

Youth Empowerment Programme in Kenya – ICT and Life Skills Training at the UN in Nairobi

Location: Nairobi, Kenya
Partners: Digital Opportunity Trust (Kenya), Environmental Youth Alliance
Donors: UN-HABITAT, Environmental Youth Alliance

Within the umbrella of the Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP) pilot project in Kenya, nearly 300 youth from informal settlements of Nairobi have, with the support of UN-HABITAT, formed a "Youth Brigade" that will act as a guild and regulating body for the youth as they graduate from their vocational trainings and begin entering the construction market.

Of the 300, a number of youth who had attended the planning sessions with HABITAT expressed a strong desire to contribute to the Brigade in other ways, rather than to undertake the offered vocational trainings in construction trades. HABITAT, in collaboration with the youth, identified suitable partner organizations and found a unique way to creatively meet the youths' request and strengthen the Brigade's pool of skills, with ICT and Life Skills training.



Starting in early August 2008, the first intake of YEP youth began their training at the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) Cyber Café. Through partner organization Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA), an agreement was struck with Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) Kenya, an ICT and Life Skills training organization that provides an innovative programme called "Reach Up". Reach Up is a modular course running approximately 120 hours of training time, which integrates all basic ICT components such as computer operation, Microsoft Office software, internet browsing, setting up and using email, plus business skills from etiquette to business planning, and personal empowerment and social skills.

As the second intake of youth is about to begin their own training with DOT, the first intake is now preparing for intensive training with a facilitator from Environmental Youth Alliance, who will build on the business and employment topics in greater depth. EYA will deliver an integrated programme of business simulation modules and games, training in business writing and workplace organization, and continued emphasis on personal empowerment.

By the end of October 2008, the YEP "Brigade" will have approximately 60 members trained and ready to assist with the administration and office processes that it will need in order to flourish as a sustainable youth-led organization – thanks to the courage of the youth in asking for ICT training, and the creative flexibility of HABITAT's Partners and Youth Section in responding to the request.