

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sanela's Story



Sanela lived in the Dom Most institution for five years, from 2002 to 2007. When we started the process to close the institution, we developed her individual care plan and identified that she was suitable to join our Young Adult Support Scheme. Schemes such as this are vitally important as they help prepare young adults for becoming independent and leaving the care system.

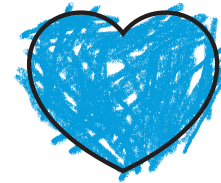
In a country where unemployment is already over 40%, young adults leaving institutions are often stigmatised because of their upbringing and finding a job is very difficult. To assist young adults like Sanela, the scheme also helps them plan for their futures and choose their careers.

Our social workers helped Sanela plan for her life-changing move and made sure that she felt confident about the changes that would happen. Once she was ready, Sanela moved into a flat with some other young adults we are supporting. She

soon found work in a local supermarket and has adjusted to her new life well.

We support and guide all of the young adults on our programme and mentor them during their first year of independent living. Sanela knows that there is always someone available to give her advice and encouragement.

Sanela said, "Life in an institution is totally different compared to a family; it is very difficult. I would love it if all children in Bosnia and Herzegovina could live with families, so that they can have a happy life. For me, I am looking forward to making the most of my life and the chance to enjoy my future."



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Our Work In Action

Sierra Leone: Rosemary's story

Sixteen year old Rosemary lived with her father and stepmother. Sadly, Rosemary did not get on with her stepmother and she was often mistreated. Eventually, the situation got so difficult that Rosemary felt she had no choice but to run away from home to Bo. Shortly after arriving in the city, she started a relationship and became pregnant. On discovering this, the man left and Rosemary found it difficult to cope. She had no money for antenatal care but fortunately a nurse offered to deliver her baby for free. After the birth, Rosemary became ill and a community member brought her case to the attention of our team.

A social worker visited Rosemary and she was enrolled on the Young Mothers Programme. After a week of medical care, Rosemary's health improved and she was able to begin her training in catering and hotel management.

Social workers also visited Rosemary's family to see if they could be reunited. Over time, Rosemary's father and stepmother acknowledged that their behaviour towards Rosemary had been wrong. They were pleased to see how well she was doing and agreed to attend her graduation ceremony. During the celebration Rosemary received a Certificate of Merit in Catering and Hotel Management. Her father and stepmother were there to witness her achievement and there was an emotional reunion, as she had not seen them for two years. They were able to talk through the issues



of the last few years and her parents made it clear that they wanted to be part of her new life.

Rosemary has now established a small catering business and shop with the start-up kit she received after she graduated. She makes enough money to cover her rent as well as food, clothing, medical bills and daycare costs.

Rosemary said, "I am very grateful for the assistance rendered to me and my lovely child at a time when we were in great need. Had it not been for this intervention, I would still be on the streets and I might not even be talking about a daughter. However, the story today is completely different. The most important moment in my life was when my father and my stepmother accepted to witness my graduation ceremony. I did not believe it when I received word that my parents had consented to travel to support me at my graduation. It was like a dream come true when my father and my stepmother embraced me in full view of the public. It was a very wonderful experience that I will never forget."

Rwanda: Francois' Story



Fifteen year old Francois has a small business trading peanuts at the local market during the weekends and in the school holidays. While he may be starting out small, Francois already has plans for expansion so that he can trade his way out of poverty and create a brighter future for himself.

Francois told us about his idea to buy peanuts in bulk, roast them in oil and salt at home and then bag them up to sell at the market. We gave him a £20 small business loan which he spent on the initial stock, a cooking pan and bags. With the profit Francois makes he is now able to buy food and clothes. Before, these basic items were well beyond his reach. Francois' business was so profitable that he was able to pay back the loan in just nine weeks.

Although Francois is now a confident young man with hopes and dreams for his future, his childhood has been far from easy. He was orphaned by HIV/AIDS at a young age and was living with his older sister but she ran away because the daily struggle the pair faced just to survive was too much for her to bear.

Francois lives in the one roomed house that belonged to his parents. Before we started supporting him the house was derelict and he had no possessions, not even a mat to sleep on. Francois had dropped out of school because there was no money for the necessary uniform and books. We helped Francois repair his home, provided him with the everyday household items he needed and most importantly; we got him back into school.

As Francois is growing up alone we have also organised for a community volunteer, Medard, to visit him regularly. Francois knows that Medard is always on hand to give advice, emotional support and encouragement whenever Francois needs it.

Now, Francois' future looks bright and he is excelling at school. He gained a mark of 74.3% in recent exams, which not only put him top of his class but top of the entire district. Francois isn't resting on his laurels though and he has plans to branch out in vegetable oil, sweets and biscuits so that he can expand his business.

Francois' ultimate dream is to become a journalist and although he doesn't own a radio himself, he regularly walks into town to hear what he calls 'the facts'. Francois loves hearing this information and has said that one day he wants to be the one who gives out the facts.