



Person Affected Journey: Alice Korvah

My name is Alice Korvah, and I am 49 years old. I live in Logan Town Hill, Voinjama, Lofa County. I'm sick, I got this problem when I was 20 years old. Some people say Elephantiasis. Some people say that African sign. I learned from the photovoice about how to love myself and accept my condition, and how to deal with people and not to create my own stigma but we should go around people. I want to tell people who will see my picture to know that people who have the same condition as me to accept and God will help to provide a solution. I want to say a big thank you to REDRESS for helping us to know ourselves and making us know that we are somebody in the community, we should not blame other people for our look, it is a sickness that we have and be cured.

I also want to say to us with the sicknesses that we should take part in the community and feel free as we are special too on the earth not because we are sick.



Impact on mental health and stigma

With three children. I suffered a lot in this situation. I went from place to place, from hospital to hospital, from countryside to countryside, everywhere I went for this situation. But I didn't find a solution to this problem. I am still in it and I'm going with it. It troubled me a lot, it worried me that I can't do anything freely, seeing my beautiful body being damaged by sickness like this. So, this is how my story begins. It tells you about my lifestyle. It tells you about how I have been going through things in life. It has not been easy. But I tell God thank you that keeps me alive to reach this far. I went through a lot from family, from friends around the world. And neglected also because of the look.



Seeking care from traditional healer

I've been to so many places because of this problem, this big foot. As you can see on the photo, they are heating the foot. The more they heat this foot, the foot become more big, because, it was not the rightful medicine that was going there, the foot is already big. I've gone so many places for this foot. Sometimes they use razor blade, they mark it, some areas they heat it, some areas they hanging over the hot water for heat to enter inside. This is a photo that shows that I've been trying my best, going from place to place for solution. I'm not sitting alone, I'm trying, I'm still trying.



Experiences of stigma

You can see the whole group putting their hands in one pan eating, sharing, and in fact fighting over it I'm happy it shows happiness. This is what I want to be. This is how I want to live. This is how I want for people to come around me. I don't want to always continuous living stigma to myself. I want to be among people we ourselves we can create our own stigma apart from the people out there. Because if you say, because people not coming around me, let me just keep nervous or let me just keep by myself that alone is a burden by itself I love to be among people. I love for people to eat with me. I like to share food. So the photo shows what? Happiness, love. I love this.



Empowerment and livelihoods

We the patients or we that have come out with this problem we shouldn't be lazy. This photo is showing that you can see me selling, we shouldn't be lazy. With anything that we doing, be strong, help ourselves, don't say because I am sick or I'm sitting here, I'm not feeling well, I will not sell or I am not able to sell. Do something. You have to wake up and do something for yourself. Before people can come to your rescue, you have to be there too fighting for yourself. So let's all use our hands and do something for ourselves so that we are able to feed our children, feed our family around us so that they can go in the streets, so that they can go out. Let us be strong in any little thing that we are doing.



Support amongst peer support group

The photo you see here you can see the hands are together. We are as a sick people. People came to our rescue. We need to love each other and hold each other. We need to love each other and always be there for each other. Because we are already found ourselves in, this is a stigma. There is nothing that we can do to cancel this. It has already happened in our life and we moving with it. But through you, through me through other people we can make it. So let's love each other care for each other and be one.