



SHAMBA Ni BIZ

Young viewers' opinions of *Shamba Ni Biz* based on a qualitative study

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October 2025

Table of Contents

1. Background	3
1.1 Introduction	3
2. Young people’s media usage habits	3
3. Key Findings	5
3.1 Overall impressions of <i>Shamba Ni Biz</i>	5
3.2 Key message takeaways	5
3.2.1 Viability of farming as a business	5
3.2.2 Youth empowerment and mindset change	7
3.2.3 Gender and family dynamics	7
3.2.4 Practical agricultural information	7
4. Opinions of the storylines, format and characters	8
5. Conclusion	10

I. Background

I.1 Introduction

Shamba Ni Biz is a new seven-minute drama segment incorporated for the first time series 15 of the long-running *Shamba Shape Up* television series. *Shamba Ni Biz* is aimed at younger audiences and designed to stimulate interest in agriculture as an attractive business venture for younger people. This report presents an analysis of young viewers' opinions of *Shamba Ni Biz* (the messages they remembered, their attitudes to the content, characters and drama format), how young people learn through drama programmes and if attitudes can change as a result of exposure to the content.

I.2 Research approach

The analysis presented and discussed here is based on four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted in Kisumu, Nakuru, Embu, and Kilifi with 10 men and women, aged 22 to 29 per county. To qualify for inclusion in the groups, participants had to view local television programmes (not necessarily *Shamba Shape Up*), have a range of occupations (i.e. they did not have to engage in farming activities as their main source of income) and have an interest in farming matters. Some of the group participants engaged in farming informally, most did not do any farming themselves but around one half had farming connections through family, friends, and work colleagues. To ensure that the discussion was based on experience of the programme, group participants were sent a link to view 10 episodes of *Shamba Ni Biz* in advance of attending the group and shown two episodes (one and three), as a reminder, on arrival at the groups.

Group participants were professionally recruited and moderated by Aaerton Blue, a Kenyan research company, and were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes

2. Young people's media usage habits

By way of context, the discussions started with a general conversation about how participants used different types of media and the sources they used for different types of content, specifically for information and entertainment. While all participants had been

recruited to be viewers of local Kenyan television content, they all expressed a strong preference for digital platforms and social platforms.

Everyone admitted that their attention spans were short and that they preferred content that was short and 'to the point'

- TikTok emerged as the most popular platform for all participants, who preferred short, entertaining, and relatable content delivered in a fun and light-hearted way.
- Facebook was used primarily for discussions and sharing content
- YouTube was valued for longer videos. *"I don't own a TV I only use YouTube. I like murder stories"* (Male, Kisumu)

Although there was a marked preference for digital media among these young participants, television viewing still plays an important role in their overall media repertoire, particularly in family viewing environments and for News.

Some said they watched local channels including Citizen TV, Ramogi TV (Kisumu), Maisha Magic East (Kilifi), Vika TV (Nakuru) and Gospel Channels. Specific programmes mentioned were *Smart Farm*, *Clarkson's Farm*, *Telenovelas*, *Tahidi High*, *Date my Family* as well as murder stories and investigations on NTV and YouTube. A typical response to watching local television channels was:

"When there's no internet, I will watch local channels" (Male, Nakuru)

Almost all of the participants in these groups said that they had watched with *Shamba Shape Up* for many years, but not recently and not out of personal choice but with their parents and families as part of weekend viewing traditions. *Shamba Shape Up* was seen by these young people as for older people, people of their parents' generation and not for people of their age-group. There was a general view that because *Shamba Shape Up* had been on television for so many years it had become something of a post-church viewing tradition on Sunday afternoons, but not a tradition they would be following when not in their parents' homes.

"I only watch it (Shamba Shape Up) because my family watches it on Sundays after church." (Female, Kisumu)

"On weekends, I always find Citizen playing Shamba Shape Up — it's like a family routine." (Male, Nakuru)

"I grew up watching it" (Male, Nakuru)

“I’ve watch it before but at home, at home the parents watch it so you have to watch” (Female, Embu)

3. Key Findings

3.1 Overall impressions of *Shamba Ni Biz*

Initial overall opinions of the programme were very positive among these group participants. They saw it as distinctly different from *Shamba Shape Up*, aimed much more at their age group and refreshing because it was based on a drama with relevant and relatable storylines and characters. Some top of mind, illustrative comments were:

“It was good, realistic and honest” (Female, Embu).

“They are good actors, mixing the languages is also attractive (Male, Embu).

“I think it’s an eye-opener for the youths, because for most of the youths if you lose your job you get into drugs, but for her....she got into farming and earning money” (Female, Embu).

“I think it’s true that farming is the mother of everything...the things we eat all come from agriculture” (Female, Kilifi).

“I learn new things I learnt that from farming you can make a fortune” (Male, Kilifi).

“I would say that programme is addressing what people are doing now – shifting from jobs to agriculture” (Male, Kisumu).

“It was good there was some drama in it, that relates to normal life” (Female, Kisumu).

“I liked it because they used young people” (Female, Nakuru).

“The youths focus on white collar jobs, yet we have the ability to farm...it showed agriculture is a business you can employ yourself” (Male, Nakuru).

3.2 Key message takeaways

3.2.1 Viability of farming as a business

The dominant takeaway across all the groups was that ‘farming can and should be viewed as a viable business venture rather than a fallback or subsistence activity’. Participants

appreciated how the programme presented agriculture as an entrepreneurial pursuit, capable of generating income, providing employment, and empowering youth to be self-reliant. This is important for young people today and expressed eloquently by these participants who want to earn good money and be their own boss. They aspire to running several income-generating activities at the same time to earn money from what they enjoy doing and not being trapped in white collar jobs and having to be accountable to ‘bosses’

“You can turn anything into a business, more so when it comes to agriculture, you can do it anytime you want and are your own boss. You can manage your own time, it doesn’t matter what you are doing” (Male, Embu).

“For me it was an eye-opener, I learnt a lot about job creation, most youths don’t have jobs and our education system has trained us to depend on white collar jobs” (Male, Kilifi).

“I think it showed us that farming is not just a hobby. It showed us that farming can work out” (Female, Nakuru)

In Nakuru, where participants are more invested in farming than they are in Embu, several noted that they liked the emphasis on ‘agriculture is a business — you can employ yourself’. In Embu, where the overall levels of education and employment are higher than in the other locations visited, participants described the series as an “eye-opener,” showing that ‘agriculture is not limited to older people or large-scale farmers but can thrive even in urban or small-scale contexts’.

“People are used to small-scale farming, but this showed that you can make a real profit if you add value.” (Male, Embu)

These younger participants, especially in Embu and Kisumu related strongly to the theme of ‘self-employment’ and ‘independence’, linking it to their own aspirations for autonomy.

“It showed you can do it anytime you want and be your own boss.” (Male, Embu).

“It makes farming look cool — something we can own as a business.” (Male, Kisumu).

Participants across all groups also highlighted how the programme conveyed the importance of business planning, value addition, and market awareness. Embu respondents discussed this at length

“Before you plan something, you should go to the market and know what’s missing — that’s how to spot a gap.” (Female, Embu)

3.2.2 Youth empowerment and mindset change

Shamba Ni Biz is succeeding in reframing agriculture as a modern, youthful, and creative pursuit. This was primarily achieved by the use of young characters navigating relatable challenges such as ‘job loss’ and ‘starting from scratch’. Participants liked the use of contemporary business practices such as using social media for marketing and the disciplines of ‘understanding your market’ and ‘developing business plans’. Flo’s story of resilience demonstrated that farming could be a path to stability and pride. Her story also illustrated to many that it is possible to find other option when you lose your job.

“They showed us that we shouldn’t focus just on the clean jobs and corporate jobs, that you can also get into agriculture to earn money and make some profit: (Female, Embu)

“...you can’t be lazy with content, in our world the digital space is good or marketing and in the end they went live on TikTok doing marketing and shooting content – I liked that you can use social media to market and sell out produce and by doing so you earn a living and make market” (Kilifi)

“Actually what I really liked was the incubation center that was willing to help – I learnt that there are always resources and people that are willing and able to help you. Just go out there and take up the opportunities that are available” (Male, Kisumu)

“Flo, she never gave up...once she gets an opportunity, she’ll go for it” (Female Kisumu)

3.2.3 Gender and family dynamics

In all four groups there was praise for the programme’s portrayal of progressive gender and family roles. Many men said the character Johnny inspired them to rethink traditional expectations. In Embu, one participant commented, “It showed that men can also share the housework and farming.” Another added, “When Flo leased the land without telling Johnny, it showed that family decisions affect both of them.” These reflections complemented feedback from Kisumu and Kilifi, where viewers saw Johnny and Flo’s relationship as a model of shared partnership

3.2.4 Practical agricultural information

Some of the stand-out pieces of specific, practical agricultural information were the inclusion of real-life lessons about leasing land, planning finances, and value addition.

However, for all of these topics, deeper explanations and more practical advice were needed. The lack of detailed information and advice about these very practical and specific issues were deemed to disadvantage young people in pursuing agriculture. Land leasing is an issue of special interest given the challenges young people have in gaining access to land and they felt that there were many misconceptions and suspicion about how to access and lease land accessing land.

“There’s that part of land leasing...you hear your Dad saying you can’t get a piece of land here. I learnt that your Dad can lease you land” (Male, Kisumu)

“People should have knowledge about getting an agreement before transactions” (Male, Nakuru)

“They just mentioned value addition but didn’t explain it” (Female, Embu)

Specific topics participants across all the four locations wanted more information on were:

- Access to finance and loans, how and where to access and collateral
- Leasing and leasing agreements
- How to draw up agreements and contracts
- Business planning in simple and relatable terms
- Marketing, using the internet to sell

There were suggestions that since the kinds of detail and practical advice they needed might be too detailed to include in the storylines and might not make the drama interesting so the inclusion of links to specific content should be considered.

In addition to enjoying the drama and learning a lot from it, there was a call from all participants for more detailed and information. These young participants expressed a hunger for practical advice and information to help them to get started in business.

4. Opinions of the storylines, format and characters

Overall, Shamba Ni Biz was described as engaging, realistic, and motivating. Participants connected emotionally with the storyline, particularly Flo’s persistence and adaptability after job loss

“When she got fired, that’s what mostly happens — it’s real.” (Female, Embu)

Others valued the humour, the use of familiar language, and the relatable settings.

“They’re in a normal house, not a mansion — their breakfast is simple.” (Male, Nakuru)

While the combination of drama and education was widely appreciated, many participants wanted more emphasis on the business and practical concepts. They liked the format enormously but were keen to get more detailed, specific and practical information that they could realistically put into practice

“If they remove the drama, it will be boring, but they should explain the key topics a bit more.” (Male, Embu)

“I liked that all the characters were real, but the aspect of insurance was missing” (Female, Kilifi)

“There are youth like us who stay in the town and are still leasing their houses without space to venture into farming...they should also provide information on insight into people who have no access to land at all” (Female, Nakuru)

This last comment was echoed by some of the participants in Kilifi who wanted to have practical information on how to grow produce using bags where space was very limited.

Balancing Education and Entertainment

Participants from all groups agreed that the short, concise episodes held their attention while delivering useful information. However, some, felt that the interactive questioning at the end of each episode (“Answer on our Facebook or Twitter”) came across as too childish.

“She sounded like Dora the Explorer” (Male, Embu)

There was a widely held suggestion that polls or captions should feel more mature and aligned with youth media habits, perhaps by complementing television broadcasts with shorter clips for TikTok or Instagram

“Youths don’t watch TV — they should post short versions on TikTok.” (Female, Kisumu)

Opinions of Characters and Program Format

Flo was consistently described as inspiring and relatable across all groups and was praised for her authenticity — *“She acts so well that it looks real.”*

Johnny was admired as supportive and grounded, — *“He looks like a typical youth.”*

Shiks was described as lively and humorous but over-familiar, *“We’ve watched her for so long — we want new faces.”*

The acting and settings were praised for their realism. *“They are realistic and honest,”* was a widely expressed sentiment. Participants also agreed that the length of each episode (about 10 minutes) was ideal.

The general feeling was that — “*It was good because it wasn’t that long and it wasn’t that short — you’re able to concentrate.*”

Format and Structure

The short, energetic episodes were seen as effective for keeping attention while conveying key messages. On balance, participants recommended that future episodes maintain the drama-education balance but make explanations of topics such as value addition and business planning clearer or find a device aligned to provide detailed, practical information such as links.

“Take a concept and dramatize it — like Makutano Junction used to do” (Male, Embu).

Comparison with Shamba Shape Up

All groups recognised that *Shamba Ni Biz* differentiates itself from *Shamba Shape Up* by targeting younger audiences and presenting agriculture as a modern, profitable enterprise. A typical comment was

“Shamba Shape Up is for our parents; Shamba Ni Biz is for us.”

Participants in Embu and Kilifi were especially vocal about platform preferences, suggesting that could expand digitally

“Let Shamba Shape Up stay on TV, and Shamba Ni Biz go to TikTok and YouTube.” (Female, Kilifi)

Others proposed thematic distinction — that *Shamba Shape Up* continue to focus on established farmers and *Shamba Ni Biz* highlight youth start-ups, hydroponics, and urban farming.

“You don’t need a big farm to make money from farming.” (Male, Nakuru)

5. Conclusion

Even in its early days of broadcast *Shamba Ni Biz* appears to have successfully inspired young audiences to reimagine agriculture as an accessible, profitable business. The inclusion of relatable characters, contemporary storytelling, and practical business lessons made it both entertaining and instructive. The programme’s emphasis on value addition, entrepreneurship, and self-reliance resonated strongly, many participants said it was a “wake-up call” for youth employment. There was a broad consensus that *Shamba Ni Biz* needed to sustain short, dynamic, and realistic episodes while integrating digital extensions to reach younger viewers where they are.

Overall, the first series of *Shamba Ni Biz* researched extremely positively among these groups of younger viewers and 'would be' farmers.