

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...”*** 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).