

SIGU MAGWA

Build systems that scale, not teams that struggle

Technology Strategist & Software Engineer · Founder of Podii · Kisumu, Kenya
sigumagwa.com · linkedin.com/in/sigu · github.com/sigu · medium.com/@sigu

PROFILE

I help organisations turn technology into a competitive advantage. The symptoms are familiar. Work takes longer than it should. Teams spend the day chasing each other for updates. One or two people quietly become the bottleneck. The cause is usually structural. Processes were never redesigned for the size the business is now, data sits in systems that do not talk to each other and somebody fills the gap by hand. I find where the technology, the processes and the people are holding the business back, agree on what should change, then build the system that carries that decision.

Technology strategist and software engineer, more than a decade across agriculture, finance, logistics, utilities and public service. Strategist by perspective, engineer by practice: I make the technology decision, then lead the work that makes it real. Founder and CEO of Podii. Co-founder of Elixir Kenya and ElixirConf Africa. I have mentored over 30 engineers.

HOW I WORK

- Follow the work as it actually moves through the business and find where it breaks.
- Name the decision the business is actually making, then design the architecture that follows from it.
- Redesign processes to remove manual dependencies.
- Connect systems so data moves without human intervention.
- Automate rule-based work such as approvals, reconciliation and reporting.
- Hand over systems the team can run and extend without calling me.

REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES

- Weekly reconciliation processes that took hours now run automatically.
- Approval cycles that stalled in inboxes now move instantly through defined logic.
- Reporting that required manual assembly became real-time visibility.
- A core function at Pulpo WMS cut from over a minute to 3 seconds.

EXPERIENCE

Founder & CEO | Podii

Feb 2018 – Present · Kisumu, Kenya

- Grew Podii from a two-person startup into a consultancy delivering systems for clients across multiple industries.
- Work with clients to diagnose the business problem before agreeing what to build.
- Run short delivery cycles so clients see working software early rather than at the end.
- Build Elixir and Phoenix systems deployed on AWS and prototype mobile applications for clients around the world.
- Make the architectural decisions and coach the developers.
- Manage company operations including budgeting, hiring and client relations.

Senior Software Engineer (Contract) | Pulpo WMS

Sept 2022 – Sept 2023 · Delaware, US

- Cut the runtime of a core function from over a minute to 3 seconds.
- Rewrote the warehouse infrastructure code for speed.
- Improved developer experience across projects and maintained CI/CD with Jenkins and Docker.

Software Engineer (Contract) | Fly.io

Jan 2022 – Jul 2022 · US, remote

- Migrated an existing Ruby on Rails codebase into Phoenix, an Elixir framework.
- Built new features and services in Elixir.
- Reviewed code across time zones, working from written specifications rather than meetings.

Senior Software Engineer (Contract) | Adobe

Nov 2021 – Jan 2022 · San Jose, CA

- Built and maintained back-end services for the Creative Cloud team.
- Performed regular code reviews, collaborating with engineers and project managers.

Software Engineer (Contract) | Frame.io

Feb 2021 – Oct 2021 · New York, US

- Built back-end features against an established monolith, writing code that would still be easy to change six months later.
- Wrote and maintained living documentation, including improving the engineer onboarding process.

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant | JKUAT

Aug 2013 – Feb 2018 · Kenya

- Taught practical software development to BSc Computer Science students.

Coach & Software Developer | Craft Academy

Feb 2017 – Oct 2017 · Gothenburg, Sweden

- Coached bootcamp students while writing and debugging client software.

- Investigated new technologies for the curriculum.

Co-founder & Software Developer | GikTek

Jul 2014 – Jan 2016 · Nairobi

- Wrote iOS and Android applications, taking concepts from wireframes and prototypes through MVP demos to release.
- Gathered requirements from stakeholders and tested by hand and with automation.

Electrical Engineer | Gedox Associates

Jun 2013 – Jun 2014 · Nairobi

- Designed, installed and monitored electrical systems in commercial and residential buildings.

SKILLS

Strategy Technology strategy and roadmaps, digital transformation, build versus buy, systems modernisation, technology due diligence

Leadership Engineering leadership and team development, product strategy, start-up leadership

Architecture Distributed systems, high-concurrency applications, cloud-native architecture, solution architecture

Applied AI Document intelligence, recommendation systems, compliance automation, decision support

Languages Elixir, Ruby, JavaScript

Frameworks Phoenix, Ruby on Rails, Flutter

Data PostgreSQL

Cloud & infra AWS, Google Cloud Platform, Docker, Jenkins, CI/CD

COMMUNITY & LEADERSHIP

- Co-founder of ElixirConf Africa and Elixir Kenya.
- Recruited and mentored more than 30 software engineers, primarily through pair programming.
- Speaker at ElixirConf EU, Code BEAM Europe, ElixirConf Africa, GigCity Elixir and RubyConf Kenya.

DOMAINS DELIVERED IN

Warehouse management and logistics · Financial technology · Agricultural platforms that get information to farmers · Document processing and recommendation systems · Enterprise collaboration · Public services

EDUCATION

Executive MBA | Strathmore Business School

2026 – 2028 · in progress

BSc Electronic and Computer Engineering | JKUAT

2007 – 2012

BSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering | JKUAT

2007 – 2012

SELECTED TALKS

- Keynote: Building an Emergency Software – ElixirConf EU 2020 (with Linda Achieng Otieno)
- Building and Growing the Community – Code BEAM Europe 2023 (with Njoki Kiarie)
- Observability in Software Applications – GigCity Elixir 2023
- Standing on the Shoulders of Giants – ElixirConf Africa 2022 (with Rachael Mwatela)
- Understanding Elixir GenServers – Curiosum Elixir Meetup #25
- The Concept of CI/CD – Nairuby RubyConf 2019

PODCAST APPEARANCES

- Beam Radio, Episode 52 – Live from New York (almost) with Sigu Magwa
- Elixir Wizards – Sigu Magwa on the Elixir Community in Kenya
- Impact Masters Podcast, Episode 23

LANGUAGES

Swahili (native or bilingual) · English (professional working)