

JYLKKÄRI IN ENGLISH

"Big problems are big opportunities"

KATARIINA KALMARI

JYU Talks challenged students to do no less than save the world.

"WHAT DO YOU want to do when you grow up?" This was one of the key questions of the JYU Talks event opening ceremony on March 23rd. Rest assured, faculty members, celebrities, businessmen and professors from near and afar had some suggestions.

"I have an appeal to the students: You are young and intelligent. The world is in a bad shape, and there's nothing better you can do than to save it", stated keynote speaker and singer/songwriter for the band Eppu Normaali, **Martti Syrjä**.

Syrjä was present to talk about his recent involvement in the TV programme *Operaatio Maa*, where he along with **Erja Häkkinen** went to Madagascar to help set up wind mills for the village of Ivovo. *Operaatio Maa's* idea of solving global problems on a local level ties in with the principles of Global Venture Lab (GVL), one of the organisers of JYU Talks.

"We're trying to figure out with experts how, where and who would go and develop this project financially. The product would be technology that would fight global warming and poverty, but would also be financially profitable. Everyone knows that carried water doesn't stay in the well", Syrjä cites.

ONE OTHER KEY issue for the evening was "problems worth solving". However, the founders of GVL, professors **Ikhlaq Sidhu**, **Dhrub Biswas** and **Marko Seppä**, saw these problems not as mere problems, but as possibilities for building better companies.

"Big problems are big opportunities. If there are no problems, no one's going to want you to solve them", said professor Sidhu from UC Berkeley.

"What is capital? Most people think of capital as money. But what kind of capital do you need to build big companies. Something completely different: Knowledge, competence, capability. You have to challenge yourself to



Martti Syrjä finds students to have a lot of potential for changing the world.

think of yourself as capital", continued JYU professor Marko Seppä.

Indeed, according to **Jane Porter**, one of the project managers with GVL in Finland, students have the potential to play a huge role in changing companies towards more sustainable methods of doing business.

"Everyone doesn't like business. And it's true, business has caused a lot

of the problems in the world today, but it can also solve a lot of those problems. So get involved and change it. Don't just leave it to the people who only think profit."

THAT IS, the message of the evening seemed to be: Students don't only have the ability to change business, but also to change the world.

"Students are like antioxidants, like enzymes: They create new things. And they are always ready to go", says professor Dhrub Biswas from IIT Kharagpur.

"Students are in a very special time in their lives. They are not incumbered by rules or constraints as you might be later in life. Students are able to be idealistic, they have the capabi-

lity to break barriers", adds Sidhu.

High hopes for the young minds, but can also be quite intimidating. However, as Jane Porter concluded at the end of the evening:

"What do you want to do when you grow up? You don't need to know yet. But you need to think."

Katariina Kalmari

Sustainability through business

GLOBAL VENTURE Lab, or GVL, which was behind the JYU Talks event, is something of a pickle to explain. It's not a business, but it works in the business world. It functions in several universities around the world, but it's not owned by any. It's not a single project, but rather a project of projects.

"It's a method, really, a way of doing things", says **Jane Porter**, one of the project managers with GVL in Finland. Indeed, GVL incorporates

learning, research and business in order to encourage entrepreneurship and solving needed problems.

"We try to give students skills and hands-on experience that they need in the business world, and make research more practical and relevant for businesses. As a whole, it all works two ways; we bring knowledge and skills out of the university, and bring innovation and business competence into the university", Porter explains.

However, business is not the only objective of the GVL.

"We use different projects to get to a bigger goal: growth venturing for problems worth solving", Porter states.

But what problems then are worth solving?

"A lot of it has to do with sustainability. How do we reach a level where we don't consume so many natural resources? Businesses play a huge role in it. We encourage students to take part

in companies that want to grow, but companies that are, for instance, involved with green energy or helping the poor", Porter explains.

GVL took off in the United States in UC Berkeley in November of 2008 with an electric car summit. Early this year it was followed by entrepreneurship programmes in IIT Kharagpur, India. Now, it seems, it's Finland's turn.

Katariina Kalmari

In the international corner of JYY

A DOZEN OR SO students from all around the world gather about the table exchanging latest news. The Subcommittee for International Affairs, also known as SIA, is the only organ in JYY where the chairperson and most of the active participants are foreign students.

The meeting is well organised but relaxed, and an honest concern in the topics of discussion is notable. The chair of Subcommittee **Thomas Sama** emphasises that the SIA wishes to be an open forum for the fo-



reign students to come together and bring up issues of their interest.

One such suggestion was made a couple of years ago, when then the chair **Angelina Korsunova** got an idea of organising a competition that would bring attention to the quality of lectures held in English.

This March the rector gave out the prize for the Teacher of the Year in Intercultural Environment for the third time. The award went to professor **Michael Coleman**, who works at the Department of English. The SIA meeting is happy to note a yearly increase in the number of votes from students – altogether 154 votes were casted.

THE SIA SEEMS to live up to its aims at being an open forum: topics in discussion vary from Inter-

nationalisation Strategy for Institutes of Higher Education in Finland to an informative event of social security and health care issues for foreign students, and the Finnish language club Suomi-kerho that has begun to meet in Kortepohja.

An Hungarian student **Sandor Klapcsik** presents a petition against the Kortepohja landline cut down. Discussion of what all the foreign students might miss out in general information continues even after

the meeting.

The Subcommittee takes seriously the problems that the international students encounter but instead of dwelling on them believes in making a change. The SIA is a bunch with a positive attitude and a real belief in multiculturalism in the university and in JYY. Oh yes – and Finns are welcome, too.

Piia-Maria Vidgren

Sarja päättyy.