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July 2016

Ghetto Mirror

Real life stories from slums

ISSUE 31



Ghetto Mirror

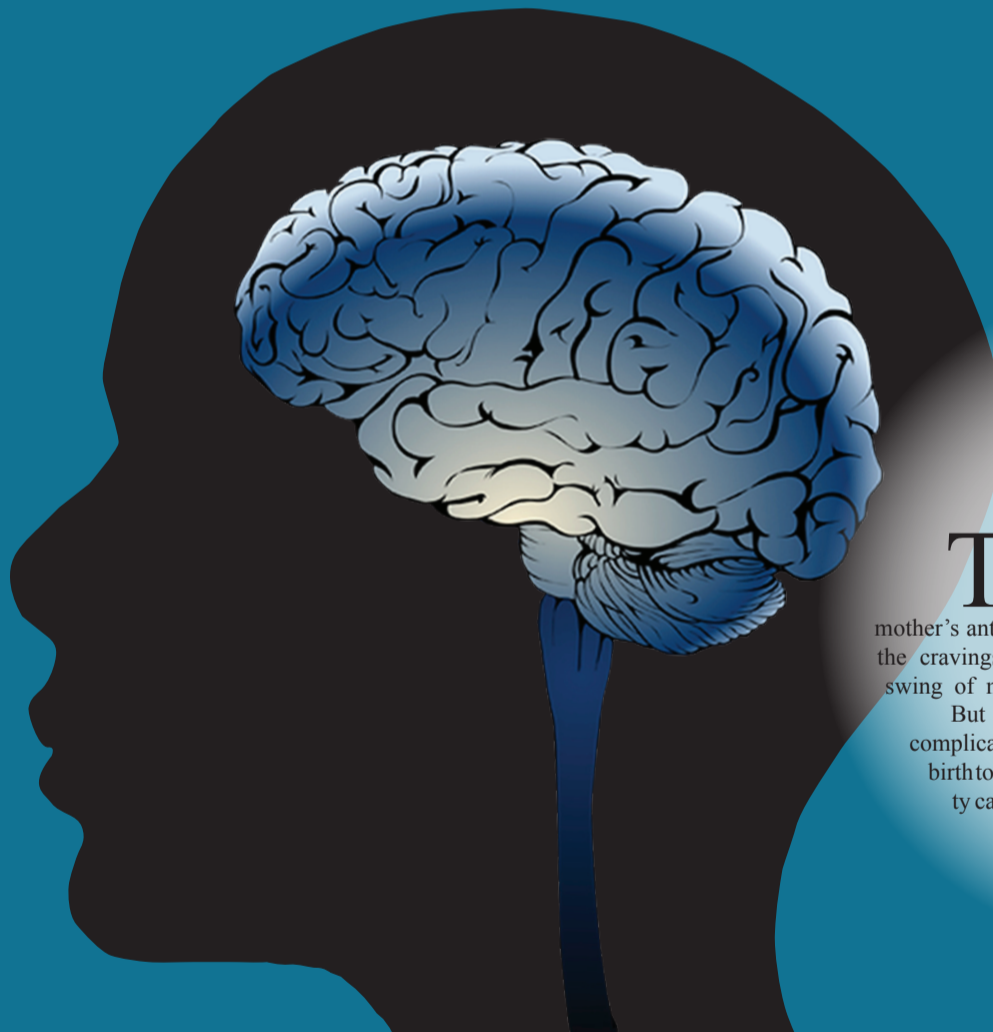


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Breaking the Autism glass ceiling



By Veronica Kaveza
(vkaveza@yahoo.com)

The news of having a baby to a new mother comes with a lot of excitement and joy to both parents and family as a whole. The mother's anticipation overshadows the pregnancy blues: the cravings, the upwards and downward emotional swing of moods and physical changes experienced. But what happens when the baby comes with complication or a disability? The reality of giving birth to a special need kid or a child with disability can be traumatizing and heartbreaking.

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Photo | Google images

Teenage motherhood: Development challenge in slums

By Johnstone Mutua

(josmutuam@gmail.com)

Mary has been caught up in circumstances she herself cannot explain. She walks around confused, unsure of what she should do next. She is 13 and pregnant, in the next couple of months she will be a mother – a young and single mother. She is not too sure what this means to her life. Soon, her parents will be shocked, angry and may

probably throw her out of home. But that is only the beginning of her problems; more problems are on the way. There are many others like her. In form two, Mary is about to add to the statistics school dropout due to teenage pregnancy which stands at 103 for every 1000 pregnancies according to Kenya Population Situation Analysis Report of 2013.

Teenage pregnancy has resulted in thousands of girls abandoning their education early and stunting community development and eventually national development.

Danky Ouma, the director of Young Single Mothers Empowerment Initiative in Kibera slum, affirms that teenage pregnancy have increased in Kibera.

"I do not understand, why after a schoolgirl has conceived and given birth she should not be allowed back to school to continue with her studies.

Why should the 'young mother' who has ...

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TALKING POINT

Editor's Note

July. The 7th month of the year. This month marks the other half of the year. The sunny days are long gone, now it is the chilly season has set in. With it, people are sniffing their noses, sweaters and scarfs are bundled up and worn tightly across bodies. Kenyan winter is here, and it is upon us. But seasons come and go, with weather changes, and we, humans still remain creatures of habits, or we choose to. However not all habits are productive to us.

This particular habit has turned friends to foes, families once close to alienated strangers, and neighbors to gossip mongers. This habit is Stigmatization. According to Dictionary.com, it defines stigmatization, to set some mark of disgrace or infamy upon. Our society today chooses to stigmatize specific individuals because they do not follow the status quo ideals. From sexuality choice to diseases, we all have experienced some form of stigma.

The end result for the ousted people are similar: anger, loneliness, depression and suicidal thoughts. We must stop and check ourselves in the mirror, if we ever find ourselves stigmatizing anyone. No one should go through that.

A society is founded on the basis of offering support for all especially the weak. It should not resort to mark individuals disgracefully on a matter they themselves do not comprehend.

Unity can only prosper, if it starts from societal level, which will then grow and flourish to national levels. For we all want is acceptance and we should accept others too!

Quote of the month

Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle
Napoleon Hill

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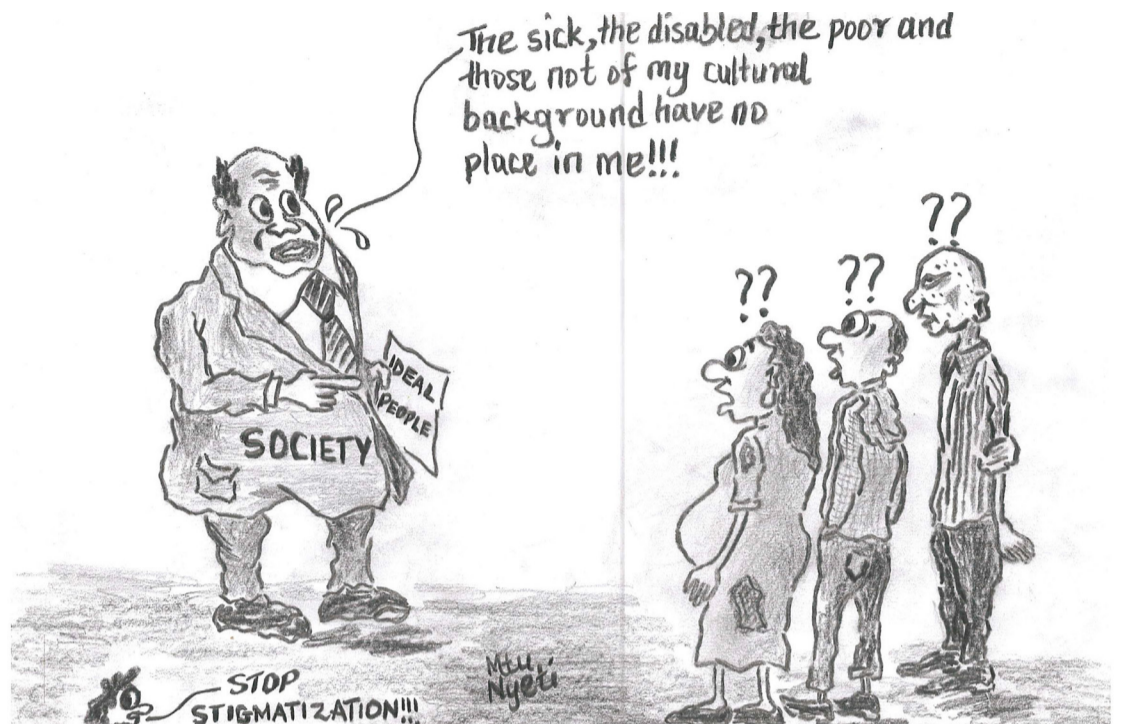
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Stop stigmatization



A home for young mothers

Unplanned pregnancies in young girls thrusts them into a world of motherhood, though they are still kids who need care and love.

Many have had to bear the full brunt of stigma from society and rejection from family, and sometimes from the boys or men responsible for their pregnancy.

The number of girls dropping out of school because of teenage pregnancy increases each year with at least 13,000 according to Kenyan statistics.

Some of this girls are either defiled by close family members or close friends. The perpetrators are known to walk away freely or come up with an agreement with parents or guardians and sometimes the local leaders, to cover it up, living these young girls in agony.

And for this reason, Uweza Foundation a Non-Governmental organization located in Kibra came out to support these young mothers.

Betty Seda, a life skill instructor at Uweza center says she has more than 15 teenagers under the program "Young Mothers" that was started three years ago to support girls.

"We support those who find themselves pregnant but don't have any assistant and are rejected by family and those responsible for the pregnancy," says Seda.

She adds that through the pro-

gram she has been able to save girls, and prevent possible suicides and abortions.

"I am a mother, grandmother, a mentor and mediator, between the girls and their parents who want nothing to do with them," says Seda.

At Uweza center the organization has been able to come up with programs such as soap making, mart kneading and entrepreneurship courses, that the young mothers train for, in order to support themselves financially.

Most of the young mothers' have small successful businesses while others have been employed by the Uweza Centre.

The young mothers are also allowed to take loans from the organization.

Seda explains they also have a savings account which they save fifty shillings to two hundred shillings each week and the money is distributed among them after six months.

Mercy one of the girls at the organization says she became pregnant at the age of sixteen. She was terrified to such an extent that she became sick.

She was afraid to tell her mother and the fact she was living with her step father she knew the news will be a prelude to disaster.

"After hiding the truth from my mother for some time, I knew I had to tell her. Though my mother did not over react she stopped supporting me and asked me to get

support from the man responsible.

Unfortunately the man responsible was also a student," says Mercy.

She stayed at home trying to figure out what to do with her life and how she was going to support her child after giving birth. Fortunately she meant Betty who introduced her to Uweza Foundation.

Now she makes soap and sell and she is thinking of going back to school.

Loreen, a mother of one has every reason to smile now after joining the program. It provided for her te means of supporting her child.

I now know the meaning of life because I am independent and I don't need to rely on anybody," says Loreen.

However, Seda still notes that there is a lot to do in the community so as to mend the burned bridges of relations and promote unity and oneness from a family-level.

"All these girls seek refuge at Uweza center. They open up easily to me than any other person.

Even the boys who are under the Uweza football team talk about their problems. Some of the boys have been sodomized. But still a lot have to been done to salvage our girls from the preys who are there to use and dumped them," concludes Seda.

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Ghetto Mirror



@GhettoMirror_KE

one on one TRIPPLE W

By Kevin Ochieng'

Tripple W is a very promising music band, where did you guys start from?

We started the band in 2006 by then it was called "Wastardi" together with Leveex Mathayo and as time went by more artists joined especially dancers and decided to change its name to **Tripple W** (Waledi Wakali Wao) music band.

What is your genre of music?

We do hip hop music and we have branded it hip hop halisi since its very inspirational carrying messages against gender based violence, crime, drug and substance abuse and bad politics and governance.

What inspires your music?

Our genre of music is inspired by our environment and our day to day challenges. We use it to bring hope and inspire more youth in Mukuru and other slums in general.

What has been the response rate of your music in the slums?

We have created our music with the intention of spreading the message of peace to everyone. With our target audience consisting of everyone from the mama mboga to the youth and child in the slum, our music is being received well and more and more people are encouraging us to keep on producing music.

How many songs have you recorded and realized?

We have done and recorded many songs but still in audio form. You can get our songs from mdundo at www.mdundo.com/a/3291 they are patriotic songs that have a message of peace love and unity.

The music band has spearheaded the say no to violence campaign in mukuru slums and its environs, can you tell us more about that?

The say no to violence campaign is a brain child of three groups the cop dancers, amush youth organization and us.

Our main aim is to bring artists together from different slum and all the country to stand together in one voice and speak against violence.

The say no to violence campaign

is a peace initiative and also it provide platform for upcoming artists to showcase their talents.

Other than music, what projects are you involved in?

We sell t-shirts and wrist band with peace messages to slum residents.

The promotional material helps when we have to produce our music, we don't want to beg but rather think in an innovative manner in terms of coming up with the money of producing the music.

What are your musical challenges?

Our major musical challenge is adequate finance to do video shoot for our songs and also we lack platforms to showcase our talent.

What advice can you give to other upcoming artists like you guys?

All we can tell them is to work hard and focus on their musical goal. Let money and fame not be their priority in their career but only a reward of their impact to people lives through their music.



Tripple W is a fast rising music band straight out of mukuru kwa njenga slum in Embakasi. The band which is made up of two artist **Leveex Mathayo** and **A-zee Coptel** and dancers have been very instrumental in promoting peace and harmony in mukuru kwa njenga slums through their inspirational music and acts.

A-zee coptel speaks about their musical journey and their programs within the slum.

Tunapanda organization: Planting youth in ICT field



Graduants from Tunapanda pause for a photo

Photo | Eunice Otieno

By Eunice Otieno
(otieuny@gmail.com)

The growth of technology in the world, has led to the desire of learning computer skills among the youths. In slums, most youths who have potential are unable to afford the fees charged by ICT institutions. For this reason, Tunapanda Institute was formed, which is composed of, two brothers, Jay Larson and Mike Larson working hand-in-hand with youths interested in learning business, technology and design, in the area.

With the partnership from other organizations such as Certel and Argon Telecoms, the Institute is planning to start the institutions in different areas in the world. Currently it has centers in Kenya and Turkana.

The aim of the Institute is to bringing digital literacy to youth in informal settlement.

"Everyone has the capability to learn the skills and all that they need is inspiration and self-motivation, here we teach multiple areas to enable the youth be more creative," explains Mike.

Tunapanda also offers non-ICT related trainings like entrepreneurship skills and soft skills and even it encourages team work to ensure that the youths are empowered to overcome any setbacks they might experience.

"Through peer to peer learning I have been able to gain skills in self confidence that enables me to express my ideas to a larger group of people unlike previously, and even the freedom that Tunapanda is offering between the trainees and the trainers in that it doesn't encourage intimidation," said Chris Abala, a trainee at the Institute.

Rosemary Muthoni also another proud trainee proclaims that through the trainers' mentoring she is now able to develop an app.

"Initially I did not like working in a team but through Tunapanda I can now work with a team and create apps and also brainstorm on innovative ideas which makes me have growth mindset," said Muthoni.

Tunapanda has also partnered with other ICT companies to help link their students to internship upon graduation. From these interns,

many youths get jobs and they are also employing the students from the program to teach the next class.

"We employ the youths from the program because most of them are the ones creating the materials and even those who have shown the desire to help other trainees hence making the work easier," said Mick Larson.

A total of 25 students graduated from Tunapanda with a certificate in ICT. The course takes 3 months.

Like any other endeavor, Tunapanda Institution also faced challenges like lack of enough materials to start with when they started the company. Jackline Mwendu, a trainer from Tunapanda commented about the irregular attendance of the trainees.

"Sometimes I do think that the students do not appreciate my work," said Mwendu.

Jay urges the students after every graduation day that Tunapanda is just giving them the basic skills, and the students should seek out more advanced information.

He believes the students can become anything they put their mind into.

Pic Speak

Bringing back the memorable moments to life



The peace messages at Makina area, Kibera, boldly drawn to spread messages of unity and harmony to Kibera residents. The messages are also drawn to promote unity in the upcoming 2017 elections Photo | Charlene Mutali



Brayo, Kaliwa video show owner places the movie posters on the blackboard, currently showing. Video shows have become popular halls of entertainment in Kibera. Photo | Charlene Mutali



The cleanup program conducted at DC area, Kibera. Youths took part in the cleaning process where drainages were unclogged, surfaces scraped clean and the garbage loaded to the disposal bay. Photo | Charlene Mutali

Creative Corner

Dance with vividness

A section that features creative pieces, written by youth from slums across Nairobi.

I could not help but smile as the rain fell down and splattered on my feet.

I embraced the rain with open arms; the feel of it released and reawakened my spirit. I felt alive. Alive indeed!

I could not recognize myself for I was a tormented dead soul; lost in this sad, depressing world. I was merely a shadow of myself.

The raindrops from the heavenly sky enabled me to be happy.

The city lights shone as bright as

ever indicating there is always a light at the end of the tunnel.

I had to follow the light to achieve total happiness and inner peace with oneself.

My constant smile is back. It seemed so long since I have been this happy.

My senses are alive. I should stay this happy for another eternity.

Eternity means forever. I will dance, live a lot and enjoy both the simple and exorbitant things in my life.

By dancing I mean dance in the rain

Splash in the muddy puddles. When was the last time you did that?

Well life is short. Too short. Let the rain wash away all your troubles and lighten your inner soul.

By Love_life.

Well of Sin

I am the well of sin
With bitter sweet waters
Often partaken
By shadowy pipes
In the cover of darkness

Many have tried to quench
Their eternal thirst
From my well of dew
But I have submerged them
With the unholy cravings
Of sulphur and brimstone
Burning their bodies to dust

The waters of my shrine
Have turned holy hearts
To slaves of flesh
For as little as half a shilling

Led many wanderers home
To the heights of heaven
And the depths of hell

For I am
The fountain of life
The spring of joy
The valley of death
The priest of chaos
Leading wretched souls
To their final resting place.

By Felix Otieno

Relationships

An advice section that answers questions submitted from readers about their relationships problems.

Hi,
I am a 23 year old woman in love with an ambitious 25 year old man. He has a son with some other lady living in Majengo. I don't understand where we are heading because he says he loves us both and he wants to marry us both. The other woman has agreed to conditions he wants to put us in. I don't want to leave him, because we have been through a lot, he once saved me from robbers. Second I am a jealous woman who cannot stand the idea of sharing my man. Please help. What should I do?

Faith from Raila.

The first thing you ought to do is to sit down with the boyfriend and tell him how you feel and what you want. Second, look for a job. You did not mention you were working so I would advise you to look for one. Get some independence in your life. You are both still young, so the guy is just mixed up and probably doesn't know what he wants in life.

It's not good to plan a future with someone who does not have proper future plans for you. In any case, it's very important to start getting involved in something productive. It will get your mind off him and improve you in many ways. Lastly, it is not a must for women to be married or live with the man. You have to put yourself first.
Fred, counselor from Ayany.

Dear Faith,
You better decide first what you want from life, because that man has decided for you. And your future seems bleak, if you stay with him. My advice, dump the guy. He is greedy and he will demand more from you. Dump him and move on. Live your life.
Jacinta from Makina.

Hey girlfriend, I totally understand you. I was in the same situation as you.

I would tell you to take the above advises and work on that. My advice to you, is that take some time off from that relationship and go on a self-discovery mission. you might find that you do not want to settle into a polygamous relationship. try it, it just might change you mind!

Sarah from Kianda.

Feature

Parents with autistic children still finding it difficult to seek for help out of fear of stigma.

Breaking the Autism glass ceiling



Occupational therapist Collins Mamanti and Roy Ochieng at Nairobi Family Services Support. The clinic offers support for families with autistic children.

Photo | Veronica Kaveza

From pg 1

That is what happened to Jennifer Ngina when she had her first born. "When I gave birth to my daughter she didn't cry and that was an alarm that something was wrong. She weighed two kilograms. She had to stay at the incubator for two weeks and later discharged" Ngina reminisces. According to Ngina, the doctor had assured her that her daughter was well. No sooner had a week passed, than they were back to the hospital. "The doctors told me that my daughter had rickets, several days later my daughter experienced convulsions," says Ngina as she tries to control the tears in her eyes. This time the doctors told her that her daughter had cerebral palsy. "It was hard for me to be-

lieve, but I come to accept the condition of my daughter and I have moved on with life," narrates Ngina. But this was just the beginning of her many trips to the hospital. "As days go by, I have realized that my baby was so dormant. At eight months she could not sit or crawl as expected of a kid at her age. Sometime she could be calm and other times she throws tantrums. I was worried," she explains, as her face droops. "I took the initiative of going back to a doctor just to be sure of what was going on in my daughter's life," this time with a smile on her face. "My little princess was autistic", she giggles. I wanted someone to wake me up from this nightmare but no it was the truth," she says this almost breaking down. Julia Wangoi a former ECD teacher who comes all the way

from Dandora says her son had lost his sense of sight, and walking, furthermore he could not even cry when pinched hard. "My son was normal. But when he turned two years he was diagnosed with pneumonia. After a convulsion he was diagnosed with meningitis. He was admitted for six weeks at Kenyatta National Hospital," she says as she tries to control her son who she had tied at her back. The former teacher had to quit her job to take care of her ailing son. "After that six week period my son went into a comma for a week. When he woke up he could not make any movement or noise. He could only stare," she gestures it out. She could not stomach the idea that her son was not going to

walk nor talk again. She was frustrated and she had to be admitted too due to high blood pressure. Julia has attended therapy for the past five months in Kibera to help her cope. "I have seen tremendous improvement on my son's condition. I am optimistic that a day will come when my son will lead a normal life, though the journey is long, it is worth it," she says as she laughs at her son who is singing a song that only he understands. Maybe thanking God for a second chance.

Stigmatized

Due to lack of awareness about autism especially in rural areas, the society has a wrong perception on autistic children and even their parents. Most of them are secluded from the society, hidden in houses and those who come out have to face the stigma and discrimination. Most people associate autism with witch craft. Caroline Otieno experienced stigmatization from close people. "I endured the insults after my neighbors accused me of killing a snake during my pregnancy period. I did not understand why I was accused considering that he was my first born I did not understand much about motherhood. I thought of visiting a herbalist so as to rectify my mistake," says a disappointed mother of two. Looking down, she admits the accusations made her feel guilty. "People tagged my son abnormal and I could not accept that they blamed me for keeping him indoors all the time but I believed my son is normal," she says angrily. She thanks God for her husband who has always been there for her. For a reason not yet to be established boys make up the biggest percentage of autism cases. According

to World Health Organization (WHO) two percent of population is within the spectrum with ratio of boys to girls being 4:1. Kenya is estimated to have 800,000 people with autism. According to Roy Ochieng an occupational therapist at Nairobi Family Support, autism can occur during pregnancy period or after birth. "Autism is a neuro-development disorder that affects the area of communication, imagination and socialization detected in children at a younger age," explains Ochieng. He notes: "The causes are yet to be known but it can be associated with lifestyle, genetic make-up or infections." "Autistic children can be hyperactive or hypoactive and socially withdrawn. Autism cannot be treated but can be managed if parents follow the prescribed program by a therapist and attends counselling sessions accordingly," he expounds. He adds that each autistic child is talented and should be well-looked after and given special care, since not all them have the same challenge. "Many parents do not know what to do with an autistic child or how to take care of them. Some children have speech, behavioral and socialising problems. Some parents end up seeking answers from witchdoctors and others from churches, and by the time they come for therapy, the child's condition has deteriorated," says Ochieng. Ochieng advises the parents to enroll their autistic children in hospital programs that cater for them according to their respective needs. Autistic children enrolled in the program early have shown remarkable achievements. The program takes a long period, however the parent is advised to be patient, committed and adhere to the prescriptions for positive outcomes.

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Society

Topical stories
on daily happenings
in the community

CMET program changing lives in Mathare



Beneficiaries from CMET program undergoing photography training.

Photo | CMET

By Felix Omondi

(felixomondi999@gmail.com)

In 2006, Titus Kuria, Benedict Kiarie and a Canadian woman, Victoria Shepherd, came up with the Canada Mathare Education Trust (CMET) scholarship program that is now changing lives in Mathare.

Driven by the challenge of providing post-primary education for the children, which they supported at the Mcedo Beijing primary school in Mathare, they decided to come up with the scholarship trust.

“The CMET program is for bright and needy students from Mathare where there are sponsored through

high school and through university,” says Kuria, one of the co-founders.

Ten years down the line, this program that started humbly with only two scholars now boasts of 130 scholars having gone through its system. 55 of them are still in secondary school while 75 have graduated from secondary school and

are in tertiary institutions of studies with 8 currently in university, while 9 more expected to join this year.

16 year old Quenter Atieno, enrolled into the program in 2013 after she was able to score 306 marks out of the possible 500 marks in the Kenya certificate of primary education (KCPE). She studied at Salama primary school, a public primary school.

She said she got to learn of the program from posters advertising the program and through friends who were alumni of the program advised her to apply.

“This program has really changed my life a lot since my parents were not willing to pay for my secondary education since the fees were too high,” says Atieno.

She was given a fully paid scholarship when she qualified for the CMET program and she is now in form 3.

During the holidays, the scholars are required to attend a one-week workshop, where they get to learn skills in leadership, mentorship, photography and videography, through a partnership with the Mwelu Foundation and Slum TV.

A day is set aside to give back to the community through activities such as tree planting, visits to children’s home or community clean-up.

Titus Kuria believes that one of the milestones made is peo-

ple taking pride in the fact they come from Mathare because now they are well educated like the rest.

“Many of our graduates are now proud to be from Mathare and are able to make well informed decisions.” He says.

He adds that many are able to make great decisions pertaining to life now that they are well educated by shunning drug abuse and criminal activities in the area.

Jesse Jackton who is a beneficiary of the trust and also the chairman of the Alumni program joined the program in 2011 and went to Mwer Boys High school in Siaya County. He attained a mean grade of C+ in the 2014 KCSE and through the program he is currently studying Bachelor of arts in secondary Education at Kenyatta university.

Jackton says that the alumni of the program are tasked with many projects and also giving motivational talks to inspire the scholars.

Future plan

The program is currently fully-funded by well-wishers from Canada who make donations towards the scholars’ school fees.

CMET’s 10 year future strategic plan, is to seek for more funding for this program by developing partnerships with local organizations.

Residents’ participation for cleaner environs



Mathare Cohorts working in an NYS Project in Mathare

Photo: Google Images

By Kennedy Odhiambo

(kennedyoguta2@gmail.com)

A few months ago, the National Youth Service (NYS) program for the youth empowerment in the slum areas of Kenya came to a standstill.

It was until recently when the organizers of the NYS project brought it back to its feet and the many slum youths who were rendered jobless had their jobs back, something that they had to celebrate.

The NYS project was meant to reduce the unemployment rate of the youth and also change the physical appearance of the Kenyan slums by enhancing cleanliness and hygienic standards by these youths.

This, however has been met but not yet satisfied since the idle youths

of slums such as Kibera among other slums that have NYS activities now have defected from involving themselves in miscellaneous acts and vices such as crime and drug abuse and now have something legitimate to keep their hands busy with.

Yes, these youths have been employed to do some cleanups in the streets and ensuring hygiene but the BIG question is; are the clean-up that they conduct up to standards?

The NYS cohorts can be sighted almost everywhere in the slums with their tools of trade, yet the environment around is still filthy!

Heaps of garbage are easily spotted piling up, next to the roads, some even encroaching on roads and passageways.

Yet these cohorts that move

around in green t-shirts walk and sit around watching until orders have been barked at them to do some cleanup.

Moving along the Kibera drive, you can hardly notice spaces without organic and inorganic litter, which brings us to the next question, what do these youths clean up?

Yes, the residents might be the careless ones and act out of negligence since they are never conscious of their surrounding after presuming that they are subjected to somewhat filthy environment.

But still let us not be quick to point fingers as this does not justify the unhealthy physical environment that has always been a menace.

Deep inside the slums, the drainage systems are still poor. Some overflowing with garbage that are mostly organic making the environment filled with stench that forms for cholera and other diseases emanating from poor sanitation.

Better physical environment can only be ensured by the top officials in charge of all these cleanup programs by also promoting participation from residents.

With that, I believe we should not still be moaning and groaning about the filthy environment that we are still in.

The Government has played its part. It is now our turn to ensure the continuation of the clean-up project for a cleaner environment for all.

Usafi Mtaani: a clean up campaign for community

By Charlene Mutali

(sharlymutali@gmail.com)

A clean-up campaign was held at DC grounds, Kibera on Saturday, 2nd June to promote sanitation and proper garbage disposal methods.

The campaign’s theme message ‘usafi mtaani’ loosely translated ‘clean areas’ brought together various youth groups from different organizations.

Equipped with cleaning tools, the youths embarked on sweeping the roads, unclogging the drainage and loading garbage in the disposal unit.

The campaign which will cover 11 more villages in the area, is organized by Shining hope for communities (SHOFCO), Nairobi City Council (NCC) and Mizuka Youth Group. Other organizations involved are Umamde Trust and Carolina for Kibera.

Fredrick Ouma, Project Officer SHOFCO, said the campaign was a successful public and private partnership

“We had two things in mind, cleaning the environment, at the same time partnering with the youth

and the community with an agenda of bringing peace,” said Ouma.

He further called for Kibera residents to properly dispose garbage to avert diseases.

“It is important that each and every person within a household to properly dispose their garbage then the City council will assist them. If they clean a small space then the whole world will be better place to live in,” urged Ouma.

Anthony Wambua, Chairman Mizuka Youth Group, challenged Kibera youths to start garbage collection groups.

“The youth can form garbage collection groups in areas where there are none, they collect the garbage and dispose it in the dumpsite. We need a green Kibera and the time is now,” said Wambua.

The much needed program comes in the wake of declining state of sanitation in the area, as reported by a Ghetto Mirror reporter in June.

The clean-up campaign is scheduled to take place in the following months, to cover the remaining 11 villages in the area.

Life

The rise of teen mothers slowing development

Teenage motherhood: Development challenge in slums

From page 1

undergone the psychological trauma of the unexpected pregnancy be denied an opportunity to better herself academically, which is paramount in assisting her to bring up her child more responsibly?" wonders Ouma

Teenage pregnancy and subsequent motherhood presents a major challenge to many slum girls who in most of the occasions have no social support from family, friends, community and the country in general.

Many girls become pregnant every year out of which 80% become pregnant at least once before 18 years old. 96% of these girls keep their babies while toiling with loneliness, no education

or resources to care for the baby.

Most teen-mothers drop out of school and most of their babies grow up and become teen-mothers too. The difficult life of teenage mothers and their children have intensified interest in finding ways to support young mothers in their efforts to become self-sufficient, delay subsequent childbearing, and promote awareness of child development early in their children's lives in order to break the cycle of poverty.

The burden placed on the young mothers necessitates, supportive services to teenage mothers, with the intent of providing teens with the skills and knowledge necessary to become more effective parents and lead more productive, independent lives.

A large number of teenage mothers are poor and as many as 99 percent are living below the poverty line, majority of them relying on their low-income earning parents for support.

Dropping from school

The poor circumstances of teenage mothers are made worse by the fact that many have limited academic skills, have dropped out of school, and come from backgrounds with few role models or opportunities for improving their livelihoods.

Many teenage mothers have a difficult time juggling the dual roles of parent and teen. These responsibilities are often undertaken in the con-

text of stressful environments, many of which are characterized by poverty, poor housing, domestic violence, abuse, and unsafe neighborhoods, a large percentage of teenage mothers experience sexual and/or physical abuse, often by a household member.

These teenage mothers face an even greater risk of repeat pregnancy and other health problems.

Many parents in the Kenya slum areas have inadequate control of their children because work keeps them away from their children, sometimes for days.

As a result, children learnt about sex from the wrong sources, such as the numerous video halls that allowed children to view pornographic films.

Girls also have to live in one room with their parents until they are mature, and many of them witness their parents having sex, so they learn about it early. Sometimes they get a man when they are still young in order to get out of that situation.

Reasons

Unprotected sex, availability of illicit brews, poor parent-child communication, peer influence and ignorance in slums have contributed to teenage pregnancies.

Most of these pregnancies are unplanned, resulting to cases of abortion, which predisposes the girls to reproductive health complications, particularly in informal settlements.

Youth receive social enterprise mentorship



Participants in groups discussing ways of setting up social enterprises.

Photo | Felix Omondi

By Felix Omondi

(felixomondi999@gmail.com)

A two-day leadership conference for youths was held at the St. Teresa church in Eastleigh on the 17th and 18th of June, which attracted 73 youths from Nairobi's informal settlements.

The conference dubbed "RUKA" was organized by the Pamoja initiative, in conjunction with JUMP foundation and Business for better society (BBS).

Youths in attendance, benefit-

ed from the forum's program, which was set to cater for personal leadership, organizational leadership and community leadership areas.

The forum was conducted in a different manner with the participants having to compete in groups with the skills equipped.

They were required to do site visits of eight different organizations operating in Mathare that were creating a difference in slums.

For three minutes, the community impact groups had to im-

press and convince the judges and the crowd that their idea was the best

Community Bridge Impact group emerged the winners with their winning idea of creating a community innovation hub portrayed the essence of startup social enterprise that could bring change within the slums. They were awarded Ksh. 60,000 as seed money to start their business.

The first runners-up were *Positive Ghetto* whose idea was to champion for better relationship between police officers and the public con-

cerning police use of excessive power. They were awarded Ksh. 40,000 as seed money to start their project.

The community impact groups were to examine the causes of the major problem in their society and its effect and later on build up solutions to this problem by setting up social enterprises, in order to win.

Paul Roshman, co-founder of Amani Institute encouraged the youths that they should mobilize their resources for change to occur.

"You should put your power into practice and help change the lives of those around you," said Roshan.

The facilitators combined design thinking, open-space methodology and rights-based approach hence to create a growth mindset in the youths mind.

"As RUKA organizers we are very proud of your project and we would like to see it come to life. We are ready to give you the seed funding as well as access to a mentor later on," said Titus Kuria founder of the Pamoja initiative after the winners were announced.

As the conference came to an end, participants' reactions all seemed to agree on how great it was.

Amina Abdulai a mentee said that she learnt how to conduct herself and work as a team

during the Ruka conference.

"Team work really pays a lot and the community should stick together towards a better future and I got to meet a lot of people and interact with many great minds and above all got someone to mentor me," said Abdulahi.

Kennedy Ngea who learnt about the conference through his school, Slum Tv, says that it has been a great experience and he got to sharpen his communication skills.

"The initiative was great, I now understand my position in the community and can now use it to uplift those in my community," said Ngea.

The organizers encouraged the mentees to fully utilize skills and contacts acquired during the conference and continue with the spirit of collaboration with their peers and the community at large, to make the community a better place.

Pamoja initiative is a community based non-profit organization which empowers Mathare residents.

The JUMP foundation, a non-profit social enterprise that uses experimental education to help individuals realize their dreams and passions. Business for better society (BBS), non-profit foundation connecting socially conscious business with projects that have sustainable impact.

Rampant deaths of youth in Mathare slums

By Shem Wamani

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Death is a hard pill to swallow and a bitter truth. A painful transition that all of us must one day undergo, but to accept the premature death at youthful stage is tasking.

Youths being the face of the nation, the driving force of its economy are wasting away and with them so do their big dreams, ambition and untapped potential, never to be realized.

In the wake of Sunday morn-

ing 26th June, the whole of Mathare slums was engulfed in sorrow. Pain and tears were looming in everybody's face from the death of Ian Martin.

The deceased was travelling from a funeral held in Nakuru with a group of other youths, when they were involved in greasy accident along Nairobi - Limuru highway. This tragedy comes barely a week after policemen claimed lives of five youths supposedly criminals, sending a tense mood in the whole slum.

A number of death cases in the slums have been caused by reck-

less shooting by policemen that has claimed many youthful innocent lives.

Just recently a group of seven Kenyatta university students perished in a severe road accident along the Kisii-Kilgoris highway sending the social media into a buzz with the images from the accident.

The rampant case of youthful lives being lost in the slum has raised so many questions. Are youths living recklessly? Is it fate that youths die young?

According to Peter Kimeu a social worker from Compassion International, a charity organization in Mathare

slum, these death toll is a global tragedy and not a tragedy in the slums only.

"Many youth are perishing because of their partying and merry making lifestyle forgetting that the youthful stage is not the last stage of life. Many have succumbed to death due to overdose of hard drugs, accidents caused by reckless driving when drunk and criminal activities," says Kimeu.

He further explains that the death tolls will continue to rise unless the youth focus on things that matter in life instead of having misplaced priorities.

To parents within the slum these

trends are worrying. Many are forced to monitor the movement of their son and daughters and also check on the kind of friends they walk with.

Is parenting to be blamed on the rising death among the youths or is it the youths themselves to carry the cross?

Omolo Kaminda, a father of five youthful boys in Mathare say parenting is not to blame for the youth death tolls because the youths are old enough to know what is good and bad.

"It's not our responsibility to take care of the youth but it's our obligation to guide," explains Kaminda.

Sports

Footballer recovers and hopes to play in top tier league

From career threatening injury back to fitness

Washington Ogunyo sets a target of playing in the Premier after his recovery from career threatening injury

By Vincent Elegwa
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A leg injury for any football player can mark the end of his or her career. This was the case for 18 year old Washington Ogunyo popularly known as "Martial", where a heavy tackle from an opponent during a friendly match, sent him writhing in pain on the pitch.

"The injury occurred on 20th of September 2013, when Nairobi Aviation college football team was playing against nationwide side Umeme FC at the Dandora stadium in a match, that was meant to strengthen the college boys' technicality," said Ogunyo.

After a medical stint at the Mama Lucy hospital in Komarock Estate, Ogunyo was transferred to Nairobi hospital for specialized treatment

"I was treated for three months for a bone injury on my right leg at Nairobi hospital, said Ogunyo.

He found the PlayStation game, FIFA, a therapeutic way to keep in touch with the game throughout his recovery period. The struggle was yet to come where he needed to get back to fitness prime.



Umeme FC players before a league match

Photo | File

"I linked up with county-side heavyweights Pellico FC, who at that moment were training at the Ziwani grounds. I got an opportunity to play alongside my age mates and instill into myself the confidence I needed, to move on from the injury which had lowered my confidence in fifty-fifty tackles," explained Ogunyo.

It is at Pellico FC that he also got the opportunity to participate in the famous annual Kothbiro tournament.

The tournament is known to produce talents. Under the hawk-eyed coach, Fredrick Okoth, he was soon sported by Kariobangi Sharks who took him for trials.

"At Kariobangi sharks, I had a hard time breaking into the first team, because I was not a Kariobangi resident as previously thought by the technical staff. With that I knew my time at the club would be limited," revealed Ogunyo.

Ogunyo is currently signed to division one side, Umeme FC that is currently fourth on the table standing, with 27 points from 18 matches behind leaders Rongai stars, second placed NYSA FC and third placed Zamalek.

Although he still regrets missing out on an opportunity to sign

for premier league side, Ogunyo is focused on shining for his current side and making a name for himself in Kenya's football hall of fame.

6 Worst Football Injuries of All Times

1. **Eduardo da Silva** – broken fibula and dislocated left ankle (Arsenal vs Birmingham City - 2008)

2. **David Busst** – Compound fracture of fibula and tibia (Conventry City vs Manchester United - 1996).

3. **Kieryon Dyer** – Broken right leg (West Ham United vs Bristol Rovers - 2007)

4. **Francesco Totti** – Fractured left fibula (Italian Championship with As Roma - 2006)

5. **Jacob Oleson** - severe dislocation of the left ankle (October 2006)

6. **Inigo Diaz De Cerio** – fractured right leg's tibia and fibula (Real Sociedad vs SD Eibar - 2008)

Community league producing country's best footballers



Antony Akumu (Red) challenges Collins Okoth in last years CECAFA Kagame Cup at the National Stadium in Tanzania.

Photo | Google images

whole season of the league tends to run from January, all the way to November with a small break during July.

According to Ouma, the league has been very instrumental in shaping the lives of many football players in the slum.

"Their discipline levels have improved, when the league began, many used to come for games intoxicated, but now that is something of the past," said Ouma.

In the beginning of every season, the participating teams usually contribute Ksh. 1600 for registration. The teams are allowed to register 30 players each aged above 16 years. This money is used to facilitate the league by paying volunteer match officials and also help to mark the pitch during games.

The 20 team league is played on a table system where the teams compete on a home and away basis. The team that emerges top of the table wins Ksh 15,000 and lifts the league trophy. The last four teams are usually relegated and a playoff is played between other teams interested in participating in the league.

The league has also given an opportunity to the youthful players to showcase their talents and many have

been scouted and are now playing professional football. Former Gor Mahia and current ZESCO United midfielder Antony Akumu and Western Stima's Kobu are some of the great players that the league has been able to produce.

The league provides a junior league to tap into teenagers between ages of ten to fifteen years, potential.

Despite the success, the league officials point to lack of sponsorship as one of the major factors that hinders the league to move forward.



We as a community wanted a league that we owned and were able to run as a community

Samson Ouma
(Organising Secretary MPL)

By Felix Omondi
(felixomondi999@gmail.com)

The Mathare Premier League which is currently in its 8th season has grown since its inception, and it has gained an attraction of 20 teams. The

Premier League, constitutes of football teams from Mathare, and is played at Mathare 4A grounds, every weekend. It also attracts football fans from around the area, who show up adorned in their respective teams colors.

Samson Ouma, the leagues' organizing secretary, explained that the league was started to re-

place the Mathare Youths Sports Association (MYSAs) league that used to be played at the ground.

"We as a community wanted a league that we owned and were able to run as a community hence started this league" said Ouma

With games scheduled to be played only during the weekends, a