

## TEDxMOI UNIVERSITY lights up Eldoret Town and we just can't get enough of the vitenges



Pomp. Colour. Vitenges. Youth. Those are just some of the adjectives that can be used to describe the inaugural edition of the first TEDxMoi University in the larger Rift region that went down on October 13, 2018 in Eldoret town.



The sold-out event, themed "The Changing Face of Entrepreneurship in Africa" had an A-list of sought-after speakers on board. From Tony Wanaswa of Nation Media Group, popular Kenyan music producer, Cedric Kadenyi 'Cedo', agripreneur, Patrica Lagat of Hortigrud Limited, Philip Ogola, the 'Digital Humanitarian', MentorMe Project Founder, Njeri Kihang'ah Chege, entrepreneur, Gitonga Ndwiga, Yusudi founder, Charlotte De Ridder and popular social media influencer, Brian Mbunde. It was organised by final year students of Moi University led by James Onyango, Nicy Owino, and Eddy Ashioya.

TEDx, which differs slightly from the worldwide TED Talks, is an independently organised event. The event was geared towards bringing together innovators, dynamic thinkers and champions for a better tomorrow to engage, challenge, provoke, incite and push positive change through sharing ideas and networks.

Speaking at the event, MentorMe founder, Njeri Chege urged aspiring entrepreneurs to take it easy. She noted that in the facade of 'Hustling Hard', most entrepreneurs end up overworking and burning out – which is counterproductive.

“It's always great to see young people identify opportunities and grabbing them. I'm pleased to speak at the first TEDx event in the Rift but moreso, proud of the exceptional young people behind it,” she opined.

Her thoughts were echoed by Gitonga Ndwiga, former Africa trainer for Samsung who left his (lucrative) job to pursue his burning passion for entrepreneurship.

“TEDxMoi University is a dream achieved. Personal branding is an essential tool in entrepreneurship and the youth should leverage on the existing Tech platforms to showcase their talents. Just Start!” Ndwiga advised.

Tony Wanaswa gave the audience something to think about with his digital age presentation. What are you doing with your platforms? Was a question that kept popping up with Philip Ogola, the 'Digital Humanitarian', warning the audience against splashing their loved ones online. “Reduce your digital footprints online, what are you posting on your channels? It matters,” said he, as he got emotional during the presentation due to his involvement in the rescuing of WestGate victims during the September 2013 attack.

Patricia Lagat, a former medical student who insists that she did not 'quit', but rather 'left' Medicine for her first love – agriculture – probably stole the show. While many young people avoid getting dirty, no pun intended, when it comes to farming, Patricia goes all the way. She advised young farmers to trust the process.

“Ukulima sio ushamba,” she has patented the words.



In a twist of events, there was an emotional moment when Cedo took over the stage to deliver his talk. His parents, who served as #CoupleGoals for the millennial audience, ended up showing us the softer side of the former Moi University Law student. Did you know that Cedo never cried as a child? Well, Cedo's parents thought you should know.

“No one can retire you from your gift,” was Cedo's key takehome.

But wasn't always easy. Kevin Mbayagi, one of the team members in organising the event, attributes it all to prayer.

Prayer is good, but it is not enough to get the job done. You have to put in the work as Eddy Ashioya, a co-organiser of the event, stated.

“There is no shortcut. Find a great team that will pull you up. Besides, they bring in skill sets which you may be lacking,”

His thoughts were mirrored by Nicy Owino, another team member.

“To me, it boils down to belief. Do you think you can pull it off? Because if you don't, why do you expect anyone else to?”

Cheryl Masia jumped in, “Team work! Team work!”

“Find what you can do better than everyone else and do it. Being part of the TEDx Moi University organizing team has brought me closer to that world that only I can impact,” closed Faith Kangogo.

But of course nothing is perfect in life. And TEDxMoi University is no different. Hellen Shikanda, a 4<sup>th</sup> year Moi University student, thinks more could or should have been done.

“I loved the event, the first TEDx in Eldoret eish! If only we had more time to add even more topics and offline engagement with the teams,” said Shikanda.

Whatever the case, history was made as TEDxMoi University not only put Eldoret on the regional map as a growing force in the North Rift, but put it on the social media map as well, with the event ranking 5<sup>th</sup> among the top trending topics in Kenya.

We guess Saturday October 13 was not a bad date after all. Is there a #TEDxMoi University 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition? Well, with the vision, the right team and the dedication, is anything too hard? After all, team work, works.

