



TV show harvests youth interest in agribusiness



Florence (right), a main character in the Makutano Junction TV show, meets with a bank representative to obtain a loan

Florence is a Kenyan woman in her 20s, who, until today, separated maize from the cob with her bare hands. She tried to convince her employer to invest in a machine that could shell more maize in less time, and increase profits. Her boss was unconvinced, and, instead, fired her for spending time on the telephone, gathering information about the machine.

Florence had discovered the shelling machine on Shamba ShapeUp, a local TV show. Now unemployed, she developed a business plan and applied for a loan at her bank, but was refused for lack of collateral.

This scene came from an episode of Makutano Junction, a popular Kenyan soap opera, airing in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda on Wednesday nights. The show weaves social and development themes with more traditional narratives of love and scandal to keep viewers interested in the story, while expanding their minds. Past episodes have tackled sensitive issues such as domestic abuse, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, rape, corruption and family planning.

This season, supported by USAID, the show will use the drama to encourage more youth to start and manage agribusinesses.

As the cornerstone of many African economies, business opportunities in agriculture can put a dent in the huge unemployment numbers among youth. Taking advantage of these opportunities, however, is not easy. Young people often do not have the knowledge or skills to develop viable business plans, run businesses or manage finances.

Like the fictional Florence, young Kenyans often are seen by banks to be too risky. As a result, young entrepreneurs often are unable to adopt the technologies and secure the land and equipment to become commercially active.

Makutano Junction provides helpful tips and resources to help other young people capitalize on their promising ideas for agricultural entrepreneurship. Follow Florence as she navigates her way through this challenge and others, Wednesday evenings, at 7:30 on Citizen TV. After each episode, viewers can send text messages requesting free leaflets for more information.

Date airing	Show Topic (Click link to watch previously-aired shows)
20th January 2016	Ideas for starting a new agribusiness
27th January 2016	Developing a winning business plan
10th February 2016	Finding alternative sources of funding
17th February 2016	Analyzing the market
24th February 2016	How to attract customers
09th March 2016	Managing day-to-day business operations, keeping good records and having a savings and re-investment plan
16th March 2016	Managing money and paying back your loan

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