

As a representative of the WPI Global Projects Program, my main goal is to create a higher standard of living for the community I'm working for, even in the smallest of ways. I realized this when reading about the work of Evariste Akoumian, an inhabitant of the Ivory Coast who works for a computer hardware delivery company. As he was delivering supplies around the country, he noticed that people living in the rural communities did not have any light after the sun set, which especially affected school children in that area because they could only work on homework for about an hour after returning home from school. After seeing this, he decided to develop a solar panel backpack and lamp combination that consisted of a lamp that would plug in to a backpack that had been charging in the sun all day. He felt that by distributing a small technology such as this, he could help to improve the education of the rural children by giving them the opportunity to keep learning after the sun went down. However, with these great ideas came some setbacks. Akoumian wanted to use this new technology as a way to create more jobs in his area, but his funds were too low, despite national acclaim. Due to this, he started outsourcing to China for solar panels and assembling the backpack-lamp combination in the Ivory Coast.

This man's want for change exemplifies much of what I want to achieve, as well as how to meet setbacks, while on IQP. The thing that struck me the most about this project was that he took a small problem, such as not having light after six in the evening, and created a small solution that could make a big impact. What this means is that you do not need to make some grand idea to make a huge difference. Sometimes the smallest of ideas can help the most. Another thing Akoumian's journey has taught me is that sometimes you cannot achieve goals right away. He wanted to be able to create jobs in the Ivory Coast while helping the rural

children, but was unable to due to funds. It does not mean that he is going to give up on that goal, but that he will continue to work hard in order to make sure that goal is attained in the future. This is applies to me because I know that there will be setbacks in my team's project and I may get disappointed if we cannot reach the end goal, but I know that if we keep working and keep our ideas alive, those goals will be achieved one day. The biggest thing that Evariste Akoumian taught me is that analyzing the needs of the people and making a small change can make a world of difference.

Capron, Alexandre. "Solar Backpacks Help Kids Do Homework in the Ivory Coast." The France 24 Observers. N.p., 09 Sept. 2016. Web. 28 Sept. 2016.