

Real Cents

A Biashara Club Magazine. Issue 3
November 2021

The Business of survival

#PartnerKwaGround



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Winning with MSMEs: Your #PartnerKwaGround

Starting a small business and growing it to the next level requires determination and an eye for the long term. With the business environment having received a major blow over the past year, many of these expansion plans have been put on hold, and many businesses have resorted to survival mode.

In this issue however, we have covered several MSMEs that have proven that with the right mind-set and the backing of business partners – be it banks, suppliers or clients – they have managed to navigate the hard times and are now poised for growth.

These businesses that are transitioning to the big league have one thing in common: the owners are hands on managers who have grown with their businesses through the quagmire of the business environment. They have shown that with the right mind-set, one can see off the hard times and thrive even when the operating environment is not ideal.

For instance, we have featured a businessman who has cornered the wood treatment business in Nyanza after realising that there was no such facility in the County. The nearest facility was in Nakuru county hundreds of kilometres away. He is now thriving after he installed his own treatment facility.

We have a story about a businessman in Moyale who saw a niche is establishing a commercial swimming pool in the town – perhaps the first of its kind in the neighbourhood.

We also have featured a lady whose small retail business has transitioned to a supermarket all in the space of a few years. It's an inspirational story.

In this issue, we have advisory pieces such as how to navigate through a crisis as well as a write up on making money from agriculture which traditionally, for many Kenyans, has been a business of last resort.

We also get to discuss how we are winning with MSMEs and supporting the survival of the MSME sector. In Kenya, over 98% of business are SMEs. Despite their centrality to the economy, MSME's continues to face challenges that limit their full potential. Access to finance is one of the challenges. Over the years, this has hindered their ability to grow and innovate, in turn preventing the economy from reaching its full potential.

This makes SMEs development a high priority for the government, but these efforts must be completed by the private sector, especially the financial sector. Banks, are particularly at the centre of the economy and vital in enabling MSMEs.

A key focus area for KCB Group is therefore to improve SMEs' access to finance and find innovative solutions to unlock sources of capital. We have launched a campaign dubbed '#KCBPartnerKwaGround Ground' to demonstrate the support KCB extends to MSMEs and position us as a Bank that supports the segment across all sectors. This will further enhance the sustainability of the sector. MSMEs are looking for that Bank that can hold their hands and walk the journey with them. KCB is that bank

Sit back and enjoy the read.

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The Digital shift

Tapping solutions to deliver financial services

Entrepreneurs are looking for more tailored solutions from their banks. They are willing to pay to have one single banking relationship which operates as a 'one stop shop' for them.

By **Annastacia Kimtai**

Many companies, for long, have been adopting business technologies to improve business processes, value for customers and innovation. While many Small and Medium-size Enterprises were already undergoing a digital transformation, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the pace, unlocking new opportunities for banks and SMEs alike.

SMEs are looking for more tailored solutions from their banks. Historically, this segment has been underserved, and so they are looking for ways that address both core and diverse needs. That is why KCB Bank has taken a customer centric approach with flexible product lines, so that we can offer appropriate solutions to our clients based on needs so as to fully support the growth of MSMEs.

It's important for banks to invest in long-term structural policies, such as digital and financial inclusion as digitalization is here to stay, and MSMEs are pushing even harder because they see the opportunity in it. The COVID-19 pandemic has driven innovation, enabling many SME owners to embrace the digital era and achieve success. Partnerships between banks and fintechs are at the core of digitalization and prove to be effective when



servicing MSMEs in a holistic way.

Technology has also provided an opportunity for banks to become MSMEs' digital disruption partners. KCB is one of four Kenyan banks championing "Stawi", a mobile loan proposition that offers affordable and easily accessible unsecured financing to micro, small and medium scale enterprises in Kenya. This is a partnership with the Central Bank that gives access to unsecured loans ranging from KSh. 30,000 up to KSh. 250,000 and the amount of loan you can get depends on your credit score and limit.

We introduced a mobile wallet, "Vooma" that offers a strong merchant proposition to the MSMEs by availing affordable bank-led wallets for collections backed by real time settlement. The platform also extends access to unsecured financing opportunities based on the financial activities within the SMEs value chains. "Vooma" can be accessed by Safaricom, Airtel or Telkom.

We also offer credit and debit cards which allow our MSMEs to pay their suppliers or withdraw cash from ATMs without incurring any transaction costs. Joining Biashara Club also enables MSMEs to access cards with much higher limits that are not available to other MSME customers.

We also have a wide range of SME loan products which include long-term and short-term SME loans, temporary and permanent overdraft facilities, learning institutions loan, telco dealers and agent loans. We also extend asset-based finance facilities and Insurance Premium Financing.

We have our duty to support the MSMEs as corporate citizens for the greater good of our nation while driving digitalization and financial inclusion.

The writer is Director Retail Banking, KCB Bank Kenya



Other than the provision of digital solutions, KCB through the KCB Foundation programme dubbed '2Jijiri' seeks to provide technical and vocational skills to allow the youth to become self-employed therefor creating more jobs.



250,000

KCB is one of four Kenyan banks championing Stawi, a mobile loan proposition that offers affordable and easily accessible unsecured financing to micro, small and medium scale enterprises in Kenya. This is a partnership with Central Bank that gives access to unsecured loans ranging from KSh30,000 up to KSh250,000 and the amount of loan you can get depends on your credit score and limit.



From banker to a school owner with an eye for quality education

By **Real Cents** writers

Jobs in the banking industry are an excellent fit for anybody interested in personal finance, business, and mathematics.

The responsibilities range from working closely with clients to determine their banking needs, discussing their financial requirements to providing financial advice, when necessary.

This is what Bacho Abdi Roba used to do at KCB Marsabit branch a couple of years ago. However, the urge to venture into business was strong and he resigned to try his hand as a school proprietor.

Roba's story is one of courage, thinking smart, and determination. After resigning from KCB Bank in 2010, he established Alfa Junior Academy, a primary school, in Marsabit Town.

The idea of a school came after he realised that the area needed one.

"Coming from a family with a business background pushed me to venture into business," Mr Roba says.

Access to education in the county is way lower than the national level. As it

is in other parts of the country, various stakeholders want their children to receive good quality education and the community is trying to look for ways to improve education standards in Marsabit.

According to Marsabit's Second County Integrated Development Plan 2018 – 2022, there are 231 primary schools of which 181 are public and 50 private. The primary school age population is estimated at 46,178. This means existing facilities are strained with some public primary schools and their respective pre-primary units sharing some infrastructure. With the population projected to grow in coming years, the county is in the process of setting aside adequate resources to expand school



As it is in other parts of the country, various stakeholders want their children to receive good quality education and the community is trying to look for ways to improve education standards in Marsabit.

infrastructure to meet both present and future demand.

Alfa Junior Academy started with four pupils, one teacher, a cook, and a security guard. Currently, the institution has a population of 374 pupils, and 17 employees - both teachers and support staff. The school comprises an ECDE section located in a separate parcel of land and a primary section from Class One to Class Seven. The school also takes care of orphans. "We target low income families and each year, the school grows by one class," he says.

For Mr Roba, it was easy to join KCB Biashara Club which he says has helped him gain the skills, network, and services that have been instrumental in running a successful business venture. "The beauty of KCB Biashara Club is that they support an entrepreneur. They have been offering financial management trainings, and I urge other entrepreneurs to join the club and enjoy the benefits," the proprietor says.

As he embarks on his future expansion plans of putting up a junior secondary school, Mr Roba hopes to introduce to the world to more Marsabit children through quality education, and impacting the community in a positive way.

Survival, Resilience and Renewal

Strategies for MSMEs

To get back on their feet, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises must always be ready to counter crises and should have a crisis plan. When you have a crisis plan, chances of survival and recovery are higher than when you don't.

By Naomi Ndele

Crisis can be highly detrimental to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The abrupt negative changes destroy company value, erode trust, exert pressure on management, threaten business goals and may even lead to business closure. The COVID-19 pandemic affected organizations and more so MSMEs as they were faced with limited credit from suppliers, challenges in liquidity, lower sales and defaulting customers.

The COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented and caught many businesses unawares and unprepared for the repugnant effects it was to have. As a result, MSMEs suffered monetary losses and cash flow difficulties, reduced sales volume, inability to meet contract stipulations, reduced employee numbers, and even business closures. The effects of the pandemic also brought psychological and emotional stress to some MSME owners as they watched their businesses disintegrate.

Although COVID-19 has impacted the world's economy negatively, MSMEs must be

resilient and look for ways to renew their strategies in order to navigate and survive through the pandemic.

To get back on their feet, MSMEs must always be ready to counter crises and should have a crisis plan. When you have a crisis plan and implement it at the right time, chances of survival and recovery are higher than when you don't.

Crisis planning involves both financial and non-financial aspects of the business and MSMEs should be able to build a crisis diagnosis that will help identify a possible crisis at an early stage. These enterprises should learn to map out their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats so as to come up with strategies to recover quickly.

MSMEs with effective leaders, who are smart at decision making and encourage teamwork, always ensure there is an effective crisis response. The businesses should also train their employees to ensure they have the ability to resolve conflicts and offer timely communication during a crisis.

To survive a crisis like COVID-19, MSMEs should also be very robust and flexible. This means that they need to promptly customize their strategies and timely reorganize their next key steps. For example, if an MSME was selling from a physical store, with COVID-19 the business should consider introducing online shopping so as to reach out to customers who can no longer visit the physical store.

MSMEs should invest in business development training and seek networking events. Training and learning can be done in an informal

way through networking, mentoring, or coaching, which can significantly lower the costs involved. KCB Bank offers these learning experiences through webinars, clinics and visits to offer training opportunities to the KCB MSME customers.

The Bank has also partnered with the government to offer loans and entrepreneurs should leverage on this to ensure business continuity.

Another measure that can be taken by MSMEs to ensure survival through a crisis is reducing operation hours in order to reduce inventories and cut down non-essential operating costs.

Entrepreneurs can also diversify their products so as to meet the needs of more customers. Having options for your customers by adding products and services will drive in more interest to your target audience and therefore increase the sales. MSMEs are also encouraged to use social media platforms to promote their posts or create adverts, as well as offer discounts as a renewal strategy. Customers have moved to online shopping where they enjoy shopping at the comfort of their homes, and marketing products online will encourage an increase in sales.

MSMEs that show higher flexibility in making decisions on labor cost cutting and price reduction for survival and it is therefore easier for them to adopt resilience strategies such as product diversification and relocation of the shop to lower rent expenses. This is mainly possible due to the low bureaucracy in small businesses.

Self-driven determined MSMEs with strong dynamic and innovative capabilities that are willing to learn from crises, will recover quickly.

The writer is Head SME Banking and Agribusiness at KCB Bank Kenya



How businesses can tap into KCB Biashara Club to thrive

We spoke to Ms. Victoria Kamuren, the RBM, Great Rift, on the prospects within Biashara Club.

Kindly tell us about Biashara Club performance in this region.

Membership is increasing as more and more customers have learnt about the proposition and the benefits of the club.

As of July 2021, we had 2,354 active members and our bankers are currently enrolling new business customers.

What benefits do members and their businesses get from Biashara Club?

The club exposes its members to networking opportunities through trainings, workshops and exposure trips.

Club members have access to various banking services and qualify for prepaid and credit cards; they also enjoy perks such as priority banking, Biashara Club trip financing and access to preferential forex rates.

From our international trips, members are exposed to different markets, where they can leverage on import and export opportunities, get exposed to emerging and developed economies hence upgrade business skills.

Are there new sectors emerging due to COVID-19?

Increased demand for fresh farm produce pushed more people into agribusiness and agriprocessing. We are starting to see value addition in produce so as to fetch better prices and remain competitive.

The COVID-19 restrictions brought to fore the importance of delivery businesses to ensure that consumers get goods wherever they are with ease.

Private hospitals and pharmacists also came up following demand for better health care and also existing facilities being strained by the pandemic.

The rise of e-commerce, e.g online shopping and online taxi hailing services such as Wasili and Bolt.

What trends have you seen as a result of the pandemic's impact on businesses?

Hotels and restaurants reduced operations to abide by MOH guidelines. Cessation of movement also adversely affected incomes from retail businesses, due to supply chain disruptions. There were also reported cases of price fluctuations, due to forces of supply and demand. Access to loans by MSMEs was also greatly impacted leading many to informal lenders despite high interest rates. The businesses were not generating sufficient incomes to service the loans leading to many requests for restructuring.

What advice would you give your customers on how to keep their businesses afloat during this period?

Take advantage of social media to market products. Use MSME propositions, like the one offered by KCB Bank, to steer the businesses back to normalcy, and where possible, diversify product proposition to cushion against unforeseen issues.



KCB Bank - Supporting MSMEs Across all Sectors



COVID-19 has changed the way we do banking, greatly affecting our customers. This has pushed us to rethink our approach towards supporting customers while at the same time building a sustainable customer base for the future and addressing the current customer needs.

In line with our Beyond Banking Strategy, the Bank is positioning itself as an institution which puts customers first with leading value propositions. Towards this, the Board identified the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as a area of focus which should significantly contribute to the achievement of the Bank's overall asset growth.

The MSME sector holds the greatest sway in the trajectory that the economy will take in coming years and therefore, the Bank sees this sector as a strong frontier for growth.

While over the years we have supported this segment, we are not where we should be and therefore, we want to enhance our play to be the home of MSMEs in Kenya's banking sector. We need to therefore ask ourselves, how do we win big in this space?

To support this approach, we are relaunching our MSME proposition with a Thematic Campaign dubbed 'Partner Kwa Ground' which will demonstrate the support KCB extends to MSMEs.



Giftmart: Growing beyond a shop to supermarket chain

Roseline Cheruiyot, a co-director of Gift Mart Supermarket.

By Real Cents writers

It's hard not to notice Giftmart Supermarket when you are in Litein. It is smack dab in the middle of the small, noisy town, surrounded by other small businesses selling clothes, groceries, housewares, as well as welders and hawkers going about their business.

The supermarket is also the pride and joy of its co-founder Roseline Cheruiyot, a part time business woman and church minister.

"We started in a very small place near a bus stop in Kericho. We started out as a convenience shop selling basic household items such as sugar and tea leaves," says Roseline.

A few years later, the shop expanded to three more outlets. The expansion was a sign that their brand was growing, and Roseline and her husband decided give their business a name.

"At first, we named the business after our village; we called it Ng'ororga General Shop. But people couldn't pronounce it well so we changed it to

"We started in a very small place near a bus stop in Kericho. We started out as a convenience shop selling basic household items like sugar and tea leaves," says Roseline.



Giftmart," she says.

Today, Giftmart Supermarket has four branches in Bomet and Kericho counties.

Like most businesses, Giftmart Supermarket has been negatively impacted by the pandemic's economic downturn. Even so, it has remained afloat, buckling in to weather the storm.

Giftmart imports most of its electronic goods, utensils and clothing from China, but because of the significant challenges posed by Covid-19 to supply chains globally, the flow of goods has slowed down and the goods have become costly.

Many businesses have also suffered job cuts due to the coronavirus pandemic, luckily, workers at Giftmart Supermarket were spared the axe.

"We did not want to retrench our employees because this is their "home". We never wanted to discourage anybody, they have families to take care of. We thank God because we didn't close down. We however close early due to the nationwide curfew. That has affected us because our customers usually come to shop after they leave work between



Roseline with a member of her staff checking an electric water jug at Giftmart supermarket

5 p.m and 7 p.m and our closing time is 7p.m," she says.

But even through these tough times, Roseline is glad that KCB Bank has been there to help them weather the negative impact the pandemic has had in the business environment.

"When business is down we always run to KCB and they have always helped us. They have never discouraged us or let us down. We really enjoy working with KCB," says the business woman.

Roseline and her husband became KCB Bank account holders back in the year 2000 when they used to deliver tea to Kaisugu Tea Factory in Kericho.

Later, they joined KCB Biashara Club and whenever training sessions or workshops are held, Roseline and her team at Giftmart Supermarket always make a point of attending.

"KCB Biashara Club has really helped us. For any of the meetings, I always make sure that the managers and accountants attend because we learn new skills. It's also nice that we don't queue whenever we go to the bank," she says.

KCB Biashara Club provides an avenue



The front side of Giftmart Supermarket

for its members to grow their businesses through providing business solutions and advisory services.

The club also partners with other organisations to ensure members widen

"When business is down we always run to KCB and they have always helped us. They have never discouraged us or let us down," says Roseline.

their skillsets and knowledge to help them run their businesses successfully.

Members also get networking opportunities that could potentially connect them to other business owners and open doors to partnerships or new customers.

Before the pandemic, members used to travel abroad for trips to gain market exposure.

Additionally, they are assigned a relationship manager to ensure they have a smooth banking experience among many other benefits.

Passion for crocheting turned to business venture



From left: Catherine Nanjela being taken through a crochet lesson by Ms Valary Lambisia, the CEO and Founder of Crochet Hub Africa together with Jane Awuor at the establishment.

By Real Cents writers

Some people knit or crochet to pass time, while others do it as a hobby. However, Valary Lambisia Simiyu turned her passion for crocheting into a business. She is the CEO and founder of Crochet Hub Africa based in Mbita, Homa Bay County. Like most entrepreneurs, Valary saw an opportunity to make money from something she was passionate about.

Her journey with KCB started in 2018 when she joined KCB Lions' Den TV show that gives entrepreneurs a chance to pitch their businesses to a panel of investors who could fund their businesses or offer mentorship.

Valary's pitch was successful and she got capital from the 'Lions', a move which took her to the next step of working with KCB Mbita.

KCB takes care of youthful entrepreneurs and we run several programs that seek to ensure our youth are self-sufficient and later transition to be MSME where they later can become employers. This includes the Tujari program, Lions' Den, Niko Waks etc.

"Joining Lion's Den opened a lot of doors for me as I learned how to do business after interacting with 'Lions'. I realized I first needed to go back to school and get business management training, after

making my deal with the Lions" she says.

Following the training, the entrepreneur set off on a growth mission. She registered her business as a limited company and separated it from her personal funds, which she says was a critical move.

"I was able to track and analyze my business expenditure accurately through



Joining Lion's Den opened a lot of doors for me as I learned how to do business after interacting with 'Lions'. I realized I first needed to go back to school and get business management training."

the monitoring of funds," she notes.

Before joining the Lions' Den TV show, Valary recalls how she ventured into business armed with only passion and a big heart; approaching business from a fairy-tale perspective expecting to start knitting and automatically getting clients.

Now, she's grateful for the training she invested in, adding that her skills have enabled her make bold positive moves.

"Now, my stock has expanded significantly, I have employed 10 people, my accounts are good and I'm in a position to foretell what my future looks like based on this trajectory. I am also able to seize opportunities as they come," adds a jovial Valary.

Owing to the ease of delivery and cashless payments, she serves an array of clientele with most orders coming from the colder regions. She is also targeting clientele outside the country.

In 2019, the bank introduced her to Biashara Club, a business club for entrepreneurs. The club exposed her to the ins and outs of doing business online, and the related cashless transactions.

"It has also enabled me to get my book keeping in order i.e. cashflows, as well as the networking which has exposed me to other experienced business people and potential clientele," Valary adds.

Like most small businesses, she admits that the pandemic affected her negatively as she immediately closed down.

After a few weeks, she realized that she could work from home, but with limited staff who would work in shifts. She also moved her business online.

Looking forward, Valary intends to fully mechanize her business and replace manual labour with knitting machines. Additionally, she is curating content for her YouTube online training channel.



Issack Tulicha, the chairman of Khandere Farmers Produce and Marketing Society in Moyale.

Farmers in Marsabit beat the odds to feed community through agribusiness

By Real Cents writers

Agricultural production is thriving in parts of Marsabit County as some communities try a hand at crop farming.

This is despite the county being classified as an Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) meaning the area experiences erratic rainfall and frequent droughts.

Crops are grown mainly during the rainy season in some areas around Mt. Marsabit and Moyale Sub-county.

The population practising crop farming is estimated to be about two percent. The main cash crops include fruits and vegetables, maize, beans and millet. Fruits grown include oranges, avocados, bananas and mangoes. Khat (miraa) is also grown in Saku Constituency and parts of Moyale. Miraa is grown commercially while fruits are produced mainly in small-scale for domestic consumption and sale in local markets.

The total area under food and cash crop production is 5,060 ha. However, the county has great potential with 1,582,750 ha being arable. Much of the area is underutilised due to erratic weather and lack of established irrigation infrastructure or schemes.

The main cash crops include fruits and vegetables, maize, beans and millet. Fruits grown include oranges, avocados, bananas and mangoes. Khat (miraa) is also grown in Saku Constituency and parts of Moyale.

5,060ha
The total area under food and cash crop production. However, the county has great potential for crop production with an area of 1,582,750ha being arable.

Currently, in isolated locations, there are greenhouses in place and drip irrigation being practiced to produce fruits and vegetables. Scaling up of irrigation requires community mobilisation,

installation of irrigation systems and capacity building of agricultural workers and farmers on adoption of irrigation farming methods.

At Heilu/Manyatta Ward in Kanisi location, Moyale, a group of farmers is now feeding the town and its environs through irrigation.

The farmers under Khandere Farmers Produce & Marketing Cooperative Society are using furrow and drip irrigation to grow vegetables and fruits in their 20 acre farm.

The society's chairman, Issack Tulicha, says a group of farmers in the area came together and started farming as a group in 1997.

"The co-operative society was registered in March 2015 and we have been growing vegetables and fruits," Tulicha says.

Each member has a portion for cultivation and they use water from a borehole sunk by the county government. "The land was bought through members' contributions. The total acreage is 20 ha, but the area under cultivation is about 11 acres. Two acres are under drip irrigation," he adds.

Crops grown include vegetables, sugarcane, bananas, maize, cassava, pawpaws, mangoes, and water melon.

The chairman says in a month, they make about KSh. 350,000 from the produce, but following the outbreak of COVID-19, the society's earnings have dropped to KSh. 120,000 per month.

Through KCB Biashara Club, the farmers have been attending trainings and interacting with entrepreneurs in different sectors. These interactions have helped them grow immensely.

In Marsabit, agricultural extension services are provided by the county government, research and training institutions, civil society, faith and community-based organisations. The services are provided through demand driven and beneficiary-led approaches, indigenous knowledge and technology sharing, cost sharing with beneficiaries and networking and collaborations.



The Camel Economy: Supporting livelihoods in northern Kenya

By Real Cents writers

The Nanyuki– Moyale Road is one of the most scenic highways in the country. The well-marked and smooth road forms part of the A2 Road that links Kenya to its northern neighbour of Ethiopia. The tarmacking of the road has seen the increase of economic activities on that route as transport is now reliable with the well tarmacked road.

As one moves from Nanyuki town towards Isiolo and Moyale the land becomes generally drier and has less vegetation. One also notices that there is an increase in the number of camels in comparison to other types of livestock. While approaching Marsabit the herds become bigger. It is very common to find herds of more than 100 camels crossing the road at once.

At least 90% of the camel pastoralists in Kenya reside in the fragile and resilient rangelands commonly called the ASALs which cover three quarters of the surface area of Kenya. The Government acknowledges the vital role camels play and their contribution to the national economy, food and nutritional security. Kenya is home to about three million one humped camels, distributed in all eight regions of the country, according to the 2009 census, owned and used mainly by pastoralists. Nearly 10 percent of all the camels in the world are found in Kenya more than any other country in the world apart from Sudan and Somalia.

Camels thrive in the harshest of Kenya's agro-ecological zones and are generally able to withstand the frequent droughts which decimate cattle, goats and sheep populations. This unique adaptation makes it possible for camel to continue producing substantial quantities of milk

thus providing the most suitable avenue through which increased livelihoods of communities living in these arid lands can be sustained. This potential has been recognized by a number of pastoral communities who were previously keeping cattle, but are now adopting the camel as a diversification strategy.

The quality of camel milk is similar to cow's milk in many respects. Fundamental differences however exist in butter fat, vitamin C and protein content. Camel milk has a low butterfat content (3.7%) compared to that of the cow (5.7%) and does not separate easily. The milk is rich in vitamin C ranging between 5.7-9.8 mg% and three times the level of cow's milk (Yagil, 1995). This is very important in ASAL regions where fruits and vegetables are not available as a source of vitamins. The protein lactoferrin in camel milk is about ten times the cow's milk. Protein lactoferrin and vitamin C in camel milk give the milk medicinal properties against viral and bacterial infection (Kohler-Rollefson, 2000).

Real Cents established that a mature camel fetches approximately KSh 100,000 in the local market. Prices are determined by the maturity of the camel, the prevailing weather condition and negotiating power of the seller among other factors.

Camels are of great economic importance to locals since they are multifunctional animals providing the pastoral community with milk, meat, blood, hides and skins, transportation and are used in social and cultural functions.

In Kenya, all camels are dromedaries or one-humped Arabian camels. The breeds are named after the communities that keep them. These are Somali, Gabbra/

Rendille, Turkana and Pakistan. The Pakistan breed is exotic and mainly found in ranches in Laikipia County. The Somali breed has a large body size (average 550kg), with an average milk yield of 4.5 litres daily. It is a heavy feeder, and does not fit in hilly terrain. It is largely cream in colour and genetically distinct. The Gabbra/Rendille breed is smaller in size (average of 350kg) and lower in milk production (average 2.5 litres daily). It does well under poor pasture conditions and rough terrain. The colour of its coat is mainly cream or brown. It is genetically distinct. The Turkana breed compared to Somali and Gabbra/Rendille is the smallest in size (average 300kg). It also has the lowest milk yield (average 1.5 litres per day), it's a lighter feeder, fits in hilly areas, and its coat colour is largely grey in colour. It is genetically distinct. The Pakistan breed is smaller in body size compared to the Somali breed, but larger than Gabbra/Rendille. Its average body size is 400kg, has the highest milk yield (average 10 litres per day), a gross feeder, yet to be tested on terrain, mainly grey in colour, and genetically distinct.

Camels are common in the counties of Marsabit, Samburu and Isiolo. In Samburu, there are areas used as camel training grounds for local youth. The best riders are selected to race in the annual Maralal Camel Derby, which attracts hundreds of tourists. Proceeds from the August event are ploughed into community social and wildlife conservation projects. The 2020 and 2021 derbies were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The camel herds are also being used for COVID-19 vaccine education and awareness across four remote sub-counties of Samburu County in a bid to reach more people.

In Marsabit, official data shows that the county is home to at least 224,000 camels, almost equalling the human population in the expansive region. The county is the largest by land, but one of the smallest by population, with 1 percent of Kenyans calling Marsabit home.

In the past decade, the interest in the camel has gone up gradually. Various stakeholders, including the government, universities, scientists, development actors and the private sector are currently trying to support camel keeping communities on issues related to health, husbandry, production, products and marketing.



Fatuma Nur Mumin, a business owner, picks an item for her customer in her shop.

New road changes face of Moyale town as investors seize opportunities

By Real Cents writers

Investors are flocking Moyale Town thanks to growth in infrastructure coupled with improved security.

New buildings are coming up changing the landscape of the border town. Moyale now offers excellent staycation destinations that make getaways one of a kind.

The town, which borders Ethiopia, can be reached by road or air. It is approximately 780km from Nairobi via the A2 road, and has an airstrip in the outskirts situated at 850 metres (2,790 ft) above sea level, with a single asphalt runway which measures 4,265 ft (1,300 metres).

In Moyale, businesses are concentrated in the town centre with the main ventures being retail and wholesale, sale of livestock products — meat, milk, hides and skins — transport services, car and motor cycle garages, spare parts shops, hotels and restaurants among others.

Fatuma Nur Mumin is among investors taking advantage of the new-look town since completion of Isiolo – Moyale Highway. The mother of four has been running a retail shop for 30 years.

"Proceeds from the business have

enabled me take care of my family and pay my children's school fees," says Ms. Mumin.

However, it has not been a smooth sailing venture. At one point, she almost went under but never gave up. This was during construction of the Isiolo - Moyale Highway when her premises was marked for demolition to pave the way for the new tarmackroad.

"The business was doing well until road construction activities started and my premises was marked for demolition. I felt devastated, but I never lost hope," she says.

Luckily, Ms. Mumin was among the few individuals who were compensated by the government and her plans to reinvest in her former business worked. She is now putting up a four-storey building (a guest house) in the remaining part of her parcel of land adjacent to the highway.

She attributes her resilience to the noble relationship she has with KCB Bank which has provided special trainings and business development opportunities enabling her to progress.

"One day, I was advised by a bank manager to open an account. I told him that I didn't have enough money to open



Ongoing construction of the guest house owned by Fatuma Nur Mumin, a business owner in Moyale Town.



Mumin with a construction worker at the guest house being build in Moyale Town.

an account, but the manager insisted that I should have an account and be depositing some money every month," the property investor says.

She adds that it is through the relationship she built with the bank that she eventually found herself joining KCB Biashara Club when it was first introduced in Moyale. The club has been offering workshops and unique opportunities where she has been able to gain new knowledge, rub shoulders with influential like-minded individuals and create new business networks to aid her in business growth. "I have travelled to China on several occasions, networked and gained a lot of experience and exposure," says Ms. Mumin.

Wood treatment entrepreneur putting classroom skills into practice

By Real Cents writers

For long, parts of Nyanza region did not have wood treatment plants and treated wood had to be sourced from far. It is this gap that led Godfrey Odeny Ali to see a business opportunity.

Having studied wood preservation in both his undergraduate and postgraduate studies, Godfrey started Alogo Enterprises, a business he runs with his wife. He made the move to fill the gap for wood treatment plants in Kisumu, Siaya, Migori and Homa Bay counties.

The community around needed to preserve their fencing poles, the government needed electric poles for the rural electrification program and timber needed to be treated, however, most wood preservation facilities were in Nakuru, Eldoret and the Mt. Kenya region. Many people had also planted trees in the area creating a ready market.

Alogo Enterprises is a wood processing factory that deals with pole and timber preservation and has a 30,000-litre capacity wood treatment plant that was bought from India about seven years ago.

"Our core business is preservation of electricity transmission poles, but we produce fencing poles as a byproduct of sizing the tree in order to get the proper height of the electricity pole. We have a workshop and we also produce timber for making furniture and we produce firewood and charcoal from the very small off-cuts that cannot be used as fencing poles or for furniture. So, our core business is wood preservation but all the other activities come as a result of that," said Godfrey. By making use of the waste from timber, Alogo Enterprises contributes to sustainability.

Alogo Enterprises is a wood factory that deals with pole and timber preservation and they have a 30,000-litre capacity wood treatment plant that was bought from India about seven years ago.

At the onset, the business set up a tree nursery as a way to conserve forest cover.

"We sell the seedlings to the farmers so that they can plant trees to replace the ones they cut. We also set up a plantation which will take around 10-20 years to mature, but at that point we will have our own trees," he adds.

Alogo Enterprises's core business involves forest conservation because once the poles are treated, their lifespan is increased by 15-20 years which means that for the years the preserved timber is in use, there is no need to cut down more trees.

The business has about 50 staff, both fulltime and part-time, because of the manual nature of the work. There is a lot of loading and off-loading of the poles and timber. The female employees work in the farms planting and watering seedlings as well as weeding.

"We emphasize on supporting women as they are very much capable of handling most of the activities," said Godfrey.

When the enterprise was registered back in 2007, they had received a government tender to supply electricity poles, but they faced a challenge came at the time

because there was no wood treatment plant in Kisumu. This meant travelling to Gilgil in Nakuru County to treat the poles. In 2012, Godfrey was able to secure a loan from KCB Bank. With the money, he purchased a treatment plant and installed it in Homa Bay marking a major step for business as it reduced production costs significantly.

In 2019, the businessman was able to get another loan from the bank to buy a truck. With the truck, the business was now operating in full capacity and they were able to treat their poles and transport them with ease.

Another key milestone was when Godfrey got more financial aid enabling him to purchase chemicals for wood treatment directly from the manufacturer. This also allowed him to supply the chemicals to other treatment facilities at a profit.

"I can gladly say that the key milestones for this business were setting up in 2007, purchasing a truck in 2019 and sourcing our own chemicals in 2020. These milestones have really made the business a very successful one and I can confidently say that this was only possible because of the support I got from the KCB Bank," he said.



Mr Godfrey Odeny Ali consulting with his business partner.

Our business involves a lot deforestation and we therefore started the nursery at the onset of the business as a way of ensuring forest conservation. We sell the seedlings to the farmers so that they can plant trees to replace the ones they cut. We also set up a plantation which will take around 10-20 years to mature, but at that point we will have our own trees,"

In order to network and build a customer base for his company, Godfrey joined Biashara Club.

"I wanted to meet like-minded people at the club and build partnerships but little did I know that joining Biashara Club gave me unlimited access to the bank. When I have any issue, I am able to call my manager at any time. My phone is always answered whether during working hours or not and they even come to my business premises to check up on me. I feel very special," he said as he laughed.

Joining Biashara Club also came as an advantage to Alogo Enterprises as the entrepreneur is able to access temporary overdraft facilities anytime he is in need and a credit card with a very high limit that non-Biashara Club members don't have.

Godfrey's future plan is to grow and expand his business because the pole business is based on the production capacity. One can win a tender, but fail

an evaluation based on their capacity to meet the order quantity and this is based on the number of equipment available.

"We have a challenge with our limited equipment and we would like to work with the bank to get more equipment because we have a big order from the government as they are aggressively working on a rural electrification program that we cannot fully service because of our limitations," said the businessman.

He also wants to modernize the manual processes so as to increase production and also get into fulltime saw milling as the demand for timber is on a rise but the supply is limited.

"I am very glad that I joined Biashara Club because I have access to financial and non-financial support that will help with my expansion plans. KCB has always supported me and I am positive that they will walk with me through this journey," Godfrey concluded.



Workers at Alogo Enterprises pulling out logs after treatment.



Alogo Enterprises proprietor Godfrey Odeny Ali with an employee splitting logs.

Beating taboo to venture into sweet honey business

By Real Cents writers

One afternoon in 2015, Martha David attended a KCB Biashara Club training on beekeeping in Baringo County. So impactful was the training that she decided to take up beekeeping as a full time venture and stop animal farming.

Martha withdrew all her savings and bought 42 bee hives. She was ready to start her business.

One thing was however holding her back. In her community, it is taboo for women to keep bees. But since she was enlightened about the potential of the business and its value chain, she could easily convince her parents to let her do it. It wasn't easy persuading them, but finally, in 2016, they gave her their blessings and even supported her by buying her three more modern hives.

Martha placed some hives near Perkerra Irrigation Scheme, which is close to where she lives in Marigat Town, Baringo County. She placed others behind her homestead and the rest in a compound belonging to a women's group project that she is a part of.

"I love this business so much because unlike other products, the price of honey is almost always constant. One kilogramme of honey ranges between KSh. 600 and KSh. 800, and also keep in mind that there is no spraying or cultivation required. The only thing I do is clean the hives and check them every two weeks to see if everything is okay," she says.

Once the honey is ready, Martha hires someone to harvest it which is usually at night when the bees are less aggressive. One hive, she says, produces enough honey to fill two 20 litre buckets which is approximately 30 kilogrammes.

She then grades the honey as she checks the quality and divides the product according to the beehive it has been



Martha David, the founder of Mama Cheptoo's Enterprise, sells honey to complement her fruits business.

Martha placed some bee hives near Perkerra Irrigation Scheme which is close to where she lives in Marigat town, Baringo, others, she placed behind her homestead and the rest in the compound of the women's group project she is a part of.

harvested from. She then lets the honey sit before sieving with a special honey sieve she bought in Nairobi for KShs. 5,000.

Martha then lets the product sit again and if there are more particles she picks them out with a spoon. The honey is then packaged and sold.

"I don't take the whole amount to the market, I have to keep some for consumption at home. I believe honey has medicinal properties and can be used as a balm for moist wounds. It's food as well. A long time ago, we used to eat honey with ugali," says the beekeeper.

Martha sells the honey in the busy Marigat Town where most of her



My six children have received an education because of this honey business. One got a job in the county, another is in Nairobi, others are advancing their education elsewhere and the last born is studying civil engineering which takes five years,"

customers know her by the name Mama Cheptoo. The bee farmer supplements her income by selling fruits, and at any given time of the day, there are customers stopping by for fruit salad and to make it extra special, Martha throws in a few groundnuts and drizzles some honey on top.

It has been a rewarding venture this far.

"My six children have received an education because of this honey business. One got a job in the county, another is in Nairobi, others are advancing their education elsewhere and the last born is studying civil engineering which takes five years," she says.



30kg

Once the honey is ready, Martha hires someone to harvest it which is usually at night when the bees are less aggressive. One hive, she says, produces enough honey to fill two 20 litre buckets which is approximately 30 kilogrammes.

Business was doing exceptionally well before the pandemic hit last year in 2020. Then she would sell five buckets of honey in a week. Currently she sells one or two buckets in a week.

Martha's customers come from as far as Isiolo, Nairobi, Eldoret and Nakuru including those who go through Marigat while traveling to other places. She also has customers in Nairobi and other counties whom she sends her honey.

"Adjusting to the curfew because of the pandemic was difficult because I used to send packages to Nairobi in the evening. Now if you don't send early enough you will be caught up by the curfew hours," says the beekeeper.

She continues: "The number of customers who used to come to the shop has dropped because of the restriction on movement. It has also limited me from sending honey to my customers in places like Kisumu and sending via courier like G4S is expensive."

KCB Bank has however been there in tough times, giving her short-term loans when she is in need.

The pandemic has changed how Martha does her business. With the reduced number of customers, she has had to reduce the amount of fruits she brings to the shop to prevent them from going bad quickly.

Still, Martha is optimistic that things will get better and is now focused on bettering her bee business. When her finances will be in order once again, she wants to buy a large water tank to provide a constant supply of water so that her bees don't migrate in search of the commodity. Further, she wants to build a house/structure for the bee hives to help in controlling their movement.

The KCB women proposition is a relationship model that takes care of our women entrepreneurs. We endeavor to ensure that all our women's financial needs are looked at with a 360 degree view and solutions provided.

A side hustle for a nurse that turned to a main income source



By Real Cents writers

Seventeen years ago, Mr Yakub Maalim Omar's desire to quit his job and start his own business became stronger with each passing day and the idea even more tempting.

The businessman, who lives in Moyale, Marsabit County, was pushed by circumstances to quit his civil service job as well as his zeal to rekindle a business he closed down in 1998. In the same year, 2004, he established Nagelle Drugmart Pharmacy and Agrovet on Biashara Street in Moyale Town.

"I started the business in October 2004 as a small pharmacy with only a workforce of two and a working capital of KShs. 400,000. Since then it has grown tremendously," says Mr Omar. The business currently has over 10 staff.

His entrepreneurial journey started with a small pharmacy in Moyale, but when he got admitted to a medical college in 1998 the business collapsed. Later, after graduating, he started it afresh. He says it was the passion he had for the business that made him make the bold move.

Mr Omar says he started the venture while still in the civil service, a junior nurse to be specific. At the time, he wanted to engage in business but the challenge was how to balance the two. Civil servants are usually discouraged

from running private businesses by their employer (the government) to avoid conflict of interest blamed for fuelling corruption.

He adds that his salary as a junior nurse was not enough and expectations from his family were high. "Being the head of the family, I had obligations. I felt that I should have some extra source of income so that I could supplement the salary I was getting from the government," the businessman says.

During the first four years, the venture was not profitable and only met the cost of rent and salaries for the two workers.

In Kenya, most small businesses fail due to lack of capital or funding, retaining an inadequate management team, faulty infrastructure or business model, and unsuccessful marketing initiatives.

The business has faced similar challenges like others in the sector such as funding and supply of products, which he has been able to overcome with time. Mr Omar says the pharmaceutical industry is sensitive because one deals with human lives and medicines have a shorter lifespan. Most of the drugs are manufactured outside the country and when they arrive, they don't stay long on the shelves.

Similarly, the cost of medicine is high and sustaining the supply and demand equilibrium is what has always been a

challenge amongst industry players. All this is because Kenya's pharmaceutical industry heavily relies on the global supply chain for inputs, equipment, and even specialised personnel. Most companies manufacture simple non-patented products or rely on technology transfer agreements with foreign multinational manufacturers.

At the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr Omar says there was a huge spike in the demand of some drugs as consumers rushed to boost their immune systems and in fear of full lockdown measures. This led to dwindling stocks in the local markets due to global supply chain disruptions, as the majority of these products are imported," he says.

The former civil servant adds: "Moyale is about 800 km from Nairobi and that has been a major challenge in terms of logistics and supply of pharmaceutical products. However, we have devised local solutions on how to deal with these challenges."

Mr Omar has been conducting his business transactions through KCB Bank. He says the bank has been trustworthy with his little savings. He points out that he was motivated to join KCB Biashara Club by a colleague, and when he got into details of the club he found out that it was educative.

"The major feature I have gained from the club is education, and sharing of ideas and success stories. I was also attracted by the young entrepreneurs who were being supported by KCB Bank. Also, the overseas trips that KCB Biashara Club has been offering have given me exposure and experience to expand my business," he adds.

Mr Omar says through the bank, he has been able to network with many pharmaceutical suppliers both locally and overseas, and he has been able to diversify even to other sectors.

"KCB Biashara Club has benefitted me in terms of skills, and I'm now able to take any business risks. The confidence I have built in the team is what I will never forget," he concludes.

Mr Omar encourages other entrepreneurs to join the club saying what they gain from the club is more valuable than what they spend there.



Ann Rotich, the owner of Tegenot Enterprises, attends to a customer who is looking for construction supplies.

Lockdown helped boost sales at hardware shop

By Real Cents writers

Ann Rotich has been running a hardware business for the last 14 years.

While most people complained of frustrations in the business environment brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, Ann enjoyed an upsurge in the number of clients seeking her products and services.

Her business, Tegenot Enterprises, is located in Kericho County in Litein Town, and deals in building materials.

Though construction and other high capital projects were expected to be the last thing in the minds of Kenyans during the pandemic, Ministry of Health recommendations to combat the virus tipped the scales in Ann's favor. The long days of staying at home provided time for most people to retreat to their homes and drew their focus towards construction projects, some of which were long abandoned for lack of time.

Ann's sales increased; she sold cement, paint, pipes, and roofing sheets among other building materials and used the opportunity to expand her business. The company boasts of a huge and growing clientele with a team of 24 employees who provide great customer experience.

Looking back to when she began the business, she says she can't help but attribute the growth to her partnership with her bank, KCB.

"We initially registered our business in 2004 but it didn't take off. We have come so far, we started with a small shop in the backstreets of Litein Town where we operated for two years between 2007 and 2009," Ann says proudly.

The purchase of two lorries that the



We initially registered our business in 2004 but it didn't take off. We have come so far, we started with a small shop in the backstreets of Litein town where we operated for two years between 2007 and 2009," Ann says proudly



hardware uses to transport goods to their customers was made possible through loan facilities from KCB Bank. This helped Ann save a substantial amount of money that would previously have been lost to transport companies. This used to reduce her profit margins significantly.

The first loan was processed in 2015 and helped acquire the first lorry. Ann was able to repay within three years beating the agreed duration of four years.

Towards the end of 2017, Tegenot got an even bigger second loan to buy the second lorry. The loan has since been paid in full and the business woman is currently processing another loan to inject more capital into the business.

Ann is also a member of the KCB Biashara Club. She looks forward to the training opportunities and networking avenues where she gets to exchange ideas with other business trailblazers.

KCB offers Asset Based Facilities that enable our customers to acquire assets to boost their businesses such as school buses, trucks, pick-ups, tuk tuks, computer accessories etc.

Meanwhile, the financial boom that the store experienced recently is slowly declining with the effects of the pandemic now hitting closer home for Ann. She is dealing with bad debts as some of her clients are struggling to pay.

"We deliver the goods and the customer is expected to pay within a period of one month, but now some of them are extending the grace period and that is affecting business," says Ann.

Scaling greater heights of thriving avocado farming

By Real Cents writers

The avocado fruit is experiencing fast rising global demand and the prices are attracting farmers. According to the Horticulture Crops Directorate (HCD), Kenya's avocado prices have risen by 33 percent since 2019.

It is no wonder then, that avocados have attracted farmers like William Ruhiu from Ngorika in Nyandarua County.

Data by HCD shows that Kenya's avocado exports recorded a 93 percent increase to KSh. 4.26 billion in the first quarter of 2021 compared to the previous year.

In 2015, William planted the first crop of avocados which was harvested in 2018 and sold to Kakuzi Plc. Impressed with the production, he gradually increased the acreage under the avocado trees which today sit on almost 20 acres.

But William says his motivation for venturing into agribusiness was not fueled by money. A graduate of Daystar University, he studied Computer Science, but as fate would have it, the opportunities in the science field did not appeal to him much.

"When I completed my university studies, I came across this guy from Kisii in a magazine. His name was Nyakundi, and he had 1.95 acres of land and had planted Hass avocado trees. So, since we have a family farm, I thought, why not plant avocados and macadamia? My first step was to start the avocado orchard, then the macadamia orchard," he says. Before planting, William spent 2014 researching on everything about avocado farming and in January 2015, started preparing the orchard.

"It is fulfilling to know that you can produce something that can be sold and reproduced. When I sold my



Mr William Ruhiu, a co-founder of Sirami Limited, which deals with avocado and macadamia farming.

first avocado fruit I was so happy. I didn't even care about the money. My fruit was actually the best that season; Kakuzi ranks fruits according to how they are picked, harvested and transported, and our avocados were the best. The money is just a reward," adds William.

It is fulfilling knowing that you can produce something that can be sold and reproduced. When I sold my first avocado fruit I was so happy. I didn't even care about the money. My fruit was actually the best that season

The family farm, which belongs to his grandfather, William Senior, who was an agricultural expert having studied and worked in Denmark, has about 3,000 avocado and 700 macadamia trees. William says, as he progresses, the focus is to increase avocado trees to 40 acres and the macadamia trees to 15 acres.

Being a biennial fruit, last year's produce saw the farm sell about 42 tonnes of avocado in August 2020 and about 10 tonnes in January 2021.

On the other hand, the macadamia nuts started dropping in July 2021 and this will be the first year the nuts are harvested.

However, the prices of the macadamia nuts have dropped. William says before the pandemic hit, a kilo would sell for between KSh. 180 and KSh. 250. But now, a kilo is going for between KSh. 85 and KSh. 100. He has invested a lot of his time into researching about the crops he grows, even consulting organisations



William with his grandfather, William Senior, setting up a fruit fly trap.

such as KALRO to learn best practices from the type of seedlings to use, the altitude the crops best perform to crop nutrition, pest and disease control and all the information he can get.

This year, William and his grandfather set up Sirami Limited, a company that will see them brand and sell their macadamia nuts to Kenyans. They also intend to do value addition on both the macadamia nuts and avocados and produce salad oils.

It's a journey they are walking with KCB Bank and they are confident the Bank will fuel their business growth.



3,000

The family farm has about 3,000 avocado trees and 700 macadamia trees. William says, as he progresses, the focus is to increase avocado trees to 40 acres and the macadamia trees to 15 acres.

"I've been a KCB Bank customer for long. So it was no-brainer that we would choose to open a business account with them when we decided to start a company. We set up an account with Biashara Club and we did this because in future we want to value-add these crops and KCB Bank will help us along that journey," says William.

KCB supports our agripreneurs through the Agribusiness solutions. This enables farmers to scale up by providing accounts and loans that allow them to acquire coolers, specialized vehicles to transport produce, farm bigger acreage, and bring together farmers into organized groups.



Jescah's Chepkirui Ng'eno, the founder of Hiways Supermarket.

Resilience, passion to serve saved Hiways Supermarket

By Real Cents writers

We are in the second year of the pandemic and many small businesses continue to struggle. The pandemic, not just a health crisis, has had devastating effects on people, jobs and Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SMEs).

However, despite the challenges they continue to face, small business owners, like Jescah Chepkirui Ng'eno, remain hopeful and resilient as they continue to operate in this new normal.

Jescah is the founder of Hiways supermarket in Bomet County, a business that began its operations towards the tail end of 2016.

Her dream of owning and running a supermarket started in 2015. In 2016,

she met the owner of the parcel of land where the supermarket stands today and after signing a lease agreement, started building the business of her dreams.

“ Jescah's dream of owning and running a supermarket started in 2015. In 2016, she met the owner of the parcel of land where the supermarket stands today and after signing a lease agreement, started building the business of her dreams. ”

At the time, she had not yet registered the business, and was running it on a trial and error basis to see what worked and what didn't. In 2018, Jescah saw it wise to register the business, that way, she would secure her reputation as a legitimate business woman and give the supermarket a unique identity.

By 2019, business had picked up, and Jescah and her staff knew what their customers required from the supermarket. Things were looking up.

Not before long in early 2020, the first case of coronavirus was reported in the country and things went downhill from there.

“When the pandemic set in we faced so many challenges that we thought we would shut down because we were not sure what would happen. But after some



time, we realized our customers needed us because we provide them with basic needs for their homes. So we had to persevere,” says Jescah.

There was also a disruption in the flow of goods from Nairobi, but once the Covid-19 restrictions eased up, suppliers once again began transporting products the supermarket needed in Bomet.

“Sales went down because of the initial dusk to dawn curfew rules, which meant we had to close early. The curfew also meant that our customers, especially those with 9-5 jobs could not come to shop. But after it was lifted, business picked up a little. Currently, we have good and bad days, but we are hopeful things will get better,” she says.

Before the pandemic, Jescah was on the verge of hiring more staff, but she immediately put those plans on hold once it seemed the outbreak was going to persist. Unfortunately, a few staff who feared the unknown left to stay with their families at home.

The businesswoman took matters in her own hands and put in place measures to ensure that her staff and customers were safe. For the customers, she provided a hand washing station with outside the supermarket, and for her staff, she gave them masks and ensured there was proper social distancing in their designated areas of work.

With the pandemic causing uncertainty

in business, Jescah is glad that Hiways Supermarket has KCB Bank as a partner.

She says the bank has made it easy and convenient to pay her suppliers. Using the KCB mobile app, she can transfer money to their M-PESA numbers or bank accounts.

“What actually impresses me at KCB is that there's no need to physically travel to the bank to do my transactions. I can just sit in the house and pay suppliers, I can also check my account and get a statement. It's time saving. And when I'm not around, I can ask one of my staff to deposit money on M-PESA then I transfer it to the account,” says Jescah.

Additionally, she was able to secure a loan facility to purchase a pickup truck that has made it easier to collect goods from the suppliers.

“We usually had to incur transport costs when getting new stock for the supermarket. Sometimes we would use a boda boda which only carries small quantities and is time consuming. So we approached KCB Bank about getting a pickup and they gave us 90% financing,” she says.

KCB offers Asset-based Financing to enable customers acquire assets including lorries, computer accessories, tuktuk's, farming equipment etc.

Jescah applied for the loan this year and



says it didn't take more than a month to process it.

“We didn't think we could get a pickup in such a short time, we thought it could take us like four years,” the entrepreneur adds.

Jescah is also a member of KCB Biashara Club, while the pandemic has restricted the in-person training and networking sessions, she can't wait to attend and meet the other members, and perhaps share a few lessons she's learnt as a business owner like financial and credit management.

As of now, Jescah has plans to expand the supermarket further. Outside the supermarket there is a butchery which she wants to combine with a restaurant for customers who wish to relax and have some tea and snacks.

She would also like to revive a hotel that used to operate behind the supermarket and sold *nyama choma*, but had to shut down when the pandemic hit.

Urge to fight cabin fever leads auditor to tyre trade



Rona Kioko, co-founder of Brijose Tyre Mart.

By Real Cents writers

Growing up, Rona Kioko's father used to sell secondhand tyres for a living. The business was the bread and butter that ensured the family was clothed, fed and that the children had a good education.

Despite selling used tyres being what her father did for a living, Rona had no interest in the business, and never in a million years did she think that she would take on her father's mantle.

At Kenyatta University, she graduated with a Bachelor of Economics and Mathematics degree, and at Strathmore University, she got the ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) qualification to become an auditor. For years, she enjoyed her work reviewing

company accounts.

But last year, when cases of Covid-19 were reported in the country, like thousands of other employees, Rona

“My husband has been in the business for almost 12 years now. Last year, during the pandemic, I decided to join him. So I resigned from my workplace to help in the management of the business,” says Rona.

stayed home to wait out the pandemic. Soon, cabin fever kicked in and she was itching to find something to occupy her time. That is how she found herself working with her husband who, like her father used to, sells tyres in Nakuru.

“My husband has been in the business for almost 12 years now. Last year, during the pandemic, I decided to join him. So I resigned from my workplace to help in the management of the business,” says the auditor.

Rona is the co-founder of Brijose Tyre Mart which has three branches along Biashara Street in Nakuru's Industrial Area. They sell tyres for small vehicles, trucks and tractors.

It was a steep learning curve in the early

days and she confesses that she was not familiar with most of the products they sold at the tyre mart. However, she was a quick study and within a month, she knew the right suppliers to deal with and where to get the most affordable and quality tyres for their customers. She also started doing regular stock taking, something that wasn't being done before across the business.

“When I came in, they weren't doing stocktaking. Sometimes you would look for size 14 tyres only to find one piece in stock and a client needs four, so we would have to get them from someone else's shop. Now, every last Sunday of

the month we have stock-takes for all three shops, and that has given us an edge because at any time, we have four pieces for one car,” Rona says.

What further gives Brijose Tyre Mart an edge is that they offer trade-ins for their customers. For example, if a customer with a size 13 tyre wants their car lifted, instead of incorporating springs, they will upgrade to size 14 tyres including the rims and the customer will only have to add the difference in price.

Additionally, for people who cannot afford new tyres, they sell second hand tyres at KSh. 1,000 or KSh. 2,000 for a good quality one.

While many small businesses have been on survival mode due to the effects of the pandemic, Brijose Tyre Mart has surprisingly thrived through it.

“The cash flows for the last nine months during the pandemic... you can't compare to those of 2019. Surprisingly, they are now higher. I think for us the pandemic presented an opportunity to send tyre parcels all over instead of customers travelling to Nairobi to get them,” she says.

Brijose Tyre Mart delivers tyres to customers in Samburu, Maralal and Nyahururu. The highest selling tyres so far are size 13, 14 and 15 and the demand runs throughout the year. For tractors, however, the demand is seasonal because farmers use different tractors for planting and harvesting.

Rona says the business has significantly grown, thanks to KCB Bank which provided funds to buy stock for the third outlet.

“We met Schola from KCB Bank who advised us to open a business account. We opened the business account in March 19, 2020. Before six months were over, we took a secured loan to stock this new outlet and I can say we have grown.

Rona is also a KCB Biashara Club member and once it's safe to travel again, she is looking forward to visiting manufacturing countries such as China and Japan for two reasons: to procure and learn how certain equipment like the wheel balancing machine work and know where her suppliers gets goods from.

“Our customers inquire so much about wheel balancing, wheel alignment and car services. So we are thinking of incorporating those things in our main shop instead of just fitting the tyres and then referring them elsewhere for those services,” she says.

In the meantime, KCB Biashara Club members get to take part in webinars covering various topics that will help them survive the Covid-19 disruption. The webinars are instrumental in helping members gain knowledge and keep up with emerging trends in their respective businesses.



KCB Biashara Club helping my business stay afloat

By Real Cents writers

Sheila Purity Jepkemboi completed her college education in 2019. Like every graduate, she hoped to get a good job where she would earn money and make something out of herself.

But getting a job proved to be difficult; opportunities were few and far between. Eventually, after fruitless months of job searching, Sheila went to live with her grandmother as she figured out the next steps of her life.

It was during this period that she thought of starting a mali mali business (general retail) to earn an income, but she had no capital to get it off the ground.

Fortunately, Sheila had heard about KCB Bank extending loans to Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to boost their business activities.

"KCB Bank came through for me by giving me a loan of KSh. 80,000," says the 24-year-old, she adds "At times when I'm low on cash I top up with "Vooma" loans and that's how I keep things going in the business."

After getting the capital, Sheila bought stock including shoes, clothing, utensils, stationery and a variety of other products.

She started off by hawking the goods in the streets, then slowly moved to an open air market. But there were challenges she had not foreseen.

"There are so many challenges in the open air market; some of the goods I sell break easily like vacuum flasks and torches. Others, like clothes, get damaged easily because they fade when they stay out in the sun for too long," she says.

Sheila also had to deal with dead stock, and the fact that she didn't have somewhere safe to store her extra goods presented an even bigger problem.



Sheila Purity, the owner of Memo Households, attending to a customer.

So she rented a shop, which fortunately came with extra space at the back which she converted to her house.

Business was going well until the onset of the pandemic a few months later.

"The pandemic has really affected me. I'm not able to pay my bills on time if at all I get the money because of the low number of customers coming to the shop and low cash flows. Sometimes I'm barely able to make the rent or add more stock," says Sheila.

“At times when I’m low on cash I top up with Vooma loans and that’s how I keep things going in the business,”



She continues: "Before the pandemic, I used to get about 30 customers per day but now I get about 12 on a good day."

It's been a tough time for Sheila, but being a KCB Biashara Club member has had its benefits. She is able to boost her business through the injection of customized loan facilities that she uses for operational costs which eventually enables her to pay her bills.

"I've been getting short-term loans from KCB Bank which have kept me afloat. And when things get better I hope to grow this business and expand it, so thank you to KCB Bank for walking with me this far," says Sheila.

KCB Biashara Club is a platform that offers SMEs business growth opportunities by offering business solutions and advisory services.

Special training opportunities for small business owners are also provided, where members can gain skills and knowledge from trailblazers in various sectors of the economy and like-minded individuals to propel them in their business growth.

Biashara Club members can also easily access a range of banking services that can aid in achieving their business goals.

Diving into uncharted waters to set up commercial swimming pool



Marcus Kamau, a swimming instructor at Wako's Resort, (R), teaches a client, (L), how to dive.



Mr Adan Oshe, the owner of Wako's Resort. With him is KCB Moyale branch manager, Ms Helen Dika.

By Real Cents writers

In August 2020, Mr Adan Oshe decided to establish a commercial swimming pool in Moyale Town. This was to be the first such public facility in an area predominantly dominated by the Muslim community.

His idea was unique but sounded a little out of touch with the reality on the ground. However, he vowed to press on with the idea and implement it. Little did he know that what had just started as a simple idea, would blossom into a big venture and have a huge impact in Moyale.

"I had this unique idea of establishing a swimming pool here in Moyale. It looked outrageous considering where we are, but I decided to take the risk and ventured into the business," Mr Oshe says.

Moyale is known for businesses mostly run by the owners. The main types of business ventures in the town are retail shops, electronic shops, clothing and beauty shops, groceries, hardware shops, livestock trade, butcheries, motorcycle spare parts, charcoal trade, fuel stations, water vending, boda boda, motor cycle and vehicle repair garages, restaurants among others.

There is also vibrant cross-border trade between Moyale and Ethiopia and most of the foodstuffs sold on the Kenyan side are usually from Ethiopia.

According to Mr Oshe, his idea was bound to succeed because there was no competition. "I only needed to get things right and not miss the opportunity."

He says he received sound advice from various quarters including his bank manager at KCB Moyale branch on the kind of investment that he needed to make. The proprietor says he was also encouraged to join Biashara Club which has been of immense help to his business venture.

His new venture, Wako's Resort, started operating in August 2020. It is located in Odda, right opposite the Moyale Army Camp, about 13 km from Moyale Town along the Moyale – Marsabit Road.

The resort comprises separate swimming areas for women, men and children, an ambient restaurant and an upcoming children's playground. The pools are separated in compliance with Islamic Shariah making them Halal. The facility has a solar-powered borehole to ensure a continuous supply of water for the swimming pools. Swimming charges are Ksh. 500 for men, KSh. 300 for women, and KSh. 200 for children.

Halal compliance guidelines for accommodation and catering establishments require provision of swimming pools and gyms that are either separated or provision of different timings for men and women.

The Bank offers Shariah compliant

banking to our customers under Sahl banking. This enables the customer to bank in line with their faith.

With 17 employees, the facility has been handling about 20 customers per day since its establishment. "Even though I am still doing final touches on the premises, the business is doing well and looks promising," says Mr Oshe.

Swimming is a great exercise, as it works all muscles in the body without stressing joints or other body parts as running would. It also strengthens the heart and lungs while reducing the risk of death. According to the U.S National Library of Medicine, swimming has been shown to lower blood pressure and control blood sugar.

The businessman says he has been applying for loans from KCB Bank and the bank has been very supportive, even during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Despite the challenges, Mr Oshe is glad that he joined KCB Biashara Club and encourages other business people to join the club to enjoy the benefits that come with being a member.

He is happy to have joined KCB Biashara Club and hopes to connect with like-minded businesspeople and open up doors for more opportunities for his new venture. Mr Oshe says he understands the importance of such interactions for the growth of his business.

The right policies will make farming a lucrative venture

By Clarisse Aduma

I have been working at KCB for nine years and took up my current role as Agribusiness Development Manager in 2012. Agribusiness customers make up over 50 percent of Biashara Club Members.

Agriculture plays a crucial role in the economy of developing countries and provides the main source of food, income and employment to rural populations. According to the Kenya Country Commercial Guide, Agriculture dominates the local economy, accounting for 40% of the overall workforce, 70% of the rural workforce and about 25% of the annual GDP directly as well as contributing another 27% of GDP indirectly through linkages with other sectors. The country's major agricultural exports are tea, coffee, cut flowers, and vegetables.

Agriculture and proper land use are also fundamental to achieving food security, poverty alleviation and overall sustainable development.

For long, there was misconception that agribusiness was for the old people, but with the introduction of technology and digitization of agriculture, we are able to attract the youth. We are also realizing that as banks become more innovative, we are capable of attracting none traditional farmers like women to participate actively in agriculture as a main source of income.

As we continue advancing in the sector, we are also seeing new types of farming like mushroom and strawberry farming becoming a trend. There is also fish cage farming that is becoming prevalent in the shores of Lake Victoria. Another type of farming that is gaining popularity is hydroponic farming where you don't have to use soil but grow crops directly in nutrient-rich water.



Agribusiness was not negatively affected by COVID-19 because people still had to eat and in fact due to job losses and salary cuts, many turned to agribusiness to earn a living hence causing a growth in the industry.

I would like to encourage youth interested in agribusiness to look for information from relevant sources including webinars, blogs, radio or tv shows and any other channels. I would also want to encourage customers to keep on diversifying their sources of income through agribusiness.

It is also very important to seek professional help when venturing into any kind of commercial agriculture because if you don't have a professional touch or the technical know-how, you may end up making losses.

At KCB, we cater for the needs of our customers on a case-to-case basis and we have tailor-made solutions for each and every customer. Some of our

customers may be affected by natural calamities such as floods or drought for example, and we have to restructure their loans, while some customers may require non-financial help.

Through our partners, we offer our customers capacity building by training them in different industry challenges such as good governance in the case of cooperatives, proper animal husbandry in livestock keeping, agronomical practices for those who are in crop farming and financial literacy for all.

I would like to inspire our customers in agribusiness to keep pushing as agribusiness is a lucrative industry. We are a specialized unit with tailor-made solutions for the industry and we also offer advisory services which we would like our customers to utilize.

Customers can also call the bank or even walk into the branches for any assistance.

As much as agribusiness is one of the most profitable business ventures in Kenya, it is yet to perform as expected compared to neighboring countries because of very high production costs. This makes our products uncompetitive and we end up having a lot of imports coming from our neighbors: Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zambia and Malawi.

Until the government arrests the issue, it will not be a very competitive sector in the region. Taxation pushes the cost of production up; the cost of input and labor is also high and we will continue facing these challenges until something is done. Policies that reduce entry barriers and transaction costs, which improve the functioning of agricultural markets and assist in increasing productivity of farmers are part of a possible solution.

The writer is a Programme Manager, Livestock, KCB Foundation



Every entrepreneur's dream is that they become successful. Whether they started at a small corridor somewhere or a big wholesale shop the effort put is immense so that the business grows.

The journey of the Kenyan enterprise

By Nyambura Nganga

Our entrepreneurs are similar to our world class athletes. Very focused and hard working. Extremely so. You can see it in the way they conduct themselves. When they open shop early in the morning whether to receive goods, or to serve customers who visit early for goods or services or even to clean up their spaces in readiness for the day. Their main agenda is to find solutions for their customer's needs and wants. They will go out of their way to ensure one does not visit their premises and not find what they were looking for.

Often one wonders how an entrepreneur chooses one business over another? Why clothes and not cereals or a hardware? What makes one know they will be successful in that particular business and not the other? Most entrepreneurs will tell you they are passionate about what they do and that they either started their enterprises either by accident-there was a gap in the market which they filled in, or it was what business their family has run for years so one

had learnt it due to close proximity of the business. Others, it is from the training they have received e.g. pharmacists who eventually run pharmacies. While entrepreneurs differ on how they choose their enterprises the goal for success is the same.

How does one master the business that they run and eventually ends up running it efficiently and effectively? Knowledge to run a business can be acquired from so many fronts. Some of the skills can be taught in school, on the job training while watching what goes on, trial and error until it works as expected. An entrepreneur who mixes both formal and informal knowledge is at a better place to run their business than one who uses one form. This is for purposes of ensuring that one practices best practice and runs a sustainable business. Learning is a continuous process. If a better way of running the business is discovered one is better learning the new way.

The market is very competitive. Rarely do you find a business that is the only

player in its field. This competition pushes entrepreneurs to try and be the best in their different fields. There are many ways of attracting customers to oneself whether it is through advertising, pricing, social media presence, brand management, customer retention strategies among others. This ensures that one can attract new customers as well as keep the old ones. Businesses exist because of their customers. If one does not have customers, then they do not have a business.

Every entrepreneur's dream is to become successful. Whether they started at a small corridor or a big wholesale shop, the effort put so that the business grows is immense. That the business eventually become bigger and outlive the entrepreneur. It would be prudent to have a succession plan such that the businesses can be passed from owner to the other and still continue to thrive.

The writer is a KCB Biashara Club Manager



A group photo after a Biashara Club clinic with KCB customers from Moyale County.



Delivery of goods at Tegunot enterprises.



Alago Enterprises staff in Homa Bay County.



KCB Great Rift Region team members.



A visit at Crochet Hub Africa in Mbita with Valary Lambisia, who is the founder.



KCB Biashara Club customer Janet Mirobi at her premises, Jawambe Hotel, after a Biashara Club clinic.



Ms Leah Choge, the KCB Moi Avenue branch manager, speaking during a clinic.



Jane Kiama and family during a visit at Kiama River Resort in Thika.



Biashara Club clinic with KCB customers from Kengeleni in Mombasa County.



KCB Staff "choosing to challenge", the theme for IWD2021.



KCB Moi Avenue branch customers "choosing to challenge", the theme for IWD2021, during a Biashara Club workshop.



Bacho Abdi Roba, the founder of Alfa Junior Academy in Marsabit, at his office.



Ann Rotich, the owner of Tegunot Enterprises, consulting with an employee on availability of stock for sale.



Isaack Tulicha, Chairman of Khandere Farmers Produce and Marketing Society in Moyale, (L), and Abush Mabitto, one of his staff.



Mr Omar attends to a customer at his pharmacy.



Sheila Purity, the owner of Memo Households, General Mali Mali Shop, as she attends to one of her customers.



Valerie Lambisya, C.E.O. and Founder of Crotchet Hub Africa.



From left: Muthaiga Travel Ltd MD Mira Bid-Shah, Founder & Director Strategic Partnerships at Passion Profit Bands Fridah Owinga, KCB Bank Retail Director Annastacia Kimtai, KCB Customer Immaculate Murugi and Naomi Ndele.



Founder & Director Strategic Partnerships at Passion Profit Bands, Fridah Owinga.



Muthaiga Travel Ltd Managing Director, Mira Bid-Shah.



Mary Nyaga- founder of LorMar Florium during the IWD.



Immaculate Murugi - KCB Customer.

IWD SME Advise- #ChooseToChallenge



“ I run a firm in a male dominated industry which is logistics and having a seat at the table where men are asking me for advice gives me a sense of pride. I would like to challenge women not to get intimidated but to get into any industry of their liking. **#ChooseToChallenge**
Judy Nyambura Waihiga- Logistics



“ As a tours and travel company owner, I have chosen to challenge myself to market Kenya and it's hidden gems unlike most companies who focus on the usual places like Mombasa and Maasai Maara. We have beautiful places like the Chalbi desert in the Marsabit County and my challenge is to show the other side of Kenya.
Stellmaris Miriti- Tours and Travel



“ I would like to challenge women to find ways of saving and starting a business, somehow, we will make society and the whole nation go far. **#ChooseToChallenge**
Christine Mwendu Kitoo- Entrepreneur



“ They say that empowering a woman is empowering the society and so I urge you to start with what you have, start where you are because the future is bright.
Faith Mumbua Nzioki- Entrepreneur



KCBIA, Managing Director, Aggrey Mulumbi, (L), interacting with KCB Head, SME & Agribusiness, Naomi Ndele during the International MSME Day at Villa Rosa Kempinski. This was during the International MSME Day at Villa Rosa Kempinski.



International MSME Day preparations.



The panelists from left, Lan-X-Africa CEO David Tanki (moderator), founder of Coolblack Enterprise Anita Nyoro, CEO of Altan Enterprises Ltd Ruth Nyarai, CEO of Airtrek Consultancy Bundi Ngirwa and Founder of Unique Investors Property (UIP) Ltd Patrick Malika. This was during the International MSME Day at Villa Rosa Kempinski.

Lan-X-Africa CEO David Tanki as he highlights how having a customer engagement model is crucial for any business. This model once incorporated with technology can be a tool for interacting with customers. This was during the International MSME Day at Villa Rosa Kempinski.



KCBIA Managing Director Aggrey Mulumbi explaining how MSMEs contribute to sustainable growth in business. MSMEs also offer employment in different industries. This was during the International MSME Day at Villa Rosa Kempinski.



KCB Head SME & Agribusiness Naomi Ndele sharing how MSMEs are important in the development of a country. MSMEs distribute the main income at the base of the business pyramid. This was during the International MSME Day at Villa Rosa Kempinski.

“ Everyone said they didn't have a product for us. You walked with me through the fields and made one. Thanks. ”
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