



## SUCCESS STORY

# Going Back to School — On Her Own

### **A Zanzibar community mobilizes to support students with disabilities**



Photo: Margaret Ngau

Time rides her tricycle alongside her deputy principal outside her school in Pemba, Zanzibar.

***Time's story produced a ripple effect on Pemba after a teacher who attended the MKEZA workshop described Time's case to the community.***

Time (pronounced Teemé) Hamad Ali is a 12-year-old girl from the island of Pemba, Zanzibar, off the coast of Tanzania. She is also physically disabled and, until recently, used a “push wheelchair” to go to school. Time's parents — rural farmers — wheeled their daughter to and from school every day. While Time's parents considered their daughter the family's “beacon of hope,” they could no longer afford the time required to take their daughter to school.

USAID funds the MKEZA initiative in Zanzibar, which promotes inclusive education and sponsors public forums to increase awareness of the educational needs and rights of children with disabilities. At a February 2005 MKEZA workshop, a teacher described Time's situation to explain how a physical disability could limit a young, intelligent girl's education. Workshop participants were visibly touched and dwelled on themes of “moving people with disabilities from consumers to producers,”

and the importance of community. The participants affirmed that each member of a community needs to contribute for it to truly prosper. Reflecting on Time's predicament, one participant wondered out loud, “What could we do for Time?”

In a show of solidarity that would make Time's dream come true, the 30 participants dug into their pockets and produced the equivalent of \$53. They handed the money to Time's teacher with instructions to purchase a tricycle, exercise books and a school uniform. A week later, Time was back at school, and riding to and from independently on her tricycle. Later, the community raised enough funds to construct a ramp at the school to provide easier access for the disabled.

Time's story produced a ripple effect on Pemba after a teacher who attended the MKEZA workshop described Time's case to the community. The teachers, parents and management committee of another school noticed the difficulties faced by one of their physically disabled students. This young boy had to limp for several kilometers to school and often arrived late. Within days, half the funds for another tricycle had been raised and the community made a promise to meet the full target soon.