

MY DRIVE IN LIFE

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‘ANYBODY’S FOCUS SHOULD BE LIKE THAT OF A DRIVER.
I WILL BE THE DRIVER OF MY OWN LIFE.’

PREFACE

From the moment I met the young people of Mathare, I knew this book had to be written and that it had to find its way back 'home' to Mathare. Let me start by telling you how I got this feeling and where it started for me, being a western young girl from the Netherlands.

As a very curious teenager, I went and visited Africa, the continent I felt so attracted to. I travelled to Kenya with Edukans, a Dutch development organisation for education. That week, a group of students, as ambassadors from their schools, visited several Kenyan schools and projects supported by Edukans in a project called 'Going Global'. What impressed me the most during this week was visiting Mathare. Coming from the western world, this way of living seemed unreal to me. The living conditions were unlike anything I had ever seen before. Something inside of me was deeply touched and my curiosity about life in general became stronger, especially life in this part of the world. I wanted to know how people felt, lived and coped with life in this environment.

Back in the Netherlands after finishing high school, I started studying social work at Saxion University in Enschede. While studying, I was exploring the

possibilities of going back to Mathare for my vocational training. I came into contact with Naomi van Stapele from the Duara Foundation. She introduced me to Maji Mazuri, a non-governmental organisation that has developed several social projects in and around Nairobi. One of these projects is the Maji Mazuri youth group in Mathare.

I went back to Mathare for my vocational training and started giving life skills classes to the young people of the Maji Mazuri youth group. During this time I learned so much. About the people living in Mathare, about myself, and even more about what connects us on the inside. Our connection in life, even though we seem so different.

The interactive life skills meetings were all about the skills needed to cope with life, effectively. During this period I tried my best at being a 'teacher', but in reality I often was the student myself, learning so much from the young people of Mathare. No matter how big the differences may seem, in surroundings or background, experiencing life is very similar for all of us. We all face challenges and obstacles and we all have to learn to live with ourselves, others and the world around us. We cannot always change the things around us but we can change our perspective on life and 'Drive our Life'.

The young people provided insight into how they cope with life in Mathare. Their perspective on life is very inspiring to me, coming from a western country where all the basic needs for a comfortable life are being met and seem to be the standard. People nevertheless seem to be searching for more, as if happiness and strength can be bought or found outside ourselves. The pressure that people in western society feel to be successful can lead to stress, fear and negativity. A great contradiction to what I learned and got to know about the inner strength and power of the young people in Mathare, who live in an environment with many everyday challenges. By the end of my vocational training, I knew I wanted to come back and learn more about their motivational resources.

The year after my vocational training I went back for my thesis. I interviewed the young people in this community, and through their narrative, their life story, I discovered what was in their minds, which choices they were making and learned about their mentality which causes them to be so positive and full of strength. While interviewing the young people, I knew these stories and life experiences were so valuable and inspiring to people anywhere around the world, because these motivational resources are within all of us, no matter where you come from. We all have the ability to become aware of our 'Drive in Life' through our inner motivational resources.

I could not let go of the idea of combining all the quotes and stories together in a book, and give back to Mathare. I had not written a book before, but something inside was driving me on. Inspired by the stories, they became a driving force for me, and my willingness to give back empowered me while working on this book. The graphic design of the book is by Ruben Kuijper, a good friend of mine, who decided to help by proving his skills and voluntary support.

Everybody involved in this book did so on a voluntary, non-profit basis. No pockets were lined anywhere, but hopefully it will touch the minds and hearts of readers. Through crowdfunding the funds were raised to print the books and give back 'My Drive in Life' to the young people of Mathare. Over 500 people in the Netherlands and around the world have donated money, so that the books could be printed and could give back – to 'come home' and inspire many more in and around Mathare.

I would like to thank all the young people for sharing their stories, and for trusting me and opening up to me. Most of all, role models are so important in the lives of young people anywhere around the world. They became my role models for coping with life and all the challenges along the way. And they continue to inspire me to this day.

Through this book, I hope they will also empower you, in some way. Let their words inspire you to reflect on the way you approach life. Let their stories inspire you to feel, think and live positively. Silas, Isaac, Joyce, Monty, Derek, Floyd, Emily, Robert, Jeffrey and Lisa: thank you so much for opening up and sharing your story with me and everyone reading this book.

You guys are a huge inspiration. My thankfulness is beyond words.

Nelleke Nijhuis

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AT THE END OF EVERY CHAPTER YOU WILL FIND
**EFFECTS AND QUESTIONS
TO ASK YOURSELF ABOUT**
EVERY PARTICULAR MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE

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INTRODUCTION

When reading this book, you may do so starting from any section; the chapters not have to be read in sequence. Please, feel free to read and re-read the book around certain themes or following your own interest. Using the book creatively is especially useful when it is being used as a learning method, for workshops or in training.

The motivational resources available to the young people in Mathare are shown in quotes in nine of the chapters. Each of those chapters represents one of these motivational resources. These resources were derived from an analysis of the interviews with the young people, and eight of the nine resources provide a direct answer to the thesis question: 'What are the motivational resources available to the young people of Mathare?'

The answers to this question, shown throughout the book in quotes, stories and pictures, concern role models, negative experiences/anti-role models, self-determination, being part of a group, stories of positive experiences in life through media, religion/spirituality, the past and the future. When you look closely, you will find that the quotes and chapters are somehow related to each other. The first chapter, on the environment, provides insight into the

young people's perspective on their environment, their community Mathare, as another motivational factor.

Each chapter introduces a specific motivational resource. After each introduction, interviews that were conducted with a group of young people are presented, more or less verbatim. In addition, the effects of the particular motivational resource on their individual lives are also described. At the end of each chapter, you will find some questions to ask yourself about your 'Drive in Life' and your perspective towards these resources.

Furthermore, besides the quotes, the effects and the self-reflective questions, there are the life stories of three of the young interviewees: Isaac, Joyce and Silas (except for Silas, these and the names of the other young people in this book are all aliases). The book also contains a tribute to Silas Muthini Mukii, whose name is not an alias.

The young people involved all gave their permission for the publication of their interviews and life stories in this book. The pictures are by David Mbutia, who was also interviewed for this book. The poems are by Victor Kebane, who is also a member of the Maji Mazuri youth group. His life story is not in the book, but through his poems he is supporting the message it contains.

The main objective of this book is to let the stories of life experiences and motivational resources 'come home' to Mathare. In this way the stories may serve as examples and be an inspiration to empower many more young people in finding their 'Drive in Life'. The interviewed young people all receive copies of the book, as will the Maji Mazuri Youth Group and other interested young people; for example, those in youth groups.

All the time I spent on making this book was provided on a voluntary basis. The young people involved have inspired me by and have supplied me with this dream of giving back. Over 500 people, both in the Netherlands and around the world, have donated their time and/or money to cover the costs of this book, to support its creation and make sure it will be available in Mathare right now





ABOUT MATHARE

Mathare Valley is an informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya. An informal settlement is an area without essential, basic needs such as clean drinking water, lighting, ventilation and a proper sewage system. Mathare Valley is one of the largest and oldest informal settlements in east Africa, overcrowded with more than 200,000 inhabitants.

The poor economic conditions have consequences for safety, education, health and perspective in life, because people lack opportunities.

Life expectancy in Kenya is around 55 years, but many of those living in Mathare Valley face an earlier death. Causes of death are mainly diseases, natural causes or disasters, such as fires and violence.

Mathare Valley literally is a valley with a river bed at the bottom. In the valley, next to this highly polluted river, the Chang'aa, an illegal beer is being brewed. Many people in Mathare are exposed to drugs. Especially young people are vulnerable to the use and possibly the sale of drugs. By not going to school and having no meaningful activities, using drugs is often the result of boredom.

Poverty and economic pressure are the main facts of life in an informal settlement. Many residents have no access to education, which means the chances of finding paid employment are small, with all its consequences.

In the lives of the Mathare young people many changes occur, physically and especially mentally. This time of life is mainly about developing your identity. It is a challenge to stay positive during this important stage in life, while trying to find out who you are and who you want to be in life.

Almost all of the young people in this book are members of the Maji Mazuri youth group. Being part of a youth group brings positivity and sometimes the change in life that is necessary for turning a negative social circle into a positive one. The chapter about being part of a group, provides more information on this motivational resource and on the impact of having such a motivation in life.

TRIBUTE TO SILAS

*Strong you were, this we could see
 In thick and thin, you worked hard like the bee
 Lovely smile you gave us, we paid no fee
 Attributes of you were as good as morning tea
 Suddenly you left; your memories can't be washed away even by the sea*

*Making a difference, your record was right
 Undisputed strength, for the ghetto you gave yourself to fight
 Taking part you did, to see the ghetto into great height
 Happy we were, working with you in day and night
 Insight you gave us, just to see things were alright
 No one compares to you, memories of you are tight
 Irreversible are the moments we shared but we can't get them off our sight*

Victor Kebane

Silas Muthini Mukii, a peaceful young man was killed on Thursday, 13 October 2013. Silas is not an alias. Silas Muthini Mukii was 25 years old when he was murdered. An unbelievable reality. Silas was a member of Maji Mazuri youth group and I interviewed him for my thesis. I will never forget how he explained his motivation for following the good path in life, willing to be a good son to his mum, who passed away when he was younger. His story is shared in this book.



A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a layered rock formation, possibly a canyon wall. The image is characterized by strong horizontal lines and textures. A prominent horizontal band of solid blue color runs across the middle of the image, partially obscuring the rock layers. The text "MY ENVIRONMENT" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on this blue band.

MY ENVIRONMENT



'GHETTO ITSELF IS THE BEST TEACHER'

INTRODUCTION

We all have an environment. Comparing the environments of different places and countries, may makes them seem very different. These differences relate to the appearance of the environment; living in a city or being surrounded by nature, in luxurious surroundings in a western country, or in the challenging environment of a ghetto.

Your perspective on your environment influences your daily life. This can be in the way you feel or think about your own life or life in general. In this chapter, the young people of Mathare explain how they see their environment, their community.

While reading this book, you may begin to get a glimpse of my fascination for these people, bearing in mind that I came to Mathare with a Western-world frame of reference. The young people of Mathare have a positive attitude towards their environment and choose positively, in a place where survival seems to involve a day-to-day struggle to combat poverty, with all its dire consequences, such as crime, early death, sickness and more. Let them inspire you to also learn from your environment, wherever that may be.

JEFFREY 'Every day a scandal has to rise up. You know so and so? He was shot dead. You know so and so? He was killed. We are brought up with those issues. In ghetto, I think about 80% of the girls got children with different fathers. Boys maybe have a family to take care of at 16 or 18. At times you miss three meals a day, just take water and call it a day. We undergo those things and in real sense you happen to know yourself, so that you can achieve the things you want from life. If you don't work there's no meal for you.'

LISA 'Most of the time here you don't have peace. You are used to be in constant fear. This can be anything, about anything they can fight. When you walk around, someone will come and beat you or even kill you. They try to steal from you. I don't feel secure, that's my biggest challenge. I don't like walking at night. I stay in the house. I try to prevent a feeling of insecurity and just go on with everything. You keep yourself strong. You have to go on and hope that someday you [will] come out of this misery.'

JOYCE 'When you look around here in Mathare, most people take life as if they can't do anything [about it], or they are not fast enough learners. No, I don't think about it. When you are ignorant, you can do bad things. Also boredom makes people do bad things, things that don't impress people.'

LISA 'I compare some people here. I look at one girl and see how she is. She went to school and now she has a job. And then I look at someone who dropped out of school and see how they live. These two have different lives. I follow the one that went on with her own education.'

ROGER 'Mathare is a teacher, there are certain things that happen but you really don't understand why they happen. I think that maybe it's good that we see it so we can learn from it.'

MONTY 'The key motivational resources are the people themselves. People have been born and stayed here, in the slums. If my friends [look at someone] like me, who achieves many things in life, and they are back in the ghetto and have not achieved, they will feel that if their friend can achieve, so can they achieve, if they do their calculations right.'

LISA 'I used to walk with some girls who use alcohol. But I was not using that. I left that group and decided to focus on my future. That is positive, because if I continued with the bad group I could have gotten pregnant. There was one friend of mine who told me that I would be losing hope. I had to listen to her and get out. She used to be with me most of the time and she gave me ways to get out. That gave me power.'



JOYCE 'I looked at how some girls and boys relate to each other. They play around with life, they play around with their lives. They just take their lives for granted. I look back on how I have been growing up and how my background was. Not to do something because I have seen somebody else do it. Let's say, for example, when I take a smoke, I know it will harm my life – even when that other person usually smokes, because maybe he is used to it. But I take care of my own life.'

JEFFREY 'These issues and challenges will be there as long as you are in the ghetto. They'll still be there. Whenever I try to come up with something, anything must come along. There was this time I tried to save some cash but then I lost it. I used to have a fancy phone, but it was [stolen by a] pickpocket. Whenever I try to come up with something it can't be accomplished. At first, when I reflect back on those memories, I felt angry about it, because you are trying to buy something or to save some money and then you don't end up with it. But, on the other side, I just say to myself that life has all these issues. If you want to end up with something, it takes a long time. I still have this passion and hope that one fine day I will still have [this attitude].'

ROGER 'Ghetto is a college. And let me say it is also a university, because the world ghetto is: Get High Education To Teach Others.'

MONTY 'The greatest thing that usually motivates me is the suffering so many people go through. Especially here in the slums of Mathare, because people are uninformed. Most of them are not formally educated up to form 4 or up to university level. Most of them are primary school dropouts, mostly as a result of poverty. These are the things that motivate me, because I believe that the moment you equip people with information they can change their lives and the lives of so many people here in the slums. So that motivates me, the problems that people are facing. I believe that one day, at one time, given the opportunity and the resources, I will change this ghetto which we are living in.'

JEFFREY 'Most people are influenced by peer pressure. Peer pressure is all about the thing that drives people crazy. Also the thing that leads most of the young people to be killed in the ghetto. You find that girls down there they don't even see a man if he doesn't have cash or if he doesn't wear [nice clothes]. Girls are attracted to a person who has money, who is able to provide. So the best way to entice a girl is maybe to steal or to go and buy expensive shoes and clothes to get this girl. In the long run, you find that whenever a person tries to be like someone else, they end up being shot or killed. If you don't have cash you spend most of the time in ghetto just dreaming. They won't even bother talking or socialising with you. So, in the



long run, they go out, involve themselves in illegal activities so that they can impress a certain person from the community. Peer pressure is all about that. You have to be very smart upstairs, you have to know whom you're dealing with. If it's a person who just wants your cash or wants your property, then you have to take some distance.'

JOYCE 'The way I think, is the way I change things. You know, most people think that when you're poor you can't move to another stage. And when you're poor you can't do anything. People can't say you did something good, they will just say this one is so poor she can't do anything. In Mathare, most of the young people lack certain skills, which they have not been taught or told about. Like decision making, self-esteem and not to look down on themselves. They have to believe in themselves and believe that "Whatever I am holding in my hand or whatever business I am doing, I can do it". And, you see, most of the youths, whenever maybe someone has finished form four he thinks of a scholar job. Bigger and bigger jobs in an office or what? But she or he don't know that this small business will grow and grow, every day. Depending on how you manage it on how you control it.'

ROGER 'In our community, in our culture, when you reach a certain age you have to depend on yourself. Not in terms of food, but you reach a

time when you're alone. Let me say, this house, I pay rent. So that's it. I wouldn't live with my parents for the rest of my years. So I also have to find my own way in which I can survive.'

EFFECTS FROM ENVIRONMENT

AS A MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE

- I learn how to be strong •
- I'm learning who I am •
- I can't give up, have to hold on •
- I recognise anti-role models in my environment and learn from them •
- I learn to be independent because of my culture •
- I learn about peer pressure because I see the effect in my environment •
- I have to have hope •
- I learn from what happens in Mathare •

ASK YOURSELF

ABOUT YOUR ENVIRONMENT



**HOW DO YOU
INFLUENCE
YOUR ENVIRONMENT?**

**WHAT DO YOU SEE
IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT?**



**WHAT DO YOU LEARN
FROM YOUR ENVIRONMENT?**

**HOW DOES YOUR
ENVIRONMENT INFLUENCE
THE WAY YOU THINK OR FEEL?**

**CAN YOU SEE
DIFFERENT WAYS
OF LIVING IN
YOUR ENVIRONMENT?
WHICH ONE WOULD
YOU FOLLOW?**



ROLE MODELS

The image features a vertical wooden plank with a prominent grain and several knots. A horizontal band of deep red color covers the middle portion of the plank. Centered within this red band is the text 'ANYTHING A MAN CAN DO, I CAN DO TOO' in white, uppercase letters.

‘ANYTHING A MAN CAN DO,
I CAN DO TOO’

INTRODUCTION

Role models are very important. There are different ways to define a role model. Role models, as described in this book, are people that build you up or have a positive impact, in any kind of way, through monologue or dialog, through several conversations or only a one-time contact. This can be close personal contact, such as with a family member, but it may also be friends, social workers or persons that empower you; for example, by listening or giving you positive feedback.

Role models can also be persons that you only meet once, perhaps in the street. An example of an inspiring one-time contact is shown in this chapter. If we start looking at role models in that way, then each and every person we meet has the potential to teach us something positive about life.

The young people also explain their motivation for being a positive role model themselves. They are aware of the environment and the community around them and have experienced the impact of positive role models for themselves. They now want to be that positive resource for others. In this chapter you will read about role models and how they help to shape the lives of young people in a positive way.

DEREK 'I was really inspired by my mum. She would tell us life can change. When you have a problem it's not the end of everything. There is always another chance. She could give us hope and ideas.'

ROGER 'There is a certain street boy, we call them chokora. He told me – and I quote: 'Chokora nihizi nguo nimevaa! Nguo nichafu lakini roho nisafi.' (These clothes that I'm wearing are the ones that make me to be a street boy, but in my heart I know that I'm clean.) These street guys are people who have been dumped. People don't know they can get a very important message from them. Like for example this guy is trying to send a message. Not every street guy that you see on the street is bad. His message to me was: don't despise anyone or underestimate anyone. Don't judge.'

SILAS 'I grew up with friends when I was small. They are big men now living a good life but they used to have so many problems. Some even don't live here anymore. They give me such impact, instead of just sitting down like that. You have to work hard, so that you can reach the goals you want.'

FLOYD 'Your mother is holy and your grandmother is very holy.'

ISAAC 'The person who I'm most inspired by is Mariga, a great footballer. He has lived here and now he is playing for Inter Milan. Here in the ghetto we believe that if you're poor, you can't go far, but Mariga is inspiring to me because he also lived in poor conditions. I know his background, he didn't have anything – but he believed, he tried and he made it. I manage a lot by looking at Mariga.'

JEFFREY 'I've spent most of the time also with my grandparent. I share stories with him. He also gives me words of encouragement.'

ROGER 'They used to come with some guns and tell you, you can hold them like this and this. When you see them you think these guys have a lot of money. Then you also want to join them in doing those things. But we could not do it. Let me say, I wouldn't say that we could not do it. But we really appreciated our parents so much, because they took the initiative of making sure we would not stay here in Mathare. So most of our friends, each and every person was taken to his rural area. I do believe that if we would have stayed there in those days, we could have died.'



MONTY 'I believe in things that people experience. For myself, as a result of sharing, I managed to overcome the trauma that was in me. I could also go and encourage someone and tell them to share, then they will overcome their traumas. Not to go to the psychiatrist where they use the knowledge learned in school, the theoretical knowledge. Someone who has experience is in a position to give you an explanation as a result of experience, now that is practical. That's why I believe that that person has the ability to give you the right guidance or the right counselling as opposed to a psychiatrist.'

JEFFREY 'There are people from the ghetto who are internationally recognised. If you bring those people to hold a motivation talk, I think some people will be changed. When you give back to the community that experience can motivate another person to come up with a second thought. Why do those people decide to give back to the community? When you try to think about that in a real sense, you also find yourself along that line and you want to achieve what others have been trying to do.'

FLOYD 'I make sure my siblings under me are OK; that no one has to drop out of school, everyone goes to school first of all, and I lead by example. I can't drink I can't smoke, I lead by example.'

FLOYD 'My dad was working very hard. He was never employed and running a family of nine, with my mother 10. He had to cater for the school fees, pay for my house. He had no education but he used his own skills. That inspires me; to do so with the skills you have, with the little knowledge you have.'

JOYCE 'In fact I was so quiet and one day my class teacher chose me as a class prefect. I began to develop the qualities of being a leader. It motivated me because I could stand in front of the class and tell them, you know, this is right and when you do that it will harm everyone.'

FLOYD 'It reached that time that I had no cash. Things were going up and then down, things were going bad. So I had to drop out of school and stay for 2 years at home. One of my cousins said 'you know what, I will provide for your school fees for the first term and the exam money'. That inspired me, because that was the exam that made me succeed.'

DEREK 'I really felt like life had come to an end, until I went to the mental hospital. When I was there, I had some counsellors who gave me hope. They showed me there is life after this, they gave me hope until my mind started thinking positive. When I came back I started doing positive things.'



JEFFREY 'I was spending time with some of my friends who used to be thieves. In a positive way, I changed one of them. I talked with this person and he heard me. I told him: 'Ghetto life is ruining most of the people, why don't you distance yourself from these people. Your parent is from the ghetto and is not able to sustain you. What about when you get caught, you spend your life in jail?' I gave him a lecture and in a positive way he changed. He told me: 'I had people talking to me, but most people don't give good advice about what to do next. If I leave this [thieving] job what about my family, the ones I'm taking care of? My wife is pregnant and she has got another kid, my mother depends on me. So what am I going to do about that?' I told him to enrol in a course at NairobiBits. That time I paid for him. He dropped out at course 2, but he was well capable of starting up his own business. Currently, he is doing web design and also printing some t-shirts. He changed drastically between the first day I approached him till now. His life has changed, so I can call that one also a positive moment. You will overcome [things] as long as you are positive in your mind; life has times that are rough and times that will be smooth.'

EMILY 'Sometimes you want to give up hope, but you don't, because of that kid whose looking up to you. When you give up hope you're killing their dreams.'

FLOYD 'Sometimes, some teachers pay my transport for a week. Something very much behind closed doors, not in public. Sometimes, if I break my glasses in class they even provide glasses for me. It motivates me, because these guys care for me. I can't let someone down who helps me.'

SILAS 'Before my mother died she used to tell us not to engage in bad company. She told me never to go stealing something, even when you are hungry, don't ever go steal something. I want to be a good son, my mother helped us so much. Before those sisters were born my mother struggled a lot with us, so now we have to give back.'

EFFECTS FROM ROLE MODELS

AS A MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE

- I want to give back •
- I feel encouraged •
- I feel inspired •
- I can share experiences •
- I receive insight and become wiser •
- I can't let my role model down •
- I'm in a safe environment •
- I'm informed about an organisation •

ASK YOURSELF ABOUT ROLE MODELS

WHAT KIND OF ROLE MODEL ARE YOU?
OR DO YOU WANT TO BE?

WHO HAS THE MOST
INFLUENCE
IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW?

**WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION
OF A ROLE MODEL? AND WHY?**

**DO YOU SHARE
AND TALK ABOUT YOUR
LIFE EXPERIENCES
WITH OTHERS?**

**WHAT EXACTLY DOES
YOUR ROLE MODEL
MEAN TO YOU?**

**WHO INSPIRES YOU,
OR HAS INSPIRED YOU?**

STORY OF ISAAC

'When my mum and dad divorced, I faced a lot of challenges. Getting [money for] school fees was hard for my mother, so many times I stayed home. When I finished class 8, I didn't go to secondary school because my mom was jobless. She was just going to hustle to get some money and come back. If she had some money then we could eat. I was not happy.

Before they divorced, we were a family of 5. We were enjoying together, having no problems. When my mother divorced my father, a lot of conflicts came. Everybody was sad and I could not enjoy my life. She was trying hard so that we could eat and pay the house. I didn't do anything because that same year, my grandmother passed away and I was wondering, what's wrong, why are these things happening? I'm not in school, my grandmother passed away, my mother divorced my father. I felt bad because when I was with friends, I was always sitting feeling sad in one place and they were enjoying themselves.

I started taking these things very simple. I imagined that there were many friends of mine without their parents. Maybe someone is living with a single parent. Only his father or mother. I took it like that. The problems I faced led

me to be a person to take small things from people. If you see something good, you take it and go sell it. When I was doing these things, one person down there was shot dead because of steeling. That's when I saw steeling is not good anymore.

It was at night. In the morning I woke up, as usual. When I was outside I heard some rumours that someone was dead, shot dead by in the night, because he was stealing. That day I promised myself not to do steeling anymore. I decided to do that because for you to prosper and live a good life you need to hustle and not involve yourself in bad things. I decided to put bad things aside and do my thing. Also the thing which made me stop taking small things is that, today, you take 1 shilling, tomorrow you take 20, the next day 100. It goes like that until [one day] you go and rob a bank.

I can search for myself, get something of my own, apart from taking other people's property. The change was when I managed to go down there and earn my own money. I went down there and started brewing Chang'aa. That's what helped. By now, I manage to pay this house, but with a lot of challenges. As Kikuyu, if you are circumcised you have to live in your own house. So when I was 16, I had to move out my mother's house. The first months my mother paid the house for me but then I saw I can't rely on my mother because she

is struggling for us to eat. I thought of going to the riverside and started brewing Chang'aa. I was just doing it so that I can get some money. When I get some money, I give some to my mum and I save some for paying the house. Even right now I pay the house and give my mum some. I work one day a week. Because there are no jobs there. Once you go there for one day you will get a salary of only 300 bob. I give my mum 100 bob, I take 100 bob to buy some things for myself, and I save 100 bob.

If I look back now, I've seen a lot of change. As for me, I hope I will manage and keep the spirit. Back in those days when my mother was going to look for something, sometimes she could not get it. At times we were sleeping like that. Sometimes you get breakfast, no lunch. If you get supper, it's a little bit. Now there is a change, because daily I can get these things. Now she is making sure we take breakfast, lunch, supper. I feel good, I feel proud. I believe through working hard you can prosper. The way I have shown my wisdom is in the youth group. I've decided to volunteer and I become a leader of the garbage collection in the youth group. It keeps me busy, mostly on Saturday. You know if you're bored, you can't say you will stay in the house and stay alone. So on Saturday I go clean up from 9 to 12, then from 12 to 5 I go to a peace meeting.

In 2007, there was war because the votes of the elections were stolen. Now we try our level best, so that even when the votes are stolen, there will be no war. We reach this through being told by for example Naomi. She tells you some things, then it applies to you and you share the knowledge with other people. I feel good because it educates me on things I didn't know.

When you are a youth, this is the stage in life where you face a lot of challenges, especially in ghettos. It can lead you to do many things which you're not expecting, so it is up to you yourself to stand and decide if you can change or not. You can follow the bad way, or you can follow the good path. You yourself are the one to make a decision. By escaping the bad things [and go] to the good things, for example if you're used to staying with bad people, you can see a change if you get something which keeps you busy because then you will not even be attending that place anymore. I have seen many people being destroyed by their friends, your friends tell you to do it their way, then you do it and it turns out you're a drunkard. If you mind yourself, you can achieve and set your goals, but if you follow other friends you can end up with problems.

The thing which made me to manage until this point is that I didn't involve myself with bad company, because by then those groups were bringing up

the fights. Those good friends of yours are the ones who pressure you, they tell you to throw stones at the policeman. Many friends of mine passed away. Some of them went mad because of taking other people's property when they fight, or break in, take a TV, a radio, or enter shops to take money. Right now some are mad, they are mad. I eliminated myself from them and decided to stay aside, that's why I managed. I stood [up for] myself and asked myself: if I can involve myself with these people, can I live a good life?

I knew it wasn't good because when I was looking at these friends of mine, some were being caught and the thing I fear most is to be caught by a policeman and then he starts beating you up, he arrests you. That's the thing I fear most. I decided [to] live by myself. I followed a role model of mine. He doesn't live here now. He is the one who told me in the ghetto, for you to proceed, stop going to clubs at night, put those ones aside. The time of those days will come, be yourself and stop involving yourself in bad things. I saw that he was telling the truth because most people in the base where we always meet, they will always tell you negative things. Encouraging you to go and steel, encouraging you to not work. Just to stay like that. They will say it [too], so that they can make a great friendship and become a group. But he was telling me positive things. He connected me with Maji Mazuri and I became a member. I compared the young people at the base with the

young people in the group. I saw there is a big difference between them. The differences are that down there they spoil you, but in the youth group they are encouraging you and through believing and working hard you can make it. I'm happy that I went to Maji Mazuri. Also he is older than me, so I asked him about the challenges he faced and he helped me to control it. For me, if I am with you and you are the person who makes me angry, I get out of that place, I leave you there and go to another place to relax there.

The strength inside me is that now I can stand [up for] myself. What happened is that I've seen a little in my believing, and putting bad things aside up to now. I've seen, I've tried myself, I've tried. What I do to feel good is that I work hard because I don't want to be brewing Chang'aa to be my level best. I want to work hard so I can go back to the course in Maji Mazuri and manage to be a great web designer, a developer.

My parents were brought up with Chang'aa, my mother has brought me up with Chang'aa and so I want to try, if I get a family, not to bring them up again with Chang'aa. To develop is the best thing. I need to try my level best and develop from this place to another, like I developed the way I was living. I came, I lived [by] myself. Now the thing I'm aiming [to do] is to develop and maybe, let us say, for example, live in a good place.'



NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES ANTI-ROLE MODELS



**'CHALLENGES ARE THERE
TO MAKE YOUR MIND GROW'**

INTRODUCTION

Negative experiences speak for themselves. We all face them in life. They can happen in different situations and moments in time. These are the situations that have a negative impact on you. Anti-role models are the opposite of positive role models. Anti-role models are the persons, or actions from persons that have a negative impact on you.

Negative experiences and anti-role models can be a source of positive inspiration if you are able to turn this into something positive. To see these situations and or persons and use them as source of learning. It can be a great inspiration in the choices you make in your own life. Using negativity, whether from a situation or a person, can teach you so much and give you so much strength.

The way the young people tackle challenges and cope with negativity has been an inspiration to me. I hope they can be an example and an inspiration for others, to learn and become stronger because of life itself, including its challenges, negative experiences and anti-role models.

DEREK 'Challenges are set so that they can sharpen you. These challenge are there to make your mind grow.'

JEFFREY 'Each and every person has got a perspective on his own life. If you want to live a happy life, challenges are there, they are going to challenge you and they are the ones you are going to overcome. As long as you overcome them they give you an experience. So you're going to experience [them] in life. Even though I have overcome [them], there are [still] many challenges ahead. You will find that those challenges are the ones that build you. If you tackle challenges, you move on with life. You experience another challenge, you tackle it, you move on. That's how life has been changing. One challenge, you tackle it, and move on.'

ISAAC 'By escaping the bad things [and go] to the good, you can see a change in yourself. If you get something which keeps you busy, you see yourself not even attending that place. If you're busy I don't think you will have the time to go and stay with that bad group, because when you are busy you will do your work, maybe you will go from your place for example at 9 and you will be back at 6 or 5. Then I don't think you can get a chance [to do bad things].'



DEREK 'The biggest challenge I experienced is when you try to make a dream come true, you find a lot of hinder. Maybe people are telling you, you can't make it. They are trying to make you lose hope. I came to find that when this door is closed there is another door open somewhere. When I was broke it was a challenge to me. But now I'm seeing I can make it in life. When I can make it in life I can be a mentor to [other] youths. When you get this problem, it's really sharpening your mind. It makes you sit down and start maybe writing things that can really, really inspire someone.'

ROGER 'There is a certain driving force within myself. There is a certain driving force, because I have a photo album here. If you see that album, only a few people are alive, [only] a few. Mostly I show this album, then I ask them did you know this guy? Where is he? Did you know that guy? Where is he? They are all dead. Then what about you? You're still alive.'

SILAS 'I saw other children who were struggling much harder than me, so I had to have strength. Some are even sleeping outside, they don't have their house, they are struggling. I saw I'm much more OK than them. So I decided, if I don't want to be living like that, I have to work to get [my] daily bread. That is positive motivation. I also saw other friends having problems that I have in life, they were working and living better than me. So I had to have that motivation.'

MONTY

'I can remember a moment that was the lowest moment in my life. The president appointed a Kamba politician. At the moment he was appointed to be the vice president, I saw a few Kamba's in the village who were killed! They had nothing to do with the appointment, nothing to do with the elections. A kid was hacked to death, a small kid. And his father was also killed. I saw it happen, it was horrific in nature and I was very terrified, I was traumatised. There was nothing I could do because I was on my own. I felt that I should go and tell these people that whatever you're doing is wrong. But those people might have turned against me and also kill me, so there was nothing I could do. I just felt very bad. At that time I was 18. Right now, as we're speaking, there's a peace concept which I have drafted, I have it with me. I'm looking for people who I can work with, in order to let people know that it's not always good to fight or turn against your neighbour. Fighting against your neighbour from an opposite tribe because of bungled elections which had nothing to do with that neighbour. It's high time we stop being used by the politicians. They have a lot of money so they use the money which they have to create kills or conflicts in our society. I want people to realise it's high time to fight the poverty and not to turn against our neighbours from the opposite tribe.'

ISAAC 'I compared the young people which are in the ghetto at the base and the young people which are in the group. I saw there is a big difference between them. The differences are that down there they spoil you, but in the youth group, they are encouraging you and through believing and working hard you can make it.'

JEFFREY 'I lost one of my schoolmates. He was shot dead. People from nearby areas tell us we saw Ng'ang'a was caught yesterday [together with] other friends. But we don't know where he is [now]. We are trying to call his number but we're not getting through. Two days we searched for him, his parents searched for him at the hospital [and in] other areas and didn't find him. So eventually one of the young people from that area told us they were tortured at a certain place. And then they were taken one by one and shot at close range. We went to the mortuary, we found actually he was one [of them]. They were killed in the morning and with some reports that [said] they were planning to rob some of the residents. We were shocked. How come a school leaver – in fact he was just fresh out of school, he came for the holidays – and then he was shot? So I lost one of my great friends. I was traumatised for almost one month. I'm a football player. So I whenever I'm traumatised I spend most of the time playing football, coming home maybe late. Because when I spend [time] at home, I just start to think back.

I have enrol myself in activities so that I can erase all the bad memories. We are from the ghetto and most of the young people don't achieve the [right] perspective [on] life, so we just stay calm, it's all about the Gods. Each and every person has his own life. Even if he was mistaken, shot dead. Just let it go like that. You still have your life to live.'

EMILY 'A clever person looks at his mistakes and learns, but a wise person looks at the others person's mistake and moves on. He does not wait to make that [same] mistake, so that he can learn from it. I'd rather take the other route, instead of going the same route that my friend used and got mugged. I don't want to be mugged. I choose another route.'

JEFFREY 'There are things, like spending time to go and visit children in centres [of] which [the] parents are no longer there, and I will erase all the bad memories that I'm going through.'

SILAS 'Don't worry about the obstacles you are going through and everything. I can just tell [you] that any obstacles you're facing in life, don't worry, those things are going to pass. Don't leave the good way, like the good life, the life that we want to be living.'



EMILY 'You know, when you look at people complaining they don't have shoes, there is another person and they don't even have legs. Why should you be there whining? At least be thankful that you got a small education up to standard two. Other than the person who can't afford to go to class one. Be thankful for the little things you have. Sometimes I wake up in the morning and don't have transport to go where I need to go. So I say OK, I'd rather be thankful because I'm alive to see this day, other than complaining. At least I have somewhere to go to. Other than a person who's in the hospital. You know sometimes it's the little things that we don't take note of that are very, very important in our lives.'

DEREK 'Negativity pushes you in a corner. It is pushing you in a corner to make you think positive.'

EFFECTS FROM NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES / ANTI-ROLE MODELS AS A MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE

- I take responsibility for my own life and make my own choices •
 - I'm thankful for what I do have •
- I compare people and follow the paths of those who achieve •
- I learn from my experiences, and make different choices to prevent negative experiences •
- I make sure I've got positive things to do, like work or school, instead of being idle •
- I believe in God after what I've seen and/or been through •
 - I want to give back to and for the community •

ASK YOURSELF

ABOUT NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES/ ANTI-ROLE MODELS

WHAT ARE THE
NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES
IN YOUR LIFE?
AND HOW DID YOU
COPE WITH THEM?

ARE THERE
LIFE LESSONS
FOR YOU IN
THESE EXPERIENCES?
IF SO, WHAT ARE
THE LESSONS?

**WHAT ARE YOU
THANKFUL FOR?**

**WHAT DO YOU NEED TO
TURN NEGATIVITY
INTO POSITIVITY?**

**DO YOU HAVE
ANTI-ROLE MODELS
IN YOUR LIFE?
WHAT CAN YOU
LEARN
FROM THEM?**

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IN YOUR LIFE
IF YOU WOULD CHOOSE
TO LEARN FROM NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES?**

The background is an abstract composition of textures. It features a central horizontal band of bright yellow, which is heavily textured with dark, scratch-like lines and brushstrokes. Above and below this yellow band are areas of black and white, also with a rough, distressed appearance, including what looks like splatters and fine scratches. The overall effect is one of raw, industrial, or perhaps artistic, energy.

SELF DETERMINATION RESPONSIBILITY IN LIFE



'IT IS YOU YOURSELF TO STAND UP
AND DECIDE IF YOU CAN CHANGE'

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter you will read about the way the young people experience self-determination and responsibility in life. It provides insight into their perspective on life, and what this motivational resource means to them. It also shows how they put self-determination and responsibility into practice, in daily life. Not only for themselves as individuals, but also for others around them and in the community.

This is a very important motivational resource in life, since everything starts within yourself. Everything experienced is happening inside ourselves. The way you see the world and cope with life starts with your own perspective towards those experiences. To know that you are the one that has the ability to choose a perspective in your own life creates a lot of space in your mind. You can choose how you want to cope with life and be self-determined and responsible, to 'Drive your own life'.

JEFFREY 'If you don't think about your life then it's short, but if you think about it, it's wide. You have to be courageous about what you think and what you do. If you involve yourself in things that may ruin your life, you'll find that your life is too short. If you involve yourself in things that you are going to benefit from, you're going to be lifted up.'

DEREK 'I want to do positive things, because if you want to achieve in life you must do positive things. I want to express what is inside of me and do what is inside the community. First of all, if you want to do positive things, you have to have discipline in your life. Discipline will guide you to do positive things, it will always keep you on the right track. Secondly, you have to have rules in your life, those rules will guide you and protect you. Whenever you want to do things, you remember you've set your rules, and those rules are there to guide you and lead you. Thirdly, feed your body, mind and spiritual insight with positive things. You need to stay away from drugs, you don't want to feed your body with drugs because drugs will shorten your life. Discipline is like living in a positive way in the community, controlling your temper, controlling your spirit. It's something that will guide you so that you can never cross the boundaries that you have set.'

SILAS 'I can say life is how you take it. When you make things become harder, it becomes harder. When you make your life to become easier it becomes easier.'

MONTY 'I really like telling people to live by their means, live by their own means. There's no point in me wanting to live like someone else who is not me. It simply means you should not try to be someone else, there's no way I can be you and yet I'm myself. There's no way I can be the president and yet I'm just a simple man out here. So it's always good to live by your own means and there's no way you will live an expensive life and yet you're poor, you see. Live by what you earn. Live by the circumstances that are around you and life will be good. And always try to improve. Try to improve on the standards where you are because life is all about improving. Each and every person in this world would like to live a comfortable live. So you should try as much as possible to improve on your standard of living and improve your way of life.'

LISA 'Wisdom is something that comes from when you are going through a lot. Something that you learn from experience. The time that we came out of the Moi Air force, after overcoming everything, I had to go back to school. I was motivated again. I wanted to go back to my education. Because without education, your future will not be good.'



MONTY 'As a child, decisions are made for you, you can't make decisions for yourself. But from the moment I started thinking, I usually weigh the outcome, and I have never regretted that.'

LISA 'If wishes are horses then beggars could ride. People like wishing, every time they say 'I wish, I wish, I wish'. If these wishes were horses, everyone could ride, because people like wishing so much. I used to hear it from my aunt. She used to tell us never to wish. If something happens and it is a bad thing, you better look [for] the ways to solve it then to wish [it to be different].'

JEFFREY 'It's all about self-worth. You have to be yourself so that you can achieve something, you don't have to form a group or do something so that you can be recognised.'

MONTY 'I want to feel happy, it is natural. You see, the moment you achieve what your always passionate about, you will feel happy inside yourself. You feel happy, so happy inside yourself. You will feel relaxed, stress-free and you feel happy. You know happiness is one of the things that have a lot of impact in our life. I will look younger than I am, happy things will always do good. But the moment you're sad, you might end up with many health complications.'

FLOYD 'If you have never gotten any experience, don't wait until you get [it]. Find someone who has experience and he will share [it] with you. And if you have experience, build from it, just focus ahead and never, never go back. May the experiences become your strongest point.'

EMILY 'If I want to live, if I want my family to move out of the slums, we [will] do it gradually. I move out, the next time I move out my mother, the next time my brother and my sisters. So if I want them to move out of the ghetto, let me move out of the ghetto first so that I can change them when I am not in the ghetto [anymore]. Because when I'm in the ghetto, I still think like someone from the ghetto. But when I move out of the ghetto and talk to my mother, I think like a person who is not living in the ghetto. She wants to be like, you know, I went the other day to my daughter's house and she was looking very nice, I think I want to move out to her place. It will make a difference. If you want a person to move out of the ghetto, you have to move yourself out of the ghetto first and then move them out.'

SILAS 'I'm just working right now and I want to finish [my] education, the training that I'm going through right now. So that when I'm finished I will be able to get a job. Then I'm able to help like one or two sisters to be catered for to finish their secondary [education].'



MONTY 'If you believe that you can change away from the norm, then you can change. But if you believe you can't then it will be hard. So I believe, even though at times it might be hard to change the genes that are there in someone, I believe in that change. Someone can change, especially as a result of, you know, life experiences.'

ROGER 'We are also to be blamed, if you ask me. There is a certain saying here, we normally talk so much but we don't help or see the way we can help people or this young generation of ours. We are just like, so and so is now a thief, if he doesn't take good care of himself, he will be killed. But then what have you helped? Instead of going to him and telling him. There is a certain boy here, he is just a small boy. I told him like where is so and so? He's not around, where is so and so? They have all been shot, or burned, or they have been beaten, and you are still alive. Do you have to steel people's property to survive? Why can't you go for a job and do some sort of work? I talked with him and he came to know that it was reality what I told him. You are still young, you are stealing and you have a baby. How will you take good care of this baby? If he grows up, he'll be asking his mother, where did my father go? Would he say that his father went to go to steal? Because he is stealing and he doesn't even have an account. What has he invested with that money? Just chewing miraa, and roaming around with those beautiful

ladies, saying that he's a champion. It doesn't make any sense. Most of the people say so and so, if he doesn't take care of himself he is going to die, but what are we doing? So to make sure that this guy doesn't get involved in criminal activities it is also on us to take that initiative and tell him that crime doesn't pay. If you see here in Mathare, and not [only] in Mathare but most of the slum areas in Kenya, most of the young people indulge in criminal activities. They have to be hired to go and terrorise somebody. Or if there is any demonstration if you switch on your tv, you see demonstrations in town, don't think these are people from wherever. They are people from the slum areas who do those sort of things. So I always say that if the government, or anyone, any initiative be it an NGO or whatever, that might come up with a strategic plan to help the young people, it would be better. There is no way a youth can go out here and do something bad if he can find something positive [to do]. If they can do such things, let's say they have a carwash, or anything that might give them some income, let me assure you, they won't go steal somebody's property, because now they're earning [money]. And most of the slum areas would be peaceful.'

JEFFREY 'I have this passion of giving back to the community. Because I'm from the ghetto and I also know people who have been experiencing some bad problems. I have that feeling that, even though we have been born

and [were] brought up in the ghetto, I decided I could maybe give a portion of my salary or of anything [else] back to the community. Whenever I'm at home, like, maybe today, I go down there to the river bank, spend time with the young people we grew up with. We talk, we chat about life, and such.'

EMILY 'My friends used to tell me, change, it starts within you. What you want to change starts within you. The change that you want starts from today, not tomorrow. If you postpone it, there is no change. Change comes from within. Change yourself first before you can change society.'

FLOYD 'Wisdom? It is something you can do and use to break the circle.'

EMILY 'I come from a poor background. I should try and work my way up, to the best I [can do]. Other than just staying and wishing I wish I had that. You can never eat wishes, you can never sit there and see a wish happen and come true, not unless you take a step and say that from today onwards I want to reach that goal. In the next two years I want to be there. And you work every day to achieve your goal.'

JOYCE 'Life is like an egg, so you should not play around with life, cause when an egg has fallen down [it will break and] you can't put the pieces of the egg [back together again]. You have to be careful with your life the way you are careful with an egg.'

EMILY 'You should have positive self-esteem. So that every time you want to give up you say, God I don't want to do that. Every time you push, you push, you push. You need something to be pushing you every time. So every time you want to give up, last time it was this person that picked me up. I don't want them to pick me up again. Let me try and pick myself up. Even if someone else tries and pulls you up, after they are gone you'll still go back to where you were. Sometimes you get help from [people] around you, but the most important is self-esteem, from deep within yourself.'

EFFECTS FROM SELF-DETERMINATION RESPONSIBILITY IN LIFE AS A MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE

- I'm aware of my role and influence as a role model •
- I give back to my community and environment •
- I believe in myself and never give up •
- I choose wisely by looking at the possible consequences of my decisions •
- I take care of my school fees, also for my siblings if possible •
- I want to take my whole family out of Mathare •
- I have a vision, a dream for Mathare •
- I 'drive my own life'; I decide where I want to go in life and in the future •

ASK YOURSELF

ABOUT SELF-DETERMINATION AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

**WHAT IS YOUR
DEFINITION OF
SELF-DETERMINATION
AND RESPONSIBILITY?**

**WHAT DO
YOU FEEL
RESPONSIBLE FOR?**

**IN WHICH WAYS
CAN SELF-DETERMINATION
AND RESPONSIBILITY
BE SHOWN?**

**WHAT DOES IT
TAKE TO BE
RESPONSIBLE?**

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT
IN YOUR LIFE IF YOU ARE
RESPONSIBLE AND SELF-DETERMINED?**

**WHAT IS YOUR
VISION IN LIFE?**



**BEING PART OF A
GROUP/COMMUNITY**



'NO MAN IS AN ISLAND'

INTRODUCTION

No man is an island, no man stands alone. This quote, taken from the interviews with one of the young people, is from the lyrics of a reggae song, as well. Meaning that we are all surrounded by others, never alone. This can be family, people at school, church or a football club, but most of the young people were telling about the positive effects of being part of a youth group.

By having people around us we can overcome problems, because we can share and talk about our experiences in life and help each other. The youth group is a group in which young people come together to help in projects, to give back to the community; for example with 'clean ups'. In these groups, the young people are empowered and help each other in a positive way. They talk with each other, get information about different subjects, but most importantly, by being part of such a group they surround themselves with people that have a positive influence, instead of having people around that bring them down. This chapter is very connected with some of the other chapters in this book. When you read what the young people said, you will understand why.

MONTY 'You need to believe in working with people, synergy. No one is perfect and no man is an island, you have to work with people. So as a result, I believe you can change, you can't do it all on your own.'

DEREK 'It's not something that happened in one step, it was a process to become where I am [today]. I didn't do it all myself, because I shared my problem with people. They could tell me their problems. I could even find [that] my problem was small, it's small. I heard their problems and sympathised with them. It also gives me hope, somebody can have this problem and still make it in life. They bring my spirit back to normal and I started seeing that I'm normal. I feel like it is really making me stronger.'

ROGER 'Always love your brothers and sisters, for that is the good thing that cannot end. And if a brother fights against brother you must always prepare to give a helping hand. Because no man is an island, and no man can stand alone.'

MONTY 'The positive moments in my life have always come when I was a member of Maji Mazuri, and I am still a member. The days or the moments when we usually visit the less fortunate, the days or moments when we help the community.'

JOYCE 'What made me grow up most is the skills that they gave us. Life skills, how to be creative, how to think, this skill of adolescence and about love. Love for my parents, for other people, and how to relate with other people, and to stay with people you live with, and also we had peer pressure and peer counselling.'

FLOYD 'My strongest point is talking. Whenever I talk I discharge. So I feel good because I'm sharing to help someone. Maybe you, I share with you and maybe I'm helping you because you learn from my experience. Whenever you move anywhere, may it be in Jamaica, the Netherlands, or anywhere in the world, when you meet young people, just tell them that the only way out is to have a place, a group where you can share ideas, day in day out. Speak out and do good.'

ISAAC 'Maybe for you, you can't work [by] yourself, alone. That's why maybe you decided to interview me because you know, you can't achieve it [alone], even you need support.'

MONTY 'I shared that traumatic story with so many people and eventually the traumatic feelings came out, little by little, as a result of sharing with so many people. I feel the moment when you share something



[traumatic] with someone, this particular person might sympathise with you and as a result [the trauma] comes out of you, because you feel you're not alone, you feel you're with others. So as a result [the trauma] will eventually come out of you.'

ROGER 'Fighting won't solve anything, it is better to listen to each other. Sometimes the best thing you can do is say sorry, excuse me and thank you. The most important thing is to know how to say sorry. Sometimes people have heard a story but want to stay with it, and keep it for themselves. So it's also good at times to open your heart and say your problem if you have a problem. Then people know it and can help you solve it - instead of only listening and have it piling up inside you.'

LISA 'Some young people like the Maji Mazuri youth group give each other hope. Being part of a youth group. Some people, when you look at their lives, they have gone through a lot. But for now they are here. Also they are hard working. They start their own projects.'

ROGER 'If you walk [around] you will see people, or most of the young people, are doing stuff out here. But if your just stay seated you won't get any information. So I had to walk [around]. I saw some young people [who are]

are organised and have vision. So I knew [that] we must also start our own youth group. So we came up with an idea, with a friend of mine, he is now a student at Kenyatta University. Then he tried to push it. The reason why I like that guy is that he knows how to push something [along]. We had this need, because there comes a time when some of the young people you've grown up with have to go, you won't be with them forever. Then we said let's start something within our location that might help in one way or another. So that's how we came to know that if you're in a youth group it will help a lot. We have a very big sign – you don't have to ask where the Muoroto Insiders organisation is, because we already have the sign there. You can get to share ideas, after which you know how to progress or take [the next] step.'

JOYCE 'Being in a youth church is what helped me because I went and talked to our chairman and I told him everything. He advised me on how to control my temper and how to leave my dad aside and pray for him, so that he can change, and not to be against him, because if I be against him, all in all, I will lose myself. That's when I started to grow up.'

MONTY 'Wisdom comes as a result of networking, as a result of living together with many people for a long time and associating with so many people. As a result of networking, you will get a lot of information.'

Networking is also a part of learning, I've learned in school. Also I've learned so many things from people who I usually work with, so that's how I get information. And also the internet, you can get so much information from the internet.'

FLOYD 'A good example of networking is when I lost my glasses. I went to the youth group and made noise, I went to Nairobi and made noise, I went to family members to make noise and people gave me solutions. You can have a free eye check-up over here. So I make it known, I speak out. If you share something you get ideas. If you hold it in, it will harm you [and you will not] get ideas. Share it in public with as many people as possible. Maybe they will laugh for a minute, but they will give you answers. What you don't need is laughing, you need answers, that's all. Then you build from the answers. People will suggest [things to] you but they will never decide for you. The decision is in your court.'

MONTY '[When] living with other people in a setting, for example in a youth group, or in school, you can also learn so many things. And you also should not be a laidback person, you have to be outgoing to learn many things, because if you're a laidback person, you might end up making wrong decisions because you will not associate with many people.'

EFFECTS OF BEING PART OF A GROUP / COMMUNITY AS A MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE

- I'm being educated, gain knowledge, get training •
- I'm working together in and with groups of people •
- I share experiences and ideas and receive hope and encouragement •
- I can give back to the community and my environment
through the organisation •

ASK YOURSELF

ABOUT BEING PART OF GROUP/COMMUNITY

CAN PEOPLE MAKE IT
ON THEIR OWN,
OR DOES EVERYBODY
NEED OTHERS?

WHICH SOCIAL CIRCLES
ARE YOU A PART OF?

**WHAT ARE YOU
LEARNING IN
THE GROUPS
YOU'RE PART OF?**

**WHO ARE THE PEOPLE
AROUND YOU THAT
EMPOWER
OR MOTIVATE
YOU IN A POSITIVE WAY
AND HOW?**

**WHAT DO YOU GIVE AND BRING
TO THE GROUPS YOU'RE PART OF?
WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AND
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU?**

STORY OF JOYCE

'I've been growing up in Mathare. When I finished primary level, I was supposed to go to form one, but my dad refused to pay school fees because of my marks. He told me to go back and repeat my exam to get better marks, but I said I can't go again. After he refused, I asked what am I going to do next? Because in Mathare when you are in the company of some guys you can get yourself into trouble and so many [other] things. By that time I was sixteen years [old], I could get pregnant. My mother was also stressed about me, about how I will go to school. She is also stressed with my dad.

I stayed at home the whole year helping my mum. There is a missionary nearby with sisters, a church, and they took me to the day school. I was happy about it, I got sponsorship and they paid school fees for me up to form four and I finished last year. When I reached form three there was a time I wanted to give up and leave school because I was getting so stressed. My dad is like this, so I was so disturbed and even my mum got sick. I was confused, I wanted to give up school to come and help my mum. Sometimes my dad would wake up and go to his job without leaving anything for breakfast or whatever. It was just waking up going to school and in the

evening coming back [home]. When my mum had not sold any avocados, we just [went to] sleep hungry. They were quarrelling in the house every now and then, and I wondered what was wrong with my dad, because he started to be like that when he married his second wife. She is concerned with witchcraft and used this on my dad, so my dad sometimes comes to the house quarrelling, not talking to anyone. I wondered what this life is that I'm going through.

There was a time, a night [when] I was telling my mum about it and I started crying. That day I felt like I just wanted to take a knife and kill myself. I said now the world is ending for me because I don't have a peaceful mind. Being in a youth church is what helped me because I talked with the chairman of that youth group and told him everything. He advised me on how to control my temper and to leave my dad aside and pray for him so that he can change. Not to be against him because if I would be against him, all in all, I would lose myself. First I was not so quick to [go] there. It's my neighbour who told me, she said just go there and you will see [for] yourself that you have brothers and sisters who will encourage you. That's when I started to grow up. Around where we live, if I would go and tell my friend she would react as if I'm joking, she wouldn't give me advice, instead she would tell me to go and insult my dad and that's not good.

After I finished form four, my dad said that my mum and I should go live in a rural area, but I told him even though I have finished form four what's next? Up to now he is keeping quiet, he is not looking at me and the way forward. Then I said I will just do any job, to get money by myself for school fees so that I can go on with life and achieve the goals that I've planned.

Right now, my mum is everything, she is the breadwinner in this house, and she is the one in the house doing everything. My dad used to have a job, he was a driver, but he said he doesn't want to do it again. He said he's going to the rural area and leave us without anything. But my mum got a job now and I'm also doing a job now. I'm washing clothes to pay the fees for the course I'm doing and that's how we are living.

When I was young I used to say 'when I grow up I will become a teacher', that's why I want to get an education. What made me grow up most is the skills that they gave us. The skills about life. Life skills, how to be creative, how to think, this skill of adolescence and love. Love for my parents, for other people and how to relate with other people and to stay with people you live with. Also we had peer pressure and peer counselling. I was being pressured by my dad. But in time because I underwent the skills of peer pressure, I knew how to manage it and how to overcome it whenever am being

pressured. Sometimes I just listen to music, that's what I normally do. When I listen to music I forget all the things that I have been pressured with. When I don't want to hear any noise, I just go inside the house and sleep. There was a time when I was so rude. I did not want to hear what my mum was telling me, I even got into bad company. I didn't know how to go to clubs but that time I knew how to go. I began to drink alcohol and I could have gotten pregnant. Then there was a teacher for counselling and one day she called me and counselled me. She told me, when you were in form one you were not like this. Even my performance went down because of bad company. I trusted her because she was saying the same things that my mother was saying. After being counselled by that teacher, I sat down and said oh my God, see how my performance has gone down, I'm not always punctual in my work, I'm always [doing] the wrong [things], so I began to change my ways and I avoided those bad friends of mine.

You know, sometimes us young people when we are at home we behave well when we see our mum but when we have gone outside we're doing our own thing. People are watching what I will be doing, not even the elderly people but also the younger ones; they look at me and what I do also my younger brother will do. I said let me change my way and do the right thing, [at] the right time. When I'm doing bad, after all, I'm the one who will lose.

My mum also encouraged me when she saw me beginning to change, she started telling me this is right this is wrong. She was also happy. There is a skill right now that I remember about decision making. When maybe my mum would make a decision that did not impress me, I would just sit down and tell her that it is not right to me because I want to achieve my goals, which will help me. Not help me alone, after helping me, it also will help the community. Let's say maybe if a friend of mine comes and tells me let's go to this place and that place will not help me, I would not accept myself to go there. I will just be calm and say this is not good. And I think about why this person would ask me and not another person. Confidence helps me to say that. What gives me confidence is to take myself the way I am and not standing up for yourself harshly, [but] in a polite way.

Right now my father has married two wives and he has not divided the land for them. That other woman is staying in our home, even though my dad has built her a house. She doesn't want to move from our house to her own house. There is a time my dad told my mum I want you to go to the rural areas. I told my mum how can you go up country when he has not divided the land for you? That is not right, but it's better if we move out of this house to another house. My mum said you have told me the truth.

He also used my mum very much, whenever he has money he doesn't give my mum any money. And when my mum has lent him money, he does not return it. I told my mum not to give him any money. Every now and then my mum is crying. I was telling my mum because I wanted to protect her. And also so that they don't quarrel in the house anymore. My mum took the wisdom that I told her. After all the following day, she told my dad about it and my dad said surely she is telling the truth.

The good thing is that there is a club in school about entrepreneurship, they give us skills on how to manage a business. There is some money they gave us to start a business and I continued with it and will continue with it. I also saved my money to take the course and after that I'm planning to also do beauty therapy. I just told my mum about it. My mom told me, you will just do your business of yours and see that your money is enough. Because the money that my mum is getting it is not enough to do everything. I did not want to stay idle. Until now, my dad has not communicated with me. I was so challenged with it and I felt so bad and said that now in our family it is as if I'm thrown away. I still have that challenge inside my heart, asking myself now this is my dad, what is the way forward? But I have kept it aside, I can do it myself. It depends on my hard working, on what I do.

Most of the youths in Mathare are lacking some skills that they have not been taught, like decision making, self-esteem and to not look down on themselves. That and they say that because I'm in Mathare, I can't move from this step to another. They have to believe in themselves that whatever I'm holding in my hand or whatever business that I'm doing, I can do it. And, you see, most of the young people when they have finished form four, they think of a scholar job, and bigger and bigger jobs in the office. But they don't know that this small business will grow every day. Depending on how you manage it and how you control it.

Maybe there is no-one who can promote you to move further. And sometimes friends can make you down, make you stop with your talent. Maybe they will hear you singing and they will tell you that it will take you nowhere, you're just like us here. Instead of motivating you and giving feedback, saying this part you have done wrong, can you go and correct it. You need some feedback of people believing in you. What I know is that maybe let's say like a talent, God is the one who gave you that talent to use it and show people.

According to the past, maybe life was not so easy for me. But now because I have some skills on how to manage my future and my dreams, I see that life is now easy for me. You know life is how you hold it. If you want it to be hard

it will be hard, if you want [it] to be soft it will be soft. It is always good to give whatever you have inside your heart and maybe you'll be given a solution. Just a month ago, I was asking myself: was I really born to be a failure? Because whenever I talk with my dad he tells me this, I tell him good things and he tells this, so sometimes I feel like I'm being thrown out of the family. How I cope with it is that most of the time I communicate with my mum and sometimes I just ignore [it]. After ignoring the negative things, I will think of tomorrow, not of the past. When I think of the past, I will get so down, instead of thinking about how I will manage to cross to the other side. I don't want to remain on this side, I want to move to the other side of the river.'

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STORIES OF POSITIVE EXPERIENCES THROUGH MEDIA

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'WHEN I LISTEN TO MUSIC, I FORGET
ALL THINGS I'M PRESSURED WITH'

INTRODUCTION

Life is expressed in many ways. Through media, many life experiences are shown. Through music, movies, art and so on. This motivational resource is all around us, maybe even more than we're aware of. Listening, seeing and recognising these experiences may have an effect on you. Maybe it gives you comfort or it makes you think about certain things, maybe you learn from it or it inspires you to do certain things. With using this resource as a motivation in your life, you can feed your mind and learn through media.

Since internet is available for more and more people around the world, we can see and hear about experiences in life, from anywhere around the world. This is a platform through which stories of positive experiences in life or inspirational persons can come to you even more. In this chapter, the young people talk about this motivational resource and about the effect it has on them.

JEFFREY 'It's all about reading the motivational books. Also, all the things that you normally do, hear or see can be motivational.'

DEREK 'It really motivates you, when you listen to music. When you listen to positive music, music that will inspire you; for example, when you listen to reggae music, when they talk about their slums through the music. You find even in Jamaica their sharing the same problems with us, it's motivating and really encouraging.'

JOYCE 'Sometimes I just listen to music – that's what I normally do. I just stay in the house listening to music and all that. When I listen to music, I forget all [the] things that I have been pressured with.'

JEFFREY 'I involved myself in activities, like listening to inspirational reggae songs.'

DEREK 'You can watch a movie, a true [story about the] life of a person and how he manages to struggle and to achieve things. When you see such a movie, and that even this person has a problem, you will compare your problem with that person's [problem] and you will learn [about] how he was patient, how he was struggling and finally how he made it in life.'

DEREK 'I'm inspired and motivated by reading books about positive things, about positive life, about how people have lived life and what they have achieved.'

MONTY 'Wisdom comes as a result of networking, as a result of living together with many people for a long time and associating with many people. As a result of networking, you will get a lot of information. Networking is also a part of learning, I've learned some in school. Also I've learned so many things from people who I usually work with, so that's how I get information. And also the internet, you can get so much information from the internet.'

FLOYD 'Koffi Anan, the UN chief Mediator, he says education is a human right and is a key. You also have songs called education is the key. At that time, my dad was becoming worse, health wise. And if I see my brothers, one is a drunkard, [my] sisters are married, so I thought the only way to change the community and my family was getting skills and getting an education. After form four my dad passed away. I knew education was the only path for me to go forward in life.'

DEREK 'I have walked a long journey and I'm still on the road, the journey is long but I still have the power to continue, because I know where



I'm heading. That has been said by Nelson Mandela. When he was in prison, he didn't lose hope and he came out of the prison and became president. It really motivated me, it gives me inspiration.'

FLOYD 'Bill Gates, Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama and [and other] great guys, [just] name them. I believe what they have done in life is not a miracle, it's not something someone cannot do. Anyone can achieve [their goals] in life. What one man can do, another man can do, too.'

DEREK 'You read profiles. People that have been struggling and achieving. When you start reading you find how they have faced a lot of challenges and problems, like Mandela. You see people like Martin Luther [King]. This motivates me and brings me back to normal, because I start thinking positive.'

EFFECTS OF STORIES OF POSITIVE EXPERIENCES THROUGH MEDIA AS A MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE

- I forget my problems and stop worrying •
- I feel good and inspired •
- I'm motivated by the experiences in the lives of other people •
- I feel motivated •
- I take advice and follow it •

ASK YOURSELF

ABOUT STORIES OF POSITIVE EXPERIENCES THROUGH MEDIA

WHAT ROLE DOES INTERNET
PLAY IN YOUR LIFE?

HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL
WHEN YOU SEE OR HEAR ABOUT OTHERS EXPERIENCES
IN LIFE THROUGH MUSIC, MOVIES OR BOOKS?



**HOW MANY LIFE EXPERIENCES DO YOU THINK
YOU SEE OR HEAR THROUGH MEDIA DURING THE DAY?**

**WHAT MUSIC
INSPIRES YOU,
OR WHICH SPECIFIC SONG?
WHY DOES THIS SONG
INSPIRE YOU?**

**IS THERE
A MOVIE
THAT MOTIVATES
YOU?
AND WHY?**

**HOW CAN YOU USE
THIS SOURCE OF INSPIRATION
MORE OFTEN IN YOUR LIFE?**

The background of the image is a marbled pattern with swirling grey, white, and black lines. A solid brown horizontal band runs across the middle of the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

GIVING MEANING TO LIFE RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY

The image features a background of a rock face with a distinct horizontal band of reddish-brown color. The rock surface is characterized by numerous cracks and a rough, textured appearance. The central band is a solid, warm brown color, contrasting with the grey and white tones of the surrounding rock.

'THERE IS A PURPOSE'

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about religion and spirituality as a way of giving meaning to life. About receiving motivation through a 'higher power'. There are different ways of using this motivational resource in your life, and there are different religions and spirituals paths to give meaning to life.

This chapter is not about differentiating these, but about the resource itself. Not about in which religion you believe, what's right and what's wrong, but about what it means to receive from this 'higher power' as a resource in life.

In the chapter you're about to read, the young people will tell you about their experiences and strengths related to religion and spirituality.

DEREK 'I was very lucky because my mum was a Christian. She told us positive things. She told us life can change. When you see this problem, it's not the end of everything. There is another chance. Maybe God wants to test you, so that he can use you to lead his people. I was really inspired by my mum. Because she would tell us there is life, you can live in a positive way. She could give us hope and ideas. When my mum passed away, I came to remember that she was reading the bible. And I started reading the bible [too]. When I read the bible, I started to find God was [upper], he wrote the story about many people. Each person has his own problems. When he walks with God, God leads him until he achieves what he wants.'

FLOYD 'I tell you God usually loves me and I don't know how. Because it was just tiny, before I lost my life. With the situation facing the reality.'

MONTY 'I'm a Christian and I believe that there is a saying in Christianity: the hand that gives receives more than the hand that receives. If you give more and more, I actually believe that at one particular time you will receive double of what you gave.'

LISA 'You know everything has a start, there must be an end.'

DEREK 'I was very young and I did not know where to start, I could not know the beginning until the time I started growing [up] and reading the bible. It really inspired me, I see God speaking to me in the bible.'

ROGER 'When I had those deep moments, the only way through which I do overcome them, personally, is through prayer. I believe that prayer can achieve what nothing else in the world can. So I do pray to God so that he might one day, I know it, be able to [make me] say that there was a time like this and this, but now I'm like this. It's only through prayer.'

DEREK 'I came to find that God wanted to use me, he wants to use me even if I would not succeed. He will show me there is hope somewhere, for me I can't say [I] regret [it]. It was God who wanted me to learn. When I was young, I was regretting things but as my mind develops and I become a mature person, I can't regret anymore. In fact, I can also say that [at the times] when I have problems, and you will find that in the ghetto there are a lot of problems.'

EMILY 'I'm a grateful person. Even if I stay hungry I thank God that I'm alive, to know that I'm hungry.'



DEREK 'Mostly when you read the word of God you will find that those people who did not have discipline are punished by God and those who have discipline go the right way and walk with God, they achieve what they want. Discipline most of all comes from reading the word of God, going to church.'

ROGER 'All in all, all I have to say is that maybe God knew why I had to go through that situation. He had a purpose.'

DEREK 'In the story of Joseph, he had a dream and when he told his brother and parents, they didn't believe him. But his father kept the dream in his mind and 13 years later the dream came true. It shows me that everybody can have a dream, you can dream something and work hard to make it reality. But there are some challenges that can hinder you to reach your dream. If you have hope don't give up, be patient, you can make the dream become reality. '

EFFECTS OF GIVING MEANING TO LIFE RELIGION / SPIRITUALITY AS A MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE

- I want to do good and give back •
- I feel good through reading the bible •
- I have hope for the good and pray for the good •
- I'm patient, thankful and give love •
- I find acceptance •
- I have discipline •

ASK YOURSELF

ABOUT RELIGION OR SPIRITUALITY

HOW WOULD YOU
DEFINE RELIGION
AND SPIRITUALITY?

WHAT ROLE DOES THIS
MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE PLAY
IN YOUR DAILY LIFE?

WHAT DO YOU RECIEVE THROUGH
RELIGION OR SPIRITUALITY?

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN RELIGION AND
SPIRITUALITY?
HOW DO YOU KNOW?

HOW DOES IT INFLUENCE
IMPORTANT MOMENTS
OR CHOICES IN YOUR LIFE?

IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THIS RESOURCE AND THE OTHER MOTIVATIONAL
RESOURCES IN THIS BOOK?

WHAT DO YOU
THINK IS THE
INFLUENCE
OF RELIGION OR
SPIRITUALITY IN
THE WORLD?

**DO YOU SHARE YOUR
THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS**
ABOUT RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY WITH OTHERS?
WHY, OR WHY NOT?

STORY OF SILAS

'My good moment was when I was living with my mum. When my mother died, everyone had to go and look for a way to live. My sisters live together but us 3 brothers all have our own places. My first born brother lives down there in Mathare, he normally goes to work in Eastleigh. My second brother lives in Jerico and he's a driver. But me, I'm just here in Mathare without employment. Without anything. I normally go to hustle and come back with a little money, anything I can get. I feel good when I have that money.

My mum was providing everything for us when I was still young. We lived down there in a plot. I don't know how, but my parents divorced when I was young, like 5 years old. By then, we were just with 3 children, me and my 2 brothers. The other sisters they were no longer there, by then.

My mother used to work in a bar, she raised us in there. When my mother divorced my father, I was the last born. We continued living and then [another] 3 daughters [were born]. But I can't tell you [the names of] the fathers of those [daughters], I only know my own father, but my 2 big brothers, I don't think they know their fathers, but one died. When my mother was there I

used to ask her how her day had been, but now that she is not there, I feel so lonely, because I don't have a parent. What hurt me the most is that now I'm separated from my family, I'm alone and have to go and lead my [own] life. I don't know where I'm going, because I can't say I have a certain good job.

When I was in school, there were days when I was told to go home, chased away from school to go and get school fees. So I went home and my friends were still learning in school and I would feel so bad. When my mother gave me the school fees after some days, I had missed what people had been learning. Sometimes you can come home and find nothing prepared for lunch, you just have to go back to school [on an] empty stomach. I didn't have a choice, it was part of life.

I can say that I have come a long way, even to finish my education was a problem and my mother had to struggle so that I could finish it. I finished my primary education. I'm so happy about that.

I had just finished class 8 and my mother told me to go and work. She told me I had to get training in a garage. I refused to go. There are other friends of mine that went to training, and now I see they are successful and living a good life. For that I feel regret. The lesson that I have learned is when your

parent tells you to join something, you have to go and join that. I saw that [only] later. Because, like I said, my mother helped us so much.

Before those sisters were born my mother struggled with us a lot, so we have to give back. When she passed away we had to gather for the funeral service and bury her where my grandmother lives. My 3 sisters stayed to live there with my grandmother's sister. My grandmother's sister did not have children, so my mother [had already] brought one of her daughters to live there before she died. When she died, we took the other 2 sisters there, too, to live [there all] together.

My brothers had their own house already. Then I had to go and look for another house to live in, so [now I live in] this house. So life became hard. I had to look for work so I can manage to pay the rent. I came and see it's OK, I have to look for work so that I can manage the problems.

When I saw other children struggling much harder than me, I had to have strength. You find out there are even children sleeping outside. Then don't have their house, they are struggling and I saw that I'm more OK than them. So I decided to work to earn my daily bread.

When I went to work, I found other friends of mine who used to live down here and they showed me how to work. That's positive motivation because I saw my other friends having problems that I had in life and they were working and living better than me. So I have that motivation. I want to work so that I can be a good person in front of people and be caring and have a nice place where I can live. I cannot say that right now I'm living under good conditions. I'm planning on how I can be living better than [I am] right now. You have to work hard to reach the goals you have. I joined the Maji Mazuri youth group after my mother died and they told about a college called Nairobi. I had to go for that training and I was given a certificate. When you finish all the courses, you go to a media lab. Then when we graduate we are in a good position to get a job. So that's my goal, what I've planned, what I'm focused on right now.

Right now I have some challenges, because I want to go to course 2 and they have a commitment fee you must pay. So that's the challenge I have right now, because I want to continue learning.

After some months, I can have the [money to pay the] fees to continue learning, because there's a goal I'm targeting, I want to go and finish that course. I normally go to work in Eastleigh, not employed but where you can earn a little money.

Carrying some heavy things, when these clothes come in a container on a big vehicle. Then they can ask me to bring them to a store and we arrange [it] for him.

That experience I went through was not a good one. I can say that, before I arrived here, how old I am I've been having so many obstacles in my life. Many things have been happening. Here, living in this area, you see friends engaging themselves in bad company and starting bad behaviour and beginning to steal. After some months or years, we found out that a guy was shot dead, or was beaten by mob justice. So many guys have died in this particular area, I know like 10 guys who died like that.

I decided to go to work. If I had engaged myself into that type of company, right now, I don't know where I could be, I could have been murdered or what. Those are the obstacles which I'm telling you about. As for me, before my mother died, she used to tell us not to engage in bad company. Even before my mother died she told me never to go stealing for something, even when you are hungry. I still have that inside of me. I want to be a good son, like that. Even when you see your friends engaging in that type of company, I see that it's not good. I feel like [I would rather] just live apart and alone then go stealing. Young guys out there even come here with master keys, they come and open [locks]. They have stolen [things] here about 5 times, so I want to get away even from this place.

The wise decision is to find a good job to satisfy my life and my family. I don't have a family yet. I don't know when but I want to have. I want to learn, I want to learn how I can be a good person to people. A good person, a good advocator to people.

I want to live a good life like other people and from my heart. I want to be a big person. I want my family to be reliable in a good way. I want to live like that. I want to finish my education and when I finish learning my education I want to be working at a good company. That's my dream.

I have many strengths. I have strengths like going to a job, working, something like that. I have strengths like I'm going to meet my younger sisters for the first time after 5 years. I feel like going to see them so that my younger sisters can be living good. I know they are in primary school and they need to go to secondary, so I'm working right now to finish my education. When I'm finished, I will be able to get a job. Then I'm able to help one or two sisters to be catered for to finish secondary [school].

I can say don't worry about the obstacles, you're [life will] go on. I can just say about any obstacles in life: just don't worry, those things are going to pass. Don't leave the good way, like the good life, the life that you want to be living.'



THE PAST

The background of the image is a close-up, black and white photograph of a tree trunk. The bark is rough, textured, and shows signs of weathering and decay. A solid teal-colored horizontal band is superimposed over the middle of the image, creating a strong visual contrast. The text is centered within this band.

**‘THE MORE YOU ARE GROWING,
THE MORE WISDOM STARTS GROWING’**

INTRODUCTION

We all have a history, a past. We were all born and have experiences in our lives, right up to the present moment. Maybe we had good experiences, maybe we had bad ones, but probably we had both. What we all share is that we can't change the things that have already happened. Sometimes this is positive, but sometimes this fact can be hard. From this exact moment, we do have the power to change our perspective about the past, even though we cannot change what happened.

The ability to change our perspective enables us to let go of negativity from our past. By using the past as a resource to reflect on and learn from, we can grow and become wiser. You are about to read about how the young people of Mathare use their past as a motivational resource.

ISAAC 'I feel motivated, because when I look back at those days and then to now, [I see] I've changed, by myself.'

EMILY 'I don't want to see my kids go through what I went through walking around the slum. Walking all over rubbish, garbage just to get to school. I don't want that for my kids. So every time I was going to school I said, I want to be a better person, I want to be a better person, and I want to get out of this slum.'

FLOYD 'I was brought up in a very poor family, making a living was becoming a problem. But what I have reached right now, in a real sense and honestly speaking, [it] is quite a success.'

EMILY 'I've already reached 10 per cent of what I've set out to do. It gives me hope to complete the [other] 90 per cent. I don't want to quit, I want to go on and on and on.'

LISA 'I get a clear picture of who I am. I've learned. You see I've shared so many things with you. So I get to learn so many other things about myself.'



DEREK 'When you're young your mind thinks [only] about today, not about tomorrow. But when you're growing [older], more wisdom starts developing, slowly, bit by bit. It's like a garden; and you must start flowering the weaker things, then you plant [them], water them, they will start to grow, and after some time they will bear fruit.'

LISA 'I have seen many things that I have overcome. I'm proud of myself that I have done so.'

FLOYD 'If you have experience, build from it, just focus ahead and never, never go back. Let it be your kick, your strength, then it becomes the strongest point in your life.'

JOYCE 'My vision is not to live the life that have lived, in the future. According to the past, maybe the life was not so easy for me. But now because I have some skills of how to manage my future and my dreams, I will see that life will be easy for me. And you know life is how you hold it. If you want it to be hard it will just be hard for you, if you want [it] to be soft it will be soft.'

EMILY 'A winner never quits, but a quitter never wins.'



EFFECTS FROM THE PAST

AS A MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE

- I want to reach my dreams and goals •
- I don't want to go through what I've gone through in the past •
 - I got to know myself •
 - I'm proud and thankful •

ASK YOURSELF ABOUT THE PAST



WHAT DO YOU THINK
AND FEEL WHEN YOU
LOOK BACK
ON YOUR LIFE?

WHAT ARE YOU
PROUD OF,
LOOKING BACK ON
YOUR LIFE?

**ARE THERE THINGS YOU WOULD HAVE
DONE DIFFERENTLY? AND HOW?**

**HOW DOES YOUR PAST
INFLUENCE YOU
RIGHT NOW?**

**WHAT DOES
WISDOM
MEAN TO YOU?**

**HOW CAN LOOKING BACK ON YOUR PAST
MOTIVATE YOU, RIGHT NOW AND
IN THE FUTURE?**



THE FUTURE



‘WITHOUT HOPE,
YOU CAN NEVER SEE TOMMORROW’

INTRODUCTION

How we perceive 'time' can be very different, even though we all live today, in this present moment. The past is already behind us and the future has not yet begun. How do you see your time in the future? Maybe tomorrow, maybe five or even twenty years from now?

Thinking about your future can give you certain feelings or thoughts. From the stories of the young people, the 'future' is a motivational resource in different ways. All the young people interviewed have dreams and goals for their individual futures. What is very inspiring is that almost all of them also have dreams and goals for their families and community. This motivates them to do certain things in their daily lives. For example, to save money and make sure their siblings can go to school, or to volunteer in the community.

This is inspiring to me, because in the western world I come from, people's first reaction to the subject of 'future' mainly seems to be about goals and dreams for themselves. It seems like the young people in Mathare feel very responsible, not only for themselves but also for their families and their community. This is something that greatly inspired me.

LISA 'I look at my future and now I know I can make it. It gives me strength. Some people follow friends who get them down. I try to be a role model for them. Think about your future, stop looking at today. This day will come to an end. But the future is still there.'

MONTY 'The change, of course, is the moment you enable people to get information, the moment people know what is required of them. The moment you enable people to get skills in life, the moment when you remove the illiteracy that's in them, you will have changed so many. Unemployment is also a factor that is really effecting us. Of course poverty comes as a result from unemployment, so my main target is the moment I empower people economically. The moment you empower them economically you will have tackled poverty, which is the main problem that's effecting the people.'

FLOYD 'My main aim is, once I'm empowered educationally, I feel that I must empower the community educationally, not from any other perspective. I need to have a dream that this community is being empowered educationally.'

FLOYD 'My younger siblings do not have to drop out of school; everyone has to go to school, first of all.'

ROGER 'Now I'm in the video class. I'm learning some things about video, about how to shoot [video] and about editing. Being an actor and being in the video industry. My future plan is to one day be among the top, let me say, cinematographers within the slum areas, and that I represent the slum people. If I can come up with a script with real issues that happen in our area. These stories are there, they are reality, nothing but truthful. People just see them on TV, but they've never been on the ground to see what's happening there. The only way to do it is to show it. And that is my dream if I can get that opportunity of showing it.'

DEREK 'My dream for the future is that I want to take some pictures. And in the future I want to publish my own book to be written and pictured to speak what's inside me and inside the community and also give back in the form of a foundation. Then I can come and teach young people about photography and coach them on how to make a film and be the leaders of tomorrow. Also when I go up I really like to do charity so that I can be able to raise money for the needy children in the slum – the ones who didn't get basic education, and give them food and shelter, so that they are able to capture life; because you find in the slum there are many challenges. Without education this world will be useless. So when I get this chance that is what [I] have been dreaming for the future.'



MONTY 'I gained a lot of interest in politics and you know in the future I want to be among the leaders of this country, who make history and of course good history. Not just history, but good history. You see politicians are the ones who usually lead the people. I feel that I'm a leader, so that's why I love politics, because I'll be in a position to lead the people the best way possible. I don't think I can explain that because I feel it's natural. I think you are born with it. I'm always passionate about working with the community and putting a smile on someone's face. I can't say I got that feeling from the external environment, no I didn't and it was just in me.'

LISA 'In the future I want to start my own business, my own wholesale [business]. I would take care of my family and take them out of this place, to a place that is safe and secure.'

SILAS 'I want to live a good life like other people, from my heart. My plans and dreams are only that I want to finish my education and when I finish learning, I want to work in a good company, that's my dream.'

JEFFREY 'My plan is that I want to go back to school. I want to be a software developer. I'm trying all my best, so that I can get maybe the funds to go to school, because you find that it's hard at this time of life, if you want

to be independent. I try to ignore the job and say I want to go back to school, but where am I going to get the cash to pay for the house? The other thing for my future [is that] I want to come up with a centre, if it would be possible for me – if I get the opportunity. I was planning to and it's still on my mind to come up with a centre whereby I can train people, train them in basic life skills, how to be independent, how to tackle the situations in life and also in ICT. What do they need to sustain themselves through ICT? I still have those plans of coming up with a centre here in Mathare. The strengths I want to develop in the future are all about networking with people. Because if you want to come up with something you can't do it alone. You have to have a network of people. To come up with anything, with a centre, it's a bit difficult for me. So it's high time I try to relate with people maybe from overseas. You find that these computers are being dumped in the streets, maybe [from] foreign countries. I'm trying how to get those things, so that they can change some of the lives of the people in Mathare. So you find that the strength also comes from networking, from the people I normally share with, be it locally or abroad.'

EMILY 'In the future I want Mathare not to be a slum anymore. I want it to be a good place where people can live happily without stepping on drunkards, I don't want that.'

EMILY 'I'd say hope for me is something that is so important to my life. Because without hope, you can never see tomorrow. I'm not sure that I'll see tomorrow, but I'll hope that I will. Without that hope I'd give up, I'd give up in life. I would not want to live.'

DEREK 'My message to the young people [is that] they should think big. When they're thinking big, they should start small. And when they start small, they should start now. Be patient, don't do things and make them happen at the same time. People are different, someone can be able to achieve [things] at 15, others at 20, others at 30. You can achieve it, no matter which way you are, you can achieve it. [You] only should be patient. Think big, start small, start now.'

EFFECTS FROM THE FUTURE


AS A MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCE

- I have hope •
- I'm patient •
- I'll never give up •
- I know in the future I will receive more wisdom •

ASK YOURSELF ABOUT THE FUTURE

A black and white photograph of a rough, textured wall, possibly made of concrete or stone, with some vertical lines suggesting a fence or structure. A white rectangular sign is attached to the wall, tilted slightly to the right. The sign contains the text 'HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR FUTURE RIGHT NOW?' in bold, orange, sans-serif capital letters.

HOW DO YOU SEE
YOUR FUTURE
RIGHT NOW?



**WHAT IS YOUR
DREAM?**

**HOW MUCH INFLUENCE
DO YOU HAVE ON YOUR FUTURE?**

**WHAT WOULD YOU WANT
TO SEE FOR YOURSELF,
YOUR ENVIRONMENT
AND THE WORLD?**

GHETTO STORY

*Early in the morning I get up
Yesterday's leftovers make up my breakfast
I assemble my utensils to clean them; the taps are dry
Something is always wrong in the atmosphere, authorities [don't] care
I never think of lunch, I'd rather think of supper
Tough times come in handy; they never hold us down
Before we know it, evening comes knocking, we still keep the faith
When day turns to night; we are still searching for an extra dime
Our minds are ever engaged, the best is yet to come
Most of us have no time for negative energy
We preserve positive energy for yet another day
Some of us make it big; the ghetto is always in our hearts
Our hamlets sometimes form a town
Then it is a different story altogether
Here, men work hard, the best way they know how
Women set up small enterprises for subsidies
To our knowledge, as little as it is, people like our story
Thank you for listening to part of our story*

Victor KEBANE



MAJI MAZURI

Maji Mazuri, which means 'good water' in Swahili, is a socio-economic development programme based in Kenya. Founded by Dr Wanjiku Kironyo in 1984, the organisation is composed of 4 interrelated programmes: Education & Talent, Economic Empowerment, Community Development and Mental & Physical Health. The programmes seek to address the root causes of poverty and focus on alleviating it by empowering people to transform their own lives.

The mission of Maji Mazuri is to help people to escape from the bondage of poverty to become thriving individuals. The vision is to provide the foundation, education and support needed for children, youths and families to become self-sustaining in terms of social, economic and spiritual well-being.

Maji Mazuri Youth Group is one of the projects of Maji Mazuri in Mathare.

WWW.MAJIMAZURI.ORG



DUARA FOUNDATION

Duara Foundation is an expert centre for inclusive community development in African ghettos. It assists local stakeholders (NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and 'informal' groups such as gangs) in achieving a more gender sensitive, inclusive and effective approach to peace building, community-led development and educational projects.

Naomi van Stapele from Duara Foundation brought me into contact with Maji Mazuri, who empowered me and helped me to prepare for my vocational training. Her colleague, Wendy De Macker, a social worker and therapist with much experience in the Netherlands and also Mathare, helped me in the process of realising 'My Drive in Life'.

WWW.DUARA.ORG

Duara |
Foundation |

ABOUT ME

My name is Nelleke Nijhuis and I come from Enschede, a city in the Netherlands. I'm very fascinated with life itself. I like people and as a social worker I've learned a lot by listening to people. Especially through working with the young people of Mathare and the life skills classes that I've given, I've learned that we're all truly the same, on the inside. Explaining who I am leads me to describe myself in how I feel, think and act today. I'm positive minded, spiritual and receive a lot of energy from people and from the experiences life itself has to offer, through people, nature, music and meditation.

My objective with this book, and my work in general, is to make people realise that we're all equal. Differences may be there, but we have to remember that life is not outside, but inside us. We all have an inner life and that's the life that I care about. This is where we have the choice to grow and develop and have a positive and good life. The differences in surroundings and in what people look like may distract us, but let us always remember that other people are just the same. Give room to your curiosity and have an open mind to learn and interact with others. Have an open mind without judgement, be curious, have faith and feel connected with life and the world around you. Love to learn and learn to love. Be aware of your drive in life and have a wonderful journey, full of experiences.

‘LET MY DRIVE IN LIFE INSPIRE YOU
TO BE THE DRIVER OF YOUR OWN LIFE’



MANY THANKS

First of all, I want to thank Silas, Isaac, Joyce, Monty, Derek, Floyd, Emily, Robert, Jeffrey and Lisa for sharing their life experiences. The mental power, awareness and thankful attitude to life inspired me and truly shaped my own attitude to life, during my own adolescence and until this day.

My Drive in Life, the title of the book, is covering all the motivational, driving forces from within the young people. These inner forces made me to find my own Drive in Life, as well. My goal to create a platform for these inspiring stories could not have been realised without lots of help and empowerment from my family first of all. My wise and empowering mom, my dad, my great two big brothers, sister in law and bonus dad; many thanks for always supporting me. I also want to thank further family, friends, colleagues and teachers for all their great help, believe in 'My Drive in Life' and support. All these positive vibes definitely helped in the creation of the book.

Big special thanks to Ruben Kuijper, Wendy De Macker, Victor Kebane and David Mbuthia, who helped by using their professional skills in graphic design, poetry, photography and always supporting me because of believing in 'My Drive in Life'.

Also I hereby thank all the hundreds of people who have donated money in support of this project. With all the help from everybody and all donations the book is realized and I'm over the moon excited, thankful and happy about that. Once it was an idea and now it is reality, with many thanks to everyone who has its part in the creation of 'My Drive in Life'.

I feel fortunate to be able to give back and create a platform for these stories of wisdom to be read and shared with people in Mathare, and anywhere around the world, to build people up. That also leads me to thank the higher power. I was receiving so much inspiration and I'm trying to give back, in hope for a world in which people share and learn from inner life experiences. Everybody in life is driving his or her life, anyway, anyhow. Let's help and inspire each other to get more insight into life by sharing our experiences. And get the most and best out of your drive in life.