

Magongo News

Special Edition

Nicholas Karani

by Victoria Ferguson Project Director Glad's House

When I started in care work one of the first rules I was told was that I couldn't have favourites... then I met Nicolas



Karani, and I like everyone else who met him instantly feel under his spell! Karani as he was known, was a very special human being, he had an energy around him that was infectious and even the most miserable person in the world would be melted by Karani's charm.

Karani was tiny for his age, he had been on the street from a very young age and mal-nourishment plus too much glue had stunted his growth and addled his brain, but this didn't

matter to anyone around him. He was your classic street boy, dirty, always with a glue bottle in hand, a free spirit, a survivor. However, like most children, the street got the better of him the end. If Karani had had a different start in life I have no doubt he would have gone far, but he didn't, he was from too young an age made to sniff glue so he wasn't afraid at night and so that the hunger in his stomach wasn't the overpowering sensation in his life. Karani was a victim of his situation and like all of his peers did what he had to do to try and survive on a daily basis. For me Karani is the personification of why Glads House exists and why its is so important we offer support for children on the street. We need to stop the Karanis of this world dying for no reason. No child should have to live on the street and no child should die on the street.

God with us all by Fredrick 'Bokey Achola MOYO

"While on the streets, we undergo lots of things". These were the words of Nicholas Karani. You may remember, last month, he had been arrested and taken to jail for loitering out on the streets. He had been sent back home to Meru in Eastern Kenya but within days he was on the streets again and on glue as always.

Last week 32 boys had turned up for Freelance Wednesday. On Friday, only 17 showed- up for the 100% Friday. Of the 17, most had cuts or various physical injuries. We wanted to know what was wrong only to be told that, that night both the Kenya Police and the Municipal Police had pounced on them. Several were arrested and for the few who escaped made it but with injuries as some had to climb and jump over high walls and from the moving police and municipal lorry ferrying them to the Central Police Station. Among those who made it was Nicholas Karani. "It is God who helped me. I could not have made it if it were not for God. The Lorry was just about to reach the Police station when I jumped off. I hurt my leg when I fell down from the lorry but I still had to run."



Many children ran to the street not knowing what awaited them. Hard drugs are now heating the streets of Mombasa. The police believe that the drug barons use the boys on the streets to carry the drugs from one point to the other hence the toughness on them. For the last few weeks they have been very hard on the children. Many get injured when running away and when they escape most believe that it is only God who got them through.

However, the week did not end well for the boys. After the "100% Friday", Nicholas is said to have gone into deep sleep along the street. At about midnight, he got himself a cane of Glue and went to his usual spot The

Casablanca night club. Here he gets money from girls who come out prostituting. Most of the girls also use Marijuana or bahgi as it is called here in Kenya. They do send him to buy it for them. They are all his friends and most believe that whenever they give him a coin or two they usually have a good catch. The following morning, a group of Indians who had a party the previous night brought the boys food that had been left over and Karani ate to capacity.

Together with three friends they then went to the ocean to swim. That was the end of Karani. Today we shall be sending one of the boys who come from the same area with him in Eastern Kenya. We hope that we shall get his mother and give her the sad news.

Such are the end stories of most children who come out on the streets. As no one knows their exact homes, many end up in mass graves as no one turns up to claim the bodies. At times, like in Karani's case one child is believed to know the parent we try to trace the family and give them the news and in case we don't make it, we organize with the other boys and put him to rest in the public cemetery here in Mombasa.