

KENYAN ENTREPRENEURS ASSOCIATE BUSINESS CONTACTS IN SWEDEN

CONTEST mobile app Saver Pal and a tracking service for fresh products took Catherine Wangari Mania and Edwin Muriuki Wanjiru top of the podium in the Hand in Hand Youth Award. During a few intense days in May, the key Finns visited Sweden to get inspiration from other young entrepreneurs.

There was full activity in the exhibition halls at the Stockholm Fair in Älvsjö when they opened the doors to this year's final of Young Business. The event was also **Catherine Wangari Mania** and **Edwin Muriuki Wanjiru**, two of the total of four winners of this year's edition of the Hand in Hand Youth Award - an entrepreneurship competition in Kenya for young people aged 18-25 years.

Both Edwin and Catherine have been educated and coached for more than a year in developing their business ideas to the real business of two of the more than 250 Business Clubs today linked to the project "Peace and Prosperity through Job Creation - an innovative path for Kenya 's youth ".

Edwin jumped on the project in February 2016 and has since been trained in leadership issues, marketing and finance. He states that Catherine was his biggest competitor before the final of the competition. In hard competition with the other 21 participants, from different parts of Kenya, they were allowed to split the first place after four winners were appointed.

Winning has been a glory, but the project has primarily meant a personal entrepreneurial journey, he says.

- Before, I saw myself as an innovator. During my education, I have raised my eyes because it requires entrepreneurial features to blow their ideas, says Edwin.

His business idea is to batchcoding fresh produce. The coding allows the consumer to trace which farmer produced a certain fresh produce, such as tomatoes, onions, jams and potatoes. A defective product can then be easily traced by the consumer directly to the producer to address the problem but also to claim compensation for non-conforming

goods. The target group is large-scale agricultural producers and owners of medium-sized plantations and farms.

Edwin's company has just entered a start-up phase where different manufacturers test the system for six months.

"Of course, I hope it's going well. Until then, I work hard to get money so I can advertise in newspapers, thus spreading the word and showing that I have a serious service to offer, he says.

For Catherine, it was a matter of course to jump on the project. With her luggage, she already had a degree in entrepreneurship from Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology.

"The ability to get practical experience starting and running your own business and getting support along the way has been crucial to taking my idea of Saver Pal further," says Catherine.

She is currently developing the Saver Pal app to help smaller business owners, those who earn less than \$ 2 a day, both to save a little of the profits while also earning money to family expenses.

"I know the app will make a difference because I, close to my mind, saw how my mother started various smaller businesses - just to go bankrupt quite quickly. I understand that prioritizing the entire income on the family, but if you are to build a flourishing business, you have to invest money in the company as well, "says Catherine.

The plan is for the app to be on the market in three months to quickly get feedback on the service from users. Other challenges awaiting the coming year are the pursuit of business partners who can support the company financially.

"My plan is to get a bank in Kenya to enter the company. Right now, the only way to solve the administration of customer money. Then, of course, I hope that Hand in Hand will pick up the app and use it in its projects aimed at supporting people in poor countries.

"The sustainability perspective is important for Hand in Hand and Saver Pal is one of many ways to create a fairer and sustainable society," says Catherine.

Both Edwin and Catherine hope to find interesting companies to be inspired by during their visit to Stockholm. Catherine points out that she only after almost two days in Sweden can find that it is very clean country compared with Kenya.

"Rubbish is a part of the cityscape and it really made me think about how we can learn from Sweden in Kenya to create cleaner and more environmentally friendly cities.

Edwin hopes to find new business contacts.

"Is that something I've learned in the past year, it's that you do not win being alone when doing business," says Edwin.