

A sex worker gets a second chance at life



“I lost both parents very early in life, and got involved in prostitution to pay school fees for my brother and I. In Grade 9, I left school to become a full-time prostitute. I started going out with truck drivers who moved from place to place. This helped me continue paying school fees for my brother until he finished Grade 12. I became dependent on prostitution to survive.

My motto during that time was ‘no sex, no food’. I lived a hard life, drinking any type of beer, smoking heavily and I was very stubborn. I knew that my life was at risk, but I did not have any option.

I got to know a DAPP Zambia TCE Field Officer who worked in my neighbourhood. He’d always tell me about the TCE programme, but at first, I thought it was a waste of time. I wasn’t interested.

Eventually I decided to see how I could get involved in the programme and even attended some trainings. In February, 2016, I tested positive for HIV and decided to change my life. I quit prostitution, smoking and drinking. I managed to open a small shop that helped me earn a living.

I became a TCE Peer Educator, talking to people in my neighbourhood about HIV, how to prevent it and how to get tested. I also started distributing condoms to sex workers and truck drivers in guest houses and drinking places. I have developed a passion for people in the community.

TCE has given me a second chance to live; otherwise, I could have been deceased by now.”

Gladys Mwanza

TCE Peer Educator

Lusaka, Zambia

