

In their own words...

Tanzania: David turns his life around

David ran away from home at the age of 7. “My parents had separated. My mother was selling vegetables to earn her living. There were times when there was nothing to eat at home, so I decided to run away to Mererani.”

He had heard stories about people making a lot of money in Mererani’s tanzanite mines. Now 12, he talks about his disappointments. “I expected to earn my living by working in the mines, but my expectations were not met”. Instead, he ended up sifting sand around the mines and earned very little. He slept on the ground outside, and when he became ill he did not receive medical treatment. “Then I happened to meet a good Samaritan who took me to his place and promised to provide for my needs. The man did what he promised and sent me to school.”

David is one of dozens of children who have been assisted by the Good Hope Centre for Children and Young People in Mererani Township. This NGO is collaborating on a project with the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and the Tanzania Mining, Construction and Allied Workers Union (TAMICO). They identify working children, withdraw them from the mines, counsel them, and integrate them into schools or vocational training.

“Here I am today, a class 4 pupil,” he says. “My dream is to become a pilot. Here at the Mererani Good Hope Centre, we are neither oppressed nor victimized. We are no longer involved in mine-related work. We feel honoured and see a bright future for our life.”

