



Grace's Story: Trapped by Poverty

Grace was twelve when a stranger raped her in her rural village and left her pregnant. She gave birth to a daughter at thirteen and was eventually thrown out of the house by her mother. She made her way to Nairobi and settled in an informal settlement on the city's outskirts, supporting herself and her daughter by working as a housegirl and washing clothes for others, making enough money to survive and pay her daughter's school fees. But then, explained Grace,

Life became very difficult. I had no assurity of having jobs daily. So I had to have a friend to keep the daughter in school. Because of that I get pregnant. After that pregnancy I feel myself that I cannot keep the baby. . . . The friend cannot keep me in the house. He told me that he has a wife last year. I asked how can I become a mother of two when I have no job and nothing to do? I decided to [have an abortion] because of the child I already have. . . . Abortion is not good but because of the situation there is not anything else we can do. I tried but there was nowhere where I could go for help, it is only me and my daughter.²⁹⁴

GRACE WAS TWELVE WHEN A STRANGER RAPED HER,
and left her pregnant. After having the child she was rejected by her mother and made to fend for herself, settling in Nairobi and working as a housegirl washing clothes.

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Grace ended up procuring an unsafe abortion. She explained, “I had no money to go to the hospital. So I decided to go to those old women. They charge but very little—500 shillings [\$6.50].”²⁹⁵ According to Grace, the “old woman” inserted a “coil” and told her to keep it in place for a few weeks. Grace suffered complications and ultimately needed care for the infection that resulted. She was fortunate enough to find a doctor who was willing to provide services free of charge.