

Students recycling plastic for innovation

Monday August 27 2018



A notice board that students have made from recycled plastic bottles. Courtesy photo

In Summary

- Gone are the days when a plastic bottle was seen as waste as soon as its contents were emptied.
- Many people have since started reusing them for various purposes, among them students who are using them to construct greenhouses among other products.

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By Dorcus Murungi

Often they say our teaching is more theoretical than practical, which has crippled the drive for innovation in the country. Yet when people talk about innovation, majority think about computer-related applications?

And students of Nabisunsa Girls School are driving innovation through recycling plastics to save the environment.

The Agriculture class is using the recycled plastics for backyard gardening.

A visit to their school will reveal their school compound has several backyard gardens and greenhouses designed from plastic containers and motor vehicle tyres.

According to Nusura Nambasa, the Agriculture teacher at Nabisunsa, the students collect all disposed of plastics in the school and use them during their practical lessons in urban gardening. “Our students have hands-on experience which is making learning easy. They collect these plastics and use them to erect green houses,” she says.

Nambasa explains that these structures are not only used for study purposes but also help preserve the environment. “Everyday tonnes of plastics are disposed of inappropriately, this not only gives us a poor drainage system but also greatly affects our climate. However, if students are taught how to recycle them in more creative ways, then our pollution problems will be minimal in the next few years,” she says. Asked how they acquired this knowledge, Nambasa says they were taught by an ECO action team from Banda Village.

Solving unemployment

According to Dr Grace Lubaale of Kyambogo University, if students are taught how to innovate using simple means, the problem of unemployment among the youth will be solved.

He notes that the adoption and exploration of innovative ideas in education is still a challenge that schools need to address.

“Instead of many educators clinging to old and increasingly ineffective methods of teaching, it is better to use innovative teaching methods. This will help to produce a type of students that think outside the box, who can use what is available to bring about something new,” he says.

According to Nambasa, giving students the opportunity to innovate makes learning interesting and engaging. “When students embrace innovation in their learning process, it reduces the need for textbooks and other printed material, lowering long-term costs incurred by schools and students,” she explains.

“The amount of rubbish we create is constantly increasing because we have no proper disposal policy and if all our students are trained on how to manage this waste, they can extend the knowledge to the bigger communities,” says Reagan Kandole of Eco action village, Banda.