

African Entrepreneurs – Successful and Responsible

Episode 5

Title: “A Business grows like a person” – Julian Omalla from Uganda

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Characters / Narrators

	Women	Men	Age	Language
Intro/Outro		x	Unimportant	
Narrator	x		Unimportant	
Julian Adyeri Omalla (clip)	x		about 40	English
Felix Omalla (clip)		x	about 40-50	English
Patricia Bilal (clip)	x		about 30-40	English

INTRO

Hello and welcome to our Learning by Ear series on African entrepreneurs who are not only successful in their businesses but also interested in social commitment. Today we are meeting Julian Adyeri Omalla, a well-known business woman in Uganda. She left her humble beginnings far behind her and changed her biography from a story of poverty to prosperity. Her struggle against poverty made her work hard to create employment for 450 people from Uganda and the neighbouring South Sudan. We meet her at her farm in the Eastern part of Uganda.

0. SFX: Atmo (driving through) farm

1. Narrator

A four hours drive from Uganda's capital Kampala takes you to Kidera poultry farm in Eastern Uganda. A huge maize field, of a size of around 200 football pitches, welcomes you to the farm. One could easily think that it was a maize and not a poultry farm because you have to drive quite a while before seeing tens of poultry houses.

2. SFX : Atmo (Chicken)

3. Narrator

Workers dressed in sky blue aprons are busy working here. Everybody seems to know their job because they co-ordinate so well with only a minimum of supervision. There are those carrying chicken feed, others are feeding chickens and some are collecting eggs. In one day, Kidera poultry farm collects a minimum of 2000 eggs.

The company is owned by a woman who started from scratch but her passion for business has positioned her in the international business arena. Her name is Julian Adyeri Omalla. On the first impression you might think that the tall and stout woman is a tough person. But after spending a few moments with her you will realize that she is a lady of calm demeanor. . The wife of a judiciary official in Uganda and a mother to three children, Julian was born 44 years ago in Southwestern Uganda and was lucky to study up to secondary school.

4. Clip Julian 1

I come from a humble poor background. My father was a teacher and we are many in our family. My mother gave birth to seven children but there were far more children living together with us in our household. My father was a generous man. He collected so many people, extended family members, relatives so we would be 35 or 40 at home. So we grew up in a poor way and I had to struggle hard to fight poverty. I hated being poor when I was young.

5. Narrator

Her struggle to fight poverty prompted her to start cross border trading with a capital of less than 100 Euros. She sold maize from Uganda in Kenya. There she bought wheat flour which she sold back in Uganda. But when her business partner fleeced her she decided to go solo in business.

Today Julian Adyeri owns six companies including one in South Sudan. She calls herself an opportunist who never misses a chance to make money and that is why she decided to tap into South Sudan's virgin economy to invest there, despite the country's poor infrastructure. Her first business called "Delight Uganda", was established in 1996. It is a company which processes and packs a soft drink called "Cheers Juice".

6. Clip Julian 2

I started in a hard way. I remember I used to go to Kenya to buy bottles; I would boil the water at night and produce juice in the morning. I would use a wheel barrow to take my juice to town. I remember I used to wear my red dress and I would move around marketing my juice. By that time I had no money to rent a shop. I would be at the veranda of a friend's shop.

7. Narrator

With the help of government chemists, Julian was able to improve on her product which is now being consumed beyond the Ugandan borders.

Nevertheless she went into other businesses, most of them in the field of farming and marketing agricultural products.

8. Narrator

A major challenge in her businesses has always been taxes. Although she loves her first business of producing juice, she says the business is not so profitable because of high production costs and taxes.

However her proceeds from agriculture play a big part in ensuring her profits. This is why she is heavily involved in agriculture. In Uganda, there are only low tax rates involved in farming. But what led her to agriculture?

9. Clip Julian 3

I was forced to be a farmer because I did not want my kids to beg. I considered it very bad for your kid to admire a mango because you are very lazy, because you cannot plant it, because you want to buy it in the market. If you always buy at the market, will you save any money doing something? Also I did not want my husband to buy food.

10. Narrator

Though she works very independently today, Julian credits her success to the support she gets from her family.

11. Clip Julian 4

I married a very supportive husband. He is more educated than me and he is not jealous like other men who would be jealous that their wife has more money than them. He said however how fat the rat will grow, it will remain food for the cat.

12. Short music break

13. SFX: Atmo of men loading a lorry with cartons of Cheers juice

We are at the compound of “Delight Uganda”, Julian’s juice production company. Several men are busy loading a truck with packages and bottles of juice. Julian's husband is supervising the loading of “cheers juice” on the lorry to be ready for distribution. Felix Omalla is a judiciary official and always helps at the factory when not busy in his office. He’s proud of being married to a successful woman. Although sometimes it’s not easy for him to accept that she’s the one wearing the trousers. To cope with it he developed his own theory of who’s the boss at home...

14. Clip Felix Omalla

It is not easy to maintain a powerful woman. Many women think it is their chance to date a powerful man but sometimes men think likewise. When you get a powerful woman, indeed it is not the woman who is more powerful than you. It is you managing that woman so you are more powerful than the woman. She is the managing director of this company but I am her managing director. So I am the managing director of the managing director of a company (laughter).

15. Narrator

For Julian, it is not important who the boss at home is. She doesn't have to prove herself anymore. Doing business is her passion. After 15 years, Julian has been able to create employment for 450 people from Uganda and South Sudan. Her efforts have not gone unrealized. In 2010, the Uganda investment authority awarded her the Woman Job Creator Award.

She admits managing six companies is not an easy task and more so for a woman living in Africa where, for a long time, a woman's place was seen to be in the kitchen. To help her manage her companies, she has trained a group of women on managerial skills with the goal to improve the capacity and bargaining power of women, she says.

16. Clip Julian 5

I always ensure I bring other women on board and I train them how to survive and not to sit and look at men. We must help ourselves as women.

17. Clip Julian 6

We can show our capacity through actions. I am not fond of talking. As I wake up in the morning I know my job and I have challenged many men.

18. Narrator

She says like most Africans who are earning, she is not in the position to re-invest all her profits because she has to support her disadvantaged relatives, friends and neighbours. All in all, Julian is happy to help because she believes it is by giving, that her businesses have been able to grow. Because the people she is helping always bring blessings in her life.

19. Clip Julian 7

In Africa relatives have a right to eat and drink and where you can, you support them. With education I try. I try to work with some of them. I am a born again Christian and the way I handle my things I believe I must be a blessing to others so I try to help where I can, even orphans I try to help. I would have gone further than where I am today but I work hard and I budget and I must take that into consideration.

20. Narrator

If you are thinking of starting a business Julian has some advice for you.

21. Clip Julian 8

Start the business which you know and understand. And you need total commitment. You must have the time; you must love the business you do. You are the owner of the business, the vision bearer so if you do not have time for business then it will never start. You must be there for it.

Secondly you must save for the business. You are supposed to re-invest and with business you must be really patient. Business grows like a person.

22. Narrator

Patricia Bilal is Julian's business partner managing "Cheers food and beverage" in Juba in South Sudan, a company selling bread. She came to Uganda to visit Julian. Having worked with her for six years, what does she think about Julian?

23. Clip Patricia

She is a very humble person and that is one thing I like about her. She is a very serious woman who likes challenges. She will get into a business without knowing what will happen in the future but she gets into it without hesitation.

24. Narrator

With all these responsibilities on her shoulders does Julian ever have time for her family?

25. Clip Julian 9

I am my own boss and it's a matter of creating time and agreeing with my family members. My husband is very supportive and I have trained my kids to learn to live at times without me and at times to accept the reality. At times we argue. They will say "mummy this time you are not going to Sudan," I tell them why I should go to Sudan, what are the benefits of going to Sudan, so, what we do mainly is we agree.

Outro:

Thank you, Julian Adyeri Omalla for sharing your personal story on how to become a successful business lady in Uganda with us. And that's all for today's Learning by Ear series on African entrepreneurs. Our reporter was Leylah Ndinda. Thank you for joining us and listening to this program. If you would like to find out more about this topic, or listen to other Learning by Ear programs, please visit our website at www.dw.de/lbe. Bye for now!