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# THE DARAJA SOCIAL

Building Bridges Between Communities - Daraja Foundation's Gazette



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## Never forget why you started, that's the reason you keep going.

ASHNOOR DHALLA, BOARD MEMBER


When I think back to the beginning, it makes me smile. I think about my first trip to Zanzibar, from the laughter of the kids running in the narrow streets of Stone Town to the crowing of the rooster and call to prayer at dawn. I remember going to Mazizini Children's Home and being with the kids, witnessing the excitement and energy that fills their hearts when they are playing together. Big things often have small beginnings.


Daraja Foundation has a special place in my heart. Six years ago, my sister came to me with a vision of what we could develop together in Zanzibar, something that would become bigger than ourselves and enable us to support women, children the young adults there. Something that could change their lives, and change the circumstances that they were in. We gathered our first Board of Directors, and founded Daraja Foundation in 2013. We started with small initiatives and have grown into something extraordinary. We have a solid group of volunteers and supporters and I am forever grateful for that.

The foundation has given me an inner sense of purpose. It has allowed me to be a part of something that empowers communities, creates opportunities, gives hope and encourages the youth of Zanzibar today. The youth in Zanzibar that have been involved with the Daraja Foundation over the years are exceptional and the reason why I continue with Daraja. Every time I visit, I am reminded of what we are doing. We are paving futures, educating motivated youth and watching lives flourish. There is no better "why" than to see the smiles on the faces of the kids, their self-confidence and the gratitude that they have for the support network that exists around them. Never forget why you started, that's the reason you keep going.

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## Rukia

### RUKIA, FLO HOUSE TRANSITION PROGRAM

Rukia is currently in college learning about record and archive management. During her break, she had the opportunity to get work experience and training for a month Puzzle Coffee Shop in Stone Town. As her first job, she experienced a lot! Rukia is currently part of our mentorship program, and our Flo House transition network.

*"I'm 19 years old and I consider myself an interesting girl. I am currently in college and started a course recently that is about preserving records and archives, I am learning a lot! During my free time, I love drawing, singing, dancing, talking, creating and writing stories. My biggest dream is to go abroad to study interior design. Art is my passion and it's in my blood."*

My mentors have been my biggest support because they never gave up on me. No matter how hard things were they were always there. Because life - well, I believe that at the place I'm working, it's a good experience for me, it's called Puzzle. The word puzzle is like life; everything that is happening in your life, every little problem, or big problem, the heaviness, the hard times, the good times, the crazy times, the best times and the sad times, it's all pieces of a puzzle that will come together. I am ready to push and keep working through the hard stones that will create power. My mentors are a piece of my success, so I am ready to persevere. Yes, I can do this, if we are together. Me, my friends that are in Flo House and my mentors, I know that I can get through this. If it wasn't for sharing my beautiful moments with them I wouldn't have landed here. So thank you and I hope this helped you learn more about me"

Rukia is a wonderful and powerful young woman, with goals that she can reach. We recently received news that NED Foundation will be raising funds to help sponsor Rukia's education in interior design, Rukia is currently looking her options and applying for a passport to study abroad. If you are interested in supporting Rukia's journey, or a young adult like her at Flo House, please send us an email at [info@daraja.ca](mailto:info@daraja.ca).



## Giving back in YYC

### WRITTEN BY SHAUNA HARRISON

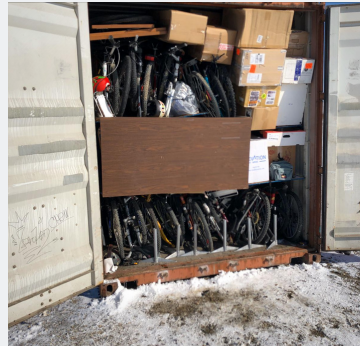
Another successful social event happened in July. Passage studio shared their space and donated an instructor to hold a HIIT class for those wanting to show up for a sweat and to support Daraja Foundation.



Thanks to everyone that made it out to Passage for their donation drop in classes for the month of July. Passage Studio has kindly offered to continue donating their karma classes for the months of August and September in order to support numerous upcoming projects.

## Bicycles for Humanity

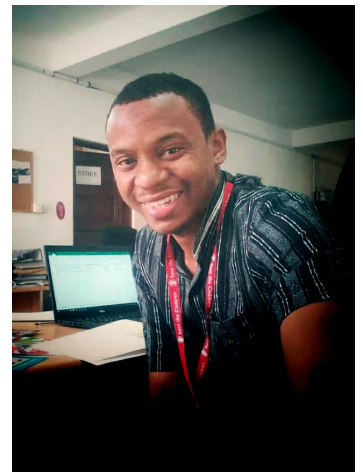
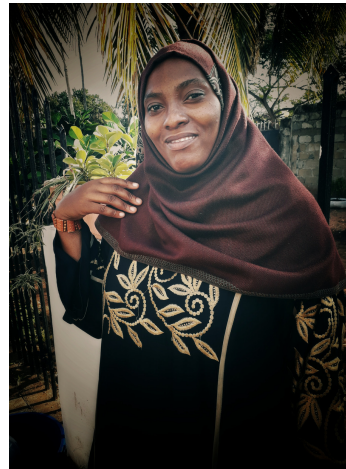
This container has left Calgary with 375 bikes, 100 new mom maternity kits, 10 laptops, 2 desks and 50 backpacks. We are excited for another container to support our programs and to distribute to more partner NGOs and beneficiaries that also plan to open Bicycle Empowerment Centres, increase access to education, support entrepreneurship, encourage healthy lifestyle habits and promote the use of a pollution-free mode of transport. Thanks to all those involved in donations of items, time and funds. Thanks to those who gave the time to sort and load the container, humanity rocks!





## Mentors of Daraja's Transition Program

Meet our current team of committed mentors that are supporting the young adults of our Flo House and outreach transition program. We work together to inspire and support our mentees - and we help each other along the way.



Transitional residences and short-term stays are one solution to help better prepare youth for the challenges of entering adulthood. The Flo House aims to prevent isolation and marginalization of these young adults. Youth who leave Mazizini Children's House are able to join the mentorship program for a period of time until they are ready to live independently.

January 2020 will mark 1 year of our mentorship program through the Flo House, through both in-house and outreach capacity. Our team of mentors is growing and developing in many ways. We are a dynamic team of long-term and short-term mentors, with various life experiences and backgrounds, such as psychology, social work, nursing, economics and entrepreneurship. We all have a lot to contribute, and we aim to support each other and our respective mentees.

Each youth is paired with a mentor to guide them. The work with each individual involves mentorship and guidance, life skills education, educational sponsorship, support with employment and help with their living situations. Daraja's goal is to continue to support them in their quest for independence by improving their skill sets and providing assistance in surmounting obstacles they may encounter along the way.

### More about our cover photo

Amina is the big sister of Flo House, living with and guiding Flo residents. Amina is also part of the mentor team. This is a photo of her participating in a fitness class offered Wajamama Wellness Center. Wajamama is dedicated to disease prevention and health promotion. In addition to being a primary health clinic with a focus on women's health services and wellness workshops, Wajamama also offers a safe environment for women to partake in various group fitness classes.

Daraja and Wajamama collaborate to encourage and empower the young women of Flo House and Mazizini Children's House to put their health first, make time for their personal well-being, have fun and keep moving. Our young women can regularly participate in these classes thanks to Wajamama's support and the generous donors of Daraja Foundation.



@lulurayphotos @wajamama\_fitness @wajamama\_zanzibar

**"NEVER, EVER GIVE UP ON  
WHAT MAY CHALLENGE YOU  
AND DON'T STRESS  
YOURSELF OUT TOO MUCH.  
NO MATTER HOW HARD A  
SITUATION IS, TIME WILL  
CHANGE IT. KEEP FIGHTING,  
DO IT FOR YOU"**

**- AMINA**





## Daraja Mentee Highlights



### KHADIJA

At the age of 22, Khadija has taken a big step forward in the world of entrepreneurship. Soon after she left Mazizini Children's Home, she went to Oman for a couple of years to work and get experience. She returned, continued to save funds and moved into the Flo House when it opened. She joined the mentorship program, trained with Mali Spa and started a business plan. Khadija has transitioned out of the Flo House and continued to work towards manifesting a business idea that she had from the beginning. She recently opened her own shop, and made it all happen with a strong support network around her.

Salama is her mentor and has been by her side, Suzanne from One Love Africa Foundation consulted with her on a business plan and budget, and Daraja provided a loan to get her started. She went for it we are here cheering her on!



### KHALFAN

Khalfan is now an officially a licensed tour guide in Zanzibar. Khalfan has been involved with Daraja for several years, taking part in various training and learning opportunities with our partners and volunteers since he left Mazizini Children's Home - including ZL4LF, Bicycles 4 Humanity, Kawa Training Center, One Love Africa Foundation, SAIT, World Unite and Daraja's mentorship program. He completed a tour guide training course at Kawa Training Center, and recently received his official tour guide license from the Commission for Tourism in Zanzibar.

Khalfan is happy about how this has opened many doors of opportunity for him. He is currently working as a stand up paddle guide for 2 Winds Paddle Sports and also arranges many activities that guests can enjoy during their visit to Zanzibar, including guided tours of Stone Town and excursions. He plans to become a Daraja mentor himself and to continue his education in tourism and travel with the support of an individual sponsor.



**WE ASKED KHALFAN WHAT HIS FAVOURITE WORDS OF INSPIRATION WERE. HE SAID,  
"THE ONLY FAILURE IS NEVER TO TRY"**

### HAJI

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to donors of individual youth, such as Haji, who have been given the opportunity to receive a better education because of your commitment. He is the son of Mohammed, a teacher from Mazizini Children's Home who passed away when Haji was 4 years old. Mohammed was a valued volunteer of Daraja Foundation, a wonderful father to Haji and a great role model to the children growing up in the home. His passing was a big loss to many.

Daraja sponsored Haji's education since then. Haji is now 9 years old and currently first in his class. His sponsorship has been taken over by Seri and Saechan from South Korea. Sponsors that invest in education make a big difference in individual lives. Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

