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Spotlight on Phiwe: Women Making a Difference

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Image



The Well Project interviews Phiwe for our "Spotlight: Women Making a Difference" series.

What is the goal of your advocacy work? Do you have a specific focus?

To ultimately work in disadvantaged communities that are hit hardest by the HIV epidemic, with a special focus on teenagers, because for some odd reason they think they're invincible to this virus (I thought so too).

Why is it important for you to reach out to women specifically?

For example in my case, I got strength from being exposed to women who were living positively with the virus, hence I believe that by using my experience I will be able to give hope to women who do not think the sun still shines in their lives.

Do you think women living with HIV face unique challenges? What are they?

I'm not sure if this challenge is unique to women, but I think dating has to be the biggest challenge in women living with the virus because it's very difficult to find partners who accept them with their statuses, especially if those men are HIV-negative.

What is the thing you are most proud of, professionally or personally?

Completing my B.tech in Environmental Health (equivalent to a degree) in record time, even as I encountered so many challenges whilst studying.

If you could visit one place in the world, where would it be?

Rome

What advice or information would you offer a woman newly diagnosed with HIV?

Read as much as you can about how to live with HIV, steer away from negative influences, and accept your status. It's the first step towards the self-healing journey.

Can you share a story that illustrates how you've been successful in working with women living with HIV?

I was able to advocate for two young women who were newly diagnosed with HIV by sharing my story with them and referring them to The Well Project, and especially the A Girl Like Me blog. That was me helping them get to understand their "new lives"/ life with HIV.

What difference has The Well Project made in your life and work?

It has made me realize that me being HIV positive hasn't changed me a bit but has helped me grow, be resilient, and be able to overcome any obstacles I find thrown my way. It has also shaped me towards positive thinking in all aspects of my life.



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