

Creative juices flow out of rubbish

Three students make furniture out of sugarcane fibres

BY DHEVARAJAN DEVADAS

MOST people would look at sugarcane fibres discarded after juicing at hawker stalls and see nothing but rubbish.

But three Secondary 2 students from Bukit Merah Secondary School spotted a business idea instead.

They collected the discarded material and washed, pressed and dried it into sheets.

These sheets were then used to make small pieces of furniture such as stools. The material could also be used as package filler.

The project by Cai San, 16, Pan Jin Hua, 14, and Nadia Ermina, 15, was one of several showcased under Spring Singapore's Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (YES!) for schools.

It was part of the launch of Global Entrepreneurship Week, co-hosted by the Action Community for Entrepreneurship (ACE) and NUS Enterprise at HDB Hub yesterday.

Spring Singapore said the YES! scheme had reached out to more than 13,000 students in 54 schools since October 2008.

Under the scheme, schools up to the polytechnic level receive funding support to put in place a comprehensive structured entrepreneurship learning programme for their students.

In his speech at the launch, Mr Prakash Somosundram, co-chair of ACE Culture Action Crucible, spoke about what students with budding business ideas can do to take an idea to the next step to



The project by Pan Jin Hua (above), Nadia Ermina and Cai San of Bukit Merah Secondary was one of those showcased under Spring Singapore's Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (YES!) for schools. ST PHOTO: LENNE CHAI

develop it.

"When you are ready to start your own business, tap on YES! Start-ups. This scheme provides funding support for young people to turn their innovative ideas into businesses," he said.

Mr Prakash added that since its launch two years ago, the scheme has supported almost 100 young people in 65 start-ups.

The guest of honour was Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Minister of State for Trade and Industry and Manpower, and Minister-in-charge of Entrepreneurship. He is also the chairman of ACE.

At a panel discussion before the launching ceremony, Mr Lee and four other panellists stressed that youth should not be afraid to

embrace entrepreneurship.

Mr Darius Cheung, founder of software company tenCube, had this advice: "Make sure that your idea is sustainable and think about its long-term prospects."

Mr David Tham, creative director of StudioNorm Design Consultants, said: "At this age, you may not be sure of what you really want, but the school gives you an idea of what's your passion."

The youngest speaker, Mr Ho Junliang, 20, founder of First Class Tutors, gave some nuggets of wisdom to the young audience.

"When pursuing an interest, don't think about the money. Think about what value you are adding with your innovation," he said.

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