

SHE DESERVES HER RIGHTS & SKILLS



**GROWING FROM CONCRETE TO HOPE:
THE REALITIES ON THE JOURNEY TO SELF
AWARENESS & RESILIENCE FOR
ADOLESCENTS GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN IN
SIAYA**



This booklet contains the inspiring stories of Adolescent Girls and Young Women, highlighting their resilience and empowerment in the face of adversity. These narratives embody the transformative impact of the *She Deserves Her Rights and Skills* project funded by the French Embassy in Kenya under their PISSCA DECID HER Project, facilitated by the Siaya Muungano Network, shedding light on the struggles, triumphs, and aspirations of these Adolescent Girls and Young Women

-Editor's Remark





Sydney Atieno, 24 Years



Sydney Atieno is a young woman who lives in the small village of Yombra in Simenya Sub-location. At 24 years of age, she is a single mother of two. Sydney earns a living by selling “bhajias” and makes around 150 Kenyan shillings daily, providing for her family and taking care of her responsibilities as a mother.

Sydney's childhood was a challenging one. Her caregivers separated which meant that she had to step up and take care of her younger siblings. Despite working hard, they

struggled to make ends meet. One holiday season, Sydney went to her caregiver's workplace hoping to change schools due to verbal abuse from a family member. However, she faced opposition. Feeling helpless, Sydney reached out to a trusted member of the community who took up her case. Unfortunately, this led to more conflicts, she was accused of inciting villagers against her family and eventually, Sydney and her siblings were left to fend for themselves. It wasn't easy, but they persevered, and Sydney's experiences taught her resilience and the importance of seeking help when needed. Her education was affected and she had to drop out of school at class seven. Later on at the age of 16 years, she conceived her first child, and in four years, she got her second born.

Years later, in 2023, Sydney learned about Siaya Muungano Network through their area Community Health Promoter (CHP).

The CHP was working closely with the organization to identify out-of-school adolescent girls and young women between the ages of 12 and 24 for the She Deserves Her Rights and Skills project. Sydney was hesitant at first, but the community health promoter convinced her to give it a try. During a mapping exercise, a staff member from the organization visited Sydney's home to enrol her in the program.

Through the Siaya Muungano Network, Sydney attended various training and meeting sessions. She attended power analysis training, intergenerational dialogue, assistant chief barazas, and community theatre outreaches. These sessions helped her become more aware of gender-based violence issues and gave her a renewed sense of hope for her future. "Even if I never completed my primary education, the things I have learnt from Siaya Muungano Network's engagement have given me hope and I believe I will make it in life," Says Sydney.

Sydney's dream was to join a vocational training centre and pursue hairdressing. She knew this would give her the skills required to earn more money and provide a better life for her children. With the linkage and support from Siaya Muungano Network, Sydney believes she will achieve her dream and become a successful hairdresser.

Looking back on her journey, Sydney had pieces of advice for others. She believed parents should be open and honest with their children; share information and offer guidance. She also encouraged girls not to lose hope, no matter their circumstances. Finally, she called on the government to do more to support the girl child, who faces numerous challenges.

Sydney is grateful to Siaya Muungano Network for the work they are doing to empower girls like her in the community. She believes that without their support, she may not be able to achieve her dreams.

Scovia Achieng, 17 Years

Meet Scovia Achieng, a 17-year-old girl from the village of Rarieda in Sidindi Ward. She is the third child among eight siblings. Scovia completed her secondary school education in 2023 and is yet to proceed to the next level. However, her life is a tale of resilience in the face of adversity.

Scovia's past is marked by a difficult family situation that left her with emotional wounds. She faced emotional gender-based violence from both close family members, which caused her a lot of pain. Despite her academic abilities, Scovia was denied the opportunity to attend a prestigious school due to doubts about her paternity, leaving her feeling rejected and unwanted.

As if that wasn't enough, when Scovia's



exam results exceeded the expectations of a family member, she was pressured to use her earnings from her hairdressing meagre job to pay for their expenses. The family member even threatened her and made her feel unsafe. Fearing for her well-being, Scovia had to leave her home and start anew without any belongings. Despite her

efforts to reconcile with her family, they were not receptive and even made threats against her life. This left Scovia feeling isolated and alone. "When I tried reaching them through a close friend of mine, they told him that even if they could locate my whereabouts, they could end my life and forget that they ever had a child called Achieng," Said heartbroken Scovia.

In her darkest moments, Scovia found the best moments in her achievements, cherishing the joy of her KCSE results when she scored B plain.

Scovia learned about the Siaya Muungano Network from a staff member who visited her home during a project mapping exercise. Since then, Scovia has actively participated in various sessions organised by the organisation. These include community entry meetings, Community SRHR champions training, intergenerational dialogues, and community theatre outreaches. Participating in these sessions has been transformative for Scovia. They have not only boosted her confidence but also expanded her knowledge on important issues like gender-based violence. Through these sessions, she has learned the value of being content with what she has and avoiding situations that could lead to trouble.

As for her dreams, Scovia has long harbored aspirations of joining the military or becoming an air hostess. Despite qualifying for these opportunities based on her KCSE results, financial constraints and unresolved school fees have stood in her way. She is seeking support to obtain her leaving certificate from school, a crucial step towards achieving her dreams. Additionally, Scovia is passionate about poultry farming, recognising its potential for financial stability. She has dabbled in poultry farming before and believes it could provide a sustainable income stream. With the right support, Scovia hopes to pursue poultry farming and save enough money to pursue her dreams, even if it means adjusting her career path from joining the military or becoming an air hostess.

In conclusion, Scovia has a heartfelt message for everyone. To parents, she urges understanding, care, and a readiness to offer advice. For Adolescent Girls and Young Women, she emphasizes the importance of holding onto hope in even the toughest situations. Lastly, she extends her heartfelt gratitude to the Siaya Muungano Network for the invaluable opportunities and impactful sessions they have provided.

Fidelis Adhiambo, 24 Years

My name is Fidelis Adhiambo, 24 years of age, from Sango B village in Rangala Location, Sidindi Ward. I'm a single mother of 3. Currently, I work as an Electrician in my Sub County Ugunja. After finishing class 8, my parents enrolled me at Ndere VTC for a 2-year course in Electrical and Electronics Engineering, unfortunately, I became pregnant when I was almost finished.



This didn't go well with my caretaker, who later refused to pay my school fees. I was depressed and decided to be married to the man who impregnated me. We went to Nairobi and after 3 years, I became pregnant again. Wrangles and fights started in our house when my husband refused to work and stayed home, leaving all responsibilities to me. Money was not enough because my samosa business was not doing well.

One day when I came from my hustle, I found a note on the table saying, "Don't look for me, go back home, a group of gangsters are looking for me." I had to leave for my parents' home. Later we realised that he had gone to Somalia to join Alshabab, fortunately after delivering my second born who was now 7 months old, my husband came looking for me to reconcile back. I didn't hesitate as staying in my parent's home was difficult with my 2 children. I was naïve and assumed family planning, I later realised that I was pregnant again with our 3rd born, and my husband denied the pregnancy saying, "ichni ok mara maye imako koru" (The pregnancy is not mine you got it from your parents' place). I was so depressed and decided to go back to my parent's home with my two small kids and left my firstborn, after a week, my husband sent a "bodaboda" man with all my properties and our firstborn.

I was a very bright student in my class and was good at practicals though I never finished my course. In my area, I have turned out to be one of the best electricians and I do wiring and installation of electricity, which has helped me support my children from the income I get. I have also employed 2 young men to assist me.

I learned about SIMUN during the mapping exercise of out-of-school adolescent girls and young women between the ages of 18 and 24 years in the Rangala Location.

SIMUN has trained us in different aspects for example how to prevent and respond to GBV cases, power analysis sessions and early pregnancies. These trainings have changed my perception about life and realised that dropping out of school is not the end of everything, I can still proceed with life. I'm now confident and can speak out when my rights are violated.

I would also like to tell my community to speak out and report GBV cases which have been rampant in our area of Rangala Location, so that our women and girls have better lives. Discrimination against those who become pregnant at an early age should be discouraged

I would encourage SIMUN to continue engaging adolescent girls and women in our communities to change, so that we have a better future, in addition, intergenerational dialogues should be done frequently to reduce GBV cases which are rampant in our village and community at large.

Finally, I'm kindly requesting SIMUN for support to complete my Electrical and Electronic Engineering course, this will enable me to sit for my trade test and allow for the registration of my ongoing electronic business.

Audrey Muhonja, 22 Years



Audrey Muhonja is a 22-year-old from Got Koyembe Village in Mur Ngiya Sub Location, South East Alego Ward. She completed Form 4 in 2021 but has never collected her certificate due to a fee balance of 6000 shillings. She is married with one boy child aged 3 years. Currently, she does subsistence farming where she plants maize, groundnuts and vegetables to feed her family.

Audrey had to stay home for almost a year during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. She found herself restricted from movement and physical interaction, leading to idleness and loneliness. She therefore started visiting a young man who had been pursuing her. She did his household chores while he provided little finances for her upkeep and it was during this time when she got pregnant. Since she was depressed and could not disclose her pregnancy to anybody else, she opted to get married to the man responsible. However, this marriage took a quick sour turn, she became a victim of violence from close relatives who she thought would love and protect her.

Audry was on her farm as usual when a Community Health Promoter and a lady from one of the implementing partners of She Deserves Her Rights and Skills Project, Stawisha Africa Initiative, showed up to

explain a new project supporting young women out of school. After a short interaction with the guests, she was found fit for the project and was enrolled.

Since she joined the Organization, she has had sessions on family planning methods, STIs and GBV prevention and response. She has also been trained as a champion in SRH and power analysis sessions to build her confidence. Currently, she belongs to Stawisha safe space where they meet weekly with other girls for mentorship sessions and moral support. Since she became a member of the Organization she has gained a lot of skills on how to cope with life. She no longer keeps to herself after violations and has learnt to speak out and share with her peers and also take the energy to the farm to ensure she can feed her family. It has also changed how her close relatives view her; nowadays they love and respect her as she sometimes provides basic items with the little she gets from allowances paid after training.

If given an opportunity with SIMUN, **she would love to study fashion and design at Ngiya VTC and get certified. Further support with equipment to start her tailoring shop will enable her to improve the living standard of her family.**

‘Parents should accept, believe and invest in their children from a young age and not feel like they are a curse in their lives or marriages.’

Marion Auma, 20 Years



When you are getting a good meal with your family, or even when retiring to sleep on your very soft bed, has it ever crossed your mind that there are worst of situations? In Orungo, a village in Nyamila sub-location North Alego ward, Alego Usonga in Siaya county, we had an encounter with Marion Auma, a twenty-year-old lady. Miss. Marion is a mother to a seven-month-old baby and five of her siblings. After a problematic schooling at the primary school level, with the support of her mother who earned a living from working on people's farms, Marion later got a well-wisher who took her education up from form two until she was done with form four. During her schooling days, there was no good experience in life. Her mother could only afford basic and common food and the well-wisher was strictly handling school fees. Personal effects of the girl child to her were a struggle to get. She involved herself in premarital sex and on her first trial, she got pregnant. This was after she was just done with her form four examinations. There were no hopes also for furthering her education because there

was no source of funds.

When Marion was three months pregnant, she suffered the loss of a close family member due to childbirth complications. This event brought to light the challenges she would face in the future. Her guardian, who had the responsibility of taking care of her and her siblings, was not able to fulfil his duties as he struggled with personal issues. Marion found herself in a difficult situation, with a growing family to support and no stable source of income. She had to rely on the kindness of her mother's friends for necessities. Over time, Marion made the tough decision to move out of her family home and seek refuge with one of her mother's acquaintances. Here she could be given maize flour which she could then return home to prepare porridge for her siblings. In this family, she faced disrespect from the children of the family and verbal insults. She had to find a better place than here. A friend of her mother on seeing her situation took her to Barding gold mines where she did tough manual work. She could collect stones which she ground and took for processing to extract gold. Sometimes she would be lucky enough to get 4000 to 10000 Kenya shillings. This, being a responsible girl, she used to pay school fees for her sister now in form two, by then she was just joining form one. This happened until she delivered her baby. She couldn't continue working and had to come back home. Miss. Marion came back to a hell of an environment. Her guardian was wild with her, there was no food at home, her siblings were squarely dependent on her and nothing

seemed to work. She resorted to working as a house help in the house of one of her mother's friends to feed her siblings and her baby. In her vulnerable state, the grandmother has brought six different men suggesting marriage for her. The worst case scenario is this last one that has been tipping one of her close relatives and now poor Marion is to be married off by force.

Luckily enough, the CHV of her village identified her for mapping with Siaya Muungano Network where she joined a community safe space, joined other peers and shared experiences. In the group, they were taken through mentorship and training like power analysis sessions. Through this, there has been a tremendous change in the way Marion views things. She has built her confidence in her approach to life. She can now bargain for her rights, and she can speak for herself and others with similar challenges. She also has sexual reproductive health and rights knowledge. **Even though she is gaining the power to stand up for herself, Marion is still vulnerable and needs serious support for her and her siblings.** It is the money she gets from the training in the form of transport reimbursement that she pays as an advance fee to a food vendor to serve them for a while. Marion's plea is that people of authority strengthen their grip on orphaned and vulnerable children to protect them from the abuse she is undergoing. Chiefs to identify children of her kind to groups that may be offering support to such children. Her advice to people of her age is that peer pressure has detrimental effects to normal life, avoid it like plague.

Emily Adhiambo, 24 Years



In our walk of duty, in Agoro Lieye village of Bar Agulu sub-location South East Alego ward, Alego Usonga sub-county in Siaya county, we meet Emily Adhiambo. In her twenty-five years of life, Emily can be

described as having seen it all in terms of family problems and rejection. She went through primary school education with problems. At her tender age, she was the one caring for her ailing mother and this led to erratic attendance to her studies. To compound this, the financial status at home was not a favourable one and this was as well a factor that adversely affected her studies. God with his people, when Emily got to form two in her secondary education, a sponsor came her way and took up her educational expenses. She was sponsored up until she got to college, Kisumu Polytechnic to be precise, where she took up a course in food and beverage. Unfortunately, along the way, she got pregnant before the completion of this course. As usual, and as the case would be, she got rejected by the man responsible for the pregnancy. East

or West home is the best. Emily returned home to her parents who took the news of her pregnancy as a bitter pill but accepted her. She lived with them until delivery in all that struggle of financial constraints. The village never lacked talks and she was always heartbroken when she heard her stories in the village as she was being used as a bad example. This could lead to a radical decision, the decision to get married.

A suitor came her way and Emily gave her hand in marriage. Life was good but not after she conceived again. The rosy environment changed and she became a subject of abuse both physically and psychologically. She was not well fed, she was treated violently and a case in point, being that she was a hands-on skills lady, she could work as a hairdresser to fend for her needs. She got some little money here and there and the husband thought that she was involved in infidelity. She was assaulted several times because of this. There was nobody to stand and speak for her. On the day of delivery, Emily was alone in the hospital. Her child was brought to her in the wards with no proper explanation. Upon discharge, she went home with the newborn baby and her three-year-old son in too. The reception was not of someone who had brought a new baby home. Nobody cared. Life was unbearable but she had to live. On some occasions, the life partner who never provided food could beat her up because he needed 'good food'. Thanks to her interaction with the CHV of her village, Emily got to know about Siaya Muungano Network. She was glad when she was mapped and included in the team. The very first benefit was a training on power analysis session which would then have her empowered on financial literacy. With the training again, she is now able to stand up for her rights and advocate for others. Through the meetings and transport reimbursements, and putting financial literacy in practice, Emily started a business. She now sells omena and can fend for herself and her family. Her advocacy has gone top-notch and has also gone a long way in reducing the domestic violence she used to experience at home.

Emily had a raft of recommendations for the community. She advises that parents and caregivers be very close to their children so that they can get to know the problems faced by them. She also advised young people to stay away from peer pressure and avoid following blindly. This could bring about long-term problems.

Seline Akinyi, 22 Years

In the line of duty, we met one-on-one with Seline Akinyi from Sidindi Ward Ugunja sub-county in Siaya County. Seline who is 22 years old lives with her caregiver and her baby at their home in Sidindi. Here they survive on casual labour and peasant farming. The case of Seline is a tale of misfortune that has followed her life but luck came her way in its simplest form when she had an encounter with Siaya Muungano Network.



Seline's life was never easy, but it became even more complicated when she lost her financial support and was forced to leave school. She had been a bright student until her close family member passed away, leaving her without the means to continue her education. With no other options, she had to drop out and stay at home to help her family.

Life at home was difficult for Seline. Her care giver was struggling to provide for her and her siblings, and they often went without the necessities such as food. As time went on, Seline became frustrated and began to feel trapped in her situation. She often faced violence from one of her family members and eventually decided to leave home to start a new life with someone she thought she could trust.

Unfortunately, her hopes were shattered when she became pregnant and her partner rejected her. With nowhere else to go, she had to return home and face her family. Her situation was not easy, one of her blood relatives sent her away. She eventually went to live with her other sister in Kisumu, where she faced new challenges but was able to persevere.

Another misfortune came at the point of delivery. Seline had obstructed labour and was to undergo an operation to save the baby and her life. The only thing delaying them was money, a resource which is a very rare visitor in their family. It only took the intervention of God in heaven that she gave birth normally without the operation.

A glimmer of hope, a silver lining came when Siaya Muungano Network was mapping for participants and members in her locality. She was considered and trained as a community SRHR champion. Seline also went through power analysis sessions which have seriously impacted her life. As a champion, Seline has disseminated information to the locals on sexual and reproductive health matters as well as gender-based violence. She is also able to stand up for her rights and the rights of others who are oppressed.

Seline thanks Siaya Muungano Network for empowering girls who would otherwise be miserable in the society because of lack of knowledge. She recommends a continuation of the good work being done by the organisation. From a personal perspective, she is looking forward to being supported to join a Vocational training centre so that she can advance her passion for beauty and hairdressing through training. Seline has in a special way given an ovation to the area assistant chief for her 'return to school' advocacy for girls who dropped out due to teenage pregnancy.

Irine Agola , 21 Years



My name is Irine Agola Anga'da, and I am 21 years old. I am the eldest of six siblings, and my father passed away when I was only three months old. Unfortunately, my newly found caregiver did not treat me well and constantly subjected me to verbal gender-based violence. The caregiver was a changaa brewer and forced me to help with the business, which affected my education.

When I sat for my KCPE, I scored 265 marks, but one of my family members took my important documents and hid them. I could not go to school regularly due to financial difficulties. When I reached form three, my performance started to deteriorate. One of my family members came to the school and spread lies about me. "This girl doesn't even have respect for me she keeps sleeping with different men," He claimed. Sadly, no one listened to my side of the story, not even my very close caregiver, which made me feel powerless. Eventually, I dropped out of school due to school fees problems.

A close relative offered me a sales job in a supermarket in Nairobi, and my caregiver accepted it.

I worked there for three months until one of my family members insisted that I had to pay for all the favours they had offered me and the price was having sex with him. When I refused, he threatened to throw me out. I shared what was happening with another family member, but they still threw me out at night. Luckily, a kind lady took me in and helped me until I met my husband, a primary school teacher.

Through the mapping exercise of adolescent girls and young women, I learned about SIMUN, an organisation which promotes girls' and women's rights and skills. I participated in training sessions where I learned to be confident, speak up for myself, be self-reliant, and never allow anyone to violate my rights as a young woman. I also learned how to help my group when their rights are violated and teach them about GBV, mental health, family planning, prevention, and referrals of GBV cases. This has made me a community paralegal.

I'm interested in income-generating activities like poultry, crop farming, and beadwork. Additionally, I'm currently training in hair and beauty at a local salon in Sirembere Market Center. However, I would like to get a certificate in hair and beauty from a nearby Vocational Training Center to fulfil my dream of owning a cosmetic shop and salon.

My message to leaders is to take GBV and SGBV cases seriously and ensure the perpetrators are brought to book. Parents should care for their children, protect them, and advise them where possible. Finally, girls shouldn't have greed for money and peer influence, which leads to disease, drug abuse and school dropout.

Ivy Awuor Oduor, 19 Years

Ivy Awuor Oduor is a 19-year-old mother of one hailing from Mur Ng'iya sub-location in South East ward. Ivy lost her father while in class four which forced her and her family to move from the city back to their rural village in Ng'iya. After her father's burial, her mother decided to go back to the city to seek opportunities to help raise her and her siblings. Ivy went to live with her maternal grandmother and later her uncle in Homabay, where she completed her primary school and later joined secondary school in Siaya. While growing up, life was not easy for Ivy and her siblings as their mother was forced to return back to the rural village due to long-term illness. Ivy was on and off school and at times could even stay up to two months home for lack of school fees. While in school, Ivy was in relationship with a man who she appreciates his support towards her transport to school on a daily basis and other items including sanitary pads which kept her in school. Ivy admits that her family knew of her relationship with her boyfriend and they did not see a problem in that. She further says that she would meet with her boyfriend often but would only have sexual intercourse during school holidays and they would take precautions since she was still in school. Ivy narrates that she realized she was pregnant for his boyfriend's best friend while in form 4 in 2022. She says that her boyfriend, whom they had been in love since she was in class six and even had expectations of marriage after school, had an affair with her close relative, something that hurt her. Ivy, filled with anger and resentment, decided she was going to revenge her boyfriend's action by having an affair with his best friend. It is out this, that she became pregnant.

After completing her final KCSE papers, Ivy had contemplated carrying out an abortion



because her care giver had promised to support her join college to pursue a course in special education in the subsequent year but this never happened as her mom was against the idea and warned her not to abort. Ivy says she then secured a job in a boutique shop where she was hosted by her boss until when she gave birth and returned back home to take care of her baby. While at home, Ivy was not comfortable as she would continuously face stigma associated with having a baby at young age from the community, which would make her feel ashamed of walking around with her baby.

Ivy is among the AGYWs who were mapped and listed as project beneficiaries under the She deserves her rights and skills project being implemented by Siaya Muungano Network, Stawisha Africa Initiative and AWEAPON. Since then, she has attended a number of meetings and trainings where she has been able to learn about various issues including the causes and forms of Gender based violence,

GBV reporting and referral pathways, family planning, human rights issues, life skills, nurturing and care for childhood development among others. She has also been trained as a mentor and currently she is a member of Achievers safe space that meets at Stawisha Africa compound once on a weekly basis. Ivy proudly says that she now understands her rights, types of human rights violations including GBV and where to report, she can handle issues that come on her way and has also gained courage and confidence to speak in front of a group of people as a mentor. She adds that initially, she was afraid of walking around with her baby who is now 11 months old but after the nurture and care session they were taken through, she now feels confident of walking around with her baby. Ivy engages with girls from her village and disseminates various forms of information around GBV, family planning and so far, she has referred 3 of her friends for family planning services and encouraged one of her expectant friends to start attending antenatal clinics. She says that the people who used to see her going for meetings in their safe space and thought she was wasting her time, now see and appreciate the importance of those meetings.

When asked whether she had endured or encountered any form of GBV, Ivy says she has had experiences of body shaming but treats this as a normal thing, having being taken through the power analysis sessions. She appreciates her body and cannot allow what others say make her feel bad about her body.

Ivy is currently attending computer classes offered by one of the implementing partner organizations (Stawisha Africa Initiative) around her village and believes that this will open for her opportunities in future. In her parting shot, Ivy says, “I encourage community members not to discourage girls who get pregnant and become mothers at an early stage but instead encourage them, support them and advice them well.”

Joy Shannice, 23 Years



Joy Shannice is a 23-year-old, mother of one, who stays with her grandmother in Usula village, Umala Sublocation, North Alego. She completed her high school exams in 2018 and later joined Premia Professional Institute in 2019 October to pursue computer studies but was unable to do her KNEC exams since she had not taken her KCSE certificate due to school fees arrears. When Corona hit and she was unable to do the exams, she resorted to being a house help in Kitengela but due to frustrations, she left three months later and went back to be with her

mother who stays in Homabay. Later, she decided to go back to Limuru to stay with her dad, where she got pregnant in March 2021. When it was realized that she was pregnant, she was encouraged to terminate the pregnancy since in Luo culture, a daughter and her mother cannot be pregnant at the same time. After termination, she was re-enrolled back to school to pursue a certificate in banking and finance and since she didn't have her KCSE certificate again, she was unable to do her KNEC exams and decided to go work in a supermarket while doubling up in a daycare.

In 2023, she was again taken back to school to pursue beauty and hairdressing that did not need her certificate story, unfortunately, she realized that she was expectant and upon contacting the father of the child, he wasn't too receptive and this time she did not want to terminate the baby. Due to this pregnancy, she dropped out and decided to go back to the village. With no source of income, life has not been easy, however, she wishes to go back to school to pursue her already-started career, beauty and hairdressing. While staying at her close relative's place, it wasn't easy during her pregnancy journey since she needed to do everything at home, including handling 2sacks of maize. Even after birth through Caesarian Section, it was still the same since three days after discharge from the facility, she was back to work as usual. "I recently felt powerless when I was a bit unwell but I was accused of pretending and mean words such as my mother couldn't accept me and that's why I am staying in the village were said. It felt really bad that I had suicidal thoughts but I couldn't since I have a baby who looks up to me," she said

Joy narrates that she learned about Siaya Muungano Network through a Community Health Promoter who was helping in listing adolescent girls and young women to be engaged in the She Deserves Her Rights and Skills Project. Ever since her life has taken a positive turn. In the project, through her safe space, she has been able to participate in the power analysis sessions that have enabled her to boost her self-confidence and power since she had esteem issues in the past due to her body size. Additionally, through the safe space, there is peer-to-peer learning on different topics such as GBV, and family planning among others, sharing of their experiences also helps to encourage one another which makes them stronger as young mothers hence keeping the faith. She reminds the young mothers that it is key to be respectful and despite the mean words told against them, they should let go for the sake of their children knowing that God still has a purpose for them. To the young girls who are not yet mothers, Joy encourages them to keep themselves and not get pregnant yet, because it is not easy being a young mother.

"Siaya Muungano has shifted my thinking attitude. A strong person who understands rights and how to overcome difficult situations I encounter in my environ, be powerful and a fighter" she concluded.



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