



NO MORE: Gender based Violence and learner pregnancies in Namibia

[Survivor's Story] Title: I will turn it all around

Today's weather looks so promising as we approach the season spring. The cold of winter is slowly disappearing, and trees are slowly regaining their colourful leaves after shedding off. The unfavourable weather has been making people spend much of their time indoors. Not forgetting the COVID-19 dilemma which is currently on the increase worldwide; activities have slowed down in this city and you can hardly see people moving although it is still morning time. Its 10am and I am waiting for Sarafina. We met last year after she heard about Regain Trust. As I was contemplating how to start my session for today, I suddenly heard Sarafina's voice. You can hear her voice pitching a mile away when she engages with others. Her voice fills the room with energy. I immediately called her to join me from the other side of the office.

Born in a family of five and being the eldest, Sarafina worked hard throughout her entire life. Her parents and siblings were looking forward to see her succeed in everything she does. She grew up knowing that its only hard work that pays. On the other hand, Sarafina was born in a family that was seriously uprooted in its culture. So serious that when she decided to get married, she chose a man who was also deeply rooted in traditional ways of dealing with issues. As she struggled to balance what she calls her way of living, she eventually became a victim derived from the expectation to be the perfect one.

"I have been working very hard to raise my three children. Since I got married, I never rested or got any help from my husband. I always thought that it is the duty of a woman to do everything for her children whilst the husband spends his money on something else" said Sarafina. Financial abuse coupled with psychological and emotional abuse has been tormenting Sarafina for years. "My husband is educated and has a better paying job. Unfortunately, I do not know what he does with his money". One day Sarafina woke up without a job and she started struggling to put food on the table. The situation became worse and as she tried to reach out to family members. She was dumbfounded when she learned that her husband decided to marry another woman, a second wife.

"His relatives were agreeing with it and I could not keep arguing about it" said Sarafina. Sometimes it is not easy to make your own decisions, regardless of the situation that you are in. It takes time to trust yourself in making sound decisions. Most of the time you think your relatives are right, you can trust them and hope for change" narrated Sarafina. I could not figure out why both our relatives were not encouraging him to take care of his family. I spend sleepless nights crying myself to sleep. I was losing a lot of weight and appetite as well" narrated Sarafina.



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The journey was rough for Sarafina and all she wanted was to start a new life. She eventually decided to divorce her husband after twenty years of marriage. “I could not let my husband continue abusing me. He was just there as a human being but not modelling to my children how a real father should behave. I decided, enough is enough and was determined to let go. I let all that I worked for twenty years being destroyed. But today, I can tell you, I am a happy person. I know I must work for my children without being judged or abused by anyone. I sleep well and enjoy my environment and being a mother at the same time. narrated Sarafina. After getting empowered through counselling, Sarafina is now able to make sound decisions for herself and her children. She is taking one day at a time as she strives for the best.

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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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