

MEET MASANGA

We are very pleased to introduce you to Masanga a 12 year old young man who represents the strength of love and importance of family in Tanzania especially in the face of great hardship.

He is raised by a single mother who is a peasant in a remote village in Morogoro; sadly, his father died over five years ago leaving his wife and 7 children to manage the very small farm or 'shamba'. Life has been very tough with no time for Masanga to attend school; he works hard each day on the land to help his mama keep hunger away from his family's door.

4 months ago, Masanga got sick – he developed neck swellings, fevers and tiredness. His poor mother knew something terrible was wrong but she had no money and no means to help him. But she did have a wonderful extended family and knew she could rely on them to help. She sent word and within a week a very concerned relative arrived from a far-away town, over 12 hours journey away.

He escorted Masanga to one of our newest nearby outreach sites – Ifakara Hospital. (Our National Children's Cancer Network, NCCN, currently has 11 sites). There they realized he had cancer and reached out to our team at Muhimbili National Hospital. Although his relative was concerned for Masanga he was also very worried about the cost of treatment. He couldn't believe it when the team assured him that cancer treatment is provided for free to all children.

TLM funded his transportation and a month ago he finally reached Upendo ward. The team quickly confirmed his diagnosis – non-hodgkins lymphoma - and started his TLM sponsored treatment without delay. Thanks to the combined efforts of his wonderful caring extended family and the efficiency of teams across multiple NCCN sites this young man has an excellent chance of cure.

He is responding great to the chemotherapy; his tumors are shrinking and he feels back to himself. We are very hopeful he will make a full recovery. Soon he will be able to return to our partner site to complete his treatment near his home.



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In the meantime, he has also been enrolled in the TLM children's school – the first time he has ever had any time for education. And he loves it! The teachers tell us he's like a little sponge learning every single day. He even says that when he goes home, he's going to make sure he and his siblings have time to attend primary school. He's determined not just to survive, but to thrive!

Who knows - Perhaps his scary brush with cancer will lead to a brighter future not only for his entire family. We know it takes a village to raise a child – we at TLM are so proud to join Masanga's village of supporters. We hope you are too!