



TAKE ACTION:
*50 Inspiring Projects from
Global Scholars*

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Friend of CCWA,

The Columbus Council on World Affairs was founded on the belief that global issues are local issues—and that lasting change begins when individuals step up to act. For more than a decade, students in our Global Scholars Diploma program have taken this challenge to heart, transforming their knowledge of global affairs into tangible solutions through their Take Action Projects.

This book brings together 50 inspiring examples of those projects. Each one was designed and led by a young person who saw a need—in their school, their neighborhood, or the wider world—and decided to do something about it.

Their actions range from raising awareness about food insecurity, to reducing waste, to promoting mental health and cross-cultural understanding. Together, these projects illustrate what is possible when learning is paired with leadership.

This collection is not only a celebration of student achievement—it is also an invitation to you. As you read, consider the challenges and opportunities facing your own community. Let these stories spark your imagination, open your perspective, and encourage you to ask:

What action will I take?

Our hope is that by the end of these pages, you will be inspired to add your voice, your passion, and your energy to building The World We Want.



Patrick Terrien
President & CEO
Columbus Council on World Affairs

TAKE ACTION PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Global Scholars Diploma Program culminates with a Take Action project in the students' third and final year that is meant to demonstrate the abilities that they have cultivated over the course of the first two years. Students choose a globally-oriented issue about which they are passionate, and they pursue a leadership role in making a positive impact at a local level.

To guide their Take Action projects, students use the ambitions of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a globally recognized set of objectives addressing critical issues such as poverty, education, climate action, and equality. The SDGs provide a structured way for students to identify and understand the broader global context of their chosen issue while also narrowing their focus to actionable impacts within their own communities.

By aligning their projects with one or more of these goals, students gain a clearer sense of the impact their work can have, learn to apply strategic problem-solving skills, and connect their efforts to a larger global movement for change. This framework serves as a tool to help students think critically and act effectively.

UNDERSTANDING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In 2015, the United Nations launched 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a shared blueprint for building a better world by 2030. They tackle the planet's most urgent challenges—poverty, inequality, climate change, health, education, and justice—while showing how progress in one area can support others.

The SDGs are global, interconnected, and measurable, providing a common framework to guide action at every level, from local communities to entire nations. They remind us that meaningful change is possible when we work together and think holistically about the world we want to create.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SDG #1 NO POVERTY

END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

Despite decades of progress, poverty remains one of humanity's greatest challenges. Today, as many as 724 million people still live in extreme poverty, struggling to meet even the most basic needs like food, shelter, and clean water. Conflict, climate change, and economic disruption have made recovery uneven—and poverty is not only a challenge in developing countries. Here in the world's wealthiest nations, millions of children still grow up without secure access to resources and opportunities.

The following projects demonstrate how young people are stepping up to address poverty in bold, creative ways. Their work reminds us that ending poverty requires not just global policy, but also everyday choices by individuals willing to act.

What action will you take?

ENGINEERING HOPE FOR THE HOMELESS

MAX R. | WESTERVILLE CENTRAL | 2022



Max's project approached the issue of homelessness with an engineering mindset and designed an inventive solution to a real problem: ripped tents used by people facing homelessness.

Using 3D printing skills, Max designed a device that fastens ripped tarps or tents without causing more damage, then partnered with The Dream Center to distribute them directly to those in need.



Innovation starts with listening.

What skills or tools do you already have that could help solve a problem in your community?

"No family should have to choose between food and diapers." - Lexi

PROVIDING BASIC NEEDS TO FAMILIES IN CENTRAL OHIO

LEXI C. | BUCKEYE VALLEY | 2023

From researching global poverty to taking action locally, Lexi partnered with the Columbus Diaper Coalition to address an urgent but hidden gap: diaper needs.

By organizing a community diaper drive at her local YMCA, she collected over 5,000 diapers, directly impacting 200 babies and their families.



Sometimes the biggest needs are the ones we don't talk about.

What is an everyday item you take for granted that could change someone else's life if made accessible?

1 in 2 US families with young children cannot afford enough diapers to keep their infant or child clean, dry, and healthy.

(National Diaper Bank Network)

DID YOU KNOW?

RISING ABOVE POVERTY'S GRASP

CHASE L. | GAHANNA | 2024



Chase partnered with GRIN (Gahanna Residents in Need) to bring a poverty simulation into his high school and offered personal finance classes, helping students step into the shoes of families facing tough financial choices.

Through the simulation and discussions, over 180 students gained firsthand insight into the realities of poverty.



Understanding starts with perspective.

How might you help others see the struggles of poverty in your own community?

Sometimes the first step out of crisis is knowing where to turn.

FIGHTING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH INFORMATION

STELLA B. / WORTHINGTON / 2022

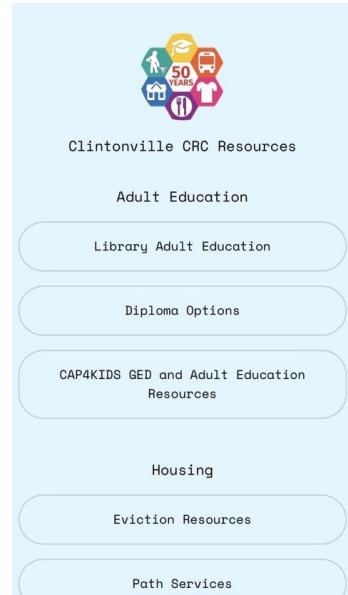
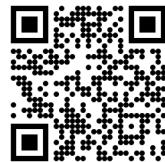
Stella partnered with the Clintonville Resource Center to create a digital resource guide linking families to housing, healthcare, and legal aid, making essential services easier to find.

The guide includes housing, legal, healthcare, education, and senior support resources, reaching at-risk groups such as Black single mothers, who are disproportionately impacted.

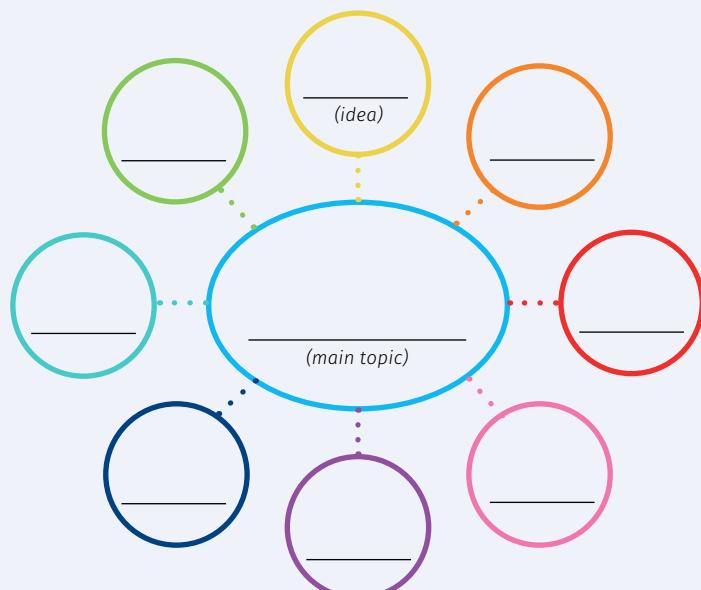
Stella's resource guide is active and can be viewed at:

linktr.ee/CRCResourceGuide

or by scanning this QR code.



Complete a mind map to help you identify people or resources in your community that you could support in their efforts to address poverty.



SDG #2 ZERO HUNGER

END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVE NUTRITION, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Hunger is one of the most urgent challenges of our time. In 2022, 735 million people—more than 9% of the global population—faced chronic hunger, a number that has risen sharply in recent years. Hunger and malnutrition not only threaten health and well-being but also limit opportunities for education, economic growth, and community development.

The student projects highlighted in this chapter demonstrate how young people are stepping into this challenge—finding creative ways to improve access to nutritious food, promote sustainable practices, and support those in need. Their efforts show that solving hunger begins not only with global solutions but also with local action, reminding us that every small step toward equity and nourishment counts.

What action will you take?

TACKLING HUNGER THROUGH AWARENESS SARAH K. | DUBLIN COFFMAN | 2024



Sarah recognized that even in an affluent district like Dublin, some families still lack access to nutritious food.

With interactive lessons, Kahoot games, and hands-on planting, Sarah reached 100+ middle school students, sparking conversations about food insecurity and encouraging young people to take action in their own communities.

The food insecurity rate in the United States is

14.3%

(Feeding America)

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Get Informed

*Look up the food insecurity rate for your state or county.
Draw a pie graph depicting a statistic on hunger in your community.*

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____





TURNING FOOD WASTE INTO COMMUNITY SUPPORT

CHLOE N. | JOHNSTOWN-MONROE | 2025

Chloe noticed how much food was wasted daily in her school cafeterias and set up a share table at the elementary school to collect unopened items.

Her project not only reduced waste but also raised community awareness, earning her an invitation from a city council member to share her work at a public meeting.



Pantry Check

At home, check your pantry for 3 non-expired items you could donate to a local food bank this month.

Extra Credit

Next time you shop, buy one extra item (like pasta or peanut butter) to donate to a local food pantry.

THE LITTLE FREE PANTRY

SYDNEY S. | BEXLEY | 2024



Sydney researched global food insecurity, then saw the issue close to home. Families in Bexley also struggle to access nutritious meals, a fact she learned directly from partners at the Developmental Assets Resource Network.

With help from her dad and approval from the Mayor of Bexley, Sydney designed and built a Little Free Pantry in Schneider Park, filling it with food from a two-week community drive.

Pair up!

Partner with a friend, neighbor, or club to run a short food drive and donate together. Write their name below so you don't forget!





FOR THE LOVE OF FOOD: RECIPES FOR FOOD SECURITY

ALLIE A. | MARYSVILLE | 2022

Allie partnered with her local food pantry and a Columbus dietitian to create nutritious recipes that turned simple free food pantry staples into balanced meals.

Through her project, Allie showed that creativity and education can transform food access by helping families eat healthier and feel supported even in times of need.



Applesauce Muffins



 Serves 12  15 min. prep  48 min. total

Ingredients	Method
4 cups baking mix 1/2 cup sugar 2 tsp cinnamon 2/3 cup applesauce 1/2 cup milk 1/4 cup oil 2 eggs	1. preheat oven to 400 degrees. 2. combine baking mix, sugar, and cinnamon. 3. combine applesauce, milk, oil, and eggs in a separate bowl. 4. combine the dry ingredients with the wet ingredients. 5. bake for 18-20 minutes or until golden brown.

served well with canned or fresh fruit, and topped with peanut butter.

Tuna Noodle Dinner



 Serves 6  10 min. prep  60 min. tot.

Ingredients	Method
2 cups noodles	1. preheat oven to 400 degrees.
4 cans tuna (drained)	2. boil water and cook noodles.
1 1/4 cup peas	3. drain the noodles, then combine
2 cans cream of	noodles, tuna, peas, cream of
mushroom soup	mushroom, milk, and salt/pepper
1 cup milk	taste.
1 cup breadcrumbs	4. place in a baking dish, and add
(optional)	breadcrumbs if you would like.
	5. bake for 25-30 minutes.
	6. serve and enjoy!

served well with canned carrots or canned fruit.

Help a Pantry

What do you think is the most needed items at a local food pantry? Write them down and then call your local pantry to learn what they need.

Find your local food bank at:

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/need-help-find-food>



SDG #3 GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING

ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING FOR ALL

Global health has improved dramatically in recent years, with fewer children dying before age five and significant progress against diseases like HIV and neglected tropical illnesses. Yet inequalities persist, and recent crises—including the COVID-19 pandemic—have disrupted these gains. Achieving health for all requires resilient health systems, universal access to care, and attention to the most vulnerable.

The projects in this chapter showcase how students are tackling health challenges in creative ways, from promoting vaccination awareness to encouraging healthy lifestyles in their communities. They remind us that improving health starts with local action and innovation.

What action will you take?

A PODCAST ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

ALEXA D. | GAHANNA | 2022



Alexa produced the Deprivation & Isolation podcast, interviewing local experts to explore the connections between substance abuse, mental health, and the pandemic.

Her podcast reached listeners on Spotify and Instagram, sparking conversations and raising awareness that substance abuse is not just a distant problem, it's happening in communities everywhere.



Conversations That Matter

What's one conversation you could start, in person, online, or in your art, that would shine a light on an issue people too often ignore?



DESTIGMATIZING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH ART

DIANA A. | WESTERVILLE SOUTH | 2022

Diana researched global approaches to mental health, from Germany's expanded funding for therapy access to China's emerging community-based supports.

Locally, she hosted an art exhibition at Westerville South High School and created an Instagram page highlighting different mental health conditions through artwork and storytelling.



The Other Hand Challenge

Try sketching something using your non-dominant hand. It's not about being neat—it's about being creative.

BLOOMS FOR DUDES

ZACK W. | DUBLIN COFFMAN | 2025



Zack created Blooms for Dudes, collecting donated flowers from local florists and inviting people to gift them to men in their lives—along with mental health resources.

By challenging stigma with something as simple as a flower, Zack sparked new ways of showing care and opened the door for dialogue around men's mental well-being.

Small Gestures, Big Impact

It's not wrong to give men flowers—and it's not wrong for men to seek help.

Challenge: Give a flower and a small note to a man in your life

Men are nearly four times more likely to die by suicide than women.

(CDC, 2021)

**DID YOU
KNOW?**



MENTAL HEALTH WALK

MINAM S. / REYNOLDSBURG / 2025

Minam organized a Wellness Walk in collaboration with NAYMH (National American Youth Mental Health) and the Bhutanese Community of Central Ohio, combining a guided walk, yoga, and breathing exercises to promote mindfulness and reduce stress.

The walk attracted strong student and teacher engagement, sparking interest in future events and showing how simple, low-cost activities can transform how communities approach mental health.



POST A COMPLIMENT: BOOSTING TEACHER MENTAL HEALTH

MARISSA G. / LICKING HEIGHTS / 2025



Marissa's research connected the rise in depression and suicides in the U.S. to global struggles in Venezuela and Spain, where financial strain and stigma worsen mental health.

Working with her principal and staff, Marissa set up the compliment wall, checked messages daily, and encouraged participation through school announcements. The project created a culture of appreciation, sparking conversations about the importance of recognizing mental health needs for educators.

Walk With Me

How could you weave walking and talking with others into your week? List 3 people that you'd like to walk and talk with this week.

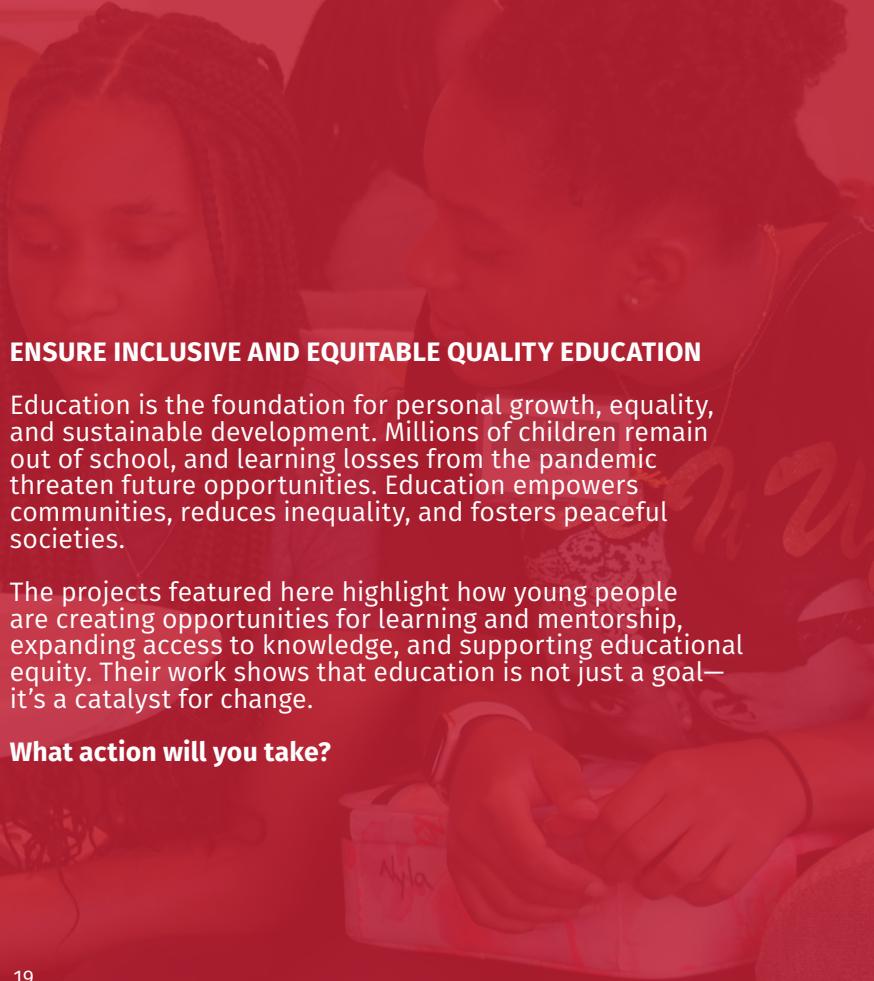
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Reach With Words

Who in your life do you think could benefit from hearing kind words?

SDG #4 QUALITY EDUCATION



ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION

Education is the foundation for personal growth, equality, and sustainable development. Millions of children remain out of school, and learning losses from the pandemic threaten future opportunities. Education empowers communities, reduces inequality, and fosters peaceful societies.

The projects featured here highlight how young people are creating opportunities for learning and mentorship, expanding access to knowledge, and supporting educational equity. Their work shows that education is not just a goal—it's a catalyst for change.

What action will you take?

Education should open doors. not close them.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

COLLEGE PREP AID

XIAOWEN L. | WESTERVILLE SOUTH | 2022



As a first-generation student, Xiaowen recognized the barriers many face in navigating the college application process.

She built College Prep Aid, an online platform guiding first-generation and low-income students through the college process with partner programs like Matriculate and TeenSHARP.

Share What Helped You

Think of one resource or piece of advice that helped you. Write it down and how you can share it.



First-generation students represent about one-third of all college students, yet only 27% complete a bachelor's degree within four years.
(Lumina Foundation)

DID YOU
KNOW?



DIVERSE LEARNER SUPPORT

KENDALL M. | BEXLEY | 2023

Kendall approached the global issue of inclusive education by focusing on equity for students with learning differences. As a student with an IEP, Kendall turned personal experience into action, creating a peer mentoring program for younger students with accommodations.

She worked with elementary and middle school students to identify their most important classroom accommodations, designing tools like personalized graphics and digital folders to help them advocate for themselves.



Every student deserves the tools and confidence to thrive.

Think of one way you could mentor someone younger than you. What advice would have made your path easier? Write down the advice and the person you plan to mentor.

STEM FOR THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

NATALIE D. | WORTHINGTON | 2024



After consulting with a former corrections officer, Natalie identified the lack of meaningful STEM education opportunities for youth in the juvenile justice system.

She created STEM activity booklets and curriculum that could be scaled to different learning levels, from LEGO design challenges to paper shape experiments, making science approachable and hands-on.

Team Effort

Who could you partner with to make your own ideas bigger and stronger?

Activity 2: Paper Bridge Challenge

Description:
You need to solve a problem with very limited resources comes about frequently in STEM. You will work to build a bridge using only two pieces of paper that can hold as many markers as possible in three minutes or less. After the three minutes are up, bridges can be tested and modifications can be made for five more minutes.

Materials

- 2 Pieces of Printer Paper
- Markers

Instructions

1. Unfold the two pieces of paper, fold or modify it in any way to create a bridge that can support the weight of at least one marker.
2. After three minutes, test how many markers your bridge can hold.
3. Modify your bridge as you see fit.
4. After three minutes, test your bridge again and determine if any changes in the number of markers your bridge could hold changed.
5. Consider your changes. What made the bridge stronger? What made it weaker? If you did this again, what would you change?



ENSURING IMMERSIVE ART EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

MADISON S. | GAHANNA | 2022

Madison launched the Art Accessibility Collaborative, inspired by her brother Conner, to explore how art spaces can better serve students with disabilities.

Her project had three parts: museum docents introduced art in her school's ESS classroom, students went on a field trip with scavenger hunts and hands-on activities, and finally, an inclusive art workshop paired ESS students with general education peers to create paintings, sculptures, and tapestries.



Who's Missing?

Flip through a textbook, museum brochure, or art history website. How many disabled artists do you see represented? Why do you think representation matters?

“Change starts with a little spark. It doesn’t have to be a whole flame. If I can just be that little spark that will ignite change, and if I can get more people who are around me who are just little sparks, that will eventually create a wildfire.”

*Before we continue, take a moment to consider:
What part of this world do you most want to change?*



“Even the smallest idea can spark a ripple of change.”

SDG #5 GENDER EQUALITY

ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women and girls represent half of humanity—and half of its potential—but inequality continues to limit opportunity and progress worldwide. Pay gaps, unequal caregiving responsibilities, discrimination, and violence persist across societies.

In this chapter, student projects demonstrate how young people are challenging gender norms, advocating for equality, and creating spaces where women and girls can thrive. These efforts illustrate that meaningful change begins with committed individuals and inclusive communities.

What action will you take?

CHILD MARRIAGE: THE CONCLUSION

KATY M. | WESTERVILLE SOUTH | 2024



Katy identified the widespread issue of child marriage both locally and globally, with an emphasis on its impact on girls in the United States and abroad.

Collaborating with Zonta International, she organized a high school advocacy event that featured a guest speaker and created a mini-documentary to raise awareness and amplify youth voices. Her project combined direct education, multimedia storytelling, and youth engagement to inform and inspire peers about the realities and dangers of child marriage.

Imagine

You've been asked to make a one-minute video to raise awareness about a human rights issue.

What story would you tell?

Child marriage is still legal in 40+ U.S. states, often because of exceptions for parental consent or judicial approval.

(UNICEF USA)

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

5 GENDER EQUALITY





SELF-DEFENSE: PROTECTING FEMALE ATHLETES

SYLVIA S. / WORTHINGTON / 2022

Sylvia partnered with IMPACT Safety Columbus to host a free self-defense class for her cross country teammates and other female athletes.

The two-hour session equipped 16 participants with practical skills and confidence, helping them feel safer while running and training.



Feeling Safe is the Foundation of Freedom.

What steps can you take to make your community safer for women and girls?

More than two-thirds of women experience harassment while running

(University of Manchester, 2024)

DID YOU KNOW?

EQUAL ACCESS: PERIOD POVERTY

LISA C. / BUCKEYE VALLEY / 2020



Lisa led efforts to provide free menstrual products district-wide at her middle and high schools, ensuring more than 500 girls had access to essential supplies.

She expanded awareness by presenting at Columbus State Community College and the University of Michigan Health Science Academy, sharing solutions and advocacy strategies.





GIRLS IN STEM: CLOSING GAPS, BUILDING FUTURES

NATALIE W. | BEXLEY | 2023

Natalie launched an after-school Girls in STEM program at Waggoner Road Middle School, bringing students together weekly for hands-on projects and conversations.

Interest skyrocketed and, by week five, 83 students had signed up, inspiring Natalie to split the program into cohorts and bring in guest speakers to expand impact.



Opening Doors

Reflect on your own community. Who gets left out of opportunities? Write down some ideas for how to include them.



SDG #6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

Access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene is a basic human right, yet billions face daily challenges. Climate change and population growth increase water scarcity, while infrastructure gaps leave many without safe drinking water or sanitation facilities.

The projects that follow highlight innovative ways students are promoting access to clean water, raising awareness about water conservation, and improving sanitation in local communities. Their initiatives demonstrate that sustainable solutions often start close to home.

What action will you take?

POSTCARDS FOR PROGRESS: YOUTH VOICES ON FERTILIZER RUNOFF

SENA M. | PICKERINGTON | 2023



After studying fertilizer runoff in Canada, South Africa, and the U.S., Sena saw how polluted farms and lawns cause algae blooms, toxic waterways, and health risks.

To spark solutions locally, she led fertilizer runoff workshops for elementary students with Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services, collecting postcards and stickers that shared kids' voices with nearly 1,000 people.



Global Perspective

Pick one country (like Haiti or Ethiopia) and research their access to water.

Share one fact with a friend or family member to spread awareness





WATER QUALITY AND HOW IT AFFECTS US

ANNA S. / GLOBAL IMPACT STEM ACADEMY | 2023

Anna researched water access in underdeveloped countries to better understand the dimensions of the global water crisis.

To make the issue real for her peers, she designed a hands-on science lesson for four Environmental Science classes. Students tested safe vs. contaminated water samples for pH, nitrates, nitrites, and turbidity, then compared results and reflected on global impacts.



Try This

Track how much water you drink in one day. Now imagine walking 15 miles just to collect it, would you use it differently?

Cut 10%

Challenge yourself to reduce your water use by 10% this week—take shorter showers, turn off the tap while brushing, or run full loads of laundry only.

ELIMINATING LEAD POISONING IN WATER

PRANET S. / OLENTANGY | 2023



Pranet's research connected local risks in Ohio to global crises like children affected in the Philippines and Bangladesh, showing how widespread and damaging the issue remains.

He launched a lead poisoning awareness campaign, presenting to students on its impacts, distributing 50 water testing strips, and gathering surveys that showed increased awareness and action.

Ohio has an estimated 745,000 lead water service lines that need replaced. This estimate places Ohio third in the nation.

(Ohio Environmental Council)

DID YOU KNOW?

What's in Your Water?

Could you test the water in your own home or school? What would you do if you found lead?



RAIN CONSERVATION BARREL: SAVING WATER AT SCHOOL

MARGARET W. / DELAWARE | 2022

Margaret designed, built, and installed a rain barrel in her school's environmental science courtyard to promote water conservation and educate peers about water security.

With help from administrators and maintenance staff, she built the barrel herself, adapting her original plan after district pushback and installing it where students could use it for science projects and gardening.



Take Action in Your Own Backyard

Just like our Global Scholars Diploma students take action in their schools and communities, you can take action right at home. The Community Backyards program from the Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District helps Central Ohio residents make small, sustainable choices that add up to big change.

How It Works

Learn → Take a short online course or attend a workshop.

Choose → Pick one sustainable action: a rain barrel, native plants, compost bin, or rain garden.

Act → Get a rebate to make it happen — your household becomes part of the solution.

Why It Matters

Stormwater runoff pollutes our rivers and streams.

Native plants and trees protect pollinators and wildlife.

Composting and lawn care reduce waste and chemicals.

Simple steps add up to healthier communities.

START YOUR OWN BACKYARD ACTION TODAY

communitybackyards.org

SDG #10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

Inequality—both within and between countries—undermines social cohesion, economic growth, and human dignity. While some progress has been made, the pandemic has reversed gains and worsened disparities.

The student projects in this chapter show how young people are working to close gaps in access, opportunity, and voice. From community programs to awareness campaigns, these projects exemplify how action at the local level can combat inequality.

What action will you take?



LANGUAGE ACCESS IN CRISIS SUPPORT

SABINA H. | MT. VERNON | 2024



Inspired by her abuelita's struggles with English-language medical care, Sabina turned her focus to helping Spanish speakers access domestic violence and sexual assault support.

She partnered with New Directions Domestic Violence Shelter, translating their most-used advocacy and sexual assault pamphlets into Spanish, carefully checking them with teachers and native speakers for accuracy.

Las Direcciones Nuevas

El refugio para víctimas de abuso doméstico y el centro de crisis por violaciones sexuales

Para TODAS sobrevivientes del abuso doméstico y sexual

- Abuso físico, emocional, sexual, o financiero en una relación
- Consiste en el uso de amenazas, intimidación y algún tipo de violencia ejercer un familiar en una posición de poder
- Afecta a personas de cualquier raza, género, sexualidad, religión, nivel socioeconómico, edad, etc.

Leave a 740-307-HELP (4357)

¿Qué es la violencia sexual?

- Contacto sexual no deseado contra alguien sin el consentimiento de esa persona
- Nunca es la culpa de la víctima
- Afecta a personas de cualquier raza, edad, género, sexualidad, religión, nivel educativo o condición económica

nowdirectionsknow.org

¿Qué es el anexo?

El apoyo se centra en la seguridad física y emocional de una sobreviviente. Las

- Apoyar las decisiones sin juzgar
- Encontrar las fortalezas que fomentan la curación
- Desarrollar habilidades para fomentar el crecimiento
- Prestación de servicios a lo largo de toda la vida de la superviviente

Breaking Barriers, Building Trust

Think about your own community—are there services, resources, or opportunities that some people can't access because of language or culture?

Write down some steps you could take to help remove that barrier.



BRIDGING GENERATIONS THROUGH TECH

OLIVIA R. | BEXLEY | 2023

Olivia partnered with the Bexley Senior Center to create a day of tech support, connecting student volunteers with older adults.

Over two hours, students helped with tech tasks from setting up apps and passwords to teaching video calls, while also sharing stories and building relationships.



Technology can divide, or it can connect

Think of one older adult in your life: how could you help them feel more confident using their phone, tablet, or computer?

FINANCIAL LITERACY FOR NEW AMERICANS

WASHINGTON C. | COLUMBUS NORTH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL | 2020

Washington saw how many immigrant families in her community struggled without a firm knowledge of the U.S. financial system.

Inspired by a financial literacy course she had taken, she set out to bridge the gap, teaching low-income, international-background families essential skills in budgeting, saving, and workplace professionalism.



Money shouldn't be a mystery

Think of one financial skill you've learned (budgeting, saving, or credit). How could you share that knowledge with someone who might not have the same access?



LUNCH BUNCH: BUILDING SOCIAL SKILLS FOR INCLUSION

MACI S. | MARYSVILLE | 2024

Maci created Lunch Bunch, a weekly lunchtime program with 7th graders who have learning disabilities, guiding them through games and activities that built conversation skills, confidence, and peer connection.

The impact was visible: students who had once struggled to communicate began initiating conversations, using iPads to speak, or confidently participating in games.



One Week Challenge

Spend a week doing a small creative activity (drawing, dancing, writing). At the end, reflect: how did it make you feel? Now imagine never having that opportunity. What would be missing?

ACCESS TO THE ARTS

ISABEL M. | BEXLEY | 2024



Isabel explored how inequality shapes access to the arts, especially dance. She partnered with Artisan Dance Studio and the GEMS school to offer classes for students with limited exposure to performing arts.

By creating meaningful connections, Isabel not only gave students a new experience but also highlighted how access to the arts can inspire confidence, belonging, and joy in communities often left out.

Arts for All

Think about your own school or community. Who gets access to arts programs, and who doesn't? What's one way you could help close that gap?

SDG #11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

Cities are growing rapidly, with more than half of humanity now living in urban areas. Rapid urbanization brings opportunity but also challenges, including inadequate housing, overburdened infrastructure, and slum-like conditions.

The projects featured here demonstrate how students are contributing to safer, greener, and more inclusive urban spaces—through initiatives like community gardens, public space improvements, and local sustainability campaigns. Their work illustrates that sustainable cities start with engaged citizens.

What action will you take?



COMMUNITY WASTE REUSE FOR GARDENS

ELLIANA M. | MT. VERNON | 2024



Elliana partnered with Community Roots to collect compostable waste from a local coffee shop and repurpose it as fertilizer for community gardens.

Over 19 weeks, Elliana collected nearly 300 gallons of coffee grounds and distributed 60+ seed packets, building a cycle of sustainability that feeds both soil and community.

Food Waste Adds Up Fast!

Try measuring your food scraps for one week.

Brainstorm two new ways to reduce your food waste at home.

SUSTAINABLE RURAL TRANSPORTATION

AUDREY S. | GRANVILLE | 2023

Audrey studied transportation challenges in China, India, and the U.S., connecting global lessons on emissions, traffic, and infrastructure to her own rural Ohio community.

Partnering with the Ohio Department of Transportation and DriveOhio, she launched a Smart Mobility Policy Pathways pilot program, creating a teen advisory council to give students a voice in shaping Ohio's transportation future.

Carbon Count

Look up how much CO₂ your daily commute produces. What are some changes you could make (route, timing, or mode) to shrink that footprint?

POLYSTYRENE: FROM TRAYS TO CHANGE

ANNA H. | REYNOLDSBURG | 2022



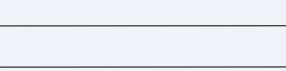
Anna investigated the dangers of polystyrene lunch trays, a single-use plastic that never biodegrades and pollutes oceans, land, and air.

Meeting with Reynoldsburg's head of Food Services, she advocated for reusable trays instead of the nearly 95,000 disposable trays thrown away each year at her campus.



Ditch the Disposables

What's one single-use item you see wasted every day in your school, home, or community? Write it down—and then list one reusable or sustainable alternative that could replace it.



This image shows a sheet of lined paper. A vertical dotted line runs along the left edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with horizontal ruling lines for writing.



STUDENT LEADERSHIP & SOLAR ENERGY

CHRISTOPHER L. | BIG WALNUT | 2022

Christopher collaborated with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and Big Walnut's administrative team to explore installing solar panels on school buildings.

Wanting to make sustainability a shared priority, he founded the Delaware County Student Council, connecting eight high schools so students could exchange ideas on global-impact projects including renewable energy and mental health.



Unite to Save

What is one way your home, community or workplace could cut energy use? How can you join forces with others to make it happen?

Devices in “standby” or “sleep” mode can eat up 5-10% of a household’s electricity use.

(Associated Press)

DID YOU KNOW?

Reflect

Imagine your city, community, or neighborhood 10 years from now. What changes would make it more sustainable, equitable, and enjoyable for everyone?

SDG #12

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

Our planet's resources are finite, yet current consumption patterns threaten sustainability. From food loss to fossil fuel subsidies, unsustainable production and consumption strain ecosystems and communities.

The student projects in this chapter highlight creative ways young people are reducing waste, promoting sustainable consumption, and raising awareness of environmental impact. Their efforts show that even small actions can ripple out to make a global difference.

What action will you take?

RETHINKING FAST FASHION

ADDISON M. | BIG WALNUT | 2024



Addison partnered with Fairy Goodmothers, a Columbus nonprofit, to improve the sustainability of their Cinderella's Closet prom dress events. She created new systems for tracking inventory trends and tagging dresses by year.

Over three event weekends, the organization served 362 students, with more than 237 pieces of jewelry, 104 handbags, and 73 new dresses going to teens—reducing waste while expanding access.

Think Before You Own

What's one item in your life you could borrow/rent/share instead of buying new?

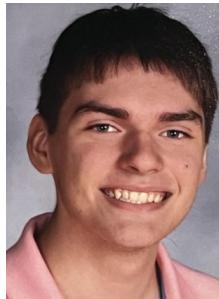


REDUCING HELIUM CONSUMPTION

LANDON P. / BUCKEYE VALLEY / 2025

Landon learned that helium—critical for MRI machines—is a non-renewable resource often wasted on party balloons.

He presented a helium-saving solution to Kroger and Party City: filling balloons with a 50/50 helium-air mix, cutting usage in half while keeping balloons afloat. After meeting with managers at four Krogers and a Party City, he saw several already adopting reduced-helium methods—showing how small actions can safeguard medical resources for the future.



Balloon Smarts

Next time you buy balloons, ask to have them filled with half helium and half air—you'll save money and conserve a critical medical resource.

SAYING NO TO PLASTIC

BHAVYA S. / OLENTANGY / 2023



Bhavya researched the devastating effects of plastic on ecosystems worldwide, from India's clogged rivers to Indonesia's coral reefs, where millions of marine animals die each year from plastic waste.

Locally, she partnered with Trinethra Indian Supermarket in Columbus, promoting the reuse of cardboard boxes instead of plastic bags.

Rethink Plastic

Next time you shop, say no to plastic bags and choose a reusable option instead.

SAY NO TO PLASTIC

About 100 million marine animals die each year from plastic waste

8 million pieces of plastics find their way into our ocean daily

Start using cardboard boxes for your groceries!

Ask for a cardboard box for your groceries and start saving/helping OUR PLANET EARTH

You can even bring a cloth bag to put your groceries in!



Say NO to plastic now!!

SDG #13 CLIMATE ACTION

TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

Climate change is a defining challenge of our time, affecting every country and threatening lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Rising temperatures, extreme weather, and sea-level rise are already causing disruption worldwide.

The projects that follow showcase how students are addressing climate challenges through renewable energy initiatives, advocacy campaigns, and community education. These projects remind us that climate solutions depend on the initiative and creativity of individuals in every community.

What action will you take?

CLEAN AIR FOR DELAWARE

ZOEY M. | DELAWARE | 2024



Zoey researched air quality worldwide, from China, where pollution reduces life expectancy by 4.3 years, to Bangladesh, where all 164 million residents breathe unsafe air, showing how pollution and climate change are intertwined.

Locally, she partnered with Sustainable Delaware Ohio. She hosted a booth at First Friday events, and shared climate and air quality resources.

Climate action starts in small moments.

Next time you're in a parking lot or waiting to pick someone up, turn off your car instead of idling. You'll cut emissions and protect our climate.



13 CLIMATE ACTION





TREES FOR CLIMATE ACTION

GAHANA B. / WESTERVILLE NORTH / 2024

Gahana partnered with Green Columbus, distributing trees in a low-income neighborhood and learning how native trees reduce flooding, asthma, heat islands, and utility costs, all while absorbing carbon.

By educating peers on climate science and helping distribute trees, Gahana connected global warming to local action. She showed how small steps like planting and protecting native trees can help communities adapt to and fight climate change.



Plant the Change

What's one spot in your neighborhood that could benefit from more shade, cleaner air, or cooler temperatures?

Visit greenbus.org/our-trees to learn how trees are making a difference and how you could get involved.

GREEN DAYS: WEEKLY CLIMATE ACTION AT SCHOOL

ANDREW W. / WESTERVILLE CENTRAL / 2024



Andrew connected his project to global research on pollution in China and India, showing how smog, rising seas, and unsafe water impact millions of lives. Locally, he reminded peers that Ohio has already warmed 1.5°F and faces more flooding, droughts, and crop losses without urgent action.

Over the school year, Andrew collected batteries, electronics, and recyclables that would have ended up in landfills, partnering with Terracycle, Goodwill, and Westerville Electric Division to ensure they were properly recycled.

Of the 62 million metric tons of electronic waste produced worldwide in 2022, only 22.3% of was formally collected and recycled.

(World Health Organization)

**DID YOU?
KNOW?**

Simple Steps, Shared Action

What's one simple swap you could make this week: bring a reusable bottle, skip meat for a day, or recycle something you usually throw away?

Choose one and get someone to join you!

PLANT-BASED EATING

LAUREN B. | WORTHINGTON | 2023

Lauren taught a class of fifth graders at Evening Street Elementary about the link between diet and climate change, using a simulation and videos to show how eating less meat conserves resources.

She encouraged students to try “Meatless Mondays,” empowering them to carry the message home to their families.



Plate Swap

Our food choices shape the planet. Could you go one day a week without meat?

Write down some plant-based meals you'd like to try:

"I hope to see a world where technology is being used to protect our environment & create a more sustainable world."

GSD Student

Spread the Word

*Think like a GSD student:
educating others multiplies your impact.*

Who could you reach—friends, family, coworkers?

What action or tip will you share to inspire them?

SDG #14 LIFE BELOW WATER

CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Oceans cover most of our planet and sustain countless species, economies, and human communities. Yet marine pollution, overfishing, and ocean acidification are pushing ecosystems to the brink.

In this chapter, student projects focus on protecting marine life, reducing pollution, and promoting awareness of conservation. Their actions show that caring for the oceans starts with local engagement and stewardship.

What action will you take?

PRAIRIE GRASSES: NATURE'S FILTER FOR CLEAN WATER

JACKSON D. | GLOBAL IMPACT STEM ACADEMY | 2025



Jackson researched how native prairie grasses like Indian Grass can absorb heavy metals and contaminants from soil that otherwise seeps into groundwater and reservoirs causing pollution.

He turned research into action by planting a 1,000-square-foot plot of Indian Grass at a local landfill, preventing contaminants from being carried into nearby water systems.



Native Plants

Think about your community: where could native plants help stop pollution from reaching rivers, lakes, or drinking water reservoirs?



RIVER POLLUTION

OSCAR R. / BEXLEY | 2023

Oscar designed a 3D-printed kayak attachment to collect trash from Alum Creek, meeting with teachers and the Bexley Rec Department to test the system during a community cleanup with 15+ volunteers.

After hours of design, redesign, and on-the-water testing, Oscar's invention successfully pulled debris from the creek and raised awareness about protecting water.



One Piece, One Change

Commit to picking up at least one piece of trash whenever you pass by a waterway. Small habits add up.

Invisible Pollution

Look at a storm drain near your house or school. Where does it lead? Imagine what might flow into it during the next rain

CLEAN WATER FOR NEIGHBORHOODS

DANIEL S. / COLUMBUS NORTH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL | 2023



Daniel partnered with the City of Columbus Public Utilities, recruited classmates, and organized a campaign to clean debris and apply 40+ storm drain stickers reminding residents that drains flow directly to drinking water.

By connecting global scarcity to local action, Daniel showed that even small acts like labeling drains can contribute to solving one of the world's most urgent challenges



One Less Litter

Commit to picking up one piece of trash near a storm drain each day this week.

SDG #15

LIFE ON LAND

PROTECT, RESTORE, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF ECOSYSTEMS

Forests, grasslands, and other terrestrial ecosystems support biodiversity, human livelihoods, and cultural heritage. Yet deforestation, land degradation, and species loss continue at alarming rates.

The projects featured here highlight student efforts to restore habitats, promote sustainable land use, and conserve biodiversity. Their work demonstrates that protecting life on land is both a global and a community responsibility.

What action will you take?

OPERATION HELP POLLINATORS

EMILY W. | MARYSVILLE | 2023



Emily researched pollinator decline in the Netherlands, where butterflies are now mostly restricted to reserves, and in Mexico, where monarch numbers have dropped to 26% of past levels.

Locally, she partnered with Kurtz Bros. Mulch & Soil, Marysville's landscape design class, and her mom, a landscape designer, to build a butterfly garden around her high school's memorial site. The garden not only beautifies her campus but also starts a conversation across her community about why protecting pollinators matters.

Pollinators keep our ecosystems alive

Try planting one pollinator-friendly flower, or set up a small garden, and watch who comes to visit.

*Visit Emily's website to learn how:
gsdbutterflygarden.weebly.com/*

Operation Help Pollinators

[HOME](#) [PROCESS](#) [GARDEN IMAGES](#) [ELEMENTARY EDUCATION](#) [ABOUT ME](#) [CONTRIBUTORS](#)





REMOVING INVASIVE PLANTS FOR BIODIVERSITY

CALI C. | JOHNSTOWN | 2025

Cali teamed up with the Vinton County Soil & Water Conservation District, working alongside a forester to identify and remove invasive species from her family's 47-acre property bordering Zaleski State Forest.

Over several months, she removed 150 Trees of Heaven, a 40-foot invasive pear tree, and countless honeysuckle and multiflora rose bushes, saving native trees that had been suffocated.



Learn about Ohio invasive plants...

ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/plants-trees/invasive-plants



...and how to replace them!
oipc.info/alternative-list.html

Of the approximately 2,300 vascular plant species growing in the wild in Ohio, about 22% are non-native, invasive plants.

(Ohio Dept of Natural Resources)

**DID YOU?
KNOW?**

RECONNECTING WITH NATURE: PROTECTING PARKS

EVAN M. | DELAWARE | 2023



Evan researched how cities like Amsterdam and Tokyo weave green spaces into urban areas, showing how accessible parks improve well-being and protect biodiversity.

Locally, he created a new conservation park, Schultz Woods, from an unused school-owned property, designing trails, clearing invasive species, and installing signage with the help of volunteers.



Pause in Nature

Get outside this week: walk a trail, sit under a tree, or pause in a green space.

Where do you like to spend time outdoors, and why?

SDG #16 PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Safety, justice, and the rule of law are fundamental to human well-being. Violence, conflict, and discrimination destabilize societies and prevent people from thriving.

The projects in this chapter illustrate how students are promoting justice, building safer communities, and fostering dialogue and understanding. Their efforts remind us that peace and strong institutions are built through action, advocacy, and collaboration at every level.

What action will you take?

UNITY SPEAKS: ENGLISH FOR EMPOWERMENT PRATIMA N. / REYNOLDSBURG / 2025



For many immigrants and refugees, limited English means struggling with doctor visits, grocery shopping, or employment.

Inspired by her parents' own struggles as Bhutanese refugees, Pratima created Unity Speaks, a 20-week Adult ESL program at the Himalayan Care Center for Bhutanese and other immigrant families in Central Ohio. She built the class around real-life needs instead of abstract grammar—role-playing scenarios and celebrating progress with prizes and encouragement.

Language is more than words, it's access.

Think about your own community: what barriers might immigrants face if they don't speak English? How could you help bridge the gap?

Columbus is home to the largest population of Bhutanese-Nepali individuals in the United States.

(CRIS)

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

YOUTH VOICES IN GOVERNMENT

ARWEN Z. | DUBLIN JEROME | 2024

Arwen researched youth participation in government worldwide, noting that less than 2% of parliamentarians globally are under 30, even though half the population is under the age of 30.

Locally, she collaborated with Ohio State Representative Beth Liston's Office to run a testimony-writing workshop for students across Dublin City Schools, teaching how to craft and deliver testimony at the Statehouse



Democracy works best when everyone has a voice

Think about an issue you care about. What would you say if you had 3 minutes to testify in front of lawmakers?

PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH EDUCATION

LILAH P. | JOHNSTOWN | 2025



Lilah partnered with activist Jami Gray of The Freedom Collective to educate her city leaders about human trafficking at a Johnstown Council meeting, then expanded her project with a weeklong donation drive.

She collected 307 items for survivors through The Salvation Army's Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force.



Human trafficking thrives in silence

Add the National Human Trafficking Hotline to your phone contacts.

You never know when you or someone else might need it.

1-888-373-7888

Columbus ranks 10th worst in the United States for human trafficking.

(Ohio Attorney General)

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

INTERNET SAFETY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

RYLAND T. | DUBLIN COFFMAN | 2024

Ryland modernized his school's outdated internet safety slideshow, replacing decade-old data and debunked myths with a 98-slide presentation that speaks to students of the 2020s.

Feedback from teachers confirmed the new presentation was a safer, more modern tool for future classes. Ryland hopes his project will continue protecting students long after graduation, like “planting a tree he may never see sprout.”



The internet is powerful, but without guidance, it can be dangerous

What are some online safety tips you wish someone had taught you earlier?

Share them with a younger sibling, cousin, or friend.



CONCLUSION

The 50 stories in this book are just the beginning. Around the world—and right here in our own community—young people are stepping up to shape The World We Want.

You can be part of this movement.

STAY INFORMED

- Follow the issues: Keep learning about global challenges. A little awareness goes a long way.
- Subscribe to updates: Join our newsletter to get stories of local and global changemakers delivered to your inbox.

STAY CONNECTED

- Join the conversation: Follow us on social media to share your voice and hear from others who care about the future.
- Show up: Attend events, community talks, or volunteer opportunities where ideas become action.

STAY INSPIRED

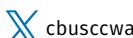
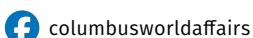
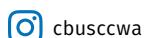
- Learn from youth: Revisit the stories in this book whenever you need motivation—these students prove that small steps matter.
- Pass it on: Share what you've learned with a friend, family member, or colleague.

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