



**Women
Creating
Wealth**


GRAÇA MACHEL TRUST

WCW
Women Creating Wealth

A collection of stories
by African Women
Entrepreneurs

Second Edition



Women Creating Wealth

A collection of stories by
African women entrepreneurs

SECOND EDITION

Brought to you by



GRAÇA MACHEL TRUST

This edition of Women Creating Wealth stories was developed
in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation



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This book is dedicated to all African women entrepreneurs.

Women from different walks of life, in different sectors and industries,
but all committed to wealth creation for their families, communities,
countries and to the prosperity of our continent.

**This book was compiled, on behalf of the Graça Machel Trust,
by We Will Lead Africa.**



We Will Lead Africa is a global network, storytelling platform and community, established with the vision of everyday African leaders, owning and leading our own narratives.

We collect, curate and share stories of these leaders because we believe in the power of storytelling, an inherent part of African culture, as a powerful tool for imagining, sparking and driving progress; and as a way to inspire more change and shape the futures we want.

www.wewillleadafrika.com

The stories collected are based on interviews with, and questionnaires submitted by, alumni of the Women Creating Wealth programme. We would like to acknowledge She Inspires Her who collected the first versions of some of the stories included in this volume.

Editorial Team

Michelle Mocumbi

Sarah J. Owusu

Design and layout by Emotion

Cover design by Baadaye Agency

Pictures provided by the story contributor, unless otherwise stated.

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This book showcases the stories of African women entrepreneurs who we thank for sharing their voices, wisdom and experience:

Acanda Jaswa	Mapula Kgosi
Adelia Nqubuka	Matilda Kambanga
Aishatu Debola Aminu	Mercy Chamwalira
Andikuza Margaret Litete-Makhumula	Michèle Schiess
Beatrice Matau	Mmatlou Mabitsela
Betty Chilonde	Mulakonda Jessie Chirwa
Bridget Mawilah-Lebala	Ngabaghila Chatata
Chikondi Agatha Michongwe	Nonceba Manjengwa
Dembe Mudodzwa Tshivhase	Onnica Toko
Dimakatso Gloria Ramahlodi	Peggy Joy Ngwira
Dipuo Phakathi	Pepsi Baiocco
Dr Ethel M Zulu	Phuti Mphelo
Endrina Maxwell	Pumza Mthethwa
Esther Mushi	Rachel Mathale
Fannie Gondwe	Rethabile Gladys Maimane
Glenrose Nkosi	Riziki Amuli
Gugu Masondo	Rose Sibsi
Hayley Eagle	Sarah Motshwane Sebetola
Hellen Tusiime	Sarah Ngwenya
Karen Longley	Sibongile Mtsabe
Kekeletso Khena	Sister Jenny
Kgomotso Malope	Thato Lekhera
Kgomotso Sekhute	Thato Mokhotu
Kondwani Phoya	Theresa Theu
Kumbutso Takomana	Tracy Marobobo
Lulu Khamis	Tutu Chitumbo
Lina Nthokola	Victoria Mwafulirwa
	Victoria Mwanukuzi

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"My dream, then and now, is simple. Women ought to take centre stage and be at the driving seat of the continent's economic advancement. I see women, not just a few, but in mass numbers, confidently occupying their place at the tables where crucial plans and decisions about the present and future of the continent are made.

To the women leading businesses and advancing communities, I say: You are at the core of our social and economic transformation across the continent of Africa. There is nothing that can stop you.

Each of you demonstrates that you have the power to fly. And when you work together, you show us what it means to truly soar.

Take this seriously. Don't settle for a small business.

You deserve to build big businesses and to build your wealth... for yourselves, for your children and for the next generations."

Mrs Graça Machel

Foreword

A message from the Graça Machel Trust Chief Executive Officer

It is a great honour to share some opening thoughts and welcome you to this book of inspiring stories of the African women who are so fiercely creating the prosperous future that we all deserve. They are a snapshot of the many women, working across Africa's rich and diverse contexts, showing us what is unique about our realities, and creating wealth through businesses that are relevant and impactful.

At the Graça Machel Trust, we believe that women's and children's rights are a non-negotiable part of Africa's economic, social and political development. And therefore, we use our convening and influencing power to put the experience and leadership of women at the centre of all that we do.

We also believe in amplifying the voices and multiplying the faces of the African women that we serve, and the Women Creating Wealth programme, is key to this. Women Creating Wealth (WCW) is an entrepreneurship accelerator designed to shift women's behaviours and empower them with the skills and confidence to transform their businesses, from income generation to wealth creation ventures. It is with great pride that we have supported more than 400 women over the past years, and we are honoured to be able to expand the reach and impact of the programme going forward, with the help of our partners.

The women profiled in this book have benefited from the opportunities provided by the programme; but more than that, through each interaction with them, we have learnt from them and they have built a sisterhood that will serve them on the journey ahead. None of them have chosen an easy path, they have each seen their share of challenges - but what these stories transmit is the power of African women, working across sectors and industries, to be the generators of wealth with great ripple effects across the continent.

As the saying goes, "if you can't see them, you can't be them"... this book is about showing the real stories, successes and challenges, to the world to inspire many, many more African women entrepreneurs to follow in their footsteps. In respect and gratitude



Melizsa Mugenyi
Chief Executive Officer of the Graça Machel Trust

Introduction

Wealth creation as a pathway to a prosperous future

What does wealth creation mean to you? This was one of the core questions that we asked each African woman entrepreneur featured in this book; and a question we invite you, the reader, to reflect on as you delve into the inspirational stories contained within.

Wealth creation is at the centre of the Women Creating Wealth (WCW) programme, the Graça Machel Trust's entrepreneurship accelerator for African women in business. Beyond the name, the words point to an ethos - an ethos that is both transmitted through the training and skills development that the programme provides, but also an ethos that each woman entrepreneur brings with her and infuses into the programme. This is after all, a dynamic interaction between women entrepreneurs from across the continent and the Women Creating Wealth team implementing the programme.

This leads to a kaleidoscopic understanding that encompasses a multitude of perspectives. Women told us, wealth creation is:

- Women working hard with other women to create sustainable businesses that will enable them to create wealth for other generations.
- Women taking ownership of our own economic status and amplifying voices of others to also take ownership of their own journey.
- Playing a part in the ecosystem, by supporting livelihoods and job creation through my business.
- Being bold enough to firstly, show up in opportunity filled spaces even when you feel you're not good enough.
- Having and creating a women-owned legacy and giving future generations of women and girls endless possibilities.
- Capitalising on the collective strengths of women, taking up space in our environment whilst creating generational wealth.
- Changing lives and creating impact.
- Growth - financially, emotionally and even spiritually... and deeply improving the quality of our lives.

These are a handful of responses from an evaluation questionnaire that was recently administered to participants of the WCW programme (and you can see a word cloud generated from the almost 200 survey responses below); this is not exhaustive, but reflects many of the main themes that were also expressed as we collected stories for this book now in your hands.

The stories themselves represent perspectives from five African countries (Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia), presented across seven chapters. Each chapter highlights the competencies¹, necessary for entrepreneurs to succeed, that are core to the Women Creating Wealth programme:

- **Opportunity seekers** - always taking initiative and turning challenges into opportunities.
- **Risk takers** - taking calculated risks and persisting even in volatility and uncertainty.
- **Tenacious implementers** - working with commitment and dedication, and never giving up.
- **Visionaries** - dreaming big and setting concrete goals to make their visions a reality.
- **Dedicated planners** - meticulous workers taking consistent action and great pride in the quality of their work.
- **Relationship builders** - building relationships, networks, and leveraging the sisterhood with powerful influence.
- **Pioneers** - finding their independence from a deep sense of confidence, self-belief and self-assurance.

Of course, each woman profiled in this volume is a living demonstration of all seven competencies coming together, but we hope that each story shines a light on these strengths in their real lives and contexts.

Going forward, the WCW programme is defining wealth creation in more detail: considering wealth as a combination of money, status, freedom and health. We describe this in more detail at the end of this book. For now, we invite you to absorb and hear from the WCW alumni.

Much has been written about the speed at which women's entrepreneurship is growing across African countries, and also about the positive, catalytic effect of putting money in women's hands. In reading this, we hope you will see - through the eyes and lived experiences of women entrepreneurs themselves - that women creating wealth is truly a pathway to a prosperous continent, and a prosperous future. We hope to show that money, whilst it certainly does matter, is not the only metric of success for African women entrepreneurs. And that each of these women is improving their own life, and the lives of others.

¹ And we include an affirmation at the start of each section, inspired by the responses to the WCW impact evaluation survey, which brings to life each of these competencies.

Stories of

Creating Wealth

Section 1 . **Opportunity seekers**

I embody proactivity and have what it takes to show up in opportunity-filled spaces. I leverage what I already have to create various revenue streams, captivate clients, and further the growth of my business.

Kgomotso Malope

Preserving cultures and heritage

South Africa



Kgomotso is the proud founder of MoTSo DeSIGNED, a one-stop visual communication company, specialising in Africa-inspired designs. Her vision is to be the go-to company for audaciously-different, Africa-inspired interiors, and she believes that African art is sophisticated, and belongs in modern living and working spaces.

As a young child in primary school, I was immensely drawn to art, spending much of my leisure sketching and doodling. However, I was discouraged by myself and my acquaintances to pursue it seriously, as art was not seen to be a fitting or lucrative profession for girls back in the day. So I abandoned it and focused instead on science subjects,

which I excelled in. I studied Bio-Medical Technology and proceeded to work as a microbiologist. On my way to work one January morning, I heard an ad on the radio announcing that application entries were still open at The Design School SA. Right then and there, at 32 years old with two young children, I decided to register for a Bachelor of Art in Interior Design.

The thought of starting an entry-level position had never appealed to me, so after completing my studies, I started my own interior design business and have not looked back since. MoTSo DeSIGNED is a one-stop visual communication company, specialising in interior design, graphic design, and branding. We also offer our own in-house brand of wallpapers which we personally design and print, using our own large format printers, and which we sell through our website and other virtual marketplaces. In the beginning, the business did all types of interiors, but upon realising the need for Africa-inspired designs in the market, we honed in exclusively on that niche. Now, the business aims to celebrate and promote African art, lifestyle and heritage by including its elements in our designs and proving that it belongs in modern living and work spaces.

Towards the end of 2019, we planned to take the business on the retail route and looked for a shopping centre where we could set up our shop. We found one and gave up the lease of a warehouse we were operating from. We served the mandatory 3-month notice and were due to vacate at the end of January when a new tenant would be taking over the space. However, mid-way through the month, the retail space agent informed us we couldn't move into our new shop! We were stuck, with no new premises to move to. To say I was disappointed is an understatement. Desperate, I took our stock and other excess property to storage and moved the printers and other machinery to the garage at my house where we would be operating until new premises were found.

In early March 2020, we attended the inaugural meeting for the 2020 Women Creating Wealth cohort and left the

meeting in high spirits, alive with possibility. Our spirits would be dampened soon after, though, when the South African president announced a hard lockdown in late March as a response to the COVID pandemic. What a downer! The WCW curriculum was then moved online with no more face-to-face interactions, while a WhatsApp group was established to encourage communication among the participants. One day, a fellow participant posted on the WhatsApp group in search of a label printer. I remembered then that I had a printer sitting idle in the garage.

While label printing was not specifically my business offering, I had the equipment and skills to do it. Thus, I got the opportunity to print hand sanitiser labels and began printing labels from that day onwards. In order to operate legally and drive around freely, I registered as an essential services provider.

As it turned out, losing out on the retail space lease was a blessing in disguise. I ended up gaining work and making money amid the lockdown. Moreover, it led me to open a new division - branding - whereby we make and sell other branding products. Overall, the pandemic enabled me to embody the buzzword of the season and "pivot" my business in order to survive.

One of the modules in the course was on Branding and E-commerce. After attending that module, I improved my e-commerce website. Furthermore, I listed and signed up to sell my products on another virtual marketplace. That has been going on very well.

Wealth creation is a means to accumulate resources that will enable one to accomplish certain necessities. It is about having funds or raising funds to realise specific goals. These goals might be different for both males and females. I have a saying: "He/she/it that pays your bills, owns you". Gender differences in financial inclusion have far-reaching effects on women's quality of life and autonomy, their families and their communities, putting them at risk of financial fragility and poverty.

"Therefore, if one is able to create enough wealth to pay their own bills, they will then "own" themselves. Wealth creation means just that – total emancipation from a vast amount of restrictions."

We, as women, should actively participate in the creation of wealth for women. There should be "Nothing about Us without Us." This means financial inclusion and equality for women, not only relating to earnings, but also to building and retaining wealth. Furthermore, it calls for the participation of women in all sectors to engage, educate, encourage and support each other in an effort to close the gender gaps in financial inclusion and enable women to take control of their finances and futures.

This is primarily what the WCW community is about: a group of women co-learning about entrepreneurship, how to make money, and most importantly, how to keep and grow that money. It's about women being part of a movement towards financial equality. I am fortunate to have been part of the Women Creating Wealth entrepreneur programme. Its Branding and E-commerce module was imperative to improving my e-commerce website and helping me sign up to sell my products in an alternate virtual marketplace. Since my participation, I have managed to grow the business and had the pleasure of appointing two young people to join our team. Our online sales have also been going very well. I am looking forward to a brighter future, as we continue looking for other growth avenues and work towards exporting our wallpapers to other countries in the continent.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1 Pivot when necessary

Be humble and brave enough to admit when your current business model is not working and pivot onto a new activity in order to survive.

2 Face challenges head-on

Challenges are often blessings in disguise. Be open to seeing and maximising the potential for growth in every hard patch you face.

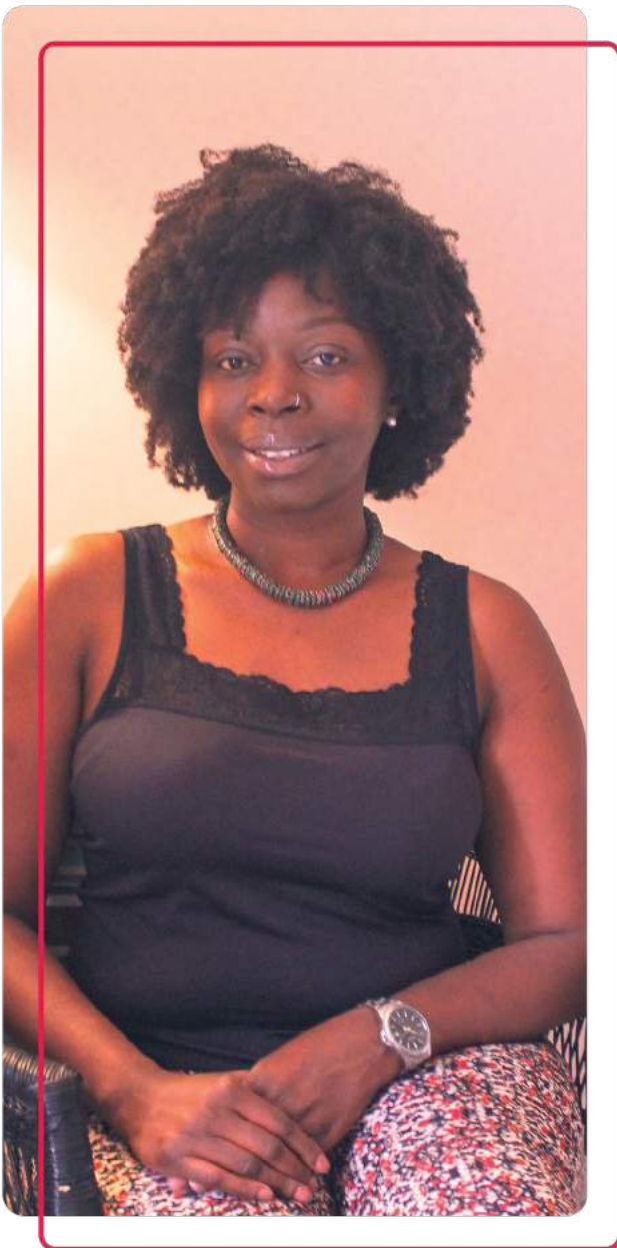
3 Invest in e-commerce

The world is becoming more and more digital. Being successful as a modern entrepreneur challenges us to adapt to this. Invest in an online brand and sell your products through alternative virtual marketplaces to reach more potential customers.

Chikondi Agatha Michongwe

Authentically furnishing and feeding

Malawi



With her boundless creativity and remarkable networking, Chikondi Michongwe has managed to successfully introduce an Afro-centric customised furniture company and a plant-based healthy food company into the Malawian market.

My first experience of entrepreneurship came when I was 14 years old, long before I knew that the word applied to what I was doing. As an introverted teen, I spent most of my time alone, crafting inventions with scrap paper and material. One of these was a handbag that I took to the local tailor, who replicated the design into a few tote bags that I later managed to sell. Seeing the handbag that I had envisioned materialise was exciting, and it awakened a newfound passion for me, to use my ideas and creativity to make a difference in my own life and that of those I worked with.

Almost a decade later, I returned to Africa from the UK with my young family. I was driving down a road when I spotted a huge felled tree stump. I was struck with inspiration then, as I envisioned turning this seemingly worthless stump into a coffee table. Working with artisans who were used to creating traditional furniture pieces came with its challenges though. A lot of explaining and convincing was needed before my out-of-the-box idea was made into a tangible reality, but I was happy with the result and that was the start of my custom-made furniture business. A year later, we relocated and opened what was called Natural Living Designs gallery in Harare, Zimbabwe. After a few years, we moved back to Malawi and rebranded the business into Afrocentric Lifestyle, a homeware, giftware and interiors business.

As a small-scale female entrepreneur, becoming a medium-scale business in the furniture-making industry came tough. Having to work in a male-dominated field and being in a leadership position meant breaking down a lot of gender stereotypes held by staff, suppliers and even clients. Over the years, I also noticed a lack of women with skills or even training in the industry. As a business owner, I saw this as a problem, because it meant I was having little impact on fellow women in my value chain.

Access to finance has been another challenge. Convincing financial institutions to give you a loan is hard enough, but I found that it was even harder as a woman. The common

belief that a woman's place in business is running small, informal businesses was an obstacle that required changing people's perceptions once more. Issues of collateral have also come into play. In the past, I've missed opportunities because of the lack of collateral and the rigidity of banks' requirements to access finances.

Financially, things took a turn for the better 2 years ago when we received a matching grant. With it, we were finally investing in expansion and growth. We refurbished our showroom premises and opened a Vegan Café. This was a niche market, but one we knew would meet an existing need based on our market research. Unfortunately, that was when the pandemic hit. We had no choice but to close down a few months into the pandemic because our mostly expatriate client base had either gone into lockdown or relocated.

I had to go back to the drawing board and figure out how to make the most of the challenges faced. For Afrocentric, I partnered with a few local outlets to stock our products and expanded our range to focus on interior furnishings in addition to our custom-made furniture pieces. As for the vegan café, we still wanted to offer vegan food but without permanent premises. Thus, we started Serene Vegan Co, through which we produce and package a range of plant-based food and beverages. We are now reaching a wider client base and have expanded both businesses into Tanzania.

By learning the power of networking, having a tribe of supportive women, establishing vital systems for seeking finances, and keeping track of our business growth, I've overcome the initial challenges I faced with gender stereotypes as a female entrepreneur. I have also engaged and partnered with training institutions to train more women in male-dominated fields. We have female apprentice plans for our new carpentry as well as welding workshops to train more females and equip them with the necessary skills.

My grandmother is my reigning memory of an inspirational woman creating wealth. Throughout my childhood, she was always running small businesses alongside her job as a government nurse. She combined her knack for businesses with her passion for helping others and opened a private clinic where she hired certified doctors and nurses. She taught me that wealth creation is about financial independence not just for an individual or a business, and that it should trickle down and have a positive impact throughout the business value chain and the community.

For me, the WCW programme sharpened my focus and vision and equipped me with the tools I needed to transition from a mere income-generating business to one with a clear vision and sustainable brand. I gained the confidence to claim my seat at the table. I have gone beyond my comfort zone to seek new opportunities and have made thoroughness and quality cornerstones of our business. I have gone from being a WCW cohort participant to the national programme coordinator, an opportunity I would have never seen or pursued without the tools from the programme.

At the moment, my main focus is scaling up and growth. We have a clear and strategic plan for further capital raising, marketing, increased sales and geographical expansion. We want to see both businesses tap into the regional and international markets. Africa has bountiful resources; we need to export not just raw materials but our finished products to the world. Over the next few years.

“I want to see female entrepreneurs continue to grow across all sectors and continue to consciously and purposefully break the glass ceiling and create more opportunities.”

Strong national strategic policies that clearly support women in business development should also be enforced. If we continue to uplift each other and share opportunities, then real change is sure to be felt.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1 Innovate consistently

Constantly think of new ways around challenges and be on the lookout for opportunities for growth. This is a sure-fire means to persevere through hard times and grow your stake in the market.

2 Build a supportive network

The important thing isn't the number of network circles but the significance of those in your network. Rely on these people for counsel, support, encouragement, and ideas.

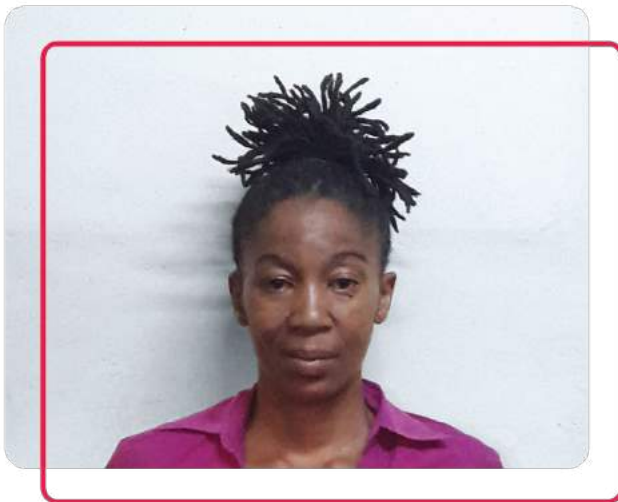
3 Have a clear strategic plan

Operate with clear goals and have a plan for achieving these goals. Set timeframes and milestones for each objective, short, medium and long-term. This will keep you focused on the bigger picture.

Riziki Amuli

Don't give up, manage your goals

Tanzania



Riziki is the founder of Flozy Natural Product, a soap manufacturing company that produces detergent, bar soap and herbal soap. Her mission is to grow the company and continue to produce the highest quality product.

The idea of becoming an entrepreneur came into my mind in 2011, as the Tanzanian society was advocating more and more for self-employment. The requirement for cleanliness of people and their surroundings triggered me to think about what is most needed to achieve this. I realised that soap products are always used for human cleanliness as well as sanitising man-made environments. This led me to engage in soap manufacturing training and workshops. Through these workshops and my own life experience, I was assured that soap could be used in various ways to clean human bodies, utensils, floors, ceramics, and even wood surfaces. Inspired, I started a small-scale soap production trade that same year.

Flozy Natural Product deals with the production of detergent, bar soap and herbal soap. Located in Tabata Bima with a team of two full-time and three part-time workers, Flozy Natural Product operates with the mission of consistently producing quality products and steadily scaling into

a large and central powerhouse of the Tanzanian economy.

Challenges are inevitable in any business, and my business has been no exception. The biggest challenge so far has been securing new customers and competing with larger companies in the soap manufacturing industry. However, I am determined and focused to excel. Through different groups and meetings, I am continually raising awareness on the importance of using products made by female entrepreneurs in order to empower women. Moreover, while COVID decreased the sales and demand for some of our products, it also led us to start producing sanitiser, which we even sold outside of our country.

“I see the role of women in wealth creation as conductors, educating others on how to execute a range of businesses successfully and guiding them to become affirming and enhancing leaders that promote the growth of their businesses and employees.”

Since graduating from the Women Creating Wealth programme, I have dedicated my time to opportunity-seeking in order to meet customer demand efficiently and guarantee constant quality in my products. Through television and radio, I have found opportunities to introduce my business and market my products. The confidence I've acquired has improved my skills in pitching the importance and benefits of my products to the market, while the growth mindset

I earned has encouraged me to participate in workshops and seminars to keep on building my knowledge on entrepreneurship and the environment. More so, I have developed an eagerness for challenge and am always in search of the next trial that will push me and my business forward. In sum, by applying the personal entrepreneurial competencies, I have been able to sustain and improve my business.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1 Quality control

Your quality is your calling card, and what you will be remembered for. Keep your quality consistent, and don't let your customers down.

2 Solve and find solutions to real customer problem

The businesses that succeed are those that are solving a real problem that the customer has - find solution that match a need.

Karen Longley

Boldly leading language forward

South Africa



Karen is the founder of Leading Language, a proudly women-owned business providing language training, business skills training and translation services to corporate clients in South Africa and beyond.

It was 20 years ago that I first became an entrepreneur through the combined circumstances of necessity and opportunity. I was in financial need at the time, newly divorced and unemployed, when an opportunity came up for me to take over a language training business in France. I seized the moment and found myself running a language training centre. Fast forward 10 years, and I returned to South Africa, unemployed once again and struggling to find a job.

Realising that my only hope of getting employment was to create my own company, I borrowed money from friends and created Leading Language, a business providing language training, business skills training, and translation services to corporate clients. Based in Johannesburg, South Africa, we now deliver all our training remotely using video-conferencing platforms and adapt the training to our clients' requirements. With a loyal and experienced team of trainers and translators, we have amassed a robust reputation for delivering great quality translations and education. Over the last 8 years, we have built our client base to include top South African companies and have also drawn on my French business networks to establish ourselves firmly with the top French companies and the French Embassy.

Through tough times - and there have been many of those - I have used my natural resilience and positivity to make sure that my business continued, one step at a time. I see challenges and barriers as problems to be solved, and this is likely what has helped us get through the pandemic.

“When COVID-19 hit and the lockdown was enforced, it could have meant the end of my business. Instead of waiting for the lockdown to end, however, I made the decision to change the way we did business and to pivot to online training, not just for the duration of the lockdown but going forward.”

This aimed to both guarantee that Leading Language would go on, and that our team of trainers and their families who depend on income from the company would make it through the pandemic.

Looking back, I strongly believe that this was the right decision, as it enabled us to survive 2020 and end the year having made a small profit. Moreover, as a result of the piv-

ot, we now have access to new markets and have been able to increase our turnover. Ultimately, the tough times have taught me that being bold gets you to places you never dreamed of. Leading Language is now a small business with big ideals, and my hope for the future is that it continues to thrive. In the next 5 years, I would like to move onto the next stage of my personal journey, having built a successful, sustainable business so that I can look back with pride and say, "See that company? I founded it."

There is definitely a "before" and "after" when it comes to the WCW programme. Following the WCW experience, I have become more confident in my decision-making ability and leadership skills, which has helped tremendously to drive my business forward. I have also understood the value of working on the business rather than working in it. I have learnt to seek outside help and knowledge to move forward, particularly with regards to sustainability. With the help of a consultant, I have used the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria to set up and implement procedures and policies to help Leading Language operate sustainably, efficiently, and with respect to the environment and community we live in. Implementing our ESG journey is about demonstrating our values, and is also an investment that will help us attract more clients - companies that score well on these types of sustainability metrics are often more likely to outperform their peers in profitability over the long term. At the same time, we are leading by example and showing the world that Leading Language is a small business with big ideals.

Another gain from the WCW programme has been the sisterhood. As women entrepreneurs, we benefit immensely from being part of a sisterhood, as it gives us access to networks, finance, and market opportunities, which are traditionally dominated by men. The WCW programme has been a support system of women who accept that we are not only entrepreneurs, but mothers, wives, partners, and sisters as well.

As Maya Angelou once said, "Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women." I believe in this sentiment, and the call to shared success. To me, wealth creation can only be meaningful if it is shared.

In light of this, I was instrumental in setting up an alliance between the Graça Machel Trust and the French South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry in December 2020. It is my wish that this alliance will grow and demon-

strate the notion of togetherness - that we are indeed stronger together. I have also been fortunate to be nominated as one of the Executive Directors of the newly-created Women Creating Wealth - South Africa non-profit company, which has adopted the slogan, "Nothing about US, without US." Using the impetus created by the WCW programme, we wish to keep on driving wealth creation amongst women entrepreneurs forward.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1 Lead by example

It is important that your business represents and upholds values, and does so with integrity and authenticity. For me, this has been about investing in sustainability and giving back to other women entrepreneurs. What do you stand for and how can you express that through your business as it grows?

2 Always be ready to pivot and adapt

Don't be afraid to make brave, bold steps. Change is an essential part of business and if you aren't able to take that leap of faith, you might find yourself in great difficulty. My leap of faith was to pivot my business activities to online, remote-based businesses, which enabled us to gain new clients, access new markets and double the size of the team.

3 There's a solution to every challenge

Become a problem solver and see problems as opportunities to do things differently and form collaborations with other small businesses that have the solutions to the challenges you are facing. Most of the success of my business has come from finding solutions to problems by working together with other small businesses and consultants.

Beatrice Matau

Promoting female entrepreneurship in transport

Tanzania



Through JB Holding Company, Beatrice Matau is doing her part to facilitate female entrepreneurship and empowerment by providing transport services to a variety of female agripreneurs.

I was born and raised in Dar es Salaam, the last born of five children, raised by a single mother after my father died when I was 8 years old. Dealing with the struggles of being widowed, my mother ran a retail shop and kept poultry, and always engaged me in all her entrepreneurial activities. In Grade 4, I began to practice arithmetic to help her understand if she was making a profit. I have a memory of her carrying boxes of broiler chicks under the high noon sun for many kilometres, in order to sell them and because there was no margin to pay for transport.

With this early induction into a hard work ethic and my sharp business acumen, it was only a matter of time before I would start my own business ventures, but my path started in banking. I left university with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and began my career at NMB bank. I used to advise clients on startups and growing small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in the heart of the business quarter, Kariakoo, of Dar es Salaam. I earned an MBA in Finance and Banking by doing evening courses whilst working in the bank as a small loans officer, and later as commercial manager, before making the leap into my own business. I knew that starting my own business was something I wanted for myself.

The idea for the business was born as I noticed the business opportunity of supplying products direct to the homes of my SME clients. They needed sand, aggregates, stones and other building material, but were busy with their businesses and couldn't supervise the kind of sourcing and transportation needed. I eventually applied for a loan from NMB to finance one dumper truck, with a view to filling this gap in the market, and buying more trucks at a later stage.

I established JB Holding Company in 2008 with the intention of providing transportation services for agricultural products and other goods. It is my mission to be a leader in specialised transportation within Tanzania, and East and Southern Africa, and in particular to serve women agribusiness entrepreneurs - a demographic which makes up 80% of our business.

To start with, I juggled both my full time job and the new venture. It was not an easy move. I was lucky to have the encouragement of my husband, family and friends, and in 2011 I finally quit the bank. Cash was tight, and starting the business would have been impossible without my personal savings and a loan from my employer against my salary and the support from my family.

I am proud of what we have achieved as I have had to earn the respect of the sector and to prove myself through the deals I have been able to make. Still a highly male-dominated sector, the transport networks make up one of the most important elements of a country's infrastructure, and I believe we need more women's voices in the space if we are to tackle poverty reduction and other social issues. This is about more than making money; it's about contributing to communities.

Our company has branched out to provide warehouse space and car hire services, with a variety of tipper and dumper trucks to cater for any order from 6 to 30 cubic metres. We have diversified our portfolio to transport agricultural products such as maize, rice, beans, sunflower, and potatoes, and have even purchased 10 acres of a 40 acre farm and begun pineapple growing. In the future we want to contribute to post-harvest loss management for smallholder women farmers in Tanzania.

The journey has not been easy, but I have never been one to turn away from a challenge. As many other businesses, 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic hit hard - our business revenue dropped by 50%, we had to significantly reduce our team through staff retrenchment and restructure our loan terms to ensure our cash flow and reduce the risk of defaulting on payments. These are decisions that take their toll. And the truth is that failure rates are high among startups, but you can't turn your back on your business everytime times are hard or money begins to trickle in rather than flow!

We have always been quick to diversify and adapt. We started a project to manufacture coal waste biomass briquettes to be used for domestic, institutional and commercial cooking in place of charcoal and firewood. Furthermore, we have always invested in technology to monitor our fleet of vehicles and improve our offer - these solutions are all ways to make our business more resilient to shocks and able to deal with the challenges in operations. It is also important to think broad and activate your networks when it comes to financing - loans are not the only option.

“A common mistake we often make as entrepreneurs is to overlook and take for granted those sources of capital that are around us and within our reach. Your friends, family, colleagues, neighbours and people within your social sphere

can be interesting sources of capital, especially in the early stages of growing a business.”

For the future, I see JB Holdings expanding operations to cater for agricultural products transportation, warehousing, and distribution services, and thereby to contribute to the post-harvest loss management for smallholder's women farmers of Tanzania and beyond. But gender inequality is still a significant global development challenge, and a barrier for women who run (or want to run) businesses. Beliefs and practices that treat women and girls as inferior block their access to resources and opportunities. I want us to break through these limitations. We are committed to sustainable community development, and want to see women at the centre of this. To other women running businesses, especially in sectors that are hard to break into, I say: don't be afraid of hard work, ask for support and dare to make decisions and to dream. We can't abandon our vision.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1 Diversify your business activities

Take up lucrative business opportunities with low risk and low decline rates. This not only helps to sustain your cash flow and liquidity, but also maximises profits, helps you hedge the risk of low seasons, and gives you a financial advantage over your competitors.

2 Know your motivation before you invest

The harsh reality is that there are high failure rates among business start-ups because entrepreneurs do not undertake research before investing and, therefore, have no clear strategy or goal. Before you take the leap, know what you are getting into and why.

3 Draw upon the expertise of others

In the course of researching professional advice, I met a CarTrack specialist who gave me the best advice. From then on, drivers, routes, mileage and fuel consumption have not been a problem to my transport business. Instead, I have managed to get more business and more profit with less cost in comparison to other transporters.

Sarah Sebetola

Purposefully marketing businesses forward

South Africa



Sarah Sebetola never thought she would lose her husband and be left running their brand development venture alone. Nevertheless, she found the strength to awaken the giant in her and continue pursuing their vision of providing essential branding solutions for other business owners.

Entrepreneurship was never a prominent thought when I was planning my future - a future I wanted to centre around growing other people's legacies. It never really occurred to me that I was able, that I too could defy the odds and take on this massive responsibility of being a wealth creator, a businesswoman, a mom, and now a widow. My husband (affectionately known as Simba) suffered from kidney failure and succumbed to the illness right in the thick of our happiest and character-building days. During the three years prior, we had passionately pursued our

vision of growing Tshepiso Branding Solutions - a brand development and management company offering strategic solutions that enable brands to connect, market, sell and build an engaged community of brand ambassadors in order to grow their own businesses. We exist to co-create value for our dream clients, because we know that as their brands grow, so does ours.

Having previously owned a reputable signage franchise, we decided to leverage our strengths, use the skills and experience learnt, and pour all our energies into our own legacy, called Tshepiso (meaning promise) Branding Solutions. We wanted a name with meaning, with our values centred around 4Ps: Purpose, People, Promise and Progress. During every business interaction, we've strived to live up to these values and our five star Google Reviews are proof that we're on the right track.

As a communication professional, I've taken the role of a Marketing and Business Development Lead that finds and nurtures prospects that often translate into our dream and loyal clients. Since Simba's passing, I've taken up the additional, strategic role of overseeing all business functions and outsourcing where necessary. The marketing position is a natural transition from my corporate duties where I held various roles centred around brand storytelling, which is what the solutions we offer strive to communicate - a brand identity and story.

Every single branding and marketing touchpoint strives to tell a brand story in order to connect with audiences in a value-driven and meaningful way.

Value always lies in knowing what our clients' pain points are and alleviating them effectively and efficiently. With this in mind, we saw an opportunity to integrate traditional branding with digital branding solutions in order to amplify brand recall on and offline. This is what enabled us to remain sustainable during the pandemic when there was no interest in signage, vehicle branding, and billboards.

We also focused on printing COVID protocol collateral such as masks, which are constantly requested to this day. It was amazing to see emerging entrepreneurs requesting our digital branding and marketing services to professionalise their brands, leverage their strengths, and take charge of their livelihoods.

Furthermore, we offered graphic design packages for startups, helping them build a corporate identity that would resonate with their target audience. The reviews we received were encouraging to say the least. The mounting recognition and success led us to receive numerous requests to produce e-commerce websites from people who wished to sell online while their brick and mortar operations were halted. Given that many of us could not operate as per usual, we had to be creative, and either adopt new innovations or get left behind. Thank goodness we didn't! We didn't come close to reaching our target, with profits going from hand to mouth. Yet, not once did we think of closing shop and going back to corporate. Our Why kept us going even when things fell apart.

I joined the WCW programme as a strategic empowerment and networking opportunity to build my knowledge capacity and confidence in myself as a budding entrepreneur. I ended up gaining so much more than that. I am so honoured to have been a part of the genuine sisterhood of ladies who were vulnerable yet strong, each with a lioness spirit that recognizes the value of hunting as a pack. Our virtual connections started with getting our minds fertile for what was to come. I can personally say that I'm constantly reminded of that lesson in personal mastery whenever I'm faced with an uncomfortable situation.

The different MasterClasses we undertook - from personal mastery to the goal-setting business model canvas, to the session on innovation, systematising your business and gaining access to markets - all empowered me to get my business in order and readied me to take advantage of inevitable opportunities. Opportunities need to find us ready if we are to move from just surviving to thriving! I am proud of the fact that I have been able to keep it together regardless of the load I am carrying. My heart is settled knowing that I am loved, held and powerful, and always humbled to know that I am living my purpose of being a beacon of hope and a fountain of life to those who doubt themselves like I used to.

For me, wealth creation starts in the mind, with knowing and believing that your dreams are valid, that your purpose

will always outweigh your average dreams and that fulfilling it is not a solo ride.

“It should never be lonely at the top because getting there takes a village of mentors, programmes such as WCW, and a burning desire to influence the world positively. It takes understanding the principle of seedtime and harvest time and that if you sow bountifully, you'll reap just as much!”

In the next five years, I'd like for Tshepiso Branding Solutions to be a respected and award-winning thought-leader in the branding industry, recognised for our impactful work that contributes to the success of emerging and existing brands. By then, the Tshepiso Brand should have a subsidiary under Tshepiso Advertising as we position ourselves to be active participants in the creation of South Africa as a Smart City. I would like for it to be a community-connected, socially aware and impact-driven entity that is intentional about contributing positively towards early childhood development, youth and women empowerment. I would like for us to have established partnerships with entities that share in our values, as we collectively evolve and build wealth for generations to come!

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1 Remember why you started

Wealth creation is a bumpy, character-building rollercoaster that will test you to the depths of your being. Remembering why you started will be your driving force through even the bumpiest twists and turns.

2 Be a shameless megaphone for your business

Make your business known to everyone you want to do business with. Be professional when networking, and present your brand in the manner that you want it perceived. Invest in it and take yourself seriously so your clients can too.

3 Network intentionally

Create a list of brands you'd like to do business with and be intentional about connecting with them. Be interested in their business model, follow up, ask for referrals, ask for testimonials, and showcase your wins on various platforms to get buy-in and cement your credibility.

Aishatu Debola Aminu

In constant search of opportunity

Nigeria



Aisha is a Nigerian Independent child, born in Kaura-Namoda, Zamfara State. She started her business career in the family business, while still pursuing her higher education. She now runs BIBI'S as a sole-proprietor, concentrating on importation of greeting cards, souvenirs, household and gift items.

I am perpetually on the move. I have been actively seeking opportunities and involved in business dealings since I was young. Raised by two merchants in Kaura Namoda, Nigeria, this comes as little surprise. My father was a highly successful trader of beans, groundnuts, and locust beans, while my mother boasted a Western education and experience working for firms like Taylor Woodrow, J. Allen, and Texaco before trading commodities in the weekly markets in our village.

Although it was my father who introduced me to business by recruiting my help to count his profits, it was my eldest sister who gave me my first real taste of entrepreneurship. After our father died when I was twelve, my eldest sister took over the responsibility for mine and our younger sister's education. Her unwavering support not only landed me a

certificate in Business Management in Community Economic Development from the United Kingdom, but also permitted my first strides as an independent entrepreneur by allowing me to sell small items that I imported, including bags, shirts, shoes and prints, through her stores.

In 1993, I used the lessons I learnt from my sister, alongside the savings from my little import business, to open BIBI'S – a retail shop located in Bayero University through which we sell imported greeting cards, souvenirs, household and gift items. Six years later, the shop was so popular that I opened a second branch in the same university.

I was not willing to rest on my achievements, though. Following a ban on some of my import products and a deep look into my future, I realised it might be more sustainable to start exporting, lest my business run out of steam. So, I branched out to exporting products in 2007, selling self-designed bed sheets, duvets, aprons and kitchen gloves, alongside baft fabric and Ankara prints made by a friend. We sold these locally during trade fairs and internationally in Sudan through a Kano Chamber of Commerce (KACCIMA) Trade Mission.

Always eager for ways to strengthen my business, it wasn't long before I felt the need to diversify again. This time, I decided to go with a food product, feeling that it would provide a more stable income than decorative household items. During a trip to the United States and United Kingdom, I saw that they sold corn kernels ready for popping. With the thought that this would do great in the Nigerian market, I learnt how to process these kernels and now use locally-grown corn to make BIBI'S Ready-to-Pop Kernels, which are sold in supermarkets in Nigeria and Niger.

Things weren't always smooth sailing, however. As my popcorn processing took off, I ran into a problem faced by many: exhausting my capacity. There is a certain point for every entrepreneur where further growth requires investment in infrastructure, but the problem is that such an investment must be made before the business has earned enough money to afford it. Faced with this dilemma, I opted to take out

a loan, using a plot of land I was fortunate enough to have as collateral. To my dismay, my business failed to grow as I'd planned and I had trouble settling the loan facility.

At serious risk of losing the land, I had to find a solution and do so quickly. I found not one, but two. The first entailed seeking support from the bank to restructure the facility which was eventually approved for a duration of 24 months, whereas the second involved raising funds through short-term contracts wherein I supplied items and services such as conference bags and venue decoration. Both solutions took a lot of hard work and sacrifice, but by God's grace, I was able to pay off the whole loan within 12 months. Unfortunately, gaining access to finance to further expand and improve my businesses remained a challenge.

On the personal front, I struggled with my first marriage where my husband at the time saw the progress and successes in my career as a threat. In the end, I had to make a choice between my business and that marriage, and whilst a deeply challenging decision to make, the positive result of that choice is visible today. Being a female entrepreneur has come at a high cost, but I see my achievements as worth the trouble. I have been in business for twenty-eight years, long enough to see my enterprise grow to employ six full-time staffers.

Along the way, I have dedicated my knowledge and experience to helping women cross-border traders (WCBTs) and young entrepreneurs - something I am immensely passionate about. Cross-border trading was how I got my start, but I was privileged to have a private car that I could use to bring products across the border. Few women share this privilege. I had the idea of formalising these women's trade activities stuck in my mind until I had the opportunity to help, first through the Kano Chamber of Commerce and now, through the Graça Machel Trust's New Faces New Voices (NFNV) programme. I have also acted as a mentor in various programmes such as YouWin! and the Tony Elumelu Foundation to help other women build their businesses.

I think it is critical to support WCBTs and young entrepreneurs because they contribute to both the regional and national economy, and more so, because WCBTs normally enter this business space to cover family responsibilities. As women entrepreneurs, we have to make use of our access, networks and privileges. I always tell my mentees that they have more resources available to them than they think. Even in access to finance, more and more financial products have low interest rates, such as grants and equity participation. We must use these for investment and expansion.

“It has been a gift to see my mentorship contribute to continued education and sensitization of women entrepreneurs about their obligations and the reduced risk that formalising their activities affords them.”

I have also delighted in seeing how the programmes have benefited women's ease of doing business. For example, the team I facilitate at NFNV-Nigeria is able to foster partnerships with UPS and presently enjoys a 50% discount and a 60% discount on domestic and international shipments, respectively.

In the midst of all my progress, I continue to keep an eye out for new opportunities. I received approval from NAFDAC (the Nigerian Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control) in September 2021 to move towards my next big step: expanding into coconut and sesame oil processing. I am also looking to acquire land to cultivate some raw materials for processing and grow BIBI's marketing footprint. God willing, I would like to see our products established as a household name in at least ten African countries outside of West Africa. With my keen eye for opportunities and my many years of experience, I know I have what it takes to make it happen.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1 Be prudent and manage your cash flow

Never spend above your income. If you take out a loan, make sure you use it to invest or expand and don't take out a loan with bigger down payments than your business can afford. And limit the amount of credit sales as much as possible. Businesses can and do fail because they don't get paid on time as it impacts your cash flow.

2 Build a strong foundation

Your customer relationships are the lifeblood of your business; make sure you prioritise them through high-quality, reliable supply, adverts and personal communications. And never compromise on quality.

3 Motivate your employees

And give them a good working environment. A happy, motivated employee delivers better performance and is more likely to stay with the business for longer, adding experience that money can't buy.

Stories of

Creating Wealth

Section 2 . **Risk Takers**

I know I matter and have great value to add. Even when my voice trembles, I am not afraid to use it for myself, for my work or for others. Even when I doubt myself or when my resources lack, I keep a mindset of plenty and continue to show up because I know that if I sow faithfully, I will reap abundantly.

Dimakatso Gloria Ramahlodi

Making miracles with Maledi Fresh

South Africa



Dimakatso is Managing Director and founder of Maledi Fresh, an agribusiness that grows, packages and distributes organic fresh produce. She started the business with just R500 in her pocket, but has nurtured its growth with grit and perseverance.

Early on, I learnt that you can build a million dollar company by hiring the right experts. I discovered this because I was once one of these experts. I worked as a food scientist in a company, for a man who in many ways was a mentor to what I do now. I realised that, just as he could be successful without having any technical expertise in food science, I too could run a business and outsource the skills I didn't have. Nothing was stopping me.

I started Maledi Fresh in 2010, making the decision when I was pregnant to use my four months maternity leave to test my idea. I knocked on the doors of restaurants and hotels and found that they were all unhappy with the quality of produce that they were receiving - I had validated the fact that there was a gap in the market, and straight away I began to source for them.

By the time I had to go back to work, I had to make a decision... Looking at my bank account, the answer was clear. In the short time of testing the idea, I had made a significant amount of money - I decided I couldn't stop my business. Speaking to my employer was a hard conversation. I asked to continue to work there whilst building my business, and got what I asked for: he allowed me to consult for the business and I had the safety blanket I needed.

For a year, I saved the money from my business and by the end of that first year, I had enough customers to quit and focus on Maledi Fresh fully. I opened a store to have an additional revenue stream. At first, the store didn't make any sales, but I didn't give up. I decided to look more closely at the value proposition, and that is when things changed around. I transformed the packaging to align with the ethos of Maledi Fresh - all organic, require natural packaging, and no plastic. I hung up my qualifications on the wall which sparked an interest from customers, and they started to ask me questions about nutrition. The shop began to flourish. I truly believe that when you invest in yourself and in your business, God will supply.

COVID was challenging, but I was determined not to panic.

At that time we were only supplying other businesses, but partnered with logistics companies to be able to deliver door-to-door. With everyone locked down, in the first three months we doubled our sales with everyone looking for healthy food.

I have faith, but I also believe in myself and I put in the effort. God's favour comes after I've done my work. This is all about mindset. In this regard, the WCW programme helped me a lot - I like to be behind the scenes, and I still have to affirm myself.

“But I have seen that when I share my story it affects people, and so I see that the story inside me is too great to keep for myself. If it can inspire others, even if it's uncomfortable, then I must share it. It can lift up someone who is in their lows. And so I have learnt to strengthen myself, encourage myself, and tell myself that I have favour. I can do all things.”

I was not always like that. I am considered a miracle baby. My mother was attacked when pregnant with me, and I was born at five months. The doctors didn't believe I would make it and I was a sick baby from birth. When my mother narrates the story she tells me that she was so unhappy because she wanted a chubby baby; I went to live and work for my grandparents. My grandfather was a businessman and made us do sales. Little did I know that I was learning to up-sell! At first, the rejection affected my self-confidence. Now I am grateful for my journey, and the fact that I know how the young women in the villages feel. Many have lost hope and think that all they can do is have children. I have to plan and help them, empower them with skills to build businesses like mine and take the opportunities in front of them. For example, the villages where they can't afford to use pesticides are where the organic produce is, but they don't understand the value of what they have. It is in the suburbs that they are willing to pay a premium. I provide farmers with water, and then buy back produce from them to show them their produce has value. Seeing their creativity and entrepreneurialism propelled is the most fulfilling thing.

My business is now focusing on growth, expanding from one to six hectares. My long-term vision is to have an area for packaging to send produce straight to retail stores from the farm. I also invested in three cattle (that have now multi-

plied to five), and we have over 50 chickens. We are currently selling free range eggs, and will sell free range meat. We will have an abattoir and dairy factory on the land that will serve the community, and empower young women there.

I have told myself I will never give up on this business. Making mistakes is fine and challenges are a lesson, and an opportunity to learn something new. I have to continue to come up with ideas for how to keep selling and keep growing. Women creating wealth is about women knowing their worth, their value, and ensuring that their contribution is being exposed.

So many women doing business aren't seen - but they are there. We need to show the world that we are already wealth creators. And for me, it's about more than wealth. I get so much from the work that I do, and this is a joy that money can't buy.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1 Don't go to your grave with your dreams in your heart

I hope that you try everything to make your dreams come true, that you use all that you have. We all have talents - you must take action, and once you take a step, things will come together. Never give up on your dreams.

2 Opportunities come from working together

All successful people come from working with others. I have learnt that opportunities come through collaboration. You can do more and serve more clients by working together as a consortium, and for example, buying together to get discounts. When people work in teams, they conquer.

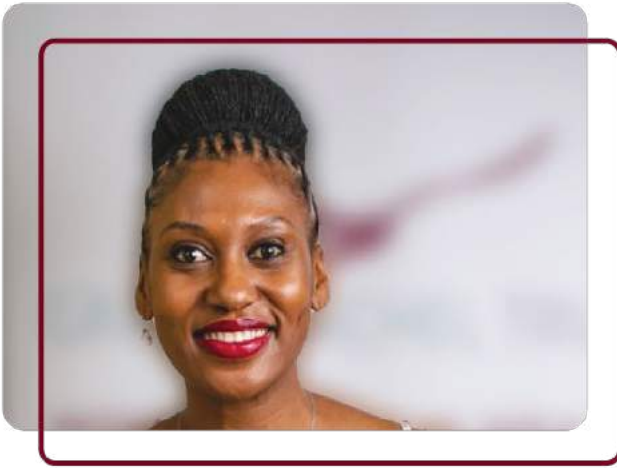
3 Ask for guidance

There is a solution to every challenge; if you don't have one, ask those who have been through this before you. I have people who support me for everything - guidance on strategy, finances, even personal issues. I ask other farmers, those in the same field or in industry groups that I am part of...and when all else fails, I ask Google!

Bridget Mawilah-Lebala

Stitch by stitch, inch by inch

South Africa



Bridget is the founder of Chambray Line Fabrics, which serves the market with fabrics, wallpaper and surface design, using contemporary designs, all carefully crafted to the highest standards. More than a fabric house, Chambray Line Fabrics is transforming South Africa's textile industry, one fabric at a time.

Looking back, it is unsurprising that I landed where I am now: founder of Chambray Line Fabrics, the first black female-led fabric house in South Africa. I spent much of my childhood helping at my family's general dealer run by my late grandparents KD & KE Mawilah, and my late mother Mac-gy Mawilah-Lebala. Ever curious, I asked a lot of questions and tagged along to supplier and industry meetings, growing my knowledge and passion for business.

But, business was not my only passion. As a child I had an eye for the finer things in life and sought inspiration and beauty from across the globe. By the time I reached high school, I had developed a deep-rooted obsession with ancient art, fashion, and modern decor, and thought to combine this love with the entrepreneurial DNA my family had instilled in me.

Armed with my creative eye and the desire to uphold my family's legacy in business, I earned qualifications as a tex-

tile designer and product developer and gained experience working at various of the leading fabric houses in South Africa. I was exposed to diverse decorators and interior designers who encouraged me to challenge the industry norm of white-owned fabric houses.

“Despite the significant influence of black culture and trends in the market, suppliers in the interior design sector have been and remain mainly white. I wanted to drive the much-needed change of black representation in the industry.

And so, after 13 years in the industry, I decided to start a business that appealed to South Africa's up-and-coming middle class.”

The outcome was Chambray Line Fabrics, a fabric house in Kramerville, Sandton that offers contemporary designs of fabrics, wallpapers and surface designs. These are sourced within and outside of the African continent and carefully crafted to meet global standards of excellence. Composed of three staff members, the fabric house is not only committed to serving its diverse clientele of decorators, architects, and interior designers, but equally committed to transforming the industry by demonstrating the infinite capabilities of the Black woman in this industry.

This journey of driving change has not been without challenges, the foremost being raising startup capital. As an eligible candidate, I feel a firm entitlement towards the public budget for assisting businesses. Yet trying to acquire public funding has been an especially tedious exercise, with close to no outcomes. There is red tape as a result of funds being squandered in other industries; and, I suspect that government institutions are not sufficiently clued-up on my sector, making them reluctant to invest.

Another challenge has been affirming the credibility of my business as a black run, woman-led enterprise in a predominantly white sector. I was the go-to person for many clients at previous jobs in white-owned businesses with a similar product offering, clientele and business model. Since starting my own business, most of these clients have neither purchased fabric, nor shown support for my venture.

In early 2020, I was preparing to launch my business in a showroom space that I had recently acquired with help from a funder. Unfortunately, I lost this funder to COVID, and this halted and distorted all of my plans. I ended up losing the space and found myself operating in flight mode, trying desperately to reset.

The reset came after I participated in the Women Creating Wealth programme that same year. Through the programme, I developed skills in personal leadership and people management; the former has empowered me to continue mastering my craft and keep my vision alive, even when the paw paw hits the fan. The latter has served me in managing clients, staff and suppliers, and fostering relationships with my peers from other sectors. The programme felt like a real business academy where I increased my glossary of business terminology and acquired new knowledge on alternative business strategies.

Additionally, the cohort permitted me to network, which has always been an important aspect in my line of business. It engaged with women from other sectors and learnt to see how the value chain could be explored beyond the boundaries of my industry. This has led me to source locally-made products from both my industry associates and other members of my fellowship, creating a value chain and collaborations amongst us. In these ways, I think I am fulfilling the ideal of wealth creation, which to me, implies adding value and creating opportunities for employment, education, partnerships, investment, support and preservation.

Ultimately, rather than dwelling on the ways in which COVID had foiled my plans or waiting for my products to be nicely sampled, the WCW programme encouraged me to find momentum amidst the pandemic; to pivot and officially launch my business nonetheless. I eventually did, with one of my clients, who invited me to share his newly-obtained showroom space. Our collaboration has been a win-win, as we divide costs and develop business together. We have both gained from my contacts, compiled over the years, and which has enabled us to grow in association with other industry players.

To date, I am most proud of my bravery; leaving secure employment to embark on the unpredictable journey of establishing my own fabric house. My plan for the next 5 years is to establish collaborative contracts with hotels, lodges, and restaurants in South Africa and the rest of the continent. As well, I am committed to reviving South Africa's textile sector, which was once a powerhouse of our economy. Shortly, I am embarking on the next opportunity to break barriers in our industry, by registering an Italian textile mill here in South Africa in partnership with my fabric supplier - this mill has over two centuries of experience and will level up my business as well as produce more jobs. This will be a one-of-a-kind textile mill as well as the first (and long overdue) black, women-led textile mill in the country. We have already registered the South African division and are ready to start as soon as we get the funding application approved.

In the meantime, I intend to continue occupying space in the industry and gracefully throwing down the rope to fellow women in the industry. One of the ways I am accomplishing this is by letting students from my alma mater shadow me for their practical exam. The first two have passed with flying colours, with one going on to become my assistant at Chambray Line Fabrics. While we still have a long way to go in transforming South Africa's textile industry, I know that passion is the best tool for success and that I have just the right amount to ensure that the sector continues to grow and thrive.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1. Do what the 99% aren't doing

You have to be willing to step up, and step into spaces where others haven't gone before, particularly where black, women haven't been represented. Not only are you taking advantage of a niche, but you are paving the way for others that will come after you.

2. Work smart

Be careful and strategic in identifying, creating and using industry networks to the advantage of your business. As they say, "Your network is your net worth."

3. Source and produce locally to build social capital

Finding partners and suppliers locally is one important way that we can support other African and women-led businesses. When we do this, products are immediately available and we avoid the bureaucratic customs processes, and we strengthen value chains in our own backyard.

Peggy Joy Ngwira

Giving up is not an option – our dreams are too important

Malawi



Peggy is a strong-willed lady who is passionate about her love for spirituality, family, ministry and her business. She gives time to the youth, with a WhatsApp class teaching others on entrepreneurship, and does motivational talks whenever the opportunity arises.

People begin their entrepreneurship journeys in different ways. Mine began in 2012 while working as a project administrator for the Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development (IRLAD) Project, co-financed by the World Bank. One of my roles was to supervise trips in the Lilongwe, Dedza and Salima districts. It was here that I

witnessed the lives of farmers changed through agribusiness farming activities. What captured my attention most was the transformation of the piggery farms in Dedza, from thatched houses with no lighting to iron-roofed establishments with proper sanitation and electricity. Immediately, I fell in love with agribusiness, particularly pig farming, and decided then to be an entrepreneur.

So, the journey began by purchasing land and developing it slowly before raising the pigs, and later processing them into value added products. I saw a gap in the market for sausages, which I had always had a passion for, and opted to begin processing sausages in my own kitchen. Eventually, I partnered with my friend Coenie and chose to expand to chicken and beef processing as well. In 2018, we opened the first Mothers Choice outlet where we process and sell fresh, processed and smoked meats. Our stock includes pork, beef, chicken, goat, sheep, fish, and quails, supplied to us by smallholder farmers who we train in quality assurance. As we speak, we have just opened a second outlet and currently sell our products in 8 other shops.

The idea to upscale did not come to me randomly, but rather during the Women Creating Wealth training programme in 2016. Here, I was introduced to the ten entrepreneurial competencies that every woman should acquire in order to be successful. Of these, the most important for me have been opportunity seeking, persistence, and goal setting. Since then, I have developed these skills and incorporated them into my daily lifestyle in order for me and my business to flourish.

As is typically the case, my business's growth has not come without trials. For one, getting a bank loan as an African woman entrepreneur in agribusiness has not been easy. Despite having an idea worth supporting, African banks want me to have fixed and tangible assets before releasing the funds; a demand I have had trouble meeting. COVID-19 has also hit my business hard, compromising some of my

sources of income such as the catering services and orders from my B2B customers. As well, it was challenging to run my business during the 2020 election period in Malawi, when national cash flow dropped and my customers' demand reduced by nearly a half.

Yet, through it all, my dreams of opening more Mothers Choice stores across the country and eventually exporting have kept me going. In turn, seeing my brand grow and earn its spot in the Malawian market have kept those dreams alive. I have invested all of my income in the growth of my business,

“so giving up has not and will never be an option, no matter what. No matter how tough life might be and regardless of the circumstance, I have learnt to stay resilient and to persevere, and that's what has kept me grounded.”

Since completing the WCW programme, my confidence and belief in my business alongside my commitment to growing my venture have surged tremendously. My persistence has never left me and has ensured that my outlet has stayed open throughout all the unending challenges. I am proud of having opened another sales depot and seeing my products sold in other outlets. Moreover, I take pride in using my position to uplift others through job creation and providing a route to market for smallholder farmers. By employing youth as staff in my outlets and working with smallholder farmers as my outgrowers, I feel that I am positively fulfilling the vision of wealth creation that the WCW programme instilled.

Five years from now, I picture Mothers Choice having a model animal farm where it rears its own animals and grows its own crops, including groundnuts, soya, sunflower, and maize. I also envision it with an abattoir for slaughtering, a state-of-the-art processing plant, and a shop front for wholesale and distribution. My goal, by then, is to permanently employ over 100 youth and women, while hiring 1000 others as temporary staff. The model farm will be a training school for all our outgrowers, and in doing so, will help maintain the quality meat that Mothers Choice promises. As more women continue to take agribusiness seriously in Malawi, I will be here to hold hands with them and to work together in building communities, changing lives, and uplifting Africa as a continent.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1 Always believe in your dream and stand by it

No matter what happens, keep it alive, believe in your bigger vision. Be resilient and never give up - even when it gets tough, your dreams are too important to give up on, so stay focused on your outcome.

2 Keep on searching for more opportunities daily

Even though the economy has been bad globally, it is important to keep looking for opportunities. Listen to what people are complaining about, and try to be a solution.

3 Learn to persevere

Perseverance is one of the most important virtues that an entrepreneur can have. Develop the resources to get you through challenges and setbacks, and keep your dream alive.

Betty Chilonde

From shy girl to fashion powerhouse

Zambia



Betty Chilonde started off by sewing clothing for her friends, then grew her business into Bulongo Clothing, a fashion house that has shown its clothing lines at major fashion events all over the world. She has since also started the Bulongo Incubator for Fashion and the Creative Arts

My path to success started when I was a little girl. I'm the second-last born in a family with ten children. My parents had a lot of dependents besides us, and sometimes it was difficult to stand out as an individual. It wasn't easy to express myself, and it was easier to keep myself busy with a book or doing music. Although I was originally a shy girl, a chance event in high school led me to joining the band MUVI POSSE. A good friend of mine belonged to the Radio 4 Fun Club - this was a time of no cell phones, no entertainment in the palm of your hand - so the fun club was a place where young people would pass time, and connect with artists and creatives. It was here we were invited to the studio by one of Zambia's happening musicians, Keith Mutale. I began singing some lines for the songs of an artist there, and to my surprise was called to shoot a video some weeks later. It became a hit and I became part of the band. This also proved to be a step toward owning my own fashion brand as I began establishing my look. I didn't have money to buy expensive dresses, so I looked to the likes of Miriam Makeba, Brenda Fassie, and our own Maureen Lupo Lilanda, and tried to design what I thought was fashionable for the stage.

Eventually, the time came to decide whether to continue with the band or to further my education. It was a very difficult decision, but my dad had retired and I needed money to pay for college. While I loved my music career, the fame that came with it didn't translate to money, so I knew I had to get an education. Still, my time with MUVI POSSE gave me a way forward. My friends and family wanted to buy clothes like those I wore in the band, so I borrowed my mother's sewing machine and started making clothes. I used some of the money I made to put food on the table and saved the rest. In time, I had enough saved to enrol into college and pursue accounting.

One major disappointment I encountered was that, after making dresses for family and friends for a while, many of them wouldn't pay the price I asked for, or took too long to pay. The business suffered and I was forced to face my fear of finding new customers. I knew that I needed to professionalise if I wanted to succeed, so I moved my business out of my home and into a small shop. This decision gained me exposure and new clients, and soon I was saving for my next big step. I figured with more knowledge, I'd be more competitive and able to make better quality clothes, and so I decided to invest in a fashion and design course.

“After my studies, I launched Black Forest by Bulongo Clothing, a brand that features luxury clothes and accessories made from locally grown and woven fabric. It is intended to revive the African dress culture to instill confidence and pride.”

Over time, the business became more robust and I now work with two seamstresses and a weaver to create my fashion lines. Our creations have gone on to be shown at major fashion events worldwide. I am proud to have started and managed a business for more than 10 years now, as well as getting on global platforms and showcasing our work at prestigious events such as the Paris Fashion Re-

ception, Roma Fashion Week, Zambia Fashion Week and many others.

When COVID hit things looked bleak - I had to find a different way of doing things. With my business model, people would come into the store and people like personal attention - having their measurements taken while I understand their needs. With COVID restrictions people stopped walking in. I had to pivot, and began teaching fashion to students online, and also used the time to go back to school to upgrade myself with a degree in Textile Design Technology - I graduated in May 2021, and am now doing a Masters.

Right now, I am focusing on rebuilding the brand and e-commerce. Shifting from tailoring and designing, to teaching and consultancy has been my way of staying relevant and keeping the business going. I realised the need for support for upcoming fashion designers, and so I started a community based incubator, Bulongo Incubator for Fashion and the Creative Arts, that supports them to get started. We offer shared workspace, entrepreneurial inspiration, business structure, and shared equipment for art business start-ups. Our focus is improving the creative sector, and getting young people into fashion from high school. There is a big gap that needs to be filled as most people with a dream to get into the industry don't have the technical know-how when it comes to mass production. They want to be fashion designers, but don't have the depth. Many young people focus on custom-made just like I did, but this is limiting. In the United States and Europe, bespoke fashion is very big business, but you have to be highly skilled and have the quality to serve this market. Without this you can't charge the same, and without consistency in your production, you can't mass produce. Many fashion designers need this reality check, and need support in finding their viable business model, building their marketing and merchandising skills. That is what I give them.

This has been so fulfilling - I am creating the bridge for young creatives that have no support, who in many ways, are like me when I first found the fun club. In my own business, I struggled to find skilled labour and to access financing to upscale my production. Artisans and other creatives in Zambia are stifled, first by their own families and then by the community. Everybody expects their child to be a doctor or a pilot. Art is considered to be for academically challenged individuals. I felt pained to see so much talent go to waste in young people, who just need support to thrive. They need a place where they can explore their talents and learn how to structure it as a business to make a living.

We are already running programmes and we have formally registered the incubator. We have funding from the British Council teaching circular design methods to reduce environmental impacts. Next, I plan to lobby the government to stop the influx of second hand clothes from the West - the so-called "salaula". It suffocates the industry and local designers. Whilst there are fashion schools in Lusaka, what is missing is an up-to-date fashion curriculum to truly prepare designers for industry and our incubator bridges that gap. We are looking at ways to connect with the government on this issue, and with other countries like India, to build a knowledge exchange. I see some recognition from the new government with a focus on developing smaller enterprises. This is a great opportunity and moment to speak out as creatives. I want us to really go big, be heard and seen - seen as contributors to the economy.

To me, wealth creation is critical, as wealth gives you strength and a voice. With resources, you have power and are able to have your say. Culturally, we see that women often don't have a say. So when we, as women, gather wealth, it gives us a way to get things done, to make decisions for our families and to show up in our communities.

Regardless of obstacles, I know I have what it takes to create a lasting impact on Zambia's fashion industry. I see myself as having a brand that will be recognized for quality, originality and consistency. Bulongo Clothing will be a steady employer that will encourage and embrace ideas, and I will influence policy makers through the incubator. This way we can preserve dress culture for our people, and grow the Zambian textile and art sector.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Look Back

Always review your past performance and compare it to the present. Assess what is working and what isn't.

2) Think outside the box

To survive, you have to be willing to change and pivot. Notice the gap that no one is filling. Business is not stagnant and you can't just stick to what you've always done - you have to be able to transform, to stay flexible, continue to learn and adapt.

3) Keep Track

Always count your money. Always! Never get too comfortable by allowing someone else to know more about the money in your business than you do.

Lina Nthokola

Building a livestock business against the odds

South Africa



Lina founded the agribusiness, LBE, in 2001, raising and supplying a variety of livestock to the market.

I established my business, LBE, in 2001 after doing a construction job for many years. Construction work was scarce, and I needed to find something else. I had always liked livestock, and so I said to myself, "why not try farming?" With that intuition and the decision made, I began.

There are many things that I have learnt through the years in business. But even having been in business for several years before joining the WCW programme, it was only then that I really learnt to see myself as a leader and entrepreneur. I have learnt about financial management, time management, marketing, teamwork... but most importantly it has given me a clear perspective on what it means to manage and own a business. Through the programme, I began to believe in myself.

These skills are crucial as the entrepreneurial journey is not easy - I am not ashamed to say that I have faced failures and financial challenges. Being an entrepreneur means re-

building yourself and finding your confidence again. I have had to learn the structure necessary for the business to actually thrive. For example, I used to sell ad hoc and then use it to get by; now I have learnt to structure my sales processes, and the importance of paying myself a salary and then investing the rest back in my business. I have started to use several channels for direct sales, including taking orders by Whatsapp, and even educating my customers to make orders this way.

When I joined the programme, I started a poultry business to operate alongside my existing livestock ventures. This has been a great addition to my business, and I am proud of the fact that I continue to push to reinvent parts of my business or take on new opportunities such as this. I continue to have big plans to grow my business and I am ready to face the challenges that come with this.

Nonetheless, over the years I have expanded my farm to six hectares now to make space for cows, sheep, goats as well as the new poultry business. We sell both high quality meat and eggs to our customers. When I started, it was just me but now I have hired three others and it is important to me to keep creating jobs. Eventually, I would like to export and to sell my cattle at auctions. I will continue to invest in my company - invest in more livestock.

COVID was very hard for me - I was building the poultry business, and had to find ways to break down orders to sell smaller packages to customers. That has been helping. I am also still thinking about the future and the potential new customer segments and channels. My mantra is to keep learning, keep learning. That is the route to growth.

When it comes to wealth creation, there are so many lessons. As African women, we should have money and we should help each other move up.

“When women entrepreneurs group together, not only do we gain support, but a bit of healthy competition is also good. It pushes you, forces you to prove yourself, to be the best version of yourself. This dedication will make us all better, and gives us confidence and willpower.”

The competition hasn't stopped us from building a sisterhood on this path - even with those who are in the same industry, or even own farms in the same area as mine! We learn from each other, help each other and where possible, we find ways to work together. When times are hard, these are the women who tell me I can't quit - our bond is so strong. With them by my side, I know I have to push hard, face my challenges and keep going. Going forward, I continue to be dedicated to establishing a great business, despite the challenges. My business will be more and more robust, and eventually I hope to reach markets beyond this country.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Work hard, be brave

Even if you face challenges, be brave and push on.
With hard work, the business will get stronger, and so will you. Push until you reach the place you want to be.

2) Ask for help

Never be too shy to ask for help. Believe me, people will give you advice and there are people all around you who can support your journey.

3) Collaboration makes you stronger, but don't be scared of competition

It forces you to be the best version of yourself when you work with others, and you can also find power in numbers if you group together.

Dembe Mudodzwa Tshivhase

Creating a farming empire

South Africa



Through Gingers Hub, Dembe Mudodzwa Tshivhase has proven herself to be a bright and resilient entrepreneur committed to increasing the visibility of women within the farming sector and serving her clients with healthy, quality and delicious products.

I took inspiration from my grandfather, Mr. RJ Dagada, when I decided to become an entrepreneur. Known as the “captain of the underdogs”, he was a popular farmer in his community who lived with his livestock in this plot. Through the time that I spent in his lot, I grew to enjoy being around nature and became fascinated by how we, as humans, can communicate with animals. Finding that I was rarely ever bored being around the animals and the farm, I made the decision to pursue my passion for the agribusiness sector.

I developed the idea for my business in April of 2017, after visiting a beautiful village in Venda, Limpopo called Mulenzhe. Seeing that people walked long distances to purchase meat, I figured out that they didn’t have any local suppliers and saw the opportunity for my agribusiness then and there. With a cycle of 300 broilers per month, I set up Gingers Hub, growing the boilers and delivering the meat to their doorstep. Today, aside from broilers, we offer foodstuff and vegetable crops as well with the aim of nourishing our clients with healthy, quality and delicious products and serving them with uncompromising integrity.

I was knocked down really hard at the beginning of my cycle. I had a wonderful production only for 200 out of my 300 broilers to be stolen. This was such a heartbreaking and demoralising moment for me on top of the prejudice I already faced as a female farmer, which my community discourages. It took time for me to recover, and unfortunately, to date, theft remains a huge problem for farmers on my side. Another problem we chicken farmers encounter is the climate. Chickens do not like harsh weather conditions. If it gets too hot, we witness high rates of mortality. The only solutions I found to minimise these threats was to tighten security and to acquire advanced sprays that cool the chickens down.

Most agribusinesses know that resilience is the only way to keep going because nothing is fixed and there is a lot of uncertainty. Anything is possible, but one has to have a lot of faith and hope. I’ve had to learn to push myself on a daily basis and grow momentum regardless of the turnout.

Giving up is not an option. Instead, one has to wake up with a sense of purpose in mind and have confidence in what they venture into.

For me, creating wealth means passing on skills to willing individuals to enable them to pass on the skills to other people as well. Women are givers naturally, and we possess so many abilities that whatever we touch multiplies. We are also nurturing, finding it easy to teach others and give them the proper guidance to make a success of their business. I am committed to creating wealth by enriching as many people as I can with the skills and knowledge that I have obtained from the WCW training. I will not only impart these skills in theory but teach them practically too so that they know how to run their farms.

My business has grown in so many ways because of the WCW programme. I've learnt strategies to make things work and I've adopted new skills that enrich my business in visible ways. I started at 300 broilers per month and now I raise 1500 broilers monthly. Additionally, I've incorporated new marketing strategies, including a website. The programme showed me that professionalism is the way to go and how improving the service in my business could be in my favour. Of everything I have accomplished, I am most proud of the way I've grown in the business and as a person. I am more striving and diligent. I place my best effort in all that I do and my confidence has been boosted. I have grown to a point where I no longer see every challenge as a threat but as a means to embark on a search for new solutions. I now enjoy working better than I did before.

The central vision I have for this business is more expansion, Godspeed. I would like to supply 10,000 chickens weekly someday. As it stands, I supply 1500 monthly, but as opportunity rises, I am certain I will be up for the challenge.

“I hope that one day, women realise that farming is for everyone and that we are able to have so much fun in this space. Despite our communities seeing it as taboo, there is nothing wrong with women wearing work suits and getting dirty. We have the right to stand up and create our own empires.”

Your dreams are valid even when you are a female farmer. Do what you love and see how it will love you back. I lit-

erally communicate with my livestock and we enjoy each other's company as I work. Tell me where else you can buy that!

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1) Share your wealth

Wealth is meant to be shared. When you give to others, more will automatically come to you. We grow as we enhance others and it brings so much life and fulfilment. My sister, Tshiwela, always teaches me to give from what I have, to learn more and to be of service. Wealth is for everyone.

2) Don't let society hold you back

As a woman, I have been told many times that female farming is taboo and that women shouldn't wear work suits or get dirty - but I didn't let that stop me. Don't let others' beliefs stop you either! Stand up for yourself and build the empire you desire, how you desire it.

3) Embrace diversity

God loves diversity, and the same is true with people - We can have different sources of fulfilment. Don't get stuck on one way of doing things or one single business activity. Venture out and diversify.

Mercy Chamwalira

Making my pharmaceutical business dream come true

Malawi



Mercy Chamwalira is a dedicated wealth creator and calculated risk taker; she started Mitch Pharmacy in 2012 with her small personal savings, and it has since become a growing and diverse business venture with a bright future.

There is a lot of pressure to get big fast and push growth, but the approach that I have taken to my business, building it alongside my husband Innocent, has been to let the business grow at its own pace. And it has worked. Mitch Pharmacy is still going strong ten years after we established it, employing more than twenty people and is part of a larger conglomerate. How did we do it? In a word: discipline.

The foundations for my approach were already laid in my childhood. When I was only eight years old, my father had passed away in a car accident, leaving my mother as the only breadwinner. I saw how much my mother struggled to provide for us, operating a small informal business. It made me work harder at school to avoid tough times in my adulthood.

Although I would have liked to study pharmaceutical sciences, a qualification in economics seemed the more sensible route. After this, I started working for a tertiary

education institution as a lecturer, but was never really happy there. After sticking it out for five years, things came to a head in a meeting with management where I raised issues of low morale. Their response was: "if any of you are unhappy here, then try next door." Realising this workplace situation would never improve, I decided to start my own business where things would be done differently. That had to be my "next door".

Going back to my original passion, we decided to start a pharmacy in Lilongwe, Malawi. Here again, discipline kicked in. We saved up to start the business with our own capital - not a big amount, but enough. Having a small amount to invest did result in its fair share of challenges, like low working capital for the first two years. Despite this, we didn't want to fund the day-to-day of the business with loans, and decided to let Mitch Pharmacy sink or swim on its own. Eventually, we established our footing and overcame our cash flow problems as the business grew and found stability.

In business you have to take risks, and we have taken many since we put our small savings into our dreams. But I think it's the balance between risk and discipline that has worked for us. My husband is a true risk taker, and I am very risk conscious; I weigh up various outcomes to make decisions. With my economics background, I have applied discipline in managing money generated by the pharmacy and embraced financial discipline and rigour. The decision not to withdraw more money than the pharmacy could handle gave us a solid foundation.

"The fact that the business continues to grow is a great source of pride. The business I started ten years ago is still standing today, it's growing at a pace that I'm satisfied with, and we have diversified in many ways."

The journey has not been without challenges. I have encountered multiple obstacles due to being a woman in a male-dominated industry. Women are expected to be the “supporting actors” in our society, and people have more trust in a business when it is run by a man. This has been hard, and I have had to fight to be taken seriously as a woman running a Pharmacy.

While COVID-19 was another deep struggle, business-wise it also took us to another level. We lost many loved ones, it was devastating in the community and I would never wish for something like the pandemic again. But making the best of a tragic situation, we were among the first to sell masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE). Today, Mitch Pharmacy has three branches, our number of employees has doubled in the last years and we are recruiting. Importantly, we have invested the money that Mitch produces in other ventures.

I am now the Managing Director for Mitch Investments Limited, a holding company with several growing businesses. I have realised my dream of starting a pharmaceutical wholesale business, Gateway Pharma, which is importing hard to find medicines from Europe to Malawi. This business is still in its early stages, but has potential and is growing steadily. We started Mitch Consulting, a public health consultancy, with funding for two major projects in the pipeline. My husband is the Technical Director, building on his background as a pharmacist and public health practitioner. This year he was able to leave formal employment and join the company full time.

Additionally, I have been focusing on making an impact and generating a passive income. We started a real estate venture - Area 43 Executive Apartments - with luxury apartments in Lilongwe that we rent out as self-catering, serviced apartments. We are currently fully booked! Lastly, I started MMC Consulting focused on business advisory, entrepreneurial training and coaching.

This last business was born from my time on the Women Creating Wealth (WCW) program. After being part of the program, I was asked to teach financial literacy to the next cohort and coached a group of agribusiness entrepreneurs. It means a lot to share my knowledge, and so in Malawi I began implementing entrepreneurship development programs. My first assignment was working with smallholder tea farmers in the Southern region of Malawi. I then got a grant to set up a farmer business school to teach business idea generation and management - through this project we

trained 3600 farmers in five districts in the central region of Malawi, all delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Going through the WCW program was eye opening. I learnt about pitching, networking and making the most of opportunities when they arrive. During the program I was connected with a Danish Pharmaceutical distributor looking for a collaborator in Malawi; I had my business plan ready and was seen as a credible partner. With them, I have been able to take on large scale projects because they absorb the majority of the financial risk. Together, with me as the local representative, we have supplied the Malawian Government, and projects funded by development partners such as USAID and the Global Fund.

I have learnt so much from these experiences, and I am always trying to move beyond my comfort zone and expertise. I have learnt that I don't need to know everything, but can build a strong team. In that way, I create something sustainable. To me, this is what wealth creation is about. It means going beyond me, and beyond my children, to have an impact and to create wealth that is sustained for many generations to come. It is about bringing a better life for many. It might take time to achieve such a goal, but I know my disciplined commitment is bound to see me through. And this is what I wish for other women entrepreneurs too: be disciplined. Put in the hard work when you start a business, spend with care, and take calculated risks. You need to set your business up for sustainability and to expand; doing so is critically important so we can see more women creating wealth.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Set goals and stick with them

Write down your plans for your business and the direction you want it to take. Then break that plan into short-term goals. Short-term goals are easier to achieve and, as long as you know where you're headed, each small goal you achieve will be a step in the right direction.

2) Identify opportunities

It's important to keep an eye out for new opportunities all the time, to be ready to make the most of them and take action when you determine that these will help you grow your business.

3) Take calculated risks

No one ever succeeds by never taking risks, but business shouldn't be a gamble either. So before making a decision, make sure you know what the risks are and then decide which risk is worth taking.

Stories of

Creating Wealth

Section 3 . **Tenacious Implementers**

My journey is living proof that there is no shortcut to success - that it takes focus, persistence and resilience to master one's craft, weather the storms and become genuinely believable.

Onnica Toko

Leading the way in the emerging biofuel industry

South Africa



Onnica is the CEO of Macluminium Trading, a company that manufactures biodiesel made from used cooking oil.

I was born and raised in South Africa. My profession was as an Electrical Engineer, and I worked in the private sector before setting up my own business, Macluminium Trading, a biodiesel producer based in Kroonstad, South Africa.

The idea for Macluminium emerged in 2016 as fuel costs escalated in the country. This led to the introduction of a

policy incentive that also aligned with the need for countries to reduce their carbon emissions. I decided to set up a biofuel company, drawing on my experience in the energy and electricity world - I wanted to contribute to and drive the development of this relatively new part of the sector, and to provide alternative fuel sources for everyday people.

Macluminium manufactures biodiesel from waste cooking oil, sunflower oil and soy oil. It is our mission to ensure that our clients have access to high quality, safe, reliable and cost-effective fuel. We are committed to this industry and intend to become a leading regional, national and global producer of biodiesel that satisfies the requirements of both the regulatory framework and customer expectations of availability and convenience.

Cooking oil is wasted and thrown away from households, restaurants and other outlets instead of being transformed into a valuable part of the green economy where biofuel is a valuable commodity. And there are benefits - for example, creating biodiesel with these so-called "waste oils" can extend the life of diesel engines because it has more lubricity than the petroleum diesel fuel, and fuel consumption and power output are relatively unaffected.

Being in an emerging sector is not without its challenges, especially as a woman entrepreneur in a white, male-dominated industry. In particular, it has been hard to access funding, but also to get access to feedstock, the raw materials necessary in the production of biofuels.

COVID-19 has also been hard - it has impacted the business mainly because we get the majority of our waste cooking oil from restaurants and supermarkets that were all closed during the lockdowns. It also made it near impossible to make collections.

Whilst all hard, it has forced us to adapt our business operations. We have looked into purchasing our own extraction

machinery, but are still in search of funding to help us with the purchase. In the meantime, we have partnered with BBI, which specialises in manufacturing, and have used their machinery to mill the sunflower seeds, soybeans and castor seeds from which we extract oil for the production of biofuel. We are also looking to hire more chemical engineers and youth to expand our team of 4, though this too is still in its piloting phase.

These challenges make me want to push harder. I am an entrepreneur because I want to be an example for the upcoming youth, especially black youth and black women. I want to show that it is possible to become an entrepreneur regardless of the challenges you may face.

“I truly believe that there is always a plan to overcome every obstacle you encounter. Presently, we produce 7000 litres of oil monthly, but we are set to maximise our capacity. In the coming 5 years, I would like to provide 3 petroleum or corporate companies with a monthly supply of 1 million litres each and secure a feedstock of roughly 1 million.”

One big learning for me on the journey, spurred by the Women Creating Wealth programme, has been on managing finances - I am not an accountant, but I have learnt so much about compiling and tracking my finances. I have even begun using the learnings on how to apply for business funding. For me, this is a key part of what wealth creation is all about - being in control of your finances so that you can invest in and grow your business. It is a process of generating and maintaining long-term income through multiple sources and creating the means for the next generation to access and utilise your wealth.

It also matters to me to give back to my country, and our world. Working in renewable bioenergy is part of a bigger mission to contribute to environmental protection and take climate change seriously. In countries like South Africa, we need to continue focusing on social and economic development, but we must do that while being thoughtful about the atmosphere, the environment and sustainability within our societies.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Giving up is not an option

It doesn't matter what age you are or what you've been doing until now. It's never too late to make it, you just have to stand up and do it!

2) Adapt in the face of challenges

Being a good business leader requires you to be flexible and to think outside the box. Some of the most creative solutions originate from challenges.

3) Be sustainable

The goal of wealth creation is sustainability. Ensure that your business practices and products contribute to social and economic development while also contributing to the well-being and longevity of the environment.

Phuti Mphelo

Finding purpose in helping others succeed

South Africa



After fighting the enemy within and undertaking a few unsuccessful ventures, Phuti Mphelo found her ikigai (sense of purpose) and was able to successfully establish an egg-producing company that is pushing economic growth and food security in Limpopo forward.

I have always yearned to have options and to make an impact in other people's lives. I studied to become a chartered accountant, believing this would be the best route toward generating wealth and positively influencing others. I found the corporate environment both challenging and highly educational; I also realised quickly that it did not allow me to make the kind of impact I desired, nor give me the options and flexibility I wanted. Through reading a ton of books and networking, I realised that owning a business was one way I could achieve my goal and create wealth in the process. So as soon as an opportunity to leave the corporate sector came, I grabbed it, and I am

grateful and happy to report that 11 years later, I still haven't looked back.

There is an African Proverb that states, "when there's no enemy within, the enemy outside can do no harm". As an African woman, the biggest challenge was how I saw myself and what I thought I could accomplish. In the early stages of my business career, my beliefs about myself and my abilities were not empowering, and resultantly, limited my progress and caused me to miss out on several opportunities.

Unsurprisingly, the first two businesses I went into immediately after leaving the corporate sector failed. However, I did not have the option to spend too long feeling sorry for myself. So I immediately sought help, noted down what I could have done better, took my learnings from those failures, and moved on.

Now, my husband and I run Mae Eggs, a layer-chicken operation based in Limpopo, that produces table eggs. We have a current production capacity of 3,000 layers and employ 4 people on a full-time basis. Our vision is to build a farming business that outlives us and leaves a positive impact on the communities we operate in. We aim to become an integral table egg producer in Limpopo in order to sustainably contribute to food security and economic growth in the province.

In the agribusiness sector, there are monopolies that control the price of inputs and access to markets. This makes new players mere price takers with no control over input costs, and heavily impacts the profitability of small-scale businesses as they incur higher production costs. The situation was created long before my time and the custodians of those systems will do anything in their power to maintain the status quo. This compelled me to build strong networks within the sector to collaborate as much as practicable and to focus on my outcome without being distracted.

Fortunately, our big break came as a result of COVID-19. We gained a corporate client whom we had been pursuing because some of their regular suppliers had delays in getting the supplies into our town due to the restrictions imposed during the first national lockdown. I was also inspired during this time to build an online business through which I could exercise my passion for teaching and helping others.

Thus, following the words of the late Zig Ziglar (“You will get all you want in life, if you help enough other people get what they want”), I formalised my coaching consultancy where I assist women to shift their views on money in order to consistently make more of it and create wealth.

Leaving an inheritance for my children and children's children is, to me, the essence of wealth creation. Securing the good health and happiness of the generations that follow is the only way to ensure that the wealth we create is sustainable and enduring.

“Therefore, I take care to ensure that the types of business I am involved in are capable of outliving me and transforming lives in ways that are positive and impactful.”

We women are typically the primary caregivers in our homes and in those of our extended families when necessary, meaning that our actions and our resources tend to affect many other people outside of ourselves. It is, for this reason, that I opine that women should be active facilitators and participants in the creation of wealth.

I take great pride in the fact that, despite the many challenges, both of my businesses have continued to grow year after year and serve increasingly more people, year after year. I am also proud to have completed the Women Creating Wealth programme, whereby I found my sense of purpose. With it, I've gained the courage to combine what I love, what I'm good at, what I get paid for, and what the world needs; in other words, my passion, profession, vocation and mission. The programme also taught me to create systems that have enabled the business to operate effectively even when I'm not around. We now have contracts with employees that highlight their roles, creating a culture of ownership and accountability within the team.

Furthermore, we have automated as much of the business as possible, especially in the areas of administration, accounting and record-keeping. Since we deal with livestock

and eggs which are perishable, being on top of the numbers is extremely important so that we monitor performance and fix problems as soon as they become apparent. Key processes are documented and shared with employees to ensure continued operations and avoid undue reliance on certain members of staff.

In the next 5 years, my business will have at least doubled in size from 3,000 layers to 6,000 in active production, which means we will employ and transfer skills to more people. My hope for female entrepreneurs in my sector and country is that they see the endless possibilities around them and take pride in the fact that they are contributing to food security and employment creation, and therefore, giving other people the dignity of being able to make a living for themselves and their families.

As part of my efforts to create wealth, I will continuously develop myself and refrain from the fear of asking others for help or information. As always, I will seek to make a positive impact, to always encourage and inspire those whom I encounter. As my business grows and as I generate more wealth, I will be adding to the number of positive role models for those coming after me, showing them that it is possible to build a business from nothing and that every failure is merely an opportunity for learning in disguise. Inspiring others to have faith, love life, and change lives is how I will know I have fulfilled my dream from all those years ago.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Belief in yourself

What you achieve is limited to your beliefs about your abilities. Wealth creation is a mindset, so if your thoughts about wealth are limited and negative, your wealth creation and success will be so too.

2) Make your wealth sustainable

Make a committed decision to do whatever it takes to learn how to earn, keep, grow and protect your wealth. Unsustainable wealth is not wealth at all. Be humble enough to admit when you don't know and ask for help from others who have successfully grown and protected their wealth.

3) Create a facilitative and supportive environment

Be protective of what and who you allow into your space. Walk away from anything that does not support your wealth creation goals and surround yourself with a strong, positive and supportive network to carry you when challenges come.

Adelia Nqubuka

The future of construction is female

South Africa



Adelia considers herself a natural-born entrepreneur. She founded Adelia Creations Enterprise in 2016, specialising in building, construction and civil engineering.

I didn't choose entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship chose me. This is what I have always said and looking back on my story, it still rings true. I was pregnant and completely inexperienced in the field when the idea to start a business in the construction industry first reared its head. Five years later, Adelia Creations Enterprise is still going strong, inspiring other young people to chase after their dreams. Based in Orange Farm, Johannesburg, we specialise in building construction and civil engineering and offer services in building, plastering, painting, maintenance and renovations for residential spaces, schools and offices.

I have grown a passion for construction and working in a male-dominated industry, but my trajectory has not been easy, laced with the common fear of challenge.

The COVID pandemic came right when I was participating in the Graça Machel Foundation's Women Creating Wealth programme. It introduced me to a group of exceptional and phenomenal women from whom I have learnt a lot and with whom I have nurtured dear and supportive connections, some of which have flourished into business collaborations. I grew immensely through the programme, which helped me to not merely grow my business but lead it to thrive! We have since been getting business. Implementing the learning from the programme has also enabled us to think like businesswomen and grow an asset of value.

I believe the future is Female. Entrepreneurship is never easy, but one should know that giving up is never an option. WCW gave me the courage to keep on going and encouraged me to applaud other women's successes. We must be willing to create a ripple effect, imparting the knowledge and skills we have secured to other women.

“We must not be intimidated by each other's achievements, but rather praise and highlight them. After all, the cake is big enough for all of us.”

I believe that in the next 5 years, Adelia Creations Enterprise will make a name for itself as one of the most well-known construction companies in South Africa. With our own office space, we plan on creating job opportunities and contributing to our national economy.

I highly recommend that my fellow female entrepreneurs take part in programmes like WCW. We can never stop learning, nor should we wait for the government or funding to use what we have and be a supportive structure for each other. Be your own source of inspiration and greatest supporter, and always uplift others and share the information you possess.

My pride in myself lies in my commitment and dedication as a young woman to continuously strive and persevere through every challenge and every shut door. I have re-

cently been appointed as one of the preferred suppliers for Capital Land Property Management. I have also recently graduated from the Rand Wander Foundation.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Choose collaboration over competition

When I was participating in the Graça Machel Foundation's Women Creating Wealth programme, it introduced me to a group of exceptional and phenomenal women from whom I have learnt a lot and with whom I have nurtured dear and supportive connections, some of which have flourished into business collaborations.

2) Support other women

Be willing to create a ripple effect of success by imparting your knowledge and skills to other women. Don't be intimidated by their achievements. Rather praise and applaud them.

3) Be committed and dedicated

Entrepreneurship is never easy, but you must know that giving up is never an option. Strive continuously and persevere through every challenge and closed door.

Mapula Kgosi

Serving the community's daily needs

South Africa



Operating from Soweto, Mathibe Manufacturing is a medium sized business with big aspirations. Mapula founded the business after spotting several gaps in the market to meet the needs of communities.

Looking back at my family, I see entrepreneurship as a gift I was born with. My grandmother, nicknamed the King of Kheebas, was a seamstress who used to produce dresses for the ladies in the community, while my parents were both self-employed. My father used to operate a carpet fitting business and my mother used to crochet and sell tablecloths with cotton. At the tender age of 14, I sold ice lollies to my peers and later upgraded to selling soft goods

to the community. Though I did not realise it at the time, I was beginning to nurture my passion for selling and running a business.

After completing my matric, I stopped selling soft goods to focus on acquiring a diploma in marketing. Upon graduating, I began working as a salesperson and realised that I could use my energies to establish my own business. During a visit to North West province in early 2000, we were forced to travel 15km in order to buy packets of ice. This alerted me to a gap in the market, and I used the little money I had to purchase a small ice machine. With it, I started a business on the side, making ice cubes and selling them to local pubs. The business started to grow, and as it did, so did the community's support.

Today, aside from being the leading ice manufacturer and distributor in Soweto, Mathibe Manufacturing also sells firewood, charcoal and briquettes food for indoor and outdoor fireplaces, bomas, braaing and cooking. We also offer tailor-made gift hampers and produce tissue paper rolls using virgin and recyclable paper. The company was named after my paternal grandmother, Mathibe.

We have ambitions of venturing into planting our own trees in order to produce other wooden products from them. Currently, we source our firewood from a farm in the North West Province or buy them from people who harvest. We aim to use the bark for leather and sawdust for firelighters, while also producing wooden ornaments. However, concretising this has not been easy. We have tried to liaise with a number of forestry organisations that have the skills and expertise but have still not succeeded in getting assistance from any of them. COVID-19 has also added further obstacles, making us lose a large portion of our clients as most of them operate in sectors that were stalled or entirely shut down by the pandemic.

While the business has yet to make progress with the former, I can confidently say that we have overcome the brunt of COVID. I owe much of that to the Women Cre-

ating Wealth programme, where I learnt to be innovative and to always think out of the box. After learning how we could recycle the waste from our current products into other products, we expanded our line of products to include firewood and firelighters produced using the sawdust from the trees. By introducing new products to the business, sourcing new customers and relying on our existing customers for referrals, we were able to overcome the problem of COVID.

Hearing motivational stories from the WCW committee and the outstanding women on the platform has been instrumental in helping me persevere. These success stories have motivated me and given me the strength not to give up. Moreover, being a part of the Graça Machel Trust has shown me that collaboration is truly the most important tool in this day and age because teamwork is always bound to yield good results and assist one in growing their business.

Likewise, the programme taught us techniques to sell in a bigger way and specifically through e-commerce. We have a Facebook page titled "Dilek-K Firewood" that was designed specifically for firewood and which redirects clients to our website, where they can see our other products. It also encouraged me and the rest of the Mathibe Manufacturing team to unpack opportunities in the business that we were unaware of, namely supplying firewood and firelighters. We are very proud to have introduced this product with guaranteed functionality which has been well-received by our customers. As well, I am proud of having taken part in the WCW programme and witnessing all the success that has followed.

"I define wealth creation as creating a legacy that will be remembered for many years to come. I consider women's role in the collective efforts to generate wealth to be creating jobs for the community and identifying opportunities that will be of benefit to others, as well as transferring skills so that others may also sustain their families."

Fundamentally, wealth creation is about helping others transcend poverty and elevate their socioeconomic standing.

For this reason, our long-term goal is to plant trees of our own, specifically macadamia trees and wattle wood trees, using a team of ladies. Both the ladies and I will need to be trained in this by someone with the knowledge and expertise. There are many women within our community who are available to work - it is merely resources that are limiting us from pursuing what we want. We could produce so much more with access to our own wood, and so, I will continue to court forestry agencies to see this dream fulfilled. Additionally, I would like for women entrepreneurs to be given more skills and not be discriminated against.

Lastly, I intend to transfer the skills I have by teaching other people how to make alternative products from firewood waste. With this, my legacy of wealth and empowerment is surely certain.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Commitment and not giving up

It takes immense commitment and personal sacrifice to sustain a business and lead it to success.

Be committed and do not give up. You will only see success if you persevere through the challenges.

2) Collaboration is key

People grow best together. Look for opportunities to collaborate with others in order to exchange skills, knowledge and resources for mutual benefit.

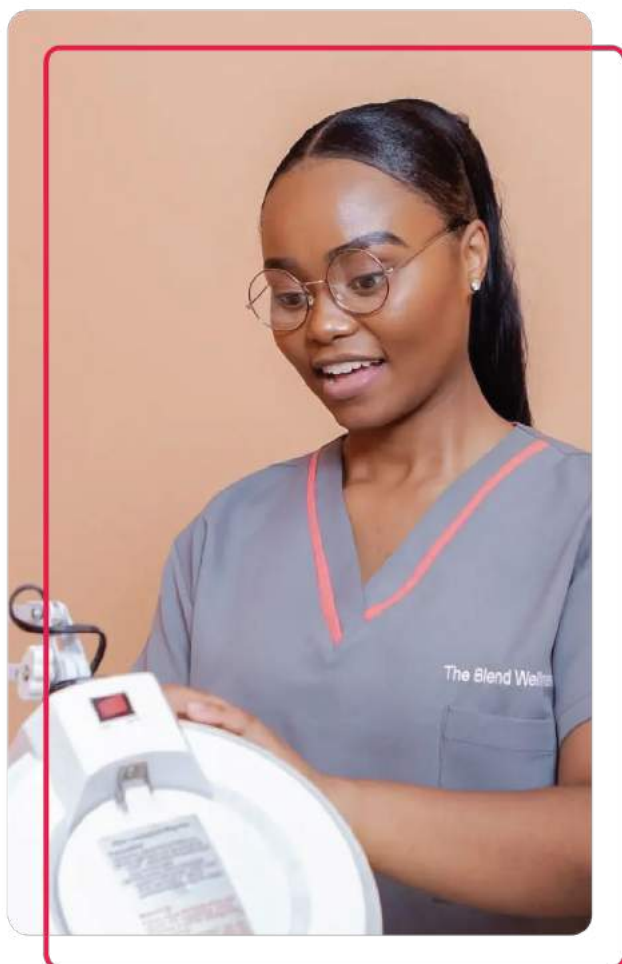
3) Focus

You can face many distractions and obstacles as an entrepreneur but the key to overcoming these is focus. Stay focused on your goals and growth, and they will follow.

Gugu Masondo

From Spa Van to Mall of Thembisa

South Africa



Gugu is founder of the Blend Wellness, a holistic spa innovating within the spa industry and pioneer of employing “Spapreneurs”.

It's been hard to have a dull moment since opening The Blend Wellness. Over the last half-decade, I have seen my small idea for a holistic spa and medical aesthetics centre evolve into a leading and innovative powerhouse in the industry, providing invaluable educational and networking opportunities and promoting the value of the spa experience in South Africa. With an authoritative but fresh voice, The Blend Wellness has fostered professionalism and growth through brand collaboration and close relationships with other renowned spa companies.

It was in 2017 that the business idea first came to me and drove my efforts to become a qualified beauty and aesthetics therapist. I enrolled at The Pyramid School of Beauty in Johannesburg, gaining vast knowledge and skills that were only further polished through my subsequent experiences working and volunteering at various renowned spas across the country. My 600+ hours of volunteering made me proficient in providing thorough skin care diagnoses, as well as performing a range of massage techniques and other spa therapy treatments. Moreover, they gave me the courage and self-belief to start my business despite having only 1 mobile plinth and needing to use towels from school to administer weekend house calls.

In March 2020, my business completely transformed into a fully-equipped mobile office. Using a spa van gave a competitive advantage over other mobile spas in the industry today. As business went on, I wanted to develop the capacity to offer clients a variety of skin and body solutions. To do so, I knew I had to stay on top of my game and keep up to date with the happenings in the industry, equipping myself with all the latest technologies and specialising in a number of advanced treatments. As a result, The Blend Wellness now offers advanced skin and body treatments such as Vagacial Therapy, Collagen Induction Therapy, and Chemical Peels. We also administer IV Infusion Therapy (IV drips) in collaboration with Dr Ruan, on top of being a full house beauty spa offering massages, facials, nail treatments, and eyelash treatments. Like this, I have achieved my goal of being beyond a “typical” spa.

Taking the business from a spa van to a mall has been a game-changer for me. Having permanent employees and students coming to do their hours at the spa has been especially humbling, recalling the early days when I was finding my own footing in the industry.

“I have never been handed out anything for free, having to work, sweat and cry myself to sleep in

order to see my idea come to fruition. That is why I appreciate every little milestone. Not receiving funding didn't stop me from dreaming, rather it showed me the importance of having a solid pitch."

I've had to pitch for my business countless times, giving me a particular knack for it that has won The Blend Wellness a total of 5 monetary and non-monetary pitch prizes. Undoubtedly, pitching is one of the most vital tools to an entrepreneur's skillset.

Being a member and graduate of the Graca Machel Trust's Women Creating Wealth programme has been the best experience for my personal development and building entrepreneurial and networking opportunities. Through the programme's masterclasses and training sessions, my business grew from generating no profit to becoming strategic and escalating its growth. As challenging as it may be for small enterprises, the programme has shown me that proper planning is what sets a business apart. Without WCW, I would not have been able to get the spa to the next level.

I want to be known as a game-changer because I enjoy innovating and coming up with out of the box ideas that meet clients' unmet needs, provide solutions to existing problems, and create value in the process. Thus, I plan to multiply the spa vans and buses, upskill more therapists and branch out. We also want to invest in formulating our own range of The Brand Wellness products and develop a system for developing spa business in South Africa. We have already made strides on the latter by initiating a system of employing "spa-preneurs" in place of full-time staff.

I am encouraged by extraordinarily successful people who, on their way to success, are very content and honest about their journey. I learn a lot from such people about the value and means of creating wealth. There is a path they had to endure and pushed through adversity.

Such stories always motivate me to be the best version of myself daily so that I can proudly share my story of adversity with others. Amidst the success I've amassed, it may be hard to imagine all the obstacles I have faced along the way, but I assure you that there have been many.

My ambitions were initially in biomedicine but financial woes prevented me from completing the degree.

After, I earned an aviation qualification from the Academy of Aviation but struggled to find work. Quitting was never an option though, and I knew I was bound for success, so I took my third shot and studied somatology. I knew that if I excelled academically and gained plenty of experience, I would be able to open my spa once I graduated. I did just that.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Work hard

Don't expect to have things handed to you for free. You have to put in effort into your business in order to succeed. The more you sweat and work for it, the more you are able to appreciate every little milestone.

2) Develop a solid and convincing pitch

Not receiving funding didn't stop me from dreaming, I've had to pitch quite a number of times and won about 5 pitch prizes, some of which were non-monetary.

3) Endure

Most success stories include episodes of adversity and obstacles. Strive to endure and be the best version of yourself daily so that you can share your own story of adversity proudly.

Hellen Tusiime

From impacted, to impactful

Tanzania



Hellen founded The Hope Art Fact Designers after losing her job, and it is now a growing tailoring company with a growing number of employees and with a vision to impact generations to come.

After losing my job in 2003, I started a small business selling flowers. I saw a potential in manufacturing, even though I had only one machine and one employee. Determined to be my own boss, I started The Hope Art Fact Designers, a small company supplying and selling home commodities, as well as tailored industrial and school uniforms and custom apparel.

The market was incredibly open then, but I found the progress hindered by my limited knowledge of business. Thus, I enrolled at the University of Dar es Salaam in 2008, earning a Diploma in Entrepreneurship. With the knowledge I'd gained, I was looking to expand the business, purchasing a second machine and increasing my total staff to 50 workers. However, the business collapsed as I failed to run the business effectively.

Hell-bent on seeing my business succeed, I enrolled in another course: the Graça Machel Trust's Women Creating Wealth. Here, we unpacked theories and garnered skills in managing a business, growing streams of income, and creating opportunities for business advancement. The rewards from the training show in my business today! The Hope Art Fact Designers has grown into a mid-sized company with a growing staff of 19 and an annual turnover of 800 million Tanzanian (TZ) shillings. This is a large leap from our previous turnover of 100 million TZ shillings, and I am looking forward to enlarging our staff to 100 employees and achieving a yearly turnover of 1 billion TZ shillings by 2025.

I have come across a lot of important learnings throughout my journey as an African woman entrepreneur, these learnings enabled me to weather the crisis of COVID-19, which discouraged most of our clientele from purchasing anything from us and caused a near 55% drop in our business. We had to alternate strategies and shift to other businesses in order to cope, including manufacturing washable masks.

Using the competencies introduced to me by the WCW programme, I was able to organise and sustain my business, and even see a 60% growth in our revenue despite COVID. Ultimately, the pandemic has left me with the powerful lesson that challenges are prime for unleashing idle potential and opportunities and reinforcing our commitment, as entrepreneurs, to our businesses and towards wealth creation.

“To me, wealth creation entails opening doors for others, granting

others access to the resources you possess, and nurturing different talents with the aim of maximising their potential and their productivity.”

When you help people to flourish and utilise their strengths, they are inherently more motivated and productive. Higher productivity yields greater outputs, and eventually, more wealth.

As time goes by, I would like to see my business grow by creating a succession plan that will give young women the opportunity to realise their full potential in leadership and management. After all, we know women make exceptional operators.

My hope for female entrepreneurs is that we are able to unite, share what we know, and uplift each other to do better. I would also like to see government and financial institutions invest more in education about financial management so that borrowing can be made easier. There are so many promising and capable young entrepreneurs whose only barrier is lack of funding. If we can make knowledge and capital more accessible to all, then we are sure to see our economies thriving more than ever before.

I am committed to continuing to spread wealth by aligning a better system of work and involving each employee in the execution process, which will increase production. I also intend to impart my technical know-how to young entrepreneurs and aid them in maintaining their territory and shares of the market. As time goes by, new things are emerging and technology is changing each day. I will make sure that systems and processes are put in place that will suit the person intended and that will pull the working spirit of the person. Through each of these acts, I am sure to impact others and fulfil my vision of creating a better life for all.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Don't give up

Regardless of the situation, entrepreneurship is about perseverance.

2) Pursue every opportunity

When an opportunity arises, pursue it to the very end and leverage it as much as you can.

3) Remain focused on your goals

Keep going, keep pushing and move forward towards your goals until you have achieved your desired situation.

Fannie Gondwe

Planting seeds of change

Malawi



Fannie is the owner of Perisha Agro and Packaging, an agribusiness focused on a variety of produce and hiring 100+ people in their mission to empower smallholder, women farmers at the grassroots level.

Throughout my life, the words of my late mother have kept me going even during the most difficult times: "Listen and remain positive." I believe that it is this attitude that has propelled me from being an employee to an employer. I am the proud owner of Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise, an agribusiness focused on multiplying the seeds of orange-fleshed sweet potato vines, cassava, groundnuts and soya. I currently hire 12 full time employees, and more than 200 casual worker farmers each year across two districts: Lilongwe and Kasungu. With processing and extending our farming land, these numbers have been steadily growing over the years.

Both my parents were farmers, and my father was a seasonal farmer. He made sure we were getting involved at a young age. He had a small piece of land, two acres, so we always went there at the weekend and with each harvest, my sister and I got a bag of beans, or other produce, that we had to sell to customers. What we earned was our own money, to do with what I wanted. Straight away it taught me that farming is business.

I fell in love with the planning and hard work that went into farming, and this passion grew in my secondary school years. Despite this, my dreams of becoming a business owner in the agriculture sector was discouraged by my friends; it had these connotations of being for old, uneducated people, and being risky and unpredictable. My dream dwindled, and I did a business degree and ended up becoming a finance person. I had an excellent, well paying job as a Finance Manager, but every time I returned home, I would get flooded with all of the amazing feelings and memories of farming and how it had made us who we were as a family.

Eventually I had to follow my passion, and I started my own business in 2012 - a small-scale farming project. In 2014, I became a full time entrepreneur, cashing in my pension money to buy 120 hectares of land and a tractor. The Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise was born.

It was not a smooth ride - nothing was moving and I began questioning myself...several companies wanted to hire me on, but I persevered. Eventually, in 2017, and with the WCW programme, I started to gain confidence and really build my strategy and business plan.

We started out just doing primary agriculture (seed multiplication), but from 2019 we moved to also processing flours - cassava, fermented cassava, orange maize, sweet potato - focusing on foods that would impact nutrition.

We weren't well known when COVID came, but we still tried to penetrate the market. We started with those

customers that were already showing an interest in our processed products, and also on gaining access to larger value chains – for example, through the government to supply public institutions like orphanage centres. We targeted the meat production and fish industry who use high quality starches as tenderisers, or as a binder for feed. With the pandemic still going, in 2021 we started to train the farmers to bake, and we sold to primary schools in the community and to rural markets.

With the move from primary agriculture to value addition, we are now trying to secure international markets - there is a need for our products in the SADC and East Africa region.

I am super proud that I migrated from being an employee to an employer. I could easily have continued in my comfortable life, but I took the risk.

“One of the best days of my life was when I built a house for my parents with the farming proceeds; it was my way to pay them back for their years of hard work. As a mother myself, I am also proud to be standing tall and passing on my father’s love for farming onto the next generation.”

The greatest challenge is continually exploring funding streams. Equipment is expensive, but the right equipment can help save costs in the end. I have to stay on top of the new farming technologies and good agricultural practices to maximise the quality and quantity of my produce. I am also planning for the unexpected by diversifying to safeguard our harvests from extreme weather due to climate changes. In addition, and for women-owned businesses in Malawi in particular, we are not widely supported.

Through the WCW programme, we have learnt to have self-confidence, seek out information to help you create informed goals and plans, and to find support in each other. I have even partnered with one of my WCW colleagues from Uganda who is also in flour processing.

For me, creating wealth is another level of doing your business - it's an elevation, a step further. You can't create wealth if you are just doing the same thing everyday. Wealth creation is about growth and expansion, and instead of making money for just me, it is about my children, my community, my country.

As we explore new markets, we have attracted significant investment. We have won three grants in the past three years, all to invest in upscaling our business - building compliant office space and worker facilities, a solar dryer, a drip irrigation system. We have funding to hire and build the capacity of more farmers, and to convert them from growing tobacco to becoming full crop farmers. We are helping them maintain their livelihoods, and they are an integral part of our process and our growth. I can't do this without them, and our business gives them access to markets and supermarkets.

I have achieved a lot, but I am far from done. I want to expand to cultivate on our full 120 hectares within the next five years. I have ideas for how to preserve the land, and diversify to bee farming and maybe agroforestry. Importantly, I want to build the community where I can - I see the business creating more than 500 jobs for Malawians, and will target youth and women. I want them to be empowered, and to come together to create wealth.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Listen and remain positive

My mother's words still guide me, and I hope they guide you too. Staying attentive to opportunities and making the most of them will get you far.

2) Be persistent

Work hard, set goals and most importantly follow your passion. You can take the easy and comfortable path, but if you have a passion inside you, you must follow it.

3) Don't wait to grow

Entrepreneurship is not only for mature people - I started late, but you can be an entrepreneur much sooner. You have to have passion, you have to love what you do, but start as soon as you can.

Mmatlou Mabitsela

Taking ownership of the value chain

South Africa



Mmatlou began establishing her own eco-green farm in 2017, with a focus on pig breeding but actuating across the value chain from production, to processing and producing biogas from waste products.

When I started out, I didn't even know what a "value chain" was... and now I am positioning myself to play a role across the pig farming and production value chain with the business I have built, Bomunu Farms.

I established Bomunu Farms in 2007 and began operating in 2017 from Polokwane, South Africa. We breed pigs, and sell some to abattoirs, but also process them ourselves to sell as fresh pork. We supply fresh pork meat to local

markets. I have always been passionate about pig farming, production and processing, but also about finding ways of making the most of the by-products of pig waste. At Bomunu, we are finding ways to turn these by-products into biogas, and green energy production is one of our primary objectives. We also produce chicken feed and organic fertilisers from these by-products.

Before this, I was a teacher by profession, and I've also worked with a variety of non-profit organisations, but I always knew I wanted to get into pig farming. I was exposed to this work at a young age, living in a rural area during apartheid. I was under the care of "mummy", who was a white lady that used to raise pigs and do other subsistence farming. With her, we had to work to earn our playtime and I always liked working with the pigs. It fascinated me that they could make so many different products: cooking fat, crackling, pork, body butter... and working with the pigs was better than baking in the heat in the fields.

Even in the years that I was working for others, I always had this passion burning inside me - I used to dream of being the Bacon Queen! I wanted to see a black woman doing this. I was determined that if others could do it, so could I... and more than that, I was determined not to do it in the subsistence way like mummy, but to make it a professional business.

Over the years I told very few people. Many of my friends told me not to do it, but eventually I had to make my move. In 2017, I went to start training and upskilling myself and in 2019, I started operations.

The challenges have been many. Getting funds to invest in the business hasn't been easy, but I have found ways including some grants. It is hard to be a primary producer - there is very little regard for us, and few incentives. All the attention is on manufacturing and processing when it comes to funders and investors, but to me that doesn't make sense - what are we meant to process if we don't have the primary producers! I believe in the work that we

are doing, and being in production is a way to contribute to food security. At the same time, I have worked hard to be a part of the value chain at various points.

Another challenge for all agribusinesses is the many unforeseen challenges and risks we have to mitigate against: climate, drought, too much rain, diseases. I would like to see more support and protections for this. Despite these challenges, I continue to persevere. Yes - I am tired. I have made sacrifices and invested fully in my business, making sure I make the best meat, that we pass all the compliance tests, that we remain in business. It is important to me to show the world that it is possible as a black business woman.

With the Women Creating Wealth programme, I found a group and a community. A place of sisterhood and support that I continue to connect with. Even though we've never met in person, we've bonded and I learn so much from the other women in the programme and their experiences. It is through them that I gained the confidence to also start sharing my knowledge and build a training element into my business.

Using my expertise, I now charge people for training in setting up in the pig breeding trade. I am hoping to get accredited as we have had very positive feedback, it has been covered by local newspapers, and I have people from across the country calling me to get training. Since my days in the non-profits, I have always been helping, always teaching - I used to train rural teachers to use media and visual teaching aids in the classroom. Today, I have combined this knowledge and our farm is positioned as a learning centre for local unemployed women and youth (including in schools), and other aspiring pig farmers.

I believe that wealth creation starts with you, and you feeling empowered. If things are not right with you, it will affect everything - your business, your kids, your family. I want to be a role model to others and encourage others.

“I am turning 53 this year. I have passion, I have a strong network, I have support, I have confidence. Myself and many other black business women are already producing and building wealth; we have pieces of land and we are seriously, commercially ready.”

I want to collaborate with other women who have a similar business and the same quality, so that we can provide volume to the big buyers and distributors. We are the future of agribusiness.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Use your passions and your expertise

Build on what you know, on your experience and the things you are most passionate about. If you have a dream, don't let it go.

2) A business needs a market

You need to get your products out there, you have to go to market. Identify your buyer and aggressively go after them, find ways to attract more buyers. You can't sit back and expect them to come to you.

3) Have a network of support

Build your network of support and be open to both learning from them, but also teaching them. In our group, we are constantly sharing skills and finding ways to partner. Your customers might be within your network too!

Stories of

Creating Wealth

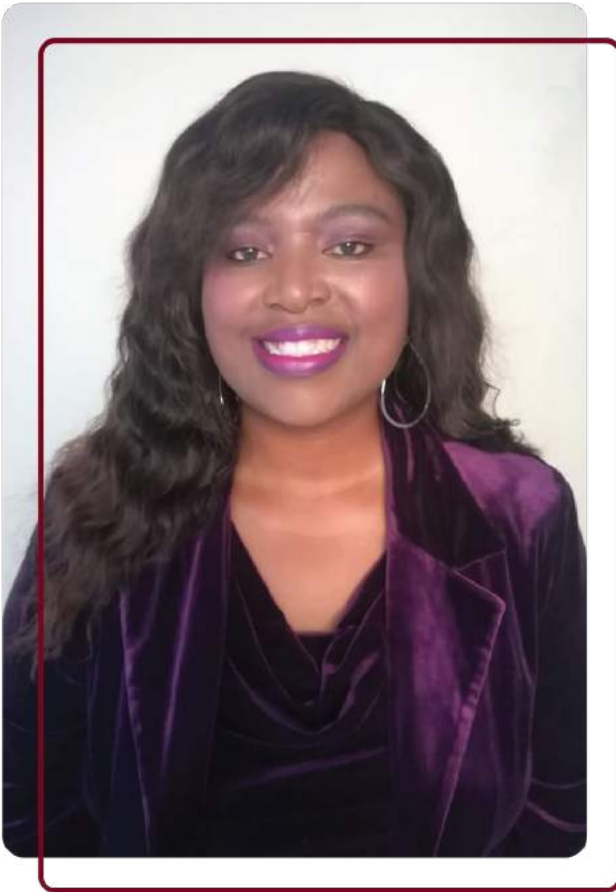
Section 4 . **Visionaries**

I started with just a dream statement, a mental creation, but step-by-step, I worked towards it and developed into a skilled entrepreneur who can manifest the creation and turn her small vision into a prosperous business.

Sibongile Mtsabe

Why we should all be farmers

South Africa



Sibongile Mtsabe is an agripreneur who established Sibocali Traders as a way to empower rural communities and address malnutrition challenges in South Africa. She is committed to educating communities about the importance of food security and helping them to install their own farms while creating market access platforms, job creation, and entrepreneurship opportunities and always encouraging a “buy local” strategy approach.

When I resigned from my job in the corporate world in 2011, I promised myself that I would push for success in business, knowing that it would never be easy. I was a marketer and a natural creative, which were skills I took with me

into my own entrepreneurial venture. I also always liked to cook and had had a passion for entrepreneurship for quite some time, so I decided to combine both interests into a business making crispy chips. Initially, I intended to use cassava but had trouble finding quality produce in the market, so I looked for alternatives. I decided to start using yams instead, and from that day, I began making trials and experimenting with different recipes. Once the chips came out beautifully, I began selling.

I quickly saw the demand steadily increasing, and we thought of ways to diversify. We started doing broad research, looking into fish farming and also selling cashew nuts from which we could make butter and milk. But for both, we didn't have control over growing or farming these so could not assure the quality and supply required. Instead, we decided to pursue the idea of making gluten-free flour and instant porridge alongside our existing crispy chips.

As our sales and demand continued to grow, Sibocali Traders - an agri-processing business - was born. Today, we produce healthy food and snacks, in particular crispy chips, gluten-free flour, gluten free pasta, instant porridge, cashew butter, and cashew yoghurt. Our mission is to increase income for rural areas and township communities in South Africa by helping farmers acquire sustainable and commercial farming skills, and provide them with access to markets through our business.

As a country, South Africa continues to face malnutrition, increasing rates of obesity and also a rise in non-communicable diseases such as diabetes. The market for nutritious, healthy foods is only growing. To meet this need, we need more agri-preneurs to start their own farms. Hence, Sibocali is committed to enrolling these farmers into our supply chains and also, employing people in the community. With assistance from GIZ, we are currently training local farmers to meet agricultural quality standards, and have been able to employ a growing total of 7 community members.

Our products are unique in that we use indigenous roots – supplied by farmers in the local community – like yams, sweet potatoes, cassava, and quinoa, to produce our range of quality products. We currently sell through social media and Manolis Munchies, a South African chain of health food stores.

We have faced a number of challenges throughout the years. In the start, the biggest challenge was gaining credibility, and once we had that it was about meeting demand. Although increasing demand is the dream for most businesses, you need to be set up to deal with it. Early on, we got an opportunity to exhibit our products and sell directly to customers who at first didn't believe you could use yams to make crisps. Once they got a taste they started calling neighbours, and through word of mouth spread, we sold out before the day was over. We rushed and ran around to catch up and prepare new batches to meet the requests for our products.

As we have grown, our challenges are competing with larger and more-renowned health shop retailers and online stores, and also successfully complying with food standards. We have gone from using a shared space, which was hindering our ability to control and map out HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) food safety procedures - this was possible thanks to a grant we applied for and won. The grant has also enabled us to acquire some industrial equipment that will help us increase the quality and consistency of our products.

“As for the competition, we just have to believe in our products and continue to market our unique approach. We have to be proud of our indigenous produce and sell the health benefits.”

We have also learnt to take notice of interesting trends in the market, and implement what we learn.

In the next few years, I want to increase our income and will start selling our products on e-commerce sites soon. Social media and exhibitions have given our products great exposure, and we intend to continue exploiting them. I strongly believe that agriculture is the way to go and has the potential to help our communities thrive. I see a future composed of financially independent rural and township communities. We will contribute to this future by opening

our own high-standard retail store in the township with raw materials sourced directly from the communities which are untapped markets in South Africa.

We want to feed and empower generations of Africans, and I believe that agriculture is the best avenue for economic development of rural communities and creating wealth for families within them. Driven by this mission, Sibocali Traders is just getting started!

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Mistakes happen

We need to use the lessons gained each time to consistently improve. We should not allow failure to overwhelm us, but rather dust it off and move on to try again and do things better.

2) Never give up

If you are focused, diligent and continue to push for what you want despite challenges, then you will succeed.

3) Making a difference in people's lives matters

For me, it is not enough to be a successful entrepreneur. I want to see how my business can contribute to putting money in the hands of young people (especially young women), to the development of communities and overall, to healthy and well-nourished people.

Sister Jenny

Healing naturally with a JEN-TIL TOUCH

South Africa



With her wonderful, Proudly South African natural creams and oils, Sister Jenny is an inventor who has used her “jen-til” touch to make a difference in the lives of diabetics and burn victims around the world.

As a qualified nurse specialising in therapeutic reflexology and therapeutic aromatherapy, I studied natural ways to heal people. During my 18 years of working in various hospitals, I treated many people with open wounds and leg amputa-

tions from a simple thing like a crack in the foot. In my own practice, I treated a diabetic patient three times a week who complained of his severely cracked heels and asked me to make something for his feet. Having already seen numerous patients lose their limbs due to such simple things progressing into life-threatening events, I was set on inventing a remedy to help prevent this once and for all.

Along with the guidance of a podiatrist, I used my knowledge of healing properties of plants, my medical training and experience, and my natural intuition to manufacture a wonder foot cream. I was so determined that I managed to meet the podiatrist’s specifications in only two and a half years. As the podiatrist kept finding more benefits to the cream, what started as a foot cream evolved into a hand cream and a massage cream that were eventually proven to heal burns and wounds, reduce scars, and help people with disabilities. I started my company, Sister Jenny JEN-TIL TOUCH, in 1992 to manufacture and sell my amazing healing creams.

Although I could demonstrate the improvement of skin texture and the instant hydration gained from my creams, it was a challenge to gather the clinical evidence to support this. As a result, I lost the opportunity to sell my products in chain stores despite being listed for 15 years. I almost closed down, but through a year of continued perseverance, passion for making a difference, and selling relentlessly through craft markets as well as my store, I managed to earn a turnover of a million rand, and won a grant and support as a National Gazelle of South Africa.

The South African Government has taken great pride in my invention, and through the Department of Small Business Development, has taken me to America, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and China to promote my products. I was eventually able to secure the clinical trials to prove the benefits, effectiveness, and safety of my creams. From my

international travels and the incredible responses to my products, I see that my invention remains unique in the market, which makes all the challenges, past and present, worthwhile.

I was very privileged to have had the opportunity to train under the Women Creating Wealth programme. It helped me stay focused and calm during the very first and incredibly trying lockdown when things were out of control and most people were not bringing in any income. Carefully designed to empower people with both lots and little business acumen to grow their businesses, the WCW programme taught me how to run my business more effectively. I have become exceptional at marketing and networking and using these skills to be featured on TV and international publications. I also learnt how to improve quality management systems and document all the processes in my business. Now that the processes are written down correctly, the workflow is much smoother and I am able to delegate many duties.

WCW continues to open doors for me. Besides the lessons, I have gained the support of the peer group and the trainers, particularly Korkor; we continue to share opportunities with each other daily. My turnover and sales are increasing, and I have received even more awards and international recognition, helping me become so much more empowered. With this affirmed power and heightened recognition, I was able to enlist the help of the powerful Professor Thuli Madonsela to fight back against a Chinese company that took advantage of my ignorance of international trademark laws. She brought awareness to my plight of trademark theft, publicly highlighting the injustice of my case and warning SMEs to protect their intellectual property. I can only give thanks to the Graça Machel Trust (GMT) for making such an outstanding difference in my life.

To me, wealth creation means not only financial wealth but emotional and spiritual wealth as well. With this in mind, I finally registered the Sister Jenny Burn Foundation, which aims to initiate various projects to assist burn victims in healing and improving the quality of their lives.

“I would like to encourage other women in business as well as those starting businesses to persevere; to take it one step at a time, have faith in themselves and their business, and refuse to give up. In business, we

grow with the help of other women. So, just as I have been helped by the GMT and other organisations I have worked with, I will uplift other women and help them grow their businesses.”

My vision for the future is to have a world-class factory employing many more women, exporting globally, and improving the lives of people living with diabetes and children with burns and scars. Through my work, one cream at a time, I am manifesting that dream.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Refuse to give up no matter how tough it gets

Persist and be resilient in spite of challenges that get in the way. Believe you are worthy and deserve it and nothing, nothing, nothing will stop you. With passion, determination and resilience all things are possible. Be the creator of your own dreams. Use your imagination to establish your own goals and dreams, and then take every possible step to make them come true.

2) Mentally open yourself to receive wealth and abundance

Find the peace within you to bring your emotions back into alignment. Know that wealth will follow as soon as you let go of resistance. Have faith in God that it is your Divine right to flourish and succeed.

3) Look out for every possible opportunity to promote your brand and yourself

You are your best asset. Make sure you behave in business with honour and integrity. Your brand will naturally have value if you nurture and grow it.

Victoria Mwanukuzi

Farming for health

Tanzania



Victoria Mwanukuzi is a woman on a mission to make collective health her priority. Her business, Nyanzobe Insight, is dedicated to showcasing Tanzania's agricultural capacity and promoting health by producing and supplying quality horticulture produce.

I used to work with the European Development Fund (EDF) as a Rural Development Officer, dealing with the Agriculture and Energy portfolio. One day, while strolling through the supermarkets, I noticed in one of the supermarkets, that most of the fruits and vegetables were imported and wondered why this was if Tanzania was more than capable of cultivating its own produce. Determined to showcase the country's agricultural capacity and see locally-grown produce in our stores, I decided to get into farming to harvest and sell products at affordable prices.

Thus, in 2015, I started Nyanzobe Insight Ltd (NIL), which deals with horticulture production in greenhouses and open fields. Our farm, located in Bagamoyo, is eight acres and produces tomatoes, coloured peppers, cucumbers, okra, eggplant, green vegetables, mangoes, and paw-paws. Our mission is to produce and supply high-quality produce and render satisfying services to our clients while

leading the way for improved nutrition and health.

The challenges are many in farming, but I have learnt to rise up and believe in myself through them. Technical know-how and experts are difficult to get on time, so it is common to make mistakes first before learning the right procedures and processes. Secondly, while markets are available, they are not guaranteed as no contracts are given. As a result, you might take your goods to a client only to have them tell you that someone else has already delivered the same goods.

Despite the setbacks that many other businesses have faced as a result of the pandemic, COVID has not impacted my business at all, likely because of its nature. People always need to eat, so I will always sell. In order to ensure that we are using the best farming practices, I have recruited an agronomist to help us supervise the farm activities.

My passion has kept me going, as have the clients who have given me good feedback and who have always chosen NIL as their supplier. Being consistent in the quality and timeliness of what I produce has been one of my most vital learning tools, and I have made sure that our consistency is what NIL is known for. The quality of our produce has also been improved by visiting other farms and seeing how they are doing. When you do a massive investment, you cannot give up; you must find a way out to remain in business. That has been our motto. So far we are doing good, thanks to the WCW training that has taught me to be resilient and patient, and to persist and persevere to reach my vision.

Since completing the WCW programme, my business has improved tremendously. The production yield has increased and the supplies have been consistent. We have implemented the crop calendar to help us plan our activities for the entire year, ensuring constancy in our supplies. Working as a team and promoting workers' sense of ownership have been great incentives for the business's growth. Each one of us knows that our purpose is to ensure clients are being fed quality produce, thus realising our motto: "Your health,

Our priority." As well, we are focusing on building the company's strength and maximising it to upscale our business and keep good records of what we do.

To create wealth is to generate a stable source of income and help people fulfil their aspirations, as well as maximise job creation. The role of a woman in creating wealth is crucial because of her responsibility to raise children in both her home and her community. It is women's responsibility to ensure that everyone is well-fed and well-protected.

"It has been a long journey but a good one. I am proud of the team on the farm who are determined to do all it takes for the company to grow and achieve its vision while improving livelihoods in the process."

Recently, we have acquired electricity and believe this will help our production increase. Furthermore, we are focused on expanding our client database by maintaining excellent customer service and encouraging feedback, as well as promoting the business on social media.

By 2025, we will have a fully established agriculture-training centre to train farmworkers, in order to ensure farm owners are reaching their potential. However, graduates who have completed university degrees will also be able to enrol to learn entrepreneur skills to start their own farms. We want to create jobs for those people who are searching for employment in vain, and we want to give farmers the skills in farm management, record keeping from planting to harvest, good attitude, and soft skills. There are many women farmers but we have been scattered, so I want to see women come together and combine their efforts to bring good results. I have started with a small group that grows coloured peppers, and we are helping each other to tackle the challenges that we encounter. Our aim is to contribute to the United Nations' 8th sustainable development goal, "economic growth". I feel good to be of help, and so my commitment is to make sure the knowledge we have as a company is shared with others so that, together, we can bring an impact to the surrounding environment.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Have a clear budget and stick to it

Budgeting is key in any business operation.

It disciplines you by teaching you to stick to prepared plans and helps you monitor your spending to ensure

that your business activities are not compromised.

2) Save money

Start saving, no matter how little it is. Put your money in a fund with good interest rates so that you steadily gain returns, which you can then use to develop your business or invest in treasury bonds.

3) Impart skills and knowledge

Use your business activities as a means of transferring skills and knowledge to those who serve you. This is how you create sustainable economic potential and growth.

Kgomotso Sekhute

Reaching new heights for accessible healthcare

South Africa



After her granddaughter and nephew were born with disabilities, Kgomotso committed herself to ensuring that every family, regardless of economic status, could have access to comprehensive and affordable health care.

As a shy and introverted teen, I was always more comfortable with connecting, listening and quietly serving others; either by motivating, inspiring or supporting them with thinking through potential solutions, most of which lay within them. This led me to a few entrepreneurial ventures; first as a clinical psychologist in the HIV/AIDS field and later, as an executive coach and management consultant. All these experiences have culminated in my latest venture as a social entrepreneur in the health-tech industry.

When my granddaughter and nephew were born with disabilities, our new reality as a family made us wonder how much harder it must be for low-income families in Africa to access comprehensive and affordable healthcare for their children. Set on redressing this, my daughter and I established BionicsForAfrika Healthcare in 2021, as a subsidiary of subsidiary of Penologic™.

Penologic™'s vision is to become a leading global, niche strategy and human capital management consultancy, with a team of 20 industry leader associates by 2025.

We aspire to be known as a brand that contributes towards business and digital transformation, regarded as a strategic partner for organisations driving meaningful and sustainable organisation culture change.

Through our subsidiary company, BionicsForAfrika Healthcare (Pty) Ltd, we aim to be a facilitator of democratised access to comprehensive, world-class, family psycho-social care and assistive devices (prostheses and bionic limbs) for children from marginalised groups and low-income families in South Africa initially, and across Africa by 2030.

As an African woman entrepreneur, my greatest challenges have been two-fold; firstly, how to find and share my authentic voice and secondly, how to gain entry to a market with high barriers. By working with coaches to address self-limiting beliefs, I was able to challenge myself to get out of my shell, stop using my introversion as an excuse not to want to be visible and share my opinions. Practically, I enlisted a business and digital strategist as my coach, starting in 2020. We have been working consistently on our company's social media strategy, which has helped with building both my personal and company's brands.

Additionally, as a new market entrant within the health-tech sector, one of the greatest barriers I experienced was a lack of access to strategic partners and finance as a pre-revenue entity, which essentially transitioned from being a management consulting firm to a social enterprise. Other barriers included the high capital cost of setting up a world-class medical centre, alongside the inability to juggle reviving our existing management consulting business after the severe impact of COVID-19 and giving the required focus and time to set up our new social enterprise.

To address the barriers to entry, I adopted a number of strategies. Firstly, I invested in my business development by signing up for Harvard's Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies programme at the beginning of 2020. A key outcome I set as a goal was a robust, credible business plan, backed by extensive research, market analysis and engagements with prospective customers to refine our value proposition and minimum viable product and services. Secondly, I worked on applying all business and financial acumen gained on the WCW programme. Thirdly, I enrolled my co-founder on an Applied Directorship programme to ensure we are both equipped from a Corporate Governance perspective. By elevating our game and appointing a Board of Directors from the beginning, we believe our credibility as a business will be enhanced, thus facilitating access to markets and finance. Fourthly, I approached potential strategic partners in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Academia, Healthcare and Women Entrepreneur Development Sectors for mentorship and funding. We are getting ready to raise seed Capital at the beginning of May 2022. Finally, I developed a comprehensive strategy to recruit strategic partners to executive on the business plan.

Even though Covid-19 negatively impacted our consulting business financially, it has been a blessing in disguise. Not having consulting assignments for more than 18 months forced us to reflect on how else our company could contribute meaningfully to real challenges in our world; which culminated in the birth of our subsidiary company.

I've been able to endure this journey chiefly due to the supportive environment facilitated by our WCW programme lead, Ms Korkor Cudjoe and team, and my 2020 cohort peers. I gained lots of loving sisters who became my pillars of strength during lockdown and beyond. I learnt how to persevere, find inner resilience and support others through an equally tough season. I also learnt that the more I served others, the easier things got for me emotionally.

To me, creating wealth entails shifting one's personal mindset, acquiring new knowledge, then leveraging insights and wisdom to grow as a person while taking others with you on the growth journey. It is about breaking the cycle of poverty for current and future generations through intentional women empowerment and the creation of supportive eco-systems for entrepreneurs that facilitate access to new markets and financial resources to grow sustainable businesses. As caregivers, parents and role models, women have a critical role to play in wealth creation.

“When more of us keep reaching for new heights, it becomes the norm for our families over generations.”

I am grateful that, through WCW, our business has gained more visibility, brand awareness, business tools to enhance our strategy, and a larger professional network. Many new doors have subsequently opened up since my completion of the WCW programme, arising from a broader network, introductions, and new bridges built by our WCW faculty. I am proud that we now have an opportunity to build a social enterprise and join others committed towards facilitating equitable access to comprehensive, world-class healthcare for African children with disabilities.

Looking ahead, my vision for our business is that we will serve 1000 low-income families in South Africa within the next 5 years and then start expanding to serve the Southern African region by 2030.

My wish for female entrepreneurs is that we liberate ourselves from self-limiting beliefs, prioritise life-long learning, commit to leave doors open for others and keep creating wealth for future generations. It will give me the greatest joy when our team is able to contribute towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, primarily improved access to comprehensive healthcare and improved quality of lives for our clients.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Share your wealth

It takes an abundance mindset to create wealth. By investing in the development of other women, sharing what we know generously and putting our heads together, we all grow.

2) Grow your network

We should deliberately expand our professional networks to include people from diverse cultures across the globe. Doing so enables us, as entrepreneurs, to gain access to new markets and grow exponentially.

3) Develop your financial literacy

On a personal front, being passionate about financial literacy and learning from previous mistakes I made in business and how I managed my finances, has helped me build wealth for my family and our business. It helps to be cautious and to enlist the services of financial advisors as needed.

Kekeletso Khena

Fixing the system through the beauty space

South Africa



Through her cosmetics company, K Squared Group, and her political work, Kekeletso Khena is set on exposing the exclusion, bigotry and systemic racism that black people face, and creating an economic, social, and political environment that helps black women and female entrepreneurs succeed.

Every business I have ever started has been inspired by what value I could add to society, and K Squared Group hasn't been any different. I registered the business in 2013, looking to develop a cosmetic product directed at black people and black hair, as there weren't many of these in the market then. I had never made a cosmetic product before, so the internet became my first point of call. There wasn't a lot of data available at the time about natural, black hair though, so we started out using African American desktop data to develop our product.

Coincidentally, as I was doing this research, I was accepted into a biotech incubator and was also introduced to the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) upon winning a competition they were running where they

looked to assist entrepreneurs with the formulations of their products. By another serendipitous chance, I had gone on holiday and discovered our ingredient alpha which has a high protein yield that mimics the natural structure of keratin. We realised we had stumbled upon gold and could use this in our formula. So I set off to develop the ethnic hair hydration technology with the CSIR. The technology went on to win an award and was then used to develop our haircare range, Black Squared.

Realising the absence of clean salons, I found a space and opened a salon where we used our products. However, we discovered at this salon that the products we were developing were not working with our climate, textures and food. So we scrapped our first generation products based on the American desktop research and started second generation products, now based on the needs of the South African market. We found that these products worked much better than what we had, and than what was in the market.

While I was developing the product, I became the poster child for biotechnology in South Africa. Everybody was excited about this project because of its scalable concept. Using our indigenous ingredient alpha means that we are able to create work for rural women and, in turn, allow them to create business and create work for others. This could have a replication effect across the continent, and there is nobody else that does what we do. So, I was in every single science magazine, the government was talking about helping us, and I was promised R15 million from the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA).

The 15 million never came. But a video was made and circulated to various people communicating to the world and its mother that I was given this money - such that, when I started looking for funding, I couldn't find any because people believed I had squandered 15 million. For a long time, TIA was not willing to talk to me about what happened to the money or why I never got it. Eventually, I was

able to have a conversation with them where they told me that the video was nothing but a marketing gimmick. My name, my life, my business, and my dreams were just a marketing ploy. That is so, so painful.

In the midst of COVID in 2020, I took part in the GMT training, and used one of the techniques we were taught to send out a survey and find out why exactly our clients came to us. I discovered that they came to us predominantly for the clinical aspects of our business, including microscopic analysis and scalp treatments. I realised that this was where my business was, so we pivoted from a hair salon to a hair clinic. This enabled us to charge more and focus on a niche market of older people who had a greater disposable income than our previous target market. By focusing on what we are good at, the business has become more sustainable.

COVID also highlighted the challenge I have with scaling. Our business is very knowledge-based; in order to identify the cause and treat each client, I need to look into their health history, diet, lifestyle, etc. How do I replicate this where I'm not there? - This was always the challenge. However, 2020 happened, and I started doing digital consultations. I realised that I could digitise my knowledge and create an artificial intelligence portal that will allow others to do Artificial Intelligence (AI) based diagnostics. Nonetheless, I still can't scale because people think I was given R15 million. So I am back to square one, literally stuck and unable to grow the business.

“I grew up with the exclusion of black people, but there was always a hope that black people would someday be included. To date, I don't see this happening. There is absolutely no reason why this business is not the big franchise that it is supposed to be, except for the fact that I am black and female.”

For example, when you apply for investment, they require you to have an off-take agreement to demonstrate your market potential. Getting these agreements in place is still challenging as a black person when the big players (Dis-Chem, Clicks, Pick n Pay, etc.) are mostly white-owned enterprises. And essentially, unless I can guarantee that white people can benefit from my hard work, then my business is not worth looking into. How is that possible? How is that fair? All

this forced me to get into politics last December, to bring attention to the systemic racism that black people are experiencing and fix the system to ensure a better entrepreneurial environment for black people and black women to succeed.

I still believe in K Squared and its potential to change lives by creating business for women that they can then use to create wealth for themselves and a living for their employees. One of the reasons we looked into this model was due to the extent of violence in our country, which is experienced primarily by economically disempowered women. We understand that female financial empowerment is critical to removing women from these violent spaces. K Squared is a passion project that covers all these aspects, cosmetics, rural development and gender-based violence - so it has to work.

I'm hoping that, in the next five years, I will have built my AI platform and will be able to scale. I'm also hoping that my politics will enable me to expose the bigotry and challenges that black women face in the entrepreneurial space, and to ensure that being in business is an easier process for them by creating a support system that acknowledges the multiple roles they have to embrace: mother, boss, marketer, product manufacture. We need to understand that once we emancipate black women, we will have emancipated everyone else. Black women have to bear an incredible burden if they are to run businesses successfully and need additional support. Someone has to advocate for that, and that someone is me.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Build a sustainable network-type business

We suffer a lot from the lack-mentality and not understanding that there is enough for all of us. By sharing your knowledge and creating a business that enables others to profit and make money, you create sustainability. When others make money through you, they eventually come back to support you.

2) Buy from black women and black-owned businesses

Again, it comes back to you. Supporting other women and people is critical and creates a network of funds among yourselves.

3) Monetise solving your community's problems

Put your ear on the ground and listen to where the problems are. Find the pain points in your community and develop an innovative solution that saves time and money and delivers a product or service that people need.

Michele Schiess

Reaching for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

South Africa



Founding her non-profit Sing 4 Life in 2000, was just the beginning for Michele. From freelancer to building a college, she is on a mission to change the face of South Africa's agriculture industry for the better.

Working as a freelancer in the film industry exposed me to South Africa and its people in all its permutations: the super-wealthy, rich, middle class, poor and poverty-stricken, communities ravaged by AIDS.

With every opportunity came a surge in awareness at the breadth of suffering and disparities within our society, and eventually, there came a time when I could no longer just stand by and observe. So, in 2000, I founded Sing 4 Life, a registered non-profit company that looked to provide nutritional support to beneficiaries by assisting them in creating home food gardens.

As the name implies, we wanted to hear people singing for joy once again as they worked the garden and grew their own nutritious food. We worked in informal settlements and townships partnering with independent AIDS activists and women's groups who were involved in home-based care and with AIDS orphans. This NGO limped along for a decade, backboned by my hard-earned money and occasionally enjoying support in the form of paid-for conference attendance, which did nothing substantial on the ground.

During this decade, Permaculture became a keen interest, pushing my husband Thomas and me to become involved in the fields of outreach and Permaculture. Permaculture is an approach to land management and social cohesion that aims to create sustainable human settlements living in harmony with nature and natural systems. The Permaculture principles of Earth Care, People Care, Future Care and Fair Share, have become pillars of our team's practice.

While donors usually fund a project for a year or two, we experienced that a project requires at least five years of funding to make a sustained impact on an environment. With sustainability in mind, we changed the name of the NGO to Sustainable Community Development, re-branded in 2015, and set out to create a best-practice model small-scale farm whereon we would teach regenerative methodologies to interested students and the local community.

We identified a small farm of 121 hectares close to Rosendal Mautse in the Free State. This valley farm was in need

of regeneration, and is close to the village and township, with an estimated population of 12,000 people. There are primary and secondary schools there. Satisfied with Waaipoort Farm, we rented it and set about farming, giving Permaculture courses, and attracting interest in organic farming methods. We established working relations with the schools in order to supplement the school feeding scheme with nutritionally dense vegetables and fruit. With the help of over 50 volunteers from SA and abroad, we built up a good foundation and attracted the attention of an international funder who purchased the farm for our organisation. The farm is now protected in a land trust for organic agriculture in perpetuity.

While the funding helped us secure our land, we are still using our personal income to keep the NGO's day-to-day operations running. Furthermore, productivity dropped considerably during lockdown. Since March 2020, we have had no volunteers. However, I was privileged to attend the WCW 2021 programme. Now along with fellow alumni, I am in the process of setting up a joint enterprise in the production and distribution of Effective Microorganisms, which is a microbial inoculant used in remediating and enhancing biotic environments, predominantly used in environmental rehabilitation. My WCW colleagues are striving towards building a reliable, committed network of female producers and distributors for Effective Microorganisms (EMs), beginning in our province, Free State.

Partaking in the WCW was a life-changing experience. It has given me all the tools I need to realise what previously seemed like an unattainable vision: sustainability! The WCW modules, assignments and exercises have changed my mindset to work towards sustainability, shifting my focus away from donor funding and using our personal consultations income, to creating the funds for development from the farm micro-enterprises instead. Partaking in self-development and thereby business development has had a profound impact in showing me that there is always a stable source of sustenance if one applies the principles. This will create sustainability!

“From those early days in responding to the AIDS crisis, I found that it was women who against all odds, and with minimal resources, pulled together to find solutions for those struggling, sick, dying people.

Again, in this often volatile business world we find ourselves in presently, it is innovative women who are the way-showers. I am very excited to be part of the power of women making change and creating abundance, that wealth may one day become a reality in our community!”

My life's aim is to change the face of agriculture in South Africa from harmful industrial practices to regenerative ones, in order to leave a legacy for future generations. SCD'S medium-term goal is to open a college to teach Regenerative Agriculture to which end we have started to build student accommodation and are writing the curriculum for accreditation by SAQA.

A prime aspect of the regenerative movement is to enhance natural resources. By spreading the use of Effective Microorganisms, the health of soils, plants and animals on farms can improve naturally and save considerable amounts of money. My sisters in agribusiness are starting to experience this! Both for SCD and the WCW alumni, EM production and distribution promises to be a lucrative business, having an excellent possibility to build wealth.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Dream big!

Without clear dreams and substantial goals, the universe has difficulty rewarding you with what you want.

2) Document and track goals

Accountability is paramount to success. Tracking failures, successes and possibly adapting your goals, is key. All data, personal and business, is important feedback for the next steps in your wealth creation journey.

3) To spend my time wisely, surrounding myself with the right network of people

Spending time on activities that are beneficial to you is hugely impactful. Whether it is exercising or meditating or inviting like-minded people into your warm circle, time is precious and should not be wasted on things that do not move you (and your dreams) forward.

Rethabile Gladys Maimane

Finding gold in sorghum farming

South Africa



From a humble investment of R200, Rethabile Maimane has grown her sorghum-based agribusiness to a daily production capacity of 4000 litres. She aims to continue scaling production to meaningfully contribute towards food security and employment in the country.

Sometimes, business development programmes hosted by various Institutions disappear into thin air and we never know exactly what happened to them afterwards. This leads many people to question whether these programmes play any positive role in helping up-and-coming entrepreneurs develop their businesses. Well, I, a Free State province female farmer and agro-processor, am proof that the Women Creating Wealth (WCW) business development programme can actually help those that are determined to grow to do so.

Golden Goose is an established home-based enterprise in Welkom, South Africa. Founded 19 years ago with an initial investment of merely R200, the business has since grown to offer a diversified range of sorghum products including Motoho (soft porridge), flour, whole grain, instant porridge, ice cream, nutritional supplement, and syrup.

To ensure the safety and quality of production as well as a reliable supply of ingredients, Golden Goose produces its raw material, sorghum, from the farm. Presently, we boast a daily production capacity of 4000 litres but are looking to increase our capacity in order to meaningfully contribute towards food security and employment in the country.

It took years of sweating and defying odds to get my business from its humble beginnings to where it is today. However, the credit is not mine alone. I recognise that the difficult transformation from survivalist business to a multi-award winning SMME was spurred by the financial injections that came from government grants as well as grants won through small business development competitions. Furthermore, participating in the WCW 2020 cohort supplied me with the sage knowledge and advice that I needed to improve the quality of my products and spur my business forward. Together, the awards and the WCW programme proved instrumental in motivating and enabling me to grow my business from strength to strength.

As a black female grain farmer in an industry that is roughly 80% white and male-dominated, I have faced quite a number of challenges. Under-capitalisation and the highly competitive, skill- and capital-intensive nature of the agro-processing sector, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic have made it very difficult for us to penetrate the market and maintain a firm foothold. Fortunately, the vital lessons and expert advice in the WCW sessions assisted me to become well-resourced and gave me the idea of broadening and correcting the skewed gender and racial participation in the agricultural, grain, and agro-processing sectors. Moreover, after the programme, I made it imperative for the enterprise to continuously enhance its capacity to access market opportunities, and to contribute to job creation and food security. In light of this, we established a technology transfer arrangement with academic institutions.

Consequently, the quality of our starter cultures and products has improved, as have our quality management sys-

tems, giving Golden Goose a competitive advantage over its competitors.

We also made monthly donations of Motoho to the Care Centre at a local Bongani hospital sheltering and aiding criminally violated women, as well as schools for disadvantaged children.

Far from a pity party, my journey is one of triumph, of overcoming adversity and blossoming against all odds. As a result of my nomination as group leader of the Agribusiness sector during the WCW programme, I've become a more ambitious, abundant, determined, and confident entrepreneur. From a shy and insecure person, I transformed into a bold and confident leader, and that is a moment of pride that I will cherish forever.

As a sorghum farmer, I see the high demand for it, and thus, strongly believe that sorghum farming must be put on the national agenda. Sorghum is largely a subsistence crop on the African continent, and it is increasingly becoming the foundation for successful food and beverage industries. It could be crucial to ensuring household food security in Africa as it is drought and heat resistant in addition to having excellent nutritional qualities. Although sorghum is the third most important grain in South Africa after maize and wheat, its production at around 200 000 tons per season is only 3% and 12% of maize and wheat respectively.

While its climatic resilience and nutritional value are undoubted, the low quantities in both production and derivative products of sorghum clearly demonstrate that its lack of popularity is only cosmetic and that there is a huge untapped potential for alternative food and other products made out of sorghum.

In the coming 5 years, Golden Goose will continue to develop sorghum grain products. In addition to the current ready-to-drink bottled porridge, we intend to produce nutritional instant porridge meals in powder form. Currently, I am in the process of implementing the second phase of development, which involves building an additional milling facility with the capacity to process 250kg of any type of grain per hour.

This will allow for adequate production of our staple bottled sorghum porridge, as well as the introduction of a range of ready-to-use fermented flour and mix-and-drink porridge largely aimed at the export market. An aggressive advertising and sales promotion campaign will then be under-

taken using all possible communication and distribution channels. This will help to create maximum awareness and product experience within the target market segments.

My word to other women entrepreneurs is that

“the future of agriculture is female. Whatever your situation may be as a woman, never be embarrassed. Cover that same situation with filters and smiles. Make a difference in someone’s life, stay focused, and execute consistently. You will conquer, and the world will never be the same again.”

Let us lead our children by example. Teach a girl child economic independence, so that she can have a partner, not a master. Teach a boy child to do housework so that in the future, he can have a partner, not a slave. Help them to find the wonder and marvel of farming life by showing them the infinite pleasure in the hand that touches the soil. Show them the joy of tasting tomatoes and the enjoyment of working with their hands. If we do this, then we are sure not to go wrong.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1) Create a legacy

Strive to create wealth not only for yourself but for the community around you. Make sure that your business leaves a lasting, positive footprint on the well-being and health of others.

2) Inspire the next generation

Lead by example. Teach young girls economic independence so that they can grow to have partners, not masters. Teach young boys to do housework so that they can grow to have partners, not slaves.

3) Build the empire

Constantly study and learn, exploit untapped opportunities in the market, remain focused on your goals, and execute consistently. Believe you will conquer and you shall.

Acanda Jaswa

An unlikely beauty entrepreneur

South Africa



Founder of Brown & Ayo, suppliers of natural textured, premium hair extensions, Acanda is on a mission to relentlessly pursue quality and innovation in order that black women can sustainably explore, enjoy and enhance their natural beauty.

Anna Wintour once said, "I recommend that you all get fired; it's a great learning experience"; and I couldn't agree more. If I hadn't been laid off from my financially rewarding full-time marketing job, I would probably never have become the founder and CEO of Brown & Ayo; a company selling premium hair extensions designed to mimic natural hair textures.

Our products are designed for black women who want to explore, enjoy, and enhance their natural beauty. Brown & Ayo began as a self-funded business, rooted in my lifelong interest in hair and my experience selling hair care products and extensions on an ad-hoc basis to friends. Using personal savings to start a business is the biggest financial risk I have taken in my life.

Two years into my entrepreneurial journey, a friend sent me a link to apply for the Graça Machel Trust's Women Creating Wealth programme. Through the programme, I learnt the importance of creating processes and systems that have allowed my business to grow independently from me. It also taught me to evaluate exit options and the impact this has on all the strategic decisions I make in the business. However, the WCW 'sisterhood' remains the most integral part.

Entrepreneurship is often glamourised in the media, but what the media fails to underscore is how lonely the journey can be when one lacks the right network. As someone relatively new to full-time entrepreneurship, my network then was largely composed of former colleagues and acquaintances from the corporate sector, making for a far-from-glamorous and rather isolating journey. It was incredibly encouraging and inspiring to meet real-life entrepreneurs who openly shared their failures and successes. I feel proud and fortunate to be part of a network of individuals who can support and guide me through the unique journey of female entrepreneurship.

Brown & Ayo faced its biggest hurdle when the world came to a standstill due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With customers spending their days at home with nowhere to go, the need for new hairstyles decreased significantly. Salons were also forced to close their doors and courier companies were only allowed to deliver essential goods, which further hampered demand. With overheads and no revenue, Brown & Ayo, like many in the industry, was hard-hit. Fortunately, the business was able to begin recovery months later after raising capital.

At the end of the WCW programme, each participant had to create a pitch deck and was given 5 minutes to pitch their business to several investors. Although this was solely for practice, the valuable feedback I received on my pitch was the catalyst I needed to raise venture capital and secure a R4 million investment from Enyigma Ventures. As a solo Black female founder operating out-

side of traditional technology, my odds of raising funding were low. Thus, it was very exciting to be backed by Enygma Ventures and its diverse team who understand this exciting sector and have been extremely valuable in supporting me to think strategically about growing my business.

Raising capital was an intense process of strategy discussions, financial modelling, due diligence and legal work that took 6 months from application to closing the deal. Understanding how venture capitalists run their business, the return on investment expected and the changes one may need to make to their business structure and strategy is a good starting point for those wanting to explore this method of financing.

“Over the next few years, one of our key business goals is to start journeying towards creating a sustainable beauty business. Currently, both the main product (synthetic hair extensions) and packaging are made from plastic polymers which end up, for the most part, in landfills. We aim to change the packaging on all our products to zero plastic and/or 100% recycled material. We will also provide recycling mechanisms through salons for consumers to dispose of their hair extensions correctly.”

Furthermore, as a retail business, a key concern and goal is creating better economies of scale for the business which will have a direct positive impact on the bottom line. We will focus on lowering manufacturing costs and increasing efficiencies in other key areas. Partnering with investors also means ensuring that expected returns on investment are met, which will require scaling the business regionally across Africa. With our zeal, and the financial and strategic support of Enygma Ventures, we will undoubtedly execute our vision.

African women entrepreneurs today represent a very small percentage of businesses raising capital globally. However, in recent years, investors are creating venture capital funds for women-owned businesses exclusively. Opportunities, access and support are available to support women to not only start businesses but ultimately create wealth.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Learn from those who have done it before

We are fortunate to have access to women and men who have won at the game we are still learning to play.

2) Create the right network

The entrepreneurial journey can be lonely without support. There will be times when you feel like throwing in the towel; it helps to talk to others who are on the same journey.

3) Raise capital

Understand how venture capitalists run their business, the return on investment expected and be open to the possibility that you may need to make changes to your business structure and strategy.

Kondwani Phoya

Growing against the tides

Malawi



A bold and model agripreneur, Kondwani Phoya has served as a model and anchor for other Malawian women farmers, helping them win the fight against hunger and poverty.

Ever since I can recall, I had always wanted to own a farm. For years, I had a relatively small plot where I farmed passionately for home consumption while managing the family business. However, I was always looking to journey into commercial farming and commodity trading, and so, when the unexpected opportunity came to purchase a 460-hectare farm, I immediately jumped. In 2014, I launched Green Tides Limited, an agribusiness entity that has made me one of Malawi's pioneering anchor farmers in irrigated commercial farming as well as a leading female farmer in the cotton industry.

We started harvesting cotton in 2015 after purchasing a cotton gin, which enabled us to expand the farm into value addition and put the business on track for growth. This was a big learning process, riddled with challenges, but

fortunately, we secured a massive loan with a commercial institution in 2017 for the acquisition of farm equipment and cotton production. In 2019, I went a notch higher into my farming by being a cottonseed multiplier for the Malawi Cotton Council and the Makoka Research Station through a project sponsored by the Brazilian Government. And I have gone even higher this current 2022 Season by signing a cotton production contract with Millennium Farms.

Coming from a place where cultural norms make it difficult for women to access land, I consider acquiring the farm as my greatest milestone. All the same, access to capital and changing climate conditions, in addition to socio-cultural norms that undermine and inhibit the economic progress and recognition of women, continue to be challenging. Farming is still regarded as a male job, which makes it hard for women-led farms to earn credibility and trust within the market. Furthermore, amidst all the successes, the last two years have been incredibly challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has greatly affected the farm's activities and significantly slowed production. As Portugal went into complete lockdown, we lost out on an excellent deal to export cotton lint. Time management has also been an important challenge and element in my business. As women, we have to balance career and family obligations, which is not easy but can be achieved with the right dosage of persistence, perseverance, and networking.

After completing the Women Creating Wealth programme (WCW), my eyes were opened, and I developed the wings for myself and my business to fly. I have now made a habit of seeking new opportunities, and through networking, have become an anchor farmer to 200 smallholder farmers. Today, Green Tides is recognised as a reliable and formidable partner in the cotton sector, and I owe that, in part, to the skills WCW gave me. Goal-setting for every farming season has steered the business' growth, while persistence and perseverance have helped to keep the business afloat, especially in times of challenge. Information-seeking and the application of technical advice have also enhanced the quality and yield of our crop production.

Moreover, networking has been a vital tool for connecting my business to both the domestic and global markets and fostering business partners in India, Malaysia, Dubai, Portugal, South Africa and Mozambique.

To me, wealth creation is when a widow in Bwanje Valley, Ntcheu can grow 1 acre of cotton in 4 months and earn MK 490,000. It is also that same widow growing sufficient maize to feed her family, being free from diseases, having a disposable income, and being an active member in the development of her church and village. To do this, wealth must be created in ways that lead to tangible, positive change and in ways that have significant reach, benefiting whole communities rather than individuals alone. As women, we have a meaningful role to play in wealth creation by ensuring that our investments have a ripple effect that benefits and betters our families and our surrounding communities.

Throughout my 7-year journey, I have suffered a number of setbacks but have always remained focused, getting back on track each time in order to achieve my goals and keep my dreams alive. Over the next 5 years, Green Tides will recover and retain 2 international markets, expand the number of smallholder farmers to 350, and become a leader in cottonseed multiplication. I look forward to seeing female entrepreneurs network and collaborate to create cooperatives, and establish small-scale cotton gins. The latter has the potential to not only increase the much-needed forex for the country but also make cotton our nation's highest-valued cash crop, replacing tobacco.

“I am proud to be one of the leading commercial farmers in the cotton industry, as well as a mentor and coach to young and upcoming farmers. Most importantly, I am proud to be a committed wealth creator, supporting my fellow women farmers in improving their socioeconomic status.”

By providing the smallholder farmers I anchor with meaningful and sustainable incomes, I am enabling them to secure food security, education, and health in their own families. In this way, I am uplifting farmers out of poverty and engendering significant and enduring transformation for the whole community.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Create sustainable and significant wealth

Ensure that the wealth you generate is significant in terms of its impact and reach. Use your wealth to positively impact and improve the lives of individuals as well as entire communities.

2) Be persistent

Keep on pushing and making good strides through every setback you face. The best way to persevere is to be persistent in your focus and drive towards your goals.

3) Network

Networking is the best tool for connecting your business to potential markets and opportunities and creating a platform for you to grow your business.

Stories of
**Creating
Wealth**

Section 5 . **Dedicated Planners**

Through fine-tuned structures and proper systems, I have been able to turn my business into an asset of value, into a self-sufficient organism that continues to run effectively, even when I am not around.

Tracy Marobobo

Accelerating change in agribusiness

South Africa



After attending a training session on behalf of her father, Tracy Marobobo realised the importance of ensuring the sustainability of black-owned businesses and decided to start farming with her father full-time to secure the longevity of his business.

I first ventured into entrepreneurship a decade ago. After leaving my engineering job, I opened my own consulting firm with the initial intent of learning more and becoming financially free. Six years later, I attended an agri-training session on behalf of my dad, and it was then that I found my “aha moment”. I learnt that most black businesses do not have a succession plan in place, which results in bankruptcy when they stop operating.

As a result, when the owner passes away, family members or close friends are often left clueless about the running operations of the business and unable to sustain it.

This knowledge prompted my decision to farm full-time with my dad and take an active role in building the legacy for the next generation. We are currently running a 526-hectare farm at Ventersburg in the Free State Province of the Republic of South Africa under a registered entity known as Khothule MJ and Daughter PTY (LTD). Our main enterprise is the production of Bonsmara Beef Weaners for the feedlot market.

Once I took up farming full-time, I immediately enrolled in a number of agri-related courses and also achieved an NQF Level 4 accreditation on animal husbandry, which resulted in me becoming skilled in the best Agri techniques and practices.

Initially, it was not easy to contribute and participate in agri-related groups in my region, as the sector is mainly male-dominated. I attended a lot of sessions and made sure that I was heard, fully active and volunteered. This made it easy for me to take up managerial positions within this predominantly male sector. There is a small percentage of women leading at management levels in Agri associations, resulting in slow progress in addressing the lack of support for women agribusinesses and their low participation in the country’s economy.

Currently, we have faced a number of challenges in running our farming operation. For example, our main access road is dilapidated, making it difficult to reach the market and nearly impossible to drive in and out of the farm during rainy seasons. Access to digital marketing was also a bit of a problem in the past, although we have now started building our digital footprint. We have also achieved a number of successes through our partnership with Sernick and Jobs Fund, namely, the construction of a fully furnished water infrastructure for the Bonsmara Beef enterprise, the installation of a fence system, and the initiation of mentoring services.

As for the COVID pandemic, we were originally afraid of the unknowns. However, we quickly restructured as a business and diversified our operations in order to ensure an increase in our cash reserves. In addition to weaners, we started producing table eggs and broilers and further increased our piggery and sheep enterprise for the slaughter market. In terms of human capital, it was a stressful time as employees could not visit their family members. We also experienced a setback when our logistics director was diagnosed with COVID.

We struggled to reach the market timeously and had to distribute more work between the rest of the team. Ensuring the health of the director was also time-consuming as well as mentally, emotionally and financially strenuous.

Fortunately, we pulled through. The good news is that our sector was regarded as an essential service, and thus, we were able to sell our produce during the pandemic. As residents could not frequent stores, we took advantage of the situation and started delivering crops and eggs to the community. The pandemic triggered a thankful heart in me, and I am forever grateful to the Almighty God for the gift of life. It is the only thing that keeps me grounded and focused on my family, goals, ministry and businesses. I am inspired whenever I empower another being.

I was fortunate to find out about the Women Creating Wealth programme in our poultry WhatsApp group through Ms. Dikonelo, one of the graduates from the 2020 cohort. She scheduled a special meeting whereby she introduced prospective entrepreneurs to the programme. I was so enlightened by the session that I did all it took to be part of the 2021 WCW cohort.

“The programme made me reach new frontiers and heightened levels of personal and business growth. I am now fearless, with several more goals to achieve.”

On a personal level, I have become much more aware of my surroundings; the people around me, my kids and family and my community as a whole. I have also set goals to focus on my physical well being, monitoring my weight and nutrition more seriously than before. On a business level, WCW increased my network, giving me access to other established farmers, mentors, and even sisters with whom I speak often and from whom I have learnt to ask for help when the need arises.

With the principles and skills taken from the programme, I have recently been approved for funding, which has things looking up for us financially. We have also started selling off produce that is not profitable, in addition to making sure that the business is compliant with SARS and registering with the UIF. Presently, we are in the process of VAT registration and finalisation of audited financial statements.

Being a wealth creator is a continuous journey, one that demands constant innovation and reformation. I see my role in this process as ensuring that I cast the proper foundations for the wealth I generate to be cross-generational and enduring. In the next 5 years, we aspire to generate total annual revenue of R20 million by incorporating back-grounding and feedlot into red meat operations.

As time goes by, my desire is to see women show up for each other, support and empower one another, and participate more actively and boldly in the mainstream economy. I am committed to consistently amplifying the voices of the women in every area of my life, taking the WCW programme and its teachings to other women, and uplifting other women in their efforts to accelerate change in their own industries and communities.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Set specific growth goals and work towards them

Don't shy away from envisioning a mega enterprise in the long-term. Take your goals seriously by being accountable and tracking your progress regularly. Share your goals with others and enlist their help to keep you accountable.

2) Draw up a clear and concise management system for your enterprise and production line

Don't make it too technical in order to ensure that even your general worker is able to process the system and teach others how to produce. This reduces wastes and improves production, which in turn increases revenue and the development of human capital.

3) Be a light and inspiration for other women

It is your duty to amplify the voices of other women in Africa. You carry a light within you that should not be hidden, so shine bright and be the hope for others to be stronger and successful in the entrepreneurial space.

Nonceba Manjengwa

Ordinary, but extra!

South Africa



Nonceba runs Tsopano Industry, a clothing manufacturing company supplying branded uniforms. Her mission is to expand across Africa, and to partner with businesses that align with the mission of boosting local manufacturing, using local resources.

In 2017, I approached my friend Shadreck Zongoro and suggested that we partner together to start a clothing business. He is someone I saw myself working with due to his strong work ethic, which I picked up on when we worked together at Maby Corporate Clothing between 2005 and 2016. My passion has always been in fashion, and I had chosen to study fashion design, and later Purchasing Management - all learning that was particularly useful for my proposed new venture.

After 3 months of planning and drawing contracts, Tsopano Corporate Clothing was born. Tsopano is a clothing manufacturing company supplying an ample range of formal corporate clothing and customised branded uniforms to a variety of corporations.

Based in Gauteng, Northcliff, we are a small company of 10 professionals centred on identifying opportunities across Africa, developing projects, and partnering with businesses in investment areas concerned with natural resources, manufacturing, and services industries. Our focus is to manufacture using local resources and manufacture products that will reach African countries in the near future.

Being an effective leader requires you to foster self-awareness and recognise your own limitations. Precisely, one of the greatest challenges I've faced while running my business was recognising my poor managerial and leadership skills. As someone without prior experience in running a business, The mantle of managing came particularly difficult because I came into the business as a "Technician" with limited skills and no entrepreneurial ones. Most of my workers took advantage of my kindness which led to the detriment of the business. Instead of challenging them, I would take it upon myself to do their tasks to avoid conflict and confrontation.

I was focused on combating the industry challenges of unemployment through hiring my ex-colleagues who were sitting at home without jobs due to the widespread factory shutdowns within the sector. I found it easier to complete tasks myself instead of constantly nagging them to do the work efficiently and with excellence.

The business took off and we started acquiring business contracts to supply corporate uniforms in various industries such as hospitality, retail and telecommunications. Our revenue grew by 60% from 2017 when we started trading and we were able to bring in more revenue which led us to believe that we were on the right track. Things went downhill in 2020 when we got hit by the pandemic and lost 70% of our business.

Suddenly, our clients decided to cut down their yearly uniform budgets because most of their staff was working from home and there was no need for them to use the budget to buy uniforms. This huge loss of revenue forced us to apply dramatic changes, such as closing our factories, operating from home, and relying on CMTs to manufacture our bulk orders.

In the midst of everything that was happening, the Women Creating Wealth programme started and kept me occupied and motivated. I learnt about WCW through Siyakha Consulting which provided information and criteria processes for us to qualify. The first major lesson I got from the programme was that I was not the only woman entrepreneur going through the challenges that I was experiencing in my business. WCW gave me the business tools that were lacking in my business, such as automated systems, operation manuals and values that we live by in order to keep the processes uniform. The personal mastery course was my favourite because it taught me how to manage my personal space, take stock of my emotions and the triggers that easily affect my effectiveness as an entrepreneur. I now use my bedtime as time to offload all the negativity in my day onto my journal and reflect on how I can handle things better tomorrow. These tools helped me be less anxious and more in control of my emotions when it comes to my business.

Before the course started, I was ready to close the business and resort to going back to working, but with renewed motivation, I became more courageous, choosing not to surrender but to implement the competencies that I was learning to keep my business going. The Graça Machel Trust taught me how to effectively manage all the departments of my business, not by micromanaging my team but through systems that ensure their accountability and effectiveness.

Wealth creation for me is building a business that grows and lives beyond generations. A legacy that will be carried by those coming behind me. An ageless brand that creates more opportunities for various people. Empowering other women to take charge and not succumb to male egos or their bullying tendencies. The programme taught me to find ways of generating multiple streams of income and making use of pivoting strategies where necessary to save my business. It has not been easy to bounce back fully, but

“I am on a journey that looks to empower other women entrepreneurs by mentoring their business journeys and offering my own wisdom and experiences. After winning the best business pitch competition, I realised that I have so much potential to grow and access funding in my business and this was not only my proud moment but also an opportunity to be bold in my business endeavours.”

In the future, I would like to see Tsopano grow bigger and contribute to the South African economy where employment and prosperity have become much too scarce. I am ready for more collaborations with other women so that we can create a louder voice and fight together against the many challenges and barriers that women face in this country. I want to collaborate with supply chain associations to combat the bribery and corruption that comes with tenders opportunities, as well as the male chauvinists in business. I want to ensure that we are given fair recognition and more opportunities because of the excellent service and products that we can offer as women. Finally, I would like for the government and funders, especially within the clothing industry, to realise the vast talent that they have on hand and to give these untapped and undervalued craft-people the respect, recognition, and opportunities that they deserve. The skills are becoming rare and before we know it we will have no choice but to rely on imports from China, India, and elsewhere. If we succeed in this, then we are guaranteed to generate enduring wealth that will easily trickle from this generation onto the next.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Develop patience and endurance

Success is not an overnight guarantee. It often takes years and enduring several setbacks before making it to the top.

2) Be consistent

Consistency is the secret to gaining clients' trust and loyalty.

3) Stay motivated

Continuously find the motivation to keep going no matter how difficult it can get.

Rose Sibisi

Increasing women's visibility and power in the media

Zambia



Confident, stylish and inspiring, Rose Sibisi has created a powerful media platform where female conversation, empathy, confidence and empowerment can bud, blossom and flourish.

I became an entrepreneur by "default" in order to survive! Firstly, out of necessity for continued livelihood, and secondly, to be able to help sustain our 4 children, who were still completing primary school and varsity at that time. I had left a formal corporate after 20 odd years and was struggling to get back in. This was because, despite having vast skills and experience working at high-level senior management in 8 global multinationals, I did not have an undergraduate or master's degree to qualify for the next level of executive position aligned with my experience. Thus, I was met with hundreds of "regret after regret" responses.

My "aha" moment came when I realised that I was the go-to "positive inspirer" for my friends, family, and many whom I encountered.

I noticed that people always came to me for creative ideas, admiring my sense of style, attention to detail, consistent excellence in all I do, and how I was always well put together.

These experiences inspired me to realise that what one is good at can be translated into a business idea. This greatly boosted my self-esteem, which had started being affected by the constant regrets in my job searches. I found inspiration in empathy, recognising that so many women need the confidence to express themselves, define their own worth, and chart their own paths.

To develop this business idea, I first prayed about it – a lot! I thought about what avenues could be used to communicate with women and stimulate these empowering conversations. That was how I created the StylewithRoseS (SWR) social media platform that highlighted women achievers to inspire others. I also started creating special customised annual live events for women called "Revolution of an Independent Woman" which we have done four times in South Africa and Zambia since 2017. Additionally, I produced the StylewithRoseS televised talk show in 2015, which aired on DSTV Zambezi Magic TV in 2017 and 2019 and served as a call to action for women to learn and "pass the rose" to others.

One of the biggest challenges I've faced as a woman entrepreneur and within the media sector is access to capital and operational finance. Having a compelling investor pitch deck requires a solid financial track record, something that most women-led businesses, especially those in the creative services and media space, struggle to have. Scaling up has been another challenge due to the difficulty in obtaining resources to engage in specialised services and in establishing collaborative partnerships.

Rather than opting to work together, potential partners often unethically run with your unique ideas, either by plagiarising or "copying and pasting" them.

The COVID pandemic literally almost shut down our business, as our largest revenue streams came from hosting live events, providing event execution services like MCing, workshops and training to our Corporate Clients. During these past two years, we have experienced little to no income and a rise in our business debt. We were also unable to employ a full-time operational team from 2020-2021.

However, we overcame some of the hurdles of the pandemic by recognising the opportunities to redirect content production onto social media and digital platforms and to take advantage of these as low-cost marketing tools. We used over-the-top media service (OTT) platforms to "soft-launch" our upcoming 24-hour broadcasting channel Maluba TV and aired content across YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn in partnerships with identified corporate sponsors.

What has kept me going as an entrepreneur is my unwavering conviction in this vision that my media platform is a conduit for global women empowerment, gender equality, and partnership. According to UNWomen, women make up just under 50% of the World's population, and hence, need equal representation in all sectors for national economic growth. SwR has to be the one to share their authentic stories, their struggles and strengths, and find the opportunities for them to flourish.

Wealth creation entails the continuous development of innovative ideas and solutions in order to create sustainable industries that will achieve the African agenda of true economic independence. We, as Africans, have the opportunity to decide what the continent's future will look like and how we want to escalate its economic growth. To achieve this, we must reclaim our dignity and sense of self-worth while overcoming the limiting slave mentality. We have all the intellectual ability, resources, possibilities, and natural landscape needed to succeed. All we need is to recognise that this is Africa's time to reshape and drive the global economy.

I believe that women's role as wealth creators is to exploit our innate nurturing ability to "birth and grow ideas" into actualisation. Women empower and equip future generations by passing on knowledge and skills through our own experiences and being accountable to what we are entrusted with. I want female entrepreneurs to take leadership and accountability in levelling the economic playing field by growing their own women-helmed enterprises.

Thus, it is my plan in the next 5 years to launch a global, women entrepreneur-focused broadcasting channel from Africa that accelerates access to markets and financial inclusion for African women and youth globally. I also hope to employ at least 1,000 women and youth creatives through my ventures.

In my journey as an entrepreneur,

"the most powerful learning I have gained is that delay doesn't mean it can't happen or that you've failed. Instead, it is an opportunity to keep refining your business model and evolve your goals."

Lack of financing and no start up capital investment are not invincible barriers to becoming an entrepreneur. Be creative and innovative. Start with what you have and where you are at. The rest will fall into place.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Be patient

Delays don't mean that it can't happen or that you've failed. "Failures" are opportunities for you to refine your business model and evolve your goals.

2) Don't let a lack of capital stop you

Start with what you have, where you are at. However little you have, maximise and multiply it with creativity and innovation.

3) Take leadership in levelling the economic playing field

Let's not wait for men to give us recognition or opportunities. Instead, let us exploit our innate nurturing capacity by passing down knowledge and skills to future generations and holding ourselves accountable to these tasks.

Sarah Ngwenya

Farming for nutrition and empowerment

Zambia



Sarah Ngwenya established Kalomo Grain Marketing Limited (KGML) in 2010, a business processing soybean into edible oil and other products, using renewable energy to do so. KGML's outgrower programme benefits over 3,500 women, we produce more than 20 tonnes of soybeans a month, and the company exports beyond Zambia's borders.

Whether I knew it or not, farming was always my destiny. Both of my parents were part-time farmers, owning a 1-hectare vegetable garden and a 5-hectare farm that my siblings and I were obliged to take care of during our free time. It wasn't long before I grew comfortable on the farm and mastered my way around it, and would eventually invest in my own farm.

Despite my interest, it took some time before I could dedicate myself wholeheartedly to a career in farming. I worked as a professional journalist in both government and private-owned media for eight years, starting with the Times of Zambia and Multimedia Zambia before finally moving to Ethiopia to join the Ethiopian Media Women Association.

I was never fully satisfied with the job however, and continued to dabble in farming on the side as it was something I loved. As time passed, I became glaringly aware of the misalignment between my career and interests, and so I decided to make a change.

Looking within my rural community, I saw many women hindered by unemployment, unable to send their children to university nor put food on the table. I wanted to assist these women in changing this reality. Upon quitting my 9-to-5 job, I gathered my savings and launched Kalomo Grain Marketing Limited (KGML) with the intention of providing jobs to rural women.

Supported by two farms and a staff of 20 full-time employees and 30 part-time workers, KGML specialises in grain and seed production as well as the processing of edible oils. Our main agricultural produce includes soya beans, sorghum, maize, sunflower, sugar beans, pigeon peas, cowpeas and groundnuts. We also have our own product line composed of cooking oil, soya chunks, low-fat and full-fat soya cakes, and instant porridges. We produce our own seeds, which are certified by the Zambian government, and use renewable energy for all our processing.

I have faced a number of challenges and barriers as an African woman entrepreneur, including access to finance, technology, opportunities, and a good market. Finding skilled and dedicated staff, along with the uncertainty of business due to uncontrollable seasonal and environmental factors, are also frequent concerns. COVID has been an additional blow to KGML's growth as we tragically lost nearly 40 women to the virus.

Nonetheless, I have found my way around or through these hurdles, one by one. I was able to overcome the challenge of financial limitations with financial support from my family, as well as reinvesting profits back into the business and diversifying KGML's product range and, by extension, our sources of revenue. I also took to trading some of the money credited to our account with the bank in order to generate more money. Additionally, with robust strategic planning we manage rainfall patterns, pests and climate change. Finally, in response to COVID, we diversified and started producing soaps and cloth face masks to meet the critical need. We also encouraged the women within our team to get vaccinated.

Whilst the challenges have been many, KGML continues to grow and even expand beyond Zambia's borders. We want to be a leader in the grain and commodities trade in Zambia, exporting to other countries in the region. We trade soybeans from approximately 3,500 women smallholder farmers from across Zambia, and have another 4,500 on the waiting list. These women are our partners, and are all contributing to the food security that the KGML products bring.

Our flagship product is Supreme Oil, an edible oil produced from soya-beans, catering to the Zambian market as well as neighbouring countries, most of which have an edible oil deficit. Edible oils make up 40% of our business, and we generate additional income from making soybean cake, a by-product from our production - this cake can be turned into a nutritious porridge that we currently sell in dry form to NGOs and hospitals. Recently, the government of Zambia took Zambian companies on a trade mission into Congo DRC and KGML was one of these. This resulted in us signing our largest contract yet to export Supreme Oil to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

“Farming is not an occupation to which many people aspire. It’s often seen as more of a last resort or an uneducated person’s job such as subsistence farming. I hope to change these perceptions and motivate young people to become agripreneurs by showcasing how agribusiness can be used to create wealth.”

I want to see many more women entrepreneurs in farming, having control of their financial lives. To me, farming signifies empowerment, and to see women coming out of

poverty and taking control of their destiny will always keep me going.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Find solutions and take action:

It is not enough to talk and think about a problem - we have to start doing things to find a way through.

2) Structure your business seriously

For us, our business plan, marketing strategy and especially our financial system has been the heart beat of the company. It has kept us on track and established us a serious business, deserving of funding.

Dipuo Phakathi

Rooted in reality, fixed on a dream

South Africa



Dipuo Phakathi is a qualified engineer and passionate warrior for customer excellence that strives to design and create cabinetry that aligns with the unique personality, brand and budget of each of her clients.

We live in a fascinating time for entrepreneurship. As a businesswoman navigating South Africa's current entrepreneurial landscape, there are a number of business paradigms and principles that I am continually forced to confront and assess for relevance every day. This has made for an interesting and exciting journey that has driven me to always challenge existing "rules" and to define my own as the CEO of Denic Cabinets.

Denic Cabinets is a proudly South African, B-BBEE Level 1 contributor in the carpentry industry, which focuses on the design, manufacture, and installation of customised kitchen units and built-in cabinets. Our offering also includes walk-in and built-in closets, bathroom vanities, TV units, office furniture, display units and bar units. All the components of the cabinetry are manufactured in our factory, with the help of qualified cabinet makers who have a combined experience of 65 years in the industry.

The business originally focused purely on kitchen designs and installation. However, in 2016, while renovating my home, I grew increasingly unnerved by the multiple meetings with contractors who simply could not understand nor cater to my vision. Realising this vacancy for a company that aligns its designs to the unique personality, brand and budget of each client, I partnered with a young carpenter, and together, we set out to make history.

Soon after registering my business, I met the original owners of Denic Cabinets who were hoping to sell the company. Impressed by my strong entrepreneurial instincts and my eye for detail, they quickly decided to sell the business to me. I am proud to say that their trust was not in vain. Today, Denic Cabinets is thriving as a competitive supplier of turn-key solutions for both the residential and corporate markets.

Getting the business off the ground came with its challenges. Juggling a side business alongside corporate employment was an extremely strenuous effort that called for long-hour weekdays and little social life on weekends when I had to supervise clients' installations. At the same time, the journey has come with many rewarding moments, the most potent being when I finally decided to have faith in my potential and passion and quit my full-time job to focus on the business.

Owning my own time has granted me significantly more flexibility and allowed me to incorporate my children's activities into my work days. Acquiring Denic Cabinets was also an incredible opportunity that, virtually overnight, grew our team from three people to 13, and readied us to play at a whole new level.

I have taken great pride and honour in seeing all my zeal and effort recognised, especially when I was awarded Standard Bank's Top Women Young Achiever Award in 2020.

As a recent graduate of the Women Creating Wealth development programme (WCW), I have been very fortunate to leapfrog my peers in many ways through the assistance and support I have received through the programme. WCW has pushed me to remain relevant and to challenge the status quo by taking a hard look at established "rules" and testing them.

In my reflection, I found that

“one of the most important rules we continue to challenge and disprove is that of “competitors”. Our experience has shown that very often, competition is perceived, not real. If you unpack it very critically and strategically, you usually discover points of collaboration and mutual benefit. This immediately unlocks a host of opportunities and gives everyone so much more room to play.”

For us, challenging the notion of competition opened the doors for us to have a presence in both the residential industry and corporate space, as well as to consider supplying the retail market.

This, in turn, led us to challenge the rule of “sticking to a speciality”, which we've found to oppose the ongoing evolution required for most products and services to remain relevant. Lines between industries and specialist skills are becoming increasingly blurred. We are now raising children to have cross-functional skills that are adaptable and applicable across a variety of careers and industries. Business should not be dissimilar. I now continuously question where, how and why the skills I have can be applied to add to my specific sector. I also keep an eye out for what's coming next, and what it means for me and the market.

Essentially, by challenging norms and redefining rules, we allow ourselves to remain fixed on our dreams while co-creating a reality where the opportunities and capacity for growth are significantly less limited. By eliminating rules, we enable businesses to operate within their truths

and devise solutions that are relevant to their business and their context and are, thus, more readily and easily applicable. In doing so, we give “smaller” businesses the wealth of a competitive advantage that may just make them the businesses to watch.

I am proof that success truly comes down to dreaming big and putting in the hard work and hours. I am from a small mining township where I lived in a four-roomed house with my extended family. Growing up, I never imagined the luxury of a four-bedroom house or a kitchen with massive islands. Today, I get to design and construct kitchens, walk-in closets, and vanities for R8 million homes. If I could get to where I am right now by dreaming, imagine where I may be in the future if I just keep pushing?

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Challenge the status quo

Don't just blindly follow business paradigms and rules. Instead, constantly test and measure them against your business's reality. Once you do, your eyes will open to so many more opportunities and avenues for growth.

2) Dream big

Big dreams and hard work are the keys to success. Always dream big and then put in the hours and effort to achieve those dreams.

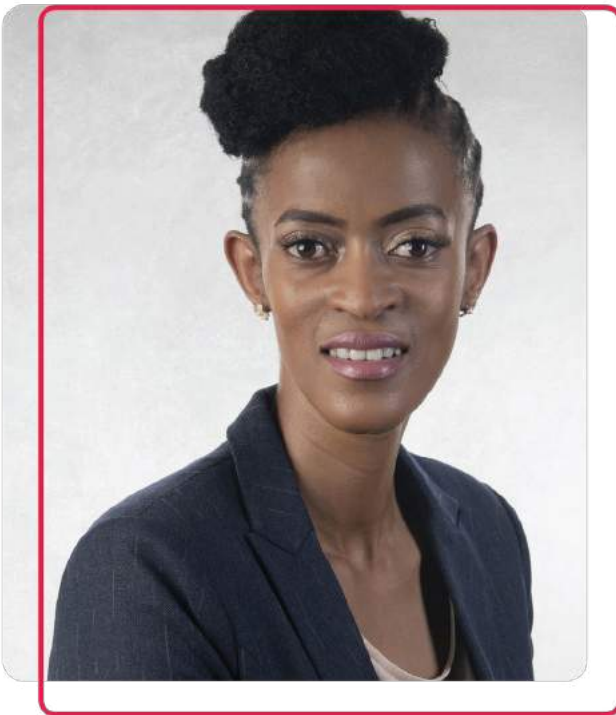
3) Encourage buying local

Foster the mindset within your business and market of sourcing and buying locally. When we buy local, we preserve jobs, grow families, and contribute to the economy.

Pumza Mthethwa

Bringing African flair to the marketing industry

South Africa



Providing insights-driven marketing in the ever-changing digital times, Pumza established Brandties as a boutique marketing agency that brings innovations to the industry.

I've dreamt of becoming an entrepreneur since I was a young girl, inspired by my father who always ran side hustles alongside his full-time job, with my mother as support. As far back as Standard 4, I realised I enjoyed the idea of trading and making extra cash, so I pursued an undergraduate degree in Economics and a postgraduate degree in Marketing, and in the years that followed, launched Brandties. Initially a print shop, Brandties evolved into a boutique marketing agency providing marketing and digital strategy development and implementation solutions across a variety of media with a special focus on digital platforms and activations.

The idea for my business sprung when I saw a gap in the market after years of working in corporate marketing departments.

“I felt that most agencies never truly understood the market or spent enough time researching and gathering insights before developing any marketing initiative. As a consequence, their solutions were often very similar and wallpaper, lacking creativity, identity or pizzazz. I realised the need for a truly South African marketing solution that could leverage the latest tools and technologies to address the issues and individuality of South African consumers.”

In parallel to closing this gap, I also wanted my business to be a means of creating jobs for the youth in the marketing and creative industry. While running the printing shop, we were inundated with several qualified young job seekers looking for experience and income to sustain themselves. This further motivated me to establish a business that could both assist in eradicating unemployment and provide much-needed experience for youth who are passionate about marketing and communication.

Like my father before me, I started Brandties as a side hustle while working full-time. While it was one of my boldest moves and one I take much pride in, it was nonetheless challenging as most of lunch hours and evenings had to be spent building the agency.

Since then, one of the biggest challenges Brandties has faced as a marketing agency is breaking into the corporate sector.

Most corporate companies are aligned to multinational agencies and have contracts that are signed off at international levels. Coming in as a woman-owned business that is homegrown seemed outrageous and getting past reception even more. Despite these challenges, we have always been true to who we are, and this, in turn, has enabled us to connect with our ideal clients by providing solutions that effectively solve their problems. The advantage of being close to the market has helped us greatly in overcoming this stumbling block. Secondly, although there are several youths and unemployed with marketing and digital skills, finding the ones with passion and commitment was trying, especially in the beginning. However, we have managed to develop a stringent screening and evaluation process that has landed us a team of highly dedicated and innovative individuals.

With COVID-19 came the cancellation of marketing budgets and the halt to campaigns. Similar to most small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), we found ourselves at a point of not knowing which doors to knock on. We were able to keep going due to the fact that our solutions are not solely based on traditional marketing mechanisms but also based on digital activations. Additionally, through the wealth of experience and knowledge within the team, Brandties has an academy where we provide Digital Marketing training to SMMEs and young people. These two factors helped us navigate the COVID-19 lockdown period as it redirected our focus to marketing our business and providing skills training. Furthermore, taking part in the Women Creating Wealth (WCW) programme during this time also assisted us by providing a platform for us to offer our training.

Creating wealth means creating long-term, sustainable solutions in business that ensure revenue and profits both in the present and into the future. It is not only about filling my pockets but also about helping others I meet along the way to grow to their full capacity, whether that be the businesses we develop marketing strategies and campaigns for, or an employee who, through interacting with us, is able to learn and grow in their career and sustain their livelihoods.

Brandties has grown immensely through WCW. Being surrounded by powerful women who are out there with the same mission has been a great win for us. Through the network and relationships, and all the advice, support, lessons and referrals that come with them, I have managed to advance so much. Managing myself has been one of my key takeaways from the programme, which continues to fuel

my growth and self-understanding, and continues to help me in setting clear and measurable targets.

I have also grown tremendously when it comes to other aspects of the business, including finances, such that I now look forward to receiving and analysing my financial records instead of just ticking them as a compliance box. WCW has been very helpful to us and continues to be our greatest connection within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

My determination for the coming years is that Brandties will continue to be an entrepreneurial agency that breaks boundaries within the marketing and communications industry in South Africa and beyond. The development of women-owned businesses and the youth is important to us, as is finding digital marketing and marketing services and offers that serve these segments. Capacitating entrepreneurs with marketing is crucial to driving high impact organisations, and this is what we endeavour to do.

Tomorrow is not only about job creation but offering practical, tailored and life-long marketing solutions and skills that address the problems faced by women entrepreneurs and youth. Doing so will be key to furthering equality in business while eradicating poverty and unemployment.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Cultivate your networks

As an experienced marketer, I have gotten business through industry networks and word of mouth. As the old adage says, never burn your bridges. Cultivate your networks in order to get business directly from them as well as through referrals.

2) Be customer-driven

Identify your customer pain points, listen to what they say, customer-led insights are important to help you in providing solutions for your customers.

3) Trust your gut

Listen to your instincts very closely and you will not get burnt. If something feels fishy sometimes, it is - if it smells rosy sometimes, it is.

Kumbutso Takomana

Farming to multiply

Malawi



Since opening her agribusiness venture, Kumbutso Takomana has sought and exploited every opportunity to maximise her personal and business growth and multiply the wealth and resources of the communities she serves.

Aichi Company Limited is an agribusiness entity in Malawi that engages in seed multiplication (grains and beans) and horticulture (banana & sugarcane), beekeeping and honey packaging. Our mission is to build communities through education and food accessibility, and by being a model of appropriate land stewardship and sustainable agriculture techniques. Through organic farming, we aim to provide healthy, nutritious and safe food for the nation and beyond.

Dreams of finding success as a business owner were what drove me into entrepreneurship in 2014. Upon returning to Malawi after a 3.5-year work stint in Namibia, I gathered that a sugar processing plant would soon be opened in the Salima District. I wanted to seize the opportunity to be one of the first sugarcane suppliers for the factory, so I started searching for land around the area and eventually managed to buy about 100 hectares spread across 3 different farms.

While I was incredibly excited to start my farming venture, I did not have sufficient money to start the highly capital-intensive sugarcane cultivation. I still had time, though, as the factory remained under construction. Thus, I decided to grow rice on 5 hectares of the farm so that the proceeds from there could finance our sugarcane production. I began the rice-growing project with high hopes during the 2014/2015 rainy season, but the project was unsuccessful and cost me all the money I had invested. At the time, I blamed the failure on the poor rainfall, but in retrospect, I see that poor planning and the absence of a proper management system were the true culprits.

Later that year, I ventured into another business with a friend. Using my financial capital and her technical expertise, we took up mushroom farming. Unfortunately, my friend died from a short-lived illness soon after we'd begun growing the mushrooms, and I lost everything once again.

“I realised that I had the drive to go into farming but lacked the right and proper know-how to succeed. As I was searching for the knowledge to cover this gap, I was fortunate to be enrolled in the Women Creating Wealth (WCW) entrepreneurial programme

thanks to Ursula Banda, a dear friend who shared information about the training with me.

This programme was a complete eye-opener that urged me to continue growing and seeking knowledge in order to surpass my present condition and guarantee my survival in the business world.”

Following the programme, I became a contract farmer for a seed multiplication company specialising in soybeans and sorghum. Met with success, I was encouraged to start sugarcane cultivation and to undertake grain trading as well. I also continued nurturing my competency in continuous learning and information-seeking.

At the recommendation of my fellow WCW sister, Fannie Gondwe, I partook in another programme, the African Women Entrepreneurship Cooperative (AWEC), which built on the skills and knowledge foundations I had acquired through WCW. Fannie had so much faith in me that she made it her personal mission to consistently remind me to submit my AWEC application, proving that she is the Angel God sent to me.

To further my learning, in 2021, I enrolled in the Harvard Business School's Entrepreneurship in Developing Economies course.

Furthermore, in 2020, I started cultivating bananas, once again with help of another WCW lady, Agness Chete, who lent me her technical support as an experienced banana farmer. Local banana cultivation was a big opportunity I identified in the market as most of the bananas consumed in Malawi are imported from Tanzania. I plan to cultivate over 20 hectares of bananas within the next 3 years from the single hectare I am presently cultivating.

Due to the COVID pandemic, I was forced to halt my grain trading in 2020 as the restrictions compromised my model of purchasing grains from mobile markets. As a result, I missed out on the revenue from this side of the business. In parallel, COVID gave me the opportunity to start packaging honey under the Aichi Honey brand in 2021. The brand was first displayed during the opening of the Women in Business Conference under the Network of African Business Women, and then at the 41st SADC Heads of State or Government Summit under the Umbrella of the Farmers Union of Malawi.

The dream is to have Aichi Honey exported to other African countries, Europe and the USA. In addition, as part of our mission to develop communities, we are designing a programme to get women in the area where our hives are located involved in beekeeping so that they can exploit the market too. This is a venture I'm very proud of and am eager to see come to light!

Being part of the WCW community has helped me navigate my business and refine my business models in ways

that I believe will help my business grow sustainably. Looking in the context of Malawian culture, I believe female entrepreneurs are catalysts for growth as their priority is always making sure their homes and communities are doing well. Presently, I run my ventures and work my day job simultaneously.

However, I hope to become a full-time business owner. I have a BSc in Chemistry & Mathematics from the University of Malawi and have vast experience in Quality Management systems in the manufacturing sector.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Learn, learn and never stop learning

The Business landscape is continuously changing and without improving one's knowledge base, it becomes a challenge for the business to adapt to changing times for its survival

2) Your network is your growth muscle

There are a lot of opportunities a business can come across through its networks. This has been the case for me and a major contributing factor to my growth so far.

3) Don't be so hard on yourself if you make a mistake

There are certain things in business that only experience and mistakes can teach you. Learn the lessons and improve for the better. This is a sure way to build your resilience as an entrepreneur.

Dr Ethel Zulu

Powerful beyond measure

South Africa



Using her expertise in organisational development and strategic planning, Dr Ethel Zulu is set to secure food security and job creation through the Bee Tree Farm.

Throughout my 8-year tenure as a board member of the Joburg Fresh Produce market, I would often see financial statements and was consistently amazed by how much money farmers made with simple crops such as spinach and cabbages. Realising the high demand for these crops and inspired by the success of those farmers, I decided to enter the farming industry and join the mission to address food security through the establishment of sustainable businesses.

After researching available markets and farming opportunities, I purchased some land and began crop production under Bee Tree Farm. Within a month of harvesting and advertising our first yield of spinach, the demand was so high that we had to quickly expand. Within 3 months, we went from planting on 1000 square miles to planting on 2 hectares. Today, Bee Tree Farm is composed of 23 hectares where we produce organic spinach, cabbages, peppers and tomatoes, as well as full-range chickens. We have also introduced agro-processing and a seedling production department as part of our agri-value chain in which we not only produce, but also preserve and package our produce.

We supply our products to local supermarkets such as Spar, Pick n Pay, and Fruit and Veg, while also executing direct home deliveries.

The decision to add poultry farming into the business model was encouraged by our desire to produce our crops using environmentally friendly methods. In order to enrich our soil, we needed to apply more manure and compost and figured that we could access manure more readily and cheaply by setting up our own poultry production operation. Through our aggressive word of mouth marketing strategy, what initially began as a small operation of 50 chickens in our garage has blossomed beyond our expectations into an operation with a monthly production capacity of nearly 3,000 chicks.

Like many other farmers, I have experienced challenges in gaining access to funding as well as acquiring the adequate farming implements to properly till the land. As an alternative, we have relied on manual labour, but in some cases, still fail to meet our projected production outcomes due to late planting. I have also struggled with being a woman in a male-dominated sector where women are looked at with contempt and considered unfit to compete with men. As a result of the male bias in the farming space, most of the markets are dominated by men and opportunities shared exclusively amongst them, limiting the markets available for women-led business to sell our produce to.

Furthermore, we have struggled greatly to meet SA-GAP standards for certification, which one needs in order to be a leading supplier for formal markets, just as much as we have struggled to get a consistent supply of electricity. Load shedding affects our business badly, causing us to lose many chicks during the sensitive brooding and incubation stages when lighting effects need to be managed. Furthermore, power cuts yield unstable temperatures in the cold rooms, thereby compromising the shelf life of our fresh produce.

Nonetheless, we have found ways around some of these barriers. While lack of funding remains a huge struggle,

we continue to knock on doors in search of an opportunity to obtain the appropriate capital funding necessary for improving and stabilising the business. In the meantime, our produce sustains the business operations, and we strategize carefully in order to cover minimum overheads. Additionally, we have since managed to register with SA-GAP, becoming a certified supplier for the formal market in South Africa. Now, we are applying for international certification in order to penetrate the global market and operate formally in that space.

Solid wealth creation means creating wealth that is generational. It implies being intentional about our legacy by developing successors that are well-trained and equipped to take the business onto the next level once we are gone. Furthermore, it entails supporting and developing other aspiring black women to run their businesses successfully by building their capacity, cooperating with each other, and forming one big market where all of us can thrive and grow.

The Women Creating Wealth programme was one such “market” for me that positively transformed my perceptions about entrepreneurship, such that I now understand the importance of personal leadership and development. Moreover, I am able to appreciate the businesswoman I am becoming but continue to take steps each day to develop further. The programme also led to fundamental changes in my business attitude that have led to steady progress and visible growth, one of them being the development of a system of operations that has made it easier for me to track the business’s progress and performance. As well, the “Know Your Money” module increased my interest in working with numbers, while the “Canvas Business Model” module gave me a template alongside the skills to confidently present my business to investors.

Thirdly, I have learnt about a number of upscaling, marketing and branding strategies that are sure to help Bee Tree Farm move forward.

“Farming is truly not a fly-by-night operation or a get-rich-quick scheme. It demands a clear vision and strategy on how to manage and grow a farming enterprise. Collaboration and networking are crucial to success, as are ongoing development and renewed learning about the industry.”

My vision for the next five years is to run a full, value chain business in both crop and poultry production. I would also like to increase our current vegetable production rate from 10 tunnels to 52, establish HACCP-compliant agro-processing facilities, and purchase refrigerated trucks for delivery. Plans to set up our own butcheries and cement a strong presence within Gauteng and across the continent are also in the works.

I aspire to be a model in wealth creation by involving and mentoring young women to get involved in farming as a business. Ideally, I would like to start by mentoring five women and, from there, increase my pool of mentees. I am very confident and hopeful that the majority of females in the farming sector will take leadership in developing the industry to be as inclusive as possible. If we work together and hold each other’s hand, then we are bound to succeed in our mission to contribute to job creation and improve food security across our beautiful continent.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1) Have a clear vision and strategy

Successful entrepreneurship is not a fly-by-night business or a get-rich-quick scheme. Without a clear vision, your business will have no destination to move towards. Take your time developing a clear vision and strategy plan for how you will manage and grow your business.

2) Collaborate and network

It takes a village to raise a successful business. Cooperate with and lean into other entrepreneurs, especially your fellow sisters. Contribute towards an entrepreneurial environment where all businesswomen are able to grow and thrive.

3) Make your wealth sustainable

Be intentional about your legacy. Take the time to train and prepare your successors in order to ensure that the wealth you create in this lifetime serves the generations that will follow you.

Stories of

Creating Wealth

Section 6 . **Relationship Builders**

Through a circle of phenomenal women, both within and outside of my field, I have gained a support system that favours collaboration over competition, a network that I connect with, and a sisterhood that I not only receive from but also add value to.

Matilda Kambanga

Alternative approaches to enhancing reproductive health

Tanzania



Matilda is committed to transforming grief and tragedy into hope and healing for others. Discovering that she couldn't conceive, Matilda has learnt how her body works and in 2015, was blessed with twins. Her business MSIA provides training, consultancy and natural remedies to help others heal too.

Who would have guessed that life and wellness could come out of heartbreaking loss and tragedy? I certainly didn't. However, that is exactly how my life and business came to take shape. Located in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, MSIA Healing at Home Consultancy is dedicated to using natural, tailor-made remedies to work with couples that are experiencing infertility. Through the business, clients gain knowledge of healthy, balanced diets and exercise, alongside personal guidance on alternative therapies and supplements. My most powerful offering, however, is the counselling, support and inspiration to help women move past the fear, heartache and hopelessness of infertility to reach a place of courage, self-belief, inner peace and happiness.

While I consider my consultancy my calling, it wasn't the kind of work I initially envisioned for myself. Growing up, my goal was to attain a PhD in Education, a dream that was shattered after I suffered a severe car accident while undertaking my MBA. The accident left me bedridden for 2 years, during which I had to relearn how to walk. Yet, in a warm twist of fate, this was also the time in which I married my college sweetheart who had been exceptionally supportive and with whom I hoped to start a family.

However, two years into the marriage, our hopes dwindled as we discovered that my husband had severe ulcers, while I was suffering from polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), with very little chance of ever conceiving.

Infertility is the unspoken "elephant" in several African homes; Tanzania is no different. Women are the victims of this taboo, even when the problem is with the man. Infertility is often used as an excuse for infidelity; and even when it lies with the man, women tend to cover it up by getting children outside the marriage. Though the exact rates of infertility in Tanzania are unclear, DNA test results reveal that 47% of children do not belong to their purported biological fathers. This forces women to live in a lonely world, with low self-esteem and a lack of support.

I was fortunate to have the support of my husband and family all the while, but that didn't make the four years of infertility struggles easy. I embarked on a tireless quest for a solution and eventually found the answer in a book gifted to me by my mother-in-law entitled, "The Natural Remedies Encyclopaedia". Through this book, I developed a deeper understanding of my body, infertility, the role of stress, diet, exercise and natural remedies.

In time, by changing our lifestyle, my husband and I became free of ulcers and PCOS respectively, and were finally able to conceive twins, a boy and a girl, in 2015.

Excited with this outcome, I began sharing my testimony on Facebook, hoping to encourage anyone who could relate. The response was incredible: numerous people, the majority being women, contacted me directly, and this prompted me to start providing tailored counselling. I saw many people being healed of various gynaecological problems, with some going on to have babies. And with each individual I helped, I felt like I ventured onto a new stepping-stone for my own healing, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

All stopped with the sudden passing of my daughter at 9 months, which left me emotionally paralysed. Even though I had my son and my husband to live for, I gave up on everything. I stopped leaving the house, and fell into a severe depression that greatly affected the whole family.

In 2017, my husband, who remained patient and supportive all this time, came across an advert for applications for the Graça Machel Trust's Women Creating Wealth (WCW) programme and encouraged me to apply so I could start going out again. I enrolled in the programme showcasing "Ubora Popcorn", a popular flavoured popcorn brand that my husband and I had begun selling in 2013. What I found unique to this programme was that, after a week of training, we underwent an additional 8 to 9 months of coaching.

These coaching sessions, as well as the stories of the different women I met during the programme, gave me the wake-up call that catapulted me back into what I love and saved me from my depression. It was then that I realised my heart was elsewhere, and thus, the MSIA Healing at Home Consultancy was officially born.

Using the competencies that I acquired through the WCW programme, I was able to formalise my business in 2018. Having the right entrepreneurial skills is critical for business because this compels one toward growth and lessens a lot of the struggles in doing business. Investing time over money was more critical when starting, as was the development of trust and connection with my clients.

As I got to know them and their issues, many valued the relationship we built and would then opt to pay for consultations in addition to purchasing supplements directly from me.

Since registering my business, I have shared knowledge of natural remedies with over 1000 people in and outside Tanzania and have helped over 100 people with infertility while countless others have been healed of diverse gynaecological-related illnesses.

"It's fulfilling to see the suffering disappear through what I do, to see individuals and families being restored and coming out mentally healthier. To me, helping women find inner peace and bounce back with renewed zeal is creating wealth."

I am excited for what the future holds. After a rather sombre and slow time of business due to COVID-19, I am ready to take my business to the next level by starting a YouTube channel for more candid talks on infertility. In the next five years, I hope to reach over 3000 people with my knowledge while directly transforming the lives of over 300 of them. As I continue to climb inconceivable summits, I always think about how ironic it is that my horrendous grief bloomed into a path of eternal healing. Oh and, the name of my company? MSIA is the acronym of my family's names: Matilda (myself), Simon (my husband), and Ian and Audrey (my son and daughter). It is a testament to the family I continue to nurture.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1) Find and nurture your passion

Putting value on what you love has greater rewards because it is something you do effortlessly.

2) Time and effort is more valuable than money

Understand your business, it may just be that your biggest capital is putting time into the skill you already have and using the right channels to promote your business.

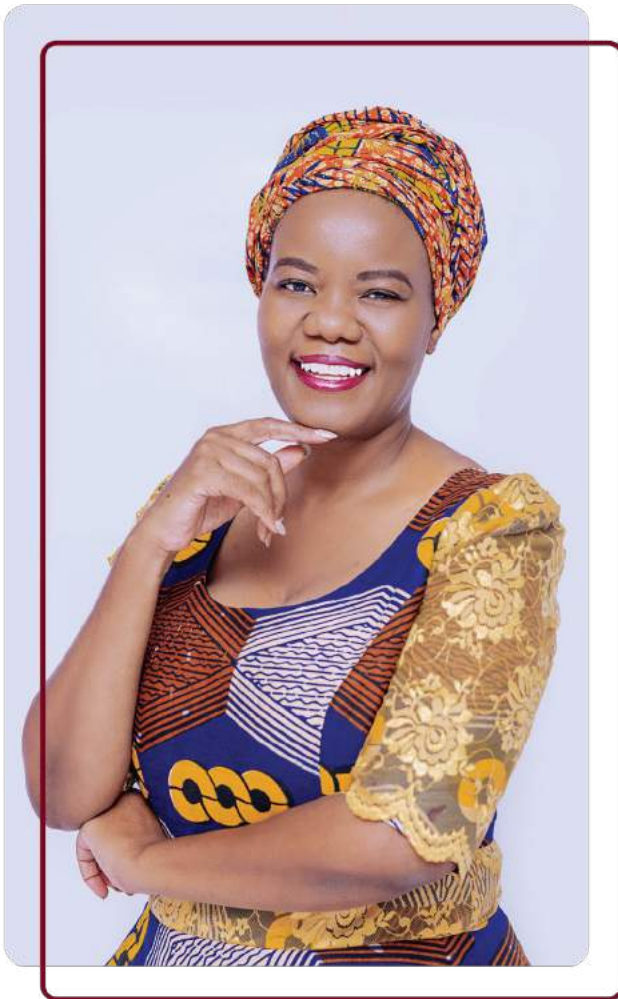
3) Build a network of women

Having a female network is a powerful strength since the hurdles of business that we have to overcome are similar. Hence, we can encourage each other along the way.

Victoria Mwafulirwa

Transforming value chains through organic agribusiness

Malawi



From humble beginnings as a caterer, Victoria Mwafulirwa has used her acumen, vision and discipline to steadily grow Homes Industries into a master manufacturer, processor and trader of organic foods, on its path to becoming a main fixture in Malawi and abroad.

I fell into the entrepreneurial space accidentally and prematurely. After my retrenchment from Paladin Africa, I found myself running a catering business for an army unit

based where I stay. While I was there, I processed my own ingredients, including flour and oil. I figured that there must be others like me who lacked these foods on a large scale and who wanted them made with love, quality and care. When my catering contract ended, I hit rock bottom, loaded with debt and delayed payments from the government. However, once you're rock bottom, there's nowhere else to go but up, and so up I went.

I birthed Homes Industries Ltd, an agro-processing company that works in three value chains, namely sunflower cooking oil, rice and groundnut flour. We work with an outgrower scheme of over 1,000 smallholder farmers who we support with seeds, capacity-building, and training in good agricultural practices and post-harvest handling. In turn, we serve as the primary market for their products. Established in 2015, the business was officially registered in 2016, and since then, we have been moving one step at a time to get to where we are now.

The climb up has not been without its hurdles, the chief among them initially being access to finance and equipment, knowledge of good practices, and a support system around these. However, I quickly realised that while finances were an issue, the true challenge was knowing where I would get the skill set to run my business and grow it to the levels that I envisioned. If my foundation was right, then access to finance would become less challenging.

Having said that, I cannot underplay the fact that accessing finance remains difficult even when you've got your stuff together. Formal institutions have requirements for funding that I think are far-fetched for SMEs or start-ups. As well, at times, the questions they pose and information they seek are discouraging and prohibitive, "Are you married?" being one of them. My marital status should have nothing to do with my borrowing. My business and my business capacity should have everything to do with it.

Another challenge has been the lack of female players and a supportive and forthcoming network within the agricultural space. As much as I need to go out and look for information, I feel that the people I seek information from should be forthcoming and supportive with it. These current attitudes leave the female agribusiness space with limited networking resources, collaborations, and opportunities for training and mentorship. These things are not readily available at present but they could be. The only limiting factor is ourselves refusing to reach out, do better, and support one another.

Personally, when my catering business ended, I looked around my network and realised that I'd lost touch and needed to rebuild to get back to the top. Coincidentally, right in front of me came the call for applications for the Women Creating Wealth programme (WCW), and this is when my U-turn began. WCW exposed me to a useful and impactful network of supportive peers and accountability partners who are always willing to shelve their own things to share information, lend advice, and help me monitor my progress. More importantly, by exposing me to Empretec, WCW filled in many of the missing middles and gaps in my foundations as an entrepreneur. On the personal front, it taught me to be disciplined and determined, to work hard and honour obligations, whereas, on the business front, WCW helped me with record-keeping and getting regulatory requirements right.

“Rather than complaining about the many systems and regulations, I learnt to understand the laws of the land and to conform accordingly. And once I had these foundations properly set up, I found that the walls and windows and furnishings were that much easier to fix and complete.”

As women, I see our role in wealth creation as being multipliers by enabling others with the knowledge and skills to be independent, to fend, and to continue multiplying wealth. I have been fulfilling my own role in that space by standing firm as a woman-led agribusiness, training my community in good agricultural practices and providing the market for their products. I now call on other female players within the agricultural space to do the same. Do not get side-tracked by others' opinions or dragged into thinking that you can't. Get up and say you'll do it and mean it. Keep encouraging each other to go for it, because we have

proven that we do wonders. We are multipliers by nature, so let's embrace ourselves as such.

The future for Homes Industries looks great! We have recently broken into the American market and have seen an increase in foreign demand from other countries, including South Africa, Tanzania, and Switzerland. I have complete faith that we can keep this momentum going. In the next 5 years, we would like to become the main fixture within the SADC region, exporting 60 tons monthly to each country. We would also like to follow the move into the digital, perhaps through online sales or training courses. If we continue to align ourselves to the right people and strategies, we will surely be unstoppable.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1) Keep asking

Don't be afraid to make mistakes, but make sure to seek the advice and experiences of others. It will help you prevent mistakes and save you so much in the long-run.

2) Focus on your growth and learning

Make sure that everything that you feed into yourself and your business is beneficial to growing your enterprise. When you are focused on growing, you have little time to waste or to focus on the petty stuff. Invest in your business and output, and you are sure to move forward.

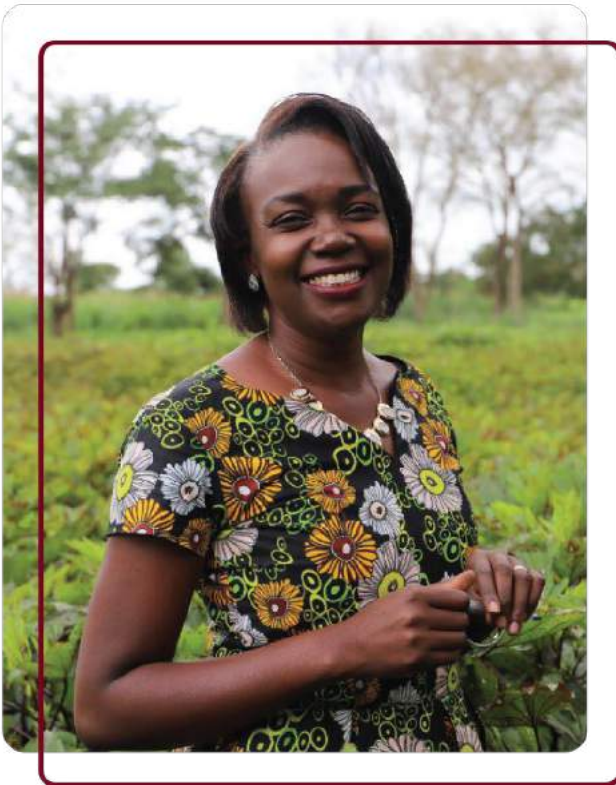
3) Be patient

Don't expect success overnight. Take your time learning and unlearning and becoming familiar and proficient in the systems and regulations of the business space. Only those who know and understand the rules can properly and effectively break them.

Ngabaghila Chatata

Seeds of hope for Malawi's agricultural industry

Malawi



Ngabaghila Chatata and her husband have transformed their love of farming into a fully fledged business set on transforming Malawi into a leading exporter of high-quality horticultural products.

In 2010, my husband and I started talking about what we wanted to do beyond our work and discussed the potential of running a business. We had the vision for a Malawi that could produce and export high-quality horticulture products. The horticulture space was monopolised by exports from neighbouring countries, but the fact that we were importing meant that there was a demand. Malawi was already a predominantly agricultural economy, but we figured that what was missing was adding value to the product and refining the quality to compete in the international market.

Hence, using a 6-acre plot that we'd bought in 2004, we started Thanthwe Farms, a passion project that has grown into a full-fledged business that uses an integrated business approach, which includes a business incubation targeting youth and women, greenhouse manufacturing and installation, agro-processing and horticulture. We sell both processed products and vegetables to supermarkets and individuals. Our range of high-value vegetables includes tomatoes, onions, sweet peppers and herbs, among others, while our processed products include jams, juices, teas, spices and dried fruits.

Once the business started growing, I resigned from my full-time job in 2015 to focus on the business, and the following year, enrolled in the Women Creating Wealth programme (WCW). This was a turning point with the most important lesson being the process of developing a business plan. As part of the programme, I was forced to hold myself accountable to my coaches, trainers and peers, and was given the framework to focus on my business. I also had to think deeply about where I wanted Thanthwe to get to and the marketing and financial strategies around that.

After the WCW, I was able to move the business forward, by developing a diversification agenda and seizing the opportunity to train other farmers and position the farm as an agribusiness hub. In 2020, we earned a grant and used it to incubate over 300 young people. Today, we continue to give advice and support to new and upcoming farmers in Lilongwe. Furthermore, we introduced agro-processing into our product line by building a processing plant where we have developed over 20 products, including herbal teas, juices, and jams. As well, we have become among the first to bring greenhouses to Malawi. Through a partnership with a greenhouse supplier, we have provided greenhouses for the government and UN organisations. To minimise costs and employ more people, we have recently built our own factory and look forward to manufacturing our own greenhouses.

We have encountered so many challenges along the way, but I have created a mentality that I am here to manage the challenges. Patience and perseverance have helped us learn to grow organically over time. Accessing finance was a big issue when we started. However, learning the art of pitching has also forced me to better my understanding of my business and enabled me to access some grants and monetary awards. COVID also seriously affected our cash flow as we lost a lot of vegetables and delayed the launch of our greenhouse factory by over a year as we experienced delays in the importation of material. All the same, we made the most of it, using the delays at the factory to reflect on how best we could finalise it, and advertising our products more aggressively as people shifted towards healthier products and lifestyles during the pandemic.

There have been many moments when I've considered quitting or contemplated finding a job, especially when we reached a point in the pandemic when we were paying our staff half their salaries. Hearing the stories of the staff, however, convinced me that whatever little we have, we can all share.

“Now, every time I think of giving up, I recall the conviction I had when I chose entrepreneurship. If I abort now, not only will my dream crumble but so will the prospects and dreams of all those who work with me. As entrepreneurs and leaders, it is up to us to always rise through the sand, shake it off, and stand tall again.”

Wealth creation is my life's purpose. I see it as generating resources in quantities that go beyond my needs and enable others around me to benefit. It has to go beyond generations, generating more than you invested and lasting 10, 20, 30 years ahead. Yet, one aspect that people miss, and the reason why many don't pursue the wealth creation agenda, is that it is a long-term process, not an event, that calls for meaningful and sometimes difficult changes in order for you to have a long-term impact.

The impact I hope to leave is a transformed agri-space in Malawi where we are able to add value to our agri-products and are known as sources of this. Through the entrepreneurship hub, I also hope to build other market leaders in Malawi and the rest of Southern Africa. Our youth are filled

with motivation and hope that should be nurtured as hope is, after all, what leads to problems being solved. There is so much potential in the Malawian horticulture place, but what we often miss is someone to hold us and inspire us. My hope is to be that someone.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1) Never lose your motivation

As you grow, there are always new challenges that crop up. Make something out of nothing and master the balancing act of motivating yourself and your people. Remember that making the money you want takes hard work.

2) Learn and unlearn

There are specific skills that you need at each stage of your growth. Either adapt or unlearn what worked at a different stage and what is not serving you at present.

3) Show appreciation to your team

Individually and collectively, say thank you, greet them when they enter the workspace, make time to sit with them, and reward them on special occasions.

Your workers mirror you. A team that is well-served serves well.

Thato Lekhera

Powering the informal market through poultry farming

South Africa



Thato Lekhera has transformed her childhood love of chicken farming into a poultry production and processing business that is empowering the informal market in Bloemfontein and facilitating the entry of other small-scale farmers into the industry.

The entrepreneurship bug first bit me in 2014. I majored in and worked in IT, but I've always loved farming with chickens. We used to keep chickens in our backyard when I was younger, and I found it quite interesting and therapeutic to take care of them. Realising I could turn this passion into a business and make a living out of it, I decided to venture full-time into business and opened Pholo ea Lisema (PEL) Poultry, an agribusiness based in Bloemfontein that specialises in poultry production and processing.

While I registered the business in 2014, I went through a slow and steady journey of exposure and capacity-building before we started operating in 2017. I started off by undergoing poultry training at the Agriculture Research Council, and then frequently visited and followed a number of small-scale, woman-owned poultry farms around my area. Eventually, I met the people who would become my farmers and forged a strong enough relationship that they agreed to mentor me. They had an extra plot of land and encouraged me to start raising my own chickens there to prove whether I was truly up for the task. So I started with about 250 chickens in my first cycle and raised 500 in the next until I got the hang of it.

I was lucky enough to have mentors like that who gave me the opportunity to start without having to worry about rentals or space, and who really wanted me to succeed. In 2019, I purchased my own plot and began operating my business from there.

My journey may be quite different to other farmers' as I was shielded from most of the challenges farmers face when starting. One of these is that chicken producers typically don't take small-scale farmers seriously and tend to give us lower-grade chickens, which are very difficult to grow organically. Without injecting them with growers, low-grade chickens either die easily or take longer to reach growth milestones which eats a lot on your pocket for feed, especially if you go outside the regular six to eight week feeding cycle.

Secondly, I sell to a primarily informal and individual market around my community and surrounding semi-rural areas. The demand for chickens is very high, particularly among the market ladies who get little joy buying from traditional white farmers as they tend to sell them rejects. When I came into the space, I was able to give them affordable and good quality chickens, so the word spread like wildfire. They are a market I treasure greatly, so much so that I ensure that they are always covered before taking my

production out into the informal market. Two thousand out of my 3000 are always reserved for them.

Even the challenge of COVID turned out to be a blessing for me. When we expected to take a knock like any other business, we actually grew. Initially, when the three restaurants and four bed-and-breakfasts we supplied closed down, I thought the business would crumble. I didn't realise that, at the same time, the informal market was booming. In the panic, my usual customers were buying extra and this compensated for the loss of business from the formal market.

All the while, I have been motivated by the growth potential I see in my business. I've always had the mentality to go commercial, and going through the Women Creating Wealth programme (WCW) showed me that it is indeed possible.

“WCW helped me work through my main weakness in business: finances. I learnt that I do not have to do them myself but efficiently monitor them, and this understanding of finances pushed me to approach financial institutions. Funnily, when I got there, they told me that they were precisely looking to commercialise women-led farms. I owe that to the WCW.”

Historically, I've realised that long-term wealth doesn't come from someone deciding to start a business and become rich today. Rather, it stems back from their great-great-grandparents who started something sustainable long before. I've realised that my being successful now is what will generate the driving force and possibilities for my children to be successful in the future. Creating wealth is creating enough stability for coming generations to access the resources and funds to create and run businesses without having to look for external funding that will take them long to pay off.

I've recently realised that I can contribute to waste management by turning my waste, such as chicken litter and feathers, into energy. While I am only in the research phase, I have partnered with SAB Foundation who are assisting me to develop a proper and professional plan to creatively reuse the waste and convert it into something useful. I am really looking forward to creating wealth this way. As well,

I intend to continue servicing my market ladies and seeing them make a killing out of their resale ventures.

I am so proud every time I go into markets and see the ladies busying about, selling for double or triple what they bought my chickens for. I want to empower young women as well by training them and helping them find their footing in the market, just as my mentors did for me. I am constantly urging young people to take up farming, and am always here to answer questions and share any knowledge and opportunities I have. There is still a large portion of the market for other agripreneurs to service without taking anything away from me.

In the next three years, the aim is to grow to have six more chicken coops with a holding capacity of 6,000 each, as well as a processing unit that can slaughter at least 5000 chickens daily and which will also be available to surrounding small-scale farmers. I would plan to grow PEL Poultry into a full-blown commercialised entity while maintaining our informal market. Once my counterparts start scaling up, they often discard informal buyers in favour of supplying to retailers and big businesses. What they don't realise is the cash flow knock that happens. With my informal market, it's cash upon delivery with no invoice sitting for two to three months awaiting payment. Hence, I aim to retain our informal market by branching outside of my community to sell across the whole of Bloemfontein, then the Free State, and eventually the country as a whole.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1) Know the ins and outs of your business

This is incredibly time-saving. Once you know the standard operating procedures of your business, you can delegate tasks to your employees and concentrate instead on the strategic side of business, particularly perfecting your business plan and business pitch.

2) Have a business plan you are confident in

This is crucial when approaching big funders. There are institutions and investors that are more than willing to invest in your venture, but you can only expect them to believe in you if you show them that you believe in yourself and your business first.

3) Stop procrastinating

Draw up a step-by-step plan for how to realise your vision and then follow through, step-by-step each day. Slowly but surely, you will go far and see that productivity translate into other areas of your life.

Tutu Chitumbo

Fishing for solutions at every turn

Zambia



Despite all the setbacks that the COVID pandemic has brought her, Tutu Chitumbo has used her excellent customer relations and palpable persistence to ensure that Tulye Foods, her fish farming venture, continues to soar.

I had been involved in business for a couple of years when my friend, Chinyanta Chiluba, and I joined the Women Creating Wealth 2018 cohort. During the year-long programme, we were asked to design and test-run a business.

By then, we had noticed that people were moving towards healthier diets, leaning away from red meat and into white meat, especially fish. We thought people would quickly grow bored of plain fish, so we thought of ways to add value to it.

The result was Tulye Foods, an agribusiness focused on the production and sale of smoked fish. Initially, all of our fish was purchased from other suppliers. However, we have

recently set up fish ponds to grow our own fish, and alongside fish farming, have expanded to farming cows, goats, and sheep as well.

We owe the existence and much of the growth of Tulye Foods to WCW. The business came from humble beginnings, supplying only 10kg of fish a week. By the end of our training, we had moved to supplying 40kg weekly. Furthermore, we were able to register the business and have become adept at producing and managing our financial records and cash flow. Without the tools given to us by the WCW, we could not have grown to this level.

WCW showed us the importance of carrying out a market survey and understanding the needs and resources within our context before starting a business. Secondly, it taught me how to devise a business plan and remain focused on my vision, while also planning ahead and projecting opportunities and setbacks in the near future. Finally, the programme taught me how to nurture and maintain customer relations by consistently keeping them connected and informed.

While we have undoubtedly made positive strides, I have faced some challenges lately, particularly since the coming of COVID.

Before 2020, we supplied to individuals and canteens and had sealed a supply deal with Food Lovers. Unfortunately, when the pandemic hit, Food Lovers and many of the canteens were forced to close down, setting us back tremendously in our plans to broaden our market. Additionally, the pandemic slowed our progress in setting up the fish ponds, which limited our stock.

However, because demand did not waver, we were sometimes forced to travel far to get our supply, which elevated our costs. Moreover, we had the issue of securing finance, despite our steady business and revenue. I'm not sure what makes access to finance so difficult, but I feel that financial institutions are reluctant to fund farming projects due to how dependent our performance is on the well-being of stock and climatic conditions.

Due to the unpredictability of these factors, I suspect that funders are less confident in our ability to pay back debts, and thus, less likely to invest in this sector.

I have not allowed these challenges to deter me, though, always pushed forward by my customers' relentless confidence and love for our products. Despite, at one point, failing to produce for nearly 3 months, we have been able to retain individual households as part of our clientele through the pandemic. Furthermore, to boost sales, I have taken to visiting and promoting our fish in large offices such as Stanbic Bank and the Anti-Corruption Commission, where I have found a large market. The pandemic also pushed me to expand to other activities; cow, sheep and goat farming, so that I could have an alternative source of income to push up my other businesses. We are still in the early stages of recovery, and I am still mapping out our road back to growth. Although entrepreneurship is not an easy road, I know that if I keep my head above and strive to think out of the box, Tulye Foods will not only survive but thrive.

I aspire to become a wealth creator, though I do not feel that I am there yet. I think I need to get to a certain level in business to move beyond making profit to promoting the sustainability of their business, myself, and the community I am in.

“Having an impactful reach and multiplying effect requires building a presence and relationship with the community and then using these relationships to positively influence and plough back knowledge and resources into the community. Although I’ve still got a long way to go, my achievements prove that I am already on my way.”

Over the next year, I would like to establish a one-stop-shop where we sell fish and other meats supplied straight from our farm. I want to become the ZanFish of Zambia, where clients are assured to find fresh and quality products. I would also like to leave a legacy of job creation and empowerment by employing more women and collaborating with other female farmers in the future. I would really love to see a situation where we support each other and work together in a supply chain where I serve as a wholesaler for the fingerlings and fish produced by other women farmers.

Though we are already doing this on a small scale, I would like to do this on a much larger scale, supporting at least 500 women.

A couple of years ago, Chinyanta had to relocate to Paris, leaving me to run the business alone, and I consider it one of my greatest achievements that the business has since not gone under but, in fact, soared. On my own (albeit with Chinyanta's support), I was able to get us the deal with Food Lovers and increase our weekly supply to 70kg. Moreso, amidst losing our biggest clients and the delays to our expansion, I have been able to get Tulye Foods through the pandemic. For my own self-improvement, I decided to go back to school and pursue a Master's degree in Agribusiness, while remaining a dedicated full-time entrepreneur and mother. If I could do all this on my own, then there are really no limits to how much higher I can soar.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Conduct market research before starting your business

Many people just start businesses without properly understanding their context or the needs of the market they want to sell to. Appraising the market will clue you into gaps and help you determine whether your business idea will be feasible and lucrative.

2) Learn to do books

Keeping steady and well-elaborated records not only help you monitor your business's performance and progress, but help you make realistic projections for the future and impress potential investors as well.

3) Nurture your relationship with customers

Keep your clients informed and connected. The stronger your bond, the more loyal and receptive customers will be and the greater chances you have of having a positive and multiplying impact on the community.

Mulakonda Jessie Chirwa

A gilded road to farming success

Zambia



Mulakonda Chirwa never saw her and her husband's hobby of rearing village chicken being translated into a business, but they have done just that. Taking the skills she garnered from the WCW, as well as her natural creativity and knack for selling, Mulakonda has managed to grow Gold Acre Farm beyond her expectations.

Before the WCW programme, my husband and I had never seen our hobby of rearing village chicken being translated into an actual business. Little did we know that what had started as a backyard pastime would hatch into an opportunity for self-identification, discovery, and enlightenment. Before joining the Women Creating Wealth programme, I spent some months in a decision limbo, contemplating whether to stop working or not. I loved my job as an accountant, but the work environment had become toxic, and I became desperate for some renewed sense of purpose.

Fortunately, a window of opportunity opened when my husband came across an ad in his network for the 2017 WCW programme. That became the start of an entrepreneurial trek that I now call "A Journey of Resilience."

During the decision-making limbo, I was stuck looking at options from one, very narrow side. Once I was on the programme, however, it was as if I had a switch that had turned on and said, "There are endless possibilities to what you can be as a woman." Listening to the different experiences of the diverse coaches and trainees, my world of possibilities widened, and I grew more and more certain about my decision.

There were many aha moments, but it was during the "Pitch your business idea" exercise, wherein trainees were asked to come up and market a potential business, that I realised my true potential. After coming up with a brand of homemade play dough for children and selling all the 5 packets I had made, I recognised my capacity for creative thinking, public speaking and selling. Standing before so many people and making my voice heard was so exciting and fulfilling that I knew, right there and then, that I had to let my inner self out of the box.

As I told my experiences throughout the training, I became a ticking time bomb, ready to explode. No longer a voice shut inside with hidden or secret thoughts, I put my ideas into a journal, and went about seeking information and networking. In that very year, I registered my business to make sure there was no way of turning back. From then, I had to be accountable and responsible as a corporate person, for my business. Situated in Zambia, Gold Acre Garm Ltd is a mixed farm agribusiness entity producing broiler chickens, a small herd of dairy animals, crop production, and fruit tree production. Operating chiefly in Lusaka in addition to a few selected towns, we strive to provide quality produce at competitive prices.

Often I have seen this question asked: "What would you tell your younger self?"

“Five years after setting up the business, I would tell my younger self to be aware of the challenges that come with starting a business. More importantly, I would tell her to remain resilient and to maintain a solution-focused attitude towards these challenges. There are always solutions within and around; the key is to network, network, and network.”

Amongst the challenges I've faced, the hardest have been access to information, lack of finance to expand operations, and lack of policy support particularly when it comes to dealing with other countries. Others have included tight regulations and changes in regulations and laws, both local and foreign, alongside being ridiculed as a woman and having people in the industry, mainly men, wanting to control me.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the challenges that we faced as a business. We lost two of our reliable clients who were large contributors to our revenue base. At the same time, this forced us to relook at our strategy and led to us resorting to the open market by diversifying our products from just village chickens to include crop and fruit tree production.

Without the WCW programme, I would still be that woman closed up with a million ideas but no voice. For me, wealth creation means freedom, experience, discovery, confidence and empowerment. Since graduating from the programme, my business has diversified from focusing on village chicken production to dairy farming, fruit production and crop production. This was facilitated by the different strategies provided during the training, namely opportunity seeking, information seeking, systematic planning and monitoring. We have had to increase our networking in order to seek opportunities and seek information, evolving from not networking at all to belonging to several bodies that work hand-in-hand with the government. Amongst them are the Zambia Federation of Women in Business and the Zambia Development Agency.

The systematic planning and monitoring has seen us plan our crops and crop rotation whilst focusing on the need to diversify. We have diversified from just growing crops to bringing in poultry both village chicken and broiler rearing, as well as dairy production. We have tried collabora-

tions with other businesses, some of which have failed, but there are still others in the pipeline that we hope to follow through with.

In the next five years, we wish to diversify further into adding value to our produce. We intend to add value to our poultry products through the making of competitively priced sausages and patties to serve the high-density markets which are within our farm's reach. Through this process, we aim to initially employ 2 people on a permanent basis whilst engaging more on a temporary basis. As well, we wish to continue creating wealth by empowering local women to buy our products wholesale and resell them for their own income generation.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1) Focus

Focus on one product that you can use to eventually diversify. Initially, we tried too many things and had multiple goals, but ended up holding or even losing our capital in these. Focus on mastering one activity or product at the time before taking on the next.

2) Look at the bigger picture

Our purpose is much more than mere profit. To be able to see the next woman, youth or business person benefit from your creation is the biggest achievement. Create wealth that is passed on from generation to generation without boundaries.

3) Diversify

Opportunities are there. Be alert to the potential that is within you to create wealth from different sources.

Lulu Mohamed Khamis

The journey of Ralmoss General Supply

Tanzania



Lulu has always wanted to be in business to provide for her family, but with Ralmoss General Supply, she has a catering and food supply company that goes beyond this, and is growing in size and success.

Ever since I was a kid, I have loved cooking and experimenting with ingredients in the kitchen. Sharing my culinary creations with others was what brought me the most joy, and eventually, I had the idea to turn my passion profitable by selling my end products to my neighbours and to my friends at school.

As I grew older, so did my itch to partake in business as a means of generating a good income to provide for my four children, creating job opportunities, and inspiring other women in society.

Thus, in 2012, I launched Ralmoss General Supply, a catering and food supply company. At first, the business consisted of only 4 employees, but due to the nature of our service and our growing success, we increased the staff to 10 workers. Today, Ralmoss packages tea masala, pilau masala, chilli and turmeric and provides catering services at large.

Tax compliance is one of the greatest hurdles I have faced as an SME in Tanzania. Here, taxes are charged for almost everything, forcing small entrepreneurs to spend their meagre capital on these charges at the expense of developing and upscaling our businesses. Like other women entrepreneurs, I have also had to deal with neglect and scarce opportunities to showcase my ability. Additionally, customers, including large companies, have taken advantage of my inferior power as a woman to evade payment for the service we provide.

“As I see it, many in society assume that women cannot, and will not, fight for their rights. Thus, clients feel entitled not to pay us without ever providing a reason or excuse.”

Fortunately, with the help of several organisations, such as the Tanzanian Women Chamber of Commerce, Graça Machel Trust and Stara Foundation, the landscape for women entrepreneurs is changing. Awareness of women-led businesses is spreading, and we are now being given priority to participate in activities where entrepreneurs are concerned.

After joining the Women Creating Wealth family, I've developed in many aspects, my attitude being the most instant. I gained confidence in my business, which I have applied to my marketing. Understanding the psychology of different clients has helped me assess my clients' wants more effectively and tailor my services accordingly. I also learnt the

value of consistency, which developed my clients' trust in my service and led them to recruit me and recommend me for a variety of jobs. Time management is the third useful skill I learnt, and I have used it to advance both my service delivery and improve in my personal life. Furthermore, the programme exposed me to different business strategies, which I have implemented into innovative solutions to improve my venture and recruit more customers. With all these tools, I can now confidently convert a simple person into a potential customer.

In the coming five years, I see my business developing into one of the most formidable companies and one of the best catering services in Tanzania and the wider African continent. Catering services are now increasing their services by also offering their space to rent for events. Hence, my goal is to build a huge house that can be rented for weddings and other ceremonies. I also have a huge commitment to continue learning in order to build wealth for both myself and society at large. I want Ralmoss to become a source of wealth for upcoming generations as well as a source of revenue to develop our country. I want my business to grow and create wealth to assist the upcoming generations. I would also like Ralmoss to become a source of revenue to develop our country, and I am determined to create a good environment for employing several people. If I continue to work hard and provide excellent service to my clients, I am sure to reach my goals.

I am incredibly proud to be a part of the WCW community, and I encourage my fellow entrepreneurs to take action and get involved in programmes like this to ameliorate and accelerate their businesses. By doing so, we are sure to leave a legacy of visibility, knowledge, and wealth to be enjoyed by all the generations to follow.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1) Fight for your money

Customers may sometimes take advantage of your inferior power as a woman to not pay you. Do not stand for it - fight for your rights. Do not let clients get away with not paying you, especially without a legitimate reason or excuse.

2) Be consistent

Be consistent in the quality and delivery of your product and service. This develops your clients' trust in you and leads them to recruit you and recommend you more often.

3) Market strategically

Understand the psychology of different clients and assess what they want. Apply this to your marketing strategies to attract specific clients and grow your business.

Rachel Mathale

Creating your own story

South Africa



Using the organisational and administrative expertise she garnered as a health and safety and environmental management professional, Rachel Mathale has created a legacy of wealth helping others create sustainable and empowering businesses.

My entrepreneurial journey has been the result of a series of events with unintended consequences. Business books and motivational coaches often share what it takes to prepare for the world of business. Unfortunately, circumstances do not always align to afford that preparation, as my entry into entrepreneurship proves. I have always dreamt of starting my own business, fascinated with own-

ing my own decision-making and empowering others to do the same.

In 2015, I left my corporate job to pursue that dream, determined to make it on my own and forge something meaningful for myself. I decided to take the expertise I had gained as a health and safety and environmental management professional into the consulting space, focusing less on the technical aspects and more on my organisational and administrative strengths. With these strengths and my skill set, I felt certain in my capacity to create a sustainable business.

Rare Sherq and Wellness Solutions is an environmental, social and governance consultancy specialising in occupational health and safety, environmental management, enterprise risk management, and ISO management systems. We provide assurance to companies that their compliance mandate and protection of People, Planet and Products are in line with not only legal obligations but company values.

Initially, my drive was to make money and lots of it, but I soon realised that, while money was a good driver, it was a poor motivator. This realisation was further affirmed when COVID hit and businesses had to navigate differently; I learnt then that it was connections and relationships that mattered most. I sold more during COVID than I had in the last two years prior to the pandemic because I stopped chasing numbers and focused instead on what really mattered to me, which is making a difference and leaving a lasting impact on people. After all, we sell our business to people who run companies and not just to a company.

This is what I am most passionate about, creating wealth through my service offering and making meaningful connections with people. Ultimately, I am in business to create wealth and own a sustainable business that empowers myself and my team financially but also in ways that encourage us to transcend our limitations. Thus, my

company is centred on wealth creation so as to ensure that it outlives me and stands as a reminder that I created my own story.

“I have chosen how my business was created and nurtured, and how it has outgrown me. I want those who come behind me to outrun me and to bring ideas that position wealth creation, for self and specifically for so many others, in the now and in the future.”

WCW shaped my views on not only acquiring wealth but sustaining it by helping me come face to face with my biases and limiting beliefs about my own capabilities. I used to see wealth attainment merely through the acquisition of big contracts and projects, but the programme showed me that it actually lies in building a series of small steps towards sustainability. Two of the greatest learning outcomes for me were, firstly, to start saving and, secondly, to incorporate consistent gratitude into my daily business practice. Celebrating the small, inch-by-inch moves has been equally as fulfilling as celebrating the big bangs.

I am very excited about the opening of our laboratory! Currently, I have a huge dependency on other companies for analytical services, which have their place. However, I want to ensure that when a client comes to us, they have a full suite of services. I want us to become a one-stop-shop for consulting and providing diagnostic solutions as well as helping companies make decisions swiftly without waiting on 3rd parties. We are geared for growth and want to play a critical role in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). I want to partake in decision-making platforms and policymaking that have positive impacts on economic growth and development, specifically for women. I am also set to establish sustainable job opportunities for those in countries neighbouring South Africa.

It is often said and shared that owning your own narrative and story emboldens you and empowers you to create even more powerful stories. It is my hope that women would own their own stories and know that your story does not have to have the perfect set of circumstances to be a good story. As long as you tell your own story, it is already a good one.

What I have learnt about wealth creation

1) Pay yourself first

We don't get to chase our dreams for free.

Save as much as you are able to so you can empower yourself to chase your dreams freely and build the business you desire.

2) Make your vision and business idea known

You may have a good vision and solid business case, but if you don't share this, it will remain hidden and untapped. Once you make your vision known, you will soon find that there are many supporters out there who are willing to help you run with your vision faster.

3) Show up for your dreams

Whatever you have set your mind to, show up for it.

Set your mind on a clear course of action and win the day. You are your own best cheerleader.

Stories of
**Creating
Wealth**

Section 7 . **Pioneers**

*I see myself as I am: as the solution the world is waiting for.
I carry the solution within myself, and so I push myself, more and more,
to transform lives through my work.*

Endrina Maxwell

Doing our bit for climate and community

Malawi



Endrina has a passion for farming, improving the health and wellbeing of people, and empowering women and communities. She is the founder of Wathanzi Mbwalika Women Growers and Processors Organization, which is on a mission to raise the finest quality, sustainable vegetables and vegetable seed oils for the local community.

If I should credit anyone for where I am today, it is my mother who, even in death, remains my most powerful and valu-

able mentor. From a tender age, she incentivised my sisters and I to embrace our family's tradition of farming by taking us to the farm and offering us payment in exchange for bits of work. Unbeknownst to me, the knowledge and skills my mother imparted to me then would be critical in inspiring me to start my own farming venture.

Realising that selling raw materials was not profitable, I decided to use what my mother taught me to add value to the raw materials I was harvesting. Thus, I founded Wathanzi Mbwalika Women Growers and Processors Organization (WMWGPO), through which we sell a range of natural products that are produced using only natural and sustainable farming methods. These are the Wathanzi pure sunflower and castor oils, papaya jam, and briquettes made from transformed agricultural wastes.

As an African woman, financial challenges and lack of opportunities have been two of my major challenges. For instance, when buying raw materials, men generally have more "financial muscle" and therefore end up raising the prices of raw materials which keeps many women out of the market. Most opportunities for financial support go to men who typically have more assets, like land, to use as collateral.

"Being looked down upon is another struggle I have faced as a woman in a male-dominated sector. At the same time, it is what has built me into a strong woman, and it is what continuously pushes me to achieve my goals and prove myself as someone able."

Instead of shying away or being intimidated, I interact with the men in my sector, learning from them and then implementing these learnings in my business. Moreover, I make

use of the power and financial muscle of the men around me. I make sure to take a man with me when I go to purchase raw materials as they are better able to negotiate prices for raw materials, which in turn, enables me to buy and continue with my processing.

COVID-19 has also been a challenge that has impacted my business a lot. Since I can't afford a loan, the growth of WMWGPO has depended mainly on daily sales. However, due to economic challenges, customers had focused more on necessities rather than non-essential products such as our oils and jams. This placed a heavy strain on our sales and nearly ran us out of business. I was determined to continue being in business, though, and so I ventured into a new product for the business' survival: the Wathanzi Briquettes for cooking. Slowly, this has kept us going, and I am looking forward to expanding this part of the business.

Since I completed the WCW programme, my annual sales growth rate has increased from 45% to 90%, and I have diversified from 1 product to 4. The size of my staff grew from 2 to 6 employees, and I increased the number of smallholder farmers who grow the raw materials for my products from 500 to 3000. The programme increased my confidence, allowing me to become a public speaker and moderator for local and international conferences, which has brought additional income for my business. I have applied the knowledge gained to diversify my products and expand my target areas through sales agents. Even with the impact of COVID-19 on the business, I feel we are still doing our bit.

In my view, wealth creation means contributing to the nation in ways that are economically helpful and which promote national development. While this can be done in many ways, we choose to do so by relying on local resources and farmers and using sustainable farming techniques. Through the former, we help reduce poverty and enhance farmers' opportunities to grow their incomes, whereas the latter ensures that we leave a smaller carbon footprint and thereby improve the health of our clients and community.

I am incredibly proud of the growth and survival of my business thus far, and I have every intention to continue expanding. In the next 5 years, I see myself having a bigger processing plant, where I will diversify into soya and groundnut oil processing and house a briquette-making machine. In addition, I want to make bulk purchases of 60-80 metric tons of sunflower grain and 5-12 metric tons of castor beans each year to further the wealth of small-

holder farmers. I have great hope for my business, and for all women entrepreneurs in Malawi. Just as my mother did with me all those years ago, I will continue sharing my knowledge and empowering others to know that they are able and to show others that they can.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Share your knowledge

I see potential and creativity in women all around me, so I encourage them to not fear business and especially male-dominated industries. In my sector, for example, there is a growing demand and more and more opportunities. Believe in yourselves, and always be willing to learn. I will always share what I know to increase our presence.

2) Have confidence

Confidence is contagious! When you demonstrate confidence in your products and services, it instils the same trust and belief in your customers.

3) Always seek information

There is an abundance of knowledge and opportunities for business growth out there, but you cannot possibly be expected to know it all. Be purposeful in seeking information from others, and learning from others, as well.

Hayley Eagle

Geared for greater heights

South Africa



Hayley is the founder and Managing Director of Jamsco Automotive Assemblies, supplying and building quality parts and proving that women have a space within the automotive industry.

My first job was in the automotive industry, providing customer support at the front desk of a suspension repair garage before being promoted to manager a few years later. Here, I became fascinated by vehicles and their intricacies and fell in love with being part of a male-dominated environment. After working for numerous carmakers and dealerships and building a good understanding of how they work, I followed in the entrepreneurial footsteps of my late father and my sisters and opened my first business in Gaborone, Botswana. Marshall Tswana Enterprises sold cotton and haberdashery and manufactured aprons.

Years later, I felt the itch to return to the automotive industry. Although women are not well represented in this sector, I knew that I could provide the high-quality standards required to run a successful business. So, with the instrumental help of a South African government initiative to include more black entrepreneurs in industries with a high entry barrier, Jamsco Automotive Assemblies became a reality.

When Jamsco started in 2012, the challenges seemed insurmountable, and in some instances, remain so. As mentioned, the automotive industry requires extremely high capital investments, so this is a dominant barrier; it also has low-profit margins and imposed cost cuts, which make small and medium enterprise entrants and township industries unsustainable.

“We need to look at alternatives to this so that the rhetoric that black suppliers are not capable, or that we do not meet the quality required, does not remain. Jamsco breaks the myth of lack of capability and quality with pride, diligence, and perseverance.”

Jamsco has also seen significant success through synergies with other automotive businesses. For example, we partnered with Sodecia SA, a supplier to Ford Motor Company. They have also helped us create trust with the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and ensure that quality parts are always delivered along the production line. Moreover, through the exchange of lessons learnt, synergies have helped us reduce risks and failures, and have brought us a wealth of industry knowledge.

For women in the automotive industry, the barriers go beyond business and fair competition. Male camaraderie is a very powerful tool that men can use, either implicitly or overtly, to exert dominance. Bullying happens unblinkingly.

ly by some of the powerful men in this sector, and if you don't bow to their pressure, you find yourself on the outside. This sends a strong message to women who dare to stand up for themselves. As a result, most women are not brave enough to speak out about the impact of bullying on women-owned businesses. My ten-year journey in the automotive space is evidence that there are a lot more supportive men, willing to aid and protect our ability to supply quality parts and safety-critical assemblies on time. Without this kind of power and support, Jamsco would have not managed to stay afloat all this time.

COVID-19 saw Jamsco with zero income during lockdown and continuous expenses to protect our customers and maintain our integrity and support to the production line. Jamsco persevered because of the immense will and heaps of time that all our stakeholders invested in securing our space as black entrepreneurs in the automotive supply chain. During this period, I have learnt to ask and reach out for assistance, and to find partners who are willing to help facilitate change.

Before starting my amazing journey with the Graça Machel Trust, I distanced myself from the idea that I needed to create wealth; it seemed like a sin. However, the Women Creating Wealth programme taught me to have confidence in my wealth and to create wealth for others by obtaining personal mastery. This has included understanding the vital role that women play in families and business and the ways we use our wealth to uplift and grow others. I also now see the need to incorporate good corporate governance, collaborate with and uplift other women-led businesses, and grow and develop ourselves and our enterprises.

Individually, I learnt how to take pride in enhancing my entrepreneurial skills. The programme encouraged hard conversations, reflecting openly and frankly about the way we were running our businesses and what we could do to improve women's participation. I am proud to be a Women Creating Wealth alum as we continue to prioritise and support women-owned businesses.

Jamsco is now well recognised and on a trajectory of growth. The automotive sector contributes a significant amount of money to the economy, as demonstrated in South Africa's Masterplan for the Automotive Industry (Master Plan 2035). We must work towards building a globally competitive and transformed industry. Jamsco has been a recipient of automotive funding, allowing us to be part of the automotive value chain. We will continue driving job creation, support-

ing meaningful transformation and growth, with an emphasis on women empowerment and development.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Create synergies with government, business and multinationals:

Technology, quality and sustainability requirements create barriers that exclude the majority in the automotive industry. Synergies create a stepping stone to help overcome these barriers that hinder inclusion, transformation and growth.

2) Be financially efficient:

Keep business costs low and have good control over your finances by completing regular financial projections to evaluate whether there is a return on investments and if the business is still feasible.

3) Diversify

Diversification of business is important as a single stream of income can be dangerous. Adding new income streams creates stability, especially when the road gets rocky.

Pepsi Baiocco

Lighting the way for renewable energy

South Africa



Charged with resilience, agility, and the conviction to make a difference, Pepsi Baiocco is dedicating her all to creating a future where clean and renewable energy is accessible to all.

My entrepreneurship journey has been a very long one. Growing up, my mom and dad were involved in a series of businesses, one of them being the sale of milk produced from the cattle at home. My younger brother and I were often roped into helping our parents sell the milk on weekends and school breaks and counting cash takings from our family shop "Mpho Cash store" every night over the weekend and during holidays and this was where my relationship with selling and money first came through. Years later, I began working for a company in Italy that manufactured Photovoltaic Thermal solar panels, which produce both electric and thermal energy. Working in the renewable energy sector brought back all these memories of growing up in rural South Africa, particularly how we struggled with hot water and electricity. I recalled how, for us, electricity meant candles and paraffin lanterns, and how we had never had the

leisure of streetlamps or warm water. Seeing that the majority of South Africa is still primarily rural, I had the idea to bring back my knowledge on renewable energy as a way to plough back and make a difference where I come from. Hence, I have co-founded Neon Energy, a B-BBEE company providing solar-powered solutions and energy services, most notably our photovoltaic thermal systems.

Penetrating the South African market has not been easy, though. Renewable energy is a fairly new concept where people are just barely acclimated to solar panels, let alone PVTs. People still need to be convinced and be educated about PVT products, how they function, and the benefits of a 2-in-1 (hybrid) which is worth the expense and cost. Being an ordinary woman or person, without holding a certain status or title, I still have to introduce myself and this has made the journey more challenging.

Secondly, I am also not an engineer or technician by profession despite being in the engineering space. So I've had to engage with the qualified male engineers (often difficult but at times willing to give me an ear) across all cultures and the likes of the Van Rooyen's and so forth. I often find that those that have the advantage of capital in this space and in boardrooms always try to make their voices heard loudly, yet they do not know the product. So, I have had to work double and triple times harder to prove myself, and of course, product knowledge is the best weapon.

Thirdly, one gets frustrated with the implementation of by-laws in South Africa and the continent as a whole. We still struggle to comprehend the Rules, Regulations and Policies around solar energy as well as the rules and regulations around installations and audits. The Department of Energy has been drawing regulations for over a number of years, but we have yet to see the results, and this is taking the industry back. One would assume that with the extensive travelling and exposure our decision-makers and leaders are experiencing globally, it would be easy to adopt some insights and plough back at home. We also need to educate our communities and people that energy is much more than just the electricity in our homes. Energy is essential and

plays an elementary role in our daily human lives, companies, households, and country. Without energy, the economy will collapse as it also drives industrial growth and production.

Alongside these challenges came COVID. Amidst job loss and financial insecurity for residential clients and the shift to working from home in corporates, people questioned whether it would be sustainable to invest in projects like the PVT system. As a result, for the last 2 years, we could not match our usual sales; Neon Energy was but a living ghost. Fortunately, we were able to get through with the help of my other businesses which allowed us to sustain Neon. We have also shifted our focus internationally, specifically to the UAE with an office in Dubai. We have found a wider and more open-minded market. The display we have here is doing well, and the market is beginning to understand the need for PVTs and we go back to producing our revenue. I am confident that it is only a matter of time before the sales begin. At the same time, our office in South Africa where we assemble is beginning to regain strength. Step by step, we are getting into this so-called new normal and recovering the economy. I owe my resilience and agility to my belief in what we are doing and working towards. That is a world free of energy poverty, sustainability, integration of renewable energy sources as well as climate change adaptation in the energy sector.

Wealth creation has many and different aspects, just as there are several aspects that contribute to preserving wealth for the next generation. As women, one aspect is showing up and making our voices heard and our presence felt. We have a space and a share in the economy, yet I feel that we often lack confidence and think we have no voice especially when the male counterpart is the majority in a room. Again, maybe it is not men thinking less of us - it's us thinking less of ourselves and being intimidated by their presence. I believe one woman in the room can change and break barriers and make paths for others to have voices.

I am passionate about manufacturing and industrialization as well as improving the quality of basic education system. So, over the next 5 years, I would like to not just import and assemble but also manufacture locally and export our PVTs to at least 70% of Africa and potentially some GULF countries. COVID-19 kicked this dream hard, but I have decided to start afresh and resume knocking on doors to see if we can get financial support this time around.

I am proud of a number of things, as much as I still have to grow. I am proud of my upbringing, rural background,

making a difference where I can and contributing to the world. I am proud and fortunate to have been exposed to work internationally with different people of different cultures, races and creeds. This has helped me to build meaningful connections with positive impact. My husband who is my consigliere and always thrusts me in the right direction. Most of all, I am proud of having made it this far with intention and a strong, powerful mindset.

As a mother and entrepreneur, another huge aspect is passing down. This means building long-term businesses that leave a legacy and have a global reach. It also means investing in our children and children as a whole through education.

“We should stop seeing budgeting and saving as something exclusive to the wealthy, and start teaching children financial responsibility from an early age. “Old money” is the product of many generations who have benefited from saving and learning to control their spending. That is true wealth – not having bank accounts and assets, but the values we share and leave behind.”

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Work not for a salary but to grow

No one should enter a job as a receptionist to leave as a receptionist. Enter every space with the intention and purpose to leave better, wiser and more capable than you entered. This has always been my “mantra” and it enabled me to excel in each and every space I have been in despite having challenges.

2) Find the right place and the right time

If you see that your current environment or activity is not right at the moment, shift your focus to something else and find someplace that will bring value to your time, energy, product and time. Be focused while keeping the agile mindset.

3) Build long-term, sustainable businesses

Don't conform to running a small business for a short-term or just to make quick money. Don't settle for local or national visibility only. Build long-term businesses with the intent to grow globally and leave a legacy. Stretch your wings, wherever you are!

Theresa Munanko Theu

Representing women in the real estate industry

Zambia



With her good humour and unshakeable confidence, Theresa Theu has spent the last 2 decades growing her property management and valuation consultancy and serving as a role model of hard work, resilience and financial empowerment for those who follow her.

I was forced into entrepreneurship because I became frustrated at my workplace where I was employed as a real estate manager.

I was in charge of managing the commercial properties the company had put on rent, as well as selling the properties. I worked so hard, mostly on my own, and made money for the company just to receive a meagre salary at the end of the month. I told myself, "If I'm doing this work for these people, I might as well just do it for myself." Making the most of my qualifications as a registered valuation surveyor

and real estate consultant, I opened Landworth Property Consult, which specialises in property evaluation, property management and estate agency.

I started the business in the living room of my house in 2002 before renting a place in town a year later. The start wasn't easy as I had a hard time penetrating the market, which is dominated by banks and financial institutions. At one point, I started looking for a job, but wherever I went, I discovered that people knew me and my enterprise. All the banks and property management firms refused to employ me as they were encouraging entrepreneurship. So I came back to my business and persisted, determined to make it work. Another challenge I encountered when penetrating the market was being a woman. When clients were referred to me and came into my office, they still wanted to see a man and were often surprised when I introduced myself as the surveyor.

I knew I needed something to help my business stand out in order to enter the market. So I made it a point to produce our valuation reports in 24 hours whereas most other valuation firms take a week. With this time advantage, I was able to capture the market. Twenty years later, I now have a good share of the market and am registered in a couple of banks, where many of our work opportunities come from. I've been able to employ more people, growing my initial team of 2 to a team of 8.

What I learned is that once you show the market that you're just as competent as the males and can produce the work, the challenges become very few. Furthermore, since 2017, I have been registered as a real estate agent in Dubai and have been selling apartments there from Zambia. I came across the opportunity after meeting some developers during an expo and using the confidence I had gained during the Women Creating Wealth training (WCW) to approach them and sell myself.

Confidence and opportunity-seeking were not the only skills WCW gave me. I have also gained the skills of information-seeking and networking. I buy a newspaper every day to find any advertisements for properties and valuation jobs. As well, I've joined a couple of women associations through which I've interacted with women from different sectors and gotten a number of work opportunities. Moreover, WCW taught me the importance of persisting through challenges and working efficiently to keep with deadlines and honour my clients' time. With regards to finances, I've learned to follow after debtors, in addition to keeping proper financial records and accounts. I have hired someone to help me with recording-keeping so that I do not forget and risk getting penalties.

When I think about wealth creation, I think it is about ascending to a different level from where you are and just having the money to invest to continue multiplying the wealth.

“As women, we can create as much wealth as men can yet, unlike them, we get content with the little we have. We should be go-getters too and always strive for more”

I have done just that - I have built three flats which are all being rented, and I am set on building more so that, once I retire, I can just sit back and see the money coming in. I want to travel anywhere and anytime and be financially independent without bothering my children to feed me.

The most important thing I've learned is to work hard. Once you set your mind to something and work hard, you are bound to succeed. I am so proud of myself for having built my flats alone using just the money saved from my entrepreneurship. In the coming five years, I would like to see Landworth Property Consult grow and hire a total of at least 15 employees. I would also love to establish a second branch and breach the mining sector.

I would also like us to continue supporting the youth. I have recently hired four undergraduates and I am currently supporting graduates from my alma mater, Copperbelt University, who complete a BSc in Real Estate. All graduates have to work under supervision for two years while filling in a diary for their test of professional competency. By mentoring these graduates, I am imparting knowledge to up-and-coming real estate valuation surveyors and ensuring continued excellence in our industry.

I want to encourage other female entrepreneurs to not back out and to continue working hard. As a woman, when you are independent and making money, life simply becomes nice. Women's financial independence is paramount - that is what my granny always used to say. "Don't say you'll get married and wait for a man to look after you. You have to look after yourself by studying and working hard. When you earn your own money, a man won't treat you like a doormat." Back then, I thought she talked too much but now as an adult, I am so glad I listened to granny!

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Be persistent

Work hard and be determined. If you set your mind to something and put in the effort, you are bound to succeed. Don't let roadblocks stop you. Find creative solutions

2) Chase opportunities confidently

Always keep your eyes peeled for opportunities and approach them confidently and whole-heartedly. You never know where one leap may lead you.

3) Be efficient

When you are given work, do the work and deliver it in the expected timeframe. When you respect deadlines, you tell your clients that you respect their time. This is how you build good rapport and gain referrals.

Glenrose Nkosi

Herbal healing

South Africa



Glenrose Nkosi is a champion of wellness and healing who uses her knowledge in biochemistry and herbology to custom-tailor natural treatments for people with chronic diseases and promote healthy, organic eating.

To become an entrepreneur, for me, was a pathway to freedom and creating a legacy for my family. Whoever I'd worked for before, I'd poured in the best of what I had. So I thought to myself that I might as well start working for myself in order to start creating wealth and to make sure that my children grow up understanding the importance and value of business.

Hence, in 2014, I started Lukap, a wellness business that concentrates on transforming lives by offering an escape that allows imaginations to flourish, creativity to flow, and dreams to re-awaken. Through the business, I offer a host of spa services, including massage therapy, weight loss programmes, and sound light therapy. As well, I use my knowledge and experience as a herbalist to conduct comprehensive consultations and design custom-tailor herbal treatments for clients.

My spark for understanding herbs and healing came after a family member with diabetes started going blind. Initially, they were given corrective lenses but were then told in consecutive sessions to increase the lens. It's never made sense to me that people with incurable diseases are given chronic medication yet do not improve. I had so much passion for people and wanted to see them well. So, I followed the route of healing and started studying herbs and the biological effects of alkalinity and acidity.

I've experienced a lot of hurdles while running the business. One of these was getting people to adhere to the treatments I propose, wherein I typically suggest that they take certain herbs and avoid specific foods, such as meat and dairy products. Avoiding these is especially hard for people because they are addicted. With time, I've realised the need to be very firm during consultations and make people understand how these foods will negatively impact their healing.

Secondly, I had to learn the difference between genetically-modified herbs and organic herbs and investigate their origins and how they were being planted. I opted to farm the herbs myself, but this has made scaling up very challenging as I lack the necessary funding. Thirdly, as a woman entrepreneur, I am often looked down upon by my male counterparts and other women. We, as women, don't hold each other very well, preferring to give opportunities to other people. While we preach about fixing each other's crowns, we don't actually live by it.

The Women Creating Wealth programme (WCW) was one of the platforms that opened my eyes wide in terms of collaboration. I had very high hopes, but I learned that being of a different belief decreases one's friends and circles. Nobody wants to be told that genetically-modified corn is not good for consumption when it is their sole means of business. As well, no one wants to hear that eating animals and animal products is not good. As a result, people are reasonably sceptical about working with me, but it's very isolating nonetheless.

To me, wealth is defined as the prosperity of money and that of health. To be wealthy and unhealthy is pointless because, without health, one can't enjoy wealth. As a black woman, wealth creation gives us freedom and a voice. I have noticed that when a person does not have a legacy of wealth, they do not have a voice - even if they have the greatest ideas and can save the world, no one listens. Wealth gives you somewhere to stand, and particularly for women, shows that we count outside of the kitchen.

“Furthermore, wealth creation is about creating a legacy. It's not a legacy if it ends with a certain generation. Therefore, children should be taught the value of money and where it comes from. If they don't, they will not respect it. If my children have a solid understanding of business, they can innovate new and better ways of operating that will enhance my business and grow it further”.

Whatever we instil in our children's minds, they live by. Thus, it's important for me to call on my daughter when I'm making my compounds and tonics so that even when I'm gone, she is able to continue the business.

My long-term plans, in 5 to 10 years, Lukap must have a retreat venue where I feed the clients my own, self-produced alkaline, organic and electrifying foods and herbs and facilitate their transition to an acid-free diet. I'd also like Lukap to expand to African and overseas countries and build an empire of health. The other thing I'm working towards now is becoming a natural, alkaline midwife and doula, because I totally believe in home births and taking care of children the right way, with the right foods and no formula. With time, I'd also like to set up an alkaline healing academy,

where patients can visit our herbal site, be educated on alkalinity and acidity, and learn to distinguish truly organic foods from those that are merely labelled “organic.” As well, I'm planning on opening a pharmacy where customers can purchase fresh and dried herbs with precise instructions on how to use them and how they help.

I want to leave behind a legacy of healing. Believe it or not, what we eat drives our mental state, our behaviours, and how we think about each other. This is actually evident when you look at countries that are heavily into gardening and healthy eating - their mental state is far much better. The impact I would love to leave behind is to teach the positivity of eating well, for both the physical and mental well-being.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Develop structured systems

This will allow you to delegate tasks and ensure that your attention is properly and efficiently distributed. Moreover, by structuring your activities, you promote consistency and discipline, which are both imperative to business growth

2) Write and implement your business plan

A business plan should not just be a book that sits on your shelf collecting dust but something that you apply on a daily basis to stir you in the direction of your goals. Write a detailed and comprehensive plan and follow it through.

3) Recognise and support other women

Don't just say you support women entrepreneurs - show it. There is a whole lot more support that goes into male entrepreneurs because they are believed to be better performers. People cannot know the truth or the opposite of that if women are not given the opportunities to showcase their potential.

Andikuza Margaret Litete-Makhumula

Putting women at the centre of sustainable community development

Malawi



At her youthful age of 61, Andikuza runs two organisations focused on community development and restoring ecosystems.

All my life experiences build on each other, and align with my purpose of making the world a better place. The two organisations I run are complimentary, and together pave the way for sustainable change. Literacy for Change (L4C) is an NGO with the goal of tackling illiteracy and poverty among marginalised social groups, particularly women and girls with disabilities. Greenleaf Investments (GI)

aims to improve and restore the ecosystem by promoting income-generation projects through waste reduction. In these programmes, women get empowerment and skills development through classes and training, and we give them opportunities to put their skills into practice making and selling products. In this way, they begin to earn money, improve their livelihood and in turn, help others.

As the daughter of a diplomat, I have had many opportunities to live internationally, but it is always my village in Malawi that has held my heart and shaped my spirit. I come from a matriarchal society, where women rule. I suppose that is why I am strong-willed and independent, but always had my eyes open to see the issues around poverty and the suffering of women. Addressing this is what I want my life to be about.

I have degrees in business, project development, leadership and human resources. In 2017, I was a Coady Women Leaders Research Fellow and as part of these studies, I examined the linkages between illiteracy, poverty and the overuse of natural resources. I discovered the vicious cycle of behaviours leading to environmental degradation. Establishing my two companies grew out of a passion for seeking solutions through empowerment.

Starting a business isn't easy and the biggest challenge for many is finances. Getting funding requires documentation and collateral, and there is a lot of competition for grants and donor funding. I was blessed to have personal savings to kick-start my initiatives, and both businesses are self-sufficient without the need for external funding.

“But more than money, to succeed you need determination, passion and willpower, and I am proudest of the ability to transform the lives of many women.”

The WCW training helped me understand the personal competencies I needed for my businesses. I monitor the business effectiveness rigorously, and now have proper systems in place. I also saw the importance of empowering and motivating my staff, who now share my passion for high performance and delivering the best outcomes. Together we continually research the market for opportunities for future products and sales, and find ways to maximise profits.

Women face many challenges. I am myself a widow, and have experienced first hand the harmful cultural practice of property grabbing. But I am determined to be unstoppable, and to raise my two children to be successful. I always set the highest standards for myself, and I am a life-long learner. This is what I transmit to every woman who is empowered by our programmes.

With this experience, I have become a mentor on several programmes. I was an office person, and now I am an entrepreneur - I want others to follow in my footsteps. I am far from being done, and continue to look forward to the future with a commitment to making a difference in all around me.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Be unstoppable

There will be obstacles, that is inevitable. As an entrepreneur, you can't let them stop you. Find solutions, find support, but keep going.

2) Create meaning

Make your mark by helping others and making everything you do meaningful. If you can find meaning in your endeavours, you will have what it takes to succeed, even when it's tough.

Esther Mushi

The Great Farm journey

Tanzania



A risk-taker and innovator, Esther Mushi has everything set to turn her Great Farm into one of the leading commercial layers farms in Tanzania.

Ever since I was a young girl, I have always admired successful businesswomen, such as Oprah Winfrey, for their ability to manage large empires, go head-to-head with their male counterparts, and support and elevate other women. I was keen on replicating their success for myself, and upon realising a greater passion for doing business than being employed, I made the decision to become an entrepreneur myself.

I founded The Great Farm company in 2011 with the aim of developing modern farming in Tanzania as well as growing to become one of the leading commercial layers farms in the country. The business started with 5,000 broiler chickens, which we were able to upscale to 40,000 by 2014.

In 2015, we switched from broilers to commercial layers, boasting an initial volume of 4,000 layers which has since grown to 60,000. By 2028, I aspire for us to be leading the industry with approximately 500,000 chickens.

Far from a seamless journey, The Great Farm has run across a number of roadblocks along the way. One of the major challenges has been earning the trust and support of financial institutions and clientele in a sector that is still much more familiar and trusting towards male-led organisations. Another challenge has been overcoming the fear of failure and ridicule that often paralyses female entrepreneurs from making bold moves or upscaling their small-to-medium companies into large and profitable enterprises.

Overcoming these hurdles would not have been possible if not for the knowledge I gathered from attending various conferences, engaging with mentors and participating in training programmes. Moreover, reading the stories of other female entrepreneurs, conversing with them, and learning how they made it through obstacles gave me impetus, bravery and insights into how I could surpass my own.

Seminars and conferences were especially poignant in sowing the seeds of my hopes for The Great Farm's future. My ambitions for the farm were initially small, rooted chiefly in my love of chicken farming. So up until that point, I had been growing the business slowly, content with whatever little progress I made.

However, with each conference in Ethiopia, Ghana, Italy, China and Abu Dhabi, I met with different farmers whose innovations and wisdom increasingly fuelled my energy to develop my business. With this fuel, I was able to introduce modern farming techniques and new technology into the farm. Furthermore, I was able to gain the trust of big government institutions which has recently culminated in the Bank of Agriculture agreeing to finance the expansion of the farm. With each of these gains, our dreams of becoming the largest farm in Tanzania seem ever more possible.

This dream has been a major reason for me to keep moving, as I know that realising it will allow me to continue supporting my family and offering the best for our present and future. At the same time, it will enable me to become an example to the many women locally who struggle with running small-scale businesses and rearing their houses while making little-to-no profit. By example, I want to teach other women what I myself have learned, which is to never give up and to trust that every problem and challenge has a solution. Rather than running from challenges, our businesses and ourselves are much better off facing them.

As women, we create wealth when we are able to synergise our ideas, energy and together to create a business that is both profit-generating and sustainable. As well, we create wealth every time we work together as a group, educate each other, support each other's ideas, encourage each other through failings or times of need, and lead each other towards the best solution.

“We need not be intimidated by each other's potential for wealth creation, or worse off, our own. Instead, we should nurture and safeguard it, operating our businesses in ways that ensure the wealth is spread beyond just ourselves. After all, wealth for her is wealth for all.”

Over this 11-year journey, I have achieved many things that I take great pride in. Being among the women running a modern chicken farm in Tanzania, as well as a woman that other entrepreneurs are encouraged to learn from, is one of them. A second has been seeing my family grow more trusting and supportive as the results of my labour and learning become more and more visible. Thirdly, I am proud to have taken part in the Women Creating Wealth (WCW) programme, which connected me to a network of savvy and supportive women entrepreneurs, and raised my confidence to challenge barriers, approach financial institutions and stakeholders, and speak about my business. Since then, I have moved from just doing business to having a profitable business, and have increased my exposure to knowledge and opportunities through the diverse countries I have visited.

As time progresses, I hope the government comes to see that wealth creation is not an exclusively male endeavour, and recognises that women are equally as capable as men

to support the growth of the economy. Women can achieve great things if given the chance.

I want to keep growing and reaching new heights, in addition to transforming the women I meet along my path through my success story. Every aspect of my journey thus far has contributed to the tangible transformations I have made in my business, and I believe that whatever follows will contribute to even bigger and brighter changes. The Esther of 2011 is very different to the Esther of 2022, and I owe this to every chapter of my great farm journey.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Connect to the right people

Nothing is more uplifting and empowering than surrounding yourself with other women entrepreneurs who are willing to collaborate, educate, support, encourage and lead you towards the best solutions.

2) Network abroad

Don't limit yourself to local connections and mentors. There is a lot of knowledge and expertise abroad that can be moulded into local solutions. Use international workshops, conferences, and seminars as a gateway.

3) Dream big

Don't be trapped in the narrative that women cannot take risks or own large businesses. Don't fear failure either. The most successful entrepreneurs have all failed or been ridiculed at some point. Take your fear and inhibitions and transform them into courage. You'll be surprised by how far you'll go.

Thato Mokhothu

Master of all trades

South Africa



Since starting a catering business on the side in 2009, Thato Mokhothu has continued using her passion and perseverance to become an admired and trusted entrepreneur in 3 different sectors.

I started my business journey in 2009 with a catering business that I ran on the side while still employed at a bank. Two years later, I opened an African-themed restaurant in my hometown of Bloemfontein, and a year after that ventured into a different sector - construction. The reason for this was my work at the bank as a home loan consultant, through which I saw the impact that non-compliant builders had on people's applications and dreams of owning a home. So in 2012, I started RTT Construction (named after my 3 children) and was officially working in 2 industries.

That same year, I was approached by a bus company called Interstate Bus Lines, which was searching for someone to run their canteen. I applied for the tender, signed a 3-year contract with Interstate and resigned from the bank to give my businesses my full focus. Becoming a full-time businesswoman, however, was not as easy as I thought; I was often lonely and no longer had the safety net of a monthly salary. So I founded a women's organisation called Phenomenal Women to support other women in business.

One of the gentlemen at Interstate was very impressed with the passion I devoted to all of my companies and the organisation, so he recommended me to Tyremart, which was looking to transform their company by getting a black woman as part of the ownership. At the time, I didn't know anything about tires nor did I aspire to be in the automotive industry, but the team believed so much in me because of my positive energy. So they gave me 6-month probation wherein I would not be earning but had to show them that I was the right partner. Fortunately, I passed my 6 months and was officially given a 20% stake in the company! This came as a complete surprise as they had never told me beforehand that I wouldn't pay for my shares because my commitment had already paid for them.

So for a couple of years, things were going well, but hardships eventually knocked on the door in 2018. I got a large contract that year to take over the maintenance of municipality infrastructure, but the municipality ran into financial problems and was unable to pay me for over a year. This made my construction business unsustainable, and I was already in the process of closing my construction offices when COVID struck. This caused me to go into a depression since construction at the time was bringing in more income than hospitality and I had gotten used to earning 3 salaries and the lifestyle that came with it.

I was dead inside, on the verge of giving up, but when I was accepted into the WCW programme, I felt it was a sign that I should not give up. Although I was not motivated at first, I was determined to see the programme through, and

once there, I was exposed to different women from outside Bloemfontein and was pushed outside of the comfort zone that my small town had become for me. This brought back the life in me. As well, it opened my mind to dream bigger and to become a part of the country's economic stream where the real money is made and where men always are.

During the programme, I was approached by one of the other ladies who was an engineer here in Bloemfontein. She asked me if I was doing consulting engineering, and I said, "Yes! How can I assist you?", without telling her that I actually had no experience in the field. We set up a meeting soon, where I was honest and told her I was only just going into consulting to expand my business, omitting the fact that my construction business had actually died. Nonetheless, she advised me to start an entirely separate business in order to see which one was more profitable, and hence, I registered RTT Consulting Engineering and started looking for new work.

To my surprise, there were not a lot of women in consulting engineering in the Free State, so I managed to get plenty of projects despite still struggling through the pandemic. I've been blessed to have staff who know what they are doing and are passionate about it. With them, I have managed to complete all my projects, which has lifted my spirit and made me feel like an entrepreneur again.

With renewed confidence and funds to invest, things have been going well. I went back to the industry where I started and became a co-owner of the Food and Beverage Institute. I also secured an enterprise development partnership with IX Engineering, a well-known company based in Gauteng, that gives me a 30% share of every project they do in the Free State. This helps my business be sustainable, especially when projects are scarce, and is giving me the experience I need to grow my engineering company. Thirdly, what I have seen is that the way for women to grow bigger and more sustainable businesses is through collaboration, not competition. So we've also started doing MOUs with other women from the WCW programme to propose each other's services and products to our existing clients and suppliers.

All in all, I think this has been a learning journey, with its share of ups and downs.

“What I have learnt is that running a business is not all roses and we must often handle a lot of stress in order to enjoy the fruits of our work. However, having a strong support team with people who support and understand us can make the business journey a smoother ride.”

In that regard, I applaud my parents, my kids, and the WCW group who really assisted me when I was going through the most and helped me come out of my depression in full force.

What I have learnt about wealth creation:

1) Be committed

If you are not committed, you will meet challenges and always quit. But when you know what you want and are committed to your dream, you will persevere no matter how hard it is.

2) Collaborate

What we need to learn as women is that the key for us to grow bigger and more sustainable businesses is through collaboration, not competition.

3) Find the right support structure

Being in business is a difficult journey and you can't do it alone. Find the right structure of people and affiliations whose care, understanding and support make the journey smoother for you.

Stories of
**Creating
Wealth**

Epilogue

The power of storytelling

**Reflections, lessons
and future aspirations**

Closing remarks

The power of storytelling

by the **We Will Lead Africa Editorial Team**

It is an honour to play a role in bringing the 55 stories in this book to life, and bringing them to you, the reader. With this book, our intention was always to put the real-life stories of the African women entrepreneurs front and centre. To us, this means sharing the stories in the voice and words of the women themselves: creating space for them to share honestly about the many challenges faced, to thoughtfully uplift the wisdom that each of the contributors provides, and to celebrate their success and impact, as catalysts of wealth creation across the African continent.

The vision that the Graça Machel Trust and the Women Creating Wealth (WCW) programme had for this book, is deeply aligned with our We Will Lead Africa mission of sharing and inspiring everyday African leadership through storytelling.

Each of the women who told their stories in this volume is an exceptional entrepreneur. These stories increase the visibility of African women leaders and cement African women's voices in the narrative about wealth creation across Africa. They provide real examples and inspiration, and empower future generations of African women to take the leap into entrepreneurship.

We believe in the power of storytelling, an inherent part of African culture, as a tool for imagining, sparking and driving progress; and as a way to inspire more change and shape the futures we want. Each of these stories represents a glimpse of a future where African women are undeniably and unshakably part of Africa's success.

Reflections, lessons and future aspirations

by the **Women Creating Wealth programme Team**

The Women Creating Wealth (WCW) programme was launched in 2016, in partnership with Virgin Unite and under the custodianship of the Graça Machel Trust. At time of writing this, 430 African women, growth entrepreneurs (from Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and South Africa), have graduated from the programme. But the WCW is more than a programme, and we hope that you have got a feel of this by reading the inspiring stories in this book. Women Creating Wealth is a movement, it is a sisterhood, **and it is a community that inspires, equips, and empowers female entrepreneurs to build wealth-generating businesses.**

We truly believe that women are the engines and powerhouses of our families, communities, economies and countries. As such, investing in them propels us all forward. This book is our way of showcasing their stories, both to recognise their brilliance, persistence and power, and also to inspire future generations of women entrepreneurs to step onto this path.

Now in our fifth year, we felt it was time to do a deep evaluation of the efficacy and impact of the programme, as well as reflect on the learnings we have had as a team implementing the programme in various countries, both offline and online (with the move to digital in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). This evaluation has included surveys and interviews with WCW alumni, review and analysis by the WCW team, assessment of the impact of the programme for the women entrepreneurs and their businesses, focus groups and many, many conversations about our learnings, aspirations and dreams for the future. The outputs of this extensive process are informing our revamped Theory of Change, monitoring and evaluation framework, as well as the programme design for the future.

Whilst we could write an entire book on what was harvested from this process, here we would like to share with you just some snippets – the most striking insights. In the spirit of forward-focused, constructive reflection, we have taken inspiration from the Appreciative Inquiry approach, and structure the insights across four categories: Discover, Dream, Design and Destiny.

Discover

Appreciating the best of what is

The WCW programme provides African women entrepreneurs with skills, tools, access and opportunities to strengthen their existing businesses and take them to the next level. Importantly, it also builds their entrepreneurial competencies and behaviours, setting them up for success in the long term. From before and after surveys, it is documented that participants experienced a notable increase in confidence, self-belief, and attitude to “show up” and take on the challenges associated with growth. And this mindset shift pays off: WCW alumni surveyed averaged 65% growth in turnover, and 90% improvement in business systems over a 10 month period. See below a selection of testimonials from the WCW alumni.

“After joining the Women Creating Wealth programme I have seen a great growth in my business: networking, my self-confidence, meeting coaches and mentors. Together this has helped me take my business to the next level. My production has grown by 1400%, and I am aiming to double this in the next two years.”

“I think the major changes I noticed is having that mindset of an entrepreneur, and the high levels of confidence. I am looking for solutions, innovating and thinking about challenges in my community as an opportunity or gap to fill. The Women Creating Wealth programme has helped me to grow out of my fear.”

“If you talk to anybody who’s run a business, they will tell you it’s lonely. As the business owner you are on your own, you’re the decision maker, you’re juggling. To have a circle of other entrepreneurs that you can talk to, to unburden with, that you can ask questions, is priceless. We all bring different strengths, different experiences, and that gives you insights.”

Excerpts of testimonials from Women Creating Wealth alumni gathered during our evaluation process

Through the past years we have expanded our understanding of what wealth creation means, in large part by listening to and learning from the WCW alumni. As you have seen through the stories in this book, they each bring to life the concept in different ways, and yet there is a commonality in the way wealth creation is expressed.

Dream

Envisioning what might be

As we face forward and imagine the future of WCW, we are building on the results and lessons of the past years, starting with a more concrete definition of wealth creation (both more expansive, and measurable). We have seen that wealth creation is about more than money, or income generation - that is too narrow a definition. Beyond building strong businesses that provide sustainable incomes, the programme also seeks to build intellectual, community and narrative wealth, driven by female economic leaders across African contexts. For us, the economic development of our continent is intrinsically linked to women's empowerment, and wealth creation is about more than economies, but the overall prosperity of Africa.

Design

Constructing the ideal

Building on our validated experience that women are able and motivated to become growth-oriented, we are articulating our wealth creation mission as encompassing more dimensions beyond income generation: a balance between financial wealth (money, assets, investments), physical wealth (health and wellbeing), time wealth (freedom, rest), and social wealth (status, community, support, networks). These aspects compliment the skills, knowledge and capacity development of our programme in order to truly unlock the potential and power of African women entrepreneurs.

Destiny

Taking steps to make our dreams real

As we move into the next phase of the programme, we are committed to building on the results that the programme has brought so far, as well as amplifying its impact by continuously improving the WCW offer and support to the African women entrepreneurs we serve.

We take our cue from the 70-20-10 rule in learning and development which reveals that individuals tend to learn 70% of their knowledge from challenging experiences and assignments (the practice), 20% from developmental relationships, and 10% from coursework and training. As such we know the course we offer only amounts to growth when the entrepreneurs apply and practice learning from the experiences.

Knowing that learning is a journey, we are committed to strengthening the community aspect of WCW to ensure that its positive effects are sustained beyond the end of the Ignite course phase. Our alumni value and benefit from the sisterhood that is created when they take part in WCW, and we must ensure that this is transformed into a long-lasting relationship with us, into partnerships and networks of support amongst each other, and a vibrant, thriving space where they can return again and again, to be inspired and motivated to act and keep moving.

Our vision for WCW is to reach millions of women (of all ages) in the next 5 years with this support and inspiration, and to work with 10,000 entrepreneurs to meet the challenge of wealth and job creation.

Imagine that, dear reader - 10,000 WCW alumni creating \$1 billion collectively, and employing at least half a million young people across their communities. That is the future that we are motivated to bring to life.

Closing remarks

by Korkor Cudjoe, Women Creating Wealth Project Lead



It is no easy task to write the closing words of this book, filled with so much wisdom, sparks of defiance and true leadership. It has also been a privilege to take this time to learn, reflect and listen to the alumni of this programme so that we can continue to improve the Women Creating Wealth programme for future cohorts.

As a woman entrepreneur, and African woman, myself, it is an honour to be co-creating this programme with you.

There has never been a better time for women to grow their businesses because finally, the world recognises women's worth, potential and essential contribution to the welfare of the family; the extended family; and invariably our communities and the economy.

Find your 'why', or a problem close to your heart. Start with what you have, and connect with your community of support and inspiration. Show up every day, stay optimistic, and with courage, keep moving.

Find out more:



<https://gracamacheltrust.org/>

