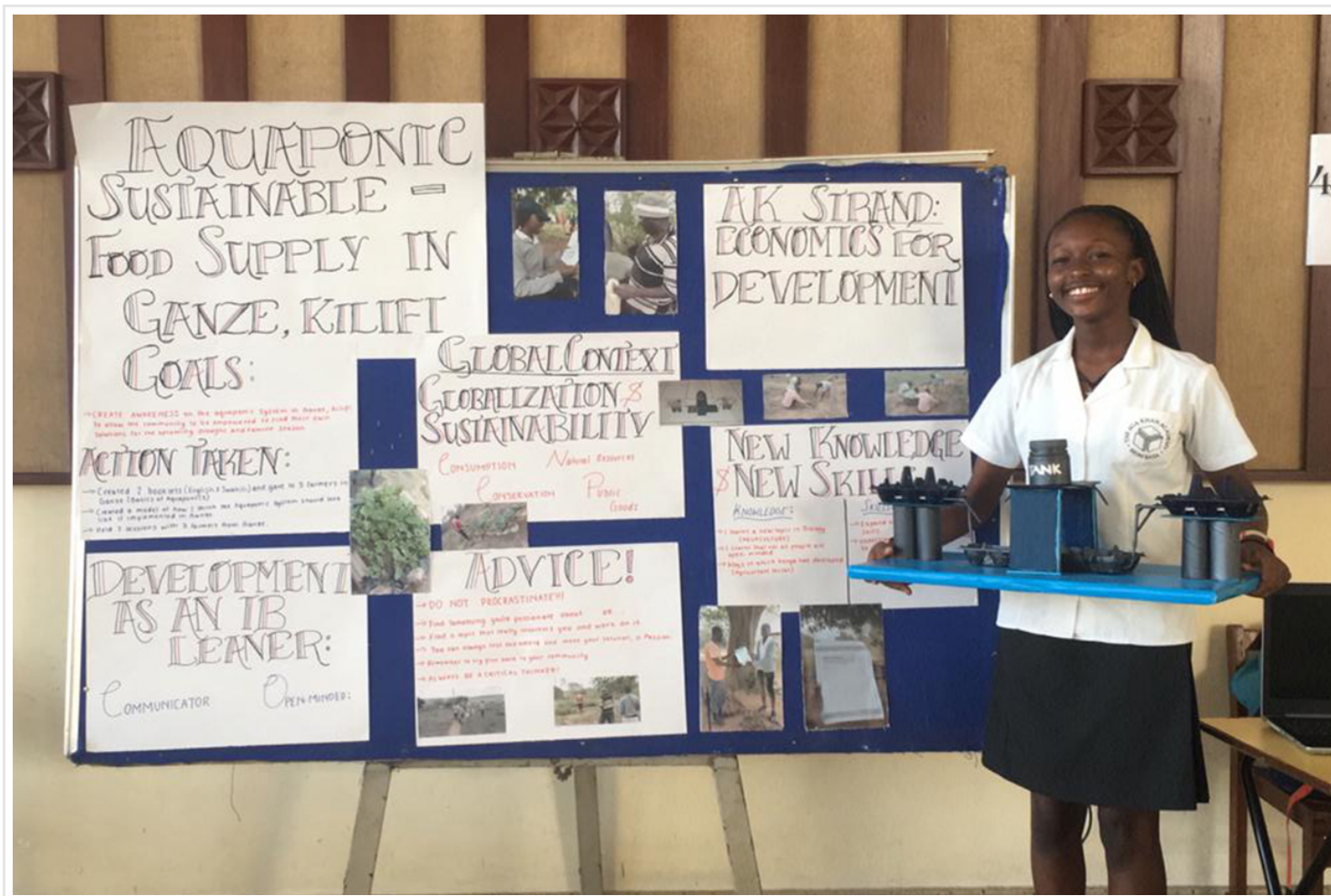


Supporting aqua-aide farming in Kenya with the MYP

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Diploma Programme (DP) student at **Li Po Chun United World College, Hawi Odhiambo**, shares her work sustainably supporting local farmers with her **Middle Years Program (MYP)** personal project, which she completed while attending the **Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa**.



By Hawi Annette Odhiambo

My name is Hawi and I completed the [Middle Years Program \(MYP\)](#) at the [Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa](#) and now I attend [Li Po Chun United World College](#) based in Hong Kong, where I am beginning the [Diploma Programme \(DP\)](#).

Although these schools are in two different parts of the world, when most people ask me what school system I attend, I would say an International Baccalaureate or IB World School, which is the commonality between the two campuses.

In my final year of MYP at Aga Khan Academy (grade 10 or MYP year 5), we had to complete a [personal project](#) that we would present to the whole school and would add up to your final MYP grade. This project is usually targeted at assisting the community where you come from or currently a part of. With help and guidance from my personal project mentor, Mr. Duncan Makori, I was able to come up with a project that I am very proud of. My goal for this project was to be able to create awareness on the [aquaponic system](#) to empower the farmers of Ganze, Kilifi.

“My goal was to motivate farmers to use aquaponics and to empower them with the idea of using sustainable practices in their community.”

Aquaponics is a self-sustained agricultural method that allows fish to be able to be grow in a system whereby they produce organic waste that the plants take in as nutrients. The water is naturally filtered and oxygenated by the plants and is taken back to the fish in a repetitive cycle. Using aquaponics would allow farmers to be able to make a choice of using a sustainable agricultural process and as a way to combat food scarcity during the drought season.

My goal was to motivate farmers to use aquaponics and to empower them with the idea of using sustainable practices in their community. In order to achieve this, I created a model of what I understood about aquaponic systems. My model

was made entirely of recycled materials such as straws, newspapers, plastic egg cartons, paint, super glue and wood. I also created two booklets on the introduction of aquaponics in Ganze—one booklet in Swahili and one in English. This would allow my community members and others who spoke either language to be able to understand more about how the system works and its benefits.



Image of the model made out of recycled materials

To support farmers in their understanding of the system, I led in-person information sessions. At that time, we were about to go through a season of drought that could result in food shortages. I went around to farms to better understand how aquaponics could be used in their individual settings and to discuss the benefits of aquaponics in the community. In the end I was able to survey the farmers of Ganze on their decisions on whether they would love to implement the system or not.

I would say that my project was successful as I was able to get them to agree to

the project. My next goal is to make the product according to the model I came up with and implement it in Ganze. As of now, I am continuing to educate myself on how I can make the product better and I am beginning to look for sponsors who can help me develop and implement the system.

“I also came to understand their perspective on the matter and also learned to take their beliefs into consideration.”

There are so many IB learner profile skills I could take away from this project and I am so thankful for being able to engage myself in this process. These skills consist of being a risk taker, open-minded and caring. One of the skills I learned that still impacts me to this day is to be a risk taker. I had to come up with a project which would either be accepted into the community or not. With this, the community was three hours away from my home, which meant I had to step out of my comfort zone and interact with people I was not as familiar with. I also learned values such as being accepting and open-minded about different situations. During the trips to Ganze, I knew that if the farmers did not agree with the project, I would have needed to move to another community to continue. However, in turn, I also came to understand their perspective on the matter and also learned to take their beliefs into consideration.

My project mostly focused on globalization and sustainability. My goal was to be able to improve the use of natural resources and the sustainability of aquaponics is attributed to the fact that this system conserves natural resources by recirculating water; overcomes the challenge of soil; provides a natural and constant fertilizer for plants; uses products from fish; and produces zero waste.

Through the project, I was able to expound on my understanding of the IB ATL skills (approaches to learning). I encountered these skills during this whole process as I was interacting with a new community and this has come to help me transition from Kenya to China, where I now study. I am still learning about the culture and the values of people in my new home, but I have gained a deeper understanding on global contexts through the IB. Being a part of the IB and understanding the goals of the program have been the most rewarding, yet often

strenuous, experience I never knew I wanted to be a part of. Most people only look at the academic benefits of the IB system, but I hope you may really consider the amount of strength and focus developed among students to be able to reach those benefits.

Hawi Annette Odhiambo is a first-year Diploma Programme (DP) student currently attending [Li Po Chun United World College](#). She previously attended [Aga Khan Academy Mombasa](#) in Kenya.

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