



**NO MORE: Gender based Violence and learner pregnancies in Namibia**

## **[Survivor's Story] Title: Perseverance despite challenges**

Popyeni is a 16-year-old girl, short, dark in complexion and has striking dimples when she smiles. She was born in the Omusati region. She grew up with her mother and grandmother, while her father has been absent. She was feeling very bad when she initially walked into the Regain Trust office because she has just become a mom and felt frustrated by the insults from her school mates.

“In 2008, I was proposed by a boy through a letter. I read the letter in private and I replied in a positive way. I suggested the place we met. I fall in love for the first time. The boy told me that he would give me everything I want because I was the only girl in his life, and I was so happy to hear that because I have never met a person telling me such nice words in my life” narrated Popyeni. She continued to say “He used to give me presents. I can remember the first time he gave me 50 Namibian dollars. I was very happy because it was my first time to receive such an amount of money. The second time around he gave me a smart phone, and I wrote him a letter to express my feelings. In the letter I stated that I loved him so much and he was the only one I wanted in my life and I wanted to be with him for the rest of my life and I did not want him to disappoint me.”

Popyeni stated “A few months later, we went to a party and after some time we ended up in his room. He was drunk and we had unprotected sex. I told him to use a condom, but he refused. That made me feel very angry, but I decided to let him do what he wanted because I did not want him to leave me. After a few weeks, I missed my period. I was confused so I decided to take a pregnancy test to confirm whether I was pregnant. The result came out positive. I was scared and I asked myself a lot of questions. I was thinking of how I was going to tell my parents. Eventually my uncle noticed that I was pregnant, and I told him the truth”.

“I knew it was a wrong thing to fall pregnant while I am in school and I had been thinking about what my school mates and people in the community would say. I was in Grade 10 and dropped out of school. My parents were not happy about it at all. I stayed home waiting to give birth and my parents, friends and my boyfriend supported me until I gave birth. We have been in a good relationship but now we are no longer together” recounts Popyeni.



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“I went back to school in 2020, and I do not want to be in relationship anymore. I want to study and pass my grade 10 this year. I want to focus on my education and work hard. I made a mistake, and I must correct my mistake by focusing on my education and achieve my goals. I want to become a teacher in the future, so I can help my child and parents who were supporting me during my difficult circumstances” Popyeni told the Social Worker.

Teenage pregnancy remains a crisis in Namibia, most learner pregnancies are results of statutory rape, which is having sexual intercourse with an individual below the legal age of consent. Teenage pregnancy mostly impacts female learners than male learners because male learners are rare to be identified. Pregnant learners are required to be in school until three weeks prior to giving birth if there are no pregnancy implications and can return to school when she is ready. It is important to keep teen mothers in school because if they complete their higher education it leads to a greater chance of finding employment and proper housing. It also decreases the chance of being in poverty and leads to reduction of fertility, infant and mortality rates.

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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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