

MERCY'S STORY

Part 6



PREVENTIONCOLLABORATIVE



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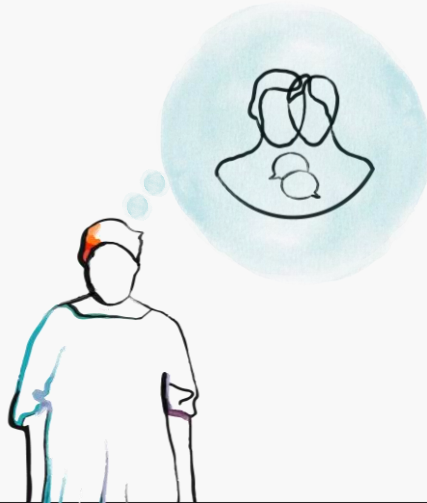


Mercy saw the NGO staff member again at another community meeting. This time, they talked about a new programme: an economic and social empowerment programme, including savings and loans groups for women, for anyone who was interested.

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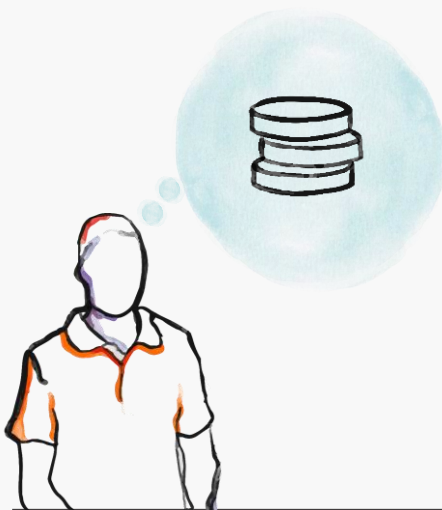


Mercy signed up to find out more. She learned that part of the programme was specifically for couples. They would go through training together to help strengthen their relationship. They would build skills to communicate and resolve conflicts with their partners. But both partners in the couple must be willing to participate.

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Mercy talked to Clinton about it. He was doubtful. He asked why they must learn about relationships. But he thought that the access to loans could help his family, so he agreed.

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After beginning the programme, Mercy and Clinton noticed that others were starting discussions with posters of women and men sharing household responsibilities. Suddenly, it seemed like everyone was talking about how to balance power between women and men and build a healthy, violence-free relationship.

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Still, what they were learning about was not easy! There was so much to change, and they didn't know where to begin. The teachings were so different from what they had learned from their parents and community about how men and women must behave.

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Clinton was still doubtful at times, but when he shared the chores at home and took time to talk with Mercy about their disagreements, he saw that they got along better and grew closer and happier.

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Their neighbours began to do things differently. Other men began helping at home. They heard a radio campaign encouraging couples to use non-violent communication! So many people seemed to be interested in this subject. Things began to look different in their community.

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Change takes time. And it's not perfect. But Mercy and Clinton begin to find that a healthy relationship, free from violence, builds a stronger, happier family and community for everyone.

