

From: Agness Mwansa

School: Young peace makers community school – Ndola, Zambia

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To: HEALTH ED CONNECT

I am Agness Mwansa working as a teacher at Young Peace Makers Community School. I joined the school on 12th October 2012. I have been working for the school from 2012 to 2021.

I would like to tell my story of where I am coming from and what Health Ed Connect has contributed to my present life.

My life started when I was in grade 8. I saw my life to be very clear and was hoping for the bright future. My school life went on well without struggles. I studied very hard and my parents were putting much effort to support me. I joined cadet force and school choir to keep myself busy and joined school LIFE.

Suddenly, things started going the wrong way in grade 10. Though I tried very hard to safe guard myself from peer pressure was being hunted. Though did not want to indulge myself in what my friends used to do. I was not safe.

One night, when my parents were away for a journey, a young man who was hunting me broke into my room and abused me and I fall pregnant.

However, things changed position because I could no longer concentrate on my studies. I was overwhelmed. I could cry for my life day and night because it was messed up and because I did not expect things like that to happen in my life.

When the young man heard of what had happened, he accepted and applied for a job in a mine sector as a surveyor because he was a university graduate and he started working and promising that he was going to settle the matter. Within the shortest period of time of working he got sick and went mad. So he came back home from Chingola Mine and joined his parents. He stopped and the issue ended there.

I wrote my grade 10 examination while pregnant and did not do well because I was in a confused state.

After giving birth to a baby girl. The child was 1 year 2 month and I left the child with my parents and went to join paramilitary training in Lusaka. After a short period of time, things did not go well I stopped and came back to Ndola.

In 1989, I joined Lyons Brooke Bond Company as a casual worker and later on I was promoted as a stoke keeper and stores clerk in stores department. I got married and had 5 children, 2 boys and 3 girls. Later on the company was closed down and we were declared redundant after working for 10 years from 1989 – 1999.

Therefore, my life became miserable again due to company closing down, my husband died later on and my first daughter died by then she was working in a saloon and had three children. My family house where I was living was later sold by relatives. Life became difficulty, bitter full darkness without peace I had sleepless night weeping and mourning throughout the night. in order to earn my living, I tried many things I tried this and that nothing worked out, I was in poverty. We had single meals after three days just like that. I was weak and sickly, I was unhealthy. One day I sat down thinking about what I should do next. I prayed to God so that God may open doors for me and guide me into what came I should do. I had something like a vision. What came to my mind is “school”, I saw the picture of the school. I asked God who am I going to teach, the answer was “orphans and vulnerable”. I took the paper and pen and wrote the vision of the infrastructure of the school and school requirements and place. I was completely blank and completely knew noting. In the following day my pastor came to me and asked if I could teach, I said “yes pastor I can teach” and gave him what I wrote on the paper and he proved that he was prompted to come and tell me to start teaching orphans and vulnerable. The following day we were guided to recruit the orphans and vulnerable and went door to door. We started teaching in the church building which was not completed and children were sitting on the reed mats.

That was the only community school we had and there was no teaching and learning materials, we had little idea about teaching .we had did not know about lesson planning, we could only collect old pupils books from people.

The number of children increased rapidly and most children were doing well. Other parents laughed at us and despised what we were doing, after finding out how the children were performing; they also removed their children government and private schools and brought them to us despite of the structures of the church.

We did not know who reported us to the school inspectors that “there is a small school going round in the community, they are untrained teachers.” The inspectors came to close the school but they were touched to find out that they were children in need. They were impressed more despite finding out that the building was poor ,the surrounding was poor too, we had no teaching materials and dirty pit latrines instead of that, they advised us to visit the Ndola teachers resource centre who later provided us with short courses in class management, literacy and language and teaching and learning Aids.

I made uniforms for the children, visited the children when they got sick shared the food that was contributed from other pupils with those who did not have which seemed not right. Besides that, my life did not improve apart from making myself busy as a relief. I did not receive any salary or appreciation, things were tough, I could not pay rent, my children could not go to school, feeding my family was a problem. Later on I took them to the orphanages centre, St Anthony Children’s Village. Later on, I lost strength and courage; I stopped teaching after working for 5 years as a volunteer worker. The school continued growing up to this day to a high standard level. I continued making and mending clothes to earn my living. I used to move from house to house with my small machine looking for something to make. Life was not easy. Later on another pastor came to me and said “Agness, you need to get married,” by then I had lost everything, I had completely nothing and I was completely nothing, depressed, lost hope lived in rejection refused to what the pastor said several times he told me that the man was coming from Chipulukusu and because of the background of Chipulukusu I could not accept it.

Later on after some counselling and encouragement I gave in. I joined my new husband in Chipulukusu on 8th May 2010, still I had no peace, I remember the vision, it was real is started looking for a school around Chipulukusu, I applied and moved from school to school.

One day, I sneaked and went around looking for a school as usual met Mr Chifumbe Gershom who was related to the pastor who was a friend to my new husband. He was surprised to see me from Ndeke Township to Chipulukusu. I explained to him that “I am married here and now I am looking for employment as a teacher.”

Mr Gershom Chifumbe said to me “we are running a school and we need teachers”. He connected me to Mr Bernard Chalwe, Mr Jack Chisala and Mr Dismass Mulenga who where discovered that they are friends to my husband and later on gave me a place.

By then there was no school infrastructure we had classes in the church building, Community of Christ. That’s how I was connected to Health Ed Connect.

Henceforth, my life hasn’t been the same. I have found peace, I have found love, I am acceptable, and things started developing in me socially, physically and intellectually.

I am able to buy food, clothing and have a shelter, am able to smile. One of my granddaughter and my last born daughter have managed to complete grade 12. I have found opportunity to upgrade myself from grade 10 to 12 because of the appreciation that I am receiving from Health Ed Connect.

In addition to that, I have an opportunity to receive sponsorship from Health Ed Connect. I received my first teacher training scholarship in early childhood education since I was handling the nursery class I got my certificate with a distinction.

I have received the second teachers training scholarship in Primary Teacher’s Diploma at Kitwe Training College.

Teachers training has helped me to acquire knowledge, skills and altitude towards teaching. I am able to accommodate learners such as slow learners, fast learners, children who are coming from broken homes, children with good and bad behaviour. I help such ones by spending time with them by counselling, teaching them about cleanliness, good behaviour towards teachers and parents. I spend time with girls in the girls achievement programme play a role of a parent to accommodate them, teach and counsel and comfort those who are being left as vulnerable and orphans and many more and encourage them to focus on school.

In conclusion, I am saying thank you Health Ed Connect I am who I am today because of you.

Thank you so much Jac and Sherri, wishing you long lives.

God bless you.