

## ***RISING TO THE TOP***

“It really doesn’t matter where and when you started your dream, what matters most is whether or not you followed it”.

It is practically unheard of for a child living on the streets to finish school. Yet, thanks to another SATF partner intervention, Mussa Mlelwa has somehow managed to accomplish the impossible.



Born in Iringa and later moving to Morogoro, it was during class three of his primary education that Mussa lost both his parents and became an orphan. From that point on, Mussa took care of himself, spending his days and nights on the harsh streets around Morogoro. When Neema Resource Foundation (NEREFO) discovered Mussa struggling all alone, fending for himself on the streets, they immediately stepped in to rescue him.

Not long after his rescue, Mussa joined St. Monica school and started the MEMKWA education program - an accelerated primary education system targeting children who missed formal education at their appropriate age. In just two years' time Mussa moved up to standard five, and joined the formal education system at Jitegemee Primary School.

SATF's support for Mussa's school fees and materials was a substantial help, but not enough to cover all of his essential needs. After all, he still had no family to look after him and at times, he was in total despair, searching for hope and prospects for his life. While in school, Mussa continued to work odd jobs, selling fruit and working as a night watchman to guard unfinished sites (“*pagalla*”). During these strenuous times, NEREFO did not abandon Mussa and he didn't surrender to the hardships. His support and assistance continued, and Mussa's persistence paid off. He made it to the finish line and graduated from Secondary School in 2016.

Nothing is holding Mussa back now. He is getting ready to join the Local Government Training Institute, Hombolo, Dodoma where he will pursue a one-year certificate course in Community development. This huge and important milestone is one that will open doors for many possible opportunities. Mussa says:

***“I grew up in difficult circumstances and never thought I would graduate from school. I want to say thank you to NEREFO and my Donor SATF who have given me the opportunity to get an education and have a better future.”***

Mussa is making us proud, not only because he is a determined and hard-working young person, but also because he is such a great role model, inspiring so many other children to believe that no matter what the conditions are in life, you can rise above.