

Aga Khan duo get President's Award honours

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Magdalena Gakuo (left) and Sumera Yego (right) with President Uhuru Kenyatta during the award ceremony. PHOTO:PSCU

Two students from the Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa, Sumera Yego and Magdalena Gakuo, are the first Kenyans to achieve the gold level President's Award- Kenya (PA-K) via the newly-introduced online documentation platform.

The President's Award is a self development programme delivering life skills and ethical values to young people aged 14 to 25, with the aim of building a better society. Currently, 120 countries worldwide, including Kenya, Ghana, Mauritius, Canada and Australia are involved in the programme.

In September last year, PA-K launched online documentation to enable participants to use an online record book to document their activities. "We now aim to have every participant register online by 2017," said Jinnarus Wambugu, a research and programme manager for PA-K.

The two girls were among the first Kenyan participants to register for the programme online, and completed it to emerge as the country's first gold level award winners on the digital platform. The President's Award programme spans physical recreation, community service, and the building of new skills. Sumera and

Magdalena chose running as their physical recreation.

After constant weekly training, they gained the confidence and stamina to participate in the half-marathon organised by First Lady Margaret Kenyatta towards raising funds for the 'Beyond Zero' campaign. Gold level candidates are also required to complete an adventurous journey and residential project.

"We both got the chance to climb Mt Kenya as part of our adventurous journey and it was one of the most challenging things I have ever done. I also got to learn about the beauty and strength that comes with team work, since I had to interact and work together with other team members during the climb," said 18-year-old Sumera.

"I am now taking part in community changing activities, like clean-up exercises, and also pushing myself to be good at many things," she said. PA-K, which is a member of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Association, was launched in Kenya by the founding President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta in 1966.