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Two Cubans Combine Fishing, Farming for Better Food Production

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Cuba is undergoing economic crisis and shortages. This can make even simple efforts like fishing or farming complex.

That is why two young Cuban businessmen decided to turn to aquaponics to get better results and increase the amount of food available on the island nation.

Aquaponics is a practice that uses wastewater from fish farming to grow food plants in a soil-less environment. It brings together fishing and farming in a way that is both **efficient** and environmentally friendly.

Joel Lopez, co-owner of JoJo Aquaponics, said the practice is a perfect fit for Cuba. "From fish to the production of food plants, everything is natural," he said while showing visitors the building where JoJo Aquaponics farms, outside of Havana, the capital of Cuba.

At the end of the month, the harvest includes both a protein from the fish, and a vegetable green - all without the use of expensive chemicals such as **fertilizers** and **pesticides**.

Cuba is facing its worst economic downturn in many years. Shortages of food, medicine and fuel have led the government to seek help from businesses in finding new solutions.

But businesses face a difficult environment in Cuba. The trade ban enforced by the United States makes doing business complex. And the Cuban government only recently permitted private businesses.

Jose Martinez is a co-owner of JoJo Aquaponics. He said aquaponics is costly and it has been difficult to raise money for the project. Martinez added that his business received some money from local government, though it was not enough.

Even with the barriers, many Cubans increasingly believe private businesses will succeed in a country where the average person earns less than \$20 a month.

I'm Gena Bennett.

Alien Fernandez reported this story for Reuters. Gena Bennett adapted it for VOA Learning English.

Words in This Story

efficient—*adj.* preventing waste

fertilizer—*n.* a chemical substance added to increase fertility

pesticide—*n.* a chemical or biological substance that protects from harmful organisms