

Doing Kenya proud!

Besides making a name for themselves in the international arena, these Kenyans have put us in the global limelight

By LILIAN KAVILU

Home is best. But for some Kenyans, the world is their playing ground as they strive to impact the globe with their acts of philanthropy, technology and even development. These are Kenyans who have made a name abroad and are playing a big role in the development of other nations, and in the process, building a name for their motherland. They have been singled out many times for their exemplary

performance in the various sectors and their role in both the economic and image development of Kenya. They are neither politicians nor necessarily the ordinary celebrities but common citizens whose performance has placed Kenya on the international scene. Development Agenda profiles some of them.

Mukhisa Kituyi

Many Kenyans remember him for his role in Kenya's cabinet when he served as Minister for Trade and Industry between 2002 and 2007.

Dr Mukhisa Kituyi now serves as the Secretary General of the African Union Commission. Besides, the Political Science and International Relations graduate from Makerere University was part of a team of experts advising the presidents of the nations in the East African Community regarding regional trade. Kituyi holds a PhD in Social Anthropology, a Master

Institute of Governance, Nairobi. The father of four helped in the formation of the structure for a pan-African trade area between 2011 and 2012 where he was consultant for the African Union Commission. Besides, the Political Science and International Relations graduate from Makerere University was part of a team of experts advising the presidents of the nations in the East African Community regarding regional trade. Kituyi holds a PhD in Social Anthropology, a Master

of Philosophy in Development Studies and a Diploma in Science, Comparative Production Systems, all from the University of Bergen, Norway. Among other achievements, Kituyi was chairman of the Council of Ministers of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and convener of the agriculture negotiations held at the World Trade Organisation's sixth Ministerial Conference in China.

No matter where you are from, your dreams are valid- Lupita Nyong'o

Lupita Nyong'o

Who else could start off this list? The daughter of Kenya's former President Mwai Kibaki, Lupita Nyong'o has been in Kenya's and international media's limelight since last year for her role in the film industry. The five star was in the global news last week after winning the prestigious Oscar for Best Supporting Actress award, emerging top of big names in the sector.

The 31 year old had earlier won the Academy Award for supporting actress following her role she played in '12 Years a Slave' in which she acted as Patsy, a freed but abused slave.

Her role in the film

reflected last year, her season her win awards that not only made her a star but also put Kenya, her motherland in the limelight. President Uhuru Kenyatta, joined other Kenyans in congratulating the Maasai born star, describing her as the "pride of Africa".

She holds a degree in Film and Television Studies from Washington College, United States and has worked in several film including 'Fernando Martinez in The Goodbye Garden' and 'Mia Nali: The Namesake'. Locally, Nyong'o featured in 'Shuga', a television series that presented a documentary that featured in film festivals in Kenya.

Daniel Adongo

At only 25, Daniel Adongo stands out as the only African player in America's National Football League. For Adongo, it all began in Nairobi's Westlands in the early 1990's when he developed interest in rugby. Besides rugby, the Southmore alumus has been a record holder in athletics including 100m, 200m, 400m, shot put and Javelin. In addition, Adongo played Basketball, Football and rugby. Previously, he was awarded the Scottman of the Year at Stiphmore School where he was coached by the South African scouts who spotted his unique talent. Adongo later joined the Kenya Harlequin junior team and in 2007, he joined to the Natal Sharks academy where he progressed from Under-19 level in 2008 to Under-21 level in 2010.

In Liberia, where I visited recently to showcase solar cooking technology, the protocol I received was so overwhelming. The President even knew that I was around-Faustine Odaba, the founder and CEO of Natural Resources and Waste Management Alliance (Narewama), in the company of delegates in any public function locally. But ironically, her visit in some countries earns her a VIP reception. "In Liberia, where I visited recently to showcase solar cooking technology, the protocol I received was so overwhelming. The President even knew that I was around-Faustine Odaba, the founder and CEO of Natural Resources and Waste Management Alliance

Faustine Odaba

Her name is the renewable energy sector is not new. However, you will hardly see Faustine Odaba, the founder and CEO of Natural Resources and Waste Management Alliance (Narewama), in the company of delegates in any public function locally. But ironically, her visit in some countries earns her a VIP reception. "In Liberia, where I visited recently to showcase solar cooking technology, the protocol I received was so overwhelming. The President even knew that I was around. 'Hina Yeu kwaa akiladawo, mami nani wabafajwe Nyamam?' (Even Jesus was rejected in his home, who am I to be accepted in mine?)" she jokingly quips.

The 55-year-old mother of six and a grandmother says that she is impressed by her reception in other countries. She says they appreciate solar energy, which is a rare resource there. "This helps them save on fuel cost hence their ability to give aid to third world

countries. In 2008, Odaba won the outstanding solar cooker promoter award in Italy for outstanding performance in training people on solar cooking technology. Among the countries that are using her idea are: Norway, USA, Uganda, Ethiopia, Darfur, Somalia, Zambia, Ghana, Liberia and Zimbabwe. She also won Order of Excellence, an international award for her work in promoting the technology in the world.



Calestous Juma

Having taken from elementary school teacher and later an Environment and Science specialist in a local newspaper, Calestous Juma is now an international brand in science and development arena. In 2002 and last year, the New York based magazine named Juma as among the 100 most influential Africans.

His remarkable role in research dates back to 1998, when he founded the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS). ACTS first development policy research institution aimed at inspiring research and development.

Among other achievements, Juma played a leadership role in 2000 when he spearheaded the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals by international experts.

Currently, Juma works as the director of the School's Science, Technology and Citizenship Project at Harvard Kennedy School. Besides, the 61-year old author leads the Agricultural Innovation in Africa Project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Born and raised in the former Nyassa Province, Juma's work has been elected in the Royal Society of London, the US National Academy of Sciences, the The World Academy of Sciences (Twac), the UK Royal Academy of Engineering, the African Academy of Sciences and the New York Academy of Sciences.



Dr Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg

In a bid to address marginalisation of women in leadership, Dr Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg, Founded Akili Dada, an organisation that sought to tackle issues affecting women in Africa, especially their role in governance, eight years ago. She wanted to bridge the gap between the high profile women and those that have little or no access to decision making privileges.

Having earned scholarships for her degree in higher education, Wanjiru knew the power of scholarships and she purposed to give back to young African women.

In 2005, Wanjiru started Akili Dada, having had a firsthand experience in what African women go through by being suppressed, especially against participating in leadership issues.

Dr Wanjiru has focused on giving scholarships to needy and bright students and she currently she works with Precious Blood, Mary Hill, Kenya High, and Loreto, Limuru High schools. Akili Dada has, thus far, benefited over 60 women.

Wanjiru is a Kenyan philanthropist who has won several awards including Winner of the 2013 Most Influential Woman in Business and Government Awards, Civil Society Sector; Person of the Year 2012; by African International Achievers (AIA) and 2010 United Nations Marketplace of Ideas competition sponsored by the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations among other awards.

In 2012, the White House honored Dr Wanjiru one of fourteen Champions of Change who are leaders in African Diaspora communities with roots in the Horn of Africa.



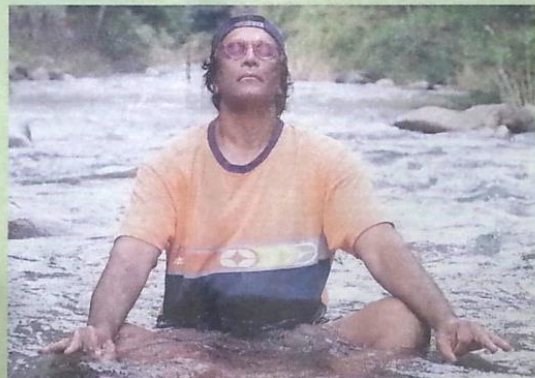
Hitesh Mehta

Hitesh Mehta, an experienced expert in protected area physical planning was born in Kenya and has over 20 years of experience in more than 55 countries in six continents.

The University of Nairobi Architecture graduate is the founder of HM Design, which began in Kenya in 1991. He also holds a Master of Landscape Architecture, University of California, Berkeley.

Currently, Mehta is a board member at International School of Sustainable Tourism (SST), an external examiner at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and a fellow at American Society of Landscape Architects. He is also in the list of world's leading practitioners and researchers on ecosystem physical planning, landscape architectural and architectural aspects of ecologies.

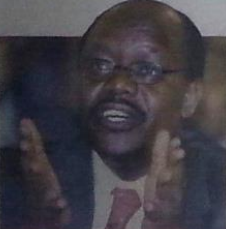
Mehta who is highly regarded in the world's architectural scene has won several awards including: Florida American Society Of Landscape Architect's (FLASA) Environmental Sustainability Honor Award to Crosswaters Ecologie and Spa, China (2011), American Society Of Landscape Architect (ASLA) General Design Honor Award for Crosswaters Ecologie and Spa, China (2010), WTTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Destination Stewardship Finalist Award - Ministry of Tourism, Montenegro (2010) and Florida American Society Of Landscape Architect's (FLASA) Award of Excellence in the Resort and Entertainment Category to Crosswaters Ecologie and Spa, China (2011) among others.



Kiran Shah

Known for his role in the Habitat film, Kiran Shah born Kiran Shah does not shy away from his "country of origin". "I was born in Nagara, here in Kenya's capital, Nairobi," he told Development Agenda in a recent interview. Shah, 58, has visited the country to champion for the inclusion of little people in the category of the disabled. He is a celebrated icon in the film arena who left Kenya in his early teenage. His career in acting began in the late 1970s, a while after he and his family moved to India. This is when he first featured in a film-

Candle shoe, a live action family film. Shah who has acted in 31 films, is in the Guinness Book of Records as the shortest stuntman in the world. Among the films he has acted include: Superman (1978), Superman II (1980), The Dark Crystal (1982), Star Wars Episode IV: Return of the Jedi (1983), Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984), Legend (1985), Aliens (1986), The Sign of Four (1987), Beethoven (1991), and Titanic (1997).





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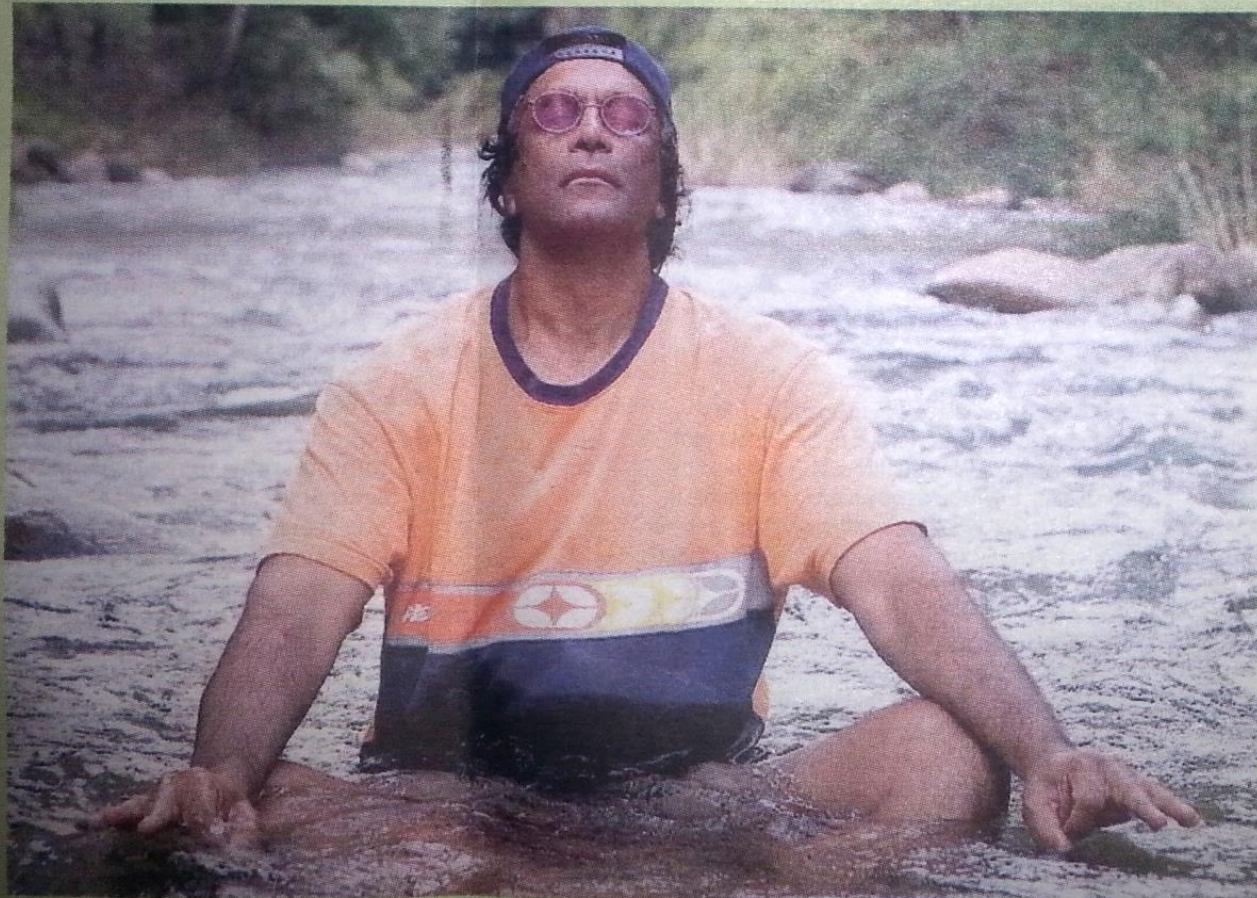
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