



Chikondi



Tope

Entrepreneur: Chikondi Mthethe, 33

A graduate with a diploma in marketing, Chikondi was in employment for 11 years before leaving to pursue her entrepreneurship dream. With her savings, she built a three-bedroomed house which she turned into a guest house. Chinyonga guesthouse was born.

Consultant: Tope Osho, 33

A law graduate and corporate relationship manager with over three years' experience in the charity sector, Tope was drawn to the opportunity to work with entrepreneurs in the developing world. He saw it as great way to give back and to develop himself personally and professionally.

Business challenges and objectives of the project

Chikondi needed help developing a business plan to enable her apply for bank loan to expand the business by building a second house. She also wanted to improve her marketing skills to ensure that she would have a steady stream of customers to fill up the current and planned capacity.

The results

One of the tasks Tope and Chikondi worked on was setting up a simple website to give her guesthouse an online presence and open it up to the international market. He also introduced her to online booking platforms such as Airbnb and Hosteling International. Prior to this Chikondi said she had considered only the local market since she hadn't known how to get

foreign visitors to find her. In addition to the online initiatives, following a session with Tope, she came up with the idea to distribute fliers to local taxi drivers, offering them a commission on referrals. The impact has been evident and Chikondi has been operating at full capacity for the past six months.

While working on the financial part of the business plan, Chikondi learnt about financial and cash flow management. This knowledge, Chikondi says, has helped her manage her finances better. As a result she decided not to take out an expensive loan but to finance the expansion of her guesthouse using savings from her profits. Two rooms have already been added to the existing house and construction is underway on the second house.

The Impact on Chikondi

"I am not the same person anymore. I am much more knowledgeable, I analyse every decision. I didn't expect my business to grow so much. I encourage other entrepreneurs to join the programme and to take the sessions seriously. Do not be too shy to admit it when you don't know something. You should tell your VC the truth so that they can help you."

The Impact on Tope

"It was a great experience that broadened my horizons. Professionally I developed my problem-solving skills and learnt different ways to approach issues. I also challenged myself in terms of thinking creatively. To other VCs I would say, do your research and build a relationship with your entrepreneur. The Grow team is always there to support you through any difficulties."

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