



The Extended Family

Born in 1976, Margaret Kalobwe was brought up in the Mwense District of Zambia. She was born with one leg shorter than the other. When Margaret was 15, her mother passed away, followed shortly by her father. That's when she went to live with her grandfather, Mwansa.

No one, including Mwansa himself, is sure of his age. He says he was about Margaret's age during the last World War, which means he is probably in his late 70's. Mwansa is illiterate, unable to write even his own name. He is a basket weaver by trade, but in recent years has become nearly blind, which prevents him from working. Margaret learned the trade from her grandfather, hoping to eke out a living, in spite of the fact that basket weaving is considered a man's occupation in Zambia. Basket weaving, Margaret says, is very difficult work.

Margaret is the mother of two children — Mpundu and Lungo. Mpundu is an African word for twin. Margaret says Mpundu's twin sibling passed away from a disease; however, rumors persist that he died of severe malnutrition. Margaret has no husband to lend support to the family. In Africa, it is very rare for an able-bodied man to marry a handicapped woman.



Margaret recently discovered she has a knack for knitting. She says it is far easier than basket weaving. She learned of a knitting group that meets in Mwense, and attended a meeting recently. She was surprised to discover the group had been initiated by a young man from a nearby community. She learned that he is a Human Development Facilitator for an organization called Outreach International.

Margaret is intrigued by the young man's discussions about the group working together to give them a voice. He says that each person, including those within the group, possesses potential to create positive change. While this is all new talk to Margaret, she is excited about the aspect of learning how to help herself and her dependents more effectively. She likes the other members of the group and appreciates the way they all work together.

Margaret says she thinks she has found "family" in the Mwense knitting group.



Hunger

Challenge

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