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Background

FemBioBiz is a female entrepreneurial acceleration programme launched by the Southern Africa Network for Biosciences (NEPAD SANBio) in 10 Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states, namely Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, South Africa, Seychelles, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

NEPAD SANBio with the support of the BioFISA II Programme (a Finnish-Southern African partnership programme to strengthen NEPAD SANBio) launched the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme to support women bioentrepreneurs in the SADC region with technical and entrepreneurship skills and creates opportunities for them to engage with funders, potential partners and customers. FemBioBiz was designed to address gender inclusiveness in the Bioscience sector which has been identified as a priority for NEPAD SANBio in response to global and regional Policy Directives such as SDG5 (gender equality).

FemBioBiz supports female bio-entrepreneurs and female students in the SANBio Member States, working on health products and services, nutrition related products, and natural products. The programme aims to strengthen in-country ecosystems that support female bio-entrepreneurs and is therefore implemented in partnership with national coordinators who work with a network of stakeholders from private sector, public sector, training organisations, business development service providers, researchers and NGOs to support female bioentrepreneurs and to address national agendas on gender inclusiveness.
The programme is run in a series of trainings and boot camps, coupled with mentorship support and networking event. Country, regional and sector specific networks were created among the female bioentrepreneurs and are being sustained on multiple platforms.

This booklet shines a spotlight on the impact of the programme, the journeys of the women who went through this program, and highlights their achievements, challenges and the impact of the work they do.

FemBioBiz has been run over 2 consecutive seasons and at the end of season 2, the programme had reached over 500 women and trained over 250 women across 10 SADC countries. Of these, 64% were in agro-processing, 19% in health and biotechnology, 14% in cosmetics and natural products and 3% in environment. The national finalists pitched at the SA Innovation Summit and the sector winners received over R3 million in prizes including a trip to Europe’s biggest start-up event, Slush.

Female entrepreneurs received various opportunities, including:

- Business model development
- Financial management training
- Pitch training
- Technical training on product development
- Media coverage and marketing opportunities
- Funding
- Peer-to-peer support and entrepreneur networks

### Participants by industrial sector per country

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<td>Botswana</td>
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</table>

- % participants in health sector
- % participants in nutrition and agricultural sector
- % participants in cosmetics and natural products
- % participants in environment

### Entrepreneurs trained in FemBioBiz Seasons 1 & 2

- Botswana: 36%
- Lesotho: 11%
- Malawi: 27%
- Mauritius: 30%
- Mozambique: 8%
- Namibia: 43%
- Seychelles: 4%
- South Africa: 36%
- Zambia: 11%
- Zimbabwe: 27%
The FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme impact includes building an ecosystem to support female bioentrepreneurs. This has been done by creating a network of national coordinators across 8 SADC countries who are supported by over 60 stakeholders comprising of incubators, government departments and ministries, NGOs, private equity funders, attorneys, marketing experts, insurance companies, banks, universities, research institutions and other parties. Collectively, the support provided to entrepreneurs by NEPAD SANBio and partners exceeds R10 million for the first 2 seasons of FemBioBiz. The coordinators and their partners are profiled below and the network effect illustrated in the map.
FemBioBiz has impacted individual businesses in various ways, including:

- Improved business operations
- Improved product quality
- Expansion of product ranges and service offering
- Better customer development
- Better financial management and tools to implement
- Business growth – increased revenue, new business partners and joint ventures
- Better fundraising techniques including pitching
- New networks with other participants
- New jobs created (permanent and non-permanent staff)

Results from FemBioBiz Season 1 show that over 50% of the 15 regional finalists increased sales, gained new customers and opened new markets from the networks established during the competition. Seventy percent of these participants also gained confidence through peer support.
**FemBioBiz Season 1 results based on participant feedback**

- Gained confidence through peer support: 70%
- Opened markets through new networks: 60%
- Increased sales through better marketing: 60%
- Increased customer segments through better planning: 60%
- Accessed funding through better pitching: 40%
- Increased productivity by employing new technologies: 30%
- Reduced costs through better financial management: 20%
- Improved customer satisfaction through more focused communication: 20%
- No benefit: 10%
- Other: 10%

**FemBioBiz Season 2 results based on participant feedback**

- Have pitched their business to e.g. investors, business forums, trade fairs, pitching competitions: 66%
- Implemented business model canvas and other business development tools in their businesses: 60%
- Actively engage with other participants in the FemBioBiz Programme: 54%
- Created bankable business plans based on inputs gained at the training: 52%
- Shared the tools with other members of the business team after the training: 50%
- Reported expanding their client base and gaining new customers: 48%
- Reported an increase in revenue of between 10% and 40% post training: 40%
- Have increased the number of products: 36%
- Implemented tools in another business venture started after training participation: 30%
- Employed more people either full time or part time: 20%
- Reported expanding exports to other countries in the SADC region: 10%
- Reported potential exports internationally: 6%
SADC Health and biotechnology sector

The health and biotechnology sector supported in FemBioBiz seasons 1 and 2 entails life science technology development by both small and large enterprises and research & development (R&D) institutions with the objective of addressing a social, health or industrial need in the market.

According to industry experts, the global biotechnology market size was estimated at US$ 369.62 billion in 2016 and is expected to increase with the rise of new technology and start-ups driving change in the industry to address global health and food security challenges. Investing in this sector is therefore critical in creating new opportunities for our societies and economies.

With support from BioFISA II, NEPAD SANBio has funded 13 R&D and commercialisation projects in this sector with participants from 8 SADC member states – see the NEPAD SANBio project booklet. During the implementation of these projects, the globally recognised gender gap in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) was evident in that less than 25% of the projects supported were led by female principal investigators (see data on the United States in infographic on the next page). NEPAD SANBio therefore included this category to support and showcase the work done by women in this sector in order to inspire the girl-child to aspire to careers in STEM.

19% of the FemBioBiz participants in seasons 1 and 2, were in the health and biotechnology sector, addressing issues of maternity health, muscular-skeletal injuries, gut health, fluorosis and other services including laboratory analysis service and import substitutions on laboratory reagents. Their businesses are in various stages of development and the following section outlines their journey thus far.
74% of STEM workers are male. Only 26% are female.

Women comprise more than 20% of engineering school graduates, yet only 11% of practicing engineers are women.

Women’s presence among computer/mathematical scientists declined from 31% to 25% over the period, but only because men’s rate of growth in this area was higher than women’s. The number of women working in computer/mathematical sciences has increased more than in any other broad occupational area.

Of 100 female bachelor students, 12 graduate with a STEM major but only 3 continue to work in STEM fields 10 years after graduation.

Women with STEM jobs earned 33 percent more than comparable women in non-STEM jobs, considerably higher than the STEM premium for men. As a result, the gender wage gap is smaller in STEM jobs than in non-STEM jobs.

Although women fill close to half of all jobs in the U.S. economy they hold less than 25 percent of STEM jobs.

STEM facts on women and girls

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Although women fill close to half of all jobs in the U.S. economy they hold less than 25 percent of STEM jobs.
SEASON 1 WINNER

Prof Keolebogile Shirley Motaung
Global Health Biotech (South Africa)

Africa is gifted with a wide variety of flora and more than 4 000 plant species are being used for medicinal purposes. Meet Tshwane University of Technology Biomedical Scientist and Assistant Dean, Professor Shirley Motaung, who has developed an affordable alternative to recombinant and synthetic stimulants currently used in bone repair and muscular-skeletal injuries.

Made from natural medicinal plants, Global Health Biotech has manufactured two products, La-Africa Soother (LAS) which is a topical paste ointment for sportspeople as a natural anti-inflammatory cream to treat pain, infection, swelling and inflammation. The second product is a Plant-Based Morphogenetic Factor Implant (PBMF) which induces bone and cartilage formation.

It was both these novel innovations that won her company, Global Health Biotech the R250 000 grand prize at the FemBioBiz Season 1 competition in 2017. Two years after winning the FemBioBiz competition, Global Health Biotech has continued to make great strides in the biomedical industry.

Early this year, Prof Motaung said her company has finally launched LA-Africa Soother (LAS) across various pharmacies in South Africa and has received positive feedback from fitness clients. The product was also sampled by a local gym company, Fitness Junction (Pty) Ltd who has tested the product with some of its clients. This has also seen the addition of 4 new employees to the team; Prof Motaung believes that the new plans to distribute to the rest of SADC will also see the company employing more people.

In addition, Global Health Biotech has also received a cash grant from the Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP), a programme of the National Research Foundation (NRF) that aims to boost South African industry by supporting research development and enhancing the numbers of appropriately skilled people.

Motaung’s achievements after FemBioBiz:
• Developed a first of its kind tissue engineering and regenerative anti-inflammatory cream/ointment
• Winner of the Biotech Fundi Research Award in 2017
• Winner, Gauteng Legislature’s Community Heroine of the VITA BASADI Awards in 2017
• Winner of a 2017/2018 National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) South32 Award
• Winner of the Distinguished Woman Scientist Award – SAWISA 2018
• Recipient of the #Inspiring Fifty SA Women 2018 Award
• Most Innovative Woman of the Year in Gauteng Award in 2018
• Finalist for the Business Woman of The Year Award in the Science and Technology category 2018

Prior to the competition, it was all just a dream; I only had a prototype and a business plan. I now have one product already on the market! Thanks to FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme for helping me a lot to learn more business skills. I still use my notes from the Business Canvas Model course.”  Prof Shirley Keolebogile Motaung

www.globalhealthbiotech.co.za
SEASON 2 WINNER

Muzalema Mwanza
Safe Motherhood Alliance (Zambia)

According to UNICEF, in Zambia 53% of births are home delivery due to most rural communities having limited access to health care. Severe infection is one of the top three causes of newborn deaths worldwide causing about 13% of all neonatal deaths across the globe, but in developing countries infections can account for more than half of all neonatal deaths.

This is Muzalema Mwanza, who has started an organisation that addresses SDGs that target to reduce maternal mortality and end preventable deaths of newborns by 2030; and also addresses gender equality by providing employment and empowerment opportunity for under-served and under-represented women in low-income communities to package and assemble sterilized and affordable baby delivery kits which contain essential supplies a woman requires at childbirth in Kiavongo District, Zambia.

Mwanza won the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme Season 2 competition in 2018 – she says participating in the programme has helped Safe Motherhood Alliance to achieve its goal of reducing maternal and infant mortality through improved quality of care at time of birth for pregnant women.

She says that her entrepreneurial success has become a journey that she could have never imagined.

It all started as an idea from her kitchen table when she was pregnant and wondering where to find a surgical blade after a nurse at her local antenatal clinic gave her a list of essentials to bring with her when delivering her baby – and now, through winning the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme, Mwanza has been privileged to meet impact investors from around the world on what it takes to create a start-up on a global level.

Safe Motherhood Alliance remains committed to demonstrating how a social enterprise can be sustainable and scalable. The organisation is a pioneer in shaping a new era of business; their business model has created jobs for 20 women in the community who have been employed as Safe Motherhood Alliance packers, 10 traditional birth attendants and many community health workers. The kits are also designed to be sold through retail distribution outlets.

Since the beginning of 2019, 1 500 kits have been sold and the organisation is working with 6 clinics across Zambia and 20 more clinics are soon to be added to its distribution channels. The organisation has also been able to remind 2 000 women of their antenatal and immunisation schedule through its USSD platform.

Mwanza’s achievements after FemBioBiz:

- Sold over 1 500 baby delivery kits
- Received Merck cash prize: R50 000
- YGAP Impact Accelerator program – AU$30 000
- Slush Global Impact Accelerator 2018 winner – EUR 5 000
- An Africa Prize 2019 winner: £5 000
- Pitch@Palace Africa 3.0 2019 winner
- Created employment opportunities for more than 30 women in Zambia
- Is working with 6 clinics in Zambia

www.safemotherhoodalliance.com
Back in 2008, being a teacher and a fresh graduate, Zimbabwe STEM Lady Sicelo Dube had to exclude science practicals due to the lack of lab chemicals and equipment in her country. LEC Biotec was founded to meet this challenge. The company supplies laboratory equipment and consumables to educational institutions, medical laboratories, and research and development institutions in different sectors.

Sicelo was one of the Zimbabwe finalists for FemBioBiz season 2 where she won US$3 000 Legal Services from Muvingi & Mugadza Legal Practitioners and a chance to pitch at the SA Innovation Summit. Life after FemBioBiz has been favourable for Dube and her company. The company has embarked on a bio-innovation strategy for import substitution with a short-term objective of locally manufacturing molecular reagents and long-term objective of locally manufacturing enzymes for health, food and beverage products. According to Dube, the change in strategy only came after entering the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme and going to the SA Innovation Summit. She said that attending the bootcamp business training, where she learned about the Business Model Canvas, and the valuable advice and pitch feedback from judges made her realise that in order for her business to scale up it needs a business and marketing strategy that works.

Dube said business is definitely looking good.

LEC Biotec has managed to grow its customer base especially in the research labs, and the launch of their new business division that manufacture molecular reagents comes as no surprise. The company is in talks to finalise a partnership deal with the University of Zimbabwe under Professor Niang Sithole to act as LEC Biotec’s partner for research and development for its reagents and enzymes. LEC Biotec is now also in the process of certifying their products with the Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ).
Her passion does not stop at her business but extends to growing the network of women involved in STEM. To this effect, she established a network called STEMFem, which is a platform that aims to bring women in STEM together while assisting them in accelerating their research into business.

She is also reaching out to young girls through her NGO, Elevate Trust, to advocate for more STEM girl student innovators and entrepreneurs and incubate their products that can later be turned to businesses and create jobs. To this effect Elevate Trust was involved in Zimbabwe’s first ever LabHack (which is a platform for students and educators to take matters into their own hands by designing and building the equipment they need to learn) in partnership with NEPAD SANBio and Oxford University. Sicelo’s journey continues as she envisions disrupting the Zimbabwean biotech ecosystem.

**Dube’s achievements after FemBioBiz:**

- LEC Biotec hired its first accountant
- Partnered with University of Zimbabwe
- LEC Biotec’s first exhibition at the 12th International Research Symposium
- LEC Biotec grew from start-up stage to a Small to Medium Enterprise (SME)
Other FemBioBiz Biotechnology and health sector winners and finalists

FEMBIOBIZ SEASON 1 WINNER

Stella Gonye – Chengie Advanced Defluoridation Technologies (Zimbabwe)

Chengie Defluoridation Technologies is an outstanding and leading innovation and research organization in the mitigation of fluorosis in Zimbabwe and other affected African countries, eradicating fluorosis and its effects and creating healthy communities. Fluorosis is a condition caused by excess fluoride above 1 ppm/mg/l and results in brown stained teeth, skeletal deformities, immune suppression, brain damage, arthritis, cancer cells development and loss of vision. The company deals with reducing fluoride in water (defluoridation), focusing mainly on underground water. The company has invented gadgets which remove excess fluoride in water, thereby mitigating the effects of fluorosis on communities.

A dentist by profession, Stella won R150 000 to support her in further R&D of her prototype and to pilot the product in one district in Zimbabwe. To date she has received the relevant permissions from government to conduct the pilot and is working with the Gokwe district in Zimbabwe to further validate her product.

FEMBIOBIZ SEASON 2 STUDENT CATEGORY WINNER

Godfridah Masaiti – University of Zambia School of Medicine (Zambia)

Godfridah is conceptualising a product that delivers antiretroviral drugs through a transdermal patch. The transdermal formulation would maintain drug concentrations within the therapeutic window for a prolonged period of time, ensuring that drug levels remain at an effective concentration. The simplified medication regimen would lead to improved patient compliance and reduce the side effects, as well as inter and intra-patient variability.

Masaiti’s achievements after FemBioBiz: As a result of her participation in the competition, she became a top 5 finalist in the MERCK Acceleration Programme, attended a SPARK Global – Biomedical Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Course in Berlin, Germany, and attended the Slush start-up event in Finland as an international volunteer.
Dianne Neethling – Imsyser Health Products (South Africa)

Imsyser Health Products is a comprehensive range of all-natural health products which was designed to support optimal health through effective gut health and optimised immunity thus promoting ‘dis-ease’ prevention and not mere symptom alleviation. The company stems from its founder and CEO Dianne Neethling’s passion for people and health.

Loide Uushona – Proquest Diagnostic Laboratories (Namibia)

ProQuest is a wholly Namibian owned medical laboratory. It is the youngest owned medical laboratory in the country with a facility in Windhoek. The services include clinical laboratory tests, commissioned research, innovation and training. ProQuest is founded on the core belief that healthcare in Africa must be easier, hence aims to revolutionise healthcare through affordable services, innovative solutions and research.

STUDENT
Bame Rammala – Botswana International University of Science and Technology (Botswana)

Bame intends to design an antimicrobial polymer mat for toilet seats that has the capacity to eliminate or inhibit the growth of microbes. The mat will be produced from nanostructured cellulose fibres, an abundant and biodegradable polymer.
Global Cosmetics Market
Size and forecast (2014-2020)

Global Cosmetics Market is expected to reach US$390.07 billion by 2020
Growing at a CAGR of 3.7% (2015-2020)

Drivers:
• Changing lifestyles
• Increasing disposable income of various countries
• Rising need for skin care products
• Increasing demand for natural ingredients in cosmetic products
• Changing packaging styles and attractive marketing strategies

Restraints:
• Advanced beauty treatments
• Rising human health concerns

GLOBAL COSMETICS MARKET BY CATEGORY
- Skin and sun care
- Hair care
- Deodorants
- Makeup and colour
- Fragrances

Skin and sun care to be the highest revenue generating segment by 2020

GLOBAL COSMETICS MARKET DYNAMICS

GLOBAL COSMETICS MARKET BY GENDER
- Women
- Men

Women to be the highest revenue generating segment by 2020

GLOBAL COSMETICS MARKET TOP IMPACTING FACTORS

- Changing lifestyles
- Rising need for skin care products
- Changing packaging styles and attractive marketing strategies
- Natural ingredients
- Rising GDPs of all the regions
- Advanced beauty treatments
- Human health concerns

Source: Global cosmetics market Research report
© https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/
Of the estimated total US$83 billion market for herbal products including functional foods, pharmaceuticals, and herbal supplements; herbal beauty products make up US$14 billion, while the global cosmetic, beauty and skincare market was valued at US$135 billion in 2016 and is expected to reach over US$200 billion by 2025. Unfortunately, while Africa may provide many of the ingredients in the herbal beauty products, the continent has a negligible market share in this industry.

With the undeniable rise in the demand for organic and or natural cosmetic, beauty and skincare products, Africa has an opportunity to increase its market share in this industry while at the same time contributing toward poverty reduction (SDG 1) to the communities who harvest, collect and have traditional knowledge of use of these products.

The SADC region is in a unique position due to the high levels of biodiversity found in the region which can contribute to national economies by adding value to them for different industries. Some of the countries in the region have also rectified the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) which is a supplementary agreement to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. Through this agreement, countries are able to develop frameworks that enable fair and equitable benefit sharing arising from the utilization of genetic resources in the country. NEPAD SANBio has supported some countries in understanding this initiative through some of the funded Seed and Flagship projects. Through FemBioBiz, NEPAD SANBio supported women working in this sector to contribute to both the domestic and international market through value addition and new product development.

14% of the applications received in the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme were in natural products/cosmetics sector and most of them received technical training in value addition, product development and quality testing to ensure product compliance before commercialisation. Most of them are putting these skills to use and their stories to date (2019) are outlined in the following section.
SEASON 2 STUDENT CATEGORY WINNER

Nomahlubi Nazo
University of Cape Town (South Africa)

Upon Nomahlubi Nazo’s first pregnancy, her obstetrician told her that she will be having her baby via caesarean and she feared the visible scar marks that come with the operation. This inspired her to put her university knowledge to practice.

Nazo was a University of Cape Town Cosmetic Science Formulation student at the time of the competition. She has developed a collagen prototype made from fish scale waste. A first of its kind in the region, her prototype is impregnated with essential oils and vitamins to heal wounds, prevent infection and help with pain relief. Her company also converts agricultural waste into activated charcoal for use in various other products.

She started her company Foi Science from humble beginnings in the dusty streets of Kwa Duza, Port Elizabeth where she empowered domestic workers through soap and candle crafting classes for free in her garage.

After her FemBioBiz win, Nazo has continued to grow her company by collaborating with a University of Cape Town skin pathologist and recently acquired land for a plantation to harvest essential oils.

Her newly acquired factory space in Montague Gardens, Cape Town has also become a beacon of hope to unemployed youth; Foi Science has employed 6 female youths and a factory manager, and plans to hire more staff in the future.

The factory space boasts a laboratory that allows Nazo to manufacture more than 5 skin care brands for, among others, the SA television and film industry and hotel amenities companies in Lesotho.

During her visit to Slush in Finland, Nazo engaged with Business Finland through Aalto University where she plans to further her research with hopes of acquiring EU compliance rights.

The future looks bright for Nazo and she believes that participating in FemBioBiz was the validation and push that the Foi Science dream needed.

She said her vision is to consistently develop innovative high quality natural and organic cosmetics using only the best of what mother nature has to offer while also empowering the lives in her community.

Nazo’s achievements after FemBioBiz:
• Received R70 000 SAB Foundation prize at SA Innovation Summit 2018
• Developed and formulated her first cosmetic & skincare brand called Sliemagic and Les Aloe
• Won the Innovative Business category at Hivos Beauty Disrupt
• Selected to attend the Global Impact Accelerator Program and attend Slush 2018 in Finland
• Received a contract to create customised skincare solutions for a TV production company, hotels, SA Innovation Summit and the dti
Botswana start-up cosmetics and beauty brand Nubian Seed entered the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme with the hope to improve its business strategy.

Nubian Seed is an eco-friendly beauty brand which takes care to leave as small a carbon footprint as possible by sourcing sustainably, using natural and organic ingredients, and using minimal packaging of recycled and recyclable material wherever possible. Established by Tuduetso Tebape and her sister in 2016, Nubian Seed’s dream is to develop a brand that promotes African ingredients.

Tebape and her sister were manufacturing their products at home at the start of the FemBioBiz competition and based on the lessons learned from participating in the competition, the company started developing its manufacturing facility, formulating its new product line, revising packaging, ensuring regulatory body alignment, broadening distribution channels and identifying key partners. Tebape said the company’s change in strategy came about after attending the SANBio/BioFISA II Finland study tour and Slush event which broadened her view and exposed her to the greater possibilities for Nubian Seed.

Tebape added that these changes were also inspired by being selected to attend a SANBio/BioFISA II funded Cosmetics Formulation course with the North-West University in South Africa, as it was valuable in guiding her decisions with regards to product development and manufacturing. Tebape said she has shared the lessons learned with her business partner and they continue to apply them in their business.

Growth as an SMME has been incremental since participating in the programme; Nubian Seed has grown its customer base and this has also led to an increase in the number of stores and boutiques the products are available at.

After SANBio/BioFISA II linked Tebape with the Hivos Foundation, Nubian Seed was selected to pitch at the Disrupt!Beauty event. The foundation has thereafter added Nubian Seed to its membership network.

Tebape has also completed the 2018 Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship programme and launched an African Rose Skin Elixir body oil, which is fast becoming popular. She aims to launch more products in the future.

Tebape’s achievements after FemBioBiz:
- Received Incubation support from Botswana Innovation Hub
- Has developed a new strategy for Nubian Seed
- Launched new product called African Rose Skin Elixir
- Completed the 2018 Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Programme

“The most valuable lessons I learned were related to finances. Moreover, the lessons I learned on developing and presenting an effective pitch are some which I also continue to use today.”

Tuduetso Tebape
SEASON 2 FINALIST

Ingrid Saurer
Belliche (Seychelles)

When Ingrid Saurer, yoga teacher and owner of one of Seychelles’ organic and natural cosmetic brands, participated in the 2nd season of the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme last year, never did she imagine that her 3-month old cosmetic brand Belliche would receive so much attention.

From 15 entrepreneurs who received training in phase 1 & 2 of the FemBioBiz competition in Seychelles, Saurer was one of the three selected to represent Seychelles at the SA Innovation Summit in Cape Town, South Africa.

At the time of participating in the competition, Saurer had just registered her company after acquiring her prototype with a vision of creating a selection of pure, organic, chemical free beauty and skin care products using natural ingredients found in Seychelles.

Saurer said her biggest takeaway from participating in FemBioBiz were the networks she was able to create.

Since her win, Saurer has had the opportunity to attend various capacity building programmes funded by SANBio/BioFISA II, such as the Cosmetics and Formulations course with the North-West University, as well as a Phytomedicine and Ethnomedicine course with the University of Pretoria.

Based on the knowledge she gained from attending both these workshops, Saurer has since trained 15 participants in Seychelles in Phytomedicine and Product Formulation together with the University of Seychelles, Seychelles Bureau of Standards (SBS) and the National Institute of Science Technology and Innovation (NISTI).

As part of the prizes she won as a FemBioBiz Seychelles finalist, the Seychelles Enterprise Agency offered Belliche a small shop in the centre of Victoria (the capital of Seychelles). The boutique style shop is expected to officially open its doors to the public in June 2019.

Belliche is also found in various major stores, airports and a few guest houses around Seychelles. Her product is also stocked at the British High Commission in Seychelles. Saurer said that the next chapter for Belliche is to launch a facial range and finally acquire funding to build a luxury retreat.

“My products have evolved in terms of their stability, content, packaging and design. I have also been able to find the ingredients I was looking for to help preserve them without chemicals for a longer shelf-life – they now have an up to 12 months shelf-life and are still chemical free.”

Ingrid Saurer

Saurer’s achievements after FemBioBiz:
• From starting with a prototype, officially launched and sells their products
• Received a R10 000 prize in cash which assisted towards travel and accommodation to meet with suppliers in South Africa
• Received a shop outlet from Seychelles Enterprise Agency
SEASON 2 FINALIST

Nyarai Kurebgaseka
Kaza Natural Oils (Zimbabwe)

Kaza Natural Oils, a Zimbabwean based company that was established in 2016 aims to sustainably commercialise indigenous plants while providing alternative income for rural farmers who serve as suppliers. The company processes plant products for cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries and exports products to France and other European countries, as well as the SADC region.

Kurebgaseka, founder of Natural Oils attended the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme with 25 hopeful female entrepreneurs in Harare where she was motivated and challenged to relook at her business model for areas of improvement.

According to Kurebgaseka, the bootcamp business training she attended equipped her to understand the different functions of departments that exist in her company such as, finance, marketing and human resources.

After winning FemBioBiz at national level, Kurebgaseka attended the North-West University Cosmetics Formulation training in South Africa for value addition of the natural oils produced in Zimbabwe and to network with other regional participants working in the same space. The company continued to grow its brand by partnering with other FemBioBiz participants, as well as regional and international players.

They are determined to continue to grow their international market and have exhibited at the 30th edition of the biggest marketing platform for cosmetic ingredients in-cosmetics Global in Paris and BioFach in Germany.

Kaza Natural Oils won US$3 000 worth of legal services from Muvingi & Mugadza Legal Practitioners as a FemBioBiz Zimbabwe finalist, and following this submitted a proposal to the GIZ Access and Benefit Sharing Initiative, and will be receiving a grant of R600 000 to assist the company in complying with international and domestic ABS regulations.

Kurebgaseka’s achievements after FemBioBiz:

- US$3 000 worth of Legal Services from Muvingi and Mugadza Legal Practitioners
- Collaborating with businesses from FemBioBiz networks, such as Moritelo, Kuti Oils and Foi Science
- Sales enquiries and requests for collaboration have increased
- Reached US$200 000 sales target for 2018
- Has created employment for an additional 4 people

“All thanks to FemBioBiz. The SA Innovation Summit gave me an opportunity to network with other businesspeople from Southern Africa and I believe this will take our business to another level. I am looking forward to a lot more growth and successes in this coming year.”

Nyarai Kurebgaseka

www.kazanaturaloils.com
Other FemBioBiz Natural products sector finalists

Hape Marite – Black Hair (Lesotho)

Hape Marite is the owner and Founder of Black Hair (Pty) Ltd, a company whose mandate is to promote good, healthy hair and skin while also ensuring that black women wear their hair with confidence. Black Hair products are specifically formulated with organics to be gentle and less abrasive to the skin.

www.blackhair.co.ls

Sandra Mwiihangele

Kiyomisandz Beauty Products (Namibia)

Kiyomisandz Beauty Products is a two-time innovation award winning cosmetic manufacturing company based in Windhoek, Namibia. It was established by owner and cosmetic chemist, Sandra Mwiihangele, whose passion and expertise lie in cosmetic development. She was also listed on Forbes Africa 30 under 30 Class of 2017. Kiyomisandz offers 3rd party cosmetic manufacturing services to clients, hotels, etc. such as R&D, stability testing and manufacturing. Kiyomisandz also recently launched its first & successful in-house skincare brand called the Summer Rain Collection that contains nutritious fruit extracts which are rich in anti-oxidant properties and the native Namibian Marula Seed Oil.

www.kiyomisandz.com
Karen Vosloo – Skin Clays (South Africa)
Local producer and supplier of boutique skin care, bath & body, and lifestyle products including clay scrubs, clay masks, and other clay cosmetics made from indigenous plant oils, plant butters and plant extracts.

Mpingana Dax – Kuti Oil (Namibia)
Kuti Oil is a botanical oil press business. The main product Kuti Oil is selling at the moment is Marula oil – which is a high-quality indigenous oil used for centuries by women in northern Namibia for culinary and cosmetic uses. The aim of their business is to press and export raw Marula oil for large essential oil companies who manufacture cosmetic products.

STUDENT
Ursula Banda – ALU School of Business (Malawi)
The Village Shop is an artisan manufacturing collective, born to bridge the gap between local artisans and access to lucrative and consistent regional and international markets. The Village Shop leverages the power of group dynamics to meet large artisan product orders and gain visibility to potential wholesale buyers. Ursula’s new product line involves cosmetics based on moringa.
Most of the SADC economies are oriented to primary agriculture production and some export a few cash crops and livestock. However, there is a trade deficit in food for the African content and for the SADC region (see graphs on the next page). The demand for processing food products in the region has increased with the growth in populations and the need to change food consumption lifestyles which have resulted in an increase in some non-communicable diseases in the region.

The agriculture sector is of major social and economic importance in the SADC region, contributing in the different Member States between 4% and 27% of GDP, and approximately 13% of overall export earnings for some countries, according to SADC statistics. About 70% of the region’s population depend on agriculture for food, income and employment. Hence the performance of this sector has a strong influence on food security, economic growth and social stability in the region.

Therefore, supporting efforts that seek to improve the lives of the people in the region is of critical importance to the building of a better future. NEPAD SANBio with support of the BioFISA II programme has funded four projects that focus on better quality animal feeds using sustainable indigenous ingredients and alternative sources of protein, while four other projects are focusing on creating new healthy foods for human and thriving businesses based on indigenous, sustainable ingredients and indigenous knowledge.

This sector attracted the majority of the applications in the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme (64%) and support to this sector responds to SDG 2 and other regional and continental frameworks. The women supported are working to reduce post-harvest losses, adding value to crops and natural products, increase productivity through innovative agricultural technologies and improve the nutritional content of the foods consumed in the region.
Our food
Africa’s widening deficit in the food trade

What Africa imports the most

Where SADC imports food from

SEASON 2 WINNER

Bonolo Monthe

Maungo Craft (Botswana)

In Botswana enterprises are responding to consumers’ growing interest in nutritional foods that celebrate the true essence of the country’s abundant natural resources and ingredients. Maungo Craft specialises in making low sugar, gourmet, craft jam that is nutritious and contains organic indigenous fruits and super foods. The company has recently introduced marmalades to their product range.

Co-owned by Bonolo Monthe and a group of friends, Maungo Craft seeks to create a reputation for distributing uniquely prepared food products that reflect a truly indigenous touch in preparation and branding.

After impressing the judges at the FemBioBiz regional event at the SA Innovation Summit in 2018, Monthe won a ticket to attend Slush in Helsinki, Finland where she got an opportunity to grow the Maungo Craft network.

So far, the company has been on a drive to break into the hospitality industry, which they believe will have a great impact on expanding their capacity. Following the FemBioBiz competition they have sent their products to an internationally accredited testing body for nutritional analysis in order to start exporting Maungo Craft jams and marmalades to the international market.

The company is currently working on a deal to introduce Maungo Craft to the South African market with the aim of reaching some of the major retailers and hotels across the country.

While the Maungo team has not yet significantly grown since participating in the competition, they have been able to hire temporary staff as and when needed. This is because they wish to grow steadily and not burden the business during its growth stage; Monthe said this will obviously change once the business starts exporting.

Learning and continuously developing their business is one of Maungo’s missions. The company has been recently selected to participate in the 2019 6-week Leadership in Business course with the Mandela Washington Fellow for Young African Leaders in the USA.

“...the greatest value for me in FemBioBiz is when we did the financials section. That was useful because we were able to put structure and better understand how to work with our figures. A lot of SMMEs don’t come from a financial background and they just hit the ground running, just like we did, so the teachings in the programme helped with that.” Bonolo Monthe

Monthe’s achievements after FemBioBiz:

- Featured on CNBC – you can watch the video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MeBEe83n-sc
- Shortlisted by Speciality Food Magazine in the United Kingdom for New Producer Awards
- Products have been sent for nutritional analysis
- Received the Botswana Pride Award & BoFINET SMME Innovation Award at the 2018 the Global Expo
- Participated in the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders

AGRO-PROCESSING SECTOR • FEMBIOBIZ SEASON 1 & 2 WINNER AND FINALISTS
Filomena Matimbe

Finana (Mozambique)

Meet the Mozambique entrepreneur who has created additional value to one of Mozambique’s most popular fruits, banana. Filomena Matimbe said that since the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme Season 1, she has gained the confidence to give her company, Finana, the push it needed.

Finana uses 100% of the banana fruit to produce banana flour by enhancing its nutritional quality and eliminating waste.

For Matimbe, participating in the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme was the obvious choice. She has a strong passion for farming and entrepreneurship and is always looking for opportunities to improve her business acumen.

While the business is still in its growth stage, Finana has been able to increase the number of its distribution channels across various supermarkets in Mozambique – which has consequently increased sales volume.

According to Matimbe, the increased number of sales was prompted by Finana’s new and improved packaging layout and also the new product categories such as the banana flour with cashew nut and banana flour with milk – which is a favourite among locals.

Finana’s growth development is a continuous process; the organisation has also recently changed its business strategy and reduced its staff in order to meet with the new changes.

Furthermore, in 2017 the company participated in the 2nd World Invention and Innovation Forum (WIIF) in China where they received a gold medal for Best Food and Nutrition.

Following her success in the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme, Matimbe has continued to receive business training from the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women network – which is an innovative solution that combines mentoring with technology to offer cross-border support to female entrepreneurs.

Matimbe said she is grateful to FemBioBiz for accelerating her business by giving her the confidence to pitch in front of investors and also broadening her network.

Matimbe’s achievements after FemBioBiz:

- Finana packaging and label has changed to fit the targeted audience
- Received gold medal for Best Food and Nutrition at 2nd World Invention and Innovation Forum (WIIF)
- Received Certificate of Merit for 2018 Best Exhibitor at the International Fair of Maputo
- Received 2018 Certificate of Excellence at the African Investors Forum for Nutrition in Nairobi
Fannie Gondwe
Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise (Malawi)

Malawian born Fannie Gondwe left her full time job with SADC-ICRAF in 2015 and took a leap of faith to finally pursue her farming passion, little did she know that 4 years down the line, Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprises would be one of the companies that will put Lilongwe on the international market.

In 2017, Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise was among the 101 women enterprises that participated in the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme Season 1 who received business training and mentoring.

Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise focuses on the seed multiplication of Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) as well as selling seeds on behalf of other companies.

Prior to the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme, Gondwe had not attended or participated in any international workshop or business training. Gondwe said that it was only after participating in FemBioBiz that she had the opportunity to understand her business which prompted her to change her business strategy.

In addition to seed multiplication, the company aims to promote clean planting material and increase the root production and value addition by farmers. This has seen Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise finally reaping the rewards – the company is at maturing stage and scaling up from seed multiplication to value addition.

According to Gondwe, life after FemBioBiz has been tremendously favourable. The company has increased the OFSP vine/seed field from 3 hectares to 8 and has also added cassava cuttings/seed multiplication with 15 hectares in 2019.

From January 2019, Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise has also started to process OFSP, cassava, starch, kondowole, garri and makaka flour which have seen them grow their annual turnover by 72%.

Gondwe’s achievements after FemBioBiz:
- 2018 Malawi winner – Most Impactful Business Pitch – Equity Investment (HIVOS)
- Graca Machel Trust, Women Creating Wealth Business Pitch winner, 2017/18 Cohort
- BIO Africa Convention Inaugural: Durban, August 2018
- Common Wealth Business Women – Malawi Chapter, Member, 2018
The company has also added 2 more professionals on their team and has created more than 200 jobs in the communities who have managed to improve their livelihoods by producing OFSP and cassava roots.

In January 2019, Gondwe said they have also managed to form a partnership with the Cornell University in the United States of America. The partnership has seen the university sending 6 of its students to do their research on OFSP roots and tubers crops together and also produce a bankable business plan that will promote Perisha Agro and Packaging Enterprise.

“Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources have also sent their students to learn from us on OFSP and cassava value chains,” Gondwe added.

Another milestone for the business includes a partnership with the government, Ministry of Industry and Trade who have bought cassava and OFSP processing equipment as a matching facility.

“With the intensive mentoring program/boot camp and subsequent meetings and networking, I have managed to connect to more buyers, partners and investors: I have also managed to reach 62% market share.”

Fannie Gondwe
AGRO-PROCESSING SECTOR

SEASON 1 WINNER

**Nkata Seleka – Sleek Foods (Pty) Ltd – (Botswana)**

*Sleek Foods (Pty) Ltd* was born out of the founder’s passion for cooking and fine foods. In 2014, Mrs Nkata Seleka, founder and owner, took a giant leap of faith to pursue her interest in the food industry. The result is original and unique sauces, pastes and condiments made with recipes which have been tested and refined over time until perfection. Sleek Foods original line of Ready-to-Eat and versatile pastes are made using olive oil and no preservatives, which come in Onion and Tomato flavour (Hot, Mild and Lemon & Herb), are currently sold in Spar, Choppies, Shoppers and Pick n Pay Supermarkets around Botswana. They are also found in Sebala Cash and Carry Wholesale stores around Botswana. This product line has, amongst other accolades, won the first prize at the prestigious Botswana Beef Festival in Botswana in 2014. Their latest line is a very unique and scrumptious Chakalaka which is supplied to KFC Botswana replacing the ‘KOO’ brand Chakalaka they have been using. Sleek Foods was certified by Yum Brands International, who own KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell, in July 2017 after passing the Yum Brands Audit. Nkata won R100 000 towards the scaling up of her business during FemBioBiz Season 1.

SEASON 2 WINNER

**Maureen Vere – Verager (Pvt) Ltd (Zimbabwe)**

Verager currently focuses on food processing and value addition of legumes and other wild and natural foods. They supply the local and regional markets at a small-scale level. Their major product is called Nutri Pea Sausage, which is made from indigenous nutrient dense cowpeas that are widely grown in Zimbabwe.

SEASON 2 WINNER

**Jennifer Mayer – Hutano Foods (Zimbabwe)**

Hutano Foods makes delicious, high-quality and easy to enjoy snacks and porridges that harness the nutritional power of local Zimbabwean ingredients: millet, sorghum, nyimo bean, marula and mongongo nuts, baobab fruit and more. They source directly from small scale farmers and wild harvesters, increasing the value of the traditional foods while also sharing the delectable fruits of their labour with a whole new generation of Zimbabwean consumers.

www.hutanofoods.com

Other FemBioBiz Agro-processing sector winners and finalists
Matiti Trish Kabi – Alosang Enterprise (Lesotho)

Alosang Enterprise is a company with a team of 80 employees based in Lesotho, impacts positively on people’s lives through its production & agro-processing of high quality, nutritious healthy fruits, vegetables and exotic Herbs. The company is dedicated to sustainable, medicinal, profitable and unique agricultural products. The company’s production methods include sustainable agriculture technologies (Greenhouses, Shade Nets, Drip Irrigation and Mulching) and best management practices – international standards (Global GAP, Traceability, ISO 9001: 2000) with products consumed nationwide.

Rachel Kalipi – Maano Investments (Namibia)

Maano Investments is a Namibian company involved in the baking, packaging and distribution of Mahangu Cookies (cookies from millet flour mixed with other ingredients). Millet flour is used in the preparation of porridge which is a staple food to more than 60% of the Namibian population. Millet is rich in vitamins and several minerals. The current production consists of five flavours, which are plain cookies, cookies with coconut, oatmeal cookies, cookies with nuts and choc chip. At the time of the competition, the cookies were sold in some of the major retailers in the country such as Pick n Pay, SuperSpar, OK Foods, Duty free shop at the Windhoek airport and many more.

Jacqueline Gowe – Sweet Maungwe Honey (Zimbabwe)

Sweet Maungwe is a leading honey producer and processor. The company’s bees source nectar from natural forests, eucalyptus and acacia of the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe producing a variety of types of honey. Their product range includes beeswax, candles, hand creams, honey with pollen, ginger or herbs and fruit snacks with honey and our number one seller at the moment is honey wine.

Elizabeth Motshidisi Mokoma – Olive Leaf Investments (South Africa)

Olive Leaf Investment was established by Ms Tshidi Mokoma to contribute toward food security in South Africa through rabbit farming. The business started as Mokoma developed the passion for agriculture after attending a 3-day workshop on ‘Foundations for Farming’, (formerly called Farming God’s Way). Her interest for agriculture lies in teaching the nation on how to be able to feed itself in a simple and effective way and hence she launched herself into rabbit farming.
Other FemBioBiz Agro-processing sector winners and finalists

**Chipokota Mwanawasa – Richmond Gold (Zambia)**

*Richmond Gold Zambia* is founded by a management team largely with vast experience in livestock development, agribusiness, project management and business development. Headquartered in Chibombo, Richmond Gold is a pioneer in exotic free-range meats. They believe that *Richmond Gold* farm can grow into a profitable business with a fast-growing ranch, solid arable farming, healthy poultry and a good exporting market to the near African neighbouring countries and beyond – by harnessing Africa’s green gold. Their customers and employees are the company’s greatest assets and thus they invest heavily in capacity building for employees in order to deliver a product of the highest quality to their customers.

**Anooradah Pooran – Secret Grand Mère Co Ltd (Mauritius)**

*Secret Grand-mère* produces 24 varieties of herbal infusion from organic medicinal plants of Mauritius for common illnesses and prevention of severe illness. Herbal tea is consumed for its physical and medical effects, especially for its stimulant, relaxant and sedative properties. 80% of the company’s production capacity is geared towards the local market and the remaining 20% for exports. There is a growing demand of herbal infusion products, both locally and abroad. The company is HACCP Certified and explores different marketing avenues, especially in Europe.

**Temwani Gunda – JAT Investment (Malawi)**

*JAT Investment* is aimed at substituting mushroom importation, providing competitive mushroom products and technical services to its wide range of customers with a vision to be a leader in shaping the mushroom industry. JATI plans to establish youth-owned satellite mushroom farms and aggregate output for sale on a viable market.

**Winnifred Nachivula – Nazya Investment Limited (Zambia)**

*Nazya Foods* operates as an agro-processing company specialising in local indigenous foods. They process and supply their goods to retail shops both local and chain stores. The company’s product range consists of various cassava products, as well as mopane worms and groundnut powder.
Ndahekelekwa Beauty Paulus – Fluffy Mallows (Namibia)

Fluffy Mallows is a Namibian marshmallow manufacturing business that specialises in producing handcrafted marshmallows. The marshmallows are hand crafted with love and attention to detail to produce insanely delicious and irresistibly smooth edible clouds of happiness.

Nadine Bourbeau – Exo Foodstuff Ltd (Mauritius)

Nadine, an ex-instructor in food and nutrition is the owner and director of Exo Foodstuff Ltd, a company producing various sauces which not only offer amazing flavour but provide good nutrition. There are 7 creative fruit based chili sauces in her current product range and she is looking to expand. Nadine is a National Women Entrepreneur Council member in Mauritius. Her products are found in several supermarkets in Mauritius.

Jean Pankuku – Tehilah Enterprise (Malawi)

Tehilah Enterprise is a privately-owned business that focuses on value addition and processing of locally grown horticultural crops and legumes. The business strives to provide both the rural and urban populations with classic healthy foods.

Claudette Albert – Manna Farm (Seychelles)

Claudette is a dedicated farmer producing mainly root crops, among which cassava is featured. She also makes cassava biscuits from cassava flour to provide an alternative healthy breakfast choice to the local market.
Other FemBioBiz Agro-processing sector winners and finalists

Iolanda Almeida – INMA Limitada (Mozambique)
INMA Limitada supports local coffee producers on the island of Ibo for social inclusion and sustainable development. The company has two major products: the Coffee Route and Cappucino, based on the transfer of appropriate production technologies to local producers. Ibo Coffee is mainly sold to local accommodation establishments, as well as other interested parties who make their purchases by order.

Lipuo Nkholi – Limomonane Products Pty Ltd (Lesotho)
Limomonane Products naturally preserves fruits. They have three lines of products, namely: canned peaches, orange marmalade and jam from peaches, apricot, plum, lemon-ginger and mixed fruits. These products are prepared in a way that preserves the integrity of the fruits, making for a fresher tasting product. Their products provide a healthy alternative, especially for people who watch their diets.

Charline Rosie Morel – Charline’s Special (Seychelles)
Charline produces delicious vegetable and mango pickles from natural indigenous ingredients jam from local fruits, and vegetable preserve with Seychellois flair – all of these based on traditional recipes with some new twists.

Mary Shikukutu – N T Okawa Trading cc (Namibia)
Mary Shikukutu is the founder and managing director of mahungu milling company N T Okawa Trading cc. They are processing a traditional staple known for its nutritional values, providing long-lasting energy into fermented and unfermented flour, and selling directly to loyal customer base in Windhoek. They also brew and sell a mahangu-based meal replacement drink locally known as Oshikundu.
Sarah Ngwenya – Supreme Oil & Supreme Seed Zambia Ltd (Zambia)

Trading as Supreme Seed Ltd, the company is involved in the production of improved certified legume seed varieties and works with numerous women-led farmer groups in Zambia. The company also processes soya beans into various value-added products such as 100% cholesterol free vegetable oil, soya meal and soya bean cake.

www.supremeoilzambia.com

STUDENT
Tlotlo Phuduhudu – Botho University (Botswana)

Tlotlo intends to make animal feeds using residues and adding certain indigenous tree leaves to enhance their nutritive level. These feeds are affordable and easily palatable for cattle.

STUDENT
Clara Penicela – Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique)

Clara is working on a processing company for cassava to produce cassava/manioc flour and puree of instant cassava. The product will show people that cassava can be enjoyed from people from all backgrounds. She also hopes that by adding value to cassava she will also be helping small farmers and encouraging them to produce cassava on a larger scale.

STUDENT
Sunera Zulficar Nurmomade – Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique)

Sunera has a Master’s degree in Food Technology. Her company produces pap made of germinated grain millet and leguminous soybeans.
Other FemBioBiz Season 2 Agricultural technologies sector finalists

Dr Wezzie Mkwaila – Nyenyezi Agritec (Malawi)

Nyenyezi Agritec specialises in providing improved seeds and seed treatments, and developing plant disease diagnostic tools using both traditional and modern methods. They aim to enhance and simplify decision making for farmers by leveraging and translating research into actionable information for end users.

Maria Sibia – Casa do Campo Lda (Mozambique)

Maria is an advertising agent with a background in administration and sales. Her company Casa do Campo provides agricultural products, equipment and services.
Renthia Kaimbi – AquaGreens (Namibia)

AquaGreens Namibia is dedicated to the production of organic fruit and vegetables and the cultivation of edible and ornamental freshwater fish populations, as well as decorative and edible flowers, all at the same time under controlled conditions, all year round. They are working on an aquaponics system to improve efficiency in farming in the Namib desert.

Samkelisiwe Chunda – Sibayeni Metrofarming (South Africa)

Sibayeni Metrofarming designs, produces and sell vertical Metro-farming stands, and its beneficiaries/clients in vegetable production. Metrofarming multiplies production unlimited spaces, saves money through reduced exposure to pests, uses up to 90% less water and is easy to maintain as well as environmentally friendly.
The Journey of an Entrepreneur

It is often said that anyone can start a business regardless of background or circumstances – this is true, yet the failure rate of start-ups is high. What is often left unsaid are the struggles of the entrepreneurs, the failures, and the lessons learned from these struggles. The reality is that most entrepreneurs fail several times before they succeed; some struggle for several years to eventually make it big at the end of these struggles, while some give up along the way.

Starting and running a business requires knowledge, tools and resources that are often beyond the founder’s reach or expertise. Careful planning, building networks and reaching customers to grow and build the business certainly reduces this risk and drives the enterprise to a more sustainable future where jobs are created and industries built.

Over 200 women working in health and nutrition went through the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme and attained skills to better develop their businesses, improve their networking skills and, for some, to better engage their customers. This support provided should enable them to build traction that will enable them to raise funding to further develop their businesses, as funding is one of the biggest headaches for entrepreneurs: they may struggle financially for some time before their business become profitable. Those that succeed with minimal finances, often learn to be agile and find different ways of doing things to reach their goals, and are driven by the impact that the business has, only increasing their passion and commitment. The impact that some of the women supported through the FemBioBiz Programme have created is unquestionable but their journeys are not yet over.

The contribution that NEPAD SANBio and its partners are making to the entrepreneurship journeys of these women is small, compared to the journeys they are yet to undertake. Other stakeholders would be able to add more value to the women supported through this Programme to ensure their businesses, and consequently the impact they can make, will not die along the way. Join us in supporting female bioentrepreneurs in building lasting businesses that create jobs and address the health and nutrition challenges we are currently facing in the SADC region!
For more information contact: fembiobiz@nepadsanbio.org

Or visit:
www.nepadsanbio.org/fbb1
www.nepadsanbio.org/fbb2
www.nepadsanbio.org/fbb3

Country coordinator websites:
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