

Today We Met a Brave Woman With a Bold Vision

This is the second year that Tawina has been a member of our parish. Only today did we learn the reasons why she has established the organisation, **Teams Advancing Women in Agriculture**. This organisation is to activate her vision, to improve the outcomes for girls in Malawi.

What incidents ignited her passion?

- As a 4 year old child she was almost raped by an uncle who was intrusted to look after her.
- As a 9 year old she was bullied by her peers for the way she walked, resulting in poor body posture and low self esteem.
- At college, she refused to have a sexual relationship with a tutor so he responded by trashing every assignment she wrote and culminated with him making Tawina surrender her first ever aeroplane ticket.
- Lack of support from college authorities, convinced Tawina that she should return home.
- After working for the government for 10 years, and enduring gender discrimination and injustice, as well as physical abuse she was sacked from employment because she applied for Women's Leadership Training!

Instead of Tawina being discouraged, she was motivated.” *If someone can't make me a leader, then I will make myself a leader.*” Malawi with a population of 17 million, may have a reputation of being welcoming to outsiders, but it seemed to Tawina that every woman she met in Malawi had their own story of suffering. She had a vision to bring about change.

What steps has Tawina taken to initiate change?

- Create leaders who were going to make a difference in her society.
- Establish the organisation Teams Advancing Women in Agriculture because Malawi's economy is based on agriculture and most women participate in agriculture.

What programmes has this organisation undertaken?

- **Girl's Education and Leadership**, so that girls can lead social change in their community.
- **Socio-economic empowerment of women** which concentrates on agricultural activities with one main hope being the advancement of by-products from soy bean to improve livelihoods.
- **Early Childhood Development** as, if a community is to change, then most transformation comes if the mindset of a child is changed.

How can you help this organisation?

- Remember, this organisation depends on the work of volunteers, donations and grants and a vision without resources is but a mere dream.
- So, consider donating for the construction of playgrounds or the supply of tents.
- Let Tawina know if you can offer her expertise to develop a website as, “when we connect we achieve.”
- Donate used lap top computers.

Maybe, at a personal level, you may consider inviting Tawina for a coffee so you can share ideas and help her achieve her vision.

