



Meet The “Fab Four”—Founders of The Amali Group

Lawrence Kamau, Managing Partner, Finance

A business entrepreneur at heart, Lawrence Kamau’s career successes stem from his practicality, adaptability, and desire for corporate responsibility.

His entrepreneurial spirit traces back several years ago when, as a young man growing up in Nairobi, Kenya, he founded and managed a successful waste collection company called Poubelle Services. With an initial staff of three people, one waste collection vehicle, and a small client base of about thirty households, Lawrence grew his company to great heights. In only its second year, Poubelle’s client base blossomed ten-fold. At its peak, Poubelle diversified, serving not only residential neighborhoods all around Nairobi, but also commercial enterprises throughout the city. Poubelle also fulfilled one of its main objectives: providing employment opportunities to street children, which gave them access to a decent livelihood. Poubelle Services, a practical enterprise, was successful by any standards and solidified Lawrence’s desire to practice business with a conscience.

Lawrence says, “Focusing only on the bottom line without regards to what or who that bottom line affects is not socially responsible. Companies can still be profitable while helping and uplifting people. The key is sound financial management.”

For Lawrence, this isn’t just fancy rhetoric. His impressive financial management background complements his innate entrepreneurial skills. He has worked for two Fortune 500 companies: Continental Airlines from 2003 to 2005 and, currently, Teledyne Technologies. Combined, the companies’ revenues exceed two billion US dollars.

Lawrence’s ability to adapt to different environments and cultures—from the east coast of Africa to the west coast of The United States—makes him a natural leader. At The Amali Group, Lawrence gets to use all of his skills while creating a business bound by integrity, as the company’s tagline states. Lawrence notes, “The Amali Group is dedicated to quality—quality product, quality ethics, and quality of life for the 400,000 tea farmers in Kenya.”

Lawrence earned an MBA degree from Cal State Dominguez Hills in Los Angeles, California. In addition, he has a degree in International Business with a minor in Finance from the United States International University in Nairobi, Kenya. He attended high school at Kangaru High School in Embu. He currently resides with his wife Nyokabi Warobi, who heads up marketing for The Amali Group, in Los Angeles, California.

Kithinji Mwirigi, Managing Partner, Operations

Having spent his formative 21 years in Kenya and the latter 10 years in the United States, Kithinji Mwirigi's career and life ambitions follow a philosophy committed to creating a positive global awareness of Kenya and Africa.

Kithinji says, "I'm committed to a personal vision of impacting urban-development-challenged regions in the world."

With a career background in architecture, he is the founder and leader of the Afro-Architecture Forum, an interactive community whose members consist of worldwide architects with a passion for African architecture—its development and growth, awareness and transformation.

His achievements are notable as well in the worldwide leadership and communication organization, Toastmasters International. He currently occupies the office of Vice President of Education for the organization's chapter located in Pasadena, California. Through his participation in this organization, he has nurtured the art of effective and eloquent communication, which has been invaluable in his passionate pursuits of career, business, and life.

By virtue of his current three-year membership with an eight-member Kenyan Real Estate Investment Group—Harambee Investments—based in Los Angeles, California, he has a fundamentally sound grasp of U.S. business operations and practices. This experience complements his solid architectural business practice with Moule & Polyzoides—Architects and Urbanists, a firm he has been with for the past five years and which ranks in the top two of best town-planning firms in the U.S. These two varied modes of business practice have given him a strong and fundamental understanding of U.S. business culture. He knows this experience is priceless and that it affords him the opportunity to positively pioneer and impact business initiatives and pursuits in Kenya that he intends to take on in the future.

Kithinji says, "By founding The Amali Group with my three partners, I have the chance to use my skills to help those in Kenya while providing quality products to buyers and consumers in the U.S. It's a win-win for everyone involved."

Kithinji received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the highly reputed University of Notre Dame, which is ranked 20th nationally, with respect to the best universities in the country. He has since remained an active member of the university's alumni club – its Los Angeles Chapter. In Kenya, he received his high school education from Strathmore School and Saint Mary's School, both in Nairobi. He currently resides with his wife Nyakio Mungai Mwirigi, who heads up administration for The Amali Group, in Pasadena, California.

Nyakio Mungai Mwirigi, Managing Partner, Administration

Nyakio Mungai Mwirigi is an inspiring young woman committed to making a profound contribution to community. More specifically, she is committed to doing this for her community in Kenya and Africa, as well as internationally promoting the cultural awareness of this region. She was born, raised, and educated up to high school in Kenya before relocating to the U.S. for her university education and subsequent professional career.

Her passion for cultural awareness dates back to her college days. It was not long into her college career at Pepperdine University that she began to stand out among the student population as a beacon of African culture. She became the voice and ambassador representing all potential international students desiring to enter the school. As a Resident Advisor, a leadership position accorded specifically to individuals who are held in high regard with respect to conscientiousness and character, she was responsible and accountable for the harmonious living of 60 women in a residence hall.

Nyakio is an excellent communicator and negotiator in business. These are qualities that she has nurtured through her career experiences while working with corporate and business investment firms in the U.S. She has worked as a financial services representative with AIG-SunAmerica Inc., a globally renowned financial company. Her responsibilities in this firm involved offering annuity products and educating financial advisors and policyholders on retirement investment vehicles. She has also worked for a real estate investment firm that owns and manages a portfolio of 13 commercial properties in Los Angeles, which are cumulatively worth more than \$200 million. Her responsibilities in this latter job have included preparing and negotiating tenant lease proposals, as well as liaising with tenant clients on behalf of the company toward mutually agreeable relationships.

“I love working with people from diverse backgrounds, and for that reason, I’m thrilled to be heading up administration for The Amali Group. Whether you’re from LA or Boston, Nairobi or Embu, I look forward to working not only *for* you, but *with* you.”

In further realizing her commitment to community, Nyakio has taken on being a coach and mentor to a group of professional adults. Her intention with this group is to empower them to make a difference in their own lives as well as others’ lives. She is pursuing this undertaking under the auspices of Landmark Education, a globally renowned leadership and development organization. Other notable commitments to community are her participation in a 60-mile fundraising walk that aids women suffering from breast cancer—an event organized and sponsored by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. She is also an active member of the Human Rights Watch chapter in Los Angeles.

Nyakio received her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the esteemed Seaver College, Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. She received her high school education from The Kenya High School in Nairobi. She resides in Pasadena, California, with her husband Kithinji Mwirigi who heads up operations for The Amali Group.

Nyokabi Warobi, Managing Partner, Marketing

Nyokabi Warobi's passion for business has been the foundation for her impressive career and educational background. Her journey in this field has recently culminated in a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the prestigious University of Michigan Ross School of Business, which, out of all business schools in the U.S., is ranked first by the reputed *Wall Street Journal* business publication. Because of her passion for business as well as her leadership potential, Nyokabi was awarded a merit-based full scholarship to this esteemed institution.

Her academic successes are coupled with valuable career experiences, which have allowed her to apply her educational knowledge in business marketing, strategy, and economics. JP Morgan Electronic Financial Services, a national leader in the U.S. financial services industry, is one company in which she has implemented the above. Through work experience on projects with this firm, she has mastered the fundamental concepts of market segment research and profitability analysis of entering new markets.

“By focusing on marketing for The Amali Group, I get to put into practice all that I've learned from university as well as my jobs. I thrive on the challenges that result from launching a product in a new market. What more challenging marketplace is there than the U.S.?”

Nyokabi's experience also extends into the realm of international business between cultures and nations. In addition to coursework taken at Otto Beisheim School of Management in Germany, Nyokabi also has valuable experience and knowledge of the business strategies and logistics entailed in introducing new products into a foreign market. Her strengths in this area are courtesy of work she has done while with SC Johnson, a large multinational firm headquartered in The United States. A notable project in this regard was one that entailed extensive research and consequent marketing of specific SC Johnson consumer products targeted specifically to Kenya's low-income population in Nairobi. Of worthy mention as well is her dual residency in Kenya and the U.S. for 19 and 10 years respectively, which proved an invaluable asset to SC Johnson throughout this project.

Nyokabi has always had an interest in helping people improve their lives, especially those in her home country of Kenya. She firmly believes that multi-national companies can do well *and* do good by working with low-income communities to create new products and services that directly address their needs. In this way, the needs of the community are met (both by the product or service, as well as the new jobs created in the process), and companies are able to sell more product.

She adds, “I'm excited to introduce the best Kenyan tea to the U.S. marketplace. The truth, of course, is that the tea is of such high quality it'll sell itself. But the best part is that companies who decide to buy this tea will be exercising social responsibility by way of uplifting the 400,000 farmers in Kenya.”

Nyokabi's formative years were spent in Kenya, where she received her high school education from Moi Girls High School in Nairobi. Her MBA degree is preceded by a Bachelor of Economics degree, which she received from Mary Baldwin College in Virginia. Nyokabi lives in Los Angeles, California, with her husband Lawrence Kamau who heads up finance for The Amali Group.