

Bernard Kimwere – Simpo (6th August 1982)

Born in Kawangware with just my mother. Poor situation and my mum could not take care of me and my two older sisters. Mum was housekeeping, baby-sitting so she had no good financial situation. I lived with my aunt and went to school. During standard 3 (11 years) mum and my aunt had a conflict and we had to leave my aunts house. I went to street for 4 years and did not go to school. I borrowed money from others to buy food. I met other boys and started to sniff glue. My aunt took me back and I started schooling again. I started in standard 4 and up to 8. My aunt said I had to work to stay in her house. I was able to finish and I went to a secondary school 4 years, but during the year 4 I got TB. At that time I was 20 years old. I was very sick. After 3 months I was good enough to go back to school. I started going to church and I met the other boys in The Conqueror. I was lucky and got a sponsor from a person in Switzerland and I have a diploma in information technology. The time in street was bad. One time I was arrested and beaten by the police. My mum ignored me and I could not stay with her. I stayed with friends, cars, street etc.

To stop sniffing was very hard and I did it slowly slowly. But I had to if I should go back to school.

I have been in The Conquerors from the start. We are from the same area all of us. Today I am married and have a girl, Tracy that is 4 years old.

Jackson Katunzi (14th April 1984)

I am the fourth born, last born. I started schooling in 1991.

I was a good dancer. I got to the street. I gave you everything but you do not use it. But one day you will remember. I got to clubs, and I have bad companies. I got worse and worse. After one year with this life my dad died. I was 18 years. I stayed there 3-4 years and did many bad things. Stealing, beaten people. I was sniffing and drinking. One day I was very drunk and I was thinking about my life. I told my mum I have stopped drinking and my mum laughs at me. She said to me; come back in 2 days. I started to go to church in 2000. The church leaders and the people there helped me to stop. We used Marijuana and petrol for sniffing. When we changed we stayed together. Supported each other like a family.

I have done my primary, but now Im in Secondary school. I will be finish in 2012. Today I have contact with my mum.

Paul Washira (Gando Opye) (27th March 1982)

We are 9 brothers and sisters. I was brought up in a good family. With love and good family. My dad lost his job and that was very bad. He became an alcoholic and things got to be tough. We used to eat 3 times every day, but very often we then had nothing to eat. Also he could not pay for my school.

My dad beat everyone in our family and my mum. It was very embarrassing for me and it disturbed my mind. I told him to not beat my mum and we quarrel a lot. He chased me away and I ended up in the street. I needed to take alcohol and drugs to ease my mind and forget about the bad things happening at home. I needed the drugs to be brave enough to steal. Deep down I knew this was not the place for me. But I could not resist the influence by the elder street boys. Because of the problem at home I started to hate grown ups and I abused them. I hit and beat to get out my anger and frustration I had against my own family. I met people from the church and they cared about us. They came out in the street, gave us food and hugged us. That was good for us. I was dirty and had bad clothes. When we come to church they often chased us away. I went more and more often to church, but I was sniffing after the service. A churchman informed me about what the sniffing was doing to me. I stopped and started schooling. I was doing drama and singing.

I have finished my primary and look forward to finish my high school (secondary). What about your family today?

Evans Lisa (23rd December 1986)

I am no three in a family of 5. My family was a bit good. My father has a job and a nice job. I started school, but when I reached class 6 my father worked night shift. Some thieves came and robbed the place and the police took my dad to court and my father was jailed for 1,5 year. He left us with mum and she did not have job. We stayed for 3 months without paying house-rent and the landlord came and through us out. I felt very bad and I could not handle this. I could not help my family and I was just 10 years. I was called the baby in the street. I ran out in the street. My mum moved back to were she came from. When I tried to go back to mum I could not find here. I was in the street again. Looking for food, sleeping where it was possible to sleep. My friends here try to help me. I was a muslim at that time and called me Mosah. Douglas and Paul came daily to me and told me to be a Christian. Every day they talked to me. It was a bit hard to change, but I did and went to church. They talked to me, told me to stop sniffing and mentored me step by step. We decided to be one family. I was acting like a young lady, a younger. So they called me Diana. We started singing.

My mother came back when he came out of the jail. He took my family back to the city. But he still has no job.

I have finished my primary. I have started secondary, but do not go everyday because of lack of money.

Douglas Masheti (Saprano) 13th June 1983

I am in a family of 7 and I am the fourth born. In 1990 I started school and my family was better of. My dad was there and my dad was there. Life was good, and I continued school and did well. In 1994 my mother died. She was the bread-winner of the family. My dad had just small jobs. We had a rough time after my mum died. The second year after her dead it became very hard for my dad. One day I was chased back home from school and that was because my dad could not pay for the school fees. This became so bad. My first sister decided to get married. We were left and were struggling a lot. I have to help my dad so he can sustain the rest of the children. I went out and was looking for small jobs. I started begging in the streets. I was standing asking for money. I did small jobs like carrying luggage for people and they gave me some money. I was supposed to be in the school, but there was no help and I stayed in the street. You meet other hopeless children in the street and they use drugs. They told me that if you want to forget the problems you must start sniffing glue and I did to make it possible to live in the street. For 5 shillings you got a bottle. You take it in a cloth and sniff it. Another sister of me married at 16.

In 1999 a pastor and Sylvester was in the street. They talked with people. One to one. I was invited to Kawangare Lutheran church. They bought new clothes to me. But I went back to sniff. But I got back and they talked with me and helped me out of it. I wanted to be a good person in the society. In 2001 the church sponsored a trip to Tanzania. I changed after being with people who did not sniff, smoke etc. I met the other boys in The Conquerors.

I started with Paul and another man doing small comedies. We met the others and we continued to do drama and singing. We started to realize we had talent and we started this group without knowing that we have started a group. One day we asked people what we should called each other. We had 3 alternatives and The Conquerors won. (Romans 8:37). No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

I reformed, went back to school. Paying for myself. I have finished my primary. 8 years.