



Better HAG Uganda

# ENDING VIOLENCE *against* WOMEN

## 3RD INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT



APRIL 2016

*In Partnership with*



*“...I have endured untold suffering in the hands of my husband for the last 3 years,  
I have been battered  
I have been mocked  
and raped countless times...  
I have been driven out of my marital home on multiple accounts  
I have witnessed him take on 2 more wives  
I have been laughed at by society  
I have struggled to provide for my children...”*

**-Jane\*, GBV Victim**

# “Leveraging Strategies of Positive Action towards Reducing Violence against Women and Girls”

*“Of course I feel empowered now, I know the law  
and from whom I can seek justice  
In case am not supported satisfactorily at any level/authority, I can always contact you (Better  
HAG Uganda) for additional support...  
he actually fears my assertiveness now  
and women in this community are learning from me  
little by little, they are picking up the courage to stand up against the evil of violence  
by walking the steps I have taken, thanks to your (Better HAG Uganda) support...”*

***-Margaret\*, GBV Survivor***

# 3<sup>RD</sup> INTERIM REPORT:

## Contact Information

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Project Address: St. Lawrence House - Bupoto road, Opp. The  
Sports Ground  
Magale Town Council, Bubulo County East  
Manafwa District

**Country:** Uganda

**Type of report: 3<sup>RD</sup> INTERIM REPORT – APRIL 2016**

## **Grant Information**

### **Project Title:**

“Leveraging strategies of Positive Action towards reducing Violence against Women and Girls”

### **Purpose of Grant as stated in the grant agreement**

- i). To increase awareness on gender based violence in Manafwa district of Uganda. The strategies will include the use of radio and stage drama
- ii). Conduct baseline survey
- iii). Train community paralegals
- iv). Hold multifaceted anti-GBV awareness campaigns and conduct community dialogues on GBV with traditional and clan leaders
- v). Strengthen operations of community referral and protection (COREP) centers as well as facilitate medico-legal operations
- vi). Document project in audio-visual recordings

### **Any change to the agreed purpose of grant?**

Yes, there was an addition to the purpose of grant in October 2015. This followed the exchange gain which prompted management to write to AWDF seeking approval to use it on the project. The approval secured mandated Better HAG Uganda to include networking.

<b>Total amount approved:</b>	\$40,000
<b>Amount Received to date:</b>	\$40,000
<b>Dates received:</b>	January 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2015 October 7 <sup>th</sup> 2015
<b>Project: Start up date:</b>	November 2014
<b>Completion date:</b>	October 2016

## **Project Goals:**

### **Overall Objective:**

To improve the health and safety of women and girls through combating all forms of gender based violence (VAW/G) and its effects in Bubulo East Constituency, Manafwa district of Uganda.

### **Specific Objectives:**

- a) To increase awareness on gender based violence with specific regard to women and girls' rights in Bubulo East constituency, Manafwa district by October 2016.
- b) To strengthen capacity for GBV prevention, response and advocacy in Bubulo East constituency, Manafwa district in 2 years
- c) To promote collaboration and coordination among key actors in the fight against violence against women and girls (GBV) by October 2016

### **Project outputs (deliverables)**

- + 1 baseline survey conducted
- + 8 meetings held with select GBV social actors to enhance coordination and collaboration
- + A 3 day training of 25 community paralegals (CoPs) or change agents successfully accomplished
- + 1 meeting for change agents (CoPs) to share experiences and forge a way forward on implementation challenges organized
- + 25 memory books availed to COPs
- + BCC/IEC materials including 510 round neck t-shirts, 1000 pieces of A2 size calendars, 600 bandanas and 6000 A5 size fliers designed and produced with printed messages; some of which distributed
- + 1 art piece of stage play and 1 radio series fine-tuned and scripts produced
- + Rehearsals for the stage play made
- + 20 GBV referrals forms designed, discussed and produced
- + 13 community dialogues with 404 members including traditional and clan leaders, women and girls; held in different communities
- + 3 anti VAWG awareness campaign reaching over 1700 people conducted
- + Medico-legal operations conducted 16 times
- + 12 community feedback sessions conducted
- + Networking with other agencies done.
- + QuickBooks software installed and Finance & Administration Manager trained on-job
- + Procurement: 1 Laptop and accessories, 2 modems and 1 external hardware procured
- + Office supplies including office trays, office phone, stationery; secured
- + Radio spots on VAW successfully aired on OPG Fm



## People reached

- Direct (Primary) Beneficiaries (Total number of direct beneficiaries)
  - how many benefited directly per activity
- Indirect (Secondary) Beneficiaries

Mode / Activity	Direct Beneficiaries	Indirect Beneficiaries	Total Reached
Baseline survey	0	0	0
Meeting with social actors	3	5	8
Community Paralegal Training	13	12	25
Confidential legal assistance and advice by CoPs	836	268	1104
Rehearsals	5	3	8
Community dialogues	190	214	404
Medico-legal operations	61	0	61
Outreach (Awareness campaigns)	1150	550	1700
VCT	704	269	973
COREP Centers	219	33	252
Community feedback sessions	179	43	222
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3360</b>	<b>1397</b>	<b>4,757</b>

## Project Background (The importance of the project)

While men are victims of Gender Based Violence, women are affected by this evil far more frequently than men. For example, researchers estimate that one out of three women will experience violence in their life time (Heise et al 1999). However, though women and girls are the most vulnerable and most affected in this issue, the long term measures to prevent and respond to GBV must include the participation of boys and men. Strategies to prevent and respond to GBV must therefore include dialogue between men and women, boys and girls, aimed at challenging the norms and practices that put people at risk of violence.

Violence threatens the lives, health, safety and freedom of women and girls around the world. This evil in Uganda is a long standing problem, this is because the biggest percentage of women and girls in Uganda are not informed about the gender sensitive laws that have been enacted and neither are they informed about their rights under these laws. Unfortunately, even the few who have some knowledge about these laws feel too inferior to publically and lawfully address their cases due to their restrictive cultural backgrounds.

In response to contributing to the elimination of this vice, Better HAG Uganda is one of the pro-active NGOs employing the human rights based approach to uplift the health and safety of women and girls in rural Bubulo County East of Manafwa district of Uganda. The organization is in position to make this impact with the continued generous support of the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF).



The purpose of this project titled “*Leveraging Strategies of Positive Action towards Reducing Violence against Women and Girls*” is to contribute to the improvement of the health and safety of women and girls through combating all forms of gender based violence (GBV) and its effects.

Ultimately, the project aims at building a shielding environment for women and girls to be free from violence, including transforming negative traditional practices in Manafwa district which are conduits for violation of women’s human rights. It seeks to do this by **focusing on social change**, addressing patriarchy (a root cause for many harmful practices against women and girls including forced/child marriages, widow inheritance, sexual violence, dowry related violence; among others); rallying support from all leaders for a violence free environment and, by **supporting implementation of the existing legislative framework** for addressing violence against women and girls.

The project specifically targets:

- 480 individuals (including among others; clan heads who are the leaders of customary law, religious leaders, women and girls) participating in community dialogues to generate discussion at the local level on harmful traditional practices which are permissive of violence against women and girls
- Over 800 men and boys to participate in the anti-VAW response
- Social actors i.e. the Police, health workers, magistrates and Local council courts in not only expediting justice but also giving priority to cases in relation to violence against women and girls.
- Over 2400 individuals (including 1800 women and girls) through community outreaches with legal advice, advocacy and general sensitization of communities on the evil in GBV (VAWG).
- 200 women and adolescent girls experiencing violence who will receive appropriate care and referral through Community Referral and Protection (COREP) centers

### **Progress over the last reporting period (18 months)**

We have made significant progress in the last 18 months with over **3360** women and girls directly impacted by the project. We are glad to report good progress on the activities which are still on course. In addition, Better HAG Uganda has taken a number of steps to tackle emerging and peculiar VAWG issues over the course of the reporting period. Our fundamental approach has not changed and we have built on the benefits from having:

- ↑ Clear objectives focused on VAWG advocacy, prevention, supporting victims access crucial GBV services, partnership working, and justice outcomes;
- ↑ Commitment right across Better HAG Uganda Staffs and Board; with activities co-ordinated across communities targeted, placing particular emphasis on women and girls’ access to anti VAWG services as well as steering them to demand for their rights;

- ↑ Active engagement of and with different GBV social actors/stakeholders within areas of project jurisdiction;
- ↑ Ensuring that legislation at community, district, national and international levels to outlaw all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls is not only made mention to women and girls-the victims to the vice, but also that responsible authorities duly implement such legislations.
- ↑ Closely working with Community Paralegals (CoPs) that have been trained by Better HAG Uganda to assist not only in discharging the much needed legal advice and assistance but also make referrals for sensitive GBV cases for primarily women and girls.

## STRATEGIES/ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Baseline survey

Better HAG Uganda (Better Health Action Group Uganda) sought the services of a Consultant to carry out a baseline survey on the “*Leveraging Strategies of Positive Action towards Reducing Violence against Women and Girls*” project. The objective was to gather relevant baseline data for key project indicators to enable

- a) the analysis of the communities’ knowledge, attitudes and practices of harmful Practices that affect gender based violence
  - b) ascertaining the magnitude of response by different stakeholders to reduce the incidence of violence against women and girls
  - c) Measuring the results and impact throughout and at the end of the project.
- Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and included information gathered on the outcome indicators and on knowledge, attitudes and practices on GBV (specifically VAW&G). Besides using the data for among others advocacy purposes, it is being used to develop and refine relevant practical tools and approaches for on-going project monitoring and learning.

### Meeting Social actors

In the previous phase of project implementation (2012-13), Better HAG Uganda was challenged by the lack of coordination and collaboration among key GBV social actors including magistrates, the Police, health workers, the church and the traditional leaders. As a result, this was increasingly making referrals difficult as neither of the social actors was aware of the intervention at hand, by and for whom.

Against the above background, Better HAG Uganda arranged for meetings with respective social actors to;

- a) Orient them on GBV as a pervasive public health problem that calls for concerted effort to address it
- b) Amplify awareness on the legislative framework of dealing with gender based violence and;
- c) Strengthen collaboration as well as harmonize operations of these stakeholders.

Consequently, this has made referrals easy as the stakeholders are aware of the project. As a result of this, women and girl victims of the different forms

of violence and abuse are reporting increased support from such social actors, offered on time in pursuit of justice.

## Capacity building

### Experience sharing meeting for Change Agents (Community Paralegals-CoPs)

Following release of the second installment which saw the organization register a sizable exchange gain, management wrote to AWDF seeking approval to among others; convene a meeting of change agents (community paralegals) to reflect on progress, share experiences and draw a way forward. The organization noted with pleasure the impact Change Agents are causing at grass root level.

***“I have supported 21 women gain recognition of their rights from their husbands, counseled young girls on reproductive health and rights and talked to my 2 sons about women and girls’ rights...”*** shared Kannah Mukoya, one of the CoPs.

This meeting also highlighted the challenges CoPs face while making this groundbreaking contribution to the health and safety of women and girls in their respective communities. Most critical of all is logistical challenges as members do not have facilitation for lunch and transport. They unanimously recommended for a monthly stipend to cater for this.

It should be noted that at the beginning of the project, Better HAG Uganda organized and conducted a 3 day training of community paralegals (CoPs) to enhance increase in women and girls’ access to legal aid in Bubulo County East of Manafwa district. This was premised on the need to have CoPs reach out to their respective areas of residence/jurisdiction to dispense GBV information and related legislative framework having appreciated the organization’s inability to traverse all communities in the project target area.

25 people including 13 women and girls and 12 men benefited from the training that happened at St. John the Baptist Parish Hall, Magale Town from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> of February, 2015. The training was facilitated by a lady Consultant of the legal profession who had hitherto developed modules in consultation with Better HAG Uganda management. At the end of the training, Better HAG Uganda availed COPS with memory books in which they would record all cases of violence handled as well as to what extent the cases have been executed.

A post training assessment indicated significant knowledge increase on GBV issues and related legislative framework, with a section of participants able to cite international policies like CEDAW. Participants drew action plans and committed to vehemently ensuring that they reach out to communities.

Amidst logistical challenges, the COPS are putting the new skills and knowledge to use. For they are monitoring cases of VAWG in their respective

communities; and referring them to the community tribunals including Local Council 1 and the clan system or formal legal court system for redress. Better HAG Uganda's visit to a section of COPS revealed their effort of reaching out to over 650 people with confidential legal assistance and advice. Out of the 144 referrals made so far, 41 women and 11 girls have been satisfactorily helped.

### **Behaviour Change Communication through IEC materials**

Additional IEC materials were procured following AWDF's approval to use the exchange gain. 260 roundneck t-shirts, 500 A2 size calendars, 296 bandanas and 3000 flyers with printed anti-VAWG messages were procured. This brings the cumulative number to 510 t-shirts, 1000 pieces of calendars, 600 bandanas and 6000 flyers.

### **Developing anti-VAWG radio series, Stage play fine-tuning and rehearsals**

Intensive rehearsal sessions for both the stage play and radio spots were done to perfection. Open Gate (OPG) Fm was contracted to record and air the radio spots which relay messages on the need to end all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls.

The listenership for this radio station covers the entire Eastern Region and parts of western Kenya. An approximated 800,000 people are benefiting from messages in the radio spots.

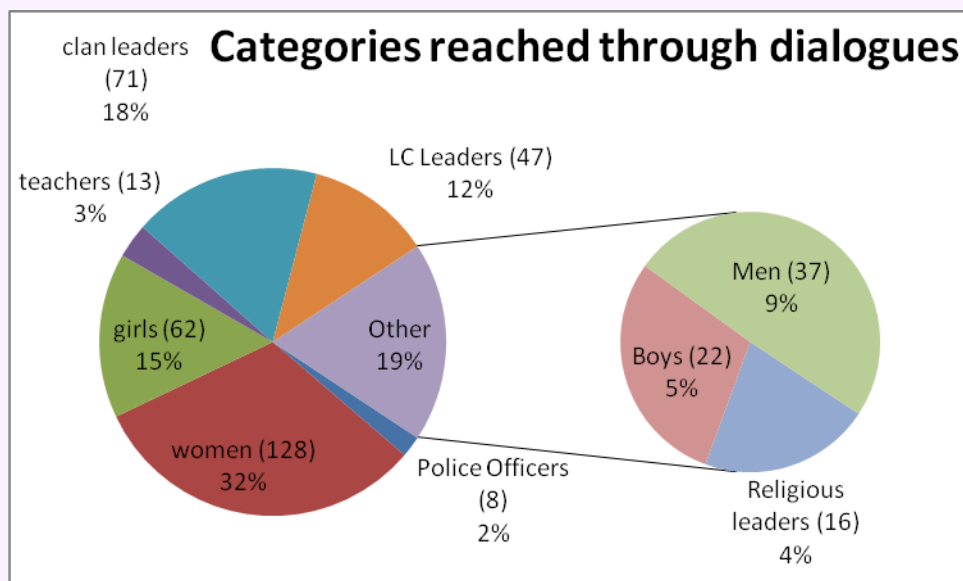
Meanwhile, multitudes continued to get messages from the stage play that was performed live during the anti-VAWG community outreaches.

Earlier in the first year of the project, the organization outsourced a Consultant to fine tune the stage play and also develop a continuation of the radio series.

### **Community dialogues on gender based violence**

In the period under review, 13 community dialogues in Bubutu, Buwamingwa, Magale (x 2), Bumuyonya-Buwatsalo, Mufutu and Sabino-Lwakhakha, Sirekele Primary School, Mukoto sub county headquarters, Situyi Anglican Church, Bukhabusi Secondary School, Bukhabusi Anglican Church and Bumatanda.

404 people as categorized in the below graph have so far been reached through community dialogues in the different communities listed above.



The dialogues enabled participants to reflect on cultural values, practices and norms that they have for long treasured and yet they are permissive of violence against women and girls. Facilitators guided participants to come up with solutions to such gaps, with clan leaders taking the mantle of anti-VAW/G campaigns in their respective clan meetings. Local Council leaders appreciated the existent legislative framework at district, national and international levels and committed to ensuring that the same are adhered to while expediting justice for women and girls in the GBV lens.

Scores of women and girl participants in the dialogues were grateful for the insight into their rights and fundamental freedoms.

#### **Anti-GBV (VAWG) Awareness Campaigns:**

Out of the 4 planned anti-VAWG outreach campaigns, so far 3 have happened in the communities of Bumbo Market Grounds, Mercy Grounds-Lwakhakha Town Council at the border with the Republic of Kenya and the last one at Bukhabusi Primary School. These public campaigns which not only aimed at creating comprehensive awareness on VAW/G prevention, response and advocacy but also rallied survivors and potential victims to reach out to relevant authorities in pursuit of their fundamental freedoms and rights; reached an estimated 1700 people in total.

All awareness campaigns were integrated with anti-GBV awareness raising and education activities such as health talks, confidential legal assistance and advice sessions, HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT/VCT) and soccer. A cross section of political and religious leaders at various levels also graced the occasions and were availed the opportunity to rap against this public health evil. Also present were; the Police, partner CBOs and health workers; among others.

Details of the sub activities conducted during these awareness campaigns and their respective outcomes can best be described below:



## Confidential Legal Assistance and Advice Camp

Confidential legal assistance and advice camps have been conduits for free legal guidance and counseling sessions for primarily women and girls during anti-GBV awareness outreaches. For this reporting period, 3 camps were established at Bumbo, Lwakhakha and Bukhabusi benefiting 611 people (422 women and 189 girls). Community Paralegals (CoPs) trained earlier by Better HAG Uganda formed the fulcrum of legal assistance sessions during the outreach. The MCs often made mention of the availability of this free paralegal service during the outreaches.

### Health and anti-VAW/G educational talks

***“... I urge all people to participate and get tested (for HIV) for better health in Lwakhakha and the country as a whole... I also encourage especially women and girls to coordinate with the police on matters of gender based violence”*** emphasized the Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Samuel Kalya during World AIDS Day 2015 organized at Lwakhakha Town Council, near the border with Kenya.

Better HAG Uganda invited a number of key stakeholders during the outreaches. These range from Local Government leaders to members of the Private Sector, Civil Society as well as Community Based Organizations within the localities where the events happened. These include among others; LC III Chairpersons, Women Councilors, Manafwa district Deputy Speaker, Officers in Charge (OCs) of Police Stations and Posts, health workers and religious leaders; among others. Most of these had the opportunity to shade light on the magnitude of GBV and its response.

During the outreach at Bumbo Market Grounds, the Manafwa district deputy Speaker commended the efforts of Better HAG Uganda in contributing to the elimination of GBV in the region. He also highlighted legal instruments and procedures at district level. He also appealed to women to be assertive, ***“...you women should not sit back and watch while your rights are being infringed upon, rise up and take charge. Some of us are willing to offer help...”*** On the question of what should be done for parents who settle for meager financial compensations when their daughters are defiled, he said ***“Such parents should be apprehended with immediate effect, if you are a girl and you fall victim to such, I urge you to seek assistance from my office...any well wisher aware of such violations should assist authorities and ensure that the right thing is done for the good of our girls...”***

## HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT)

HCT provides a valuable avenue to not only assess the safety and welfare of women and girls but also strike against the vice especially to the men. Our HCT team usually does this while illustrating the intersect between GBV and HIV to all those who go for Voluntary Counseling and testing (VCT).



3 HCT outreaches have so far been arranged in collaboration with Health Facilities at communities where anti-GBV awareness campaigns were conducted benefiting 973 people (704 women and girls).

At Bumbo, Better HAG Uganda successfully counseled, tested and gave results to 381 people during the anti-GBV awareness campaign. 214 of these were women and girls. Of the 11 found HIV positive, 2 women were already on care; while 3 men, 5 women and a teenage boy were referred to Magale Sub Hospital for specialized management of HIV.

On World AIDS Day 2015, the organization tested and gave results to 349 people. 49% of these were women and girls. 27 (11 women, 8 adolescent girls) were diagnosed HIV positive and were referred to Bumwoni Health Center III and Magale Sub Hospital for specialized management of HIV.

At Bukhabusi Primary School, Better HAG Uganda counseled, tested and delivered results to 243 people. 4 people (1 woman) were found to be living with HIV and were referred for further assessment and treatment.

#### **Soccer**

During the outreach at Bumbo Market Grounds, our Sports and Events (S&E) strategy was manifested in soccer and became an integral approach for Better HAG Uganda in amplifying anti violence against women and girls messages. Commentary was deliberately in line with women's human rights, spelling out women and girls abilities in real life as exemplified by their playing and/or movements on the pitch.

People of different categories turned up overwhelmingly to witness this event and as a result benefited from the live commentary about the need to end all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls with primary focus on wife battering, forced and/or early marriages (defilement), sexual violence and economic violence. The commentary also emphasized legal instruments that address the vice.

#### **Community Referral and Protection (COREP) centres**

COREP centres at Makunya, Bumbo and Matuwa continued to work as places of solace and paralegal advice for victims of violence against women and girls. So far 382 people (87% women and girls) have benefitted from support at the centres. Although we are still experiencing logistical challenges, we believe that such arrangements are hope for zero tolerance to gender based violence.

#### **Medico-legal operations**

A total of 13 sessions of medico-legal operations have been conducted by the organization, reaching 61 people i.e. 42 women and 19 girls. Working with COPs and partner CBOs, teams were facilitated to collect and process forensic evidence on the different forms of violence against women and girls. Additionally, the teams continue to provide confidential advice and legal

assistance to women and girl victims of human rights violations. In seeking justice, such evidence is not only presented by Better HAG Uganda on behalf of the victims in the courts of law and community tribunals but is also being used for advocacy purposes.

### **Community feedback sessions**

Better HAG Uganda has conducted 18 community feedback sessions to ascertain how the project has impacted on people in different communities of the project area of jurisdiction. 173 people have been reached through this intervention. Efforts have been made to visit CBOs, Local Government leaders, COPs as well as clan heads to assess their contribution to the fight against violence against women and girls. We are pleased to report that;

- ✓ CoPs continue to play a salient role of ensuring that victims of gender based violence who are largely women and girls continue to access justice and that they are safe, healthy and productive.
- ✓ Members of CBOs including Sorry Comes After Danger (SCAD), Lwakhakha HIV Group, Walibi Tsawanzusi HIV Group and Bubutu HIV Prevention Group; who benefitted from the 2012 and 2015 COP trainings have integrated anti-GBV interventions in their respective work plans and are doing tremendous work in regard to sensitising respective communities on GBV issues and related laws.
- ✓ Kongo Kannah (Mrs.) – LC III Councillor, Buwandyambi is traversing communities reaching out to her electorate with this crucial information. She invited Better HAG Uganda to join her in fighting violence in one home in Buwandyambi.

One Wabuko M. Samwiri, Elder in Buwandyambi commended Better HAG Uganda's effort in fighting the vice. *"...I am very pleased that you have come at a time when my area recently experienced violence...my good friend and neighbor has just approached me for advice...and I hope that you (Better HAG Uganda) will escort me to her home in an effort to broker peace there..."* an invitation Better HAG Uganda could not resist.

### **How has this reflected in the lives of project beneficiaries or in the work of the organization (please give details)**

The organization has continued to register success. A good section of women and girls are entering a new phase – from just being knowledgeable about GBV issues and related laws to actually reaching out to concerned authorities to demand for their fundamental freedoms and rights. Learning of women who are visiting Local council leaders, the Police as well as COREP centres is not only amazing news but is also indicative of how project beneficiaries have been transformed from previously accepting GBV as a part of their life and norm to standing up to challenge the same norms permissive of VAWG.

Better HAG Uganda staff have equally been impacted by the project. The Executive Director and the Finance and Administration Manager (FAM) have benefited from AWDF's institutional capacity development arrangements. Whereas the former benefited from the Result Based Management (RBM) training,

the FAM acquired tremendous skills and knowledge from the financial management training; both of which were held in Nairobi Kenya.

As an organizational, we have transformed our financial management techniques from the historical accounting method to computerized accounting i.e. QuickBooks. The software was installed and on-job training in the use of QuickBooks done for the FAM.

Additionally, program staffs are continuously learning from the project. They have been able to know which strategies work best to deliver concrete outcomes and they are focussing their efforts there.

### **Details of work/activities yet to be completed**

All activities that were planned for year 1 of the project have been successfully been accomplished. The following are pending receipt of the second installment of the grant.

- a) 1 multifaceted awareness campaign.
- b) 3 community dialogues.
- c) Working with COREP centres to give confidential legal assistance (including referrals) and advice to women and girls on GBV issues
- d) 2 sessions of medico legal operations
- e) 2 quarterly monitoring visits.
- f) 6 quarterly community feedback sessions
- g) Conducting external financial audit.

### **Main challenges faced in carrying out the project**

- ❖ Women and girls' access to justice is continuously being hampered by the lack of logistical facilitation. Because of poverty, many victims do not reach the courts of law, the Police and cannot pay for medical fees in the event of physical harm.
- ❖ We continue to experience shortages in IEC materials. It is projected that they won't be enough to cover the whole of next year's project activities.
- ❖ There are still financial expectations from the community during dialogues.
- ❖ Inflation which grossly affects our static budgets. At times we are forced to scale down on certain activities due to high prices of goods and services.
- ❖ Lack of an organizational 4x4 vehicle continues to be a menace and as a result hampers our smooth operations not only in the rainy season but also due to the rural bad road network.
- ❖ Bad weather characterized by heavy rainfall and too much sunshine.
- ❖ Lack of core funding. We still have inadequate remuneration for our staffs. The organization therefore still survives on voluntarism which is risky since staffs can look for greener pastures elsewhere at any time. This also impacts on organizational operational costs including but not limited to staff meals, stationery, utilities, internet, rent and fuel.

**Will the project be completed as scheduled? If no, please give reason.**

Yes

**Will there be any financial implications, if there is a delay? If yes, who pays for that?**

No

**Please provide Photographs, Newspaper clips, etc. (if any)**

Please find attached appendix



### A Young Woman kills two birds with one stone...



Jennifer (centre-in blue top) alongside other marathon winners and participants; holds her goat after winning the marathon, Lwakhakha Town Council, 1/12/2015. Photo credit: staff of Better HAG Uganda.



Jennifer (centre) poses with her husband (right) and Angella Nambuya (Better HAG CoP), Sabino during one of the community feedback sessions. 4/3/2016. Photo credit: staff of Better HAG Uganda.



Jennifer poses with four of her children in front of her house, Sabino, 4/3/2016. Photo credit: staff of Better HAG

Many women country wide have fallen victim to gender based violence in all its forms from, among others, their spouses. Commonly, women are battered and sexually abused. Domestic violence has a significant impact on the health and well being of women both immediate and long term, which include post traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety; all of which reduce the effectiveness and productivity of the women.

Jennifer Buteme, a 28year old mother of five was one of the many people that thronged the December 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 event to commemorate World AIDS Day 2015 at Mercy Grounds, Lwakhakha Town Council, near the Border with the Republic of Kenya.

Jennifer was attracted by the MC's invitation for women to participate in the health marathon, an integral activity in all Better HAG Uganda's public awareness campaigns with the winner's prize being a goat. *"...I was attending to my garden when I heard her (MC) invite and I was like, can't I really bring that goat home? Confident of my abilities, I halted the garden activities to register myself...and there I was; winner of the women's category..."* narrated Ms. Buteme during one of Better HAG Uganda community feedback sessions.

Initially oblivious of the purpose of the event was this ecstatic winner. Her principal motivation to go to Mercy Grounds was smiling back home with the goat. However, the award ceremony for the winners of the marathon would await speeches from key invited guests who all expounded on the need to stamp out the evil of sexual and gender based violence. In addition, the Executive Director of Better HAG Uganda, Officer-in-Charge of Lwakhakha Town Council Police Station and the area Women Councilor all made mention of the intersect between HIV/AIDS and GBV. The legislative framework on SGBV and the navigation process for victims seeking redress was elaborated; and Jennifer, like many other women and girls present benefitted from these empowerment messages.

*"Whilst I awaited the goat to be officially handed to me, I noticed how relevant the messages rapped by different speakers touched my own life. I had been a victim of battering from my hubby, including all these other insults that men throw at their wives when things go wrong at times... I could realize that as a woman, I have a host of rights, and that he has no right whatsoever to treat me inhumanly...I have since claimed my rights from him and I am glad to share that there is a significant change in his attitudes towards me...it's amazing that he's starting to consult me on a few issues that affect this home..."* revealed Jennifer.

Better HAG Uganda noticed with interest the remorse expressed by Jennifer's husband. *"...we are both adults, I think I ought to treat her with some dignity...I regret the nasty treatment I have given her in the past. I want to be a better man for her..."* said Joseph Wekwanya, Jennifer's husband.

Better HAG Uganda team counseled the couple, clearing recapping women's rights issues and openly (in the presence of her husband) encouraged Jennifer to take charge of herself and demand for equal treatment from her husband.

The Organization followed up Jennifer through Ms. Angella Nambuya, a CoP trained with the generous support of the AWDF.

## Teenager trained as Paralegal (COP) rescues self first



Barbara (seated - in black) attentively listens to fellow participants brainstorming on factors fuelling GBV



Barbara happily receives a Certificate of Completion of COP training from the Facilitator.



Beatrice, AWDF Grants Manager, poses with Barbara at Bumbo Play Ground during AWDF's site visit to Better HAG Uganda.

The period November 2014 through to October 2016 marks the second phase of implementing a project on elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) with the generous support of the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF). The project is happening in Bubulo County East of Manafwa district in Eastern Uganda where GBV is very prevalent.

One of the lessons learnt in phase I was the need to recruit and train Community Paralegals (CoPs) on GBV issues and related laws so as they reach out to victims in their respective communities. Little did young Barbara, one of the beneficiaries of the CoP training, know that she was destined to the empowerment that could save her critical situation.

Barbara Mukite is an 18 year old candidate for O-Levels National Examinations at Africana Secondary School, Bumwoni S/County. The future of her studies was seemingly fading on account of her Father (who happens to be a Sub County Speaker) denying her tuition and other scholastic materials. ***"...he tells me he does not have money to educate girls, that I should get married so that he gets the dowry to educate my male siblings...what is more hurting is he helps other clan children with fees and scholastic materials and ignores me...he even threatened to slice me up with a panga if I insisted on demanding for tuition from him..."*** a sobbing Barbara secretly shares her ordeal with the M&E Officer during tea break.

This was hastily shared with the Lead Facilitator - a Lawyer by Profession. She elucidated a whole set of rights while quoting different legal instruments to the delight of Barbara. She also encouraged her to rise up and demand for such rights from her Dad, noting that Better HAG Uganda would stand with her. This incident formed the benchmark of the training where the Executive Director encouraged the rest of the participants to ensure that such human rights violations come to a halt as soon as they pass out from the training.

Barbara successfully completed the training and was awarded a certificate, a card (ID) identifying her as a CoP as well as an introduction letter from Better HAG Uganda to concerned authorities in the GBV response.

Feeling empowered, flying high and confident that she would emerge victor in the fight for her right to education, Barbara happily left for home.

It is Better HAG Uganda's principal and passion to follow up peculiar GBV cases like that of Barbara. A fortnight after the training, Better HAG Uganda made contact with Barbara to the joy of 'good news'. ***"I respectfully told him that I know my rights, and that I didn't wish to take him to court for that...I showed him the certificate which clearly bore my name, together with the ID and the letter Introducing me as a COP...I could see him with no option ... and days later he paid my tuition. I am now happily in school; and although I haven't got all I want, I am sure he will honour his pledge and settle me in the near future..."*** noted a joyful Barbara on phone.

On the question of what she thought of the training, Barbara noted ***"...thank you so much Better HAG Uganda, without that arrangement and the fact that you selected me to participate, I wouldn't perhaps be here (at school) today..."***

To us, all credit goes to AWDF. For without this big-hearted support; Barbara would perhaps be one of the many saddest girls in the world.



# Woman supported to regain marital home and land



Janefer Sikhoya with 2 of her children after regaining occupancy of her marital home

In most cases whenever a man gets married to another wife, he immediately ignores his first wife and gives all his attention to the new wife. It does not only involve shifting the attention and love to the new wife but also things like land, money among others. The lack of control over both productive and non-productive resources that is apparent in both rural and urban settings places women at a reduced level of advantage in areas of security of home, maintaining a basis for survival, and accessing economic opportunities.

Janefer Sikhoya is a 37 year old mother of 6, the oldest being a 19 year old girl and the youngest 3½. For close to 20 years, she was living in relative peace with her husband until he decided to take on the second wife. Janefer could not challenge this marriage as she had been traditionally married, with national laws allowing a man to marry as many as he wishes under this arrangement. Only Christian marriages allow for nullification.



Better HAG Uganda's COP, Mr. Kunikina Eridadi poses with Janefer and her two children in front of her house.

Upon taking on the second wife, her husband drove her out of her marital home, along with the children. She was also denied the right to cultivate the land. Janefer sought refuge at her paternal home. ***"...he would have married a second wife if he wished to, but to deny me the right to my home after all this while with him, with all these children is hard to take...why did he have to give all the pieces of land to his new wife ...where did he expect his children to get food?..."*** bemoaned Janefer during an interview with Better HAG Uganda.

Mr. Kunikina Eridadi, a Lay Reader at Mufutu Church who also doubles as Better HAG Uganda's COP, learnt of Janefer's situation from the congregation. He visited Janefer's father-in-law who was positive about ensuring that his grandchildren come back home with their mother. ***"...he told me he had tasked the son to explain the dismissal of his family but in vain..."*** said Eridadi. The COP advised Janefer's father-in-law to convene a meeting of clan members, Local Council 1 leadership, Janefer's husband, children and herself, an advice which was promptly heeded to.

This meeting came up with the following resolutions;

- ♥ That Janefer and her children should with immediate effect regain occupancy of her marital house
- ♥ That all the pieces of land she was cultivating before her husband married a second wife be returned to her with immediate effect
- ♥ In consideration of the fact that Janefer had not been cultivating and therefore did not have food for the family, her husband was take responsibility both as father and husband to provide food for 2 years.

Upon meeting Janefer after she had regained her marital home, Better HAG Uganda learnt that she was in control of all the pieces of land. ***"...I am happy for Mr. Kunikina because he has been behind all this success...well, sometimes he defaults on giving us food but at least we are cultivating our own, we have harvested beans and even re-planted for the second season. In a few weeks we shall also be harvesting maize"***

Mr. Kunikina is a beneficiary of Better HAG Uganda's paralegal training which was generously funded by the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF).



# From forced early marriage to sitting for National Examinations...



Metrine Nambuya at her home



Metrine poses for a photo with Mr. Kunikina Eridadi, Better HAG Uganda's COP (Change Agent)

Millions of young girls worldwide are forced to marry when they are still children - with Uganda having one of the highest early and forced marriage prevalence at 46%. As a result, victims are denied the ordinary experiences that young people elsewhere take for granted: schooling, good health, economic opportunities, and friendship with peers. This exposes them to numerous detrimental consequences associated with early marriage.

Community Paralegals (CoPs) were trained by Better HAG Uganda as Change Agents to extend paralegal services related to different gender based violence cases like the above.

Nambuya Metrine is a 15 year old first daughter of one Mityero Yokana of Buwambwa village, Sirekere Parish, Bumbo S/County in Manafwa district. On learning that she was being infatuated by a 16 year old boy, her father forced her to get married to him. ***"...yes, I was having an affair with my boyfriend but I felt I was not ready for marriage. My father withdrew me from school and pushed me into it, he told me I was old enough to start my own family...I went into it against my will"*** revealed Metrine.

Her new marital status was however never to last for long following her father-in-law's disapproval. He could not consent to the marriage on considerations that the 'love birds' were not only underage but also due to the fact that he was still housing the groom. He therefore sent her packing to her Father's house who also forcefully tossed her back to her 'husband's' house. ***"How could I allow children to get married...yet it beats my understanding to see that my counterpart (Metrine's father) insists on wanting this engagement on...I have no doubt that he was expecting wealth (dowry) for his daughter"*** wondered Metrine's would-be Father-in-law when approached by Better HAG Uganda.

It was at this point when Better HAG Uganda's COP, Ageing Kunikina Eridadi intervened. Naturally, Mr. Kunikina visited the girl's parents to expound on laws against forced and early marriage in addition to others that relate to women and girls' human rights. However, the drama was yet to unfold as Metrine's father 'set new age' for his daughter, raising it to 18 years. On hearing this, Ageing Kunikina wisely told the man that the 'real' age meant that if pursued; Metrine would undergo defilement charges as the law equally applies to females who defile underage men.

Beaten on all fronts, Metrine's father yielded to the COP's advice of restoring Metrine in school. ***"...he accepted in principle to take his daughter back to school, and I am glad to confirm from the girl that she is attending classes..."*** noted Mr. Kunikina.

The COP used the analogy of soup and chicken in advising Metrine to concentrate on her studies. ***"...don't be deceived, for it doesn't make sense for you to fill your tummy with soup and leave no space for chicken"***

It is great to learn that Metrine is back at school and is set to sit for National Primary Leaving Examinations in November 2015. We are keeping our fingers crossed for Metrine to make good grades. Educated girls are undoubtedly at a lesser risk of any form of gender based violence.

**Note:** This is happening because of the generous support of the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)



**Annex: Project in Pictures**



**Left to Right:** Nantsala Leah , Wanzala Betty, Arnold Josephs Kituyi (**ED**) Nambuya .K. Angella at the Experience sharing meeting for Paralegals at Better HAG Uganda Manafa office. **DATE** .Photo credit: staff of Better HAG Uganda.



**Left and right:** Nantsala Leah and Innocent Wanyela –Better HAG Uganda Community Paralegals interact with the audience during a community dialogue at Situyl Church Of Uganda, 3/3/2016. **Centert:** A woman participates in the community dialogue held at Sirekele Primary School, Bumbo Subcounty, 5/3/2016.Photo credit: staff of Better HAG Uganda.





**Left:** The Sabino HIV Group ,act a skit on HIV/ AIDS on World AIDS Day ,Mercy Grounds-Lwakhakha Town Council, 1/12/2015. **Center to right:** Samuel Kalya (The Police ASP), Angella Nambuya- CoP( Community Paralegal),Nafula Josepher, Manager for African Rural Development Initiatives (ARDI) and Arnold Josephs Kituyi( Executive Director Better HAG) address the crowd on the World AIDS Day ,1/12/2015. Photo credit: staff of Better HAG Uganda.



**Left:** The Health Marathon participants get ready to be flagged off by Lwakhakha Town Council Women Councilor, Mrs.Khayongo Mayimuna . **Center:** Jennifer arrives in first position during the health Marathon. **Right:** Jennifer (center) poses with her prize alongside other winners and participants after emerging winner of the Health Marathon, Lwakhakha Town Council, 1/12/2015. Photo credit: staff of Better HAG Uganda.





**Left to Right:** The VCT team from Bumwoni Health Center III carry out HIV testing and counseling on the World AIDS Day ,Mercy Grounds-Lwakhakha Town Council, 1/12/2015. Photo credit: staff of Better HAG Uganda.



**Left:** The Community Paralegals give counsel to a group of individuals on GBV on the World AIDS Day, Mercy Grounds-Lwakhakha Twon Council, 1/12/2015. **Center:** A visit to Robina Watyangu's house to take note of the violence inflicted on her by own sons (poses with her grand children inside her house and **Right;** with Better HAG staff outside her house, 4/3/2016. Photo credit: staff of Better HAG Uganda.





*Left: Jennifer (centre) poses with her husband( right) and Angella Nambuya( Better HAG CoP), at her home, Sabino. 4/3/2016. Right: Jennifer poses with her five children in front of her house, Sabino,4/3/2016. Photo credit: staff of Better HAG*



*A visit to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Muleyi to counsel the two on GBV, 4/3/2016. Photo credit: Staff of Better HAG Uganda.*