

SPORT TAKES THE LEAD IN FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

PHOTO BY SAMSON SSEMAKADDE

By Samson Ssemakadde

Efforts to tackle gender-based violence gained fresh momentum in Entebbe, where a cross-section of community leaders, teachers, sports officials, and development partners wrapped up a three-day training under the Girls in Rugby Learning Through Sports (G.I.R.L) initiative.

Hosted at Hotel Innophine in Katabi, Entebbe Division A, the engagement was backed by Olympic Solidarity in collaboration with the Uganda Olympic Committee, Uganda Rugby Union, and Swans Sports Club. The focus was clear—leveraging sport as a vehicle to drive gender equality, encourage responsible parenting, and build safer communities.

Uganda Olympic Committee General Secretary Beatrice Ayikoru noted that gender-based violence often goes unrecognized despite affecting people across all walks of life. She emphasized that sport provides a unique platform to confront the issue by promot-



G.I.R.L project leader Regina Lunyolo (left) guides participants through a practical rugby session at Hotel Innophine in Entebbe

ing shared values and equal participation.

According to Ayikoru, principles such as respect, friendship, and excellence—deeply rooted in sport—can be powerful tools in address-

ing violence within homes, schools, and communities. She stressed the importance of giving both boys and girls equal opportunities to engage in games, adding that organized sports structures,

including school clubs and community programs, can help raise awareness and foster inclusivity.

Throughout the sessions, participants examined how sport instills discipline, respect

for rules, and acceptance of both victory and defeat—qualities that can reduce tendencies toward violence and discrimination.

Project lead Regina Lunyolo described the initiative as a

platform to spark long-term change, urging communities to speak out and actively reject gender-based violence. She noted that Swans Sports Club is committed to using such engagements to address what remains a pressing societal challenge.

Lunyolo also highlighted that gender-based violence is not confined to Uganda but is a global concern manifesting in different forms. To tackle it effectively, the program brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including religious leaders, cultural figures, law enforcement officers, probation officers, safeguarding experts, and school administrators.

Participants welcomed the initiative, with Henry Sserwadda pointing out that the training offered practical knowledge on safeguarding. He expressed his intention to extend the lessons learned to his church and wider community, reinforcing the broader goal of creating safer environments through collective action.