



Accelerate your growth.

Accelerated growth for start-ups, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Zambia.

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Edgewise LEVEL UP Cohort Converges for Investment Readiness Symposium



The AGS LEVEL UP Programme is a 6-month Accelerator Programme which includes tailored coaching and mentoring to make businesses investor ready. It focuses on high potential Zambian Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and start-ups with ambition to grow. The Accelerator Programme currently has six cohorts running, all at different stages.

As part of the process, the Edgewise Cohort, which is being run by Edgewise Business Solutions converged in Solwezi, North-western province for a 2-day Investment Readiness Symposium, from 27th to 28th January 2022.

The symposium aimed to provide a platform to engage with suppliers, finance institutions, mentors, and regulators. The event brought together different stakeholders including industry experts, service providers, investors and the participating businesses from different sectors. Officiating at the event, North-western Province Minister, represented by the Provincial Permanent Secretary Colonel Grandson Katambi, highlighted the importance of unity and partnership for the success of businesses and called on stakeholders to share ideas with MSMEs and support the programme to accelerate MSME development.

"We have embarked on the opening up of all roads leading to neighbouring countries," Col. Katambi announced.

In her opening keynote, Sylvia Mutale, Edgewise Business Solutions Managing Partner, indicated that the MSMEs in the cohort, had gone through a rigorous four months of the 6-month training and had their competitiveness enhanced during the period. She expressed that Edgewise expects that the MSMEs will record high levels of productivity at primary level at the end of the year 2022.

"I urge you to get as much information as possible from the stakeholders present and gain business linkages," Sylvia Mutale advised the MSMEs.

The event featured activities and presentations from various stakeholders and MSMEs. The Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries gave an overview of the ministry's mandate, policies, and programmes, highlighted various opportunities in the sector and the supply gap on the market and opportunities for SME investment.

Other presentations included, National Pensions Authority (NAPSA) – Managing the human resource regulatory obligations, Zambia Revenue Authority – Tax Regulations and SME Obligations and ZANACO – EU Small Holder Funding / SME Funding Opportunities.

As part of facilitating linkages between SMEs and financial service providers, the event included a speed dating session on the second day. It was revealed that one of the challenges that SMEs face in accessing business finance is the inadequate presentation/articulation of their business models and financing needs.

The MSMEs were also accorded the opportunity to pitch their businesses to potential financiers. ZANACO, NATSAVE, Citizens' Economic Empowerment Commission and AGS were on hand to provide the pitching platform.

AGS Promotes Decent Jobs and Human Rights Protection in Business

The Improve Your Business (IYB) on People and Productivity blended with the Human Rights Based Approach to Business (HRBA) trainings aim to enhance growth capacity, access to finance and the capacity to compete on local and international markets as well as to ensure that MSMEs recognise, promote and protect Human Rights in their business operations as stipulated in the Zambian Constitution.

Besides being a training ground, the workshops have been a good source of information on the current situation with regards to Zambian MSMEs and providing decent jobs that inspire productivity in workers while also protecting human rights. Most participants reported that they did not know most of the requirements they needed to have in place. Despite acknowledging that they know what human rights are, most of the businesses reported that they do not know how to apply them to their businesses.

The participants also reported that they struggled to provide decent work as they had no knowledge of the definition of decent work in the context of Zambian laws such as the Zambian Employment Code. Of the 10 MSMEs that participated in the blended training from 26th – 28th January 2022, 90% did not have contracts with their employees or any written policy in their businesses. The businesses also expressed that the provision of a fair income and social protection – components of decent work – was a challenge.



Participant shares business experience



Business Development Expert takes participants through people and productivity lesson

The businesses echoed that they found the training very relevant and informative and requested that the AGS should provide more information and trainings to help them turn the theory into practice.

Using the lessons from the 2-day training, some participants were able to develop their own action plans with the aim to bridge the gaps identified during the training. They noted the lack of adequate understanding and skill to motivate employees for maximum productivity, hence this was one of the key components in their newly developed action plans.

The trainings have therefore, revealed that there is need to strongly emphasise to businesses the need to apply the People and Productivity as well as the HRBA approach if they are to improve their businesses.

Following these revelations, the AGS will ensure that the businesses are implementing their business plans with consideration of the IYB and HRBA approaches through physical monitoring and evaluation and continuous follow-ups. The AGS believes in the power of networking, hence will continue to support programmes that foster meaningful Business-to-Business interactions.

AGS Programme Participants Continue to Excel



The AGS Programme offers various business development services. These services are aimed at accelerating the growth of MSMEs and improving their competitiveness. The programme has so far seen success with regards to achieving these goals as evidenced by many success stories that have come from businesses that have gone through the programme.

With over 290 businesses trained so far, the AGS has continued to build the capacity of businesses to expand, compete and leverage opportunities.

Last month, two of AGS Programme businesses scooped first and third prize respectively in the ZANACO Kweza Pitch Competition. Maima General dealers, led by Mwala Mooto, a 26-year-old entrepreneur won the K1 million first prize of the challenge, while SeafoodFisheries scooped the K500,000 third prize.

The two businesses are enrolled in the AGS LEVEL UP Accelerator Programme AMSCO Cohort, a 6-month Accelerator Programme which includes tailored coaching and mentoring to make businesses investor ready. It focuses on high potential Zambian Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and start-ups with ambition to grow.

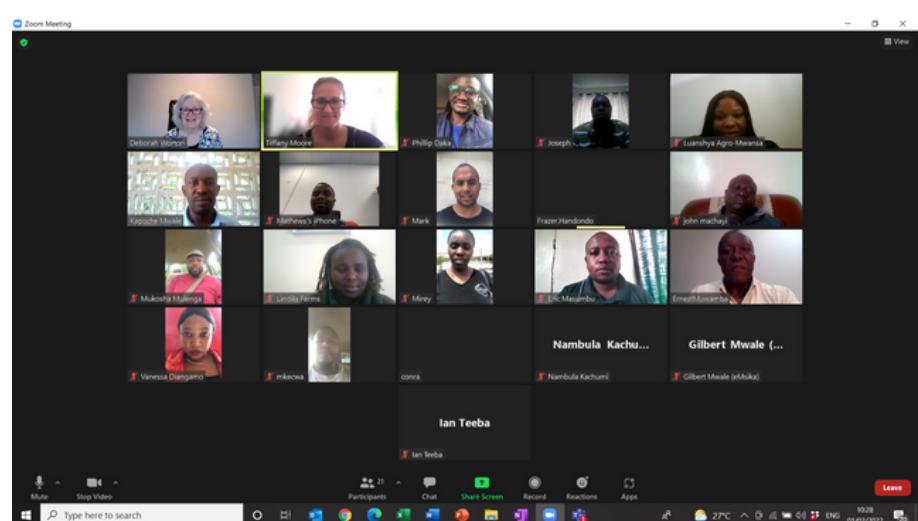
The Kweza challenge ran for over 2 months with 50 entrepreneurs pitching various aspects of their businesses. Maima General Dealers' Mwala Mooto pitched a business model of building a stable value chain in the agriculture sector that incorporates smallholder farmers.

Mwala indicated that the company is "setting up a 20-million-kwacha financial instrument that will be used to build a stable value chain in the small livestock sector." Some of the funds have already been secured from various investors, including the K1 million from ZANACO. The company is actively engaging more financiers to raise the balance.

WEAC LEVEL UP Cohort Learns how to Craft a Pitch

Our WEAC LEVEL UP Accelerator cohort met virtually for a "Crafting a 5-minute Pitch" session hosted by the managers of the cohort the Women's Entrepreneurship Access Center (WEAC) and presented by Impact Capital Zambia.

This is part of the AGS 6-month Accelerator training. The cohort is being managed by the Women's Entrepreneurship Access Center (WEAC).



Opportunities in our Network



WE ARE HIRING

POSITION
INNOVATION LEAD

DEADLINE
Saturday, 12 February 2022
23:59hrs

Apply here: www.bongohive.co.zm/careers

Bongohive is looking for an Innovation Lead to join their Innovation Unit. The Innovation Lead will facilitate internal and external innovation; and create incremental and disruptive, growth-enabling products and services to enter the Zambian and regional markets.

Deadline: Saturday 12 February 2022
For more details and to apply, visit their [website](#).

Prospero is hosting a webinar on 10th February, for SMEs/individuals that process wild food & natural ingredients into cosmetics, edible or medicinal products. The session will share insights & highlight opportunities for collaboration & participation. Register [here](#).



Webinar
Exploring Commercialization of Wild Foods and Natural Ingredients in Zambia

Date: February 10, 2022
Time: 10:11-30hrs
Venue: Zoom

Register Today!!

Don't miss any opportunity, [sign up](#).

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