

# “WE HAVE NO CHOICE”

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Above: Ashura Onesmo speaking on October 17, 2018.

Ashura Onesmo is a member of ATD Fourth World in Tanzania. Her job breaking stones in a rock quarry is exhausting and dangerous. She must take her children with her to work every day. But without an education, she has no other way to support her family. Despite these hardships, she says, “We do not despair because we hope that someday things will change.” She gave the speech below on [World Day for Overcoming Poverty](#) in Tanzania.

My name is Ashura Onesmo. I am a mother of two children and I am stone breaker at the quarry named “Cambodia”. The root cause of my life of poverty lies in the family conflict between my father and my mother. My mother had to bring the children up single-handed, and her only income was from small money making activities.

*I managed to study until the end of primary school. But I was not able to do more. If I had had a good education, I would have been able to find a good*

*job and overcome poverty.*

For women like me, the way to struggle against poverty is to break stones. It is a job that requires no investment other than our own strength. However, breaking stones is hard work and very dangerous. But we do it because we have no choice.

## **Low pay for hard dangerous labor**

I usually get up at four in the morning to prepare juices for sale and lunch for my family. Then I go to work at the quarry. At 6 am I arrive there and immediately start breaking the stones. I stop at around 3pm and start separating the piles of broken stones into buckets. In one day I can fill between 7 and 20 buckets and earn between 2000 to 5000 TSH. This is not enough for the needs of a family, but we continue to struggle. We do not despair because we hope that someday things will change.

The work of breaking stones is a job that can be done by everyone because we do not need any capital, except for our own strength. But it is work that brings great risks.

*The dust causes tuberculosis and other diseases. We work under the sun all day long on a very poor diet. As women we have particular problems. Lifting and carrying large stones can result in miscarriage and other internal injuries.*

## **"Our children are with us every day"**

The problems caused by poverty are numerous. Our children are with us every day at the quarry and grow up there. They start breaking stones themselves at a young age. They get used to contributing money, which often means that they don't want to go to school. In fact, the family cannot survive without their income."



*Stone quarry in Tanzania.*

In the name of women working in the quarries, thank you very much.

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