



SUCCESS IS A COMPANION OF COMMITMENT

Kone Minata

Success takes months, years and sometimes, even decades. However, when you're passionate and committed towards your goal, no matter how far you have to travel to taste your rewards, you wouldn't be tired. For you know that good things take time, but certainly, they come to light.



Burkina Faso – A land rich in culture

Ranked as one of the most financially unstable countries according to statistics with a poor literacy rate, Burkina Faso in West Africa is known for its rich culture, art and music. In land of such normalcy, it's mesmerizing to follow Mrs Kone Minata's life and her ascent to the peak of success.

She knows the meaning of hard work from a tender age

After losing her father at the age of 8 and working tirelessly to help her mother to fulfill their family's needs, it may be well understood that Mrs Kone is used to working hard from a young age. Not one to compromise on education, as a child, every day after finishing school, she would involve herself in meager trade and the money she'd earn was used to ensure the next day's meals. On Sundays, which were regarded as market days, she'd assist her mother in her trade.

Taking her mother's advice

Many a days passed similarly and once she had obtained her master's degree in technology, she worked as an archivist at the Ministry of Agriculture. After completing 15 years of service in this field and having retired, Mrs Kone decided it was time she finally accepted her mother's suggestion from the year 1992, which was to grow cashew nuts in the field that she generously offered.



Starting a one of a kind factory

Thus, in 2003, she established the Industrial Cashew Processing Society in Burkina Faso (SOTRIA-B), specializing in raw cashew nuts processing into white kernel, cashew butter or cashew flour. Mrs Kone's factory was the first Burkinabe private enterprise made up of completely national capital, to exercise in cashew nuts processing.





Small steps led to her glorious success

What started as a small scale enterprise with around 100 employees, today houses more than 2000 people with more than 90% being women. Presently, SOTRIA-B has a production capacity of 2 ton per day. Since 2010, Mrs Minata has also been able to sell her products exclusively in the American market which are also distributed across the world.

A bumpy ride

As impressive as it is to see her rise to success, it hasn't been a smooth ride. Not only did she have to mold herself to the transition from an archivist to an industrialist, she had to also ensure that she had the necessary skills. Although one of her aims to join the cashew business was to generate employment for women, before she could fulfill it, she had to do her bit.

Thus, it is for this reason, along with the minimal knowledge she had from being a trader and also observing well established businesses in her neighborhood in terms of cashew nut processing, she frequently travelled to factories in foreign lands to educate herself on production and processing. Although she did not receive trainings per se or know any women personally in this field, as it is said, travelling is the best teacher!

Providing employment and related facilities to women

And true to herself, a majority of employees in her enterprise from the beginning to this day are women. She believes that it is the social character of the enterprise that attracts the female population to the cashew sector. After all, along with monetary benefits, Mrs Kone's enterprise also offers advantages like facilities to access bank loans, infirmary, nursery, financial support to buy school supplies of their children and a literacy center for those who are in need.



She strongly believes that by trusting women and providing them with necessary funds for their business, their status in the cashew sector can be enormously improved.

Hard work pays off!

With 13 years of experience in this field and years of commitment, it is a moment of pride to be a witness to her long days of hard work that seem to finally pay off. Working full time at her enterprise, she admits that she spends more hours at work than with her family, nevertheless she does her best to be available for her children. Also, she has no family members who work with her in this field.

Commitment is key

Coming to her personal views, she believes that her commitment helps her stand out in the market along with the impressive years of experience as well as permanent and stable labor. For Mrs Kone, only her enterprise isn't associated with work for her job starts at home before proceeding to the unit due to which, she cannot specify her working hours. She is involved with all levels of the job, which include purchase of RCN/Kernal, processing and operation monitoring, marketing and negotiation with kernel buyers, technology selection as well as financial transaction with banks.



Effective communication is a skill

When it comes to dealing with men workers in her unit, she says fluent communication is the key and it helps break barriers. She also believes that she is not denied rewards based on gender.

In her opinion, access to funding in time, at a reasonable rate at the local level stands to be a challenge and she backs on her research from around the world to overcome it.

An impressive role model

Married and mother of two children, Mrs Kone, is the very model for successful female entrepreneurship. Her experience and efforts help her receive recognition and she is of the opinion that although women are the pioneers, they hardly become leaders because of the negative practices in the field. In her view, the government should take specific protective measures to protect national industry.

Receiving accolades for her work

Today, in spite of business world difficulties, Mrs Kone Minata has succeeded. And in an effort to appreciate her humongous contribution to Burkina Faso social-economic development, she was awarded a national honor, the Medal of the National Order. Recently she was elected as President of the Interprofessional body of Burkina Faso, as well as in October 2016 a Member of the Executive Committee of the African Cashew Alliance (ACA).

A novel entrepreneur

Mrs Kone is a modern entrepreneur and a model who is always on the lookout to improvise and hopes to run a higher growth company in the coming years. Her life story can inspire many others and encourage those who want to try entrepreneurship.

However, it is important to note that one needs to be passionate about it, for when asked, Mrs Kone confidently replied that to her, her work was like her last child. This clearly gives us the idea of how dedicated, committed and invested she is in her profession.

A story filled with lessons

A symbol for courage, strength and success, Mrs Kone's story can serve as a motivation factor to all the women across the globe seeking a career in the cashew industry or otherwise, as long as they are willing to stay committed to their passion.

For, as we all know, success is the companion of commitment!

