

2 MyNetWork

FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN LEADERSHIP

More female university students are stepping into the roles of student leaders **P.4&5**



I paved the way for Diamond Platnumz and East African artistes to cash in

Jackson Ngechu Makini, also known as Prezzo, a pioneer in the Kenyan music scene, has significantly influenced the industry over the years.

In this interview, the former Big Brother Africa housemate speaks about his journey, his contributions to the growth of the music industry, and his future aspirations, including a move into politics.

Prezzo discusses his current projects, including the launch of a media house with dedicated studios for podcasts and music recording, as well as an upcoming EP set for release in November.

He reflects on the evolution of the Kenyan music industry and his commitment to supporting the younger generation of artistes.

1 What are you currently working on?

I recently opened a media house which has Studio A and Studio B. Studio A is for podcasts and everything else, and Studio B is for recording music.

I am also working on an EP which should be out by mid-to-late November. I've featured a couple of artistes whom I'm not going to unveil right now. It's a bit early, but then it's one hell of an EP.

I'm in high spirits because my first song "Ma Fans" just turned 20 years old.

My main focus right now, is to elevate the younger generation. I have started doing so by even working with my younger brother; he is 20 years old. He's the one who's run-

ning the studio and scouting for talent. I want to give young talents a platform where they can showcase their talent.

The industry has greatly evolved so much since 2004, when I came into the industry. At that time, there was no industry, you know? My main missions were two things: to bring the show into the business, and to open up the doors— and leave them open— so that the next generation can come and do their thing. Then, they can open up the doors for the next generation and so on.

Right now, artistes can make a living out of music.

2 You are the pioneers of reality TV shows in Kenya. Would you still feature in any?

To be honest with you, right now, I wouldn't do a reality show.

Like I said before, my mission was to open up the doors and to leave them open for the next generation. I gave Diamond and other East African artistes that platform to also benefit.

So, my pride and joy come from seeing artistes like Diamond Platnumz and the rest doing shows abroad and making a living out of music and reality shows. When I started music, there was no industry in East Africa as a whole.

But then I came, I brought the show into the business, and I have receipts for that.

When we started doing music, the first thing people thought about you was drugs, women, and alcohol. But in all honesty, music molded me to become a better person. I have travelled and met very great people around the globe.



PREZZO

T5

3 How do you approach creating your sound, and how do you capture attention with your genre-blending music?

You can be the best rapper but you have no charisma, you have no swag, you have no style.

So, once you don't have charisma, then it's not all about the talent and everything. Like, some things you have to be born with.

I don't go with the trends and you would never find me on an Amapiano kind of track.

I do my thing and put it out there, and whoever is going to feel it, whoever is not going to feel it, can jam to it.

A lot of people put themselves in a situation where they pressure themselves, because they're trying to keep up with the trends. But then, if you just stick to your originality, everything just keeps sailing smoothly.

My joy comes from seeing an industry that we built and Prezzo's flame is still there. Because all said and done, and contrary to what people might think of me, I know I have a good heart.

4 Why is it important for you to give people their flowers while they're still alive?

Because I did the calculations and realised that it costs 0.00 shillings to give somebody their flowers.

And once you have jealousy and envy inside you, then it's going to be very hard for you to prosper. Because you're wasting so much energy and time wondering, "Why is it that so-and-so has this and I don't have this? Why is it that they have that and I don't have that?" When I see somebody who's elevating, I use that as motivation.

And then there's a saying that says "the sun shines on every dog's a**". So, at the end of the day, the universe works in mysterious ways.

5 You've expressed a desire to join politics. Who has inspired you on this path?

I'm eager to enter politics, and I've even founded my party called 'Chama Mabadiliko Busara.' My message to Gen Z is that they have nothing to worry about in 2027, just get your voter cards and together we can transform this nation. The last time I ventured into politics, I didn't have the right team, but I've learned from that experience.

My political role model is the late Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi. Some nations need a firm hand to maintain order, and Moi, in a way, was a dictator who made things run smoothly. It's like having a strict parent, not because they hate you, but because they care deeply about your well-being.

Hotspot



Get ready for a thrilling musical experience as Jamaican superstar Shenseea makes her highly anticipated debut in Kenya! She will perform at Raha Fest on December 31, 2024, at Uhuru Gardens. The concert was confirmed by the Raha Fest team on August 8. Known for her hit tracks like "Hit & Run," "Lick," "Pon Mi," "Bad Alone," and "Be Good", Shenseea is set to bring her energetic performance and dynamic presence to the stage. She will share the spotlight

with Tanzanian icons Alikiba and Marioo, adding to the star-studded lineup of the December Edition of Raha Fest. This performance marks Shenseea's first appearance in Kenya following the last-minute cancellation of her previously announced concert. Tickets are available now, ranging from Sh6,000 for regular access to Sh30,000 for VVIP, covering both days of the festival.

PODCAST REVIEW

'The Friendly Troll' is a podcast offering unique insights into the global tech industry from the Global South's perspective. The hosts' aim is to enlighten listeners and explore fascinating topics with a fresh viewpoint. Produced by CIPIT (Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law) at Strathmore Law School in Nairobi, Kenya, the podcast has been running since 2019.

They delve into subjects such as the impact of the coronavirus on student innovations and the implications for Intellectual Property Rights. The podcast also addresses crucial questions like: What rights do students have to their creations? And how can we safeguard their innovations during uncertain times, such as a global pandemic?

The Hustler



Safara gets a very late night hustle and bets on football games

BY MIKE SAFARA

You'll remember from last week that I hadn't paid my rent for August three and a half weeks later, and I had only been given by the landlady till end-of-week to do so.

Sure enough, come Saturday morning at around nine, my buzzer rang very loudly.

I had lowered the TV set to nil volume since seven, and sat quiet as a mouse.

I could picture the caretaker, Doug, on the other side of the door, dressed in his weekend wear (blue overalls, with a Stars-and-Stripes t-shirt inside), the frown in the middle of his forehead getting deeper as fat fingers pressed the bell knob.

"I know you are in there, Mike!"

I pictured the powerful anti-burglary Mindy padlock in his hand, how he would ask me to step out of the door once I answered it, then swiftly lock me out of my life.

But if he knew I was in there, he wouldn't dare to lock me inside, would he?

"You can't lock me in, Dawg," I texted him on WhatsApp.

"That is false imprisonment. Against the Law."

I could hear his sharp intake of breath as he read my message, then a bark that passed for a laugh.

"Unajifanya wakili, Mike?" he said. "Sawa! Monday morning, I will come with a master key and remove you by force. Uko na bahati sana I don't have it now."

Left unsaid was that the following day was Sunday, a day when no evic-

tions can be done, per the Law.

So, my bravado had bought me a day or two to raise rent and a little 'me' money.

But having been turned down for loans by men and Apps, money from where?

"Your network is your net-worth!"

I raised the volume on my TV as I thought of a solution.

Quest, in a program for his ad, was saying, "If you can stand with the bears and run with the wolves, then Wall Street and all that is in it, will be your friend."

I had run out of money, and had no real friends to tap for some, only hustlers.

Maybe because of Quest crying 'wolf', I thought of Michael Fossel, with his long lupine face, and my fingers found themselves calling his number.

"Hello?" he said.

"Fossel, I need half the money by 6am, Beijing time, before I begin," I said, with Dawg on my mind

Mike Safara



Clearly, I was the one person in the world he had never expected to hear from again – after all, he had stuck me with a hotel bill in Lamu which I ran away from.

And had been peeved that the 'yellow' lass Karen Li had chosen the broke black hustler (me) over his loaded and condescending smug *mzungu* self.

"I need work."

"You ran out on your tab, Bwana Safara, and stuck Karen and I with it."

He sounded very satisfied to have me at his mercy.

"You left me no choice, namesake."

My pride kicked in, "You suck!"

"I suck?" Mike Fossel said.

"Yes, you do," I went for broke, no pun intended.

"You are the one with the gold, leader; but you *stickin'* the bill with the broke n****. . . I literally sang this, like in the Kanye West song, and caught Fossel's shocked gasp at this political incorrectness, even as I guilt tripped him *kiasi*.

"She gives me money (Karen Li)," I sang on, "when I escape with bills. . ."

That cracked the white man up completely, and by the time he stopped laughing, he'd handed me the names of five Chinese clients who 'can't' afford him."

"You left me no choice, namesake."

That cracked the white man up completely, and by the time he stopped laughing, he'd handed me the names of five Chinese clients who 'can't' afford him."

It was a simple virtual gig.

Every morning, Monday to Friday, for ten days in a row, I would hold a one-hour Zoom meeting with five men – Li Bai, Bai Jin, Lu You, Du Fu and Su Shi – and tutor them on "online Live selling"; "Something you know how to do well," Fossel said.

"The money isn't much," he added. "A thousand yuan per man for the ten

morns."

I checked the exchange rate. That was Sh18,000 per *Chinaman*, or 90K total.

"So, namesake," I asked. "What time in the morning will the Zoom be?"

"Six till 7am."

"That's cool!"

"Beijing time," he clarified.

"D*mn!" That would mean one to 2am, Nairobi time, and being a 10pm to 6am sleeper; that would mean waking up in godforsaken hours, when I was meant to be dead-bang in the middle of my sleep.

"Fossel, I need half the money by 6am, Beijing time, before I begin," I said, with *Dawg* on my mind.

"Done!" he promised. Then asked this: "If you don't mind, Mike, did you ever get. . ."

He paused, and for a moment I was tempted to stick it in his craw.

"With Karen Li? *Nuuuhhh*, we met in Nairobi, but her paying for my bill had made me lose face. . ."

Not exactly the truth, but I needed to keep his ego happy.

"No worry," the man said magnanimously. "It's such a pity that women don't see through our wallets into our souls. Look at you, for example – fairly okay-looking guy, well-toned, funny, smooth talker, with an eye for the ladies and the hustle. And yet your women flock to guys like me, merely because of our bank accounts."

"I bet you don't get women like that in the West."

It was in a good mood on Sunday that I went to catch the Chelsea VS Wolverhampton game at the local, where I met a Manchester United hater who, eyeing my t-shirt, smirked: "*Cheo Sea reo watakurwa na Woof! Kwanza game iko kwa nyoba ya Woof, Morrie Knows. . .*" (Today, Chelsea will be mauled by the Wolves, especially since Wolves are playing at their home stadium; Molineaux).

"I'll bet you four grand to your two that we destroy Wolves today!"

The Blues ran out a 6-2 killing of the Wolves, Madueke scoring a hat-trick.

"*Sasa kuja next Sunday tu-bet da-bro on Man You fusses River Pool (Liverpool)!*"

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Movie Review

BY MICHAEL OCHIENG

Trigger Warning
Where: Netflix
Genre: Action, Thriller

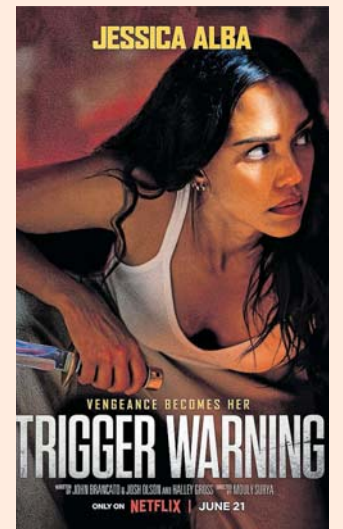
An action-packed thriller, *Trigger Warning* keeps viewers on the edge of their seats. Jessica Alba shines as Special Forces commando Parker, who returns to her hometown after her father's sudden death. As she investigates the truth behind his demise, Parker faces a violent gang and navigates a web of deception. The film's political undertones add depth, and Alba's performance channels John Wick's vengeance with a fresh twist.

Jessica Alba's portrayal of Parker is both fierce and vulnerable, making her a compelling lead. The film's plot unfolds like a tightly wound coil, revealing shocking secrets and unexpected alliances. As Parker confronts a ruthless gang, the tension escalates, and the stakes become personal. The cinematography captures gritty urban landscapes, enhancing the gritty realism of the story. While some plot twists may be predictable, the adrenaline-fueled action sequences and Alba's charismatic performance make *Trigger Warning* a must-watch for action aficionados.

Alba commands the screen as Parker, a skilled operative with a haunted past. When her father is murdered, Parker returns to her hometown, determined to uncover the truth. The film weaves together suspense, betrayal, and high-octane combat scenes. Alba's physicality and emotional depth elevate the character, while the supporting cast adds layers to the narrative. Although the plot occasionally relies on familiar tropes, the film's relentless pace and Alba's magnetic presence keep viewers engaged. *Trigger Warning* is a pulse-pounding ride that leaves audiences craving more.

Trigger Warning bursts onto the screen with heart-pounding intensity. The film's gritty realism and intricate plot draw viewers into a world of danger and deception. As she seeks justice for her father's murder, Parker faces formidable foes and uncovers shocking secrets.

The action sequences are visceral, and Alba's commitment to the role is palpable. Its relentless momentum and Alba's magnetic presence make it a thrilling watch. While not groundbreaking, the film delivers solid entertainment for action enthusiasts.





The new era of university governance

Women have been the heads of different institutions in Kenya over the years. However, in the governance spaces in the country, for a long time only a few would make it to the very top.

With the sealing broken over recent years, now women are treading into leadership positions from as early as campus.

BY MICHAEL OCHIENG

Once male-dominated landscape, leadership now bears the unforgettable marks of female pioneers who wield their influence with grace and determination.

Of the remarkable women who have etched their names into the records of Kenyan history, Martha Karua, the resolute party leader of the National Rainbow Coalition, stands tall, as her vision transcends mere politics. Lady Justice Martha Koome, the first-ever female Chief Justice of Kenya, presides over the legal compass of the nation. Her unwavering commitment to justice and equality has inspired generations of law students. Not forgetting Faith Mony Odhiambo, the Chairperson of the Law Society of Kenya (LSK), a force to be reckoned with, urging young minds to embrace advocacy and uphold the rule of law. And then there's Dorcas Agik Oduor, the first female Attorney General of Kenya, whose legal acumen bridges the gap between theory and practice.

Remarkable women are also redefining university governance, infusing it with purpose, compassion, and a commitment to excellence. My Network speaks to four student council leaders from different universities exploring a transformative tale that goes beyond the confines of traditional governance.

Masai Naomi Chebet, 21

Kenya Methodist University Students Association President, (KeMUSA).

I believe women have always played a role in leadership, even in the past. However, when it came to political leadership, our voices were often muted. Even today, there are barriers we're trying to overcome. It's fascinating, you'd think we've evolved and modernised; women are now accepted as leaders. It is a significant milestone, but some still question it.

Initially, I was in the council from March 2023 serving as the sports, clubs and entertainment secretary. Then on March 10, 2024 I was elected the KeMUSA president. My primary goal as the president is to deliver. If I don't, it won't just be seen as an individual failure, it reflects on all women in leadership.

As a sports secretary, I worked hard and accomplished tasks such as renovation of our volleyball and netball court, and also pushed the motion of having a tennis court—which I saw through to the final stage of completion. Balancing responsibilities and delivering effectively sets one apart as an able leader.

When it comes to planning, I've noticed that women often excel. Whether it's organising events or shaping policies that touch on emotions, we tend to think ahead and consider the human impact. Some might view

emotions as a weakness, but there's strength in empathetic decision-making. Understanding how policies affect people in their unique situations is an advantage that women in policymaking bring to the table.

I wholeheartedly agree with the example we're setting. When you look at it, men and women aren't fundamentally different, but when it comes to thinking and using our minds, we're on equal ground. So, just like men, women should be given opportunities. However, I hold a slightly different perspective from some. I don't believe in handing out positions solely based on gender. Instead, let's compete, women against men, for those roles. It's essential to earn our place.

Dealing with men or others who haven't witnessed women succeed before can be quite challenging. If I, as a woman, were to wear a nice Rolex or seek campaign funding, it might be attributed to having a spon-

sor; simply because I'm a girl. This bias exists even in our national politics. When we criticise male leaders for their shortcomings, we focus on what they haven't accomplished. But for women leaders it's different. We're scrutinised, "Who are they associated with? What's their social life like? Have they been seen with any men recently?" It all circles back to being female in this space. Navigating leadership as a woman is a delicate balancing act. When a male leader falls short, it's often seen as an individual failing. But for us women, any slip-up can be attributed to our gender. It's a high-stake game.

There has been a discussion around women's representation, especially in county positions. Some argue that women already have more representation, thanks to specific seats designated for them. But here's my take, favouring anyone based on gender implies weakness, and that's not the case. We don't need positions reserved just because someone is a woman. Recognition and empowerment matter more. Let's compete, strive, and create opportunities for ourselves.

Balancing everything I'm involved in isn't easy, but I've learnt a few tricks. When it's time to focus, I set timers and create dedicated blocks for specific tasks. Sometimes, I even lock myself in my office to ensure uninterrupted reading or work. As a leader, I've realised that I don't have to do everything alone. I have a team. Organising tasks allows me to separate my time effectively. Whether it's diving into books or helping fellow students, organising well makes it possible to handle everything.

Jesse Saruni, 31

President of Kenya University Students Organization, (KUSO).

The Kenya University Student Organisation includes all students and student leaders across the country. We serve as an umbrella body for the entire student community. Our activities involve discussing and sharing policies, ideas, and other relevant matters that impact students nationwide. We have representatives from both public and private universities.

Throughout history, there have been significant barriers preventing female students and leaders from reaching key political positions. These obstacles included traditional gender roles assigned to women and limited opportunities for capacity building and mentorship. Additionally, physical well-being played a role, as men tend to be more aggressive and energetic. Our national politics sometimes involves questionable activities, including interactions with unruly individuals.

In recent times, I've noticed a positive trend, more women are reaching key positions. I attribute this to three factors. First, our Kenyan constitution clearly emphasises gender representation. It ensures that government positions, including those in parliament and other institutions, have equal participation from both men and women. Secondly, deliberate efforts by female empowerment organisations have played a crucial role. Over the years, these organisations have motivated, empowered, and encouraged women to take up leadership roles. Thirdly, as a student leader, I've also seen the impact of the Universities Act of 2012. This act introduced a delegate system for elections, replacing the universal voting. By doing so, it removed barriers, including violence, that hindered women's participation. Thanks to this system, we witnessed the first female university president at The University of Nairobi, Ann Mwangi Mvurya, elected in 2019. The new act is a significant step toward enabling women to ascend to key positions.

I share the belief that no one should face discrimination based on gender. During my

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Jesse Saruni



Jesse Saruni, 31, is the president of Kenya University Students Organisation, pursuing International Relations at The University of Nairobi. PHOTO | POOL



When it comes to planning, I've noticed that women often excel

Masai Naomi Chebet



Masai Naomi Chebet, 21, is the president of Kenya Methodist University Students Association, pursuing Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery. PHOTO | POOL



Dibora Zainab Hirbo, 21.

Vice President of University of Nairobi Student Association, (UNSA).

My leadership journey started when I was in primary school. I served as the environmental prefect and later, in high school, I held the position of students' academic secretary. Now at university, I'm the vice president of the student's association, a path I'm truly passionate about.

In my experience at the University of Nairobi, female leadership is well-received. We've had two capable female presidents and even female governors. It's heartening to see that educated and informed individuals are increasingly embracing female leadership. The impact of female leaders on policy decisions and governance is primarily through advocacy. Female leaders often amplify the voices on various issues and concerns raised in our society, and the country as a whole. Their influence extends beyond mere representation, it shapes policies and drives positive change.

Coming from Marsabit County, where female leadership faces significant challenges, I've learnt that it's all about believing in yourself and having the courage to overcome obstacles. Unfortunately, in my hometown, female leadership isn't widely embraced. We've never had a female member of Parliament in Marsabit County, the only position available for women is the one designated for them as Women Representatives. However, outside my community things are different. A larger percentage of Kenyans are open to female leadership. It's an ongoing struggle, and I remain positive to breaking the barriers in Marsabit County.

Drawing from my own experiences, one significant obstacle in female leadership is the prevalence of stereotypes. Even when we have valuable ideas or solutions that could benefit our nation, some men remain closed-minded. They dismiss our contributions without giving us a fair chance. Female leaders often seek mentorship and guidance. However, some politicians misuse this opportunity, they expect something in return; whether it's personal favours or compromises. As students, we have limited resources to offer, and sometimes the cost of mentorship

outweighs the benefits. Unfortunately, this situation leads many promising female leaders to drop out of politics. It's disheartening because mentorship is crucial, but the demands placed upon us can be overwhelming. We need a more supportive environment that recognises the value of mentorship without imposing unrealistic expectations.

I'm deeply passionate about national politics, especially in Marsabit County, because I aspire to be a catalyst for change—especially for women. My goal is to encourage more women to step into leadership positions. It's not just about showing them the way, it's about emphasising our capabilities and urging decision-makers to give us equal opportunities. By doing so, we can demonstrate that equity and equality matter in our community. As a woman from a marginalised background, I believe we deserve a meaningful role in governing our country. This belief is what drives me to actively participate in politics.

Honourable Millie Odhiambo, Member of Parliament for Mbita Constituency truly stands out to me. She's incredibly bold and brave, fearlessly expressing her thoughts. What I admire most about her is how she advocates passionately and amplifies the voices of women in Parliament. Her inspiring message to young girls encourages them to step up, take positions, and be brave. She's a shining example of courage.

Lynn Achieng 20,

Vice President of the Co-operative University of Kenya Students Union (CUKSU)

My leadership journey stands apart from the typical narratives you might encounter. Unlike those who draw inspiration from well-known politicians or established figures, my path unfolded in a more unexpected way. It wasn't a conscious decision, leadership seemed to find me. Back in high school, I unexpectedly became the student council leader. My name was suggested because of the leadership traits I had, and that is how I ended up being elected. Similarly, at the university, I never served as a delegate or participated in student council governance, my



friends noticed leadership qualities in me and encouraged me to run for the position. I vied as the vice presidential candidate and luckily I secured the position at first attempt. At first, I hesitated, becoming a vice president felt like an unsettling challenge. However, I decided to take it. Campaigning wasn't easy, but I pulled through. The Co-operative University of Kenya CUKSU recognised my vision and elected me as their vice president. My manifestos, among them being the establishing of alumni relationships and links to help students acquire internship programs, resonated with my fellow students and I embrace the responsibilities given to me, and handle them with determination.

Being a young leader, it's essential to recognise that despite my age, I am the one they look up to. Whether I'm leading master's students or someone older, I strive to balance humility and assertiveness. Sometimes I need to be a listener and other times I must take charge, it all depends on the situation. Ultimately, it's about trusting the process and believing that I can make a positive impact. The dominance in political leadership by men motivates me. I believe women should also rise to those positions.

I've researched on the history of Co-operative University since it got a chatter, even when it was a college, there has never been a female president. Surprisingly, females dominate at being the vice presidents. My desire is to break that cycle; I want to be the first female student president at the university. I'm determined to secure the position. People are accustomed to male presidents and female vice presidents. It is a cultural norm that needs to change.

While it's true that we can learn from others, like observing their confidence, posture, or communication style, I believe in forging our unique paths. In my own experience, working alongside male leaders has taught me valuable lessons. I've learned to adapt, collaborate, and find common grounds. Nevertheless, it's not about imitating someone else's leadership journey, it's about finding our own way. I strive to create my own authentic approach to leadership.

As a young leader, I faced immense pressure. I had to stretch financially during campaigns, got underestimated for being young and having to face the public for votes. Despite all that, I persevered and won. I still encounter challenges; some male counterparts refuse to be led by a woman. I've learned that not everyone needs to appreciate my leadership. I focus on those who recognise the positive impact I can make. I see national politics as an opportunity for women to contribute significantly. It's not just about men bringing development, women play a crucial role in our country's growth too.

Lynn Achieng, 20, is the vice president of the Co-operative University of Kenya Students Union, pursuing a Diploma in Hotel Management and Catering. PHOTO | POOL

Being a young leader, it's essential to recognise that despite my age, I am the one they look up to. Whether I'm leading master's students or someone older, I strive to balance humility and assertiveness

Lynn Achieng



Female leaders often seek mentorship and guidance

Dibora Zainab Hirbo



Dibora Zainab Hirbo, 21, is the vice president of The University of Nairobi Student Association, pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Education, majoring in Literature. PHOTO | POOL

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Finance systems manager/developer codes, debugs, tests and integrates various financial modules

Giving up a childhood dream of becoming a pilot led him to a world of finance and tech

BY MAGDALENE WANJA

Derrick Oduor, 33, studied Accounting at KCA University for CPA and Certificate in Computer Applications 10 years ago. His decision to be an accountant, however, was a diversion from his dream career to be a pilot.

"This was because one of my closest uncles was one (an accountant), and it was the only profession I knew then," he recalls.

He is currently a finance system manager/developer, where he develops and maintains an organisation's financial systems.

What tasks do you carry out in your current position?

It includes coding, debugging, testing, and integrating various financial modules. I work closely with the finance department and other stakeholders to ensure the systems meet all requirements and comply with industry regulations.

What inspired you to switch from your previous occupation?

In my previous role as an accountant, I focused on financial record-keeping, financial reporting, budgeting and forecasting, financial analysis, and cost management. While I enjoyed these responsibilities, I found them more historical than forward-looking. When I saw an advertisement for a functional consultant position online, I applied and was fortunate to be selected by a software company in Nairobi, my second employer. This role gave me valuable exposure to the technology space.

During one of my projects as a functional consultant, I noticed a significant disconnect between finance professionals and tech experts. Finance professionals struggled to turn their vision into reality, while technology experts, lacking a finance and accounting background, found it challenging to interpret and implement requests accurately. This gap inspired me to bridge the divide between finance, accounting, and technology.

I developed a strong interest in technology and innovation, and became increasingly passionate about problem-solving

Derrick Oduor



Derrick Oduor, a finance systems manager/developer. He develops and maintains an organisation's financial systems. His tasks include coding, debugging, testing, and integrating various financial modules PHOTO | POOL

I developed a strong interest in technology and innovation, and became increasingly passionate about problem-solving. I wanted to specialise in a field with a significant impact on businesses and economies. The complexity and importance of financial systems intrigued me, motivating my career switch.

What does your typical day look like?

My typical routine begins by checking my emails to identify any urgent matters and organise my calendar. I then review my task tracker to assess ongoing projects and address any issues. A significant part of my day is spent writing and reviewing code, debugging software, and conducting tests. I also attend meetings with department champions to discuss new requirements or necessary system changes. My day often concludes with code reviews, documentation, and responding to emails.

In the evenings, I connect with industry professionals to stay updated on emerging trends in tech and developments in the accounting and finance sectors. This is also driven so much by the fact that I read articles and books that touch on technology. During lunch, I engage in social media, particularly on X, to stay informed about local and global events. I also take some time to relax and enjoy content on TikTok, remembering that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

What's the most interesting bit about your job?

The most interesting aspect of my job is solving complex problems that have a real-world impact. Developing and coming up with solutions that can process large volumes of financial transactions quickly and accurately is both challenging and rewarding. I also find it very interesting putting into reality what someone has in mind. I also enjoy staying updated with the latest technological advancements in the financial sector.

What's your advice to youth that may be scared of switching up careers to follow a passion?

My advice is to thoroughly research the new field they're interested in. Ensure it aligns with their skills and passions. Take online courses, attend workshops, and gain hands-on experience through internships or projects. Networking with professionals and mentors in the field can also offer valuable insights and opportunities. Remember, it's never too late to start something new; age is just a number, as long as you have the determination to keep pushing forward.

Do you have people that you look up to?

Professionally, I admire pioneers in the financial technology space, such as Satoshi Nakamoto for block chain technology and leaders in software development like Linus Torvalds. Their innovations and contributions have significantly shaped the industry. I also look up to my boss, Timothy Laku, who has been a great leader and mentor.

What challenges come with this kind of job, and how do you deal with them?

One of the biggest challenges in this field is ensuring the security and reliability of financial systems. To address this, I stay informed about the latest security threats and

DERRICK ODUOR IN BRIEF

His dream career from when he was a child was to become a pilot. But he changed it to pursue accounting.

As an accountant, he found his responsibilities more historical than forward-looking. That's when he saw an advertisement for a functional consultant position online.

Passionate about problem-solving, he wanted to specialise in a field with a significant impact on businesses and economies.

best practices. Regular code audits, thorough testing, and compliance with regulatory standards are crucial. Another challenge is keeping up with rapid technological changes and working with different programming languages across various systems. I manage this by continuously learning and adapting. Additionally, interpreting and implementing end-user requirements accurately can be difficult. I tackle this by referencing best practices and offering my professional advice to ensure correct implementations.

What are your future goals?

My future goals include advancing to being a chief executive officer (CEO) of a software consultancy company, or a role where I can oversee larger projects and drive innovation within the company. I also aim to deepen my expertise in emerging technologies like block chain and artificial intelligence to develop more advanced financial solutions. I also look at being a mentor to the young people.

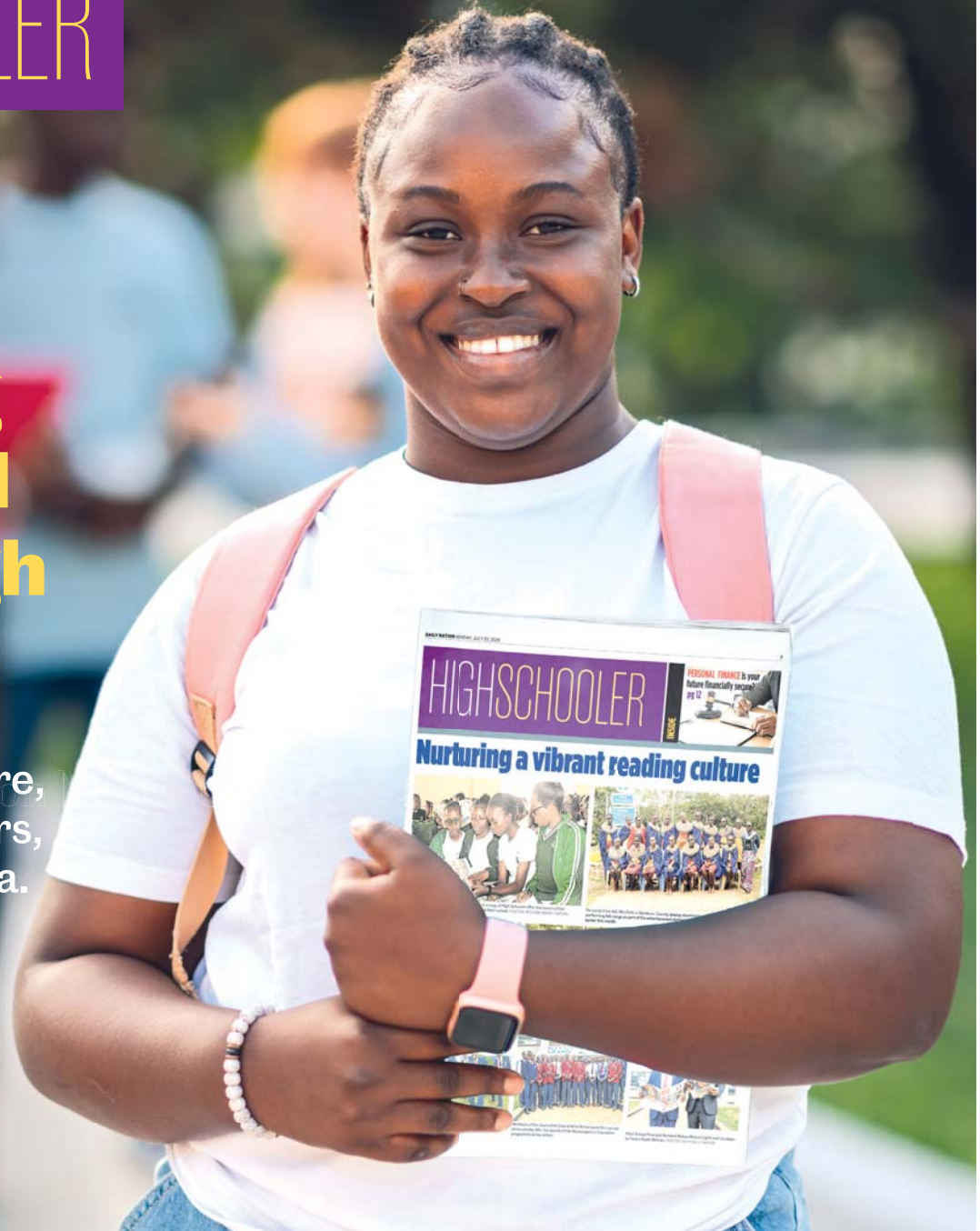
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