

Learning by Ear 2010 – “Against the Current” Urban Exodus

Episode 01: “Without a job, the city is hell”

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CHARACTERS:

Scene 1:

- **BEN** (AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER, MALE, 29 YEARS OLD)
- **KABO** (FARMER, BEN'S UNCLE, MALE, 57 YEARS OLD)

Scene 2:

- **BAKI** (SOCIOLOGIST, FRIEND OF ZEINA AND BEN'S, MALE, 26 YEARS OLD)
- **ZEINA** (ECONOMIST, FRIEND OF BAKI AND BEN'S, FEMALE, 24 YEARS OLD)

Scene 3:

- **BAKI** (MALE, 26 YEARS OLD)
- **ZEINA** (FEMALE, 24 YEARS OLD)
- **BEN** (MALE, 29 YEARS OLD)

Intro:

Welcome to Learning by Ear and our new series about urban exodus, called "Against the Current".

We'll be following the adventures of Ben and his friends Baki and Zeina. Appalled by the lack of prospects in the city, these three young university graduates have decided to set up an agricultural cooperative in their village.

Ben is 29 years old. He is an agricultural engineer. He resigned from his post as a public servant because he could not fulfil his dream of putting his skills to the service of farmers and villagers.

Zeina is 24 years old and trained as an economist. Since graduating, she has been temping in the hope of getting a stable job and founding a family with her boyfriend Baki.

Baki, for his part, has lost all hopes of finding a long-term job in his country. The 26-year-old has decided to go to the United States to make use of the experience he has gained as a company sociologist.

In this first episode you will see how these young people, faced with unemployment, try to answer the same question: How do we get out of this situation?

MUSIC

Scene 1: In town. At Ben's home.

BEN, KABO

1. **ATMO** **MUSIC PLAYS ON RADIO**
2. **SFX** **LEAFING THROUGH A NEWSPAPER**
3. **SFX** **KNOCKING AT THE DOOR, ONCE, TWICE AND THEN PERSISTENTLY**
4. **KABO** **(Shouting) Ben! Ben, can you hear me...? Ben!**
5. **SFX** **RADIO IS TURNED OFF**
6. **SFX** **A KEY TURNS IN THE LOCK**
7. **SFX** **THE DOOR OPENS, STEPS APPROACHING (KABO, INDOORS)**
8. **BEN** Uncle Kabo! ... Hello! I was listening to the radio. I didn't hear you calling me. Are you going back to the village today?
9. **KABO** Yes.
10. **BEN** In that case, I'll take you to the station.
11. **KABO** I'm not going yet.
12. **BEN** Do you want me to get you anything in town?
13. **KABO** I came to talk to you.

- 14. BEN** Come in please!
- 15. KABO** No! I won't be long. **(HE SIGHS.)** You know I got here three days ago. And I haven't seen you go to work once. Apparently you resigned.
- 16. BEN** Yes, that's true. I'm an agricultural engineer, uncle. I've studied for almost 8 years. And then they put me in an office where there's nothing to do. Our bosses even tell us not to come at the same time because there are only two chairs, although there are five of us.
- 17. KABO** Were you fired or did you resign?
- 18. BEN** I resigned.
- 19. KABO** Do you know how many people are looking for paid work right now? More than half of your generation is going to reach the age of 40 without ever having worked. And you...
- 20. BEN** If I stay there I'll forget everything I ever learned. I want to use all my skills and knowledge. I want to do something useful. Help the farmers with their work. I also want to develop myself. If I stay there nothing will come of me.
- 21. KABO** And will something come of you if you just lie on your bed all day?

22. BEN Err!

23. KABO Listen to me Ben! You are the first member of our family to have studied. The first to get his primary school certificate and then his school-leaving certificate and whatever other certificates... We are proud of you. While you were coming home with certificates, we, your uncles, your aunts, were saying to ourselves that we would soon be saved from poverty and misery. And now that you've got all that you're lying down?

24. BEN Uncle, I mean...

25. KABO Listen to me! Nobody in the family is asking you to work for them. All those years when you were on a school bench, your father was sweating for you. Now he's retired, don't you think he deserves some rest? Don't you think he has a right to look at you and think to himself that he didn't suffer for nothing?

26. BEN I...

27. KABO Don't interrupt me! Your dad and I didn't go to school. We never understood what you were learning there. But you are the hope of the whole family. Don't ever forget that! You are not a child.

If times were different, you would be in the fields supporting your family. That's all I wanted to say to you. I'm going back to the village tonight. When I come back, I want to find out that you're working. Do whatever you like, but work! It's a question of dignity.

28. SFX **LOUD, HEAVY AND ANGRY STEPS WALKING AWAY GRADUALLY (KABO, INDOORS)**

29. BEN Uncle Kabo! ... Uncle Kabo! (**sighs**)

30. SFX: **THE DOOR SHUTS. A KEY TURNS IN THE LOCK.**

----- **Music** -----

Scene 2: In town on the street

BAKI, ZEINA

31. ATMO **STREET SOUNDS: CAR HORNS, BRAKES etc.**

32. BAKI Hi Zeina!

33. SFX **TWO HANDS CLAPPING ENTHUSIASTICALLY**

34. ZEINA Hi Baki! I was just coming over to yours. We never see each other these days. Have you found a job?

35. BAKI Yes, but not for long. It was a sociological survey. I just filled in for someone as a supervisor.

- 36. ZEINA** **(offended)** And you didn't have time to tell me about it... I hope you were well paid at least.
- 37. BAKI** Yes, the pay was decent.
- 38. ZEINA** So what are you complaining about? You can breathe a bit now.
- 39. BAKI** Come on, let me take you to the Hope Café, I'll buy you a drink.
- 40. ZEINA** **(Teasing)** I don't think that's enough for me to forgive you!
- 41. BAKI** If you don't forgive me, who will?
- 42. ZEINA** Maybe I will? **(Laughing)** Let's go!
- 43. SFX** **SOUNDS OF STEPS (BAKI, ZEINA)**
- 44. ZEINA** Two weeks! I really missed you, Baki!
- 45. BAKI** I missed you too, Zeina!
- 46. ZEINA** I know now that I can't live without you and you want to go...
- 47. BAKI** This is not a life here! We won't achieve anything this way. How much longer do I have to wait until I find a job?
- 48. ZEINA** I haven't worked for exactly six months. I've applied. I keep getting interviews. And nothing. Last week, I

went to a gas station where the boss was looking for a manager. He listened to me, looked at my application and... ..

49. BAKI Then he thanked you!

50. ZEINA Better! He took out all my certificates and gave them to me: **(Imitating the man's voice):**

"That's too much! I don't need all these certificates. But a girl like you could attract customers. Come back tomorrow and we'll see."

When I came back he had already employed another girl who didn't have any qualifications.

51. BAKI Of course! She'll be cheaper than you! She can't make any demands whereas you can with your economics degree...

52. ZEINA Employers don't want to make use of others people's skills but then they complain the whole time that their companies are not doing well at all.

53. BAKI You can't do anything about it!

54. ZEINA Another time, I came first in some test. It was for a project management post. The guy wanted to take me...

55. BAKI But?...

- 56. ZEINA** In his bed!
- 57. BAKI** The bastard! I'm sick of this country! I am going to do everything to find two or three interesting contracts. To pay for my plane ticket and the visa. And then I'll go and try my luck in the United States.
- 58. ZEINA** You can't do that!
- 59. BAKI** Zeina! We've already talked about this. We can't just live like this, sitting around until we die. We have to try our luck elsewhere. Two or three odd jobs and I'm off.
- 60. ZEINA** **(sighing)** Please!
- 61. BAKI** As soon as I get settled in, you can come. You'll see!
- 62. ZEINA** What?
- 63. BAKI** It will be better than here. That's for sure!
- 64. ZEINA** It's a bad idea. Our future is here!
- 65. BAKI** My future is in the US.
- 66. ZEINA** Do you think you'll feel at home over there?
- 67. BAKI** There I'll have the possibility of fulfilling myself and being a person in my own right.
- 68. ZEINA** That's not true!

- 69. ATMO** **STREET SOUNDS FADE OUT – DOOR, CAFE
AMBIENCE FADE IN, CHAIRS BEING PUSHED,
SITTING DOWN**
- 70. BAKI** I don't want to carry on suffering for nothing. I wasn't
lucky enough to get into the civil service. So I'm
going to go and take a look elsewhere, that's all!
- 71. ZEINA** Civil service isn't any better you know. Ben just
resigned!
- 72. BAKI** What? Is he crazy?
- 73. ZEINA** You should ask him yourself!
- 74. BAKI** Well, I haven't seen him for a while. Shall we go and
pay him a visit?
- 75. ZEINA** Let's go!
- 76. SFX** **CHAIRS BEING PUSHED, DOOR, STEPS (BAKI,
ZEINA) GOING AWAY FAST, CAFÉ SOUNDS
FADE**

----- MUSIC -----

Scene 3: In town at Ben's house.

BEN, BAKI, ZEINA

- 77. ATMO** **MUSIC PLAYING ON THE RADIO**
- 78. SFX** **SOMEONE KNOCKING AT THE DOOR**
- 79. BEN** Come in! It's open!
- 80. BAKI** Hi Ben!
- 81. BEN** Baki! Zeina! How are you?
- 82. SFX** **HANDS CLAPPING WARMLY**
- 83. ZEINA** Not bad!
- 84. BAKI** Bad!
- 85. BEN** You too? You can't say that. Don't humiliate yourself!
- 86. ALL** **LAUGHTER**
- 87. BAKI** Zeina just told me that...
- 88. BEN** I resigned. It's true.
- 89. BAKI** Why?
- 90. BEN** I'm sick of wasting my time. Sit down!
- 91. ZEINA** Thank you!
- 92. BAKI** And what are you going to do?
- 93. BEN** I'm thinking of starting my own company.

- 94. ZEINA** That's a good idea!
- 95. BEN** I'm thinking about an agricultural cooperative. I've been trying to come up with a business plan for a week but it's hard.
- 96. ZEINA** Baki could help you. That's what he's good at!
- 97. BAKI** 95% of the small and medium-sized companies set up in this country disappear before the third year. It's worse than the mortality rate.
- 98. BEN** Baki, instead of wasting our time waiting for someone to give us an interesting job that is also rewarding, why don't we launch a project that we like and is useful to people?
- 99. BAKI** Give it a rest! So many people have tried. All of them have failed!
- 100. ZEINA** OK, but we haven't even tried.
- 101. BEN** Listen Baki. You're a sociologist. Zeina is an economist and I'm an agronomist. We've got the skills. We can succeed.
- 102. ZEINA** It would be a beautiful adventure. The best way of building our future here.
- 103. BAKI** I've already told you. My future is in the US.
- 104. ZEINA** Baki! We really need you here.

- 105. BEN** Will you at least read the plan that I'm trying to come up with?
- 106. ZEINA** Your expertise... please...
- 107. BAKI** Why are you looking like that, Ben? You know I wouldn't just say yes to keep you happy. We shouldn't lie among friends, should we? ... Where's the plan?
- 108. BEN** Here it is! It's very rough!
- 109. SFX** **PAPER NOISE (LEAFING THROUGH BUSINESS PLAN)**
- 110. ZEINA** Careful, you'll rip it!
- 111. BEN** Listen, I'll make some copies straightaway just opposite. Then you can both read the plan in your own time and we can meet up to discuss it later.
- 112. ZEINA** Tomorrow for instance!
- 113. BEN** Yes, tomorrow. Let's meet up at the Hope Café. It's on me!
- 114. BAKI** OK.
- 115. BEN** I'm just going to pop over to the copy shop. Don't move. I'll be back in five minutes!
- 116. SFX** **STEPS MOVING AWAY FAST (BEN, INDOORS)**

- 117. BAKI** (Sighing) I feel like I just made a mistake.
- 118. ZEINA** Why?
- 119. BAKI** I only said yes to keep him happy!
- 120. ZEINA** If the project is good as I hope it will be you won't regret it.
- 121. BAKI** And if it's bad?
- 122. ZEINA** We'll improve it together.
- 123. BAKI** And what if we can't?
- 124. ZEINA** Well I'm not going to the US, whatever happens.
- 125. BAKI** (Joking) In which case, I'll leave you and I'll find a more beautiful girl!
- 126. BEN, ZEINA (BURST INTO LAUGHTER)**

Outro:

And that's how Learning by Ear ends today. Don't miss the next episode to find out whether Baki and Zeina like Ben's project, and whether Zeina has managed to convince Baki to stay.

If you want to listen to this program again or give us any feedback visit our website www.dw-world.de/lbe or send us an email at: lbe@dw-world.de. Don't forget to tune in next time!

END OF EPISODE 1