

Learning from my mistakes

Gladys

It was a windy Sunday. A bad weather day in Malboro Village. The houses and people on the street were smothered with dust. Leaves were blowing off trees. I was still asleep at 12 o' clock.

When I woke everyone was at church. I was alone at home. Around 1 o'clock my mother came back from church. I saw her before she saw me. She was wearing a black and yellow dress, black jacket, yellow flat shoes and a black sun hat. I ran back to my bedroom and when she knocked on the door I acted as if I was asleep. I did not want her to see that I was pregnant. I was eight months pregnant but I was very small and still not showing.

After a while I opened the door. I was tired as if I had been doing an unusual job-like working underground in the mines at Phalaborwa, handling those heavy machines. When she got inside my mother was very surprised at how I looked. 'Your face looks like you were dancing the whole night. 'What is wrong with you' she asked. I looked at her and I groaned. It was the fear of telling her that I was pregnant. I knew she was going to overreact because she trusted me and I was going to break her heart.

On Monday I did not go to school. I was shy to be at school because I was still young and I was pregnant. That evening I decided to tell my mother I was pregnant. She was very angry with me. She even told me that she would not take care of the child. I was stressed. My legs were very painful. It was a very tough time for me. With the movement of the baby kicking my tummy, I stood up quickly

pushing my tummy. Looking at the colourful drawings I drew at school reminded me of that time. Suddenly my face was full of tears as if it was raining. I opened the curtains and looked outside at the moon and the stars in the sky. I heard the sound of cars. This helped me release the pain I was feeling.

It was not easy for me. There was a separation between me and my boyfriend and it was not good. He said the baby was not his. He threatened me. He was cruel. He even came home and threatened my mother that he would kill me because I was accusing him of being the father. He got gangsters in our area to bully me all the time.

A month later around 4.30 in the evening I was at home alone when my water broke. I screamed as if someone was pointing a gun at me. The water poured out as if I was in the toilet. My shoes were full of water. I could not move. My mother arrived and assisted me to get dressed. She then prepared herself to go to work as she was working night shift that night. I prepared to go alone to the hospital.

I walked along the street. There were a few people on the street as it was a Sunday. The street lights showed the path to the taxi rank. There were a few people at the taxi rank waiting for a taxi. I didn't notice them because I was in pain. There came a taxi driver, driving as if the police were chasing him. This helped me get to the hospital quickly. I opened the hospital gate. I went into the yard and I started to know I was safe.

In my white dress I sat on a dirty yellow chair. A short dark complexioned lady in a navy blue dress greeted me. 'Hello child, can I help?' There came a huge pain at my back and I screamed. She immediately called the doctor and they carried me to a moving bed.

I felt like I wanted to go to the toilet. The doctor said stretch your legs wide. I pushed, screaming with tears on my face. I felt a terrible pain and then there was no pain. After a while they gave me my baby boy who answers to the name of Lorenzo. That was a lovely moment of my life at the age of eighteen.

I was still in grade 12. I had to take care of the baby and continued to study. I lost weight. My legs were very thin. I felt like I was under the shadow of darkness and no one was there to assist me. I was still young and I hoped my mother would be there to help me.

It has been a hard journey to raise my child with the little money from the social grant, but I manage to do my duty for my child who is now 4 years old. At the same time I have managed my school work and I am now on internship for a child and youth development programme. I plan to soon start my own early childhood project.



