

Q2 MyNetWork



Nation Media Group's Paper Copy

USING TECH TRENDS TO UNLOCK GROWTH

When individuals harness the power of technology, the investments pay off in an exponential return. Read the stories of four young people who are leveraging on the power of digital technology **P.4&5**

MyNetWork Show Biz



Elizabeth Ngigi

Review

The Back-2-Basic podcast is an engaging space curated by Ondu Street Lawyer, a passionate music journalist, hip-hop enthusiast and culture scholar. Launched in 2021, the podcast offers an in-depth exploration of Kenya's creative industry, with a particular focus on its contributors and their journeys. Through candid conversations, Ondu dips into the personal stories and careers of creatives, highlighting the state of culture, the challenges of the creative economy, and life in general. What makes Back-2-basics stand out is its ability to blend cultural analysis with personal narratives.

Hotspot



Homeboyz Entertainment and Sarit Expo Centre are bringing Nairobi its first large-scale Halloween festival, the Festival of Frights. The event will take place on November 1 and 2, offering unique experiences for adults and children. Day one, Horns & Halo, will feature spooky activities for adults, including live performances and costume parties, while on day two will feature Hocus Pocus for children aged five and 12 and Neon Nightmare will cater to families with children aged 13-17. By organising this event, the organisers hope to redefine Nairobi's event scene. Tickets are already on sale at Sh1,500 via www.tikiti.co.ke. The event promises immersive décor, interactive attractions, and themed contests.

NEOMI NG'ANG'A



Neomi Ng'ang'a is a media personality, actress, and entrepreneur known for her advocacy for plus-size women. She grew up in Huruma informal settlements in Nairobi in a family of eight children, and was raised by her mother for the better part of her childhood as her father traveled frequently in search of resources to get his family out of poverty.

Neomi first gained national attention as a radio presenter and actress, starring in popular TV shows like Wingu La Moto and Noose of Gold. In this interview, she reflects on how she has expanded her influence beyond the screen, and carved out a niche in the fashion industry with her clothing line, Style by Neomi, that caters specifically to plus-size women.

1. You wear quite a number of hats, how has your journey in the fashion industry been like?

It all began in 2016 when I attended red carpet events as an actress and radio presenter. I was very green in the entertainment world. Sometimes I was called to host the shows and as a plus-size woman, I struggled to find stylish and flattering clothes. Most designers only offered me baggy outfits, which didn't reflect how I wanted to look or feel. I knew there had to be a way to dress my body in a way that made me feel confident and sassy.

Determined to solve this problem, I started designing my clothes by collaborating with different tailors. Soon, other plus-size women began asking me where I got my outfits, and I realised there was a demand for fashionable clothing for plus-size women in the industry. This is what inspired me to launch my business.

Now, nine years later, Style By Neomi is a popular brand that empowers plus-size women to embrace their bodies and express themselves fashionably. We are even designing bridal and couture dresses and this has allowed Style By Neomi to offer a wider range of stylish, custom-made outfits for women. My mission has always been to provide stylish, well-fitting clothes that make women feel beautiful, regardless of their size.

2. What did you study in school and is it helping you currently?

I took a diploma course in public relations at the University of Nairobi and graduated in 2009. I would like to go back to school and study the business side of fashion. Most creatives are talented in creativity but they fail as entrepreneurs because they do not have the necessary skill. I market my fashion house through social media, interact frequently with other creatives and sign up for training on different aspects of fashion to em-

power myself.

I also have a fashion school where we train people on the business side of fashion and the dynamics of the Kenyan market.

3. How has working with clients who are facing body image issues shaped your approach as a designer and stylist?

I handle different women every day. This includes some who have recently given birth or are going through difficulties in life and have either added or shed weight significantly and are struggling with their image. Some clients come to me seeking not only the perfect outfit but also a sense of confidence.

I normally say that fashion is deeply personal, and clothes are also a powerful tool for self-expression. For some, the process of finding clothes that make them feel beautiful can be emotionally challenging. This is where psychology comes into play. I have started collaborating with psychologists to help my clients navigate body image concerns.

You have to know where this person is coming from so by working with mental health professionals, clients can better understand some of their insecurities. Most clients agree so we address their physical appearance alongside the emotional and psychological aspects of their lives. Gladly, I have not had clients who don't follow what we tell them. Emotional support is crucial because while a stylist can only provide the perfect wardrobe, true confidence comes from within.

4. What are some challenges you have encountered in the nine years you have been in the industry?

One of the major challenges is the workmanship. In Kenya, we do not have a lot of tailors and designers who are well-equipped with current fashion techniques, so it's always a challenge to get the right team. Sometimes we are forced to use tailors from other countries. It is a challenge, but we are doing our best. We just hope that Kenya will establish more fashion schools and that our fashion designers will continue to elevate themselves in response to market trends because the fashion industry is dynamic. New trends and designs are coming up every day, and fashion designers have to keep up.

5. Are you dating, and who is your ideal husband?

Haha...I thought this interview was about my work! But since you asked, if I haven't announced anything on social media, then there is no man in my life. I am very single and working very hard to grow my company. My preferences for a partner have evolved. If you had asked me this question 10 years ago, I would have focused on looks and physique, but those things don't matter to me anymore. Now, it is all about emotional support and shared visions.

I want a man who complements my life and ambitions, and who genuinely supports what I do. He should be God-fearing and committed to building a family. I have worked hard, so I need a partner who is just as focused and grounded. At this point, I have left everything to God. Men like that are rare, but if He has one in store for me, I will be grateful when that time comes!

People

From my rare skin condition, a beauty business was born

BY PAUL KARIUKI

Growing up, Carol Wacuka had low self-esteem owing to a skin condition that caused her to hide under heavy makeup. However, the 28-year-old turned the condition to her advantage by enrolling in a beauty college. She graduated in 2019 with a diploma in beauty therapy. Today she runs a beauty business with branches in Nairobi and Nakuru.

How did you manage to establish a thriving skin care business?

I had problems with my skin ever since I was a teenager. I had an uneven skin tone which really affected my self-esteem. I used to wear very thick makeup almost all the time, and it really bothered me. As I searched for solutions online to try and understand this situation, I began getting interested in dermatology, especially the beauty aspect of skin care, so enrolled in a beauty school and took a diploma course in beauty therapy.

Beginnings are always humble, how fast did your business take off?

To be honest, one must know the ropes in any industry before venturing into business, especially how the market operates. I was employed in a spa in Westlands as a beauty therapist. My services included facial treatment, makeup, and massage. Then I started selling skincare products from my house. I would get orders and deliver them personally to clients. I started getting more orders and the hassle of delivering them personally got a little bit tricky because at that time I was still employed.

I decided to be storing them at my work place because we had lockable personal lockers. Our offices were located in Westlands and that worked for me because I could easily get clients. Soon after I started, the demand grew and I also had a lot of stock so I decided to rent a shelf in Nairobi CBD where clients could pick the products. Also, I began using riders to make deliveries.

Many have a challenge with the rent-a-shelf model, how was your experience?

I have no complaints. I really wanted a place where I could engage with my clients, and a physical location in Nairobi CBD was ideal because I could get many walk-in clients. Once I got the location, the volume of sales grew significantly, and I began feeling that employment wasn't for me. I quit my job to concentrate on business. Now, five years later, I have no regrets.

Are you satisfied with how fast the business has grown?

I can't complain. The world of business is different from that of employment. You don't have the same luxuries or benefits that employment offers, but you can challenge yourself to move

to the next height and be captain of the industry in a given business segment. Opening the Nakuru branch was a really huge step, and although I am not yet where I want to be, I am trusting the process.

What are some of the challenges you've faced so far?

One of the main ones is currency fluctuation. I ship most of my products from abroad, so changes in the dollar affect the prices, and we have to pass this additional cost to the customers. That is sometimes hard to explain to clients.

How many employees do you have and what do you look for in a new hire?

I have one in Nairobi and the other in Nakuru. When hiring, I always look for individuals who are good with skin consultation, have content creating skills, engage clients, are respectful, disciplined and, of course, fluent in English.

What is your short term vision?

I want to create my own skincare brand and be the best in providing skin



solutions, of course drawing from my own experience.

Do you reinvest profits in the business or channel them to a different project?

Yes, I reinvest profits back into the business. One thing I have learned about skincare is that it evolves every day and products are being launched every day. I therefore have to restock new products frequently.

What business lessons have you learned along the way?

One of the most critical lessons is that failure is an essential part of the journey. It is important to recognise failure as an opportunity to learn and grow. Secondly, never be afraid of taking risks. Skintrest Ke, my business, was a risk and today it is a thriving business.

Any mistake that you made and still regret?

Keep your business affairs from family life and friends. I learned that the hard way. Many, especially family, relatives and friends, will not share in your vision and will talk you out of the idea, but will be first to toast you on your success!

What advice would you give to those looking to invest in a business?

Put God first. There will never be a perfect time for you to start. Again, no one will ever do it like you so start now. Don't listen to naysayers who are there to distract you from your vision or goals. Not every advice is good advice.

How do you unwind?

I like spending time with my loved ones. It keeps me grounded.

Series review

By Michael Ochieng
PREFECTSWhere: Citizen Tv
Genre: Comedy, Drama.

Prefects is a new Kenyan series that delves into the intricate dynamics of high school life, focusing on the role of student leaders in high school. The series offers a fresh perspective on the challenges and responsibilities that come with leadership at a young age.

The storyline revolves around a group of students who are elected as prefects and must navigate the complexities of their new roles. The series does an excellent job of portraying the balance these young leaders must strike between maintaining authority and being relatable to their peers. It highlights the pressures they face from both the student body and the school administration, making it a relatable watch for anyone who has experienced the highs and lows of school life.

One of the standout aspects of *Prefects* is its character development. With the star cast Tracy Kababito, Melvin Alusa, Azzia Nasenya, Basil Mungai and Natasha Sinyo-bye, each character is well-crafted, with distinct personalities and backstories that add depth to the narrative. The lead characters, in particular, are portrayed with a level of nuance that makes their struggles and triumphs feel genuine. The series does not shy away from addressing real issues such as bullying, peer pressure, and the quest for academic excellence, making it both entertaining and thought-provoking.

The use of local music and cultural references adds an authentic touch, making the series resonate with its target audience. The dialogue is sharp and engaging, often infused with humor that lightens the mood without detracting from the serious themes. A must-watch for anyone interested in a well-rounded portrayal of high school life in Kenya.

MyNetwork Cover Story

Here's how we are play

Elvis Sitati is the founder of Uamuzi, a platform that uses digital tools in political engagement. .
ALL PHOTOS|POOL



BY MARGARET MAINA

Technology has become deeply integrated into the lives of young people worldwide. From the constant flow of social media notifications to the expansive opportunities offered by e-learning and online entrepreneurship, technology is a vital resource, but also a potential risk. Young Kenyans are navigating a landscape where instant connectivity and vast knowledge are readily available, yet they must also contend with many risks including cyber bullying and digital addiction. These four young innovators say how they are leveraging on technology to accelerate growth in various sectors.

Elvis Sitati, 32

Innovator and founder of Uamuzi

"In this technology-driven era, it is striking that public participation still relies on outdated methods. Geographical distances, time constraints, physical disabilities, socio-cultural barriers, and political affiliations often hinder meaningful engagement," Elvis begins.

In recognition of these challenges, Elvis envisioned a digital platform that would elevate political engagement by making the discussions

more inclusive, efficient, and transparent. His goal was to develop a tool that would enable every Kenyan, especially the youth, to connect with their leaders and access reliable information easily.

Despite lacking formal training in software development, Elvis launched Uamuzi, a mobile app tailored for Android devices. Although it provides functionalities similar to those of a website, its interface and user experience are optimised for mobile use.

"I graduated with a degree in community development from Kenyatta University, and the knowledge equipped me with a deep understanding of community dynamics, stakeholder engagement, and grassroots empowerment," he says.

Uamuzi is crafted to boost citizen participation in governance through various features that enable direct communication between the public and their representatives. The app facilitates engagement by allowing Kenyan young people, women, and persons with disabilities to participate in governance activities using their smartphones.

"Users can interact with elected leaders, provide feedback, and engage in discussions without physical meetings. The app includes real-time broadcasts of key events such as manifest launches and project updates, and has options where users can attend political forums online and even take polls on salient issues,"

he adds.

As an active citizen, Elvis noticed that some elected officials often disconnected from their constituents, particularly after they assumed office. He realised that this gap made it difficult for the electorate to voice their concerns and hold leaders accountable.

His app addresses this by providing all manifestos on the platform so that the electorate can easily access them, which in turn makes it easier for them to hold their leaders accountable. By ensuring that updates come directly from leaders, the platform reduces the risk of misinformation and ensures that constituents receive accurate and timely information.

Elvis and his team recently entered a partnership with the European Business Institute of Luxembourg (EBU), which has provided 5,000 sponsored courses for Kenyan youth and 100 leadership courses for legislators.

Through this partnership, young leaders can access funding to vie for political office, which is among the barriers keeping young people from taking up leadership opportunities.

The app also helps bring local issues to the forefront by allowing users to comment on posts from leaders in their constituencies.

Alex Mose aka Moseax,

Alex Mose aka Moseax is a Nakuru-based social media personality and vlogger.

32

Social media personality and vlogger

In the ever-evolving realm of social media, few stories capture the essence of digital influence and creativity quite like that of Nakuru-based Moseax. Since embarking on his social media journey in 2012, Moseax has carved out a prominent space for himself in Kenya's dynamic online landscape.

With a client base that primarily seeks him out due to his compelling content and established reputation, he says that his career trajectory highlights the changing dynamics of digital influence.

"Monetising my work involves a range of strategies. I am paid based on the scope of the task at hand, and the financial strength of different organisations. Kenyan businesses rarely pay per tweet, but I once worked with Microsoft where I earned \$35 (Sh5,000) for each tweet," he reveals.

Moseax's income is derived from several streams, including his online marketing agency, Baseline Kenya, and his ventures as a travel influencer and farmer. His career features collaborations with over 100 leading Kenyan brands, including Safaricom, Coca-Cola, and Microsoft. To fend off competition, he focuses on delivering consistent quality and value, which has helped him build long-term relationships with clients in the compet-

itive market.

He plans to explore emerging trends in social media and digital marketing by leveraging new tools and technologies to engage his audience in innovative ways. He is excited about the potential of artificial intelligence and machine learning to shape the future of social media marketing, anticipating they will provide new opportunities for personalised content and targeted marketing strategies.

"One of the challenges in this rapidly changing landscape is the need to adapt to new platforms and shifting audience preferences. Influencers must continuously innovate and refine their strategies to remain relevant and effective," he says.

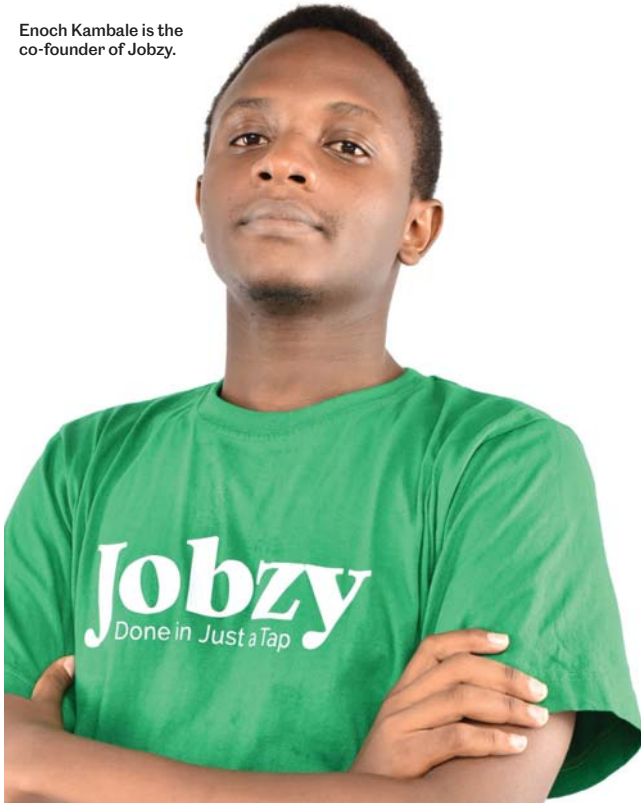
Among the highlights in his career are nominations to the 2015 SO-MA Awards, and the Kenya Glamour Awards. He also featured in a Coca-Cola advert on World Social Media Day. However, his journey has not been without challenges.

"Managing client expectations, navigating the complexities of digital marketing, and maintaining authenticity in an ever-changing landscape are just a few hurdles I have faced. Through these experiences, I have learned the importance of transparency, adaptability, and maintaining a strong personal brand," he says.

Despite the challenges, Moseax testifies that social media influencing remains a promising career path for those who can adapt to chang-

ing on new tech trends

Enoch Kambale is the co-founder of Jobzy.



ing trends and consistently deliver high-quality content.

Enoch Kambale, 20

Tech prodigy and co-founder of Jobzy

Enoch is the co-founder of Jobzy, a leading tech startup that is revolutionising job discovery and recruitment across Africa.

Currently pursuing a computer science degree course at the University of Nairobi, Enoch has channelled his passion for technology into a collection of products known as Talent, designed to serve both job seekers and recruiters.

“My journey in technology started in my teenage years. As an only child, I initially found comfort in drawing and sketching. However, everything changed when I discovered coding at 16. This newfound passion became the cornerstone of my future,” he reflects.

In 2021, Enoch and his co-founder, Matt Magera, launched Jobzy to connect informal gig workers with customers. The platform demonstrated how technology can address inefficiencies in informal employment. As Jobzy grew, they saw an opportunity to expand its scope.

This insight led to a strategic pivot into Talent, which caters to formal job markets and includes three distinct but interconnected products

for job seekers and recruiters.

The Talent mobile app serves as a comprehensive job board, aggregating listings from prominent platforms such as LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and Indeed. It also includes job postings, offering users a wide array of employment opportunities.

A standout feature of the app is its integration of Generative AI.

“This advanced technology generates customised resumes, cover letters, and job application emails. By entering personal career details or a LinkedIn profile URL, job seekers receive tailored documents for each application. The AI uses job information and the user’s career history to produce these documents within minutes, greatly enhancing the chances of a successful application,” he explains.

Automatically synchronised with the Talent mobile app is Talent Suite, a recruitment platform where recruiters can post job openings thereby facilitating a seamless connection between recruiters and job seekers.

Enoch is currently developing an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to allow recruiters to organise, review, and communicate with applicants through a single interface, thereby enhancing both efficiency and effectiveness.

The comprehensive background-checking system, used across Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa, allows recruiters to

thoroughly verify potential employees. It provides a reliable method for validating credentials and ensuring hires meet required standards. This reduces hiring risks.

“Since its launch, the platform has attracted over 20,000 users. Job seekers are drawn to the app’s AI-powered tools, while recruiters appreciate the ease of posting and managing job listings,” he says.

Kambale’s entrepreneurial journey has been characterised by significant challenges. Launching Jobzy with limited resources demanded creativity and resilience, from securing initial funding to building a dependable team. Beyond his work, he is dedicated to mentoring aspiring tech enthusiasts, offering insights and guidance to young developers to inspire the next generation of African tech innovators.

As Talent continues to advance, he remains dedicated to refining its features, expanding its reach, and introducing new products.

Neema Masitsa, 27

Communications specialist at KICTANet

Neema’s strategy to merge media, technology and human rights advocacy, along with her role at an ICT firm, positions her well to tackle digital rights and internet governance complexities.

Neema Masitsa is a communications specialist at KICTANet.

Her expertise, bolstered by a Bachelor’s degree in media science, and certifications in internet governance and media science research, offers her a deep understanding of the intersection between media, technology, and their societal impacts.

“I am deeply involved in the Gender Digital Rights Program, where my focus is to establish an equitable and inclusive digital environment. My work addresses the complexities of digital rights and confronts the persistent challenges of the digital age, with a particular emphasis on advancing gender digital rights,” she says.

The digital revolution has greatly expanded educational and entrepreneurial opportunities for Kenya’s youth by expanding access to learning through online platforms and digital tools. This transformation has enhanced skill development, enabled the launch of innovative businesses with minimal investment, and created valuable networking and mentorship opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

“However, despite these advancements, the digital landscape presents substantial risks. Concerns such as cyberbullying, online predators, misinformation, and digital addiction remain a challenge.”

Addressing these risks requires a multi-faceted approach, including comprehensive digital literacy education, active parental involvement,

robust regulatory frameworks, and accessible support services for victims of online abuse.

“Digital literacy programmes are essential for educating young users about online safety, privacy settings, and managing digital threats. Active parental engagement is another critical component. Parents should monitor their children’s online activities and foster open communication about their digital experiences.

“Effective digital policies and regulations are also essential for safeguarding young users and ensuring platform safety. Comprehensive standards are needed to address online abuse and promote responsible technology use, while accessible support services are crucial for helping cyberbullying victims recover emotionally and psychologically,” she says.

Neema advocates for strong data protection laws, comprehensive policies to combat online abuse, and improved digital literacy programmes to meet diverse user needs.

“The digital revolution has dramatically transformed how young people learn, work, and connect. To navigate these changes effectively, it is crucial to address risks and challenges through improved digital literacy, strong policies, and a culture of safety and inclusion,” she says.

mwmaina@ke.nationmedia.com

Accomplished Judith is a fly-half for Impala Roans and national 7s and 15s teams

From football rookie to rugby team captain



Q&A

You were once a footballer, how did you transition to rugby?

I started playing football in primary school. I loved it. I used to train with Ikonzo FC during school holidays. I continued with football to high school at the advice of my football coach who

told me there was a school in Nairobi that pays fees for student footballers. That is how I joined Olympic High School in Kibera where I was boarding.

While playing football, rugby coach Diana Awino came to our school to start teaching rugby. Our school team coach gave her names of some football players, including me. That was back in 2015 when I was in Form Three. Awino told us that if you impress, then you can join the national women's team. That really

motivated me to work hard.

Rugby is a contact sport where you can easily pick an injury, how did you come to like it?

To be honest, I wasn't keen on rugby. I believed it was a dangerous sport, much harder than football. In fact, while in Form Two, I swore never to play rugby. However, after some motivation from the coach, I changed my mind.

Tell us more about Diana

While in Form Two, I swore never to play rugby,

Judith Auma



Awino... what exactly did she tell you that piqued your interest in rugby?

She told me that I could make a good number nine in rugby because of my athletic body and because I am short. She told me that I had the potential to get to the national team if I worked hard. Her words really motivated me and made me take up the sport. She made me believe that I could represent the country someday.

How did you find your way to the national team after high school?

After Form Four, I returned upcountry because I had nowhere to stay. But coach Mary Otieno from Impala Roans called and asked me to come back to Nairobi. I attended national team trials and earned my first call up in October 2017. I was so excited to be in the national team. I owe coach Mary Otieno a lot for my rugby journey. She sent me a bus fare of Sh1,200 from Busia to come for the trials and even gave me a place to stay. She promised to pay my rent of Sh5,000 from 2016 to 2018 to enable me to continue pursuing rugby.

How did your parents feel about you playing rugby?

When I told them I was playing rugby, they asked if I was sure I wanted to do it. My dad was so happy when I joined the national team. My mum doesn't know a lot about rugby but one day she saw a video of me and asked me how I ended up playing rugby at such a high level.

What challenges have you had to go through to get to the top in rugby?

After Form Four, before coach Mary Otieno came to my rescue, I had no place to live. Transport to attend training sessions was

also a challenge and sometimes I lacked food.

You are a young mother, how do you juggle motherhood and rugby?

It is not easy but it is all about planning. I always think about my child, even when I'm on the pitch.

You emerged as the top try scorer at this year's National Sevens Circuit...

That meant a lot to me. I did not expect it but I did it thanks to God and also myself for working hard. I got the Most Valuable Player award twice and Impact Player once. It is all about effort. Additionally, as an athlete, you have to do your own personal training.

You have captained both Impala Roans and the national sevens team, Kenya Lionesses. What does it take to be the captain?

You must lead by example and work hard.

Will I be correct to say that you have earned good money from playing rugby? Where have you invested it?

Yes, I have earned good money from this sport. I have used the money to help my siblings to go to school.

What are your plans, because you will not be playing rugby your whole life?

I plan to start a business and go into coaching. I've not settled on a particular business I want to operate because I'm still thinking through it. I currently coach young children.

How has rugby changed your life?

I have travelled to Tunisia, Japan, Australia, South Africa, Botswana, Uganda, Hong Kong, Dubai, Poland, Chile, Uruguay, Madagascar, Monaco and the US because of this sport.

Is it easy or difficult to be a female rugby player in Kenya?

It is not easy at all. As women, we have a lot to deal with such as mood changes, periods and, of course, maternity. Sometimes we are not understood.

How has your spouse helped you in your rugby career?

After maternity, he stayed with my child as I went for training.

In Brief

■ Born in Busia on July 12, 1998, Judith Auma Okumu is one of the country's top female rugby players

■ The first-born from a family of seven ditched football for rugby in 2015

■ Judith, who is nicknamed Ozil after former German and Arsenal football playmaker Mesut Ozil, is a scrum-half/fly-half from Impala Roans and national sevens and 15s team

■ Her role model is South African Rosko Specman and Japan-based Kenyan international Janet Okello

■ Judith attended Ikonzo Primary school in Busia and Olympic High School and Kenya Institute Of Professional Studies (KIPS) College in Nairobi, and was part of the Kenya Lionesses team at the 2018

Commonwealth Games and Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games

■ She has also featured in Rugby Tens Series championship, turning out for Wild Dogs franchise in 2022 and Elephants in 2023 in South Africa and represented Elephants alongside compatriots Stella Wafula and Grace Okulu in 2024 in the US.



HIGHSCHOOLER

HighSchooler magazine

Premium content for junior secondary and high school on careers , literature , finance and so much more



Subscribe your school for the NIE program at **Ksh 60,000** per year. For more details please contact Philemon Bett [+254 722 129 446](tel:+254722129446) nie@ke.nationmedia.com

DAILY NATION



Visit: epaper.nation.africa
 subscribe today

