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1. Participant watches over a snake pool in Madina Salam 2. participant at Folonko Sacred site

GU Summer school participants embark on excursion to Kartong

Participants to the Global Unification Summer School on Thursday, 26th of August, embarked on an excursion to the historical village of Kartong and its environ, as part of activities of the summer school.

The excursion, which was sponsored by the National Environment Agency was meant to expose the kids to the beautiful national flora and fauna, which is relevant to their social and history studies.

The students and their instructors visited a number of nature reserves including the bird sanctuary, and the reptile farm in Madina Salam. They were welcomed and taken on a conducted of the farm, where they were exposed to the difference species of reptiles.

The team was introduced to the mode of breeding and the habitat of the different species of snakes, many of which are now endangered species. They learnt about the harmful and the harmless reptile as well as the safety precaution and first aid treatment on snake bites.

Luc Paziaud, the proprietor of the reptile farm, asserted that The Gambia is endowed with a large population of reptiles but that due to changing climate and human interference, the country is gradually losing that large population of the creatures. He advised the students to develop the culture of love for nature and to do everything possible to protect the country's fauna and flora.

From the reptile farm, the group proceeded to Kartong village where they visited the famous Mama Folonko sacred site and a bird sanctuary research center. The bird sanctuary is run by a British called Mr. Collin Cross, who explained that the center was set up for research on migratory birds. He added: "Here in Kartong, we embark on a community-driven programme to promote Kartong not only as a historical village but also as bird watchers' paradise that will return a lot of financial benefits to the community". The tour ended with the group's visit to mangrove swamp at the outskirts of the village.

Speaking at end of the tour, the summer school deputy programme coordinator, Jalika Keita, expressed delight at the success of the excursion. "It provided us the opportunity to learn about biodiversity and how to sustainably use nature and natural assets," she remarked. Ms. Keita also expressed her satisfaction with the logistics of the whole summer school programme and the excursion in particular.

She thanked the National Environment Agency for their immense support to the association and the excursion in particular for "without them, the programme would not have been a success," she concluded.

The excursion marked the end of the summer school programme, which closing ceremony was held at the Serrekunda Lower Basic School. The ceremony was marked by presentation of certificates and prizes to deserving students.