



Better HAG Uganda

# 2ND INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT



OCTOBER 2015

*In Partnership with:*



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

## 2<sup>ND</sup> INTERIM REPORT:

### Contact Information

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Magale Town Council, Bubulo County East  
Manafwa District

**Country:** Uganda

**Type of report:** 2<sup>ND</sup> INTERIM REPORT – OCTOBER 2015

## **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. 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.

**Total amount approved:** \$40,000

**Amount Received to date:** \$20,000

**Date received:** January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015

**Project: Start up date:** November 2014

**Completion date:** 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) successfully accomplished
- + 25 memory books availed to COPs
- + BCC/IEC materials including 250 roundneck t-shirts, 500 pieces of A2 size calendars, 300 bandanas and 3000 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
- + 6 community dialogues with 194 members including traditional and clan leaders held in different communities
- + 1 anti VAWG awareness campaign reaching over 600 people conducted
- + Medico-legal operations conducted 6 times
- + 4 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



## 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	587	142	729
Rehearsals	5	3	8
Community dialogues	90	104	194
Medico-legal operations	27	0	27
Outreach (Awareness campaigns)	350	250	600
VCT	214	167	381
COREP Centers	103	21	124
Community feedback sessions	61	28	89
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1453</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>2185</b>

## Project Background (The importance of the project)

Women and girls statistically make up the majority of the victims of GBV worldwide and the same is true of Uganda. While GBV is often mistakenly seen as a “woman’s issue”, long-term solutions to prevent and respond to GBV must include the participation of men and boys. Strategies to prevent and respond to GBV must therefore include dialogue between men and women, boys and girls, aimed at changing the cultural, social, economic and other systems and structures that deny human rights and equality between women and men.

GBV is a form of injustice. Women fear taking their cases to courts due to their cultural background that does not encourage them to address relevant issues through courts. Even those who overcome the issue of fear face the challenge of paying for costly legal assistance. Whereas many discriminatory laws have been revised, difficulties persist in that the populations are not informed about the gender sensitive laws that have been enacted, nor are they informed about their rights under these laws.

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 protective 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 marriage, 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 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 (year)**

We have made significant progress in the last 12 months with over 1400 women and girls directly impacted by the project. Good progress is being made on the remaining activities which are on course, some of which are pending receipt of the second instalment of the grant to have them executed. In addition, Better HAG Uganda has taken a number of steps to tackle emerging and peculiar VAWG issues over the course of the last year. 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**

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**

Gender based violence is by and large precipitated by behaviour, some of which is entrenched in culture. Better HAG Uganda believes that if such behaviour was positively transformed to reflect values that promote peace in the home, ultimately societies will experience social-economic transformation at family, community and national levels.

Against that backdrop therefore, Better HAG Uganda engaged a section of stakeholders including among others; project beneficiaries, local government, religious and cultural leaders of the church to discuss and fine-tune anti-VAWG messages to be printed on the different IEC materials.

After a rigorous bidding and evaluation process, Better HAG Uganda awarded the contract accompanied by the Local Purchase order to Addictive

Media East Africa Limited to supply 250 round-neck t-shirts, 500 pieces of A2 size calendars, 300 bandanas and 3000 A5 size fliers designed and produced with printed messages.

All the IEC materials procured were distributed in this reporting period. We need more IEC materials enough for activities to be implemented in year 2 of this project. Note that the bulk of project activities are in this period.

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

Better HAG Uganda engaged the Consultant who developed the first scripts to support in the fine tuning of the stage play and also develop a continuation of the radio series. The master art pieces which have also been translated into the local language-‘Lumasaba/Lugisu’; highlight the linkage between GBV and HIV as well as the remedies to these pervasive public health evils.

Whereas rehearsals for the stage play have been conducted pending the first live performance during the first anti-GBV multifaceted awareness outreach in May 2015 as per the work plan, the radio series has been shelved until the second disbursement of funds as that is when the funds for hiring studio to record the skit as well as radio airtime will be released.

It is anticipated that the stage play will steer more discussions among the audience which will guide on-spot evaluation of the intervention during the awareness campaigns.

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

Patriarchy, one of the leading root causes of violence against women and girls or gender based violence generally; is deeply rooted within cultural norms, customs and traditions which are under the custodianship of traditional, cultural and clan leaders. Addressing patriarchy in the form of rallying for a transformative change in attitudes and perceptions that promote zero tolerance to GBV therefore becomes paramount if we are to address this problem.

In the period under review, Better HAG Uganda continued to engage the clan system as well as a section of cultural leaders in the region through dialogues on gender based violence as a whole and how cultural/traditional values, norms, customs and practices have catalyzed the problem in the region. 6 community dialogues reaching 194 people were held in the communities of Bubutu, Buwamingwa, Magale, Bumuyonya-Buwatsalo, Mufutu and Sabino-Lwakhakha. A section of CoPs and other technical people on human rights were invited to beef up the Better HAG Uganda team and shade light on especially laws related to gender based violence.

We were able to note a lot of reactions on the subject with notable numbers of clan leaders and elders pointing out a number of cultural practices and

values that are permissive of the different forms of violence against women and girls.

A lot of participants committed to working from within their communities to fight violence against women and girls. And the community feedback sessions conducted by Better HAG Uganda in the period under review reveal how much CoPs have passionately reached out to communities and avail the much sought after legal assistance for women and girls.

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

For the period under review, the only planned anti-VAWG outreach campaign was conducted at Bumbo Market Grounds on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The campaign aimed not only at creating comprehensive awareness on VAW/G prevention, response and advocacy but also rallying survivors and potential victims to reach out to relevant authorities in pursuit of, as well as demand for their fundamental freedoms and rights.

This multi-pronged awareness outreach coincided with AWDF's monitoring and site support visit, and Better HAG Uganda was privileged to have the AWDF team as chief guests. An estimated 600 people attended this occasion and benefitted from integrated anti-GBV awareness raising and education activities including 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 occasion 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**

Community Paralegals (CoPs) trained earlier by Better HAG Uganda formed the fulcrum of legal assistance sessions during the outreach. The MC often made mention of the availability of this free paralegal service prompting a record 219 female beneficiaries. Also benefiting as secondary beneficiaries were 17 boys and 24 men. This puts the cumulative number of women and girls so far reached to 587 for the period under review.

According to the CoPs, whereas sessions revealed considerable improvement in knowledge levels on women's rights; notable was the fact few women and girls were committed to reporting and taking on perpetrators at relevant authorities in the event that their rights were violated.

This scenario not only highlighted success in the previous awareness campaigns conducted by the organization which has heightened legal literacy of women's human rights, but also revealed just how much we

need to put more emphasis on our new area of focus-steering women and girls to demand for their rights.

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

During this outreach, invited guests that included LC III Chairperson-Bumbo Sub County, Manafwa district Deputy Speaker, Bumbo Local Council III Women Councillor, Officers in Charge (OCs) of Magale, Bumbo and Lwakhakha Border Stations, representative of Bumbo HIV Prevention Group, religious leaders; among others were given opportunity to shade light on the magnitude of GBV and its response.

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 mindfully illustrating the intersect between GBV and HIV to all those who go for Voluntary Counseling and testing (VCT).

In collaboration with Magale Sub Hospital, Better HAG Uganda successfully counseled, tested and gave results to 381 people during the anti-GBV awareness campaign at Bumbo. 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.

### **Soccer**

During this outreach, 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. Since the previous reporting in October 2013, not only of 213 i.e. 144 women and 69 girls from the 3 centres but also 31 men 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**

In the period under review, a total of 7 sessions of medico-legal operations have been conducted by the organization, reaching 27 people i.e. 22 women and 5 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 6 community feedback sessions to ascertain how the project has impacted on people in different communities of the project area of jurisdiction. 89 people (61 women and girls) 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 computerised 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) 3 multifaceted awareness campaigns. The first of this was conducted in May 2015 during the monitoring and support visit by the AWDF team.
- b) 10 community dialogues.
- c) Working with COREP centres to give confidential legal assistance (including referrals) and advice to women and girls on GBV issues
- d) 5 sessions of medico legal operations

- e) 4 quarterly monitoring visits.
- f) 4 quarterly community feedback sessions
- g) Conducting external financial audit. This will be the very last activity of the project to be done in October 2016

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

- ❖ The project kicked off in January/February 2015, a time for preparing land and planting. A community dialogue which had been arranged to be conducted at Makunya had to be called off after the organizer called us to inform us that prospective participants had left for the garden – in the afternoon.
- ❖ 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

## 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



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

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.

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)

### When a goat reminds one of his wife's rights!



Mr. Damian Wataka smiles as he welcomes the Better HAG Uganda team on one of their monitoring visits to HM beneficiaries



Better HAG Uganda team takes a group photo with Damian (squatting) with his goat and 2 little children.



Better HAG Uganda at the home of Mr. Masinde. Joy (in orange) and husband (in blue shirt) poses with their goats together with the Better HAG Uganda team

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread violations of human rights with far reaching consequences harming families, communities and the nation at large.

In partnership with the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Better HAG Uganda is making efforts to leave an indelible mark in the lives of women and girls of Bubulo County East of Manafwa district by contributing to the elimination of this pervasive public health evil.

A lot of strategies and activities are being employed for this cause, each of which achieving own milestones. The centrepiece of this story hinges on the anti-GBV multifaceted community outreach campaigns where communities are engaged through different sub activities. Particular to this are the Health Marathons dubbed 'HMs' by Better HAG Uganda.

HMs are clustered in 5 categories i.e. girls (10-15), boys (10-14), women and adolescent girls (18-35) and adolescent boys and men (18-40) as well as older men (50+). The prize for winners of the respective categories is a goat while those who emerge 2<sup>nd</sup> are awarded chicken. During the awards, select invited guests handing over the prizes rap beneficiaries (winners) with different messages commensurate with women and girl's fundamental human rights and freedoms. Legal instruments (GBV legislative framework) that address the vice are also quoted, hence beneficiaries of the prizes and the general community profit from it as well.

Mrs. Joy Masinde and Mr. Damian Wataka both participated in the health marathons organized at Bubutu S/County playground. Both of them emerged winners in the women and older men's categories respectively and were naturally awarded goats. The LC III women Councillor, Bubutu S/county and other invited guests emphasised women's rights while handing over the prizes. For they noted that without honouring women's rights, even the prizes they were getting would not live for long.

While Joy Masinde boasts of the knowledge attained, Damian is quick to note ***"...this goat reminds of my wife's rights, unlike in the past when I didn't see any tangible value in her, the event in Bubutu in which I got this goat changed my perspective on women's rights. Now amidst misunderstandings, we are living as equal partners and we settle our issues amicably..."***. Damian adds ***"...I honestly used to beat her and would at times treat her inhumanly, something I never intend to repeat..."***

Joy on the other hand notes in the presence of her spouse that ***"...my husband asked me where I got the goat and I shared with him the entire story, I told him how much he needed to treat me with dignity and that in case he failed, I had enough knowledge and support to seek and get justice. Since that time (Bubutu event), I can't deny that we haven't had differences but he has never lifted a hand at me...."*** Mr. Masinde echoes his wife's word ***"...it would be a lie to say we won't have issues but clearly, I would never beat her again, I am happy that we are growing old together peacefully and little by little, we are prospering"*** – says Mr. Masinde as he points to the goat and its kid.

It is clear that those strategies which in one way or another engage men and boys (these being prime perpetrators of GBV) are imperative if we are to effectively disentangle the underlying causes of violence against women and girls. THANK YOU AWDF!



**Annex: Project in Pictures**



*Our Sports Approach to Zero Tolerance to VAWG. **Left:** Gertrude Bibi Annoh-Quarshie, the AWDF Finance & Administration Manager getting ready to flag off a football match between girls and women at Bumbo Market Grounds in May 2015. **Extreme Right:** Girls tussle it out with women in a tie that saw the latter beaten by a goal to nil. Live commentary highlighted women’s human rights and the need to end GBV, to the benefit of not only the women and girls present but also a good section of traditional perpetrators of VAWG - men and boys*



***Left:** A teenage girl celebrates after scoring the only goal against women. **Middle:** A section of the audience during the anti-VAWG awareness campaign **Right:** The Woman Councilor Local Council III, Bumbo Sub County delivering her remarks on GBV and the need to end the vice.*





**Left and Middle:** The LC III Chairperson Bumbo Sub County and Manafwa District Deputy Speaker also gave the nod to Better HAG Uganda's initiatives of stamping out GBV in the area. **Right:** A section of Better HAG Uganda's Community Paralegals (COPS)- 'Change Agents' pose for a photo with Beatrice and Gertrude during their site visit at the awareness campaign.



The Police institution being the law enforcement agent in the country has been critical in partnering with Better HAG Uganda to eliminate violence against women and girls. **Above:** The Officers in Charge (OCs) of Bumbo, Lwakhakha and Magale Police Stations highlighting their efforts in addressing GBV. The third OC also doubles as Better HAG Uganda's CoP having benefited from the training.





Beneficiaries of health marathons. **Left:** A boy displays his hen and chicks alongside Better HAG Uganda's OVC Officer and Ag. Programs Coordinator. The young man came second in the boy's category to win a hen. **Middle:** Better HAG Uganda team with Agatha Mutonyi, the winner of yet another marathon in the women's category displays her goat. Her husband, in green jacket was also present. **Right:** Another lady winner (in orange t-shirt) with her husband (in blue shirt). The husband revealed how his perspective of his wife's rights had changed following his wife's success in the race.



**Left and Middle:** A community dialogue at Sabino-Lwakhakha. **Right:** Janet Musuya, Better HAG Uganda's COP (Change Agent) who co-facilitated the dialogue poses with participants outside Sabino Pentecostal Church after the session.





***Left:** Janet in action to highlight how some traditional values, norms and practices are catalysts for women's rights violations. **Middle and Right:** Elderly people are involved to shade light to traditional beliefs that have been practiced over time and yet such are permissive of violence against women and girls. Dialogues are facilitated to allow for elderly persons themselves to identify by themselves the gaps in the tradition.*



***Better HAG Uganda's COP of the year.** Mr. Kunikina Eridadi, a clan leader and Lay Reader at Church of Uganda who benefitted from the COP training has successfully ensured that the above ladies secure justice. Details highlighted in the annexed success stories.*