

Students win international prize for sustainable aquaculture idea

April 13 2016, by David Orenstein

Aquaculture, if practiced sustainably, could greatly increase Kenya's food supply, but the techniques the industry uses to produce feed for fish farms—such as dynamite fishing and trawling—are ecologically destructive. In Switzerland earlier this month, two Brown students and their collaborators received a \$10,000 international prize for their innovative idea for an alternative.

Called [Kulisha](#), which means "to [feed](#)" in Swahili, the project produces fish feed made from black soldier fly larvae as an alternative to feed made from wild-caught fish. The team, including environmental science undergraduates Maya Faulstich-Hon and Kenya native Viraj Sikand, proposes to build a business of raising the larvae—which eat organic waste—and processing them into a [fish feed](#) that can then be sold to [fish](#) farmers. Raising flies that are native to the country, eat waste, and don't spread disease is sustainable, Sikand said.

The idea was convincing to the judges at the [Thought for Food Challenge](#), which started with nearly 500 teams and came down to 10 finalists who pitched their concepts to judges in Zurich on April 1 and 2. Kulisha, which also includes Lunalo Cletus from the University of Nairobi, Arjun Paunrana of UCLA, and Eric Katz of the University of Michigan, was selected as the overall winner.

This summer, the team will return to Kenya with the award and other grants they have received to focus on implementation.

"The TFF prize money, along with the other grant money, will be used to build a production facility, start a colony, and begin testing prototypes." Faulstich-Hon said. "In addition, we've partnered with a major tilapia farm, and by the end of the summer we'll start trialing our product with them."

Provided by Brown University

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