

News

Lawyers compete for innovation prize

OUR REPORTER

When one thinks about innovative boot camps, the idea is usually of scientists devising new ways of resolving old problems. However, the 2016 Innovating Justice Boot camp changed that notion, when it was held at the Makerere University Resilient Africa Network offices in Kololo recently.

The camp attracted six promising justice innovators drawn from over 400 applications.

The innovators, mostly law students or recent graduates, were there to pitch their alternative ideas of addressing local community problems in the most affordable manner.

The winners would earn part of 160,000 euros (about Shs 605.4m) in funding, among other benefits.

The Innovating Justice Boot camp is a regional event organized by Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiiL), a not-for-profit institution based at The Hague in the Netherlands. This year, the HiiL partnered with RAN



Moses Mugisha of Puliida (L) receives a certificate from Prof Sylvia Tamale

to host the Kampala event.

The innovators made their pitches to a panel that included Prof Sylvia Tamale of Makerere University School of Law; Maureen Nahwera, programme manager Rule of Law with SIDA, Davis Baasha, regional director and senior advisor at BiD Network; and Sophie Racin, component manager, Rights, Justice and Peace.

The innovator pitches include BYTELEX by Raymond Asiimwe, who sought to provide

practical legal solutions and advisory services to startups, technology companies and investors for their spur lasting growth and continuity.

Next in the queue was EFAJ-P by Fred Muzira, who sought to empower families to Access Justice Project, which promotes human rights by increasing access to information on land and property rights.

Muzira was followed by Lawyers 4 Farmers, presented by Helen Mukasa on behalf of five

other female lawyers, who are promoting farmer entrepreneurship to address the legal knowledge needs of farmers.

Then there was Mobile Legal Aid (presented by Wubeshet Woldemariam Tefra of Ethiopia) for survivors of SGBV in Uganda. Others were Puliida by Moses Mugisha, who provides legal solutions for agribusiness and climate change in Wakiso and Mpigi; and finally J2P, presented by Rancy Bukenya, who

work towards resolving unattended traffic offenses, unrecorded crimes, unaccounted fines and payments by traffic offenders by the police.

The jury later ruled that Puliida-Legal solutions for agribusiness and climate change justice had emerged the best innovator team and qualified to go to The Hague for the Justice Entrepreneurship School, taking place between November 26 and December 2, 2016. There, they will receive an investment of up to 20 000 euros equity-free. There, they will be joined by finalists from five other boot camps, held in Tunis, Lagos, Nairobi, Johannesburg and Kyiv in Ukraine. At The Hague, the innovators will receive expert advice to improve their product and be ready for a six-month validation course.

Justice Geoffrey Kiryabwire of the Commercial division of the High court was keynote speaker at the event, and challenged lawyers to reconsider their roles in the 21st century, especially in the age of ICT; the future of the courts and legal practice, and how the judiciary is innovating by providing information and enhancing transparency through judiciary portal, ULII website, social media, procedural changes and the institutional changes.

In his remarks, Ran's Chief of Party, Prof William Bazeyo, thanked the HiiL Innovating Justice Team for choosing to hold the boot camp here, noting that the innovation space was available for such initiatives.