



NO MORE: Gender based Violence and learner pregnancies in Namibia

[Survivor's Story] Title: [Unprovoked Curiosity] My World of Sexual Encounters as A Teen

Years have lapsed since Maria tried to change her life. After 21 years, Maria openly speaks about the journey of a child giving birth to a child and having to deal with the harsh reality and urgency of having to grow up fast to raise a child. I have been in touch with Maria on a few occasions and I could tell there is a lot that she is feeling and a strong urge to share with all young mothers. Hers is a story of encouragement for young mothers not to give up regardless of the nature of the problem.

Maria was 16, when she lost her virginity. She was born in a small family where her mother worked hard to raise her. "I remember how excited I was to try out this "sex" thing that all my friends were talking about" narrated Maria. Maria was the only one who was not sexually active, and she felt out of place whenever her friends would talk about their sexual experiences. Mondays were particularly tough days for Maria, because that is when her friends would talk about what they did over the weekend. Maria would have conversations about sex and boys. "I was not someone that was easily influenced or that would give in to peer pressure. I was very strong willed, with a strong personality and it was not easy to convince me to do something that I did not want to do. But for some reason, this "sex" thing was getting in the way of my friendships" narrated Maria. Maria's friends started going out without her and avoided chilling with her at school during break time. "They felt I was boring and could not relate to what they were talking about since I was still a virgin and knew nothing about sex. I literally saw how my friends were drifting apart, the once close-knit friendship cycle was falling apart and nothing was the same" narrated Maria.

"That is when I decided (unprovoked) to give this "sex" thing a try and see for myself what the fuss was about. I had a boyfriend (a much older guy who was not in school) and I told him I wanted us to have sex" narrated Maria. Maria was disappointed after the sexual encounter because she had envisioned it to be an experience of a lifetime. Because that is how her friends sold this sex thing to her. The Monday at school, Maria was so excited to share the news with her friends that she is no longer a virgin. "I shared my encounter, expecting my friends to be happy that I'm finally one of them now, but to my surprise the feedback that I got was that now that I got a taste, I had to do it often, as much as possible, to have different sexual experiences" narrated Maria. After hearing that advice, Maria decided to give this sex thing another try but she was not comfortable with the pressure that she suddenly felt of having sex. Shortly after two sexual encounters her boyfriend decided to dump her. "My world came trampling down. I now started finding sex very interesting and I was curious to finding out more about sex" narrated Maria.



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It was at this point that Maria's life changed. She was now desperately in search for someone who could further explore her interest with. A few months later, she had just turned 17 years, and got a new boyfriend. "This guy was way older than my previous boyfriend. I remember how I was not really into the guy, but because he was so persistent & adamant about wanting me, I decided to take him. Maria's boyfriend used to take her to school with his car, pick her up after school and he made sure they spend time together. At this point she started lying to her mom about sleeping over at her friend's house, but then she would be with her boyfriend. She would sometimes not go to school just so that she can spend more time with him. "I was now too deep into this sex thing and wanted to explore as much as possible by creating different sexual experiences. I started developing strong feelings and fell in love. The sexual chemistry between me and my boyfriend was very intense, and I was sinking deeper & deeper into this sex thing, I did not know how to control my hormones or focus on what was really important, like my education. What seemed like a lot of fun at the time would soon prove to bring about serious consequences as I was losing touch with reality. I was merely a child about to become responsible for a child as I fell pregnant." narrated Maria.

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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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