



Case Study 1

Vânia Maria Juvêncio

“If wasn’t involved in the project, I wouldn’t be here today.”

Vânia’s story is one of hope after many horrific challenges during her childhood. She has thrived from having the opportunity to learn and the programme has given her the strength and skill to help face her problems, as well as the motivation to help others know and claim their rights.

When Vânia and her brothers and sisters were abandoned by their father her uncle began living with them so that Vânia’s mother could work in the city. Vânia suffered abuse from her uncle with the violence and abuse getting worse and worse. Vania also faced abuse in the house where she worked as a domestic worker. She was married at just 16 years of age, and faced further abuse from her husband. Her challenges didn’t disappear, and she left school after getting pregnant to take care of her children.

Today it is a different story. She finds support through a group of leaders at an NGO (non governmental organisation) called Eucalipto, an organisation that works in partnership with Concern Universal. “Before, I’d never even heard of rights & would have had no idea how to claim them if I had known about them. An awful lot has changed; I’ve learnt to know my rights and to fight for them. I’ve learnt to be a good mother. I have gone back to study, I’ve improved my own relationships with my children and family.” Vânia is still a domestic worker but now she is conscious of her rights and duties as a worker. She now knows the importance of her place in the community and is busy fighting for rights not only for herself and her family, but for the whole community.

“I now have the opportunity and the courage to claim rights for my family and community. Together, we’ve made a plan to improve medical health care, we made a petition for everyone to sign which we have given to the local government so that our children have better quality schools and school meals and so that our community has sanitation facilities.”

“I am conscious of the people who have helped and promoted the work of the NGO Eucalipto, and I want to thank people, even people who don’t know me, through supporting the work they have helped and supported me”.