

PSI
STORY



Vies saines. Résultats mesurables.



WITH OPPORTUNITIES COME TALENTS AND....

NEW VISIONS



"This three years at PSI-Haiti have been my greatest experience ever. For once I have been very well treated and also I have always been paid on time"

More than two decades ago when PSI decided to approach the sex workers, one of the most vulnerable group with which it works, it wasn't just to educate them about the importance of condom use and to train them on how to correctly use it. Actually, the work has always gone well beyond that. The partnership with FOSREF in the past included a program through which professional training was offered to this group. Later in 2004, PSI had launched a Center especially for youth and, in this center many young sex workers have had the opportunity to develop new skills and they have received a certificate prompting them to enter the labor market. Unfortunately after the seism this program has been discontinued due

to lack of funding. However in 2009, under PREVISIDA, a USAID's project, this trend has even extended because not only partners under this project such as FOSREF, POZ and MARCH have continued the training of the sex workers in many areas (hair care, sewing, computer skills) but also these women have been offered the opportunity to practice some of their new skills or to just discover new talents. This is how Joanne Thomas a 33 years old woman and mother of three children, started to work for PSI-Haiti in the packaging department of the social marketed products such as PANTE, PILPLAN, CONFIANCE and DLO LAVI TAB, through the organization named "Organisation de femmes en Lutte pour le Progrès (OFLP)".

To do the packaging task it is required among others to be very meticulous since the products are to be sold on the market and in a certain way they reflect the image of USAID as a donor as well as that of PSI as an Organization. Joanne has proven that besides of being a very well organized person who has always complied with her work, she also has many talents. In May 2014, the contract that OFLP had with



PSI since June 2012 ended and Joanne is no longer employed by PSI-Haiti but she is looking for another job. In an interview with her, she told more about her experience as a former employee of PSI and about her current lifestyle and her dreams.

“This three years at PSI-Haiti have been my greatest experience ever. For once I have been very well treated and also I have always been paid on time”, has said Joanne. Joanne’s life hasn’t been easy. She explained that she has been raped when she was 17 years old and she never told her parents about that because she was afraid that they brutalized her. From this terrible experience she got pregnant of her first daughter who is 15 years old today. Following the birth of her daughter, she started working as a sex worker. *“At this time I did not have many options, I had to take care of my child and I did not have any help. Then I started my first work as a sex worker”.*

When Joanne entered the OFLP many years ago, she received useful information about the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. This is where she first met PSI-Haiti team who taught her how to use the female and the male condoms. *“Since then I have always used a condom for my work”.* She has also received information about family planning but she opted for the use of condom because as she said it is better for her job. Furthermore she has participated in a study conducted by GHESKIO about violence on women and learned a lot from this experience.

Joanne said that she has dreams. She would like to own a small business that will allow her to take care of her family. She would also like to travel especially in the USA because she believes that she will easily find a job there that will take her to the realization of her dream. *“I never stopped looking for a job after my experience at PSI, I am ready to do anything so I could stop working as a sex worker. Although I am still doing this job, but I really slowed my activities because I don’t want my older daughter who is now a young woman to find out that I am a sex worker. I will leave it definitely as soon as I get a new job”.* She has faith that she will find something because she feels like she can do better in her life and she won’t give up.

PSI-Haiti is doing a great work of education and offers opportunity to live healthy or to work when it is possible. *“May the donors continue supporting such important work in Haiti because life is not easy at all”,* this is Joanne’s wish for the country.

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