost my front teeth; up to now I have artificial teeth which are the ones I am using now."

The repeated abuse limited Fortunata's social life and her self esteem.

"Very often I felt ashamed to let people outside know that I had been beaten. You can cheat that you had fallen down and got hurt...you can wear sunglasses so that people could not see that your eyes were red or swollen."

After reaching her limit, Fortunata tried to seek help from her church elders. Although they confronted Emmanuel about his abusive behaviour, he continued to abuse his wife. He became uncontrollable and beat her when her male co-workers greeted her or even in front of visitors.

In 1996, Emmanuel retired after reaching the level of Lieutenant Colonel in the army. Hoping for a new start in Emmanuel's home town, Fortunata suggested that the family move to Dodoma, the capital of Tanzania where Fortunata owned land and cattle given to her by her late father. She was sure that the land and cattle would allow her family to earn an income. Emmanuel agreed to the move and with their savings, they built a house there.

Fortunata recalls that in the beginning, life was good. She tried to rebuild their relationship and assure her husband that they could raise their family from income she generated from raising cattle. She soon built a drug store and felt certain that she and her family had finally found happiness.

Unfortunately, Fortunata soon learned that the peace was only temporary. After Emmanuel received his retirement benefits he became abusive again.

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Since he was no longer dependent on Fortunata financially, he began to accuse her of being “stubborn” and “disrespectful” because she had her own money. In an attempt to end her business enterprises and keep her at home, he even fired her house helper and the staff she had hired to tend her cattle.

“I reached a point where I took myself as a cursed person, that I had made a mistake in taking this man to be my husband and he was not a person God appointed for me.”

Fortunata finally decided she could not take the abuse any longer and sought the consolation and advice of a close friend. She decided that she had to leave the marriage. In 1998, she walked out.

“I had to leave Emmanuel, literally left with nothing but my few belongings and my children. I sacrificed my income generating projects, the house and marriage to save myself although my husband had no job. I went back to my mother in Iringa.”

After she left, Fortunata was challenged by her church and her family who felt that she did the wrong thing by leaving her husband.

“...We Roman Catholics believe that once one is married, there is nobody to break that marriage...there is no divorce of any kind.”

Fortunata’s own mother also questioned her decision.

“She did not accept me at home at all. She had gone to see the Reverend and informed them on my case...that I have broken my marriage...”

In spite of her church’s advice to return to her abusive husband, Fortunata stood firm and refused. Eventually, she found a younger priest with more progressive views. He agreed with her decision to leave her home.

In that same year, Fortunata started *Women Wake Up* (WOWAP) with a friend and with the financial support of local sympathizers. Recognizing the frequency of spousal abuse and gender-based violence in their area, they established WOWAP to provide assistance to women who are suffering from abuse and other forms of discrimination in their homes. In the following year, WOWAP received additional funding and Fortunata returned to Dodoma to continue managing the organization with its co-founder.

Many people in her community witnessed what Fortunata went through from the abuse and the struggle to leave her marriage. Her success in protecting her and her children is regarded as a positive example by many. Her experiences enabled her and her WOWAP co-founder to open up a counselling and assistance centre for women and children.

WOWAP has also established a highly successful legal support unit for women undergoing domestic abuse. WOWAP also provides arbitration assistance

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designed to help couples in abusive relationships find ways to end the abuse and live together in harmony and peace.

It is now common for women in Dodoma to be told to visit WOWAP when they have such cases. In 2004, the association organized and encouraged a rural village in Dodoma Rural District with many cases of violence against women to support girls coming of age without going through female genital mutilation.

Today, Fortunata is happy with her decision to leave her abusive marriage and protect her health and the health of her family.

"I find happiness in my ability to have overcome physical and emotional abuse. And being independent I can earn and control my own income, but also single handedly educated my children. I have started building another house."

Fortunata believes that all women have a right to a happy life and to be free from abuse in their homes. She firmly believes that women who are abused should have access to social, emotional, financial and legal support.

Session 7: LIFE SKILLS

Ressy and George Kalunga

Ressy and George Kalunga are a married working-class couple living in an urban township in Lusaka, Zambia. They have been married since 1981 and have six children. Despite having only some secondary education, the Kalungas manage a small business together and train community members in business development skills.

When they married, George, a bricklayer by training, was the sole wage earner of the family. He depended on contract jobs which, he says, did not come regularly enough to keep the family going. After Ressy and George began a family and subsequently took in an additional seven other relatives, they realized that they desperately needed other sources of income.

One of the relatives they took in was Ressy's sister who eventually died of AIDS. While nursing her sister, Ressy decided to take a one-week course in home-based care at a local clinic. One of her instructors introduced Ressy to a tie and dye project which worked to empower and educate women about income-generating opportunities. Ressy joined the project's tie and dye course and successfully completed it. *"I was the only one out of 50 women undergoing the three-week course who graduated."*

The tie and dye skills Ressy acquired marked a turning point in the Kalunga's financial situation. *"Previously our financial position was such that we were literally not able to send our children and dependants to school and sometimes went to bed on empty stomachs."*

AFRICAN TRANSFORMATION WRITTEN PROFILES

With only K150,000 (less than US\$50) in seed money given to her by her husband, Ressay started a tie and dye business in 1999. Today, the tie and dye business earns the Kalungas an average of K2.5 million a month (About US\$750). This is approximately three times the salary of a university graduate working in the civil service.

"Although my husband had construction skills, the flow of money was irregular because he did not always get contracts from people. But with my skills, things are different now," said Ressay.

In addition to her tie and dye skills, Ressay also gained mastery in knitting and baking which enabled her to maximize her earnings and meet the needs of her family.

Throughout her work, the Kalungas realized that sharing the skills Ressay learned with others was important. This went beyond the tie and dye business to organizing other groups in the community. *"Our township had no women's club and I started one of which I was chairperson. The club also started a community school for vulnerable children. This has been of great benefit to the community,"* says Ressay. Not only was she earning a living from her tie and dye business, Ressay also offered her services to the women's club in her community.

With her husband's encouragement, Ressay decided to find ways to train even more women in skills that would bring them additional income. In 2001, she successfully trained 86 women who were wives of police officers stationed in Lusaka in tie and dye technology. A year later, she moved on to a military barracks and trained women in a soldiers' wives club.

Ressay and George now host lectures on tie and dye in their home and currently Ressay is training ten women. All these efforts have helped women to overcome poverty in their households through becoming empowered economically.

"This gives me a sense of great pride and satisfaction that I have contributed and continue to contribute to the economic empowerment of women to improve their livelihood. I have therefore not only improved my own welfare, but also that of others."

Ressay feels that she owes her success to her husband who, when she felt like giving up, encouraged her to "soldier on." He also was able to supplement Ressay's capital to boost the business whenever he made money from his employment as a bricklayer and carpenter. Today, her tie and dye product customers range from individuals to institutions.

Now, with the help of an assistant who is paid a monthly salary, Ressay pledges to continue helping women become empowered economically so that they do not need to wait for or rely on their husbands' salaries.

AFRICAN TRANSFORMATION WRITTEN PROFILES

Ressy is aspiring to graduate to batiks - the next level of her trade. Batiks are of higher quality than tie and dye. This technology, Ressy says, will increase her and her family's financial stability.

Incidentally, since he showed interest in the tie and die technology, Ressy's husband has been working under her tutorship.

"I have always been a believer in working together. I sponsored my wife to do her course and after I asked to see the skills she had learnt put into practice, I was amazed with the quality of work I saw. This really motivated me to rally behind my wife and give her all the support." said George.

George often buys materials for his wife. He does not mind helping his wife before he completes his personal errands. He knows that this will help his wife stay in business.

He has also taken the time to learn from his wife how to operate the tie and dye technology and as a result helps out on the project.

"I have assured my wife that I will be there for her. This is our business, because when you marry, you are one. So we must do things together. When you work together you see the direction and there are no divisions that can make things hard for each other. We work together and when my wife goes to teach I go with her."

George says their goal is to establish an orphanage and a community centre where, apart from tie and dye, trades like carpentry and bricklaying will be taught.

"We also want to have a home-based care facility so that my wife who has relevant skills can help the terminally sick. Apart from providing home-based care, the centre will also train counsellors and provide general information on HIV/AIDS. If we realize our dream, we shall really be fulfilled," said George.

In order to make sure her business prospers, Ressy has also decided to go back to school. Since she is a person who is determined to get to the height of business entrepreneurship - as Ressy points out - she certainly needs a good education.

"[I] am going back to school and am not ashamed to tell you that although I left school in grade seven, I will start from grade six so that my foundation is solid. When you are not educated you are easily cheated and very disadvantaged, so I have made up my mind to start night school next month," says Ressy as her husband nods in approval.

Session 8 : WORKING AND MANAGING RESOURCES TOGETHER

CHARLES AND JANE MUKILIKULI

Charles Mukilikuli, 35, and his wife Jane are a remarkable couple. Although neither Charles nor Jane has more than a primary education, they have been able to raise a large family and build a successful business over the years. They plan and manage their family and business together as husband and wife.

Charles and Jane started their business by selling food stuffs in a small shop. They later switched to selling 'ghee' - a dairy-based food flavouring. As their business grew, they were able to buy a plot of land upon which they built a 24-room guesthouse and small shop which sells household items, beans, peas and groundnuts. Today, the couple still trades in ghee which they both deliver to buyers as far away as Kampala (Uganda's capital city).

The Mukilikulis use the proceeds from their businesses to look after their large family. In addition to six children of their own, the Mukilikulis take care of several orphans who are children of relatives. Over the years, they've made financial decisions and plans together to make this possible.

"It is difficult to stay with so many relatives if you have both not agreed to it." Jane says.

As their family grew, they decided not to have any more children of their own but to provide the best possible opportunities for the children in their care. Their primary goal is to be able to give a good quality education to all of the children they are looking after.

To achieve their goals, the Mukilikulis developed a money management plan. Initially, for a long time the couple kept their savings in a wooden box stored in their house. They only used the money for expanding their business. For example, they built their guesthouse from savings accumulated in the box. Later, the couple opened a bank account at a bank about an hour's drive from their village. Although they still use the savings box to store money before it's taken to the bank, they find that keeping money in the bank is more secure because it is insured.

Through interacting with people and operating their businesses, the Mukilikulis also realized that they wanted to give back to their community and that their success could serve as an example to the community. As a result, they have started an adult literacy program and have joined the Mutukula Community Development Association (MUCODA) which offers small business loans. They have future plans to start a vocational school to provide additional skills to those looking for work.

AFRICAN TRANSFORMATION WRITTEN PROFILES

The couple says that, while some community members doubt their success, their family and the majority of the people in their community are happy for them and admire what they have achieved.

"Our relatives are happy to see us married and running the business together. If you understand each other, make joint decisions and are always there for each other you will be successful. The Mukilikili's advise that "couples should learn to work together and understand each other." These are among the critical factors that have helped them to succeed in their business.

Session 9: BENEFITS OF NETWORKING

ANNIE AND BWALYA KATONGO

Annie Katongo was born to a family of six in a rural area of Zambia's Northern Province. At 45 years old, she is a married mother of one child and has only a primary level of education.

In 1978, Annie married her husband, Bwalya Katongo, shortly after he completed his studies in agriculture. Currently, he works for the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. They live together in Zambia's Central province, about 75 kilometres from Lusaka in Malaya village, with their one natural child and 18 other children who they take care of.

In response to the problems with poverty among women in their village, Annie Katongo, along with three of her peers, decided to create the Atusole Women's Club in 1989. The founders wanted their organization to help relieve suffering among women living in poverty due to lack of employment opportunities. They also hoped that the club would help women address health and education issues, particularly with members' young children.

Annie describes the club's rocky start:

"We went around informing people that we should form a club for women in order to help them do certain things. Some agreed and some refused. We realized that the majority had refused because they didn't know the benefits of starting a club and some had problems with their husbands. Their husbands totally refused."

Annie and her co-founders soon discovered that many local men believed that allowing their wives to work outside of the home would lead to unfaithfulness. These men were reluctant to support the initiative.

As a result, recruitment was slow and the club began with only 13 members.

AFRICAN TRANSFORMATION WRITTEN PROFILES

Upon realizing the men in the community were preventing their wives from joining the club, Annie asked her husband for assistance:

"One day my wife came and said, 'We have some work to do with men. When we discuss with men they say there is no benefit and they won't allow their wives to come.' So I called a meeting with men to discuss this problem...[A]fter a long discussion, the men came to understand the benefits of supporting their wives to learn new skills and how it would benefit their families. The majority refused but a few accepted and began to come and help in making decisions. We began with the few, but seeing what we were doing even those who refused started joining us."

With the help of her husband, Annie managed to convince men of the benefits of allowing their wives to join the club. Once the men and other community members were educated about the club's purpose, membership began to increase.

"We used to visit husbands and educate them on the benefits of having their wives join the club. Ten of our members also have their husbands as members of the club and attend meetings together," Annie said.

Thereafter, they recruited men to join the club as male advisors which helped women to join.

Today, Atusole Women's Club teaches members about nutrition, health, farming and income generation ventures and is situated in Malaya Village, a neighbouring village with a population of 12,500 people. Since it started, the club has been involved in improvements in education, sanitation, and health services in the area.

For example, the club built a school with the help of other organizations and social networks. At first, Annie and her club members did not know where and how to get the money to get it started. After careful reflection, Annie mobilized people in the area to build a self-help community school in 1998. The school began with a one-classroom block that accommodated all the classes at the time. Two years later, the club sought help from the Zambia Social Investment Fund (ZAMSIF) to expand the space.

ZAMSIF is a Zambian government initiative which helps communities with various developmental projects. ZAMSIF built another block which contained three classrooms, two teachers' houses and 10 toilets. This expansion is a great benefit to the community and the children's education. Now, more children attend school and they do not need to walk a long distance to go to school.

Before the school's establishment, children did not start primary school at the normal average of 6 years but had to wait until they were 10 when they would be strong enough to walk the 12 kilometres to the nearest school. This was especially hard on young girls, as they would get married off at 12 after only two years in school.

AFRICAN TRANSFORMATION WRITTEN PROFILES

Annie is very proud that she helped bring a school to the area because it has attracted people to settle there after their retirement. She said that even teachers were happy to work in the area. She expressed hope that, in future, the area would be able to produce leaders such as councillors and Members of Parliament. This would contribute further to the development of the area.

The club also helped address adult literacy issues within the community. Since a good number of adults could not read or write, Annie, in consultation with the community, decided to organize adult literacy classes which have since proved very popular in the community.

Annie appreciates the value of education despite not having completed her secondary school education. She has introduced Functional Adult Literacy classes known as 'Shibukeni' (literally translated as 'wake up') for people in the area. This form of education has proven very beneficial to adults who did not have a chance to attend formal school. They now have the opportunity to learn how to read, write, or solve simple arithmetic.

Water was another problem that the community faced on a daily basis. At the time Atusole Women's Club was formed, there was only one well in the village. Worse still, this well was just a simple dug out with no structure built around it to prevent objects from falling in and to keep the water clean. Annie felt that it was necessary to have more sources of clean water. She mobilized her club members to start seeking ways of achieving this. Their dream was finally realized when the Ministry of Health, through the Central Board of Health, sunk two boreholes, one for people in the village and the other at the community school.

Before the club, Malaya Village also did not have any health facilities, which meant community members had to walk long distances to seek medical services. Today, Annie prides herself with having established a mobile clinic for people to access health care. The unit is run by two community health workers that Annie had trained to attend to the sick and administer drugs. Annie also mobilized for the training of two traditional birth attendants in childbirth and other maternal healthcare skills.

Through community mobilization and networking, the club also helped install a hammer mill, a piggery, and it owns sewing machines and a 10 acre piece of land for commercial crops such as soya beans, maize and groundnuts. Annie attributes the club's success to good leadership and networking with other organizations.

"I am humble. I take time to visit members that miss club meetings to find out reasons for their absence. It is good to cooperate. As you can see, we have achieved a lot. People can only help when you have started so we began in a small way," she said.

AFRICAN TRANSFORMATION WRITTEN PROFILES

Today, the Katongos are role models in their community who never cease to educate others on the need for groups to work together to easily identify problems and carry out solutions. Through networking with other women's clubs in the area, she has established herself as a dependable member of the community. She has used her leadership position to bring about positive change in her community. Annie is now confident enough to share her experiences, problems and ideas to help others learn some the club's best practices.

Atusole Women's Club has led to the establishment of five other clubs in the area where both men and women meet to share knowledge and discuss projects that can help develop the area.

Bwalya Katongo is very supportive of his wife's involvement in the club and encourages her to spend time on club activities. He uses his position as an agricultural extension worker to link the women's club to markets and other services. He is convinced that his support and encouragement is a good thing.

"It is good to encourage the women and also work with them. In this way we can implement a lot of programs. When women learn something, they are also very good in passing on information to others."

Annie is seen as a very committed leader of the club who has brought positive development to the area. She and Bwalya are even able to care for their dependants without any problems. The couple owes just about all of their success in caring for their family to their involvement in Atusole Women's Club.

"It is easy for us because through the club we are able to cultivate and sell our crops while keeping enough to eat at home. We keep oxen that help us in tilling the land. Our pigs also supplement our meat requirements. Other members in the village have also benefited," Annie said.

African Transformation is a package of tools designed to promote gender equity, participatory development, better health and community action. The package includes the African Transformation Facilitator's Guide and nine profiles in video, audio and written form of women, men and couples who have become positive role models in their communities.

The enclosed nine profiles portray these women, men and couples from Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia who by their actions have overcome gender barriers to reach their goals and better their lives. Their stories feature the challenges they faced and overcame when dealing with issues ranging from traditional and cultural values and reproductive health to violence between partners, networking and life skills. The written profiles are designed to be used along with the African Transformation Facilitator's Guide, but can also be used as a tool to promote dialogue between men and women.

