




Business Acceleration for Youth Project







Business Acceleration for Youth is a four-year innovative project funded by [USAID Malawi](#) and led by the [Alliance of Bioversity International](#) and the [International Center for Tropical Agriculture \(CIAT\)](#). Framed around a resilience-led sustainable strategy, the Activity aims to strengthen the resilience of youth and women-led enterprises including vulnerable households in Balaka, Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Machinga, Mangochi, Mulanje, Nsanje, Thyolo and Zomba through the delivery of Business Development Services creating growth-orientated, sustainable firms able to secure and effectively utilize investment.

Results of analysis of stories of change and lessons learned

Title of the story	What took place before the project intervention	Changes that took place during the project intervention	Reviewers' reasons (comments)	Lessons learnt
<p>Shaping Standard-Compliant Businesses through the Incubation Program</p> 	<p>This is the story of Trust Majamanda, a young woman who created porridge flour for her mother's health needs. Recognizing the potential to address malnutrition in her community, she turned porridge flour processing into a business. Due to unique ingredients, like biofortified orange maize and vanilla powder, the product gained popularity in Thyolo, Blantyre, and Chikwawa Districts. However, she had challenges hindering the expansion of her business, specifically lack of resources. Further, she experienced limited access to process soybeans from maize mill operators and shops refused to stock her products due to lack of regulatory compliance certification.</p>	<p>Through the project, she enrolled in the Incubation program in Thyolo, where she received training on the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) pre-certification requirements. Following this, she was awarded a grant of USD 2,500, which enabled her to pursue MBS certification and purchase essential equipment for her business, including a mini grinding machine, roaster, bag stitching machine, and sealing machine. These upgrades increased her production capacity to 250 kg of porridge flour per day.</p>	<p>Initially, the business was unregistered, lacked a business plan, had limited production capacity, and did not maintain proper financial records. Through project interventions, including training, coaching, and financial grants, Trust's enterprise was transformed, enabling her to meet demand and address community malnutrition with a high-quality product. Furthermore, her innovation, determination, and entrepreneurial spirit, combined with the project support, helped her enterprise overcome its initial challenges.</p>	<p>Availability of targeted support by means of training, access to finance and other related resources can help small businesses overcome initial hurdles and scale up their business operations.</p>

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<p>From Setback to Revival: How the Incubation Program Rejuvenated Ukhondo Products</p> 	<p>The story highlights Innocencia Mmodzi, a young woman who ventured into producing affordable soap and detergents business. The business addresses people's overdependence on imported soap and detergents in her area. She noted that these detergents and soap are expensive. Without any prior knowledge of soap or detergent making, she gained these skills through YouTube videos. She experimented with her products, introduced them to the local market in Zomba Matawale, and successfully made a name for herself. Before the business could fully take off in 2023, Cyclone Freddy affected her business greatly such that it came to a halt.</p>	<p>With hopes that her business could revive, she applied for the project incubation program. The trainings equipped her with entrepreneurial insights and the motivation to restart her business. She managed to develop a business plan that highlights her vision and she received a grant of USD 2,500. With the grant, she bought machinery, including a specialized mixer, a grinder and adequate raw materials. The grant has increased production and diversified her products such that new products have been introduced and are customer favourites. The business has also employed herself and two other people.</p>	<p>The story showcases the business transformation from a small, struggling enterprise mostly because of Cyclone Freddy to a growing and thriving venture, providing diverse, affordable and quality cleaning products to the community, and creating employment opportunities for herself and others. The Business acquired equipment and raw materials, introduced new products, improved its sales and marketing strategies.</p>	<p>Determination and passion are key in learning new skills.</p>
<p>Meating' the Demand: Stella's Butchery Dream Realised</p> 	<p>This is the story of a young woman, Stella Issa, who had a simple business idea: to operate a butchery at Goliati Trading Centre in Thyolo District. Before April 2024, the area had only one regularly operating butchery, which often struggled to meet the demand for meat. Recognizing the need for better access to quality meat, Stella decided to address this gap and turn her idea into reality.</p>	<p>With the technical support and grant she received from the project, her dream business became a reality. Laelan Butchery is now fully established, equipped with essential tools such as meat cutters, freezers, and meat processors. She can now add value to the meat by producing sausages and poultry products. The business has gained recognition and has received positive feedback from its customers.</p>	<p>Stella started with just an idea of opening a butchery, and she now owns a thriving business. She earns close to MWK80,000 daily, with sales volumes increasing regularly. The business has expanded to offer a variety of meat products and has created employment opportunities by hiring additional staff to support its operations.</p>	<p>The availability of targeted support, such as training and access to financial resources, can help youth with viable ideas turn them into reality.</p> <p>Empowering youth with business skills and financial support fosters job creation for their peers.</p>

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<p>Vunica Farms: From a Business Idea to Reality</p> 	<p>This is the story of Gloria Goba, a young woman with a dream of establishing Vunica Poultry Farm in the Zomba Urban area. However, a lack of financial resources initially made her dream seem unattainable.</p>	<p>Participation in the project's incubation program equipped Gloria with skills in design thinking, financial management, and marketing. She registered her business and developed a solid business plan. With a grant of USD 2,500, she purchased 300-day-old chicks and essential supplies, employing two workers to focus on egg production. Today, Vunica Farms collects 255 eggs daily, selling them to households and exploring broader market opportunities. Additionally, Gloria maximizes her business's potential by selling chicken manure to farmers.</p>	<p>The real change lies in the transformation of Gloria's dream into reality. What began as a simple business idea has grown into a thriving poultry farming business that not only provides employment opportunities but also delivers valuable products to her community.</p>	<p>The availability of targeted support, such as training and access to financial resources, can help youth with viable ideas turn them into reality.</p>
<p>Shaping Early Stage Business Operations through the Business Acceleration for Youth Project</p> 	<p>The story revolves around Wongani Ngoma, a young man who works as a consumer electronics repair technician, specializing in phones, computers, and televisions. He runs his business in Chikwawa District. However, he operated without maintaining any financial records, which significantly hampered his ability to evaluate the profitability of his business. Despite having a steady stream of customers, the business remained stagnant because of poor financial management. He had a habit of spending any income he earned immediately, relying on the hope of making more the following day.</p>	<p>After enrolling in the project, he participated in comprehensive training, coaching, and mentorship sessions. Through these, he gained essential entrepreneurship skills, including financial management, design thinking, climate-smart business practices, and marketing strategies. This knowledge enabled him to diversify his business by adding the sale of accessories such as phone and laptop chargers, earphones, and power banks. He also revamped the layout of his shop to create a more appealing space for customers. This diversification expanded the range of products available, improving customer satisfaction and enhancing the overall appeal of his business. Additionally, he adopted the "Cash Book" app, which allowed him to effectively manage his finances, track monthly profits, control expenses, and monitor business growth.</p>	<p>The business operations became more structured and financially managed, enabling him to gain a clearer understanding of his business's profitability and growth potential. This organized approach, combined with the new skills he acquired, laid a solid foundation for sustainable business development and long-term growth.</p>	<p>Targeted support through training, access to finance, and other resources can empower small businesses to overcome initial challenges and scale up their operations effectively.</p>

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<p>Adapting Dreams: How Floodgate Tours Expanded Beyond Tourism</p> 	<p>This is the story of Yvonne Masikini Banda, a young woman who founded Floodgate Tours, a business she launched in 2014 with the ambitious goal of revolutionizing the tourism landscape in Zomba City. Her vision extended beyond providing unique and professional tour services; she aimed to create a business that would also generate positive environmental and social impacts within the city. However, the journey was far from smooth. For eight years, Floodgate Tours struggled to gain traction, grappling with numerous challenges in both its establishment and daily operations.</p>	<p>The project offered comprehensive training sessions that encouraged Floodgate Tours to critically evaluate its business model and envision its path to success. Through the incubation program, Yvonne gained invaluable knowledge, including how to develop a business plan, make financial projections, and ensure the sustainability of her business. With the grant she received, Yvonne strategically invested in an espresso machine and other catering equipment—an ideal addition given Zomba's cool climate and the growing demand for coffee among residents and tourists.</p>	<p>Floodgate Tours underwent a remarkable transformation, evolving from a struggling business into a thriving enterprise. This growth resulted in a 70% increase in profits, diversified service offerings, job creation, and a positive impact on the local community. The success of Floodgate Tours not only highlights its financial achievements but also its contribution to sustainable development and community well-being in Zomba City.</p>	<p>Targeted support through training, access to finance, and related resources plays a crucial role in helping small businesses overcome initial challenges and successfully scale up their operations.</p>
<p>Laying Foundations for Startups Success with the Incubation Program</p> 	<p>This is the story of Alinafe Mtukula, a young man from Machinga District. Before joining the project, he processed castor oil and packaged it in any available bottles, without proper branding. He sold his products without maintaining records of sales or expenses, which hindered his ability to manage and grow his business effectively.</p>	<p>The project provided Alinafe with business training, mentorship, and a grant, which helped him enhance his business skills. Mentors from SMEDI identified key areas for improvement, guiding him on branding, sustainable raw materials, and record-keeping. Now, Alinafe professionally packages and brands his castor oil, making it more attractive and valuable. He also maintains proper financial records. Additionally, he has cultivated castor trees on a 2-hectare plot and expects a harvest in four months. With the project grant of USD 2,500, he plans to purchase an oil extractor to scale up production and expand castor and moringa cultivation through contract farming, ensuring a steady supply of raw materials.</p>	<p>Alinafe's business has transformed from a small, informal operation into a formalized and professional enterprise. This transformation includes improved packaging, branding, and enhanced business management practices, positioning his venture for sustainable growth and greater market appeal.</p>	<p>Targeted support, such as training, access to finance, and related resources, can empower small businesses to overcome initial challenges and scale up their operations effectively.</p>

Read more about the project here: <https://allbiociat.org/4gy3d40>

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