

MARGARET LOWAL

AGE: 23 YEARS

OCCUPATION: VOLUNTEER PEER EDUCATORS

PROJECT: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FOR KARIMOJONG YOUTH PROJECT



This beautiful young lady is Margaret. She is 23 years, newly married and expecting her first child. Unlike most girls her age, Margaret works extremely hard to provide for her parents and siblings, as well as secure a brighter future for herself.

“In my community, if you are educated all the family responsibility falls upon your shoulders”

Margaret grew up with an uncle who decided to sponsor her education, Unfortunately he passed on. With support from his friends she was able to continue, occasionally dropping out along the way until she was able to attain a certificate in social work and social administration.

“I had to give up on my dream of becoming a nurse....

...I always wanted to be a nurse because even to date my community has just a few medical practitioners”

With her qualification, it was difficult to find employment. Margaret moved back home however it became even more difficult, her father, his 5 wives and her 23 siblings where all counting on her to provide for the family. The situation got worse when an elderly man asked for her hand in marriage, although her father refused, Margaret knew that she had to find a solution before she ended up like many young girls in Karamoja.

“The biggest challenge many young girls in my community aged 14 to 15 years face is early and forced marriages, sometimes to much older men”

In 2015, Margaret came across a Restless Development advert for volunteer peer educators. She had heard about the organisation before from a group of friends who had participated in a research. Margaret applied and was successful. With overwhelming joy she joined a group of 31 other young peer educators under the Sustainable Livelihoods for Karamojong Youth project.

“We where given a 2 week training to prepare us for the field....

... I gained a lot of knowledge in proposal writing, entrepreneurship, Agrilivelihoods and life skills”

As a volunteer peer educator Margaret mobilises and supports young people in her community to form groups so that they can benefit from livelihoods projects in their communities. She leads sessions on entrepreneurship, governance and has supports groups to develop project proposals from which they have benefited. When asked what her biggest successes are, Margaret replied;

“I am proud of Unity youth group, in just a few months of working with them, they were able to save 8,000,000 Uganda shillings from the 1,000,000 startup provided by Restless Development.

I have been able to convince a few girls and parents in my community to opt out of marriage and get back to school.

I was able to provide a food for my family using the allowances I got from Restless Development.”

Margaret also acknowledges that engaging with Restless Development has imparted on her personally.

“I am confident and can speak on behalf of my fellow youth in sub county and elders meetings, volunteering with Restless Development enabled me prove that women can represent their communities”

Margaret has bright plans for her future, her family and her parents too.

“Using the knowledge I got from volunteering I started a personal project brick laying , I was able to make enough money to enable me purse a diploma in social work and social administration. I also acquired a piece of land which I plan to build my home on by the end of this year”

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