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PRIORITISING Children

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Reintegrating child victims of trafficking

Mkombozi in partnership with IOM to address human trafficking

In 2009, Mkombozi began working in partnership with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM; a United Nations agency) to address the situation of child victims of trafficking (VoTs) in our area of operation. Based on the UN's definition of "trafficking of persons" (as stated in the Palermo Protocol), which in Mkombozi's case means "children", trafficking can be defined as "the transportation of a child under circumstances of abduction, deception or abuse of power for the purpose of some form of exploitation". Some of Mkombozi's clients fit easily into this description, while others have simply been extremely vulnerable and at the risk of exploitation.

For Mkombozi, this partnership, focused on swift and effective reintegration of children who have been separated from their homes, is timely. We are currently moving towards short-term residential care and intensified work with families. In fact, during 2009, Mkombozi worked with 11 VoTs, most of whom were successfully reintegrated into their homes and they linked to opportunities in their place of residence. Additional successes have been the actual psychological / emotional rehabilitation and healing that these boys have experienced during their time in Mkombozi. It also seems that these specific instances of short-term stays in the residential centre has actually spread a motivation amongst the other boys (who have been at the centre longer) to be reunified!

NEW: Law of the Child 2009

Children's rights now recognised!

Finally, after many years of research and preparation, the government introduced the bill to enact The Law of the Child in July 2009. A few months later, it was passed by Parliament in a reviewed version following a number of advocacy efforts and joint consultations between civil society and government (in which Mkombozi participated). Tanzania's legislation for children has long been insufficient and fragmented across various statutes. The creation of the Law of the Child Act included the revision and consolidation of such legislation as well as the introduction of new elements that reflect the standards set out by the UNCRC.

The Law of the Child Act addresses most of the serious issues and challenges that Tanzanian children are faced with today; namely, the right to a name and nationality; the rights and duties of parents; the right to opinion and the right to protection from torture and degrading treatment. However, some of its shortcomings are that it does not ban corporal punishment, and it does not address the current discriminatory fact that the legal age of marriage is set at 15 years for girls and 18 years for boys. In short, the enactment of this legislation means the effective domestication of the UNCRC and provides a legal framework that guides Tanzania in the protection and realisation of children's rights.

For Mkombozi and organisations working for child protection, this is an historical event - a necessary stepping

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A headmaster tells her Most Significant Change story...

Reminiscar is the headmaster of Elerai Primary School in Hai Mjini ward. Elerai is a MEMKWA centre and one of the target schools wherein Mkombozi has, for several years, been facilitating teachers to better protect, support and interact with children. The following is Reminiscar's account of the most significant changes that she has experienced as a result of her contact with Mkombozi - it clearly shows an example of the outcomes that we set out to accomplish as part of raising awareness in local schools.



"I first got to know Mkombozi by attending a workshop that involved teachers, students and different stakeholders. I now have a relationship with Mkombozi due to the good cooperation that exists between us. The education which I have received has enabled me to help children who live in dangerous situations to protect themselves, to educate the community on how to relate to children's rights and how to use a participatory approach."

Reminiscar says that as a result of Mkombozi's intervention, she has experienced the following changes: "to understand my responsibilities as a teacher in protecting children; to educate my fellow teachers to use alternative punishment (other than corporal); to examine the situation of vulnerable children; to educate the community about children's rights". When asked why this change is significant, Reminiscar answers that it has helped her "to get education which helps me as a part of my work as a teacher" and "to be able to deal with student's truancy".

MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORY:

The importance of temporary shelter and protection

Mkombozi continuously collects so called "Most Significant Change Stories" from its constituents as part of its monitoring and evaluation. The following story was told by eleven year old "Emmanuel", as he reflects on his life-changing, past few months in Mkombozi's care. Emmanuel's story reveals the importance of providing temporary shelter and family reunification to vulnerable children and youth.

"I was brought to Mkombozi by my brother who is studying here, and I was received by Sister Upendo [a social worker]. I continued coming to study with my brother and then returning home, and we were living in a rented room close to Mtei [a location in Moshi town]. I fell ill with malaria and I explained this to Sister Upendo, and she told me to remain at Mkombozi. It was in October and I was given medicine by Mama Nurse and I became better - now I am doing well."

When Emanuel looked back upon his past six months, this is the most significant change he had experienced as a result of Mkombozi's intervention:

"I am very glad because I sleep happily, I am no longer bitten by mosquitoes, and now I know how to read and write a little. I enjoy playing ball and eating rice and spaghetti, I am in good health now, and I eat every day. When I was living with my brother we were picking scrap metal [to sell for a living], and if we failed to find some we would not eat that day, and we also had to pay our rent."

Emanuel said that the reason

that this change was significant to him was:

"Because now I live like children who have homes."



Emmanuel's unsustainable life in the streets, lacking proper care and being deprived of an education are now over. At the end of 2009, after a short period in Mkombozi's residential centre,

Emmanuel was brought to his relatives in Babati District. He now lives permanently with his loving aunt and her family, and he is attending the second year of primary school.

are currently making plans to build a Child Protection and Community Centre.

INTRODUCING THE "HARDLIFE ARTISTS GROUP": Innovative new workshop & art gallery started by residential centre youth

At Mkombozi, an old chicken house has been transformed into a small workshop and art gallery, run by a group of boys who call themselves the Hardlife Artists Group...

Morgan, Joseph, David and Rogers have all decided to pursue art in their free time - while also inspiring their peers and younger children to explore their own talents.

An integral part of Mkombozi's programming is to facilitate children and youth to discover their natural talents. When it was noticed that some of the boys at the centre were inspired to become artists, Mkombozi nurtured their initiative by allowing them to have the old chicken house as a venue and by occasionally linking them to mentoring artists. From Mkombozi's perspective, the path of artistry will not only enrich their lives, it might even provide

opportunities for self reliance.

Before last year, three of these boys had occasionally been making and selling cards at different events. It was during the week they spent as part of the "Cre8 project" in June 2009, however, which provided them with the boost they needed to dedicate more seriously to the art of painting (i.e. Cre8 was a talent-discovery event for Mkombozi youth and community members).

Since they formed the Hardlife Artists group after Cre8, the group has made big progress in learning the art of painting - partly by practice, and partly through the teaching of mentoring artists who are in touch with Mkombozi.

Rodgers, talking about how he became interested in painting, says that: "I used to visit places where artists were painting to look at their work. When I saw a

Morgan says: "If you make something and then people admire it, you feel great..."

David says: "Go ahead and discover your talents. Doing so just might bring you success..."

painting that I liked, I would try to imitate it on a piece of paper, I would put it up on the wall, and feel happy."

Presently, the Hardlife Artists are all secondary school students with the dream of developing their artistry further. They support their

continued painting by occasionally selling their work to visitors, thereby making an income that goes towards buying new materials.

If possible, they would like to get in touch with local galleries that would be interested in exhibiting their art so that they could make a name for themselves and work towards self reliance.



2009 CYP SATISFACTION SURVEY: Preliminary results show success and challenge



Mkombozi conducts a Children and Young People (CYP) Satisfaction Survey each year in order to gain feedback about the CYP's experience of Mkombozi's services. The survey is quantitative in format, and enables Mkombozi to learn which areas require further development, and which are exceptionally successful.

Most recently, the survey was carried out in November 2009, using a questionnaire developed in cooperation by staff and CYP. Notably, with respect to respondents:

- 108 CYP in total responded to the survey (i.e. 103 male; 5 female). Of these respondents, 37 live at the residential centre, 10 live in group and transitional houses, 46 were met through different street interventions, and 15 participate in Mkombozi's non-formal education classes.

While the sample cannot be considered completely representative, and although a comprehensive analysis of data is currently being compiled, some preliminary findings are instructive and valuable. For instance, with respect to CYP relationship to Mkombozi staff:

- 68 CYP (63%) say that they find the communication between CYP and staff in

general either very satisfactory or satisfactory, while 18 (17%) find this unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory.

- 52 CYP (48%) say that they find the staff's knowledge of their lives very satisfactory or satisfactory, while 35 (32%) find this unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory.

With respect to the CYP's perspective of Mkombozi services:

- At street-based interventions, 37 CYP (80%) say that they find our health services very satisfactory or satisfactory, while only six (13%) find these services unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory.

- At the residential centre, 25 out of 37 respondents (68%) say that they find our services in total very satisfactory or satisfactory, while seven (19%) find them unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory.

- At the residential centre, it was specifically shown that the provision of clothes and personal necessities is a challenge - 16 CYP (43%) say that they find this very satisfactory or satisfactory while 15 CYP (41%) say that they find it unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory.

Social workers recognised for increasing professionalism...

In late 2009, Mkombozi's Director, William Raj, recognised the team of social workers for their commitment, professionalism and effectiveness throughout the year. The social workers have grown into a skilled team which can be relied upon in the most difficult situations that we come across with children and young people.

Notably, the second half of 2009 brought much success in family reunification and overall youth reintegration into the community. Specifically, the social work team took the lead in the outflow of some of the youth who have been in the organisation for many years. In our experience, long term residential stays can foster an unhealthy attachment to the organisation which makes it harder for youth to return to a normal life in the community. This is why swift reintegration has become a growing priority. Thus, out-flowing these youth has been a challenging task into which the social work team has put much effort and careful consideration.



The team has also had its share of complicated cases involving children and youth with special needs - in particular those with mental disabilities. Cases of such children are complex since Mkombozi does not specialise in this area and often lacks an appropriate service provider to whom they can be referred. Dealing with such cases can unfortunately mean knowing what is best for a child but being unable to provide it.

Despite the difficulties involved, the factor that has made the work successful has been a focus on strong cooperation and support within the Mkombozi team while keeping close ties to government authorities. Another factor adding to recent success is the increasing practice to treat each case as unique, with its own special needs, rather than trying to treat them all in equal manner.

In fact, the team has even developed an important ability to link interventions to a consideration of what is best for a child in the long run rather than focusing on what seems best for the moment - a

balancing act that sometimes means making difficult decisions.

National survey: Children who live/work in the streets

In 2009, the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children (in collaboration with Consortium for Street Children and other stakeholders) took the lead in preparations to develop policy that addresses the situation of children who live/work in the streets.

In early 2009, a planning conference took place in Dar Es Salaam, attended by over 80 municipal and ministerial representatives, international and local NGOs, bilateral organisations, UN agencies and children themselves. The conference came up with joint action points that will lead to the creation of a "National Strategy for Street Children" and formulated the overall goal to reduce the number of children living and working in the streets by 60% before 2019. It was noted that, in order to build the understanding that would inform such a strategy, a baseline survey showing the real situation was required.

Thus, in July and August 2009, a survey of almost 2300 children and young people was rolled out in seven Tanzanian town centres with the help of local NGOs and government authorities. The survey aimed to gain an estimate of the number of children who are in the streets at the same time as learning more about their current situation and the reasons for which they came to the streets.

Part of Mkombozi's role in the process was to lead the Arusha data collection by training research assistants and supervising the exercise itself.

Some of the survey findings were:

- The greatest issue facing children who are in the streets is violence. Over 50% reported the problem as abuse from authorities and other adults, physical and sexual abuse, and being insulted and sworn at and being stigmatised.
- Family breakdown (violence, lack of love/care, alcoholism, conflict) was stated by 41% as the reason for migrating to the streets.
- Economic issues (hunger, supporting the family, lack of school fees or accommodation) was stated by 35% as the reason for migration to the streets.

Positive outcomes from this survey include: it shows the magnitude of the issue; it is based on the views of children themselves; it provides a baseline from which to work; it provides an understanding to the root causes of why children come to the streets; and it can inform the drafting of the National Strategy for Street Children.



Did you know?

SEVEN ARUSHA YOUTH IN TRAINING AT "JOBORTUNITY"

In 2009, Mkombozi initiated a partnership with the Arusha-based **Jobortunity** ("The training institute for future hosts") with the goal to train youth and link them to employment opportunities. According to Jobortunity, young people in Northern Tanzania lose out on employment opportunities in the tourism sector due to lack of education and experience. Jobortunity aims to enable vulnerable youth to become self-reliant through the hospitality and tourism job market so that they may provide for themselves, their families and contribute to society as a whole. The institute provides professional training in life skills and personal development to vulnerable youth aged 15-23. To date, seven Mkombozi youth have been guided to a better future through the Mkombozi / Jobortunity partnership and are being trained in the hospitality and tourism industry - training that will undoubtedly lead to increased opportunities for employment. In fact, since the training began, Mkombozi social workers have observed rapid improvements in the self-esteem of these youth!