

Clicks & Bits.

Hashtag

#Education Matters

I am building a medical empire

High mortality rates from preventable or treatable ailments inspired Steven Stowel to establish Stowelink – a brand that seeks to educate people on health issues. To date the young company boasts of reaching an estimated 1.2 million Kenyans with messages on health and how to prevent and treat non-communicable diseases such as cancer, stroke, and heart ailment. Stowel, 22, is a third-year student at Kenyatta University where he's studying for two degrees – Population Medicine and Homeopathic Medicine. He also dabbles in modelling, singing, poetry and photography, among other passions. This is what he has to say about building a medical empire from college while still not missing out on the fun of early adulthood.

By Pauline Mulndi
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When did you launch Stowelink?

The official launch was in September 2016, although I had been working on the idea a couple of years earlier. Before September 2016 Stowelink was involved in various projects most of which were not health or medical related. There was photography, design, modelling, and poetry events. We hadn't decided on which direction to take yet.

By saying 'we' does it mean that you have partners?

Not really, I own 100 per cent of Stowelink although I have friends and people I have mentored working for me. These are people who believed in me and my ideas and continually help me succeed. Most of them are fellow students although we also partner with an established IT company.

What motivated you to start the health/medical side of Stowelink?

I knew I wanted to be a doctor in class five, which led me to pursue a course in the medical field. From a young age, I

had a huge desire to have an impact in society and had always been entrepreneurial. In high school I used to tutor other students in computer knowledge for a fee. Stowelink was where all that came together.

What was the beginning like?

I didn't have funds for the business. I just believed in my idea and its potential to help people. I started talking to people about it and doing small projects on community health information. From this, I partnered with other students, doctors, and health organisations.

How successful were these projects?

So far Stowelink has been involved in three major projects: Save a life, Save a world- Alpha- and myHeart_KE. All of them have been successful. For the first one, we collaborated with Aids Control Unit and it involved free youth-friendly sex education to campus students and surrounding communities. We managed to reach 8,000 people. Alpha was a four-month project in which we collaborated with an NGO called Sante Reva to sensitise people on cancers-especially breast, testicular, prostate, and cervical cancers. We reached 120,000 people through Alpha. The third project, my Heart_KE, focused on educating people in Kisumu on heart health and has been the most successful yet- reaching over 112,000 people. We're currently running the same project in Nairobi and are training people to reach other counties. We have had various other side projects such as counselling for victims of sexual abuse in Kisumu, and co-hosting World Stroke Day in Nairobi.

It sounds like Stowelink is a non-profit organisation. Do you make any money doing this?

It's true that we operate much like a non-profit. Right now we're mostly focused on having a positive impact in the community. However, we have also managed to make money which goes to other projects. We made some money during health projects through organising photo shoots, having sponsors, and have created a health app. to capitalise on online revenue.

What are some of the unique challenges of your business?

Like any other business, we struggle with getting funding. Most sponsors want to see that you have a resume of various successful projects before they can commit their money, which is a challenge because we're such a young company. Other challenges are getting people interested and excited about health topics, which many find boring.

How do you get them to listen?

We make our campaigns attractive and fun for young campus students. We incorporate activities like fashion shows, photo shoots, and poetry. In rural areas we go through chief's barazas and community gatherings as well as primary and high schools.

How do you manage to juggle between Stowelink, schoolwork, and your other creative interests?

I have learned to manage my time really well. Instead of wasting time in activities that don't build me, I use every hour of my day doing something towards my goals. Time is a limited resource and it's important to have self discipline in managing it. Once you do that, you realize 24 hours is a lot of time!

What are some of the awards Stowelink has won?

In 2017 we won KUSA Exemplary Entrepreneur and were cited as one of the biggest contributing brands to achieving SDG3 on health and wellbeing by the UN. Stowelink was also noted by Y-TATAS (a branch of UNESCO based in Uganda) as one of the brands contributing to Youth Friendly Health Sensitisation Projects in Kenya. On a personal level, I was nominated for KUSA Outstanding Model of the Year and was shortlisted to represent Kenya in the One Young World Youth Forum in Colombia.

Steven Stowel.



PWEZA PREDICTIONS

EPL Review

Match week 24 was relatively low-keyed, but an amusing one, with Hazard, Lacazette, Willian and Martial all netting sumptuous goals for their respective sides. Chelsea were free flowing against Brighton hitting four unanswered beauties. Conte will look to welcome Bournemouth next week. (Blues 3 Cherries 1)

Tricky affair at Wembley as Spurs entertain Man United. Spurs, despite enjoying great chances against Southampton had to settle for point. Top four is proving elusive for Pochettino and he will do anything to bag all three points. Red Devils had a narrow 1-0 win against Burnley last week, with dazzling Sanchez now on the side. It will be tough for Kane reaching that centurion PL goal. (Spurs 2 United 2)

Many thought after slumping to their first defeat this campaign, City crumbling was just a matter of when! Aguero's hat trick past Newcastle was enough to hush the critics. With 12 points clear at the summit, Pep is confident of a win when West Brom come knocking next week. (City 4 Baggies 0) Liverpool is that team that showcases the best while exposing all of its weaknesses at the same time. After knocking out fatso (City) last week in such classic manner, only to be floored by bottom side Swansea beats all logic. Liverpool travel to Huddersfield Town next week in attempt to right all wrongs. (Terriers 1 Reds 3)

In a swap deal that saw Sanchez and Mkhitarianov move opposite directions, Arsenal will try to prove a point as they travel South to take on basement boys Swansea (Swansea 1 Gunners 2).

Highlight of the week

Liverpool beating Man City a week earlier, then losing to Swansea a week later, would be the most Klopp thing ever (pun intended). Ok Klopp, if only you could play City every other week you would be at the top of the table!

FINANCIAL TIDBITS

Inflation and deflation

Inflation is when prices rise, and deflation is when prices fall. When taken to their extremes, both are bad for economic growth, but for different reasons. This is why central bank tries to control them. Here's how to recognize the signs of rampant inflation and deflation,

Inflation lowers your standard of living if your income doesn't keep pace with rising prices (and it rarely does). However, if inflation is around two per cent, then people buy things now before prices go up in the future.



There are five types of inflation. The worst is hyperinflation. That's when prices rise more than 50 per cent a month. Fortunately, it's rare. That's because it's only caused by massive military spending. On the other end of the scale is asset inflation,

The third type, creeping inflation, is when prices rise three percent a year or less. It's somewhat common. It occurs when the economy is doing well. The fourth type is walking or pernicious inflation. Prices increase three to ten per cent a year, enough for people to stock up now to avoid higher prices later. Suppliers and wages can't keep up, which leads to shortages or prices so high that most people can't afford the basics.

The fifth type, galloping inflation, is when prices rise ten per cent or more a year. It can destabilize the economy, drive out foreign investors, and topple government leaders. It's a result of exchange rate fluctuations.

Deflation is when prices fall, but it can be difficult to spot. That's because all prices don't fall uniformly. Deflation is worse because interest rates can only be lowered to zero. As businesses and people feel less wealthy, they spend less and reduce demand further. Prices drop in response, giving companies less profit. Once people expect price declines, they delay purchases as long as possible. They know the longer they wait, the lower the price will be. This further decreases demand, causing businesses to slash prices even more. It is a vicious, downward spiral.

[Jimmy Mwangi]