

FEM ALLIANCE UGANDA (FEMA)

PREVELANCE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) AMONG LBTQ/WSW PERSONS



Supported by:



December 14, 2018

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FEMA Alliance Uganda

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We also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the FEMA board members who have committed their time towards this piece of work.

Regards are also extended to the several queer persons and their organisations of affiliation for participating in this research in the different parts of the country. Special regards are extended to CEDOVIP and Raising Voice for the guidance offered to FEMA staff on collection of this data.

FEMA has been able to accomplish this task under the leadership of the Executive Director, Mulucha Jay whom we are grateful for. And for the professional guidance and support of the then Director for Programs Sandra Kwikiriza and the diligent efforts of other FEMA staff who are all dedicated to ending IPV among queer people.

FOREWORD

It is indeed with great honour that I present to you this report and take this opportunity to present this welcome reminder of the remarkable journey of a small, but tenacious and rapidly growing organisation.

FEMA views this report as a tool to affirm the existence of LBTQ/WSW, and the critical challenges that they experience. We see this as an opportunity to take stock of some of the issues that affect the core target group –LBTQ/WSW that we work with.

As we take stock of our achievements in 2017 into 2018, we are aware of the fact that LGBTIQ persons still face challenging and live in a society which works collectively against their existence.

In terms of work output, FEMA has experienced immense growth and progress over the course of 2018 and this report has been one of the greatest achievements of this organisation.

We remain grateful to our generous development partners for making our work possible. I also extend my thanks to my fellow board members, our trustees, and every staff member of FEMA. Without the support, cooperation and dedication of all of you, our work and success would simply not be possible.

We look forward to winning more ground in the fight for human rights and justice for all.

ABBREVIATIONS

FEMA-Fem Alliance -Uganda

IPV-Intimate partner Violence

GBV-Gender based violence

LGBTQ-Lesbian, Gay, bisexual, Transgender, Queer

LBQ-Lesbian, bisexual womyn, transgender men and queer womyn

WSW-Womyn who have sex with womyn

Womyn-women to include non-binary persons

Trans/T-Transgender

I-Intersex

SOGI-Sexual orientation and gender identify

HRAPF-Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum

ERWEO-Eastern Region Womyn's Empowerment Organisation

HRI-Health and Rights Initiative

HOPE Mbale-HOPE Mbale -Uganda

BRF-Blessed Rwenzori Foundation

FARUG- Freedom and Roam Uganda Ltd

CEDOVIP-Center for Domestic Violence Prevention

Out & Proud-Out and Proud Uganda Ltd

Kuchu times -Kuchu Times Uganda Ltd

OGERA-Organisations for Gender Empowerment and Rights Advocacy

RSU-Rainbow Shadows Uganda Ltd

Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence among LBT/ WSW: A Case Study of The Central, Eastern, Northern and Western parts of Uganda

Introduction

IPV has been the subject of an increasing number of conversations and policy interventions in recent times. However, such interventions and conversations rarely focus on IPV as experienced in same sex relationships among womyn and among trans men. This is largely because of the misconceptions regarding whether womyn can be perpetrators of violence or not and the fact that the LGBT community in Uganda continues to be pushed to the sidelines because of societal homophobia. Another reason why existing interventions and conversations may ignore LBTQ/ WSW is that there is limited data on the lived experiences of this segment of the population and most of this data is legal academic research not necessarily analysis of quantitative data. This does not mean that violence does not occur in same sex relationships particularly those in which both partners may be womyn.

This study is intended as a step towards curing this disconnect between lived experience, reported statistics and interventions by presenting quantitative data on the prevalence of IPV among LBTQ/WSW.

Methodology

The study was conducted in 6 districts in Central, Western, Northern and Eastern Uganda namely; Kampala, Mbale, Malaba, Mbarara, Kasese and Lira. The first part of the report shall discuss the first phase of the research in the districts of Kampala, Malaba and Mbale while the second phase will detail the data from Mbarara, Kasese and Lira.

Respondents were identified through the snowball method whereby FEMA identified partner organizations in Mbale and Malaba and organized workshops at which respondents were selected. The same was done in Kampala.

The collection of data was quantitative with questionnaires being distributed to a number of respondents who filled them in and returned the same to the researchers.

The questionnaire asked a number of questions regarding their sexual orientation, gender identity, whether they have experience abuse in a relationship before and whether they know where to seek out support. The data was then analyzed and broken down by a consultant resulting in this report.

The respondents to the study included Lesbians, bisexual womyn, trans men, sex workers and a few gay men. However, this report focuses on the experiences and responses of Lesbian, bisexual womyn, Trans men and Queer people who were the initial target of the study.

For purposes of this study, IPV is defined as a pattern of behaviour utilized by one partner to exert and maintain control over another person where there exists an intimate and/or dependent relationship.¹

i) Physical abuse: Using physical force to control an intimate partner by pushing, shoving, slapping, beating, punching, choking, throwing objects at the partner, or assaulting them with a weapon.

ii) Sexual abuse: Using words, actions, or threats to force another to engage in sexual activities against their will.

iii) Psychological /Emotional abuse: Using words or actions to isolate, humiliate, demean, intimidate, or control an intimate partner. This category often includes property violence such as punching holes in walls, breaking down doors, throwing things, and damaging a partner's possessions. These behaviours are intimidating but do not involve the direct use of physical force against the partner.²

The questionnaire used in this study sought the respondents' experience of all forms of violence including physical, sexual, economic, and emotional among others.

In this study, what Rohrbaugh describes as psychological abuse is split into Economic and emotional violence

Economic violence includes destruction of property, preventing a partner from using shared resources, kicking them out of the house and preventing them from working or getting an education, among others.

Emotional violence includes intimidation, verbal abuse and controlling behavior such as keeping track of a partner's movements, friendships and phone calls.

1 Brown University Health Education, "Dating Violence in LGBT Communities," available at http://brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/Health_Education/sexual_assault_&_dating_violence/dating_violence_in_LGBTQ_communities.php (accessed on 29 September, 2012).

2 Joanna Bunker Rohrbaugh, "Domestic Violence in Same-Gender Relationships," Vol. 44, No. 2, Family Court Review, April 2006 287–299.

All these forms of violence are taken into account and analyzed as described in the table below:

Type of abuse	Behaviors
Physical abuse	Slapping, beating using weapons like belts, throwing items like knives and breaking items
Emotional abuse	Humiliating partner in public e.g. places of work, Threatening to harm children, Intimidating them Social isolation; Preventing partner from leaving the house to see friends / get a job/going to school Verbal abuse; Calling partner names, humiliating partner
Economic Abuse	Stopping partner from working, knowingly withdrawing money and food, refusing to provide resources such as food
Sexual abuse	Forcing partner to have sexual intercourse when they don't want to/ are uncomfortable with the circumstances

The data from the 6 districts is broken down into 4 thematic areas; sexual orientation and gender identity- which include a unique analysis of the data collected from transgender respondents, the impact of alcohol and drug use, then finally, access to protection mechanisms.

Central and Eastern Uganda

Mental health and IPV

Although, mental health was not initially an area of focus during the study, the outcomes from the data have necessitated a unique analysis of this issue. One of the questions in the questionnaire asked if respondents had experienced suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months 51.6% (16) respondents in Malaba reported to have ever felt so low that they considered harming themselves and or committing suicide. 48% (25) respondents from Kampala reported having experienced suicidal thoughts or wanted to harm themselves. In Mbale, 39% (20) reported that they have felt so low that they thought of harming themselves or committing suicide in the last 12 months. This means that out of a sample space of 134 LGBTQ/WSW Ugandans in 3 districts, 61 (46%) have had suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months. This is quite a high prevalence of suicidality for such a small community. The prevalence of mental health problems among LGBTQ/WSW may be attributed to living in a hostile environment such as Uganda where LGBT people are still ostracized and isolated. It may also be attributed to inadequate support in handling issues that may induce mental health problems such as IPV. This is an area that organizations like FEMA that work to support LGBTQ/WSW people should look at taking up.

Adequacy of Protection Mechanisms

44% (23) respondents from Kampala said they don't know where to seek for help if they experience IPV, 39% (20) from Mbale said they don't know where to seek support. 65% of respondents in Malaba reported not knowing where to seek help in case of IPV while 26% (8) of the respondents knew where to seek for support. 38% of the respondents from all 3 districts would not know where to seek support if they experienced IPV. The majority of those who said they know where to go reported seeking for help from friends, a small percentage resorts to police, drugs, particular organizations and the biggest percentage resorts to suffering till the relationships end and this is attributed to the fact that they are not aware of avenues to get this support .

The Data from this study has shown that protection mechanisms are either non-existent or inadequate. Among the respondents that sought for support from friends report to have sought for counseling, shelter and short term financial support which was not adequate and this forced many of them to lay back and do nothing hoping that the violence will stop. In addition, the organizations listed across the 3 districts as places where people seek support do not seem to have handling IPV among their program areas. This could explain why the respondents did not get sufficient support. Regarding post intervention support, the data shows that most respondents did not ever receive any follow up after the first intervention from the friends, police and particular organisations from whom they sought for support. These survivors' reasons for not seeking support need to be viewed in their broader social, political and legal context. Prejudice based on sexual orientation continues to affect the lives of many LBQT/WSW persons and as a consequence, many decide to not report and seek any help when they faced IPV.

Misconceptions regarding IPV

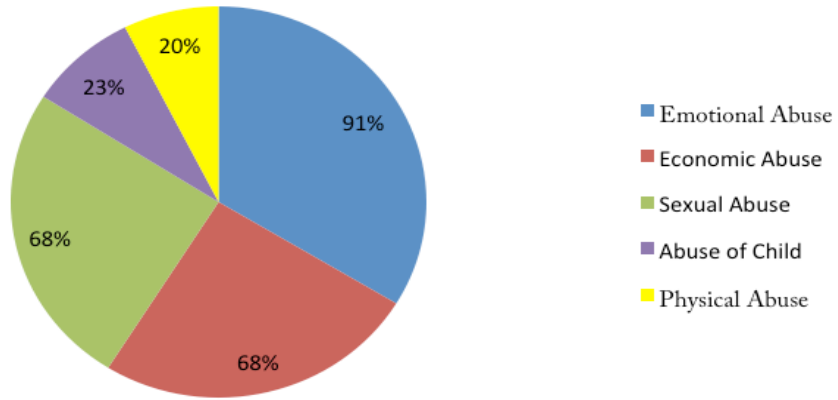
Emotional abuse, which was the most prevalent across the 3 districts, was under reported in all of them. Many respondents who did not report having experienced abuse went ahead to describe controlling and abusive behavior by partners which they did not seem to consider as abuse. This underscores the need for efforts to educate LBQT about violence in order to ensure that people can recognize it when it happens and seek support.

Kampala district

There were a total of 52 respondents from ages 18-45 in Kampala; 31 Lesbians, 9 bisexuals, 5 trans, 2 sex workers, 4 didn't disclose identity and 1 gay man.

Some respondents acknowledged emotional abuse but did not seem to think it sufficient to qualify reporting as having been in an abusive relationship.

Prevalence of Different Types of Violence



Physical abuse	Sexual abuse	Emotional Abuse	Economic Abuse	Abuse of child/ pet
7	24	32	24	8

The most prevalent kind of abuse experienced by respondents in Kampala is Emotional abuse, with 62% of respondents having experienced it.

Two lesbians T and Y had moved in together and they shared a house with Y's brother. The couple fought severally because Y always insisted that X has sex with her brother. This went on for a while till she accepted to have sex with Y's brother to avoid being thrown out of the house

91% of those who reported having experienced violence had experienced emotional abuse while only 20% of them experienced physical violence.

Sexual abuse is more prevalent than physical violence with 68% of respondents reporting experiencing sexual and economic abuse.

23% of those who experienced abuse reported having experienced threats to harm their child or actual harm to their child from an abusive partner.

Sexual Orientation and Gender identity

Of the 52 respondents from Kampala, 31 (59%) were lesbian, 9 (17%) self-identified as bisexual and 5 (10%) as transgender. The rest did not provide an identity. Although we tar-

geted queer people, none of the respondents reported to be queer

Age Range	18-25	25-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	Total
L	19	11			1	31
B	2	6	1			9
T		4	1			5
SW	2					2
Q	0	0	0	0	0	0

67% (35) of the respondents from Kampala reported that they are or have been in an abusive relationship before. This number rises to almost 72% when emotional violence is factored into the equation. Some of the respondents answered “no” to the question of whether they are or have been in an abusive relationship before but then went ahead to report instances of emotional and economic abuse. This disparity can be attributed to the misconceptions about what constitutes abuse. Many still think that abuse in a relationship is limited to physical violence.

Majority of those reported as aggressors, even by respondents who self-identified as lesbians were men. Respondents (lesbian, bisexual and trans) used pronoun “he” when describing their abusers and this is interpreted to include both trans and cis-gendered men. However, given that the majority of respondents who reported having experienced violence self-identified as lesbians, a number of the aggressors were female. Womyn are just as capable of aggressing.

46% (24) of the respondents from Kampala reported having retaliated against their abuser or having been a perpetrator of abuse as well. The kinds of abuse respondents reported having perpetrated included sexual violence such as rape and forcing one to have sex against their will, and physical violence such as slapping and kicking.

The T

10% (5) of the respondents in Kampala identified as transgender. All the trans respondents were between the ages of 25-35. The prevalence of abuse among trans people (taking into consideration the small sample space) is high both as victims and as perpetrators. 3/5(60%) reported having been violent and 4/5(80%) reported having been in or currently in an abusive relationship.

All the 5 trans respondents from Kampala were employed, with 2 being formally employed and 3 informally employed.

Impact of Substance use

25 (48%) reported that their partners either used drugs or alcohol or both. 2% reported that alcohol/ drug use did not result in abuse. One respondent reported that their partner became more loving and playful when drunk. 46% reported that their partners became physically and emotionally abusive after using alcohol and drugs doing things like “embarrassing

me in public” and “becoming jealous and fighting.”

Protection mechanisms

44% (23) respondents from Kampala said they don't know where to seek help if they experience IPV. 42% (22) of the respondents reported that they would know where to seek help.

Respondents in Kampala reported that they would seek support from organizations like FARUG and HRAPF. 69% (35) respondents said they would seek support from friends

There seems to be no formal reliable mechanisms for reporting and dealing with IPV in Kampala. The police is not a viable option and was not mentioned by any of the respondents as a place they would go to seek support. Majority of respondents sought counseling and a few (10%) sought legal help for example divorce.

Mbale district

Mbale is located in Eastern Uganda, neighbored by Iganga and Tororo.

In Mbale, there was a total of 51 respondents from the ages of 18-40. 50% (26) of the respondents reported having experienced economic violence while 8 had never experienced this. 33% (17) of the respondents have been physically hurt or threatened by their partner, 8 (16%) have not and 1(2%) of the respondent's did not answer the question.

Respondents also shared information about if their partner threatened or abused their children/pets and 37% (19) reported that it had never happened, 5(10%) reported that the question was not applicable to them, 32% (16) had experienced it and 1(2%) did not answer the question.

53% (27) respondents also reported that their partner had ever forced them to have sex with them, and/ or forced them to engage in sex that makes them feel uncomfortable.

57% (29 respondents) reported experiencing emotional abuse which includes feeling afraid of a partner, insisting on knowing where they are, preventing them from leaving the house or seeing and talking to friends.

The most prevalent form of violence reported in Mbale was emotional violence, followed by sexual violence, then economic violence, with physical abuse and abuse of children com-

A bisexual woman while dating a lesbian got pregnant once. Her lesbian partner started to beat her throughout her pregnancy. Arguments ranged from why she had got pregnant and may other smaller things. Infact, she got a miscarriage and this was when she was able to leave this relationship

ing last.

The participants also shared about whether they have ever used any form of violence on someone close to them as illustrated below;

Yes	17
No	14

The following are the forms of violence that the participant's reported having used on people close to them;

1. Slapping them when angry
2. Fighting with them
3. Beating them
4. Hitting with different articles in the house

Fighting and locking them out of the house

5. Beating them when they come back home late
6. Locking their partner out of the house when they go out without them

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Of the 51 respondents, 21 (41%) were lesbian, 13 (25%) were bisexual and 16 (31%) identified as transgender. Two (4%) did not provide an identity.

The T

31% of the respondents in Mbale identified as transgender. The trans people in Mbale ranged from 18-35 years old. 54% (7) of trans people in Mbale reported that they haven't experienced any intimate partner abuse. The prevalence of violence among trans people in Mbale is lower than that among Lesbians and Bisexual womyn. 62% (8) of the trans respondents reported that they have never used any form of violence against anyone in their life, while 48% had been perpetrators. These figures refute the allegation that majority of trans men are aggressors in their relationships. In Mbale, this does not seem to be the case. Only 23% (3) of trans respondents were employed (both formally and informally) with the rest being unemployed.

Impact of Substance use

45% (23) of respondents reported that their partners use alcohol and drugs. 22% (11) of respondents reported that their partners are verbally and physically abusive as a result of consuming alcohol. 8% (4) reported that their partners use alcohol/ drugs but are not abusive as a result. There seems to be a correlation between substance ab(use) and abusive behavior.

Protection mechanisms

53%(27) of respondents said they know where to seek help if they ever experience IPV and 39% (20) said they don't know where to seek support. The respondents also shared the different avenues they seek support

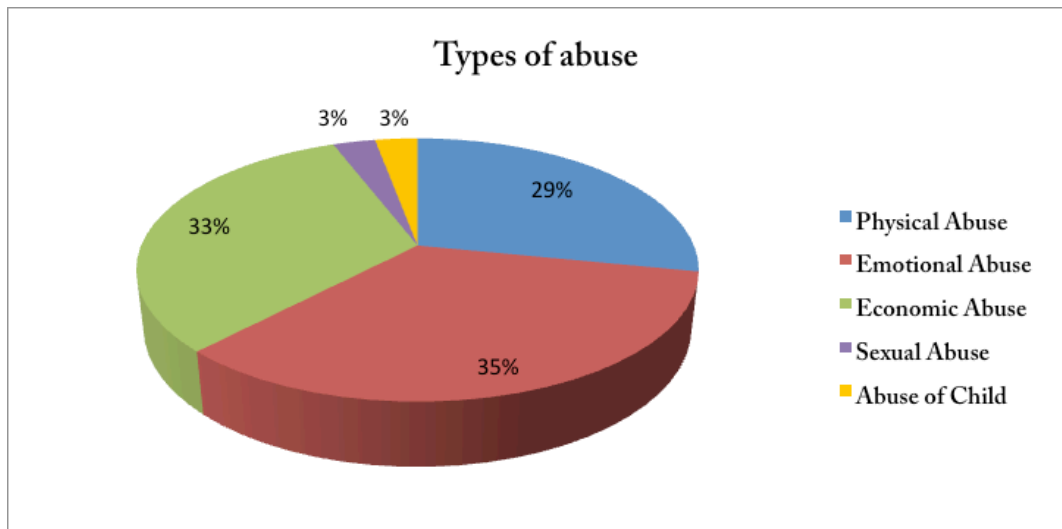
25% (13) respondents shared that they seek support from particular organization; 13% (7) from particularly Hope Mbale, 1(2%) did not specify the organization and 10% (5) sought support from ERWEO. 57% of respondents from Mbale reported that they would seek support from friends (this includes those who said they know where to seek support and those who said they don't.)

Majority of respondents sought legal and counseling support. Only 8% sought medical help and 3% sought financial assistance.

Malaba district

33 respondents from Malaba district participated in the research and 68% were between 18-24 years old, 26 % were between 25-30 years old 6% between 31-35 years old.

Breakdown of the types of abuse



The most prevalent form of abuse in Malaba is emotional abuse with 35% of respondents reporting having experienced it. This is followed closely by economic abuse which was experienced by 33% of respondents. The least prevalent form of violence was threats and violence against children.

Sexual orientation and Gender Identity

55% of the respondents were sexworkers and the rest were LBTQ/WSW persons as illustrated below. Therefore, the highest percentage of respondents in Malaba are bisexuals at 29%, 10% for lesbians, 3.% for transgender men and 3% for bisexual sexworkers.

The T

3% of the respondents in Malaba identified as transgender. The trans person in Malaba ranged from 18-24 years old. This trans person had never experienced any violence so has never sought for help.

Impact of substance use

48% of the respondents reported that their partners use both drugs and alcohol while 38.7% reported their partners using only one of them. 12.9% reported that their partners use neither drugs nor alcohol. The data also shows that partners are more likely to be abusive while under the influence of drugs / alcohol.

Protection mechanisms

64.5% of respondents reported not knowing where to seek help in case of IPV while 26% of the respondents knew where to seek support. A negligible percentage of 13% compared to 67% of the respondents who seek for support resorted to police which never addresses their issues. This clearly shows that most of the victims therefore never get support even when they might be interested in getting it.

IPV AMONG LBTQ/WSW IN NORTHERN AND WESTERN UGANDA

Introduction

The second phase of the research was conducted in the Northern parts of Uganda in Lira and Gulu and, in the Western part of Uganda in Mbarara and Kasese district. It was conducted for a period of 3 months and a total of 47 respondents were reached out; 20 from Western Uganda and 27 from Northern Uganda.

There were 47 respondents from Northern and Western Uganda. Given that not much work has been done in Uganda- outside of Kampala, regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of LGBT people, the number was shocking (in a good way). 17, which is almost half (49%) of the respondents were between the ages of 18-24, 12 (34%) were 25-30, 4 (11%) were 31-35, 1 (2%) between 36-40 and there was only one respondents (2%) between the ages of 41-45.

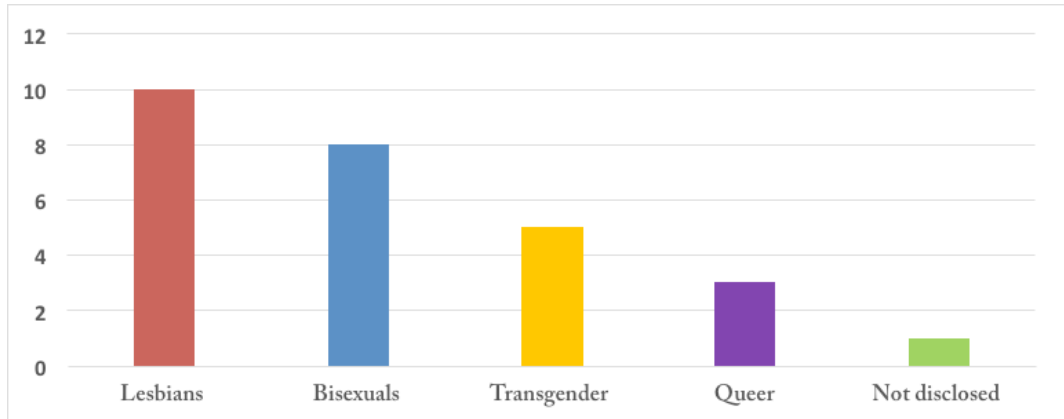
The majority (34%) of respondents identified as lesbian, 29% as bisexual, 23% as trans and 14% as queer.

Lira District

There were a total of 27 respondents from ages 18-45 in northern Uganda .11 respondents (41%) aged between 18-24, 10 respondents (37%) aged between 25-30, 4 respondents (15%) aged between 31-35, 1 respondent (3.5%) aged between 36-40 and another 1

respondent (3.5%) between 41-45 years old.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

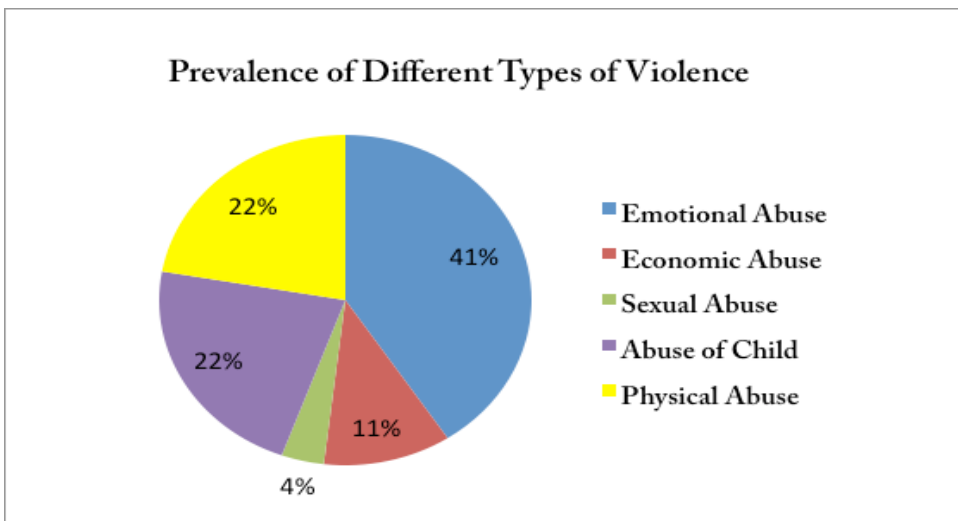


The T

There were 5 (18%) transgender person who all reported to not have experienced any form of violence before. Out of the 5, 1 (20%) reported that they had tried to beat up their partner when they found them hanging out with someone else .The data from this district debunks the stereotype that trans people are always aggressive in relationships. (Age group and employment status)

Prevalence of IPV

Some respondents acknowledged emotional abuse but did not seem to think it sufficient to qualify reporting as having been in an abusive relationship.



Physical abuse	Sexual abuse	Emotional Abuse	Economic Abuse	None
6	1	11	3	6

Out of the 27 respondents in Lira 21(78%) had experienced abuse of different kinds while 6(22%) reported having not experienced abuse. However, out of those 6 (22%) who answered “no” to the question of whether they are or have been in an abusive relationships before, 3 (10%) of those went ahead to report instances of emotional and economic abuse in the next questions.

“When my partner would leave me in the house alone, her brother would sometimes want to have sexual favours from me.”

“Yes ... my partner has hurt me ... through beating, forced sex and threatening me.”

“My partner insulted and humiliated me in public by pouring alcohol on me.”

This disparity can be attributed to the misconceptions about what constitutes abuse. Many still think that abuse in a relationship is limited to physical violence. This was also noted among the respondents in Kampala.

Just like in the other areas, the most prevalent kind of abuse in Lira is emotional abuse, with 41% of respondents having experienced it. 22% of the respondents had experienced physical abuse which was mostly beating.

It is also noted that sexual abuse is less prevalent than all the other kinds of violence contributing 3% of the data.

In relation to the nature of abuse, a notable number 17 (63%) of the respondents reported that their partners prevented them from seeing and hanging with friends. This is a known technique that a lot of abusers employ- excluding the victims from all sorts of support so that they continue abusing them.

Impact of Substance use

21 (78%) of the respondents reported that their partners either used drugs or alcohol. 6 (22%) reported that their partners did not use any of the two.

17(81%) out of the respondents who said that their partners using or having used alcohol and drugs reported that, their partners became physically and emotional abusive. Respondents reported things like “wanting to have sex all the time when I don’t want”, “fighting other people”

Lesbian A had been in a relationship for 3 years with an abusive partner. Whenever her partner drunk, he returned home and fought about everything. She had no way out since, like many queer persons, had been thrown out of her parents’ house. By the time FEM Alliance reached out, she was in a bad state and needed help with moving out

Protection mechanisms

17(63%) of the respondents reported that they knew where to seek for help if they experience IPV. Out of those 17(63%) ,6 (35%)of them reported that they seek help from friends, while the 10 (59%) reported that they would seek help from organizations like HRI , FEMA , CEDOVIP and Raising Voices . 1 (6%) respondent reported that they would report to the police. This speaks further to the fact that Queer people never seek help from the institution –the police that is mandated to protect the citizens of Uganda.

10 (37%) of the respondents reported not knowing where to seek help if they experienced IPV. However, out of those 10(37%) , 3 (11%) of the total number later reported friends as their source of help which is not surprising since many queer people are not usually in good terms with their parents so their friends are usually their core support system. We however need to interrogate how ready and capable their friends are to deal with the complexities of IPV and the fact that they do not consider them as valid avenues through which they seek help.

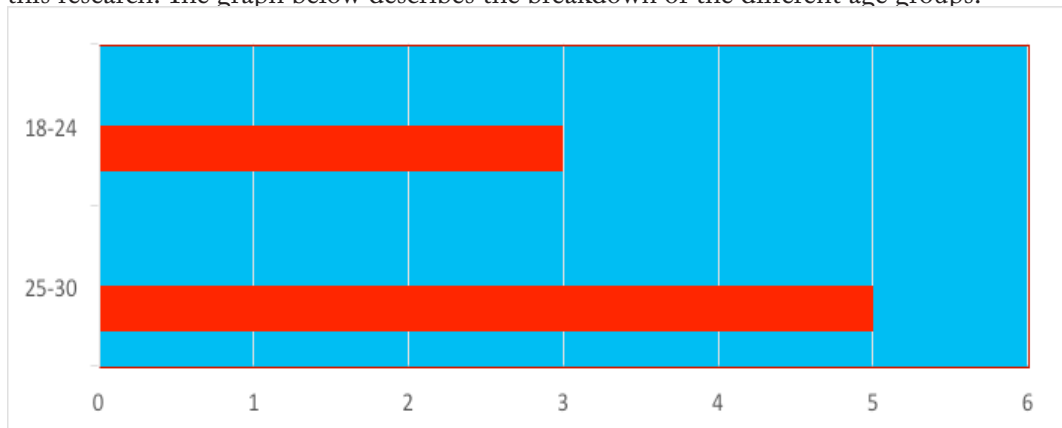
As seen in the other regions, there seem to be no formal reliable mechanisms for reporting and dealing with IPV in Lira.

Western Uganda

FEM Alliance reached out to 20 respondents in the districts of Kasese and Mbarara. The numbers were low compared to the other regions and this is something that FEMA could interrogate if they intend to do any work in the region.

Kasese District

In Kasese, a total of 8 respondents were reached out to .This is the lowest number of respondents in the whole research which could either mean that the queers in Kasese are not organizing or, that they do not feel safe enough to participate in queer related activities like this research. The graph below describes the breakdown of the different age groups.



Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Among the 8, 2 (25%) of the respondents are lesbians, 3 (38%) are transgender persons, (25%) are bisexuals and 1(12%) did not disclose.

The T

Transgender persons were the highest number of respondents even in Kasese. All the incidents reported of abuse, alcohol and drug use were among transgender partners. (Age groups, employment)

Prevalence of IPV

4 (50%) of the respondents reported to having experienced IPV and the highest percentage reported was physical violence which included being beaten, next was emotional violence which included a respondent who reported that their partner cheated on them and even confessed to doing it.

Person X –a lesbian and person Y- a transgender man had been dating for a while. Person X who was HIV + was bullied through this relationship. Person Y continued to post about her status, and about how that was the reason why they broke up. She intimated that she needed a counselor to speak to due to the depression she was experiencing.

2 (25%) of the respondents did not answer this question and 2 (25%) reported that they had not experienced any form of violence.

However, some of the respondents who reported having not experienced violence later reported that their partners had knowingly withdrawn to provide resources e.g food, money etc; had threatened to throw them out of the house and prevented them from using home resources like TV. This illustrated that that some of the respondents were not even aware of the fact that this constituted violence.

Substance use

In Kasese district, 4 (50%) of the respondents reported to having partners who use one of the substances (drugs / alcohol), but they were not violent to them. They reported things like; 'happy moods' 'she acts well' as their partners'

behavior when they use any of the substances.3 (38%) of the respondents reported that their partners use one of the two substances and they always became abusive.1(13%) of the respondents reported that their partner uses none .

Protection mechanisms

5(63%) of the respondents reported not being aware of where to seek for help incase they experienced IPV which further makes us believe that the queers in Mbarara Uganda are

in need of vigorous organizing to enable them grow together and identify mechanisms to tackle IPV.

2(25%) out of the 3(38%) that reported that they knew where to seek for help reported friends as their source of help. Even the one (25%) who reported a organization mentioned that their second option would be friends. This further feeds into the fact that friends are the commonest support system for most queers.

Mbarara district

12 respondents were reached out to in Mbarara district. A number that is low compared to the numbers in the other regions. This could be because not many queer organisations operate in Mbarara so it made it difficult for FEMA to reach out to bigger numbers. Below is a table illustrating the ages of the different respondents.

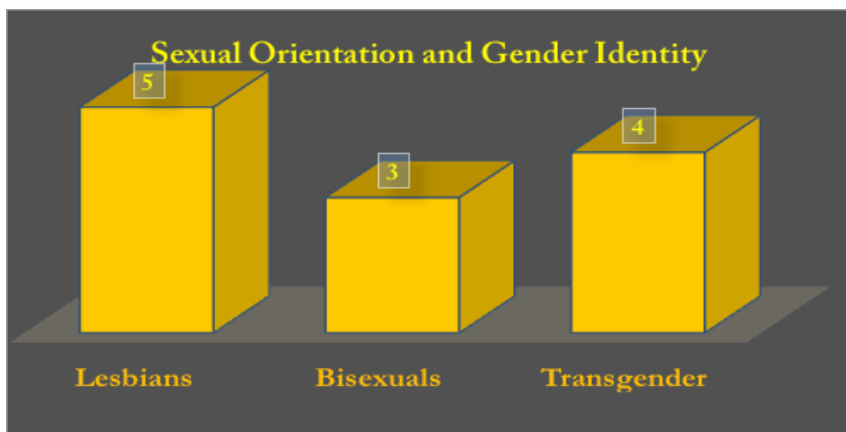
Age group	Numbers	Percentage
18-24	5	42%
25-30	7	58%
31-35	0	0%
36-40	0	0%
41-46	0	0%

Sexual orientation and gender identity

Out of the 12 respondents that participated in this research, 5(42%) were lesbians; 3 (25%) bisexuals and 4(33%) transgender.

The T

Transgender persons contributed (33%) of the number of the respondents. Most of them 3 (25%) had never experienced violence in the relationships they had been involved in. It was also noted that all of them reported consuming alcohol. (Age groups and employment



Prevalence of the different types of IPV

The highest number of the respondents 6(50%) have experienced IPV in the different relationships they are/were involved in. 4(33%) reported that they had experienced emotional violence, 2(25%) physical violence and the same 2(25%) had/have experienced economic violence however, when asked if they had experienced IPV they first reported 'No'

Substance use

7(58%) reported that their partners are/were using alcohol and all the transgender persons were included in here. This is important because half that percentage of those respondents later report that their partners get violent after drinking. Respondents reported things like "She wants to fight whoever I talk to", "She quarrels when drunk" as responses. It is also equally important to note that more than half of the respondents in this district reported not being employed which raises concern about how they are able to afford alcohol if they are not employed.

Protection mechanism

Interestingly, most of the respondents in Mbarara reported being aware of avenues to access any assistance when they experience IPV. 4(34%) of the respondents reported that they would report to an organisation, 6(50%) reported that they would reach out to friends, 1(8%) did not respond to this question and only 1(8%) reported that they would opt to go to the police for protection. It is still evident in this region, just like the respondents in the other regions that police is not a popular avenue through which queers seek for assistance

Important things to note about the respondents' areas

Consent and sexual violence

There seems to be a limited understanding of consent among the LGBTQ/WSW community in northern and western Uganda specifically within the context of a relationship. There's a perception that sex within a relationship is compulsory. Respondents self-reported "denying a partner sex" as a form of abuse that they have perpetrated on their partner or a way they felt their partner abused them. It might be necessary to have a deeper conversation about this within the communities, clarifying the boundaries of enthusiastic consent and sex as a thing people are entitled to in relationships.

The value of informal support systems

Friends were the most common source of emotional and financial support for those who have been victims of IPV. However, even some who said they did not know where to seek services listed friends as their only source of support implying that friends are not really acknowledged as a valid source of support. This is problematic for many reasons.

LBTQ/ WSW Ugandans are often denied institutional support for all issues from health care to legal services. As such, many have to rely on informal support systems such as friends, family (when they are supportive) and other such networks. Given the challenges associated with support from donor funded organizations, there is value in looking into how this most common support can be strengthened and made more relevant for the queers who have access to it. How can LBTQ/WSW organizations support the relationship of queers with family and friends so as to ensure that they are more likely to be supported (emotionally and otherwise) if they are ever victims of abuse in relationships?

Access to services

The respondents who reported knowing where to seek help in case they experience violence in relationships in all the regions indicated that their go-to support is friends and family who support them financially and give them counseling. Those who knew where to access services said they would and have accessed them from specific organizations like HRI, FEMA, CEDOVIP among others. Friends were the most common source of emotional and financial support for those who have been victims of IPV and yet it seems friends are not really acknowledged as a valid source of support since even some of those who ticked “No” and said they did not know where to seek services, listed friends as their only source of support.

Strategic heterosexuality

Several respondents reported being “married”. It’s unclear whether the responses were in reference to legally recognized marriage between a man and womyn or in reference to long-term partnerships with transmen and lesbians/ bi-womyn.

It’s important to recognize the impact of “strategic heterosexuality” in the data. Strategic heterosexuality includes situations where womyn who are otherwise attracted to other womyn get into partnerships with cisgender heterosexual men to keep a semblance of being “straight” in order to avoid being ostracized by their communities. This means that some of the respondents who self identified as lesbian reported being abused by male partners (not clarified whether cis or trans) so some of the data may be based on violence in “cisheterosexual”/ non-queer relationships.

The impact of Alcohol and drug use

Most of the respondents reported that their partners consume either alcohol, drugs or both of these. For example Kasese, all trans respondents reported being consumers of both alcohol and drugs. Also in Lira more than half of the number of the respondents who reported having experienced violence shared that the alcohol/ drugs aggravated their partners’ abusive behavior.

It has been acknowledged severally that LGBTIQ people tend to consume alcohol and drugs at higher rates than the general population as many use it as a coping mechanism in the face of a society that rejects and ostracizes them. Add to this the fact that most queer socializing happens in bars and pubs, the fact that the majority of respondents who reported

abuse experience it from partners who also use alcohol and drugs is not surprising.

In addressing IPV among LGBTQ/WSW in different regions of Uganda, the issue of alcohol and drug (ab)use must be addressed head-on as it ties in with issues of mental health and wellness.

Mental Health/ Suicidality

Some of the respondents in especially Kampala, Malaba and Mbale reported that in the past year they have felt low enough to attempt to take their lives. This is a very high incidence of suicidal thoughts for a relatively small community. This can be attributed to having experienced IPV as well as the daily frustrations of living as a LGBTQ/WSW in a society that is not accepting since it was reported by those who have not experienced IPV as well as those who have.

Recommendations

a) Support queers to organize

The small numbers of respondents in some parts like Western Uganda could mean so many things, one of which could be because the queers do not have enough support to organize. It could also mean that the queers are not comfortable with coming out to participate in queer related activities like this research. This is a region that FEMA could venture into. Related to this is, the need to conduct research into other issues that affect LGBTQ/WSW community. This research will inform that kind of advocacy that we engage in if we are to come up with solutions that are actually informed by that the communities that we work with and for.

b) Intensive engagements

There is need to have intensive conversations about IPV among queers in Uganda. Important to take note of are the areas of Mbale, Malaba, Mbarara and Kampala. Given the fact that those are busy cities, with most of them informally employed and surviving on sex work, deliberate conversations would help communicates that ; They are not going through it all alone and that there is support out there for them.

c) Partnerships on provision of protective mechanisms

FEMA needs to actively partner with like-minded NGOs that provide aid. Many of the respondents reported to reporting to friends and in one of the areas, only one respondent reported to the police. This points to the fact the queers rarely resort to the police whose core mandate is to protect the citizens of Uganda. This means that FEMA needs to enter into partnerships with NGOs that offer aid in response to violence so as to offer meaningful assistance to their community.

d) Invest in a psychosocial center

FEMA needs to invest in a well-stocked psychosocial centre where queers can get assistance. In all the areas where the research was conducted, emotional abuse ranked highest and this, in our opinion is a cry for help. While heterosexual partners in Uganda have their families and the faith based groups to guide and counsel them, queers do not have that kind of support system. All systems and forces in society work against their existence and by extension their wellbeing.

e) Media and advocacy campaigns

Awareness is one of the mechanisms that can be used to curb this vice among queers due to the fact that many respondents first reported that they have not experienced any abusive behavior from their partners but later went on to share instances where their partner stopped them from seeing their friends, or to leave the house or to share money for food. These kinds of responses are a red flag for us to act and to sensitize least this kind of behavior is

normalized among queer people.

Also important to this conversation, is the representation of LGBTIQ community in the mainstream media. For the longest time, LGBTIQ community has been stereotyped as violent and people with mental disorders and no deliberate research into these issues has been taken. This research has affirmed and the need to use platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Whatsapp as spaces to reach out to queers on issues of mental health, avenues of access to health services, counseling, emergency care and any other issues that relate to IPV.

f) Awareness trainings on IPV

FEMA needs to engage in awareness training that focus on sensitizing about IPV and drug adherence among queer people. Most of the respondents in this research reported that their partners were using drugs and alcohol and always turned violent whenever they used them.

Conclusion

This research is a step towards developing solutions towards IPV among LGBTQ/WSW community. However, this research has also exposed some factors that are core to access to help in case a queer person experienced violence. It has also affirmed the fact that queer people face barriers to seeking help that are unique to their sexual orientation and gender identity. The legal definitions of domestic violence that exclude queer people has clearly been spelt out in this research with most respondents resorting to friends because they know that police will dismiss their very existence. The dangers of “outing” oneself when seeking help and the risk of rejection and isolation from family, friends, and society and the lack of, or survivors not knowing about, LBT-specific or LBT-friendly assistance resources came out strongly in this report. Important to take note in the next steps to be taken after this research is that we are dealing with respondents with low levels of confidence in the sensitivity and effectiveness of law enforcement officials and courts for queer people so we need to carefully and intentionally engage those stakeholders if our programming is to yield result.

