

2 MyNetWork



INSIDE KENYA'S ONLINE EDUCATION BOOM

Meet the 20-somethings who turned Zoom classes into six-figure salaries - and the companies fighting to hire them

P.4&5

MyNetWork Show Biz



Elizabeth Ngigi

Review

Okay Kiasi podcast is hosted by three siblings from a blended family.

The weekly show offers listeners a candid look into life, relationships, and personal growth through the lens of shared experiences. In their latest episode, "Can Women Be Friends?", the hosts dive into a topic often debated in social circles. Drawing from their own experiences, they explore the complexities of female friendships, touching on trust, competition, and the societal narratives that sometimes pit women against each other. Their easygoing banter makes even the heaviest topics feel relatable, and their authenticity keeps you hooked.

The podcast also delves into profound topics like forgiving a parent for the negative impact of their upbringing and how childhood shapes one's independence as an adult.

One standout discussion is around the concept of "toxic independence", a phrase increasingly used to describe women who, due to their upbringing, feel compelled to handle everything on their own, sometimes to their detriment.

Hotspot

Willy Paul Set to headline a Grand Valentine's Day concert at KICC

Willy Paul has officially confirmed what fans have been eagerly waiting for – a spectacular Valentine's Day concert at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) on February 14, 2025. The event, dubbed *Pozze Live*, promises to be more than just a music show, aiming to deliver a night of love, unity, and electrifying performances.

"This is not just another concert," Willy Paul announced. "It is a celebration of love, music, and unity. Get your tickets now by dialing 7098#, and let's create memories together."

The choice of Valentine's Day for such a significant event feels fitting for an artist who has consistently blended love-themed lyrics.

From stolen jokes to sold-out shows: 2Mbili's 12 years of laughing (and crying?)



BY ELIZABETH NGIGI

After 12 years in the comedy industry,

Andrew Duncan Oduor, popularly known as 2Mbili, is ready to mark his milestone with a unique show, *Born2Laugh*, on his 32nd birthday, January 10.

His journey has been anything but ordinary, from performing in small clubs to headlining international shows.

In this candid interview, 2Mbili shares his story of perseverance, choosing comedy over a traditional career path, and how he continues to make audiences laugh.

You are celebrating 12 years in the comedy industry with a special show. Can you tell us more about *Born-2Laugh*?

Yes, it is a comedy special, but I didn't want to frame it purely as a celebration of my 12 years in stand-up. Since it is happening on my birthday, it is like a special gift to my fans and a chance to celebrate together. It is a 3-in-1 show. The first part will feature a few upcoming comedians, and then Chipukeezey will take the stage.

After that, Dem wa Facebook will host a two-part roast session featuring various comedians. The roast will wrap up the night.

I invite everyone to come to *Born-2Laugh* and have a good time. Let us

"I have three children but want 14" comedian 2Mbili

laugh together and enjoy the night. And to Kenyans, let us get serious about supporting our artistes. Talent needs to be nurtured, and we can only grow if we support one another.

2. How did your journey in comedy begin?

It is very funny that I ended up doing comedy. I started back in 2012 while I was at the University of Nairobi. I was studying microbiology. I graduated in 2017, but I never pursued it as a career.

I used to do stand-ups with guys like Butita and comedian YY.

We performed in clubs alongside big names like the late Fred Omondi and auditioned for the Churchill Show.

I was also doing shows with Tom Dakitari Platform, Kioko, and Xavier. It was all about getting stage time and building my confidence.

Why didn't you follow that career path? Was it your decision, or did someone influence you?

I qualified for microbiology, but it wasn't something I was passionate about.

My dad, who was a professor and a professional nutritionist, suggested it. He actually wanted me to become a doctor, but I did not meet all the cluster points.

By the time I graduated, I had already set my mind on comedy. Microbiology had its challenges which was too much for me. Comedy felt more natural. Plus, I was already performing and getting recognised.

4. Looking back, do you think you would have achieved the same success had you pursued microbiology?

Honestly, no. Comedy has taken me to America, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Botswana.

None of that would have happened if I had stuck to microbiology. I was the second stand-up comedian in Kenya to do a one-man show after Eric Omondi, and I sold out tickets.

5. How did your parents react when you chose comedy over microbiology?

At first, my dad was angry. But I explained that comedy made me happy, and it wasn't about money or respect. We are in a generation where happiness matters more than traditional career prestige.

Over time, he blended in and started supporting me. Now he even follows my work, sends me links, and comments on my posts. He is proud of what I have

achieved.

6. The comedy industry can be tough. Have you faced any low moments?

Definitely. There have been times when I felt I did not deserve to be where I was because others had bigger names.

I have faced challenges like having my jokes stolen by other comedians. You rehearse, create content, and then someone performs your material before you get on stage.

It is frustrating, but it pushes me to work harder. There were also times when I organised shows that didn't do well, but I learned from those experiences.

7. Do you think Kenyans appreciate local comedians?

I would say Kenyans support talent selectively. In places like Uganda and Tanzania, people support you wholeheartedly and even give you money on stage. In Kenya, they pick who to support, regardless of your talent. You can be very good, but if Kenyans don't want to support you, they won't.

8. How did you transition into content creation and what is the key to standing out?

There was a period when I had no gigs, so I had to find something else to do. That is when I ventured into digital content. We started doing virtual shows during the Covid-29 pandemic, performing for online audiences in the UK and US. I also created my YouTube channel, 2mbili TV. Content creation has been good, and it is paying. You can survive on it if you are original. Originality is key. Everyone is creating content these days, but the key is to have a unique voice. You need to ask yourself, "Why am I doing this?" For me, originality has always been crucial.

9. You have been vocal about gender-based violence (GBV). Why is that important to you?

I am completely against GBV. It's something that needs to be addressed. People need to be educated about it, and victims should be supported.

10. How do you balance your career and raising your children?

It is challenging, but I try my best. My kids have their own house, and someone helps take care of them when I am not around. I spend as much time with them as I can when I am available.

I have three, and I want fourteen. I don't know why, but I feel like fourteen is a good number. Maybe my current partner can help me reach that goal.

11. What can fans expect from you in the coming year?

I am shifting focus back to stand-up comedy. Last year, I did not do many shows, but this year, I have gigs lined up in Uganda, Botswana, and South Africa. I want to do more stand-up and less YouTube content. Stand-up is my first love, and I have been scripting jokes for other comedians as well. I am also working on serious projects to support the arts and help upcoming comedians.

Careers

The 24-year-old breaking gender taboos in Migori's mining pits

Lilian Kagai Mugalla, 24, works in the mining pits with the men. The Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering student at JKUAT says she feels most at home underground

BY TEBBY OTIENO

I have found myself a visitor in a town where I was born and raised due to my brave move of getting inside the gold mining pit which does not only shock the men I work with but the women working at the mining site as well.

Most people going underground in the shafts to get the ore are men. That is their work according to the society which has made women find themselves being the majority of those at the processing stage.

This is because a long time ago, there was a taboo that women are not supposed to go to the shaft. This taboo is gradually ending and I am happy that I am part of those women proving that women do not make gold disappear as previously assumed.

However, the work here is not for the faint-hearted. It requires a lot of energy and physical protection because it is a risky affair. That is why dressing in a reflective overall suit to protect my body from shoulders to legs is not enough.

I have to be in safety boots to protect my feet, a helmet to protect my head and still have an LED headlamp tightened over a helmet that lights my way inside the dark deep gold mining shaft of Osiri Matanda mining in Migori County.

This is not an ordinary scene for most women here. Ironically, for me, this is going to be part of my lifestyle because that is what I enjoy doing.

It is a childhood dream that is gradually becoming real as I continue climbing my academic ladder. I feel lucky to be one of the few women who join a team of men in their search for gold instead of waiting for it outside.

As I study my bachelor's degree in Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering, it is a requirement by our institution, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) that I get hands-on skills before I can graduate.

That is why I searched for an opportunity to work at a gold mining site. For the period that I have been working with miners at the mining sites, I do find working at an artisanal gold mine more interesting.

I have met a number of mentors who are focused on artisanal gold mining and these are the professionals I look forward to working with after my graduation. As the saying goes, 'your network is your net worth.'

Interestingly, it is one of the photos that I took while working at the artisanal mining sites that won me the 2024 online photo campaign by the International Day of Women in Mining,

It was a unique photo because it had me with an ordinary battery torch which is not a professional equipment in such a working environment. Normally, we are supposed to be using headlamps but most people in the artisanal small-scale mining sector do not have it.

So by uploading that photo, I was showing the reality and the hardship that artisanal gold miners go through, contrary to how people would expect that they have gold, a valuable mineral that should make them rich and have all the professional protective gears.

I had to rally online users to vote for me but the journey did not lack obstacles as I faced cyberbullying from some people. I responded like bravely and that made me stay in the campaign till the end when the world was celebrating the International Day of Women in Mining in June, 2024.

I was excited and I lacked words when my name was mentioned in the top three of all the contestants in the photo campaign. It came with a very big surprise even though I had worked hard for it, especially by the fact that I was awarded an intermediate online course at Edumine in Canada, an award which was not

stated in the call when I enrolled for the photo campaign.

This is my first international competition award and it is a great achievement for me because knowledge is something that cannot be taken away from anyone. The photo campaign also offered me a good platform to network with other women in the mining industry.

I am usually hopeful and enthusiastic about life and my expectation after graduating is that I practice this career so that my parents will believe that I made the correct career choice.

I was a top performer in physics, Mathematics, and Geography subjects during high school and I wanted to do an engineering course. Passing the three subjects in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education exams helped me in choosing a mining course since I had met the cluster points.

My parents on the other hand had a problem with the course because they knew of the common engineering courses like mechanical, and electrical but not the Mining Engineering that I chose to pursue.

I had to convince them. Being good in Geography, I knew various minerals that are mined in Kenya and I mentioned a number of them.

I knew Mining Engineering was the course for me because even after high school I had volunteered to teach Physics and Mathematics in one of the schools that was still developing in my home village at the time when they didn't have enough trained teachers. I enjoyed teaching but it was also not a career I wanted to do my entire life.

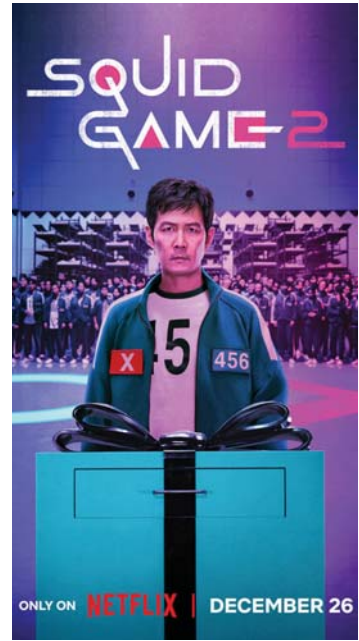
I am a go-getter and that is why besides attending my classes, I am currently a volunteer at the Centre for Sustainable Mining, Environment and Climate Change.

I applied for the opportunity. If there were many women in the mining industry, I would not be pushing myself too much like I am doing now. I am, however, hopeful that the industry will change with time.

This is a male-dominated career, my dreams are to transform the mining sector to make it environment-friendly and conducive for artisanal gold miners.

I look forward to a future where we will have more women in the mining sector, and we will contribute positively to the industry."

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BY MICHAEL OCHIENG

SQUID GAME SEASON 2

Where: Netflix

Genre: Thriller

Squid Game Season 2 has made a triumphant return, captivating audiences with its intense and gripping narrative. The second season continues to explore the dark and thought-provoking themes that made the first season a global phenomenon.

A Riveting Continuation: Season 2 picks up where the first season left off, with Seong Gi-hun (Player 456) returning to dismantle the deadly Squid Game tournament. The show delves deeper into the characters' backstories, adding more depth and emotional weight to the narrative. The return of familiar faces and the introduction of new characters keep the storyline fresh and engaging. Squid Game continues to explore themes of wealth disparity and class struggle, resonating with viewers worldwide. The social commentary is as sharp and relevant as in the first season, making the show not just entertaining but also thought-provoking.

One of the standout aspects of Season 2 is the character development. The show delves deeper into the motivations and backgrounds of the contestants, making their struggles and decisions more relatable and impactful. The tension reaches new heights as Seong Gi-hun, Player 456, returns with a burning resolve to dismantle the sinister game from within. After narrowly escaping the horrors of the first season, Gi-hun's journey takes a darker turn as he uncovers the true identity of the Front Man, who is revealed to be one of his former allies, Young-il.

The season is a rollercoaster of emotions, with Gi-hun's determination clashing against the Front Man's cynical worldview. The stakes are higher than ever, culminating in a heart-wrenching showdown that leaves viewers questioning the very nature of humanity and hope. This season not only deepens the psychological complexity of its characters but also sets the stage for an even more explosive finale in the upcoming third season. The cliffhanger ending of Season 2 has left fans speculating and excited for what's to come.

Overall, Squid Game Season 2 has lived up to the high expectations set by its predecessor. The combination of compelling storytelling, strong performances, and relevant social commentary makes it a must-watch.

MyNetWork Cover Story



Jesse Njuguna, 24, works as a data scientist and web designer, having successfully transitioned from finance to the tech industry through an online course in data science. PHOTOPOOL



Esther Nekesa, 23, a University of Nairobi graduate in mathematics, supplemented her studies with an online data science course. The combination of traditional and online education helped her secure a role as a data analyst. PHOTOPOOL



From Zoom rooms to Zoom degrees

Why more students are choosing online diplomas over traditional degrees

BY JACKSON NGARI

It's 10am, and while some students are stuck in traffic heading to campus, others are logging into class from their favourite café, bedroom, or even upcountry home. Welcome to the new face of higher education in Kenya, where smartphones are the new school bags and WiFi is the new school bus.

Remember when getting a degree meant four years of your life, eye-watering fees, and possibly moving to a different city? That script is being rewritten. Today's savvy students are discovering they can bag qualifications without breaking the bank – or their spirit.

But this isn't just about convenience (though who doesn't love studying in pyjamas?). It's about staying ahead in a world where yesterday's hot skills are today's basic requirements. From coding ninjas to digital marketing wizards, Kenya's youth are choosing online diplomas that take months, not years, to complete.

The best part? These aren't just any certificates to frame and forget. They're practical, industry-ready qualifications that employers actu-

ally want. In fact, some companies are now actively seeking out graduates of specific online programmes, recognising their up-to-the-minute skills and self-driven learning ability.

In this week's deep dive, we'll introduce you to five young Kenyans who took the digital plunge and emerged with more than just qualifications – they've got the jobs, skills, and flexibility that many traditional graduates are still chasing. Plus, we'll show you how some turned their "basic" degrees into power moves with strategic online upskilling.

Whether you're a student weighing your options, a parent concerned about the future, or a professional looking to level up, this is your guide to education's new frontier. Because let's face it – in a world where even your grandmother is on WhatsApp, why shouldn't your diploma come through the internet too?

The appeal of flexibility and relevance

Jesse Njuguna, 24, data scientist and web designer

Jesse Njuguna, a 24-year-old data scientist and web designer, is among the growing number of students who have embraced online learning. Njuguna decided to pur-

sue an online course to broaden his skills and take a new career direction. "I have a background in finance, but I wanted to explore the tech space, specifically data science. The ALX Data Science course stood out to me because of its hands-on approach, which involved working on projects and learning through walkthroughs," Njuguna explained. His experience demonstrates how accessible online education can be, offering practical, project-based learning that equips students with real-world skills.

For Njuguna, the online environment was ideal as it allowed him to continue learning without having to sacrifice his work commitments. "I didn't have to physically attend a university or relocate. I could study from anywhere, including from Mombasa, while still completing my projects," he added. The flexibility of online courses meant that he could work on his studies at his own pace while handling other responsibilities. This was crucial in maintaining a balance between his work, family life, and education.

The value of online learning lies not only in its flexibility but also in its ability to provide current, market-driven skills. Njuguna explained that the ALX course focused on teaching high-demand skills such as SQL, Python, Power BI, and machine learning.

"These are the exact skills that

employers in data science are looking for right now, so I felt well-prepared to enter the job market upon completion," he said. Additionally, Njuguna found that the self-paced nature of the course helped him improve his soft skills, such as time management and teamwork, which are critical in any field.

Shifting perceptions

Although online education is steadily gaining recognition, it has not been without its critics, particularly among older generations who tend to value traditional degrees. Parents often express doubts about the legitimacy of online programmes, asking questions like, "Is a digital diploma really as valuable as one earned in person?" or "Will employers take these certifications seriously?" These concerns are not entirely unfounded, as there was a time when online education was seen as less prestigious or rigorous compared to traditional university programmes.

However, perceptions are changing. Employers are increasingly recognising that, in today's digital age, skills can often trump formal degrees, particularly in technical fields where practical, up-to-date knowledge is crucial. Njuguna's experience speaks to this shift in the job market. "After completing my course, I was able to secure opportunities where I could apply my da-

ta science skills in real-world projects.

The skills I learned, both in technical areas and in soft skills, helped me get these roles," he said. The emphasis on skills rather than degrees reflects a broader trend in the job market, where companies are prioritising employees who can demonstrate practical abilities.

One such change can be seen in the technology industry, where employers are now more focused on whether candidates possess the required technical expertise rather than simply holding a degree. Many online platforms now offer credible certifications that match, and sometimes exceed, traditional university programmes in terms of depth and applicability.

Lifelong learning
Ian Dennis, 24, IT graduate and freelancer

For many students, online diplomas have become a tool for career switching or upskilling, particularly for professionals who want to pivot into new industries without sacrificing their current jobs. Ian Dennis, a 24-year-old IT graduate and freelancer, found himself in this position when he decided to pursue an online course. "I've always been computer-savvy, and there's been a growing demand for cloud computing skills. After researching my options, I found several schools that offered courses both physically and online. I needed something flexible that could fit into my life without disrupting my work," Dennis explained.

Dennis's story is one that resonates with many professionals looking for ways to upskill while maintaining their current responsibilities. "The online format made it manageable. I could plan my study schedule around my work and personal commitments. It required some serious time management, but learning at my own pace helped me stay on track," he shared. The flexibility that Dennis en-

Muthoni Muriuki, 25, software engineer and co-founder/CTO of SanaSana Sustainability. She attributes her professional growth to online certifications, including a pivotal data science course sponsored by Google and Andela. PHOTOPOOL



joyed is increasingly becoming a common reason why many students are opting for online programmes. These courses allow professionals to gain relevant skills without having to take time off work or adhere to the rigid schedules often associated with traditional degree programmes. "I was able to complete the course while still working full-time. The freedom to manage my own time was one of the biggest benefits," Dennis added.

These courses also offer an affordable alternative to the costlier traditional university degree programmes, making education more accessible to a broader audience.

Complement traditional learning

Esther Nekesa, 23, The University of Nairobi graduate

Not all students choose online courses to replace traditional education. Some use them as a complement to their ongoing studies. Esther Nekesa, a 23-year-old graduate from the University of Nairobi, took an online data science course with ALX while still pursuing her university degree in mathematics. "I wanted a career that was still connected to mathematics, so I enrolled in a data science course. I wanted to be able to quantify problems in my society and find solutions," Nekesa said.

For Nekesa, the dual approach worked well, as the flexibility of the online course allowed her to juggle her university classes and her online studies. "I had physical classes from Monday to Wednesday, so I used the other days to focus on the online course. The deadlines for the course were typically on Sundays, so I had time to complete my assignments while staying on track with my university work," she explained.

Nekesa's experience shows how online learning can be seamlessly integrated with traditional education, offering students the best of

both worlds. She was able to leverage the skills she gained from her data science course to secure a position as a data analyst. "The online course helped me build my portfolio, which made a big difference when it came to job applications. The projects we worked on during the course were practical, and I could showcase them on platforms like GitHub and Kaggle," she said.

In addition to technical skills, Nekesa found that the course provided her with valuable career guidance. "We were taught how to write resumes, present our work, and collaborate with others in a professional setting. These are essential skills that helped me transition into the data field quickly," she added.

Overcoming the digital classroom demands

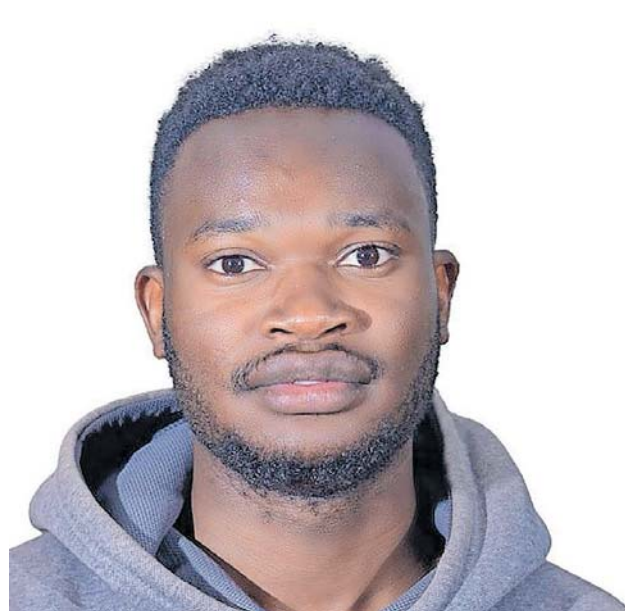
Keith Clinton Nyaburi, 24, software developer

While online learning offers significant benefits, it also presents challenges that students must overcome. Keith Clinton Nyaburi, a 24-year-old software developer pursued an online course in software engineering to supplement his undergraduate studies in electrical engineering. "I wanted to have a backup plan, a skill that I could practice on the side," Nyaburi explained.

Nyaburi's experience was not without its hurdles. Balancing the demands of his software engineering course with his final-year university project was difficult, particularly since the course required 70 hours of study per week. "I had to sacrifice a lot of time with friends and family to meet the deadlines, but as I got better at managing my time, it became easier," he said.

The lack of in-person interaction is another challenge many online students face. "One of the disadvantages of online learning is the absence of a human touch. Most of the interaction is done through forums or Zoom sessions, and there's no face-to-face engagement with

Ian Dennis, 24, is an IT graduate and freelancer who pursued an online course in cloud computing to upskill while continuing his professional work. The flexibility of online learning allowed him to manage his studies alongside a full-time job, giving him valuable industry knowledge. PHOTOPOOL



classmates or instructors," Nyaburi noted. However, like many students, he found that the flexibility and convenience of online learning far outweighed this drawback. "Overall, the experience was worth it, and I gained skills that have helped me in my current role as a junior backend developer," he added.

Njuguna echoed these sentiments, noting that one of the biggest challenges of online learning is staying motivated when there is no physical presence to keep you accountable. "Sometimes it's hard to finish projects on time because everything is self-paced. Unlike traditional education, where you have to show up for lectures, online courses require a lot of self-discipline," Njuguna said.

Despite the challenges, online students find ways to stay on track. For Njuguna, the ALX program's study groups were a key source of support. "The community aspect helped a lot when things got tough," he said.

Growing legitimacy

For students like Dennis and Nyaburi, the skills gained through online courses have translated into real career advancements. "After completing the course, I started handling cloud computing tasks that I used to outsource. The certification boosted my confidence, and I've seen a noticeable impact on how clients perceive me professionally," Dennis explained.

Nyaburi, too, saw tangible results after completing his software engineering course. "I secured a job as a junior backend developer shortly after finishing the course. The skills I gained not only helped me land the role but also made me more disciplined and detail-oriented," he said.

Employers are increasingly valuing the skills gained through online certifications, particularly in fast-moving industries like tech, where practical knowledge is often more important than formal degrees. "My manager noticed a

significant improvement in how I handled tasks after I finished the course. I even got a raise because of the skills I gained," Dennis said.

As the job market continues to evolve, skills are becoming the currency of the future. For many professionals, online diplomas offer a way to stay competitive and relevant in their fields. "The biggest advantage of online courses is that they allow you to gain new skills without having to commit to a full-time degree," Dennis said. "It's a great way to upskill and stay ahead of the curve."

Nekesa agreed, noting that online courses provide an accessible way to break into new industries. "The flexibility and affordability of online learning make it a viable option for anyone looking to change careers or gain new skills," she said. For students like her, the ability to balance both traditional and online learning is a game-changer.

Nyaburi, who is now charting his career path in software engineering, believes that online learning has given him a clear vision of his future. "The course helped me define my long-term goals. It opened my eyes to new possibilities," he said.

Help in entrepreneurship

Muthoni Muriuki, 25, software engineer and tech entrepreneur

For Muthoni Muriuki, a 25-year-old software engineer and tech entrepreneur, online courses played a pivotal role in shaping her career. She is now the co-founder and CTO of SanaSana Sustainability, a smart fleet management solution, and attributes much of her professional growth to the skills she acquired through online learning.

"It all started when I was part of a programme sponsored by Google and Andela. During the sessions, we were strongly encouraged to take specific courses, and they referred us to various scholarships available at the time. I applied for one and was fortunate enough to

take an online course in data science and analytics for free," Muthoni explained. This experience became the foundation of her successful career, and it wasn't her last online certification. Muthoni has since completed several more courses to stay current in her field.

The flexibility of online courses allowed Muthoni to balance her studies with her other commitments, including full-time university classes. "I was still in school when I took my first course. I would study in the evenings or on weekends, and the flexibility of being able to refer back to the materials at any time made it easy to keep up," she said. The self-paced nature of online learning meant that it didn't interfere with her work or family life.

Muthoni's first certification proved instrumental in landing her first internship, which quickly turned into a full-time job before she even graduated from university. "This opportunity was one of the most rewarding outcomes. The certification opened doors," she said.

After gaining more experience in the industry, Muthoni went on to complete more advanced certifications. "The second certification I completed helped me become more efficient in my tasks, which led to a pay rise in my third job," she shared.

The skills she gained through these courses allowed her to take on new responsibilities, such as transitioning from a front-end engineer to a back-end engineer role. Additionally, she noted that the management skills she acquired have been invaluable in her role as CTO.

Though Muthoni acknowledged some challenges in her online learning experience—such as the lack of a physical community and occasional delays in receiving support—these were manageable. "The issues didn't detract from the overall value of the courses. The flexibility of learning from anywhere was a huge advantage over traditional education, where physical attendance is often required," she said.

Muthoni also reflected on how online certifications have boosted her professional standing. "I noticed immediate positive impact on how I was perceived by my colleagues and employers. My manager mentioned that I had become more efficient in my tasks. This recognition led to a pay raise and new job opportunities," she explained.

For those considering online courses, Muthoni advises evaluating personal goals first. "Are you looking to upskill or learn something completely new? Once you've clarified your goals, you can choose the right course platform," she recommended. Muthoni suggested platforms like Coursera, Google courses, and IBM for tech professionals, but noted there are options for every industry.

Muthoni says that while promotions or job offers may not be immediate, online courses can make current jobs more enjoyable by helping one perform their tasks more efficiently and effectively.

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BY GEOFFREY ANENE

Basketball has been more than just a sport for me; it's been a lifeline, a teacher, and a source of endless purpose.

How do you rate your performance at Road to BAL 2025 Elite16 East Group in Nairobi?

As a player, I stepped onto the court to prove to the world that I can compete at the highest level. Personally, I aimed to showcase my skills and dedication. As a team, we invested significant effort, supported by management, which brought in top-tier players and worked tirelessly to assemble a competitive squad. The preparation paid off, but there's still more to come when the BAL tips off on 5 April 2025.

Which aspect of your play do you want to improve to be even more competitive in basketball?

To elevate my game, I need to focus on enhancing my basketball IQ, refining my ball-handling skills, and improving my finishing at the rim. Additionally, I aim to adapt better to changes in pace. Observing and learning from seasoned professionals has been invaluable, and I'm committed to integrating these aspects into my play.

Why did you choose basketball and not any other sport?

I dabbled in soccer, basketball, and table tennis during high school, but I eventually gravitated towards basketball. I fell in love with the game—it was always accessible, and the court was often free. Friends in my village who played with me further deepened my interest, making basketball my passion.

What challenges did you navigate through to reach club basketball and play for the national team?

I was fortunate to have a mentor, Coach Zeddy [Otieno], who guided me after high school. He played a significant role in my transition to club basketball and continues to advise me to this day. Many know him as a celebrity in the basketball world. Under his guidance, I gained exposure, even playing briefly in the USA before returning to Thunder. I later joined KPA, where I won MVP in the 2021-2022 season, then moved to Dynamo BBC in Bujumbura, Burundi, and eventually returned to Thunder.

Did you ever think this dream of playing professional basketball would come true?

I always believed in my talent and knew that hard work would take me far. My dream has always been to be one of the greatest players in Africa. I aspire to be recognised as a generational athlete and the best shooter the continent has ever seen. It's an ambitious goal, but I'm determined to achieve it.

Is basketball your bread and butter?

Yes, basketball is my livelihood. I

From the court to greatness:

Shooting guard Kennedy Wachira



Q&A

Ken Wachira watches a basket during a training for Eastern Conference qualifiers of Basketball Africa League (B.A.L.) on November 20th 2024 at Nyayo National Stadium. (B.A.L.) on November 20th 2024 at Nyayo National Stadium. PHOTO/CHRIS OMOLLO

play professionally, and it provides for my needs.

What lessons have you picked from basketball?

Basketball has taught me discipline and honesty. Like all sports, it keeps you focused and away from distractions such as drugs or negative peer influences. Growing up, it kept me busy with practice, schoolwork, and household responsibilities. As an adult, it

has consumed much of my time, demanding relentless dedication. Realising in high school that I wanted to play professionally, I committed myself fully to the game, which shaped my mindset and work ethic.

What does your family think about your involvement in sports?

My family is very supportive, allowing me the freedom to pur-

sue what I love. They understand the mental and physical resilience required to play at a high level consistently. Our relationship is strong, and their support fuels my drive.

Tell us about your best and worst moments in basketball.

The defining moment of my career—both the best and the worst—was when I broke my metatarsal on my right leg on 9 March

In Brief

Basketball isn't just a game for him; it's a way of life

- Born on 8 July 1995, shooting guard Kennedy Mureithi Wachira honed his basketball skills at Pat The Roc Basketball Skills Academy in Maryland, USA, before joining Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) in 2018
- Kennedy represented KPA during the 2019 and 2022 Africa Champions Clubs Road to Basketball Africa League (BAL) 2020 and 2023 qualifiers. In July 2023, he signed with Nairobi City Thunder
- The 1.85-metre (6'1") player has also donned the national team jersey, featuring in the 2021 FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 African Qualifiers and 2023 FIBA AfroCan
- During the 2024 FIBA Africa Champions Clubs Road to BAL 2025 (East Division Elite 16), Kennedy made significant contributions:
- Scored 15 points in the 102-59 victory against MBB Blue Soldiers (South Africa)
- Added 9 points in the 104-71 win against Kriol Star (Cape Verde)
- Contributed 8 points in the 91-68 triumph over Bravehearts in the group stage
- Did not feature in the semi-finals against Uganda's City Oilers, which Thunder won 72-62
- Delivered an impressive 18-point performance in the final as Thunder edged Kriol 99-86

2021. It was a challenging time, forcing me into five months of isolation and introspection. Those dark days reshaped my mindset, taught me resilience, and changed how I approach basketball and life. The injury became a turning point in my career, ultimately strengthening my determination.

Lastly, how many years do you think you have left in basketball?

I estimate I have about five to seven years of high-level basketball left. After that, I plan to transition into business. I've always been business-oriented and envision myself pursuing ambitious ventures in the business world.

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