

When I saw him, I thought it was a bad gag. Why? I couldn't just believe the guy standing in front of me was the founder and the Chief Executive Officer of Kuna Vijana.

As usual with Sue my not very crazy friend, inquisitiveness always gets the best of us and we really wanted to know what is Kuna Vijana all about and why the name Kuna Vijana. All this dates back early this year.

Recently I decided to probe more into Kuna Vijana. With a membership of over 6000 youth nationwide, you realize it's not just a name in existence but a name living up to its meaning. Their face book site is their magical touch in the hearts of the youth who daily continue to yearn for something meaningful to do with their zealous energy.

A student at the Strathmore University and a second born in a family of three, Evans N. Muriu carries the banner of kuna Vijana with the mission of redeeming the reputation of the youth in this nation.

Looks can be illusory! You would think of him as young and green but beneath that look lies a alluring and buoyant guy, ready to carry a burden to profound many have abscond from; the youth. My exclusive interview with CEO of Kuna Vijana, Evans Muriu, gets us deeper in to the world of Kuna Vijana and the man behind it.

C: Define your character in three words

EM: God fearing, talented and future oriented.

C: Define your relationship with God.

EM: Am close with my God and grateful because the far I have come it is through His grace. This has been greatly influenced by my growing up. When growing up in Eastleigh, we used to have a children fellowship in our estate which my mum made my siblings and I attend once every week. Even today we have Sunday fellowships in our house which again I also attend.

C: Don't you find the fellowships as a routine?

EM: On the contrary, I enjoy that moment when I just connect with God and share my burdens with him. I love the fellowships.

C: Why the name Kuna Vijana?

EM: It all began in mid 2007. I was walking behind a group of young men who had pierced their ears and wore dreadlocks on their heads. Beside the road was a group of old men sited and as soon as the youth group passed, they began talking of the way the young generation has lost a sense of discipline in the way they dress and carry themselves.

I couldn't understand why the old generation despises the young by just a glance! What is in a person or does dressing define a person? I wondered. I therefore decided took it upon myself and redeem the

name of the youth. That is where the name Kuna Vijana came from. The name is a pair of two Swahili words which mean 'There are youth'.

C: How is kuna vijana registered?

EM: Kuna Vijana operates as a registered nationwide, nonprofit making organization that seeks to earn Kenyans youth a name and a reputation by fully tapping, utilizing and exposing their talents. We also seek to change the reputation of the youth in the society and help them overcome barriers they encounter daily in their success journey.

C: For how long has Kuna Vijana been into operation?

EM: We began our operations in October 2008 and that would bring us into a year of tremendous change and positive influence in the lives of many by using the youth to initiate these changes.

C: What changes are you talking about?

EM: We have initiated a group called Jikaze that associates itself with the Internally Displaced persons (IDP's). So far we have identified the IDP's living in Naivasha whom we are helping to put up semi permanent houses and we look forward to providing the ladies living there with sanitary towels on October 20th.

We also visit children's homes as well as host educational workshops to train the youth on issues affecting us daily by inviting guests to speak during the workshops. In the workshops that we have so far hosted in Nairobi and Mombasa we had invited guests from Malaysia in concurrence with Otep Kenya and they were quite successful.

C: Apart from the charity events and workshops that target non-members, how do Kuna Vijana members benefit?

EM: We have the responsibility to prop up members of Kuna Vijana in their own activities. A good example is the BIOCIDE rock bands who are members of Kuna Vijana, we help them organize their concerts as well as market them through our activities where they get to perform.

C: How do you finance all this activities?

EM: That is a good question. Finance is our biggest challenge. So far we have no donors and we finance all activities that we come up with.

C: How do you raise the money? You finance the m yourself?

EM: No as I said the name Kuna Vijana means there are youth out there who are rational, responsible, hardworking and self driven. Through our members we contribute with food, clothes and money. Through these donations and the limited finances, we have managed to run our activities and members can bear witness to having benefited from Kuna Vijana as well as acquired a positive attitude towards life.

C: What would you achieve if you had donors?

EM: Kuna Vijana would definitely move a notch higher by holding more educational workshops, get involved more in charitable activities as well as do one extra-ordinary thing that seems impossible in our nation; create jobs for the youth.

C: You are a student. How do you balance your studies and Kuna Vijana?

EM: I have learnt to balance the one show I used to learn during the initial stages of Kuna Vijana. I delegate duties in the office of Kuna Vijana. This delegation gives me time to study but I must confess I am a firm CEO who ensures everything is run with efficiency and accountability.

C: What drives you?

EM: Caltex (he laughs) Seriously...what drives me is the passion for what I do and the results I achieve after a days' work, positive change of people's lives.

C: How is your family's reception towards your initiative?

EM: my family is proud of me and they support me whenever they can and I am grateful for their support.

C: Where do you see kuna vijana in the next five years?

EM: I see Kuna Vijana having created a powerful network of the youth and having overcome many barriers that hinder our development. This will be possible because it is a long term goal and there is a lot of continuity in it where we have people joining and others leaving the youth age bracket.

It is my prayer that Kuna Vijana will continue to redeem the reputation of the youth in this nation.