

MYTHS REGARDING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE FACT SHEET

May 2021



BACKGROUND

On a global level, one in three girls and women will be affected by violence in their lifetime. According to national statistics, 56.4% of girls and women in Cameroon have suffered emotional and/or sexual violence. Even though internal conflict, the pandemic and economic instability has increased incidences of abuse against women and girls, gender-based violence in the country has been an existing reality even before these crises. One of the main reasons that gender based violence remains prevalent is due to the myths surrounding it, making it difficult for us to understand it as a society and eliminate it from amongst our midst.

MYTHS VS REALITY

Gender based violence is a women's issue: Gender based violence affects the society as a whole and leads to poverty and marginalization in the long run. It is an issue that concerns both men and women.

Violence only affects certain groups of women: Research has repeatedly shown that violence crosses all boundaries and can affect anyone regardless of gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and ability.

Domestic violence and sexual violence are the only types of gender-based violence: Physical abuse is just one of many forms of violence. Economic abuse, psychological and emotional violence, child marriage, femicide and human trafficking also lie under the umbrella of gender-based violence.

Domestic violence is a private, family matter: Violence is a serious human rights violation and a crime. It is the responsibility of the state and civil society to end gender-based violence.

Men cannot control their anger and it is the woman's responsibility to keep them happy: Feeling angry does not automatically lead to violence. Men who are violent choose violence as a way of exerting power and control over their partners.

Sexual violence is more likely to be committed by a stranger: Just the opposite. In fact, two thirds of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the survivor – for example a spouse/partner, family or friend.

Women must like the violence, otherwise they would just leave the abusive relationship: There are many barriers preventing women from leaving a violent relationship. These include financial dependence on the abuser for the survival of herself and/or her children, pressure from society and family to maintain the relationship, and a lack of options regarding where to go.

Most children and young people don't experience severe violence: International studies reveal that approximately 20% of women and 5-10% of men report being victims of sexual violence as children.

People who experience violence at the hands of others, “deserve” it. If they had acted differently, it would not have happened: It is never the survivor's fault. Violence against women is a human rights violation, and independent of any “provoking” action of the woman, it is a crime and cannot be tolerated.

Men have no role in ending gender-based violence: Men have a crucial role in ending violence against women which they can exercise by participating in public events, looking out for their family and friends and raising their sons to treat women as equals.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEBUNKING MYTHS AROUND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Along with implementing laws, policies and programs that recognize and respond to gender-based violence, it is the responsibility of government agencies and community organizations to run awareness raising campaigns which address underlying myths, gender stereotypes and stigma that foster gender-based violence. It is only through education of the public, service providers and law enforcers can we fight gender-based violence and allow people to live a life free from violence.

Community Centre for Integrated Development

**First Floor Express Union Building – Checkpoint Buea Opposite Omnisport Stadium
Molyko Buea P.O.Box 1505 Molyko – Buea South West Region Cameroon**

Email: info@comuceid.org Website: www.comuceid.org

CCID is committed to advancing the rights of communities, women, girls, and young people in Cameroon while strengthening community leaders and community-based organizations to respond to the needs of indigenous people.

Through a generous support from the German Embassy in Yaoundé, we are implementing a project titled **‘Strengthening Community Resilience to combat GBV’** which seeks to **improve protection of women and girls by addressing all forms of violence at district level with an intersectional and joint methodological approach by the end of 2021.**

