



## The Global Water Initiative

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# Water Can Bring Love but Not Understanding

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Water can solve domestic violence problems. Just talk to the women of Akodokodoi Village in Orum District, Uganda. Sitting under a tree mere feet away from a borehole installed through the Global Water Initiative, they recall life before the borehole. They used to get water from a school three kilometres away. Though the distance to the school was surely daunting this was the least of the women's worries. Upon reaching, they would face long queues and the struggles for water would sometimes escalate to fights, according to Janet Adongo, one of the women that gathered to talk to GWI staff.



Women in Akodokodoi Village

When they would finally return home, half the day gone, they would find husbands who were hungry and angry, waiting for lunch and wondering where their wives had been. In this sour mood, their

husbands would often beat them.

The water point changed that. "This facility is encouraging our husbands to love us more," says Janet. "We hurry to the well, keep ourselves clean and domestic violence is not there any more."

But why can't the men simply be more understanding of their wives and accept that it takes a long time to get water? Asking this question provoked a range of responses from both men and women. At the heart of this unfairness seem to be cultural attitudes about the roles and duties of men and women. One such attitude relates to bride price, as evidenced by the assertion of one man that a woman should work according to how much was spent on her and that the struggles women faced in getting water were none of a man's business.

Improved access to clean water, therefore, can ease tensions at home and even promote feelings of love, but without attention being paid to cultural norms, it continues to be a woman's burden.