

SUCCESS STORY

Better HAG Uganda Supports Widow to Access Justice



Sarah and her 3 children at her mother's place where she had sought refuge following threats of death.*



The Executive Director highlights on some of the legislative framework of dealing with such a case.



Better HAG Uganda team poses with Sarah and her children.*

*Names have been changed for confidentiality

Better HAG Uganda is currently implementing a project titled “*Leveraging Strategies of Positive Action towards Reducing Violence against Women and Girls*” in Bubulo County East of Manafwa district. The project aims at enhancing awareness and education on the fundamental freedoms and rights of women and girls in the GBV spectrum.

Cases of widow expulsion from the property of the deceased are common scenarios in rural Uganda. Sarah* aged 31, lost her husband in June 2011 and instead of getting married again decided to stay and take care of 8 children (5 of whom older step children whose mother had been separated with their father long before his death). Sarah* experienced loads of challenges after the demise of the husband, including struggling to get enough food from the small plot of land to sustain the big family. Worst of all was the rampant theft of the little food-stuffs she had both in the garden and in the house; by people she later learnt were her brothers-in-law. She revealed; “Sam* (one of the in-laws) once told me I didn’t come here with a plot of land and therefore they were free to enjoy everything I cultivated...” Sarah notes that all these were happening to her because she rejected their proposals to ‘inherit’ her.

Seeing that Sarah* didn’t move an inch from her marital home in spite of the abuse being inflicted on her, the 2 brothers in-law connived with their 18 year-old nephew and 17 year old niece (Sarah*’s oldest step children), inciting them to expel their step mother from ‘their father’s house and property’. By this time, these step children had also started stealing from her and efforts to reprimand them by Sarah* turned futile.

Better HAG Uganda management learnt about Sarah* through one of the beneficiaries of the GBV training workshop and grieved by the story, decided to pay her a visit at her mother’s home where she had sought refuge with her 3 children following threats of death from her older step children and brothers in-law. Sarah* benefited from the confidential advice and legal assistance from her visitors, prompting her to record a statement at Bumbo Police Post. In 3 days, the brothers in-law were arrested and incarcerated for a week, her matter forwarded to the LC III Court from where the court ruled in her favour- illustrating her right to occupy her late husband’s house and also cultivate the land until such a time when the children come off-age and the property is distributed in consonance with the guidelines of the Succession Act.

Sarah* was pleased with the Court ruling although still doubted her security. We advised her to apply for a protection order from the magistrate court. We, at Better HAG Uganda, are very pleased with our confidential legal assistance beneficiary. With the generous support of AWDF, we have played a salient role in the life of this widow. We are glad that she now has sufficient legal knowledge to respond to any form of abuse and that thanks to AWDF, she will live to provide

for her children at their late father's home.