*My Rows and Piles of Coins* by Tololwa Mollel

Discussion Questions

1. Where does Saruni, the young boy in the story, live?

*Tanzania, a country in Africa.*

1. Why does Saruni’s mom, Yeyo, give him five coins each worth ten cents?

*Yeyo gave Saruni the coins because he helped her work. He helps her take goods to the market and to sell them.*

1. Where does Saruni’s mom get the coins she gives to her son?

*She earns them at the market selling the goods she has grown and harvested.*

1. Name some of the goods sold in the market that Saruni looks at after his mom tells him to, “Go and buy yourself something.”

*Roasted peanuts, rice cakes, sambusa, toy trucks, kites, slingshots, and marbles are all for sale. Sambusa is a little triangular sealed pouch of dough stuffed with spiced vegetable and/or meat and deep-fried.*

1. Saruni thinks, “I wanted to buy everything.” Why doesn’t Saruni spend his money on any of these things?

*He doesn’t buy because he decides he wants to save his money for a bicycle.*

1. Saruni and Yeyo take many goods to market on Saturdays including dried beans, pumpkins, spinach, eggs and bananas. Where do all of these goods come from?

*Saruni and his family own a farm and they grow and produce all of these foods.*

1. Why does Saruni’s mother need his help?

*They must carry all of their goods to market; Yeyo carries a load on her head and Saruni pushes an old wheelbarrow.*

1. Everytime Yeyo pays Saruni for his help, he must choose what to do with his money. He chooses to save his money; what is his opportunity cost?

*In order to save, Saruni pays an opportunity cost of spending his coins now.*

1. When we work at learning something new, we are investing in our human capital. What does Saruni try and try and try to learn?

*Saruni works hard at learning to ride his father’s bicycle.*

1. Saruni values the bike above all other goods for sale in the market. He know the bike is going to help him do a job. How will the bike help Saruni?

*He will be able to carry much more to market on his bicycle than he can push in the old wheelbarrow.*

1. When Saruni takes his 305 coins to market to buy his bicycle, what does he find out?

*Saruni doesn’t have enough money to buy a new bicycle.*

1. But Saruni does get a bicycle. Initially, his father sells him the bicycle he has been learning to ride because Murete now has a better form of transportation. What is his substitute?

*Murete gets an orange motorbike.*

1. Saruni’s parents then give him back the money he had saved. They gave it to him as a gift. It was a reward for all of his hard work. What plans does Saruni have for his coins now?

*He is going to continue to save his money. He plans to get a cart to pull behind his bike so that he can carry even more goods to market.*