**Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.**

Under the blazing sun in the Middle East, I am greeted with blasts of scorching heat. Sweat leaked from my head and sizzled as it collided with the asphalt road. Out of the corner of my eye, I see a thin figure and I turn to see a malnourished dog limping down the road. Its hunger was apparent from its rib cage bulging out of its body. Its crusted tongue dangled from its withered mouth. Should I give it food? Before I could even attempt it, the stray dog became aware of my presence and bolted out of sight. I felt a sense of regret that I could not do anything. If only I could do something to help them.

Stray animals will travel long distances to scavenge for food and they will go so far as to venture into the city where the consequences can be fatal since they will get shot here in Oman. I came across numerous articles about this while conducting research. I thought this was inhumane so I wanted to harness my engineering skills to create a solution to this problem. I knew I had to lead them away from the city so they have less interactions with people. I figured a source of food would keep them away. Therefore, I wanted to make an automatic feeder. I also wanted to take advantage of the abundant sunlight and incorporate a solar panel. I thought this would be a great idea since it would not only benefit the stray dogs but also propel me towards becoming a mechanical engineer.

The process of building the automatic feeder did not go smoothly since I had issues with all of my prototypes. The flimsy cardboard walls barely held up the simple electrical circuit that was meant to dispense the dog food. I have spent time going on multiple trips going back and forth from the shop to get new supplies just for the prototype to not work. I was ready to abandon the project. But the image of that starving dog was jammed into my brain. Despite numerous failures, I know I have to keep making prototypes until one of the models functioned.

Thinking it would be best to talk to an expert, I got in touch with BAWABALI, a voluntary animal rescue organization, and I had a meeting with one of their members. I pitched the design to her and she mentioned that it would need significant changes to be used in the streets of Bali. I discovered that there were more practical problems I had not even considered. I was sad. To rub salt into the wound, I had to return the equipment I used for the working prototype since I borrowed it from the school workshop. I will never forget the feeling of misery I had while forking over all my progress to a teacher who had no idea what I went through.

I went back home to Indonesia for a month but there was not enough space to bring my wooden  case. I wanted to meet with BAWABALI but now I don’t even have a semi working prototype. I felt powerless and had no clue what to do next. I thought the best course of action was just to create a 3D model using CAD.

I realize that I have to appreciate the small steps towards my goals. I almost did not start at all because, in my mind, if I am not able to do it immediately then I don’t want to do it. Changing my mindset made me determined to finish this product. It made me less arrogant so I can listen to the advice I’ve been given. I also learned to swallow my pride and let experts do their thing: it took me weeks to build the wooden case in my school workshop and only one day for a carpenter to do it.