

## 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!