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## IFAGE December Update: Faith Can Move Mountains: Celebrating Domnic's Birthday



*Rev. Domnic Misolo, the unlikely feminist, during the 2023 launch of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) street walk in Siaya, Kenya.*

**Dear friends & partners,**

In the spirit of joy, reflection, and gratitude, we are delighted to share the inspiring story of the reverend Domnic Misolo, an ordained Anglican priest, as he celebrates his 46th birthday.

This Friday, December 8th, 2023, holds a double celebration for us as the IFAGE team and community! We are not only commemorating IFAGE's significant milestones but also marking the 46th birthday of the reverend Domnic Misolo, our visionary founder, affectionately known as "The Unlikely Feminist."

### **Unveiling IFAGE's Roots**

The Institute for Faith and Gender Empowerment (IFAGE) traces its roots to the passion and vision of the reverend Domnic Misolo. Born in a remote village in Siaya, Kenya, Rev. Misolo witnessed firsthand the abuse and silent struggles of women relegated to the shadows.

Two scenarios Rev. Misolo vividly recalls are when he was given a seat amidst older women, including his mother, in a chief baraza while he was just a boy, and noticing only male leadership in his church while growing up as a young boy.

Rev. Misolo's transformative journey began when he discovered the truth about equality for women and girls during his theological education at St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya. Immersed in academic journals and the insights gained from Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) International, he underwent a profound shift in his attitude, mindset, and worldview.



Rev. Misolo speaking on the state and impact of Gender-Based Violence in the church and community.

The awakening stirred him to question the prevailing norms, and his critical questioning began: "What's going on here...?", a question widely explored in his book, *Girl Child & Her Long Walk to Freedom*, [an e-book](#) he co-authored with his dear friend and partner Emily Nielsen Jones, president of the [Imago Dei Fund](#). His curiosity ignited the idea and passion for women and girls empowerment, and this laid the foundation for the inception of IFAGE, a faith-based, non-governmental organization that promotes equality and justice for women and girls, both at home, in church, and in society.

Since 2013, IFAGE has emerged as a beacon of hope, challenging structures and systems of patriarchy, poverty, and violence against women and girls within East Africa and beyond.

Today, we celebrate not just a birthday but a visionary leader, the "unlikely

feminist," whose efforts have propelled IFAGE to shift power dynamics, confront inequalities, and shape social gender norms for justice and equality.



*Rev. Misolo and the IFAGE team honored those who lost their lives due to GBV around the red chair during the 16 days of activism.*

### **IFAGE's Pillars of Impact**

IFAGE stands tall on Four Pillars, fostering holistic approaches and solutions to the root causes of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV);

#### **a). Positive Masculinity**

Through our faith-inspired training curriculum, IFAGE engages and equips men and traditional leaders on positive masculinity to lead positive change and

social transformation in their local communities.

**Milestone:** In 2023, we engaged 112 men in positive masculinity training to foster gender equality.

#### **Achievements**

- Challenged harmful stereotypes by promoting empathy, equal partnership, and power-sharing, including equal decision-making abilities between men and women.
- Engaged men as allies in dismantling gender-based discrimination and promoting gender equality advocacy.
- Supported equal opportunities for both men and women, encouraging environments for women to thrive beyond societal expectations through capacity building.
- Fostered collaborative efforts with the church and traditional leaders to challenge patriarchal norms, creating safe spaces for diversity within family, church, and community setups.

#### **b). Biblical Equality**

IFAGE believes that the Bible from Genesis to Revelation teaches about equality for women and men, and based on that, we engage and equip Christian leaders on Biblical Equality, create safe spaces in the church and community for a dialogue on gender-based violence (GBV) and address misinterpretation that justifies male superiority and power against women and girls.

**Milestone:** Through our trained gender champions, we achieved a 70% increase in the community's reach with Biblical Gender Knowledge.

#### **Achievements**

- We trained 128 gender champions who directly reached 32 groups, comprising 90–120 individuals, creating a ripple effect of our biblical gender training this year.
  - Gender reconciliation in families, churches, and the community: through
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our gender champions, we reach the basic unity of our society by addressing issues of GBV, gender discrimination, and empowering families to embrace gender equality.

- Promoted women's leadership in faith spaces, challenging stereotypes that demean women's abilities, has empowered more women to take leadership positions in church. Now we have bishops, assistant bishops, and more clergy who are women.

### **c). Para-Social/Legal Workers**

For a holistic approach to ending gender-based violence (GBV), we train community gender champions as para-social and para-legal workers to support survivors of sexual violence through tracking, tracing, and providing GBV survivors with essential care, family reconciliation, legal assistance, and effective support systems.

**Milestone:** In 2023, we equipped 35 community gender champions with para-social and para-legal skills to address gender-based violence (GBV) and provide survivors-centered services to GBV survivors.

### **Achievements:**

- Tracing, tracking, and linking 352 GBV survivors to essential care.
  - Established a supportive network for effective response to survivors' needs.
  - Breaking the silence against GBV, this initiative has seen more GBV cases reported than before due to our well-structured response and referral process.
  - 17 safe spaces for GBV survivors in churches.
  - Empowered the para-social and para-legal workers to become advocates for gender justice, contributing to our common goal of gender equality.
  - Scaled up to 7 sub-counties with 7 operating survivors' social networks.
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*Rev. Misolo leading the triple threat (GBV, HIV/AIDS, and teen pregnancies)  
sensitization training in Butere Sub-county*

**d). Sexual Reproductive Health Education**

IFAGE strives to provide adolescents, youth, and young mothers with the knowledge and skills on sexual and reproductive health to reduce rising cases of teenage pregnancy, new HIV/AIDS infection among youth and adolescents, and gender-based violence (GBV).

**Milestone:** In 2023, we empowered 50 youth as peer mentors. Steered the formation of a youth parliament made of peer mentors to advocate for gender equality and empower other youth on sexual reproductive health to live a healthy reproductive life.

**Achievements:**

- Through the efforts of the Youth Parliament and peer mentors, there is a noticeable increase in awareness and understanding of SRH issues within the community. This includes topics such as menstrual hygiene, understanding puberty, and the importance of gender equality in promoting overall well-being.
- Fostered collaborations between the Youth Parliament, other community-based organizations, the local government, and health centers through budget advocacy. This collaborative effort ensures a more comprehensive approach to SRH education, leveraging resources and expertise from various sectors.
- Trained and equipped youth with sexual reproductive health education, enabling them to serve as peer mentors. These mentors have played a crucial role in disseminating accurate information, providing support, and fostering the creation of safe spaces and environments for discussing SRH topics among their peers.



- Through strategic campaigns like the 16 Days of Activism and other initiatives, the peer mentors contributed to breaking down barriers, challenging stereotypes, and promoting a more inclusive and equitable society free from GBV.



*Rev. Misolo paid a visit to our sponsored girls at school*

### **Your Invaluable Contribution**

None of these milestones would be possible without your prayers, your goodwill, your shared passion to end GBV, and your generous donation towards IFAGE's course. Your invaluable efforts and support of our work can never go unappreciated.

As a token of appreciation on reverend Dominic's birthday, we invite you to join [The Girl Child and Her Long Walk to Freedom Reading Cohort](#).

Be part of a community passionate about transforming faith into action—a safe space to learn, unlearn, and relearn the history of patriarchy—and understand the barriers we need to overcome for a world where both men and women are equal and free from gender-based violence.

[Join the Reading Cohort here](#)

Finally, faith indeed moves mountains, and together, we are reshaping the landscape of gender equality. Let us continue this journey, hand in hand, towards a world where women and men are equal and free from sexual and gender-based violence.

Thank you for being an integral part of the IFAGE family.

[Donate Now](#)

**With gratitude,  
Rev. Misolo & IFAGE Team**



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