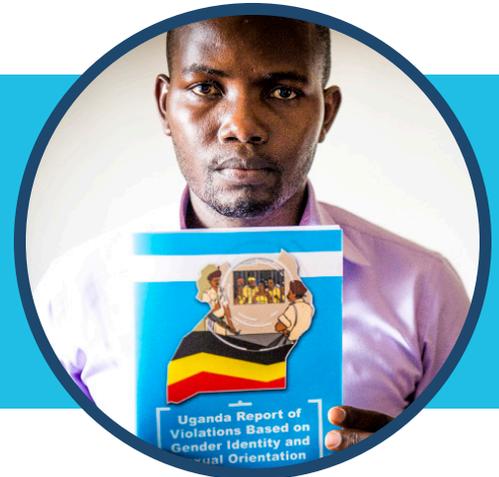


“ The problem is that people don’t believe it [human rights violations]. They actually say these things don’t happen and you are exaggerating the situation. We want the stories to be substantiated and used as evidence because when we don’t have the data, we can’t stand up and say there was a violation. Benetech has really helped us do that. ” —EDWARD SSEMAMBO MUTEKANGA

Partner, Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum in Kampala, Uganda



## CHALLENGE

All over the world, human rights activists use stories to create policy and cultural changes that advance the cause of human rights. In particular, sexual minorities in Sub-Saharan Africa face a hostile social climate, negative attention from the media, and even state-sanctioned persecution. In several African countries, including Uganda, discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community is widespread. Laws criminalizing consensual same-sex conduct reflect strong prejudice against sexual minorities. LGBTI organizers in these communities regularly struggle with threats, arrests and detainment, theft of computer equipment, interception of communications, and, in some instances, direct physical violence.

## SOLUTION

Assist human rights defenders in Uganda by providing data-collection software and methodology to capture the stories of injustice and abuse. Activists in a consortium of organizations used Martus, Benetech’s free, open source software platform containing strong encryption and cloud storage to gather and protect sensitive data. Since 2014, the consortium has produced three reports – “Uganda Report of Violations Based on Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation” -- containing over 250 cases of verifiable violations including denial of access to legal counsel, arbitrary arrest, forced testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, forced eviction, and denial of employment.

## IMPACT

These reports are a major achievement in the efforts to monitor and document the full range of human rights violations targeting LGBTI persons in Uganda. They provide concrete evidence of violations in spite of state officials alleging that LGBTI persons are treated just like other Ugandans. The reports contain comprehensive analyses of the implications of the documented violations, as well as 134 recommendations to the Uganda police force, members of parliament, Uganda Human Rights Commission, Uganda Law Reform Commission, President of the Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Health, and national LGBT organizations for improving human rights conditions to conform to domestic and international standards. Activists now have a model of secure, systematic, documentation of human rights violations and they have transformed this data into evidence-based advocacy tools for social justice.

*Benetech is a nonprofit that empowers communities through software for social good. Our work transforms how people with disabilities read and learn, makes it safer for human rights defenders to pursue truth and justice, and connects people to the services they need to live and prosper. We’re constantly pursuing the next big social impact.*