

First StartUp QC Student Competition celebrates entrepreneurial spirit among youth

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THE QUEZON CITY Government has celebrated the entrepreneurial spirit of student innovators through the first StartUp QC Student Competition, featuring 27 standout teams out of 39 finalists.

Held at the Matrix Creation Events Place in Barangay Pinyahan last May 16, the demo day provided a platform for student entrepreneurs to present their visions and projects across various sectors, such as sustainability, health, education, agriculture, and governance.

The competition aimed to encourage and nurture the next generation of entrepreneurs, fostering a culture of innovation and problem-solving within the student community.

The team Rise Rural Philippines, made up of students from the University of the Philippines Los Baños, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, and Ateneo de Manila University, has won the grand prize of P100,000 for their healthcare and energy solutions.

They developed the Araw-Kalinga Box (AKB), a multifunctional device integrating a solar-powered ultrasound machine, a cold box for vaccine storage, and a compartment for medical instruments. The AKB represents a paradigm shift in healthcare delivery, particularly in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA), where access to medical facilities and resources is often limited.

In an interview, Mark Virgil Jamel, founder and chief executive officer of Rise Rural Philippines, shared his personal motivation that sparked the idea: “Because my mother is a midwife, I grew up in a clinic and it kind of exposed me to the realities of healthcare access in rural communities.”

Rise Rural Philippines is currently operating in Siargao and Tanay, regions that struggle with inconsistent electricity.

“Most of the healthcare professionals in these areas, they have to move frequently from one place to another. It’s very difficult for them to carry their stuff around. With our backpack, it kind of gives an all-in-one solution for healthcare professionals to provide services to anyone, whether it’s in a rural community or urban when they’re doing house-to-house visits,” Mr. Jamel added.

As Rise Rural Philippines continues to develop, the team is focused on scaling their operations within the local communities.

“We’re still under the product development phase, hoping to finish that this year with the support of StartUp QC. We’re looking to gain more partnerships with NGOs and LGUs to sell more of these backpack units to more communities,” said Mr. Jamel.

ESEA, the second placer, received P75,000 for their project aimed at improving the fisheries supply chain. Their user-friendly mobile application connects Filipino fisherfolk directly with consumers. The idea was developed by students from Ateneo de Manila University (AdMU).

The third prize of P50,000 was awarded to NYHA Robotics, a team from the University of the Philippines. Their project promotes robotics education among children with an all-in-one learning kit and specialized robotics competition kits.

In addition to the major winners, other 24 teams received cash prizes across gold (two teams), silver (10 teams), and bronze (12 teams) categories, with each category securing P35,000, P25,000, and

P15,000 respectively. In total, Quezon City awarded P725,000 to these talented student innovators.

Among the notable bucket winners was a group of senior high school students from the Philippine Science High School. Their project, the LakBike app, automates bicycle mobility utilization in Quezon City. The app allows cyclists to easily rent bicycles from popular areas within the city for use in designated bike lanes or other appropriate locations.

Jay Gatmaitan, head of **Quezon City Local Economic Investment Promotions Office (LEIPO)**, was thrilled to host the grand finals of the very first StartUp QC Student Competition.

“In celebration of QC’s 85th founding anniversary this year, we are elevating our efforts and initiatives, especially for the youth, and the business community. Hopefully, these young citizens will be inspired to strive to build on their ideas after pursuing their studies, knowing that their government will support them to the best of its capacity,” he added.

The competition aims to develop students’ entrepreneurial skills through financial grants and mentorship sessions, providing a platform for young minds to showcase their innovative business ideas. Earlier this year, the QC LEIPO conducted a campus tour across Metro Manila to discover innovative and creative business ideas from senior high school to college-level students.

The StartUp QC program, an expansion of the local startup community in Quezon City, has partnered with various national government agencies, colleges, universities, and startup community members to support and nurture the entrepreneurial spirit among students. The student competition is open to students residing in Quezon City, aged at least 18 years old, and currently enrolled in any college or university in the Philippines.

“We believe that our students already have innovative ideas and the desire to make a meaningful impact in the world. It is our job in the city government to support them and help them make these concepts come to fruition,” said Quezon City **Mayor Joy Belmonte**.