

## Hyper-inflation survivor scores big

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After a two-year hiatus from school caused by the economic challenges experienced in Zimbabwe in 2008, 21-year-old Fortunate Chifamba is on her way to fulfilling her dreams to become a medical doctor, thanks to a family friend.

My biggest advice (to young girls facing adversity) is that dreams are renewable, no matter your age, if you really want to be someone in life, you should not give up no matter how old you are, says Fortunate, a participant of the United States Achievers Programme (USAP).

She was admitted to Smith College with a full scholarship and hopes to pursue studies in medicine and business studies.

Narrating her story, Fortunate said she dropped out of school in November 2008 after her cousin was retrenched from a motoring company in Harare.

I dropped out of school and went to live in the rural areas with my cousins family due to lack of funding, says Fortunate. Despite her good grades at O Level (scoring 7 straight As and 3 Bs), she endured two years cultivating the fields in Beitbridge.

At the time there were unprecedented levels of hyper-inflation, massive devaluation of the currency, low productive capacity, and loss of jobs, food shortages, poverty and general despondency.

That period was very difficult and harsh, says Fortunate. At that time, no one was going to work, so it was difficult to get food. I went to the fields to help out just to look for food. I also tried looking for work, but since I had neither certificate nor qualification I could not get a job to help out in the family.

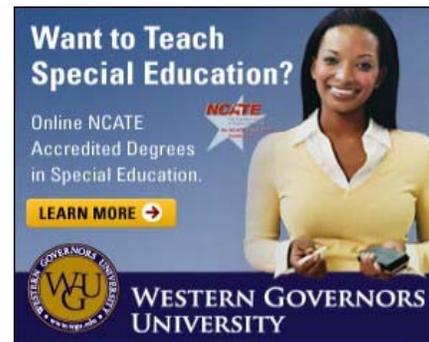
Her parents are deceased. In May 2010, Jessie Machakwa a businesswoman and friend of her late mother offered to fund her education, enrolling her at Shungu High School in Kwekwe, Mديلاندس province.

In early 2011, Fortunate applied to join the USAP and was admitted, and attributes this to God. USAP recruits economically disadvantaged, but academically and talented A Level students.

The students spend a year in the programme growing together and working through the college application process, with all costs of the programme borne by the US Embassy.

The US colleges and universities provide the scholarships whilst local corporate and individual sponsors have also contributed to the students expenses including visa fees, immunisations and air tickets.

For Fortunate, the programme has achieved more than just securing her a full scholarship to study in the United States. Having taken leadership positions throughout her school career, Fortunate knows she owes Zimbabwe her future and is willing to play her role.



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