

Marc has 23 years' experience with a major international investment bank. He has worked in Asia for nine years within this period. His work has covered all aspects of corporate finance, including business strategy, marketing, managing clients and raising capital. Marc spent one week mentoring three entrepreneurs in Nairobi, Gilgil and Naivasha in June 2009.

THURSDAY: Orientation and meeting with Alex at his premises

After breakfast I have the orientation with Peter, the facilitator, at my hotel. Then lunch with a mentee who wants to develop a business based on Aloe Vera. His passion for the opportunity is inspiring. Finally a meeting with Alex, who runs a small web design agency in Nairobi. In the evening we drive to Malewa.



FRIDAY: Mentoring session with Kamau in Gilgil

Wake up at the Skills Venture campus at Malewa. It's a beautiful setting and the cottage is perfect. A morning run with Charles, once a top 10 distance runner in Kenya! Then to Gilgil to see Kamau, who runs a family hotel/restaurant business. It has strong assets, but needs to find new ways to increase cash generation.



SATURDAY: Mentoring session with Francis at Malewa

Preliminary discussions with Francis, who is the financial director of a family-owned flower farm near Naivasha. Most mentors take the weekend off, but I decide to waive this right since I only have a week here! We talk about all areas of the business, trying to identify the best ways to improve his margins.



SUNDAY: A day off with a morning run and a visit to church

A morning run with Charles. Then I ask to be taken to a local church service to see how the community comes together on a Sunday to worship and what role it plays in the community. A fascinating chance to experience real local life. Finally, some local sightseeing in the afternoon, then a glass of wine at sunset.



MONDAY: Mentoring session with Alex at Malewa

Alex and his business partner come up from Nairobi to spend a day taking our discussions further. The day ends with a greater appreciation of where value is being created in the business and what issues could cause major problems. They need better division of labour and tighter controls on invoice receivables.



TUESDAY: Mentoring session with Mwangi in Gilgil

A session with a small retailer looking to diversify his product offering. I am impressed with his commercial acumen and drive. We sit in the shop while business continues. He seeks capital for growth; I propose an alternative way to think about capital requirements. Within 45 minutes he 'gets it'; very satisfying.



WEDNESDAY: Final goodbyes, back to Nairobi, and a look around town

My last day in Kenya. A morning run, some phone calls to mentees, then I pack up and am driven back to Nairobi by taxi. We call by Francis as a follow-up en route. My flight isn't until evening, so I have a few hours to explore the town, and meet up with another SV facilitator for a coffee. Then to the airport and home.

