

## **HIV&STIGMA**

People across the globe, since the dawn of time have known stigma to be there and have been labeled and condemned by society.

We were born with a label with no chance to choose for ourselves It's a hard feeling that you have to endure for a life time and if you are not lucky you may never have an equal share in life, or opportunities that may come your way. **HIV** came to the world at the point where nations had exited wars and they were on the road to rebuilding. What they had lost. No one knew how to contain it nor how it was spread everyone knew but one key detail was left out, what does a person with HIV look like! That was the loop hole and it spread so fast and so wide. There is a saying that goes "we all intersect in life as humans one way or another." After all being said and done everyone across the globe was dying from HIV and that's where the discrimination began, the way HIV killed caused a huge scale in stigma and discrimination.

We are now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people have evolved and we expect them not to have stigma anymore, but it breaks my heart when I see children being dumped when they are born with **HIV**, being born in a family and finding yourself to be the only child like that is heartbreaking and at times makes you feel like an outcast. That's how we feel at times as people living with **HIV**, with stigma right around you it cripples you in so many ways beyond imagination, it damages yourself esteem, self-worth, We have many young girls ending up in sex work and young boys abusing drugs all because they don't value themselves when it comes to life as a whole. We pray every day for zero stigma and discrimination, all we want is to be accepted for who we are and what we are. People living with **HIV** have a lot to give back to the world, we have dreams we wish to accomplish and have families to build.

Our cry as young people is to have this label removed and our potential unleashed and be one with our brothers and sisters with no segregation whatsoever. My dream is to have zero stigma and discrimination and communities filled with love for one another; my dream is for people to have an understanding of what love and unity can make this world a better place and there won't be room for name calling and stigma. Let us bring hopes and dreams back to the young people living with HIV lets lift up the young girls and empower them to do better with their lives and to the young boys let's show them the path to walk which will build their greatest potential.

**#let's stop stigma and unite together and eliminate HIV**