



CASE STUDY:

Juma, Mkombozi youth

In his own words:

My name is Juma (name changed for confidentiality). My brother and I live here together at Mkombozi. We come from Arusha and used to live with our parents, until my mom moved away in 2001 because my father used to go drinking all day and would fight my mom. He would stay out all night and drink alcohol, then return at night and beat my mom because the food was not good, he said. I always felt bad seeing this happen.

One night my dad beat her in the dark so we couldn't see, and that morning my mom told us children she couldn't take anymore. She left us all and it makes me really sad. After that, our lives were so much more difficult. Our father would beat us instead of my mom. And he didn't permit me to go to school so I would care for his cows, during when I was in first grade (i.e. Standard 1 in Tanzania).

By 2004, most of my brothers had ran away from home because my dad was really mean and angry and drunk. Only my younger brother and I stayed with my dad. I didn't like going to school because I didn't see the point of it, and I never had money to buy lunch at school. So my brother and I would skip school and tend the cow. Then one day we failed to take proper care of the cows and they ended up entering someone's field. That night my dad beat us so bad. Even our neighbours would beat us because they thought we were stealing their food, since we were given no food. One day, after we were beaten, we decided to run away and never come back.

We walked and walked all day, not knowing where to go, but looking for our mom. My young brother was five. He started complaining of cold, so we stopped at a place where a man helped us when he saw it was midnight and we didn't know where to go. The man took us to his home, and let us shower and gave us some food. The next morning he brought us to the police, who asked us if we were going to Moshi. We said yes, since that is where we thought our mother was. The police commanded a daladala bring us for free to Moshi, and when we got there, my brother and I begged for food.

Eventually we saw one of my brothers who had run away already and he brought us to Mkombozi, since we were unable to live in the street and he was unable to feed us. Soon after I arrived here at Mkombozi, I began to study in the non-formal education class, and was so happy to study since education will help me later in life.

In the beginning, I would beat the weaker boys to show my power. My friends began to advise me to change, because I was acting very bad. I know now it wasn't right to act that way, and now I live peacefully with the other boys in the centre. I have succeeded in non-formal education and now study in formal education where I am very happy learning all the subjects.

Mkombozi helped me to change my behaviour by making me understand that being mean is not acceptable. Mkombozi helped me to understand the importance of education by helping me to have it and by giving me all I need to succeed, with food, exercise books, pens and most of all, adult care. At home I was beaten and didn't feel loved; here the staff gives me support and love which makes it easier for me to love, care for and support others and myself.