

Start-up Edsy Bitsy lauded for its big ambition and impact

Firm wins award in SUSS start-up challenge for e-learning app that helps disadvantaged users

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Far-flung Kenya, Uganda and South Africa do not usually come to mind as test beds for a Singaporean start-up.

But local edtech start-up Edsy Bitsy saw opportunity in Africa, where poor Internet connectivity makes remote learning amid the Covid-19 pandemic unviable.

“As the entrepreneurs of a lean start-up, we want to validate our product where problems we address hurt the most,” said co-founder Edwin Ho, 29.

Mr Ho and co-founder Deevak Premdas, 26, approached educators to offer a mobile app that lets teachers design interactive yet resource-efficient lessons, attracting

around 350 users, mostly in Africa.

The app requires up to 200 times less memory and 100 times less data than Web-based digital learning software, while encouraging students to engage with lessons by recording their verbal responses to quizzes.

Lauded for its ambition, impact and innovation, Edsy Bitsy’s pitch came in third out of 11 start-ups in the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) Impact Start-up Challenge Grand Finale on Wednesday.

The team includes Indonesians Charlene Chang, 15, and Catherina Limanto, 16, who had learnt of Edsy Bitsy and e-mailed the founders, asking to join the competition team.

Strong Silvers, a marketing agency that targets seniors,

clinched the \$10,000 top prize.

Edible cutlery producer Crunch Cutlery came in second, receiving \$5,000, while third-placed Edsy Bitsy received \$2,000.

SUSS said the prizes would help winners kick-start their journey to make an impact with their start-ups.

The competition is supported by DBS Foundation.

Business skills development and market access are ways the foundation can support the winners, said competition judge and head of DBS Foundation Claire Wong.

“We see how we can complement start-ups to develop skills by leveraging DBS Foundation’s relationship with DBS,” Ms Wong told The Straits Times.

For instance, start-ups could be partnered with staff from the bank’s human resources or small and medium-sized enterprises team to develop relevant skills.

The foundation can help start-ups find potential partners as well,



Mr Deevak Premdas and Mr Edwin Ho saw opportunity in Africa, where poor Internet connectivity makes remote learning amid the Covid-19 pandemic unviable. They co-founded edtech start-up Edsy Bitsy, which provides an app designed to encourage creative, interactive e-learning in environments with slow hardware and Internet connections. PHOTO: COURTESY OF DEEVAK PREMDAS

she added.

The Impact Start-up Challenge Grand Finale brought together the top teams from previous impact start-up competitions organised by SUSS.

Another contestant was FlashBites, which aims to reduce food waste by selling leftover food at discounted prices.

Co-founder and chief executive Kusala Gn, 23, said that although similar platforms exist, FlashBites will offer a unique pay-it-forward function on its app slated to launch next year, allowing users to sponsor meals for the needy.

She added that the company has already partnered Kim Keat Palm Food Centre in Toa Payoh as a pilot

test, with more than 130 users of the platform since January.

The other judges were Quest Ventures partner Jeffrey Seah; Mr Kevin Moon, head of private investments at Lonsdale Capital; and Investigate VC co-founder Mikael Krogh.

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