

Mkombozi

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ON THE ROAD TO SELF-RELIANCE:

Trained business mentors are linked to Mkombozi youth

Mkombozi enables street youth to do business through the guidance of trained business mentors, a process in which both sides can grow as individuals by learning from each other. Through the Street Business Toolkit (SBTK), a training kit developed by Street Kids International (SKI), Mkombozi has this year educated 13 street youth to build and maintain a small-scale business.

On their personal roads towards self-reliance, the youth need intense guidance and support from an adult. Thus, the “Business Mentorship” concept was created to fill this very gap. It is the product of an elaborative cooperation between Mkombozi staff and SKI, and aims to make youths’ transitions toward independence a safer and more informed process.

Earlier this month, Mkombozi arranged the first training of business mentors at the Arusha office. Eight mentors, each joined with one or two (of 13) youth, undertook a two-day training on the guiding principles of mentorship. An increased knowledge on business principles, trust-building and the nature of street-based youth were some of the key gains for participants attending the training. Most importantly, each mentor gains the opportunity to make a significant contribution in the life of a vulnerable youth.

Most of the youth who have been trained in the SBTK this year have been living on the streets of Arusha for some time. But now, their lives are changing significantly. Mkombozi has provided them not only with training and business mentoring, but also with a small business loan and a start-up grant for independent living. In fact, most of these youth have just moved into rented rooms in various parts of Arusha town. Now is the time for them to run their own businesses, such as selling eggs, fruit, dried fish and clothes, with the support, care and follow-up offered by Mkombozi and the mentors.

Ephygenia Mapunda, Street Educator at Mkombozi, who was facilitating the Business Mentorship training, is very positive about the linkage that has been made between mentors and mentees. “As a mentor, you are supposed to be a volunteer working for youth,” she says. “You will not get any money, what you will get is the skills and knowledge so that you can help young people.”

The cooperation between mentors and mentees has begun. Mkombozi youth in different parts of Arusha town are now bravely facing the challenges of independent living.



Halima Iddy, SBTK training participant



Ephygenia Mapunda, SBTK trainer