

This boarding house is my pathway!

Lorraine (19) comes from a small village approx. 24 kilometers from Mtandahwe High School. It is the closest school that offers “A” level to students in the surrounding. She is a student in Upper 6 at Mtandahwe High School. She has been bush boarding before. All students in her home area who want to proceed to ‘A’ level have either to go to formal boarding schools which are very expensive or have to stay in private houses near the only closest school which is Mtandahwe High School. For Lorraine the story of bush boarding is not one she would wish for any female student because of what she has gone through herself.



Lorraine in front of the boarding house at Mtandahwe High School.
Foto: Plan International

“When I heard that Plan was going to establish a boarding facility for girls here at Mtandahwe, I could not hide my joy. It is a pity that it is coming when I am left with only a year of my secondary school but I am extremely happy that all the other girls coming after me will benefit. This boarding facility is an answer for many girls from heaven.”

According to Lorraine, bush boarding has exposed many young girls to all forms of abuse as no one takes care of the girls when they are out there. The girls have to take care on their own. She witnessed many girls dropping out of school either due to child pregnancy or due to child marriages. Men take advantage of the poor girls in their lodgings by promising them all sorts of things that parents cannot afford and it is always difficult for the majority of the girls to resist.

“Life is not easy at all in the bush boarding set up as most of us come from very poor backgrounds and cannot afford all the daily needs that we need. Besides, most homes that offer accommodation for bush boarding do not have safe and conducive environments for studying especially at nights. In most cases girls live in groups of 6 or 8 per room in order to share costs.”

Lorraine says she is very excited that she is one of the girls that have been selected to be one of the first beneficiaries for the boarding facility at Mtandahwe High. She believes that being in the boarding facility will give her time to focus on her studies and confidence to pass all the exams. Though there are still many girls out there who will not have an opportunity to be in the boarding facility, she believes that this is just the beginning of many good things to come.



It is also her hope that one day, her home area will also have an “A’ level school that will further give an advantage to many girls that would want to proceed with school after successfully completing their “O’ level.

“This boarding house is my pathway”, says Lorraine. “For most of us it has always been difficult going to a secondary school and complete with our A levels. Thank you to this project and thank you Plan.”

Lorraine’s story is one being shared by many girls in her situation. The construction of the boarding house at Mtandahwe has brought so much relief to the Mtandahwe and many other surrounding communities nearby. Mtandahwe is the only secondary school offering “A” level in the surroundings. One can only hope that there will be so many schools like Mtandahwe in the future but for now, the Mtandahwe boarding house is indeed a joy for many marginalized girls.