



NO MORE: Gender based Violence and learner pregnancies in Namibia

[Survivor's Story] Title: The difficult times of a parent

It is a quiet day in the middle of the week. The winter has taken its toll and we have seen biting cold days that made many people stay indoors. The dropping of degrees in temperature has everyone shivering. We are warming our bodies with a cup of coffee and revisiting the past of Lazarus. Lazarus had vowed to see the best being done for his daughter after sexual abuse violation six years ago.

At the age of nine Anna had seen it all. She started building trust as a young girl who was surrounded by so many people in her life. Still young, innocent and under the care of her father, she did not know that she would become a victim of gender-based violence at a tender age. Powerlessly and unknowingly Anna was sexually abused by people who were close to her.

Anna was born in the northern part of Namibia. A girl who used to like swimming in the river and spent most of her time playing with other kids. Since she was born, she was in the care of her father who was working very hard to provide food for her. As the only child in the family, Anna was very close to her father. Lazarus trusted the people who were close to his family too. It was until then when Erastus discovered that something terrible had happened to his child. Anna was sexually abused by the people whom she had known for some years. As if that was not enough another abuse was perpetuated by another close person. "It was like a curse in my family. I could not understand why it was happening to my daughter only" narrated Erastus.

One afternoon Anna got sick of stomach aches. According to the father she changed her behaviour and became quiet "My daughter's behaviour became very depressive and worrisome. She just got sick suddenly. She used to be a talkative girl, but she became very quiet" She also used to play with her friends. My daughter stopped playing her favourite games" narrated Erastus. We are no longer friends with those people.

Although the case of abuse was opened the process is taking long to see justice being done and until now no one has been found guilty of committing the crime. Anna was affected by the abuse so much so that her schoolwork deteriorated. "My daughter would spend days without going to school. We had to change her from the previous school because of stigmatization and being embarrassed due to how she was performing" narrated Erastus.

It was not an easy journey for Anna when she got in contact with the police. "She used to be frustrated here and there when being questioned about the abuse by the police". The only way to assist his child was to seek help. As a child she felt very comfortable to go through the medical and counselling sessions. In most cases children who have been abused at a tender age become abusers themselves if help is not given to them.

Father and daughter gained their strength back after attending psychological counselling. "The power of art helped my daughter to open up a lot. We were encouraged to understand ourselves first for us to let others enter our lives. We must start somewhere to build trust with others. As parents we need to encourage our children to keep trying in difficult situations. If there is no encouragement, there is no future for them" stated Erastus.



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There are two types of child abuse namely contact abuse and non-contact abuse. Parents and guardians understand mostly the contact abuse when a child is sexually abused meaning that a child can be sexually exploited for the pleasure of another. It is important for parents to be on the look-out for non-contact or covert abuse which is also common in our homes. Adults can expose their naked bodies to children as well as showing them pornography or a child can be forced to show his or her naked body. Sometimes an adult can abuse a child by merely talking about sex. Protecting all children is our duty of care.

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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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