**PRESS RELEASE**

**Sandra Namboozo and Samuel Muyita win the Community Healers prize at the Young Inventors Prize for natural fruit preservation innovation**

* **Young Ugandan entrepreneurs (aged 26 and 28) recognised for Karpolax, a biodegradable sachet that triples fruit shelf life without refrigeration**
* **Their invention supports smallholder farmers and vendors, preventing over 1 million tonnes of fruit from spoiling in just 3 years**
* **The European Patent Office is awarding them EUR 20 000 to develop their natural, low-cost alternative to synthetic preservers**

**Munich/Reykjavik, 18 June 2025** – During a ceremony held today in Iceland, the European Patent Office (EPO) awarded the Ugandan entrepreneurs **Sandra Namboozo (26)** and **Samuel Muyita (28)** the **Community Healers prize** for their invention. It is a biodegradable sachet that **helps fruits stay fresh longer** by releasing natural compounds that delay ripening and prevent spoilage.

The **Community Healers prize** **recognises changemakers focused on social equity**, developing solutions for food security, education, healthcare and fair working conditions. Their work promotes equal opportunities and combats discrimination. As this year’s recipients of the Community Healers prize, Namboozo and Muyita **received in total EUR 20 000 (EUR 5 000 awarded to each Tomorrow Shaper and an additional EUR 15 000 in recognition of this special prize).**

*"Winning a special prize is a powerful validation, not just of our work, but of the farmers we serve every day. It shines a global spotlight on a simple truth: innovation rooted in empathy can change the world. This recognition fuels our mission to ensure that no harvest goes to waste and that every farmer, no matter how small, has a fair shot at prosperity,"* said Namboozo and Muyita.

Namboozo and Muyita were selected by an independent jury as one of the **ten winners of the Young Inventors Prize 2025,** chosen from over 450 candidates worldwide. This prize celebrates innovators aged 30 and under, known as Tomorrow Shapers. From this group, three were awarded with special prizes:

* **World Builders,** awarded to the French-American Marie Perrin,for promoting sustainable access to essential resources like water, energy and sustainable infrastructure;
* **Nature Guardians,** awarded to the US sisters, Neeka and Leila Mashouf, for protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, and addressing climate change, ocean health and wildlife conservation
* **Community Healers**, awarded to the Ugandan team.

**Reducing waste, increasing resilience**

In 2022, the world **wasted over 1 billion tonnes of food**, while **783 million people faced hunger**, according to the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)](https://unfccc.int/news/food-loss-and-waste-account-for-8-10-of-annual-global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-cost-usd-1-trillion). In sub-Saharan Africa, where access to cold storage is limited, post-harvest losses particularly affect smallholder farmers.

Namboozo and Muyita, both from farming families, set out to develop a natural alternative to synthetic preservers. Their solution, **Karpolax, is a biodegradable sachet placed inside fruit packaging that releases** a blend of plant-derived volatile organic compoundsextracted from cloves, lemongrass, eucalyptus and wintergreen. These compounds slow ripening by reducing ethylene emissions and **protect against mould, fungi and bacteria**. In pilot tests with Uganda’s National Agricultural Research Organisation, Karpolax extended the shelf life of mangoes from 11 to 33 days. The product has also been successfully used on bananas, apples and oranges.

*“In Uganda, if farmers are not using Karpolax, they are not using anything, … they do not have an alternative. Without refrigeration, products will go to waste. We have seen a reduction in wastage of over 40%,”* said Muyita.

**Healing communities through food security**

Karpolax was launched in 2020 and, by 2023, had **helped over 100 farmers, 20 exporters, and 250 vendors, preventing more than one million tonnes of fruit from going to waste**. Namboozo and Muyita developed the sachets while studying agricultural sciences at Makerere University in Kampala (Uganda) and are now **working on new versions for pineapples, capsicum, and berries.** The journey to launch, however, involved significant obstacles: *“Initially, we did not have access to the equipment, laboratories, the expertise and funding that we needed...we had to walk from lab to lab…we faced many challenges, but we are here because we learned how to be resilient to them,”* said Muyita.

**The Young Inventors Prize celebrates worldwide innovators 30 and under using technology to address global challenges posed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).** Namboozo and Muyita’s work supports SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) by reducing post-harvest losses and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by promoting sustainable food preservation practices.

**The winners of the 2025 edition were announced today during** [**a ceremony livestreamed**](https://www.epo.org/en/news-events/young-inventors-prize/2025-event?mtm_camp=pressrelease&mtm_key=yip2025&mtm_med=press) **from Iceland.**

Find more information about the invention’s impact, the technology and the inventor’s story [**here**](https://www.epo.org/en/news-events/young-inventors-prize/sandra-namboozo-and-samuel-muyita?mtm_camp=pressrelease&mtm_key=yip2025&mtm_med=press).

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**About the Young Inventors Prize**

Aimed at individuals 30 and under, the Young Inventors Prize showcases the transformative power of youth-driven solutions and recognises the remarkable young people paving the way to a more sustainable future. Established in 2022, trophies were first handed out during the European Inventor Award ceremony. As of 2025, the Prize has moved up a gear with its own dedicated event, held separately from the Award. Among the 10 Tomorrow Shapers selected for each edition, three receive special prizes: World Builders, Community Healers, and Nature Guardians. In addition, a People’s Choice winner is selected through an online public vote. Each Tomorrow Shaper receives EUR 5 000, while the three special prize winners are awarded an additional EUR 15 000. The People’s Choice winner also receives an extra EUR 5 000. [Read more](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award?mtm_camp=pressrelease&mtm_key=yip2025&mtm_med=press) on the Young Inventors Prize eligibility and selection criteria.

**About the EPO**

With 6,300 staff members, the[European Patent Office (EPO)](https://www.epo.org/?mtm_camp=pressrelease&mtm_key=yip2025&mtm_med=press) is one of the largest public service institutions in Europe. Headquartered in Munich with offices in Berlin, Brussels, The Hague and Vienna, the EPO was founded with the aim of strengthening co-operation on patents in Europe. Through the EPO's centralised patent granting procedure, inventors are able to obtain high-quality patent protection in up to 46 countries, covering a market of some 700 million people. The EPO is also the world's leading authority in patent information and patent searching.