

campus life

A very bright idea

Meet the LPC Lamp Lite-ers: five students from Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong. Together, they embarked on a project to save energy in their school - one light bulb at a time, writes **Nicola Chan**

You've all probably seen those reminders at school to "turn off the lights when not in use"; but have you ever questioned whether there's a more effective way to ensure lights aren't left on? That's exactly what six students from Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong did.

Ankit Yadav, Aslee Tam, Crystal Kwan, Galia Paul, Kagan Yanik and Martina Emma Feltracco came up with the idea of installing motion-activated sensors to regular the light bulbs in their school, and the results were astounding.

The group embarked on the venture as part of environmental organisation The Nature Conservancy (TNC)'s educational programme. The programme, Nature Works Hong Kong, invites students to carry out an environment-related project in their school.

TNC went on to crown the group, known as the LPC Lamp Lite-ers, one of the four champions of this year's programme.

Young Post met the students to learn more about the inspiration behind their project.

"We sought to maximise our impact in our community while minimising costs," said 16-year-old Ankit of the team's initial aim.

Every action students take is a small step towards a bigger realisation

They brainstormed a number of potential ideas "that could be useful" but also very expensive, Ankit added.

By comparison, the plan to install motion-activated light sensors and test their energy-saving capacity was very low-cost - but that wasn't the only appeal.

Galia, 17, explained that, with each member of the team specialising in a different area of science - including environmental sciences, physics, chemistry and biology - the light sensor idea would combine all their strengths.

With the help of their physics teacher and other members of staff, the students carried out their experiment overnight. They fitted a motion sensor to a light bulb in one of the bathrooms on campus, as these lights are usually left on 24 hours a day. They then compared the electricity consumption of the altered light bulb to an ordinary light between 10pm and 8am.

The group found that the sensor not only resulted in a 56 per cent power reduction, but when used on a larger scale, would result in a huge reduction in energy costs, too.

As winners of the Nature Works Hong Kong programme, the students have been awarded funding by TNC to extend their project further across the school.

"With the money, [we are] going to set up the motion sensors in the academic block bathrooms," said 17-year-old

Martina, "and are hoping to set [them] up in other areas, such as study rooms, laundry rooms, and other bathrooms." She added how encouraging it was to have the support of their fellow schoolmates.

"Everybody, from students to staff, was interested in finding out more about our project and keeping up to date with the whole process.

"It was amazing to see how many people were supportive and wanted to learn more about energy consumption on campus."

Seventeen-year-old Crystal agreed that it was "very rewarding" being able to make a difference in their school, while also "engaging the whole student body and acting as an advocate for sustainability."

And while there were some hurdles, Ankit said that finding ways to overcome them was one of the most fulfilling parts of the experience.

Galia, meanwhile, offered a reminder to Young Post readers that "the great hero who is going to save the world from global warming ... is simply you".

"Every action students around Hong Kong take is a small step towards a bigger realisation."

Edited by Charlotte Ames-Ettridge

LPC Lamp Lite-ers (from left) Kagan Yanik, Ankit Yadav, Galia Paul, Aslee Tam and Crystal Kwan accept their award from Veolia's Joe Zorn. Photo: LPCUWC

