

Kenia: «Ujuzi Kwa Vijana» project

Career opportunities for former street-children



Project region

Kitale, Western Kenya

Project duration

3 years, June 2019 – May 2022

Project budget

CHF 540'000

Background

Even though Kenya is often portrayed as the backbone of the eastern African economy, it is still a typical sub-Saharan developing country. The unemployment rate is very high with 40%. Therefore many families rely on farming to get by (subsistence farming) or take up casual work. Due to bad learning conditions at the schools, as much as 24% of the population (especially women) are illiterate. Without education, chances that the youth will find jobs to get by on are very slim. Many of them become involved with crimes, drugs or prostitution and end up on the street. In order to escape this situation, they need new perspectives and the possibility to get an education.

The project „Ujuzi Kwa Vijana” is aimed at youth in Kitale, a city in Kenya, who have been on the street for a prolonged period of time. There are ultimately 362 young men and women partaking in the project. “Ujuzi Kwa Vijana” helps them reintegrate into normal life and become responsible and self-reliant members of society. It is part of the project that the young men and women organize themselves in small associations (8-12) to give them a mutual and immediate support structure.

Goals

- Reintegration of youth formerly living in the streets
- Provision of vocational and business skills training
- Transition into the world of work

Beneficiaries

- 362 young men and women formerly living on the streets of Kitale, Kenya
- 3 Vocational training Centres
- self-help associations

Partner organisation

Child Rescue Kenya (CRK) was founded in 1988 and is a nationally registered NGO.

Vision: Support young men and women from the street in becoming self-reliant and responsible members of society.

CRK has been working with youth from the street in Kitale since 2013.

Thematic focus: reduction of poverty, education, improved life quality, reintegration of street-children

www.childrescuekenya.org

Activities

- In a preparatory phase, youth from the street are mobilized by CRK Social workers. They are encouraged to organize themselves in self-help associations. The social workers provide emotional support and help the youth develop personal plans for their future.
- The youth receive 12 months of vocational training: 9 months placement as a trainee in a small business and 3 months of theoretical education at the vocational training centre.
- After finishing their courses successfully, graduates receive equipment necessary to exercise their skills. (e.g. mechanical tools, hairdressing suitcase)
- CRK and the youth associations support graduates in finding employment or establishing their own small business.
- The youth are encouraged to organize their associations as saving groups. This way, they can for example get easier access to small loans. The Youth participating in the project will share what they learn with the other members of their association.



Practical training to be a hair-dresser



Practical mechanic training



Computer class in the vocational training centre

Results from the pilot project «Ujuzi Kwa Vijana», 2018

- Social workers from CRK have convinced numerous youths formerly living on the street to try a fresh start with the help of their program.
- CRK supports the youth in forming their small associations (8-12 people) functioning as self-help groups.
- 24 of originally 25 participants were still with the program (one lady got pregnant and had to stay at home for some time. She will get the opportunity to finish the program later on).
- All participants are working in their apprenticeship place and are earning at least a minimal amount of money.
- The instructors as well as the majority of the beneficiaries are optimistic about them finding a gainful employment after the training.
- All participants are now positively viewed by their family and communities, compared to 32% at the beginning of the project

Sustainability

The project intends to introduce a dual approach to vocational skills training. It builds on an already existing network of small companies offering apprenticeships to reintegrated youths. It additionally introduces a concentrated formal training component conducted in a Youth Polytechnic. Curricula and modalities of this formal short training component have already been tested in other parts of Kenya. As the project is a new combination of already existing and tested elements, a sustainable continuation afterwards is most likely.

Personal sustainability is given as the beneficiaries, through vocational training, will be in a better position to start and manage their own businesses or find employment. The gained wisdom is expected to have long-term effects on their lives and will be handed on to their associations. As the project is a new combination of already existing and tested elements, a successful implementation of the new approach and a sustainable continuation afterwards is highly likely.

CO-OPERAID is engaged in the international children's right to education in East Africa and South Asia. The association was founded in 1981, is politically and denominationally independent and ZEW certified since 1998.

Vision: Qualitative good education for children and youths as a basis for a self-determined and dignified life.

Thematic Focus: Basic education and vocation training with complementary elements such as fighting poverty, farming income projects, furthering girls, Aids prevention, health.

www.co-operaid.ch