



RESILIENCE IN ADVERSITY:

THE JOURNEY OF CHRISTIANA YAMBA



EARLY LIFE AND STRUGGLES

Christiana Yamba, a 24-year-old member of the Chochendeh VSLA group in Jياما Nimikoro Chiefdom, Kono District, was born into poverty. Growing up with a single mother who struggled to make ends meet, *Christiana's education was cut short in class two because her mother couldn't afford the school fees and other necessary materials.* Forced to drop out of school, she joined her family members in farming. Despite these hardships, a flicker of hope burned within her youthful heart.

INSPIRATION AND DETERMINATION

Christiana found inspiration in the stories of her cousins from Freetown. Their fluency in English and love for books sparked a flame of aspiration within her. Determined to defy the odds, *she delved into gold mining, a common practice in her region.* With each laborious day, she saved her earnings, unwavering in her pursuit of education. Despite the taunts and jeers of her peers, who dubbed her the *"Mother of the Children"* due to her elder status in class, Christiana forged ahead undeterred.

EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY

Christiana faced countless humiliations and embarrassments but developed a thick skin, resolute in her determination

to never backtrack from her dreams. Her trials only strengthened her resolve. She successfully completed her Basic Education Certificate Examination with flying colors. However, financial constraints denied her admission to Senior Secondary School. At a crossroads, she was lured by promises from a neighbor to find a job in Guinea, only to be deceived and trapped in a foreign land. The neighbor wanted her to marry an elderly man. With courage as her compass, Christiana made the arduous journey back to her homeland.

FINDING SUPPORT AND RENEWED HOPE

Upon her return to Kono, Christiana resumed gold mining to sustain herself and pursue her dreams. It was then that she learned about the *Chochendeh Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA).* Interested in joining, she found solace and opportunity within the group. With the guidance of the chair lady and the support of her peers, Christiana nurtured her savings and leveraged the loan scheme offered by the group. *She borrowed Le 500 to procure school items and gain admission to Jياما Secondary School.*

"In the depths of hardship, I discovered the strength to rise. Every challenge became a stepping stone, every setback a lesson in resilience. And amidst it all, I found the courage to dream, for with

in the heart of adversity lies the seed of hope, waiting to bloom against all odds," says Christiana Yamba.

A NEW CHAPTER

In September 2023, Christiana embarked on a new chapter as she started at Jياما Senior Secondary School with renewed vigor. No longer bound by the shackles of circumstance, she embraced the promise of education, buoyed by the support of her VSLA family. The VSLA restored her hopes, and her aspirations are back on track. Now, she aims for a career in nursing, her journey set to be bright.

CONCLUSION

Christiana Yamba's story is one of resilience, determination, and unwavering hope. Despite the adversities she faced, she never lost sight of her dreams. Through the support of the Chochendeh VSLA group, she found the strength to rise and pursue her education. Her journey serves as an inspiration to many, proving that within the heart of adversity lies the seed of hope, waiting to bloom against all odds.