



## From sniffing glue to Prefect

*DAPP Children's Town Transforms former street boy*

**P**robably one of the well-dressed pupils in the school: grey trousers and a white shirt uniform, Matthews Phiri adds a red necktie, indicating that he is a school prefect. With a tall figure and bright smile, he confidently walks the corridors of DAPP Children's Town school undertaking his responsibilities as one of the leader-pupils at the school.

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## Illegal child marriage Stopped

**A** trained Community Volunteer in Kabushi Compound of Ndola District has helped save a girl who was married off at a very tender age.

The 13 year old girl who was discovered to have been married off by her parents and made to stop school in Grade 8, was believed to have been in her illegal matrimonial home for three weeks.

When Mary, the volunteer, received the information about the girl, she reported the matter to the Victim Support Unit (VSU) of the Zambia Police Service. ➡ *Page 3*

# From sniffing glue to Prefect

*Four years ago, his life wouldn't have been so different. 109 Kilometers from the quiet tree-lined farm he now calls home in Chibombo district's Liteta area, Matthews was living on the streets of Lusaka, doing odd jobs from engaging in petty theft to fighting, as one of the about 1000 children living on the streets of the capital.*

"I used to stay with my aunties and most of my friends were living in the streets, they saw how I was living and told me that I would make good money and buy everything I want by living in the streets. I later joined them and started going out to the streets every evening where I was taught ideas on how to survive and steal money," he narrates.

Matthews started picking up bottles, washing cars, sweeping and doing many jobs to make money. Whatever money he made, sometimes a K50 in a day, he would use to buy glue which he sniffed as a drug.

"I would sniff glue until I was dizzy. Whenever I sniffed, I would have negative thoughts and become violent and fight with other street children. I used to feel the world is mine."

With support from the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Matthews was recruited to DAPP Children's Town School from a transit home in Lusaka. The school based in Chibombo district provides a home and a wholesome Practical and Theoretical Training to both vulnerable and former street children like Matthews.

"My friends and I in the streets used to believe that stealing made us men and strong but the teachers here

changed my ideas about life," Matthews recollects.

Since its establishment in 1990, Children's Town School has worked to provide academic education, skills training and rehabilitation of former street children. The school follows a two tier Practical and Theoretical Education (PTE) approach where the pupils are taught the General Education syllabus and so learn trades such as farming, carpentry, tailoring and food production.

Matthews now in grade nine was chosen to be a prefect when he was only in grade 7 as he showed good leadership qualities. Since his arrival at the school, he has taken keen interest in agriculture and grown to be one of the outstanding pupils on campus.

"I am a good leader and I hope to become an agriculturalists because of the knowledge I'm receiving in agricultural sciences. I have gained a lot of knowledge about agriculture starting from preparing land, planting and taking care of the crops. I have skills to help me make my own money and survive rather than what I was doing in the street. I dream of starting my own food production factory, my life has changed."

**"I would sniff glue until I was dizzy. Whenever I sniffed, I would have negative thoughts and become violent and fight with other street children. I used to feel the world is mine."**

## Children's Town School

### Digest

Grade 1 to 6 results show an overall average pass rate of 64.5% across the pupils' populace. Pupils in Grade 7 and 9 final examinations results recorded 100% and 98% pass rates respectively. In rehabilitation, 35 children (former street children) were recruited to the school and incorporated into the academic, non-academic and rehabilitation programmes, as well as the boarding facility.

The school reintegrated 28 pupils who completed their learning and rehabilitation process in 2020 and made follow-ups of 30 students who had been reintegrated back into their families in 2019. It was established that all of them had continued their education in Grade 10 and were progressing well.

A further 20 students sat for the TEVETA crafts exams and are awaiting results.



# Thriving in Club Life



**A**fter falling pregnant as a teenager, life came to a stand still for Susan Palata of Chibombo District.

"I had to drop out of school to get married and take care of my baby," Susan says.

Life as a teenage mother was not easy. She struggled to take care of her child as she had no skills to earn a living and her husband was not working. Her story changed in 2019 when she joined the DAPP Young Farmers Club Project. Through the club, Susan received vegetable seeds for gardening, Moringa seeds and seedlings and had access to a water pump for irrigation. She also joined a saving group in the area.

Now 21 years old with four children, she manages to send her children to school and cover hospital expenses. The diet of her family has also been enhanced and her children rarely get sick. "I continue to save which I couldn't manage before joining the club," Susan says.

## DIGEST

Peasant farming is the backbone of the Zambian rural economy. It plays a major role in producing food for both rural and urban populations and in providing incomes and employment. DAPP has worked hand in hand with farmers to maximize their production and value for their produce. Its approach to supporting sustainable agriculture and environment puts farmers and their families at the centre of all activities. It sets up Farmers' Clubs to share new farming methods and knowledge. It mobilises the farmers to act together in improving production, support one another with finance for expansion, conduct collective marketing and much more, for them to advance together towards common goals.

# Illegal child marriage Stopped

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Working with the Victim Support Unit the perpetrators were apprehended and taken to court for prosecution.

The man who illegally married the girl was sentenced to 22 years imprisonment with hard labor for a charge of defiling a minor while the father to the girl was sentenced to two months imprisonment for compounding a felony.

After serving the sentence, the father to the girl joined the HOPE Project Anti GBV Club as a champion. The girl is being taken care of at one of the Safe Homes in Ndola away from her parents. She re-enrolled in school and is currently doing Grade 8 at one of the governments schools in town.



# Harriet: Dedicated to fight HIV

Harriet Muzembo, is a DAPP Total Control of the Epidemic (TCE) Kalingalinga Clinic Field Officer in Lusaka. Her typical day begins with a prayer for success in bringing at least one client for HIV testing and then for treatment, if need be. As a focal point person for TCE index testing, she knows how difficult it is to convince sexual partners of known HIV-positive clients of their need to be tested.

Index testing, also known as partner notification, is an effective case-finding strategy that targets the exposed contacts of HIV-positive persons for HIV-testing services.

If the index client agrees, Harriet contacts each listed partner and offers voluntary HIV testing services.

"The goal of index testing is to break the chain of HIV transmission to persons who have been exposed to HIV and linking them to treatment, if positive, or prevention services, if negative." She says.

Her most difficult times is when she makes a phone call to a contact client.

"Hello, my name is Harriet from Kalingalinga Clinic. I'm calling to get you interested to come for HIV testing because you have not come in the past six months."

The occasional response from the other end is a barrage of questions: "Who are you and how did you get my number? How do you know me?" The first two hours of her day, Harriet makes calls using different strategies, depending on a profile derived from index clients identified the previous days. She may also call upon those that have not honored their promise to come in for testing.

"We prioritize testing for sexual partners of all old and newly identified HIV positive individuals, sexual partners of patients with a non-suppressed and suppressed HIV viral load, and document and track all sexual partner elicited in, through the registry. It's not a straight forward process to convince these partners to come forward and take the test," she explains.



Despite difficult calls, a good number of those contacted present themselves at the Clinic or invite her to go and conduct the testing at their homes.

Her dedication and tenacious efforts, has enabled her test and index 32 clients, where she also got 69 contacts. From the contacts, she tracked and tested 45 of whom 31 were positive and immediately put on treatment while 14 tested negative and she put them on HIV prevention.

"I really love my work. I get satisfaction in knowing that I'm helping people get better and live healthy lives. Sometimes clients tell me that they no longer feel sick and they are thriving since starting treatment," she says proudly.

## DIGEST

Only the People can liberate themselves from HIV/AIDS Epidemic. Others can only assist. This is DAPP's slogan. It means DAPP, through interpersonal communication, gives people the knowledge, tools and responsibility to prevent HIV/TB and adhere consistently to treatment, and as such liberate themselves to a better life. DAPP adopts and employs a holistic approach to the fight against major health problems. HIV Prevention, Diagnosis at home and Care; TB Prevention, Linkage and Care until cured; Maternal and Child Health; Gender Based Violence Prevention; Nutrition and Infants' first 1000 days; Water and Sanitation; Malaria Prevention, Malaria Test and Treat.