



*The Story
of Cecilia,
a KAB Graduate
in Kenya*

Cecilia

*Owner of Ebony N'Ivory Designs Ltd.
Nairobi, Kenya*

When 31 year old Cecilia Mwango Mwatiti got tired of the long hours and hard conditions at her job as employee supervisor for Export Processing Zone, she began rethinking about all the issues she had learned during her years as a Fashion Design student at the Kenya Polytechnic, from where she had graduated in 2002.

During her time there, besides learning various fashion design skills, Cecilia took an Entrepreneurship Education course, which based on the International Labour Organisation's "Know About Business" package, confronted her to issues such as self-employment as a career option, and the importance of business planning and fostering good client relations. The more she thought about it, the more she was convinced that opening her own business was the only professional path she felt comfortable taking.

Thus, after practicing at home several new designs and taking all the knowledge she had acquired during her Entrepreneurship Education to prepare a business plan, Cecilia decided to quit her job and focus all her efforts on her business: Ebony N'Ivory Designs Ltd.

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At first, her business was a small affair, making designer clothing for a few targeted customers. But as happy clients began spreading the word about Cecilia's fashion talents, her business began to grow and with an increasing amount of orders coming in, she set out to buy more machines and employ qualified designers and dress makers on a full time basis. Her success is due to her original designs and good quality garments, but as Cecilia herself says, it also comes from her Entrepreneurship Education which in her own words, "made (her) aware of many business issues which (she) encountered in practice. Without the Entrepreneurship Education, (she) would have been poorly prepared and would have wasted a lot of resources and time trying many things without direction".

Today, Cecilia's business is doing well. She sometimes receives big orders that require her to employ more temporary workers and that is why she has already begun thinking about her next phase – expanding her business. But for that, she knows that planning carefully is key, as well as identifying a good location. She therefore spends her free time working on a new business plan, and on building the foundations for a strong network with various partners and micro finance institutions and banks, in order to acquire prime space in one of the leading shopping malls for designer clothing outlets in Nairobi.