

TANGAZA

IN THIS ISSUE:

This month we feature Slum Art Attack, an art centre proposed by a group of community participants from Kibera. They credit the Reach Up! programme for giving them the confidence and the necessary skills to go for their dreams (*see main feature*).

We have added several other community partners to our growing list. Make a Better World (MABWOK) in Nairobi's Mukuru Kayaba slum, Youth Transformation Network in Limuru, Kinangop Youth Summit in Kinangop, the youth of Waithaka ward and Nairobi-Bits Design School, both in Nairobi. (*NairobiBits is featured on pg. 3*).

We also hosted Colin Bruce, World Bank Country Director at one of the Reach up class sessions (*see story pg. 1*).

We hope you enjoy it!

Colin Bruce, World Bank Country Director for Comoros, Eritrea, Kenya, Seychelles and Somalia, made a visit to a Reach Up class at Don Bosco Boys Town on the 14th of March, 2007.

Accompanied by Joseph Maruti, DOT Kenya country

ART BREWED IN THE KIBERA POT

Kevin 'Stero' Irungu, John Skafta, Isaac Omari and Davis Kabala took the Reach Up! in Cycle II at Carolina for Kibera. Joan Walumbe visited with Kevin and John at the Maasai Mbili Seyna Centre in Kibera and brings you their story.

Life the sprawling Kibera slums of Nairobi is a struggle for the most part for the residents of this, the largest slum in Sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty is a reality they have to deal with everyday and a lack of employment for the youth only exacerbates the problem. Kevin 'Stero' Irungu, John Skafta, Isaac Omari and Davis Kabala have chosen to do something to change their reality. These young men have a passion for art and have seen the possibilities

for creating a livelihood not just for themselves, but also for other young people, using the creative arts. They propose to start an art centre where young people can create their pieces of art. The centre would also act as a gallery, allowing them to display their pieces for prospective buyers.

I visited with Kevin, who prefers the name Stero, and John at Maasai Mbili Seyna Art Centre or M2 as it is popularly known, in Kibera where they showed me samples of their artworks. M2 is an art centre in Kibera where they have honed their skills. From this 2-storey wood and iron sheet structure in Kianda village in Kibera, young men and woman create pieces that mirror their lives and evoke great emotions. Neither John or Stero have



Kevin Irungu, aka Stero, displays one of his pieces which he calls "Dame" at the M2 Art Studio.

had any formal training in art, but one of the founders of the centre, Otieno Gomba, is their mentor and has nurtured their talent for the past 2 years. Otieno is a veteran artist specialising in a genre he calls 'Ghetto Art'.

Stero was under his wing for 2 years and struck
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WORLD BANK COUNTRY DIRECTOR VISITS REACH UP!

Director, Mr Bruce was able to get a first hand look at the Reach Up! programme in action. Adrian Gitau and Carol Wamwea, DOT Kenya's interns at Don Bosco, were taking the participants through

the module "The Opportunity Marketplace". Adrian even managed to include both country directors in a class activity. That got everyone a bit tangled up but broke the ice nicely.

In his short address to the class, Mr Bruce noted that he was interested in coming out to see the programme because DOT's programmes and the Reach Up! programme in particu-

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Art brewed in the Kibera pot contd. from pg. 1



John Skafe and Kevin 'Stero' Irungu pose with their mentor Otieno Gomba and Rose Juma, their intern facilitator during Reach Up!, in front of Gomba's piece "Burning Desire" at the M2 centre.

out on his own about a year ago. His house in Kibera burnt down a few months ago in a kerosene

fire which destroyed everything he had including some of his pieces. But he has quickly picked himself up and gotten back to the drawing board.

John is the newest member of the group. He is still polishing his skills with pencil drawings but he is a quick learner. Stero shows me an unfinished carving of

what is clearly a tortoise in stone, a piece by Isaac, who was not available for the interview. "Isaac is going to

be a great sculptor," he proudly exclaims.

The proposed art centre isn't all the boys are involved with. "We do sign writing and we print T-shirts on order. John is also a shoe shiner. All these activities give us a small income that helps towards achieving our higher goals," explains Stero.

They are not just into the creative arts. They also dabble in the performing arts and are confident of their rapping skills. They have plans to make their own movies. "We plan to give Hollywood a run for its money with our mov-

ies," Stero confidently asserts. They are currently editing a video about life in Kibera.

The boys are very glad to have taken the Reach Up! programme because they crystallised their ideas through the coaching and are now well on their way to making their dreams a reality. ■

The members of Slum Art Attack can be reached via

Email: joblesscornercampus@yahoo.com.

For more information about the M2 Seyna Art Centre, including samples of the artworks by featured artists, visit their website at

www.art4peace.org

WB Country Director visits Reach Up! contd. from pg. 1

lar seemed to fit in with the World Bank's areas of focus. "I wanted to visit you here today because this programme deals with the youth and it is an example of how organisations (Don Bosco and DOT Kenya in this case) work together, and lastly, I was interested in the fact that you are introducing technology in a very holistic way." He was also very happy to see the linkage with vocational training especially as it is evident in Don Bosco. He urged the participants to use the newfound skills even while they were still in vocational training. "Don't wait until after you finish your training. Even while you are still here as a student, you can develop your entrepreneur-

rial spirit by starting small businesses with your fellow students and the staff here as clients."

The class was very interested in the work of the World Bank especially as it is concerned with their individual lives. Mr. Bruce fielded many questions and even took suggestions from one participant who suggested that the World Bank change tack a little and find ways to greater impact the lives of individuals by funding their business ventures directly.

The visit was part of DOT Kenya's ongoing effort to get development partners into the classrooms to experience the programme for themselves. Mr. Bruce was very keen to



Carol Wamwea, Colin Bruce and Joseph Maruti at Don Bosco Boys Town, Karen.

see what impact the programme has had on the participants and asked to be sent the impact assessment as and when it is ready. He also pointed to a loan of \$140 million that the World Bank was finalising with the government of Kenya to aid in its efforts to roll out technology to all its citizens, and organisations such as DOT Kenya which are involved in skills building will be able to apply for grants. ■

DOT KENYA
EXTENDS PROGRAMME

DOT Kenya is proud to announce the extension of the Demonstration Programme for a further three months. This effectively means that DOT Kenya is offering the Reach Up! programme to existing and new community partners for 3 more months in April, May and June, 2007.

By the end of March, 496 community participants had gone through the Reach Up! class sessions. 229 community participants are currently registered and will complete the class portion of the Reach Up! training by the end of April.

Community based organisations (CBOs) and youth groups interested in taking the Reach Up! programme can contact DOT Kenya on +254 20 4453721 or +254 20 6751385. ■

PARTNER PROFILE: NAIROBITS DESIGN SCHOOL

NairoBits Trust has its roots in Holland where it started in 1999 as a small cultural project to create a two-way channel of communication between Africa and the rest of the world and also reduce the digital divide while creating opportunities for slum youth. The project founders were also concerned with the need to gain access to first hand knowledge on Africa, free from any third party manipulation.

Based at the Godown Arts Centre, NairoBits has since developed into

a Digital Design School that creates websites, IT-projects and new business concepts www.nairobits.com/e-learning/index.html

The project focuses on enabling the youth to tell their own stories through creative websites and also be able to access information through the internet sources. As a result, they have been able to creatively design and write on the day to day issues affecting them as Africans, Kenyans and more so, as young people living in informal settlements of Nairobi. They have been



able to also look at their lives more positively and proven that theirs is not just a sad and bad story, but also the story of people determined to live a better life.

Job Opportunities among the slum youth

The programme ultimately

enables the youth increase their chances in the job market. Since the year 2000, NairoBits has managed to train over 300 youth in ICT at different levels of training. Over fifty of them who have trained up to Level Four (or the MediaLab), the highest level, have secured jobs with leading web design and communications product companies including 3Mice, Globefinity, Webfundi, Wananchi Online, Metrocomia, Dotsavvy, I4Design, Single click. Recently, one of the students secured employment with the UNEP as Web Specialist. Others have found scholarships or jobs abroad.

NairoBits is a DOT Kenya partner providing both the training venue and the participants for the Reach Up programme. 12 eager and willing participants began the training in early March 2007. The programme has created a buzz at the centre and several youths have expressed an interest in the training. Plans are in the works to begin another class in April 2007. We wish to thank the management of the NairoBits Design School and look forward to fruitful partnership that is mutually beneficial. ■

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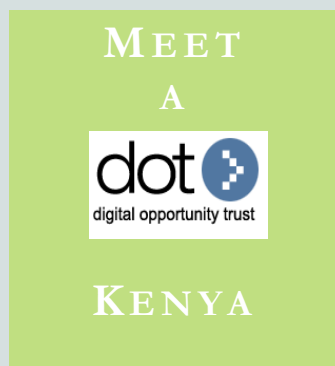
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Dynamism, innovation and creativity are some of the words I, Samson Muigai, would use to describe myself. I joined DOT Kenya in October 2006 as an intern. I have truly appreciated the training and the opportunity to facilitate DOT's innovative and motivational Reach Up! Programme.

The entire internship programme, from training to the community placement, has helped me to discover my gifts and has greatly increased my confidence. As a result, I feel I am more marketable and enlightened.

My first posting was in Gatanga, a rural community about 45 kilometres from Nairobi, with an organization known as the YARD (Youth Action For



Rural Development). While I was placed there, three projects stood out for me: Jenju Pig Rearing, Artur Chicken Rearing and Gargoyles Screen Printing. Gatanga is a rural area, and the participants were excited at the prospect of starting their own projects in order to pro-

vide sustainable livelihoods for their families and provide employment in the community. I am currently following up these projects to see that they are implemented.

After this internship, I hope to get a career in advertising as a copy-writer, in order to realize my ambition of becoming a Creative Director in 10 years. Currently I am producing and directing plays and working on my own stand-up comedy show. I hope to start my own film and television company to produce my own local and international films.

I really appreciate the efforts of the DOT Kenya Team who have made this internship worthwhile. ■ *Contact Samson on smuigai@globalnetcorps.org.*