



## SEEKING MEDICAL HELP WAS NEVER AN OPTION.



### ► THE BEGGINING

.The fear of judgment, of being labelled, of being stared at in the waiting room was too much to bear. So, he suffered in silence.

In December 2024, Stephano Mahembe, a trained Adolescent Peer Educator, was conducting his routine reproductive health education sessions in Churuku Village. His role was simple yet powerful talk to young people about their health in a way that felt safe, open, and judgment-free.

### ► A CONVERSATION THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

That's when he met Issa. At first, Issa was hesitant to speak. He had never openly talked about his health, especially not with someone from outside. But Stephano had a different approach he listened first. Slowly, Issa found himself opening up. He described his symptoms, his fears, and his belief that the clinic would be an embarrassing place to go.

### ► TRADITIONAL REMEDIES

For 19-year-old Issa Hussein, seeking medical help was not an option.

For weeks, he had been unwell. Pain, discomfort, and uncertainty had taken over his daily life. Deep down, he feared the worst an STI. But instead of visiting a health facility, he turned to traditional remedies, hoping the problem would resolve on its own.

Going to the clinic felt impossible.



## NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

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I thought if I went, people would assume things about me. I didn't want to be judged." Issa insisted Stephano reassured him that **seeking healthcare was not something to be ashamed of.**



## THE DIAGNOSIS THAT SURPRISED HIM

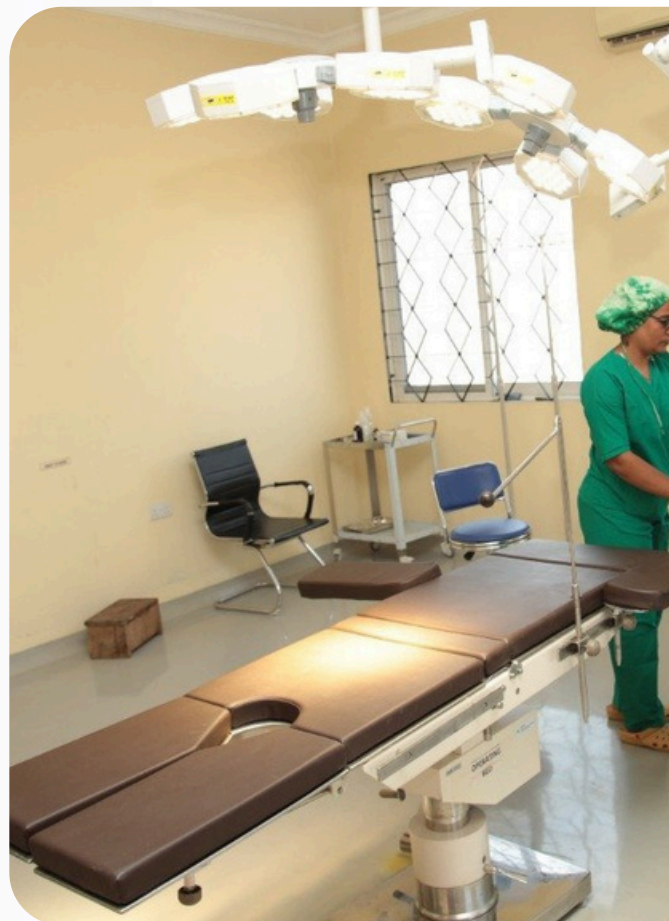
He explained that the local clinic had a special private room for adolescent services, ensuring confidentiality. More importantly, he encouraged Issa to prioritize his health over fear.

Finally, Issa agreed.

When Issa arrived at Churuku Dispensary, he braced himself for bad news.

But after a full check-up, the truth was far from what he had feared it wasn't an STI at all. *It was a simple urinary tract infection (UTI).*

A condition that could have been treated weeks ago had instead become a source of anxiety, pain, and isolation all because of stigma and misinformation. With the right medication and care, Issa recovered quickly.



## A NEW PERSPECTIVE, A NEW MISSION

Looking back, Issa realized just how much **fear and misinformation had cost him** his comfort, his health, and his peace of mind.

*"I spent weeks in pain, all because I was scared of what people might say."*

Now, he **sees things differently**. Health isn't about judgment, it's about **getting the care you need, when you need it**. And he's not keeping that lesson to himself.

Today, **Issa spoke to his friends about his experience**, making sure no one else delays treatment out of fear.

**One conversation, one decision, one step towards care, it changed everything.**