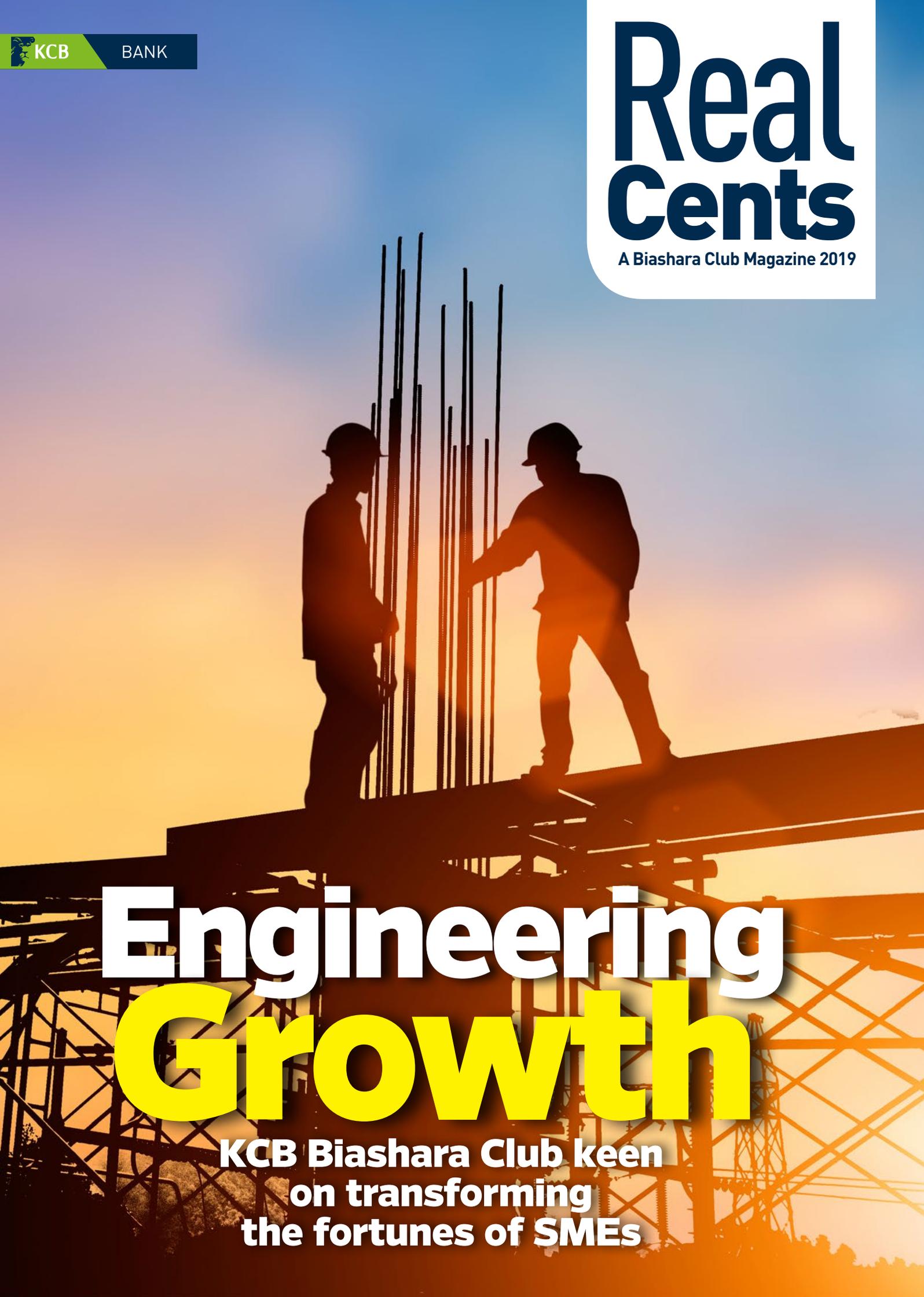


Real Cents

A Biashara Club Magazine 2019



Engineering Growth

**KCB Biashara Club keen
on transforming
the fortunes of SMEs**

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// EDITOR'S LETTER //

Stimulating the entrepreneurial spirit



Entrepreneurs are made not born. They are a special brand of people who are always discovering, creating and building. They have the mindset that can allow them to sell ice to eskimos. By making entrepreneurship a mindset it becomes second nature, until you can't remember what it was like to not see opportunity everywhere.

This insight, is what led to the formation of KCB Bank Biashara Club in 2008 – a members' platform that would offer businesses an all-access pass to the skills, experts, and networks needed to get any business off the ground—or take it to the next level.

Over the past decade the Club has partnered and supported SMEs across the region. They have been instrumental in pushing entrepreneurs to new levels of operations, having gained insights from interacting with their peers and benchmarking globally.

For the Club, it was evident from the beginning that SMEs are of special importance to private sector growth as they are more efficient at creating jobs and are more innovative. This is what has made SMEs a priority area for us in the banking industry.

We believe that starting or growing your own business shouldn't be painful. That is why at KCB Bank, under the umbrella of SME Banking, we work to make financing easy for current and aspiring owners by providing custom funding solutions, financing education, and business exposure trips to build networks and explore new markets.

As a financial partner in today's rapidly changing economy, we know that growing companies face both uncertainties and possibilities.

Throughout this publication, we have delved into different matters facing SMEs, explored tried and tested solutions and featured some of those who have made it courtesy of being members of this exclusive club.

As we enter a new chapter, we seek to assess how far we've come and where we're going next.

To celebrate this milestone, we are featuring SME customers spread across all sectors of the economy including health, manufacturing, hospitality, construction and agriculture.

Their stories will take you on a journey of growth, perseverance and the occasional leap of faith that entrepreneurs have grown accustomed to and have become defined by.

In this publication, you will see that every business starts small, faces teething problems before reaching maturity stage. You will see what it takes to create wealth one employee at a time, one product at a time.

Entrepreneurs live to push boundaries and we choose to venture and support them as they build successful businesses from the ground up, even in uncharted territories.

Have an inspiring read!

“Over the past decade the Club has partnered and supported SMEs across the region with this in mind: When you think the way entrepreneurs think, you see everything around you differently.”

Judith Sidi Odhiambo

KCB Group Head of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs

Real Cents
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Betting on Small Business for Big Wins

By **Anastacia Kimtai**

Starting a business is not for the faint at heart. But if you're ready to turn your idea into reality, entrepreneurship is an exciting journey that will forever change your life.

The good news is that once an idea has been concretised, sheer determination will see it through the teething stages.

SMEs form a dominant share of the private sector in developing countries, and in most cases account for more than half the jobs in these countries.

Besides providing employment, SMEs help in the diversification of the economy which provides some much needed stability whenever external shocks hit big businesses.

Given this importance of SMEs for creation of more, better and inclusive jobs, it is therefore important to address the challenges and constraints that stifle growth in this sector, and address them accordingly.

One of the major constraints faced by SMEs is access to credit. In Kenya, this has been especially true following the capping of interest rates that hurt the sector more.

However, there are a couple of questions to be considered. As a financial partner of choice, we ask ourselves; can small and medium enterprises be banked profitably, and is the market today an attractive one?

In order to explore this, we strategically engage the SME market by seeking to find solutions to overcome the challenges they face. We look for the opportunities offered by the SME segment, and then tap into our strength as a financial partner to unlock their potential in a challenging, but growing market.



Anastacia Kimtai
KCB Bank Director Retail



KShs.40b
value of MSME loan
book in 2018



KCB Bank has earmarked
KShs.50 billion
for MSMEs

And it is a huge market. In Africa, SMEs account for up to 90 per cent of the businesses in most countries and create a substantial number of jobs.

In Kenya, they contribute close to 30 per cent of Kenya's GDP.

But there is a major survival challenge facing the sector; about 46 per cent of these businesses close within a year of establishment while another 15 per cent fall by the wayside in the second year, according to the Central Bank of Kenya. These are worrying statistics. Apart from lack of management expertise, lack of funding is a major hindrance to their success.

Just last year, looking at the industry as a whole, lending to SMEs was down by almost KShs. 250 billion. This is quite a drastic drop. We at KCB Bank are determined to stem this hemorrhage. We have been pushing for a model that is heavy on mobile lending, while still working within the rate cap.

Over the years, we have come to learn that the resilience we see in SMEs is because of one thing; entrepreneurs are constantly reminding themselves why they chose entrepreneurship in the first place. With time, you realise that the long-term benefits often outweigh the temporary stresses of starting and growing their own business.

Under the umbrella of SME Banking, the KCB Biashara Club's mandate is to provide business solutions and advisory services to the bank's customers who are entrepreneurs in order to support them to grow with the bank.

On the agricultural front, the Bank officially launched KCB MobiGrow, a digital agri-loans product targeting over two million farmers in Kenya and Rwanda. To date, the uptake of the facility is 340,174 customers with deposits of Kshs 662 million highlighting the demand for such technology which allows farmers to among other transactions, borrow through mobile phones for agricultural inputs.

Over the last year, the Bank also increased its focus on micro, small and medium enterprises across the region in light of the realisation that the sector is one of the key drivers of economic growth. Our loan book for the SMEs stood at KShs.40 billion and as a result, start-ups accessed credit facilities at concessionary rates.

Since the launch of 2jijiri in 2016 – our flagship programme of the KCB Foundation that seeks to create jobs for the unemployed East African Youth by growing the wealth of MSME's – 6,562 individuals (Women 48%: Men 52%) have accessed Business Development Support services.

In addition, loans worth Kshs120 million

have been disbursed to beneficiaries to support their business enterprises. For those who enrolled as entrepreneurs, success has been recorded in their being qualified for additional loans. A sizeable number of beneficiaries have grown their enterprises and have transitioned from the first loan to the second loan.

We know how fundamental the success of increased lending and access to finance for SMEs is and just how important these businesses are to the success of any economy as a whole.

For the bank to effectively compete in the SME market and increase its market share, we are looking to align ourselves with the dynamic environment and broaden our business space.

Moreover, as research plays a big role in the investment industry, we will increase its research output on sector research, economic research and company specific research to micro-target and fulfill the individual needs of businesses.

Looking into the next decade of growth for our SME customers, we remain committed to catalysing creation of employment, and by extension wealth, for all business owners daring to dream big, by starting small.

The writer is KCB Bank Kenya Director Retail Banking.



**6,562
Individuals**

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Women entrepreneurs: unlocking East Africa's potential

By Naomi Ndele

Today, women are as likely as men to recognize and seize business opportunities. In Africa, business failure rates among women are equal to or less than that of men. Women consider themselves strong innovators. In developing countries in particular, the opportunities offered by women entrepreneurs help grow markets and increase employment prospects.

Existing information shows that women-owned small and medium enterprises globally tend to be concentrated in overall low-profitability or low-growth sectors. Retail, beauty and food services are among the sectors in which women focus. In Africa, about 75 percent of women are in these consumer-oriented sectors.

The problem is that this centers women in sectors that are low earning and domestically focused with low prospects of economic and business growth, which explains the gender earnings gap.

Focusing on these sectors also limits financial opportunities, with banks considering these businesses less of an investment opportunity. SMEs in particular are important because they have a jobs creation function in most economies. Encouraging more women to own SMEs, increases job prospects.



Within the program, women go through a financial literacy training and capacity-building program in order to sensitize them on financial empowerment before the disbursement of loans. The Bank attributes the 100% repayment rate success to the financial education foundation set during the empowerment program.

But there is opportunity for far greater economic advancement. When women cross over into male-dominated sectors, they can earn three times as much as in traditionally female-dominated sectors.

By encouraging women to enter male-dominated sectors — and thereby changing the mindset of financial lenders and providing new opportunities for women to learn, grow and develop entrepreneurial businesses — women in developing countries can escape poverty and improve their country's economic condition.

If we are serious about creating a vibrant SME services sector, one of their anchor strategies should be to adopt a holistic, long-term vision.

SMEs in the services sector in Africa have the potential to become the new rising stars across the continent.

As such, KCB Group has committed Kshs 7.1 billion shillings towards funding women-owned and women-run enterprises. Through this Women Value Proposition programme the aim is to increase credit facilities to women alongside providing them with both technical and non-financial support.

Within the program, women go through a financial literacy training and capacity-building program in order to sensitize them on financial empowerment before the disbursement of loans. The Bank attributes the 100% repayment rate success to the financial education foundation set during the empowerment program.

Under the umbrella of SME Banking, the KCB Biashara Club's mandate is to avail business solutions and advisory services to the bank's customers who are entrepreneurs in order to support them to grow with the bank.

Currently, we are in partnership with over 12,000 active club members in Kenya, South Sudan and Rwanda.

Before the implementation of the women's proposition, only 9 per cent of the Bank's lending represented women-run SMEs. Today, that number has increased almost four-fold and stands at 31 per cent.

Our purpose, manifested through business exposure trips, access to customized loans, and business development trainings, exposes customers to emerging and developed economies to upgrade their skills in doing business.

The evidence is pointing to a major scope for growth if we can help women entrepreneurs effectively. We can create a path that will help them lead the continent into a brighter future.

The writer is KCB Bank Head of SME Banking and Agribusiness.



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Engineering Growth



Over the past decade, the KCB Biashara Club has been guiding SME Business owners to get what they want out of their business and overcome their limitations in order to break through to the next phase of operations. The club has been modeled around transforming fortunes for small businesses and paving a path for a new wave of entrepreneurs



Improving access to finance for SMEs

It has been a tumultuous period for SMEs over the past decade where year on year, they have been challenged by market dynamics more often than not, not acting in their favour.

Market conditions and regulatory environments are not always supportive of the growth of SMEs and access to formal finance is one of the main obstacles they face.

For instance, a glaring lack of information on SMEs and MSMEs in the country in

order to determine adequate financing levels for various enterprises has left entrepreneurs in the hands of shylocks or desperately seeking other avenues of financing.

In mid-October, the President refused to assent to the Finance Bill 2019 citing the fact that the capping of interest rates has caused unintended effects that are significant and damaging to the economy, particularly to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises which have been the hardest hit.

“Over the last three years, the government

and the banking sector have initiated programmes and measures to deal with the concerns of affordability and availability of credit from banks and at the same time strengthen the vulnerable sectors especially the MSMEs, Women and Youth. While noting that significant progress has been made, these programmes and measures are yet to achieve the desired results due to the negative effects caused by the capping of interest rates,” said H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta.

The position was supported by the Kenya

Bankers Association who said, “We note that Kenya has had interest rate caps in the past, but the controls were repealed in the 1990s because of the same effects we see today. Therefore, any efforts to correct the situation will be good for businesses, households and the broader economy.”

According to a research conducted in May 2019 by Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics, MSMEs in the country are concerned about interest, trustworthiness and ease when accessing credit.

The study also noted that SMEs have an aversion to credit and don't borrow mainly due to high interest rates.

Others are even tempted to think that bank products are irrelevant because they've survived without them for so long. On the flipside, the research also showed that MSMEs are likely to choose business banking products from banks they have prior interactions with.

Furthermore, insufficient information provided on access to markets, international trade and a lack of business acumen training have led to the slow but significant demise of the SME in Kenya.

A study by the Central Bank of Kenya shows that the rationing out of MSMEs from the credit market by commercial banks is estimated to have lowered the country's economic growth by 0.4 percentage points in 2017 to and by a further 0.2 percentage points in 2018.

The writing was clearly on the wall and there is a clear need to re-think what needs to be done in order to support these SMEs in a manner that fuels their job creation capacity and contribution to the economy.

Although the SME sector has remained significantly underfunded, banks are increasingly looking at developing products and services to cater for these businesses.

“Our focus is to support SMEs to enable them play an even bigger role. As policy makers, we will continue exploring policies to ensure we support SMEs, including in optimising the cost of lending, skills development and training,” says Joshua Oigara, KCB Group CEO & MD.

The structured integration of SMEs into the mainstream economic systems shall definitely contribute immensely towards



Today, about 40% of adults worldwide do not have an account at a bank, or with another type of financial institution or mobile money provider.



Kenya's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) contribute approximately 40% of the GDP



Stawi offers loans ranging from KShs.30,000 up to KShs.250,000 at an interest of 9% per annum payable over 12 months.

expanding opportunities for the bulging youth population of Africa and help check against their disillusionments and despair.

To counter the challenges faced by many SMEs, financial institutions are engaging in partnerships to offer sustainable solutions to business owners. One such solution is Stawi, a credit solution for small businesses.

Backed by the Central Bank of Kenya, the business loan product offers loans ranging from KShs.30,000 up to KShs.250,000 at an interest of nine percent per annum payable over 12 months. It is also the first time banks have come together, leveraging on a digital platform, to offer below market rate loans.



“Until now, lending to MSMEs has been constrained by the lack of reliable information to assess their creditworthiness. The innovation of this product is the use of all data on customers' transactions to fill this gap. In that sense, it is revolutionary,” said CBK Governor, Patrick Njoroge.

Noting that Kenya's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) contribute approximately 40 per cent of the GDP with the majority falling in the informal sector, the move to launch this product opens up doors to formal financing that had previously remained shut to entrepreneurs.

“The Bank will remain interconnected with the economy and its innovation and partnerships will be driven by market need. Overall, we recognize the nexus between SME financing and economic performance. We know how fundamental the success of increased lending and access to finance for SMEs is and just how important these businesses are to the success of the economy as a whole,” said Oigara.

Therefore, to ensure long-term growth and economic prosperity, Kenya, and the region as a whole, needs a thriving SME sector – in any case, the successful SMEs of today grow and become the large companies.

“Our focus is to support SMEs to enable them play an even bigger role. As policy makers, we will continue exploring policies to ensure we support SMEs, including in optimising the cost of lending, skills development and training.”

— Joshua Oigara, KCB Group CEO & MD.

Building a thriving network for our customers

By Moses Odipo

When Biashara Club was launched in 2008, the desire was to serve our customers better. Customers visited the Bank branches and would spend so much time queuing to get service. This complaint was the beginning of the making of KCB Biashara Club.

To address this issue, we opened dedicated counters for the customers in the branches, significantly reducing the amount of time they spent transacting. The only caveat was that the customers pay an extra fee, a condition they took up without hesitation.

This service increased dedicated customer engagements, who we realized came from different regions and operated within different industries. The interactions bred the need to offer customers more than financial services. The customers required more than spending less time queuing at the branches. They were interested in non-financial services.

With this in mind, we introduced key pillars; networking forums, training sessions, international trips and dedicated relationship managers, in the Club in an attempt to bridge the gap that existed between the Bank and the customers.

Initially our target customers were purely Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs). These were the affluent customers who had a common goal—the desire to grow and needed support from the Bank.

Over time, we realized that different sectors define SMEs differently, we therefore extended our reach to Micro customers, allowing the Club to serve MSMEs.

Being a member of Biashara Club comes with benefits.

Firstly, each member is assigned a relationship manager. This allows us to understand our customers and needs better, enabling us to serve them better.

Secondly, we have the express banking service in all the branches in the region, allowing the customers be served immediately. This is an offering we are highly proud of.

We also offer frequent training to the customers, which are based on the different needs they have. For example, as a Club, we analyze our credit appraisals for the MSMEs on a daily basis. Through this process, we learnt that the customers lack book keeping skills, a critical requirement when one needs funding. We therefore partnered with professional trainers to



teach our customers basic book keeping for their business.

We host networking forums for the customers. On a yearly basis, we organize three-day team building activities in the different regions. Joshua Oigara, KCB GCEO, leaders in different industries and government officials attend these forums and offer counsel and support to the customers.

The most popular aspect of the Club are the international business trips. Our members travel to different countries, learn how they do business and how best they can collaborate to grow their businesses back home.

As we step into the next ten years, my desire is that we will replicate this program across all regions to grow the East African region. We have so much to offer.

The writer is KCB Bank Kenya Biashara Club Senior Manager.

Creating a future of business that works for women

By Nyambura Nganga



All businesses stand to benefit from greater equality for women and empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors to facilitate building stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities.

Trade has historically been an important driver of growth, productivity gains, development and job creation in developing countries. When women-led businesses, particularly the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that account for most jobs are able to connect to international markets for goods and services, the development gains are disproportionately large and, importantly, shared across a wider section of the population.

In order to meet the development challenges in emerging markets—and to tap into the enormous potential of the women's market the barriers of access to finance for women-owned SMEs need to be addressed urgently.

As we all know, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) trade less in international markets compared to larger firms, leading to disadvantages for businesses that lose out on lucrative opportunities.

And that is why KCB Bank focuses on connecting SMEs to international markets.

As a financial institution, we are committed to championing a supportive domestic and international operating environment for SMEs to help promote linkages and partnerships with larger firms, domestically and internationally, that can enable SMEs to better exploit their competitive advantage when it comes to various sectors across the economy.

Across the globe, what is clear is that - with the right support - trading overseas can be more rewarding even though it has its own challenges.

Through the Biashara Club, we're providing training that go beyond financial capital and basic business skills, teach necessary life skills that have had a significant and positive impact on female-owned enterprises.

While we are definitely on the right track, women-led SMEs in the region cannot wait for the future; rather, companies need to begin their efforts today. Decisions made now will bring significant and positive outcomes for women's advancement.

Solving these challenges requires all of us to play our part today.

The writer is KCB Bank Kenya Biashara Club Manager.

Numbers since inception:



Over 5000

Training sessions in Kenya, 27 trainings per quarter



Over 80,000

MSMEs have been exposed to the trainings and workshops



41

International trips



Partnerships with: Strathmore Business School, Export Promotion, Text Book Center and the China Union Pay etc.



A recent survey of 91 banks in 45 economies found that banks perceive the SME segment to be profitable, but macroeconomic instability in developing economies and competition in the SME segment in developed economies were identified as the main obstacles to them providing financing to SMEs.

Growing a business across generations

By Real Cents Writer

When Soi Snr was 12 years old in the 1930s, he started manually ploughing farms for people in Kericho. Years later as a young man, he began buying and selling chickens at a profit. Before long, he was buying tea leaves from farmers and selling them to multinational companies. Business was booming. And when his sons completed school, they joined the family business.

The old, yet still strong, man has built an empire with his three sons, with businesses spanning distribution, mining and construction, dairy farming to hospitality and manufacturing. The entrepreneurial culture is one that runs in the family, and is highly encouraged in every member.

We meet Bernard Soi, one of his sons, when we arrive in Kericho. His office sits on the top floor of a building whose windows overlook rolling tea plantations, atop a supermarket and a restaurant owned by the family. He reminisces about a time when he owned a small shop, when he would buy five bags of sugar and divide them into smaller bags to sell. Today, he sells over a thousand bags of sugar a day.

We leave the comfort of his office and drive to the dairy farm where we meet the rest of the family.

A tour of the farm reveals hundreds of high grade, big and bulky, healthy cows in well-built and well maintained sheds. We are just in time for the afternoon milking session. Cows are led into small cubicles where the hum of the milking machines mingles with the lowing of the cows. This state of the art unit is as a result of a KCB

Biashara Club trip their father undertook to Israel. When Bernard's father went on this trip and saw how dairy farming was carried out in Israel, he was inspired. He had an expert come to his farm and design it anew; he also learnt about improved breeds and bought milking machines which have led to increased efficiency and productivity in the farms. Before, the cows were milked by hand. It was a tedious affair.

From here, we drive to the quarry, where dust rises into the air as a towering crushing plant, bought in China after a Biashara Club trip, grinds stones to ballast. These building materials are sold in their hardware stores, and used by the family during construction of business premises.

During the drive back to Bernard's office, we stop by the first supermarket the family ever opened, a lot smaller than the one we saw in the morning when we were making our way to Bernard's office.

"We never close any business after opening a bigger one," his brother Alfred says. "We have maintained consistency in the way we do business, and in delivering high quality products to our clients" he adds.

We make our way back to Bernard's office, and as we walk past the pastry section of the supermarket, he points to a machine he bought during one of the international trips organized by the club.

"The trips are very eye-opening, I'm able to network with other business owners and identify machines I can use back home." They are also a great opportunity to escape the busy work life and unwind. "If I want to go on a vacation, I might as well go on Biashara Club trip. This way I'm able to

combine both business and pleasure", he jests.

The biggest impact from these international trips to the business is increased innovation in the business. It's also seeing how other businesses run their operations in more efficient ways that allows for reduction in production costs.

Machines used in the two tea factories the family owns have been imported from China. The multiplier effect of the KCB Biashara club is being felt in the community. Growth and diversification of the businesses has created more jobs for the locals, directly and indirectly. Combined, the family business directly employs more than one thousand people. The tea factories buy tea leaves from 10,000 farmers, leading to economic empowerment.

They are also sponsoring six needy students' education.

"We are also empowering small businesses by providing smaller distributors with goods on credit. We want to teach more people how to run businesses and pay forward the lessons we learn from the training forums organized by KCB Biashara club," he says.

How has this family managed to grow such a diversified businesses portfolio?

"Consistency in delivering quality products, maintaining strong relationships with employees, customers and community members" he says. And his parting shot to young people? "Aspire to create jobs. It is critical that with the alarming rate of unemployment in the country, we promote a culture of entrepreneurship among graduates."

Soi Snr, Chairman
Kuresoi, Kipchimatt
and Mbogo Valley

“Aspire to create jobs. It is critical that with the alarming rate of unemployment in the country, we promote a culture of entrepreneurship among graduates.”



Breaking barriers in business



Loise Kihara balancing the books with Dr Kihara at Kianda Agrovet

Top: The quarry where the Soi's source raw materials for their hardware stores
Below: Dairy cows at the farm



Bernard Soi and his wife at the family's office



By Real Cents Writer

Kianda Agrovet was established in May 2005 by Dr Boniface Kihara Macharia and his wife Loise Wambui Kihara. The agrovet stocks animal feeds and seeds.

Boniface, a veterinary doctor, also advises farmers on how to manage their animals and best practice in terms of usage of medicine.

“Besides offering our products and services over the counter, we recently began distributing the same to major companies such as Unga Limited, Murphy Chemicals, Bidco Limited, Kenchic Limited amongst others,” says Boniface.

He says he felt the need to differentiate his business from others by offering advice in best animal husbandry.

“I took advantage of this opportunity and it has led to tremendous growth over the years,” says Boniface.

They currently have 15 workers; nine are on payroll and six casuals. They have an accountant, drivers and field attendants.

One of the biggest challenges the entity faced was financing of their newer projects. Some of

the distributors they worked with wanted cash or bank guarantee.

Consequently, the entity's management approached KCB Bank for financial assistance and the bank agreed to support them.

Another challenge the couple has faced is managerial expertise. The more they continue to expand, the more they have realised they need to refine their management skills.

“To mitigate this, we joined KCB Biashara Club in 2012 to polish our management skills through the various trainings and forums offered. We can now comfortably meet our goal through the application of effective management skills” he says.

One of the benefits, Loise says, is that Club members enjoy fast banking services and travel opportunities.

One of the key lessons Boniface and Loise have learnt from the Biashara Club trainings is that of Mr Kinyanjui Ng'ang'a, a Biashara Club trainer at one of the sessions they've attended, where he talked about focusing on business operations, no matter the obstacles thrown their way.

“To mitigate this, we joined KCB Biashara Club in 2012 to polish our management skills through the various trainings and forums offered. We can now comfortably meet our goal through the application of effective management skills.”

“Despite any hurdles we face in the business realm, the important lesson from

Mr Kinyanjui's teaching is, 'concentrate on what you are doing, and do it at the best of your abilities until you succeed,' says Loise.

Boniface and Loise say KCB Biashara Club has given them opportunity to network with professionals who influence their business.

“Because of Biashara Club we've met so many like-minded people, we encourage each other as well as do business,” says Loise.

Over the years, Kianda Agrovet has grown in revenue and with the help of KCB Bank, two more agrovet have been opened.

Word of mouth spreads good fortunes in business



Anne Ngari, Director Illinois Prestige Limited

By Real Cents Writer

Word of mouth is the most influential form of brand awareness, with people far more likely to trust the recommendations of friends over marketing campaigns or brand messaging.

For Anne Ngari, Director of Illinois Prestige Limited, a business recommendation from a friend set her on a path to the world of entrepreneurship.

She began with an FMCG business with her husband, was encouraged by her friend to venture into owning a line of M-PESA Agents across Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu where she also acquired dealership status selling gadgets as well.

After a while in this business, she diversified into the construction industry and began getting jobs from the Kenya Ports Authority. At the moment, she is also a water vendor serving corporates in Mombasa.

"I remember seeing how well my friends were faring on in business and I wanted the same for myself. After all, everyone needs water!" she says.

Venturing from one business to another and being successful in all of them has been hard work.

"I have always been searching for new ideas, various projects and things to learn. I never wanted to stick to just one career path, so entrepreneurship was a natural fit," she says.

That's why the Biashara Club was a natural fit for her as well.

"When I went to the US with the club, the expo we attended offered a lot of learning opportunities and I got many ideas which I applied to the construction business when I came back home," she says.

The diverse nature of her businesses are on a road less traveled and often filled

with ups and downs. However, that's what makes every day a thrill.

"I enjoy entrepreneurship because of the growth opportunities. I'm not the same person I was before and I see the fruits of the investments and hard work," she says.

"Through the club, I've been able to buy a house by applying for a loan through the club and the trips are fantastic because they expose you to different ways of doing business, and you get an opportunity to network," says Anne.

She believes that a good entrepreneur will do well in any business once they have the right people in their circle, either as partners, friends or employees.

"You hold on to your knowledge of business and work with skilled people in the areas of your interest. If you're struggling in business, through the club, you can start from somewhere and grow beyond your wildest dreams," she says.

"I have always been searching for new ideas, various projects and things to learn. I never wanted to stick to just one career path, so entrepreneurship was a natural fit."

Investing in agribusiness for the future



Jennifer Kariuki, CEO Marubi Supplier

By Real Cents Writer

In Kamatongu village in Nyeri, Jennifer Muthoni Kariuki is pushing the envelope in agribusiness since she believes that this is the next frontier of investment.

On her poultry farm, she has invested in 3,000 layers with a return of 80% from the layers.

"Agribusiness holds the key to meeting our demand for food because it gets to everybody, from the rich to the poor and I wish everyone could have an egg every day. That's what I'm working towards not just for my area but for the country as a whole," says Jennifer.

"There is nothing more gratifying than contributing to feed the population," she says.

She believes that Africa can feed itself and that there is vast potential for establishing production and trade links, by leveraging on the synergies between different actors along the entire agribusiness value chain (producers, processors and exporters).

Moreover, she believes that the shift from primary production



The shift from primary production to modern integrated agribusiness will provide opportunities to many smallholder farmers, the majority of whom are women, as well as generating modern jobs for the continent's youth.

to modern integrated agribusiness will provide opportunities to many smallholder farmers, the majority of whom are women, as well as generating modern jobs for the continent's youth.

"Until people stop seeing it as farming for livelihood and start seeing it as a business, the realisation of our dream for this sector will remain a dream," she says.

Introduced to the club by a friend, Jennifer says the insights she receives from the trainings have helped her become more competitive and pushed her to meet consumer requirements on price, quality and standards.

"Through Biashara Club, I'm offered broad options from trainings to finance solutions. As an entrepreneur always on the go, the one-stop-shop experience offers unmatched convenience in the market," she says.

From a previous trip to China, she was able to source for equipment to enhance her

farm in terms of improving hygiene and housing for her layers and is now able to utilize the space better.

The networks forged during the trainings and trips have also boosted her business through exchanges with like-minded business people.

"I'm always learning something new from the interactions with the club members. We exchange a lot of ideas and this which has really done a lot for me and my farm," she says.

Jennifer recognizes the club's potential in changing the way people view agriculture.

Just like any other economic sector, poultry farming requires capital, labour, materials and a good dose of entrepreneurship.

"This is good space where people are enlightened to no longer only see farming as a subsistence activity, but as a promising entrepreneurial undertaking."

When Passion Meets Profit

By Real Cents Writer

When Francis Musembi was studying veterinary medicine, his dream was to become a business owner. Three years after he graduated in 1998, he set up shop in Kitengela town as a veterinary officer. Soon after, he opened an agrovet shop to complement the clinical services he was offering. Twenty years later, Dr Musembi can see the fruits of his labour.

Starting out as a small business owner, Musembi faced several challenges among them lack of managerial skills, staffing and lack of know-how in inventory management. But along came KCB Biashara Club which availed him networking opportunities, discounted loan interest rates, quarterly seminars and local, regional and international trips. He didn't need much convincing and with that, he became one of the first members to join when it launched in 2008.

KCB Biashara Club is a platform that supports SMEs by offering business solutions

and advisory services. Some of the perks that members benefit from are personalized banking services and SME management seminars and workshops.

In the 10 years Musembi has been a KCB Biashara Club member, he has only missed a few of the quarterly seminars.

The trainings on effective running of SMEs have equipped him with the skills he needs to operate his growing business. To date, he has five agrovet, 39 employees and from one pick up he now has five trucks.

The fifth agrovet shop, Musembi says, will be in partnership with Safaricom in an initiative geared towards supplying inputs to farmers at the sub county level.

He is well versed on best hiring practices and addressing skill gaps among his employees.

Gradually, the agrovet shops have grown from a one man show to a family business, thanks to the business advisory services club members receive.

In 2001, his wife joined him in the business and his firstborn daughter, a finance major, helps with the accounting on a part time basis.

"I started involving her after a training on succession in family businesses," he explains. His biggest buyers are small and large scale farmers and educational institutions.

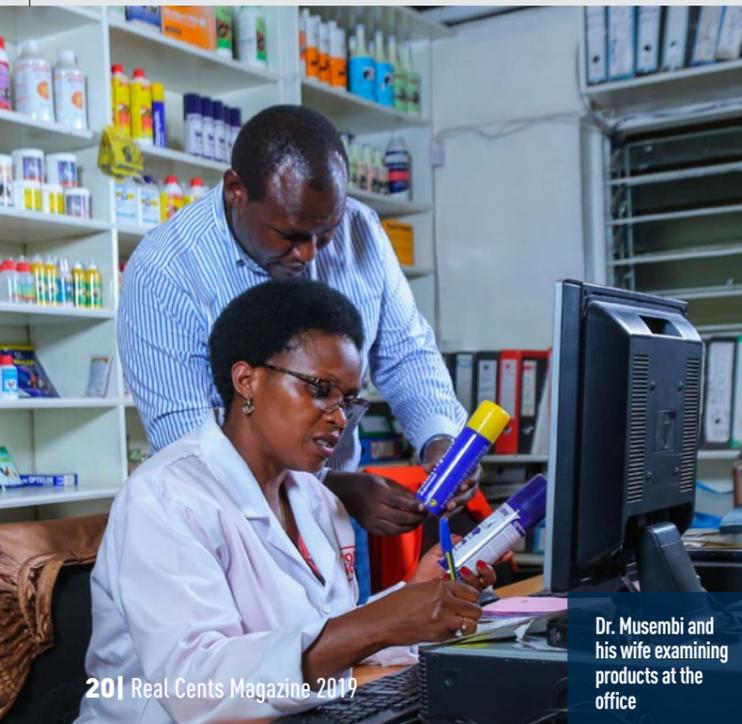
Since his business depends on the agricultural sector, Musembi is determined to make farming "cool" and fight food insecurity by training farmers on best farming practices. This, he does in partnership with agrochemical companies.

"There is a perception that farming is for the poor and the old. We want to change this perception and make farming a cool thing. In fact we are no longer referring to it as farming; we are now calling it agribusiness."

“ There is a perception that farming is for the poor and the old. We want to change this perception and make farming a cool thing. In fact we are no longer referring to it as farming; we are now calling it agribusiness”



Dr Francis Musembi, CEO Lukenya Agrovet



Dr. Musembi and his wife examining products at the office



Dr. Musembi arranging stock at the warehouse



Jane Kiama, CEO Top In Town Drycleaners

Re-writing the rules for **SUCCESS**

By Real Cents Writer

As your business starts to grow, you need to maintain a set of practices that ensure your continued success. Establishing a set of rules for yourself to follow and sticking to them can make all the difference when trying to avoid a potentially disastrous business mistake.

You need a certain mindset to be a successful entrepreneur. You also need to be enterprising, resilient, flexible and driven. But, even with all these qualities, you're still going to need all the help that you can get – and these 10 nuggets of advice are a great place to start.

Jane Wangari Kiama, has always been a

stickler for rules as an entrepreneur.

From her days selling insurance to owning and running Top In Town Drycleaners in Mombasa, she became used to running her own business.

"I began by selling insurance which is essentially like running your own business because you get paid for what you work for," she says. "No one tells you what to do or how to do it. You set the groundwork and grow it by yourself," she adds.

In April 1999, she bought a small running laundromat in April 1999 from a Swiss gentleman which only had three workers at the time and only ran during the daytime.

Today, she has 62 employees, four branches and collection points spread across Mombasa, Diani and Nyali, servicing over 25 hotels.

According to her, when you're in business, in order to grow, you need to be able to do three things:

Be honest, strive to give people good quality and manage your money the way it should be managed.

These guiding rules, she believes, are the secret to her success.

In business, you lead by deeds, not words. Ultimately, it's going to be you who defines the culture and ethos of your business and



Jane Kiama with her staff at Top in Town Drycleaners in Nyali

“As an entrepreneur, you're constantly thinking about the future of your business and who will succeed you.”

the best way to instill this in everyone is to lead by example.

"Anybody who wants to run a business needs to have integrity and commitment. All of us prefer to do business with people we like and trust," she says.

"I enjoy doing business because of the independence and we see the ripple effect of the business to the lives of employees. We're creating jobs and that's not so bad, is it?" she asks.

Expanding your customer base can be difficult in a business that depends heavily on location. Even if you have an incredibly efficient pick-up and delivery service, your customers are likely still within a certain geographic radius of your facility—leaving you with a pretty finite number of potential customers.

To the outside observer, running a laundry business might seem fairly simple: take in dirty laundry, turn out clean laundry. It's a simple enough concept, but the reality is that commercial launderers have to do much more than just clean laundry to be really successful.

"Location matters, your passion matters, your attitude matters – you need to enter knowing that you will succeed and that your financial situation is a critical factor of success," she says.

In the laundry industry, she says it's always better to be over-prepared, so be sure that your equipment is up-to-date on maintenance and your supply closet is never close to empty.

Moreover, do everything you can to avoid down-time.

"I'm training my son to maintain and repair our machines so that he knows how to fix them when they break down. He's training in electrical courses so he can build his business acumen as well as technical so he can help the business continue together with his wife," she says.

"I would like for my business to outlive me so this is important," adds Jane.

Through Biashara Club, she visited Germany where they visited a factory being run by the 4th generation in the family.

At the factory, they were shown an old timber shack where the founders used to make the cranes and now, that company is one of the biggest crane makers in the world.

"As an entrepreneur, you're constantly thinking about the future of your business and who will succeed you. That trip put my mind in a place where I was challenged to think about how I'm preparing my children to take over and do the same once I'm gone," she says.

Jane was introduced to the club by the bank and did not hesitate before joining in order to enjoy the benefits.

"I like a bit of class, who doesn't? And the extra special treatment you receive from the bank by being a Biashara Club member makes me happy," she says.

Additionally, she says the trips broaden members' thinking and the sessions with motivational thinkers also assist them to grow as individuals and the management trainers guide them in unlocking business interests.

"Your attitude plays a big part in business. What you project onto your customers will reflect on your business, you can't go to them when in a foul mood and expect business to run smoothly," says Jane.

What's next for Jane?

At the moment, she's diversifying her business and venturing into farming in Malindi..

"Many years back when I was a small girl and had just landed in Naivasha, I saw the lake and thought it looked really beautiful and I told myself I'd retire in a farm and perhaps that's what I've been carrying close to my heart," she says.

When anyone asks her about diversifying business, she always insists that It's necessary to understand that you should not use the money you should be using to run your current business to venture into new thing.

"There is no need to cause your business to fail as you try and look for new business interests," she adds.

Starting a business is very tricky and it is possible to fail before you start.

Whatever your business, whatever your vision, you're going to need a team around you who share your aims and worldview. Because when you're all pointing in the same direction it makes reaching your desired destination that much easier.

Her advice?

"Put everything in order before you take one step in another direction. Do not allow yourself to fall back."

The making of a regional medical hub

By Real Cents Writer



Dr Rutto Kipkoech (left), MD Reale Hospital



I would like to see our clients being able to afford any medical services and would like to offer my services at the same rate as a public hospital. That is my dream”

Eldoret itself is becoming a budding regional hub for healthcare in the North Rift region. This was the realization that struck Dr. Rutto Kipkoech one day prompting him to take the plunge and set up his clinic within the CBD 2009.

Dr. Rutto noticed the price of medicines was very high prompting people to engage him on the drug’s suitability vis-a-vis the price.

“I noticed that people would go directly to the pharmacies and laboratories. A very high percentage would come and show me medicine and ask if I thought it was good for the condition,” says Dr Rutto.

It was this habit that informed his positioning of the clinic by ensuring the prices were affordable enough for everyone to access the services they so desperately needed.

“I looked at the economic situation in the region and had to calibrate our offering to cater for the people by offering affordable and quality healthcare. Their mindset was that going to private hospitals was not affordable and we had to work around that,” says Dr. Rutto.

In 2013, Dr. Rutto noted that he was doing a lot of referrals for in-patient services to other medical facilities.

In June that year, as he was closing his shift at the clinic in town, he met a KCB Bank manager and asked her if he could find a bank to fund the establishment of a hospital.

“I believed in the business model but we needed the capital because investments had to be made. Without this funding, there was a level of healthcare that our people would not have access to”, he says.

She asked him to write a proposal, and the rest as they say, is history. Reale Hospital is now currently running a 127 bed inpatient bed capacity and four clinics within the North Rift Region with a staff base of 300.

The bank financed the construction of the facility and whenever they needed more funding such as for medical equipment, KCB Bank has always been at hand to offer solutions.

That marked the beginning of a fruitful partnership and is the same grounding on which he joined Biashara Club.

“I’ve been a member for four years and I have enjoyed the privileges that come with,” he says.

He adds that in the last two years he has attended trainings and participated in trade expos where he has picked up some ideas to grow business.

From the trips to China, Thailand and the US through the club, he has been able to benchmark against medical facilities in first world countries and procure specialized equipment that was previously lacking in the region.

Most recently, Reale Hospital launched a highly specialized endoscopic spine surgery and has over time forged partnerships with doctors, medical equipment companies and drug companies some of whom have sponsored doctors to go for further studies in Germany, India and USA.

“I would like to see our clients being able to afford any medical services and would like to offer my services at the same rate as a public hospital. That is my dream,” he says. “I want to motivate other private facilities to set up facilities even in the periphery, everyone should be catered for.”

“The path to UHC might be long and challenging, but by incorporating private sector players such as financiers and insurance providers, we can collectively deliver on the promise of leaving no one behind,” says Dr. Rutto.

Finding a gap in the market

By Real Cents Writer



Overview of Building Construction Concepts premises in Kisumu



Christine Jackino, MD, Building Construction Concepts

“Production has to go on throughout. People were not willing to wait; they wanted to come in and find the product ready,” says Christine.

At the workshop prefab materials are prepared which typically starts with mixing concrete and molding it into shape depending on the use.

“The demand for prefabricated items for houses and road construction like blocks and culverts has increased tremendously with the growth of Kisumu’s real estate sector,” Christine says.

The company now has 70 employees and also empowers women by offering them about a third of all employment vacancies.

Christine’s dream is to become the leading producer and supplier of concrete products in the Western and Nyanza region as well as being the preferred supplier of affordable housing materials.

With KCB Biashara Club, she has travelled to China where she learned about cutting edge machinery in the construction industry and to Thailand and Bangkok where she learned about interior furnishing.

“When we go for these trips we benchmark our business against what we see there and identify the gaps in our own business such as the need to upgrade our machines. We also learn about new technology,” she adds.

She believes there are countless ideas to explore when it comes to business and that you just need to have an open mind to find the entrepreneurial sweet spot.

Successful businesses are often anchored on innovations that plug a gap in the market. Taking advantage of that gap can change the course of an entrepreneurial venture like it did for Patrick and Christine Jackino, when they realized there was a huge unmet demand for material in the construction industry.

In 2009, the couple set up Building

Construction Concepts Ltd, a company that sells construction material, to service this market. All they had at the time were 10 bags of cement, a store and an ambition to be a big player in the construction sector.

As the business grew, they realized that most of their customers needed ready-made items.



Paving the way for women in construction

By Real Cents Writer

Melanie Wituka studied International Relations and had envisioned herself finding employment in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

When this proved difficult, she joined the Chinese contractors on the Thika Super Highway as a translator where she picked up the basics of road construction while on the job.

This came as a blessing in disguise because that same year, the government introduced the 30% rule that enabled women, youth and persons with disabilities to trade with the government.

Seeing the potential of the opportunity at hand, she packed her bags, left Nairobi and set up camp back home in Kakamega where she was ready to try her hand at road construction.

Unfortunately, she didn't have much in the way of savings at the time but her mother believed in her and offered her some starting capital. With that she was able to open a company - Suleco - and started applying for tenders.

Her mother advised her to open a bank account, which she duly did at KCB Bank who took interest in her venture and agreed to support her.

"When Suleco started, I did everything by myself. I was the cashier, the manager, the driver and I had to look for the tenders. Over time, I came to learn how to set up a company through the training we had been going for through the KCB Biashara Club

and now we've grown to 20 permanent employees," says Melanie who is a former Miss Tourism, Western Region.

Suleco mainly deals with the construction of buildings and roads, as well as water works, such as drilling boreholes.

Recently, Suleco just completed a 7km road in Khwisero and a 12km road in Matungu constituency.

Being an account holder at KCB Bank she was introduced to Biashara Club which has been good for networking.

"I have met new partners, customers and opportunities and even travelled to Israel and China," she says.

Tapping back into her beauty pageant days she met a lady at a tourism expo in France and quickly formed a partnership.

"She produces oils and lotions and sends them to me so that I can distribute them in East Africa," says Melanie.

When it comes to projects close to her heart, she is a champion for women's empowerment.

She mentors a group of 38 girls from across Kakamega County whom she trains on project management from inception of a tender, the execution and payment.

And it's working - a few of the girls have started their own company.

"Having Dr. Kinyanjui at the club as my mentor has helped me pick the right practices for my business and the best people to do business with," she adds.



Melanie Wituka (R) and a mentee look over some construction plans.



Cracking the home ownership code

By Real Cents Writer

Most people dream of owning a home. However, the reality is that building a house from the ground up is not always a seamless process.

With seemingly tighter budgets across every generation, the dream seems to recede further with each passing year.

More often than not, building a house is often the biggest investment the average person makes - so it does pay to go into the project with all the information one can get. There are many ways of reducing the cost of building a house, but, the main one is to source for quality and well-priced building materials.

Peter Ndegwa is one such supplier. He is of the proprietors of Stone Center Limited, a leading building contractor and manufacturer of interlocking blocks as well as quality natural stone tiles.

When he and two other directors started the company six years ago in Kiganjo, Nyeri, they researched on the best technology

available to lower the cost of construction.

During a visit to the China, they identified the kind of machinery that could be used to make the idea of affordable housing a dream within reach for many.

"What we do during the construction and management process, is direct clients to certain architects, engineers and quantity surveyors so that they choose who they are comfortable working with and is affordable," says Ndegwa.

This is followed by the team submitting the finished plans to the relevant authorities and once approval is given, they kick off work doing what they do best: making decor floor slabs, tiles for wall copings, decorated paving slabs, natural stone cobbles and inter-locking blocks made from either granite, slate, sandstone, marble, travertine among others.

In the last two years, they have built 30 houses and more are on the way.

Trained in business, Ndegwa developed a

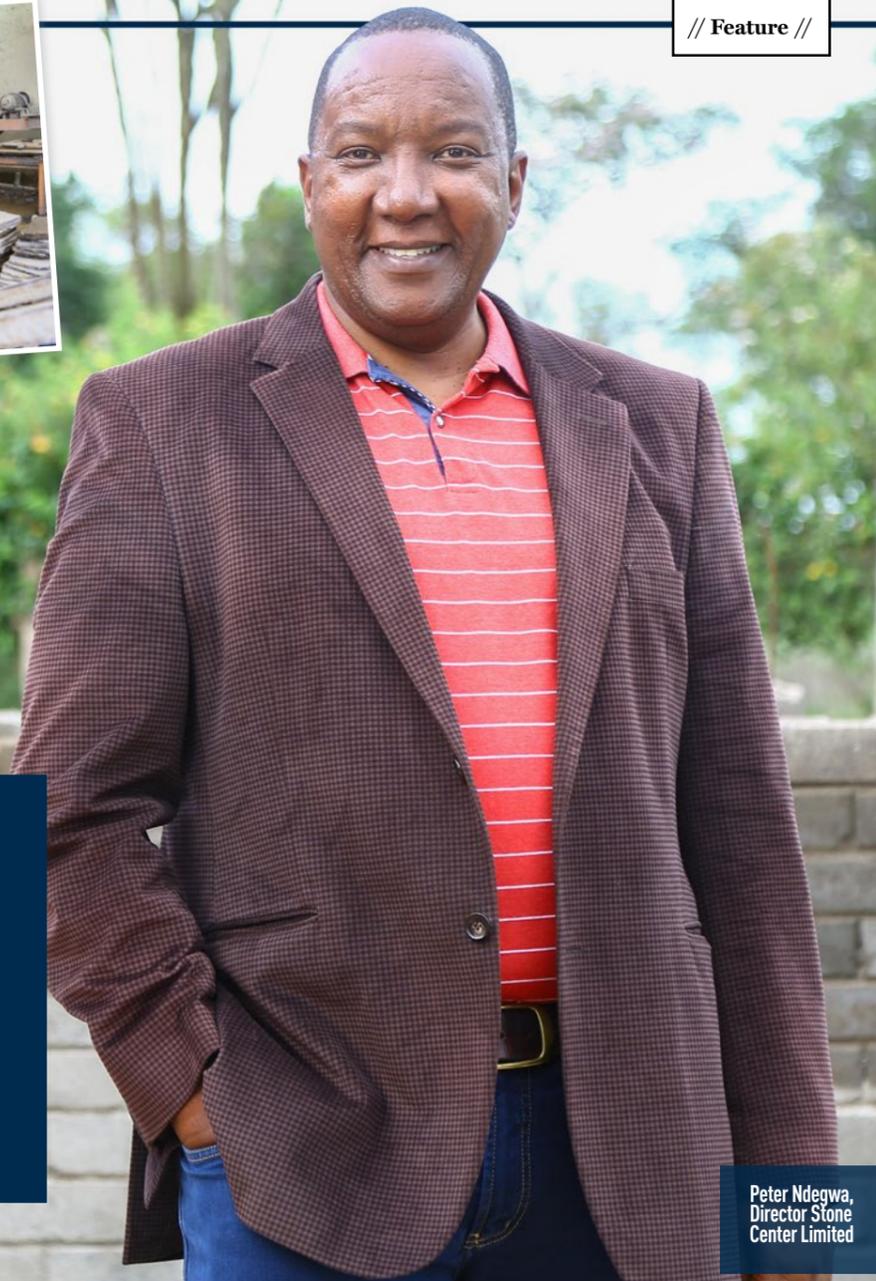
penchant for scouting for opportunities and converting them into viable businesses.

"It didn't just fall into place at the beginning, it was a struggle because I needed to put in quite a bit of investment in the land, buildings, and the machines. I can tell you it's been quite a ride but I like it when people see an idea that is going to succeed and decide that they are going to walk with you," he says.

He believes the Biashara Club is one of the reasons the business is stable.

The club brings together different interest groups under the same umbrella and gives members an opportunity to interact and build their networks. It's a win-win situation for business.

"We have been trained by some of the finest minds in the country in approaches to business, seeing opportunities and exploiting them. It's a well thought out concept," says Ndegwa.



Peter Ndegwa,
Director Stone
Center Limited

2012



Customers during the 2012 China Trip in Yiwu China.



2013

KCB Biashara Club 2013 Maasai Mara trip Flag of at Hilton Hotel. The Networking trip to the Maasai Mara plains was flagged off by KCB Group CEO Joshua Oigara, Retail Director, Annastacia Kimtai and Head of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs Judith Sidi Odhiambo.

2014



KCB Group, Chief Operating Officer, Mr Samuel Makome flags off the Biashara Club Landcruisers on their way to Amboseli in 2014 on a club members' retreat.

2015



Regional Business Manager Mr. Metric Mukhalasie addressing customers during the opening of February 2015 Biashara Club forums at Sarova Panafric. The workshop was themed 'Blue Ocean Strategy'.

2016



Patrick Malika of Unique Properties (c) in a business matching with SMEs in Rwanda during the 2016 Regional trip to Rwanda. The round table event was organized by Rwanda Development board and KCB Biashara club in an attempt to unite the two countries synergy.



Biashara Club members during a business exposure trip to South Africa led by KCB Bank Director Retail Banking, Annastacia Kimtai.

2016



From left: KCB Bank Head of SME and Agribusiness, Naomi Ndele, KCB Bank Director Retail Banking, Annastacia Kimtai and Mr. Titus Kavisi Maluki- Marketing Officer at High Commission of Malaysia-Trade Section MATRADE, during the Malaysia-Singapore pre-trip briefing session in 2016.



From left: Mr. Sevak Patel, Putni Patel and Minalben Patel. Keenly listening to the Embassy official's presentation during the 2016 US trip pre-trip briefing at Hilton Hotel. The trip attracted 120 applicants who showed interest to travel for the San Diego Expo in California.



Shape Africa Limited Corporate Trainer, Dr. Kinyanjui Nganga delivers the main Business presentation during the Biashara Club Women engagement forum in 2016.



Vista Packaging Managing Director, Bernard Chege addresses customers during the KCB Biashara Club pre-trip briefing for Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand at the Hilton Hotel in 2016.

2017



KCB Biashara Club Women in Business pioneers during the International Women's Day 2017 celebrations at the Hilton Hotel.



Mr. Babu Shabram, Mr. Moses Sang and Mr. James Obulinji getting finer details during the French expo in 2017 during the Germany-France business trip.

2017



KCB Bank Industrial Area Branch Team Leader Lilian Kagwira (center) listens to lady entrepreneurs, Chebet Cheruiyot of DotCom Logistics (right) and The Home Stuff Director Winnie Mwaniki during the KCB Biashara Club Coaching and Mentorship workshop for women entrepreneurs. Lady members of Biashara club as well as aspiring members attended the event from varied entrepreneurial fields across the country in 2017.



Members examine the vegetables grown at the Organic Fields of the Negev Desert during the 2017 Israel trip.

2018



KCB GCOO Mr. Sam Makome during the opening the celebration of International Womens day with Biashara club customers. KCB has taken a leading role in driving the women agenda, and will simplify the world of business to enable women's progress.



Customers pose for a photo after the visit to The Liebherr Group, a multinational equipment manufacturer in Germany in 2017. Their product range extends from construction machines and cranes.



Jennifer Karina Speaker, Professional Coach (center) and KCB Biashara Club members pose for a photo after the KCB Biashara Club International Women's Day conference held at Voyager Hotel, Mombasa in March 2018.



A section of the KCB Bank Kenya SME Delegation to the US in June 2018, led by KCB non-executive Board Member Julius Mutua, are taken through the History of the US Government in Washington DC.

2018

Chairman of JUMVEA, Mr Hiroshi Sato (l) and CEO Jogi Motors and approved Toyota dealer in Malindi, Mr. Joshua Rudurot (r) pose for a photo after signing an agreement in April 2018 at the Tokyo Dome Hotel, Japan.



KCB Biashara Club members pose for a photo after a tour of the city in front of the United States Capitol building located on Capitol Hill at the eastern end of the National Mall in Washington, D.C. in 2018.



KCB Non-Executive Board member from Rwanda John Robert Ulanga addresses a KCB Kenya SME Delegation at a cocktail event held at the Tokyo Dome Hotel in April 2018. The 45 entrepreneurs were hosted by JUMVEA (Japan Used Motor Vehicle Exporters Association).



KCB Group Chief Operating Officer Mr Samuel Makome and KCB Non-Executive Board Director Mr Julius Mutua with KCB Biashara Club members in May 2018 during the international franchising expo held in New York.



KCB Biashara club customers during the Thailand-China trip 2018 visit to Fit auto shop distributors of lubricants, car spare parts and tyres.



H. E Ambassador Patrick Wamoto, Kenya's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand, KCB Bank Board Director Kenya Njeri Onyango and KCB Bank Kenya Director Retail Banking during a business matching meeting in Thailand in 2018.

2018



KCB Group Director Credit Apollo Ongara having a chat with the Damian Moey of A&M Commercial Ltd and Patel Kanubhai Manibhai of Fivestart Bungoma and Peter Chemwile Looks on April 2019 at Clayton Rd, Warrington, UK.



KCB Biashara club members in an organic pig farm in Denmark. The Danish government stipulates that one cannot visit a farm if they have not been in the country for at least 24 hours. One must also wear protective clothing to get access..



KCB Biashara club customers making chocolate in Planete Chocolat Brussels, Belgium in the Europe trip 2019.



KCB Biashara Club members pose for a picture after a factory visit during the Netherlands-Belgium trip in 2019.



Dorothy Rono, KCB Bank Lead, Branch Excellence Model, poses for a photo with branch managers from Nairobi Central during the KCB Biashara Club Nairobi Central Forum at the Sarova Panafric Hotel in 2019.



Cellsmart Enterprise Ltd Director Ruth Ronga and C.E.O and Lead Consultant Prestine HR-Engine Ltd Josephine Irungu at the KCB Biashara Club and IFC training program at Sarova Stanley Hotel in September 2019.



Central Bank of Kenya Governor Patrick Njoroge of and KCB Rwanda MD Mr. George Odhiambo pose for a photo during the launch of Biashara Club, a business club for its SME customers in KCB Rwanda. The club intends to grow and strengthen customer relationships by providing additional value propositions to its members. The event was at Kigali Serena Hotel on 9th August 2019.



KCB Bank Director Marketing & Communications, Angela Mwirigi speaks to KCB Biashara Club members on developing brand equity, creating visibility and winning the market as a business during a workshop held in Nairobi in 2019.



Biashara Club members during the 2019 IFC (International Finance Corporation) – KCB SME Business Skills Training Program at Ole Sereni Hotel, Nairobi. The training course addressed the topic of enterprise and customer base growth.



KCB Bank Head of SME and Agribusiness, Naomi Ndele (l) and KCB Bank Biashara Club Manager, Moses Odipo (r) present a cake to Margaret Mlamba, CEO Studio 6 Interiors and Sammy Kungu, Chairman Studio 6 Interiors, during the 2018 Customer Service Week.



Biashara Club members celebrate during the 2018 Grow Your Business programme graduation at the Villa Rosa Kempinski Hotel in Nairobi.



African Management Institute CEO Rebecca Harson (l), KCB Head of SME and Agribusiness Naomi Ndele (c) present a certificate of completion to East African Online's Wanja Getamu in Nairobi in June 2018.



KCB Biashara Club customers enjoy a game drive during a networking trip to Maasai Mara in 2018.

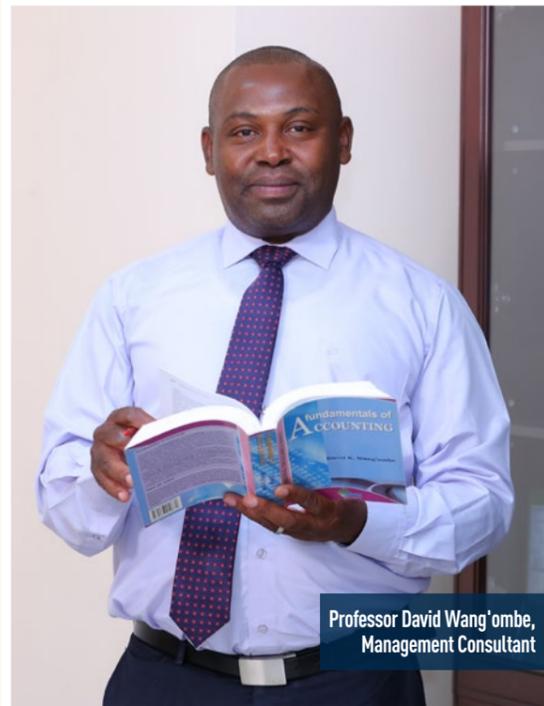


KCB Bank Kenya Head SME Banking and Agribusiness Naomi Ndele (center), with Africa Management Institute (AMI) General Manager for East Africa Joan Kamau (right) and AMI Learning & Talent Manager Jasmine Bakshi during the first learning lab for cohort two in 2018.

Fueling business growth through strategic partnerships



David Tanki,
MD LANX Africa



Professor David Wang'ombe,
Management Consultant

By Real Cents Writer

Many entrepreneurs know the journey they need to take to push their business to the next plane of operations.

However, they usually operate on a wing and a prayer; they have no strategy.

A strategy allows businesses to align the company's objectives and provide a growth road map. It is with this mind that over the years, Biashara Club has curated a rich pool of partners whose services allow small businesses the opportunity to grow their customer base, market understanding and improve their business.

Partnering since 2008, LANX Africa and KCB Biashara Club have offered training on financial planning, budgeting, developing foundational structures and managing expansion or growth.

Moreover, they develop a business performance audit where they work closely with SMEs at every step of the business and investigate how the business is faring compared to market standards and competition within the same sector.

"We offer support to business organisations with soft skills and different strategies that help them grow. We also help SMEs recruit and develop talent, roll out plans and review the strategies to ensure they become successful," says Mr. David Tanki, LANX Africa MD.

Indeed, business owners know there is no single set guide to establishing a successful business. In fact, most chalk up their long

term success to failing first and fast, and their ability to learn from those situations.

"Most SMEs owners get into business by accident and they need help in identifying solutions to the challenges they face and predicting future risks. They have great passion but lack concrete plans or objectives," says Professor David Wang'ombe, a management consultant with the Club. "We help in bridging the gap between passion and business management."

Business strategy planning done right should connect the dots in your business so that you get a better picture of the whole and in order to take your business to the next level, you must become a strategic business owner and the first step would be to face reality. Now consider the second step: shifting your mindset.

Once you hit the ground running with your business, it is critical for this shift to happen, failure to do so would be failing yourself and your business as a whole.

According to Sarah Richson, CEO at Richmele International, you sell yourself first as a business.

"We work with the founders, and start with their mindsets and their personal brands as this is where the perception of the business brand stems from."

She says all businesses must consider a few questions when it comes to strategic business ownership.

What is your unique selling proposition? What are your values? The answers to these two questions evidently trickle down to employees and to the operations of the business.

The business exposure trips offered by the Biashara Club, she says, serve this purpose.

Business travel remains one of the most fruitful ways to energise yourself and your business and though taking time out to explore the world might seem like an indulgent escape from the real world for a while, it is in fact essential in nurturing skills and experiences needed to become a successful business owner.

"There are ways to make travel easier, more productive, and more economical, and that's why we partnered with the KCB Biashara Club to offer seamless business travel options to the members," says Mira Bid from Muthaiga Travel Limited.

Since 2015, they have organised business exposure trips for the members to the Far East, Dubai, Israel, South Africa, Europe and USA.

In a nutshell, there are many huge benefits that arise for customers when partners converge to achieve a unified objective – which is to add value to the business owner.

After all, we're human and we work better when we have visible goals we can work towards.



KCB

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