

## Faces of *change*



*For a quarter century, Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. (AKF USA) has been investing in people, extending a helping hand to communities and individuals so they may live with dignity and hope.*

### A Visit with Makame

In Zanzibar, with a population of just under one million, 51% of the people are poor and the adult literacy rate is 60%. Demands for education are high, with half of the population below the age of 15 years. However, enrollment remains low.

The Aga Khan Foundation has implemented a project to help improve the quality of learning and access to schools for children in Zanzibar – two islands off the coast of Tanzania in the Indian Ocean. The project partners with communities and the government from pre-school to secondary level to improve teacher skills and school management. The Foundation encourages local civil society organizations to get involved in the school system in ways that promote quality education. The Foundation is also actively addressing issues faced by children with special needs and disabilities.

Out of the estimated number of children and youth with disabilities only 2% of them have access to education of any kind. There are numerous obstacles facing children with disabilities: shortage of trained teachers; lack of appropriate teaching-learning materials; inadequate supply of teaching tools and equipment for learners with disabilities, inaccessible school buildings (no ramps, narrow corridors and doors, poorly designed toilets); long distances from home to the nearest school; negative community attitude towards people with disabilities, and low awareness and sensitivity to disability issues by government policy makers and other stakeholders.

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In April 2006, Makame was provided with a special needs tricycle through an education program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. Recently, two program officers from the education program went back to Makoba Primary School and visited Makame in his Standard 2 class.

Makame eagerly greeted their familiar faces with a big smile, saying “Look, I can move on my own.” He spins his tricycle in a circle laughing: “I do not need so much support from other people to move around now. Do you remember when I had to stay waiting on the floor until someone helped me to move from place to place?”

Makame’s Standard One teacher shares her experience after attending a Sensitization Workshop offered by AKF’s education program and the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training’s Special Needs Unit. “I did not know about sensitization before the workshop. I knew about Makame but did not do anything to help him. After the workshop, I went to visit his parents and requested they send Makame to school. At first, his father had to carry him or use a wooden cart to bring him to school. Now Makame has his tricycle. His life has changed. My life has changed and I am proud to have made a difference in his life.”

Makame’s parents now dream about a bright future for their son. His mother, Tan Faki Hasan smiles shyly and in a quiet voice says that “Makame has minimal problems now. He can go to school. He can do some work. He can participate in village activities. We are grateful for the support we are getting. We are highly inspired and encouraged to support his education. I am sure he will continue to be happy and work hard. I am proud of him.”



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