

Learning by Ear 2010 "Against the Current" – Urban Exodus

Episode 10: "Very good news"

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CHARACTERS:

Scene 1:

- **JOURNALIST**
- **KABO** (57 YEARS OLD)
- **BAKI** (26 YEARS OLD)
- **ZEINA** (24 YEARS OLD)
- **NANA** (22 YEARS OLD)
- **TINGO** (32 YEARS OLD)

Scene 2:

- **BEN** (29 YEARS OLD)
- **HADIA** (45 YEARS OLD)
- **HADARI** (48 YEARS OLD)

Scene 3:

- **BEN** (29 YEARS OLD)
- **BAKI** (26 YEARS OLD)
- **ZEINA** (24 YEARS OLD)
- **THE CROWD** (PEOPLE IN THE DISCO)

Intro:

Welcome to *Learning by Ear* and to the tenth and last episode of our series about urban exodus entitled "Against the Current".

In the previous episodes, we have followed the adventures of Ben and his friends, three unemployed young graduates who have decided to take their destiny in hand by setting up an agricultural cooperative in their village.

Today we'll find out how, despite all kinds of problems, the project is turning out to be a great human and social adventure. Listen in to this final episode titled "Very good news". We join our young heroes as they are meeting at Ben's...

Scene One: At Ben's.**JOURNALIST, BAKI, ZEINA, NANA, KABO AND TINGO**

1. **ATMO** **AT BEN'S. CRICKETS, HENS, POUNDING IN THE DISTANCE**

2. JOURNALIST (voice from the radio) "That was the latest information from the stock exchange with Matip Kerare live from the capital. And now on to business news.

According to a chamber of commerce statement, peanut exports are expected to drop by 80 percent in the next few days. People fear this will be a disaster for producers and will...

3. ZEINA Listen!

(The lines 5 and 6 are spoken while the text in italics is being read)

4. JOURNALIST ...lead to a significant fall in living standards. The federation of producers has said it will stop all deliveries until the authorities issue *guarantees that they will assume responsibility for loss of income and operating costs. At least during a transition period that the commission will define...*"

5. ZEINA They're talking about the peanut rate...

6. BAKI Zeina could you please turn off the radio? We've got work to do!

7. SFX **TURNING OFF THE RADIO**

8. KABO I can't see Ben.

9. ZEINA Where is he?

10. NANA Has anyone seen him since this morning?

11. **BAKI** What should we do?
12. **NANA** We have to wait for him.
13. **KABO** The first training session is tomorrow.
14. **ZEINA** Has this meeting now been officially opened?
15. **KABO** Do you all agree to start without Ben? I have to go and see Hadari. He's starting his new job tomorrow.
16. **ZEINA** I would rather wait for Ben.
17. **BAKI** We can deliberate. Four of the five-member management team are here – that's the quorum set by the rules.
18. **ZEINA** Well, actually I was hoping to discuss a serious matter and Ben is directly responsible for the affair.
19. **KABO** Really?
20. **BAKI** What is it?
21. **NANA** Can't you be a bit clearer Zeina? You're worrying me!
22. **ZEINA** Not without reason... But I won't say anything else in Ben's absence.
23. **BAKI** **(Annoyed sigh)**
24. **SFX** **STEPS APPROACHING (TINGO, OUTDOORS)**
25. **BAKI** Here he comes!
26. **SFX** **KNOCKING AT THE DOOR (BEN'S HOME)**

- 27. TINGO** (behind the door) Is anybody there?
- 28. KABO** Who could that be?
- 29. SFX** **A CHAIR BEING PUSHED BACK, STEPS GOING TO THE DOOR (BAKI), A DOOR GRATING**
- 30. TINGO** ...Oh! Hello Baki!
- 31. BAKI** Tingo?? Are you looking for someone? We're in a meeting.
- 32. TINGO** I would like to become a member of the cooperative.
- 33. ALL** WHAT????
- 34. BAKI** Ok, come in!
- 35. TINGO** I've read the cooperative statutes. I can become an associate member.
- 36. BAKI** You must also have read that the cooperative reserves the right to reject certain people.
- 37. TINGO** Listen, I know you don't think much of my work or of me... I know that... But I've come to make you an offer.
- 38. NANA** Again?
- 39. TINGO** Yes. But this time it's sincere, interesting and beneficial.
- 40. ZEINA** For whom?
- 41. TINGO** I need you. You probably already know that the market value of peanuts has dropped completely.

- 42. BAKI** Nothing to do with us.
- 43. TINGO** I'm already committed. I've already received an advance for the next season. I'm going to lose a great deal of money. A huge deal.
- 44. BAKI** You still haven't answered me. What's all this got to do with us?
- 45. TINGO** Well, faced with this problem, I'm looking for solutions. The best one involves you.
- 46. BAKI** And why should we be interested?
- 47. TINGO** It's a win-win situation. For everyone – the cooperative, the farmers, the whole village, and for me...
- 48. NANA** Basically you need us so you don't have to register so many losses.
- 49. TINGO** Yes. And the only solution is to use the cooperative's services. The cooperative can put qualified staff at the disposal of its members.
- 50. BAKO** Do you think we're slave drivers? Do you believe that we will provide you with labor force that you can exploit at leisure?
- 51. TINGO** Not at all.
- 52. ZEINA** That's exactly what I wanted to discuss with Ben! There are some rumors going around ...

- 53. TINGO** I can't stop producing peanuts. Not this year. I usually pay my farmers half of their wages when the work is done and the outstanding balance when the harvest is sold. But this year they won't accept this.
- 54. NANA** Yes! Because before this crisis, we launched a campaign demanding that they receive their full wages as soon as the work is done.
- 55. TINGO** I suggest paying one third now, two months before the season begins, one third when the work is done and the rest when the harvest is sold... The cooperative offers them a solid guarantee. You can sue me if need be - they can't.
- 56. BAKI** What's in it for us?
- 57. ZEINA** Let's see, Baki! What's the farmers' main problem?
- 58. TINGO** They never have enough cash to prepare for the season and ensure that the production is good.
- 59. ZEINA** But if they get some cash now and have our support, the harvest of food-producing crops will only increase.
- 60. TINGO** We could form a coalition – the cooperative, the farmers and my farm. Together we could break the vicious circle of food insecurity and poverty.
- 61. KABO** How would we do it exactly?

62. TINGO Well, I promise to diversify my production as soon as possible: no more monoculture! And I will make part of my land available to the cooperative... I would even be prepared to sell plots for a reasonable price! Like that some farmers could work in complete autonomy. We only need to discuss the details.

63. KABO Have a seat!

----- MUSIC -----

Scene two: Village bar.

BEN, HADIA, HADARI

64. ATMO **VILLAGE BAR. LOUD DANCE MUSIC; CONVERSATION IN THE BACKGROUND**

65. BEN **(shouting)** Can't he turn down the music?

66. HADIA **(shouting)** What? I can't hear you, Ben!

67. BEN **(shouting)** ... The volume! ... **(VOLUME DECREASES)** ...
pew!

68. HADIA The atmosphere is going to be great tonight!

69. HADARI I hope so! The village has to remember this party!

70. HADIA We'll remember you, Hadari. Ten years is a long time!

71. HADARI I know, Hadia. But people won't only have good memories. I

didn't only make friends here...

- 72. HADIA** That goes for everybody. What's important are the friends that you did make.
- 73. BEN** And there are lots of us. You know that.
- 74. HADARI** That's true and it's all thanks to you, Ben.
- 75. BEN** Oh, I didn't do much...
- 76. HADARI** You know what, right now I would like to retire so I can do the same as you... Yes... go back to my village and start up an agricultural cooperative.
- 77. BEN** What a good idea! We could work together!
- 78. HADARI** You know, my life has changed so much since you got here. I am so lucky to have met you. Thank you so much.
- 79. BEN** I don't think that... Honestly, I...
- 80. HADARI** Really! I really wanted to tell you that and I'll repeat it at the party later in front of everybody.
- 81. HADIA** Stop it now! You'll make me cry! Stop talking as if you're saying goodbye for ever! This is a party, not a funeral!
- 82. HADARI** You're right, Hadia! People shall have fun tonight!
- 83. BEN** You can count on us. We've got the bar for the whole night. The drinks are already cold. And the music is deafening!
- 84. HADIA** I haven't danced for at least 15 years!

- 85. HADARI** Please, save the first dance for me!
- 86. HADIA** Agreed!
- 87. BEN** I'll be jealous!
- 88. HADIA** Why? Isn't Nana coming to the party?
- 89. BEN** She doesn't know about it, yet... but she will come... I'm sure...
- 90. HADARI** That's the problem. Nobody knows about it. Will anyone come?
- 91. BEN** We wanted it to be a surprise. Everything's fine. We just have to invite people now.
- 92. HADIA** I'll ask all the women and young girls to bring all the men.
- 93. BEN** Right I'm off! I'm already late for a meeting at the cooperative. See you later!
- 94. HADIA & HADARI** See you later Ben!
- 95. SFX** **STEPS GOING AWAY (BEN, indoors)**

----- MUSIC -----

Scene three: Bar.

BEN, BAKI, ZEINA, THE CROWD

- 96. ATMO** **IN A BAR. PARTY ATMOSPHERE, LOUD DANCE MUSIC,**

SHOUTS, LAUGHTER, BOTTLES AND GLASSES

97. **BEN** Hadari really dances well.
98. **ZEINA** Amazing for his age!
99. **BEN** It's because he's young at heart!
100. **SFX** **LOUD CLAPPING**
101. **CROWD** Bravo! Bravo!
102. **BAKI** Zeina! Ben! I've brought you some drinks!
103. **BEN** Finally! Thanks Baki! What did you want to say?
104. **BAKI** Hang on... Let's go somewhere a little quieter.
105. **SFX** **STEPS (BAKI, BEN, ZEINA), THE MUSIC GETS QUIETER**
106. **ZEINA** Come on Baki! Tell him!
107. **BAKI** Cheers!
108. **SFX** **GLASSES ARE RAISED AND CLINKING SOUNDS (3 P)**
109. **BEN** Cheers! What's going on?
110. **BAKI** I would like to make a toast to Zeina, my future wife!
111. **BEN** You're... you're getting married?
112. **ZEINA** Yes, Ben! Baki just wants to settle down here and make sure the cooperative prospers.

- 113. BAKI** The village is changing at an incredible rate and the future has promise! Even Tingo is convinced of the importance of protecting the environment and especially of food-producing crops!
- 114. ZEINA** Can you imagine, Ben! Finally the villagers won't need to go far anymore to buy expensive yam, sorghum, millet and vegetables! They will have grown them themselves.
- 115. BAKI** And what's more, they will be able to sell the surplus!
- 116. BEN** **(looking a bit absent-minded)** That's true...it's wonderful... and we are already beginning to serve as an example throughout the region...But...
- 117. ZEINA** What's wrong Ben?
- 118. BAKI** You're looking a bit strange...
- 119. BEN** Er... No... no! Wait a second, I'm coming back...
- 120. SFX** **RAPID STEPS GOING AWAY (BEN, INDOORS)**
- 121. BEN** **(Going away)** I'm going to get Nana... I've got a toast to make, too!

Outro:

And this is the end of the last episode of "Against the Current", our Learning by Ear series about urban exodus. Hopefully it will serve as an inspiration to others like Ben, Zeina and Baki who want to pursue their careers outside of town. This series was written by Alfred Dogbé.

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Thank you for listening and good bye for now!

END OF EPISODE 10