



Lucy



Tafadwza

**Entrepreneur: Lucy Mbota, 31**

Lucy lives with her mum and daughter in Kawale, Malawi and runs Lucy's Best Wedding Services, an events management business, hiring out chairs and wedding dresses as well as decorations for venues. She helps people to celebrate engagements and other special occasions as well as weddings. She started her business in 2011 when she got a loan from the National Association of Business Women (NABW) and found out about Grow at the same time.

**Consultant: Tafadwza Chakaodza, 23**

Zimbabwean Tafa graduated with a first-class honours degree in International Business with Japanese from Regent's University and was involved with African-based charities throughout his studies. He started Innovate For Africa and partnered with four Kenyan universities to help entrepreneurial students so when he found out about Grow, it seemed a natural extension to his work.

**Business challenges and objectives of the project**

Initially, Lucy had good ideas but was lacking the business skills and forward planning needed to ensure her business was a success. Tafa initially spent time getting to know Lucy and focusing on their relationship and, for the first three weeks, they didn't discuss business.

Tafa is originally from Zimbabwe so didn't have any concerns about cultural differences and there were real synergies between the Grow mentoring role and some

of his previous work so he relished the opportunity to help Lucy. They initially had some difficulty with timekeeping and deadlines so made sure they focused on timelines initially to overcome this obstacle early.

Once they had formed a friendship, Tafa and Lucy discussed some business basics such as working out a vision or mission statement, building up the layers of the business in terms of financial records and looking at ways to grow the business further.

They kept their focus simple to avoid over-complicating things and therefore ensured Tafa's advice was relevant to a micro-business such as Lucy's.

**The results**

Lucy's vision is to be a market leader in Malawi's wedding decoration sector.

Tafa helped her to think more laterally about her business and open dialogues with fellow entrepreneurs operating in a similar market. She began to network with photographers, caterers and others who could join forces with her to create a service for larger events.

**The Impact on Lucy**

*"I really enjoyed working with Tafa because I learned things I hadn't even thought of before. Things like networking and business development which will help to grow my business."*

**The Impact on Tafadwza**

*"Ultimately I want to help empower Africa. It was a great honour to be a part of Grow Movement and it taught me that I needed to tailor my advice. With such micro-businesses, there's no one-size-fits-all advice that can be given. I enjoyed connecting at this level and getting to know Lucy and her business really well."*

June 2015

