

Kibra: Where Hope Battles the Chains of Poverty

by Ebby Bright Addai

If poverty had a face, it would carry the weary eyes of parents and the silent cries of children in Kibra, a place where struggle isn't just a season but a way of life, passed down like an unwanted inheritance. In this sprawling informal settlement, poverty is more than the absence of money. It's a relentless chain that traps families in survival mode: parents scraping by on casual labour, children dropping out of school to put food on the table, young people inheriting not opportunity, but a mindset scarred by fear, scarcity, and hopelessness.



Life's essentials: food, clean water, electricity, shelter, feel like luxuries. In the daily fight to survive, families are left painfully vulnerable: children pushed into exploitative labor, teens drawn into crime or harmful relationships, parents cornered into risky, even dangerous choices. In Kibra, poverty doesn't just steal futures, it exposes families to abuse, exploitation, and a heartbreaking cycle of brokenness.

But amid this harsh reality, ***Business for Life dares to plant something different. Hope.***

BFL isn't handing out aid. We are handing back dignity. One training at a time. One business at a time. One family at a time. We walk with mothers learning to run sustainable businesses. Fathers reclaiming their role as providers. Young people discovering that they have options and a future worth fighting for.



Since we began working in Kibra, **we have trained 114 people, meaning we have empowered 114 families and ignited a ripple effect of transformation across the community.** Many of these individuals have gone on to empower others, becoming agents of change in their neighborhoods and households.

BFL's work in Kibra over the years is driven by a simple but radical belief: breaking the cycle of poverty begins with breaking the mindset of scarcity. By equipping people with practical skills, mentorship, and the confidence to believe in themselves, BFL helps transform struggle into strength. In a place where hope often feels like a visitor, BFL walks with the community until hope takes root and stays. Because when people believe they are more than their struggle, families begin to heal, businesses grow, and generational poverty starts to break.

COURSE HIGHLIGHTS | 2025:

Transforming Lives, Empowering Communities One Business at a Time

This mid-quarter, our impact stretched across Kibra, Isibania, and Joska, equipping communities with business skills that sparked hope, unlocked potential, and transformed families.

Kibra: Where Hustle Meets Hope

In the dense heart of Kibra, where the hustle of daily life meets the weight of survival, 25 aspiring entrepreneurs, mostly youth under 25 and women running micro-businesses, gathered with little more than raw ideas and quiet hope. Through Business for Life's intensive training, they were equipped with practical business skills, mentorship, and mindset transformation.



Today, they are walking proof that change is possible. Some launched new ventures before graduation, like Kevin Luvai, who had no active business but stepped out in faith and launched one before the program ended. The training's secret? Real-life business application, community-driven peer coaching, and a strong support system that turned potential into purpose.

For these entrepreneurs, Kibra is no longer just a place of struggle, it's now home to a new generation of empowered entrepreneurs rewriting their stories.

Isibania: Cross-Border Visionaries, Local Impact

At the Kenya-Tanzania border lies Isibania, a bustling town shaped by trade and faith but challenged by economic instability. In collaboration with local churches and community leaders, Business for Life trained 23 diverse participants: men, women, pastors,

traders, and youth, each hungry for growth and change.



Peter M. Mohagachi, a zonal education officer, captured the essence of the program when he said, ***"This training is not just information—it's transformation."*** He has since committed to training others, reflecting the ripple effect we hope for across the region: knowledge passed on, mindsets shifted, communities empowered.

From Isibania, we see the future of grassroots entrepreneurship expanding, one ripple at a time.

Joska: The Power of a Shifted Mindset

Joska stands as a beacon of transformation where 25 participants underwent a business training that was more than just lessons—it was a mindset awakening. Here, we witnessed the difference knowledge makes when rooted in purpose.

What made Joska's training unique was the deep hunger for change, the strong community ties, and the drive to not only grow personal businesses but also uplift entire families and neighborhoods. The alumni emerged as future trainers, confident and committed to being change-makers.



In Joska, we didn't just deliver a course, we planted seeds of generational transformation and they're already beginning to grow.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT | What a difference a few simple skills makes!

Catherine: Always Hardworking, but Now with More Focus

Catherine Wanjiru Kibuti has two children, a son and a daughter. She is a dressmaker. Her dressmaking business is in Joska, Machakos County and mainly entails making dresses for women although sometimes she takes on male clients who usually come to have their clothes altered.

Catherine began her career as a dress maker when she was quite young. Immediately after finishing high school, she enrolled in a dressmaking college. Upon completing her college course, she began work right away. That was over 30 years ago!



In addition to this business, she was involved in other related ventures such as buying clothes from Eastleigh and selling them; especially when her dressmaking business wasn't doing too well. Sometimes she even dealt in buying and selling second-hand clothes. She has also resorted to selling detergents and many other businesses; anything to ensure that she is able to provide for her children.

After the Business For Life (BFL) training, she realized that she was carrying out her business without a clear sense of direction. For instance, she was not keeping any records of her business and therefore had no clue if she was making a profit or not. However, through the BFL training, she learned the need to keep a record of every aspect of her business.

One of the challenges she has encountered in this business is that sometimes she makes certain clothes and puts them out hoping to make some sales but unfortunately, they do not sell. Often it is because the material she used is out of fashion. Fortunately, these clothes end up getting utilized at some point in her business. She learned the importance of market research the hard way!



Catherine commented, "This business has greatly impacted my life positively as it has helped me to get my kids through school. In three years. I hope to expand my business by enrolling young girls to learn this craft. For anyone looking to get into the dressmaking business, I can assure them that this is a good business venture as long as you are diligent and reliable in your work."

How You Can Be Involved

Because the poor cannot afford to pay for this kind of training, we rely on donor funding and community-based partnerships. Courses have been funded by organizations, businesses, churches and individuals.



We are looking to expand our network of donors as the demand for the course grows. Donations in US dollars can be sent to Empowering Lives International, P.O. Box 67, Upland, CA 91785-0067 and demarcated to **Business For Life**.

To contribute online using your credit card, visit

<https://businessforlife.empoweringlives.org>

Since your gifts are tax-deductible for USA citizens all funds contributed to ELI are inherently under the control of the board of directors to improve and empower the lives of people living in poverty.

Community Development organizations working in Africa interested in exploring a partnership with us, may call us at +254 721 179061 or email us at

businessforlife@empoweringlives.org

Thank you for being part of the Business for Life family. Together, we are not just teaching business—we are building a legacy of hope, resilience, and lasting change.

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