



NEW RESEARCH BY MKOMBOZI:

The causal link between child truancy and migration to the street

Mkombozi in conjunction with two other Tanzanian NGOs has carried out **Participatory Action Research (PAR)** on the local causation of primary school dropouts and exclusions in Kilimanjaro region. The research showed that there is a causal link between children who are out of school and migration to the streets.

Factors contributing to school dropout

- High teacher absenteeism
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Poor teacher-student relations
- Non-intervention in cases of domestic, community, and school violence

Methodology: The research focused on 10 primary schools and counted on the participation of teachers, parents and children. Document and literature reviews were conducted as well as meetings and interviews. Quantitative data from schools was collected, a census of street children was taken, and classroom observations were undertaken.

Objectives: To find the causes of school truancy and dropouts, and assess ways to address the 'push factors' that drive children away from school, and the community.

Mkombozi's recommendations are aimed at policy-makers, local government and schools, and included broad issues such as the need to address infrastructural and resource problems, stop making school uniforms compulsory, and addressing substance abuse within families.

"A child arrives on the streets of Arusha everday"

Mkombozi's research highlighted that the causes driving children to play truant and dropout from school are complex and can be attributed to a number of attitudinal, knowledge-based and practice factors:

- Schools and communities have not been assisted to develop support mechanisms for children.
- Teachers are aware they have responsibilities towards children at risk, but they do not know how to put these into practice.
- Corporal punishment and physical / verbal abuse of children is so normalised in community attitudes that teachers and other child care agencies do not even consider such behaviour abusive to children.
- Many adults including teachers believe that children need to be disciplined because they are naturally disobedient.
- Child abuse is not recognised by schools as a reason for poor behaviour, truancy and eventual exclusion.
- There is little discussion on how violence against children affects their behaviour within school.
- The lack of cooperation between parents and teachers leads to resentment and poor communication – ultimately causing parents to de-value education and preventing the cooperation of parents and teachers to address child truancy.
- Ignorance on the causes of poverty results in stigmatisation of poor children.
- There is an assumption that all children have the same learning needs.

"Key to a child's development is gaining positive and mutually respectful attachments with another person"

Dissemination and Actions on Key Findings:

- Different approaches with parents, teachers, communities and local authorities
- Workshops conducted with teachers on causes of child truancy and dropouts
- Publication and dissemination of informational handbook for parents on how to enrol their child in school
- School intervention activities established to help most at risk students

CHILDHOPE'S NEWS:

- **New Trustees** In January 2007 ChildHope recruited five new Trustees: Dean Anderson, Fundraiser Amnesty International; William Brewis, a corporate lawyer; Jean Grugel, Professor, Sheffield University; Michael Little, Director, Dartington Social Research Unit; and Alice Mayhew, employment and human rights barrister.
- **Child Protection Training Courses in the UK** ChildHope and CREATE have been running training courses on organisational child protection. We ran 4 in 2006:
 1. How to develop UK Child Protection Policies and Procedures – an introduction (1 day)
 2. Basic Training for Child Protection Officers in the UK (1 day)
 3. Introduction to developing Child Protection Policies with overseas offices or partner organisations (1day)
 4. Training of Trainers for developing and supporting the implementation of CP policies with partners/ overseas offices (3 days)

Participants included trainees from Africa, Asia and the UK working with children internationally. The courses were partly based on material from ChildHope's Child Protection Policies and Procedures Toolkit as well as new material. During 2007 ChildHope will hold workshops for partners in Uganda in June and in South Africa in September.

Quotes from participants

I feel this was fantastic and I feel very satisfied, confident and excited to move my organisation forward with regards to its child protection policy"

(Course 1 participant)

"The whole course was enjoyable, it included equal levels of discussion & role play"

(Course 4 participant)

- **Media training** ChildHope has initiated a partnership with Thomson Foundation. They have produced a video of ChildHope-supported work with Aparajeyo, Bangladesh (<http://www.childhope.org.uk/video.php>).
If any other partner is interested in getting media coverage or receiving training in film-making, we can facilitate a link with organisations such as the Thomson Foundation or CBA-DFID. If you are interested please contact [Catherine](#) at ChildHope.
- **Action on Disability** ChildHope wants to hear from partners who are either already working with disabled children, or who have identified it as a need in their work but they are lacking the necessary support and information to proceed. ChildHope would like to find out how partners are involved in disability issues and also to hear if partners want to receive support on this. **Please contact [Catherine](#) if you wish to start a dialogue on this issue.**
- **News stories** Our partners' work has recently been featured:
 - On the BBC Radio World Service – a story about girl mothers in Sierra Leone, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/5056654.stm>
 - In the Independent newspaper – the lives of Peruvian child labourers, <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/americas/article1174429.ece>).
 - On regional BBC TV – a story about a 10 year old boy from Hull in the North east of England visiting the children involved in the HANCI-CH project in Sierra Leone, http://www.bbc.co.uk/humber/content/articles/2007/01/26/sl_comic_relief_feature.shtml

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