

## SUCCESS STORY

### 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.