

Banking on Success

HE'S THE MANAGING director of a banking giant's Swaziland operations, the chairperson of the Swaziland Bankers' Association, and the current chair of the SADC Banking Association – but until recently Tineyi Mawocha (45) has had to spend a fair amount of time convincing some people (including himself) that he was even in the right industry.

But the recent graduate of USB's Master's in Development Finance (MDevF) degree won't have to remind sceptics of his impressive list of achievements any more.

Not only did Mawocha obtain his MDevF degree *cum laude* last December, he also received the MDevF Top Student Award sponsored by the Development Bank of South Africa, as well as the prize for best performance in the subject Small-Scale Enterprise Development.

"It took me totally by surprise," Mawocha, MD of Standard Bank Swaziland, says. "I worked very hard, but I didn't think I'd be the top student."

It must have been a sweet victory for Zimbabwean Mawocha, whose pre-banking career path meant he often had to answer questions about how he had got into the banking sector in the first place. "I started off with a diploma in hotel and catering management 20 years ago," he says with a laugh. "Naturally, people often want to know how I went from managing a hotel to planning country-wide strategies for a banking group!"

Within four years, he'd risen from junior assistant food and beverage manager at a Harare hotel, to general manager, with responsibility for 350 employees. In the mid-90s he took over as MD of Nando's in Zimbabwe, after which the company tasked him with identifying investment opportunities in countries including Mozambique, Zam-

He went from junior assistant food manager at a hotel to MD of a leading bank's Swaziland operations. **SIERAAJ AHMED** spoke to Tineyi Mawocha to find out more about 2009's top Master's in Development Finance graduate.

Tineyi Mawocha's tips for success

- Trust in God – or any force bigger than yourself.
- Try to be the best in whatever you do.
- Have a passion for developing other people. Your legacy is made through other people.

bia, Kenya and Malawi.

His move into the banking sector occurred almost accidentally, after Mawocha completed his MBA (in 2000) at the University of Zimbabwe. He applied for a job that required someone with an MBA as well as a service and retail background. "I assumed the job was in FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods), and when they told me it was for a bank, I replied, 'I'm not suited for the job'. But they insisted that I was exactly what they needed."

Mawocha started in 2001 as the bank's

South-East Gauteng area manager, and rose through the ranks until he was appointed Swaziland MD in 2005. "By then, I had a few years of experience in the banking sector, but I still felt at a bit of a disadvantage. When I heard about the USB's MDevF programme, I realised the subjects were exactly what I wanted to learn more about. They fitted the environment I work in perfectly. This was the degree I needed to back me up in my banking career."

The two-year, modular MDevF degree, a relatively new programme offered since 2003 at the USB, focuses on development finance and Africa's growth needs – a subject particularly close to Mawocha's heart. "I'm driven by a need to make a difference – in my work environment, my community, and in Africa. Our continent is rich in resources both natural and intellectual, but these need to be exposed and sharpened. Solutions to African problems will come from Africa – and programmes like MDevF are providing fertile ground for the solutions to take root. When I realised the MDevF is the only programme of its kind on the continent, I knew I had to get in."

Mawocha started at the USB in mid-2007, with a class of around 80 students from all over Africa – and beyond. "We had to attend four two-week sessions in Cape Town over two years, as well as hand in a

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Tineyi Mawocha is not only USB's top Master's in Development Finance graduate for 2009, he is also MD of Standard Bank Swaziland and chair of the SADC Banking Association

research report. It was really intense; with so many assignments along with your regular work, you're always chasing deadlines. The MDevF is very taxing, but it's an amazing experience. You learn and grow so much, and get to network with like-minded people from all over the world."

His classmates included students from Nigeria, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, and even Japan and America. "Some of them already had doctorates; others were senior government workers. But we all wanted to learn more about our shared passion: Development Finance. It was an invaluable networking experience: these people have become friends and contacts around the world. When I encounter something new in my work, I can now look through my class database and contact a person in the right sector, or someone with first-hand knowledge of the country I want to learn more about."

Alongside the MDevF's wide list of core subjects (which include Corporate Governance, Research Methodology and Project Finance), students also have to pick three electives from a list including Microfinance and Public Sector Finance. Mawocha's favourite subject was one of his chosen electives, Africa Country Risk and Return Analysis.

"All my subjects were enjoyable and chal-

lenging," he says. "But Africa Risk stood out for me. The course deals with scenarios: you look at different African countries' development alternatives, and map the way things could turn out. It really challenges your thought patterns. I couldn't help thinking: The leaders of African countries need to do this course... The MDevF is becoming increasingly popular as a result of its sterling reputation among those interested in the development of Africa and other under-developed areas."

The scenario-planning also equipped him with a new practical skill he could apply at work. "I can see different scenarios in any situation now. It's been a very helpful tool for improving my decision-making. You can take a big 'countrywide' concept and narrow it to apply to your own work situation."

Since his graduation, Mawocha has been enjoying having (slightly) more time to spend with his wife Gail and their three children. He's also got more time available for the social projects he's involved in, which include the Swaziland Business Coalition on HIV/Aids, and the Swaziland Child Hunger Alleviation Foundation (which he chairs).

He's already got his eye on his next career goal, though. "I'd like to do a PhD in Development Finance, and work in a bigger African country where I can put into practice what I've learned."

Mawocha is also tempted by the call of academia. "I would enjoy teaching as another way of giving back to my community and continent. But for now, I think I'll take a break from academics ... for a year or two, not longer!" **a**



For more information

about the USB's Master's in Development Finance go to www.usb.ac.za/Degrees/MastersInDevelopmentFinance