



NO MORE: Gender based Violence and learner pregnancies in Namibia

[Survivor's Story] Title: Do not let it break you

It is a cold and windy morning. We are slowly approaching the heart of winter and the weather says it all. I am seated with Emma in our counselling room and I am immediately reminded of the first time I met Emma. I recall the conversation we had nearly 2 years ago, which led to her story being shared with other survivors of gender-based violence.

The first time I heard Emma telling me her story, she seemed miserable, depressed and suicidal. Having had 3 children at a young age and going through physical abuse from a boyfriend was more than enough to endure. In a nutshell Emma was done with life. She did not want to see herself living again. "I had negative thoughts and emotions and a lot of complains when I was going through difficult times". Having children at a young age was not easy. My body was not ready to carry three children. Someone was supposed to protect me instead of abusing me". Now two years down the line we hear from Emma again "I blamed myself and everyone for my problems" she started the conversation with a smile with which she tried to hide her self-blame. "You see I have somehow managed to survive with my children" said Emma. As I listen attentively to Emma, I asked her if she could tell me more about her journey after accessing psychosocial support services at Regain Trust 2 years ago.

"There was a time when I was very sick, and I dropped out of school twice. Unfortunately, I got pregnant again. So, you can imagine the confusion and emotions which piled up. It was overwhelming to say the least. I thought I was going crazy and I really needed help" she explained. Emma approached Regain Trust not knowing what she was really searching for. Her argument was based on how the family had deserted her and she was living a lonely life. At Regain Trust she discovered that she was not the only teenage mother who was looking for help. "I attended group counselling with young mothers" I started to listen to other group members and realised I was not the only one with problems" she said. I was able to speak up and to listen to what other people were going through. I learnt not to be judgemental. I used to have so many issues and challenges, but I eventually overcame most of them" she narrated.

After receiving psychological counselling and empowerment from the self-help group, Emma started to see her life from a different angle and gained a new perspective. "Today I learnt that I do have rights and the confidence to talk over what is going on in my life". As I looked into her eyes, she showed confidence and kept emphasising on how sexual abuse is a serious issue that need to be addressed. "The situation I am in today allows me to assist others to seek help so they can change their lifestyle. Knowing your rights and your responsibilities and where you need to go for help is something that is not supposed to be taken for granted. Now I have my voice back and my strength" she said.



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Teen pregnancy and sexual abuse towards young girls has become a worrisome issue for the Namibian nation. Children as young as 9 years old are being sexually abused and some are giving birth, whilst they themselves are still just a child.

According to the Namibian law, the (Combating of Rape Act 2000) says if someone under the age of 14 has sexual intercourse with someone who is 3 years older than the victim this is regarded as rape. Legal Assistance Centre further explained that if someone decides to change their mind even though he or she agrees to it at the start, that should be regarded as a no, and if the other person continues then it is regarded as rape.

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Regain Trust empowers survivors of Gender Based Violence through psychological therapy sessions, one on one and group sessions. The intervention process helps and empowers survivors to open up and speak out about their experiences. Awareness campaigns are done through public dialogues, media campaigns and trainings. The organization advocates for a holistic approach to address GBV.

Regain Trust and (FES) Friedrich Ebert Stiftung with co-funding from the European Union are implementing a project that will contribute towards National efforts to address Gender based Violence and Learner Pregnancy in the Khomas, Erongo and Northern Regions. The project titled "Survivors Speak Up!" seeks to Increase and enhance the delivery of prevention, psychosocial, health, legal and protection services to reduce the prevalence of GBV & LP.

Find upcoming events and more information about Regain Trust on our website and Facebook Page.



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