

# Early motherhood not a barrier to access education

By JUSTINA MULENGA  
**BEING a young mother should not be a barrier for girls to achieve their dreams in life, go back to school and you can make it if you believe in yourself, says Josephine Chikoti Grade 10 pupil and mother.**

Josephine, who is a pupil at Munali Girls Secondary School and a mother of a four-year-old girl, said that life has not been easy for her family after she lost her father.

She confessed that, being the first born in the family of six, two boys and four girls, her desire has been to work hard and support her family.

Josephine had her child when she was 17 years old and has raised the child with the support of her mother, a widow who works for a cleaning company.

"Life has not been easy from the time I lost my father. I have had no money to pay for school, no one to support my mother, and this caused me to stop school and start searching for greener pastures," she said.

It might have seemed that she had found a greener pasture when she met the father of her child.

She recalls that all seemed rosy and that he promised to give her everything she ever wanted in life.

"I was taken because I thought I had found someone who loved me and was willing to support me and my family, but when I fell pregnant everything changed," she said.

Josephine was in Grade 9 when she stopped school. She became disappointed and lost interest in school because her life seemed shattered.

The man who impregnated her accepted responsibility but has

not rendered any support to the child since she was born.

"All I know is that the father of my child is in Mpika, and we don't communicate because I lost his contact," she said.

When Josephine heard about Lubuto Library Scholarships at Ngwelele Primary School from her friends who were being sponsored, her hope of getting back to school was rekindled.

Josephine visited Lubuto Library at Ngwelele where she found many other young mothers, and she was encouraged to apply for the scholarship.

Despite the huge number of applicants, Josephine was awarded a scholarship to complete her studies.

"I applied for the scholarship at the end of 2016 and was privileged to be picked as one of the young mothers to be given full sponsorship from Grade 10 to University level," she said.

Josephine has been attending mentorship classes and Family Literacy programs offered by the DREAMS team which helps her to build determination.

"I would like to thank God for this opportunity because I would not have made it on my own," she said.

She is grateful to Lubuto Library Sponsors for according her the opportunity to go back to school and complete her studies as she was just staying at home looking after her child.

Josephine's dream career has always been teaching. She said she would love to become a teacher to teach others about her life which she believes would encourage many.

She said young mothers should not give up on their dreams because there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

Josephine said government



Josephine feeling proud in a uniform at Munali Girls

through the Ministry of Gender had done tremendous works in supporting girl children to

go back to school even after becoming mothers.