



M.Y.O ON THE BLOG

The Power of Mentorship: Creating Role Models for a Brighter Future

Growing up, everyone had someone they looked up to. For most girls, it was their mothers, for boys, their fathers. Beyond family, it was often a famous musician, actor, or actress from the United States. We admired them, copied them, and dreamed of becoming like them one day. Do you remember the people you looked up to when you were young? Are your views about them still the same?

For me, my first role model was my mother. Despite living in a slum, she created a home that felt like a different world. Her resilience and attention to detail fascinated me—especially when it came to food and homemaking. Next was my sister, whom I admired so much that I would wear her clothes just to feel like her (much to her frustration). But looking back, I realize that my mentors at the time were limited to those within my immediate environment/ my literal world view or those out of reach like celebrities in the United States.

It wasn't until I got to university that I actively heard people talk about mentorship. "My mentor advised me..." "I have a meeting with my mentor..." These statements intrigued me. I wanted to understand how these relationships worked—how people found mentors, what they discussed, and how it shaped their lives. Later, during my internship, I met someone's mentee and saw firsthand the impact of structured guidance. It made me reflect on my own journey and my childhood friends, some who succumbed to the pressures of the slum and those who fought through.



Why Mentorship Matters

A few years later, at Maisha Yangu Organization we are designing a mentorship program with consideration for the unique population we serve. Throughout this process I think back to my younger self, living in the slum, facing challenges that seemed insurmountable. As much as my mother made our home a haven, the environment outside remained unchanged. The struggles children face in these communities are immense, it is even worse when the environment adds to those challenges which often shape their outlook on life and limit their dreams.

But what if there had been people from the same slum who had succeeded; people who returned to mentor the next generation? Would the assurance to overcome and succeed have come more easily? Would those at risk of falling into common pitfalls have been reached in time?



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The Impact of Mentorship on Children



Mentorship provides young people with a strong foundation for academic success, personal growth, and resilience. It fosters:

- ✓ **Academic Improvement** – Guided students develop better study habits and motivation, leading to improved school performance.
- ✓ **Confidence and Self-Esteem** – Having a mentor who believes in them empowers children to set bigger goals and believe in their potential.
- ✓ **Better Decision-Making** – Mentors offer guidance on navigating challenges like peer pressure, helping children make informed choices.
- ✓ **Exposure to Opportunities** – Mentorship opens doors to scholarships, career paths, and personal development that children might not have accessed otherwise.

Building a Future of Hope

At Maisha Yangu Organization, we believe mentorship has the power to change lives. We are creating a program where children can connect with mentors who understand their struggles—people who have walked the same paths and emerged stronger. Through this, we aim to offer guidance, assurance, and inspiration they need to break barriers and create a future beyond their current circumstances.

If I had access to such mentors growing up, I imagine my journey would have been different. But now, I have the chance to be part of something bigger—to ensure that the next generation does not have to wonder what it would be like to have a mentor. They will have one, and they will know they, too, can rise beyond their circumstances. Join us to make this a reality for children at Maisha Yangu Organization and partnering schools.

