



we're creating a
STRONGER FUTURE



welcome to
THE SOMO PROJECT

EMPOWERING GREATNESS IN THE WORLD'S MOST UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

There are 1 billion people living in urban slums – 1/7th of the world's population. Cities are increasingly overcrowded, with growing slum populations. Those urban slums have poor infrastructure with little to no health care, education or economic opportunity. These otherwise dire conditions create huge opportunities for social entrepreneurs.

OUR MISSION

In Swahili, "somo" means "to learn lessons." The Somo Project's mission is to identify, train, fund and mentor entrepreneurs looking to drive social change by building enterprises in their own low-income urban communities.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We invest in social entrepreneurs and provide the training and tools to help them build enterprises that change their communities from within. By investing in the right people, we help bring hope and long-term stability to urban slum areas.

OUR ENTREPRENEURS RECEIVE ...

Training

- Business plan development.
- Entrepreneurship boot camp.
- Self-belief and local context development.

Capital

- Financial backing for selected entrepreneurs.
- Long-term investment and partnership.
- Early stage grant equity and later stage growth capital.

Guidance

- Market Advisory of local and international entrepreneurs, advisors, and investors.
- Business development workshops providing 1:1 mentorship.
- Long-term mentorship commitment.





meet our
ENTREPRENEURS

- 4 • AFRIKNIT DOLLS
Susan & Meshack
- 5 • BOUNTYNUT
Rose
- 6 • HABARI KIBRA
Thomas & Michelle
- 7 • KISCOM
Joseph
- 8 • NUTRITION PALACE
Joshua
- 9 • PORTABLEVOICES
Allan
- 10 • REAFRIC
Julius
- 11 • YO-TOTO YOGURT
Lillian & Collins
- 12 • CONTACT THE SOMO PROJECT



Susan & Meshack
AFRIKNIT DOLLS

OVERVIEW

AfriKnit Dolls makes African dolls from scrap and waste fabric. Our goal is to address the lack of African-inspired dolls in the market, clean up the environment, and train and employ school dropouts and destitute youths from the surrounding community. We're proud that our business creates employment for vulnerable youth.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **June 2017:** Entered Somo's Entrepreneurship bootcamp.
- **September 2017:** Received first grant from Somo.
- **December 2017:** Got first contract from a school.
- **February 2018:** Sold over 100 dolls in the month.

Ultimately, we found out that tailors often just throw them away or burn them, which releases carbon emission into the atmosphere and causes respiratory discomfort. After this observation, we got the inspiration to come up with dolls that would help curb the problem of waste fabric disposal. We also remembered how we used to plait long grass as kids, and we realized that this would work perfectly for the heads of the dolls.

SCALING PLAN

We plan to scale AfriKnit Dolls in five ways. In addition to hiring a full-time employee, we want to engage vulnerable youths for on-the-job training to ensure production. Further, we plan to integrate the trained youths into our program, to help promote growth. We also wish to cooperate with international individuals or businesses to reach the international market, starting with African countries and then moving overseas. Finally, we will be connecting with Jumia to advertise and sell our dolls.



SUSAN & MESHACK - FOUNDERS' STORY

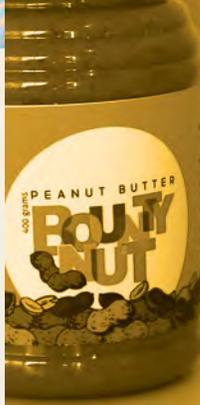
Our names are Susan and Meshack. When we were kids, the air used to be so pure and clean, and we would never suffocate from the smoke of burning rags, plastic residues, or waste papers. In those days, we would use any locally-available materials that we could find, including ropes torn from the backs of banana stocks, to make balls and dolls to play with.

Today, so many toys are imported – plastic toys that first must be imported, but that are too expensive for most low-income households anyway. As parents, we became passionate about creating alternative, eco-friendly, affordable toys for our children.

One day, as we worked on uniforms and pillows, we had lots of leftover cut-offs and thought about how to dispose of them; we saw the drainage systems clogged with rags and were curious to find out how they got there.



"WE BECAME PASSIONATE ABOUT CREATING ALTERNATIVE, ECO-FRIENDLY, AFFORDABLE TOYS FOR OUR CHILDREN. WE EVEN USE SCRAP & WASTE FABRIC TO HELP CLEAN UP THE ENVIRONMENT."



Rose BOUNTY NUT

OVERVIEW

BountyNut produces natural peanut butter that does not contain any chemicals. Through our business, we create job opportunities for widows, single women, and youth. Our BountyNut peanut butter is produced from fresh dried nuts, which are roasted and ground to a smooth or crunchy texture.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **May 2017:** Accepted into Somo Project bootcamp.
- **July 2017:** Launched in PopUp Shop.
- **September 2017:** Won startup capital from Somo.
- **January 2018:** Started selling through Jumia.
- **March 2018:** Launched shop.
- **March 2018:** Got Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBs) standard mark.



SCALING PLAN

With average operating margins of 39% and \$470 of monthly revenue, BountyNut is in a position to expand. Receiving KEBs and buying a roasting machine through the Somo grant were the major hurdles we overcame to enter wholesale markets. We are now ready to grow exponentially and are looking to scale throughout Kenya through wholesale relationships. In order to do

this, though, we need investment capital so we can hire staff and buy raw materials inventory.

ROSE - FOUNDER'S STORY

My name is Rose, and I was inspired to make peanut butter when my sister's child, who had been very sick, was discharged from the hospital with the mandate that she get natural peanut butter to supplement her diet. My sister could not find a reliable, natural, and affordable source of peanut butter; the peanut butter she found in stores had additives and preservatives. I decided that others in my community must also be lacking access to an affordable, additive-free product, so I decided to begin producing it myself.



"WHEN MY SISTER'S CHILD WAS DISCHARGED FROM THE HOSPITAL AFTER A SERIOUS ILLNESS, WE COULDN'T FIND AN AFFORDABLE PEANUT BUTTER WITH NO ADDITIVES ... SO I BEGAN MAKING IT MYSELF."



Thomas & Michelle
HABARI KIBRA

OVERVIEW

We started *Habari Kibra* as a platform to allow youth to engage their passion for journalism. The training program teaches youth a wide range of skills – writing, photography, TV and media production – so they can reach their ambitions in an ever-changing and diversifying industry. Graduates are matched with income-producing journalism jobs or join the Habari Kibra team to sell content to local media hubs in Nairobi.

HIGHLIGHTS

- *November 2016:* Accepted to receive funding and partnership from Somo.
- *February 2017:* Launched first training class.
- *October 2017:* Launched Habari Kibra website.
- *November 2017:* Received International Center for Journalists fellowship.
- *November 2017:* Partnered with Mtaani Radio.

on publishing stories, as well as doing shorter but more intensive courses. This year we will have one four-month course, covering the fundamentals of journalism, photography and data journalism, a writing project, and audio and video. The final project for each student will be a story that is published on our website and potentially sold to a media company. If we are able to sell any of our students' stories, we will take a percentage to cover our costs of training. After training, students will enter our internship program, allowing them to continue producing stories, receiving mentorship, and publishing stories.



THOMAS & MICHELLE - FOUNDERS' STORY

Our names are Thomas and Michelle. While working with Pamoja FM, a community-based radio station in Kibera, we saw that Kibera was being described as one of the worst informal settlements with very poor living conditions. Unfortunately, the stories were not about restoring hope among the locals. We wanted to tell the Kibera story differently, as well as to create a safe space for young aspiring journalists to tell their own stories and the stories of their community.

SCALING PLAN

We are focused on growing our business by selling stories, which are produced by both our team and trainees, to media hubs around Nairobi. To date, we have WGBH and Radio Kaya as customers. We are focusing



"KIBERA WAS BEING DESCRIBED AS ONE OF THE WORST SETTLEMENTS, BUT THE STORIES IN THE MEDIA WEREN'T ABOUT RESTORING HOPE. WE WANTED TO GIVE YOUTHS A PLATFORM TO TELL THEIR OWN STORIES."

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Joseph
KISCOM

OVERVIEW

Kiscom provides affordable information communication technology (ICT) services to the people of Kibera. Our business offers computer training to disadvantaged youth in the community, subsidizing these services through the other ICT services offered. We also promote education by providing library resources to children who cannot afford school books, allowing them to rent materials after school at a low cost.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Trained well over 50 Kibera youth since 2016. These youth are now either employed or self-employed.
- Advanced digital inclusion and 21st century technology skills for the community.
- Offered affordable ICT services to the people of Kibera for the last 3 years.
- Helped reverse the negative perception of Kibera residents as excluded from the digital era.
 - Sponsored three bright but needy students, to allow them to attend Nairobi high schools. Two are now in Form 3, and one is in Form 4.
- Created employment opportunities for two youths.
- Supported high school and university education for my own children.

JOSEPH - FOUNDER'S STORY

My name is Joseph. I am a resident of Kibera and have a deep knowledge of the challenges facing people living here because of abject poverty. Many youth become school dropouts since they or their parents cannot afford their high school fees. Because of this many succumb to drug addiction, early pregnancy, and participating in criminal activities. By offering computer training, Kiscom empowers youth, enabling them to earn employment or start their own businesses, ultimately changing their standard of living. The training unleashes their innate

potential. When I left my previous job I wanted to create a venture that would improve the quality of life for underserved and under-resourced people. Kiscom offers sponsorship to about half its students coming from needy backgrounds and offers these ICT-related services in a location convenient to the local community.



"BY OFFERING COMPUTER TRAINING, KISCOM ENABLES YOUTH TO UNLEASH THEIR POTENTIAL. WE'RE HELPING THEM CHANGE THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING."

SCALING PLAN

Within 5 years, Kiscom aims to open two more branches, one in Nairobi and the other in rural Kenya. We hope to reach 1,000 students who can establish stable employment based on the training they receive from Kiscom. We intend to grow our team to at least 10 employees, improving their living standards and those of their families. All of this would be accomplished using capital generated from the existing business.



Joshua
NUTRITION PALACE

OVERVIEW

Nutrition Palace is a healthy food cafe in Kibera. Our mission is to produce nutritious, great tasting meals that are affordable to our community. The community is dominated by fast food restaurants, and our cafe offers a healthy alternative to the low-income population.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **July 2016:** Won the Somo Project grant for starting up a healthy restaurant.
- **August 2016:** Launched our first location in Kibera.
- **January 2017:** Launched a catering service.
- **June 2017:** Started contract with Daystar University, serving more than 600 students.
- **September 2017:** Purchased our own facility.
- **December 2017:** Completed contracts for 15 weddings, 6 birthdays, 8 conferences and 4 burial ceremonies.
- **December 2017:** Reached a total of 20,162 clients, selling a total of 65,400 products.



alternative was to leave the community to buy meals, which is too expensive for most people. Today, it's not only my community that benefits from our services, but also other communities within Nairobi.

SCALING PLAN

Nutrition Palace wants to scale in two ways. The first is through opening additional branches of Nutrition Palace, in Kibera and in other low-income areas. Within 5 years, we intend to have 5 branches throughout Nairobi. Secondly, we want to grow the Nutrition Palace catering service offerings by marketing to large companies around Nairobi, hiring 10 more staff, and purchasing the supplies to cater to large crowds.

JOSHUA - FOUNDER'S STORY

My name is Joshua, and I was born and raised in Kibera. I witnessed my community suffer from diseases like cholera, typhoid, high blood pressure, and even loss of lives due to inability to access healthy meals affordably. As an example of my own experience, I watched my father suffer from diabetes and high blood pressure until he died of complications from them. I have also witnessed my friends in the slum community suffer from cholera. These experiences caused me to think of ways to address the root causes of these issues. I started Nutrition Palace because I realized that most food kiosks in Kibera provide unhealthy, unhygienic food. The



"I WITNESSED MY COMMUNITY SUFFER FROM SO MANY DISEASES, & EVEN DEATH, DUE TO THE INABILITY TO ACCESS HEALTHY MEALS. NUTRITION PALACE ADDRESSES THE ROOT CAUSES OF THESE ISSUES."



Allan PORTABLEVOICES

OVERVIEW

PortableVoices is a pioneering audiobook company and podcast network that produces and distributes African digital audiobooks and spoken entertainment to inform, educate, and entertain. Among our target customers are blind and partially sighted persons. We founded the company in April 2016 and are based in Kibera.



HIGHLIGHTS

- **April 2016:** Started as a weekend project at Tunapanda Institute.
- **August 2016:** Accepted into the Somo Project Business Incubation Program.
- **October 2016:** Started pilot podcast series.
- **February 2017:** Launched first series of 4 podcasts.
- **August 2017:** Raised Ksh 265,000 in grant capital from two institutions.
- **October 2017:** Became a Nairobi finalist at SeedStars World Startup Competition.
- **December 2017:** Raised Ksh 100,000 from two angel investors.
- **February 2018:** Completed a 10-story audiobook.



"I BELIEVE THAT EASY ACCESS TO INFORMATION HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES. PORTABLEVOICES BRINGS AUDIOBOOKS & PODCASTS TO OUR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY."

ALLAN - FOUNDER'S STORY

My name is Allan, the Founder and CEO of PortableVoices. I am an entrepreneur with three years of experience teaching digital content development and entrepreneurship in various schools, including Tunapanda Institute in Kibera and Learning Lions in Turkana. I believe that technology and easy access to information has the power to change millions of lives, especially for those living in underserved communities.

SCALING PLAN

The Kenyan entertainment and media industry is a Ksh 217 billion business. Book publishing represents

18% of that market, and is growing rapidly because of technological advances. PortableVoices generates its revenues from four sources: (1) audiobook production (flat fees and royalty deals); (2) e-commerce commission fees paid from books sold; (3) sales of sponsorship packages for podcasts and branded shows; and (4) subscriptions to premium exclusive content.

This year, we are planning to grow our production scope by producing 100 audiobooks, 3 free podcasts, 50 spoken word recordings, 50 comedies, 50 poems, and 10 premium podcasts. This will allow us to launch PortableVoices Premium Subscriptions in November. We are seeking equity funding of Ksh 3.3 million to make investments in technology and website development, expand content production, and fund cash flow for the next eight months of operation.

OVERVIEW

ReAfric is a recycling company that collects waste materials such as leather boards from industries, discarded fabric from tailors, used vehicle tires, leather from carpenters, and old jeans. With these materials, we make durable quality footwear that is sold both locally and abroad. We work with young mothers and youths, training them to be skilled artisans who can produce shoes in order to generate sustainable income for themselves and their families.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **October 2016:** Joined Somo's Entrepreneurship Bootcamp.
- **June 2017:** Won Ksh 30,000 from the British Council Entrepreneurship program.
- **September 2017:** Started exporting to U.S.
- **November 2017:** Won Ksh 50,000 from Samasource investors.
- **February 2018:** Joined the African Entrepreneurship Award Network.
- **March 2018:** Entered iBizAfrica's incubator at Strathmore University.
- **April 2018:** Joined the Digital Opportunity Trust Business Journey.

JULIUS - FOUNDER'S STORY

My name is Julius, and I am the founder of ReAfric. I was born and raised in the Kibera slums, where I completed my primary, secondary, and college education. In college, I studied entrepreneurship and ICT (information communication technology). I consider myself to be a creative thinker, very passionate, open minded, and goal oriented. I love to solve problems that exist in slum

communities and turn my ideas into successful ventures. As a young business man, I pride myself on my high integrity, transparency in what I do, commitment to my work, and diligence. I value human dignity and respect personal values, and my driving force is my passion to create significant positive social impact in our slum communities.



SCALING PLAN

We want to develop our online shop and outlet facilities around Nairobi. We also wish to grow our market more in the U.S. through an outlet in San Francisco, California. Furthermore, we want to set up a full-fledged production facility in Kibera and begin to expand production to Mathare. We project this will create 20 job opportunities directly and impact over 100 people in total.

"I LOVE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS THAT EXIST IN OUR COMMUNITY. REAFRIC USES WASTE MATERIALS TO MAKE QUALITY FOOTWEAR, & WE TRAIN PEOPLE TO GENERATE THEIR OWN INCOME."



Lillian & Collins
YO-TOTO YOGURT

OVERVIEW

We started **Yo-Toto Yogurt** with the goal of providing healthy lunch and snack alternatives to the children of Kibera. The yogurt is made without preservatives and uses probiotic cultures and fruit-based natural flavours. It is rich in protein, calcium, vitamin B, potassium, and magnesium, which helps to improve both digestion and the immune system. Available in strawberry and vanilla, Yo-Toto Yogurt makes a perfect school snack or quick and healthy breakfast for working parents. Our company also makes made-to-order smoothies and fruit cups.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **December 2014:** Made first batch of yogurt for home use.
- **August 2016:** Accepted into the Somo Project Business Incubation Program.
- **February 2017:** Launched production.
- **July 2017:** Reached 100th client.
- **December 2017:** Sold yogurt in Dumawors, Bamba group and Human Needs project.
- **January 2018:** Started making smoothies and fruit cups.
- **January 2018:** Sold 1,000 liters of yogurt.
- **March 2018:** Started working with KIRDI to scale production through pasteurizers, as well as developing different forms of yogurt such as Greek and soy.
- **March 2018:** Launched first in-school programs.

LILLIAN & COLLINS - FOUNDERS' STORY

Our names are Lillian and Collins, and we began making yogurt for our children in 2014 due to the high price of commercial yogurt brands. Together we founded Yo-Toto, selling organic yogurt at affordable prices to families and schools in Nairobi.



"DUE TO THE HIGH PRICES OF COMMERCIAL BRANDS, WE BEGAN MAKING HEALTHY, NATURAL YOGURT FOR OUR CHILDREN. WE NOW SELL OUR ORGANIC YOGURT AT AFFORDABLE PRICES TO FAMILIES & SCHOOLS."

SCALING PLAN

We plan to test the fruit cups and smoothies in a wider market, primarily targeting offices around Nairobi that are accessible to Kibera (in order to minimize transportation costs). These efforts will be complemented by the capacity-building financing we are receiving at KIRDI, which will enable us to expand our sales and marketing base.





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