

# ANALIMU



Students of Iganga Secondary School at their farm. The students were among the people who trained and exhibited products during last year's Harvest Money Expo. They will grace this year's expo

## Why your school should not miss Harvest Money Expo

**U**nder the secondary school competence-based curriculum, learners are innovating and coming up with winning projects, especially in farming. At this year's Harvest Money Expo, students will not only be visitors; many will be among the exhibitors who will explain complex and yet simple farming techniques.

The expo will start on Friday and end on Sunday (February 27-March 1) at the Kololo Independence Grounds in Kampala under the theme, *Farming as a Business: Growth, Sustainability and Co-operation*.

The entrance fees to the expo will be sh10,000 per individual per day. Those who wish to attend trainings will part with another sh10,000 per session.

The Harvest Money Expo is organised by Vision Group in partnership with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Engineering Solutions, Tunga Nutrition, Pearl Bank, Uganda Development Corporation, Heifer International and aBi Development. Other sponsors include the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries as well as State House.

### KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Fiona Tamale, the Vision Group events manager, says the expo presents enormous learning opportunities to students.

"Students of all levels will be able to learn from experts and fellow students, who will be exhibiting different products," she says.

While explaining the special attention that the organisers gave to

learners, Tamale said the student-led training sessions are discounted at sh7,000.

"Starting last year, we organised a training session where students from selected schools such as MST Junior School, Gayaza High School and Iganga Secondary School share their experiences on farming as a business," she says.

Apart from the official training

session, students have a lot to learn from experts on agronomy, quality assurance, insurance, financial management, value addition, environment conservation, sales and marketing.

Over the years, the expo has attracted a number of schools to exhibit what they are doing. Other schools and teachers who visit the expo can pick a leaf and emulate

or improve what they have in their schools and back home.

"Last year, we had schools like MST Junior School, Iganga Secondary School, Gayaza High School, Bombo Army Secondary School and St Kizito Secondary School exhibit agriculture projects and innovations on environmental conversation," Tamale says.

### PRIMARY SCHOOLS

At last year's expo, MST Junior School from Bwerenga, Entebbe, represented the primary school learners. The school's pupils were among the trainers and exhibitors.

The pupils trained fellow learners and other people in areas such as piggery, vermiculite, banana growing, lactic acid bacteria and briquettes making.

The school director, Dr Emma Naluyima, says she got the inspiration to involve learners in trainings during the visit to the Netherlands in 2014, when she emerged winner in the Best Farmers' Competition, which is

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organised by Vision Group. She says while in the Netherlands, she met students who were placed at different farms and companies to get hands-on training about the latest technologies and agronomical practices. The students, she says, turn out to be top-notch experts who keep Netherlands' global niche in agriculture alive.

Shannel Kwagala, one of the prospective student trainers at the forthcoming expo, says she will be explaining to the show-goers how to make expensive cosmetics from snail slime. "We are taught different things at school. Other pupils will be training people in piggery, maggot-culture, vermiculite, poultry, rabbit keeping, vegetable and banana growing," she says, urging all pupils and schools to attend the expo.

She urged parents to ensure they do not leave their children behind when going for the expo.

## SCHOOLS EXHIBITING

Bernard Ssenfuka, a student at Bombo Army Secondary School, has rallied his fellow students and youth not to overlook agriculture as a field for illiterate people who have failed in life.

"Agriculture is the backbone of Uganda's economy employing the majority of the citizens. Such a sector cannot be overlooked by the elites. It should instead be enhanced by our knowledge and skills," he argues.

Ssenfuka says last year's Harvest Money Expo was a great opportunity for them to explore new ideas and technologies along the agriculture production value chain, including seed varieties, fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides, animal feeds, post-harvest technologies, value addition and marketing opportunities.

"At Bombo Army Secondary School, farming is a way of life. Students engage in enterprises such as fish farming, maggot culture, dairy, poultry rearing, snail farming, vegetable farming, plus rabbit and rat rearing," he says.

Juma Masaba, who is in charge of exotic birds at Bombo Army Secondary School, explains that they have many breeds with unique characteristics in terms of sound, colour and body structure.

"We have the vulturine guinea fowls, silkie hens, Indian fantail pigeons and



A students of Gayaza High School at last year's expo. They will return this year with better products to showcase



Students of St Kizito Secondary School Namugongo showcasing recycled products during last year's expo

Indian runner ducks. We also have fan pigeon and Polish chicken, among others," he says.

Masaba adds that such birds are very expensive.

"A pair of silkie birds and pigeons go for sh500,000. They are ideal for agro-tourism and can be kept as pets. Their feathers are used in decorations, especially in art and crafts," he explains.

Ann Desire Kiconco, another student of Bombo Army Secondary School, is looking forward to training people in dairy farming. She explains that they have over six dairy cows, with two that are milking and producing 40 litres of milk a day. This milk is consumed by the students and staff.

The cows also produce dung, which is used for biogas, while

the slurry is used as organic fertiliser in the school gardens.

Alice Birungi, the headteacher of Bombo Army Secondary School, says the students' farming skills have enabled the school to save money and improve overall nutrition.

"The vegetables, especially spinach, are mixed with the beans. Where the school would prepare 170kg of beans, it now uses 120kg because of adding vegetables. The eggs and milk consumed are got from the school farm," she says.

## RECYCLING PLASTICS

Adasa Mugisha from St Kizito Secondary School Namugongo says they make animal artifacts like elephants, crocodiles, zebras and trees, from used plastic bags, bottles and tyres.

## GAYAZA HIGH SCHOOL

"Without agriculture, humans are nothing." These were words from one of the students of Gayaza High School during a students' training session at last year's Harvest Money Expo at Namboole Stadium. Jean Nabajumba, a Senior Four student, says her engagement in agriculture has made her realise that farming is a business.

"Since agriculture is the backbone of Uganda's economy, the youth should be encouraged to venture into farming as a business. It is a business where the entrepreneur will never fail to get the market for the products," she says.

The school has a farm from which they have learnt many useful aspects starting from land preparation, seed selecting and planting, livestock management like milking, cleaning, feeding and feed management, among others, which has greatly impacted their lives. "At home, my parents had a small space at the back of our house that was wasted, but when I learnt about urban farming, I interested them into utilising it for vegetables like tomatoes, spinach, cabbages, among others. We no longer go to the market," she says.



Students of MST Junior School from Bwerenga, explaining farming concepts at last year's expo

"We all know that keveera and plastic bottles are a big threat to the environment. After collecting them from the environment, we had to look for a way of using them. This is how we came up with such products like the elephant sculpture we made from keveera and sold one to Uganda Wildlife Authority at sh7m. We have orders of a lion and leopard. We also used tyres to make crocodiles and plastic bottles to make a zebra," he says.

Melissa Lanyero, a student of St Kizito, says they make briquettes from leaves, wood and paper after carbonisation. She says every day, they produce a tonne of briquettes, which they sell to the school and other private individuals.

She adds that they also make soap and candles, skills they will pass on to other people at the expo.

"We have a Sudanese student who has started a company making liquid and bar soap," Lanyero adds.

## FARMING IS A BUSINESS

Iganga Secondary School students were among the facilitators during the students' training session at last year's the Harvest Money Expo. At their stall, they exhibited maggot culture, urban vegetable farming, fish farming and simple irrigation technologies, among others.

Hope Ayeta, the farming club vice-president at Iganga Secondary School, says members have learnt that farming can be a business that will provide sustainable income to any one, irrespective of the level of education.

"From the club, we have learnt that farming can be done as a business and has many aspects from which one can develop business ideas, ranging from land preparation, fertiliser making through vermicompost, growing crops like bananas, vegetables, aquaponics, livestock keeping and value addition," she says.

At the school, the club has layer chicken, dairy cows, banana plantation, vegetables and confectioneries, which are sold to the school and parents. The club is given 10% of the proceeds, which are used by members for further investment and other club activities like organising meetings, attending training and shows.

She adds that with the knowledge acquired, many members have established projects back home and also shared the knowledge with their parents.