RISING FROM THE ASHES: RAMATU'S JOURNEY OF EMPOWERMENT



Ramatu Karim Sesay, a 27-year-old member of the Young Women in Governance Network (YWiGN), established by SEND Sierra Leone with the support of the Irish Embassy, has an ***inspiring story of resilience, passion, and dedication to the empowerment of girls and women in Sierra Leone.*** *Born in Port Loko district into a poor family, she faced the harsh realities of poverty, being the only girl child attending school at the time.*

EARLY STRUGGLES AND ADVOCACY

Ramatu's journey began with a deep sense of purpose rooted in her personal experiences and the challenges she witnessed around her. ***Despite surviving a difficult first marriage, she refused to be defined by her circumstances.*** Instead, she channelled her energy into advocating for those who needed a voice the most: ***girls and women.***

While pursuing her Bachelor's degree at the Ernest Bai Koroma University, Ramatu intensified her advocacy efforts. By the time she was pursuing her Master's degree at the University of Makeni, she was already making significant ***impacts in her community through her involvement in child rights advocacy. Her passion for justice and equality led her to establish The Ramatu Foundation for Girls and Women Empowerment,*** where she serves as the Executive Director. Through this foundation, she has been a strong advocate for ***child rights, sexual reproductive rights, women's rights, and against female genital mutilation,*** supporting numerous communities through awareness campaigns on these issues.

FOUNDATION'S IMPACT

The Ramatu Foundation for Girls and Women Empowerment addresses issues ranging from ***child rights to sexual reproductive health*** with determination and empathy. ***Ramatu conducts awareness campaigns, organizes community events, and provides support to those in need.*** Her relentless advocacy not only raises awareness but also inspires others to join the fight for gender equality.

GROWTH AND TRAINING

In 2023, Ramatu's journey took a new turn when she was recruited by the More Than A Woman project. This opportunity expanded her network and equipped her with valuable skills and knowledge through various trainings. Ramatu shared this acquired knowledge generously with her team members, staff, and the communities she served. Her commitment to empowering others through education and training is unparalleled.

FUTURE PLANS AND VISION

Ramatu's journey is far from over. Driven by her own experiences and the desire to create a better future for girls and women, she dreams of growing her foundation into a renowned NGO in Sierra Leone. Her vision extends beyond borders as she aims to pursue a PhD, furthering her professional development and expertise.

"I refuse to let my past define me. Instead, I choose to use it as fuel to ignite change and empower others," says Ramatu Karim Sesay.

CONCLUSION

Ramatu's journey showcases the power of resilience, passion, and community development. Through her continuous steadfastness, she has not only transformed her own life but also touched the lives of countless others, leaving behind a legacy of hope, empowerment, and change.

