

### Ageing Clan Leader sets up Clan Committee to tackle Violence



*Mzee Wabweni Lekoboam stressing the importance of addressing gaps within the Bagisu/Bamasaba Culture.*



*Lekoboam unveils the Bunyoro Clan Committee to fight Violence.*

It is indisputable that the patriarchal culture in this Elgon region has inherent traditions, customs and norms which are permissive of violence against women and girls. Wife battering (intimate partner violence-IPV), early marriages, sexual violence; among others stem from such cultural beliefs and have exacerbated several SRH consequences including HIV/AIDS and death.

In partnership with the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Better HAG Uganda implemented a project titled "***Leveraging Strategies of Positive Action towards Reducing Violence against Women and Girls***" in Bubulo County East of Manafwa district. While aiming at enhancing awareness and education on the fundamental freedoms and rights of women and girls in the GBV spectrum, the organization used several approaches including community dialogues. The purpose was to engage the holders of the customary law i.e. clan leaders and elders with a motive of changing their negative perspectives and attitudes about women and girls' rights.

Better HAG Uganda is pleased to share a success story on a clan leader whose eyes were opened in the course of the discussions that followed in one of the dialogues. Mzee (Old) Wabweni Lekoboam, a clan leader of Bunyoro participated in a dialogue held at Bukhabusi S/county. When a question was posed to all participants about the traditional beliefs and customs in the area, ageing Lekoboam was vocal enough to air out almost all. All in all, Mzee Wabweni looked very vibrant through out the dialogue, challenging fellow participants on a number of issues and looked more than ready to take on every topic at hand.

The most interesting of all was when the elderly man openly committed to establishing a committee within his Bunyoro Clan to respond to different forms of violence which according to him were "...very many...men are beating wives frequently, girls are getting married at a tender age and nothing has been done to stop this..." He noted "...I did not know that there are laws which we can use to stop this, but now that I have the knowledge, I am going to establish a committee in my clan to respond to this problem"

We did not believe until one week after the dialogue, Old Wabweni invited our Manafwa district staff to witness a function where he was assigning roles to a team of 11 people (5 women) from different zones of the clan. To this Committee, he emphasized "*Your role is to ensure that all women and girls, even men (he joked, putting smiles on everybody's face) report violence- especially beating wives, parents who conspire to marry off young girls and men who steal from their wives....*"

Like many others, Better HAG Uganda is very proud of Mzee Wabweni, for he challenged other participants in the dialogue. We are confident that his anti-violence Committee will deliver. We shall be in touch to provide any assistance should such an arrangement and many others from other dialogues need it.

