

# LIU MAGAZINE

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# LEARN ENTREPRENEURSHIP ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE

**LiU student Marcus Nygren is in Uganda to develop an educational app in business enterprise. A perfect combination of doing some good, learning something new, travelling and meeting people.**

STORY **EVA BERGSTEDT** PHOTO **ALLAN KWITONDA, MARCUS NYGREN & PATRICK OBBO**

**M**arcus Nygren is studying media technology, an engineering programme at Linköping University. This spring he is in Zambia and Uganda as part of his degree project to develop an app that will improve training for future business owners.

“This is a way for me to realise both my own and other people’s dreams,” he says.

Alongside his studies, Mr Nygren runs his own web development business, so he knows a bit about entrepreneurship. The client for the degree project is the non-profit Swedish organisation Young Drive, which trains young future business owners for free in entrepreneurship,

on location in several African countries – Botswana, Zambia and Uganda. In Uganda alone, 12,000 young people have received training so far.

On site first in Zambia, and then in Uganda, Mr Nygren has studied how the training is arranged and what conditions for the participants – some as young as 15 – are like.

“Many come from their villages with business dreams of various kinds. They deal with everything from manufacturing brooms and selling mobile phone subscriptions to developing advanced products and services.”

**FOR TEN WEEKS THE PARTICIPANTS** receive training in entrepreneurship, one half-day a week. The training is provided by native

coaches specially trained by Young Drive. And this is where Mr Nygren’s app comes in. It will function as a supplement to the physical, five-day coach training on site. With the help of four parameters that the app trains the coaches in, they obtain better knowledge and self-confidence, so they in turn can teach the skills of entrepreneurship.

The first three parameters deal with helping the coaches provide correct information, structure instruction for the young people, and calculate how much time each training element takes – and keep to it.

The fourth parameter – which Mr Nygren realised needed to be included after interviews with coaches and participants – was a ‘fun atmosphere’.



Marcus Nygren



*How is that done in an app?*

Mr Nygren has thought about that a lot.

“Young Drive is no school; the training takes place voluntarily in the participants’ free time. It’s important to make the training sessions fun, and to create a relaxed atmosphere with interactivity between coaches and participants. So one way, in fact, is to help the coaches feel self-confidence when facing their youth sessions, and the app trains them in various scenarios. Of course in the future the app can be expanded to also practice team-building exercises.”

**THE PURPOSE OF THE APP** is to be a learning tool both for the coaches and the project managers. Via a quiz, for example, the coaches can see how much

they have learned after every training day.

“For them, it will be a learning tool, and for the project managers it will be a way to direct their efforts; they can see who they are to support and how,” Mr Nygren says.

He is certain that the app would never have been good enough if he had sat at home in Sweden and developed it.

“The project stands or falls on technology being developed in interaction with the people it affects. Now I’m on site, I can observe and learn, let the participants test solutions, and based on that develop my work further. It’s very instructive for me.”

For Mr Nygren, his degree project means he gets to work with the things he’s most interested in – technology, entrepreneurship, cultures, and people – at the same time as he contributes something

that can help other young people realise their dreams.

“It’s great to be a part of a larger context. To say nothing of being in Kampala; this is an entirely new, exciting city for me.”

One lesson he learned during his months in Zambia and Uganda is the importance of physical meetings between coaches and participants. Still, he hopes that the alternative of just an app on a mobile phone will make it possible for people to learn entrepreneurship.

“Think of the possibilities this could bring. It would then be possible to start training everywhere – in a distant village, in a refugee camp, or in a school. It’s an awesome vision.”

Young Drive <http://youngdrive.org/>