## NDB BEHIND TOUNO Ama mara hire car Success in buin, Arob



## NDB Propels Touno Ama Mara Hire Car to New Heights in AROB

Augustine Lokea is the proud owner of not one or two but three Toyota Land Cruisers thanks to the funding assistance of the National Development Bank. "I owe my business success to NDB who assisted to start my hire car business and see it grow to where it is now and I appreciate and acknowledge the good business partnership I have with the bank," Augustine said.

Augustine is from Buin in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and owns Touno Ama Mara Hire Car operating in Buin servicing customers between Buin and Buka. Touno Ama Mara means "Not Too Bad" in the Buin vernacular which describes the experience he went through in trying to start his Hire Car business.





Caption: Augustine Lokea owner of Touno Ama Mara Hire Car with one of his funded Four Door Land Cruiser in Buin, South Bougainville.

It had always been his childhood dream to own a land cruiser which is the preferred type pf vehicle for the rough and rugged terrain in Bougainville but to make this dream become a reality was a real test of

## Caption: First two funded 10 Seater Toyota Land Cruisers hired out in Arawa.

struggle, endurance and perseverance.

Orphaned at the age of two and growing up under the care of his grandmother, Augustine thought his dream would remain a dream with curve balls hurled at him as he tried to find his way in life. Persistence saw his obtain a Diploma in Building from Polytech, Lae and he proceeded to briefly work with Curtain Brothers in Port Moresby but he never lost sight of his childhood dream.

If luck should have it, Augustine was able to claim his late mother's retirement entitlements from the years she served as a teacher. Without a second thought, Augustine returned to Buin and bought a second hand ten-seater from his uncle and started to operate as a PMV between Buin and Buka. He bought his second used open back Landcruiser and with the two vehicles operating he started saving. Augustine sold the two vehicles plus his savings totaling K100,000 he deposited it with PNG Motors hoping to obtain a loan from the only Commercial Bank in Buka to pay off the balance owing for his brand new Landcruiser. "Confidently, I walked into the Commercial Bank in Buka to ask for a loan and even showed the receipt of the K100,000.00 I deposited at Ela Motors but the loans officer just looked at me and told me straight in the face, You are not eligible," Augustine distraughtly recalled. "I was gob smacked, shocked and embarrassed to be told just like that, You are not eligible and I walked out of the Commercial Bank completely lost my dreams shattered," and Augustine added.

"I was in complete turmoil and for three months as I tried to figure out what to do next, where to obtain the funds to pay off the balance at Ela Motors, I slept with relatives and sometimes on the streets, on many occasions with an empty pocket and the list goes on. The struggle was real and it did not help when people I knew were making fun of me with typical street gossip and ridicule but I continued to put up a thick skin to find a solution," an emotional Augustine revealed.

A loans officer at the NDB Buka Branch who occasionally traveled

"Word got around town and much to my surprise I was paid a visit by the Loans Officer from the Commercial Bank who declined my loan proposal and told me in the face that I was not eligible this time offering to give me a for not one but three loan Landcruiser's," Augustine said. "After taking in the unbelievable offer I courteously thanked the commercial bank's loans officer and told him I was not interested as my loyalty and commitment remained with NDB who picked me up from the gutters and helped me start my business and has been supporting me to grow my business. I also told him that should I want another loan, I will go to NDB who will always be my bank of choice," Augustine proudly stated.

True to his word, Augustine revisited NDB and was funded his third loan for a Four Door a few months ago. NDB Buka Branch Manager Ronald Karam said the third loan is special as Augustine is the first person in Buka to buy the latest and new look land cruisers and he is very happy about this.

Augustine says he has plans to expand his business with two more funding assistance. It is our mandate to help our people and our doors are open to everyone, as long as the bank's minimum lending requirements are met," Ms Vene reiterated.

Ms Vene thanked Kumul Consortium Holdings (KCH), Minister for State Enterprises William Duma, and Prime Minister James Marape for the continued support to NDB to provide this funding assistance to our people in tough economic times.

NDB is committed to assist our people live their business dreams to become financially and economically independent as they become catalysts for change and bring about development and improved livelihood for themselves, their families and their communities at large.

on Augustine's PMV's bumped into him in town and after hearing his story told him to go the NDB Buka Branch to see how NDB could assist. "Deciding to walk into the NDB Buka Branch that day in 2019 was the start of my wonderful business journey with NDB, a journey of success and profitability and a decision I will never regret," Augustine contemplated with a smile.

Augustine was given his first brand new ten-seater loan which he successfully repaid and obtained his second loan for another tenseater. With the overwhelming success and profits from his Hire Car Business, Augustine proudly walked into Ela Motors and purchased a brand new 4 Door Landcruiser with cold hard cash. Landcruiser's in sight and will definitely be visiting the NDB Buka Branch after he completes his current loan.

Branch Manager Mr Karam said not only is Augustine a very good, committed and loyal customer, but he has also been a very strong advocate for NDB making referrals to the bank for people in South Bougainville some of whom have now become customers of NDB.

Acting Chief Executive Officer Ms Vicky Vene congratulated Augustine on his business success and reaffirmed that NDB is the people's bank and partnering with the bank to help him start and grow his hire car business is what the bank is here for. "NDB is the government's vehicle to help start and/or grow MSME's and SME's in the country through