LEARNERS SHOWCASE SKILLS AT FARMING EXPO

PHOTOS BY HERBERT MUSOKE

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teacher at Emma High School, explained that farming can change Uganda's fortunes if more investment is made in the sector, with the youth at the forefront.

Iganga Secondary School students exhibited a unique product, a zero box that uses charcoal dust mixed with water to preserve perishables. Miriam Nafula, a student, explained that the cooler is supposed to serve people in remote areas and during the time of power blackouts.

"Power is still a challenge in some parts of Uganda, and when it goes off, vendors lose a lot of money. With this innovation, vendors can keep their products cool so that they do not go bad," she said.

Alice Mudondo, a Senior Three student, explained that at school, they have started many projects, ranging from vegetable growing to snail farming, poultry, dairy farming and crop husbandry, with emphasis on value addition.

"We run these projects through the agriculture club, where we share tasks and seek knowledge in farming as a business. Through this club, we have found many opportunities," she says.

Through the club, they grow and sell their produce to the school and parents. Mudondo says most of the proceeds are ploughed back into the farming projects and a small fraction is given to the members.



Andrea Nagudi and Sharlene Nabbaale of Gayaza High School explaining urban farming at the expo



Hannah Nowamani and Hannah Kwagala of MST Junior School explaining snail farming to Andrew Byaruhanga from the Embassy of the Netherlands in Uganda

GAYAZA HIGH SCHOOL

Tasty yoghurt at Gayaza High School stall was a centre of attraction to people who graced the expo.

Keisha Asiimwe, a student, explained that the yogurt was made from milk produced at the school farm.

"There are many products that can be made from milk. We are now making yoghurt from milk produced at our school farm," she said.

Andrea Nagudi, another student, was training people who visited their stall in vegetable growing.

"We grow our vegetables in buckets and hanging gardens. We also grow strawberries, which are also very nutritious and profitable," she said.

Other students, Sharifah Naturinda, Sharlene Nabbaale, Kathy Mikaela, Kayla Kalema, Rihanna Lubega and Maria Kwikiriza explained innovations, such as vermculture.

ST KIZITO HIGH SCHOOL

At St Kizito High School, Namugongo, students explained how food waste is turned into livestock feed, generating income for the school and the students in the farming club.

Geoffrey Owor, a student at the school, explained that after realising that food leftovers were becoming a hygiene challenge at the school, they innovated to turn them into feed for chicken and pigs.

"Most of the food is posho, beans and some bones. We dry the food under a solar dryer and later mill it to make flour that are fed to animals. We make pellets," he said.

Hadijjah Mugisha, another student, explained the making of briquettes from tree leaves, papers, grass and wood after carbonisation.

"The briquettes are sold to the school and other people," she said. They also exhibited different crafts made from used plastics and tyres, which drew many visitors to their stall.

BOMBO ARMY SS

Alice Mary Birungi, the headteacher of Bombo Army Secondary School, led her students to the expo. She explained that the school prioritises farming because it is an enterprise where one can never go wrong.

"We started farming over 10 years ago with the main aim of producing a well-trained student who can thrive even in hard conditions. We also instigate an understanding that farming is not for the failed and poor, rather a source of livelihood if ventured into with business sense," she stressed.

She thanked Vision Group and the sponsors for organising the Harvest Money Expo.

This year's expo, which started on February 27 and ended on Sunday, March 1, was sponsored by Tunga Nutrition, ENGSOIL, Heifer International, Uganda Development Corporation, aBi Development, Pearl Bank, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, as well as Uganda Revenue Authority.



Maria Namirembe, a student of Bombo Army Secondary School explaining urban vegetable farming to a visitor

STUDENTS SHARE VIEWS ABOUT HARVEST MONEY EXPO

Joan Kikya, Senior Four, Gayaza High School
I have learnt it is not about the number of pigs you have, but the way you keep them. You should have few at the start because it is easier to feed and maintain them. This way, you will get more profits than the person who has many and cannot feed them.



Alice Mudondo, Senior Three, Iganga Secondary School
I have got an opportunity to exhibit what I have learnt in the new curriculum. I have also got to witness how the environment can be preserved naturally. I have learnt how to make briquettes from rubbish, ash and banana peelings.



Michelle Karungi, Senior Four, Emma High School
The expo has been such an educational space because I have seen a lot of value addition. I have never seen the cocoa fruit and plant, but at the expo, I got chance to know where the powder comes from.



Nelson Maditroth, Senior Four, St Charles Lwanga International School Kakiri
I have learnt how to grow fish on a farm and also make feeds in order to reduce costs. I have learned how to grow greens in a limited space.

