Addressing Violence Against Women in Uganda: Approaches and Strategies of Civil Society Organizations

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ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN UGANDA:
APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS

By
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAU</td>
<td>ActionAid Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-Based Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDOVIP</td>
<td>Center for Domestic Violence Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Concerned Parents Association</td>
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<td>CRESS</td>
<td>Child Right Education Support Services</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>CV</td>
<td>Community Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVAW</td>
<td>Coalition on Violence Against Women</td>
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<td>DEVAW</td>
<td>United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRB</td>
<td>Domestic Relations Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOC</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC</td>
<td>Formerly Abducted Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIDA (U)</td>
<td>The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDI</td>
<td>Gender-related Development Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAR</td>
<td>Hope After Rape</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRF</td>
<td>Human Rights First</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSM</td>
<td>Holy Spirit Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDMC</td>
<td>Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGA</td>
<td>Income Generating Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRIN</td>
<td>Integrated Regional Information Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isis-WICCE</td>
<td>Isis-Women’s International Cross Cultural Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Local Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIWEPI</td>
<td>Lira Women Peace Initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRA</td>
<td>Lord’s Resistance Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUWODA</td>
<td>Luwero Women Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSF</td>
<td>Medicins Sans Frantieres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACWOLA</td>
<td>National Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEP</td>
<td>National Exchange Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRA</td>
<td>National Resistance Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>National Resistance Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEAP</td>
<td>Poverty Eradication Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRB</td>
<td>Population Reference Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVP</td>
<td>People’s Voice for Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>Rape Crisis Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROP</td>
<td>Rural Outreach Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV</td>
<td>Raising Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRHR</td>
<td>Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEWPA</td>
<td>Teso Women Peace Activists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMWA</td>
<td>Uganda Media Women’s Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGMP</td>
<td>Ugandan Governance Monitoring Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN OCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPDA</td>
<td>Uganda People’s Democratic Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPDF</td>
<td>Uganda People’s Defense Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPE</td>
<td>Universal Primary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Organization Name</td>
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<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPHOLD</td>
<td>Uganda Program for Human and Holistic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWONET</td>
<td>Uganda Women’s Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WID</td>
<td>Women In Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIN</td>
<td>Women’s International Network</td>
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</table>
This thesis looks at how civil society organizations (CSOs) are working to address the issue of violence against women in Uganda. Specifically, it examines what types of organizations are working to address this issue, where their efforts fit into the public health ecological model for violence prevention, and to what extent they adopt a feminist perspective. In addition, I investigate how operational environments affect CSOs and what the organizations consider they have learned from their experiences. The study is primarily based on interviews conducted in the field with CSO representatives from various parts of Uganda.

The findings suggest that the majority of the CSOs studied are grassroots or other indigenous women’s organizations that undertake activities in multiple categories and thus adopt a holistic approach in addressing the issue of violence against women.

Based on the public health ecological model for violence prevention, the overall picture that emerges is that the CSOs focus on primary level interventions, specifically concentrating their efforts on sensitization, awareness-raising, advocacy, and lobbying activities. In regards to their level of operations, my findings indicate that organizations favor community level interventions. All of the CSOs in the sample aim to address multiple at risk factors and most adopt a focus on multiple types of violence. In terms of the target population, the majority of interventions are universal, whereas both selective and indicated interventions primarily target women and girls.

The study results indicate that the majority of the organizations adopt a feminist approach, either explicitly or implicitly. As a result, the CSOs focus on women’s and girls’ strategic interests and work towards the equal enjoyment of rights and opportunities. In addition, a majority of the activities that aim to address women’s practical needs do so in ways that have high transformative potential.

Those interviewed report that CSOs face a variety of constraints from their operational environments. Inadequate human and financial resources, negative cultural and political climates, as well as competition between CSOs are impeding their efforts to end violence against women in Uganda. Only two positive factors were identified that
contribute to the performance of CSOs – their dedicated members/staff/volunteers and networking with other organizations.

From the CSO interview responses some common lessons emerged. These include addressing the causes instead of the symptoms of violence against women, in particular, addressing gender inequality and consequently involving men and other community members in violence prevention efforts. The organizations also emphasize the importance of appropriate methods and communication strategies when dealing with sensitive issues. Finally, although facilitating behavioral change is a long-term and arduous process, interventions that promote lasting change are considered critical in order to end gender-based violence.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Imagine a people routinely subjected to assault, rape, sexual slavery, arbitrary imprisonment, torture, verbal abuse, mutilation, even murder – all because they were born into a particular group. Imagine further that their sufferings were compounded by systematic discrimination and humiliation in the home and workplace, in classrooms and courtrooms, at worship and at play. Few would deny that this group had been singled out for gross violations of human rights. Such groups exists. Its members comprise half of humanity. Yet it is rarely acknowledged that violence against women and girls, many of whom are brutalized from cradle to grave simply because of their gender, is the most pervasive human rights violation in the world today. (Bunch, 1999, p. 1)

In recent years awareness of the problem of violence against women has broadened from being a ‘women’s issue’ and a feminist concern to being widely acknowledged as a human rights, public health, and a development problem. Most of the credit for this breakthrough goes to the feminist scholars and activists who struggled to bring this issue to light. According to Marin and Russo (2005), “feminists have done more than simply bring attention to the problem of male violence against women. Feminists have made such violence a central issue in the women’s movement around the world” (p. 1). Significant progress has also been made in documenting and publicizing women’s experiences of violence, especially in situations of armed conflict, as well as researching the consequences and costs of gender-based violence to women and girls and to society at large. Moreover, groundbreaking developments have been achieved in international law with the recognition of rape and other forms of sexual violence as crimes against humanity, war crimes, and elements of genocide. Nevertheless, increased attention to the problem has resulted in few recognizable improvements in women’s lives. In the words of Susan Griffin (1979): “We do not yet have the end of rape. All we have is the feat of naming rape a crime against us” (p. 31). Consequently, the continuum of

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gender-based violence continues to destroy the lives of women and girls in times of peace and war.²

Several human rights reports emphasize that in many countries, especially those in conflict and post-conflict situations, government initiatives that aim to address and/or prevent gender-based violence are nonexistent or scarcely effective³. This is due primarily to an overall lack of both political will and resources to implement national commitments and international standards effectively:

Violence thrives because too many governments turn a blind eye and allow violence against women to occur with impunity. In too many countries, law, policies and practices discriminate against women, denying them equality with men, and making them vulnerable to violence.⁴

[Although] important breakthroughs have been made in terms of international treaties and mechanisms, laws and policies ... these achievements continue to fall dismally short of the real needs because the promises they contain remain just that. (Amnesty International, 2004b, p. iv)

Feminists point out that such lack of legal, political, and law enforcement concern for the problem reflects the fact that these state institutions are designed to maintain the inequitable gender relations and the patriarchal order in society which serves to uphold the legitimacy of male violence against women (Marin & Russo, 2005; Williams, 2001). According to Scutt (1985), “governments and laws are established for the benefit of men, and against women” (cited in Connell, 1990, p. 516). Similar arguments are evident in non-Western feminist perspectives. N’Dri Therese Assie-Lumumba argues that “the African state was not designed to take care of the needs of women, so we cannot expect it to have done so” (Tyler, Mager, & Cardosa, 2000, p. 40). Mies (1982) extends this argument to assert that state itself is “the general patriarch” (cited in Connell, 1990, p. 516). According to these perspectives, the state’s failure to address the problem of male violence against women is to be expected. In fact, it could be said that this failure is a deliberate strategy intended to maintain women’s subordinate status and the patriarchal structures in society. According to Suzan Bazili (1991), the state perpetuates and promotes violence against women through action, omission, practice, endorsement, and


neglect (cited in Green, 1999, p. 99). Thus, feminists emphasize that to end violence against women it is necessary to transform not only the social institutions of the family, the household, and the community, but also the practices and policies of the state. Given this perspective, the struggle to end gender-based violence falls on civil society and on women themselves. A comprehensive literature review revealed that information on how various civil society organizations (CSOs) are seeking to address this issue at local, national, and international levels is very sparse, fragmented, and unsystematic. The growing body of literature on gender-based violence focuses most often on documenting the brutality of women’s experiences during conflict, with little or no attention to interventions aimed at addressing gender-based violence issues. This study represents a step towards filling the gaps in existing research. Based on fieldwork interview material from Uganda, supplemented by secondary sources such as brochures, annual reports, strategic planning reports, evaluations, etc. produced or commissioned by the organizations interviewed, I analyze interventions of civil society organizations aimed at addressing the issue of gender-based violence in Uganda. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to answer the following questions:

1. What types of organizations are working either directly or indirectly to address the issue of gender-based violence in Uganda?
2. Where do civil society organizations’ efforts fit into the public health ecological model for violence prevention?
3. To what extent do civil society organizations explicitly or implicitly adopt a feminist perspective in addressing the issue of gender-based violence?
4. How do organizations’ operational environments facilitate or impede their efforts?
5. What do Ugandan CSOs feel they have learned from their experiences?

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4 See Bunch, 1999; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Freeman, 1980; MacKinnon, 1989; Marin and Russo, 2005; Williams, 2001.
Organization of the Study

This thesis is composed of six chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction and the rationale for the study and outlines the research questions. Chapter 2 reviews relevant feminist literature on violence against women and institutional responses to such violence. It also provides a public health perspective on gender-based violence and introduces the public health ecological model for interventions to prevent violence. In addition, I discuss the current status of women and the patriarchal structures in Uganda. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the research methodology and theoretical framework applied in the analysis of my findings. Chapter 4 gives a brief historical background, reviews the current political and economic situation in Uganda, and looks at Uganda’s human development indicators. Chapter 5 presents my findings and answers the research questions outlined above. Chapter 6 draws together my findings in the context of other research and reflects on the results in light of the feminist and public health perspectives.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review I present two perspectives on violence against women: feminist and public health. I begin by discussing definitions and key concepts and how each perspective relates to the problem of violence against women. I then briefly highlight the effects of gender-based violence on women and girls and proceed to discuss feminist and public health points of view on responding to and preventing gender-based violence. As will be seen, the essence of the feminist argument is that pervasive gender inequality is the root cause of violence against women. In contrast, the public health approach considers violence against women a problem with multifaceted roots which include various biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors. As such, the public health perspective sees gender inequality as only one of the factors that perpetuate gender-based violence. Consequently, there are some similarities between the feminist and public health approaches in responding to and preventing violence against women. Specifically, strategies and approaches embraced by feminists are also incorporated in the public health ecological model for violence prevention. However, while the feminist strategies are concerned with addressing gender inequality within the family, society, and state institutions as well as providing meaningful support services to women survivors of violence, the public health approach has a broader focus and, in addition, incorporates factors and strategies that feminist argue vehemently against. These include addressing biological and psychological factors which, according to the public health approach, cause or contribute to violence against women as well as implementing psychological trauma healing initiatives. From a feminist point of view these strategies not only fail to address the actual cause of violence as they do not hold men responsible for their actions, but may also reinforce women’s subordination. The final section in this chapter reviews the current status of women in Uganda and reflects on how differences in the gender system may require adaptations in the strategies discussed in order to be applicable in the Ugandan context.
Feminist Perspectives on Violence Against Women

In this section I review some of the critical concepts that are central to the feminist analysis of male violence against women and therefore central to my thesis. It should be noted that there is great diversity in feminist perspectives on violence against women. My analysis of the problem is primarily based on the insights of radical feminists. I thus acknowledge that I examine only a small subset of feminist literature and use feminist theory as a general term while recognizing the wide, even contradicting, viewpoints feminist theorists have on this subject.

The conceptualization of the problem of male violence against women I present below is based primarily on Western feminist theory. Thus, a question arises whether it should be applied to a non-Western society such as Uganda. To answer this, I adopt Ugandan feminist Sylvia Tamale’s argument, which she presented in justifying the use of Western gender theory in her analysis of Ugandan society:

The colonial process rendered a coming together of a particular kind of postcolonial state that reformulated the dynamics between patriarchy and gender in Uganda … Such foreign intervention, which is manifest in ideology and the law, transformed and undercut most precolonial social values, leaving a formal structure resembling that of Western societies. In this sense, therefore, we may conclude that the scaffolding [original emphasis] of Western gender theory can be applicable to African societies for two reasons: first, because general social and legal structure of most postcolonial African states is based on a Western model; second, and more important, because the division of labor in Africa, as in Western societies, has always been based on sex – a major principle of gender theory in explaining the universal oppression of women … Hence … the realities of gender ideology in Africa today may parallel those of contemporary Western countries (1999, pp. 30-31).

In addition, some Western feminists highlight the connections between the patriarchal structures and practices of other cultures/societies and their own, recognizing that they are different in scope and degree, but not in their functionality. For example, Radford and Stanko (1996) assert that although the form and nature of male violence varies across cultures, “the presence of male violence … is a feature in all societies characterized by male supremacy and female subordination – the social relations of
patriarchy” (p. 78). Bunch (1999) also points out that “the prevalence and pattern of domestic violence are remarkably consistent from one culture to the next. Statistics on rape from industrialized and developing countries show strikingly similar patterns” (p. 3). Thus, although I recognize that differences exist between patriarchal society in Uganda and Western patriarchal societies, I believe that these differences do not preclude the possibility of feminist analysis using primarily Western feminist theory.

Definitions and Key Concepts

**Violence against women.** There is no universally agreed upon definition of violence against women. Some prefer broader definitions which, in addition to physical, sexual, and psychological violence, also include structural violence such as feminization of poverty, unequal access to health, education, and other services. For example, Turshen (1999) discusses economic, political, and cultural violence against women. Others argue that a very broad definition can mitigate the descriptive power of the term (see Pickup, 2001). According to the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW), violence against women is

any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (cited in United Nations Development Fund for Women [UNIFEM], n.d.)

DEVAW Article 2 further elaborates that violence against women encompasses but is not limited to the following:

(a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at

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5 According to Turshen (1999) examples of economic violence include military budgets that deprive women of education and health services, and the violence of the state’s failure to recognize and return women’s financial contributions in the form of pensions and other benefits. Political violence is done to women parliamentarians who become honorary men; and making token appointments of women undermines equality. Cultural violence is the use of religion, tradition, and custom to deprive women of new liberatory identities, the symbolic meaning that enrich their lives, and the security that makes creative life possible. (p. 12)
work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs. (cited in UNIFEM, n.d.)

Green (1999) defines violence against women from a feminist perspective as any

violent acts (real or threatened) perpetrated on females because they are female. Whether violence operates as direct physical violence, threat, or intimidation, the intent is to perpetuate and promote hierarchical gender relations. It is manifested in several forms, all serving the same end: the preservation of male control over resources and power. (pp. 1-2)

Even though this definition is not as specific, it emphasizes an important aspect of gender-based violence – that of power and control. For the purposes of my thesis, I fuse the above definitions and use the terms violence against women and gender-based violence interchangeably.

Although there are many different forms of violence encompassed by the above definitions, the issues that will be mainly discussed here are sexual and domestic violence\(^6\) against women and girls. For the purposes of this study, I adopt Kelly’s (1988b) feminist definition of sexual violence, in which she attempts to reflect “both the extent and range of sexual violence and to include women’s perceptions within it” (p. 41). She defines sexual violence as

any physical, visual, verbal or sexual act that is experienced by the woman or girl, at the time or later, as a threat, invasion or assault, that has the effect of hurting her or degrading her and/or takes away her ability to control intimate contact. (p. 41)

For the purpose of this study, I define domestic violence as physical, sexual, or psychological violence against women and girls or threats of it “by an intimate partner, including a cohabiting partner, and by other family members, whether this violence occurs within or beyond the confines of the home” (UNICEF, 2000, p. 2). According to

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\(^6\) The terms domestic violence, intimate violence, partner violence, partner abuse, family violence, marital violence, conjugal violence, spouse abuse are criticized for not identifying women as targets and men as perpetrators. The terms marital violence, conjugal violence, spouse abuse or wife battering, wife beating, and wife abuse are criticized for ignoring the abuse that unmarried women or lesbian women suffer in their relationships. In addition, terms such as such as wife battering or wife beating as well as battered woman or abused woman identify the victim but obscure the offender, thus downplaying the role of men as perpetrators (Bograd, 1988; Marin & Russo, 2005). For lack of a better term I use domestic violence with an explicit emphasis on male violence against women.
UNICEF (2000) such violence is manifested through physical abuse and aggression, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, economic abuse, as well as acts of omission such as “gender bias that discriminates in terms of nutrition, education and access to health care” (p. 2). Overall, as illustrated in Table 1, this study assumes that the forms of gender-based violence include institutional and socio-structural violence as well as various forms of non-contact violence. It should be noted that although the categories below are listed separately, they are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they often work in tandem.

Gender, power, and patriarchy. Gender is a key concept in feminist theory, especially as it relates to gender-based violence, and refers to a social construction of sex. According to Hawkesworth (1997), the concept of gender aims to “distinguish culturally specific characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity from biological features” (p. 650). O’Tool and Schiffman (1997) offer a more elaborate explanation:

As a central organizing principle among human groups, gender is the constellation of personal attributes assigned to men and women in any culture. It is a primary characteristic by which we structure intimate relationships, divide labor, assign social value, and grant privilege. In most contemporary societies, dualistic gender systems endure, with clearly demarcated boundaries between what is considered masculine and what is considered feminine – temperamentally, physically, sexually, and behaviorally. Gender is simultaneously a deeply embedded aspect of individual personalities and structural social arrangements. (p. xii)

West and Zimmerman (1987) propose an alternate definition. In their perspective gender is not what one is, but what one does:

The ‘doing’ of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production. Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine ‘natures’… Rather than as property of individuals, we conceive of gender as an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society. (p. 126)
Table 1. Forms of Gender-Based Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Perpetrated by</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Battery</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maiming</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproductive coercion/control</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical chastisement</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rape and sexual abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incest</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child sexual abuse and defilement</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual exploitation</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual aggression</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual harassment</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional and psychological violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confinement</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surveillance</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Threats of reprisals</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destruction of objects</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal aggression and humiliation</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional harmful practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female genital mutilation</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dowry-related violence and murder</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honor killings and maiming</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early and forced marriages</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female foeticide</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female infanticide and/or neglect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widow and wife inheritance</td>
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<td>Sati</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Witch burning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-economic violence</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deprivation of food and other basic needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deprivation of medical care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denial of funds/refusal to contribute financially</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confiscation of women’s earnings</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denial of access to education</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denial of access to employment</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denial of property rights</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercialized violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trafficking</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slavery</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forced prostitution</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media: pornography</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media: commercialization of women’s bodies</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Custodial violence</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Torture</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political and legal violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual violence as a weapon of war</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate detention</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproductive coercion/control</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerating gender violence by non-state actors</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discriminatory laws (customary and state legal system)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discriminatory practices by the organizations and structures that enforce the law</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thus, by ‘doing gender’ we create differences between women and men “that are not natural, essential, or biological. Once the differences have been constructed, they are used to reinforce the ‘essentialness’ of gender” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 137). Consequently, masculine and feminine attributes, behaviors, and activities “are reified into a hierarchical opposition which positions the male subjects as the standard or norm and which both naturalizes women’s subordination and obliterates the political significance of the private sphere” (Zalewski, p. 344). Despite the variations in these definitions of gender, they reveal two essential aspects of gender that are important for this study: gender is socially constructed and it is used to create inequality between women and men.

The concept of power is central to feminist analysis and explanations of all forms of violence against women. As will be discussed below, feminists focus on men’s exercise, misuse, and abuse of power over women and identify violence as a means to maintain or regain that power. Some feminists refer to this kind of power simply as power itself, such as defined by Marcela Lagarde (1990):

Power consists primarily in being able to take a decision which will affect someone else or in acting to force, confine, forbid, or prevent. Whoever exercises such power subordinates and degrades, forces actions, exercises control and assumes the right to punish, seize material property, infringe symbolic rights and dominate in every aspect. (p. 31 cited in Alberti, 1999, p. 130)

Kelly (1988b) points out that:

Power in feminist analysis is not a property but a relation [original emphasis] which structures interactions between men and women in all areas of social life. The fact that women, unlike other oppressed groups, are expected to live in intimate contact with those who have power over them, not only respecting but also loving them, makes women’s subordination both pervasive and insidious. (p. 26)

However, these perspectives fail to note that not all power is harmful. I therefore distinguish men’s power over women as power over from other kinds of power such as power within, power to, and power with, which will be discussed later. Power over, although not limited to, is primarily exercised by men over women and is aimed at achieving and maintaining the subjugation and the exclusion of women. Power over can and is often enforced through violence, fear, and the threat of violence. However, it can
also be enforced through more subtle means such as fears that women have been
socialized to impose on themselves or “social rules which force the weaker to accept the
will of the stronger” (Townsend, Zapata, Rowlands, Alberti, & Mercado, 1999, p. 26).

Patriarchy is another key concept and a central category in feminist social theory
and analysis. It is closely related to the concepts of gender and power. According to
Connell (1990) the term patriarchy defines

historically produced situations in gender relations where men’s domination is
institutionalized [original emphasis]. That is to say, men’s overall social
supremacy is embedded in face-to-face settings such as the family and the
workplace, generated by the functioning of the economy, reproduced over time by
the normal operation of schools, media, and churches. (p. 514)

Similarly, Green (1999) points out that:

Patriarchy is a web of public and private structures, ideology, and mechanisms for
the control of women in which the family plays a unique role … the family is the
institution most central to patriarchy because it indoctrinates males and females
though psychosocial conditioning and socialization into gender roles. (p. 15)

Thus, feminist definitions of patriarchy emphasize that this system of male domination
over women is socially constructed, not the inevitable result of biological differences
between women and men.

In addition, feminist writings on patriarchy emphasize the use of violence as a
means of social control as well as enforcement and maintenance of patriarchal ideology.
For example, Kate Millet (1972) in her analysis of patriarchy accentuates that men’s
control over women in patriarchal societies, like in all political systems, “ultimately rests
on force” (cited in Kelly, 1988b, p. 21). In addition, according to Kelly (1988b), Millet’s
perspective points out the two essential features of patriarchy: the control of women’s
sexuality and the use of force. Rozario (1992) discusses how the concepts of honor and
shame, which are interdependent mechanisms of patriarchy, legitimize the use of gender-
based violence to secure the social control. She suggests that honor in patriarchal
societies is viewed as men’s responsibility, while shame is apportioned to women (cited
in Green 1999, p. 23). Consequently, Green (1999) argues that “females are socialized to
accept shame as their lot in life … Inherent in notions of female shame is the concept that
female sexuality requires social control” (p. 23). At the same time, patriarchal ideology
associates the purity of women with honor and status of men in their families. Thus, various forms of gender-based violence such as female genital mutilation exemplify how men control women’s sexuality and, in particular, their “sexual purity” by imposing ideals of female behavior (Green, 1999).

Some feminists have extended definitions of patriarchy to include other power structures such as race or class. For example, Dobash and Dobash (1979) define patriarchy as a system comprised of two elements: structure and ideology.

The structural aspect of the patriarchy is manifest in the hierarchical organization of social institutions and social relations, an organizational pattern that by definition relegates selected individuals, groups, or classes to positions of power, privilege, and leadership and others to some form of subservience. Access to positions is rarely based upon individual ability but is institutionalized to such an extent that those who occupy positions of power and privilege do so either because of some form of ascribed status or because of institutionalized forms of advantage that give them the opportunity to achieve status. (Dobash & Dobash, 1979, p. 43)

Patriarchal ideology, according to Dobashes, is supportive of the principle of a hierarchical order, as opposed to an egalitarian one, and of the hierarchy currently in power. It is a rationalization for inequality and serves as a means of creating acceptance of subordination by those destined to such positions. (pp. 43-44)

Similarly, Freeman (1980) asserts that often those in subordinate positions believe in the legitimacy of the authority over them. For example, wives may accept the authority of their husbands and their right to chastise them. Consequently, “hegemonic masculinity is all the more powerful because it is perceived as being based on legitimate authority” (Green, 1999, p. 27). Since patriarchal ideology is internalized by both men and women, Green points out that:

In many societies it is not uncommon for women to support and participate in violence against other women (even when they themselves are subjected to the same violence). They may work (directly or indirectly) to sustain wife beating, rape, and female circumcision. As a result, women become participants in the promotion and perpetuation of violence against other women. Such a situation should not be surprising since females have been socialized into their roles just as males have. In many cultures where existence outside the family is unfeasible, ‘established’ women are often the most active enforcers and proselytizers of gender relations. (p. 12)
Several authors make an important point that patriarchal ideology often thrives under disguise of cultural values or traditions. In the words of Charlotte Bunch (1999), “the most enduring enemies of woman’s dignity and security are cultural forces aimed at preserving male dominance and female subjugation – often in the name of venerable tradition” (p. 3). Green (1999) also suggests that gender-based violence thrives because it is treated as too traditional or too culturally sensitive to tackle, thus “the sexual relations of power are perpetuated by the silence that protect ‘traditional values’ and the sanctity surrounding the family” (p. 20). This argument is also present in non-Western feminist perspectives. According to Bene Madunago, “within Africa, the structures that continue to oppress women have remained because they are deemed to be cultural. But the structures for male power have changed in order to perpetuate male power” (Taylor, Mager, & Cardosa, 2000, p. 4).

Linking Patriarchy, Gender Inequality, and Violence Against Women

**Feminist contributions to the denaturalization of the problem.** The pervasiveness of gender-based violence across cultures and societies has led to biological determinism in debates about its origins. Thus, there are numerous theories explaining male violence against women as a natural consequence of biological differences between women and men. However, the influence of the women’s movement and feminist thought on academic inquiry shifted the focus from biological or psychological characteristics of individual perpetrators and/or victims to gender relations. Compelling feminists theories have emerged that accentuate the issues of gender, power, and control as the starting place for an inquiry into gender-based violence (see Bunch, 1999; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Griffin, 1979; Kelly, 1988b; MacKinnon, 1989). As a result, the feminist approach has relocated the discussion within a framework of women’s oppression and male domination in society and, through the emphasis on gender relations and patriarchy as social constructs, has denaturalized violence against women. According to O’Toole and Schiffman (1997), “once an unfortunate, but taken-for-granted, aspect of human condition, gender violence becomes a social problem with a beginning and, ostensibly, an end” (p. 3).

Among psychological, pathological, or biological explanations for gender-based violence feminists have refuted a myth that rape is a natural behavior (Griffin, 1979;
Seifert, 1992, 1994), or that men who rape have an overwhelming and irrepressible sexual drive, which “if not restrained, will regrettably but inevitably have its way” (Seifert, 1992; also see Donat & D’Emilio, 1997), as well as the myth that men who rape or batter women are psychopaths\(^7\) (Griffin, 1979; Kozol, 1995; MacKinnon, 1989; Marin & Russo, 2005). Feminist research has also dispelled the stereotypical assumption reflected in laws that “real” rape “is an attack at night, in a public place, by a stranger who uses force (preferably a weapon)” (Kelly & Radford, 1996, p. 21). While such rapes occur, the fact is that most women are raped by the men they know (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Kelly & Radford, 1996; MacKinnon, 1989). Feminist scholars have also criticized the use of social deprivation theories to explain male violence against women. According to Teboho Maitse (1998), such approach projects “blame onto an abstract, albeit genuine, reality, rather than placing responsibility with the perpetrator … using poverty to explain men’s violence towards women risks excusing the violence, and does not force men to take responsibility for their actions” (p. 56). She also adds that “women are not exempt from poverty – in fact, they are the poorest of all people in this country [South Africa]; yet they do not rape or commonly commit violent acts against people” (p. 56). Sen (1998) has a similar point that “women across income categories, in all countries, are subjected to male violence. The dominant risk is not poverty; it is being female” (p. 14).

In the area of domestic violence, feminists have challenged the idea of marriage and family as the private sphere and struggled to bring attention to the issue of marital rape (see Bunch, 1999; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Kelly & Radford, 1996; Marin & Russo, 2005; Sweetman, 1998). According to Bograd (1988), feminists link wife abuse to the structure of current family life, they draw theoretical and empirical links between the personal and the political, which leads to new understandings of battering: Wife abuse is not a private matter but a social one. (p. 15)

Feminist theory has also dispelled the stereotypes on domestic violence that focus on social and psychological characteristics. These include stereotypes of batterers that accentuate alcohol abuse or aggressive personality disorders as well as stereotypes of battered women who are portrayed as “poor, weak, and downtrodden and as nagging

\(^7\) MacKinnon (1989) cites Abel, Becker and Skinner (1980) whose findings indicate that only about 5% of all known rapists in the United States are diagnosed psychopathic (p. 336).
women who ‘deserve’ to be hit” (Kelly, 1988a, p. 123). Instead, feminists approach “battered women as survivors of harrowing, life-threatening experiences, who have many adaptive capacities and strengths” (Bograd, 1988, p. 15). By focusing on and validating women’s experiences from their own frame of reference, feminists have revealed biases against women in academic theories as well as institutional policies and approaches such as blaming or implicating women for the violence they have suffered (Bograd, 1988; Kelly, 1988a; MacKinnon, 1989; Radford & Kelly, 1996). Moreover, by focusing on women’s experiences, feminists have recognized that the limitations on social mobility, deprivation of economic resources, and other forms of psychological and economic abuse are subtle yet insidious forms of violence (Kapur, 1998; Marin & Russo, 2005). Overall, feminist scholars have placed male-female relations at the center of their analysis and view gender inequality as a key factor perpetuating violence against women. Consequently, gender-based violence is not seen “as an end in itself” (Donat & D’Emilio, 1997, p. 188), but as a central means of social control used to enforce gender roles in society and maintain women’s subordinate status compared to men (also see Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Kelly, 1988b; MacKinnon, 1989; Marin & Russo, 2005).

Rape and sexual violence. A large portion of feminist writings on violence against women focuses on sexual violence and rape in particular (see Allen, 1996; Griffin, 1979; Kelly, 1988b; Seifert, 1992; Stiglmayer, 1994). These accounts analyze rape as stemming from difference in women’s and men’s social positions and thus link it to patriarchal social forms. In this view, as Helliwell (2000) points out, “inequality between men and women is linked to men’s desire to possess, subjugate, and control women, with rape constituting a central means by which the freedom of women is limited and their continued submission to men ensured” (p. 794). Similarly, Radford and Stanko (1996) state that “sexual violence is used by men as a way of securing and maintaining the relations of male dominance and female subordination, which are central to the patriarchal social order” (p. 65). However, they recognize that patriarchy is interlinked with other power structures such as race, class, age, etc. which shape women’s experiences of violence as well as how the legal system responds to such violence.

There are two distinct views in feminist theory on the nature of rape. Some feminists consider rape as a non-sexual act of aggression. According to Seifert (1992),
“rape neither has very much to do with nature nor sexuality. Rather, it is an extreme act of violence perpetrated by sexual means” (p. 1). Similarly, Groth and Hobson (1986) assert that:

Rape is not an aggressive expression of sexuality, but a sexual expression of aggression. In the perpetrator’s psyche, it does not fulfill sexual functions, but is a manifestation of anger, violence and domination of a woman. The purpose is to degrade, humiliate and subjugate her. (p. 88 cited in Seifert, 1992, p. 1)

MacKinnon (1989) suggests that this argument gives the needed emphasis on power and dominance, however, it obscures sex as an element of rape. She argues that “aside from failing to answer the rather obvious question, if it’s violence not sex why didn’t he just hit her, this approach made it impossible to see that violence is sex when it is practiced as sex” (p. 323). MacKinnon defines sexuality as “a social construct of male power: defined by men, forced on women, and constitutive in the meaning of gender” (p. 316) and argues that:

The meaning of practices of sexual violence cannot be categorized away as violence, not sex, either. The male sexual role … centers on aggressive intrusion on those with less power. Such acts of dominance are experienced as sexually arousing, as sex itself. They therefore are. (MacKinnon, 1989, p. 316)

Griffin (1979) also points out that “many men appear to take sexual pleasure from nearly all forms of violence. Whatever the motivation, male sexuality and violence in our culture seem to be inseparable” (p. 7). Similarly, Millet (1970) asserts that force within the patriarchal system takes “a form of violence particularly sexual in nature and realized most completely in the act of rape” (p. 69 cited in Donat & D'Emilio, 1997, p. 188). Helliwell (2000) argues that the sexualization of violence in rape and the understanding of rape as a horrific practice by most women in Western societies has greatly intensified the consequences of rape for women in Western societies. However, non-Western feminist research (see Isis-WICCE, 1998, 2001b, 2002b) demonstrates that the intermeshing of sexuality and personal identity also occurs in these non-Western patriarchal societies and therefore the consequences of rape for a victim include what Helliwell (2000) refers to as “a violation of personhood itself” (p. 792). Moreover, due to the premium that these societies place on women’s sexual purity, especially its association with male honor, as well as men’s sense of entitlement to women as their
personal property, rape may have even greater social and economic consequences for women in non-Western societies (see Green, 1999; Isis-WICCE, 1998, 2001b, 2002b; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002).

**Domestic violence.** According to Radford and Stanko (1996), domestic violence is “one of the most widespread, legitimized, invisible, and neglected forms of violence against women around the world” (p. 68). Since such violence is still regarded as a private family matter in many countries, the law is often mute when it comes to domestic violence. Thus, Radford and Stanko (1996) point out that:

> The bulk of violence against women, that which occurs in private, rarely comes to public attention, is scorned by the police, and the women who ask for police intervention are left neglected and often abused by the very system financed by the state to protect them. (p. 68)

The pervasiveness of domestic violence has led feminist scholars to question the prevailing concepts of the family, in particular the idealization of the family as a peaceful and safe haven. According to Radford and Stanko (1996):

> The family, and the institution of heterosexuality which underpins it, is a central institution in patriarchal society, one in which the private struggles around patriarchal power relations are enacted, and hence one in which violence frequently features as a form of control of the powerless by the powerful. (p. 78)

Bograd (1988) extends this argument to emphasize that institutions of marriage and family promote and uphold men’s use of violence against women. Similar perspectives are also evident in non-Western feminist writings. For example, while recognizing the wide variety of marriage practices in Africa, Thandabantu Nhalpo (1991) defines marriage in Africa “as an institution that allows men the means by which to achieve the overriding goals of the wider group – control over women’s procreative and productive capabilities” (cited in Green, 1999, p. 21). Green (1999) also points out that, in Africa, because of women’s crucial role in productive and reproductive labor and because they socialize the next generation of producers, women are subjected to a special sort of coercion and restriction … marriage designates women as perpetual minors whose reproductive and productive capabilities are both highly valued and jealously controlled. (pp. 22-23)
Overall, similar to the feminist analyses of sexual violence, feminist writings on domestic violence against women contend that the issues of power and gender are the ultimate root of such violence. Power is central to Kelly’s (1988b) explanation of marital rape. She argues that:

Sexual access, like other resources, is determined by relational power. The more power a man can claim over a particular woman, the greater his claim to exclusive sexual access, the more likely it is that some level of sexual aggression will be considered legitimate. (p. 30)

Moreover, both MacKinnon (1989) and Kelly (1988b) emphasize that men’s assumed right to sexual access with wives stems from the patriarchal ideology of gender inequality which considers wives as property of their husbands. This is especially evident in societies that have a custom of bride wealth. According to Green (1999), often both men and women perceive the payment of bride wealth as “granting the husband absolute power and authority over his wife” (p. 37). Kelly (1988b) points out that such men’s attitudes of entitlement are “most clearly legitimized in marital rape exemption clauses” (p. 30). Thus, according to MacKinnon (1989), the concept of “marital rape is considered by many to be a contradiction in terms” (p. 337) because husbands are entitled to sexual access with wives whenever and wherever. In the words of the former California State Senator Bob Wilson: “But if you can’t rape your wife, who can you rape?” (Schulman, 1980, cited in MacKinnon, 1989, p. 337). Overall, Freeman (1980) suggests that domestic violence against women should not be seen as a breakdown in the social order so much as an affirmation of a particular sort of social order, namely a patriarchal one. In this sense such violence is a functional and not dysfunctional. Violence against women is necessary concomitant of the oppressed and dependent position which women generally occupy in the social structure. (p. 216)

In addition to emphasizing the role of gender and power in abusive relationships, feminist research on domestic violence has highlighted the fact that the overwhelming majority of victims of such violence are women. Thus, while many of the current professional interventions transform feminist analysis of domestic violence against women to a gender neutral problem of family violence, feminists have strongly emphasized both the gendered distribution of perpetrators and victims (see Berns, 2001;
Physical battering in ‘family violence’ perspective is either a reflection of bad marital relations, personality disputes, or intoxicating substances, not the manifestation of unequal power and the need for control. Sexual abuse, following the same line, arises because of some men’s uncontrollable lust or miscommunication with women … not as an exercise of patriarchal power. Women in the tradition of victimology, are often blamed as being inadequate wives or as colluding to their own harm. (p. 77)

Websdale and Johnson (1999) argue that due to such assumptions, “much therapy with battered women ends up reinforcing women’s subordination rather than challenging their social and political disadvantage and incorporating that disadvantage into emotionally supportive strategies” (p. 1). They also caution that prevailing stereotypes of women, who are being abused but remain in violent relationships, suggest that they are weak and passive, and therefore fail to take into the account the range and complexity of women’s responses to violence. Consequently, policies and programs that reproduce such stereotypes fail to provide meaningful support to survivors of violence (Websdale & Johnson, 1999).

Feminists have also analyzed how patriarchal values, social and economic gender inequality, as well as the dominant cultural concept of femininity (in which women are subordinate to men) circumscribe women’s ability to leave violent relationships (Kandiyoti, 1988 cited in Sweetman, 1998, p. 4; Sweetman, 1998). According to Sweetman (1998) “women are typically faced not only with economic barriers which prevent them from leaving abusive men, but also with a barrage of opposition on grounds of culture and social norms” (p. 4). Wanyeki (1996) suggests that women remain in abusive relationships because they have been socialized and condition to accept their abuse (cited in Green, 1999, p. 28). Dobash and Dobash (1979) point out that:

The legacy of patriarchy continues to generate the conditions and relationships that lead to husband’s use of force against his wife. Patriarchal domination through force is still supported by a moral order which reinforces the marital hierarchy and makes it very difficult for a woman to struggle against this, and other forms of domination and control, because her struggle is construed as wrong, immoral, and a violation of the respect and loyalty a wife is supposed to give to her husband. (p. ix)
Moreover, because in patriarchal societies the underlying cultural values denigrate most of the activities and characteristics assigned to women, Kurz (1989) argues that:

As long as women are responsible for domestic work, child care, and emotional and psychological support and men’s primary identity is that of provider and revolves around work, the husband has the more important status and also controls the majority of issues and decisions in the family. It is through such a system, coupled with the acceptance of physical force as a means of control, that in the words of Dobashes (1979), the wife becomes an ‘appropriate victim’ of physical and psychological abuse. (p. 496)

In addition, research shows that a woman’s economic dependence on her husband, lack of job training and income earning opportunities may prevent her from leaving an abusive relationship (Griffin, 1979; Kurz, 1989; Sweetman, 1998). Thus, Griffin (1979) asserts that patriarchy holds a woman as prisoner not because she lacks courage to leave a violent relationship, but “because the material conditions of her life prevent her from being anything but an object” (p. 16). Overall, according to Dobash and Dobash (1979):

Women struggle against all odds – against cultural ideals that still require a woman to submit to almost any form of treatment that her husband considers appropriate and against the policies and responses of various social agencies which often demonstrate direct or indirect support for the husband’s authority and his use of violence. (p. ix)

**Violence against women: Institutions of the state.** Feminist analyses of sexual and domestic violence have engaged not only existing concepts of the family but also of the state. Feminist scholars emphasize how, both historically and in the present, major institutions have permitted and condoned the use of male violence against women. For example, Kelly and Radford (1996) analyze “the ways in which man-made law has been explicitly constructed to exclude from ‘crimes against the person’ all but ‘extreme’ forms of sexual violence” (p. 19). They compare the formal construction of the law and women’s understandings of their experiences of violence by men, and demonstrate that “the law not only reflects but also constructs a very limited definition of sexual violence, and thereby plays a significant role in denying or trivializing women’s experience of male sexual violence” (p. 19). Lees (1996) argues that:

The criminal justice system is not merely failing to protect women but that the processes involved legitimize male violence … A rape trial can be seen as a barometer for ideologies of sexual difference, of male dominance and women’s
inferiority. Current ideology condones and legitimizes male violence. The conduct of rape trials has the manifest function of limiting the degree of violence against the few women who bring cases to court and its latent function is to reinforce male dominance, undermine women’s experience and hold their autonomy in check. The public airing of stereotypical views of women reinforces male dominance. (p. 111)

Freeman (1980) also emphasizes the important role the legal system plays in upholding male supremacy because it “reproduces an ideology about the family which not only makes violence against women understandable but almost makes it necessary” (p. 216). Freeman further asserts that “the legal form is one of the main forms of social practice through which actual relationships embodying sexual stratification have been expressed. Law defines the character and creates the institutions and social relationships within which the family operates” (p. 226).

A large portion of feminist literature focuses on violence against women in the media. For example, Kozol (1995) argues that the public spheres of mass media have considerable influence in constructing and limiting social knowledge as it relates to people’s understanding of domestic violence. She points out that “media representations of domestic violence most often protect patriarchal privilege by preserving ideals of domesticity that are integral to popular values about gender, public and private spheres, and other aspects of social identity” (p. 658). Consequently, male dominance remains unquestioned because the focus falls on the victim (e.g., why women stay in violent relationships) rather than the perpetrator. According to Kozol, the focus of the media “on women’s guilt or victimization displaces attention from male abusers and the patriarchal system that supports these crimes” (p. 657). Similarly, Nancy Berns (2001) emphasizes that newspapers, magazines and other forms of media are all “public arenas where images of domestic violence [are] reconstructed, debated, and reproduced. From these resources, individuals construct their own conceptions of what is normal and acceptable” (p. 263). She further points out how popular men’s magazines “reframe domestic violence in a way that obscures men’s violence while placing the burden of responsibility on women” (p. 262). Berns refers to this strategy as patriarchal resistance and insists that it is prevalent in books, television shows, the Internet, political debates, courtrooms, classrooms, etc. She identifies two main discursive strategies of the patriarchal resistance:
degendering the problem of domestic violence and gendering the blame. According to Berns, degendering the problem or removing gender from the construction of the problem, undermines “the role of gender and power in abusive relationships” (p. 265). Thus, the patriarchal resistance perspective frames domestic violence as a human issue and argues that women and men are equally violent. In addition, she points out that “when it comes to discussing responsibility for ending abuse, the focus is the culpability of women. Thus, although violence is degendered, blame is gendered” (Berns, 2001, p. 269). Berns identifies three major implications of this patriarchal resistance discourse for the fight against domestic violence. Namely, “the normalization of intimate violence, the diversion of attention from men’s responsibility and cultural and structural factors that foster violence, and the distortion of women’s violence” (p. 278). Donat and D’Emilio (1997) point out that the media often portrays the victims of rape as secretly enjoying their victimization. This portrayal reinforces rape myths, represents women as inferior and “as victims rather than agents in their own sexuality” (p. 189). Other feminist also analyze the relationship between women’s portrayal in the media, especially pornography, and the prevalence of rape and sexual assault (see Dworkin, 1981; MacKinnon, 1989; Russell, 1988). According to MacKinnon (1989):

Pornography is a means through which sexuality is socially constructed, a site of construction, a domain of exercise. It constructs women as things for sexual use and constructs its consumers to desperately want women to desperately want possession and cruelty and dehumanization. (p. 327)

She further points out that, “from pornography one learns that forcible violation of women is the essence of sex. Whatever is that and does that is sex” (p. 329). Thus, in the words of Groth and Birnbaum (1979), “pornography is a media equivalent to the crime of rape. It is the sexual expression of power and anger” (p. 27 cited in Donat & D’Emilio, 1997, p. 189).

Violence against women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. Some of the feminist research on contemporary armed conflicts is mainly based on observation and testimony and focuses on women’s experiences (see Allen, 1996; Barstow, 2000; Isis-WICCE, 1998, 2001b, 2002b; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). This research not only exposes gender violence by bringing attention to women’s plight in conflict and post-conflict situations, but also demonstrates that war and its outcomes have significant gendered
impacts on women. The majority of these accounts of violence place emphasis on exposing the severity of the abuses that women suffer all over the world as a means to highlight the urgency to take action, however, these sources provide no specific insights into practical initiatives to end violence against women. Nevertheless, such research is important because it contributes to better identification of the problem so that appropriate solutions can be devised and women’s experiences are not lost in the fog of war.

In addition, feminist perspectives on armed conflict focus on the connections between gender, militarism, masculinity, and violence. The underlying theme in many of these writings is the representation of war as a continuum of violence that is inherent in patriarchal societies in everyday life. For example, Cockburn (1998) makes the connection between “the oppression that is the ostensible cause of a conflict (ethnic or national oppression) in the light of another cross-cutting one: that of gender regime” (p. 8). Giles and Hyndman (2004) also link “militarized violence that occurs before, during, after, and even in the absence of war” and argue that “sites of war and peace are ultimately linked; both can be sites of violence” (p. 4). Kelly (2000) argues that sexual violence in war is a deliberate military strategy and a tool of political repression by the state and analyzes its connections to sexual violence in other contexts. She points out that:

Locating of gender relations as ongoing sites of conflict suggests that we should understand sexual violence in situations of national/civil armed conflict as expansions in location, forms and intensity, as the intersection of two conflicts informed by, and constructed through gender. (p. 48)

Hence, feminist theory emphasizes pervasive and intransigent gender inequality as an underlying cause of gender-based violence in war. While the existing power structures within societies perpetuate violence against women both in times of peace and war, conflicts tend to intensify brutality, increase society’s acceptance of violence, and reinforce sexist stereotyping and rigid differentiation of gender roles (Callamard, 1998; Green, 1999; Kelly, 2000; Turshen, 1999). According to Callamard (1998):

The war does not create the conditions whereby women are invisible, whereby gender-based violations are not recognized as such, whereby rape is a stigma, whereby women are ostracized if they dare report on sexual violence; these are all present ‘before’, and ‘after’ the conflict begins … What may be specific to an area of conflict is the extent, nature and function of violence against women, and
the particularly brutal, hierarchical and institutionalized circumstances through which abuses of women’s human rights are promoted and condoned. (p. 63)

Seifert (1992) also argues that women are raped in war because

they are objects of a fundamental hatred borne in the cultural unconscious that comes to surface in times of crisis … these feelings of hatred and contempt manifest themselves already in peacetime. They are, for instance, cultivated in the socially accepted pornography that celebrates physical violence of men against women in peace time and provides a consistent system of hate values. (p. 7)


Feminists emphasize that, instead of war, the focus should be on militarism, “since it is militaristic culture which legitimates violence as a way of resolving conflicts, of establishing and maintaining power hierarchies within and between states” (Kelly, 2000, p. 49). Feminists define militarism as a form of brutal masculinity that is socio-culturally constructed from the prevalent patriarchal ideologies of gender and therefore prone to perpetuate gender-based violence (Kelly, 2000; also see Enloe 1987, 1989). According to Seifert (1992), militarized masculinity is closely linked with “heterosexuality and the monopoly of violence” (p. 4) and, therefore, masculinity is something to be reinforced through violence. Military institutions, Seifert (1992) points out, create an environment where men must constantly prove their masculine identity. Thus, some of the violent acts perpetrated by men in armed conflicts are perpetrated precisely because men perceive it as a way to reaffirm their masculinity. As a result, rape and other forms of sexual violence are often considered a “natural” side effect of war. Pickup (2001) further points out that “the effects of militarization often continue to be manifested in relations between men and women” (p. 145). She notes that demobilized soldiers compensate for the loss of their identity by participating in organized or random violent acts against women. Overall, the relationship between militarized masculinity and gender-based violence is evident not only in military but also in other state institutions for organized violence such as police forces, in which organizational culture is centered on the concept of maleness and hence patriarchal attitudes and sexual harassment of women (Kelly, 2000; Turshen, 1998).
In addition, the emphasis that patriarchal societies place on women’s sexual purity as well as cultural meanings they ascribe to female body renders women as prime targets for abuse. Thus, in contemporary conflicts, women’s bodies, sexuality, and reproductive capacity have become the sites of national, ethnic, and religious battles and the rape of individual women can be translated into an assault upon their communities (Brownmiller, 1994; Cockburn, 2004; Kelly, 2000; Seifert, 1994). For example, during the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda mass rape was combined with a deliberate policy of forced impregnation aimed at diluting national identities. This illustrates how ethnic rivalries and hatred play out on the bodies of women as rape is used as a genocidal strategy. According to Brownmiller (1994):

In one act of aggression, the collective spirit of women and [original emphasis] of the nation is broken, leaving a reminder long after the troops depart. And if she survives the assault, what does the victim of wartime rape become to her people? Evidence of the enemy’s bestiality. Symbol of her nation’s defeat. A pariah. Damaged property. (p. 181)

Green (1999) suggests that considering mass rape as an attack on women’s families and communities is based on a patriarchal notion that rape is a violation of male enemy’s property. Seifert (1992) has a similar point:

Rape committed in war can be further regarded as the ultimate symbolic humiliation of the male enemy … the rape of women carries a message: a man-to-man communication, as it were, telling the other side that they are incapable of protecting ‘their’ women and thus hurting their manly pride …. men see the abuse of ‘their’ women as a degradation of their masculinity. What counts is not the suffering of the women, but the effect is has on men. (pp. 3-4)

It is important to note that feminist gender analysis of conflict does not try to simplify women’s roles and experiences in war to mere victimization. Some sources challenge the conventional image of women as passive and helpless victims of war by highlighting the diversity of women’s experiences and roles in conflict and post-conflict situations. For example, Turshen (1998) argues that “the binary stereotype of active males/passive females” (p. 1) is no longer valid because, due to the privatization of violence, in contemporary wars women assume roles of combatants, spies, and support war in variety of ways. Afshar (2004) points out the complexity of women’s experiences and multiplicity of their roles:
Conflicts can both empower and disempower women, since women can be at the same time included in practice and yet excluded ideologically, or they may be both victims and agents of change – though they often have no choice in these matters. They may opt to be fighters and yet be attacked and raped; they may choose to provide back-up support and yet simultaneously find themselves and their homes in firing line; they may be caught in transgressions – such as cross-division marriages – that could have been bridges towards peace but may instead have become causes of hatred and war. (p. 2)

Feminist scholars also analyze the shifts in gender roles that occur during armed conflicts (see Byrne, 1995; El-Bushra, 2004; Seifert, 1994; Turshen, 1999). Such shifts, they point out, can potentially challenge the patriarchal power structures thereby destabilizing interpersonal relations between women and men and challenging men’s dominance and control over women. Consequently, changes in gender roles and gender relations may have a positive, empowering effect on women by providing them with new opportunities to gain skills, participate in decision-making processes, increase their independence and self-confidence as well as by offering prospects for new and more egalitarian relationships with men. On the other hand, these power shifts can lead to increases in domestic violence in conflict and post-conflict situations because men resort to violence to exercise their frustrations regarding the changes in gender roles, to compensate for their lack of power, and to reinforce their masculine identities. This is especially true of demobilized soldiers, who may lack economic opportunities following their demobilization due to the breakdown of social and economic infrastructure (Pickup, 2001). Overall, feminists argue that violence, especially violence against women, is a culturally appropriate means to reaffirm a masculine identity for men who lack other means of demonstrating control and authority, not only in conflict and post-conflict situations, but also in everyday gender relations in times of “peace” (Pickup, 2001; also see Gerber, 1995). Due to such continuum of violence in women’s lives, feminist scholars have expanded the definition of the term peace to include not only the end or absence of armed conflict but also the absence of other forms of violence and the factors that contribute to such violence. For example, Williams (2004) points out that “peace does not come with the cessation of armed hostilities and signing of peace agreements” (p. 332). She suggests that post-war reconstruction policies and programs must also “embrace and ensure peace between women and men” (p. 333). Enloe (1987) defines
peace as “women’s achievement of control over their lives” (cited in Kelly, 2000, p. 48). Kelly (2000) points out that Enloe’s feminist theorization of peace requires detailed understanding of women’s oppression and its connections to the ways in which gender, and especially the construction of masculinity, inflects with capitalism, colonialism and militarism. A peace meaningful to women would require not just the absence of armed and gender conflict at home, locally and abroad, but also the absence of poverty and the conditions which recreate it. (p. 48)

Feminist scholars are adamant that, in order to challenge policy makers’ and development practitioners’ tendency to consider women as a uniform and homogenous group, it is vital to recognize the differences in women’s roles and experiences in conflict and post-conflict situations. Viewing them either as helpless victims or a resourceful and stoic group, struggling to take care of their families, restore peace, and rebuild war torn societies not only oversimplifies the significant differences between women, but also results in ill-equipped emergency interventions and post-conflict programs which fail to address the actual needs of women (Farr, 2001; Pankhurst, 2004). According to Sørensen (1998), “one of the risks of conceptualizing women as victims is that we reinforce existing incapacitating processes by introducing welfare-oriented projects that aim to reduce suffering here and now, but which do not support women’s own long-term interests” (Section V, p. 3).

Feminist literature highlights the significance of contributions by both individual women and women’s organizations in the restoration of war-torn societies as well as highlights their potential to address gender blindness and other inadequacies of existing development, reconstruction, and peace-building interventions (see Gervais, 2004; Hamilton, 2000; Muchina, 1994; Newbury & Baldwin, 2001). However, Kelly (2000) cautions that the inclusion of women in national peace-building agendas can often subordinate their needs to “those of repairing the damage to men and ‘the society’” (p. 62). In addition, Pankhurst (2004) points out that many reconstruction and peace projects rely on women’s unpaid labor, thereby increasing their already heavy workload, and are centered on supposition that such work is “self-evidently a priority for women and that it will inevitably help tackle gender inequality” (p. 28). She also warns that:
The ideological rhetoric is often about ‘restoring’ or ‘returning to’ something associated with the status quo before the war, even if the change actually undermines women’s rights and places women in a situation that is even more disadvantageous than it ever was in the past. (p. 19)

Feminist scholars therefore insist that it is important to consider the underlying gender power relations and the dynamics of social change in order to avoid poorly conceived programs and activities. According to Sørensen (1998):

Women are positioned differently with regard to options for action, the nature of their experiences, their access to resources, skills, participation in social networks, perceived options and future aspirations. So while there is need to pay more attention to women as a special category, the understanding of their situation requires recognition of other factors such as class, age, ethnicity, region [sic] and education which cross-cut and intermingle with gender identity. (Section V, p. 2)

Public Health Perspectives on Violence Against Women

The public health approach to violence is interdisciplinary, science-based, and has a strong emphasis on violence prevention. According to Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, and Lozano (2002), “rather than simply accepting or reacting to violence, its starting point is the strong conviction that violent behavior and its consequences can be prevented” (pp. 4-5). Mercy, Rosenberg, Powell, Broome and Roper (1993) point out that “public health brings something that has been missing from this field: a multidisciplinary scientific approach that is explicitly directed toward identifying effective approaches to prevention” (p. 13). As a result of its multidisciplinary approach, the public health ecological model for violence prevention can be used by different actors in different sectors including health care, education, media, criminal justice, non-governmental sector, etc. Here, I review some of the important concepts and definitions as they relate to violence against women and present the public health ecological model for understanding violence.
Definitions and Key Concepts

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (cited in Krug et al., 2002, p. 5). Thus, this definition associates intentionality with the commitment of the violent act itself rather its outcome and, at the same time, it defines violence as it relates to the health and well-being of an individual person. Public health typology of violence divides violence into three categories according to characteristics of the perpetrator(s) of the violent act: self-directed violence, interpersonal violence, and collective violence (Krug et al., 2002). Here, I am only concerned with interpersonal and collective violence against women and girls. Interpersonal violence in this approach refers to family and intimate partner as well as community violence which are defined as follows:

Family and intimate partner violence [original emphasis] is that occurring between family members and intimate partners, usually, though not always, taking place inside the home …. Community violence [original emphasis] includes violence between unrelated individuals, who may or may not know each other, and generally, although not exclusively, occurs outside the home. (WHO, 2004a, p. 6)

Collective violence refers to social, political, and economic violence committed by larger groups of individuals or by states. Collective violence includes armed conflict, state violence, denial of access to essential services, etc. In terms of the nature of violent acts, the public health typology differentiates between physical, sexual, psychological violence as well as violence involving deprivation or neglect (Krug et al., 2002). These four types of violent acts occur across all subcategories of interpersonal and collective violence as illustrated in Figure 1.
Overall, while acknowledging other types of violence against women, the public health perspective on gender-based violence primarily focuses on the two most prevalent types of abuse in the lives of women and girls: intimate partner violence and sexual violence (see Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, and Watts, 2005; Heise, Ellsberg, and Gottemoeller, 1999; Krug et al., 2002). Intimate partner violence in this perspective refers to “any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship” (Krug et al., 2002, p. 89). While this definition of intimate partner violence is gender-neutral, Krug et al. (2002) acknowledge that “the overwhelming burden of partner violence is borne by women at the hands of men” (p. 89). Sexual violence is also defined in a gender-neutral way as any sexual act, attempt to obtain sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work. (Krug et al., 2002, p. 149)

Coercion in this definition covers physical force, psychological intimidation, blackmail and threats, as well as situations where a person who is aggressed is unable to give consent (Krug et al., 2002). In addition to rape, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse of children, public health approach categorizes some traditional harmful practices such as
early and forced marriages as well as female genital mutilation, forms of commercialized violence such as forced prostitution and human trafficking, and forms of physical violence such as reproductive coercion and control as forms of sexual violence.

Unlike the feminist theory, which contends that the root cause of violence against women is gender inequality, public health perspective asserts that:

No single factor explains why some individuals behave violently toward others or why violence is more prevalent in some communities than in others. Violence is the result of the complex interplay of individual, relationship, social, cultural, and environmental factors. Understanding how these factors are related to violence is one of the important steps in the public health approach to preventing violence. (Krug et al., 2002, p. 12)

Consequently, the public health approach offers an ecological model that helps us to understand the root causes of violence and the risk factors associated with it, which need to be identified and addressed by prevention strategies. The model identifies risk factors at four levels: individual, relationship, community, and society. The first level of the ecological model represents biological and personal history factors that each individual brings to his/her own behavior. The second level represents factors associated with proximal social relationships – within the context of family and other intimate or acquaintance relationships. The third level of the model examines formal and informal institutions and social structures in which relationships are embedded – such as workplaces, neighborhoods, and schools. The fourth level represents larger societal factors associated with economic, political, and social environments, which affect the rates of violence in society (Krug et al., 2002; WHO, 2004a). Krug et al. (2002) note that there are often links between different types of violence and, in many cases, different types of violence have risk factors in common. Figures 2 and 3 below provide examples of the ecological model of factors associated with domestic violence and sexual violence against women and girls respectively.
Figure 2. Ecological Model of Factors Associated with Domestic Violence


Figure 3. Ecological Model of Factors Contributing to Sexually Violent Behavior in Men

Krug et al. (2002) note that “while there is an emerging consensus that an interplay of personal, situational, social and cultural factors combine to cause abuse there is still only limited information on which factors are the most important” (p. 97). Moreover, the authors note that current research on the subject is skewed towards examining factors that may affect the likelihood of abuse at the individual level rather than factors at the community or society level. Consequently, factors presented in Figures 2 and 3 are therefore both incomplete and tentative.

The Effects of Gender-Based Violence on Women and Girls

Much of the feminist research and other literature on gender-based violence focuses on the consequences of violence on women and girls (see Amnesty International, 2004a, 2004c; Heise et al., 1994; Isis-WICCE, 1998, 2001, 2002; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002; UNICEF, 2000). Sources unanimously agree that gender-based violence exacts a severe toll on the physical and mental health and well-being of women and girls. The fatal outcomes of gender-based violence include homicide, suicide, maternal mortality, infant mortality, and AIDS-related mortality (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2003). Nonfatal physical and psychological injuries and other medical problems that plague survivors of violence often require long and complex treatment (which they may not have access to). These include reproductive health complications, miscarriages, infertility, sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, broken and severed limbs, internal and external bleeding or discharge, broken pelvis, chronic infections, chronic pains, and many forms of physical disabilities. In addition, women and girls suffer from psychosomatic body pains, psychological trauma, and other mental disorders and have to cope with feelings of fear, grief, guilt, shame, anxiety, revulsion, hatred, anger, loss of dignity, and depression (see Amnesty International, 2004a, 2004c; Heise et al., 1994; Isis-WICCE, 1998, 2001, 2002; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002).
Furthermore, rape survivors suffer from social stigma and are often ostracized by their families and communities. In patriarchal societies, a raped woman is considered defiled and represents a disgrace to her family and community. Moreover, being publicly identified as a rape victim is equivalent to being labeled as ‘dishonored’, which not only damages the survivor’s status within community, but also greatly limits her life choices and economic opportunities (see Amnesty International, 2004a, 2004c; El-Bushra and Lopez, 1994; Kelly, 2000; Stiglmayer, 1994; Twagiramariya & Turshen, 1998). Isis-WICCE (2001) notes that social stigma and fear of HIV/AIDS have considerably increased the number of marriage breakups in Uganda because many rape victims are being rejected by their husbands. Moreover, by affecting women’s eligibility to marry/remain married, rape has significant economic impact on women and their families because access to resources is dependent on their relationships with husbands or male relatives. Women and girls who are impregnated as a result of rape are in particularly dire situations because their families often reject them and any children born of rape. In many cases, commercial sex work is the only option for ostracized women to support themselves and to provide for their children (El-Bushra & Lopez, 1994). As a result of these dramatic socio-economic impacts of gender-based violence, women have strong incentives to try to hide their experiences of sexual assault.

In addition, threats of gender-based violence and physical disabilities resulting from violence limit women’s mobility, thereby restricting their economic and social functions, which can increase feminization of poverty and social isolation. In circumstances where violence or threats of violence have forced women and girls to flee their homes, they may find themselves without the protections of their communities and families and ultimately in equal or greater risk of being victims of gender-based violence. Many flee to internally displaced people (IDP) or refugee camps where, in addition to poor living conditions, they are vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation and are often forced into prostitution or coerced to exchange sex in return for food, medicine, transport, and other necessities (see Amnesty International 2004a, 2004c; Cockburn, 2004; El-Bushra & Lopez, 1994; Hyndman, 2000; Mertus, 2000; UNHCR, 2003). Overall, according to Noeleen Heyzer (1998):
In every nation, violence or the threat of it, particularly at home, reduces the range of choices open to women and girls and narrows their options in almost every sphere of life, public and private— at home, in school, in the workplace, and in most community spaces. It limits women’s choices directly or by destroying their health, disrupting their lives, and constricting the scope of their activity; indirectly, it erodes their self-confidence and self-esteem. Ultimately, violence hinders women’s full participation in society. (p. 17)

Although the above discussion provides a brief introduction to the consequences of gender-based violence, it highlights the severity of the problem and reveals the diversity of issues and needs that must be addressed. It also shows how the needs of the survivors go beyond medical assistance and may include training for alternate income opportunities, a wide variety of social services, and interventions to ensure women’s safety and security.

Responding to and Preventing Gender-Based Violence: Feminist Perspectives

Feminists emphasize that addressing the problem of male violence against women requires complex, comprehensive, and systematic approaches that tackle violence at multiple levels with a variety of creative strategies (see Marin & Russo, 2005; Williams, 2001). Noeleen Heyzer (1998) suggests that:

In short term, the overarching priority is to ensure that protection mechanisms are in place which ensure women’s safety, and to respond appropriately to cases of abuse by bringing perpetrators to justice and offering medical and legal remedies to survivors. In longer term, our challenge must be to reverse the retrenched attitudes, gender stereotypes, and power structures which lie at the root of this [violence against women] pandemic. (p. 17)

Support Services to Women Survivors of Violence

During the early 1970s, rape and domestic violence became central issues for feminist activists and scholars which sparked anti-rape and battered women’s
movements. Rape crisis centers (RCCs) and refuges were established to provide services for women survivors of violence. According to Poskin (n.d.):

Victims and their advocates created rape crisis centers to fill a void – with a definition and purpose different than traditional mental health or social services. With the goals of social change, equality between men and women, and the fundamental principle of victim-centered services, the anti-rape movement offered a new model for institutional change and individual healing. (p. 2)

Both Poskin (n.d.) and Greensite (n.d.) note that the early RCCs were grassroots collectives of women activists and women survivors of rape who had no professional training and very little resources. However, Poskin points out that “once survivors broke the silence about the terror of rape, women devoted their minds, hearts, time and money to construct and sustain organizations that created the field of anti-rape work” (p. 1). In terms of battered women’s movement Dobash and Dobash (1979) also note that:

Women who began to work on wife abuse were primarily feminists and members of women’s liberation groups who were unencumbered by professional beliefs and theories, nor committed to maintenance of patriarchal family arrangements. They were not concerned about therapy, treatment, or apportioning blame. Rather, they acted pragmatically to assist women by providing them with a reasonably secure refuge from their husbands. (p. 223)

From these humble beginnings the movement grew and matured and now a wide range of support services are available to women survivors of violence. These include services such as 24-hour crisis hotlines, which provide information, referral services, and crisis intervention, 24-hour crisis intervention services at hospitals to survivors of sexual violence, as well as shelters for battered and abused women. Refuges allow women and their children to leave life-threatening situations and provide sanctuaries where women can think about and make decisions regarding their options for the future (Njovana & Watts, 1996). In addition to providing a safe place, shelters offer an important contribution to positive changes in the lives of women survivors of violence. According to Pickup (2001), “the fact that a woman has an institution outside marriage to support her in the event that she decides to leave may encourage couples to negotiate acceptable terms free of violence on which to continue their relationship” (p. 164). Similarly, Dobash and Dobash (1979) argue that:
When a woman leaves her husband she may be taking one of the most positive steps she has taken in her entire married life as she directly or indirectly indicates to her husband that she has had enough and asserts her independence. This action may shock the husband and might, just might, lead him to question his own behavior and beliefs. When the woman returns, if she wishes to return, she often enters on new terms; the husband may be somewhat apprehensive that his wife will leave again and he may feel more of a need to constrain his own behavior. Because he now realizes that his wife can leave again or seek support, both moral and at times material, from other women who live or work in the refuge. (p. 238)

Moreover, since refuges founded on feminist principles emphasize the provision of services based on battered and abused women’s actual needs and experiences (instead of identifying the needs and defining the experiences for women), they accentuate the importance of self-determination in all of their services and activities. The emphasis on self-determination is extremely important because it encourages women survivors of violence to regain their self-confidence and take control of their own lives (see Dobash & Dobash, 1979). However, as Dobash and Dobash (1979) point out in their discussion of Women’s Aid refuges, women are not left to manage on their own. On the contrary, the other women living in the refuge and the members of the Women’s Aid support group offer empathy, support, and advice, but only when a woman requests such help. (p. 225)

Thus, in addition to safety, shelters provide a supportive environment for women to deal with their problems and make independent decisions regarding their lives. Consequently, feminists are skeptical about shelters and services provided by non-feminist groups. Dobash and Dobash (1979) note that:

All efforts to assist battered women are noteworthy and at least help alleviate their immediate problem, but we consider those programs that make counseling or therapy mandatory to be particularly unfortunate. If groups consider professional help to be appropriate, it should be made available on a voluntary basis and not be a precondition for receiving assistance. We have serious doubts about the need for therapeutic helpers in refuges. We think refuges should be places where, in the words of the French group SOS Femmes, women will have an opportunity to ‘take charge of themselves’. (p. 232)

Francine Pickup (2001) points out that non-feminist psychological trauma healing approaches ignore the structural inequalities between women and men which cause and condone violence against women. Since such approaches focus on the healing of
individual survivors, they fail to address the social causes of the abuse. Instead, Pickup suggests that a better way to promote the emotional healing of women survivors of violence is through the naming of violence:

‘Naming’ an activity means acknowledging it. Understanding a relationship or an event as abusive is extremely important in enabling women survivors of violence to evaluate their lives and, potentially, to recognize ways to end the violence against them … Acknowledging violence in one’s own thoughts often (although not always) leads to a desire to speak about it. Survivors do not necessarily have to talk about the violence they experienced in order to heal, but in some cases this may help … Speaking out can validate women’s experiences, and end their isolation. Organizations that want to support women survivors of violence can play a useful role in providing an opportunity for women to do this. (Pickup, 2001, p. 184)

In accordance with this principle of naming the violence, feminist RCCs and shelters organize events which emphasize the power of speaking out and often include survivor speak-outs where women whose lives have been impacted by violence share their experiences. Although this can be an empowering experience, Pickup cautions that, not all women may want to speak about their abuse because it may be too difficult or too painful. In addition, women speaking out in public about their experiences of violence may face stigma and further violence. Thus, many refuges and RCCs have women’s groups where women survivors of violence can speak out safely and at the same time they can provide support to each other. According to Pence and Shepard (1988), such women’s groups create

a place where batterers and their coconspirators in the system cannot control the discussion; they cannot interpret the facts; they cannot silence women’s minds nor keep women from speaking. The purpose of the group is for women to rename their experiences. To look not at what defect within her made their partners hit them, but how men are able to take control of women’s lives so completely. (pp. 290-291)

Legal advice is another important service that RCCs and refuges provide to women survivors of violence. Pickup (2001) suggests that:

Many of the women’s organizations that work with victims of violence recognize the problematic relationship between women and the law, and aim to make the law work for [original emphasis] individual women survivors of violence, rather than against them. They do things by providing legal advice on women’s rights,
and assisting women in the legal processes of separation or divorce, and maintenance or custody of children. (p. 175)

In addition, through coordination of interagency information flows and monitoring of each agency’s adherence to agreed upon policies and procedures, legal advocates work on ensuring that cases are not deliberately screened out within the legal process and that batterers are unable to manipulate the system to avoid punishment (Pence & Shepard, 1988). However, Schechter (1988) points out that working to protect the rights of women survivors of violence is not an easy task because legal advocates must “know more than the local welfare or police bureaucrats, who often run circles around uninformed clients, denying them their legal rights through technicalities” (p. 304).

Feminist activists and writers point out that, above all, the empowerment of women survivors of violence is the most important strategy in ensuring that their long-term future is free from gender-based violence (see Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Pickup, 2001). Liz Frank (2001) defines empowerment as all the processes that encourage a woman to take ownership of her life. However, she notes that the space for taking ownership, that is the space for women’s activity and agency, is limited by a number of factors: women’s own ideas of what is possible for them to do, laws regulating the scope of what women can do and socio-cultural norms of what women should or should not do. (p. 13)

Townsend et al. (1999) refer to empowerment as the “gaining of power by the vulnerable” (p. 19) and distinguish between several types of powers: power from within, power with, and power to. In this perspective, “the power from within [original emphasis] is grounded both in self-esteem and in awareness of external reality. It is knowing who you are, that you have a right to exist; it is self-respect” (Townsend, 1999, p. 63). Moreover, this power “arises from a recognition that one is not helpless, not the source of all one’s own problems, that one is restricted in part by structures outside oneself” (Townsend et al., 1999, p. 30). Consequently, the power from within must be self-generated and is central to one’s empowerment. As mentioned above, organizations founded on feminist principles stress the importance of self-determination, which encourages women to empower themselves and take control of their own lives. In addition, safe and supportive environments in refuges help women to strengthen their self-esteem and self-confidence as noted by Dobash and Dobash (1979):
Through the process of living in a refuge and beginning to assume more responsibility for their own lives and taking part in the running of a refuge, most women quickly regain the self-confidence and self-esteem they may have lost and at times even surprise themselves. (p. 225)

*Power with* according to Townsend et al. (1999) is “the capacity to achieve with others what one could not achieve alone” (p. 31). Women often gain their *power with* from sharing, working together, and being together in women’s groups or organizations. This provides an opportunity for women to support each other, to liberate themselves from their fears, and to grow from their experiences (Zapata, 1999). Feminist shelters and RCCs effectively facilitate women in strengthening their *power with* through support groups, which encourage participation in supportive social networks that are essential in enabling women to resist violence in their lives. Such groups, Pence and Shepard (1988) point out,

are designed to create a safe space for women to find their personal power to join with other women to take back control of their lives. The best police and court systems will be ineffective without building in such support system for women. (p. 291)

Kelly (1988b) notes that although refuges, crisis hotlines, and other types of feminist organizations are “primarily directed at broadening the ways in which women can achieve individual survival, they do so by enabling and encouraging women to act collectively in challenging sexual violence in their communities” (p. 235). As such they have a dual vision and purpose: ensuring safety for women survivors of violence and promoting a violence free world.

According to Rowlands (1995), “empowerment that is based on the ‘power to’ involves gaining access to a full range of human abilities and potential” (p. 22 cited in Townsend et al., 1999, p. 33). The *power to* allows women to do new things, to overcome obstacles, and to become agents of their own lives (Mercado, 1999). By facing their problems, gaining knowledge, and developing new skills, women can develop their *power to* in refuges. In particular, Pickup (2001) emphasizes the importance of education and training as a means of addressing women’s social and political disadvantage, which is crucial in promoting women’s *power to* face material hardship if they decide to leave an abusive relationship. Websdale and Johnson (1999) also argue that an effective way to
reduce the revictimization of battered women by their partners is “to empower battered women to move beyond their violent relationships” (p. 8) by providing women with job training, job opportunities, independent living skills, independent housing, and educational support. They give an example of the Kentucky Job Readiness Program (JRP), which in addition to baseline shelter services, provides “a comprehensive range of preventative interventions, including economic self-sufficiency, emotional empowerment, autonomous living skills, and practical support” (Websdale & Johnson, 1999, p. 2). By confronting the structural advantages that battered women are facing, JRP helps in promoting livelihood strategies for battered women who have no other choice but to return to violent homes. According to Websdale and Johnson (1999), each JRP component is designed to confront a particular structural impediment, which, if overcome, gives battered women a chance to redirect their considerable resistive powers away from mere physical and emotional survival and toward the construction of a more peaceful lifestyle, usually with their children. (p. 3)

In addition, Pickup (2001) suggests that a woman’s economic empowerment (e.g., through income-generating projects) may not only enable her to leave an abusive relationship, but may also improve her status within the household if she decides to stay and as such it may improve her relationship with her husband. However, Pickup notes that, in addition to economic obstacles, numerous social, ideological, and cultural factors impede women’s ability to challenge violence in their lives. As a result:

An independent livelihood does not in itself increase women’s ability to resist individual incidents of violence. However, participation in a project with albeit purely economic aims may result in women gaining access to wider social and political resources. Such outcomes may be unplanned, but are still extremely important. They may be just as important as the credit or income that is the focus of the project, in women’s struggle to end violence. (Pickup, 2001, p. 189)

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8 Some feminist caution that an increase in woman’s status may result in a male backlash and thus an increase in violence (see Griffin, 1979; Russel, 1975; Sweetman, 1998). According to Williams (2001), “when women begin to challenge this dominance, be it through taking up educational opportunities, or joining organizations, or increasing their status in any way, they often meet with male violence” (p. xiv). Adepoju and Oppong (1994) also point out that improved status of women through education or labor force participation both empowers women and renders them vulnerable to gender-based violence (cited in Green, 1999, p. 29).
Above all, feminists emphasize that any kind of support services to survivors of gender-based violence must be based on the needs of individual women and address those needs in a holistic way.

Overall, feminists realize that direct support services to women survivors of violence alone will not eradicate violence against women in society. As Pence and Shepard (1988) point out:

If our practice is rooted in feminist theory, then the realization that this model will not eradicate battering should neither surprise nor discourage us … It is only when we put this and similar projects into perspective that we can come to an understanding of its place in the women’s movement. This work can and does make individual women safer. It can and does save women’s lives. It can make it easier for women to be about their real business, the work of transforming the culture that violates every part of their being and spirit. Projects like these are not about changing men, but about creating safe space for women to live in and participating in their communities in order to create a more sane society. (p. 296)

Thus, in the words of Dobash and Dobash (1979):

The efforts of groups working on the problem of assaults on women in the home and proposed changes in the ideologies and practices of various agencies will aid women who find themselves in relationships characterized by violence and who eventually decide to live on their own. If we wish to do something about the social processes and cultural ideals that generate patriarchal and violent relationships we need to work toward fundamental changes in society. (p. 240)

**Changing Society’s Attitudes and Beliefs**

No matter how effective direct services are to women survivors of violence, without fundamental change in men and in society in general the lives of women and girls will continue to be circumscribed by gender-based violence. According to Pickup (2001):

If women are to live free from violence, men must change too. Where women continue to be victims of violent conflict due to men’s desire to hold onto power in the household, the community, or the State, they cannot be said to be fully ‘empowered’, regardless of whether they attain any other development goal – for example, financial independence. (Pickup, 2001, p. 201)

She suggests that although communities play an integral role in condoning, perpetuating, and supporting gender-based violence, they are also an important part of the solution to such violence. Pickup points out that without changes in people’s attitudes and beliefs
that uphold violence against women, measures such as legal reform will have limited impact or worse: “In extreme cases, where reform is introduced in the absence of popular support, violent backlash against women can result” (pp. 229-230). Challenging and changing society’s attitudes and beliefs is, therefore, an extremely important strategy both in responding to gender-based violence (i.e., it helps to eliminate the stigma experienced by survivors of violence) and in preventing gender-based violence (i.e., it challenges patriarchal doctrine of violence and control as well as promotes gender equality). Feminist suggest that the starting point in raising awareness and shaping people’s knowledge is research and documentation of the extent and impact of gender-based violence on individual women and on wider society (see Callamard, 1998; Maguire, 1998). Consequently, the documentation of women’s experiences of gender-based violence has been a focus of many women’s organizations and groups both in developed and developing countries (see Kapur, 1998; Pickup, 2001). Pickup (2001) further suggest that:

Having documented and attempted to describe violence within a community, the next step is to ensure that it is ‘named’ as violence by society at large. To do this, strategies are required that challenge the ‘common sense’ attitudes and beliefs, where these ignore or condone violence. (p. 232)

This can be achieved through a variety of methods including media or public education campaigns, training, as well as through changes in gender role socialization of children. Although I discussed how mass media’s portrayal of gender stereotypes negatively impacts attitudes towards violence against women, Pickup (2001) insists that:

Because mass media communications reach and influence large numbers of people, they also have the potential to play a positive role in the struggle against violence against women. Communications technologies present new opportunities for the exploitation and abuse of women on an international scale, but also present unprecedented opportunities for individuals and organizations to present a different version of gender relations and violence against women. (p. 241)

Consequently, numerous women’s organizations have used media campaigns as well as media projects to inform women of their rights, to challenge cultural assumptions about gender roles, and to educate the general public about the issue of gender-based violence. Feminists have also campaigned and worked with media to encourage non-stereotyped portrayals of women and to develop materials that contribute towards transformation of
gender power relations (see Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Green, 1999; Foley, 1996; Njovana & Watts, 1996; Pickup, 2001).

In addition, feminists emphasize the importance of popular education and community training as a means of challenging people’s assumptions and increasing their awareness about violence against women (see Green, 1999; Muchina, 2000; Pickup, 2001; Vann, 2002). According to Beth Vann (2002), educating communities about the issues of gender, power, human rights, and violence against women through the use of a variety of participatory methods that stimulate discussion and promote reflection on these issues can lead to a change in people’s behavior. She suggests that “education can empower potential victims and change attitudes and behavior of potential perpetrators and the community-at-large that may be perpetuating gender-based violence through silent acceptance of abusive behavior and blaming the victim” (p. 10). Pickup (2001) notes that both role play and theatrical representations can raise public awareness of violence against women in a participatory manner that invokes the audience to think critically about the problem. Theatre, according to Pickup, can be especially “effective when discussing sensitive topics, particularly in contexts where there is a strong oral tradition” (p. 248). Feminists also emphasize the importance of community level training (midwives, development workers, religious leaders, community leaders, etc.) as a strategy to build critical consciousness of violence against women. Such training aims to sensitize people about the issue of violence and enhance their capacity to provide support services to women survivors of violence as well as to implement violence prevention initiatives. Consequently, “training on violence against women is often underpinned by gender training, a process that aims to transform attitudes to gender roles and power relations in society” (Pickup, 2001, p. 252). In addition, community level training has a potential of resulting in a cascade effect in the wider community, whereby training a small number of people and encouraging them to share what they have learned with others can produce a change in people’s attitudes and behaviors on a greater scale.

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9 Pickup (2001) suggests that:
The process of developing ‘critical consciousness’ starts from a recognition that women’s experience of violence comes about because of their inequality with men, and a recognition of the consequences of violence and inequality both for women themselves, and for society in general. Groups move from a ‘common sense’ idea that violence against women as a feature of society that is condoned or tolerated, to a ‘critical consciousness’ of violence against women as an abuse of human rights. (p. 252)
In terms of changing society’s patriarchal beliefs and norms, feminists emphasize the importance of changing gender role socialization of children. Marin and Russo (2005) emphasize that understanding gender role construction is key to predicting and preventing violence against women. Similarly, Hanson and McAuliffe (1999) suggest that “one answer to reducing violence [against women] may lie in a yet relatively unexplored arena – the gender-role socialization of our children within our social systems” (p. 1). The authors point out that through gender role socialization gender-based violence becomes a part of the social fabric of the society:

From birth on, children are taught the norms, values, and behavior of their gender, as perceived by the culture into which they were born. Through this socialization process, children internalize the rules of masculinity and femininity. Because they learn these roles at a very early age, the meanings attached to gender differences seem natural rather than socially constructed. And, because the roots of violence [against women] are deeply embedded in our socialization of children about appropriate roles for males and females, efforts to confront such violence must include a comprehensive examination of the socialization process and the definitions the culture has of appropriate male and female gender roles. (Hanson & McAuliffe, 1999, p. 2)

Several authors analyze the importance of the education system in gender role socialization and hence, its role in addressing the issue of gender-based violence. Debra Robbin (n.d.) suggests that, “in that schools are a microcosm of society at large, it is important to examine the ways in which educational environments may foster and perpetuate a tolerance of gender-based violence” (p. 4). She also points out that the education system is one of the primary purveyors of dominant cultural norms, which reinforce stereotypical biases regarding gender roles. Thus, by internalizing these myths about “appropriate” male and female behavior, children learn the culture of violence in schools, which increases their vulnerability to experiencing violence both as victims and/or perpetrators. Robbin argues that gender power hierarchy is reinforced in schools through a variety of ways, which include teacher-student interaction (e.g., males are treated as being more important than females, males receive more attention from teachers than females, favoring males in task assignment, as well as differences in teachers’ expectations of students based on their gender), design of curriculum materials which reinforce gender bias, schools’ tolerance of sexual harassment of females, etc. Robbin points out that:
These practices send different messages to males and females about their worth, their abilities, and their potential. Significantly, boys are more likely to attribute their achievements to their abilities, while girls attribute theirs to luck, depicting very different levels of self-confidence for males and females. Furthermore, in promoting a dichotomy in gender, males learn to reject supposedly ‘feminine’ qualities of cooperation and sensitivity in favor of competition and objectivity. Such socialization only serves to lay the foundations for gender expectations based on male domination and female subordination. (p. 4)

In order to improve girls’ self-confidence and self-esteem and to teach boys to reject a culture in which they must prove their masculinity by exercising power over others, especially in their relationships with women and girls, Robbin suggests that issues of gender, power, and violence must be incorporated into the school curriculum. In addition, she argues that schools must take a clear stand against sexist bias, harassment, and dating violence by adopting sexual harassment policies. Finally, she suggests that it is important to have diverse programs and comprehensive support services for students in order to address the problem of dating violence and various other issues as well as to empower young people. Overall, as Hanson and McAuliffe (1999) point out that:

Our educational system is a primary carrier of the dominant culture’s assumptions, norms, and beliefs … Schools, then, with their history and role of conveying cultural beliefs and behaviors, play an important role in creating awareness of the gendered aspects of violence and of countering such behaviors. (p. 4)

Challenging the State and its Institutions

As discussed above, feminists argue that the state is not a neutral institution; on the contrary, according to Ferguson (1984), the state, its gendered ideology, and gendered laws, perpetuate and promote violence against women (cited in Green, 1999, p. 99). Green (1999) suggests that, “perhaps the most powerful way in which the state contributes to gender based violence is through its abdication of responsibility to protect women. Male control over women is central to the laws and policies governing gender violence” (pp. 99-100). Through gendered laws and patriarchal ideology the state promotes the accepted political reality and, thus, assists in defining and redefining the border between private and public spheres. As a result, the “legal system does not merely fail to protect women; it legitimizes male violence” (Green, 1999, p. 148).
Some feminist activists and scholars are very skeptical about feminist attempts to transform the patriarchal state institutions, especially when it comes to reforms in the legal system. Smart (1989) argues that the law is one of the main forms of social practice through which gender inequality is expressed and reproduced. She therefore questions feminists’ efforts to make the trial process bearable enough for women to use it because this does not challenge the underlying patriarchal ideology of the legal system. Moreover, Smart (1989) suggests that a reform, which does not fundamentally address gender power hierarchy, may have the counter effect of celebrating a legal system that condones violence against women (cited in Green, 1999, p. 234). Thus, “a reform such as the provision of victim advocates provides a guide through the labyrinth of the legal process, but does not fundamentally change the victim’s ordeal; it only offers her company” (Smart, 1990, cited in Green, 1999, p. 234). Marcus (1992) critiques feminist literature and activism that focuses on police procedures and legal definitions of rape. She argues that such focus can produce a sense of futility: rape itself seems to be taken for granted as an occurrence and only postrape events offer possible occasions for intervention. Although feminists drive to change the legal definition of rape, to increase the penalties for rape and to render the terms of a rape trial less prejudicial to the raped woman have publicized rape’s seriousness as a crime, an almost exclusive insistence on equitable reparation and vindication in the courts has limited effectiveness for a politics of rape prevention. (p. 388)

While Marcus brings up a valid point that more efforts should be put towards the prevention of rape and other forms of gender-based violence, other feminists argue that legal reform is an important strategy in addressing the issue of violence against women for a variety of reasons. For example, Kelly and Radford (1996) point out that “the law plays the central role in constructing ‘what counts’ as crime, and in the case of sexual violence … it focuses almost entirely on extremes”, therefore such “malestream strategies of inclusion and exclusion function to deny women’s reality and influence the perceptions of women themselves” (p. 21). Although they recognize the limitations of the law in the struggle against sexual violence, Kelly and Radford nevertheless suggest that feminists should not abandon legal reform. Green (1999) argues that through the substance and the process of the law (as well as other repressive mechanisms) the state defines what it means to be a female and determines how much control women are
allowed to have over their lives. Laws that discriminate against women in terms of rights to divorce, custody of children, and property rights make divorce unfeasible for women. Divorce can mean loss of custody of children, loss of access to land, and loss of all livelihood. According to Green:

   Even where both men and women can initiate divorce, the circumstances by which it may be obtained often differ according to gender. Under the circumstances many women face, to pursue a divorce as a means of escape from domestic abuse is truly a heroic exercise. (pp. 109-110)

Moreover, Bazili (1991) as well as Charlton, Everett, and Staudt (1989) point out that, since the gender ideology promoted by the state and its institutions (such as the legal system) is so pervasive, it is often regarded as society’s moral standard or a natural order of things (cited in Green, 1999, p. 101). Thus, Green argues, it is crucial to focus on challenging and reforming the patriarchal legal system because the law has “an important symbolic and educative role in shaping and changing attitudes. There is extraordinary symbolic force in ‘naming’ domestic violence and calling it a crime because in the past it has been trivialized or denied” (Green, 1999, p. 122). In addition to symbolic meaning, Green argues that:

   If the state took wife abuse seriously, the process of arrest, prosecution, conviction, and punishment would carry the clear message that society condemns the conduct of the perpetrator. It must be made clear that the perpetrator is personally responsible for his actions. (p. 122)

Thus, legal reforms are important means of confronting the ‘malestream strategies of inclusion and exclusion’, improving the status of women, changing society’s attitudes and beliefs, and challenging the patriarchal ideology embedded in the legal system. In the words of Gregory and Lees (1994), “to abandon legal strategies altogether would be no solution at all; rather, it would be to concede defeat, leaving the law unchallenged, our silence taken to imply that we had no criticisms to make” (p. 80).

   In addition to changes in laws, feminists emphasize the need to transform the practices of the legal system. Smart (1990) suggests that discriminatory attitudes and treatment of women by police, lawyers, judges, and juries effectively disqualifies and silences many women (cited in Green, 1999, p. 101). Consequently, the relatively few women who seek justice through legal system find that legal processes are biased against
them due to the pervasiveness of the patriarchal ideology (Green, 1999). In order to eradicate discriminatory police practices, ensure the appropriate use of legal sanctions, and eliminate gender bias in the interpretation of the law, Pickup (2001) suggests that a set of strategies is necessary which includes building awareness and changing attitudes about gender-based violence as well as training of state officials on how to appropriately respond to the problem of violence against women. She argues that the most effective training must combine both: technical aspects, such as how to obtain the best evidence for conviction in cases of medical examinations following rape, and political aspects, such as raising awareness on the roots of violence in women’s subordination. Moreover, Pickup points out that such training should be extended beyond the police and judiciary and should include other groups within the state institutions: medical and educational professionals, immigration specialists, as well as health, welfare, and social workers.

According to Goetz (1997), staff within state institutions work in an environment in which culture, systems, and procedures discriminate against women and are biased in men’s favor. Training them is particularly effective when it is a part of a wider strategy to make the institution “right for women” (cited in Pickup, 2001, p. 285).

In general, feminists emphasize that it is important to combine research on the extent and nature of violence against women with lobbying, advocacy, and media work, in order to achieve attitudinal change on the part of state officials. Pickup (2001) suggests that these activities are complementary to the service provision to individual women survivors of violence. She insists that, although the provision of direct support is critical, preventative and advocacy related work is also extremely important. According to Pickup, lobbying and campaigning for change using regional and international agreements, declarations, and conventions that are relevant to violence against women can be an especially effective strategy. Moreover, she suggests that:

The collection of testimonies from women who have survived violence, and from witnesses, is a very valuable tool for use in lobbying national governments. Such testimonies can force the State to acknowledge that atrocities have taken place, and to provide support for the victims. At the international level, such research can be used to lobby for states to be forced to take action. (Pickup, 2001, pp. 233, 235)
Overall, the above examples demonstrate that feminist strategies against gender-based violence can vary in size, scope, and type of activities undertaken. While some programs are directed specifically towards addressing the needs of the survivors of gender-based violence, others have broader goals and may include awareness-raising, lobbying, or peace-building activities. Overall, feminist scholars accentuate that there will be no end to gender-based violence without a comprehensive approach that changes society’s attitudes and beliefs that continue to reinforce women’s subordinate position.

According to Muchina (2000), violence against women can be eradicated through combined efforts from all those who care about humanity. We can no longer remain silent because silence in the face of violence sanctions it or gives approval to the perpetrators. Any religious institution, government, or cultural tradition that teaches or emphasizes the subjugation of women is an accomplice to the murder and the physical and psychological violence. (p. 123)

The need for diverse, multilevel strategies aimed at preventing gender-based violence is also emphasized in the public health ecological model for violence prevention, which is presented below.

**Public Health Ecological Model for Interventions to Prevent Violence**

As mentioned above, the public health approach to violence has a strong emphasis on violence prevention. Krug et al. (2002) point out that:

Violence can be prevented and its impact reduced, in the same way that public health efforts have prevented and reduced pregnancy-related complications, workplace injuries, infectious diseases, and illness resulting from contaminated food and water in many parts of the world. The factors that contribute to violent responses – whether they are factors of attitude and behavior or related to larger social, economic, political and cultural conditions – can be changed. (p. 3)

Violence prevention, according to WHO (2004a), means preventing violent acts from occurring through interventions that eliminate or reduce the underlying risk factors,
reinforce protective factors, decrease the reoccurrence of violence, and reduce the negative effects of violence that has already occurred. While Figures 2 and 3 above demonstrate multiple levels in the causation of violence, these levels also represent key points for intervention. The public health ecological model, therefore, emphasizes that violence prevention must be carried out at the individual, relationship, community, and society levels. As illustrated in Figure 4, dealing with domestic and sexual violence at these levels involves the following:

- Addressing individual risk factors and taking steps to change beliefs and behaviors of individuals.
- Influencing close personal relationships and promoting healthy family environments.
- Raising public awareness, stimulating community action, providing support services for victims of violence, as well as addressing gender inequality and adverse cultural attitudes and practices.
- Addressing the larger cultural, social, and economic factors related to violence. (Krug et al., 2002; WHO, 2004a)

It should be noted that Figure 4 presents only a sample of the possible interventions that can be implemented to address sexual and domestic violence against women and girls.

In addition to multiple levels, the public health ecological model for violence prevention classifies violence prevention strategies along two dimensions:

The first dimension concerns time, and classifies interventions according to where they are located in the chain of risk factors and situational determinants that stretch from long before the occurrence of violence to long after the attack has occurred and into the consequences incurred by victims and perpetrators. The second dimension relates to the target population, and ranges from prevention strategies that target everyone (universal) to interventions that address victims and perpetrators only, or high-risk groups. (WHO, 2004a, p. 7)
The model also distinguishes between three types of interventions in terms of the target population. Universal interventions target the general population without considering their risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Selective interventions target people who are at enhanced risk for violence. Indicated interventions target individuals and groups that have already been victimized and/or demonstrated violent behavior (Krug et al., 2002; WHO, 2004a).

Overall, due to the multifaceted nature of violence and the complexity of its root causes, the public health ecological model for violence prevention emphasizes the importance of developing interventions at the different levels in order to effectively prevent violence. In this respect, interventions may focus on one or multiple types of violence, may operate at one or more different levels, and may target one or more at-risk-environments, risk factors, and at-risk groups (WHO, 2004a).
Current Status of Women in Uganda

Ugandan Constitution and Women’s Political Participation

The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda is recognized as one of the most gender sensitive constitutions in the world. The Constitution explicitly guarantees women equal rights and responsibilities under the law, which is evident in many sections of the document. For example, under the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy it states the following:

VI. The state shall ensure gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups on all constitutional and other bodies.
XV. The state shall recognise the significant role that women play in society.
(Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995)

Additionally, under the Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, Article 33 outlines the rights of women in more detail including:

(1) Women shall be accorded full and equal dignity of the person with men.
(2) The state shall provide the facilities and opportunities necessary to enhance the welfare of women to enable them to realise their full potential and advancement.
(3) The state shall protect women and their rights, taking into account their unique and natural maternal functions in society.
(4) Women shall have the right to equal treatment with men and that right shall include economic opportunities in political, economic and social activities.
(5) Without prejudice to article 32 of this Constitution, women shall have the right to affirmative action for the purpose of redressing the imbalances created by history, tradition or custom.
(6) Laws, cultures, customs or traditions which are against the dignity, welfare or interest of women or which undermine their status are prohibited by this Constitution. (Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995)

In other sections the Constitution entitles men and women to equal rights during marriage and at its dissolution, protects the rights of widows to inherit property, and accords women workers protection during pregnancy. Furthermore, Article 78 calls for one woman representative in legislature for every district and Article 180 reserves one third of the membership of each local government council for women (Constitution of the
Republic of Uganda, 1995). According to Sylvia Tamale (1999), these articles “are but a sample of the ‘feminist’ provisions included in the 1995 constitution. These provisions form a solid foundation for the Ugandan women’s movement to challenge all forms of gender discrimination and oppression” (p. 116).

Other positive measures implemented by the government of Uganda to enhance the status of women include the National Gender Policy and the National Plan for the Advancement of Women (HRW, 2003b). The National Gender Policy mandates gender mainstreaming in all planning, resource allocation, and implementation processes of development programs. According to the Ministry of Gender and Community Development (1997), “the ultimate objective of this policy … is to evolve a society that is both informed and conscious of gender and development issues and concerns” (cited in Snyder, 2000, p. 24). Smyth and Payne (1998) argue that equally important was the establishment of the Ministry for Women in Development in 1988. The central objectives of this Ministry included ensuring that women are brought into the mainstream of all aspects of development activity and that all policies of government ministries are gender sensitive (Mugyenyi, 1998; Smyth & Payne, 1998).

Since the Constitution provides for affirmative action through the provision of reserved seats for women in parliament and local government, there has been an increase in women’s political participation and presence in decision-making positions in Uganda. According to Tripp (2002):

In 1980 there was only one woman in parliament. Today 25 percent (77) of parliamentary seats are held by women, up from 18 percent after the 1989 and 1996 elections. The deputy speaker of the house is a woman. The 2001 elections also saw an increase in the number of women running for open constituency seats (rather than 53 reserved women’s seats). In 1989, two women won constituency seats. In the 1996 parliamentary race the number of women contesting open seats was only 26 with 8 winning. By 2001, 32 ran for constituency seats and 13 won. The biggest change, however, was in the overall numbers of women running for the office. In 1996 the total number of women running for parliamentary seats was 135, while in 2001, 203 women ran in parliamentary elections. (pp. 8-9)

Uganda was the first African country to have a female Vice President, Dr. Specioza Wandira Kazibwe. Out of 69 ministers currently 16 are female. Of these only six are full (cabinet) ministers. Women, however, are not all relegated to the traditional ministries of education, gender, and agriculture. In addition to these positions, Uganda currently has a
female Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Bbumba Syda Namirembe; Minister in Charge of Security, Akech Betty; and Minister in Charge of Presidency, Beatrice Mukaye Wabudeya (“The New Cabinet,” 2005). At the local level, women hold one third of local council seats, which makes Uganda a leading country in female representation in local government. Moreover, the local council system includes a Secretary for Women’s Affairs at each of its five levels of governance and since 1993 each of these levels also has a Women’s Council (Snyder, 2000).

Despite affirmative action policies, critics are skeptical of NRM government’s commitment to women’s emancipation. Tamale (1999) suggests that there are plenty of examples “to demonstrate that the policies of the NRM only pay lip service to women’s emancipation. For instance, since its inception, the ministry in charge of women’s affairs has always received the smallest portion of disbursement from government coffers” (p. 20). In addition, following the restructuring in 1991, the Ministry of Women in Development (WID) was merged with the Ministry of Youth and Culture. According to Mugyenyi (1998), “the merger with Youth and Culture may well imply stereotyping women as custodians of culture and child issues. But still more importantly, the merger has meant a further financial and human resource reduction in WID work” (p. 139). Moreover, in 1994, the ministry became a department within the Ministry of Gender and Community Development and, in 1998, it was again consolidated as the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development. The two directorates of women and community development were further reduced to a Department of Gender and Community Development (Snyder, 2000). Tegulle and Kemigisha (2002) point out that the diminished status of the ministry is particularly evident in the reduction of its human and financial resources. For example, the ministry’s staff shrank from 26 in 1994 down to 8 in 1998 (cited in Tripp, 2002, p. 16). During the 1994-1995 fiscal year, the Ministry of Gender and Community Development received only one tenth of 1% of the government budget, compared to 20.9% allocated for the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development and 25.1% for security (Snyder, 2000). As a result of its extreme resource constraints, the Ministry became primarily dependent on foreign

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10 These are village, parish, sub-county, county, and district levels.
donors, such as Danish International Development Agency and UNICEF, which restricted its activities to primarily following donor priorities (Smyth and Payne, 1998). Tripp (2002) notes that the increasing numbers of women participating in Ugandan politics have resulted in few legislative changes that benefit them. She further points out that:

Within parliament, women have generally had poor representation in the leadership of Standing Committees (women served as chairs of only two out of nine committees in 2002), but have slightly better representation in leadership of Sessional Committees. In the past women have also experienced difficulty being taken seriously and listened to in parliament (Tripp, 2002, p. 9)

Similarly, a study by Sylvia Tamale (1999) on women in parliamentary politics in Uganda demonstrated that sexual harassment is rampant, that women have difficulty being taken seriously, and that they are frequently subjected to humiliating stereotypes and derogatory remarks. A study by Mulyampiti (1993) suggests that women participating in local government have similar experiences. For example, in Pallisa district the Women’s Secretary noted that men in the Council decided that “women should not bother to attend meetings since it interrupted their domestic chores and that men should attend on their behalf” (cited in Tripp, 1998, p. 126). Overall, according to Tripp (n.d.):

Women have yet to see enormous payoffs in terms of elected officials and political appointments. Women often lack the resources, political experience, education and political connections to run for office …. Prohibitive cultural attitudes against women’s involvement persist among both men and women. These are reflected in voting patterns, media coverage of female politicians, and even in blatant attempts to suppress women’s assertion of their political rights and views … the 1996 presidential elections saw increasing incidents of intimidation and harassment of wives by husbands over differing political opinions. Throughout the country there were reports of women who were threatened with withdrawal of family support. Some were killed, beaten, thrown out of homes, and some had their voters’ cards grabbed from them or destroyed. One of the consequences of this experience was that women did not turn out to vote in the parliamentary elections in such large numbers, partly because of harassment. (p. 16)

Likewise, the 2001 parliamentary elections saw another wave of violence against women. This time it was directed against female candidates. Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET), 2001, observations indicate that:
The elections were marred by a lot of violence, intimidation and influence peddling. Reports from Mbarara Municipality, Lira Municipality, Rukungiri District, Mwenge County South and Nakaseke County indicated violence and intimidation targeting female candidates and their supporters by the army and power wielding officials.

The President's direct involvement in campaigns undermined the democratisation process. The electorate's right to choose candidates of their choice was interfered with. This was most eminent in the Districts of Kampala, Lira, Mbarara and Rukungiri.

In addition to threats, intimidation, and violence, Tripp (n.d.) suggests that cultural factors prevent women from fully partaking in national or local politics:

Partly the reluctance stems from cultural prohibitions on women being seen and speaking in public in front of men. Where these prohibitions are strong, men do not listen to women who take the podium or are active in politics in other ways. Campaigning and being a leader often involves travel, spending nights away from home, going to bars to meet people, and meeting men, all of which put women politicians at risk of being thought of as ‘loose women’ or ‘unfit mothers’. Not only may they find themselves and their families under attack or the subject of malicious gossip, but, husbands sometimes will forbid their wives from entering into politics. Some husbands are threatened by the possibility that their wives will interact with other men, others fear the social stigma directed against their wives, or they worry that their wife’s political preoccupations will divert her attention away from home. (pp. 16-17)

Discriminatory Laws and Practices

Although Uganda has adopted a gender sensitive Constitution, the extent to which this can promote the empowerment of women depends on the operationalization of its provisions. So far the process of operationalizing the new Constitution, according to Kharono (1998), has been “manipulated to serve dominant interests and undermine the positive provisions which could otherwise promote the empowerment of marginalized groups such as women and the poor” (p. 20). Thus, many statutory and customary laws and practices which discriminate against women remain.

While the Constitution guarantees women the right to property, most land in Uganda (especially in rural areas) is held under customary law. As Kabanda (2005) points out:

Under customary law, land is acquired, belongs to, and is managed by a patrilineal (male) group. Women’s rights to access and use of land depend on their social ties to men, either as daughters, sisters, wives, widows, or mothers.
resulting in loss of land rights upon termination of these social relationships. (p. 342)

In 1998, Uganda enacted a Land Act, which was intended to decentralize land administration, strengthen security of tenure, and address historical gender imbalances in land ownership (HRW, 2003b; Kabanda, 2005). According to Asiimwe (2002):

Substantial work went into lobbying not only for women’s land rights in general, but specifically for a clause in the Land Act that would allow spouses to co-own family property. However, when the Land Act was passed the co-ownership clause was missing, despite its having been discussed and approved of by members of parliament. (p. 121)

Thus, the bill failed to provide for co-ownership of land and did not change holding systems for family and clan land. In June 2003, the Ugandan parliament passed an amendment to the Land Act, which provides for a spouse’s ‘security of occupancy’ on family land. While the bill offers women a greater security of tenure, it does not provide equal rights of ownership (HRW, 2003b). Kharono (1998) therefore emphasizes that:

With increasing pressure on land bolstered by government policies and legislation which have encouraged commercialization of land and promoted land registration and titling to facilitate the process of commodification, women have been caught between cultural/traditional restrictions which deny them independent land ownership rights and ‘modern’ laws which stress ownership above user rights. While the majority of women in Uganda continue to operate under the same traditional production relations in which the responsibility for agricultural production have increasingly become feminized, therefore, whatever protection they may have had under the different customary land tenure systems have been eroded, and the new legal systems do not adequately protect them. The end result of all this is that the majority of women in Uganda have been left vulnerable and insecure on land. (p. 16)

In addition to women’s land rights, statutory and, in particular, customary laws discriminate against women in the matters of marriage, divorce, custody, and succession. According to Oumo (2005), the Ugandan Divorce Act “does not define matrimonial property, yet presumes that everything in the house belongs to the husband. The wife must, therefore, prove ownership in order to make property claims” (p. 244). Mutyaba (2005) further points out that:

Courts typically deny divorcing wives the right to a share of the property despite their contribution to the family accumulation of wealth. Additionally, where
divorce is based on fault, Uganda’s Divorce Act penalizes a wife for committing adultery by removing her right to property. In contrast, the statute does not remove the right of a husband to property when the marriage is dissolved because of his adultery. (p. 224)

Uganda’s Customary Law Marriage Decree does not entitle women to maintenance after divorce, especially if she is at fault for divorce. In addition, since wives are “purchased” through the payment of bride price and thereby are considered their husbands’ property, upon divorce women do not receive a share of family property and may keep only a few personal items (Mutyaba, 2005). Moreover, customary law limits women’s parental rights in matters regarding child custody. In patrilineal Uganda, children belong to the husband’s family/clan and courts award custody accordingly (Tamale, 1993, cited in HRW, 2003b, p. 19). Overall, Asiimwe (2002) points out that:

As a consequence of colonial rule, Uganda has a dual legal system of customary and statutory law. This plurality continues to characterize a range of legal areas, including laws related to land ownership and inheritance. Since customary law is not codified, men are able to manipulate it to suit their desires and have used it to justify the distinctions and/or discrimination between men and women …. Statutory law provides greater protection for women, allowing for female inheritance and land ownership. Although it trumps customary law in theory, statutory law is less utilized in practice. This is especially true in rural communities, where ignorance of statutory law is compounded by high illiteracy rates and inaccessible courts. (p. 124)

Byamukama (2005) further explains the processes through which customary law practices discriminate and subordinate women in Uganda:

In most cases, men make and interpret customary law because of the patrilineal nature of the Ugandan societies. Judges, who are primarily men, control the substantive content of customary law by choosing who to consult on the content of customary law … and by manipulating judicial precedents. Through this process sexist values have been indelibly imprinted on the customary law. Judges and community leaders use this constructed, static, corrupted version of customary law to oppress, subordinate, and discriminate against women. The government and other groups have ignored or resisted calls to change the aspects of customary law that discriminate against women on several grounds, including the need to preserve African culture and values. Ugandan society has conditioned women to think that they are inferior to men to such an extent that they do not relate to laws that give them equal status with men. (p. 20)
Women’s Economic Status

Agriculture is the most important sector in Ugandan economy. “Nine out of every 10 Ugandans live and work in the countryside, and an estimated 90 per cent of women, compared to 53 per cent of men, engage in agriculture” (Snyder, 2000, p. 123). Women produce over 80% of the country’s food products, 60% of traditional farm exports including coffee, tea, cotton, sugar, and tobacco, and 80% of non-traditional agricultural exports such as maize, beans, cereal, and vanilla (Snyder, 2000). However, women’s contribution to the productive process is not matched by their access to and control over productive resources. Only 7% of Ugandan women own land and 8% have leasehold agreements (Smyth and Payne, 1998; Snyder, 2000). Most land is held under customary tenure and is regulated by customary law. Thus, while statutory law does not prohibit women from owning property, social and cultural practices effectively deny women this right. Kabanda (2005) points out that, although inheritance could provide an access to land for women, under customary law women’s land inheritance rights are not recognized. According to Asiimwe (2002):

Land in Uganda is normally passed through inheritance, traditionally through the male line from the father to son. Traditional patrilineal descent remains especially dominant in the rural areas of Uganda. It is characterized by male control of decision-making about who will inherit and administer the estate and preference for male over female heirs. (p. 123)

Madanda (1997) explains that gender bias in land inheritance is due to the fact that “daughters are expected to leave parental home with their husbands when married, and the family would lose the land” (cited in Snyder, 2002, p. 81). To compound the problem, married women cannot inherit land through their husband because they do not belong to their husband’s clan. According to Madanda, “in essence, women belong nowhere, and that in turn affects productivity” (cited in Snyder, 2002, p. 81). Other socio-cultural practices that discriminate against women and discourage them from owning land include bride wealth and polygamy. Moreover, in parts of Uganda, it is a cultural taboo for a woman to own land (Asiimwe, 2002; Kabanda, 2005). Direct purchase may be the only way a woman can acquire land in spite of cultural restrictions, however, many are not able to do so because of poverty. Kabanda (2005) highlights that even when women are
able to purchase land, sexist stereotypes force them to register it in their husband’s or other male relative’s name. Overall, Elizabeth Kharono (1998) points out that:

The context of Uganda land question clearly illustrates the extent to which an inter-play of cultural-historical, socio-economic, legal and political processes have structured and reinforced women’s poverty and marginalization. Patriarchal cultural arrangements in all social contexts in Uganda have appropriated women’s labor on land but denied them ownership rights. As a result, women’s lives under all existing land tenure systems are closely tied to a resource which the majority of them (93%) have access to through their relationship to men … The most pervasive aspect of this arrangement is the extent to which women and men have internalized the patriarchal ideology and value system which deny women ownership rights over land. In essence, patriarchy has structurally excluded women from making political demands on land matters as they have no right of inheritance or ownership. (pp. 13-14)

The lack of land ownership or secure access to it negatively impacts women’s access to credit because they cannot fulfill collateral requirements. Furthermore, Ugandan women farmers have less access to extension services than men and the few extension services that do target women often fail to address their unique workload, responsibilities, and constraints. Lack of access to land, credit, training, and other support services for agricultural production prevents women from engaging in long-term investments in agriculture. Female-headed households are especially vulnerable to these constraints (Karuhanga-Beraho, 2002; Mugyenyi, 1998).

Inequality in access to and control over production resources also has implications for women’s status within the household. There is unequal gendered division of household work, with women almost solely responsible for cooking, cleaning, fetching of water and firewood, taking care of children and other needy or ailing members of the household (Kasente, 2002). When it comes to agricultural work, Snyder (2000) points out that, as landowners, men determine the use of their wives’ and children’s labor. As such, they also control the products of that labor. Men are primarily responsible for marketing agricultural crops, even those produced by women. “Thus men sell the crops, and the women, who do most of the work, have little control over the income” (Snyder, 2000, p. 124). Similarly, Whyte and Whyte (1998) suggests that in Uganda “family values dictate that women may only sell crops with the permission of their husbands and for specific
agreed purposes. Thus it is almost impossible for women to accumulate capital with which they might engage in trading” (p. 234).

Wage employment is available to only 7% of women in Ugandan labor force compared to 21% of men; 39% of women and 62% of men are identified as self-employed; the remaining 54% of women and 17% of men are considered ‘contributing family workers’ (The World’s Women, 2000, pp. 141, 145, cited in Snyder 2002, p. 78). Basirika (1993) and Mugyenyi (1998) further point out that within wage employment women are concentrated in low-paid jobs such as teaching, nursing, and secretarial work. Only 5.8% of administration and managerial jobs are held by women (Mugyenyi, 1998). Constraints that inhibit women’s entry and retention into the labor market include lower education levels and literacy rates, lack of training, discrimination against women by employers, sexual harassment, and difficulties balancing employment and domestic responsibilities (Government of Uganda, 1998, cited in Nassuna, 2005, p. 324). As a result, women’s participation in economic activities is often in the so-called ‘informal sector’ and remains largely invisible. According to Impact Associates (1995), “women constitute ‘perhaps the majority’ in informal employment in Uganda’s micro- and small-enterprise economy, which includes 850,000 self-employed persons and employs 2.6 million others” (cited in Snyder, 2002, p. 78). Although there are some women among Uganda’s large scale entrepreneurs, these numbers are small: “As a group they have been called ‘the missing middle’ because the unwritten ‘qualifications’ for this level include secondary education, land ownership and previous salaried employment” (Snyder, 2002, p. 78). Additional constraints women entrepreneurs face include difficulties accessing bank loans because they do not own land or because of the small size of their businesses as well as discriminatory practices, which require a husband to co-sign any loan agreement (Karuhanga-Beraho, 2005; Snyder, 2000). As a result, Basirika (1993) points out that, the majority of women are concentrated in petty commodity trade where profit margins are very low. Overall, according to Snyder (2000):

Because custom often works against them, they have less education, are less likely to own land to put to productive use or use as collateral for credit, have less information on markets, and bear heavy, time-consuming responsibilities for home, offspring and extended family. Although change has been coming in the last decade, those factors still limit women’s capacities to maximize profits in any business they may undertake. Yet they are increasingly a major if not the sole
source of support of large households – often providing half or more of the family income even when a spouse is present. (pp. 3-4)

In addition to providing food for their families, Ugandan women are expected to meet health, education, and other cash and time demanding family needs. This is primarily due to the economic reforms and structural adjustment programs (SAPs) that the NRM has been implementing since 1987 (Mugyenyi, 1998). SAPs have reduced social spending and resulted in cutbacks and cost-sharing arrangements in essential health and education services, which have significantly increased the unpaid workloads of women. The responsibility for filling in the gap in social service provision fell on women due to their roles and responsibilities within the households and the communities. Studies by Basirika (1993) and Obbo (1991) have demonstrated that the welfare of women in Uganda has been negatively affected by SAPs. In addition to women’s and girls’ increased burden of care for the sick, girls’ education has been negatively affected because the strain on family resources causes parents to chose to withdraw their daughters from school while continuing their sons’ educations (Mugyenyi, 1998). Moreover, the environmental deterioration caused by SAPs has negatively impacted women because they are responsible for water and firewood collection. Thus, Elizabeth Kharono (1998) emphasizes that:

The perception that women’s labor is free labor is one of the most important factors in structuring women’s poverty, because women spend a lot of time (in most cases all their lives) in productive work which is invisible and out of which they earn no income. (p. 17)

**Women’s and Girls’ Educational Status**

The NRM leadership has taken some positive strides towards improving women’s and girls’ access to education. Since 1990, an affirmative action measure has assisted female applicants to get accepted into the university system. “The purpose of the policy is to correct gender imbalances in management and decision-making by increasing the number of skilled women graduates” (Mugyenyi, 1998, p. 140). According to Makerere University, this has increased enrollment of women from 23% in 1989 to 35 % in 1999 and to 41 % in 2002 (cited in Kikampikaho & Kwesiga, 2002, p. 41). In addition, the Promotion of Girl’s Education Project was initiated in 1995 in 15 districts. Under this
project, “about 1,000 schools which have promoted girls’ education have benefited from the programme through the provision of latrines, girls’ playing grounds, classrooms, houses for senior women teachers who guide and counsel girls, or bringing water to schools” (Kikampikaho & Kwesiga, 2002, p. 41). Furthermore, in 1996 the government introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) which offers free access for girls and boys to primary education. According to the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education, UPE increased total enrollment from 2.6 million to 5.5 million in 1997 and to 6.8 million in 2002. About 3 million of enrolled students are girls (cited in Kikampikaho & Kwesiga, 2002, p. 41). Another important measure was the introduction of a Gender Desk in the Ministry of Education in 1998 aimed at coordinating and initiating activities and programs to promote girls’ education. The desk played an important role in implementing the National Strategy of Girls’ Education in August 2000, which provides a framework for addressing barriers to girls’ education (Kikampikaho & Kwesiga, 2002).

Despite these positive steps, the education of women and girls is still lagging behind their male counterparts. In 2002, literacy rate was 59.2% for the female population compared with 78.8% for the male population (UNDP, 2004). The Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (2000) points out that the enrollment of girls at the primary level is 47% compared to 53% for boys (cited in Musoke, 2005, p. 371). Gender disparity is also evident in the combined gross enrollment ratio for primary, secondary, and tertiary school levels, which was 68% for females and 73% for males in 2000/2001, with the net secondary enrollment ratio of female to male 0.86, and the gross tertiary enrollment ratio of female to male 0.52 (UNDP, 2004). According to Kikampikaho and Kwesiga (2002):

> The obstacles to gender parity are embroiled in cultural norms and practices, socialization processes and into the framework of patriarchy, which is fundamental to social structures in Uganda … Consequently, these obstacles inhibit and may in some cases completely block opportunities for promoting girls’ and women’s education. (p. 42)

When it comes to education, Ugandan parents, communities, and society have a pronounced preference for educating boys as illustrated both in the duration and quality of education they receive compared to their female counterparts. Because marriage is

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11 Ages 15 and above.
considered the ultimate goal for most girls, they are seen as less deserving of social capital since any “investment” will transition to their husband’s family (Kikampikaho & Kwesiga, 2002; Musoke, 2005; Tibamwenda, 1994). Byamukama (2005) points out that:

It is even more difficult for a woman to continue with her education after she marries because of the heavy family responsibilities women are expected to assume upon marriage. Similarly, the practice of bride price leads needy or greedy parents to marry off daughters as soon as possible to get bride wealth. In some families, the discrimination against girl children may be the result of a lack of adequate social welfare facilities, pensions, and retirement benefits. Families allocating sparse family resources may look to the education of sons more than daughters as an investment in their own long-term security. (pp. 16-17)

In addition to early and forced marriages, other factors contribute to girls’ lack of access to educational opportunities including their involvement in domestic chores, teenage pregnancies, as well as economic barriers (Mugyenyi, 1998; Musoke, 2005; Tibamwenda, 1994). Poor families struggle with providing school fees for secondary and tertiary education as well as paying for school uniforms and school supplies. Thus, although UPE is free, the latter expenses still prevent girls from attending schools (HRW, 2003b). Byamukama (2005) further suggests that another challenge is the lack of support from the educational system:

The schooling system itself perpetuates discrimination against women. Structural barriers to women’s higher education include sexism at the elementary level, inequality in vocational and athletic programs, overt sexism and harassment against women who choose non-traditional areas of study, rigid examination systems, biased admission procedures, limited educational facilities, teenage pregnancy.

Of particular concern, sexual harassment has become part of school culture, further alienating girls and young women from the education system in Uganda. Sexual harassment causes girls to lose interests in school and diminishes their academic performance. Sexual harassment is found at every level of the educational system, from elementary school to postgraduate programs, yet Ugandan schools have failed to respond with appropriate measures. (pp. 17-19)

Kikampikaho and Kwesiga also emphasize the seriousness of the sexual harassment problem in Ugandan educational institutions. They note that, although sexual harassment is rampant, it has not been addressed by Ugandan policy makers – “there is no policy yet against sexual abuse and other related offenses to protect girls … in schools and within
pupils’ immediate communities” (Kikampikaho & Kwesiga, 2002, p. 53). Overall, the authors suggest that while

the NRM leadership always appeared to be very positive towards improving girls’ education …. More often than not, those in leadership at various NRM levels need to practice what they preach so that gender responsiveness does not just end at the office level. (Kikampikaho & Kwesiga, 2002, p. 54)

Violence Against Women and Girls

Despite the positive changes discussed above, on the whole Uganda performs very poorly in terms of gender equality. It ranks 113\textsuperscript{th} out of 144 countries according to its Gender-related Development Index\textsuperscript{12}, which has a value of 0.487 (UNDP, 2004). Moreover, at 7.1 births per woman Uganda has one of the highest fertility rates in the world as is its maternal mortality rate, which in 2000 was 880 per 100,000 live births\textsuperscript{13} (UNDP, 2004). Smyth and Payne (1998) point out that women and girls account for 52% of HIV/AIDS related deaths, which is the leading cause of death among adults in the country. Furthermore, domestic violence, rape, and other forms of violence against women are widespread in Ugandan society.

As will be discussed in Chapter 4, Uganda has a long history of political violence and armed conflict, which has taken its toll on Ugandan society by breeding a culture of violence and making the use of force an acceptable way to resolve conflicts. This culture of violence manifests itself in various forms of gender-based violence both in situations of armed conflict and in “peaceful” areas of Uganda where domestic violence against women and girls is rampant.

Isis-WICCE research (1998, 2001b, 2002b) indicates that in Uganda women and girls in areas of armed conflict have been subjected to various forms of physical, sexual, and mental abuse and torture including defilement, rape, gang rape, abductions, sexual slavery, mutilation, forced pregnancies, etc. Moreover, rape victims are shunned by communities and divorced or neglected by their spouses because traditions dictate that continuing marriage to a sexually abused wife is unacceptable. This is further

\textsuperscript{12} Gender-related Development Index measures “average achievement in the three basic dimensions captured in the human development index—a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living—adjusted to account for inequalities between men and women” (UNDP, n.d., p. 4).

\textsuperscript{13} adjusted for underreporting and misclassification.
complicated by the fear of sexually transmitted diseases. When women and girls return from abduction with their children born out of rape, forced pregnancies, and sexual slavery, they are often ostracized by the community. In the midst of these difficult and traumatic circumstances, women face serious reproductive, mental, and other health consequences due to the violence suffered as well as a result of the breakdown and disruption of health infrastructure. In addition, armed conflicts, conditions in IDP camps, and negative social consequences of gender-based violence make life difficult and force many women and girls into prostitution or sexual slavery in order to support themselves and their children.

Mugyenyi (1998) points out that overall “violence against women is rampant in Uganda in the form of rape, physical harassment, domestic violence, and mutilation of female sexual organs” (p. 142). In 2000 alone, there were 4,209 reported cases of rape of young girls (locally known as defilement). However, Women’s International Network (WIN), 2001, points out that this number represents only a small fraction of the actual rape cases as the majority of them go unreported. UN statistics estimate that, in 2000, 41% of Ugandan women suffered from domestic violence (cited in HRW, 2003b, p. 17). WIN (2001) also notes that, in December of 2000, a reported 121 girls from Pokot tribe and 621 women and girls from Sabiny tribe were circumcised during a biannual ceremony. Currently there are no laws against the practice of female genital mutilation. Moreover, there are several other patriarchal cultural traditions and practices that in themselves constitute forms of gender-based violence as well as contribute to other forms of violence against women (see Chapter 2). These include the practices of bride wealth, polygamy, and widow inheritance. According to Wakabi (2005), the practice of bride wealth perpetuates the inferior status of women in Ugandan and encourages male domination and control over women. It also “reinforces the concept of women as property, possession, or chattel of men. As such, it perpetuates violence against women” (p. 135). HRW (2003b) further points out that the payment of bride price gives husbands control over their wives’ labor, bodies, and reproductive capacity. Thus, women lack power to negotiate safe sexual relationships or family planning options. They lack bodily autonomy as well because sex is viewed as a marital obligation by both men and women.
According to HRW (2003b), the practice of bride wealth provides a considerable obstacle for women who attempt to leave abusive relationships:

If a wife wishes to leave her husband, he must be reimbursed in full. Often the wife’s family is unable or unwilling to pay the husband, condemning the economically dependent women who have no other refuge to remain in violent relationships. (p. 34)

Polygamy and widow inheritance expose women and girls to domestic violence and to HIV infection (HRW, 2003b; Obbo, 1998). These harmful practices combine with inequalities in women’s and girls’ status and lack of property ownership to increase their vulnerability to abuse in intimate relationships, which, according to HRW (2003b), “can become lethal where HIV/AIDS is involved” (p. 20). According to the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (1999), girls 15 to 19 years old are five times more likely to be infected with HIV than boys (cited in Namuli, 2005, p. 289) and women between the ages of 20 to 24 are twice as likely to be infected than men of the same age (UNICEF, 1992, cited in Namuli, 2005, p. 289).

While all forms of gender-based violence are widespread in Uganda, domestic violence is particularly prevalent because it is seen as a normal part of marriage:

In many societies in Uganda, wife battery is permissible and is considered to be an inherent part of marital relationship. Major tribes in Uganda such as the Bakiga, Iteso, Soga, Langi, Acholi, Baganda, and Karamojong deem wife battery acceptable so long as it does not cause serious harm, injury, or death. Wife battery is not only a form of chastisement or punishment, but a way of reminding the woman who is ‘boss’ so that she is not tempted to disobey the man in the future … Such cultural attitudes, instilled through socialization, increase the incidence of domestic violence by condoning the behavior of violent husbands. (Wakabi, 2005, p. 135)

In addition, Mugyenyi (1998) points out that Ugandan society trivializes domestic violence as a private issue, while the legal system (as discussed below) provides no meaningful protection to survivors of violence. This, combined with the stigma that battered and sexually abused women face, results in most cases of violence going unreported and unpunished.

In Uganda, laws have not been amended to make marital rape a criminal offense. Thus, raping or sexually assaulting a woman to whom one is married and from whom one is not legally separated is not a crime because “a woman is presumed to have consented
to all sex with her husband at the time of marriage” (Wakabi, 2005, p. 140). HRW (2003b) points out that “the failure to criminalize forced sex in marriage perpetuates the belief that women have an obligation to submit to their husband’s sexual advances upon the terms that he dictates, and, furthermore, have no authority to negotiate condom use” (p. 25). Currently, Uganda also has no specific legislation addressing domestic violence. Domestic violence has not been legally defined or enacted as a separate criminal offense with special rules of procedure and evidence. Hence, the police and courts rely on general provisions in the Penal Code that cover common assault, assault occasioning bodily harm, grievous harm, affray, murder, and manslaughter (HRW, 2003b; Wakabi, 2005). Moreover, cultural and religious beliefs, traditional notions of sanctity and privacy of the home, and notions of male superiority have resulted in unresponsive and unsympathetic attitudes from judicial and law enforcement officers towards victims of domestic violence. Wakabi (2005) emphasizes that:

These traditional gender biases are so embedded in the social structure that domestic violence is not regarded as a violation of women’s rights or as a crime deserving serious attention. Because domestic violence is not seen as a crime, there is a pervasive attitude, a tolerance of wife abusers both at a conscious and subconscious level throughout the legal system. Thus, domestic violence is commonly regarded as a private matter with which the state or other outsiders should not interfere. As a result, judicial and law enforcement officers are reluctant to investigate, prosecute, and punish domestic violence. (p. 139)

Women’s organizations and human rights activists have been lobbying for years for the enactment of the Domestic Relations Bill and the Sexual Offences Bill. However, according to HRW (2003b), “there has been serious government opposition to their enactment because they address issues such as marital rape, women’s ownership of marital property, and polygyny, and therefore have far-reaching cultural and religious ramifications” (p. 18). Similarly, Mugyenyi (1998) points out that the Ugandan government has not demonstrated its commitment to addressing discrimination of women at the domestic level because this sphere is considered private and outside the realm of political intervention. However, she emphasizes that:

This is a serious omission because the so-called private issues (domestic violence, division of labor, property ownership and inheritance, wife inheritance, alimony, sexual violence, brideprice, child custody) apply to all families in Uganda and affect all girls and women. They are manifestations of a power imbalance
between men and women in society. State legislation and monitoring are essential to redress imbalance in the domestic sphere. It is at the family level that the structures of gender subordination are rooted; where the socialization of girls and boys takes place; and where society’s values and stereotypes are formed. This is the foundation at which empowerment must begin. It is the gender bias in the household that is reproduced at the state level. Unless government becomes committed to eliminating gender inequality at the domestic level, other policies in the context of empowering women will remain superficial. (Mugyenyi, 1998, p. 137)

Overall, a look at women’s status in Uganda reveals a wide disparity between the constitutional ideals and the practical reality. This discrepancy comes from the ingrained patriarchy evident in all aspects of society, from traditional gender roles to the lack of political will to adopt and enforce gender sensitive laws and policies.

This discussion also reveals aspects of the Ugandan gender system that may necessitate the approaches/strategies reviewed in the previous sections be adapted to the Ugandan context. For example, support services such as establishing shelters for battered and abused women may not be appropriate for Uganda (especially in rural areas), as women have limited economic support structures outside their marriages and cultural norms and practices prohibit them from leaving an abusive marriage. However, the fact that at least one such shelter has been established in Kampala (Women’s and Children’s Crisis Center) and that one of the organizations I interviewed plans to open a safe house when funding allows, suggests that this situation is changing – at least in urban Kampala. Thus, in the future such services may be in higher demand. Either way, the feminist principles that emphasize self-determination in the provision of services to women survivors of violence can and should be applied in the delivery of other services in Uganda. Furthermore, while shelters are currently scarce, the supportive and encouraging atmosphere that women find in feminist shelters may be recreated in women’s groups and organizations. Strategies that facilitate women’s empowerment within, empowerment with, and empowerment to are fully applicable within the Ugandan context and can be implemented through emotional support, training and education interventions, awareness-raising activities, etc. Although current legislation does not allow legal services to offer adequate protection to women experiencing violence (e.g., there are no protective orders/injunctions), legal services are still necessary to assist women in domestic and
sexual violence cases as well as in the matters of divorce, child custody, and property rights.

Strategies that focus on changing societies attitudes and beliefs as well as those that challenge the state and its institutions are also applicable in the context of Uganda. While the approach in some cases may need to be tailored to a specific cultural context (e.g., awareness-raising messages delivered through drama performances), most strategies are currently being implemented by Ugandan civil society organizations, as will be seen in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Fieldwork Experience and Relationship to the Interviewees

The fieldwork for this study was carried out in Uganda between July and October of 2005. My fieldwork activities were simultaneous with an internship with Isis-Women’s International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), an organization based in Kampala that focuses on documenting women’s experiences in situations of armed conflict. I spent my first month in Uganda working with Isis-WICCE, attending numerous workshops and seminars, as well as getting acquainted with the Ugandan way of life and making new friends. The remainder of my time was divided between my fieldwork and Isis-WICCE projects. My internship gave me valuable insight into the world of Ugandan civil society organizations¹⁴ and also helped me to establish many network connections. I attended meetings and workshops as a staff member of Isis-WICCE, which presented me with an opportunity to become acquainted with representatives from numerous CSOs. Isis-WICCE staff were very kind in introducing me to their networking partners and later assisted in setting up many of my interview appointments. Thus, during my internship activities and fieldwork trips for Isis-WICCE projects, I established contacts with various organizations in different parts of Uganda that were working through diverse strategies and approaches to address directly or indirectly the issue of gender-based violence. My internship assignments allowed me to travel to areas of ongoing armed conflict in the Northern (Gulu district) and Eastern (Soroti and Katakwi districts) parts of the country. There I was able to experience

¹⁴ Here I adopt Vakil’s (1997) definition of CSOs as “self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared toward improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people” (p. 2060, cited in Jordan & Van Tuijl, 2000, p. 2052). This definition includes organizations which are registered with the Ugandan Registration Board of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and therefore qualify as NGOs as well as ones who are only registered with district authorities and may be better classified as community-based organizations (CBOs).
firsthand the situations I had been reading about and the operational environment of the organizations working under these challenging conditions. These field trips also presented me with several opportunities to interview organizations working in the areas of armed conflict.

I met most of the interview participants for the first time at the interview. Other participants I was acquainted with beforehand and a few I knew quite well and had friendly relationships with due to my internship assignments. It should also be mentioned that Isis-WICCE, the organization I interned with, is included in the sample of organizations I interviewed during my fieldwork. Since Isis-WICCE activities are focused on addressing gender-based violence in Uganda, I decided that it was important to include it in this study despite my personal connection to the organization. Being a part of Isis-WICCE for 3 months allowed me to observe the daily life of a CSO in a way which was much more involved than the limited information I was able to gather about other organizations through interviews. Due to my intimate knowledge of their operations I was able to supplement the interview I had with the Isis-WICCE Director with my own personal knowledge of the organization.

**Selection Criteria and Organization Sample**

The selection of organizations to interview was based on their operational activities and their relevance to the issue of gender-based violence, as well as on staff members’ availability to meet with me for an interview. Thus, the organizations interviewed represent a purposive rather than a random sample. As mentioned above, Isis-WICCE assisted in setting up many of the interviews and also provided transportation. I arranged other interviews myself utilizing contacts I had established while in Uganda. In most cases this was achieved through one or more phone conversations. The organizations interviewed were:

- ActionAid Uganda (AAU)
• Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP)
• Concerned Parents Association (CPA)
• Hope After Rape (HAR)
• Isis-Women’s International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE)
• Lira Women Peace Initiatives (LIWEPI)
• Luwero Women Development Association (LUWODA)
• National Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (NACWOLA)
• People’s Voice for Peace (PVP)
• Raising Voices (RV)
• Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA)
• Uganda Media Women’s Association (UMWA)

In the case of FIDA (U), I was not able to arrange an interview with its staff but was given enough secondary sources to include this organization in my analysis. I met with one of its staff members and was invited to observe the operation of the Kampala legal aid clinic. The staff member felt that the FIDA (U) Executive Director was the best person to answer my interview questions. In order to make an appointment, I was asked to write an official letter explaining my reasons for wanting to interview the Executive Director. I was given an appointment at a later date, however, when I arrived for the interview, I was informed that the Director was not available to meet with me and I was escorted to a reading room in order to browse through some of the organization’s annual reports and other documents to find answers to my questions.

I am not able to assess how representative the organizations I interviewed are of CSOs in Uganda due to a lack of data. The information on civil society organizations operating in Uganda is exceedingly scarce. Statistics are unavailable on the number and type of organizations that have emerged in Uganda and, in particular, no data is available on which CSOs are specifically working to address the issue of gender-based violence. This makes it extremely difficult to assess how representative my sample is of all CSOs working to address similar issues. According to the Ugandan Ministry of Internal Affairs, as of December 2000, there were 3,499 NGOs registered with the NGO Registration Board (cited in Barr, Fafchamps, & Owens, 2003). However, when Barr et al. (2003)
conducted a study on the Ugandan NGO sector commissioned by the Office of the Prime Minister, they found problems with the system:

The manual register and filing of NGOs in the Registration Board is well organised. However, it is impossible to trace NGOs that have not renewed their certificates or to monitor those which have not returned annual reports or budgets .... it became evident that a number of NGOs in the manual register had registration certificates that had elapsed. In some cases it was known that the NGO was still in operation but simply had not renewed its certification; in other cases the NGO was known to have ceased operation; yet in other cases it was not clear that the NGO had ever begun operating. There was also concern that many NGOs had changed their core functions and location without informing the Registration Board.

Barr et al. (2003) estimated that only 15 to 30% of the organizations in the register are actually in operation. The fact that even the NGO Registration Board does not have accurate statistics illustrates the scarcity of information about NGOs in Uganda. Moreover, there is even less information about the number of community-based organizations, which are not registered with the NGO Board.

Although I cannot assess how representative the organizations I interviewed are of CSOs in Uganda, I can point out a few limitations inherent in my sample. First of all, since Isis-WICCE is a Kampala-based organization, the majority of my internship work and, consequently, my research was in Kampala. Although, internship assignments gave me an opportunity to interview organizations in Northern and Eastern Uganda, my sample overall is skewed towards organizations based in the capital. As a result, grassroots organizations in rural areas may be underrepresented in my sample. Furthermore, since Isis-WICCE assisted in setting up the majority of interviews, my sample is also skewed towards organizations which Isis-WICCE had positive relations with. Lastly, due to both Isis-WICCE involvement as well as the fact that I selected organizations which work to address the issue of gender-based violence, the majority of organizations in my sample are women’s organizations and/or participate in the women’s movement in Uganda.
Data Collection and Data Sources

For my research I chose a semi-structured qualitative interview approach because, as Reinharz (1992) points out, this approach does not require “long periods of researcher participation in the life of the interviewee” (p. 18) and it allows free interaction between researcher and interviewee, which does not exist in survey research or structured interviews. In addition, the majority of my interview questions were open-ended, which, according to Reinharz, “explores people’s views of reality and allows the researcher to generate theory” (p. 18).

Before leaving for Uganda I prepared a questionnaire, better described as a guiding framework, which I planned to use for all interviews. It was designed to investigate in-depth the strategies and approaches used by civil society organizations working to address the issue of gender-based violence in Uganda. The questionnaire covered a wide range of topics including the nature of the organizations, their activities, human resources, sustainability, as well as problems and challenges faced in their work. However, depending on how much I learned about the organization prior to the interview from various sources or how much interaction I had with its staff members, the questionnaire was customized to ‘fit’ each individual organization. Once I began my fieldwork, I had to become even more flexible and adapt my methodology to the real situations I encountered. Many times during the interviews I deviated from the questionnaire or omitted questions from it for various reasons including time constraints and additional literature provided by respondents to answer my questions. I provided space for interviewees to express their point of view and to talk as they desire, which Bloom (1998) insists is necessary in order to ensure egalitarian interview relationships. Consequently, some of the interviews turned into narratives and sharing of experiences because participants were not restricted to only answering my questions. In addition, during the interviews I listened carefully, often constructing questions from what respondents narrated and, occasionally, returned to previous topics in order to get more thorough information. I also answered any questions the interviewees had for me and shared my own experiences where appropriate.
I interviewed a total of 18 people (15 females and 3 males) from 12 organizations. All of the CSO staff interviewed were Ugandan citizens, with one American interviewee as an exception. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The interviews were held in English (the official language of Uganda), were recorded using audio equipment in the field, and were transcribed upon returning to the United States. No respondent was asked to answer any questions with which she or he was not comfortable. Whenever I had a chance to interview multiple people from the same organization, they were interviewed simultaneously. This was a practical decision based on the availability of staff members and my internship schedule. I was unable to conduct follow-up interviews due to time constraints. As a result of combining my fieldwork activities with my internship responsibilities, I had an extremely busy schedule. In addition, the participants’ demanding schedules limited their availability to meet for follow-up interviews. However, when possible I participated in or observed workshops, seminars, and other activities arranged by the organizations I interviewed.

The qualitative interview data collected during fieldwork represent the primary source of my research material. In addition, a number of secondary sources were utilized. These include brochures, annual reports, strategic planning reports, evaluations, etc. produced or commissioned by the organizations interviewed. Some of these I received from the organizations interviewed, some were available online, some I obtained in the Isis-WICCE documentation center, while others were obtained directly from Isis-WICCE because they were part of its National Exchange Program participants’ reports. It should be noted that some of the secondary sources utilized have been published or are available to the public online, while others remain unpublished internal documents. In addition to these sources, I received permission from Isis-WICCE to use the transcripts of some of its interview footage material filmed for a video documentary project on women’s peace initiatives in Uganda.
Conceptual Framework

CSO Classification Criteria

There is a lack of consensus regarding the framework for classifying civil society organizations. Thus, for the purposes of this discussion I adapted a framework from Clark’s (1990) and Bratton’s (1989) NGO classifications. In his book *Democratizing Development*, Clark identifies six different types of development organizations: relief and welfare agencies, technical innovation organizations, public service contractors, popular development agencies, grassroots development organizations, and advocacy groups and networks. Clark notes, however, that this spectrum does not “divide precisely into separate primary colors. Most … are mixtures, a blend of several of the colors on the pallet, though one may predominate” (p. 35). Bratton (1989) distinguishes between three types of organizations: community-based NGOs, national NGOs (both of which are subsumed under ‘indigenous’ NGO category), and international NGOs. Within the indigenous category he differentiates between “membership organizations that help themselves and service organizations that help others” (p. 571).

Here, based on the origins of an organization, I distinguish between:

- Grassroots (or community-based) organizations
- Other indigenous organizations
- International organizations and their Ugandan counterparts

Based on the organizational activities, I identify the following types:

- Relief and welfare organizations – provide direct services (counseling, medical support, rehabilitation, etc.) to victims of gender-based violence
- Popular development organizations – focus on self-help, social, economic, as well as political development, and empowerment of people
- Technical development organizations – provide technical support to other organizations
- Advocacy groups and networks – focus on awareness raising and lobbying

In addition, I categorize CSOs along the following dimensions:
• Organizational composition:
  o Member and non-member. Member organizations are further
differentiated between:
    ▪ those that help themselves (members only)
    ▪ those that serve non-members
  o Women only or mixed gender members/staff/volunteers
• Current level of operation:
  o Local – organization operates at a district level
  o Regional – organization operates in one region (Central, Eastern,
    Northern, or Western region of Uganda)
  o National – organization operates in two or more regions (this includes
    national branches of international organizations)
  o International – organization based in Uganda that operates within the
country and beyond its borders
• Institutional location (headquarters): rural or urban
• Operational focus: rural areas, urban areas, or both
• Method of financing: government support, donor funding, membership fees,
  fundraising activities.

CSO Efforts and the Public Health Ecological Model for Violence Prevention

To determine where the efforts of the Ugandan CSOs fit into the public health
ecological model for interventions to prevent violence (as discussed in Chapter 2), I will
specifically answer the following questions:
• Are CSO interventions primary, secondary, or tertiary?
• Do they operate at the individual, relationship, community, or society level?
• Do they adopt a single focus or multiple foci in terms of addressing at-risk
  factors?
• Do they adopt a single focus or multiple foci in terms of the type of violence
  they aim to address?
• Do they adopt a single focus or multiple foci in terms of targeting one or more
  at risk environments?
• Are their interventions universal, selective, or indicated in terms of the target population?

Practical and Strategic Gender Needs and Transformatory Potential

In assessing the extent to which organizations adopt a feminist perspective I utilize Molyneux’s (1985) concepts of practical and strategic gender needs/interests and Naila Kabeer’s (1994) framework for assessing transformatory potential of interventions. Before laying out the evaluation criteria I will elaborate on these concepts.

According to Molyneux (1985), practical gender interests arise as a consequence of “the concrete conditions of women’s positioning within the gender division of labour … Practical interests are usually a response to immediate perceived need, and they do not generally entail a strategic goal such as women’s emancipation or gender equality” (p. 233, cited in Kabeer, 1994, p. 90). Since women are primarily responsible for domestic work, childcare, and family welfare, their practical gender needs are often fused with the needs of their families, especially their children. These include needs such as health care and nutrition as well as requirements of housing and access to basic services at the community level (Moser & Levy, 1986). Consequently, initiatives addressing practical interests do not challenge the prevailing forms of inequality. Moreover, they may consciously or unconsciously serve to preserve or even reinforce these inequalities (Kabeer, 1994; Moser & Levy, 1986).

In contrast, women’s strategic interests arise from “the analysis of their subordination and from the formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory set of arrangements from those which exist” (Molyneux, 1985, p. 232, cited in Kabeer, 1994, p. 90). Examples of strategic gender interests for women, according to Molyneux, include the elimination of the gender division of labor; alleviation of the burden of child care and domestic labor; eradication of institutionalized forms of discrimination; adoption of measures against male violence, sexual exploitation of women, and coercive forms of marriage (cited in Kabeer, 1994; Moser & Levy, 1986). Kabeer (1994) points out that these strategic measures “entail a challenge to the structural basis of women’s disempowerment. They seek to enhance women’s control over their own lives in the crucial areas of politics, work, play, love, sex, and reproduction” (p. 301). Based on Molyneux’s ideas she distinguishes between interventions that aim to “address the
concrete *conditions* [original emphasis] of women’s daily lives, which are imposed by existing divisions in resources and responsibilities, and those that seek to transform women’s *position* [original emphasis] within structurally unequal set of social relations” (p. 90).

Moser and Levy (1986) point out that such strategic objectives generally “are considered ‘feminist’, as is the level of consciousness required to struggle effectively for them” (p. 8). Kabeer (1994) suggests that:

Because women are positioned within their societies through a variety of different social relations (class and ethnicity, as well as gender), the interests they share as a gender category will also be shaped in ‘complex and sometimes conflicting’ ways … women, along with men, are likely to subscribe to prevailing ideas about gender inequality as either divinely ordained, biologically given or economically rational. Consequently, women’s strategic gender interests are not given *things* [original emphasis]; they are likely to emerge only through a process of struggling ‘against the grain’ of commonsense notions about gender inequality. (p. 299)

Thus, due to restrictions that women face in their lives, they may have limited awareness or expectations that their position in society could be different. In cases where they are aware of their subordinate position, women may not know what to do about it. Through *conscientization*¹⁵ and other processes that lead to self-empowerment (gaining the *power from within*) women can increase their capacity to reflect, analyze, and assess their subordinate positions in society, construct an alternative worldview, and take action towards the realization of that vision (Kabeer, 1994). Kabeer also suggests that new forms of consciousness “arise out of women’s newly acquired access to the intangible resources of analytical skills, social networks, organizational strength, solidarity and sense of not being alone” (pp. 245-246). Thus, strategies that encourage women to develop their *power to* as well as *power with* (as discussed in Chapter 2) also contribute to women’s *conscientization*. In addition, Kabeer (1994) suggests that:

Women’s practical and strategic gender interests are not separate and dichotomous categories, but rather linked through the transformatory aspects of these different strategies for empowerment. This transformatory potential lies in

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¹⁵ Based on ideas of Paolo Freire, the *conscientization* approach is “a combination of political education, social organization and grassroots development – designed not just to improve living standards, but to help the poor to perceive their exploitation and realize the opportunities they have for overcoming such exploitation through mass organization” (Clark, 1990, p. 31).
the extent to which strategies seek to open up, rather than foreclose on, the possibilities for women. (p. 261)

Consequently, “women’s practical gender needs, and the ways in which they are met, thus become interrelated dimensions of strategic interests: needs point in the direction of satisfying choices, while interests refer to expanding control over the interpretation of needs and the conditions of choice” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 300). Moreover, Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996) note that many of the examples of strategic gender interests suggested by Molyneux are at the core of gender power relations and may therefore be met with strong resistance from community/society members. In order to overcome this resistance, the authors suggest that the capacity of those who aim to challenge the status quo must be built up through the processes of empowerment. Thus, Naila Kabeer (1994) suggests that “meeting daily practical needs in ways that transform the conditions in which women make choices is crucial element of the process by which women are empowered to take on the more deeply entrenched aspects of their subordination” (p. 301). Figure 5 illustrates the stages through which the transformatory potential of interventions is operationalized.

![Figure 5. Transformatory Potential of Interventions](Note. From Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought (p. 311), by N. Kabeer, 1994, London: Verso.)
Although the extent to which an organization adopts a feminist perspective in addressing gender-based violence cannot be quantified, for the purposes of this discussion, organizations will be classified as adopting a perspective that is either explicitly feminist, implicitly feminist, or non-feminist. This will be achieved through the evaluation of mission statements and activities as follows:

- If an organization’s goals and activities explicitly focus on women’s strategic gender needs/interests, it will be considered that the organization has adopted an explicitly feminist approach.
- If an organization’s goals and activities focus on women’s practical needs in ways that have a high transformatory potential\(^\text{16}\), it will be considered that the organization has adopted an implicitly feminist approach.
- If an organization focuses purely on women’s practical gender needs in ways that have low or no transformatory potential it will be considered non-feminist.

\(^{16}\) For the purposes of this discussion, interventions that fall under ‘Transformed awareness’ stage and the stages to the right of it (as illustrated in Figure 5) will be considered as having high transformatory potential. Interventions that fall under stages to the left of the ‘Transformed awareness’ stage will be considered as having low transformatory potential.
Historical Background

Uganda is a landlocked country in the Great Lakes region of East Central Africa. It covers an area of 236,040 square km ("Republic of Uganda," n.d.). Its neighbors include Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Kenya. Uganda gained independence from Britain and became a republic on October 9, 1962. However, according to HRW (1999), the “dream of Ugandan independence quickly became a nightmare from which the country has yet to emerge”. Ethnic differences and other pre-independence issues combined with poor post-independence governance have resulted in turbulent history of armed conflicts and continuous civil strife. Consequently, the country has been a major site of political instability, social disruption, and economic turmoil in the Great Lakes region.

In February 1966, Milton Obote, who was Prime Minister at the time of independence and a leader of the Uganda People’s Congress, embarked on the process of political centralization by suspending the Constitution, removing both the President and the Vice President, and assuming all government powers. In September 1967, Obote consolidated his powers by introducing a new Constitution, which entrenched him with even greater powers and abolished the traditional kingdoms (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). Following an assassination attempt on Obote in 1969, all opposition groups were banned and a single party state was created (HRW, 1999).

On January 25, 1971, Obote's government was overthrown by armed forces commander Idi Amin Dada in a military coup. Amin declared himself President and gave himself absolute powers by dissolving the Parliament. He also created several new “security” organizations including the Public Safety Unit and the State Research Bureau. According to the HRW report (1999):
Along with the Military Police, these two organizations wreaked havoc on Uganda. By the end of Amin's first year in office, these security forces had killed approximately 10,000 Ugandans. Over the next few years, tens of thousands of Ugandans fell prey to Amin's henchmen, sought sanctuary in neighboring countries, or went into hiding in Uganda. (Ofcansky, 1996 cited in HRW, 1999)

In 1972, Amin issued an order to expel 70,000 Ugandan citizens of Asian origin and expropriated their property, which included 5,655 firms, factories, and farms as well as personal goods all totaling over US$ 400 million (Ofcansky, 1996 cited in HRW, 1999). Overall, Idi Amin's 8-year reign of terror was characterized by brutality and violence and resulted in

massive violation of human rights such as imprisonment without trial, murder, terror and dictatorship; militarism entrenching itself during subsequent years; use of the gun to achieve political goals leading to internal displacement and forcing many to flee Uganda; deterioration in the social and economic infrastructure and the people’s moral fabric; exacerbation of poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, disease and; massive corruption and nepotism. (Isis-WICCE, 1998, p.4)

Estimates vary widely, but overall between 100,000 and 500,000 people were killed during Amin’s rule (Busittil et al., 1991 cited in HRW, 1999).

In October 1978, Amin’s troops invaded Tanzania, which prompted armed retaliation by Tanzanian forces. In April 1979, Kampala was captured and Amin fled the country. Several short-lived governments followed the overthrow of Idi Amin’s regime until December 1980, when Milton Obote returned to power as a result of a controversial election (HRW, 1999). Obote’s second reign (1980-1985) was branded as one of the worst regimes in the world in terms of human rights violations. The period was characterized by “military excesses against civilians which are believed to have exceeded the brutality of the Amin era” (HRW, 1999).

In 1980, National Resistance Army (NRA) led by Yoweri Museveni started an insurgency in Luwero that aimed to topple the regime of Milton Obote. By 1981 this guerilla war turned into a full scale civil war fought in Southwestern and Central Uganda (Isis-WICCE, 1998). This civil war period was marked by further gross human rights violations by Obote’s army and a massive loss of civilian lives. According to the U.S. Department of State, by 1984 between 100,000 and 200,000 civilians were slaughtered in
the Luwero triangle\textsuperscript{17} by government troops, and the number of victims is believed to be much higher by 1985 (Busuttil et al., 1991 cited in HRW, 1999).

Obote’s second reign lasted until July 1985, when troops led by Brigadier Basilio Olara-Okello and General Tito Lutwa Okello captured Kampala and proclaimed a military government. The new regime started negotiations with the NRA and pledged to end human rights violations and tribal rivalry. However, human rights abuses continued as the Okello government murdered civilians on a massive scale in order to destroy NRA support. Despite a cease-fire agreement between the Okello government and the NRA signed in 1985, the NRA continued the war against Okello. In January 1986, the NRA seized Kampala and took over control of the country. Yoweri Museveni became the new President and formed a government dominated by his followers from the National Resistance Movement, NRM (HRW, 1999; U.S. Department of State, n.d.).

Overall, Uganda’s history of numerous power struggles, violent coups, and rebel insurgencies, as well as impunity for such violence has left a legacy of violent politics and militarism. Moreover, this lack of accountability for human rights violations and other atrocities has fostered a culture of violence in Uganda, which made “violence the ‘easy’ and normal method of retaining or gaining access to and controlling state power” (Lomo & Hovil, 2004, p.15).

\textbf{Current Political Situation and Armed Conflict}

The U.S. Department of State (n.d.) indicates that Museveni’s government “has largely put an end to the human rights abuses of earlier governments, initiated substantial economic liberalization and general press freedom, and instituted economic reforms”. However, the HRW report (1999) points out that:

\textsuperscript{17} Luwero triangle is an area of Buganda formed by roads leading North and Northwest from Kampala (HRW, 1999).
The progressive policies pursued by the NRM in some areas of human rights protection contrast sharply with its policies in the political arena. Organized political activity has been outlawed in Uganda for the past twelve years, and the NRM government has not hesitated to resort to repressive measures when these legal restrictions on political activity are challenged. Numerous political rallies have been halted, some through force. Political activists who have challenged the NRM's hold on political power are frequently harassed and sometimes arbitrarily arrested.

Although in a March 2000 referendum, 70% of voters supported retention of the NRM system instead of adopting a multiparty system, the referendum was extensively criticized for low voter turnout and unfair restrictions on the NRM opponents (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). In addition, while the Ugandan Constitution (ratified on July 12th, 1995), formerly limited the President to two 5-year terms, it was revised to eliminate presidential term limits in August 2005. This allowed President Museveni, who has been in power since 1986 and was elected under the Constitution in 1996 and re-elected in 2001, to run again and win in 2006.

The 1995 Constitution provides for Executive, Judicial, and Legislative branches. The judiciary has a five-tier court system, the Courts of Judicature, ranging from subordinate magistrates’ courts to the High Court of Uganda, the Court of Appeal of Uganda, and the Supreme Court of Uganda. Legislative branch is comprised of a unicameral parliament, which promulgates constitutional amendments and statutory law (HRW, 2003b; Leiter, 2005). The local level government is divided into a five-tiered system of local councils (LCs), which include village, parish, sub-county, county, and district councils. Each LC has a nine-member executive committee responsible for implementing policies and decisions made at that level (Tamale, 1999). Uganda has a plural legal system, in which applicable laws include, statutory law, case law, common law, doctrines of equity, and customary law (The Judicature Act, 1967, sec. 16, Laws of Uganda, cited in HRW, 2003b, p. 11). The Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (1999) points out that “statutory law takes precedence, and customary law is only applicable in the absence of relevant statutory or case law” (cited in HRW, 2003b, p. 11). However, HRW (2003b) states that, because the Ugandan population is predominantly rural, the majority of people seek justice at the local level – the local council courts. LC courts are established at the village, parish, and sub-county levels and
have jurisdiction over limited civil matters, petty criminal offences, and cases governed by customary law. According to HRW (2003b):

Previously lauded as quick and cheap avenues of justice, the LC courts are attracting criticism as corrupt and chauvinistic institutions. The courts frequently exceed their authority by hearing serious criminal cases, including murder and rape. Although LC court decisions may be appealed to magistrates’ courts, and – with the leave of the chief magistrate – to the High Court, few defendant are aware of their right of appeal. (p. 12)

Since Museveni took power in 1986, Uganda has witnessed 14 insurgencies in various parts of the country. Even though relative stability has returned to some areas, violent conflicts continue in the Eastern and Northern parts of Uganda. The latest estimates indicate that, as of May 2006, approximately 2 million people have been displaced from their homes in Northern and Eastern parts of Uganda due to the ongoing insurgency by the Lord’s Resistance Army and cattle rustling by the Karamojong warriors (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UN OCHA], 2006).

The war in Northern Uganda started in August 1986 and is one of the most protracted armed conflicts in the history of Uganda. It has encompassed five different rebellions and started with a rebel insurgency soon after the NRM overthrew the Okello’s government. According to Lomo and Hovil (2004):

The northern war was initially a popular revolt by Okello’s ousted army troops and their numerous civilian supporters who formed the Uganda People’s Democratic Army (UPDA). Both these rebels and their successors, who came together to form the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) of Alice Auma ‘Lakwena’, received massive popular support in the north and thus seemed to act on behalf of an Acholi population that was both alarmed by, and angry at, the new Museveni regime. (p. 1)

The political-spiritual HSM rebellion spread over most of the Northern Uganda and even spilled into Teso and Tororo in the Eastern Uganda until it was defeated by government troops in November 1987. Soon after the UPDA insurgency ended the Gulu Peace

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Accord was signed. Overall, neither the UPDA nor the HSM perpetrated considerable atrocities against the civilian population; however, such tendencies began to emerge during Severino Lukoya’s brief insurgency in 1987 (Isis-WICCE, 2002b; Lomo & Hovil, 2004). At about the same time Joseph Kony, an independent UPDA commander who claimed to have spiritual powers, started mobilizing forces to resist the NRM government. This rebel group became infamous as the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). In 1994, when the LRA established bases in Southern Sudan and began to receive support from the Sudanese government, the conflict gained regional dimensions but has been felt most intensely in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader in Northern Uganda (Isis-WICCE, 2001b; Lomo & Hovil, 2004). Lomo and Hovil (2004) indicate that initially the LRA targeted mostly government troops, however, according to Isis-WICCE (2001b):

Right from the start, Joseph Kony’s alleged spiritual powers made him to use violence when dealing with civilians. At times, he claimed to be cleansing the Acholi people of spiritual contamination … Reports of massacre of civilians by this force started coming out as early as 1988. (p. 16)

The LRA tactics used to brutalize civilian population include murder, various forms of torture, maiming and mutilation, sexual abuse, abduction of children, looting, and destruction of property. Consequently, the war in Northern Uganda has been extremely violent and the LRA “developed a reputation for the ritual use of violence aimed at instilling fear in the communities” (Isis-WICCE, 2001b, p. 19). HRW and Isis-WICCE reports indicate that the Ugandan army also commits atrocities against civilians. These include killing, torture, sexual violence, unlawful arrests and detention, various forms of harassment and threats (HRW, 2003a; Isis-WICCE, 2001b). In particular, sexual violence against women and girls has been extensively committed by both the LRA rebels and the government soldiers (Isis-WICCE, 2001b).

Overall, since the beginning of the conflict, the primary strategy of both sides has been to control the civilian population. Thus, the Acholi people found themselves caught in between the two fighting forces and subjected to atrocities by both. In October 1988, the NRA began forced evictions of people from their rural homes to Gulu town in order to isolate the LRA and deprive them of any logistical support from the civilians. This operation created strong resentment towards the Ugandan government because, in addition to forcing people to leave their homes, it did not ensure any support for those
arriving to Gulu town (Isis-WICCE, 2001b). Following this, in 1991 the NRA launched Operation North, a military offensive against the LRA. According to Isis-WICCE (2001b):

This was also characterized by the heavy-handed treatment of civilians by the government troops. Gulu [district] was sealed off from the rest of the country. NRA soldiers were alleged to have extra-judicially executed hundreds of villagers. Hundreds others were detained without charge or trial. (p. 17)

Part of the tactics against the LRA included mobilization of people into self-defense groups known as Arrow Brigades, which used local weapons such as spears, bows, and arrows. This strategy backfired as the LRA began an intensive retaliation campaign against the Arrow Brigade members and other civilians, which included mass killings and mutilations (Isis-WICCE, 2001b).

By 1996, the population displacement increased significantly due to the intensified LRA violence as well as the forced relocation of people to “protected villages” by the government forces (HRW, 2003a). By June 2000, UN OCHA reported that an estimated 370,000 people (approximately 80% of the total population in Gulu district) had been displaced to over 30 IDP camps in Gulu district (Integrated Regional Information Networks [IRIN], 2000, cited in Kasente & Guma, 2002). Estimates indicate that there were 82,000 IDPs in government camps and between 10,000 and 20,000 in transient or unofficial camps in Kitgum district (Isis-WICCE, 2001b). In October 2002, the displacement crisis in Acholi region was exacerbated even further when the Ugandan military issued an order for all civilians remaining in villages to move to the government camps within 48 hours (HRW, 2003a). According to UN OCHA 2002 estimates, this has displaced an additional 300,000 people, increasing the number of IDPs to 800,000 by the end of 2002 (cited in HRW, 2003a).

The justification given by the government for moving people into protected villages was “to enable the UPDF [Uganda People’s Defense Force – the army of the Ugandan Republic] to protect civilians more effectively and to assist the government’s military strategy by making rebels more visible” (Lomo & Hovil, 2004, p.38). However, even the camps protected by soldiers are often attacked by the LRA. For example, 200 people were slaughtered during the LRA attack on Barlonyo IDP camp in Lira district in 2004 (IRIN, 2004 cited in Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2005, p. 4).
According to Amnesty International (1999) and Singer (2001), 90% of the LRA consists of abducted children who are forced to serve the LRA as conscripts and labor or sex slaves. Approximately 20,000 children between the ages of 5 and 17 were abducted between 1986 and 2003 (HRW, 2003c; United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2004). UNICEF estimates that the LRA abducted an additional 8,500 children in 2003 (USAID, 2004). Since children are most vulnerable to LRA abductions at night, this has led to the night commuters phenomenon. According to UNICEF, an estimated 30,000 children have become night commuters, traveling each evening from insecure rural areas to urban centers of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader to sleep in relatively safe bus stations, churches, storefronts, hospital verandas, or streets, only to return home the next morning (UN OCHA-IRIN, 2005).

In December 1999, the Ugandan government introduced the Amnesty Act, which gave blanket amnesty to all LRA fighters who surrender. However, since the Amnesty Act failed to end the LRA insurgency, in March 2002 the government launched Operation Iron Fist in which the UPDF troops attempted to eradicate the LRA bases in Southern Sudan (Human Rights First [HRF], n.d.; HRW, 2003a). This operation backfired as the LRA responded by increasing the number of abductions, killings, and lootings inside Uganda. The intensified activity of the LRA worsened the humanitarian situation and further increased the number of IDPs in Uganda. The area of displacement expanded during this period as the LRA attacks spread to Lira and Apac districts (Lango region) and to Teso region in Eastern Uganda (HRW, 2003a; Lomo & Hovil, 2004; Medicins Sans Frantieres [MSF], 2004). According to MSF:

Its [the LRA] confrontation with the government and locally formed militias caused an escalation in violence that displaced approximately 250,000 people, mostly in Katakwi, Kabermaido, and Soroti districts. Mass killings, looting and burning of houses and land, and abductions of children became common. (p. 10)

In late 2003, the number of LRA attacks in Teso started to decline and by 2004 the majority of the rebels left the region allowing some IDPs to begin returning to their homes (MSF, 2004; USAID, 2004). However in September 2005, the LRA attacked IDP camps in Amuria district, which marked their return to Teso region. The attacks caused renewed displacement of an estimated 4,000 people (UN OCHA, 2005 cited in IDMC, 2005, pp. 4-5).
In addition to the atrocities committed by the LRA, Teso region has witnessed a series of armed conflicts that date back to the 1950s and before, such as cattle raiding by the Karamojong warriors. Prior to 1979, the Karamojong used to raid cattle using bows and arrows. However, the fall of Amin’s government enabled them to acquire fire arms, which increased the scale, intensity, and brutality of their cattle rustling. Consequently, the Iteso people were forced to flee their homes and seek security in local government administrative headquarters and other public facilities, which became the basis of IDP camps. In particular, the Katakwi district, which borders the Karamoja region, has born the brunt of the Karamojong raids (IDMC, 2005; Isis-WICCE, 2002b). In March 2000, Karamojong carried out one of their worst attacks in Katakwi, which displaced nearly 90,000 people into 53 IDP camps. In response, the local administration declared Katakwi a Disaster District in July 2001 (Isis-WICCE, 2002b). The World Food Program estimates that 370,000 IDPs remain in Teso as a result of the 2003 LRA attacks and cattle raids by the Karamojong warriors (cited in USAID, 2004), whereas UN OCHA September 2005 estimates indicate that the total number of IDPs in Teso region is 210,000, of which 195,000 are in camps in Katakwi district (cited in IDMC, 2005, p. 5). According to the Government of Uganda (2005), approximately 150,000 people have been in IDP camps for over 20 years (cited in IDMC, 2005, p. 5). The Karamojong warriors continue cattle raiding and atrocities to this day. Their attacks are marked by killings, rape, abductions, massive destruction, and looting (Isis-WICCE, 2002b; UN OCHA-IRIN, 2001). The government of Uganda has tried unsuccessfully to disarm the Karamojong. According to Isis-WICCE (2002b), this failure to curb the cattle raiding in the region is perceived as “state complicity with the Karamojong to deprive the Teso people of their cattle” (p. 3).

Overall, living conditions in IDP camps in Teso and, particularly, in Northern Uganda are extremely poor. A study conducted by the Ugandan Ministry of Health (2005) revealed that over 1,000 deaths occur each week in IDP camps in Northern Uganda. The primary cause of death is malaria/fever. HIV/AIDS and violence are respectively the second and third most frequent causes of death (cited in IDMC, 2005, p. 7). The spread of endemic and epidemic diseases is exacerbated by overcrowding, poor sanitation, and lack of access to health care and other social services. The study’s
findings indicate that in Pader the number of persons per latrine is 37, whereas in Kitgum district this number is 80 (cited in IDMC, 2005, p. 7). Lack of access to water is an acute problem as well. According to UNICEF, only 10 to 29% of IDPs have access to boreholes (UN OCHA-IRIN, 2005). Thus, while 15 liters of water per day constitutes an acceptable norm, in some camps people have access to only 2 liters per day (Refugees International, 2004). The Ugandan Ministry of Health (2005) findings also indicate that malnutrition contributes to high child mortality rates. An estimated 48% of children in Kitgum district suffer from chronic malnutrition (cited in IDMC, 2005, p. 7). In parts of Northern Uganda, infant mortality rates are as high as 290 deaths per 1,000 births (USAID, 2004). Access to healthcare among IDPs is almost non-existent. In most cases, they have to walk long distances to reach the nearest primary health care center. Similarly, food insecurity, lack of access to water, and poor sanitation all force IDPs, especially women, to venture outside the camps. This puts them at risk of LRA or Karamojong attacks. For example, in February 2005, 11 women were attacked by the LRA outside Ngomoromo camp and 8 of them had their lips cut off. According to UNICEF (2005), “Ngomoromo only has one borehole within the camp’s security perimeter, for which waiting time is between four to six hours, thus the women had little choice but to venture outside the security perimeter in search for water” (cited in IDMC, 2005, p. 10). Even within camps people are not safe due to inadequate protection. Between January and October 2001, there were more than 55 Karamojong attacks on IDP camps in Katakwi district (Isis-WICCE, 2002b). According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (2002), the LRA attacked 16 camps in Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader districts between June and September 2002 (cited in Lomo & Hovil, 2004).

In addition to displacement, the conflicts in Northern and Eastern parts of Uganda have caused massive disruption of the economic, social, cultural, and political infrastructure. People in these areas have undergone various traumatizing experiences including torture, maiming, assault, sexual violence, abductions, loss of loved ones, loss of property and sources of livelihood, which have resulted in many health problems and have disempowered them. Overall, armed conflicts and displacement have damaged the moral fabric of society and eroded social support networks along with the roots of Acholi and Iteso culture (HRW, 2003a; Isis-WICCE, 2001b, 2002b; MSF, 2004).
Current Economic Situation

According to the 2005 International Monetary Fund (IMF) country report on Uganda, since Museveni took over the leadership of the country, the Ugandan economy has undergone a significant recovery:

After more than a decade of erratic and negative growth, annual real GDP growth averaged a 6.2 percent between 1986/87 and 2003/04, with real investment rising by 6-7 percentage points of GDP... Largely as a result of strong economic growth, the incidence of poverty in Uganda was reduced from 56 percent of the population in 1992 to 34-38 percent in 2000-03. (p. 3)

In 1997, the Ugandan government introduced the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), which provides a framework for poverty eradication in the country based on four major pillars:

- Creating a framework for economic growth and transformation
- Ensuring good governance and security
- Directly increasing the ability of the poor to raise their incomes
- Directly increasing the quality of the life of the poor.

(Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, 2001, p. 4)

While there have been some positive improvements under the PEAP (see IMF, 2005; Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, 2001; U.S. Department of State, n.d.), Uganda still remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Between 1990 and 2002, 44% of the population had income below the national poverty line; in 2002 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was US$ 236 (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2004). According to the Population Reference Bureau (PRB), 2005, 97% of the population live on less than US$ 2 per day and the World Bank indicates

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19 GDP “is the sum of value added by all resident producers plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output. GDP per capita is gross domestic product divided by mid-year population” (UNICEF, n.d.).

20 According to UNDP (n.d.), the percentage of population living below US$ 2 a day is calculated at 1985 international prices, and adjusted for purchasing power parity.
that 85% of the population has incomes of less than US$ 1 a day\textsuperscript{21} (cited in UNICEF, n.d.). According to the 2004 UNDP Human Development Report, out of 95 developing countries Uganda ranked 60\textsuperscript{th} on its Human Poverty Index\textsuperscript{22}. Moreover, Hansen and Twaddle (1998) warn that “the remarkable economic recovery which has occurred during the Museveni government’s years in office has taken place at the expense of social expenditure, and in disregard to the poverty suffered by the poorest 20 percent of the Ugandans” (p. 14). Similarly, Jamal (1998) points out that “despite a number of years of sustained recovery under President Museveni, average incomes are still one-tenth below their peak at the start of the 1970s” (p. 73).

Agriculture contributes to 42.5% of Uganda’s GDP and hence is the foundation of the country’s economy. Agriculture not only generates 97% of Uganda’s foreign exchange earnings, but also employs 83% of its labor force (Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, 2000, cited in Isis-WICCE, 2004b, p. 8). Food crops account for 71% of agricultural GDP, whereas livestock products contribute 17%, export crops 5%, fisheries 4%, and forestry 3% (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Fisheries, 2000, cited in Karuhanga-Beraho, 2002, p. 90). According to Food and Agriculture Organization (2000), most of the agricultural contributions come from small holder subsistence farmers who have less than 2 hectares of land. Family labor and non-mechanized technology are primarily used for cultivation. Subsistence agriculture currently accounts for about two fifths of agricultural output in Uganda (cited in Isis-WICCE, 2004b, p. 9). Although food crops account for the majority of agricultural output, Isis-WICCE (2004b) points out that the country is facing food shortages. Due to a combined set of factors including unfavorable weather conditions as well as intensifying armed conflicts in various parts of the country food crop production has sharply declined. For example, in 1997 “severe food shortages were declared in more than half of the country and were more severe in the armed conflicts prone districts of the north, northeast, northwest, and southwest, which had large refugee and internally displaced

\textsuperscript{21} Percentage of population living on less than US$ 1.08 a day at 1993 international prices, which is equivalent to US$ 1 a day in 1985 international prices, adjusted for purchasing power parity (UNICEF, n.d.).

\textsuperscript{22} Human Poverty Index measures “deprivations in the three basic dimensions captured in the human development index—a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living” (UNDP, n.d., p. 4).
people’s settlement” (p. 9). In some areas of Western Uganda, food production prior to 2001 had virtually collapsed because people were afraid to work in the fields because of war. Similarly, in Northern Uganda food crop production has ceased because people are afraid of being killed or maimed by rebels or land mines (Redfern, 2000, cited in Isis-WICCE, 2004b, p. 10).

In 2003, Uganda’s economy “stagnated with a GDP rate of growth of 5.3%. much lower than the initial projection of 7%. The local currency remained weak against the US dollar, coupled with worsening terms of trade especially for coffee and agricultural exports” (AAU, 2003, p. 8). According to the U.S. Department of State (n.d.), the fact that Uganda is one of the 47 most heavily indebted countries (total debt US$ 1.9 billion) and that it is largely dependent on agricultural products for its foreign exchange earnings (with coffee accounting for about 19% of the country's exports in 2002), overall its economic prospects may be quite bleak.

Ugandan Population and Human Development Indicators

According to the PRB 2005 World Population Data Sheet, Uganda’s total population was 26.9 million; 51% was under the age of 15 and only 2% was 65 and older. Women comprise 53% of the population (Asiimwe, 2005). Estimated total fertility rate in 2000 was 7.1 births per woman (UNDP, 2004) and population annual growth rate was 4% according to 2004 estimates (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). Uganda's population is predominately rural as only 12% of its total population live in urban areas (PRB, 2005); of this 1.2 million live in Uganda’s capital city Kampala (Uganda Investment Authority, n.d.). According to the U.S. Department of State (n.d.):

Three main ethnic groups – Bantu, Nilotic, and Nilo-Hamitic – constitute most of the population. The Bantu are the most numerous and include the Baganda, which, with 18% of the population, constitute the largest single ethnic group. Individual ethnic groups in the southwest include the Banyankole and Bahima, 10%; the Bakiga, 8%; the Banyarwanda, 6%; the Bunyoro, 3%; and the Batoro,
Residents of the north, largely Nilotic, include the Langi, 6%, and the Acholi, 4%. In the northwest are the Lugbara, 4%, and the Karamojong, 2%, occupy the considerably drier, largely pastoral territory in the northeast. The Basoga, 8%, are among ethnic groups in the east. Europeans, Asians, and Arabs make up about 1% of the population with other groups accounting for the remainder.

In Uganda, 66% of the population is Christian, 16% Muslim, and 18% have indigenous beliefs (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). While English is the official language, there are over 30 indigenous languages that belong to five distinct linguistic groups (Uganda Tourist Board, n.d.).

According to the UNDP report (2004), Uganda has a low Human Development Index\textsuperscript{23} of 0.493 and ranks 146\textsuperscript{th} out of 177 countries. In 2002, life expectancy at birth in Uganda was 45.7 years, infant mortality rate was 82 per 1,000 live births, and maternal mortality rate adjusted for underreporting and misclassification in 2000 was 880 per 100,000 live births (UNDP, 2004). The UNDP report also indicates that in 2000, 48% of Ugandan population had no sustainable access to an improved water source and 21% had no sustainable access to improved sanitation. UNICEF (n.d.) indicates that in 2002, 59% of the population did not have access to adequate sanitation facilities. HIV prevalence rate in population ages 15 through 49 was 7.1% in 2003/2004 (PRB, 2005); number of physicians per 100,000 people in 1990-2003 was five; between 50 to 21% of the population did not have sustainable access to affordable essential drugs in 1999 (UNDP, 2004). Adult literacy rate for population ages 15 and above was 68.9% in 2002 (UNDP, 2004). IMF indicates that between 1993 and 2004 the central government allocated 2% of its expenditure on health, 15% on education, and 28% on defense (UNICEF, n.d.)

On the whole, Uganda’s current political situation, massive displacement of population to IDP camps, staggering poverty, and the patriarchal status quo create a challenging environment for civil society organizations that work to end violence against women.

\textsuperscript{23} Human Development Index measures “average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development—a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living” (UNDP, n.d., p. 4).
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

What Types of Organizations Are Working Either Directly or Indirectly to Address the Issue of Gender-Based Violence in Uganda?

Organizational Origins and Type of Activities

Of the 13 CSOs in the study, five fall under the ‘grassroots’ category, five can be classified under ‘other indigenous’ category, and three are of international origins (Table 2). A review of the field interviews, organizations’ annual reports, evaluation reports, websites, newsletters, and brochures reveals that none of the CSOs can be categorized as specializing in a single type of activity or service. All of the organizations in my sample are undertaking activities in multiple categories identified in Chapter 3 and, thus, adopt a holistic (rather than specialized) approach in addressing the issue of gender-based violence (Table 2). One organization, AAU, encompasses all four types of activities: advocacy, technical development, popular development, and welfare. Of the rest, eight organizations cover three different types of activities. Seven of which (CPA, FIDA (U), LIWEP, LUIWODA, NACWOLA, PVP, and TEPWA) focus on advocacy, popular development, and welfare and one organization (CEDOVIP) focuses on advocacy, popular development, and technical development. The last four organizations primarily focus on two types of activities. Of these, HAR is an advocacy group with a welfare component, Raising Voices is a technical development and advocacy organization, and Isis-WICCE and UMWA are focused on advocacy and popular development. It should be noted that, while Isis-WICCE is primarily focused on advocacy and popular development, it also offers some technical (e.g., organizational growth and development workshops and seminars) and financial support to other organizations and occasionally provides some welfare assistance.
Organizational Composition

In terms of the organizational composition, four of these CSOs are non-member and nine are member organizations (Table 2). Memberships for the latter are as follows:

- CPA membership includes over 5,000 parents and their extended families (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, n.d.).
- FIDA (U) has 244 members (FIDA (U), 2004a).
- HAR has over 300 members (Margaret Ntakalimaze, personal communication, September 22, 2005).
- LIWEPI has 40 members (Joyce Opon Acak, personal communication, August 14, 2005).
- LUWODA has 80 members (Margaret Nassozi Kakembo, personal communication, September 1, 2005).
- NACWOLA has approximately 40,000 members (NACWOLA, personal communication, August 26, 2005).
- PVP has 7 members (Ben Okello Lubanya, personal communication, September 10, 2005).
- TEWPA has 16 members (Cecilia Alupo Engole, personal communication, August 14, 2005).
- UMWA currently has 69 members (Margaret Sentamu Masagazi, personal communication, August 12, 2005).

Over the years most organizations in the sample experienced growth in their membership, albeit with some fluctuations. PVP and UMWA, on the other hand, have experienced significant declines. From 35 original members, PVP membership has dwindled to 7 by 2005 (Ben Okello Lubanya, personal communication, September 10, 2005). UMWA membership has also decreased from over 200 in 2003 (UMWA, 2003) to 69 in 2005.

Of the member organizations only NACWOLA is predominantly focused on helping its members, whereas CPA, FIDA (U), HAR, LIWEPI, PVP, and TEWPA are focused on helping others (non-members). LUWODA and UMWA predominantly concentrate on helping others, but their members receive or have received some benefits as well.
The gender composition for each of the four non-member organizations includes both female and male staff and volunteers. By the end of 2003, AAU had 34 female and 65 male staff members (AAU, 2003). CEDOVIP currently has 4 female and 2 male staff members. In addition, under its Local Activism Department the organization initially recruited 52 community volunteers (CVs) — a female and male from each of the 26 zones of the parishes — and gradually increased the total number of CVs to 73. CEDOVIP also has 15 volunteer community counselors (gender ratio is unknown) and, under the Men’s Program, 20 volunteer Male Activists (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005; CEDOVIP, n.d.-b). Isis-WICCE, a women’s organization, at the time of my internship had 8 female and 3 male staff members, 5 female volunteers/interns and an all female board of directors. RV consists of only 2 staff members – 1 female and 1 male (Lauri Michau, personal communication, August 24, 2005).

Of the membership organizations, CPA and HAR have male and female members as well as male and female staff/volunteers. However, HAR considers itself a women’s organization. At the time of the interview, it had 5 staff members and 3 volunteers (Margaret Ntakalimaze, personal communication, September 22, 2005). CPA had 34 staff members and 10 volunteers (Orach Godfrey Otobi, personal communication, August 19, 2005). I was not able to determine staff and volunteer gender ratios for either organization. FIDA (U) membership is limited to female lawyers and female law students. The organization has an all female board of directors and senior advisory committee. The staff has both male and female lawyers. In addition, male lawyers can be contracted as external advocates. According to the 2004 Annual Report, in December 2004, FIDA (U) had 31 female and 18 male staff members. Furthermore, a male lawyer who has “contributed substantially to the legal profession and protection of women and children’s rights” (FIDA (U), n.d.) can become an honorary member with the approval of the General Assembly. The membership of LIWEPI and LUWODA, both women’s organizations, consists predominantly of female members. Only women work as staff and volunteers in these two organizations. Although LIWEPI does not have any paid staff, it has 4 full-time volunteers and 5 part-time volunteers, whereas LUWODA has 1

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24 It should be noted that in many cases organizations offer some facilitation in the form of transport refunds or meals to their volunteers.
permanent staff member and 9 volunteers (Rashida Oketcha, personal communication, August 14, 2005; Margaret Nassozi Kakembo, personal communication, September 1, 2005). NACWOLA beneficiary membership is available to women living with HIV/AIDS and honorary membership is for individuals, institutions, and organizations who support NACWOLA. The organization has both male and female staff members (12 in the head office) and volunteers (NACWOLA, personal communication, August 26, 2005). PVP considers itself a women’s organization, but has 2 male and 5 female members who serve as volunteers (Ben Okello Lubanya, personal communication, September 10, 2005). TEWPA is a women’s organization with female only members, 3 staff, and 1 volunteer. However, it does have 3 men on its board of directors. In addition, TEWPA has expanded its organizational structure to the grassroots with Peace Committees of four or more women representing TEWPA in each sub-county in the Teso region and five women working as Peace Animators at the parish or community level. Currently, there are 244 women in TEWPA Peace Committees and 305 Peace Animators (Cecilia Alupo Engole, personal communication, August 14, 2005; TEWPA, 2005b). Full membership in UMWA is restricted to practicing female journalists with or without formal training. Associate membership is available to women studying media related issues at the university level and non-participatory honorary membership is accessible to any person with interest in UMWA (UMWA, n.d.-b). At the time of the interview, UMWA had 3 paid staff members all of whom were female. UMWA volunteers are also primarily female, though it occasionally has some male volunteers and receives contributions from male media writers for the UMWA newspaper pull-out *The Other Voice* (Margaret Sentamu Masagazi, personal communication, August 12, 2005; UMWA, 2001b).

**Current Level of Operation**

In terms of the current level of operation, three organizations operate at the international level, four at the national level, two primarily operate at the regional level, and four predominantly operate at the local level (Table 2). Isis-WICCE, NACWOLA, and RV operate internationally. AAU, FIDA (U), HAR, and UMWA operate at the national level. TEWPA and CPA activities are primarily at the regional level, while CEDOVIP, LUWODA, LIWEPI, and PVP operate at the local level. It should be noted
that this classification applies mainly to each organization’s field activities as most of these CSOs participate in advocacy efforts at the national and some even at the international levels.

**Headquarters and Operational Focus**

The headquarters of all surveyed CSOs are located in urban areas\(^{25}\), eight of which (AAU, CEDOVIP, FIDA (U), HAR, Isis-WICCE, NACWOLA, RV, and UMWA) are in Kampala. In terms of operational activities, only CEDOVIP fieldwork activities are focused on an urban area – the Kawempe Division of Kampala District. All of the other organizations work in urban and rural areas. However, because 88% of the Ugandan population lives in rural areas, one could conclude that their focus is predominantly rural populations.

**Funding**

The specific financial details of the CSOs were often not available to me. Some organizations were either unwilling or unable to provide their annual reports or other financial documents; oftentimes interviewees did not know the organization’s financial details; and, in some cases, financial details were not indicated in the documents provided. Although I cannot indicate the specific proportions of funding coming from different sources for these CSOs, interview responses clearly indicate that they primarily rely on donor funding. Other sources of funding include government funding, membership fees, and local fundraising. Two of the organizations (CEDOVIP and RV) are solely dependent on donor funding, another two (AAU and PVP) have received funds from donors and the Ugandan government. Isis-WICCE, in addition to donor/government funding carries out local fundraising. Five organizations (CPA, HAR, LUWODA, NACWOLA, and TEWPA) finance their activities from membership fees as well as donor funding, while three (FIDA (U), LIWEPI, and UMWA) in addition carry out local fundraising (Table 2).

\(^{25}\) Urban areas in Uganda are defined as settlements with over 5,000 inhabitants (UN, 2006, p. 512).
Table 2. Classification of CSOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>CSO origins</th>
<th>Activity type</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Level of operations</th>
<th>Instit. location</th>
<th>Operation focus</th>
<th>Method of financing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAU</td>
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Grassroots, Other indigenous, International, Relief & welfare, Popular development, Technical development, Advocacy, Member, Non-member, Women only members, Mixed members, Female staff/volunteers, Mixed staff/volunteers, Local, Regional, National, International, Rural, Urban, Both, Donor funding, Government funding, Membership fees, Local fundraising.
Where Do Civil Society Organizations’ Efforts Fit Into the Public Health Ecological Model for Violence Prevention?

This section examines where the efforts of the Ugandan CSOs fit into the public health ecological model for interventions to prevent violence. It should be mentioned that in the previous section in order to determine what types of organizations are working to address the issue of gender-based violence in Uganda, I looked at all the activities organizations are carrying out including international activities as well as programs that are not relevant to violence prevention. However, for the remainder of this chapter I am strictly concerned with projects and programs relevant to gender-based violence that are implemented within Uganda.

Time Dimension: Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Interventions

In regards to the time dimension of organizational interventions, the findings indicate that all organizations sampled are involved in primary prevention of gender-based violence. In addition, 11 of these CSOs also have secondary level interventions (AAU, CEDOVIP, CPA, FIDA (U), HAR, Isis-WICCE, LIWEPI, LUWODA, NACWOLA, PVP, TEWPA), and three (CPA, NACWOLA, PVP) further aim to address gender-based violence with tertiary level interventions (Table 3).

Primary interventions. Both the fact that all CSOs interviewed implement primary interventions and the wide range of activities they undertake in this category make primary level interventions most popular for addressing the issue of gender-based violence. Activities in this category include:

- Research, documentation, information repackaging, and publishing
- Sensitization, awareness raising, advocacy, and lobbying
- Capacity building
- Economic empowerment
- Peace building

26 These include training and other capacity building activities that are not related to income generation. Training related to income-generating activities will be discussed under ‘Economic empowerment’.

105
Eight (AAU, FIDA (U), HAR, Isis-WICCE, PVP, RV, TEWPA, UMWA) out of 13 organizations in the sample are involved in research, documentation, information-repackaging, publishing, and information-dissemination activities. Four of these organizations have separate research/documentation programs (FIDA (U), Isis-WICCE, PVP, TEWPA), whereas others engage in such activities only occasionally. With one exception, all organizations publish their research/documentation projects. TEWPA has yet to do so. In addition to publications, most organizations repackage information into video documentaries, drama, and/or radio programs. Information is also utilized for advocacy, lobbying, and awareness raising.

Topics related to gender-based violence that CSOs choose to research/document vary by organization and are usually closely related to an organization’s overall mandate and program objectives. For example, AAU operates within five strategic themes which, in addition to Gender and Women’s Rights, include Education, Agriculture and Food Security, HIV/AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, and Peace Building. Consequently, AAU research activities on gender-based violence are closely related to its other thematic areas of operation. Some of AAU recent research projects which resulted in publications include: *Study on Mechanisms and Dynamics of Gender Issues in Access and Utilization of Sexual Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS Related Services* (2004) and *Scoping Study on Gender Based Violence in Educational Institutions in Uganda* (2004). The former was a collaboration between the Gender and HIV/AIDS Units which aimed to identify how gender dimensions affect health seeking behavior and awareness of the availability of HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health services as well as access to and utilization of such services (AAU, 2004b). The latter publication, a collaboration between the Gender and Education Units, was intended to assess the magnitude of gender-based violence and its impact on access, retention, and performance of children, especially girls, in schools. It also aimed to facilitate interventions to address these issues as well as to generate information for AAU advocacy work (AAU, 2004a).

Since the issue of women in situations of armed conflict has been one of the key concerns of Isis-WICCE, PVP, and TEWPA, they have focused on documenting women’s experiences and their human rights violations. For Isis-WICCE, research and documentation has been the primary strategy to achieve its major objective “to tap
African women’s ideas, views and problems and make them part of the global agenda” (Isis-WICCE, 2002a). The organization has been documenting violations of women’s human rights in situations of armed conflict in Uganda since 1997. Isis-WICCE has published its findings in several reports which provide valuable information and data. These have been used for advocacy as well as to promote gender sensitive post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation (Nkuuhe, 2003). In addition to its research reports, Isis-WICCE publishes information generated from its Exchange Programs, Gender and Development Forums, as well as information received from its partner organizations worldwide. Through its publications Isis-WICCE aims to challenge gender-biased stereotypes in the mainstream media by making “issue-oriented information from a woman-centered perspective more accessible and available” (Isis-WICCE, 2002a, p. 22). In 2003, Isis-WICCE expanded its research agenda to include documentation of women’s strategies and approaches to peace in Africa, which it is using to advocate for women’s inclusion in conflict resolution, peace building, and post-conflict reconstruction processes. This is in order to ensure that these gender blind processes are transformed, women’s needs and concerns are addressed, and sustainable peace is promoted. In addition to publications, the organization’s research has been repackaged into video documentaries, radio programs, and drama. For Isis-WICCE, the documentation of women’s experiences is not an end in itself, its publications are used to raise awareness, facilitate policy change, and reduce discrimination and violations of women’s human rights in Uganda. According to Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro, Isis-WICCE Board President:

Information only becomes powerful when it informs us into actions that translate into benefits of sorts …. Information must lead to change and to the transformation of people’s lives …. Unless such information is enhanced with advocacy work, its relevance for Africa is limited. (2003, pp. 37-38)

Another type of documentation activity is statistical data recording based on an organization’s activities and/or documenting clients’ cases. For example, in addition to standard research, FIDA (U) records statistics and client experiences from legal aid clinics, which provides another source of data for advocacy and lobbying. Moreover, based on the experiences of its Legal Education Program, FIDA (U) develops educational materials which are published in local languages to educate and create awareness about legal, gender, and human rights issues within communities (FIDA (U), n.d.). Three other
organizations (Isis-WICCE, RV, and UMWA) are also involved in development and publishing of various educational materials (booklets, posters, info sheets, etc.) which aim to raise awareness about women’s human rights, gender-based violence and its effects on women and girls, the importance of educating girls, and other issues. Although CEDOVIP is not one of the organizations involved in research and documentation activities, the organization does have a Learning Materials Department that works to create “dynamic materials in popular format that are used in public activities to emphasize women's rights and the importance of public dialogue and action to prevent domestic violence” (CEDOVIP, n.d.-b).

When it comes to CSO publications, the majority are non-recurring except for some by Isis-WICCE and UMWA. As mentioned above, these include publications of CSO research and documentation projects, program/project reports, training manuals, education and communication materials, etc. In the case of RV, in addition to research, it develops and publishes programmatic tools to enable CSOs to develop systematic and effective violence prevention programs. Two such tools are Mobilising Communities to Prevent Domestic Violence: A Resource Guide for Organisations in East and Southern Africa (2003), which is a comprehensive guide on community mobilization strategies aimed at addressing gender-based violence and promoting lasting change in beliefs and behaviors that perpetuate violence, and Rethinking Domestic Violence: A Training Process for Community Activists (2004), which is a practical tool that outlines the training process for strengthening the capacity of community members in domestic violence prevention (Michau & Naker, 2003, 2004).

In terms of regularly recurring publications, Isis-WICCE currently has four: bi-annuals Women’s Peace Monitor, Women’s World, Monde des Femmes, as well as an annual publication Impact Magazine. UMWA regularly publishes an advocacy and lobbying newspaper pull-out The Other Voice which targets policy makers and the general public. The Other Voice started as a response to unfair and inadequate coverage of women’s issues in the Ugandan mainstream media and was initially published in five languages. However, due to reduced funding UMWA currently publishes only the English edition of the newspaper. The number of issues per year also depends on funding available. Despite reduced circulation, the newspaper has contributed significantly to
gender debates in Uganda. It has highlighted contradictions in policies and laws that have negative impacts on women and girls and has contributed to advocacy efforts for the formulation and implementation of gender sensitive laws and a just society. The newspaper has covered a wide range of issues including women’s land rights, rape and defilement, domestic violence, the Sexual Offenses Bill, women’s property ownership rights, girl child education, gender and law, gender and politics, etc. (UMWA, 2001a, 2001b, 2003).

All of the surveyed CSOs participate in activities that I labeled as sensitization, awareness raising, advocacy, and lobbying. Except for lobbying, which targets only policy makers at local and national levels, all other activities target policy makers, professionals (law enforcement officers, medical personnel, social workers, etc.), communities (religious and cultural leaders and communities in general), and society at large. Sensitization, awareness raising, and advocacy are executed through media campaigns, various public events, outreach activities, community dialogues, theatre, seminars, and workshops. In addition to gender-based violence, these efforts cover numerous related issues such as women’s and girls’ human rights, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive rights, girl child access to education, gender bias in the mainstream media, women’s political participation, peace and reconciliation, etc. Some of these will be discussed in more detail in the next section, which will highlight community and society level activities. Here, I will focus on the national advocacy and lobbying activities aimed at increasing women’s legal, social, political, and economic status and at preventing all forms gender-based violence. I will also discuss strategic litigation and policy monitoring – two related primary level interventions.

All eight of the Kampala-based CSOs (AAU, CEDOVIP, FIDA (U), HAR, Isis-WICCE, NACWOLA, RV, and UMWA) as well as LUWODA have been participating in the events of the annual global campaign 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence27. Since 2003, CEDOVIP has spearheaded the events of this campaign in

27 In June 1991, the Center for Women’s Global Leadership initiated a global campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. The annual campaign dates are November 25 to December 10 as this time period encompasses four significant dates: November 25, the International Day Against Violence Against Women; December 1, World AIDS Day; December 6, the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, when 14 female engineering students were murdered; and December 10, Human Rights Day (RV & CEDOVIP, 2001).
Uganda. Local, regional, and national activities of 16 Days of Activism include marches, vigils, speak-outs, ribbon campaigns, workshops and seminars, drama performances, video shows, community dialogues, media advocacy and awareness raising (newspaper articles, advertising, and weekly columns, as well as banners, murals, booklets, radio and TV infomercials, radio and TV programs), competitions in schools, exhibitions in police stations, discussions at health centers, and other public events (“Center for Domestic Violence Prevention Marks,” 2003; RV & CEDOVIP, 2001). While this campaign is against all forms of gender-based violence, some organizations, either based on their focus of activities or the area they operate in, may dedicate more attention to a specific type(s) of violence. For example, in 2002, AAU 16 Days of Activism activities in six districts in the Eastern Region of Uganda focused specifically on early marriages, rape, defilement, and domestic violence. Similarly, some of CEDOVIP activities focus specifically on the issue of domestic violence against women (AAU, 2002, 2003; “Center for Domestic Violence Prevention Marks,” 2003).

In addition to 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, many of the Kampala-based organizations participate in various coalitions and campaigns on local and national policy issues relevant to women’s rights and gender-based violence. The coalitions have been carrying out lobbying and advocacy activities to ensure the creation of gender sensitive policy and legal framework conducive to the protection of women’s and girls’ rights. Six of the eight Kampala-based CSOs (AAU, CEDOVIP, FIDA (U), HAR, Isis-WICCE, and UMWA) have been involved in advocacy for fair family law under the Domestic Relations Bill (DRB) Coalition. The DRB is an amalgamation of all domestic-related laws including marriage, divorce, separation, inheritance, and property rights. If passed, the bill would secure greater equality for women and girls in these

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28 Distributing purple ribbons to be worn by a variety of people throughout the 16 days including ministers, members of parliament, local leaders, television presenters, and community members to express their commitment to prevent violence as well as their solidarity with those affected by violence (“Center for Domestic Violence Prevention Marks,” 2003).

29 A competition organized within schools for the best essay or picture on how to prevent domestic violence or how domestic violence affects the victim and his/her family (“Center for Domestic Violence Prevention Marks,” 2003).

30 Interactive exhibitions facilitated by police officers depict “the commitment of the police station to take reports of domestic violence seriously and to work in partnership with the community to prevent domestic violence” (RV & CEDOVIP, 2001, p. 2).
matters, reduce women’s powerlessness at the household level, prohibit cultural practices such as bride price, dowry, or widow inheritance, and, above all, criminalize marital rape (“Addendum,” 2004). It has been over 40 years since the struggle for a fair family law began and so far the results have been disappointing. According to UWONET (2005):

In spite of numerous calls, especially by women, to have the bill debated in parliament, several times it has been merely shelved. The President of Uganda, H. E. Yoweri Museveni has been open about his sentiments concerning the bill. Indeed, in 2001 he put his position in writing and called for the bill to be removed from parliament. (p. 2)

To date the DRB has not been enacted. However, the coalition is continuing its efforts, which include awareness-raising workshops and seminars within communities on the need for fair domestic laws and discussions with religious leaders, academics, and civil society representatives. The information generated from these activities is used to augment the campaign at the national level as well as to lobby legislators and members of parliament to support the enactment of the law. The activities also include public demonstrations and speeches, petition writing, drafting memorandums to the President of Uganda to influence his attitude towards DRB, media campaigns to create awareness and sensitize the public on the provisions of DRB, as well as research. (AAU, 2002, 2003; FIDA (U), 2002, 2003, 2004a). For example, in 2004 AAU in partnership with UWONET carried out a study to estimate the relevance of DRB to poverty reduction and, thus, its connection to the Poverty Eradication Action Plan as a rationalization for its enactment (AAU, 2004c). In addition, AAU is working to establish strategic partnership with the Law Reform Commission, a government agency that has carried out DRB related research and is supporting the enactment of the law (Christine Achieng, personal communication, September 9, 2005). Overall, the organizations in the coalition feel frustrated with the lack of political will to pass the DRB:

Civil society – sometimes their hands are tied …. Like this Domestic Relations Bill has been in proposal for more than 40 years … and we are loosing hope every day. Whenever we push it – they [politicians] say ‘Ah, this one is minor’ …. when people are dying [original emphasis] of AIDS, when people are dying [original emphasis] of domestic violence, when children are on the streets! Ah? They are not helping us! (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005)
Three organizations from the sample (FIDA (U), Isis-WICCE, and UMWA) are also members of the Coalition on Violence Against Women (CVAW). The coalition was formed in 1999 by a group of women’s organizations and women’s human rights activists. Currently, over 30 women’s organizations are coalition members working on ending violence against women. CVAW activities include research, documentation, and sensitization on gender-based violence issues, lobbying and advocacy for legal reform, as well as providing services that address issues of violence against women (“Coalition on Violence Against Women,” n.d.; Isis-WICCE, 2000). For example, in 1999 CVAW, coordinated by the Population Secretariat and funded by the United Nations Population Fund, carried out a research study *The Scope, Prevalence, and Effects of Gender Violence in Uganda: The Case of the Districts of Apac and Mbale*. The study findings were disseminated in November, 2000. According to Isis-WICCE (2000), in addition to sensitization activities about gender-based violence, research findings were utilized to develop quantitative research tools and to strengthen advocacy efforts for law reform.

Another long-term campaign in Uganda has been for women’s land rights. Since 1996, several CSOs (including AAU, FIDA (U), UMWA) have been campaigning to increase access to and control over land for women. The Land Bill, which operationalizes provisions relating to land and governs land ownership, management, and use, was passed by Parliament in July of 1998. While there are some positive provisions in the new law, the Bill does not guarantee user’s rights for women, especially widows. Moreover, the first draft of the Land Bill contained a vital paragraph regarding co-ownership of land by both husband and wife and was discussed and approved by Parliament. This was the result of substantial lobbying work done by the Uganda Land Alliance and women’s organizations. However, when the Land Act was passed, the co-ownership clause was missing (Kawamara, 1998). Elizabeth Kharono, who joined the Uganda Land Alliance on behalf of UWONET, narrates the disappointment of the land rights campaign:

The women’s organizations involved in lobby and advocacy to try to ensure that women’s interests in land were taken into consideration in the new law, felt let down by the whole process. In their view, women had yet again been given a raw deal in the new law and all their efforts to impact on the law-making process seem to have been a waste of time and energy. Despite the considerable effort they made to provide women’s views and suggestions on the Land Bill and how their
interests could be promoted and protected by the new land law … they were basically ignored by all male-dominated Committees. The fact that even the single amendment to the Bill intended to provide for co-ownership of land by spouses, moved by Hon. Miria Matembe and adopted by parliament, ‘mysteriously disappeared’ in the final draft of the Land Act, confirmed that basic insensitivity and anti-women character of the new land law and consistent marginalization of women’s concerns and interest in land issues which characterized the whole land debate and process. (1998, pp. 9-10)

Although the attorney general has promised to rectify the omission of the co-ownership clause, this has yet to be remedied. Thus, CSOs continue their advocacy work on this issue. For example, both AAU and FIDA (U) have been actively campaigning for the inclusion of the co-ownership clause. Strategies employed in 2003 included a march to Parliament with representation of grassroots women, print media campaign, discussions and meetings with members of Parliament and select committees, and participation in parliamentary debates on the Land Amendment Bill. While the Land Act was amended in June 2003, AAU (2003) points out that such a massive campaign led to very small changes in the Act. The marginal victory broadened the definition of spousal land thereby preventing a spouse's objection to its sale from lapsing. However, the original goal to guarantee a wife's co-ownership rights has yet to be achieved. Moreover, the amendment still does not protect the land rights of unmarried and widowed women.

In addition to participating in the DRB and the land rights campaigns, FIDA (U) was also among the organizations which appeared in the Constitutional Court in 2004 to challenge several discriminatory sections of the Divorce Act. Under the Divorce Act, a husband could formally terminate a marriage on grounds of his wife’s adultery alone, whereas a wife could not divorce her husband on grounds of his adultery. She had to combine her divorce claim with other grounds such as cruelty, desertion, bigamy, or bestiality. This constituted an inequitable burden on women attempting to legally terminate their marriages. Furthermore, according to FIDA (U) Annual Report (2004a):

The Act defined adultery by a husband as having sexual intercourse with a married woman who was not his wife; sexual intercourse with an unmarried woman did not amount to adultery. On the other hand, a woman committed adultery if she had sexual intercourse with any man who was not her husband. This was clearly discriminatory and contrary to the Constitution, which guarantees that men and women shall be equal before the law. (p. 6)
As a result of FIDA (U) and other organizations’ efforts, in March 2004, the Constitutional Court declared these discriminatory provisions of the Divorce Act unconstitutional (FIDA (U), 2004a).

Two related activities are strategic litigation and policy monitoring. Strategic litigation is undertaken by FIDA (U) in order to establish precedents which challenge discrimination and inequality before the law and as such promote gender sensitive law reforms. Through strategic litigation, the organization aims “to further substantive equality for women and children, have gender insensitive legislation overturned, have courts make positive orders for the protection of women’s and children’s rights and bring about the enactment of better legislation” (FIDA (U), 2002, p. 10).

Several of the organizations also participate in various policy monitoring coalitions and activities. For example, AAU Gender Unit in collaboration with FIDA (U), Isis-WICCE, and other national CSOs work to influence policy and monitor Uganda’s implementation of its national and international commitments articulated in the Constitution and various international instruments. This includes monitoring government compliance with international human rights standards as well as the progress of the implementation of the Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). AAU and FIDA (U) are part of the coalition of CSOs, headed by Isis-WICCE, which prepare a Shadow Report to that of the government providing a comprehensive assessment of women’s status in Uganda and highlighting the gaps in the country’s implementation of CEDAW to the CEDAW Committee (AAU, 2002; FIDA (U), 2002; Isis-WICCE, 2002). FIDA (U) and Isis-WICCE are also part of the Ugandan Governance Monitoring Project (UGMP), which began in 2003 to monitor government’s progress against selected benchmarks of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). The Shadow Report as well as UGMP under the PEAP Benchmark II (Respect for Human Rights) highlight the lack of gender sensitive laws in Uganda and the urgent need to enact the DRB because the current family laws are discriminatory and outdated and therefore inconsistent with the Constitution. Moreover, UGMP (2004) report emphasizes that most of the Constitutional provisions to change the status quo for women and promote gender equality do not have enabling laws enacted. In addition, the Ugandan government has failed to domesticate the CEDAW and ratify the Additional Protocol to
the African Charter on Women’s Rights. Another issue highlighted in both reports is the need to establish the Equal Opportunities Commission\(^{31}\) (EOC) as provided by the Constitution. So far, the provision regarding EOC has remained dormant (FIDA (U), 2002; UGMP, 2004). According to UGMP:

> An opportunity to review and reinvigorate the EOC debate came along during the Constitutional Review process [which started in 2001]. However in its report, the CRC [Constitutional Review Committee] recommended that the EOC be placed under the Human Rights Commission (HRC); a position that civil society and indeed other stakeholders including MGLSD [Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development] were totally opposed to, as this would not address issues of marginalization as the EOC is meant to address. (p. 36)

Consequently, CSOs, academia, human rights activists, legal professionals, and others have set up the Civil Society Coalition for the establishment of the EOC, which includes three CSOs from the sample (FIDA (U), NACWOLA, and UMWA). The coalition has prepared a memorandum, which advocates for an independent EOC (separate from Human Rights Commission) be established and operationalized in a timely manner. In addition, the memorandum aims to refine and enrich the proposed EOC composition and functions. The coalition has also participated in consultative workshops with members of Parliament and the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development on the establishment of the EOC (FIDA (U), 2003, 2004a; “Memorandum,” n.d.).

Another category of primary interventions is capacity building. As noted previously, these activities are not related to income-generating activities and include education/training of organizations as well as various individuals (women, girls, community volunteers, local, religious, and cultural leaders). Eleven of the CSOs (AAU, CEDOVIP, CPA, FIDA (U), HAR, Isis-WICCE, LUWODA, NACWOLA, RV, TEWPA, UMWA) in my sample are involved in some type of education or training activities. Of these, three organizations (AAU, CEDOVIP and RV) are involved in capacity building of other organizations in order to strengthen them and their networks to address issues of gender and women’s rights. In particular, through its programs RV aims to improve gender-based violence prevention efforts in Uganda. Under the National Training

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\(^{31}\) According to Tamale (2002), “EOC would expose and address discrimination in laws, policies, and practices; advocate for changes in attitudes and stereotypes, and instill respect for women’s rights as human rights and the rights of all marginalized groups” (p. 27).
Program, RV is working with the Uganda Program for Human and Holistic Development (UPHOLD) to strengthen the capacity of six Ugandan CSOs in developing effective prevention programs that address violence against women within the context of HIV/AIDS. This is done through workshops, development of communication materials, technical support visits, and ongoing consultations. In addition, RV provides various types of technical support to organizations through which it aims to increase the number and quality of violence prevention programs and to ensure that their policy and advocacy work is effective. Technical support includes workshops and seminars to strengthen organizations’ conceptual and programmatic skills in violence prevention as well as training on the usage of RV program tools, gender-based violence, and related issues. In addition, under technical support, RV provides onsite and long distance assistance for organizations to enhance their documentation and monitoring skills, proposal and strategic plan development, as well as provides training in program development and design of communication strategies and materials (Lauri Michau, personal communication, August 24, 2005; RV, n.d.).

RV in collaboration with CEDOVIP also runs a Learning Center which provides onsite training for organizations on holistic, rights-based approaches to violence prevention, community mobilization techniques, and development of learning and communication materials for violence prevention. They also learn about strategies and approaches that facilitate individual and social change in communities. In addition, the Learning Center assists organizational staff to develop effective communication, training, advocacy, and project management skills. Overall, the center aims to build organizational capacity through first-hand experiences to facilitate holistic and systematic violence prevention programs (CEDOVIP, n.d.-b; RV, n.d.).

AAU is another organization involved in organizational capacity building activities. It aims to enhance the capacity of CSOs in Uganda in human rights, gender issues, advocacy, and policy influencing. AAU provides training to women’s organizations to endow them with knowledge and skills to monitor the government’s implementation of the CEDAW and to prepare Shadow Reports (AAU, 2003, 2004c). In addition to providing technical assistance in the area of organizational development, under its HIV/AIDS Department Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)
Program, AAU trains its partner organizations on human rights, gender, and HIV/AIDS issues. This is aimed at strengthening their capacity in HIV/AIDS prevention, providing quality support to people affected by HIV/AIDS, and facilitating women and adolescents, especially girls, to assert their sexual and reproductive rights and to gain control over their reproductive health. AAU works to enable its partner CSOs to educate communities, especially youth, about their sexual rights through the Stepping Stones methodology. The organization notes that SRHR interventions implemented by its partners, especially the Stepping Stones approach, have reduced early pregnancies and related high school drop out rates as well as empowered girls to make informed decisions in sexual matters and positively manage their sexual and reproductive health. The Stepping Stones approach also enables youth to communicate about sensitive issues such as sexuality, sexual health, and HIV/AIDS (AAU, 2002, 2003, 2004c). In addition, under its Education Program AAU trains CSOs in the use of Regenerated Frierian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) methodology. REFLECT has been adapted and used by AAU partners to raise awareness about issues such as HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, land rights, peace building, girl child education, as well as livelihood strategies (AAU, 2002, 2003, 2004c). According to AAU, both Stepping Stones and REFLECT methodologies “respect peoples own experience, knowledge and skills, promote gender equity, which is critical if we are to address HIV/AIDS issues, and enhance empowerment, which enables people to understand, claim and defend their rights” (AAU, n.d.-a).

At the community level, both AAU and CEDOVIP are involved in training local, cultural, and religious leaders, while UMWA provides training to local leaders. AAU efforts are part of its community level campaigns against domestic violence and campaigns to promote girl child education and therefore will be discussed in the next section. Although UMWA under its Rural Outreach Program (ROP) mainly targets women, Margaret Sentamu Masagazi, UMWA Coordinator, notes that “you cannot go very far with just target[ing] the women only, because the men are still the rulers in this

32 The Stepping Stones is an “innovative participatory community development approach with issues communication as a tool to discuss sex and gender relations” (AAU, 2002, p. 15).
33 REFLECT is “an innovative way to adult learning, development, and empowerment through structured participatory learning process, which facilitates people’s critical analysis of their own environment and issues for sustainable development” (AAU, 2002, p. 17).
country” (Personal communication, August 12, 2005). Thus, as part of ROP, the organization trains local leaders in communication skills and gender issues in order to enhance their capacity to disseminate information, to communicate to the local people, and to understand the barriers that women are facing.

CEDOVIP has capacity building activities that target local, cultural, and religious leaders – both Christian and Muslim. These include workshops, seminars, and one-on-one support with a focus on women’s human rights along with domestic violence, its causes, and its effects on women. CEDOVIP aims to motivate these leaders to promote change within their own communities and eliminate cultural biases such that women’s rights are respected and upheld. According to Hope Turyasingura, CEDOVIP Capacity Building Officer:

Just recently we had a seminar with traditional aunties, here we call them sengas, who are responsible for grooming the young girls for marriage. And they are always giving them toxic [original emphasis] information: ‘You see, you have to make sure your husband is happy’ …. we are trying to tell them ‘Look here. A relationship is a relationship, [it] is a partnership between the two. If you say that only one person is responsible to make sure that the relationship works and the other one is just negligent then the relationship is not going to work.’ (Personal communication, August 19, 2005)

CEDOVIP notes that its training efforts have resulted in some positive changes in the communities. For example, trained local leaders developed gender sensitive by-laws, started discussing domestic violence during meetings, and are participating in community dialogues on violence prevention. Moreover, the organization points out that local leaders are becoming strong voices against gender-based violence and are now involved in awareness-raising efforts in their communities. Muslim religious leaders who have been trained have revived a court system to increase women’s access to justice and are also holding special classes for men and women. In the case of Christian religious leaders, they incorporate messages about importance of violence-free homes in their sermons, hold video shows for their parishioners, and have initiated youth and women’s booklet clubs. Some have even held seminars for other priests on domestic violence (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005; CEDOVIP, n.d.-a).

Several organizations including CEDOVIP, FIDA (U), and TEWPA train community volunteers (CVs) to promote women’s and children’s rights and spearhead
peace building and violence prevention efforts in their areas. CEDOVIP trains CVs on domestic violence, notions of masculinity, gender analysis, and women’s rights issues as well as on communication skills and strategies in order to build their capacity to engage other community members in gender-based violence prevention efforts at the grassroots level. In addition, under the Local Activism Department CEDOVIP has a Men’s Program which trains Male Activists to engage other men in such efforts (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005). FIDA (U) is involved in training volunteer Child Care Advocates to enable them to advocate for children’s rights in their communities (FIDA (U), 2003, 2004a). TEWPA is in the process of training its peace committees and peace animators – about 550 women volunteers. TEWPA aims to build their capacity to advocate for rural women’s and girls’ rights and to promote peace and reconciliation in their communities. In addition to human rights issues, TEWPA training covers leadership skills, conflict management and resolution, lobbying and advocacy, communication skills, and group dynamics (Cecilia Alupo Engole, personal communication, August 14, 2005).

Related to TEWPA training of peace animators and peace committees is the final activity in this category – capacity building for women and girls. Three organizations (CPA, FIDA (U), and LIWEPI) are involved in providing educational sponsorship for girls, which includes scholastic materials and school fees. Five organizations (AAU, Isis-WICCE, LUWODA, NACWOLA, and UMWA) have various primary level interventions aimed at empowering women and girls with knowledge and skills. AAU trains women leaders, especially at the grassroots level, in leadership, advocacy, and lobbying to increase their ability to articulate their views, their capacity to lead the development processes within their communities, and their effective participation in decision-making structures at different levels (AAU, 2003, 2004c, n.d.-b).

Both Isis-WICCE Information and Documentation and its Publications programs include capacity building components. These consist of training women in various methods of documentation to assist Isis-WICCE in its projects as well as training women in the use of information communication technologies (ICTs). Isis-WICCE believes that knowledge of ICTs will allow women and girls to make informed decisions that can improve their status and enable them to overcome gender inequality. To that end, since
2001 it has been running the Internet Café which, in addition to internet access, provides training for women and girls on the use of e-mail, the Internet, basic word processing, etc. (Isis-WICCE, 2001a, 2003a, 2004a). However, Isis-WICCE main capacity building intervention for women is its Exchange Program. The organization has been running the National Exchange Program (NEP), which consists of training and exchange visits for women leaders from rural areas, since 1999. NEP aims to break the isolation of rural women in areas of armed conflict by bringing them together to share experiences, help each other in the healing process, and exchange coping mechanisms. In order to enable women to resolve violent conflicts and effectively participate in peace processes in their communities, the training equips women with leadership, mediation, negotiation, conflict resolution, and peace-building skills. In addition, women gain knowledge and skills in trauma management, advocacy, and lobbying (Isis-WICCE, 2002c, 2003c). NEP training lasts 5 years, during which women come for face-to-face training sessions once a year. After each session they develop a plan of action based on the training received. With monitoring from Isis-WICCE, the plan is implemented in the participant’s district/community to promote peace. Participants report on their activities during the following year’s training. In addition, some NEP trainees and other women leaders participate in Isis-WICCE Regional Exchange Institutes for women from the Great Lakes Region. Similar to NEP, these institutes include training and exchange visits. However, the regional training is more advanced than the national level training. In addition to NEP goals, regional training aims to clarify the concept and framework of human rights, empower women with skills to promote and protect human rights (especially in situations of armed conflict), and impart women with leadership and advocacy skills to enable them to participate in peace building at local, national, and regional levels (Isis-WICCE, 2003d).

LUWODA is also involved in leadership training for women. However, Margaret Nassozzi Kakembo, LUWODA Coordinator, notes that the focus of organization’s training activities for women has been changing over time:

We have been looking at the needs of the women and adapting [to] new expectations. From the beginning we were training mainly on conflict resolution and peace building – how we can resolve conflicts because we were just immediately merged out of armed conflict. And we had a feeling that we should
educate our people on … other means of handling the conflict than violence; how women can handle domestic conflicts in their homes …. We also trained on leadership because we wanted to build the capacity of our women to participate in leadership positions in their different areas at different levels. We trained in leadership on a wider perspective including public speaking – how a woman can stand in public to talk, how a woman can solicit for votes, and the rest. (Personal communication, September 1, 2005)

NACWOLA provides leadership training to women living with HIV/AIDS and through its Positive Vision Club aims to empower infected young women with skills and knowledge to enable them to cope with HIV/AIDS, reduce the isolation, fear, and stigma they face (NACWOLA, n.d.-b). UMWA provides various local and international training opportunities to media women (predominantly its staff and members) to enhance their communications skills and enable them to perform better in their workplaces. These trainings cover topics such as research, investigative journalism, HIV/AIDS issues, sustainable development, and gender legislative priorities (UMWA, 2003). UMWA also aims to empower rural women with relevant information and skills through ROP in order to address women’s social, political, and economic marginalization. ROP activities will be discussed in more detail in the next section under community level interventions.

Economic empowerment is another category of primary level interventions. This includes income-generating activities (IGAs) as well as IGA-related skills training, vocational education, loans, etc. Six organizations (CPA, LUWODA, LIWEPI, NACWOLA, PVP, and TEWPA) are involved in economic empowerment activities. For example, CPA provides vocational training in home economics, knitting, tailoring, etc. to child mothers34 and other formerly abducted children (FACs) at its rehabilitation center. It also has a revolving credit scheme for FACs and their parents. LIWEPI started IGA activities as a way to address dire poverty and related struggles women face in IDP camps:

We went to the camps, talked to the women, and then we sort of identified poverty [original emphasis] as the major cause of the problems that women had in their houses. So then we started, initiated, a kind of training for the women in camps on income-generating activities cause the kind of life they led in camps was also not so good. Some were going out for sex in order to get money, others

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34 Child mothers are formerly abducted girls who were impregnated while in captivity.
were going onto the streets to beg. (Joyce Opon Acak, personal communication, August 14, 2005)

Even though the war in Luwero district ended in 1980s, poverty remains a major source of conflict, especially at the household level. According to LUWODA Publicity Secretary:

> We know that when they [community members] are financially well … that will be another way of reducing these conflicts in these homes and this is … how we can build peace in the families and the neighbors. Because if they are all having … a source of income some of the conflicts which would be rising up cannot come. (Madina Zalwango, Isis-WICCE interview, September 1, 2005)

In addition, LUWODA Coordinator feels that including IGA-related training in the organization’s activities is important for women’s empowerment “because there’s no way you can … train a woman to be a leader without a stable income in the family” (Margaret Nassozi Kakembo, personal communication, September 1, 2005). Thus, the CSO trains women in entrepreneurship skills as well as loan and IGA management. LUWODA also helps to market handcrafts produced by women and women’s groups and organizes learning excursions/exchange visits for rural women.

NACWOLA and PVP provide IGA-related training including IGA and credit management, budget analysis, business skills, and technical expertise. In addition, NACWOLA trains women in vocational skills and facilitates their capacity building through internships and apprenticeships, whereas PVP runs revolving loan and revolving goats schemes. Beneficiaries of NACWOLA economic empowerment are individual women living with HIV/AIDS as well as women’s groups (NACWOLA, n.d.-b). PVP training activities and loans are primarily for women survivors of gender-based violence.

TEWPA is the last organization I discuss involved in economic empowerment activities. The organization recently started a rotating savings group ‘merry-go-round’ as well as some IGAs. According to TEWPA Coordinator:

> Since poverty also is a cause of conflict we said we have to begin sustaining TEWPA and then sustaining our beneficiaries who are at the grassroots.

> We have just started writing out proposals [to donors for IGAs] but we have asked women at the grassroots to begin something simple like growing cassava, growing sunflower, using log beehives to trap the bees. (Cecilia Alupo Engole, personal communication, August 14, 2005)
I now turn to the final category of primary level interventions: peace-building activities. Seven organizations (AAU, CPA, Isis-WICCE, LIWEPI, LUWODA, PVP, and TEWPA) participate in peace building, which includes a wide array of activities. It should be noted that, in addition to working to bring an end to armed conflicts in Uganda, most of these CSOs adopt a feminist approach to peace (as discussed in Chapter 2), which among other things includes building harmonious relationships and trust on the individual level in homes and communities, promoting respect for women’s human rights, and increasing women’s control of their own lives. Consequently, some of CSO efforts such as advocacy campaigns against gender-based violence and activities to increase women’s incomes or their participation in decision making, although considered peace building by some organizations, have already been discussed. With the exception of LUWODA, here I primarily focus on the efforts of organizations working to implement peace-building and conflict resolution interventions in areas of armed conflict.

LUWODA is primarily focused on peace-building activities at the family and community level:

When we talk about conflict resolution and peace building we narrow it down right from the family level. We tell our people that peace begins right from the home and then spreads to the neighborhood, it then spreads to the village and thereafter spreads to the whole country. (Isis-WICCE Interview with Margaret Nassozi Kakembo, 2005)

The organization’s peace-building activities at the family level include mediation and counseling. Community level activities include packaging information about sustainable peace and conflict resolution in drama and presenting it to the communities, organizing peace-building seminars and workshops, as well as organizing focused peace group discussions for women, which allow them to mobilize, strategize, and find solutions to specific problems in their communities. LUWODA also networks with local and religious leaders, police and probation officers, elders, and other stakeholders to sensitize local communities. For example, they invite officials to address communities about the importance of living peacefully or to sensitize them about the law and managing conflicts (Madina Zalwango, Isis-WICCE interview, September 1, 2005; Margaret Nassozi Kakembo, Isis-WICCE interview, September 1, 2005).
AAU, under its Humanitarian and Peace Program, trains CSOs in peace building and conflict resolution. It also supports local peace initiatives through facilitation of the local, cultural, and religious leaders to undertake peace-building activities. In addition, AAU participates in inter-district reconciliation and peace meetings to bring attention to the plight of women, children, and IDPs (AAU, 2002, 2003, n.d.-c). CPA promotes peace, stability, and reconciliation in the communities through community dialogue, radio programs, dissemination of information, education and communication materials, and other activities. At the national level, the organization advocates for immediate and unconditional release of children abducted by the LRA, halt of further abductions, as well as for forgiveness, reconciliation, and peaceful means to end the war in Northern Uganda (CPA, 2005). Isis-WICCE primary peace-building activities include documentation, publications, and video documentaries on women’s peace initiatives as well as advocacy for women’s inclusion in the peace processes and capacity building for women to enable them to participate effectively in peace building – all of which have been discussed above. LIWEPI promotes peace within IDP camps and the district and aims to increase women’s participation in peace building:

Joyce Opon Acak: We started the organization to help them [women and girls] to understand their rights and to talk openly about peace and how they are suffering. So they can think free, so that they can participate in the organization.… Rashida Oketcha: Now we’re so intent to make women and girls and the community around know that peace is really a prerequisite for the governance … therefore they should really help in the process of making peace. Joyce Opon Acak: So it is not only for men. So, when there’s talking, making peace, everybody should come in. Rashida Oketcha: Be involved, [be] part of the peace process. (Personal communication, August 14, 2005)

LIWEPI promotes peace through radio programs and community dialogue and is also part of the district peace initiative Lira District Peace for All (Rashida Oketcha, personal communication, August 14, 2005). PVP is part of the District Peace Team in Gulu that goes to IDP camps to sensitize people on peace. This includes showing photographs and documentary films to raise awareness and promote a spirit of survival. PVP also conducts peace-building seminars and has established four peace committees within IDP camps. These work on sensitizing the communities, reintegrating the FACs, as well as promoting conflict resolution and reconciliation. In addition, some women survivors of gender-
based violence, who were counseled and supported by PVP, have become peace actors and promote peace in their communities through drama. According to PVP:

An achievement, you see, is that we have created more community-based peace actors in the community, whereby it is not now only women who carry out those kind of activities – the youth also came up. At the moment, we are strengthening the capacity of the formerly abducted children who are in the community. (Arop Francis Omuk, personal communication, September 10, 2005)

TEWPA is another organization actively involved in peace building. TEWPA promotes peace and reconciliation between Teso and Karamoja regions through dialogue meetings with Karamojong women, radio programs on peace and security, songs, dance, and drama that advocate for peace. TEWPA also trains women peace activists to give them skills to solve conflicts within their communities and to participate in the official peace processes. According to TEWPA Coordinator:

[In] the Katakwi - Karamoja conflict there have been a number of treaties signed, there have been a number of accords signed by men [original emphasis], and little has been done simply because the communities, the women are not involved! So, I'm beginning to see that women are getting involved in peace .... and already the [TEWPA] peace committees of Katakwi [district] are getting involved in most of the security meetings and even in the assessment programs of the IDPs in Katakwi. We are there. (Cecilia Alupo Engole, Isis-WICCE interview, September 3, 2005)

**Secondary interventions.** Eleven organizations have secondary level interventions of which one of the main activities is providing counseling or psychosocial support to survivors of gender-based violence (Tables 4 and 5). This includes both individual and group level counseling. Some organizations also provide counseling to family members and/or perpetrators of violence. A total of six organizations (CPA, LIWEPI, LUWODA, NACWOLA, PVP, TEWPA) provide psycho-social support services of which four (CPA, LIWEPI, PVP, and TEWPA) operate in areas currently affected by armed conflict where the need for such services is particularly high.

According to Joyce Opon Acak, Coordinator of LIWEPI:

In office we have programs like a psychosocial support programs, counseling the women who had problems, who would come in the office. Some were returnees that were raped and they completely had disturbed minds....

For example, like one [woman] who said: 'You know, when you have been abducted [by the rebels], they give you 25 men and 25 men rape you!' A
single lady! If you cannot even manage one … ’ So, that’s the kind of the cases we were having, and that is when they come individually to the office to talk about it…. The short term [goal] is to counsel them, to comfort them. You know, when you are raped, when they have really violated your rights, you need to talk to somebody. (Personal communication, August 14, 2005)

It should be noted that while FIDA (U) does not provide counseling services per se, it has an in-house counselor in its legal office in Kampala who attends to clients in need of psychosocial support (FIDA (U), 2003, 2004a).

Although I have categorized the majority of training and capacity building activities as primary level interventions, some training activities fall under secondary level interventions. This is because such training is intended to improve the handling of gender-based violence cases that have already occurred to minimize the harm to the victim. These training activities can be divided into two groups: training of community volunteers (e.g., teachers, parents, midwives) to provide psychosocial support to survivors of gender-based violence and training of law enforcement officers, other professionals, as well as local leaders, and community-based paralegals to change their negative attitudes and strengthen their capacity in handling gender-based violence cases. Seven organizations (AAU, CEDOVIP, CPA, FIDA (U), HAR, NACWOLA, TEWPA) are involved in such training activities, of which four (CPA, HAR, NACWOLA, TEWPA) conduct training of community based volunteers in basic counseling skills and trauma management. One organization (FIDA (U)) trains law enforcement officers, community-based paralegals, and local leaders to effectively handle cases reported by women and children and to establish a referral mechanism with the police, and two organizations (AAU and CEDOVIP) are involved in both types of training. As mentioned in the previous section, TEWPA has recruited women peace committees and peace animators throughout Teso region who are actively involved in various peace-building activities in their communities. In addition, these women provide counseling to survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence and their family members. While CEDOVIP is involved in training of community-based counselors, its main focus is capacity building of local leaders and various professionals including police officers, medical personnel, and social workers. The training provided by the organization aims to influence policy
and practice within the workplaces of these professionals. Through workshops, seminars, policy review and development, as well as one-on-one support CEDOVIP aims to enhance their understanding of the gender-based violence and its impact on women and strengthen their capacity in providing appropriate services to women survivors of violence (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005; CEDOVIP, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Hope Turyasingura, CEDOVIP Program Officer, describes the benefits that training of police officers can bring:

We went around to the police stations doing the needs assessment to find out what do they understand about domestic violence, how do they handle this … domestic violence and we found out that it was none of their business …. And they had also a negative attitude towards these women. They used to think that it is not in order for a woman to report the husband to police, so they would discourage so many people from reporting.

So we trained both male and female [officers] to be able to articulate the issues of domestic violence, to understand what is DV, what is the cause of DV, instead of blaming this woman … without knowing the limitations of this woman. So, we train them, we build their capacity continuously, and, as I talk now, they are almost there … they are giving better services to these women than they were doing before. (Personal communication, August 19, 2005)

CEDOVIP has also been involved in building the capacity of local leaders to give them knowledge and skills to handle domestic violence cases properly because they deal with such cases in the local council courts. Before CEDOVIP training, local leaders used to charge women who would seek help from local courts a fee, which discouraged many from reporting. Now, attitudes are changing and, in some areas, the fee system has been abolished. Local leaders also refer difficult cases to CEDOVIP CVs and even incorporate them as advisors in the local council courts (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005).

Six organizations (CEDOVIP, CPA, HAR, LUWODA, NACWOLA, PVP) provide referral services to survivors of gender-based violence, which is another type of secondary level activity. For example, in order to reduce the vulnerability of women’s living with HIV/AIDS, NACWOLA facilitates both women’s access to medical care and legal support with regard to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, property disputes, and other issues. While the majority of referrals are for medical treatment and legal aid, some organizations offer other types of referral services as well. LUWODA has established
extensive referral mechanisms and works with probation officers, religious leaders, and medical professionals to address issues of domestic violence. LUWODA Publicity Secretary, Madina Zalwango, elaborates on the organization’s referral services:

Those people who have got into [domestic] conflicts – we look for how we can make them to transform their conflicts … We can at times take them to the religious leaders, they counsel them …. we can look for other people who can mediate them, who can work as mediators like the police officers, in case of domestic violence. We can contact them. They can come and sit with these people and talk to them. Like the medical personnel – they also assist us very much. (Isis-WICCE interview, September 1, 2005)

Indirect Medical Services is another category of activities classified under secondary level interventions. This type of services is provided by CPA, Isis-WICCE, and NACWOLA. Of which, CPA subsidizes medical bills for formerly abducted children and in the case of child mothers also covers medical costs for their children (Orach Godfrey Otobi, personal communication, August 19, 2005). NACWOLA assists women living with HIV/AIDS and their children to meet emergency medical costs (NACWOLA, n.d.-b). Isis-WICCE follows its action-oriented documentation projects with short-term emergency medical interventions carried out in collaboration with medical experts to collect medical data on the consequences of armed conflict on women’s health and to address most critical reproductive, orthopedic, and psychological health problems experienced by survivors of war (Isis-WICCE, 2001a, 2002a).

FIDA (U) is the only organization in the sample involved in providing legal services to survivors of gender-based violence. The organization provides free legal assistance which includes mediation, arbitration, and court representation to its clients, who are predominantly poor women and children. According to its 2002 Annual Report, “FIDA (U) has been particularly instrumental in combating gender-based violence … Through the use of the police, probation officers, the family and children’s courts more women have been assisted to lodge complaints against abusive spouses” (p. 7).

The final activity categorized under the secondary level strategies is establishment of community-based domestic violence watch groups. Currently, only CEDOVIP and its community volunteers are involved in recruiting and sensitizing such community groups.

35 Although services are free, FIDA (U) charges clients UGS 1,000 for opening a case file on their first visit to FIDA (U) legal aid clinic (FIDA (U), n.d.).
Domestic violence watch groups report cases to CEDOVIP CVs, who then intervene and take appropriate measures to address the problem (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005).

**Tertiary interventions.** Three organizations (CPA, NACWOLA, and PVP) in the sample have tertiary level interventions (Table 3), which include long-term psychosocial support, home follow-up visits, and monitoring. In addition to these activities, CPA also runs a rehabilitation center for formerly abducted children in Kitgum, Northern Uganda. The center prepares FACs who returned as adults for reintegration into the communities. During the stay at the center, CPA staff and volunteers work to improve physical and psychological well-being of FACs and also work with their families to prepare them for reunification. According to Orach Godfrey Otobi, CPA Child Rights Policy Officer, the rehabilitation period can last from 3 to 6 months or more:

What normally happens is at the center you stay depending on the level of recovery. There is continual assessment to see how you are recovering. So, a lot of assessment is done, because the family also needs to be assessed to see how ready they are for reintegration. Then … the condition – psychological and physical – all those are studied. But the [child] mothers took a little longer at the center … So, at least for them, it has been accepted that they can stay a little longer to let them stabilize … as the center staff try to establish a situation at home. (Personal communication, August 19, 2005)

**Individual, Relationship, Community, and Society Level Interventions**

In terms of the level of operation, six organizations (CEDOVIP, CPA, FIDA (U), HAR, NACWOLA, and PVP) operate at all four levels: individual, relationship, community, and society. Five organizations operate at three different levels of which three CSOs (LIWEPI, LUWODA, TEWPA) focus on individual, relationship, and community levels, and two (AAU and Isis-WICCE) – on individual, community, and society levels. Two organizations (RV and UMWA) operate primarily at the community and society levels (Table 3).

**Individual level interventions.** Of the 13 organizations a total of 11 (AAU, CEDOVIP, CPA, FIDA (U), HAR, Isis-WICCE, LIWEPI, LUWODA, NACWOLA, PVP, and TEWPA) operate at the individual level. These interventions primarily include providing counseling to survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence, as well as providing referral, legal, and indirect medical services to survivors of gender-based
violence. In addition, this category includes capacity building for individuals (women and girls) through training and educational sponsorship as well as economic empowerment through vocational and IGA-related training and loans (to individuals). For a discussion of these strategies see the previous section. Here, I discuss two innovative individual level strategies designed to utilize various opportunities to reach individuals with educational/awareness-raising messages: impromptu discussions and While You Wait sessions. Impromptu discussions is a strategy utilized by CEDOVIP community volunteers and male activists to engage men in the community violence prevention efforts:

We use them to reach out specifically to men because when you invite them for activities, they don’t come. So, you find them at their drinking joint, you find them at their games and you ask: ‘Can I have an opportunity of talking to you? I have an issue that I would like to discuss with you’ … Then as you talk, some of them … take in the message and … will continue refreshing back on the discussion and asking their colleagues: ‘So what can we do to make sure that our relationships are good?’ …. So, we are trying to influence the kind of discussion they are having at their drinking joints and their working places. (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

FIDA (U) developed While You Wait information sessions in order to utilize the time clients spend in FIDA (U) reception room waiting to see legal officers. The sessions cover a variety of topics including marital relationships, HIV/AIDS, family planning, child nurturing, etc. As part of the While You Wait FIDA (U) provides a marriage counselor who can address various questions and concerns a client may have. Currently, While You Wait sessions are conducted only in FIDA (U) legal clinic in the head office in Kampala (FIDA (U), 2004a).

**Relationship level interventions.** Although nine organizations (CEDOVIP, CPA, FIDA (U), HAR, LIWEPI, LUWODA, NACWOLA, PVP, and TEWPA) operate at the relationship level, the interventions at this level are primarily limited to counseling (relationship, marriage, and family) as well as mediation, negotiation, and conflict resolution at the family level. One of the PVP staff members narrates their efforts to mend marriages through counseling:

Their husbands left them and we worked very hard to at least to make the husbands understand that it was not their [women’s] own making, that they were
raped, they got land mined … And we reunited the man – the husband and the wife. (Margaret Atim Tebere, personal communication, September 10, 2005)

In addition to psychosocial support to war affected families, CPA relationship level interventions include organizing Parent Support Groups, increasing parents’ economic well-being through IGAs, and facilitating traditional rituals for cleansing, reconciliation, and healing. All of these are aimed to prepare families for reintegration of FACs and ensure their ability to effectively address such children’s emotional and material needs (Orach Godfrey Otobi, personal communication, August 19, 2005; CPA, 2005).

**Community level interventions.** All 13 CSOs interviewed have numerous interventions at this level including sensitization, awareness raising, and advocacy, capacity building, income-generating activities, and peace-building activities. Of these the most popular are sensitization, awareness raising, and advocacy. AAU work in this area has been directed towards creating awareness within communities to prevent domestic violence and promote respect for and protection of women’s human rights. AAU, together with its partner organizations, implements community level campaigns against domestic violence which target police, religious leaders, district personnel, health service providers, and communities in general. Campaign awareness-raising and sensitization activities about domestic violence and its effects on women and girls consist of workshops, training, distribution of booklets, posters, and T-shirts, drama performances, radio and video shows, newspaper articles, and community dialogue. Campaign efforts also include raising awareness on and mobilizing support for the enactment of fair domestic laws (AAU, 2002, 2003). In addition, in its ongoing advocacy efforts to remove the barriers that hinder girls’ access to education and their retention in schools, AAU has conducted a number of campaigns against defilement and early marriages and has been working to sensitize parents, police, and district authorities about the importance of educating girls. After the realization that cultural institutions “are the custodians of some of the cultural practices that hinder girls’ education” (AAU, 2002, p. 22), AAU has also been working with cultural leaders to address the issue through forums, radio campaigns, and workshops (also see AAU 2003, 2004c).

CEDOVIP, in collaboration with its CVs, carries out community sensitization and awareness-raising activities about domestic violence and its effects on women and girls.
Activities aimed at changing attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate such violence include workshops, radio programs, video shows, booklet clubs, community theatre and dialogue, as well as other public events. In addition, under the Men’s Program CEDOVIP works with 20 trained Male Activists who use a benefits-based approach\(^\text{36}\) to engage men in violence prevention efforts:

We have identified men to go out and reach out to their fellow men – the men who have already internalized our issue, who already know that domestic violence is bad, the major perpetrators are men, and the major victims are women. So, they are going out to tell these men that: ‘You see, we have been brought up and we have been socialized to believe that we are the heads of the family, we are the bosses, we are the commanders in chief, but in a relationship we need to sit down and discuss with our colleagues.’ So, we are helping them to go out and talk to their fellow men and tell them that a relationship is made up of two people who need to sit together and make the decisions together and not one of them being a dictator, and a terrorist in the home. This is the home where everybody is supposed to be happy, you get the basic needs, you get love and care … but if it becomes a torture chamber then it makes no sense. (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

Furthermore, under the Local Activism Department, CEDOVIP works to create supportive environments within beauty salons and barber shops. The organization educates barbers and salon operators about domestic violence and its effects and encourages them to pass the information on to their clients and initiate discussions about these issues (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005).

CPA is engaged in community sensitization to reduce stigma and isolation of FACs, especially child mothers, awareness raising on HIV/AIDS, and advocacy on peace and reconciliation (Orach Godfrey Otobi, personal communication, August 19, 2005).

HAR aims to sensitize communities about children’s rights and their obligations to protect children from abuse and neglect. The organization also implements interventions to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and promotes behavioral change among youth with an emphasis on abstinence through school programs, youth clubs, and life skills education (Margaret Ntakalimaze, personal communication, September 22, 2005).

FIDA (U) believes that knowledge of the law creates a conducive environment for the respect of human rights as “many people violate the law and others have their rights

\(^{36}\) Benefits based approach emphasizes that non-violence benefits the whole family including men (CEDOVIP Website, n.d.-a).
violated simply out of ignorance” (2002, p. 19). Consequently, the organization conducts legal awareness sessions to sensitize communities about gender, law, and human rights, with an emphasis on women’s and children’s rights, and to build the capacity of families and communities to effectively handle their legal problems (FIDA (U), 2002, 2004a). Furthermore, FIDA (U) is engaged in several community level initiatives specifically aimed at promoting children’s rights such as girls’ right to education. For example, in Iganga district the organization works to ensure the capacity of communities to handle cases of child rights abuse through legal aid and legal and human rights awareness raising and uses Child Care Advocates and Child Rights Clubs to promote girls’ right to education. In Tororo and Lira districts FIDA (U) spearheaded advocacy campaigns to eliminate domestic child labor and promote children’s right to education through community sensitization, awareness raising, training of CVs, and economic empowerment of children’s parents (FIDA (U), 2003, 2004a). In 2003, the organization embarked on the Child Right Education Support Services (CRESS) program in partnership with HAR and Save the Children. FIDA (U) is responsible for the Child Rights Advocacy Project under the CRESS program. Through community dialogue, workshops, awareness seminars, information sharing, and consultative forums this project aims to build coalitions with community institutions to ensure adequate protection of children’s rights. It advocates local leaders for appropriate policies to ensure the rights of children are enforced and raises awareness among law enforcement agents, parents, teachers, health workers, and other community members to ensure respect for and protection of children’s rights (FIDA (U), 2003, 2004b).

Isis-WICCE community level interventions include sensitization seminars and workshops carried out to educate women leaders about the importance of information for their personal empowerment and in facilitating their development activities. Sensitization workshops and seminars for rural communities have also been conducted on women’s human rights, impact of armed conflict on women’s sexual and reproductive health, empowering women against poverty, gender and development, women and leadership, and other issues. In addition, Isis-WICCE has sponsored four information units in rural areas operated by local women’s organizations including LUWODA and TEWPA. These information units serve as learning and interaction centers which facilitate skills building
of rural women and girls in ICTs and allow them to access relevant information for

LIWEPI, LUWODA, and TEWPA sensitization efforts are aimed at raising
awareness of women’s human rights in their communities. According to LIWEPI staff
members:

Joyce Opon Acak: Our main objective is to sensitize the women to come up, to be
free, to talk. And, for us, we want them to know their rights, that, you know, nobody should mis-violate [sic] your rights and even for the girl-child. Now in the Lira … culturally, a woman has mainly to reproduce and to be in the kitchen. You are not supposed to talk, you keep quiet. Even if you know things, you keep quiet. And we are saying, ‘No. Please, come up. Talk.’

Rashida Oketcha: The long term plan is to make them aware of their rights. That they would be knowledgeable, they would be able to speak out as women (Personal communication, August 14, 2005)

All three organizations also work to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS, sensitize
communities about the effects of domestic violence, promote girls’ right to education,
and advocate for peace in their areas.

NACWOLA awareness-raising efforts at the community level are aimed at
eliminating discrimination and stigma of women living with HIV/AIDS through outreach
activities, sensitization seminars, stigma talks, and drama:

With fighting stigma and discrimination we have a drama group which is in place.
We go out, we make outreaches, we go to the community, … schools also … We share our life experiences there, we share their questions, we sing, we dance for them … and that’s how we can fight the stigma and the discrimination in the community. That is one move – passing over the information to the community. (NACWOLA, personal communication, August 26, 2005)

The final community level activity discussed here is UMWA Rural Outreach
Program aimed at sensitizing communities about their rights and addressing women’s political, economic, and social marginalization. ROP focuses on the provision and dissemination of information as a means of empowering women and encouraging positive behavioral change in the communities. Topics range from health, family, reproductive and sexual rights to constitutional, political, and economic rights. ROP consists of a variety of activities including workshops, seminars, dialogue, and radio listening clubs. UMWA also encourages women to form drama groups which adapt plays
and compose songs from the issues addressed through ROP for staging in the communities and on private and public media. In addition, seminars conducted by UMWA and radio listeners’ clubs provide information and encourage women to express their views and concerns and find solutions to their problems (Margaret Sentamu Masagazi, personal communication, August 12, 2005; UMWA, 2001a, n.d.-c). According to UMWA:

For women, the program is about awareness raising so they realize their unfair status quo that is skewed against them. It aims to address the socio-cultural values that are militating against their progress and enabling them to stand up for their rights. For men, the program is aimed at enabling them to appreciate why women have to be equal partners in the home and at the national level. For the community, the program aims at providing the necessary information for development. In addition, the community is expected to change their attitudes and appreciate the changing roles in society that are promoting equal gender relations. (2001b, p. 16)

Community level activities also include various capacity building activities of community-based organizations; training of community-based volunteers to provide psychosocial support to survivors of gender-based violence; training of local leaders and community-based paralegals to change their attitudes towards and strengthen their capacity in handling gender-based violence cases; training of local, religious, and cultural leaders and CVs to participate in violence prevention efforts and promote women’s rights in their communities. These have been discussed under primary and secondary level capacity-building interventions. Similarly, community level income-generating and peace-building activities were covered under primary level interventions.

Society level interventions. Ten CSOs (AAU, CEDOVIP, CPA, FIDA (U), HAR, Isis-WICCE, NACWOLA, PVP, RV, and UMWA) participate in society level interventions aimed at addressing the issue of gender-based violence in Uganda (Table 3). The majority of their efforts have been covered in the previous section under primary level sensitization, advocacy, awareness-raising, and lobbying activities. Research, documentation, and publication activities as well as capacity building for NGOs and state professionals, all of which have been discussed under primary and secondary level interventions, can also be categorized as society level interventions. In this section, I
therefore discuss advocacy, sensitization, and some media activities that have not been touched upon so far.

In addition to 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, the DRB Coalition, and other national advocacy efforts against gender-based violence, most CSOs are continuously carrying out various advocacy and awareness-raising activities at society level. For example, CPA has been raising awareness about children’s rights and highlighting the plight of abducted children. CPA founder Angelina Atyam has become a powerful voice for children abducted by the LRA and, in 2002, was awarded the United Nations Prize for Human Rights. The organization also participates in advocacy efforts for non-violent conflict resolution in Northern Uganda (CPA, 2005; Sebunya, Openy, & McKenna, 2004).

In addition to community level peace-building activities, PVP has been involved in advocacy efforts on women’s human rights violations in situations of armed conflict as well as peace and reconciliation activities at the society level. In 2005, PVP founder, Rosalba Oywa, was nominated for the Nobel Peace prize for her achievements in peace work (Mackay, 2005). The organization has also carried out research on the opinions of those most affected by war and used the findings to advocate against the involvement of the International Criminal Court in Northern Uganda:

We did a lot of research, especially the opinions of people on the war. And it helped us, because, you know, the ICC, the International Criminal Court wanted to know whether these people have really forgiven those who had carried atrocity on them. And individually when we went, people had forgiven them on the condition that they just wanted peace – even those who had been affected by the war, who had actually had injury or even had lost a limb, even said … [they had] forgiven those people. What they want is: ‘Let them come home then and then the war ends’… They [the international community] have been pressing very much … for these people should be brought to justice. And we are telling them, even one time we went and advocated telling them: ‘No … we don’t want that, it will jeopardize the peace process that is going on. First of all, let us have the forgiveness’. (Ben Okello Lubanya, personal communication, September 10, 2005)

UMWA is another organization who had a society level peace-building project titled Media and Conflict, Media and Peace Building to raise awareness on issues of armed conflict and peace building in Uganda. As part of the project, UMWA conducted workshops on the role of media in conflict management and peace building in Kampala
and Gulu. In addition, female journalists wrote segments for Mama FM radio station and articles for *The Other Voice* on night commuters, women’s experiences in armed conflict, and other issues affecting Northern Uganda (Margaret Sentamu Masagazi, personal communication, August 12, 2005). Aside from peace building, UMWA society level interventions are aimed at addressing the negative portrayal of women in the media. In addition to its advocacy and lobbying newspaper, UMWA has been running the first women’s radio station in Africa since 2001. Mama FM broadcasts gender sensitive educational programs and provides training and practical experience to female journalists. Similar to *The Other Voice*, the radio station aims to contribute towards the empowerment of women and other marginalized groups in Uganda by increasing their participation in local and national development processes and by highlighting their needs and concerns to policy makers and society in general. The radio station also provides a platform for dialogue on issues of gender inequality and other subjects that women deem important to discuss or call attention to including health, marriage and family, legal issues, land ownership rights, economic empowerment, education, human rights, good governance, leadership, peace building, environment, politics, and culture. In addition, Mama FM advocates and lobbies for gender balance at various levels of decision-making structures both in the government and the private sector (UMWA, 2001b, 2002, n.d.-a).

CEDOVIP Media and Advocacy Department works with print and electronic media to promote a national discussion and public debate about domestic violence as well as to address the negative portrayal of women in the Ugandan media. Through sensitization seminars, workshops, and one-on-one work with journalists CEDOVIP aims to increase ethical reporting, encourage balanced analysis of women’s issues in the media, and decrease sensationalized reporting of gender-based violence issues:

> Sometimes we have journalist seminars to sensitize them on the issues of domestic violence and how, basically, they can report. Because we have always been disappointed by the way they report about these cases. Like they make fun of them … they trivialize the issues, they make sure that people don’t feel that domestic violence is a big issue. So, we bring them on board. We sensitize them and we request them to go and report positively. (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005)
Isis-WICCE, in addition to addressing gender-biased stereotypes in the mainstream media through its publications, uses various platforms and channels of communication to disseminate its research findings and other gender sensitive educational information. These include workshops, seminars, conferences, radio programs, and advocacy campaigns. For example, it organizes national and district level sensitization workshops and seminars, which include CSOs, policy makers, and professionals from various fields, to disseminate its research findings. The organization also uses radio to disseminate information and generate debate among different members of society, stakeholders, and the general public on issues that are of concern to women such as women’s human rights violations in situations of armed conflict, the importance of women’s political participation, and the use of information and communication technologies to promote women’s rights (Isis-WICCE, 2000, 2001a, 2002a, 2003a, 2004a). In addition, since 1998 Isis-WICCE has been conducting Gender and Development Forums that inform activists on gender issues and encourage them to participate in policies and processes that affect women’s lives. These discussions provide a conducive atmosphere for Ugandan civil society, especially the women’s movement, to analyze, debate, and strategize on salient issues. Topics include gender-based violence, women’s human rights, reproductive rights, women’s participation in decision-making structures, affirmative action, etc. (Isis-WICCE, 2000, 2001a).

I have summarized my findings on the time dimensions and levels of operation in Table 3 below. In addition, I am including Table 4 which further breaks down primary and secondary level activities into categories and indicates the number of organizations participating in each. Due to the small number of tertiary level activities and organizations that undertake them, these are omitted from the table.
Table 3. Time Dimension and Level of Operation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Time dimension</th>
<th>Level of operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAU</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDOVIP</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIDA (U)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAR</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis-WICCE</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIWEPI</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUWODA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>NACWOLA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVP</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEWPA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMWA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Primary and Secondary Level Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of organizations implementing activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitization, awareness raising, advocacy, and lobbying</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity-building interventions (not related to IGAs)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research, documentation, information repackaging, and publishing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace building</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic empowerment</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial support</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral services</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect medical services</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence watch groups</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At Risk Factors

All of the organizations interviewed aim to address multiple at risk factors: ranging from 5 factors (PVP) to 16 (AAU). On average the organizations’ programs and activities aim to address 11.5 at risk factors; the median being 12 factors. The factors range from lack of respect for and awareness of women’s human rights, low social and political status of women to armed conflict and poor dress code by girls. Table 5 summarizes all factors and the number of organizations that are working to address each one of them.

Type of Violence

My findings indicate that most organizations adopt a focus on multiple types of violence (especially in terms of the nature of violent acts) they aim to address. While some do focus primarily on certain type(s) of violence, their activities are by no means limited to that/those particular type(s) of violence. Eight organizations (AAU, CPA, FIDA (U), Isis-WICCE, LIWEPI, PVP, RV, TEWPA, and UMWA) focus on all three: family/intimate partner, community, and collective types of violence. Of these AAU, Isis-WICCE, and UMWA have the broadest focus in terms of the specific nature of the violent acts they aim to address which include physical, sexual, psychological, socio-economic, political, and legal violence, as well as traditional harmful practices and commercialized violence. CPA, FIDA (U), LIWEPI, PVP, and TEWPA primarily aim to address physical, sexual, psychological, socio-economic violence, and traditional harmful practices. In addition, FIDA (U) works to address legal violence against women and children. Three organizations (HAR, LUWODA, and NACWOLA) concentrate on two types of violence – family/intimate partner and community violence. Of these, HAR programs and activities aim to address the needs and concerns of survivors of sexual violence, LUWODA focuses on physical, sexual, and socio-economic violence, and NACWOLA mainly aims to address emotional and psychological, physical, and socio-economic violence. Finally, CEDOVIP is the only organization, which primarily focuses on family/intimate partner violence including physical, sexual, psychological, socio-economic family violence. However, as indicated in previous sections, some of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At risk factor</th>
<th>Number of CSOs addressing factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s economic dependency on men, lack of access to and control over resources*</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of respect for and awareness of women’s human rights*</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative cultural practices: early marriage, girl child labor and discrimination, bride price, polygamy, widow inheritance, female genital mutilation*</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigma and silence associated with gender-based violence*</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of respect for and awareness of women’s sexual and reproductive rights*</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low social and/or political status of women*</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms granting men control over female behavior*</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s lack of decision-making power in the household and relationships*</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed conflict and displacement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access to education for girls*</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of awareness about gender-based violence and its effects on women/girls*</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS, discriminatory treatment of women with HIV/AIDS*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital conflict and relationship disharmony</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-supportive environment: discriminatory/biased legislation, policies, and administrative practices*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notion of family as a private sphere, isolation of women*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigid gender roles*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trauma related to violence and abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of respect for and awareness of girls’/children’s rights*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of women’s participation in decision-making processes*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance of violence as a way to resolve conflicts*</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abduction and abuse of women and girls by the LRA*</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender role socialization*</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of legal protection and access to justice by poor women*</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscommunication</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative portrayal of women in the media*</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associating with delinquent peers</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discriminatory treatment of widows*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug abuse and alcoholism</td>
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<td>Forced pregnancy*</td>
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<td>Notions of masculinity linked to dominance and aggression*</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental neglect and lack of parental care and support</td>
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<td>Stigma related to disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Availability of pornographic materials*</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Lack of legal literacy</td>
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<td>Lack of life-skills among youth</td>
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<td>Lack of what to do by young girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor dressing code by girls</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor educational attainment and lack of skills by childmothers/FACs*</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prostitution*</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stigmatization and isolation of FACs by parents and the community*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional beliefs that having sexual intercourse with virgins will cure various diseases, including HIV/AIDS*</td>
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* These factors represent aspects of gender inequality
CEDOVIP national level advocacy and awareness-raising activities aim to address all forms of gender-based violence.

Target at Risk Environments

Due to ongoing armed conflicts and a large population of internally displaced people in Uganda, seven of the CSO interventions (AAU, CPA, Isis-WICCE, LIWEPI, PVP, TEWPA, and UMWA) target areas of armed conflict and IDP camps as especially high risk environments. In addition, due to high levels of domestic and community violence, nine organizations (CEDOVIP, CPA, FIDA (U), HAR, LIWEPI, LUWODA, NACWOLA, PVP, and TEWPA) target homes as at risk environments, five organizations (AAU, CEDOVIP, HAR, NACWOLA, and RV) target schools, and all of the CSOs target communities, especially in the rural areas, as high at risk environments.

Target Populations

In terms of target populations, all of the CSOs in the sample have universal interventions. Eleven of them (AAU, CEDOVIP, CPA, HAR, Isis-WICCE, LIWEPI, LUWODA, PVP, TEWPA, and UMWA) also have selective interventions of which the majority target women and girls, and, in the case of NACWOLA, women and girls living with HIV/AIDS. CEDOVIP is the only organization that has selective interventions which target men. HAR and CPA selective interventions target youth. In addition, CPA selective interventions target war affected families and PVP selective interventions focus on internally displaced people. Ten of the organizations have indicated interventions of which six (CPA, FIDA (U), HAR, Isis-WICCE, NACWOLA, PVP) provide services to survivors of gender-based violence, whereas indicated interventions of CEDOVIP, LIWEPI, LUWODA and TEWPA include counseling for both victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence.
Out of the 13 organizations interviewed, six are working to address women’s strategic needs and are therefore considered explicitly feminist according to my criteria outlined in Chapter 3. These include AAU, CEDOVIP, FIDA (U), Isis-WICCE, RV, and UMWA. Another four organizations (LIWEPI, LUWODA, NACWOLA, and TEWPA) have activities that have low or no transformatory potential as well as interventions that aim to address women’s strategic interests or their practical needs in ways that have high transformatory potential. Thus, on the whole these CSOs are considered implicitly feminist. The last three organizations (CPA, HAR, and PVP) are non-feminist, as they focus purely on women’s practical gender needs in ways that have low or no transformatory potential. I will look at each organization in more detail below.

Explicitly Feminist Organizations

The main objective of AAU work is poverty eradication, however, the organization views poverty as a gender issue, and gender inequality as one of the main causes of poverty:

Key among those things [causes of poverty] is gender inequality and, unless we deal with that, we feel, we shall not have dealt with poverty … the issue of gender inequality and inequity … perpetuate poverty in Uganda and it manifests in so many ways: women’s access and control over resources, the laws that protect women when issues of violence confront them, issues of inheritance when they’ve lost their loved ones, violence in the home, some of the cultural practices that perpetuate that, where we still have a community where you find female genital mutilation is still happening, marital rights, quite many issues. (Christine Achieng, personal communication, September 9, 2005)

The organization therefore aims to ensure that gender analysis informs all of its development work. AAU has developed a gender policy framework to guide the process of achieving gender equity, equality, and women’s empowerment through its work with partner organizations in poverty eradication. Overall, the organization strives to implement all of its programs and activities in ways that address both women’s practical
needs and their strategic interests, with emphasis on the latter. For example, through the Women’s Rights and Gender Program AAU implements as well as supports partner interventions specifically aimed at establishing and promoting women’s rights in Uganda (AAU, 2001, 2002, 2003). As discussed under the primary level interventions, AAU participates in advocacy and lobbying activities to eliminated gender-based violence and to promote gender responsive policy and legislation. In addition, AAU capacity building interventions for women and women’s organizations aim to fulfill one of AAU strategic objectives as well as to address women’s strategic gender interests:

To strengthen women’s movement in Uganda at all levels, by ensuring that poor women are able to understand, demand and protect their rights as guaranteed by the constitution of the country as well as through international commitments made by the GoU [government of Uganda]. (AAU, 2001, p. 20)

Overall, within all five key thematic areas of AAU operation, one of the criteria the organization uses to guide its selection of partner development initiatives to be supported is “the extent to which the initiatives will contribute towards women’s empowerment” (AAU, 2001, p. 17). Within AAU, the Gender Unit takes responsibility for coordinating the mainstreaming of gender in the organization’s work and building the capacity of AAU staff in gender issues (Christine Achieng, personal communication, September 9, 2005). Thus, although AAU does not identify itself as a feminist organization, it clearly demonstrates a commitment towards addressing women’s strategic gender interests and is therefore categorized as explicitly feminist.

CEDOVIP work is based entirely on the program tools designed by RV. Thus, both organizations essentially assume similar outlooks in their work and will be discussed together. CEDOVIP and RV are considered explicitly feminist as they primarily focus on women’s strategic gender needs: eliminating gender-based violence, enhancing the status of women, and promoting their human rights. The organizations aim to prevent violence against women by addressing its root causes through rights-based community awareness-transformation programs. This means that both organizations are devoted to facilitating change in the beliefs that accept and perpetuate a culture of violence against women and building community support structures that uphold women’s rights. Among other things, both organizations participate in the events of the annual global campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence and run a Learning Center to facilitate holistic and
systematic violence prevention programs in Uganda and beyond. The CSOs emphasize that gender inequality is the root cause of gender-based violence. For example, the RV resource guide *Mobilising Communities to Prevent Domestic Violence: A Resource Guide for Organisations in East and Southern Africa* (2003), on which CEDOVIP work is based, states that factors such as poverty, alcohol, difficult living conditions are not the cause of domestic violence, although they may contribute to frustration, disagreements, and conflicts. Instead, it points out that the low status and value that communities place on women is the root cause of domestic violence (Michau & Naker, 2003). Moreover, the guide accentuates the need for all community-based activities to address gender role socialization because

> the unequal power relations between women and men, which begin through the socialization of girls and boys, result in women’s low status and the belief that women have less worth than men. When individuals and communities place less importance and value on women, they fail to respect women’s fundamental human rights. Violence happens in relationships when a man feels entitled to violate a woman’s rights, does not see her as an equal human being, and feels he has authority over her. (Michau and Naker, 2003, p. 68)

Both RV and CEDOVIP also aim to highlight that domestic violence is a public not a private issue and adopt other feminist principles (discussed in Chapter 2) in their work. This includes principles like ‘Never force a woman to tell her story’, ‘Do not assume you know what is right for any woman’, ‘Remember that they are the experts of their own lives – encourage and support them to make decisions themselves’, ‘Do not tell women what to do if they are experiencing violence, help them think through options and decide for themselves’ (RV & UPHOLD, 2005, p. 14). In other words, similar to women-centered feminist support services, CEDOVIP and RV place a strong emphasis on women’s self-determination in all of their activities.

I also consider FIDA (U) an explicitly feminist organization. Although it has some activities such as providing legal services to survivors of gender-based violence, which fall under the ‘Welfarism’ category, by and large, the organization is committed to addressing women’s strategic gender needs. It is dedicated to gender equality and equity and aims “to improve the legal status and promote the empowerment of women through advocacy for gender responsive legislation, policies, and administrative practices” (FIDA (U), 2004a, p. 4). This commitment is illustrated in the organization’s advocacy,
awareness-raising, lobbying, and strategic litigation activities, including participation in 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, the DRB, and women’s land rights campaigns, as discussed in previous sections.

Isis-WICCE is another explicitly feminist organization. Its mission is “to promote justice and empowerment of women globally through documenting violations of women’s rights and facilitating the exchange of information and skills, to strengthen women's capacities, potential, and visibility” (Isis-WICCE, 2003a). The CSO is dedicated to addressing women’s strategic gender interests through its programs and activities including promoting gender equity and equality and working towards elimination of all forms of gender-based violence (details of these activities can be found in previous sections). According to Isis-WICCE Board President, Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro:

"Today we courageously ask pertinent questions: Information for what and for whom? What are our advocacy responsibilities to the people whose lives we document?"

"We at Isis-WICCE are deeply consciencezed into advocacy and the need to change the lives of women for the better. Our commitment to women’s human rights has increased. Our programs on Information and Communication aim at providing fresh data to address the status of women in Africa and in the world. (2003, pp. 38-39)"

In addition, Isis-WICCE is the only organization in my sample that openly embraces a feminist identity in its activities and publications. For example, under its Information and Documentation Program Isis-WICCE coordinates the International Feminist Network, which mobilizes human rights activists worldwide in advocating for an end to violence against women (Isis-WICCE, 2001a). As mentioned in previous sections, Isis-WICCE has expanded its research agenda to document women’s strategies and approaches to peace in Africa in order for “the feminist approach to peace to be recognized and be used to compliment ongoing peace processes on the continent” (Isis-WICCE, 2003b, p. 3). Furthermore, according to its Annual Report (2004), the Gender and Development Forums held in 2004 were “aimed at making a feminist analysis and identifying gender implications of the on-going national level discussions on governance and the empowerment of the civil society to enable them to advocate for women’s human rights” (p. 20).
The last organization in the sample which has adopted an explicitly feminist approach in addressing the issue of gender-based violence is UMWA. Similar to others in this category, UMWA awareness-raising, advocacy, and lobbying activities aim to address women’s strategic gender interests: eliminate gender-based violence, promote gender equality, encourage formulation and implementation of gender sensitive laws, etc. In addition, through ROP and its other activities the organization encourages women and girls to take up careers in journalism, a male dominated field in Uganda, thereby challenging the sexual division of labor in society. Furthermore, an external evaluation report of UMWA activities demonstrated that, in addition to disseminating developmental information to facilitate consciousness raising and attitudinal change among communities on gender issues, ROP has transformative potentials including an increase in women’s participation in leadership:

Women groups that did not exist before the implementation of the ROP programme, have been formed in rural districts …. Women have also had to talk in front of each other in the groups and hereby women had started to take on leadership roles. The women’s groups had formed a platform for their members from which they could more strongly raise their voices. As a result it was stated that women have started to participate more in decision making in community issues. (Ndeezi, Staugård, & Winum, 2000, p. 16)

Thus, while most UMWA activities aim to address women’s strategic needs, even those that address women’s practical needs do so with high transformatory potential and can be classified under ‘Transformed awareness’, ‘Building new and collective relationships’, and ‘Mobilizing around self-identified needs and priorities’.

Implicitly Feminist Organizations

LIWEPI, LUWODA, NACWOLA, and TEWPA approach the issue of violence against women in what I have defined as an implicitly feminist approach. LIWEPI activities primarily address women’s practical gender needs through counseling and IGAs. These qualify as ‘Welfarism’, ‘Participation in needs identification’, and ‘New economic resources’ and have low transformatory potential. According to Joyce Opon Acak, LIWEPI Coordinator:

We thought of bringing them [women] together and training them on income-generating activities using the available resources. Like, we used bottle tops to
make bags, doormats, car mats, … paper to make necklaces, paper necklaces and we trained them on wine making using passion fruit, … pineapples, and oranges with lemons … so they would make the wine and sell it in order to get income, to raise income, for their sustainability. So, in that way, it helped them a lot. Then, in office we had programs like a psychosocial support programs, counseling the women who had problems, who would come in the office (Personal communication, August 14, 2005)

However, the organization is also involved in other activities such as raising women’s and girls’ awareness about their human rights, promoting girls’ right to education and providing educational sponsorship, as well as encouraging women’s participation in peace building. Some of these aim to address women’s strategic interests, while others aim to ‘Transform awareness’ and challenge the cultural norms through which gender inequalities are institutionalized, and therefore have a high transformatory potential. On the whole, LIWEPI efforts are thus considered implicitly feminist.

Likewise, LUWODA aims to address women’s practical needs through ‘Welfarism’ and ‘New economic resources’ interventions, which have low transformatory potential. However, the organization also implements activities aimed at addressing women’s strategic interests or practical needs with high transformatory potential. LUWODA works to improve the social and political status of women in Luwero through leadership skills and human rights training as well as access to relevant information and networking. Furthermore, through awareness-raising, advocacy, sensitization, and other activities the organization aims to reduce gender-based violence and promote respect for women’s human rights within communities. Both of these, as well as the goal of improving the social and political status of women, are strategic in nature, which places LUWODA in the implicitly feminist organizations category.

Another organization which adopts an implicitly feminist approach in its interventions is NACWOLA. The organization aims to address practical concerns of women living with HIV/AIDS as identified by the women themselves:

Our activities have been coming from the problems that we have. We sit in the support group and try to come up with the issues which we feel are really key and they are critical, that we need to do something about them. Then from there we design, we find a way of how we can handle them. Then, we go ahead and look for funds. (NACWOLA, personal communication, August 26, 2005)
This is similar to how Molyneux (1985) describes practical gender needs, which (unlike strategic gender interests, which require a level of feminist consciousness to be identified) “are formulated by the very women themselves who are within these [subordinate] positions, rather than through external interventions” (p. 233, cited in Moser and Levy, 1986, p. 8). Thus, many of NACWOLA programs aim to improve the lives of women living with HIV/AIDS through emotional support, nutritional assistance, access to treatment, and IGAs. These NACWOLA interventions fall under the ‘Welfarism’, ‘Participation in needs identification’, and ‘New economic resources’ stages and as such aim to address women’s practical needs with little or no transformatory potential. In addition to women’s practical needs, NACWOLA also aims to address stigma and discrimination of women living with HIV/AIDS. This includes eliminating self-stigmatization as well as stigmatization and discrimination by family, community, and society members. NACWOLA aims to achieve this through awareness raising and advocacy on the rights of HIV positive women as well as through the empowerment of women living with HIV/AIDS. Through NACWOLA membership, programs, and activities HIV positive women and girls gain their power from within: increase in sense of worth, self-esteem and confidence in their right to exist, and their right to a future, which enables them to take ownership of their life. As one NACWOLA member narrated:

We really contributed to the fight against HIV/AIDS, also the empowerment of women living with HIV, where they can come out and talk boldly, bring out issues which affect them and fight for their rights. And also so that they really fight and live long … Living positively, seeing the value in themselves even if they are HIV positive. (Personal communication, August 26, 2005)

In addition, NACWOLA membership provides safe and supportive social network for women living with HIV/AIDS to share, support each other, and work together in an environment that is sensitive to their needs, which encourages women to strengthen their power with:

Member 2: We are bringing out women. Bringing them on board, learning that it is not the end of your life. You have to be heard.
Member 1: Life must continue.
Member 2: You have to continue doing it. Only that has really helped us recover from that stigma we had. Because it’s like making a new family. We are like a family now. We no longer mind about our other family, where we were born from
– whether they like me or not – I don’t care. I have my own [NACWOLA] family.
(Personal communication, August 26, 2005)

NACWOLA efforts to eliminate self-stigmatization and facilitate empowerment from within of HIV positive women can be considered as part of the ‘Transformed awareness’ stage, while encouraging women to strengthen their power with through supportive networks is equivalent to ‘Building new and collective relationships’; potentially it could also include the next stage ‘Mobilizing around self-identified needs and priorities’. Thus, while NACWOLA aims to address women’s practical needs in ways that have no transformatory potential as well as in ways that have high transformatory potential, I conclude that because of the latter the organization adopts an implicitly feminist approach.

Like most of the organizations discussed here, TEWPA has a welfare component through which it aims to address women’s practical needs in ways that have no transformatory potential. This is especially true in emergency situations where practical needs take priority over strategic interests. According to Cecilia Alupo Engole, TEWPA Coordinator:

We had the Lord Resistance Army conflict which came here in 2003. We had a number of women, children, you know, communities were just lying under trees, under verandas, under hospitals, in schools. And the majority of these … who were really suffering, were the women. So, what we did is go and visit them in the places where they were located … and identified their needs and … what we did was to call upon our friends in Kampala including Isis-WICCE, National Association of Women Organizations … who gave us material assistance to bring to these women … Some of these items included clothing, food stuff, jerry cans, you know, things that a woman really needs to use at home because most of these women ran with barely nothing. And then we also visited women victims who have been shot at, who have been beaten, who have been raped in hospital and again we gave them some kind of assistance again maybe some little sugar here, some soap, some dresses. (Isis-WICCE interview, September 5, 2005)

However, the organization also works on discouraging negative cultural practices such as early marriages, promoting women’s and girls’ human rights, as well as reducing domestic violence in the communities. Moreover, TEWPA capacity-building activities, which aim to empower women and transform their awareness, give women access to, what Kabeer (1994) identified as, “intangible resources of analytical skills, social networks, and solidarity” (p. 245) and therefore have high transformatory potential.
Finally, TEWPA is increasing women’s participation in peace-building processes or, in the words of TEWPA Coordinator, “breaking the monopoly of having men talking about peace” (Cecilia Alupo Engole, Isis-WICCE interview, September 3, 2005) thereby addressing a strategic gender interest of women and challenging the status quo. These interventions place TEWPA in the implicitly feminist organizations category.

Although I have categorized the above organizations as implicitly feminist, there are a few points that should be noted where these organizations uphold cultural biases or implement gender-unaware interventions. For example, although TEWPA uses the rhetoric of women’s empowerment, some of its members subscribe to somewhat of a biological determinism as illustrated by the following statement:

I think women are really in their own way are very, very tolerant. And for them by nature you can just first of all see a woman at home, in her home – the married woman. The man can beat her, can kick her, can abuse her, but she will be very patient and sometimes she will even try to apologize even if she’s not in the wrong. And she has that loving, loving care for her husband and the children. So, a woman is already a peace maker. Because if a woman was not a peace maker in her own way I don’t know how many men would be in the world. They would have all perished because a woman can do anything – she is in the kitchen, she’s cooking food. If somebody, like a man who has just beaten her, he orders her to ‘Give me food!’, she will go and cook and serve him. But if the woman was bitter, having a heart like a man, she would even poison him! But women are not, they are loving, they are always kind. So, women can actually bring peace.
(Member, Isis-WICCE interview, September 3, 2005)

Such views about the “naturalness” of certain characteristics of women that are actually a result of gender specific socialization go against the very essence of feminist theory. Nevertheless, they were echoed in other interviews as well. Moreover, Bruce and Dwyer (1988) caution that viewing women as ‘maternal altruists’, who are naturally willing to undertake additional responsibilities in the interest of family and the community, can lead to exploitation of their unpaid labor without offering them material incentives (cited in Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 1996, p. 7). As Smith (1999) points out, such views and beliefs are primarily a legacy of cultural traditions and biases in which “women are commonly depicted as having a special feeling for peace, which is itself traced to the role of women as mothers who have physically carried their children” (p. 68). Overall, while the views quoted above go against the concept of gender as a social construct, conceptualizing women as inherently peaceful is another contentious matter debated even among
feminists and is beyond the scope of this discussion. Although I felt it was important to bring this subject up, it does not change my classification of TEWPA. Some of TEWPA activities have high transformatory potential which, according to my criteria, qualifies it as an implicitly feminist organization.

Another criticism is that psychosocial support services such as counseling and family therapy offered by LIWEPI, LUWODA, and TEWPA (as well as non-feminist organizations such as PVP) are always directed at reintegrating women who have been abused back into active heterosexuality and family life with the abuser. This can be seen in the narration of a family level counseling case undertaken by a TEWPA Peace Committee member: “Though they are not happy, but they should be together … It was a family thing and in the family thing you will not let the partnership to break because something has happened” (Teresa Alajo, Isis-WICCE interview, September 4, 2005). This is in contrast with feminist women-centered support services (discussed in Chapter 2), that emphasize self-determination and providing unconditional support to women in whatever choices they make. This attitude could partially be explained by the high levels of poverty in Uganda and economic dependency of women on men, whereby if a woman leaves an abusive marriage she may not be able to support herself. Another reason may be a cultural practice of bride wealth, whereby if a woman leaves her abusive spouse her family is supposed to repay the bride wealth money to her husband, which results in pressure from woman’s parents and other relatives to remain in violent relationship regardless of the abuse she is suffering. Finally, religious teachings and belief in the sanctity of marriage may also be an important factor in discouraging women to leave their abusive relationships. Given these economic, cultural, and religious constraints, it is not surprising that LIWEPI, LUWODA, and TEWPA think that the best option for women is to remain in their marriages. In defense of these CSOs it should be noted that their work is not simply aimed at reintegrating the survivor of abuse back into the family life. All of these organizations also offer counseling to the perpetrators of violence and through mediation, family therapy, home visits, and referrals services work to end violence and establish peace within families.
Non-Feminist Organizations

CPA, HAR, and PVP adopt non-feminist approaches in their work as they primarily focus on practical gender needs in ways that have low or no transformatory potential. CPA emphasis is on health and education. Thus, the organization aims to address practical needs of former female abductees through welfare provision (counseling and medical support) as well as vocational training and loans. Moreover, until 2001 the practical needs of child mothers and other female abductees were addressed by CPA in gender blind ways:

I think, it is like [that in] any conflict situation, girls tend to be invisible. Much as people know about them, but they tend to be invisible. So, in most program work there always is some oversight in seeing the situation of girls. So, like in the case in Northern Uganda, there is no special attention paid to the gender differences until the year 2001. All we knew before that time was that girls who have been abducted, when they were in captivity they are given as wives in courts to the commanders and we were informed and we were aware that some children were being born in captivity. So, that was just that, but I think we did not put any contingent planning, to say, alleviate the situation. So, the basic provisions at the rehabilitation centers were basically the same for both, boys and girls, with the exception of like personal effects, like, maybe petticoats, maybe sanitary pads, providing those basics for girls but there was basically no difference. (Orach Godfrey Otobi, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

Although CPA developed a special program in 2001 to address the needs of child mothers, the program still primarily focuses on responding to their immediate practical needs and does not entail strategic goals such as promoting gender equality. It aims to provide child mothers with basic skills to enable them to support themselves and their children. In addition to small start-up capital, micro enterprise development and IGA-related training, they receive training on personal hygiene, reproductive health, and life skills. Overall, in regards to vocational skills received while at the rehabilitation center, female FACs are taught home economics, catering, tailoring, and knitting, while male FACs receive training in building, carpentry, and tailoring (Orach Godfrey Otobi, personal communication, August 19, 2005). This demonstrates that the training offered by CPA aims to address practical gender needs of women and girls to generate income to support themselves (and their children). However, such training does not address their strategic needs and has low transformatory potential. According to Moser and Levy
(1986), while provision of skills training can meet an important practical need, the type of training determines its potential to address strategic gender needs of women. Thus, skills training in areas such as nursing and primary school teaching or, in the CPA case, home economics and knitting, which meet women’s practical gender needs to earn an income, does not challenge the sexual division of labor in society because it prepares women for positions traditionally allocated to them. Such skills training does not address women’s strategic interests. Overall, CPA interventions fall primarily under ‘Welfarism’ and ‘New economic resources’ stages and therefore have low or no transformatory potential and are considered non-feminist. As will be seen below, additional criticisms can be applied towards CPA trauma counseling services from a feminist perspective.

HAR has adopted a psychological/medical rather than feminist approach to addressing the issue of gender-based violence. It primarily aims to treat the psychological consequences of gender-based violence such as trauma through counseling. From a feminist point of view, such psychological trauma-healing methods (also embraced by CPA and PVP), as criticized in Chapter 2, ignore the structural inequalities between men and women which cause and condone violence against women and therefore fail to address the social causes of abuse. Consequently, HAR work aims to address the effects of gender-based violence without addressing the root causes of such violence. The organization also fails to address women’s and girls’ strategic interests or practical needs in ways that have a high transformatory potential. While I have mentioned that the organization’s advocacy aims to promote the rights of women and children, HAR efforts are often limited to raising awareness on psychological effects of gender-based violence. Moreover, in cases of sexual abuse of girls, instead of gender inequality as a root cause of violence, HAR identifies a number of factors which place the blame on girls for the violence they suffer. For example, the organization identifies these factors as causes for defilement\textsuperscript{37} of young girls:

- The need for money by some young girls make them easily lured by men who defile them.
- Lack of what to do by young girls. This makes them roam around and eventually end up in the hands of the defilers.

\textsuperscript{37} Having sexual intercourse with a girl below the age of 18 years with or without her consent (HAR, n.d.-b).
• Due to the lack of hope for the future after dropping out of school, some young girls enter love relationships [italics added] with men for purposes of having a belonging or for economic support.
• Poor dressing code. The poor mode of dressing often excites defilers to fall up younger girls. (HAR, n.d)

From the feminist point of view these factors are outrageous, not to mention that they pertain to children. In addition, HAR can be critiqued for its exclusive focus on abstinence in HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention work. For example, HAR programs for youth aim to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and support children “in their efforts to abstain from sex until they are ready, preferably in marriage” (HAR, 2005, p. 2).

However, a focus on abstinence only fails to take into account the unequal gender power relations in society due to which girls may not have a choice to abstain or negotiate safe sex. Given these criticisms, I conclude that HAR interventions are gender blind in their design and therefore have no transformatory potential.

PVP is the last organization in the sample that has adopted a non-feminist approach in its work. Similar to CPA, PVP activities respond to immediate needs of survivors of gender-based violence. According to Margaret Atim Tebere, PVP Coordinator and Documentation Officer:

[After] the research that was done on women’s experiences of armed conflict, Peoples Voice for Peace found that it was necessary at least to give something to these women who gave their testimony. So, we decided to counsel them first and then take them to the hospital. Because, some were found with the HIV, and some were found, the raped ones, were found torn completely. So, the doctor … assisted them to heal.…

After that we thought that at least these women should not simply wait for hand out. They should do something for themselves. So we taught them how to manage an IGA, that is income-generating activity. (Personal communication, September 10, 2005)

Thus, the organization addresses the practical needs of survivors of gender-based violence through ‘Welfarism’ (counseling and medical services) as well as ‘New economic resources’ (skills and IGA-related training and revolving loan scheme) stages. The IGAs that women undertake under PVP guidance primarily include selling fish and vegetables, brewing beer, selling secondhand clothes, making charcoal, and rearing goats (Tebere, 2003). As such they are a means to tackle poverty, enhance women’s economic independence and their power to support themselves and their children, but their overall
transformatory potential is low, which is why PVP approach is considered to be non-feminist.

**Operational Environments**

Now that I have explored what types of CSOs have emerged in Uganda that are working to address the issue of gender-based violence, where their efforts fit into the public health ecological model for violence prevention, and to what extent they adopt a feminist approach in their interventions, I will analyze how the operational environments of these CSOs facilitate or impede their efforts. Specifically I will discuss the effects of the following:

Internal factors:
- Financial and human resources

External factors:
- Insecurity, poverty, and illiteracy
- Cultural and political environment
- Donors conditions and behavior
- Relations with other CSOs

**Financial and Human Resources**

When it comes to organizational resources, lack of funding was consistently identified as the number one challenge for most organizations. Since none of the organizations are financially self-sustainable, inadequate donor funding limits organizational effectiveness in carrying out their current activities as well as the possibility of organizational growth, introduction of new programs, and increase in the scope of operations. In the words of a LUWODA member:

On many occasions, we find out that our activities are seasoned – we may plan to do something but again you look in the coffer and there’s nothing like money. So,
we may decide to postpone up to when you get something. (Margaret Nassozi Kakembo, personal communication, September 1, 2005).

Furthermore, some organizations note that because of financial constraints they are not only unable to expand their programming (e.g., to include men in their activities), but are also struggling to reach the poorest and most vulnerable women in the communities with their current activities. This is illustrated by LUWODA Publicity Secretary:

Because of limited funds we have not gone very far in training or involving men in our programs … We are currently organizing groups for women in case of creating income-generating activities in order to let them be sustainable … but something which should be much better is to involve men in our programs. Because most of our women are in men’s pockets … each and everything they have to get – they have to get with permission from their husbands …. So, that’s why we need to get some facilitation in case of organizing trainings and workshops for men. Because this is when they would also get to know that they have to sit with their wives and make decision making on … issues concerning their families. Another challenge is … we have not reached every woman in our area. We just pick those who are in leadership system, but we would like to pick every woman from the household and train them how to use their opportunities, how to use their chances, and how to see that they get involved in each and everything which is done in their household. (Madina Zalwango, Isis-WICCE interview, September 1, 2005)

Even when organizations do receive funding the challenge is that it usually comes as a one-time donation not as sustained funding:

We have never had really very sustained funding of our program. Donors come in … the person gives and that’s all. Like for instance, Oprah [Winfrey] just gave us the vehicle, and it was the vehicle. Nothing for fuel. Nothing – it was just the car. The British High Commission – they just said, ‘OK, we’ll furnish for you the office’ and they furnished the office and that was that … But now, like paying for the bills and the like, it wasn’t there. (Orach Godfrey Otobi, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

UMWA Coordinator points out that lack of financial sustainability is a challenge to the organization because if funding was discontinued it would not be able to continue its activities. Even with current donor support UMWA is struggling. According to Margaret Sentamu Masagazi, “having Mama FM … it is really killing us …. Initial capital you have, but the running costs are very high” (Personal communication, August 12, 2005).

In addition to programming, inadequate funding also affects the organizations’ ability to recruit and maintain human resources. Since the major focus of most donors is
on funding programs and activities, Hope Turyasingura notes that “we are finding ourselves having no one who is willing giving funding for the staff and we ask ourselves: ‘How do they expect us to run these programs without salary?’” (Personal communication, August 19, 2005). Consequently, most organizations complain of being understaffed and overworked. For example, RV currently has only two full-time staff members, which they are rapidly outgrowing, according to RV Co-Director Lauri Michau. Thus, when asked how RV manages to implement so much programming with only two staff members she replied:

We have no life, that’s why <laughs>…. It’s awful but it’s true … it’s just a lot of work. You know, when you are starting an organization you have to, kind of, gain credibility in the field. You have to make sure you maintain quality of programs. Fundraising is always hard … we [the founders] can easily take a salary cut, but if you hire someone else on, you have to make sure that you can sustain them and that’s really challenging. (Personal communication, August 24, 2005).

Interview responses suggest that even well established organizations such as UMWA and Isis-WICCE face similar problems. They indicate that inadequate human resources are a limitation to the organizations’ performance as well as a health concern for individual staff members, as illustrated by Isis-WICCE Director:

I think Isis is still lucky that the people who are here at the moment they value, they own [original emphasis] what they are doing. But, I think, it is just too much work for an individual … here you are from Monday to Monday, all the hours beyond 8 hours. You can’t do anything for yourself. People don’t go to the leave they should be going to …. That is a challenge not only to … the organization but for their well-being. I mean someone needs to rest. You cannot deliver, continuously deliver, unless you have a rest to reflect, to think, to create other things you want to do … And it’s not that the people are not there. There are very many people but it is about the resources …. So, without the money you can’t do much and that’s why we go squeezing ourselves, killing our body, to be able to make women achieve something. (Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng, personal communication, September 23, 2005)

It should be pointed out that some of the organizations interviewed, such as PVP and LIWEPI, operate completely on a voluntary basis. Moreover, in the case of LIWEPI, its members use their own money to fund LIWEPI activities due to financial constraints:

Rashida Oketcha: We are using our own money, because we want to help our people. If we sit and fold up our hands, who is going to help them? So we are doing it voluntarily, now for 3 years.
Joyce Opon Acak: And for contacts at times we use our own [cell] phones, our own air times. Personal. Even when we go out camps, we use our own resources. (Personal communication, August 14, 2005)

By and large, regardless of whether or not they have paid staff, all organizations depend on volunteers to carry out most of their activities. CSOs note that this negatively affects the quality of their programming. According to UMWA (2003), the services of volunteers “are not dependable as one isn’t obliged to work as hard as if they were being paid staff” (p. 4). NACWOLA Memory Project evaluation revealed that the organization’s dependency on members as volunteer trainers does not deliver the desired results. As Witter (2004) points out, “many trainers are inexperienced in the training role, some probably having had only a ten-day training of trainers before embarking on such complex and emotionally charged topics” (p. 29).

Overall, the main asset of all these organizations is their dedicated members, staff members, or volunteers who really own the mission and vision of the organization and on whose selfless and tireless work the entire existence of the CSO hinges. However, there are only a few such core people within each CSO. The interview responses suggest that most organizations have a difficult time motivating the remainder of their members, staff, and volunteers due to the lack of tangible rewards. Many, after joining an organization, become inactive because they do not embrace the organization’s altruistic mission or are unable to donate their time to unpaid labor. This is often a source of conflicts within organizations. In particular, such internal conflicts and lack of member motivation and participation is prevalent among member organizations which aim to serve non-members:

We may find amongst some members they are not very happy. You see, this for reasons based in on themselves, but this does not mean that they are going to overrun the vision and the mission of the organization. Some of us are saying ‘No. We must continue until they come to see sense’ …. those are the kind of things that bring in conflict. You know, some of our members do not have the drive to do things even on their own without being asked or without even a salary. So, some of us are saying, ‘But let’s look at the mission and the vision of the organization and, unless we achieve the mission and the vision, then we would have wasted time. So whether there is money or no money, there is work’…. And then of course, there are others who are now saying, ‘Surely, we should be the beneficiaries’ but … again, this takes us back to the vision and the mission of the organization. Who are the beneficiaries? It is that rural woman who is most affected … that’s the woman we should bring her some status, so that is the
immediate beneficiary. (Cecilia Alupo Engole, personal communication, August 14, 2005)

Consequently, in the cases of TEWPA, LIWEPI, and UMWA many registered members participate poorly in organizational activities and do not pay subscription or registration fees (Engole, 2005; Joyce Opon Acak & Rashida Oketcha, personal communication, August 14, 2005; UMWA, 2003). It should be noted that even CSO members who exercise the spirit of volunteerism and donate their time to the organization recognize the limitations of voluntary work. The Coordinator of TEWPA, when asked about lessons learned from their experiences, replied:

Lessons learned is that, to some extent, some of the people in the organization may be right because you cannot go on volunteering all the time … because how do you manage? how do you manage … if you are going to spend all your time doing things for others and then you do nothing for yourself. There’s some truth in it, but it should not be a priority. (Cecilia Alupo Engole, personal communication, August 14, 2005)

Insecurity, Poverty, and Illiteracy

Armed conflict, high levels of poverty, and widespread illiteracy – these external factors make the operational environment of the CSOs very difficult. Armed conflict, in particular, not only impedes the progress of these organizations but, in many cases, forces them to halt their efforts all together. For example, in its 2002 Annual Report AAU indicated that due to the worsening security situation in Northern Uganda it had to evacuate its staff from the Pader district. TEWPA member, Rachel Frances Adyango, points out how insecurity in Teso region disrupts their activities: “Sometimes you can say you want to go and meet the women out there [in Katakwi or Karamoja], but like you go, you find an ambush, and there’s no path. You cannot proceed and then you just come back” (Isis-WICCE interview, September 5, 2005).

In addition, armed conflicts and their consequences continue to interrupt planned programs and activities of CSOs as they divert organizational attention towards emergency response activities in order to attend to the immediate needs of the people:

Our [AAU] interventions in Masindi, Nebbi, Apac, and Kumi were also disrupted to respond to increasing number of refugees running away from LRA rebels. The escalation of the conflict for much of 2003 required the field teams to re-orient their programs to respond to the new challenges. For instance, in Pader the focus
has been to respond to the increasing number of Internally Displaced children in host schools. The needs have ranged from scholastic materials, food, psychosocial counseling and accommodation….

In Katakwi, the other DI [district initiative] that was directly affected by escalation of the LRA conflict, the AAU program was reoriented and the field team took a lead role in coordinating CSOs in the distribution of food items in partnership with World Food Program (WFP). The field teams have also been involved in the coordination of IDP number verification exercises. This has not only exposed the team to enormous risks but also stretched their capacities in handling food distribution, stores management and dealing with other program areas in relatively peaceful parts of the district. (AAU, 2003, pp. 23-24)

The above examples illustrate that operating in such conditions puts the lives of CSO staff members and volunteers at risk. Furthermore, as a CPA staff member pointed out, operating in a situation of a constant emergency does not allow appropriate planning, design, or evaluation of interventions, which can result in ineffectual programs:

The intervention is proving to be inadequate, especially for these victims of gender-based violence, the girls … People are confined in camps, so it’s rather difficult really to do sustained program … So, the situation of the girls still leaves a lot to be done. Then, I will tell you, the thing that we have not been doing a lot of [is] active or proactive research really to find out the best practice, what we need to do, where we need to concentrate … we have been responding on emergencies … but we have never taken like a comprehensive study in a long term approach. (Orach Godfrey Otobi, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

Several CSOs note that constant insecurity, displacement, and poverty pose other challenges as well. The long-term displacement and poverty have traumatized and demoralized many community members. In particular, a majority of the men in the camps have failed to cope with the situation and have turned to alcohol abuse, leaving the burden of ensuring household survival to women (Ben Okello Lubanya & Margaret Atim Tebere, personal communication, September 10, 2005; Joyce Opon Acak & Rashida Oketcha, personal communication, August 14, 2005). Isis-WICCE (2001b, 2002b) notes that, in addition to increased burden of responsibility and work for women, men’s failure to cope with the situation, their frustrations, and alcohol consumption resulted in increased lawlessness and violence at the community and family levels. All of this makes implementing community level interventions difficult for CSOs:

Working with the community, it’s quite challenging in how you can generate and sustain their interests. Because, due to the war, people have lost almost all sources
of livelihood. So, when you approach the community and you want like to do something with them, people always want to know what they could benefit immediately. Without looking at the long-term benefit they will derive from that. So, they want immediate benefit. (Orach Godfrey Otobi, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

Overall, high levels of poverty impede CSO activities both in areas of armed conflict and peaceful areas of Uganda. This is illustrated by the UMWA Coordinator:

When you’re dealing in information as an organization you go sensitize people. You know, this is very good … but in a poverty stricken country one always asks: ‘We don’t eat information’. And you know … if you get information or knowledge, it is a road to progress … but for people … their immediate problem is food… they keep on asking: ‘We need food. We need money. We need financial [support] …’ But for us we used to keep on emphasizing: ‘We don’t deal in that. We’re just providing information, link you to the service providers, where they are, and how you can do it.’ But of course, you could keep on getting those demands from people. (Margaret Sentamu Masagazi, personal communication, August 12, 2005)

Consequently, as part of the UMWA rural outreach initiative, ROP coordinators carry lunch allowances for women’s radio listeners groups to encourage their attendance in sensitization workshops (UMWA, n.d.-c). However, UMWA notes that even such incentives are not sufficient because once beneficiaries feel that they received sufficient knowledge, they start to demand tangible benefits such as loans and various handouts, which UMWA cannot provide. As a result, there is a high turnover of ROP members, which negatively affects the project: “Almost on any visit there were new members who required sensitization on topics that had already been addressed, thus delaying the process” (UMWA, 2001a, p. 48). Several organizations also point out that without material incentives people are not motivated to attend workshops, trainings, or other activities. These incentives include meals, transport refunds, allowances, etc. Thus, workshop participants’ expectations instead of ‘gaining knowledge’ often include ‘enough transport refund’, ‘get allowance’, ‘get good feeding’, etc. (TEWPA, 2005a, p.2). According to Ben Okello Lubanya:

If you organize a seminar when they know that there is a transport [money], they would come. And if you organize a seminar and you say there is no transport, few would come. Because of the financial gain. And yet … it is the learning which would make the person survive. (Personal communication, September 10, 2005)
While some organizations face a lack of interest in their activities by communities due to high poverty levels, others, such as NACWOLA, are overburdened with their members dependency on the organization also because of poverty:

Member 2: Another challenge we have is that our organization is for women, but majority of them are widows. Now, when it comes that most of these women are just house wives, so when the husband dies, that means she takes over that responsibility of maybe looking over that home. You are not working, you don’t have any time to. So, these women are overburdened. On top of being HIV positive, they have to take over all that full responsibility, and look for alternatives, which is difficult.

Member 1: So that causes about, sort of, overdependence on the organization. Because this is like for nutritional purposes: ‘Let me go to NACWOLA, so that I can also be a beneficiary of the nutritional support’… when that one is given, they come and say ‘school fees’, which is another big problem that we are having. You know, it has really become hard. Everything is NACWOLA. (Personal communication, August 26, 2005)

Other challenges associated with poverty include poor infrastructure such as impenetrable roads that make traveling for CSO staff very difficult and lack of electricity that reduces their ability to carry out activities such as educational video shows. Furthermore, high illiteracy levels impede organizations’ efforts in achieving their objectives:

Most women are illiterate, yet the information required for their emancipation is in print and electronic form. As if this is not enough, the information is not in their local languages. This leaves many women uninformed about developmental issues. This is worsened by the poor flow of information (especially gender information) to the rural areas, the cultural norms and attitudes the community may have towards feminism and gender. (Ochieng, 1998, p. 36)

Cultural and Political Environments

Several organizations have identified patriarchy as one of the major challenges they are facing in their activities. Due to the prevalent cultural norms that silence and subordinate women, CSO staff members and volunteers face resistance from various community and society members in their work. According to TEWPA Coordinator:

The challenges are numerous. One of them is: We are being misunderstood as a peace activist. People, especially who may not want peace, say: ‘Ah! That one is always spoiling our women’. You know, when we talk about empowering women, they say: ‘That one is spoiling our women’. But it is not spoiling, it’s just that sometimes people want the culture to go on suppressing a woman, you know?
... so that is a big challenge, you know, in a male dominated society. (Cecilia Alupo Engole, Isis-WICCE interview, September 5, 2005)

LIWEPI Secretary also notes that as a woman activists, who speaks in public and advocates for women’s rights, she faces negative consequences: “When, say, a woman is vocal, you are taunted, given names: ‘mad woman’, ‘prostitute’. Because you are fond of moving out [leaving the house], they call you prostitute, because you are vocal they call you mad” (Rashida Oketcha, personal communication, August 14, 2005). In addition, organizations point out that patriarchal cultural traditions and practices interfere with their efforts to deliver services to women and, in particular, hinder women’s ability to attend workshops and other training activities outside the household:

Men are so possessive of their women. They don’t want their women to go out of their homes! [original emphasis] A woman could be just sneak[ing] out to come and attend a workshop for specific hours and runs back. So, some men refuse their women to participate or to commune with other women thinking that … when women go out to meet others … they share information about their homes and that they may get spoiled. So, in some areas, you may invite women and very few turn up. Why? Their men say: ‘Don’t go [original emphasis]. You are going to get spoiled.’ (Margaret Nassozi Kakembo, personal communication, September 1, 2005)

Isis-WICCE Director points out that the patriarchal mainstream media sabotages the efforts of CSOs working to raise awareness about gender-based violence and advocating for women’s rights and other related issues:

The biggest challenge is that the mainstream media, which is best accessed by the majority, tends to marginalize women’s realities. It goes further to even print harmful, women-hating, violence-inciting articles and information on and about women ….

At the decision making level, the Uganda print media have gone beyond commercializing women as sex objects to the extent of ridiculing their achievements. Most Uganda local papers have taken it upon themselves to minimize and ridicule women’s potential achievements in the political arena by sexualizing their positions of power ….

In Uganda, whenever cases of sexual abuse are reported in the media they are made to appear to be for ‘entertainment’ purposes or to boost the sales of the paper rather than to enlist corrective actions. Most of the reporting is done in such a way that the victim of sexual abuse is portrayed as the one in the wrong. (Ochieng, 1998, pp. 36, 41, 42)
In addition, the Ugandan mainstream media is effectively silencing women’s real voices sometimes without and sometimes with government assistance. For example, when several women’s CSOs organized a V-Day Kampala event in February 2005, the Ugandan Media Council and the Cabinet banned the performance of the play *The Vagina Monologues* and threatened the organizers with arrest if they attempted to carry on with the production (“Overview of V-Day,” n.d.). In a press briefing, James Nsaba Buturo, the Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, stated that the play would corrupt public morals, that its title is “both indecent and tasteless”, and its author, Eve Ensler, “is a known lesbian who lives with another lesbian. She worships the female sexual organ seeing it as her god!” (Buturo, 2005). Consequently, in the ruling the Media Council stated: “To the extent that the play promotes illegal, unnatural sexual acts, homosexuality and prostitution, it should be and is hereby banned” (“Uganda Bans,” 2005).

Above all, most CSOs emphasize that patriarchy embedded in governmental institutions as well as political interference result in a very challenging political environment for CSOs, particularly women’s organizations, to operate in. According to AAU Annual Report (2002):

> The recent debate in the parliament over the Family Bill was very interesting. It brought to light the real hurdles that face the women’s movement in Uganda. The patriarchal mindsets of its leaders. The many who believe that women have little role other than to produce children. That they are destined to be married to, used and then thrown out of their houses when they become inconvenient. That protecting their interest by providing them with security of tenure over their own houses would threaten national interest as it would hamper property expansion and wealth generation. (p. 2)

Isis-WICCE Associate Director emphasizes that, due to patriarchal governance in Uganda, women peace activists “have to not just to knock gently, but to break the door and demand that they get included in the [peace] processes” (Jessica Babihuga Nkuuhe, Isis-WICCE interview, September 23, 2005). The challenges that women face in their work are numerous as noted by LUWODA Coordinator, Margaret Nassozi Kakembo:

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38 V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. Through V-Day campaigns activists produce annual benefit performances of Eve Ensler’s play *The Vagina Monologues* to increase awareness about gender based violence, raise funds, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence groups and organizations. *The Vagina Monologues* is based on interviews with over 200 women from around the world. The play celebrates female sexuality and also brings into light the abuses women suffer. It has been performed in over 70 countries to date (“About V-Day,” n.d.; “Eve Ensler,” n.d.).
Some of our leaders at different levels have sometimes not cooperated. Many of them, when they look at a woman, they think ‘There’s nothing good that can come out of a woman’. So, some of them, when we go there, talk to them, ask them to help in facilitating us to reach their women, and talk to them about the issues of peace, we find out that, sometimes some of them shun us out. They don’t want us because they think we don’t know. They think they know a lot. And sometimes we are deprived of reaching our women because of such leaders. (Isis-WICCE Interview, September 1, 2005)

Furthermore, FIDA (U) notes that, in addition to patriarchal administrative practices and mindsets of politicians, gender biases are also embedded in gender discriminatory legislation and the lack of comprehensive reform of most laws to conform with the constitutional provisions and international conventions ratified by Uganda. Customary practices, in particular, undermine the status and dignity of women and girls. Overall, the continued legal sanctioning of discriminatory laws and practices, especially the dual legal system of customary and statutory laws, remains a major challenge (FIDA (U), 2004c).

FIDA (U) and other organizations emphasize the lack of political will as the main factor in government’s failure to address the issue of violence against women, which accordingly encumbers the work of these CSOs. Although the government has adopted a gender sensitive Constitution, the constitutional provisions which would improve the status of women have not been implemented. Moreover, despite the rhetoric concerning women’s participation in decision making and development, these promises have not been followed with concrete actions. Isis-WICCE Director emphasizes this in relation to women’s participation in peace-building processes:

Every time women talk – it’s not an issue. The patriarchy has taken so much root that the marginalization of women’s voices for peace and how they want peace to be built is not being heard, it’s not there. So, governments need to uproot the whole patriarchy system and take the responsibility of giving women more space, more opportunities, to educate them so that they reach the levels that they will be integrated into the governance system and make an impact. I know, government of Uganda says: ‘Oh, but we have a third of women in parliament, even in governance at the local [level].’ What is the use of putting people in those structures when they don’t have the know how? (Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng, Isis-WICCE interview, September 24, 2005)

Other CSOs emphasize that nowhere is the lack of political will more visible than when it comes to family law and the disappointing results of the ongoing DRB campaign. In a presidential communication on the DRB of October 25, 2002, Yoweri Museveni
expressed his patriarchal and traditionalist mindset towards women and the Domestic Relations Bill. One of his arguments against the Bill is that it would encourage women to exploit marriages for the purposes of divorcing and grabbing property (Kharono, 2003; Mishambi, 2003). Furthermore, the President argues that the DRB is trying to mimic Western values and ways of life, which he feels have led to the downfall of family values and humanity (Mishambi, 2003). Instead, the President proposes a Harmonized Code to rationalize the lives of Ugandan people, to “bring discipline in the society, make families cohesive and save the world from the mistakes of the West” (cited in Kharono, 2003). To accomplish this, one of his suggestions is to allow each tribe in Uganda to be governed by its respective tribal codes and customs. As it is, the current dual legal system already undermines the rights of women and girls. The proposal made by the President would be a further step backwards and violate the constitutional framework that provides universal principles and values for the entire country (Kharono, 2003). Thus, the President’s very vocal personal views about the DRB are incongruent with the principles of equality found in the Ugandan Constitution. Overall, the Ugandan leadership has yet to live up to its rhetoric and promises to empower women:

I think this government in particular – it’s actually a little bit dangerous because they’ve done a lot of public things for women around women’s participation but … I think, that they are very scared to talk about personal issues that will … rock the status quo. You can talk about UPE and who’s gonna say no to that? You can talk about women’s participation and OK, that doesn’t necessarily fundamentally question the broader picture of women’s status in their families and in their relationships. And, I think, that they’ve been very good at window dressing and very poor at real concrete measures like the DRB. I mean, it’s not gonna go anywhere. I mean it’s 40 years now and DRB doesn’t even talk about violence, you know, I mean, violence isn’t even in the DRB. The sexual assault and domestic violence bill, I mean, god knows where that is. Nobody can ever find it. It’s supposed to be there, we’ve read it. We’ve all read it, we’ve contributed to it, and then it just gets lost. So … I think that there’s a very negative climate in Uganda around the issue of domestic violence. Policy makers within the government, I don’t think wanna touch it. So, I think, it stays under ground. (Anonymous)

Due to such prevalent gender biases, it is not surprising that few women’s organizations have good networking relations with the Ugandan government. In response to my question about networking relations with the government, UMWA Coordinator replied:
We … work with government sometimes, but many times they do lip service and then they threaten you. They don’t support you as government … Once you make a small statement they come running after you …. With government … I think it’s much more on co-existence. (Margaret Sentamu Masagazi, personal communication, August 12, 2005)

Similar responses came from other interviewees as well: “I wouldn’t call it networking with them. We network with other NGOs …. but the government – we look at it more as a body that we target with our programs” (Christine Achieng, personal communication, September 9, 2005); “Ha! Government – we would very much want to work with them, but they are not opening to us” (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005). However, CEDOVIP Capacity Building Officer noted that, at least, their organization operates in a conducive environment as they have been allowed to carry out activities without any interruptions. This is not the case with all CSOs; interview responses indicate that some organizations do face political interference in their activities. TEWPA Coordinator points out that the organization’s activities are hindered by “political interference because when we go talking to these women, some people think we are politicizing, we are talking politics, which is not the case” (Isis-WICCE Interview, 2005). TEWPA member, Rachel Frances Adyango, elaborates further:

We are in this peace building, we’re women group [yet] several times they [local leaders] have misconceived our organization as being in the opposition with government. So, this gives us a problem, because when government starts looking at you as, though you are in opposition a bit, it becomes difficult and yet for you are trying really see how to help the women. (Isis-WICCE interview, September 5, 2005)

To avoid any such problems TEWPA as well as LIWEPI are trying to be transparent and continuously report to district authorities about their activities. In addition, both CSOs have been soliciting support from local leaders trying to involve them in organizational activities (Rachel Frances Adyango, Isis-WICCE interview, September 5, 2005; Joyce Opon Acak & Rashida Oketcha, personal communication, August 14, 2005).

Apart from all these challenges, CSOs are now faced with an additional one at the national level. Despite lobbying by Ugandan NGOs and CBOs, on April 7, 2006, the Parliament passed ‘The Non-Governmental Organizations Registration (Amendment) Bill’ (‘The NGO Bill’). This stringent bill, according to AAU, “not just underestimates
the contribution made by the civil society in this country; it promises to fetter them in endless chains of bureaucracy, almost treats them as criminals and hopes to close further the spaces for dissent” (2002, p. 4). If before signing it into law the President does not take into consideration the concerns expressed by the CSO community, the NGO Bill would, among other things, complicate the CSO registration process, requiring that organizations obtain a special permit from the National Board (which has no CSO representatives) before they can operate. According to HRW (2001), this law would increase the Board’s power to reject or invalidate an NGO’s registration and would raise penalties for operating without official authorization which, in turn, would increase the possibility of legitimate NGO activities being criminalized. Overall, according to the Coalition on Non-Governmental Organizations (Amendment) Bill (2006), if the Bill becomes an operating law it will “undermine the operations of NGOs and usurp their independence and autonomy” (p. 1).

**Donor Conditions and Behavior**

I previously discussed the scarcity of funding and donor dependency as one of the major factors constraining these CSOs. Here I will look at how donor conditions and behaviors challenge these organizations. In particular, several CSOs point out that donors are often biased against interventions which do not bring immediate tangible results and instead focus on promoting qualitative changes in communities and society. According to Rosalba Oywa:

> Peace building is not part of the work you see tangible results coming out, so most donors don’t understand when you say you are working in the field of peace building. They don’t see the tangible results like houses being built and many other things. So, they think you are doing nothing, but if we can continue documenting these experiences to show the changes – the quality changes in people’s lives on a day to day basis, then we might in the long run be able to convince the donors, be able to convince other policy makers that it is part of the activities which need funding. (Isis-WCCE interview, September 10, 2005)

Isis-WICCE Director notes that when it comes to the time consuming and expensive issues of research, information, and education it is very difficult to get funding because donors prefer projects that produce immediate and visible results such as schools being built or boreholes being dug. Research, in particular, has been sidelined by donors as an
activity for universities and not CSOs. But, according to Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng, Ugandan university researchers have yet to take on women’s issues and the approach of academic research is very different from Isis-WICCE approach: “The issue we’re dealing with of conflict and human rights abuse – you need time, you need space, you need to understand what this woman’s body is saying and those are days and months” (Personal communication, September 23, 2005).

Because of such donor biases, RV is involved in advocacy to increase funding for violence prevention programs as well as regional efforts to develop indicators to measure social change in communities. RV Co-Director, Lauri Michau, explains:

One of our biggest challenges has been to prove and show evidence that violence prevention works and is a sustainable approach. I think that we can see it in the community, but how to document it in a way in which it makes sense to donors who are looking for the bottom line is an incredible challenge … Because how do you measure social change? If you are measuring one individual through a process of workshops and how his or her attitude has changed, it’s very clear. You’ve got a group of thirty people and you ask them questions. How do you do that to communities of 300,000, of a half a million, of the country? That if we’re doing national level advocacy and media and awareness raising, how are you measuring, if you don’t have a massive unit to do constant research, quantitative research? Because donors want the numbers ….

I think, the other [challenge] is to really convince donors that one-off and sexy activities don’t necessarily work. But fine, they might want to fund this little neat, tight thing that takes 6 months, but that’s not going to be long-term sustained change. But that’s what looks good on paper and in reports. And this process of community mobilization is messy, it’s totally not linear, it’s not easy, it’s complex, it’s messy, it’s life. And that does not fit well within donor timeframes, you know? It just doesn’t. [Interviewer: ‘They want clear cut?’] Exactly. This was accomplished, this was accomplished, and this was accomplished. Funny, a lot of prevention efforts right now … try to show their impact by number of activities conducted, number of people reached, but we have to move beyond that now in the field. We have to say, ‘OK. We have some way of tracking attitudinal and behavioral change.’ And nobody really knows how to do that yet. But we’re trying. (Personal communication, August, 24, 2005)

In addition to donor funding conditions, NACWOLA brought attention to another problematic issue related to donor behavior. NACWOLA members pointed out that donor field visits to HIV/AIDS affected families, especially child-headed ones, can be both stigmatizing and traumatizing:
Member 1: When the donors come and they say ‘Oh, we want child-headed families’, they come driving cars ... And then it’s like when the community sees, it’s like they have come to support them [the HIV/AIDS affected family]. At the end of the day – you walk away. You’ve gathered all of the information ... but you’ve left the family with no support. And the community around is going to look at this person as somebody who has got support .... In a way they [the HIV/AIDS affected family] are stigmatized because, at the end of the day, they are the reason why people are coming there. And even the community will want to find out why people are always going there. And in a way they will start to stigmatize them .... You also have some stigma in some children. After sometime like they don’t want it [visits from donors] anymore because it is stigmatizing ... which is also another challenge because the donors come and that’s where they want to go. (Personal communication, August 26, 2005)

When possible, NACWOLA tries to convince donor representatives not to visit people who reside deep in rural areas or requests that they at least give some material support to the family/children who are interviewed as a way to compensate for this traumatizing experience. According to NACWOLA members:

Member 3: At least they will have something to show for that moment. Because even just talking, telling your experience, being asked questions, there is a way it takes you back ... there is a way that they affect you psychologically .... So, when you [donors] go away... then you leave them in their house hurting inside.
Member 2: Affected.
Member 3: Yeah, for some time. So, we try to overcome that by the material support, but sometimes it comes back as counseling issues. (NACWOLA, personal communication, August 26, 2005)

Despite NACWOLA efforts to minimize the damage, the stigmatizing experience of donor visits to some of NACWOLA members is worse than the poverty they have to face. Thus, they have decided to refuse greatly needed support.

Relations With Other CSOs: Competition and Networking

Relations with other CSOs is an external factor in the operational environment of the Ugandan CSOs which has the potential to facilitate their efforts. Although, similar to the external factors discussed above, it can also impede them. This, of course, depends on whether the relations with other CSOs are networking or competition. Responses indicate that this varies from organization to organization. For example, LIWEPI operates in an environment where there has been more competition than networking between the CSOs (Joyce Opon Acak & Rashida Oketcha, personal communication, August 14, 2005).
the case of CEDOVIP it is both – the organization networks with some CSOs, however there is also an element of competition:

With other organizations – yes, we network with them, but sometimes you find it’s on a limited [basis] … because … sometimes we have this competition on resources. So, like when you have a good idea and you feel if you sent out, then other people will hijack it from you and then they grab your donors and whatever. Yes. So, sometimes it is not as smooth but we network with very many organizations. (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

On the other hand, some CSOs emphasize that their networking connections are an important strategy in achieving organizational goals and objectives:

On a number of occasions many individuals and organizations have wondered how we manage to accomplish so much with such a small size of staff. The answer lies in opening up and working with others. Since its inception, Isis-WICCE has made networking, collaborations, and coalitions central to its strategic plans. We believe in working with others to produce quality work and therefore, we try to tap the relevant human resources around us to accomplish our planned activities. (Isis-WICCE, 2001a, p. 3)

FIDA (U) also emphasizes that the linkages it has established with other CSOs have facilitated information sharing and have benefited organization’s programs and activities. The CSO believes that “when enough activism and attention is brought to an issue, a critical mass is achieved which forces change to be achieved. As such FIDA (U) seeks and is sought to create networks with partners across numerous diverse sectors” (2003, p. 26).

Overall, the majority of the organizations interviewed emphasize the importance of networking as a way to strengthen civil society in Uganda and maximize their impact in bringing positive changes to the lives of Ugandan women and girls. Although competition for limited resources is a concern, most CSOs network with other organizations and belong to various networks and coalitions in order to extend both their reach and their effectiveness.
What Do Ugandan CSOs Feel They Have Learned From Their Experiences?

Most of the CSO representatives interviewed were asked about their ‘lessons learned’. While some of the replies indicate more personal lessons learned, others pertain specifically to their organization. In this section I highlight some of the common responses that give us insight into what the CSOs themselves feel they have learned from their experiences.

Addressing the Causes Instead of the Symptoms of Violence

Both interview responses and CSOs’ focus on primary level activities indicate the importance they place on addressing the root causes of gender-based violence before it occurs, rather than implementing interventions to minimize the damage (symptoms) of violence after it has already happened. Michau and Naker (2003) from RV point out that, in order to affect long-term, sustainable change, organizations can adopt a proactive rather than a reactive stance. A preventative approach assumes it is not enough to provide services to women experiencing violence or to promote an end to violence without challenging communities to examine the assumptions that perpetuate it. Prevention involves addressing the root causes of violence against women by introducing a gender-based analysis of domestic violence. This means recognizing women's low status and rigid gender roles as the root causes of domestic violence. Prevention work involves challenging the widely held belief that women are less valuable as human beings and therefore not worthy of possessing the same inherent rights and dignity as men. Efforts must expose this fundamental injustice and work proactively to challenge these assumptions. (p. 13)

CEDOVIP Capacity Building Officer also emphasizes that in order to effectively address the problem of gender-based violence a proactive approach is needed. However, she points out that to achieve best results such efforts should, nevertheless, be combined with service provision for survivors of gender-based violence:

We wanted to shy away from providing services. We wanted to be specifically for prevention, but as we conducted our awareness-raising phase people developed some trust in us. They saw that we are talking some sense, but violence was still
happening. It cannot stop all of a sudden … although they have seen that it is bad and it has bad effects, it continues. So, after it has happened where do these people [affected by violence] go? (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

Thus, while the primary focus should be on addressing the root causes of gender-based violence, interventions are also needed to address the needs of survivors of such violence. This suggests that an organization working to address the issue of gender-based violence either should adopt a holistic approach and implement primary, secondary, as well as tertiary level interventions or, should specialize in primary or other level intervention(s) and establish good referral/networking mechanisms with other organizations which specialize in different level activities. Of course, the latter would be a more efficient and conceivably more feasible option given the limited resources most CSOs have at their disposal.

Involving Men and Other Community Members

Many of the organizations that primarily focus on women as well as the ones that currently work with men emphasize the importance of involving men in violence prevention efforts. As CEDO VIP staff member points out: “Since the major perpetrators are men, they have to get the information. If you only empower the woman – she goes back home and she is disempowered!” (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005). LUWODA Coordinator notes that the organization started involving men to minimize their backlash and entrenched resistance to women’s empowerment:

With time we have started involving men because we found out that when you train women alone, again when they go back [home] the men [original emphasis] change the whole process. So sometimes we involve some few number of men to act as ambassadors to other men. (Margaret Nassozi Kakembo, personal communication, September 1, 2005)

Overall, organizations emphasize that violence prevention efforts should include all community members. Efforts that engage selected groups fail to take into the account the complex relationships that exist between various community members. Thus, to generate sufficient momentum for social change violence prevention efforts must creatively engage a cross-section of community members, including youth and children, as illustrated by the LUWODA Coordinator:
There’s need to bring on board all. Not only women [but] everybody – be it children, young boys and girls. And we are organizing to start up a program of reaching out to schools, to start peace education in the schools such that the children grow knowing the details about peace, how we can maintain peace, the importance of having peace for development. Could be if we start there, by the time our generation is over, it will be automatic that our children will know each and everything about peace and practice everything about for sustainable peace. (Margaret Nassozi Kakembo, Isis-WICCE interview, September 1, 2005)

Moreover, engaging the entire community in the process means using community-based strategies which support and empower communities to make changes. This in turn promotes community ownership of the work and ensures sustainability of violence prevention interventions. Michau and Naker (2003) emphasize that while CSOs must play a supportive role in facilitating the change and strengthening the capacity of community members and institutions, “the change must occur in the hearts and minds of the community members themselves” (p. 14). Moreover, in order to ensure community ownership and sustainability of violence prevention interventions, the value system and attitudes prevalent within a community must be chosen and directed by the community itself and not mandated by the outside forces as noted by a PVP staff member:

It is the community based approach which needs to be enhanced. We also learned that by making the beneficiaries part and parcel of the project, or the programs … the programs can really materialize then and be effective. Because through their participation they own that program. But when you come and impose on them, then they feel that this is somebody’s program being brought to them. And when it is left for them to be managed, then they just leave it like that. (Arop Francis Omuk, personal communication, September 10, 2005)

Although it may not be easy, a community-based approach to violence prevention can be very effective because empowered communities, even in difficult environments such as IDP camps, have a lot of potential:

What I’ve also learned is that the community when they are empowered, they can really be useful in society. The reason why I say that is I throw back my memory on these solidarity groups which we have instituted. These solidarity groups, they are working on our behalf now in the community … To carry out their work within that IDP camp, they have their days for community sensitization, on conflict resolution and peace building, they have their days to sensitize on health and sanitation, they have their days to sensitize on HIV problems. So, we just empowered them on peace building … and they are doing a great job. (Arop Francis Omuk, personal communication, September 10, 2005)
Importance of Appropriate Methods and Strategies

Gender-based violence is a sensitive issue in the patriarchal context of Uganda. Thus, in order to enhance communities’ reception and overcome initial resistance (especially from men), appropriate communication and delivery strategies are essential. CSOs emphasize that given the patriarchal environment and variety of cultural contexts, the universality of human rights framework may be the best starting point in the fight against gender-based violence in Uganda. Indeed, RV and many other CSOs interviewed have adopted a rights-based framework to violence prevention in order to create a legitimate channel for discussing women's needs and priorities. This framework, according to RV,

is empowering. Violence prevention programs that are not based on human rights tend to resort to appealing to the kindness or benevolence of men. This means that men are encouraged to ‘take better care’, ‘be a better partner’, ‘be kind to their partner’, etc. This keeps women in a dependent and passive position, waiting and hoping that the men will stop using violence. Alternatively, a human rights approach means that women can legitimately call for their human rights and men can legitimately be held accountable to a universal human rights principle. (RV & UPHOLD, 2005, pp. 9-10)

Consequently, using a rights-based framework allows the construction of gender-based violence problem as a community responsibility, not as a ‘women’s problem’. According to Michau and Naker (2003), it “holds the community accountable for treating women as valuable and equal human beings. Moreover, human rights approach challenges community members to examine and assess their value system and empowers them to make meaningful and sustainable change” (p. 14). However, RV Co-Director, cautions that even human rights approach may be too radical in the context of Uganda:

Making bold assertions about women’s rights in the context of many communities in East Africa scares people – women included. Rights remain statements, assertions to which others react along a spectrum of agreement or disagreement. People can take it or leave. It has little personal consequence (if one chooses not to engage) and rights therefore essentially remain the ‘problem’ of women. (Michau, 2002, p. 44)

Thus, while not diluting the message of women’s fundamental human rights, RV emphasizes the benefits-based human rights approach, which demonstrates that there are rewards associated with promoting women’s rights not just to the women but to the
community at large (Lauri Michau, personal communication, August 24, 2005). CEDOVIP Capacity Building Officer adds that, in addition to the benefits-based approach, it is crucial to approach people, especially men, in the right way. Though it is important to hold men accountable for violence, one should not blame or judge. Instead, through constructive discussions the organization should help people to reflect on and critically examine their relationships, their lives, and the choices they make and assist them in identifying what alternatives there might be in order to have more harmonious relationships (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005). Michau (2002) suggests that in patriarchal societies such as Uganda, approaching violence against women from the angle of family safety, harmony, and happiness encourages community dialogue. “It doesn’t automatically scare people or anger them. It may sound like a less powerful and radical stance, but we find that it has seriously radical potential” (p. 44).

The success of this approach is also illustrated by CEDOVIP experience:

Before they [community members] were thinking that we are giving women big heads, we are giving them information and they are becoming unruly. But they are realizing that our major purpose is to make harmonious relationships, is to resolve the conflicts the way they should be resolved – not by beating, not by chasing, not by starving someone. So, they are realizing that what we are doing is good work. And when you go to the community they say: ‘Ah, what you have done for us is really wonderful work.’ (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

**Communication Strategies to Broaden the Reach**

In previous sections I discussed innovative strategies designed to reach people with educational messages such as CEDOVIP impromptu discussions or FIDA (U) While You Wait sessions. Here I would like to specifically discuss two communication strategies aimed at broadening the reach of awareness-raising messages – radio programs and drama.

Despite their critiques of the mainstream media, Ugandan CSOs recognize the importance of media in informing society, influencing opinions and perceptions, and creating awareness among people. In particular, they emphasize radio as an affordable and popular medium of communication, which can effectively reach a wide cross-section of the population because of its broad coverage, portability, and its ability to bypass some illiteracy barriers (FIDA (U), 2002; UMWA, n.d.-a). For this reason, Ugandan CSOs
utilize radio as a tool for advocacy, awareness raising, sensitization, and education. The most notable and ambitious are the efforts of UMWA. Since 2001, the organizations has been operating a women’s radio station, Mama FM, which aims to provide “a more and interactive accessible medium for the under privileged particularly women in rural and semi-urban communities, to enable them develop and progress” (UMWA, n.d.-a). Besides UMWA, most organizations interviewed emphasize the importance of radio programs in their work. For example, FIDA (U) supplements its community level legal awareness sessions with radio programs, which has improved information dissemination and outreach (FIDA (U), 2002). However, the organization accentuates that, because most of its clientele do not speak English, such radio programs must utilize local languages in order to achieve the desired impact.

Drama is another communication strategy that can reach a broad audience and is widely utilized by women’s groups in Uganda. Isis-WICCE emphasizes that “drama continues to be the most appropriate method of disseminating messages to non-literate and rural communities” (2001a, p. 20). This is illustrated by Margaret Nassozi Kakembo:

> We found out that when we organize workshops and seminars – we select. However, there are those who cannot read and write that if you brought that person in the workshop she cannot even note down something and take back to others. So, we decided to start packaging information in drama. We find out what specific information we need to pass on to the communities then we sit down, write a drama script, rehearse it, package all the information there, and take it to the communities. And we found out that this has worked. This works so well because everyone comes, even if you invited someone or not – everyone comes in order to enjoy it and in case of enjoying it they draw lessons out of the drama. (Personal communication, September 1, 2005)

Although it is primarily an organization for women, NACWOLA recognizes the need to sensitize men as well. However, because few men are willing to come forward and talk about HIV/AIDS, it has been difficult to get them to participate in discussions and workshops. NACWOLA discovered that drama was an effective strategy when it comes to reaching out specifically to men. According to Annet Biyetega, NACWOLA Coordinator:

> Through dance, drama and music we speak to men about how to get themselves tested for HIV, where to find information and about family planning – all sorts of information that is good for the community. We also refer men to organisations
that work with men such as TASO [The AIDS Support Organization]. (“Memory Work,” n.d.) These examples demonstrate that appropriate communication strategies are vital tools that can benefit women and their communities by facilitating dissemination of information on pertinent gender issues and concerns, encouraging understanding, and promoting change.

**Change Takes Time**

Several organizations emphasize that facilitating behavioral change is a process that requires patience, commitment, and long-term support from the organization implementing the work. According to a PVP staff member “it takes time to realize the impact. It really takes time. It also takes for us time to really come up with concrete evidence of our work” (Arop Francis Omuk, personal communication, September 10, 2005). This is because, in addition to changing attitudes and behaviors of individuals, the process of behavioral change must address the value system and attitudes of the wider community. According to CEDOVIP:

We have also learned that change, behavioral change and attitude change, is not a one day’s event. It takes years and years and years! So when you go in with a lot of excitement and say ‘I am going to sensitize people, I am going to stop violence!’ it will not work. Go in knowing that change is a process, small, small, small, small, small, and then when you go in with that, you will not get disappointed. Like when you talk to people, you go back tomorrow – they are still having their stereotypes … It is the process that they have to go through. So that’s why we are using different strategies to reach out to almost the same people. (Hope Turyasingura, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

This also illustrates the need for repeated exposure of communities to the same messages in order to facilitate change. Michau and Naker (2003) point out that repeated exposure engages community members “with regular and mutually reinforcing messages from a variety of sources over a sustained period of time. This contributes to changing the climate in the community and building momentum for change” (p. 13). In order to make the process of community mobilization and behavioral change manageable for organizations and avoid overwhelming the communities, RV recommends breaking it down into five distinct phases. Since each phase is designed to build on the achievements of the previous phase this systemizes the implementation of long-term projects and keeps
the implementing organization focused (see Michau and Naker, 2003). This method of breaking down into phases is also evident in capacity-building efforts carried out by several organizations. For example, Isis-WICCE NEP and Regional Exchange Institute trainings (discussed in previous sections) continue for 5 years, whereby women come for face-to-face training sessions once a year after which they implement knowledge and skills gained during training in field work activities. CEDOVIP training of community volunteers follows a similar mode.

In conclusion, facilitating a process of social change in communities to address the issue of gender-based violence requires long-term sustained efforts that encourage community members to re-examine their values and learn alternative behaviors. Moreover, new mechanisms must be created in order to maintain the social changes that have occurred in communities.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The organizational profile emerging from the study indicates that the majority of the CSOs working to address the issue of gender-based violence are of Ugandan origins (grassroots and other indigenous). I found it surprising that only three organizations in my sample are of international origins. This could be due either to my small sample size or to the fact that organizations in the sample were selected based on the focus of their activities (i.e., their relevance to gender-based violence). Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996) suggest several reasons why development agencies shy away from involvement in this field which, I think, may also apply in explaining the lack of involvement of international organizations. One such reason is the ‘sanctity of culture’, which is frequently used as an excuse for the failure to challenge existing gender inequalities.

According to Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996):

Although development processes everywhere have been about the massive transformation of political economy and personal life, so that no society can claim to have been untouched by it, the sanctity of culture tends to be brought up most frequently when some form of redistribution in favour of women is being considered. National as well as international development agencies who have no qualms about seeking to intervene in the most personal arenas of people’s lives through family planning programmes or the promotion of safer sexual practices in response to the AIDS threat frequently tend to invoke the sanctity of culture when the question of women’s empowerment is brought up. Yet when development programmes violate local cultural norms in favour of men, it passes with little official comment. (p. 9)

Another reason why so few international organizations may be working to address the issue of gender-based violence in Uganda is reluctance to intervene in the “private” sphere of the family. Kabeer and Subrahmanian suggest that this explains the long-standing refusal of the state and policy makers in most societies to take action against violence and sexual abuse within the family. The gradual emergence of violence against women within the home as a matter for policy intervention has entailed the politicization of the problem, the struggle to shift it from its previous status as a ‘private’ issue, to be settled by the individuals
concerned, to the status of a ‘public’ issue, a question of basic human rights and hence a matter for state intervention. It is worth noting that while violence against women has increasingly been recognized by international bodies as an infringement of their human rights, its political nature cannot be easily accepted in all development agencies. (p. 10)

My results indicate that all of the CSOs undertake activities in multiple categories. In my sample, every organization focused on at least two categories of activities and nine cover at least three different types of activities. Of these the most popular is advocacy, followed by popular development, relief and welfare provision, and technical development. Similar findings come from Barr, Fafchamps, and Owens’ (2003) study of Ugandan NGOs. The authors conclude that:

Virtually no NGO sees itself as provider of a specific service. All have a holistic approach, which gives them more flexibility to respond to the perceived needs of the population they serve, but presumably limits gains from experience and specialization. (Barr et al., 2003)

My findings also suggest that the majority of the CSOs are member organizations primarily focusing on helping non-members. This is in contrast to Barr et al. study whose findings suggest that, “in the context of Uganda, members are nearly always included among the intended beneficiaries” (2005, p. 674). Barr et al. surveyed 300 Ugandan NGOs and found that only 5% restrict their services to non-members. This difference in our findings may be due to the sample size or the fact that Barr et al. sample was randomly selected and contains organizations working in a number of different sectors, whereas organizations in my sample were selected based on the focus of their activities (i.e., their relevance to gender-based violence). This may also indicate that organizations working in the gender-based violence field are different from the typical developmental NGOs in that their focus is primarily on providing services to non-members.

Nine of the organizations in my sample identify themselves as ‘women’s organizations’. Some of these CSOs restrict their membership to women only or have female only staff/volunteers, while others have both male members and/or male staff and volunteers. The label ‘women’s organization’ can therefore be interpreted as:

• An organization that was founded by women and is predominantly comprised of women members/staff/volunteers
• An organization that focuses on providing services to women/for the benefit of women
• Both of the above

Indeed, with the exceptions of HAR and PVP, the women’s organizations are predominantly comprised of female members/staff/volunteers. In addition, most of the women’s organizations are primarily providing services to women or implement activities for the benefit of women and girls (even if they are not the target population). As my findings show, a majority of the interventions are universal in terms of the target population, however, the intended beneficiaries are females. Moreover, both selective and indicated interventions primarily target women and girls.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, my sample may be skewed towards women’s organizations and/or organizations which participate in the women’s movement. On the other hand, the fact that 69% of the organization’s in my sample identify themselves as women’s organizations may instead indicate that it is this type of organizations that primarily works to address the issue of violence against women in Uganda. Dicklich (1998) points out that:

Because of state withdrawal from the provision of basic services and the consequent economy of survival that has developed, many NGOs are being pressured into dealing with poverty alleviation (not eradication), and the provision of basic social services like primary health care, education and sanitation, instead of empowerment and advocacy. These are not mutually exclusive pursuits, but they do serve to divert NGOs to a more reactive rather than proactive focus. (pp. 148-149)

Thus, with the majority of CSOs focusing on poverty alleviation and service delivery, it falls upon women’s organizations to take on the struggle against gender-based violence. Indeed, Tripp (2002) suggests that:

A new emphasis on political participation emerged in the 1990s. New nonpartisan women’s organisations formed to improve leadership skills, encourage women’s political involvement on a nonpartisan basis, lobby for women’s political leadership, press for legislative changes, and conduct civic education. Groups mobilized around issues like domestic violence, rape, reproductive rights, sex education in the school curriculum, female genital cutting, and the disparaging representation of women in the media, and corruption. (Tripp, 2002, p. 5)
Similarly, Kikampikaho and Kwesiga (2002) note that the women’s movement in Uganda utilized the change in national political situation to promote women’s agenda. As a result, women’s organizations have transitioned from focusing only on so-called ‘women’s issues’ (such as reproductive health and child rearing), to matters of governance, economic development, gender equity, and women’s human rights.

In terms of the CSO activities, the overall picture that emerges is that they focus on primary level activities, though the majority also have secondary level interventions. Only three CSOs have tertiary level interventions. This is not surprising considering that tertiary level activities are long-term efforts aimed at treating and rehabilitating victims and perpetrators of violence and facilitating their re-adaptation into society. As such they are primarily associated with healthcare and judicial settings (Krug et al., 2002). Within primary level activities CSOs concentrate their efforts on sensitization, awareness-raising, advocacy, and lobbying activities. This coincides with Barr et al. Ugandan NGO survey findings. The authors indicate that despite the diversity in NGO activities there is a “strong emphasis on ‘talking’ as opposed to the delivery of physical goods or services” (Barr et al., 2005, p. 664). They suggest that since the emphasis on talking makes NGO monitoring very difficult, this could potentially be a way for ineffective and dishonest organizations to hide from scrutiny within the sector. However, Bar et al. (2005) also offer additional explanations:

This emphasis on talking may be grounded in the belief that ignorance is a major cause of poverty and unhappiness. Alternatively, it is possible that NGOs would like to do more but, given their limited financial means, find it the quickest and cheapest way to have an immediate impact. (p. 664)

I think the interview responses clearly demonstrate that CSO emphasis on talking (i.e., awareness-raising and advocacy activities) is specifically aimed at addressing ignorance as a cause of violence against women. As Benjamin and Murchison (2003) point out:

Advocacy and awareness-raising efforts are crucial components to GBV programming. An information, education, and communication (IEC) awareness-raising campaign is one of the most important elements to any GBV community-based intervention …. With awareness training, community support can be strengthened to provide a more protective environment both for prevention and integration of survivors. (p. 25)
Moreover, United Nations Population Fund (2004) suggests that “programme objectives that may be sensitive benefit from carefully developed advocacy campaigns” (p. 3). In addition, the focus on advocacy and awareness raising illustrates that these CSOs have graduated from providing welfare services only, or what Korten (1987, 1990 cited in Atack, 1999, p. 856) refers to as first and second generation strategies, and embraced third and fourth generation strategies: policy formation and advocacy. Jordan and Van Tuijl (2000) emphasize that advocacy is increasingly seen as an integral part of CSO work. Thus, through organizing and strategic use of information CSOs nowadays aim “to democratize unequal power relations” (Jordan & Van Tuijl, 2000, p. 2052). UNICEF (2000) also emphasizes that “NGOs have a fundamental role to play in bringing pressure on governments to ratify, or withdraw their reservations to the international human rights instruments” (p. 16). Attempts to democratize unequal gender power relations, monitoring the implementation of international and national human rights instruments, advocacy for policy change and institutional mechanisms to be set up to respond to the needs of women who suffer violence, lobbying for legislation that protects women’s rights, and more – all of these are evident in the work of the Ugandan CSOs discussed above.

Furthermore, interview responses point to the fact that, in order to achieve any real impact in communities and society, advocacy and awareness-raising efforts must be sustained over long periods of time and require patience and long-term commitments from organizations. In addition, Jordan and Van Tuijl (2000) emphasize that:

Grounding NGO advocacy in democratizing power relations puts up-front the fact that NGOs challenge the status quo. In general, advocacy NGOs reveal truths that are not liked by vested interests and power holders. Being involved in NGO advocacy therefore entails taking risks: politically, legally, mentally and physically in the South as well as in the North. (p. 2053)

Taking into the account these risks that have been illustrated in my discussion as well as the time and commitment that advocacy efforts demand from the CSOs, I would hardly classify them as the ‘quickest and cheapest way to have immediate impact’. As discussed in the previous section, when it comes to changing attitudes and behaviors, especially those associated with gender relations, advocacy and awareness raising do not bring immediate results. Such changes occur gradually over a long period of time.
In regards to the level of operation based on the public health model, my findings indicate that CSOs favor community level interventions followed by individual, society, and relationship level programs and activities. Michau and Naker (2004) from RV point out that gender-based violence “is the community [original emphasis] problem. It is important to shift the responsibility of addressing and preventing GBV from women to the whole community” (p. 5). They further suggest that:

Many times, efforts to change behaviour are linked to policy and legislative reforms which are expected to filter down and create behaviour change. These efforts are crucial yet building bridges in the opposite direction is important as well. Promoting inter-personal change at the community level can provide impetus for the development of equitable laws that protect individual rights. Furthermore, grassroots prevention efforts create a climate in which equitable laws are likely to become effective. (p. 5)

Thus, as the organizations interviewed indicate, in the socio-cultural context of Uganda community participation and ownership are essential, especially when implementing interventions related to sensitive issues such as gender-based violence or women’s rights. The effectiveness of community-based approaches has also been demonstrated in other contexts. For example, Reasons for Hope (1997) reviews a number of successful community level poverty reduction interventions from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These case studies, according to Krishna, Uphoff, and Esman (1997), “show us that approaches to rural development that respect the inherent capabilities, intelligence and responsibility of rural people and that systematically build on experience have a reasonable chance of making significant advances in improving those people’s lives” (p. 2). Magar in her study of Indian NGOs (2003) demonstrates the effectiveness of a community-based approach in empowering women, in holding perpetrators accountable, and in changing existing social norms. She analyzes how women activists have adapted an indigenous form of conflict resolution known as mahila panchayats or women’s courts to feminist principles through which they publicly confront domestic violence against women. According to Magar (2003), “by publicly challenging women’s subordination by the husband and in-laws, women become agents in developing a new understanding of gender-based violence – that physical and emotional abuse against women, for any reason, is unacceptable” (p. 522).
My study indicates that the majority of organizations working to address the issue of gender-based violence adopt an explicitly or implicitly feminist approach, which emphasizes empowerment of women and girls. As a result, the CSOs (whether they implement women-specific or universal interventions) have moved beyond looking at women’s practical needs and focus instead on their strategic interests and work towards the equal enjoyment of rights and opportunities. The gender considerations are not treated as add-ons to organizations’ main programs and projects. Instead, their activities are based on the analysis of gender-specific constraints rather than on prior assumptions about the “proper” roles for women. In addition, a majority of the activities which aim to address women’s practical needs do so in ways that have high transformatory potential. Through research, publications, advocacy, and awareness-raising activities these CSOs make visible the needs, concerns, and complexities faced by Ugandan women within the country and beyond its borders. They publicize the issue of gender-based violence and work towards increasing society’s awareness that violence against women is not a private issue but a public crime and a human rights violation. In addition, these CSOs have been advocating for policy change and lobbying for legislation that protects women’s rights. Their activities illustrate their concern with women’s empowerment as many of them emphasize the importance of intangible resources such as information, communication, education, and training. Thus, instead of nutrition, they educate women on human rights issues, train in peace building, leadership skills, etc. This emphasis, according to Kabeer (1994), enhances women’s self-confidence and awareness and provides new possibilities so that women can move beyond acceptance of deeply-rooted structures that uphold their subordinate status and begin to question, envision, and work towards alternatives. In particular leadership training, Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996) point out, “can help women ensure that they benefit strategically – it will help women to break out of imposed social norms and expectations of what they can or cannot do, or who they can and cannot be” (p. 43). Nzomo (1989) also suggests that “the more women become aware of their rights and the causes of their oppression, the more equipped they will be to challenge oppressive structural forces” (p. 15). In addition, Isis-WICCE and LUWODA organize exchange visits and meetings for rural women, which, according to Kabeer (1994), is an important element in the process of building their awareness. She points out that rural
women’s lives are often extremely circumscribed in geographical and social terms, thus travel-related activities play “an important role in breaking down the sense of isolation and powerlessness that women are often trapped in” (p. 251). Furthermore, trainings, meetings, workshops, and other women-specific activities, as suggested by Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996),

provide the possibility of having ‘a space of one’s own’ where they can be temporarily freed from their domestic obligations. And given women’s cultural exclusion from the community, such groups may be a first step to having a voice within that community. (p. 43)

Nzomo (1989) notes similar social benefits in relation to women’s group programs in Kenya. She points out that:

The moral support of the group may be as important as any material support that might be rendered. The social interaction deriving from group membership gives women a chance to break from their individual isolation and confinement in their respective homes and family related activities. Group participation further helps broaden the women’s knowledge and enhance their awareness and consciousness of the world beyond their domestic environment. This is particularly the case if a group’s program includes visiting other women’s groups. Furthermore, group participation and interaction is helping to improve women’s self-confidence and even develop leadership abilities. (pp. 11-12)

Thus, while it is beyond the objectives of this study to assess the effectiveness of CSOs’ in achieving their goals and objectives of empowerment (not to mention that the difficulties in measuring empowerment is a whole other subject), the study findings illustrate that the majority of these CSOs are implementing the rhetoric of women’s empowerment in practice.

Although according to my criteria I classified 10 organizations as explicitly or implicitly feminist, the study revealed that Isis-WICCE is the only organization in my sample that does not shy away from its feminist identity. This is probably due to the fact that the women’s movement in Uganda is relatively young and there are prevalent negative connotations associated with the ideas and labels of feminism. Thus, few organizations have chosen to declare their feminist identity openly as this may have consequences at various levels: negative responses from communities, other CSOs, policy makers, donors, etc. The rest of the explicitly and implicitly feminist CSOs identify themselves either as women’s or human rights organizations, however, most of
them acknowledge their connection to the women’s movement in Uganda. Overall, whether this is a matter of semantics or ideology it is not relevant for this thesis since the classification was based on other criteria.

This study has also shown that CSOs face a variety of constraints from their operational environments. Inadequate human and financial resources, negative cultural and political climates, as well as competition between CSOs are impeding their efforts to end violence against women in Uganda. I identified only two positive factors that contribute to the performance of CSOs: dedicated members/staff/volunteers and networking with other organizations.

The study revealed that most CSOs depend largely on volunteers to carry out their activities. Okalebo and Nuwamanya (2003) as well as Barr et al. (2003) studies also conclude that volunteers account for the majority of the human resources available to Ugandan CSOs. According to Okalebo and Nuwamanya (2003), “it is important to note that this volunteering staff usually comes as community contribution, which is seldom monetized and often understated.” Although interview responses demonstrated that for some the spirit of voluntarism is still alive and well, the majority of respondents also emphasized that their staff were under-resourced and overworked. They also noted difficulties in maintaining membership due to the lack of altruism and solidarity among some members, which was a cause of conflicts within organizations. Korten (1990) emphasizes the importance of shared values as the foundation for voluntarism and one of the distinctive strengths of CSOs (cited in Atack, 1999, p. 859). Clark (1990) also points out that “NGO staff are generally highly committed to their work because of widely shared values and a belief in the social change mission inherent in their work. They are often prepared, therefore, to work long hours for low pay” (p. 53). This is definitely true in the CSOs interviewed, as their impetus and existence depends on dedicated staff members and volunteers working long hours in difficult conditions, often without remuneration. However, overall my findings reveal a conflict between the idealistic values that motivate and inspire CSO members/staff/volunteers and the financial constraints they face in supporting themselves, their families, and their organizations.

Interview responses related to the political climate and to CSO relations with the government were almost invariably answered in negative terms, with the majority of
respondents indicating a lack of networking, support, and some even citing political interference. Thus, the external political climate in Uganda within which the CSOs operate appears to be exerting a strong constraining and intimidating influence. Similar findings come from studies which have explored NGO performance in Uganda as well as other contexts. For example, Dicklich (1998) suggests that:

There seems to be a tacit understanding as to the limits of non-compliance with NRM policy which will be tolerated. This explains why some NGOs prefer to remain apolitical and non-confrontational. NGOs and individuals within NGOs which have stepped beyond the acceptable limits have received strong warnings from the regime ....

These warnings serve to remind NGOs of their subservient and tenuous position in Uganda. Anything that is deemed critical of the regime is often classified as ‘sectarian’ and ‘destabilizing’. These pronouncements serve to undermine the legitimacy of NGOs that confront issues deemed too political by the regime. Many NGOs fear to become ‘political’ because of possible repercussions from the regime. (pp. 150-151)

DeJong (1991) indicates that in Sub-Saharan African countries

the relationship between NGOs and government and NGOs and donors are primarily political, and in all but very few cases both tend to be problematic. Governments are often jealous of resources being channeled to NGOs and war of their oppositionist potential, while NGOs often live in fear of government interventions in their activities. (p. 15)

In contrast, Bar et al. (2005) survey of Ugandan NGOs indicates “a certain ambivalence toward government, with close to 60% of their respondents stating that government staff help them in their task, but 27-29% stating that government is both a help and a hindrance” (p. 673). It is possible that our findings differ due to the fact that the majority of organizations in my sample are either explicitly or implicitly feminist. As such, instead of simply receiving policy directives from the government, their mission is to challenge gender inequality embedded in legislation, policies, and gender discriminatory practices of policy makers. In an environment which lacks a democratic tradition and where the government is intolerant of criticism or opposition to the socio-economic and political status quo, the mission of these CSOs may explain why they face backlashes and political interference. Naila Kabeer (1994) makes parallel observations in her discussion of the Women’s Development Program (WDP) in Rajasthan:
The WDP experience appears to suggest that, while considerable progress in women’s conditions can be made under state auspices, once the broader political dimensions of gender subordination are recognized and acted on, women’s empowerment can become as destabilizing to social order as more conventional forms of oppositional politics. (p. 260)

Since all of the organizations in my sample are donor dependent, the sensitivity to donors and their funding behavior emerged as another factor constraining their activities. Here, my findings coincide with several other studies, all of which indicate the common problems CSOs are facing – lack of funding and donor dependency. Barr et al. (2005) point out that “the grants from international NGOs and donors are the life and blood of Ugandan NGOs, but not all NGOs have access to grants” (p. 671). The authors found that on average an organization generates only about 2.5% of its funding from members and individual donations (Barr et al., 2003). Furthermore, Barr et al. (2003) note that “the difficulty of securing grants and the short-term nature of grants explains why the sector remains unspecialized. Many well meaning people register an NGO with the hope of securing a grant, but only a few of them actually get one.” DeJong (1991) also points out that:

In the current African setting, where self-reliant local institutions are few and government coffers nearly empty, many NGOs must increasingly turn to international financial support for their activities. While this support is vitally necessary during a period of economic downturn, the long-term implications of such dependence may be decreased autonomy of NGOs, more intrusion of foreign objectives into domestic activities and reliance on the benevolence of developed country constituents at a time when pressure is increasing to reduce economic assistance to developing countries. The drawbacks of dependence on external finance also manifest themselves in the project-to-project operations. (p. 10)

I have also shown how donors’ reluctance to fund interventions that aim to bring qualitative changes into people’s lives is a challenge to CSOs working to address gender-based violence. Clark (1990) suggest a similar trend in donor behavior when it comes to funding development activities:

Though most people would agree with the familiar adage that it is better to teach people to fish rather than to hand out fishes, when it comes out giving money the private donor want to keep on paying for the fishes. It is always the famine appeals which bring in the money. Raising funds for development is never as lucrative. (p. 38)
Similar to my findings regarding the CSO relations, other researchers have highlighted competition between CSOs and its effects on information-sharing across organizational boundaries as a constraint to their capacity. For example, Kerkhoven (1992) observes that “although the NGOs talk a great deal about the exchange of information and experience and co-ordination, their actions show a certain amount of ambiguity to this, especially amongst identical organizations” (cited in Fyvie & Ager, 1999, p. 1393). Similarly, Dicklich (1998) suggests that “the heavy reliance on foreign donors also instills a spirit of competition rather than co-operation among NGOs. Many NGOs end up competing for scarce funds, rather than co-ordinating efforts to make the greatest impact” (p. 154). Tripp (2002) notes that competitiveness among Ugandan CSOs have made it difficult to coordinate their efforts. “Some organizations get good ideas from coalition meetings and then take off and try to implement them on their own, weakening the network and coalition building rather working together through a division of labour” (p. 19). However, in response to capacity problems as well as resource constraints, my findings also demonstrate that CSOs are making efforts to enhance the impact of their initiatives by forming partnerships with other organizations. Interview responses suggest that organizations interact with CSOs engaged in gender-related activities, and explore opportunities for mutual support, information sharing, and coalition building. Indeed, Barr et al. (2005) survey shows that Ugandan NGOs are “heavily networked with one another. Seventy-two percent of surveyed NGOs belong to a local NGO network or umbrella organization” (pp. 674-675).

Throughout the previous sections I demonstrated that Ugandan CSOs act as advocacy groups and lobbying forums for change in the policies and structures that perpetuate women’s subordinate status. The fact that not all their efforts have been successful, especially in relation to the DRB campaign, may be explained by the patriarchal environment and subsequent lack of political will in Uganda. According to Winnie Byanyima (2004), Member of Parliament and founding member of the Forum for Women in Democracy:

Despite more than 17 years of promoting women in politics through affirmative action polices, there is still broad resistance in society against women in politics. This then is the background against which women in politics have to operate. On the one hand, a ‘progressive’ leadership has responded to women’s demands and
created a space in the political process thus providing a powerful opportunity for challenging patriarchy and women’s subordination and oppression, but on the other hand a predominantly rural and patriarchal society resists change and creates ambivalence among the ‘progressive’ leaders. The result is that women are able to take their place in the representative bodies but they receive little support from ‘progressive’ male colleagues and meet societal resistance in gender equality advocacy. Many women politicians choose the easier way out of moving with the majority and sticking to the safer issues that do not rock the boat.

Another possible explanation why the lobbying and advocacy efforts have not been successful may be similar to the one offered by Sunila Abeysekera (n.d.) in her discussion of the feminist movement in South Asia. She points out that:

In many ways, the encounters between women’s groups and others engaged in working for social justice from different perspectives has led to closer collaboration, as well as to conflicts and tensions created by divergences in priorities and agendas … The fact that many women’s groups in the region have, in the past years, devoted more time and energy to developing strategies to deal with violence against women and other forms of exploitation particular to women has led to their alienation from other social movements. Thus, while there is always a display of solidarity when it comes to public demonstrations or campaigns on broad economic, social and political issues, women’s concerns are rarely an integrated part of the long-term agendas of other civil society movements.

In addition to these exogenous challenges, Tripp (2002) and Karuhanga-Beraho (2002) note that there are internal problems that the Ugandan women’s movement is facing as well. They point out that the movement lacks strategizing and cohesions, and has been more reactive than proactive. Thus, there is need for more coordination and collaboration, and more careful advanced planning around concerted strategies in order to achieve desired impacts.

I will conclude by returning to the feminist and public health approaches on responding to and preventing violence against women which were discussed in the literature review section. On the whole, the study findings indicate that the efforts of the Ugandan CSOs are compatible with the strategies and recommendations of both perspectives. For example, although secondary level interventions came in a close second, primary level interventions are the most popular and the broadest category of activities undertaken by the CSOs in my sample. In addition, the organizations themselves emphasize the importance of addressing the causes rather than the symptoms
of violence. These findings are in line with the recommendations for action provided in the WHO *World Report on Violence and Health* (2002), which strongly emphasizes the need for more primary prevention efforts. The emphasis on primary prevention is also consistent with the feminist perspective, which accentuates the need for strategies that target the root cause of violence and transform the patriarchal institutions of family, society, and the state. Both feminists and a majority of the CSOs interviewed regard gender inequality as the root cause of violence against women, whereas the public health approach argues that violence is caused by numerous biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors. Thus, while the efforts of the CSOs discussed ‘fit’ into the public health ecological model for violence prevention, this is an example of where the feminist perspective may more accurately describe these organizations.

Study findings show that sensitization, awareness-raising, advocacy, and lobbying activities are the most prevalent within the primary level interventions category. These are followed by capacity-building interventions (not related to IGAs), and research, documentation, information-repackaging, and publishing activities. These types of activities are emphasized in both feminist and public health approaches. In particular, the CSOs utilize most of the feminist strategies discussed under the ‘Changing Society’s Attitudes and Beliefs’ and ‘Challenging the State and its Institutions’ sections of the literature review. This includes community and society level media and public education campaigns as well as other activities that aim to raise awareness on violence against women and women’s human rights, promote changes in cultural norms that discriminate against women and girls, etc. Such strategies are also highlighted by the public health approach as necessary primary prevention efforts to address discriminatory attitudes and socio-cultural norms. However, WHO *World Report on Violence and Health* (2002) cautions that, when it comes to cultural norms, they must be addressed in a sensitive and respectful manner: “sensitively because of people’s often passionate attachment to their traditions, and respectfully because culture is often a source of protection against violence” (Krug et al., 2002, p.16). As indicated in their responses, the CSOs are aware of the importance of appropriate methods and strategies when dealing with sensitive issues such as gender-based violence within the patriarchal context of Uganda.
Both feminist and public health viewpoints agree that, although mass media can negatively impact attitudes towards women and exacerbate the problem of gender-based violence, it can also play a significant role in educating the public on the issue of violence against women and challenging cultural assumptions about gender roles. According to Krug et al. (2002):

The media have considerable potential as both negative and positive forces in violence prevention … The media can be used to change violence-related attitudes and behaviour as well as social norms by printing or broadcasting anti-violence information, or by incorporating anti-violence messages into entertainment formats. (p. 249)

In the context of Uganda, the organizations interviewed emphasize the use of radio and drama (community theatre) as effective and affordable communication strategies for awareness raising that can reach a broad audience despite high illiteracy rates. At the same time, the study indicates that several Ugandan CSOs are also engaged in efforts to combat negative portrayal of women in the media – a feminist strategy highlighted in the literature review. While not relating specifically to media violence against women, WHO (2004b) suggests that reducing media violence is a promising society level strategy that has potential in reducing violence and its risk factors.

My findings demonstrate that the CSOs devote a lot of time and effort to advocacy and lobbing activities for gender sensitive policies and laws. Legal reform, in particular, is emphasized by many feminists as an important strategy for improving women’s status, transforming society’s gender-biased attitudes and beliefs, and challenging the patriarchal ideology embedded within the legal system. Similarly, Krug et al. (2002) point out that legal remedies and judicial reforms aimed at criminalizing physical, sexual, and psychological abuse by an intimate partner send a message that “partner violence is a crime and will not be tolerated in society. Bringing it into the open is also a way to dispel the idea that violence is a private family matter” (p. 104). Overall, the public health approach emphasizes that:

Policy development and implementation can make important contributions to achieving social and gender equality and equity. Policy can both provide legal protection from discrimination (to promote equality) and improve the access of groups to opportunities and resources (to improve equity). (WHO, 2004b, p. 49)
As part of their primary level interventions, Ugandan CSOs also implement trainings, workshops, and other capacity-building activities for local, religious, and cultural leaders as well as community volunteers to increase their awareness of the problem gender-based violence and promote their participation in violence prevention efforts. According to feminists this is an effective strategy to build critical consciousness of violence against women. Krug et al. (2002) also note the importance of involving religious and traditional leaders as well as other prominent figures in the community in violence prevention efforts. In addition, as part of the primary level capacity building interventions, the CSOs interviewed implement initiatives aimed at empowering women and girls with knowledge and skills. By promoting women’s empowerment from within, empowerment to, and even empowerment with, these interventions embrace principles that are essential to the feminist strategies of responding to and preventing violence against women. Since the public health model does not consider interventions that focus on the empowerment of individual women and girls, this is another example where the feminist approach may be a more appropriate match for the CSOs.

As previously mentioned, the third most popular category of primary level interventions is that of research, documentation, information-repackaging, and publishing activities. Again, this coincides with recommendations from both perspectives. Feminists suggest that research and documentation are a starting point for advocacy, awareness-raising, and lobbying efforts. The public health approach also highlights the need for more research on causes, consequences, costs, and prevention strategies of violence both to gain a better understanding of the problem in order to develop appropriate responses and for the purposes of lobbying policy makers (Krug et al., 2002; WHO, 2004b). However, feminists place a strong emphasis on documenting women’s experiences of gender-based violence and other women-centered research, an approach also favored by the Ugandan CSOs. The public health perspective has different research priorities. For example, in the case of intimate partner violence, WHO report urges that priority should be given to research on the economic costs of intimate partner violence, “longitudinal research on the trajectory of violent behaviour by intimate partners over time, examining whether and how it differs from the development of other violent behaviours”, as well as research that examines “the life history of adults who are in healthy, non-violent
relationships despite past experiences that are known to increase the risk of partner violence” (Krug et al., 2002, p. 112). Although research foci may differ, the CSO activities of repackaging information into video documentaries, drama, and radio programs as well as publishing are in line with WHO (2004b) recommendations:

Mechanisms must be established to ensure that research findings in interpersonal violence are broadly disseminated beyond the research community to include health practitioners, policy-makers and the public. This is an important step in gaining wider appreciation of the value of such research, and in setting the stage for the application of its findings. (p. 32)

This study demonstrates that secondary level interventions are also widely implemented by the Ugandan CSOs. The top three activities in this category are training, psychosocial support, and referral services, all of which are in line with the public health approach recommendations. Despite its emphasis on primary level interventions, the public health perspective recognizes that “support and care for victims of violence are important in mitigating the physical and psychological consequences of interpersonal violence and reducing individual vulnerability” (WHO, 2004b, p. 35). In particular, it points out that the impacts of violence should be minimized by meeting medical, psychological, social, and legal needs of the victim. In addition, the public health approach emphasizes that interventions at this level must reduce secondary victimization (intentional and unintentional) by health, judicial, police, and social service providers and improve the quality of victim services. This can be achieved by training police officers and other professionals on gender and violence issues to increase their sensitivity and their effectiveness in handling gender-based violence cases (Krug et al., 2002; WHO, 2004b). Feminists also devote a lot of attention to providing support services to women in their efforts to resist, survive, and overcome violence in their lives. In addition, as part of challenging the state and its institutions, feminists emphasize capacity building interventions for state officials in order to change their negative attitudes about gender-based violence and enhance their ability to appropriately respond to the problem. Consequently, training and referral services are embraced by this perspective as well. While providing emotional support is an important part of feminist services to women survivors of violence, they are very critical of psychological trauma healing approaches and, in particular, psychosocial services provided by non-feminists. Thus, some of the
secondary level psychosocial support interventions are not compatible with feminist strategies. Currently none of the interviewed CSOs offer shelter services or crisis hotlines and only one organization offers legal advice – all of which are support services encouraged by feminists. Nevertheless, the feminist principles that are at the core of these services and accentuate self-determination and empowerment are evident in other CSO programs and activities.

Finally, study findings suggest that organizations interviewed favor community level interventions. Both the feminist and public health approaches agree on the need for interventions at this level. In the literature review I noted how feminists acknowledge the important role communities play not only in perpetuating but also in preventing gender-based violence. Similarly, WHO (2004b) points out that “the community is the environment in which individuals and families interact, and the extent to which it condones or censures violence and its associated risk behaviours … [is] an important consideration in prevention efforts” (p. 38). Furthermore, WHO emphasizes that the involvement of multiple community stakeholders is a vital element of success in planning and implementing violence prevention interventions. This coincides with one of the lessons the CSOs consider they have learned from their experiences, namely ‘Involving Men and Other Community Members’. Since feminist organizations and activists have generally undertaken little work to directly alter men’s violent behavior towards women, including men is an important concept that feminist strategies should consider. According to Francine Pickup (2001):

Reasons for resisting working with men are complex. Women activists, and gender and development policy-makers and planners, have fought hard to gain slender resources for their work. Since their goal is to transform the daily lives and status of women, many are – understandably – reluctant to risk diluting the political power of their focus on women, not to mention risking losing resources to men who already have far greater access to them. The starting point for focusing on men’s need to change involves showing how men, like women, are constrained by gender stereotypes. However, pointing this out poses a real risk that we lose awareness of the inequalities between men and women worldwide. (p. 204)

The bottom line is that if violence against women is to be eradicated men need to change as well, which is why it is important to involve them in violence prevention efforts.
Overall, this study illustrates that in spite of the difficult operational environment, a number of different types of organizations have emerged in Uganda that work to address the issue of gender-based violence. These are primarily women’s organizations committed to addressing strategic interests of women and girls in Uganda. It is clear from the results of this study that there is no universally appropriate strategy to address violence against women. Rather a combination of strategies and approaches is needed to enhance women’s socio-cultural, economic, and political status, to challenge cultural norms that perpetuate violence against women, and to influence policy and legal reforms in order to promote meaningful change in society. Although individually some of these organizations are struggling on a variety of levels, together they represent a diverse and rich movement for changing women’s lives.
APPENDIX A

LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS AND DATES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAU</td>
<td>Christine Achieng</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td>09/09/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDOVIP</td>
<td>Hope Turyasingura</td>
<td>Capacity Building Officer</td>
<td>08/19/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Orach Godfrey Otobi</td>
<td>Child Rights Policy Officer</td>
<td>08/19/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAR</td>
<td>Margaret Ntakalimaze</td>
<td>Vice Chairperson</td>
<td>09/22/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis-WICCE</td>
<td>Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>09/23/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIWEPI</td>
<td>Joyce Opon Acak</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>08/14/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIWEPI</td>
<td>Rashida Oketcha</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>08/14/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUWODA</td>
<td>Margaret Nassozi Kakembo</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>09/01/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUWODA</td>
<td>Madina Zalwango</td>
<td>Publicity Secretary</td>
<td>09/01/05</td>
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<td>NACWOLA</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>08/26/05</td>
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<tr>
<td>PVP</td>
<td>Margaret Atim Tebere</td>
<td>Coordinator &amp; Documentation Officer</td>
<td>09/10/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVP</td>
<td>Ben Okello Lubanya</td>
<td>Counselor, Financial &amp; Training Officer</td>
<td>09/10/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVP</td>
<td>Arop Francis Omuk</td>
<td>Research &amp; Advocacy Officer</td>
<td>09/10/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV</td>
<td>Lauri Michau</td>
<td>Co-Director</td>
<td>08/24/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEWPA</td>
<td>Cecilia Alupo Engole</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>08/14/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMWA</td>
<td>Margaret Sentamu Masagazi</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>08/12/05</td>
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APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE
INTerview QUESTIONnaire

• How, why, and when did the organization activities begin?
  o Was there an event that triggered the motivation to establish the organization?
  o How did the organization decide on the type and the range of activities?
  o Based on what? Was there a needs assessment carried out to define the type and scale of the problem?
• What were initial goals, activities, and organizational structure?
• How have goals, activities, and organizational structures changed over the years?
  What factors motivated these changes?
  o Current short, medium, and long term goals
  o Human resources:
    ▪ Number of people involved – both volunteers and paid staff
    ▪ Did staff receive appropriate training?
  o Programs and program components:
    ▪ Initiation dates
    ▪ Target groups
    ▪ Program scope
  o Sources of funding and annual budget
• What are the main strategies and approaches for achieving the organization’s goals? Have these changed over the years? What factors motivated these changes?
• Are the organization’s activities well publicized? How?
• What planning methods do you use?
• Does the program include a formal evaluation component?
  o What methods are utilized? Do you report to a donor or other agency?
  o If no, how does the organization knows whether it is achieving its objectives? How do you measure your successes?
• Results:
  o Are program interventions routinely documented?
  o Are progress reports written?
  o What are the program outputs? (Publications, etc.)
  o Achievements and setbacks? Challenges?
  o How are achievements and setbacks shaped by internal and external factors?
• What lessons have you learned from you experience?
• Vision for the future for your organization?
• Networking relations with local communities, other CSOs, government? Relations with donors?
APPENDIX C

HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL MEMORANDUM
APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 6/22/2005

To: Greta Jonikatie

Dept.: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
   The Role of NGOs in addressing Gender Based Violence Issues in Conflict and
   Post-Conflict Situations

The forms that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR § 46.110(b) 9 and has been approved by an accelerated review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If the project has not been completed by 6/21/2006 you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

You are advised that any change in protocol in this project must be approved by resubmission of the project to the Committee for approval. Also, the principal investigator must promptly report, in writing, any unexpected problems causing risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols of such investigations as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Protection from Research Risks. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Dr. Rebecca Miles
HSC No. 2005.417
APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I freely and voluntarily and without element of force or coercion, consent to be a participant in this research project. I understand that my participation is totally voluntary and I may refuse to answer any questions and I may stop participation at anytime.

This research is being conducted by Greta Jonikaite, who is a graduate student at Florida State University. I understand the purpose of her research project is to better understand the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in addressing the issue of gender based violence as well as their role in providing services to the victims of such violence. I understand that if I participate in the project I will be asked questions about my organization’s aims, objectives, strategies, programs, and services as well as challenges and opportunities that my organization and NGOs in general encounter working in this area.

I understand that I will be participating in an interview and my answers will be audio and/or video recorded and/or written down by the researcher. The total commitment time would be about 45-60 minutes. I understand that the audio/video tapes will be kept by the researcher in a secure media case and that they will be destroyed by August 30, 2015.

Please chose and initial one of the following:

_____ I understand that the answers to my questions and comments throughout the interview will not be kept confidential and may be quoted and attributed to me by Ms. Jonikaite in future publications. I understand that I may change my decision at anytime.

_____ I understand that the answers to my questions and comments throughout the interview be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Quotations may be utilized by Ms. Jonikaite in future publications but not in any manner that may directly or indirectly identify me. I understand that I may change my decision at anytime.

I understand that there is minimal risk involved in participating in this interview. I understand that my participation in this research will help to provide a valuable insight into the unique role of NGOs in addressing gender based violence issues. In addition, it will allow a better understanding of what strategies and programs are effective in addressing the needs of the victims of violence.

I understand that at no time in the interview may I specifically identify individual victims of gender based violence for the protection of the victims and of their privacy.

I understand that this consent may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice or penalty. I have been given the right to ask and have answered any inquiry concerning the interview. Question, if any, have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I may contact Ms. Jonikaite via e-mail at gi03e@fsu.edu or through the International Affairs department at Florida State University +01 850 644 4418 as well as Florida State University’s Institutional Review Board via e-mail at JTH5898@fsu.edu or by phone at +01 850 644 8633 for answers to questions about this research or my rights. I understand that I may also contact Dr. Rebeca Miles, the supervising professor of this research, at Florida State University, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, via e-mail rebecca.miles@fsu.edu or by phone at +01 850 644 7102 regarding this research.

I have read and understand this consent form.

(Subject) ________________________________ (Date) ________________________________
APPENDIX E

SITE USE FORM
Site Use Form

This form grants permission to Greta Jonikaite to utilize the location described below for the purpose of conducting research interviews. By completing and signing this form, I hereby authorize Ms. Jonikaite the use of the facility according to the specifications below. By signing this form, I also confirm that I am authorized to grant such permission.

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<th>Location Address or Description:</th>
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<th>Room or Area authorized for interviews:</th>
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I, ____________________________, am familiar with the topic and purpose of Ms. Greta Jonikaite’s research and hereby grant her permission to utilize the above location for the purpose of conducting interviews.

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APPENDIX F

ISIS-WICCE LETTER OF PERMISSION
This is a formal request for permission to utilize transcriptions of certain Isis-WICCE interviews conducted for the video documentary on women’s peace initiatives in Uganda. These interviews will be incorporated, along with other research, into my Master’s thesis titled ‘The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Addressing the issue of Gender Based Violence in Uganda’. I am requesting permission only for the transcribed content of the videos, not for the use of the actual footage. By this agreement no footage would be released or utilized for other purposes by myself or other persons without Isis-WICCE prior consent.

I am requesting permission for the following interviews:

- Ruth Ojiamb Ochieng – Isis-WICCE (recorded on September 24, 2005)
- Jessica B. Nkuehe – Isis-WICCE (recorded on September 23, 2005)
- Juliet Were-Oguttu – Isis-WICCE (recorded on October 2, 2005)
- Cecilia A. Engole – TEWPA (recorded on September 3 and September 5, 2005)
- Jane Apino Ekume – TEWPA (recorded on September 3 and September 5, 2005)
- Rachel Frances Adyango – TEWPA (recorded on September 5, 2005)
- Rosalba Oywa – PVP (recorded on September 10, 2005)
- Margaret Tebere – PVP (recorded on September 9, 2005)
- Madina Zalwango – LUWODA (recorded on September 1, 2005)
- Margaret Nassozi Kakembo – LUWODA (recorded on September 1, 2005)

In order to ensure proper documentation, please complete the lower portion of this letter and mail the signed original back to me. If you have an alternate permission letter that you wish to use, please feel free to do so. I greatly appreciate your help and hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Greta Jonikaite

Permission is hereby granted for the above cited material to be used by Ms. Greta Jonikaite for her thesis in the manner described in this letter. All material remains the property of Isis-WICCE and any use beyond this agreement will require further written permission.
REFERENCES


Foley, M. (1996). Who is in control?: Changing responses to women who have been raped or sexually abused. In M. Hester, L. Kelly, & J. Radford (Eds.), *Women, violence, and male power: Feminist activism, research, and practice* (pp. 166-175). Bristol, PA: Open University Press.


Mutyaba, R. L. (2005). Comparative study of the status of women under the law of divorce and of their economic status in Uganda, Britain, and Bangladesh. In J.


Greta Jonikaite was born in Vilnius, Lithuania. At sixteen she left Lithuania for Nakskov, Denmark, as a Rotary International exchange student. After her exchange year she continued her studies in Denmark in Birkerød Gymnasium from which she earned her International Baccalaureate. In 1999 she entered the University of Florida, and began working towards her B.S. in Business Administration with a focus in International Economics. After graduating with Honors in 2002 and working for a year she entered Florida State University to pursue a Master’s degree. In December 2006, she received her M.S. in International Affairs with concentrations in Gender and Development and Economics.