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## Mengo SS champions co-curricular path

**The deputy head teacher in charge of co-curricular activities, Mr Jeremiah Mugerwa, said the school is deliberately promoting holistic education by balancing academics with talent development. P.21**

BY SHABIBAH NAKIRIGYA

As pressure for academic excellence continues to dominate Uganda's education system, Mengo Senior School is pushing a different message: success in life goes beyond books.

This was evident during the school's inter-house Music, Dance and Drama (MDD) competitions held on April 25. Here, learners competed in music, poetry and drama, showcasing talents

that school leaders say are just as vital as classroom performance.

The competitions featured eight houses, including George, Armitage, Luboyera, Musisi- Bunjo, Kennedy, Sempa, Nsubuga and Busulwa.

Mr Conan Businge of Victoria University Kampala who was the chief guest said creative disciplines are increasingly relevant in an economy shaped by automation and artificial intelligence.

"The world of work is changing. What

remains uniquely human are creativity, communication and collaboration and MDD develops exactly these skills," he said.

Ms Grace Ssebanakitta Nantajja, the headteacher said the event was organised to ensure learners discover and nurture their God-given gifts while pursuing academic excellence.

"We hold our MDD competitions in the spirit of ensuring that our learners do not only do academics, but they also discover the gifts that God gave them," she said, adding that learners competed in music, drama and poems, among other activities.

Mrs Sebanakitta said talent development should not be left to schools alone, but must involve parents, teachers and government working together to guide learners.

"It is our duty and mandate to ensure that these gifts are developed. Some of these children will survive based on the gifts that they have. Some will be musicians, footballers or artists," she said.

She, however, criticised what she described as declining parental involvement, saying many parents hand over children to schools without taking enough interest in their personal development.

"As parents, we don't seem to be doing our best. We take learners to school and leave everything to teachers. When they come back home, take interest in what they are doing, check their friends and support them, because success requires the parent to play a critical role."

He added that schools and parents must work as partners if learners are to fully succeed.

"We want to see a parent on one side and the school on the other, working together to push these learners to succeed," she said.

The deputy head teacher in charge of co-curricular activities, Jeremiah Mugerwa, said the school is deliberately promoting holistic education by balancing academics with talent development.

"Life goes beyond academics. If you are not doing so well in books, you can still explore your talents and survive. We are showing learners that you can combine academics with co-curricular activities and still make it in life."

Mr Mugerwa said activities such as MDD equip learners with practical life skills by developing their psychomotor, cognitive and affective abilities.

"We are preparing them to earn a living, not necessarily only out of books, but also through their talents," he said. For Mengo, the message was clear: nurturing talent alongside academics is no longer optional, but essential in preparing learners for future careers.

George house managed to be the top performers and walked away with two cows and five scholarships.