

# Mitumba: Mapping the Journey

A Learning Resource by Maughan Pearce for [Social Alterations](#).  
This resource has been designed to accompany the documentary,

*Mitumba: The Second-Hand Road*  
by Raffaele Brunetti (2005)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkdfzC7pKqE>



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# Mitumba: Mapping the Journey

The T-Shirt travels around 10,000 Km!

**1** **HAMBURG**  
GERMANY  
Olaf is a textile recycler. He collects clothes from around Hamburg and sells them on to dealers in Southern Europe.

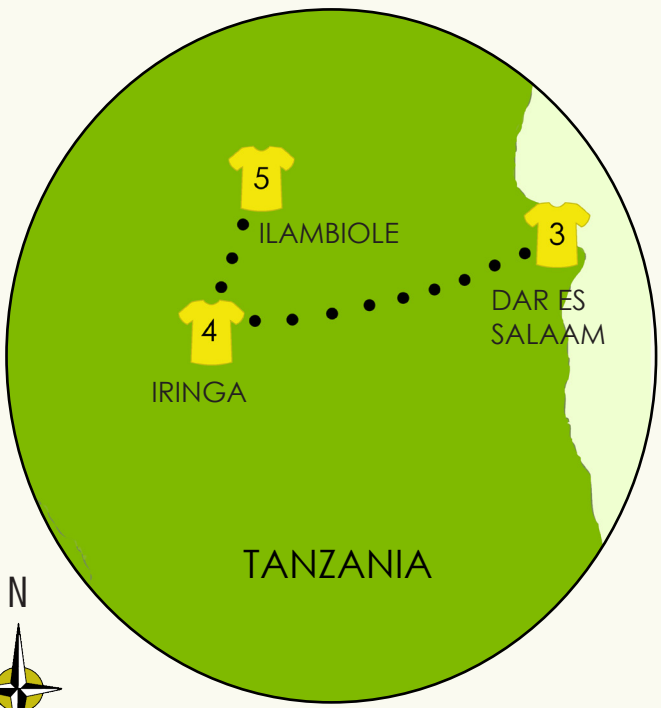
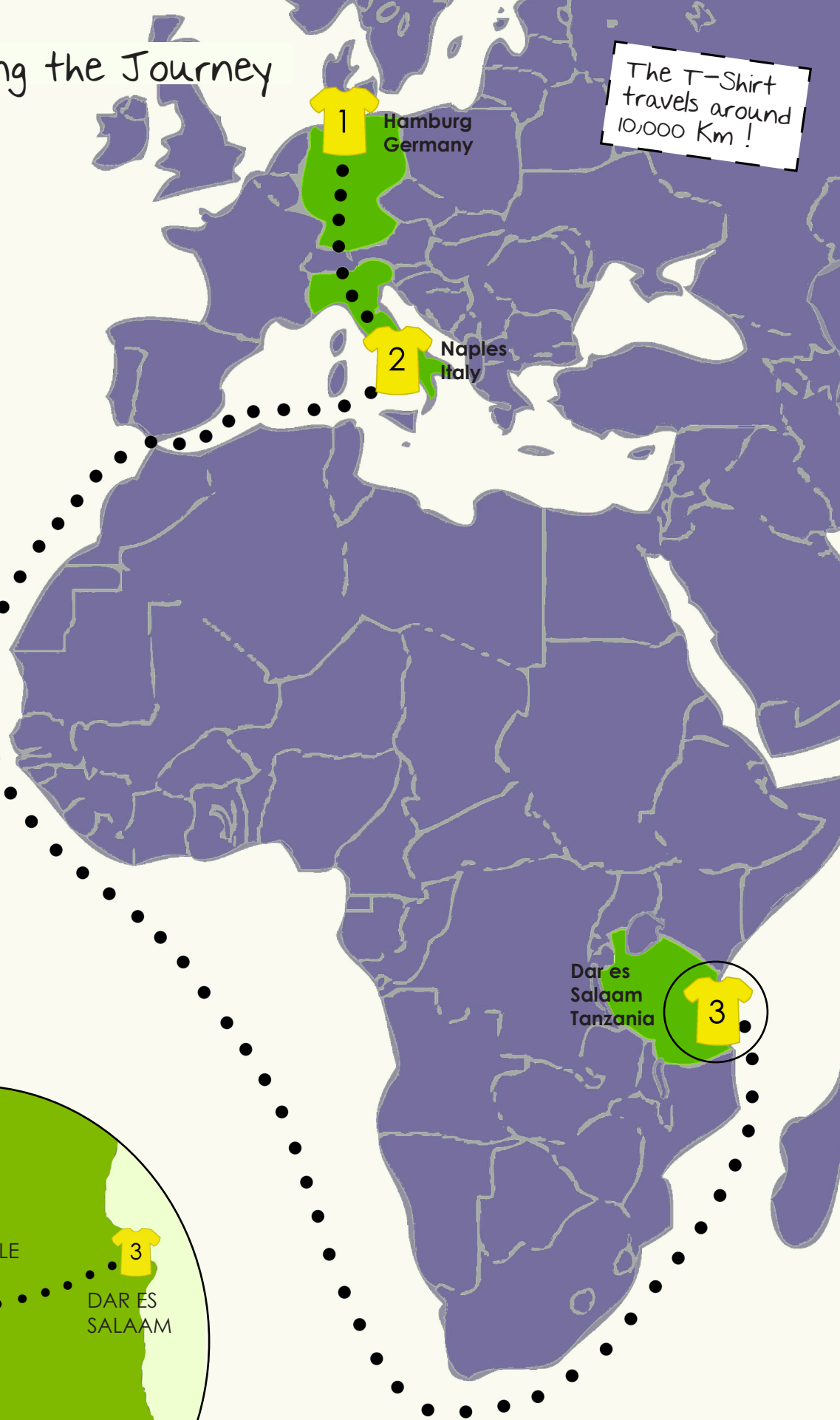
**2** **NAPLES**  
ITALY  
Mr Russo, is a dealer in used clothes. He buys lots of clothes, sorts them into bales and exports them to many African countries.

**3** **DAR ES SALAAM**  
TANZANIA  
Used clothes are imported from many western countries and sold here by the bale. Some people buy lots and some just one.

**4** **IRINGA**  
TANZANIA  
Nesco runs a small business selling used clothes. He buys one bale at a time from Dar Es Salaam then sells them at auction in his home town.

**4** **IRINGA**  
TANZANIA  
Esther runs a micro business selling the clothes she buys at the auction in the small villages around Iringa.

**5** **ILAMBIOLE**  
TANZANIA  
Esther travels to Ilambiole to sell her clothes. It is harvest time and people have money to buy. Shakaura buys the T-shirt for her son Lucky.



This is my football shirt, it is too small for me now. My mum will put it into a clothing bank, she hopes it will go to someone who needs it.  
Felix Age 10



This is my new shirt. I like it because it has a number on the back so I can look like a real footballer. My mum brought it for 1500 shillings.  
Lucky age 9



\*\*The route shown here is only hypothetical, as exact routes will/may vary.

# Mitumba Questions: Think/Discuss

What surprised you about this story?

What do the people who donate the clothes think happens to them?

Apart from the main traders, who else is employed in the business of Mitumba?

- What jobs do they do?

Who wears Mitumba in Tanzania?

- Why?

What do the Tanzanians think about the people who donate Mitumba?

- Why might they think this?

Why does the Tanzanian government think the second hand clothing trade is bad for Tanzania?

Mitumba is said to affect local clothes production, what else might affect this?

What is the impact of cheap imports from Asia?

- How might this affect Nesco and Esther?

What does Mitumba mean to Nesco and Esther?

- If they didn't sell Mitumba what would their job be?

Are there any negative aspects to the Mitumba trade?

What does Esther have to consider to make her business profitable?

- What challenges does she face?

Why might Lucky's mum like to sell Mitumba too?

# Mitumba: Extension Activity

## Point of View writing exercise:

Choose one of the Tanzanian characters from the story. Write and illustrate a journal entry about Mitumba from their point of view. Try to use the same words they would use to describe their life. What do they think about Mitumba? How would they respond to the Tanzanian government's ideas about Mitumba? What would happen to them if they couldn't sell/buy Mitumba? What are their dreams for their future? How do Mitumba fit into their dreams?

## Glossary

**Swahili or Kiswahili:** The language spoken in Tanzania.

**Mitumba:** A Swahili word meaning bale or bundle.

[slang] The name given to second hand clothing in some African countries including Tanzania and Kenya.

**Shilingi:** The Swahili word for the Tanzanian Shilling (TZS), the unit of currency in Tanzania. US\$ 1 = 1583.85 TZS (<http://www.foreignexchange.org.uk> April 2012)

**Micro-business:** A very small scale business, with a few employees, sometimes only one.

## Useful Links

[The Textile Industry and the Mitumba Market in Tanzania](#) [report]

Oliva D. Kinabo 2004

[Fast fashion from UK to Uganda](#) [article and video clips]

Jack Garland. BBC (2009)

[How Susie Bayer's T-Shirt Ended Up on Yusuf Mama's Back](#) [article]

George Packer. New York Times March 31, 2002

["Journalists' Journey through the World of Garments."](#)

**Teaching Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators.** [learning resource]

Südwind Agentur. Edited by Liz Parker on behalf of Fashioning an Ethical Industry (UK) and Dr. Marsha A. Dickson on behalf of Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business (USA). London: Label Behind the Label, 2009. Pg. 154.-169

\*\* Note For Educators: For further reading on the trade of used clothing please refer to the Higher Education version of this document.