

## MENTORpreneur Zambia

### Interview with Mentee cohort 2022

#### 1. Who are you and what is the story of your business?



My name is **Margaret Mwanza Nkole**, a motivated **business entrepreneur**, with 2+ years of experience as the **Founder and Executive Director of Aswabi Children's Academy**.

At Aswabi Children's Academy, I **direct all organizational operations, policies, and objectives to maximize productivity and returns**. Besides my work with Aswabi, since 2019 I **lead digital business growth of non-traditional and emerging markets for MTN Lusaka, Zambia**, a multi-national telecommunications company as Head Channels Development and Management. I'm **highly skilled in sales and customer care**. My primary source of income is from MTN. I ventured into business out of passion.

## The Business – Aswabib Children’s Academy



Aswabi Children’s Academy serves the **Kabanana catchment area in Zambia**. Kabanana is a community in Mandevu ward, Lusaka Province. The community is located more than 10km from Lusaka city center. More than 30,000 people call Kabanana home. The area is under-developed with few basic facilities due to its geographic location, lack of resources, and high poverty rate. As a result, there is an **urgent need for formal learning support**. Aswabi Children’s Academy operates in a densely populated area with low-income families, with **little or no access to public schools**, I help **unlock the children’s potential** and help them understand that **education is an equalizer**.

**Aswabi Children Academy was duly registered in 2020**, under the Office of the Registrar of Societies. I achieved **enrollment of 56 pupils** between the ages of 1 – 13 for the 2020 school calendar and **increased enrollment to 100 pupils in 2021** through a four-point strategy consisting of **service streamlining, increased pass rate, outreach, and marketing**. Currently, the Academy has a **steady enrollment of 100 pupils**. Aswabi Children’s Academy’s mandate is to “Give Back” to the community. Because of my passion, I have been **taking in children who are unable to pay school fees** of \$13 per month.

I am a relentless optimist who believes **there is no failure, only feedback because nothing is impossible with an educated mind**. My hope is that the **mentor relationship will help me overcome the challenges I face** in leading and growing Aswabi.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/aswabca/>

## 2. How is the relationship with your mentor unfolding?

My **relationship with my mentor**, Dr. Mwansa Chabala, lecturer at Copperbelt University and business entrepreneur is **developing well**, and I have gained **valuable advice**. His willingness to share his own business experiences is playing a significant role in **helping to shape me as a professional**. I have realized that **I have a responsibility for seeking out opportunities and experiences to enhance my learning**. As a result, I **communicate regularly with my mentor to review my progress**. I have learned the value of **tolerance, patience, and trust in business** from him. My mentor has noticed that I am passionate about my business.

My mentor relationships with Dr. Chabala formed naturally and as **my business career is progressing**, I have begun to understand **how much of an impact my mentor has on me**. Dr. Mwansa Chabala has been there **to listen, offer advice, and help in any way he can**. For example, he made me realize that if I am to run a business, I need to strictly divide the enrollment of students and the management of my finances. My **personal funds should not be mixed with business funds**. I should be disciplined enough to ensure that the **school business must sustain itself**. I am currently working on finding ways to **increase funding** by searching for business partners and **grant opportunities to finance the business** and allow the school to **reach its full potential** and provide **quality education**. I have also learned that it's equally important that I give back to my mentor, by **taking the opportunity to be mentored seriously** and doing all I can to apply what I am learning.

### 3. How did you and your business benefit from the MENTORpreneur Zambia Programme?

Early in my business career, I didn't thoroughly understand what mentorship was or how it worked. I am lucky to have been given an opportunity to participate in the MENTORpreneur Zambia Programme and **gain a valuable mentorship** with Dr Mwansa Chabala. **I am learning leadership and management skills that I can apply** both at the school and at Channels Development and Management. The program has also **opened the doors to meet other entrepreneurs** and **provides a network of businesswomen and men from different places**. For example, I also met the Women's Entrepreneurship Access Center (WEAC) Executive Director, Mrs. Nambula Kachumi, who **shared insights** about her organization and the opportunities offered by the Academy for Women Entrepreneurship, providing business workshops and courses. I was encouraged to **research** and **attend workshop opportunities within the business environment**. **Through networking** with the WEAC Executive Director, **I am enrolled in a dream builder course**.

Is there anything else you would like to share?



I see that this program has the potential to continue to **connect my business to international businesswomen and men** with whom I can **network**. Attending this program has **enlightened me to focus on specific challenges** that Aswabi Children's Academy faces and **find solutions** with a valued mentor as well as to **secure opportunities for networking, potential funding, partnerships** and to **dream big**.