

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

Dorothy Otieno



DOROTHY MAUREEN AWUOR OTIENO

FOUNDER/CEO NYALORE IMPACT

Website: <http://www.nyaloreimpact.org>

Facebook page: [nyaloreimpact.com](https://www.facebook.com/nyaloreimpact.com)

Dorothy Maureen Awuor Otieno is an entrepreneur located Homa Bay, a small town in Kenya's Nyanza Province. With nearly 30 certificates obtained on the SME Trade Academy's online courses, she is one of ITC's most prolific e-learning users. We recently contacted her to hear about her story.*

"I lived in the town of Eldoret for most of my life. In 2013, I relocated to Homa Bay and started a sugar cane business. Looking back, I knew very little about the challenges that it would entail. The business involved sourcing sugarcane from smallholder farmers, selling it to the local milling factory, and then sharing the profits with the farmers at an agreed rate. The whole thing was, and still is, heavily male-dominated; from harvesting to cutting, loading and transporting. I often worked very late into the night, and started my day very early.

After some time, the demand for sugarcane started rising, and competition became very fierce. The factory that I was used to selling to suddenly closed for maintenance and, on top of that, I discovered that some of my suppliers had been cheating me. I lost a lot of money.

I started to use my own savings to directly purchase the sugarcane supplies I needed, but things went from bad to worse. Bank loans accumulated, and by the end of 2015 I was reduced to selling some of my personal items to survive. What's more, my fixed assets were repossessed by my bank for 9 months.

I went into a deep depression, and today this period is still a very painful memory for me.

Then, one day, I saw a post on WhatsApp advertising free online entrepreneurship training from ITC. I resolved to learn more about business in order to become a better entrepreneur in the future. I realized that all I needed to have access to the training was a smartphone – and even this was a challenge for me, since at that time I didn't even have money to feed myself properly on most days.

I enrolled on my first ITC online courses in 2016. I failed all of my first courses, which left me discouraged and even more depressed than before. But I didn't give up. I started taking notes in exercise books, reviewing the course content seriously, and told myself that succeeding in these ITC courses was the only way to prove to my family, the world and myself that I was not a business failure. Since then, I have obtained close to 30 certificates and taken over 40 courses. I am not planning to stop learning anytime soon. I still have courses to take, even now, and I still hope to see even more courses on entrepreneurship to better equip women entrepreneurs.

Today, I am back to working as an entrepreneur. The company that I have founded, Nyalore Impact, promotes clean cooking solutions such as stoves and fuel to customers who cannot afford LPG (liquefied petroleum gas), ethanol gel, etc."

'My biggest dream is to be part of the world's best social innovators and entrepreneurs. Thank you very much for who I am today, ITC.'

Dorothy Maureen Awuor Otieno, Kenya

*Ms. Otieno's testimony has been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT :

Raphaël Dard,
E-Learning Programme Coordinator
E: dard@intracen.org
P: +41 22 730 0587

Shaun Lake,
SME Trade Academy Manager
E: lake@intracen.org
P: +41 22 730 0623