The "I" Stories

Speaking out on gender violence in Southern Africa

Volume 4

2009



The *"I" Stories* is an annual project of Gender Links (GL), in collaboration with partnering organisations, to share first hand accounts of women and men affected by gender based violence. GL is a Southern African non-governmental organisation committed to a region in which women and men are able to realise their full potential and participate equally in all aspects of public and private life.

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In this series, where writers have given their consent face photos are used with their stories



Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

"I" Stories contributors 2006 march against violence



Photo: Gender Links

Times of Swaziland speaks up during 16 Days of Activism



Photo: Tonya Graham

Ritsepile Pretty Mlauzi, *"I" Stories* South Africa, 2008

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* Due to the sensitive nature of these stories, many contributors have chosen to use pseudonyms

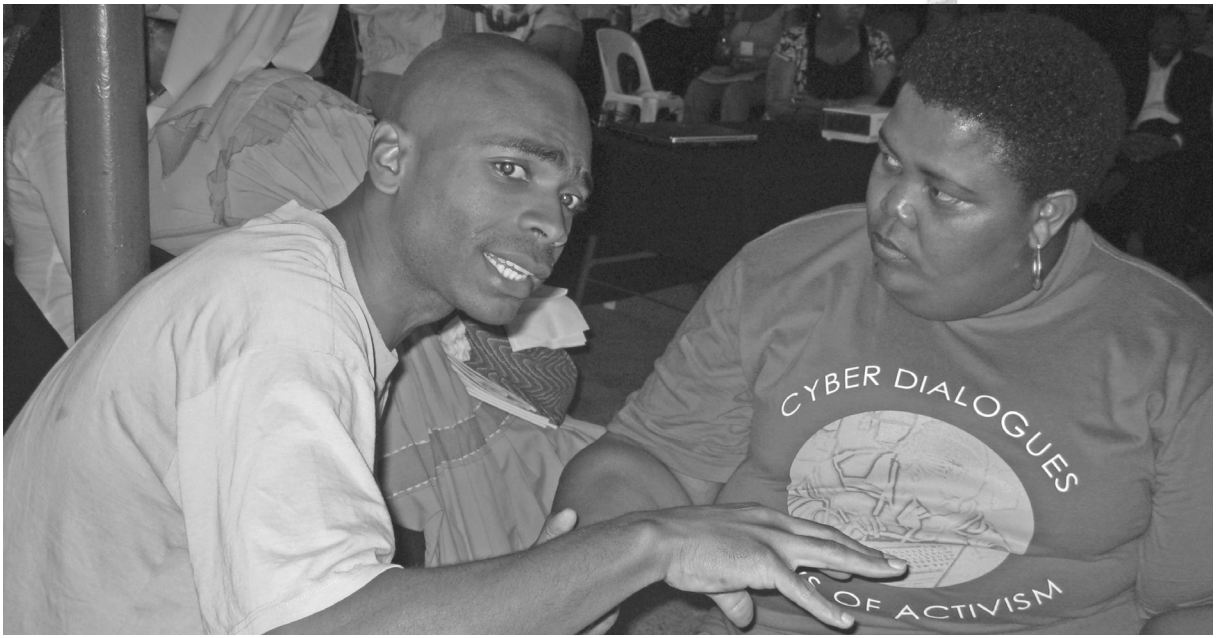
Acknowledgements

The stories in this book represent the voices of tens of thousands of women and men affected by violence in the region; we salute their courage in speaking out.

This fourth volume of *"I" Stories* includes a selection stories from each of the four countries where country focused specific *"I" Stories* books were produced as part of 16 Days of Activism 2008, as well as contributions from round the region. Loveness Jambaya Nyakujarah coordinated the overall project as part of a regional Sixteen Days series of *"I" Stories* booklets to make every voice count in the region. Countries that participated include – Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland.

We wish to thank our sponsors, the Department for International Development (DFiD) and FOKUS for supporting in country workshops and the production of the stories in print and radio formats, as well as several media houses in the region for disseminating these stories widely as part of the Sixteen Days of Activism on Gender Violence Campaign in 2008.

In Swaziland, the 2008 *"I" Story* project was a collaboration of by Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA), Swaziland Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (SWANNEPHA), Women Together, Gender and Media Swaziland (GEMSWA). In Namibia, the project was spearheaded by GEMSA Namibia, in collaboration with the Namibian Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. In South Africa, several partners co-operated in gathering stories, Gender Links, Engender Health, the Department of Public Service and Administration, the Association for Burundian Solidarity in South Africa. In Mauritius, the project was an initiative of Media Watch Organisation-GEMSA.



Activist and *"I" Story* contributor Grace Dimakatso Maleka at the launch of the *"I" Stories* South Africa 2008 *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*



Voices that bring change

A word from the editor, Deborah Walter

Since 2005, every year during the annual 16 Days of Activism held 24 November to 10 December, Gender Links works in collaboration with local partners to produce the *"I" Story* collection. For the first time, this past 16 Days GL launched country-specific *"I" Story* books in South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland, and Mauritius - holding off publishing the fourth volume of its regional book of personal accounts of gender violence for mid-2009.

The choice was made as another part of the campaign to stretch 16 Days of Activism to 365 Days of action on gender violence. If we want to see real change in women's lives in the region, there needs to be action every single day of year.

In August 2008, leaders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) signed the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which commits states to a whole range of actions to address gender violence. This includes enacting and *enforcing* prohibitive legislation, eradicating social, economic, cultural and political practices and religious beliefs that legitimise and exacerbate gender based violence, and adopting integrated approaches.

Many countries in the SADC region have developed multi-sector National Action Plans or strategies to end gender violence, helping them to move from campaign mode to a more holistic and integrated approach. However, what is now needed is the practical ground work to implement these plans into the core of our societal structures.

Sadly, regardless of differences of country, culture, sexual orientation, age, or religion, women and men's accounts of gender violence are remarkably similar. Addressing gender violence is not only a human rights and health issue, but also a social and economic necessity. Many of these stories clearly show that abuse beats down not only the bodies, but also the dynamic potential of women and girls.

Many stories show the affect of violence on children, the scars for those who both experience and witness it. Natasha Kangale, a Malawian, and Ntombie Kuhlese* from Swaziland tell of how sexual assault in childhood affected their whole lives, while Ncamie Mthombeni's* memories of seeing her father kill her mother in Swaziland are still fresh.

Physical and sexual abuse leaves emotional scars the last long past the healing of outside wounds. We see abuse translate into girls missing out on education, turning to sex work, and losing all sense of self-esteem and trust - making developing into productive, healthy women nearly impossible, especially without much needed psychological and material support.

For some women, gender violence links directly with HIV. Some become HIV positive from their husbands, through sexual assault, or after engaging in sex work. Many find being diagnosed as positive intensifies abusive situations.

Yet these stories are also stories of hope. Congolese Grace Ayanda* demanded, and received, change in her life, while in Zamibia Mukamwiinga* is no longer scared, with a house and income of her own, she has the power to live her own life. And men can be part of the solution. Charles Sikalele in Zambia was once an abuser, and is now a counselor, while Pascal Akimana broke the cycle of his father's violence, and now works with men to challenge gender inequalities.

Each of these stories shares different aspects of violence, yet they all point in the same direction. There is simply not enough being done to protect victims and support survivors. With each story, these courageous women are calling for change - not just from government, but from organisations, communities and individuals.

It is not enough to say "shame" but to ask ourselves what, as individuals, community leaders, business people, church leaders, etc, we can do. Too many stories tell of communities, families, and friends turning a blind eye. Each of these stories is courageous, but they also show those in abusive situations sometimes need someone to reach out to them, and always need someone to listen when they decide it is time to speak up.

Each individual can play a part in calling on our leaders to achieve the targets set out in the Gender Protocol, so these stories become a thing of the past. If we do not hold our leaders accountable, who will? And, if we will not help our neighbour or believe our daughters when they say they were raped, who will? Many people read each collection of *"I" Stories* and are touched, yet the challenge is, what is everyone *doing* about the situation. As Pascal Akimana says, "I will use my voice to bring change," and so can you.

** not their real names*

Violence, families, and children



Legal and support services can help protect families *Photo: Trevor Davies*

How bitter my pain was!

Sharleen,* Namibia

I am 18 years old living in Windhoek, Katutura. My father passed away when I was two years old. This is a real story of the pain my stepfather caused me.

My mother married in 1998 when I was eight years old. The man she married drank and smoked, and in 1999, he left his job. He use to go out in the morning and come back at night... wake us all up, start beating us, including my mother and my two sisters, and lock us out of the house

If we cried, he used to chase my two sisters and me out and lock the house. We would sleep outside until the next morning. He also brought food in the house but would not allow us to eat. He only allowed my mother to eat. He used to say that we should go and look for our father.

If my mother gave us food, he would take the food from us and give it to the dogs. My mother's sister helped us with food. We would eat at her place and go back home. Sometimes, she had nothing and we used to sleep with hunger.

I used to cry every night because he beat us every day. When I came home from school, while my mother was still at work, he used to tell my sister and me to go to my aunt's house, but he never allowed me to go.

He used to show me his private parts and tell me to taste, because he said it tasted like chocolate but I used to refuse and he beat me with a belt. If my mother came home and asked why I was crying, he used to say to her, "your daughter doesn't want to wash dishes. She refuses if I tell her to do something, but you want me to give them food?" He never stopped doing what he was doing.

In March 2000, my mother went to the hospital because she had a problem with her pregnancy. While she was in the hospital, at night my stepfather used to pull off my underwear and enter my female parts with his finger. When I cried, he would cover my

mouth with one hand. Sometimes I would ask one old lady who lived next door to lock us in from outside and give the keys to my stepfather and tell him we went to my aunt's house. We would then take our blankets and sleep under the bed so that he could not get us.

After some time, my mother came home from hospital. However, he never stopped mistreating us and he told me that if I told anyone, he would kill me. Once I went for a weekend to my aunt's house. The kids were playing different games but I was not playing with them. I was just quiet on my own and my aunt asked me if there was something was wrong. I pretended nothing was wrong.

The next day, which was a Saturday, she called me while I was sitting under a tree. She said she could see something was wrong and I should just tell her. So, I decided to tell her. I told her that my stepfather used to beat us every night. I also told her that I felt pain when I visited the toilet. I also told her everything that he did to me. My aunt took me to the clinic and they checked and treated me because I had sores on my private parts.

They referred us to the Woman and Child Protection Centre to go and lay charges against my stepfather. When we reached home, my aunt told my mother, but my mother would not believe what we said. They also called my two sisters in and my aunt asked that we should go and live with her for the time being. So we moved.

One morning my mother came to my aunt's house and she said she did not believe what my aunt and I were talking about, but she was shocked to hear that her husband was talking about sex to her neighbour's daughter. She was told that if she did not tell her husband to stop, the neighbour would report her to the police.

She wanted my aunt to help her get a divorce. We all went to the Woman and Child Protection Unit and there she told me she wanted a divorce. They referred her to Legal Aid where she got help and her husband was arrested. The people at Legal Aid told us we must move back to our mother's house.

The bad times have passed but memories still come back. Please stand up for your rights!

* not her real name

Life on the street

By Zarina Geloo with Gloria Mushabati,* Zambia

When my mother was alive we went to school and had food to eat. Back then, I looked down on and avoided street kids. I often wondered how they went onto the streets; now I know.

When my father remarried after my mother died, things got very tough for us at home. My four siblings and I received ill treatment from our stepmother and in the end, she drove us all onto the streets.

It began for me with a particularly severe beating that we got from our stepmother. My two brothers and I had eaten some groundnuts, which she had cooked for her own two children. She went mad and beat us with a hoe. I broke my ankle; one brother fractured his hip.

Neighbours took us to the hospital. My stepmother said that we should die in pain because we were thieves. My brother and I were in the hospital for about six weeks. My father never visited once and we relied on sympathisers from the ward for food.

When the hospital discharged us, we went home only to be told by my stepmother in front of my father that I was no longer a member of the household and should find a place to go. She allowed my brother to stay, as he was younger.

I pleaded with my father but his wife told him that if I stayed she would leave. She did not even allow me to enter the house to pick up clothes. It was early morning so I went to the town centre without really knowing what I was going to do.

I was tired of walking at about 19:00. I was loitering about looking for somewhere to sit in the shopping centre when a security guard called me over. He said that if I gave him sex, he would give me some food and that I could share his spot for the night. I ran away to the other end of the street. I had just sat down in a shop corridor when a group of street

boys found me and began to harass me. I ran back to the security guard who chased the boys away.

I was very scared now. I did not know what to do. I knew the boys would not go far so I stayed with the guard. He demanded sex and I had no choice. I felt so depressed that afterwards I sat on the road wanting a car to run over me. That was my first night on the street.

The next day I was hungry and tired. I found some girls who said I could hang around with them but I had to find my own food. I suppose because my dress was still clean and I still had shoes I was more presentable and found the begging easy.

People gave me food and money. My new friends liked me. I discovered later that when you do not have food or money, your friends disappear. I also learned very quickly to hide my money as my friends could just as easily turn against me and steal from me. There have been times when I have not slept because I had to guard my money and food. At other times, it is me who is trying to steal from my friends. It's a funny relationship because we like each other, we play games and look out for each other when boys try to harm us on the street, but when it comes to survival we turn on each other.

I have seen my brothers now on the street and I am sad. They ran away as the abuse at home got too much for them. They have it very hard. It's not like us girls who can exchange sex for protection. They have to deal with violence on the streets every day with no one to turn to for help.

Sometimes when I have money or food I give them some, but we generally avoid each other. We don't sleep on the same street although, we meet occasionally. More often than not, we simply pass messages to one another through friends. We don't like meeting; it's embarrassing and for me, it is painful.

Sometimes, I go to my fathers working place to ask for money for food. If he is in a good mood, he gives it to me. At other times, he tells me to sell sex and feed myself. I have learned to recognise the sympathetic people who will give me money and those who are likely to abuse me. I know which dust bins to dig into and at what time. I even know when the bakeries are throwing away their burned goods and I am fast at picking it up.

I have also learned how to get my way with the boys. I give them sex if I have no food or money. Once, one of them really liked me and for a while he protected me on the streets, but he died.

I feel bad about my situation, but I don't know what to do. I know that what I am doing is wrong, especially having sex without condoms but what can I do? I feel so dirty and worthless that even when the social welfare people come looking for us I run away.

I have become used to life on the street. There are some good days when I actually laugh and am happy and there are days when I just want to die. I can't see a future for myself and I am not even sure any one can help me now. I just live from day to day.

** Gloria Mushabati, not her real name, was a 12-year-old street child. She was giving testimony at human rights public hearings in Zambia. After telling this story, she was taken into an orphanage and is learning to read and write. She is a very good storyteller and earns a little money telling children's stories at the orphanage.*



How I lost my mother

By Ncamie Mthombeni,* Swaziland

I was four years when it happened. We are a family of three, two girls, my brother, and I am the last-born. Mother was 24-years-old when she lost her life in my father's hands. I used to see him beating my mom, but I did not know that he would end up killing her like a goat, but it happened one day, the day that I will never forget.

My father was a very dangerous person with no respect for any other person, even those who warned him against beating my mother. He could not even respect the police when they tried talking to him. He was not taking any drugs. He neither smoked, nor drank and would sometimes go to church (he was a Zionist) pretending to be good.

One fateful day, which I will never forget, he killed my mother with a knife and she died on the spot in front of my eyes. He chucked me outside so that I could not see mother bleeding and groaning like a cow. Unfortunately, I saw everything that had happened. Mom was an orphan; both her parents passed away and they were both South Africans. They did not have relatives in Swaziland.

My sister and my brother grabbed me out of the house and we ran away and reported this matter to our neighbours who quickly called the police. They arrested him the same day. Our neighbour also reported the issue to the elders of the community. They wanted them to report the matter to the organisations that looks after children's welfare, as at that time we were still young.

They got a place for us at SOS in Mbabane, where they took care of us in everyway. Now my sister is a nurse and my brother is doing his third year in University of Swaziland. I am doing Form four (4) at St. Francis High School.

My father has finished his sentence and he wants us back home, especially me. I am afraid of him and I am not prepared to see his face. I hate him with all my heart. What brings

me to Swaziland Action Against Abuse (SWAGAA) is counseling. I was counseled but I felt like it was not enough because the trauma I went through comes in my mind every time I think about my mother. I still see her in the pool of blood; hear the scratchy voice of my father shouting at her.

I received counseling from SWAGAA three times. Counselor Funekile rescued my life. I also wanted revenge against my father. The counseling I received was more than enough, now I can sleep very well, eat like other children and play with them well. I would like to thank Aunt Funekile who rescued my life now I am fine and coping very well in everything I do. I also forgive my father though it is still hard to see him face to face.

* not her real name





When a child is raped

By Natasha Kangele, Malawi/South Africa

My name is Natasha Kangele and I am from Malawi. I came to South Africa when I was ten years old. I grew up with my mother's sister due to family problems. Growing up in my aunt's house was not a piece of cake. It was like living in hell because she did not like me that much.

One of the horrible days of my life happened the day I lost my womanhood, in a way that I did not expect. I was raped when I was 12 years old. We were living with another woman named Anne. That morning, Anne sent me to the shops to buy something. When I was returning, a man followed me. He said that I should follow him or else he would kill me. I felt a gun on my back, so I had no choice. He took me to his place in Berea. There he raped me. When he had what he wanted from me, by God's grace he took me back home. It was not easy getting home but I managed to get there. Before I went into the house, he threatened me by saying, "If you tell anyone about what happened…I know you... I will kill you."

When I went in, Aunt Anne was waiting for me, and she noticed that something was wrong with me. So, I told her what had happened to me that morning. She suggested that we wait for my aunt who at that time was at work. We waited from 9am until 6pm for her to come home. When my aunt saw me, she said that I was not raped. She said that my boyfriend did this. She told everyone at home that I was lying, when I said that I was raped. Everyone believed her story. Can you believe this? Even my best friend believed her.

I was so disappointed and I was very angry with everyone. I needed my family and friends, but they were nowhere to be found. Home was not a home; it was just a place to live because I had nowhere else to go. As a child, I felt this rejection and I started to hate my family. I hated them and I hated myself and I especially hated men. I hated men because I had lost my pride as a woman in a way that I had never dreamed could happen to me.

All these years I have carried this secret with me, until recently. I spoke to a very good friend of mine about what happened to me as a child. He said that it was not my fault and he made me realise that I have to let go of the whole situation and move on with my life. One day he phoned me when I was at work and he asked me if I was ready to speak out and let other women know about my story. I agreed because I needed to move on and I was tired of living with that anger and hatred.

He took me to the "I" Stories workshop where they were speaking out on Gender Violence in Southern Africa. There I met great women and men, some who had lived in abusive relationships and some who are still living in abuse.

So, now that you have heard and have read my story of abuse, please women and men of South Africa say "NO" to abuse. If you know someone who is living in abuse, or who has been abused, my brothers, my sisters, my mothers of Southern Africa please give them as much support as you can. If you are going through abuse, then say, "enough is enough". Say "no" to violence. Speak out because someone who loves you would not force you to keep quiet. That silence is abuse. If someone is abusing you and calling it love, then you are living in hell.

I pray that may God give you the strength that you need to say no and to go on living even when you feel like you cannot go on. Remember that you are the reason that the sun is shining out there and, because you live, a new day comes. You can be a pillar to the women and children of this country.



For the sake of my child

By Saphia, South Africa

I am a woman of 25 years; I got married when l was 19 years old. Being a woman is one thing and being a Muslim woman is another. Muslim women are supposed to obey their husbands; we do not have any say in decisions to be made in our homes. I do not think my story is any different from many other women. Women have been abused for many years, and l think it is time we say "no" to the abuse. The truth is, many abused women die.

When women do not work, men take advantage of that, because they know that the woman doesn't have any financial support. They know that she won't have anyone to turn to. Some women say they stay in these abusive marriages because of their children, saying that the children need their father, but do they really? I think we are afraid of coming out of our abusive marriages because we are afraid of the challenges that are out there. If it were for the children, why would you let your children suffer emotionally by seeing their father beating their mother all the time?

For example, my daughter who loved her father more than anything in this world, started changing towards him when he began beating me in front of her. She would not let him hold her again. One day when he hit me, she made me run into the guest bedroom and close the door. It was around 8pm. She was still very small, but she stood at the door for almost two hours. I kept on telling her to come and sleep, but she could not. She told me "if l leave the door, Papa will come in and hit you." I realised that she was not going to sleep so l told her, "let's go to your uncle's house". It was around 10pm. I put her on my shoulders and we walked to her uncle's house and slept there.

Another day he beat me so hard that I started bleeding from my nose. When my daughter saw how l was bleeding, she stood at the gate and started calling for the neighbours to come and help me. Sometimes kids would tease her, telling her that your father has to beat your mother. She would be so furious. She would tell them, don't talk like that or mum will get cross.

When these men are busy using us as punching bags, they do it to show us that we are lesser human beings than they are. People used to say that what does not kill you will make you stronger, and in my experience, it made me grow up. It taught me how life can be sometimes, and how one can learn to survive it. It also showed me what is most important in my life. It was not the food on his table, or his house, or his expensive bed. It was not even me that was most important: it was my baby girl, my angel. I had to be strong for her and get out of that marriage before it took my baby's smile from her face, the happiness from her heart.

Some people say that when you talk about it, you feel much better, and that you can heal by talking about it. In my opinion, no matter where you go or how much time passes, you can never forget that abusive partner. They also say you can forgive but you cannot forget. Every time when l think about those days, l have tears in my eyes.

I sometimes thank God for having a family who supported me during those hard times. If it was not for them, I do not know what l would have done. And l thank God for giving me a strong woman as a mother, who always put my sister and me first. That is what I am going to do for my daughter.

To all the women who have been through the worst, I hope that you will come out of it safe and sound with your children. God bless us all.



A survivor of sexual abuse speaks out

By Ntombie Kuhlase,* Swaziland

I have been trying to write, but still, finishing a single paragraph is difficult. However, I pray that today God will make me strong and help me to write about my ordeal through to the very end. It is especially important to me because this is my 23rd birthday.

I am a victim of rape. My biological father raped me for seven years. It all started when I was doing standard three in 1995. I was ten-years-old by then and staying with both of my parents. My mother was a naturally short-tempered person (unelulaka) so I was very scared of her. Each time I was in trouble with my mother, my father would stop her from beating me but I had to pay for it later when my mother was away at work. She would work four day-shifts, be off for two days, and then work four night shifts.

He started by telling me to share their bed with him, when mom was on the night shift. I remember the first day; he started by telling me nice things. He asked me if I knew what my name means. He told me he and mom had prayed and asked for a baby girl and then they had me. He told me many stories until I fell asleep. I thought I was very safe. He had said that if someone broke into the house, they would not harm me since he would protect me. Then, in the middle of the night, he forced himself into me. It was very painful. I cried and he said that if I said anything to my mom, he would kill me. Again, he promised to continue protecting me from my mom's beatings.

He continued doing that for years. It was hell. When I was in form three, my friends were telling stories about their boyfriends and losing their virginity. When my turn came, I created a story about a boyfriend who never existed. I then decided to have many boyfriends to cover up my otherwise hellish life. Sometimes I would sit by the door of my bedroom to stop my dad from coming in; I would sit for the whole night. The only time I slept peacefully was when my mom was on day shift.

Then one day the deputy headmaster called me and really complained about my strange behaviour and about my schoolwork. With difficulty, I told her what was happening in my life. She was shocked but she said she could not help me. She advised me to go to my grandmother. I did not take that advice. I started isolating myself; I continued my many relationships for comfort. Those relationships saved my life because I had been thinking of killing myself. I told one of my boyfriends my problem and he was very supportive.

Things did not change. By the time I was in form five in 2002, it was six years since my father had started his devilish acts. I had a strong relationship with my boyfriend (the one to whom I had told my problem), but my dad was aggressive and violent toward him or any other male who showed an interest in me. One day it came to my mind that I had suffered enough, and I had begun to worry that my dad would do the same thing to my younger sisters. So, after he had paid the last amount of the school fees I decided to stand up and act.

I went to the same deputy head teacher. I told her the same story I had told her years before, and told her that my dad was still raping me every time my mom was on night shift. She was shocked and blamed herself for not acting years ago. She asked if I wanted to report him to the police. I told her that the only thing I was worried about was that he not rape my little sister. She promised that this time she would do everything in her power to help me. Indeed she did!

She wrote a note to my mum and asked her to report to the school the following day, which she did. She told my mom the whole story from two years back when I had first told her of my problem. My mom almost fainted. She went straight home and asked my dad about this news. He never denied a thing; he simply said he was very sorry. "I was misled by the devil. I promise it will never happen again," and that was the end of it. It has been kept as "tibi tendlu" (a family issue) until today!

No one has raised that topic again and no one has taken me for counselling. Whenever I think of the whole thing, tears fill my eyes. I have been trying to write about my experience for four years now but each time I take my pen and begin writing, I just break into uncontrollable tears. I thank the almighty God that after four years of trying to write about my ordeal, at least today He has given me the strength to write this for the first time since it happened.

I do not wish to see someone going through the hell I have been through and I advise parents to be very careful when raising female children. My dad destroyed my future. He ruined my youth. He took my innocence!



Scarred for refusing early marriage

By Mary,* with Perpetual Sichikwenkwe

Will society accept me with a disfigured face like I have now? Will I ever walk up the streets out there to go to school after what this cruel man has done to me? I feel I have nothing left to be proud of and I have lost the biggest purpose of my life - completing school. I had hoped one day to have a house of my own and to be like many other women, educated and working.

I was born in 1988 on December 6 in Mpika, Northern Province of Zambia. When I was in grade six in 2001, I was engaged to Thomas* and my parents accepted the traditional payments from him. I had no idea what it was all about although my parents told me that Thomas intended to marry me at a later stage. It was not clear at which stage he was supposed to marry me, but since that was the common trend in my village, I did not probe further. Thomas lived about 30 Kilometers away from our village but we were from the same church and he was a devoted Christian.

When my elder sister who was then living in Lusaka heard about the engagement, she was opposed to the idea. She wanted me to complete school as she had done. She asked that I come to stay with her. I also loved school and I accepted the idea of going to Lusaka. When I was leaving for Lusaka, Thomas was away in a boarding school. My parents did not forget to warn me not to entertain other men in Lusaka because there was already a man who had paid my dowry and was waiting for me.

Years later, I was surprised that Thomas managed to track down my whereabouts and started coming to my church as well as visiting me at my elder sister's place. My sister was not happy with Thomas visiting me and advised me to stay way from him so that I could complete school. Several times, I advised Thomas against coming to see me but he did not heed my advice. He kept coming, sometimes sending people to spy on me.

Many times I told him that I did not want disturbances from him because I wanted to finish school. Thomas would threaten that if I were not going to marry him, he would kill me. I used to share that with my family but we would all just laugh, treating it as a mere joke. In 2007, my sister and I moved to stay with our elder brother in Chelstone. Thomas started sending insulting SMS and threats to my sister and brother warning them against stopping me from marrying him.

Despite our reports to the police about Thomas' behaviour, the police did not arrest him. In November, two days after he had sent another SMS insulting my family, Thomas came to my church again. I decided not to talk to him. I did not even greet him and I informed my sister about his presence. In February 2008, when I was returning from school, I heard a voice calling out my name. When I looked behind, I discovered it was Thomas. I asked him what he was doing around my place. He told me that he had come to see me and complained that I did not even want to talk to him. I left Thomas on the road and headed for home where I informed my brother about Thomas' visit.

On March 25th, 2008, a day came that I will remember for my whole life. I went to write my end of year test at Kabulonga Girls High School. Usually, I came back in the company of friends but that day, immediately after my test, I decided to get a bus back home so that I could study physics, which was my next subject. My friends pleaded for me to wait for them but I declined. I just wanted to be home early and study. I did not know my refusal to wait for my friends was going to mark the end to my education dreams, at least, for now.

When I got off the bus at Chelstone, I met my neighbor, Gift, who informed me that he had a letter for me from an unknown person. While discussing the letter, I heard a voice calling out my name. When I turned, I saw Thomas. He greeted me and asked whether my sister was home. Thomas told me that he wanted to talk to my sister but I told him to do that on his own. I went on my way, but Thomas followed. After a short distance, I met another neighbour. I decided to spend a few minutes with him to avoid Thomas. When I turned to look behind, Thomas had made a u-turn. That was a chance for me to walk fast towards home.

When I was four houses away from our house, I felt something cold splashed on the back of my head, around my neck. When I turned, Thomas was standing right there. I asked

him what he had poured on me and why. He never replied but splashed some more liquid on my face. It was at this point that I felt pain and a burning sensation on my face. I ran towards our home but I fell in a drainage ditch. I screamed for help. Thomas followed me for a short distance on his bicycle and eventually rode off.

Our neighbours came and took me to Chelstone clinic. From there I do not remember what transpired until I had re-gained consciousness. I discovered that I was in Lusaka's University Teaching Hospital (the largest hospital in Zambia) with my sister on the bedside. I was admitted to UTH from March 25 to June 28, 2008 after which I was discharged. When I looked at myself in the mirror, I could not accept what had happened to my face.

I spend sleepless nights when I think about what has happened to me. I feel I am not the same person. I can laugh outside but what is inside me is sadness. I get annoyed with myself when I think about school and when I see my books lying in my room. I am wasting something that I have cherished from my childhood. School was my passion, but how can I go back with this disfigured face? How is society going to receive me? Will they accept me the way I am? Right now I can not move an inch out of our yard because I am scared of how people will take me especially those who knew me before this happened.

If there are well-wishers out there, please help me. I want my face to be rehabilitated. I want to be the same old me who was happy with friends, family and was in school. If doctors cannot work on my face, even a mask of some kind can help me to reunite with society because now it is difficult for me even to walk around.



Gender Violence and HIV and AIDS



HIV counseling in Zimbabwe. The link between GBV and HIV and AIDS makes women particularly vulnerable *Photo: Gender Links*

Grace's story

By Grace*, with Denisha Seedoyal, Mauritius

I came to know about my HIV status in 2001. A question that everyone asks me is how I got the virus. Well, the answer is simple. Like most people, I got HIV through sexual activities. This answer brings a weird reaction from people. That's human nature I think; reaching conclusions too quickly, without really understanding the depth of the matter.

I was neither a drug addict nor a sex worker. I was only a girl looking for love. I was a good student with lots of friends. I was waiting for my prince charming who would come and take me happily away. However, life is not a bed of roses and I would not have thought in my worst nightmares that I would have had to go through so much.

At age 20 I became a victim of sexual violence. I was walking home one night on a deserted road. My mother often warned me to return home early but that night the bus broke down. So I decided to walk as I did not live far away. Two men were passing by. They started making comments about me. I did not pay any attention but soon realised they were following me. I walked a bit quicker. I did not even have time to run away or do something. They raped and left me unconscious. They had their fun out of me but the effect of this experience would have an adverse impact on my whole life.

My parents reported the case to the police but I couldn't identify the aggressors. I felt very dirty and guilty like somehow it was my fault. Is being a girl a free ticket to men to commit rape? Where had I gone wrong? Had I asked for this? What had this to do with love? I started to punish myself by not eating properly. I stopped attending my classes and avoided talking to my friends. I isolated myself.

Although there was always the fear of being raped again, I began to come out of the trauma. I did not know that there was to be more to this nightmare. As I was not eating properly, my parents took me to a doctor. I was anorexic. He gave me vitamins but I did not get better. Then, I was asked to have an HIV test. The worst happened. The results came. I was HIV positive. My life drastically changed. Death knocked at my door. I cried endlessly. I locked myself in my room for days. I avoided talking to my parents. I barely touched food. My world had ended.

After some three months, I felt a boost suddenly. I realised I was being unfair to my family. Why should they pay for all of this? I was practically not talking to my mother. One morning, I left my room and prepared breakfast for the whole family. They were surprised to see a change in me. Since then, I have become closer to them. My biggest worry was that I would never be loved after I became HIV positive. My family has proved that I had a wrong belief. Love is not just the feeling one has for a life partner: the relationship we have with our parents is love. I only realised it now.

They have tried their best to help me face my predicament. It is one positive thing out of all this. They did not reject or turn away from me. They were always with me even during the greatest pain. I began to change. I left activities that harmed my health and looked for things that could improve it. Though I had to give up my studies, as I was rather weak, I had never thought I could live with this virus and be happy. My parents and I attended some conferences about HIV to learn more about this disease.

I meet people who are HIV positive when I go for treatment. We share our sorrows and try to think positive. Young people live under the illusion that nothing can harm us which is not true: anything can happen to anyone. I had asked neither to be raped nor to have this disease. Now, I try to face reality. About two years ago, I started to write down my feelings in a diary. It has become my companion day and night. Whenever I am sad, I just open my diary and jot down my emotions. I have also started a meditation class that sounds weird for a girl like me, who used to hate prayers. Although it would be good for anyone to become closer to their family, to write a diary and to meditate, I might not have found my way there without having HIV. The disease has had some positive impact. I even went back to my studies.

I would advise those who are living with HIV, not to give up. At the start, you will feel it is the end of the world. Work at getting out of this mood. A great philosopher once said: "Where there is a will, there is a way." Those who have got HIV through rape should pluck up their courage with both hands. We will all die one day but it is hellish to die a little every day. So do not give up. Don't waste time. Realise that love is what we need. For the first three years, it was difficult for me, but the love I received from my family helped me. I have not surrendered to my HIV status. I try to live life to the full each day.

* not her real name

Living positively after abuse

By M'ampho Nkoale,* Lesotho

My story gives a human face to the devastating consequences of infidelity in families. I have known my HIV status since 1999. Next year I will be celebrating ten years of living positively. I've been told that I am a dignified woman of conviction who exudes confidence and a strong sense of determination. I have needed these qualities in my new life.

I was already working with people infected by HIV at the time I discovered my own status. I worked within the Positive Action Association supporting people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA). I had seen many of them develop full-blown AIDS and die. When my husband became ill, I saw some of the HIV symptoms in him, but I could not ask him any of the questions that were worrying me, least of all ask about HIV.

As a "morally upright woman", I was not expected to know about sexual matters. If I did know, it was up to me to hide that knowledge from my in-laws and my own husband. Otherwise, they would consider me immoral and not good enough for my husband. My in-laws, consisting of my mother-in-law and my aunt-in-law, always spoke about taking their son to traditional doctors. While they were devising strategies to approach and persuade my husband to seek a traditional medical opinion, his health was fast deteriorating. Our sexual relationship however did not lose its momentum.

Our usual sexual routine was that he would come into the room where I was already under the blankets. He would get into bed still dressed and I would put out the burning candle by my side. Then the business of sex would begin. He would climb, insert, move in and out, ejaculate and climb down. He would dress again and go out into the night without a word until the next morning. Year after year, this was our routine. For close to ten years, that was my life. I conceived and bore two children in that family. In all that time, I had never touched my husband's private parts. I had never seen him naked. I had only felt him move in and out of my body without once saying a word.

One day I had the guts to change this sexual routine slightly. I grabbed my husband's erect penis in the darkness and discovered that he had lumps on it, some of which felt wet with open sores. I whimpered my protest and tried to get out of bed. He slapped my face and used his hands to turn me around. In no time, he was on top of me struggling with me until he pinned me down and pushed his sick penis into me. I cried out aloud with tears streaming and so much noise, I thought my mother-in law would come to find out what was going on. But she did not.

Instead, my husband rolled me over again, slapped my face, stood up, picked up his clothes from nearby, dressed and left me to cry on my own. I groped about in the night for a washcloth and looked about for water and soap. I kneeled over the basin and started to splash and rub and splash and rub, all the time crying. I hated him so much at the time; I could taste the bile of hate in my mouth. This time I knew for sure that whatever disease he had, he had passed on to me. He had infected me. It was just a matter of confirmation from the doctors.

Until that man went to Queen II never to be seen alive again, my feelings of hatred would not go away. The doctors had told his brother that he was dying of AIDS but nobody had told me. His brother had kept the knowledge to himself. It was all a big secret hidden from me. I of all people was not supposed to know. But I knew about my status when my husband died.

After his death, I became very weak and the in-laws explained it to neighbours as depression caused by my husband's death. My mother came to see me and immediately took me to see Dr. Strauss in Lady Brand in South Africa. I was asked whether I wanted to test for HIV and AIDS and I agreed to the test and got the confirmation that I was HIV positive. I continued to work with Positive Action and received counseling from that group. I went for Buddy Training, which is about assisting HIV positive people to accept themselves and to stay positive in attitude.

One day I came home and said to my mother "Mom, I feel good. I am good. I am nice even though I am a moving skeleton." From that day onwards, I have been growing from strength to strength. I have been able to tell my in-laws, my children and the community I live in about my illness. I have been able to help establish the Lesotho Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS in Maseru and throughout Lesotho.

After my husbands death I did not expect to meet another man. I hated men, feeling that my husband had sentenced me to death; but through living positively, being an activist and helping others cope with AIDS, I have found a male partner who is very supportive and loving and we work together to help other people living with HIV.

** not her real name*



The hateful, unhappy life is over

By Monday,* Namibia

I am 23, a single mother of two sons. In 2004, during my first pregnancy, I tested and found out I am now living with HIV. Luckily, my sons were protected from getting the virus at an early stage.

It was my uncle's baby and when I told him that the baby was his, he refused to accept this. He took out a panga, saying if it were really his baby, he would take it out. I cried as hard as I could, but it did not help. He kicked me on the floor, sat on top of me, and lifted up his right hand, with which he was holding the panga.

I cried and begged him. I told him that I would never tell anyone, and that it was our secret. He felt pity for me and stood up off me. By the time I gave birth, my uncle was very ill. He died of AIDS.

I went to live with my stepfather and mother. My mother was working on a farm. One night I saw my stepfather in my room and I asked him what he was doing. He slapped me and said it was his house and he could do anything he liked. He then jumped on me and raped me.

I picked up my baby and cried, saying Lord why me? First, it was my uncle, now him. My Lord – what have I done to be punished like this? The next night he raped me again. I told him I would tell my mother what he was doing to me. He warned me that he was capable of killing my baby and me.

By that time, I was not thinking straight. When I saw my mother step in the door, I started crying, telling her what her husband was doing to me, but she accused me of everything that happened. She would not believe me. She threw me out of her house. I slept with my baby in the outside toilet for three months.

Her husband begged her to let me stay in the house. She agreed and I moved back in the house. She went back to the farm again to work. My stepfather started again with the same things, he carried on raping me. That is how I got pregnant with the second child. I gave birth to the second boy. When my boy was six months, my stepfather died and my mother died too.

Thanks to the Lord, my boys are very healthy. I am also taking my anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs and living a positive life. I thank the Lord that I am over that life, that hateful, unhappy life, the dark nights. Thanks to the Lord that he gave me my life back and I can smile.

** not her real name*



My nightmare marriage

By Nonhlanhla Zwane,* Swaziland

I am a 32-year-old woman living at Zombodze. I was once a happily married wife taken through Swazi law and custom. I was 29-years-old then and was very ecstatic about the whole issue because it was my wish to get married before the age of thirty.

My husband was a bit older than I was. He was 42 years. I told myself that at least I had found someone who was matured instead of these young guys who like playing stupid games. Before I met this person, I already had four children from a previous relationship and the last-born was two-years-old. I did not hide that from my husband-to-be and after some time into our relationship, he told me that they wanted to meet me at his home.

Everything was okay for four months and after that, he formally made me his wife. During that time, I worked in a shop in Manzini and lived at home. Soon after, I moved in with my husband in his family home, but continued going to work. My husband was supportive and helped maintain my children. He even paid their school fees since their father was dead. He really showed love towards my children and gave them everything they needed. However, his family was against all that.

All was well that year and my youngest child would often come and visit. Just when I thought everything was fine, my husband came and told me that his family had serious discussions about our relationship and came to the decision that I should quit my job because I couldn't perform my duties as a wife.

I asked him how he expected me to cope because he knew that I had four children who needed my attention. He told me that he was the man in the house and should listen to whatever he says. He told me that he would do everything for them. He went on to say that he holds a high position in the Army thus will be able to make sure that my family is provided for in every way possible.

I had no choice but to agree to their terms. All was well in the first two months, and then things started to change. He stayed in his place of employment and would often come back

home, but all of sudden he did not come back home and gave flimsy excuses. As if that was not enough he refused to buy food and told me that he didn't have money as he was paying debts incurred from shylocks, buying booze and cigarettes, saying I know he drinks and smokes and should just accept that.

I then discovered that he had another girlfriend and they stayed together at the army barracks. I was very hurt because I trusted my husband. He used to come home with dirty clothes whenever he came home, but then he starting coming home empty handed. When I asked him, he told me that the younger soldiers did his laundry.

When I asked for money to buy food he told me that he had enough food at the barracks and thus could not afford to maintain the family. He then beat, kicked and called me with all sorts of names. He went on to say that I killed the father of my children because I thought I could force him to maintain my children.

I reported the matter to his family but his mother told me straight in the face that I was lying and that her son could not do anything like that because he was a kind person. My life was miserable and one person saw the kind of life I was living and gave me money to start my own business. I then became a hawker but before venturing into my business, I reported to my mother in-law and also to my husband who was at work.

Whenever I would go out and sell the clothes, I would report to my mother in-law and did that about three times a week. When my husband came back from work one day, she told him that I no longer stayed at home and was always in and out of kombis. She even said that I was now involved with one of them. The moment he came in the house, he beat me so bad and even called me a prostitute.

That became life for me. One day he came home and asked me to bring him his credit cards that he always left in the car. Just as I was taking them he came behind me, started assaulting me, saying I was a thief and wanted to steal his money. He then threw me inside the car and my mother-law saw what was happening but did not say anything.

We then proceeded to nearby bushes where he said this is where we would finish our business. Inside the car was a big Rambo knife, no one had to tell me to come out and run

away. Although he tried chasing me, I was able to outrun him. I found refuge in a homestead and related my story to the old woman I found there. She told me that running away was not the solution and she escorted me back home.

She also narrated the whole ordeal to my mother-in-law and she just laughed it off saying his son would never do that and was just scaring me. After realising that no one was taking my story serious, I decided to try my luck with the police and they promised to talk to him. I am still waiting for that to happen.

One day my husband came home in the company of his girlfriend and they were both drunk. He left her inside the car but in the process fell asleep. I was already asleep when he came in but was surprised when I heard noises coming from outside. Just as I was concentrating on that, someone opened the bedroom door and it was a woman.

She came towards me and started beating me. She was holding a beer bottle and I took it and threw it on her head. I rushed out of the house and explained to my mother what had just happened. She just ignored me, saying she doesn't like to talk.

My husband took her to hospital and that incident made life for me worse than hell. I starved most of the time and had nothing to eat, emotional and financial abuse became food for me. Sometimes I drank water and slept or would eat soft porridge without sugar. I cried everyday, thinking of my children and the hell they were going through because of my marriage to this man.

I became worried because of my husband's ways and the fact that we never used a condom. My worst fears were confirmed, I was HIV positive. I was confused I did not know what to do and that's when I decided to go to SWAGAA for counseling, they also told me to come with my husband so he too could be counseled.

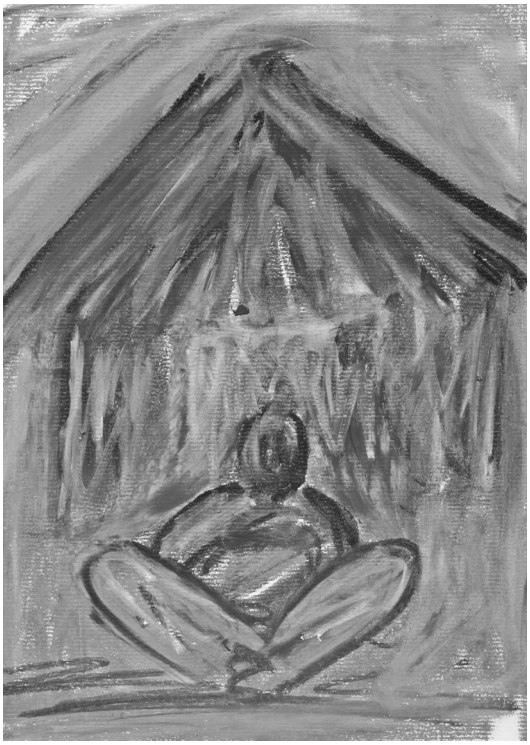
I explained to my husband the whole situation and regretted the day I was born, he went and told his mother and they both agreed that I go back home so that my family could talk to me. My father asked what I had done, but my husband could not respond to his question. Seeing the situation I was in, he told them that he was happy that they had brought me back home alive.

I spent about three days at home and I received a call from my husband telling me that he no longer needed me in his life and that he wanted to live with his girlfriend. He went on to say that I should keep my disease because he and his girlfriend were clean. He said he would burn all my clothes. Upon telling my family what he had just said, my father said it was not right and that I should go back and get my clothing. I was in the company of my younger sister and when we got there, they threw the clothes at me and told me that I was no longer needed. Indeed the girlfriend was inside the house.

Today I stay at home with my children and they are happy to see me live a happy life. Even though I am unemployed, I am enjoying everyday day of life and live without fear. I know it is difficult but I hope there is a way to separate traditionally married people because I don't see myself going back to that home. I had a terrible life there.

He goes around telling people that I am his wife yet he told me that he does not need me by his side because I am HIV positive. Please help me.

* not her real name



Gender Violence and Sex Work



Young girls are vulnerable to sexual exploitation

Photo: UNESCO

Memories of my life as a sex worker

By Nakato Daisy, Uganda

I was 17 and a virgin when a man in my village raped me. I became pregnant. He said he was going to help me, but I must marry him first. I did not want to marry him. No one in my village supported me. Not even my mother or my sisters. So, when my daughter was 6 months old, I left her in the village to make money in Kampala. I began working in a bar, but they paid little, so at the same time I became a sex worker.

One of the first men I met was someone who worked in the Ministry of Tourism. He was a big man, as big as my grandfather was. I served him often in the bar and he asked, "You are such a young girl, why are you not at school?" He said he would pay for my school fees, so I decided to go with him.

He gave me HIV. When I confronted him, he said I gave it to him. He threatened to kill me if I told anyone about it. So, I kept quiet. After this, I joined the streets and began a terrible journey. I will relate some of these experiences.

One time, a Uganda Ministry of Defence (UPDF) officer said he was going to give me 50,000 UGX (approx. USD $30). His escorts took me outside Kampala, to Kakiri, so that no one would find out he was hiring a sex worker. After having sex with me, he left me in the lodge with no money to travel back. He said that's what sex workers deserve for selling something that is worth nothing. I slept with another person in the lodge, just to get back to Kampala.

Another man, also a UPDF officer, took me to his place, saying he would give me the money he would normally pay for a lodge. We entered his compound, which was guarded by soldiers with big guns. Guns filled his room, and were all over the walls. I wasn't sure

if I should be scared, but he acted like a really decent guy. At around 4am, he woke me up asking for his money back, plus all the other money that I had; otherwise he would order his friends to kill me. I gave him all my money, and my phone, which was very nice and expensive. He threw me out, with nothing, saying "Don't shout, don't say anything. Or I'll shoot you."

Another memory involving the police is one of my worst. A police officer I refused to have sex with free arrested me, accusing me of being indecent because I was wearing a short skirt and an open back top. I stayed at the prison for 3 days. It was too cold. I had nothing to cover myself. I had no shower. In the mornings, the police officers ordered me to mop. As I tried to cover myself by pulling my skirt down, they told me to continue mopping, saying that if I wanted to be in a short skirt that I should mop with my knickers for everyone to see.

On the third day, the Officer in Command found me mopping. He recognised me because he had been my client previously, though I hadn't known at the time that he was a policeman. He asked why they had arrested me alone, as they usually arrest sex workers in groups, and I told him that I had refused to have sex free. The OC understood that this was unfair, and offered to confront the officer together with me, but I was too scared. This memory hurts me the worst because this is when my neighbours found out I was a sex worker. They had never seen me in such clothes. After 3 days in the prison cells, I was also dirty and smelly. When they released me, I had to walk home in this state. The entire neighbourhood came to see and laugh at me.

Another instance I remember occurred when a man picked me up at Capital Pub. He seemed very nice and gentle. He said we should go to his place in Muyenga. When he turned off the road into a bunch of thick bushes, I asked, "Is this your house?" He said, "Do you think I'll actually bring a prostitute into my own home?" I said that there was no way I could sleep with him in the bush and asked him to take me back to the bar.

He opened my door and pulled me out. He pulled off my shirt and jeans and threw them in the car. My keys, phone, and money were in my jeans. First he wanted to have sex standing, and then in the car, but I am a big girl and I could not. He then slapped me,

and showed me his pistol, his knife, and a hammer. "Since you are too fat and can't have sex with me, just go before I shoot you." He flashed his car lights at me and ordered me to run. I was wearing a T-shirt, but my knickers, jeans, and money were in his car. As I ran through the bush, I often fell, checking to see if he had shot me. I managed to get a boda-boda and go home.

The next day, I went back to Capital Pub, just to drink. Fellow sex-workers approached and asked what had happened? I said nothing. They said, no, what really happened? I said that the man hadn't paid me. They persisted. They kept insisting because their friend had gone with him before. He had taken her to the bush and forced a stick up her vagina. When she had returned, she had had to go to the hospital and later died. I was angry that they had not warned me.

I drank the rest of my vodka and went home. I took all of the clothes I used to wear, all of my shoes, all of the things that associated me with this work and I put them in a pile and burned them with paraffin. This was the day I stopped engaging in sex work.

All these experiences are why I hate men. I don't want anything to do with them. Even these days, I see these men often. I cannot say anything because there is no law to protect me. I can't even point out these men to anyone because no one cares.

Luckily, I had saved money. I bought a small house. I sleep in one room and rent the rest to tenants. I send money home to my daughter often. My daughter came to live with me at one point but I feared for her safety. When she started to develop into a woman, with breasts and a bum, I was scared someone would rape her. We were in such small living quarters that I was worried that we were not safe. So my daughter is back in the village, where I send her money.

While I have been able to move out of sex work, I cannot escape the fact that I know that every single sex worker has very serious problems: they are underpaid, they are exploited, they can be beaten, they can be gang raped, and their clients won't use a condom. They really need help. They are cast as women who don't want to work, don't want to marry, don't want to have children. However, this is not true.

Those who have gone through this life and have survived are the only ones who can help them. No one else can understand what we have gone through. We are women who are being tortured or have been tortured. Often, we don't even know we are being tortured. We have experienced a lot. We have the power to convince others of the dangers and risks involved with sex work in Uganda.



The truth about me

By Kyomya Macklean

Since that night, I have never gone back to that club.

That club was called Panther. It is no longer there, but it was our favourite place. It was hot! It was one of the best places to go, dance, drink, and party. It was where we got plenty of customers.

Truth and I were best friends. We slept in the same hostel, and did everything together. Like good friends. We used to go to Panther, get men, and "de-tooth" them. De-toothing is a term we used to describe the process of extracting money from men and running away with it.

We would play up to them sweetly, pretending to be their girlfriends, and then ask them to buy us dinner. They would give us cash to buy the meal at the counter, but we would run away with the cash instead of buying the food. I did this in order to have money to pay for my school fees.

One night, a friend came to our window at the hostel and asked us to go clubbing. We said ok, and of course went to Panther. When we got there, we saw K, a man we had de-toothed previously. He was in the club and we were so surprised and scared. He had already sent us a threatening message through a mutual friend.

We hid in a dark corner, waiting for K to leave.

When the club began to close, we decided it was safe to leave. It was around 2am and we decided to go back to our hostel. As we were going back, we realised two men were following us. We were not aware that K had paid some thugs to come after us. We were suspicious and started to walk faster. We were not sure if they were following us. When we turned a corner, we decided to run, and they started to chase us. We managed to hide, and we thought we were safe.

However, when we emerged, we didn't realise they still followed. Truth was wearing jangles (high heels). They were new, and actually she was the only one who had them. When the man started to chase us, Truth could not run fast enough in her jangles. We ran, and she fell behind. I ran to the flowerbeds, heart pumping, and hid there.

From my flowerbeds, I saw this man force himself on Truth. He had with him a large sharp stone. He told her that if she moved, he would cut off her head. I witnessed the rape of my best friend and I could do nothing. I was afraid. He raped her, and when he was done, he stole her bag, her blouse, and also her jangles.

A few days later, Truth was not well. I was worried. After trying to take care of her, she was still not well. The man who had raped her had torn her inside. She was in pain. She stopped eating, she was crying often, and had fevers. She refused to go to the hospital even though she was scared that she had contracted a disease and fallen pregnant from this man.

After a few weeks, I finally convinced her to go the hospital. A female doctor saw us and told us where to go for an HIV-test.

At first, we were too scared to go in for testing. We were embarrassed and worried what people would think. We went to the clinic and pretended to be searching for work. They gave us some forms to fill out, and as we were filling them, we saw a line of women outside the hospital. We asked why they were there and learned they were there for counselling. We asked if we could join, and it was in these sessions that we became more aware of the virus. We finally got the courage to get an HIV-test.

I was the one to go and get the results. It took me two days to tell Truth that she was HIV-positive. By this time, Truth was already aware that she was expecting a baby from the man who raped her.

I think that Truth had contracted HIV long ago. When she learned of her status, she wanted to abort the baby. I learned from another friend that Truth had taken local medicines but they did not work. Truth had already had four abortions, and had almost died from two of them. I managed to convince a counsellor to come and talk to Truth.

The counsellor convinced Truth to be strong, eat well, and keep her baby. I really appreciated this counsellor because she would visit and check on Truth often.

During all this, I telephoned Truth's mother in the village. Truth's father had already chased Truth out of her home a few years ago. He had learned that Truth was going around with men and said, "I do not breed prostitutes!" But Truth's mother had still supported her over the years, sending her money without her father knowing.

Truth's mother came to visit and I watched Truth's mother cry as she learned that Truth was pregnant. We never told her mother about that night.

The story of my friend Truth is one of my worst memories and experiences. And it is not even me who suffered the most. I consider myself as someone who used to be a 'bad girl."

Since that time, I never went back to Panther; I never went looking for money in this way again. Since then I have worked in different places to earn money for school. I began to speak out on behalf of my sisters and friends about the pressures and hardships we face. Through WONETHA*, I hope to make this my life's mission: supporting and speaking out for all human beings, especially those that are punished just for being born as girls.

* Kyomya Macklean and Nakato Daisy work with WONETHA in Kampala, Uganda, and organisation that works to empower vulnerable women and sex workers.



Tired of sex work

By Nofiki,* Lesotho

The man was ugly with large bumps on his face so that I could not touch him. I was repulsed: so many bumps, the redness of his eyes, and his overly large hands. All the time we were in the act of sex, I wanted to die. I tried to conjure an image of the need for power and money that had forced me to come to him, but I could not.

This case was different from all the other times when I have endured a man's physical needs for money. This time l had sought the man out because he had something I wanted. I wanted a real job because I was tired of the routine of standing in the night in the bitter winter air and sometimes snow opposite the Victoria Cinema waiting for a man to catch the wink of my eye so we could go to a more private place. I was tired of waiting to be picked up.

This time I had been told that one of the employers of the City of Maseru would give me a job if I slept with him. I had no idea it would be someone so very ugly, so very thick and large. As a sex-worker I was used to being paid in cash, not in kind and I did not know when we would start talking about my life saving permanent job. I really was looking forward to the job, but I felt too conflicted to actually ask a direct question about the job. I could not judge the right time to ask. Then I reminded myself that we were in business, so as soon as I thought he was ready, before he could get too comfortable, I asked him about the job.

He said, "You see it is very difficult my dear: in government, you have to be educated. Without an education, you need someone to find you a letter. Maybe your educated sister or someone can type your name on a photocopy of her certificate and take it to the police to certify. You can tell the police you lost the original, or you can go to anybody, perhaps a lawyer friend of yours and she can do an affidavit... No, you wouldn't know anyone like that because you are not educated. So that's where I come in. I can do all the dirty work and get you a nice job sweeping the offices and making tea for me."

I am sure you wonder why I am still a sex worker selling to the highest bidder like some cow on auction. Well, the service job never materialised. The man and I quarreled. When he left, I was shouting after him because I was so disgusted at myself for giving up my time to such an empty promise. Who would pay a lawyer? Who would pay the police? The man was not only ugly but he was totally out of his mind. I demanded that he give me money there and then and forget about the job. However, he said he had no money.

So, I am back at my spot where my most profitable days occur during the rain. When it rains, I am lucky, as my clients are many. There are at least two a night, sometimes five in one night. I wish there could be someone to sponsor me to go to a real school to learn and to get a certificate. At this stage, I am tired of sex work and really wish there was something else I could do.

* not her real name



No home for an innocent child

By Maria,* Namibia

I am 21 years old. At the age of seven years, I went to school in Mariental. I started my Grade 1 about the time when my mother got work in Windhoek. I lived with my grandmother in Mariental. In 2002, my father died. My grandmother died two years later and I had to move to Windhoek to stay with my mother in 2004.

My mother used to drink too much and she did not want to buy me basic needs. She also did not pay my school fees. I had to drop out of school.

One night, I was sleeping when my uncle broke into our house and raped me while my mother was drinking homemade brew at a neighbour's house. The next day I was crying and told my mother what happened, but she said I was lying and that her brother would never do something like that. I told her to go and ask him, but my uncle said I was lying. When my mother returned, she beat me very much.

I ran away from home and went to live with my friends in Babylon (Okuryangava). My friends told me to go to town and beg for money and food. My friends also told me to go to the bridge and sell our bodies for money. We used to get N$20 dollar or N$5 for sex. Sometimes the client will sleep with me without paying anything. After a few months, when I was 18, I fell pregnant with my first child.

My aunt came and told me that I will have a child and must no longer go to the bridge. She took me to a caretaker so that I could get food for my child. When I came back to my friend's house, she threw me out of her house and accused me of having money which I did not have and that I did not buy food for the house.

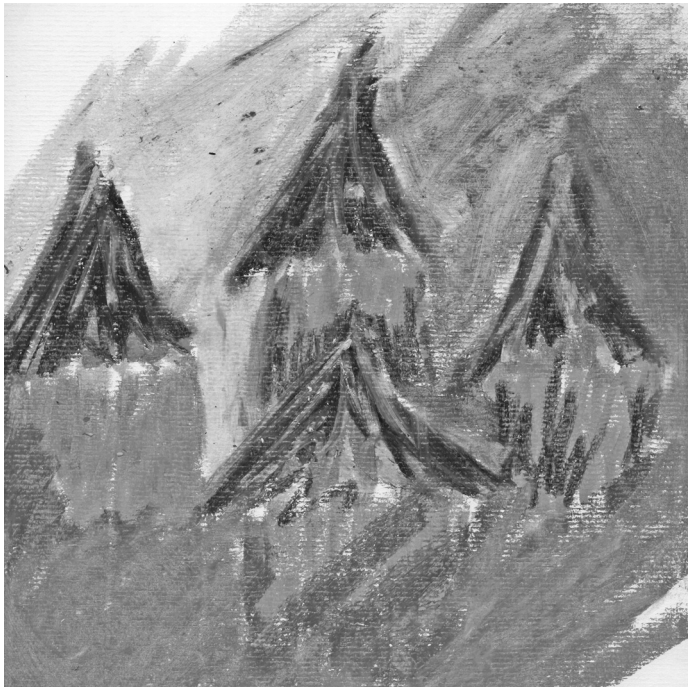
Now I don't have a house to live in. The only option I have is to go back and stay at the bridge for the whole night, with my poor baby whose father I do not even know. I went to

a caretaker and told him my story. He brought me zincs to build a house for myself in Windhoek. After a few months, my mother came to my house and accused me of being HIV positive, saying that my child was also sick, but I was not. She said I slept around with older men. At the time she was saying all this, I had already stopped going to the bridge.

She forced me out of my own house and brought in her lover and they lived there. Then I begged my friend to take me back at her house and she said yes. I moved there with my baby, to my friend's house. A woman said to me I have a small baby and I should not move around too much. She asked me to go and live with her and so I did.

However, she did not want to give me food so I had to ask at the neighbours. I tried my best to look for work but I didn't get any and she still denied me food. I always begged from others to get something to eat. I still want to go back and complete my school but I don't have money to pay for my school fees. My mother passed away in 2006.

I don't want to sleep around with men anymore. All I want to say is to advise all the young girls out there not to run away from home like I did and not to sell their bodies for money. Finish your studies and become someone important in life and don't suffer like I did.



Breaking Free and Speaking Out



Take Back the Night 2008 at Ekurhuleni, South Africa

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

From abuser to counselor

By Zarina Geloo with Charles Sikalele,* Zambia

One day, I arrived home and all there was for dinner was watery tea. Then, I knew that we were indeed poor. I am a Tonga. We are a very proud tribe. We pride ourselves on working hard and on being rich. We are cattle rearers.

There was a drought and little by little, my father had to sell cattle. We also had a succession of bad crops. This affected the livestock as well. I thought we would recover even though all around me the villagers were getting poorer and poorer. It was only when we had no food in our home that I realised that we too had become 'the poor". I was so ashamed and angry with my parents when I had to leave school because we could no longer afford it. Soon they sold the little possessions we had for food and we were left with literally the clothes on our backs.

Then, the worst happened; my father left us to go to town to look for work and he never came back. My mother fell sick with AIDS and subsequently died. I was now effectively the head of a household of four children. My uncle came to take us to town but he too was a struggling gardener living in a one-room shack. He told me he expected me to look for food for my brothers and sisters: he would only provide shelter.

I still don't see that I had much choice; I became a thief. At first, I did petty things like pick pocketing or stealing from the shops – nothing big. But, this did not provide enough money for our needs. I was just stealing enough to buy maybe a loaf of bread, but my siblings needed more.

I then went onto the street and joined a gang of robbers. They gave me jobs to do like to be the "look out" or "the distracter." They would give me K100, 000 (about US$20). At least that enabled me to buy some decent food. But there were not enough of these jobs. I knew I needed a regular income so I began to do jobs myself. I started breaking into shops in the compound; they are not very well secured. Soon, I was making quite a bit of money.

To this day, I am amazed that the police never once caught me. The other gang members heard about me and offered me a "partnership" to break into rich peoples' homes. The first time I did this, I was scared so they gave me some marijuana to smoke for courage.

That was the beginning of my descent down hill. I became addicted and in addition, began to drink beer. My partners also encouraged me to have sex. With money in my pocket, I had a pick of any girl. I began by abusing street girls who were cheap; they only wanted food for the day. Then, my friends introduced me to prostitutes. I began to feel powerful and I raped women, beat them up, and inflicted all manner of abuse on them just because I thought I could with my little money. Looking back now, I am so ashamed of what I had become.

In my self-destruct mode, I began to spend more time under the influence of drugs and alcohol than doing "jobs." My partners abandoned me saying that I had become a liability, as I was unreliable. I was back to being poor again. At about the same time I got a serious case of syphilis. I went to a clinic where I tested for HIV. I was positive, unsurprisingly. I was treated and advised to go on ARVs. I resisted because it meant no more beer and no more marijuana.

In the meantime, my younger brothers went to join a church that gave them a meal a day. At the church, a white missionary came to see me. At first, he would just sit with me without saying anything. Then he began to counsel me, I was a willing listener as I was in bed with no money and nowhere to go.

We made a deal. He would employ me and I would go on ARVs. It was not easy, I was not used to working an honest job and the money was like peanuts. We had our share of problems and we fought. Many times, I tried to go back on the streets, but I just could not make it and invariably went back to the missionary. Somehow, we stuck to each other.

In the end, he probably saved my life. I now work as a volunteer counselor for recovering addicts and trained as an HIV counselor. I have a life, not the one I had planned of prosperity but thankfully, it is not the criminal one was making for myself. At least I feel human and I can look after my siblings who in spite of my lifestyle, have stayed focused and are doing well in school.

That does not mean however that everything is okay. I see a woman's purse and theft comes to my mind. I see an unlocked car and I wonder how much I would get for it. Even as I talk to youth recovering from alcohol or drug abuse, I empathise because there are times when I miss the heady feeling of dagga and beer. I have to work at controlling my thoughts and desires everyday. It is not easy but I have made a choice and am determined not to sink into that abyss again.

Charles Sikalele* not his real name, is a 23-year-old carpenter. He was giving a testimony at the human rights public hearing in Zambia.



People must speak out

By Amie Jonh,* Tanzania

"Please forgive me!" Those were the only words I could say as he beat me on and on. I was in my third year at one of the most prestigious universities in Tanzania when it happened.

I was hanging out in a club with family friends on Easter of 2005 when James* passed by. After a short greeting, he invited me to his place, which was in the neighborhood. I agreed to go to his place even though Manuel*, one of the friends I was hanging with did not approve, warning that I could find myself in trouble. I dismissed his worries since I could not imagine that James, who looked so decent, would cause me any harm. We went to the same school and came from the same province. However, I was very wrong.

The troubles started only few minutes after we arrived in his place. His housemates left as soon as the introduction was over. He put on some very loud music. Then, he asked me to undress so that he could have sex with me. I refused. He turned violent. He started beating and insulting me saying that I was only refusing because he was not rich.

I tried to stop him from removing my clothes by force. I was very lucky because I was wearing a long dress that made it hard for James to remove them at once. There was even a time when he was struggling to look for some scissors to tear them. As James realised that he could not easily remove the clothing I was wearing, he resolved to kick me without even caring where the kicks and blows were landing. This went on for more than an hour when finally the housemates returned and rescued me.

His housemates started scolding him, telling him that he had been beating up all the girls he had been bringing to the house and that he should learn to ask for sex. I had learned a very hard lesson: I realised that this calm and good-looking guy was not as cool as I had thought. He was not only violent, but he perpetrated his violence against females.

James sent a short message through my mobile a few days later. It was somehow supposed to be an apology for what he did. At first, I could not even understand who had sent it because I had already deleted his number from my mobile. I only found out that it was from him after calling the number and recognising his voice. I cut the call off as soon as I recognised his voice because I did not want to talk to him.

I have lost my trust of men since that day. I am cautioning girls and women not to go out with or visit with men even though they may look innocent and harmless. But something still bothers me. Almost worse than James behaviour, is the fact that I don't understand why if his housemates knew of his behavior, no one said anything. None of them warned me of his past behaviour.



Demanding change

Grace Ayanda,*Congo/ South Africa

I am a 38-year-old woman born in Lubumbashi, who did not enjoy love from my parents beyond my earliest years. When I was three, my father passed away and my brother and I had to separate from our mother for a while. The way the culture was then, the husband's family must take over everything, including the children. As was also common, my mother remarried her husband's brother.

We started our new life with problems in a house with two wives and nine children. I did not understand why my mother had chosen to marry her husband's brother. Later, when I reached around twelve years of age, I started to see why she had done this but also to see that this was wrong. Then, this new father chased me out of his house. I went to stay with my other uncle until I got my matric.

Because of these troubles, I was forced to leave my family and start my own life. I met a man who I thought would make me happy in this world. It was a very good beginning. I had my first child in 1995, but eight months after the child was born, everything changed.

The first time he beat me was after his mother had left her house keys with me. When he arrived home later, I could not find her keys and he got angry and began to beat me. During the beating, he tore my dress. He left me half-naked in the lounge while he went to the bedroom. I used that as a chance to run to my neighbour's place for help and for some peace of mind. Following this incident, there was a family meeting and they expected me to stay with him: a wife should obey her husband and forgive him.

A year later in 1998, we came to South Africa because of what was happening in Congo. Fortunately, I found a job and I was away from the house from 7am to 7pm. My "love," unemployed at the time, would be at home waiting for me to come back from work in order to do the housework. This situation was very stressful. It got to the point where I felt happier at work than at home. Going home was like being imprisoned and enslaved. He expected me to perform my duties as a wife and to provide the money for us to survive.

Things became worse and worse. I remember an incident that happened in 2006 on Christmas Day. He came home with two men and they drank from 8am until 10pm. During the day, he left the house to drop some people off and while he was away one of the men started to fight in my house. I asked him to leave but when I tried to close the door, he pulled me out onto the steps and opened the gate, which came back and hit me on the face. My face became green with bruises. When my husband returned he did not react. He said he could not take me to the hospital unless I put petrol in the car. I wanted to file a complaint and open a case at the police station, but I did not know the name of the guy who had assaulted me because it was the first time I had ever seen him. My husband refused to name the person and said that I deserved what I had gotten because I was a bitch. His reaction hurt me.

On another day, he came home late, drunk. He found a letter from the school. It said that my son had jumped through a window. At the time, I was sleeping and I had not read the letter. My husband entered the bedroom demanding an explanation. When I had no answer he started to hit and strangle me. He said he would kill me. Then, I finally went to apply for a protection order.

There was a postponement, and I had to make several appearances. It was a very difficult time. During the time of the case, the two of us were not even communicating. For example, if he wanted to talk to me, he would send one of the children to talk to me. Throughout this, I tried to leave him but I felt that for the sake of the children, I had to return to him.

Finally, the case was concluded and on the last day of the court appearance, he apologised for his behaviour and promised never to hurt me again. I chose to forgive him because I believed him. I am glad to say that he has not beaten me since.

I decided to speak out about my story to help other women to know their rights and if there is an abuse problem to ask for help from organisations working with abused women and they will get help.

* Not her real name

No longer scared in a house of my own

By Mukamwiinga* with Perpetual Sichikwenkwe, Zambia

Marriage brings happiness to some, but for me it was a nightmare for twenty-five years. I stayed in an abusive marriage, enduring it, always hoping that what did not work out today, would tomorrow. It was my son's sickness that ended it: a son who had been a breadwinner for my husband and me. Because it ended, I found happiness. Let me explain.

Misfortune started when I fell pregnant at the age of 12 in a village in the Chooma district in Southern Zambia. I was doing my sixth grade. The man who had been responsible for my pregnancy died in a road accident during the pregnancy. I gave birth to a son. I lived with my uncle until my son was 10 years old. In 1979, I found a man who proposed marriage to me. I accepted. He was already married but in that era, polygamy, especially within the tribe, was common. So I gladly moved in with him. I was puzzled when he refused to have my son live with us. He said that since the boy was young, I could leave him with my relatives. I did not bother much about this because all I wanted was to have a husband and a home of my own. People in the village had laughed at me being so young and having a fatherless child. In 1981, we decided to shift to Namwala district so that we could be away from our relatives.

In Namwala things changed. My husband became uncaring and provocative at harvest time, because he did not want me to benefit from the harvest money. Then, one evening after a long day's work, he informed the first wife that he was going to marry a third wife. Her duty was to inform me which she did. She had always been good to me treating me like her younger sister. Reluctantly, I consented.

However, I was shocked when I was told that the third wife would get all the money from the sale of our farm products for a house, clothes and other things. He further demanded

my personal money, which I kept for my son's school fees. He was doing upper school by then. I refused. When my husband realised that I was serious about not giving him the money, he locked the house and beat me. It was at night. People were sleeping and could not hear my screams. I fainted.

When he realised what he had done, he told his first wife that if I died, she should put logs on my body outside my house to look like unknown people killed me. When I gained consciousness, the first wife advised me to run away back to my parents because my husband was going to kill me for the money that was meant for my child. The next morning, my husband told me that I had 2 days to decide whether to give him the money or to endure another beating. My son's school requirements were most important, so without telling anyone, at midnight, I snuck away to go to my uncle's place to inform them of my husband's behaviour.

Luck was not on my side. My husband caught up with me. He beat me, leaving me for dead. I was only saved by a Good Samaritan who took me to the hospital, where I stayed for five days. While I was still at the hospital, we had talks with my family and his family. My husband said he still loved me even after what he had done and promised not to do that again. We decided to go back to my house

Those first beatings were just the beginning of many beatings. He had even started beating our 3 children. Whenever I had a good harvest or money from my business, it was grounds for mistreatment and beating. I had relatives who offered to look after me and my children if I left him, but I could not do that because I wanted to be called Mrs. somebody. My first son was now working as a banker, and encouraged me to leave my abusive husband and go and stay with him, but I wanted marriage.

The end was to come in February 2004. It was raining heavily. The roads were impassable. A radio message from Lusaka informed me that my son was critically ill after being involved in a road accident. I was with my husband when the message came, but he did not say anything. I waited for his reaction that never came. The following day I told him that I was leaving. I had sold some chickens to raise money for transport. He demanded an equal share of my transport money because the chickens lived on his land.

I refused to give him the money, supported by the other 2 wives. When it was time for my departure, he offered to escort me to the bus stop. I thought it was genuine and accepted. About 4 kilometers into the journey, my husband stopped the bicycle and demanded that I give him the money. When I said no, he started beating me and the next thing I realised, I was in Monza General hospital nursing serious wounds while my son was dying in Lusaka. I could not be there for him.

I proceeded to Lusaka four days later with a swollen eye and marks all over my face and body. My son was in a bad state. I could not even have a word with him. Five days later, my beloved son and breadwinner died. I informed my husband about my son's death but I heard nothing from him. He even refused to let our 3 children come to their elder brother's funeral. After the funeral, I decided to stay with my mother for 2 weeks. That 2 weeks changed my life completely.

My siblings advised me against going back to my husband. They found a counsellor who agreed, saying that I would end up dead in order to be called "married." I took their advice. My husband still had not even sent condolences, but my children finally made it to the funeral. They informed me that my husband had sold all my house property most of which had been bought by my son. I was angry but I decided that I could not look back. My children too refused to go back to their father. We agreed to start life afresh.

Even as I was agreeing, I was scared. How could I survive without the support of a husband? How could I carry on after the loss of my son who was also my breadwinner? How I could start fresh in life without any property? I had left everything including my clothes with my husband and he had sold it all. How would the community look at me knowing that I had failed in marriage? I was even scared to take him to court just in case he organised people to beat me or harm my children.

As I am talking now, with the help of my mother, siblings and other family members, my fear has turned into happiness. I have everything a woman needs for survival. I am the pillar of the family because I have animals for ploughing, a house of my own, and money. Above all, I have regained happiness and peace.

* not her real name

Honouring my mother and sister

By Pascal Akimana, Burundi/South Africa

I was born 27 years ago in a little village called Gatumba, 15 km from Bujumbura in Burundi. I am the product of a teenage mother forced to marry the man who impregnated her and who later had three more children with him. I grew up in a very violent home. Gender based and sexual violence was daily bread in my life. My father assaulted my mother every day in front of the entire family and no one said anything.

Sometimes he forced her to have sex in front of me. This puzzled me because it didn't seem normal, nor did my mother like it. As a child, I asked myself why my father fought with my mother, but I could not see the answer. I found out later that the main cause was that my father was cheating on my mother. I also realised that women in the entire village experienced gender based and sexual violence.

To my father, assaulting my lively mother was proving his manhood. He used to say that he was the man, and that all things must be directed to him to have the final say. He used to beat my mother almost to death. Sometimes she would wake up with a swollen face and for fear of telling the truth, she would say that she fell when it was dark. He would kick her against the wall or beat her with sharp objects.

He would insult her in front of us, telling her that she was less than a woman, she was nothing, stupid, ugly, and she could not cook. He would also turn on my sisters, and me, beating us, chasing us away, saying that we were ugly, stupid, nothing, like our mother. When she talked to her family and the elder women, they said that is how you build the house! You must stay; he will change.

In the end, my father finally chased my mother away, naked. I remember that night: he took all my mother's clothes and burned them, saying that he bought them. According to

Burundian culture, if a woman separates from her husband she must not take the children with her, so she was forced to leave me and my sisters behind.

Two hours after my mother left that night, my father brought in another woman, who became my stepmother. Some people have the good fortune to have a good and kind stepmother, but it was not the case with me. She started harassing and abusing me. Many times, she would report me to my father and I would be punished and tortured – disciplined, as he called it. He disciplined me like a criminal and not his own child. This continued for a long time.

Once, my father learned that I had gone to visit my mother. He beat me as if I had committed an unforgivable sin. He did this to cut the ties between my mother and us. I grew up with a lot of anger and hurt towards my father and until today, I am still finding ways of dealing with it and forgiving him.

Not long after, the community started dividing themselves in two, some calling themselves Tutsis others Hutus, and killing one another. In 1993, the democratically elected Burundian president was killed. The whole country was in havoc, with many people fleeing to different countries. My father and my stepmother with two other kids took one direction. I was 12 years old. My sister and I took another direction leaving Burundi and joining a crowd of people running to DRC. As we entered DRC, Congolese soldiers stopped us, raping my sister in front me. I was screaming and shouting but could not find any help; instead they beat me seriously. Once they finished, they left and UNHCR officials took my sister to hospital.

I admit, I became a dangerous young boy, maybe because of the violence I grew up with. I was very angry. I often fought and I joined a bad group of people who abused women and girls. Later I realised I did not want this, because whenever I reflected on my mother's situation, I could see that what my father did to her is what I was now doing to girls. I became conscious and started to think how I could change, though it was very difficult.

Because I have experienced all this violence - abuse in my family, community and the whole country - I decided to advocate for women's rights, because whenever I hear or see an abused woman, I see and remember my mother and what we went through.

I still find it difficult to date girls. Many girls expect me to be violent or behave in a violent manner. When I behave the way I want, they push me back into the gender box. Some drop me, saying that I am a confused young man, or that maybe I was supposed to be a gay.

My father and I still have many disagreements. When I try to raise these issues he denies them, but I have decided to confront him with the whole truth and remind him of all the bad things he has done to me.

I am writing this down, as it is a healing method for me. More importantly, I want to share my story with others, especially those who are working with displaced people: refugees or women and children who are in abusive relationships. This story of mine can be an eye opener to other people and help them to take necessary measures.

Men can change and men are changing: I have changed and I know others who have changed. When I conduct trainings, I see men who are shocked about the violence women have in their lives. I also hear stories about their own sisters, mothers, or daughters who are going through abuse and violence.

When you involve men in finding solutions to sexual and gender based violence, men will use their power in a positive way by working together with women. I have seen women go back home excited after participating in training, sharing the information that they gained, and being met with violence. When we train men, those men leave with a pledge of changing themselves and a promise to communicate better with their partners.

If we engage more men, together of course with women, we shall get solutions. I have dedicated my life to this work based on my principle of honouring my mother, my sisters and my own experience. As a man, I will use my voice to bring change.

Gender Violence provisions in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development



Legal
- By 2015 enact and enforce legislation prohibiting all forms of gender based violence (GBV).
- Ensure that laws on GBV provide for the comprehensive testing, treatment and care of survivors of sexual offences.
- By 2010 review and reform criminal laws and procedures applicable to sexual offences.
- By 2015 enact and adopt specific legislative provisions to prevent human trafficking.

Sexual harassment
- By 2010 enact legislative provisions, and adopt and enforce policies, strategies and programmes which define and prohibit sexual harassment.

Services
- States shall provide accessible, affordable and specialised legal services, including legal aid, to survivors of GBV.
- States shall provide specialised facilities including places of shelter and safety.
- Integrated approaches.

Integrated approaches
- Draft National Action Plans to End Gender Based Violence.

Monitoring and evaluation
- By 2010 construct a composite index for measuring GBV.
- By 2010 provide baseline data on GBV.

Khuluma, Bua, Speak Out!



gender links

HIVOS

DFID Department for International Development

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