



Child's play: Kids take part in a fashion show during Children's International Festa 2013 in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo, on Saturday. While at the Brazilian Embassy booth, kids get soccer tips. | YOSHIKI MIURA

THE JAPAN TIMES ST
THE JAPAN TIMES ON SUNDAY

NATIONAL

It's a kid's world at Festa 2013

BY MASAOKI KAMEDA
STAFF WRITER

Children enjoyed intercultural experiences ranging from Thai vegetable carving to learning Sri Lanka's Sinhala alphabet Saturday in Tokyo.

Children's International Festa 2013, held at Yebisu Garden Place in Shibuya Ward, provided kids with opportunities to learn about different cultures around the world through hands-on experience, said Madoka Soma of Somos & Co., which organized the event.

Twelve embassies, including those of Belgium, Poland, Spain, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Brazil, as well as the delegation of the European Union, offered workshops at booths during the festival, which was supported by The Japan Times and other organizations.

"This is a very good opportunity for the young people of Japan to get to know different countries," said Angelica Escalona, minister of the Philippines Embassy, adding that she hoped children learned some key concepts at the event.

"First of all, we are all the same," Escalona said. "We might have different cultures, but actually we're just all the same, human beings. And second is that we have different things that we are proud of for each country, so we'd like to let them know the things that make our country special."

At the booth run by the New Zealand Embassy, officials showed kids how to make beeswax candles, while staff at the Colombian Embassy booth offered lessons on creating preserved flower cakes.

At the Italian Embassy booth, children made necklaces by lacing a string through different types of pasta.

"It was the first time I had created a necklace out of pasta, so I enjoyed it very much," said 10-year-old Ena Iida of Kawasaki.

Her friend, 11-year-old Saki Shimura, also enjoyed the experience, saying it was fun to create a necklace using pasta of various shapes and colors.

An Asaba, an 8-year-old from Meguro Ward, Tokyo, said she carved a flower out of a block of radish at the Thai Embassy booth.

"It was difficult to carve around the center of the flower using a carving knife," she said, adding that it took about three minutes to finish the creation.

A fashion show was staged in the afternoon, featuring some 20 children who showed off T-shirts they decorated beforehand with the help of a fashion school from France.

The festival, the fifth of its kind, also featured traditional Egyptian and Hungarian dance performances.

The Japan Times

August 31st, 2013

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