



MWANSA'S STORY

Abortion is legal in Zambia

Yet 6 out of 10 girls attempt to end unwanted pregnancy on their own

Many with traditional or unsafe methods



Mwansa: If you look at me, would you know that I had an abortion last year?



I live in a compound with my mum and grandmother. My dad works away. I'm studying for my grade 11 exams.



I hope to go to University. I have dreams.



But my life could have been very different.



I had been with my boyfriend Chilufya for two years but we had only had sex three or four times.



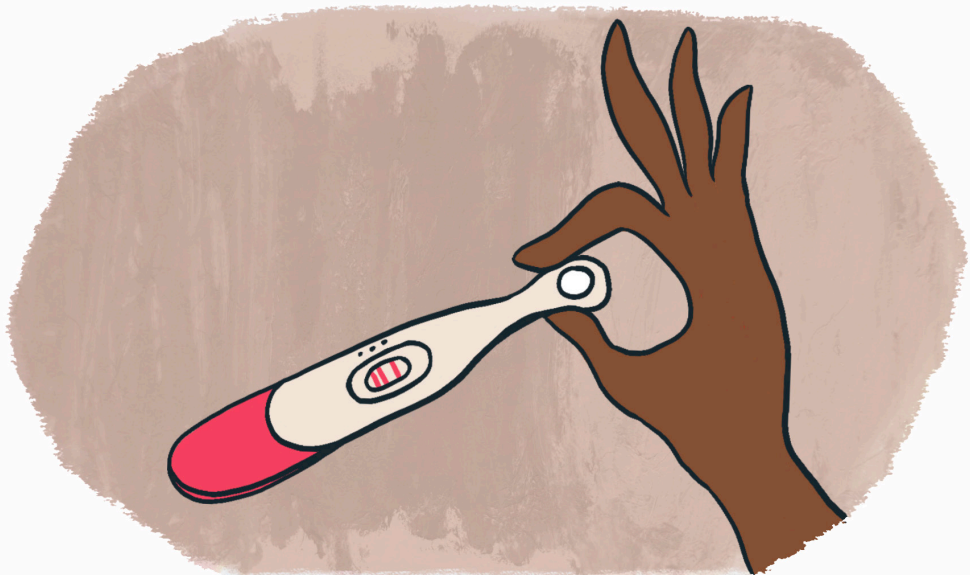
Chilufya: It doesn't feel nice when I wear a condom. I won't release inside you. I promise you will not fall pregnant. If you really loved me, you wouldn't make me use one. You love me, don't you?



Mwansa: I believed him.



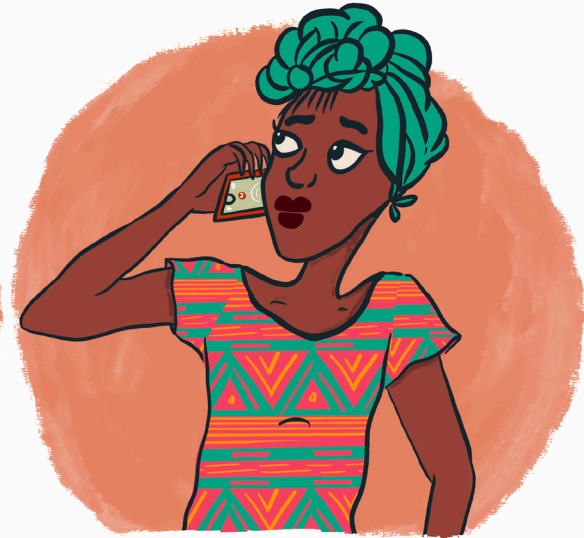
Mwansa: I noticed my body changing. My breasts were so sore. I went to the local pharmacy to buy a test.



Mwansa: How could this be happening? Chilufya had promised I would not fall pregnant. He promised.



Mwansa: I called my friend Bupe.



Bupe: When Mwansa called me, I knew how she felt.



Bupe: I stay in town with my uncle and auntie for school, but my father's home is in the village. I also fell pregnant. I did not use protection.



Bupe: I thought taking headache pills after sex would prevent pregnancy.



Bupe: I was too scared to tell anyone. I knew I couldn't go back to the village like this. My family would be disappointed in me. They had given up a lot so that they could send me to school in town.



Bupe: I decided to use herbs to abort.

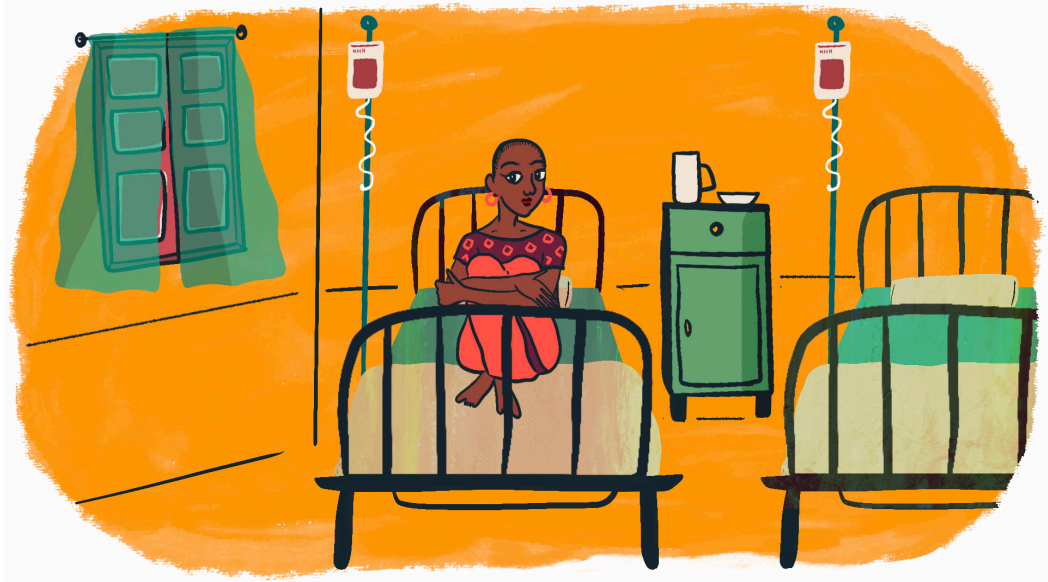


Bupe: There was a lot of blood. It did not stop for two days and my stomach felt painful. I went to the health centre nearby.



Bupe: I met a girl there. She had paid for a cleaner at a clinic to give her pills. But the pills were not correct. Her abortion did not work.

10% of girls seeking abortion-related care at public health centers pay unofficial fees for care that should be free or very low cost



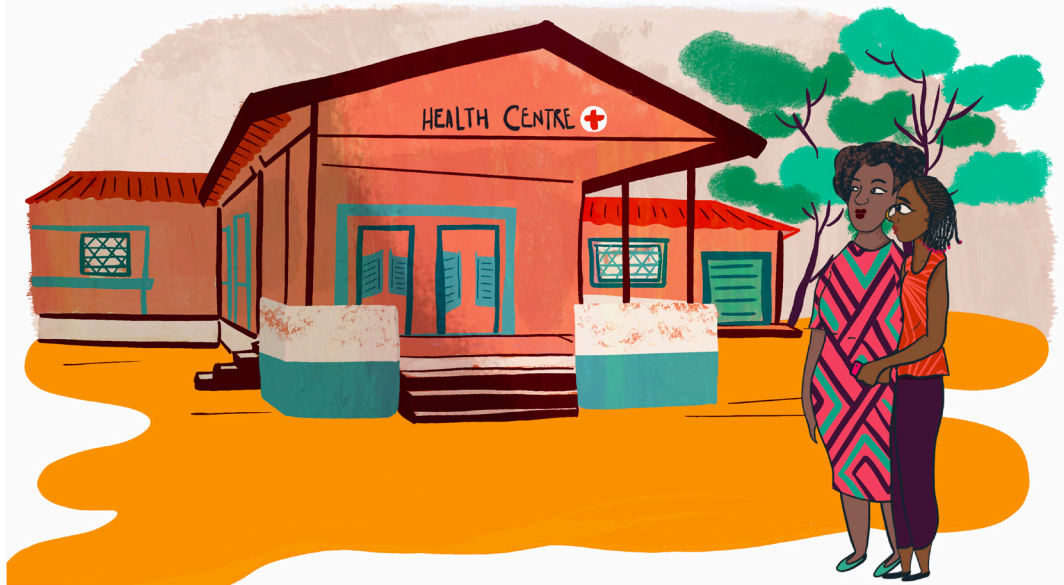
Bupe: She was at hospital to clean her womb.



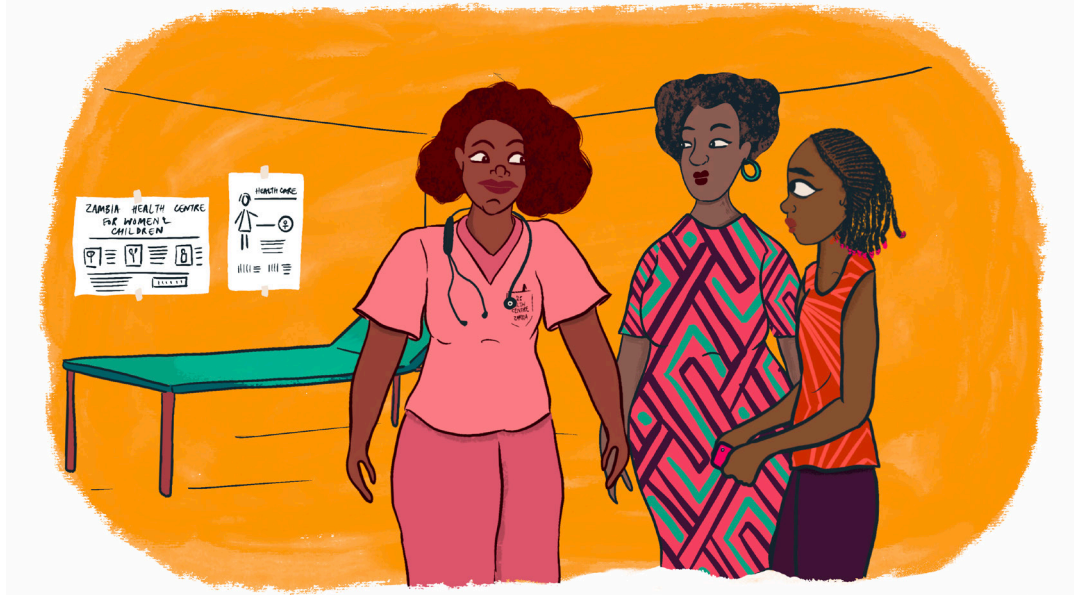
Bupe: There were many girls like this. I was...I was terrified. I didn't want Mwansa to go through what I did.



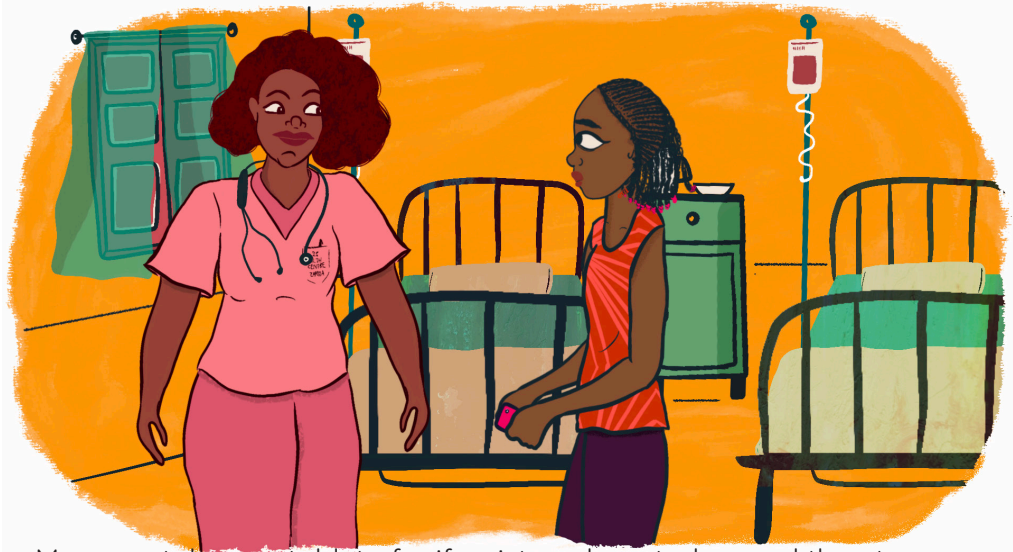
If facing an unwanted pregnancy, you should seek
help at a local health center



Mwansa: My Mum and I went together to the health care centre.

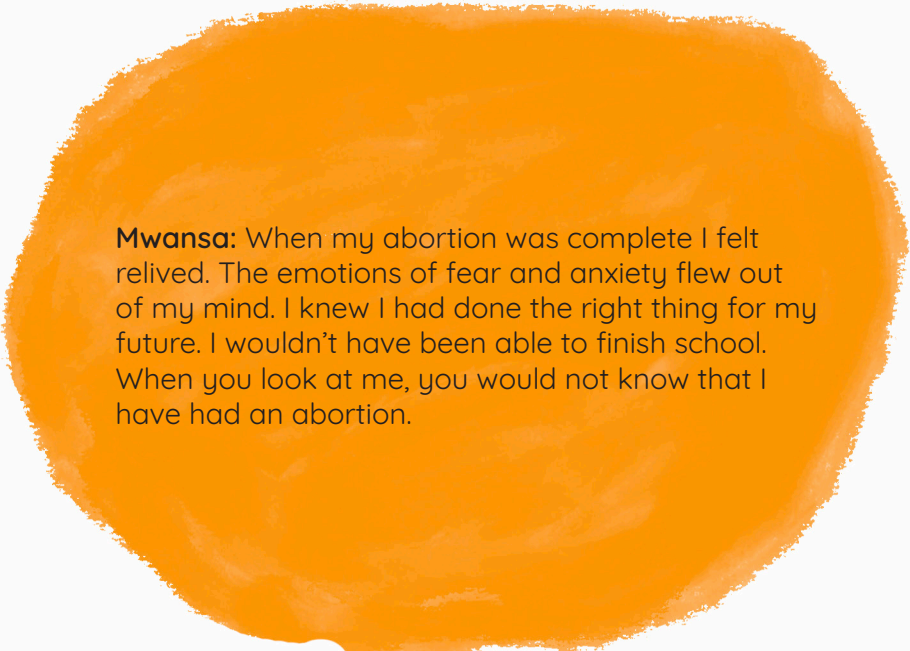


Mwansa: A trained nurse helped me to make an informed decision on my choices. She gave me two types of tablets called mifepristone and misoprostol.

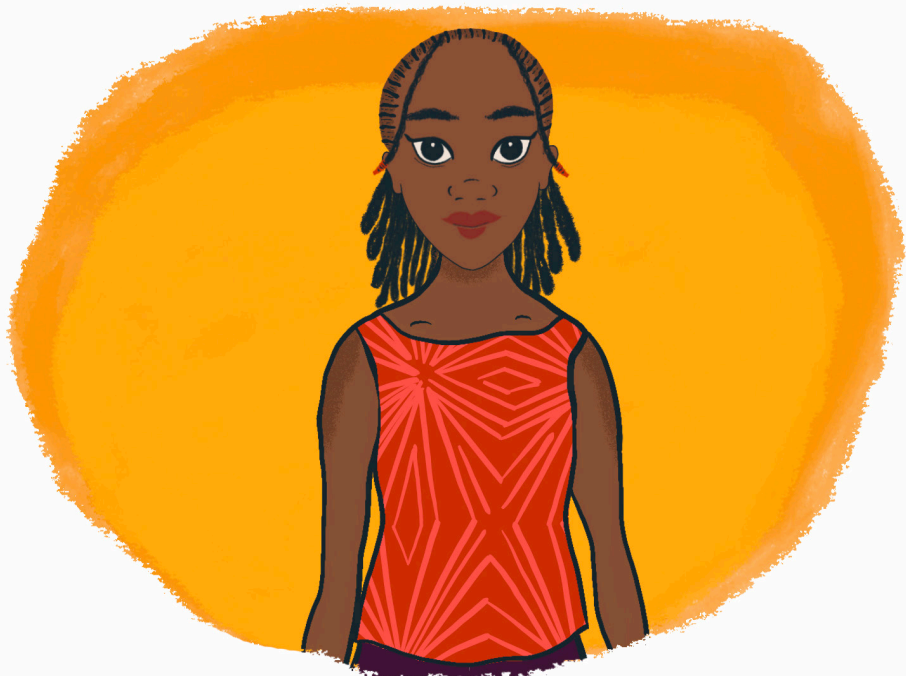


Nurse: Mwansa, take one tablet of mifepristone here today, and then tomorrow you must take the remaining four tablets of misoprostol.

Mwansa: Before I went home, the nurse told me about contraception.

A large, irregular orange watercolor splash serves as the background for the text. The splash has a textured, painterly appearance with varying shades of orange and some darker, more saturated areas towards the edges.

Mwansa: When my abortion was complete I felt relieved. The emotions of fear and anxiety flew out of my mind. I knew I had done the right thing for my future. I wouldn't have been able to finish school. When you look at me, you would not know that I have had an abortion.



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sub-Saharan Africa: health system pathways

Find out more at
abortioninafrica.wordpress.com
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