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ETHIOPIA

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Scholarship Gives Education and Hope

A scholarship program gives young women a brighter future



Photo: Pact-Ethiopia

Segenet envisions a future full of promise after graduating as an Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship student.

"Thanks to the scholarship, I was given the tools to remain in school... I have learned that if you are patient and able to endure the suffering around you, eventually you can succeed," said Segenet Wendawork, a recipient of the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship.

Telling Our Story
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Segenet Wendawork was five years old when her mother died. Her father soon remarried and moved away with his new wife. Segenet remained with her grandmother until she was nine, when her grandmother passed away. She then went to live with her aunt, who kept her home from school to help with chores. When the family became abusive and her uncle began sexually harassing her, Segenet left and moved in with a friend.

Unable to keep up with her studies, she failed eighth grade. When Segenet's father heard about her situation, he took her to live with him and his wife. Although she was able to attend school, this family also became abusive, and Segenet's teachers began noticing the bruises on her face.

"I had just made the decision to quit school and move away when I noticed a scholarship program advertisement. This was a ray of hope for me," said Segenet. When she was told that her father's income made her ineligible, she approached several teachers who intervened on her behalf and was awarded the USAID-funded Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship.

"I am 20 and graduating this year," Segenet says happily. She lives with another scholarship recipient and hopes to attend university and major in tourism management. "Before the scholarship, I was unable to dream about the future," said Segenet. "How could I envision a good future when all my energy was dedicated to simply surviving the problems surrounding me?"

USAID's scholarship program has been helping girls like Segenet complete their education since 2000. The program enables girls with a strong academic record but few economic resources to finish school. Scholarship recipients receive tuition payments, a housing allowance, educational materials, and tutorial services.

"I am very thankful to the scholarship for helping to provide me with a bright future," Segenet said.