



# Coast student inspiring girls to fly into a male-dominated career

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women can do anything. This will break the stereotype," Mahek said.

This initiative came to birth as a school project in 2018 but, being Mahek's area of interest, she has carried on with it even after completion.

"As a requirement of the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) Curriculum, I had to create a project based on my interests. The one thing I am most passionate about is aviation. I chose to be the pilot of the plane, not the passenger. Passion and love for aviation told me straight up that I need to continue this and here I am!" Mahek added.

Her dreams were inspired by Captain Irene Koki Mutungi of Kenya Airways, who inspired and guided her in growing the project.

"I am very thankful to Capt Koki for all the advice and support in building WFM," she added.

By having interactive sessions with girls from Mombasa and Nairobi, the girls are educated about the basics needs of the pilot career.

"They also learn about the life of a pilot, basic aircrafts, its parts, the requirements to be a pilot and tell them what our country and the world has to offer them," she said, adding that WFM is currently running in Mombasa and workshops have been successfully completed in Nairobi.

Mahek's vision is to develop and open more groups within the country.

Social media plays a big part in the program. She uses Instagram, and a website is almost complete, to create more awareness.

In the process of winding



Mahek Shah, a 15 year old student at the Aga Khan Academy, at the cockpit of a plane in Mombasa. She inspires girls to pursue a career as pilots. PHOTOS | COURTESY

up the project, Mahek had successfully completed educational sessions in Mombasa and Nairobi with 12 girls.

"I'm the youngest member of Women in Aviation International and part of the Kenya Chapter. Last year, in September I attended the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) and Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO) gala dinner where I got to know more people. I have met over 150 aviation professionals based around the world and I am an aspiring Pilot," Mahek said.

She hopes to continue the program for the coming years and contribute to changing the fact that the Pilot Career is male dominated.

Her parents are very supportive of her dream. When she is not busy, Mahek helps

her mother to tend to flowers and bonsai trees in their garden.

"Being a pilot has been my passion and dream and I am soaring towards it. Recently, over the summer break, I went to the United Kingdom for a summer camp organised by Brookfield Aviation called 'British Aviation Experience' with 12 other teenagers from all over the world. I was so proud to be representing."

Also, she had an opportunity to fly a Piper - A28 (a charter plane) for three hours, an Aerodyne (aerobatic aircraft) and a helicopter for an hour with an instructor who made me do all the flying.

"We also visited the British Airways headquarters, Emirates Simulators and many more. This experience was the best in my life. Taking off, land-

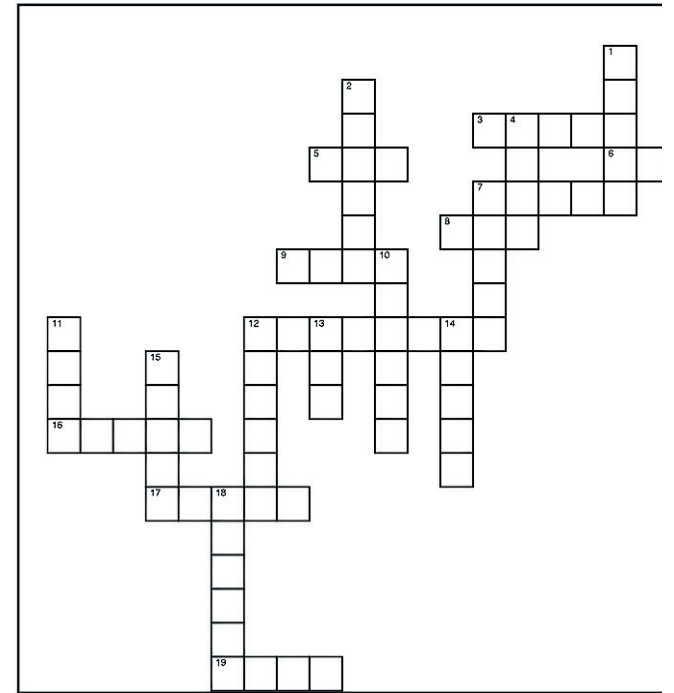
ing, ascending, descending, flipping, looping, flying upside down made me realise that this is what I want to do and there is nothing and no one stopping me," Mahek spoke passionately.

However, she noted that balancing school and project is stressful.

"Sometimes I forget to post on my Instagram account or reply to emails all because of my busy school life. Since I am now in year 11, there are a lot of expectations we have to meet. This means Continuous Assessments, exams, community service, extra-curricular activities, building a portfolio and so on. To top it all, I chose to continue my school project," Mahek said.

She makes a schedule which helps her organise herself and manage time well.

## crossword



### ACROSS:

3. Capital of Egypt
5. A ships record
6. Add color to
7. Add to, Slightly
8. Become decayed
9. Make angry
12. Become seasoned
16. A pigs nose
17. Burglar
19. Make changes to

### DOWN:

1. Dwelling
2. Excavate
4. Just slightly
7. 1,000 kilograms
10. Held in high regard
11. Outlays
12. Binding Promise
13. Seasoned pro
14. Church singing group
15. Done for publicity
18. Brew

## Photo album

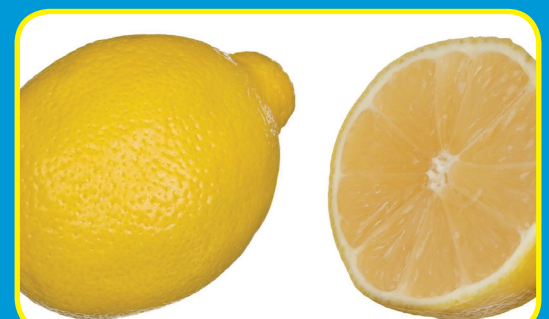


PHOTO | KANYIRI WAHITO  
Foreground from left: Jewel Reshma, Mugi Wahome and Njoki Susan performing a poem with other pupils during the Royal Brains Academy Pre-Primary 2 (PP2) graduation ceremony in Ruaka, Kiambu county.



PHOTO | ANTHONY NJAGI  
Pupils at Wells of Hope School Kangemi, Nairobi during the 2019 graduation day at their school last week.

## ORIGIN OF WORDS



### LEMON

The lemon, (Citrus limon) is a fruit with citric acid that gives the fruit a sour taste. It is used for its juice for both culinary and cleaning uses.

The word has Arabic

origins from the word 'Laimun', which simply means a yellow citrus fruit. The term became a part of the English language and was also influenced by another Middle Eastern language; from Persian.