



Case Study: Zainabu

Zainabu lives in Tanzania and she is in standard six at Makuyuni Primary school. She has been doing well at school but her family are very poor so it is a struggle for her to stay in school.

The Headteacher says Zainabu has been doing well in class and as a result she has been chosen as the school storekeeper.

'I am living a very difficult life. My father left us a long time ago and has been living in Dar es Salaam ever since. He left us when we were very young. My mother works as a casual labourer in other people's farms to get money to buy us food and to pay for other household expenses such as medical and school expenses.'



Zainabu from Tanzania

'For the past three years my mother has faced problems getting work. There has been a very bad drought and this meant there is often no work for her. Whenever I ask her for money to pay for school expenses such as buying school uniforms, shoes and exercise books my mother can never afford it. I am also under pressure to leave school to find work – my sisters tease me by saying that school is a waste of time.'

'When I come home after school I also face difficulties. We often have to go to other people's houses to beg for food. We sometimes have to go to sleep without eating at all or just have porridge as our dinner. I am also asked to go and fetch water for my uncle's family when I am supposed to go to school.'

'Education is important because it could change my life. Our house is in very bad shape and if I got some money I would be able to fix it. Sometimes when it threatens to rain, we stay up all night waiting for it to start. We try to block every hole in our walls and ceiling so the rain doesn't fall on our bed. If I get my education, I could become a teacher or anything else I want. I would build a home for my mother'

'During my free time I like to read. Sometimes there is no oil for the light at home so we sit in the dark and I sometimes use a candle to read. I think if my mother had gotten an education, we would not be living in hardship now. One day, I want to be the President. I would also like to become a teacher.'

Photo © Kate Holt/ActionAid

Text © ActionAid

75 million children are missing out on an education