Helping Rural Families Achieve Self Reliance with Dignity

ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme (YES)

Most rural entrepreneurial schemes fail because of poor management due to insufficient knowledge or communal practices which place a heavy burden on the owner of the small business. The YES was initiated with the aim of helping rural youth start, run and expand small businesses effectively and efficiently.

With financial support from Accenture Singapore, we were able to assist several youth acquire sufficient training in artisanal trades, e.g. video production, masonry, tailoring and catering. We started a small business centre housing several registered small businesses for the youth. They include mobile phone repairs, electrical wiring, tailoring, catering and a sundry shop. These businesses have enabled the youth to supplement their family income.

Judas Magomba, a former TRLF beneficiary and presently a volunteer, runs a mobile phone repair business at the TRLF business centre. Judas is able to support his family with dignity.
‘Mitumba’ Project

The ‘Mitumba’ (or recycled goods in Kiswahili) Project assists rural households to earn additional income so that they can cater for their own development needs.

Every year specific used items are collected from friends in Singapore and Malaysia and shipped over to Tana Delta for resale by selected beneficiaries, all of them women.

Through the sales of these recycled items, the enterprising spirits of beneficiaries are honed and their other social aspects such as health and education are boosted.

Branded and high quality items are sold to friends at a jumble sale to raise funds to finance the shipment and other costs of the project, such as the airfare for TRLF youth to travel to Singapore to manage this project. Items that we cannot ship over are sold to the ‘karang guni’ or rag-and-bone sector with the help of Ms. Yvonne Goh and funds used likewise.

The Mitumba Project received a huge boost thanks to GE Volunteers from General Electric who organized a mammoth drive across the GE group of companies in Singapore. We are grateful to Fr. Henry Siew and his welcoming staff at the Church of the Nativity and the Nativity Kindergarten in Singapore for their hospitality and very generous support in facilitating this project. We also thank the Teng-Wong families, Serene Tan, Anita Tan, James Chan, Theresa Ting and Francis Ng for underwriting the freight charges.

- 56 women in Tana Delta and their entire households benefited directly from the Mitumba Project in 2013.
- Proceeds from ‘karang guni’ - S$1,457
- Proceeds from Jumble Sales – S$5,569

Student volunteers from Holy Innocents’ High School assisting TRLF ex-beneficiary and present employee, Eddy Adison in sorting ‘mitumba’ at the collection centre in Singapore in March 2013.
Teaching Community Service through Mitumba

In 2013, this project was entirely managed by TRLF youth interns. They formed a committee who interviewed over 100 local women who applied for assistance under this project. 56 women were selected. They are supporting the education of siblings, children or grandchildren in secondary schools or colleges, or have family members in need of urgent medical attention.

Three places were given to the wives of our youth who had fathered children while in school but who have been very responsible in caring for their young families.
Indirect Benefits of Mitumba

The ‘Mitumba’ project has immense direct as well as indirect benefits.

Three major areas of indirect benefit:

• Inculcates responsible behavior on the part of the beneficiaries
  Aid, not a handout, is disbursed in a form that provides autonomy in decision making. This gives the receiver much dignity and helps them use the assistance in the same way as one would treat a bank loan or credit facility. It enables them to find better solutions to their problems. Beneficiaries had excellent credit discipline this year for the stock of items. There were no bad debts in 2013. In fact, many of the beneficiaries submitted receipts showing evidence that funds they raised from sale of ‘mitumba’ were used to pay school fees for their dependents.

• Participation of young people from Singapore
  During the weeks after the collection of ‘mitumba’ in Singapore, many donors, youth and students joined us at the collection centre at Nativity Church to help sort the items. We received a lot of help from students from Holy Innocents’ High School, Maris Stella High School and CHIJ St. Theresa’s Convent during the jumble sales. Their help was a great support for us and at the same time rewarding to the students, who were able to participate in an activity that directly changes lives for rural families.

• Helps TRLF youth learn the right way to assist their community
  The TRLF youth volunteers managing this programme selected beneficiaries impartially, a big achievement in a rural community like ours. They were very honest and efficient in accounting for the stock distribution and cash collections.

On stock issue days, they assembled as early as 6a.m. to prepare the stock so that the whole exercise could be carried out in an orderly manner. This project, like the agriculture project, has become an excellent character building opportunity for the youth of Tana Delta.