

TRUTH EVERYDAY

Daily Monitor

EDITORIAL

# One good science story at Makerere

IN SUMMARY

How, for example, are the high school students being managed and prepared to grow their knowledge and innovations?

For a week, Makerere University in collaboration with British public broadcaster BBC, has been hosting the Africa Science Fair that brought together aspiring scientists and innovators, top notch scientists and inventors as well as science users, especially farmers.

Broadcast live to a global audience every day of the Fair which ends this week, idealistic young Ugandan scientists have showcased to the world, in interviews that there is in fact a future for science on the continent and in this country.

Two female secondary students are harnessing an age-old local remedy against stomach worms through the use of paw paw seeds which could be processed into tablets.

Other groups of secondary school students told of their initiatives in developing robotic technologies while the under graduates at Makerere working on the Kiira EV car model wowed the world with the progress they are making not just on the car but other innovations. Other researchers shared works in progress on agricultural technologies, crop and animal research.

While the Fair has demonstrated immense potential and initiative, one major impediment seems to stand in the way—inadequate support from government.

Government has an opportunity it should seize if it is serious with the idea of transforming this country from a peasant agricultural-led economy to an industrialised one. The young talent needs to be tapped, nurtured and supported. Their ideas should be protected from patent infringement and more importantly the young brains should be encouraged and facilitated to develop their ideas from home.

While the ruling NRM government has prided itself in providing security, the country has continued to bleed talent and knowledge partly due to financial insecurity, casual regard for intellectual capital and the consequent search for greener pastures but more importantly lack of facilities to advance research work. How, for example, are the high school students being managed and prepared to grow their knowledge and innovations?

Many complained, and rightly so, of the theory-based teaching without much room for practical experience. The marking and grading system is also skewed and can discourage innovators because they risk being graded poorly in the theoretical examinations. The Fair has exposed the potential, it is all our responsibility as a country and government especially to harness it.

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