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# Women's Day tribute to top 50

> Applauding projects that made a difference to millions of lives

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ALL over the world, many projects are done quietly but successfully for the empowerment and the betterment of women's lives. In conjunction with the International Women's Day celebrated last week, a global advocacy organisation called Women Deliver has applauded a list of 50 most inspiring solutions and ideas that has helped women stand up for themselves.

The 50 organisations featured were among 125 shortlisted by a committee before winning through online voting by more than 6,000 people.

In Kenya, where women headed households are the poorest, a simple backpack programme is making all the difference by seeking to standardise the quantity and quality of their crops.

The Backpack Farmers Agricultural Programme (BPF), has made it as one of "Women Deliver 50" ideas to raise the standards of living for women.

BPF provides starter packs to small landholders, both men and women, but mostly women.

Each backpack recipient undergoes training on how best to use the tools provided in the starter pack, which if used properly can triple their crop size.

BPF founder Rachel Zedeck said the programme has been successful because it offers farmers what they want.

In Southern Africa, an after-school football league for girls educate and empower them to stay away from risky behaviour and sexual diseases.

Launched in 2010 by Grassroot Soccer, the 'Skillz Street' programme combined activity-based HIV prevention and life skills curriculum with football.

"We started the Skillz Street soccer initiative to educate girls in Southern Africa about sexual and reproductive health and to



A woman, helped by Aawaaj, starts life again. (Right) A backpack farmer tending to her crops

empower them with the skills they need to protect themselves from HIV," said Dr. Tommy Clark, Grassroot Soccer Founder and CEO.

"Our inclusion in this list, among so many inspiring organizations, gives us renewed energy as we inspire generations of strong-minded, confident young women, working towards our goal of educating one million youth by 2014."

On the other side of the world, in Nepal, where sexual abuse and domestic violence is an everyday affair but taboo to be discussed, Aawaaj (which means "voice" in Nepalese slang) is an organisation that creates awareness on such topics and gives girls and women the courage to speak up and get help, said its programme coordinator Pabitra Shahi.

"What we do is create awareness through media, road shows, the arts. We create support mechanisms in villages, where Aawaaj members assist and aid victims through all the steps of recovery - lodging a police report, admitting it happened and then working to regain normalcy in life," said Pabitra.

The organisation, which was launched in 1999, helps more than 100 girls and women each year with legal, economic and counselling

assistance.

Shahi said the main aim is to give them their life back.

Another inspiring story is that of Women for Afghan Women (Waw) which advocates Afghan women's rights and provides shelter, counselling and legal aid for victims of domestic violence in a culture completely patriarchal.

Besides its work in Afghanistan, Waw also operates a community centre in Queens, New York, to assist migrant Afghan women and their families facing crises and provides support to refugee families.

Women Deliver founder and president, Jill Sheffield, said the 50 organisations showcased various solutions that have worked, from advocacy campaigns and health interventions to technology and educational initiatives.

The list was done by a selection committee of experts and advocates representing the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Medic Mobile, Room to Read, Man Up and the International Center for Research on Women, narrowed down the original list of nominations for voting. (For the full list, visit [www.womendeliver.org](http://www.womendeliver.org))