

# UNLEASHING THE POWER OF GIVING

My Giving Story  
2023 competition



African Philanthropy Network  
THE VOICE AND ACTION FOR AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY



FOUNDATION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY



TANZANIA PHILANTHROPY  
ORGANISATION  
— The Power of Giving —

# Overview of the #MYGIVINGSTORY2023 Competition

The #MYGIVINGSTORY2023 Competition, conducted in collaboration with the Tanzania Philanthropy Network and supported by the Africa Philanthropy Network, was designed for Tanzanian youth aged 15-35. The competition encouraged participants to share stories of their community contributions.

Entrants had the option to submit their stories in either a written essay (not exceeding 1500 words) or a 2-minute video, sharing their narratives on social media with the hashtag #mygivingstory2023.

The competition ran from September 21 to October 20, 2023, with the announcement of the 5 winners taking place at the CSO Week 2023 Gala Dinner on October 27, 2023.

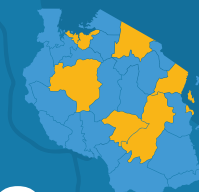
The campaign aimed to instill a culture of giving among the youth, highlight diverse giving trends, acknowledge and celebrate the positive impact of generous youth in their communities, offer a platform for sharing giving stories, and inspire other young individuals to engage in philanthropic activities.

A total of 65 entries were received from 10 regions, with 25 submissions from males and 40 from females. The entries were judged based on criteria such as creativity, uniqueness, originality, inspiration, clarity, and impact.

The 5 winners received varying amounts of funds for their chosen charities: the 1st winner received \$800, the 2nd winner received \$700, the 3rd winner received \$600, the 4th winner received \$500, and the 5th winner received \$400.



**65** total of entries received



**10** regions



**25** males



**40** females

We sincerely thank the judges for their dedicated time and expertise in this activity; namely;

- Princely Glorious - Ona stories
- Dorothea Namuhisa - Good Deeds Day Tanzania
- Evarist Kamwaga - Global Peace Foundation
- Tulanana Bohela - Ona stories

Appreciation was extended to everyone involved in the initiative, including entrants and supporters.

# Award Ceremony





## Winners Profiles



Winner

**Jennifer Lembe**

Ardhi University

A dynamic student at Ardhi University, shines as a beacon of compassion in the lives of children with special needs. Through her organization, Women and Youth Movement (WOYOMO), Jennifer addressed significant obstacles faced by disabled children at Gezaulole Primary School.

Following her touching story, Jennifer won the first-place prize in the My Giving Story essay competition by FCS. She translated words into action, presenting thoughtful gifts that transcended objects and became tokens of hope. These gifts, including learning materials and essential resources. The event marked a transformative moment, highlighting the impact of philanthropy in reshaping the lives of those often marginalized by society.



1<sup>st</sup> Runner up

**Dr. Gloria Swila**

Physician, Mloganzila Hospital

A compassionate young physician at Mloganzila Hospital, emerges as a hero in the battle against the taboo surrounding mental health in Tanzanian communities. Fueled by personal encounters and a dedication to making a difference, she co-founded AkiliRecipe to address the hidden struggles faced by children and youth.

After winning second place in the My Giving Story competition, Dr. Gloria organized an event on #GivingTuesday, providing psychological assessments, counseling, and self-care kits to children from challenging backgrounds in Dar es Salaam. Despite scary barriers, including the high cost of mental health therapy, Dr. Gloria remains committed to outreach, urging stakeholders to make mental health services more accessible.



# Winners Profiles



**2<sup>nd</sup> Runner up**

**Joyce Joseph**

Hubert Kairuki Memorial University

Motivated by a commitment to address the cultural taboo surrounding reproductive health and menstrual hygiene in African communities, Joyce Joseph, a student at Hubert Kairuki Memorial University, came up as a catalyst for change.

Winning the third position in the My Giving Story competition organized by FCS, Joyce utilized her winnings to organize a comprehensive health education outreach at Oysterbay Secondary School. Joyce's initiative not only provided practical knowledge but also distributed menstrual pads and gifts, emphasizing the importance of breaking the silence on these critical matters.



**3<sup>rd</sup> Runner up**

**Badru Yahya**

State University of Zanzibar (SUZA)

A dedicated student at the State University of Zanzibar (SUZA), is committed to breaking the cycle of poverty affecting children in his village. Overcoming personal challenges, Badru, along with fellow volunteers, invests time and expertise in teaching mathematics and English to underprivileged children without any charges.

Recognized for his efforts, Badru won the My Giving Story award and collaborated with various organizations to organize a charity event at Kibele Primary School, providing essential items and educational support to students from disadvantaged households.



## Winners Profiles



4<sup>th</sup> Runner up

### Neema Theonest

Mbeya University of Science and  
Technology

A 20-year-old student at Mbeya University of Science and Technology, embodies the essence of leadership and compassion. From a young age, she has demonstrated a natural inclination to lead and a profound empathy for those in need.

Her initiatives, ranging from hospital visits to organizing philanthropic campaigns in multiple regions, showcase her ability to influence positive change without institutional support. Neema's commitment to ongoing initiatives, particularly in empowering girls, reflects her dedication to creating a lasting impact and larger vision for a better world.



# Winners

## Stories of giving

# LANGUAGE OF THE HEART

Jenipher

The sheer delight of bringing a smile to a child's face is unparalleled—a feeling that resonates deeply within us. For many, childhood memories are mixed with challenges, growing up in families grappling with limited basic needs. The struggles were real, and sometimes, we attended school on empty stomachs. Our memories tinted with more hardships than joyous moments.

The situation becomes even more challenging when children struggle with disabilities, enduring greater hardships and societal marginalization. In the eyes of some, they are perceived as a burden, a curse even, compounding their struggles.

In the face of various challenges, we come across Jennifer Lembe, a dedicated student enrolled at Ardhi University. Her volunteer efforts primarily focus on assisting groups of children with special needs. During a visit to Geza Ulole Primary School, Jennifer observed the significant obstacles that disabled children encounter in their educational journey. Motivated by a desire to make a positive impact, she decided to utilize the resources at her disposal through her organization, Women and Youth Movement (WOYOMO), to support the school.

The turning point came with the *My Giving Story* essay competition organized by FCS. Jennifer, fueled by courage, composed an essay that resonated. Her words were not just acknowledged; they secured her the first-place prize, awarded in Arusha during the peak of CSO Week 2023. In collaboration with FCS staff who contributed funds, Jennifer and her fellow volunteers presented gifts to the school.

*"The human heart has its own language. Nothing delights these precious children more than feeling loved and appreciated,"* Jennifer shared. Even those with speech disabilities radiated joy, their faces adorned with smiles.

The gifts presented that day transcended mere objects; they were tokens of hope. Learning materials, awareness-stimulating pictures, mattresses, juice, water, and biscuits—all carefully selected to stimulate awareness





“  
Fellow young  
people, let’s invest  
in giving because  
that’s where the  
blessings are,”

—  
Vivian Joseph,  
SADC Young Ambassador  
for Health



and provide essential resources for the children’s education and well-being.

Jackeline Wandoa, the class teacher, shed light on the persisting challenge of disabled children lingering on the streets rather than attending school. The root cause, she emphasized, is the poverty of their parents who cannot afford the daily costs of bringing them to school. The proposed solution: the construction of dormitories at the school, envisioning a more sustainable and long-term impact.

*“Philanthropy is deeply ingrained in African culture, with individuals often engaged in activities such as education, caring for sick relatives, and contributing to social causes. FCS has actively collaborated with people with special needs, either directly or through partners.”* She stressed the importance of prioritizing giving back.

Vivian Joseph, SADC Young Ambassador for Health, passionately issued a heartfelt call to action. She discouraged the perception of considering ourselves as special and viewing those children as lacking. Instead, she emphasized the significance of love and encouraged seeing these children as the more blessed ones. *“Fellow young people, let’s invest in giving because that’s where the blessings are,”* she urged passionately.

Reflecting on the past, the special education unit, which began in 2020 with just three children sitting on the ground under a tree, has undergone a remarkable transformation. New toys have replaced empty bottles once used as play equipment, and the number of students has grown to 34. The children, once lacking discipline, can now greet, express gratitude, and show confidence—an undeniable testament to the significant positive changes that have taken place.

In conclusion, Jennifer traced the roots of her goodwill to the family level. She drew inspiration from her biological mother’s unwavering commitment to helping the community, even in times of scarcity. Jennifer expressed heartfelt thanks to all partners, including FCS, for their invaluable support in this transformative event.

Speaking on behalf of FCS, Nasim Losai explained the purpose behind their participation in the event. Providing a brief history, she highlighted six years of charitable involvement, underscoring the joy felt by FCS staff in partnering with the school during **#GivingTuesday** celebrations. Nassim emphasized,





## TRANSFORMING TABOOS INTO TRIUMPHS

| Gloria

In a community where the whispers of mental health issues are drowned out by the weight of taboo and superstition, a significant problem lingers in the shadows. The mere mention of someone grappling with mental health challenges is met with fear, stigma, and discrimination, forcing many to conceal their struggles even when help was within reach.

At the heart of this societal challenge, a specific group bears the brunt of this hidden battle: children and youth. The battleground? The family, where incidents of violence and marital conflicts reverberate most profoundly. Though we will not dive into the intricacies of medical jargon, the synonyms are clear. Stress, loss of appetite, feelings of unworthiness—these are the battle scars worn by young souls. Some lose interest in life's affairs, neglecting studies, succumbing to excessive slumber, or undergoing changes in eating habits.

As the youth navigate the maze of adulthood, the terrifying pressure of unemployment and financial instability becomes formidable enemies in the war against mental health. Amidst this struggle emerges a heroine, Dr. Gloria Swila, a compassionate young physician at Mloganzila Hospital. For her, mental health is not just a profession; it is a

*calling*. Driven by a desire to make a difference, she joined hands with like-minded colleagues through their organization, *AkiliRecipe*, aiming to extend a lifeline to various youth groups in the community.

Armed with an internationally accepted screening tool, they embarked on a mission to identify and intervene in the lives of those silently battling their demons. Dr. Gloria's commitment was fueled by a personal encounter—a fellow youth, falsely accused of a crime while studying abroad. However, innocence prevailed, the mental scars endured, derailing academic pursuits and tarnishing the image of a once-promising life.

These tragedies are not isolated cases; they are part of Dr. Gloria's daily reality. Her mission? To extend a helping hand to the youth before their struggles reach a point of no return. The battlefield is the hearts and minds of the most vulnerable, bearing in mind that not everyone possesses the ability to withstand the onslaught. Some resort to self-harm, spiraling down a dark path towards the ultimate tragedy—suicide.



**30-40** children

from the age of 14 to 18 participated, each undergoing a psychological diagnosis.



**The costs of mental health therapy remain high, and regrettably, most health insurance plans do not extend coverage.”**

Dr. Gloria



In an attempt to make a meaningful impact, Dr. Gloria participated in the *My Giving Story* competition organized by FCS, emerging as the second-place victor. With the prize at hand, she organized a gathering on #GivingTuesday, bringing together children from challenging backgrounds at the Youth Compassion Center in Mtoni, Dar es Salaam.

The Center nurtures and supports children from impoverished households aged 3 to 22. Its mission? To cultivate physical and mental well-being, instill a positive societal outlook, cement a love for education, and equip them with practical skills like sewing and cooking.

During this impactful event, 30 to 40 children from the age of 14 to 18 participated, each undergoing a psychological diagnosis. After careful assessment, they were categorized into two groups. Those exhibiting signs of potential mental health issues were ushered into a separate room for mental health counseling. Additionally, all children were handed a unique assignment—to express their emotions through the strokes of art. These artworks served as windows into their souls, guiding psychologists during their therapeutic interventions.

As the event concluded, each child received a self-care kit, a tangible reminder of their worth and a call to prioritize their health and well-being.

Moreover, Dr. Gloria and her devoted colleagues have embarked on a research journey, seeking to understand the depth of the problem within the country. In tandem, they are preparing materials in Swahili, bridging the gap to facilitate a more profound understanding among Tanzanians.

Yet, a formidable barrier stood tall—the cost of seeking help. Dr. Gloria, with a heavy heart, expressed, *“The costs of mental health therapy remain high, and regrettably, most health insurance plans do not extend coverage.”* She appealed to stakeholders, urging them to alleviate these financial burdens or, better yet, make mental health services freely accessible, safeguarding the lives of the young.

Sharing her reflection on generosity, Ms. Karin Rupia inspired the youth present to embrace a culture of volunteering. *“You don’t necessarily need money,”* she emphasized. *“You can begin by offering a helping hand to a friend for her school assignment or joining forces with others to do something around the neighborhood. The blessing lies in doing well for others.”* On behalf of FCS, she extended gratitude to all who participated, leaving a mark of compassion.



# TACKLING MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Joyce

In many African cultures, a significant factor contributing to challenges in child upbringing is the prevalence of secrecy, particularly regarding reproductive health, puberty, and sex education. Even in tribes with traditional practices such as initiation ceremonies (*jando* and *unyago*), there has often been a notable lack of openness. Despite evolving lifestyles due to globalization, some cultures still struggle with openly addressing these crucial matters.

The absence of accurate knowledge poses considerable risks for young people, particularly as they enter adolescence. This lack of understanding may lead to involvement in sexual activities, resulting in unplanned pregnancies and disruptions in education. Additionally, some may contract various sexually transmitted infections.

For girls, the matter of safe menstruation is particularly sensitive, directly tied to their dignity. Despite menstruation being a natural occurrence, misinformation and misconceptions persist in the community. When girls experience menstruation without proper knowledge and find themselves in unfavorable circumstances, it can lead to feelings of shame and stigmatization.

Motivated by these challenges, Joyce Joseph participated in the *My Giving Story* competition organized by FCS through the Rotaract Youth Club, securing the third position. With her winnings, Joyce, a student at Hubert Kairuki Memorial University, organized a health education outreach for girls at Oysterbay Secondary School.

150+



Female and male students attended the session





Use this knowledge for the future or assist your sisters and brothers at home. We know some of you have family members struggling with these issues

Madam Mboneka Mushi,  
Teacher



Over 150 female and male students attended the session, where essential aspects of menstruation were openly discussed, and children were encouraged to ask questions. Topics included why girls menstruate, the duration of menstrual cycles, days at risk of pregnancy, hormonal imbalances, and the impact of food and climate on menstrual cycles—all practically demonstrated with special scientific illustrations.

The conversation then transitioned to types of menstrual pads, covering the advantages of both reusable and disposable options. Joyce highlighted the cost-effectiveness of reusable pads, lasting up to three years, and explained proper personal hygiene practices.

Coinciding with World AIDS Day, the children received education on the complexities of the disease, considering they are also at risk. They demonstrated a solid understanding of transmission methods, symptoms, and preventive measures.

Other topics addressed building a culture of volunteerism in the community as a form of philanthropy and the various types

of contraceptives. However, the emphasis remained on the fact that it is not yet the time for them to engage in sexual activities. Madam Mboneka Mushi, a teacher at the school stressed, *“Use this knowledge for the future or assist your sisters and brothers at home. We know some of you have family members struggling with these issues.”*

Following the completion of the sessions, students received packs of menstrual pads and additional gifts for their personal use. A portion of these items was also entrusted to the school leadership to support girls in case of emergencies on the school premises. Madam Mboneka conveyed the school’s appreciation on behalf of the institution.

Joyce concluded by expressing gratitude to FCS for achieving this goal and outlined plans to expand similar outreach efforts, especially targeting schools facing challenging circumstances like Njechele Secondary School in Rufiji.

# BREAKING THE CIRCLE

Badru

Picture yourself as a second-grade child. Early in the morning, you rise to begin the journey to school, surviving solely on water until returning home in the evening. Clad in your father's oversized sandals and a worn-out *kanzu* instead of the official school uniform, with exercise books packed into a burst plastic bag – you get the picture. You are just one among many children facing similar circumstances in your village.

While you may manage to complete your education, a pressing question arises: Can you compete with peers who have studied in environments that are more conducive? Will your psychological well-being remain intact, and how will you perceive the world? Will it be a just, loving, and fair world?

Poverty is an evil phenomenon significantly hindering the educational outcomes of children in Africa, as exemplified by situations as aforementioned. Limited access to essentials such as nutrition, healthcare, and sanitation impedes physical and cognitive development, eventually affecting learning outcomes. The cycle of poverty persists through generations, complicating efforts to break free from educational underachievement.

Badru Yahya, a student at State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) and his fellow volunteers have chosen to invest in supporting children emerging from such challenging environments. For years, they have devoted their energy and expertise to teaching children mathematics and English without charge.



“

In our environment, villagers live in dire conditions, so initiatives like this greatly help empower them to address their challenges.”

Mahmud Mtumweni,  
Local government leader



Having won the *My Giving Story* award from FCS, Badru collaborated with the Social Sustainable Development Organization (SSDO), SUZA Environmental & Intervention Club (SEIC), parents, teachers, and students to organize a charity event at Kibele Primary School in Zanzibar on 30 November 2023 to commemorate #GivingTuesday.

The school had 37 students from disadvantaged households, but due to budget constraints, only 13 students received assistance

with essential items like uniforms, shoes, notebooks, pens, soap, and school bags. Other activities during the event included environmental education, personal hygiene, and the distribution of gifts to students who excelled in their studies.

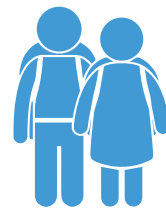
The response was overwhelmingly positive; teachers and parents were delighted, and the students were especially happy to be visited by their older siblings who were already excelling academically. Mrs. Theresia, the school’s Head Teacher, expressed her joy, *“You have done something significant that will leave a lasting impact on the hearts of these students and their parents.”*

Mahmud Mtumweni, a local government leader added, *“In our environment, villagers live in dire conditions, so initiatives like this greatly help empower them to address their challenges.”*

Many of us may not comprehend the joy felt by a shoeless child when provided with such assistance. What may seem small to you is enormous to them. When blessed, let us share with those less fortunate in life.

13

students



received assistance with essential items like uniforms, shoes, notebooks, pens, soap, and school bags.



## LEADERSHIP AND COMPASSION

Neema

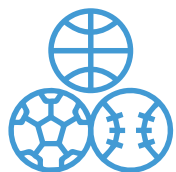
Leadership can be inherent or cultivated, and the most effective leaders often possess a blend of both qualities—innate and nurtured. The signs of leadership potential can manifest early in childhood, and if parenting and supportive systems like schools and various organizations are conducive, the development of such potential becomes seamless.

Leadership, fundamentally, involves the capacity to influence and instigate change in a specific area. Illustrating this concept is Neema Theonest, a 20-year-old student at Mbeya University of Science and Technology who consistently assumes leadership roles wherever she goes.

From a young age, she has been moved by a sense of unease witnessing the struggles of orphaned children, individuals with disabilities, and others in need. This empathy has driven her to undertake compassionate initiatives such as hospital visits, blood donations, assisting orphans, inspiring those facing despair, and educating girls on reproductive health.



**103** students



received educational materials, sports equipment, and hygiene items at Samora Machel Secondary School.





“

This is not a one-time event. We have already planned to extend our reach to many more areas

—  
Neema



Remarkably, she has been organizing philanthropic campaigns in Mwanza, Kagera, and Mbeya regions without institutional support or external donors. When she learned about the *My Giving Story* essay competition by FCS, she recognized it as an excellent opportunity to extend her impact. Winning a prize in the competition further validated her efforts.

Alongside her, around twenty fellow students contributed to promote a spirit of generosity on #GivingTuesday. Their efforts included a visit to Samora Machel Secondary School in Mbeya City, where they donated educational materials, sports equipment, and hygiene items to 103 students. They initiated the visit with environmental cleanup and engaged in dialogues about empowering girls to achieve their goals, emphasizing the prevention of early pregnancies. The District Education Officer participated in the event, and afterward, they distributed exercise books, pens, and sanitary pads to students.

Additionally, they engaged in providing humanitarian aid, including soap, towels, and other essentials, to patients at Mbeya Regional Hospital.

Reflecting on her environmental passion, Neema remarks, *“I am also an environmentalist. I purchased fruit tree seedlings that we planted at our school. While we aspired to do the same for the hospital, the unique challenges of a hospital environment necessitated a different approach.”*

Neema concludes with a commitment to ongoing initiatives: *“This is not a one-time event. We have already planned to extend our reach to many more areas. I want orphans and particularly girls from underprivileged backgrounds to awaken and reach their full potential. We welcome collaboration with anyone who shares our vision.”*



# MyGivingStory

