

Superwoman made in Africa



Fatoumata Ba (Janngo) and Martin Weiss (Hubert Burda Media) (c) *Andreas Gebert/picture alliance*

Courage, creativity, optimism and an unconditional belief in feasibility: these are the attributes that distinguished Aenne Burda as an entrepreneur and with which she lent a face to the economic miracle in post-war Germany. Her legacy is still omnipresent today and inspires young founders to innovate.

Every year, the Aenne Burda Award for Creative Leadership is presented to women who have made a name for themselves with outstanding entrepreneurial and creative achievements and thus share Aenne Burda's passion.

This year, the Aenne Burda Award goes to Africa for the first time and is presented to a woman who, despite all adversities, has set up a billion-dollar start-up: the young entrepreneur Fatoumata Ba from Senegal. Like Aenne Burda, Fatoumata Ba was initially sneered at for her visions. Her trading platform Jumia (a kind of African Amazon) based on the Ivory Coast made the breakthrough due to her hard work and willpower and became the most successful start-up in Africa.

In addition, Fatoumata's founder ecosystem platform Janngo connects ambitious entrepreneurs who also want to make it to the top. And here, too, there are parallels to

Aenne Burda, who at her time created a worldwide network and overcame not only cultural but also political barriers - and all this before even the internet was born.

Burda board member Martin Weiss presented Fatoumata Ba with the trophy, a bust of the goddess Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom and a symbolic figure for strong women.

"Fatoumata represents everything Aenne Burda stood for: A vision of what can be build. The power, the energy and the persistence to make that vision a reality. And the belief that to make a difference, you need to follow your passion."

Martin Weiss, Burda board member

Fatoumata called out to the audience: "What would you do if you weren't afraid?" In doing so, she encouraged women in this country to put their start-up ideas into practice. At 27 percent, Africa has the highest rate of female entrepreneurs in the world.

Among the winners of the past years are Arianna Huffington, Christiana Figueres, Mitchell Baker, Viviane Reding, Edit Schläffer and Auguste von Bayern.

Free press pictures can be found on Flickr.

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