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young nation



Teen turning plastics into notice boards

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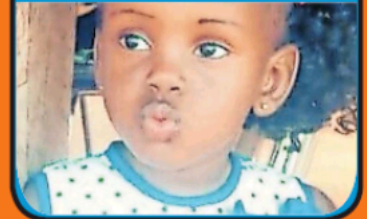
Pollution caused by dumping of plastics is a big threat not just to humans but also the world's oceans and marine life. But 17-year-old Omar Mwakuluzo, a Year 10 student at Aga Khan Academy, has come with a solution to tackle the plastic menace. He recycles the plastic products and uses them to make school notice boards, stopping not only pollution but also making lives of learners and teachers enjoyable.

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Student's innovative way to stop pollution



Teachers and students stick yellow sticky notes on some of the plastic notice boards Mwakuluzo makes.

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His work was inspired by a recent classwork project and some of the boards he is making were recently donated to some schools in Likoni, Mombasa County. But he wants to extend the project to include home boards.

He said through the initiative, every child can have a board at home, where they can pin their important notes. "There are a lot of plastic bottles in cities. Despite the ban on using plastic bags, some companies are still packaging their products in them. Also, single-use plastics are on the rise. For instance, people buy bottled water then just throw away the bottle after use," Mwakuluzo said.

He added that the hot conditions in Mombasa have also contributed to an increase in the number of plastic bottles in the county as residents buy more water to hydrate.

"Some people do not care about the pollution caused by plastics. Others will decide to burn them, in which case the plastics end up releasing harmful gases, increasing air pollution. This contributes to global warming," he said.

While working on his school project, Mwakuluzo researched on moulding as a safe way to recycle plastic. Then he melted the plastics and worked with the resultant liquid. But he switched to oven-based moulding after realising that by melting them, he was polluting the air even more.

His boards are made of clothes, carton boxes, plastic bottles and pieces of wood. He cuts the bottles into small pieces then places them in an oven where they heat

for a while in order to fuse together. The size of the oven determines the size of the notice board he makes.

"I used an oven and a customised mould measuring 35cm by 25cm by 1cm. It took about three hours to heat and an hour to cool," he said, in reference to a board he showed Young Nation. As the pieces of plastic melt in the oven, he introduces the pieces of wood to cover the plastic mould and clamps the mixture so that it does not crack. He then gives the mixture an hour to cool. The resultant plate is ready for the next stage, in which he sticks a carton box to the board using glue and also introduces the piece of cloth to ensure the final product is appealing to the eye.

He then uses recycled soda cans to secure the sides of the board.

"In my previous school in Likoni, we never had a proper notice board. Most of them were broken, vandalised and had strange writings on them. Those present were not student-friendly because one could not pin revision notes or any other important study material on them," Mwakuluzo said, adding that these challenges inspired his project.

With the help of his teachers, he successfully made several boards in his classwork project. He also thanks his parent for supporting him.

Omar said making a bigger board will require more materials and time. His biggest challenge is, however, balancing school work and personal projects.

"At the time I was going to collect the plastics, members

of my community in Likoni had already burnt them. I had to walk several kilometres to get as many plastic bottles as possible. It took three weeks to assemble the materials. Without the challenges, it would have taken four days," he said.

The teen said young people have the capacity to change the world.

"Have the drive and motivate yourself too. Also, ask for help. Everyone has a duty to change the world positively," he advises.

ORIGIN OF WORDS



ANIMATION

This is a method in which pictures are manipulated to appear as moving images. This is common in movies and cartoons like 'Tom and Jerry', 'The Flintstones', Bat-

man, Ben 10 among others.

Therefore the word "animation" comes from the Latin word 'anima' which means 'breath' a loose translation to 'giving breath to pictures.'

Photo album



PHOTO | COURTESY Pupils Of Little Star Learning Centre in Githurai, Kiambu County during the Annual Talents Day



PHOTOS | COURTESY Left and below: Mount Angel School Kahawa Estate pupils stage a choral verse during the Annual Music Week at the school.



PHOTO | COURTESY Fountain Junior Academy scouts at Githurai Kimbo, Kiambu County, during the Annual Scouts' Day.



PHOTO: Mwakuluzo