

High school students showcase mobile apps

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Students from various high schools over the weekend showcased mobile applications that they developed during an event dubbed 'Hack Out Loud' (HOL) organised by HeHe Labs, a Rwanda-based IT research firm.

Justin Basile Iradukunda, a Senior Six student from Lycée de Kigali whose group developed an application for agriculture, 'Hinga App', said their application is aimed at easing agri-business.

"With our application, you find different varieties of crops and the statistics about how they were sold during the previous season; this helps the farmer to choose a crop that is on high demand so they can plant it the next season," he said.

"Besides, when a certain crop is selected, it provides the user with information about planting seasons based on the four seasons we have, which helps the user to practice climate resilient agriculture," Iradukunda explained.



Image via [123RF](#)

For Edmond Turatsinze, a Senior Five student at Agahozo Shalom Youth Village, his group, HeHe Eagle, developed the 'Ikaze App', an application that provides basic information about healthcare facilities and government institutions.

He said they developed the application to ease integration within the East African Community and market Rwanda abroad.

"For instance, if someone using this application does not know much about Rwanda, the application provides them with basic information like location and contacts for hotels, restaurants, hospitals and government institutions, which we hope will

be helpful for those who want to visit our country," Turatsinze said

Natasha Muhoza, in charge of communication at Hehe Labs, said this year's HOL mobile applications were specifically focused on service delivery.

"Last year's lab focused on developing mobile application that could help boost education and the theme was "Gaming for Education".

"This year, students have undergone a six-month training under the theme "Service Delivery", and each group had to come up with a mobile application providing solutions to service delivery," she said.

Patrick Nyirishema, the Director General for Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA), said what had been showcased gives hope for a smart future.

"It is quite amazing to see students from high school develop applications. This shows how Rwanda is moving fast in terms of ICT. These applications present an opportunity for them," he said.

Jean Philbert Nsengimana, the Minister of Youth and ICT, urged the young innovators to use their knowledge to expand their market.

He said "your applications bring solutions to different problems. Yet, you should use your knowledge to expand the market for your products since the problems you want to solve can be found around the world.

"When searching for solutions for problems through your innovations, think of them globally, translate those problems into your markets where you can supply solutions."

HeHe Labs is an East African research and Innovation Lab based in Rwanda that's aimed to build mobile information systems that are relevant, meaningful in solving the continent's challenges.

It currently has labs in five high schools namely; Lycée de Kigali, Green Hills Academy, Gashora Girls School, SOS Kagugu, and Agahozo Shalom Youth Village, and the University of Kigali working with nearly 100 youths.

They also have HeHe Labs main campus based in Kigali.

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