



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
SOLUTIONS NETWORK
A GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS



Global Schools
Program

Practicing Education for Sustainable Development: Case Study Guide for Educators

Global Schools Program 2022

Photo Credit: Lilian Atieno Oloo
Global Schools Advocate, Kenya

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Members of the Global Schools Team serve in their personal capacities, so the opinions expressed in this report may not reflect the opinions of their respective organizations.

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About

The Global Schools Program is an initiative of the UN SDSN in support of UNESCO's Roadmap for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Through research and advocacy, Global Schools develops the tools, resources, and programs to support schools and educators around the globe. The vision of the program is to create a world where every primary and secondary school student is equipped with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary to effectively respond to the greatest challenges of this century and shape a sustainable and prosperous world for all.

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Part 3: Lessons Learned

Letter from the Program Manager

The Global Schools Program is delighted to showcase the crucial work of teachers and educators in promoting education for sustainable development (SDG Target 4.7). This publication supports the work of Mission 4.7 and will provide a foundation of lessons learned and best practices for the Global Schools Network. The Network is an outstanding community of educators from across the globe who are committed to bringing 21st-century skills, the SDGs, and global citizenship education into primary and secondary schools.

The 21st century is marked by major challenges both of scale and of urgency, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, extreme poverty, and income inequality. These problems are multiple, diverse, and interwoven by nature across environmental, social, and economic arenas. The Global Schools Program believes that schools and educators play a vital role in combating these critical challenges and preparing students to tackle the problems of this century. Educational frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Global Citizenship Education (GCE), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) have been proven to increase students' academic performance and soft skills, promote empathy for others, and inspire sustainable behaviors.

"Integrating sustainable development into classrooms is an often complex and challenging process. Case studies are fundamental in helping us better understand these challenges at the local level. This report details the experiences of our advocates across many regions and countries and helps us understand what common and differentiated challenges each of them has faced and how these could be addressed in future iterations of the program. However, this report also serves as a powerful medium for inspiration. It highlights the incredible efforts undertaken by these educators in overcoming challenges and finding creative and transformative solutions to plant the seeds of sustainable development in classrooms." - Global Schools Director, Sam Loni

Therefore, it is our hope that this guidebook will detail how the Global Schools Advocates have worked across departments and classrooms, designed creative projects, and found success in integrating ESD within their school communities. We are confident that these stories of powerful change will inspire others on the journey to improve education for all and create a more sustainable world.

Sincerely,

Amanda Abrom, Program Manager



PART 1:

What is Education for Sustainable Development

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals



What is Education for Sustainable Development?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as Global Goals, are a set of 17 integrated and interrelated goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that humanity enjoys peace and prosperity by 2030.

According to UNESCO, Education for Sustainable Development “empowers learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to address the interconnected global challenges we are facing, including climate change, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, poverty, and inequality”.¹

Education for Sustainable Development is

directly addressed in SDG Target 4.7, and includes ensuring that students receive transformative education that enables them to understand and act on the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole.

ESD competencies allow students to reflect on their own opinions, learn from others and practice empathy, deal with conflicts, develop innovative actions that further sustainability, reflect on their own actions and values, evaluate multiple perspectives and choices, and understand complex relationships and systems.²

“The ideas of Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development need to be put into practice for all learners worldwide. Global Schools has done that impressively well. Inspiring today’s learners and educators to become change agents for a better future is an essential contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement.”

Monika Froehler, CEO, Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens

¹ UNESCO. “Education for Sustainable Development.” UNESCO, January 3, 2022. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development>.

² Leicht, A. Heiss, J. & Byun, W.J (2018). “Issues and Trends in Education for Sustainable Development.” UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261802>

What is the purpose of this guide and who is it for?

The purpose of this guide is to showcase best practices of educators around the world who have successfully incorporated Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in their lessons and activities. These diverse case studies from a myriad of global contexts will provide insight into creative mechanisms that create school buy-in, incorporate SDG activities into national standards, and foster a sustainable development movement within education centers.

This guide will extract lessons learned for future Advocates in the Global Schools Program network, as well as for teachers and educators around the world who seek to instill ESD, global citizenship, and 21st-century skills within schools.

This guide will also feature the outstanding work of the Global Schools Advocates, celebrating their achievements and accomplishments as educators and changemakers.

This case-study guide is for educators, teachers, school leadership, and policy makers. This guide will provide primary and secondary school stakeholders with an overview of ESD lessons, activities, and school-wide strategies that were successfully implemented in different global contexts. It will also detail the challenges of incorporating ESD into school communities faced by educators with varying backgrounds and exposure to these topic areas.

The Role of Educators

The Global Schools Program believes that schools and teachers are in a unique position to educate the future generation of community leaders, consumers, voters, and citizens on the world's biggest challenges and to inspire them to take civic action.

More than half of the world population is currently under the age of 30. Schools and teachers have a tremendous opportunity to empower billions of young people to become global citizens and pioneer a movement for a better and more sustainable future.

In the 2021 report, "Getting Every School Climate Ready," UNESCO found that only 40% of teachers

were confident in teaching the cognitive dimensions of climate change, and only 20% can explain how to take action. This report additionally reviewed 20 country profiles on climate change education, finding that only 55% of teacher training programs (both pre-service or in-service) incorporate education on climate change.³

Therefore, the Global Schools Advocates Program seeks to bridge the gap in these numbers by providing high-quality training and collaboration on not only environmental education but also holistic education for sustainable development.

³UNESCO (2021). "Getting Every School Climate Ready. How Countries are Integrating Climate Change Issues into Education" <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379591>



PART 2:

Case Studies for Educators

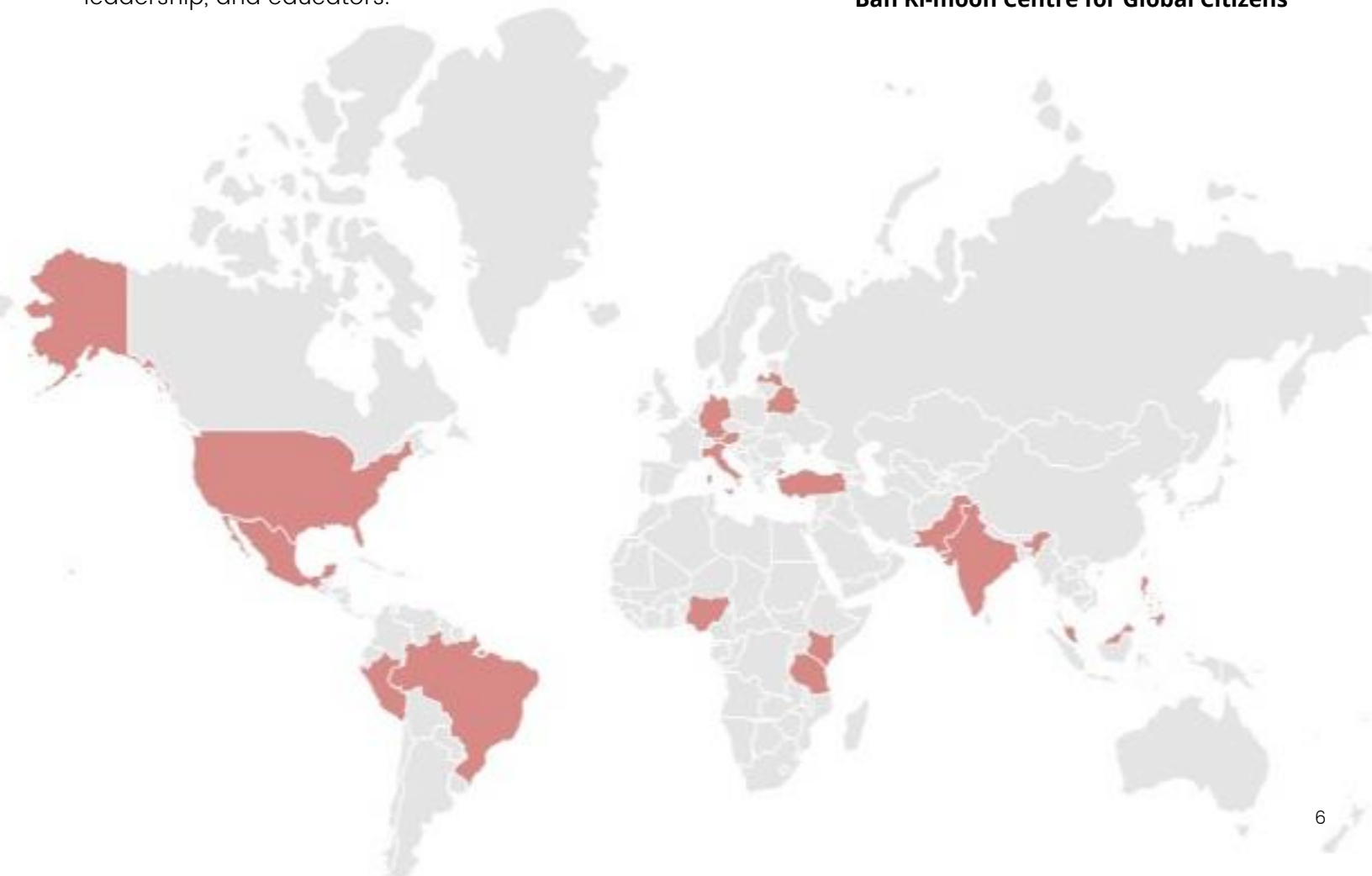
Case Studies

The following section details 30 case studies from Global Schools Advocates who successfully completed all program components. These case studies offer an in-depth analysis of each Advocate's projects and initiatives. Additionally, the case studies offer insight into pre-established programs and initiatives in the Advocates' schools, which provides a better understanding of the successes and challenges of incorporating ESD in their communities. In some cases, these educators already had a solid foundation and prior experience conducting similar SDG-related projects. In other cases, Advocates were exposed to ESD and SDG themes for the first time. The diversity of these case studies provides a broader perspective to incorporating sustainable development in schools. The lessons learned section will summarize the underlying factors of success and challenges faced by teachers, school leadership, and educators.

Advocates and educators featured in this guide carried out their role in approximately 20 countries, including: Austria, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Germany, Hong Kong (China), India, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Tanzania, Turkey, and the United States.

"Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education are key to preparing our youth to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. The Global Schools Program and its outstanding teacher advocates, exemplify how bringing sustainable development teachings into the classroom can lead to powerful actions. The BKMC is proud to be a member of Mission 4.7 along with GS, UNESCO, and SDSN and to work towards the realization of SDG target 4.7."

**Julia Zimmerman, Program Officer
Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens**



Global Schools Advocates Program

February 2021 - July 2021

The Global Schools Advocates Program provides training on the basic tenets of ESD to teachers within primary and secondary schools. It allows focal-point teachers and educators in schools to act as action planners and connectors within communities, ensuring the implementation of a school-wide, long-term strategy to bring the SDGs, global citizenship, and 21st-century skills within school curricula and operations. In February 2021, the Global Schools Program re-branded the Advocates Program for educators.

177

educators at the K-12 level joined the program and received training and resources to implement ESD in schools.

27,500

students reached by these teachers, helping youth create sustainable solutions to become leaders of the future.

2,300

lessons and activities were completed on Education for Sustainable Development and the Global Goals.

6,880+

additional teachers worked with Advocates to engage students in sustainable development activities.

3,500+

teachers participated in a Global Schools trainers of trainers workshop or presentation.

50

countries represented in the Global Schools Advocates Program cohort.



Priority Goals

The majority of lesson plans spanned SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 13: Climate Action, and SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation.

Methodology

One hundred and forty Global Schools Advocates successfully completed all program components and graduated from the program in July 2021. One hundred percent of these Advocates completed the Global Schools Program Graduation Feedback Survey (2021) and the Final Key Performance Indicator Survey (2021). The Global Schools Team reviewed feedback from the surveys and conducted interviews with 30 Global Schools Program Advocates to build a robust case study guide and garner an in-depth understanding of qualitative and quantitative feedback from the survey forms. Advocates indicated their interest in contributing to the case-study guide on the graduation forms, and Global Schools compiled the stories of 30 Advocates who were willing to detail their experience in a one-on-one interview.

The case study interviews were structured using a standardized questionnaire containing 10 topics, which covered challenges, approach, impact projects, and other details about the Advocates' journey. The methodology for the questionnaire was jointly developed by the Global Schools Content Team and the Global Schools Research Team. Interviews were carried out by the Global Schools Program Team and lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. Additionally, the Global Schools Team carried out five focus groups with Advocates to compile further feedback on the Advocates Program.



ASIA



TEACHING METHODS TO CONNECT LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

Amanda

Amanda Tiang San is an English and Global Perspectives teacher at Riam Road Secondary School in Malaysia. Amanda continuously incorporates Education for Sustainable Development into her daily teaching, using international news articles and projects to activate students' knowledge and promote interconnectedness between the local and global communities. Her students also carried out online research projects to develop 21st-century skills in public speaking, research, and presentation.

Her school had the vision to become a green school; therefore, school leadership was supportive of her role and allowed her to give updates on her Advocate projects at staff meetings. Because she teaches a new subject, Global Perspectives, school leadership helped facilitate a webinar to explain ESD to 60 parents and encourage their involvement. Amanda hopes that incorporating parents will raise awareness and promote positive actions for change in her city.

As an Advocate, Amanda carried out a variety of projects:

- Inviting a guest from Nairobi, Kenya, to speak about good health and clean water;
- Teaching about poverty by allocating students a household budget of RM5000 and asking them to report back on how they spent it. If it was not enough for their needs, students had to communicate an alternative plan;
- Presenting a movie review on a film related to Zero Hunger.



Though successful in her projects, one major challenge Amanda had to overcome was formulating creative projects during online learning. Field trips to a water treatment plant and a beach clean-up had to be canceled, and Amanda was limited to online student presentations. Another challenge was involving faculty from the science and math departments, as direct pathways linking SDGs to STEAM were more difficult to grasp. SDGs are only incorporated into English and Global Perspectives classes, which Amanda attributes to the Malaysian education system, as last year was the first time students learned about SDGs.

By the end of her advocacy, Amanda's school had pledged to become a Global School. School leaders, teachers, parents, and students are proud to be the first Global School in their city. Her school is continuing its plans to be a green school and create a new international school, incorporating green projects on both campuses. The school is also working with the local municipality. "Students are learning more real-life issues, have developed more social awareness, are exposed to more 21st-century learning, and are making small changes in lifestyle habits," says Amanda.

Amanda's advice on creating a movement for ESD in schools is to:

- Gain support from school leaders;
- Involve teachers from other departments, and;
- Liaise with community organizations to make a greater impact.



“Working within and outside of your community on ESD will allow students to realize sustainable development is not only part of the curriculum, but is also related to the entire world.”

GROWTH OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE FROM DESIGNING SDG PROJECTS

George C.

George M. De La Cruz, a teacher at Handumanan National High School in the Philippines, was very excited about becoming an Advocate for the Global Schools Program. As an Advocate, he saw the importance of motivating people to relate to one another and connect based on their beliefs and values around education. He actively communicated with his coworkers, classes, and community to highlight the significance of incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into education.

George and other educators from the school department were on a mission to integrate the SDGs into their lesson plans, employing project-based learning approaches. When George presented a global issue to the class, he would ask the students to discuss with other students, giving them opportunities to explore their reflections, possible solutions, and other outputs through projects.

800 People
reached through the Senior High Immersion Forum

80% increase in learning outcomes
on sustainable development knowledge areas

George proudly spoke about the SDGs to parents, students, faculty members, and class advisers during the Senior High Immersion Forum, which was attended by approximately 800 people. Student performance data clearly indicates that 80% of students showed significant growth in their learning and performance around topics that involved SDGs.

For other teachers and future Advocates, George has a list of steps to help them enhance the presence of Education for Sustainable Development within their school communities:

- identifying a genuine locally relevant cause to teach;
- reaching out for support;
- researching resources, and;
- engaging in effective professional development.



EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING AND SDG ACTION IN YOUTH



Kenneth Kwok from Hong Kong is a founder and an educator at KIDsforsDGs, an organization that empowers youth “to help the world build back broader, greener, and better through the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework.” During the pandemic, KIDsforsDGs co-curated the inaugural UNITAR Youth Ambassador Asia Pacific Programme. In Hong Kong, there has not been enough emphasis on the SDGs in the academic curriculum. This is one of the reasons that Kenneth, who received the World Economic Forum UpLink Top Innovator recognition for his SDG work, decided to join the Global Schools Program. By becoming an Advocate, Kenneth gained a platform to speak to schools, governments, and corporations, and to raise awareness, beginning with youth.

Kenneth believes that education entails not only studying independently at school, but also researching, collaborating, building a community, and partnering to find passions and to ideate solutions. During his advocacy, he initiated the development of solar rooftop farms to encourage more students to be entrepreneurial; a few schools have already installed solar rooftop panels that feed into their science classes. Spearheaded by youth, other schools have been motivated to replicate this movement. Currently, there are 10 schools already on the list to install solar panels by 2022.



10 Schools indicated that they would install solar panels due to Kenneth's work developing solar rooftop farms, which encourage youth entrepreneurship

HELPING STUDENTS ACHIEVE GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP ON A PERSONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

Javeria

Javeria Rana, an English teacher at The City School in Pakistan, was in search of a positive, diverse, and collaborative way to connect with other teachers. Due to conventional thoughts about education in Pakistan, she did not know if she was guiding and instructing her students with the skills, attitudes, and values to help them to take action on global issues. The Global Schools Program introduced her to a community of educators online who believe in the same values for education.

Among a myriad of projects, Javeria integrated global citizenship education concepts at an individual level, and “Reduce - Reuse - Recycle” at a school level. For the former initiative, Javeria’s students would ask how they could be a “Global Citizen”, and instead of answering them with her own perspective, she would challenge students to think if they knew family or friends who lived overseas.

Recycling Baskets
installed in every room at
the school to encourage
“Reduce-Reuse-Recycle”

This allowed students to analyze similarities and differences between their global environments, draw their own conclusions, and deeply acknowledge the differences between communities.

Javeria explains this as an “aha moment” for the students, wherein it was evident that they were mentally prepared to break the barriers and take on global issues. At the school level, Javeria initiated the “Reduce - Reuse - Recycle” program by helping the school install reusable recycling baskets in every room. As a result of the program and Javeria’s guidance, the students became conscious of their own impact on the environment.



Advocacy Letters sent to the Climate Change Minister of Pakistan



Acknowledging that Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable nations to climate change impacts, Javiera started the Planting Drive initiative. The program consisted of local authorities sending pots to the schools to encourage the students to take responsibility for planting and caring for their own trees. Subsequently, students wrote personalized letters to the Climate Change Minister of Pakistan, Zartaj Gul, to discuss their goals and actions, which included volunteering for Pakistan's Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Program. Students prepared pamphlets to distribute on the street and inform the community about climate change.



One of the most challenging experiences Javiera faced as an Advocate was navigating the general public's resistance to her activities. Some voiced that students should not be out during school time talking about climate change and should instead be learning in the classrooms. Javiera took this as an opportunity to educate the public further, since they refused to take time to read the pamphlets her students had prepared. Javiera and her students decided to mobilize a gigantic truck of signs depicting global issues that would attract the community's attention. She is working toward gradual but impactful change in her community.

When asked what advice Javiera would give to other teachers and Advocates, she expressed, "Please educate yourself and others." She explains that, "in the classroom, we are teaching for future generations. What we are leaving behind is a thought process for the next generation. We have a responsibility to hand over our knowledge." She believes that educators are responsible for informing and instructing future generations about the SDGs, and that the next generation should do the same for the following generation – creating an endless cycle of good.

PROMOTING RENEWABLE ENERGY THROUGH SKILL-BASED WORKSHOPS AND GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGNS

Dhivya & Abraham

As Advocates, educators, and Global Schools Mentors, Dhivya Kirupa and Abraham Knight work in a rural area in Tamilnadu, India, with students in grades 8-12. Although they have always engaged in innovative teaching practices, upon receiving the certification to become Global Schools Advocates, Dhivya and Abraham initiated a campaign focused on promoting SDG Target 7.1: "by 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy services." The aim was to motivate action toward achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 and welcome for-profit organizations to adopt such initiatives in the near future. WCIA (WiseCom Image Academy) used the opportunity of this mass campaign to encourage private companies, specifically Google, to move toward clean energy.



Through the work of Abraham and Dhivya, students from various schools have come forward to thank Google with a strong pledge, each individual student creating a special note. The duo explains that programs on teaching Global Goal 7 were effectively instilled among faculty. Dhivya and Abraham are now working with five schools to run the Zero Carbon Emission Program. Over 2,030 students and 273 faculty have participated in the Advocates' activities and signed the campaign materials aimed at raising awareness on SDG 7. This project has allowed both Dhivya and Abraham to take ESD to their community, by working with their district collector and other government-aided schools.



As part of their campaign, Dhivya and Abraham conducted workshops and led customized activities in local languages to reach the rural students of Tamil (Tenkasi district), as their district is rich in wind energy production. They included hands-on, skill-based sessions and experiments to produce deep insights on the importance of renewable energy. Specifically, the topics emphasized the comparison between current energy sources and renewable energy sources.

2,030+ students have participated in Advocates' workshops and signed campaign materials

Dhivya and Abraham suggest further authorization and certification from the Global Schools Program to support the promotion of the remaining Global Goals throughout the upcoming years. Additionally, Dhivya and Abraham suggest that the Global Schools Program aids in communicating with government bodies to ensure Advocates have the necessary resources to be successful. They express it would be highly beneficial to send official letters to government leaders in order to explain the benefits of ESD for society as a whole, and not just for students, paving the way for better ESD integration into school curricula. Abraham and Dhivya are ready to take complete initiative to teach the SDG throughout 2022, volunteering for the welfare of the nation's progress through quality teaching.

273+ teachers and faculty participated in Advocates' workshops and signed campaign materials



DEVELOPING TEAM WORK TO ACHIEVE EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Gem

Gem Jos teaches English Language at Viswajyothi Public School Kerala, India.

Lacking an in-depth knowledge of the SDGs, Gem was challenged to educate herself and build the necessary confidence to teach sustainable development to her students. During her advocacy, Gem aimed to achieve school-wide impact: she introduced the SDGs to the school authority and carried out workshops with teachers on the importance of teaching and incorporating Education for Sustainable Development into the school curriculum. Afterward, the school supported her fully in devising an action plan.

15 Teachers collaboratively integrated six sustainable development topics into their subjects

Gem chose six sustainable development topics that addressed significant challenges in her local community and developed a 15-member team of teachers from grades 1 to 12 to handle each “case” topic per month. Viswajyothi Public School’s syllabus is based on the Central Board of Secondary Education; hence, significant changes could not be made to the syllabus. However, Gem encouraged the teachers to adapt the “cases” into their respective subject areas and subsequently connect them to the SDGs.

Gem recalls that the teachers conducted their activities using the Project-based Teaching Method to create enhanced student engagement.



One of the most successful projects was a community research initiative that enabled students to investigate the impact of environmental pollution in the school community. The community enjoyed gathering waste materials, including plastic and disposed cartons, in order to transform them into beautiful art pieces.

350 Students directly impacted by sustainable development activities

Her proudest moment was when she realized how much sustainable development awareness she was able to create in the entire school. About 120 of the school's teachers participated in the SDG activities Gem organized, and about 350 students were directly impacted by the activities. Now, both teachers and students at the Viswajyothi Public School understand the need to think, act, and develop values and skills that will help sustain the environment. Going forward, Viswajyothi is also considering integrating sustainability as a strategic goal.

As Gem's term as an Advocate coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to take a significant amount of personal agency. Gem conducted many presentations via video collaboration to motivate teachers to be part of the journey. "It becomes tough when you see this as work of some sort. The trick is to have passion and empathy for society. The trick is seeing this as giving back to the community. Otherwise, you will do nothing." Gem leaves an important thought for other Advocates, reminding them of how essential it is to create a reward system for students, to encourage them to be curious, and to help them feel empowered.

Community Research Project enabled students to investigate the impact of environmental pollution on the school community



120 Teachers participated in SDG activities in school community



JEFF (class 9 B)

Collecting waste from his house surroundings and wisely converting this into compost which helps to promote organic farming.

INCORPORATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO TEACHER EDUCATION



Syed

Syed Saud ul Hassan is a school leader from Pakistan who directs the Mairaj Academic Consortium (MAC). MAC is a platform where teachers can educate themselves on the Global Goals and disseminate knowledge to students. It hosts optional courses on ESD for teachers on Saturday and Sunday. From there, teachers spread the message to co-teachers and build relevant lessons for students.

Syed has previously engaged in the Clean and Green Cities initiative led by the Pakistani government to promote Life on Land and plant one billion trees. Through this project, Syed engaged other teachers and students in climate action. Syed has also supervised a 6-month SDG project for students. These projects started approximately two years ago but were halted due to COVID-19.

Syed shares his experience in leading a Global Schools Workshop to discuss Climate Action and Quality Education. The workshop brought novel topics to the forefront of discussion, as there is not a high level of awareness amongst teachers about how the curriculum is already connected to the SDGs. Syed expresses that the first challenge is spreading awareness. Post-workshop, teachers began informing Syed that the students were receiving outstanding marks in subjects related to sustainable development. Syed is now planning meetings for teachers to share best practices and challenges when integrating the SDGs into classrooms by collecting feedback through Google forms, which capture unique ideas and create change.

Learning about the SDGs helped students become more responsible and intellectual as they took interest in creating a better community



Syed has observed changes since starting his role as an Advocate. “The Global Schools resources were outstanding,” he says, and assisted him in showcasing the importance and relevance of sustainable development to his students. Now, students have more interest in ESD and understand that everyone is responsible for the future. Specifically, Syed notes that (1) others are asking how to incorporate SDGs in any course; (2) he has started a new public speaking course so that people can express themselves; and (3) he is leading MAC to link SDGs to all courses.

As Syed explains, some hurdles are still being faced such as garnering support from local governments and from decision-makers whose lack of interest prevents wider impact.

Syed advises other Advocates to remember their motivation for becoming changemakers and to turn their difficulties into strengths. He is ready to think, plan, and design courses that are unique and also teach sustainable development. In January 2022, MAC will launch an SDG course for students aged 12-16, working with several organizations to promote and attract youth.



In addition to the workshops, Syed was invited to share his work at a national conference in Karachi in celebration of UN Day (October 24th, 2021), alongside delegates from all over Pakistan and the Special Advisor of the Prime Minister of Pakistan from FPCCI (UN Standing Committee). He received the SDG Goodwill Ambassador Award for his work promoting sustainable development.

“We are ‘the last generation that can fight climate change’ [quoting Ban Ki-moon]. Therefore, if you aren’t working for this or if you don’t, then who will? Be a changemaker. Be a part of the positive change. This world will definitely thank you after you’re gone from here, and you will be remembered.” - Syed

South America



STRENGTHENING RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH ESD SCHOOL-WIDE ACTIVITIES

Gustavo

Gustavo Nemecio Valencia Tello is a Natural Sciences teacher based at a rural school in the Province of Casma, Peru. For ten years, Gustavo has used his position as an educator to develop sustainability projects to enhance the quality of life of his local community. He describes his school's location as a beautiful valley where soil, air, and water pollution are a constant threat to the health and well-being of its residents.

Even before joining the Global Schools Advocates Program, Gustavo considered that ESD should be part of Peru's national curriculum. He explains that his school constantly conducts hands-on activities that bring impactful results: "We try to engage in activities such as tree planting, plastic pollution reduction, and organic agriculture, all of which have a direct impact in our community."

6 School-Wide Activities held on sustainable development

To support these activities, Gustavo employs Global Schools' K-12 lesson plans, particularly those involving water protection, good citizenship, and climate change. Gustavo teaches lessons to demonstrate to his students that they are part of a global community, and that by preserving their town's natural and historical resources, they contribute to a larger international effort to protect the planet.



Like most teachers around the world, Gustavo faced the challenge of teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic. When reflecting on those difficult times, Gustavo remembers the joy he felt when students and teachers were able to go back to school and complete in-person activities. He shares that the most impactful school-wide ESD activity was the school garden where students planted fruit trees, an activity that he describes as “a life experience that goes beyond science and theory.”



During his time as an Advocate, Gustavo hosted a Global Schools workshop in his school, where participating teachers showed great interest in the SDGs and the possibility of integrating them into their classrooms. He explains, “Raising people’s awareness is a difficult task, but when you have the support of other people, the path is easier. My educational community has moved forward in recognizing the importance of the SDGs and has made them part of their daily work.”

When asked about the meaning of ESD, Gustavo responds that ESD is the definition of quality education: a type of education that helps people understand the world around them and make them feel part of a larger community. Gustavo believes that the ultimate goal of ESD is to educate people on how they can meaningfully participate in sustainable development processes, and he advises other Advocates to engage students in activities that can help sensitize communities to the significance of the SDGs.

COMBATING WATER WASTE THROUGH INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

Bernardo

Bernardo Rios is a secondary school teacher working at a private school in Bolivia. During his time as an Advocate, his most memorable activity was a project on water consumption that lasted for three months. During the inquiry-based learning project, Bernardo had students use entrepreneurial tools to seek out solutions to combat excessive water waste in daily habits, promoting collaboration and problem-solving. Students carried out tangible, verifiable experiments using the scientific method that not only allowed them to identify water waste, but also to conceptualize the specific amounts they were wasting. Making the project less abstract was a key component of Bernardo's success.

During the project, students designed their own experiments to examine water wasted when brushing teeth, showering, washing dishes, eating certain diets, using toilets, and more. "What was cool was how our simple solutions can have such a big impact. We were able to realize how much water we waste. It was a fun project and we had an internal challenge in our group to see who would save more water," said Elias Abraham (student, graduating class of 2024). Students measured and converted water waste into tangible data, even getting parents involved. For many students, it was their first time recording data in Excel.

"When we actually did the experiment, we used a timer to limit our showers and reduce the amount of water. One of my friends used to take 25-minute showers...imagine the gallons of water!"

Ericka Aliaga
Student, graduating class of 2023

After the students completed their experiments, they created visual presentations to showcase their findings and solutions to expert panelists. When preparing the presentations, Bernardo also helped students clearly communicate ideas, make a proper pitch, and incorporate a call to action. During the final presentations, expert panelists including Lykke Andersen, Executive Director of SDSN Bolivia; Kambiri Cox, Manager of the Climate Smart Utilities Programme at the International Water Association; Daniel Oporto, Latin America Regional Director of Water for People; Jesus "Louie" Zuniga, Director of Development at the Latin American Leadership Academy; and Amanda Abrom, Program Manager at the Global Schools Program, joined as guest judges.

"In the beginning, we were nervous since we were presenting in front of experts...however, they were really encouraging in the end. We felt that we can start changing our community and it does not always have to be experts making the change."

Jimin Hong

Student, graduating class of 2022

Bernardo contributes the project's success to the high level of student involvement. Students chose the expert project judges, sent letters of invitation, named the event, and designed an event logo, creating ownership in the project. Additionally, the school gave him autonomy to work individually in his role as an Advocate in the classroom. The school's support and flexibility to teach an elective without limitations gave Bernardo the freedom to develop a project of this scale, which would not have been possible in his traditional AP Human Geography course, for example.

After the project, students realized that they could tackle one problem of water waste using many hypotheses, possibilities, and solutions. "I think that this project was different and important because we created the project from start to finish. This project made us think outside the box and realize how much water we waste in our life. The project impacted me greatly... because now I continue to shower with a bucket and use the saved water to flush my toilet," reflected student Rodrigo de Grandchant (graduating class of 2024).

Bernardo tries to expose students to life outside of the bubbles to which they are accustomed. In the end, the project exceeded his original expectations in time and scope, going up until the last week of school. He expressed he could have benefited from even more time. In the future, he plans to invite companies in Bolivia that are tackling the SDGs to his classroom to promote social entrepreneurship and sustainability.

"We had this class on Friday during the last period. When you are a senior and it is your second semester, this could be the perfect moment to simply turn off your camera and start the weekend. But no. We identified the problem, we proposed a solution, we tested it out. We designed this thing. It was ours. This motivated us. And remember, the day of the event was Senior Skip Day. Imagine that. We got online to present on the day seniors skipped school. This is only because we cared and realized that something so simple and practical can cause such a large impact," said student Adrian Luzio (graduating class of 2021).

Benardo advises other Advocates that, if you are passionate about sustainable development, it will make a difference. The more educators can surround themselves with like-minded people all over the world, the more we can transmit this knowledge to students.



STEAM PROJECTS TO ADVANCE STUDENT ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Carla

Carla Lyra Jubilut is an Arts and Creation teacher at a private school in São Paulo, Brazil. Among the several artistic expressions she conveys to her students are videography, application design, and STEM. Her school was enthusiastic about her role as an Advocate and had already established spaces for active methodologies and pedagogies that promote meaningful learning. Due to the pandemic and lockdowns in Brazil, she took an individual approach to bring teachers on board, rather than completing a school-wide workshop.

As an Advocate and educator, Carla carried out numerous projects to integrate sustainable development into her school, using active and engaging approaches. One of her projects involved leading discussions on the SDGs and creating informational videos with the students in her videography class. They took an active role in learning, writing the script, interviewing community members, filming, and carrying out all stages of production. The videos were shown at a celebratory pre-exhibition in classrooms and subsequently to the entire school of 1,500 students.

1,500 Students
watched videos on SDGs
created by Carla's
videography classes

Students in 4th and 5th-grade classes engaged in project-based learning, running a campaign to recycle oil into soap. First, they researched oil wastage in Brazil and its harmful effects on life underwater. To connect the school and community, students created and distributed posters in the surrounding area and posted awareness-raising videos on social media. After spreading awareness, oil was collected at collection points. Then, chemistry and biology teachers joined together to turn oil into soap, and the final product was distributed to the entire neighborhood. Addressing similar topics and using place-based learning, Carla also carried out an activity with 1st-grade students to build a vertical garden with herbs, vegetables, and houseplants.



Africa



TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Simon

Simon Omusula Wamu is an early childhood educator and school leader at Merrylane Schools, and is also the CEO and Founder of the Education Empowerment for Rural and Urban Slums Initiative in Kenya. In his role as an Advocate, Simon initiated and implemented ESD activities with students from Merrylane Centre Schools.

During his advocacy, Simon held workshops with fellow teachers at the school, and had a unique opportunity to interact with the children, teachers, parents and the community, while learning alongside them about issues related to sustainability. He shares, "It was surprising to realize the limited knowledge people had on the SDGs. Less than 10% of the people I interviewed had never heard about the SDGs. I was obligated, therefore, to first introduce the SDG concepts and explain their significance to the whole aspect of development."

3 Teacher Workshops were held to introduce ESD, review progress and summarize challenges, solutions and experiences

Simon held a total of three teacher workshops. The first meeting was to introduce SDGs and collaborate to implement the noble cause of ESD. The second meeting, which was held two months into his advocacy role, was to review the progress of the activities, identify challenges and devise solutions to these challenges. The third meeting presented an opportunity for the teachers to summarize their experiences during the five months.



At the school level and with the help of fellow teachers, Simon conducted several classroom and school-wide activities that helped learners develop a deeper understanding of sustainable development and their contribution to a sustainable society. He ensured that every class had a Global Goals Chart on which the children, through his guidance, would mount pictures, items, and anything that helped to demonstrate the importance of sustainable development. He also created a school garden that provided vegetables to the school and addressed multiple goals.

To promote a community-based approach, Simon encouraged the learners to extend the activities to their homes and involve their parents. This was an innovative way to introduce ESD concepts to the community and create a sense of responsibility among community members. At the end of his formal mandate, he invited parents to the school to have an 'SDG Experience', during which he explained ESD to the parents, and the learners showcased their activities. To commemorate the moment, Simon presented the children with 'Badges of Pride' with ESD values inscribed (e.g., curiosity, empathy, creativity, problem solving).



The Global Schools Program was a significant turning point for Simon. The ESD activities' interactive nature encouraged many erstwhile timid children to become more active in learning, leading to improved learning outcomes. He was also awarded Global Schools Advocate of the Month. Simon shares, "The Global Schools Program changed my understanding of the meaning of quality education. It led me to understand that quality education is one that is transformative. [The program] helped me recognize the importance of empathy and the centrality of curiosity. This experience developed my agency to cascade the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to colleagues and the learners."

Going forward, Simon has chosen to select an SDG to focus on for each term, leading teachers in developing activities and guiding students in sustainable development projects. So far, the school has covered Zero Hunger and Climate Action. Simon has also designed an SDG Board to remind the community of the importance of sustainable development knowledge. He is developing an action plan to advocate for school gardens in every school in his community to promote nutrition, Zero Hunger, No Poverty, and Good Health.

INCREASE IN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ATTENDANCE THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Ramadhani

Thanks to Makundusi Primary School's open policy where Ramadhani Ally Rashidi works as an English Language and Civic Education teacher, there is a lot of support for new initiatives around solution-based projects and sustainability ideas. As a result, Ramadhani was able to swiftly convince the school about the importance of ESD. Initially, Ramadhani teamed up with Raleigh Tanzania, an organization working on environmental sustainability, to develop a tree-planting project. In addition to this initiative, he organized a school talent show where students could dramatize their learnings from class about female genital mutilation and other social issues in their community. This talent show was presented to parents and teachers. In many cases, Ramadhani had to find the connection between the available topics in the existing curriculum and the ESD areas related to these subject areas. He highlights that,

"throughout my advocacy, I placed a lot of focus on promoting digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving."

40 Teachers directly participated in organizing ESD Activities

700 Students were reached as a result of Ramadhani's Global Schools advocacy.

School Attendance increased due to new school-wide activities and increased motivation due to ESD



Truancy was a common problem at Makundusi because of the community's lack of educational awareness. As a result of Ramadhani's advocacy, the school witnessed an increase in school attendance and participation. With new teaching methods grounded in project-based learning, students were inspired to attend classes and teachers became aware of innovative teaching methodologies, encouraging discussions on climate change, good hygiene, food, mental health, and overcoming local challenges. In the end, Ramadhani's colleagues were also motivated to join the Global Schools Program as Advocates.



Ramadhani shares how flexibility in adapting to the pre-established curriculum in any school environment is crucial to integrating ESD activities into classroom learning. One of the challenges Ramadhani faced was financing some of the projects. Funding needs to be planned in advance, and it is important to consider how this can be supported through strong partnerships with organizations that have the same mission.

“Organizing such a level of advocacy demands commitment, hard work, and a willingness to become a lifelong learner.” Ramadhani's next project is Hedhi Salama, a school-wide project focused on menstrual hygiene education, which will be implemented in the upcoming school year. He is also planning to submit his ideas to the curriculum board for possible consideration.



ONE PERSON CAN INSPIRE CHANGE: THE STORY OF PETER AND THE SDGS

Sodiq

Sodiq Temitope Odutola teaches Junior Secondary School students at Melville College, Lagos, Nigeria. Five teachers and 90 students participated in the ESD activities he organized.

At Melville College, the school curriculum has to be adhered to strictly. However, the curriculum was made six years ago and does not reflect the reality of the current educational landscape. As a result, it took ample creativity to ensure that Sodiq's new activities were directly linked to the subjects in the curriculum. Initially, Sodiq's proposal on the introduction of ESD was ill-received, and he was limited to implementing activities with the students he teaches directly.

"As a result of the project-based learning, the students' critical thinking and interactions with the local community improved, and they were able to draw connections between their learning with their environment and their local circumstances."

Sodiq's students conducted community research, which enabled them to investigate the impact of environmental pollution in the school. He saw his students enjoying the project-based learning and local content when they visited the community to gather waste materials, such as plastic and disposed cartons, and recycle them.



When asked about his proudest moment as an Advocate, Sodiq thinks back to one of his Junior Secondary students, Peter, who had been showing a lack of enthusiasm about education. Peter came to class with a fan he made using plastic waste he collected from his environment. He was inspired, he said, by listening to Sodiq's introductory session on the SDGs and hearing about what others are doing globally to achieve the goals, especially on Climate Action. Peter has since been made the head of the school's recycling project.

Classroom videos
can be accessed [here](#)



Sodiq shares that administrative bureaucracy in schools can be difficult to navigate. Hence, it takes a lot of commitment, resilience, and resourcefulness to find impactful information that can drive the change one desires to make. Sodiq would like to leave a message for other Advocates on the importance of finding creative solutions to financing, as in his case, getting the school support was very difficult.



ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH PLAY-BASED LEARNING

Lilian O.

Lilian Atieno Oloo is one of the Global Schools Advocates based in Nairobi, Kenya, at CITAM Schools Woodley, and she is also a Mentor Advocate in the current Global Schools Program cohort. She is a specialized early childhood educator with a focus on ESD and play-based learning. Prior to joining Global Schools, Lilian had been promoting ESD through an experiential learning approach for many years based on her own passion and interests; yet she was not fully aware of the official title of her teachings. After learning more about ESD and the SDGs, she started to branch out and build a larger network of experts in the field of ESD and SDGs, as well as like-minded peers. With time, Lilian realized there was still a large number of her colleagues who were not aware of the SDGs or ESD, and this inspired her to join as an Advocate to raise awareness through the support of the Global Schools Program.

80 Students
benefited from ESD
classroom activities

151 Students
participated in school-wide
ESD initiatives



Lilian's successful application excited the school administration, as "they felt proud to have been chosen out of 800 applicants to become a Global Schools Advocate." Despite this, Lilian faced many challenges in implementing a sustainability-focused curriculum and mandate, since prior to taking the Global School's pledge, CITAM Schools Woodley did not have any sustainability initiatives. Advocacy was therefore important, as well as creating a clear path with goals and objectives. Given the rigidity of the curriculum and school program, Lilian was limited in changing any curriculum drastically; but with persistence and motivation, she embraced an approach focused on smaller-scale but impactful initiatives.

Lilian believes in using play as an approach. Her most memorable moments were teaching children activities that resulted in tangible outputs, allowing students to realize their own impact and feel empowered. A major highlight of Lilian's advocacy was teaching about sustainable farming, product circularity, and resource scarcity. Students were educated on the food production cycle and the necessary effort it takes to produce, process, and supply the food they buy with their families in the markets. They were encouraged to think about the impact of all their daily routines in order to build a sense of community and belonging. This was an effective way for learners to get inspired, and they began to uphold sustainability practices at home.

Lilian recalls students discussing sustainable farming practices at home and ways they can mitigate some of the environmental impacts of food insecurity and wastage. She highlights how important it was for learners to gain a sense of ownership in their solutions; so when she would teach a unit on recycling and reusing, she would then encourage her students to bring these lessons to life. Her students made homemade animal crafts from materials that would have initially gone to waste, or redesigned old clothing and then wore or sold these refurbished products to their families. In the end, the most important outcome was the "excitement created around this topic, a stepping stone in cultivating a changemaker mindset."



"They created mini gardens in their own backyards and balconies, and took photos to share with other students and faculty."

Lilian's advocacy inspired other teachers to incorporate experiential learning about the SDGs into their curricula. For some of them, a change was noted in their practice as a result of this engagement and environment, even coining the term 'teaching for change'. Lilian explains how crucial it was to adapt the mindset and attitude present at the school, while moving educators and staff away from their comfort zones. Lacking the foundational knowledge of ESD, colleagues were hesitant to take on new initiatives and adapt their methodology; but with the right motivation and guidance, Lilian was able to create excitement and positivity around the necessary change. "It is clear that ESD is addictive. Once you start, you crave to learn more and dive deeper." As a next step, Lilian suggests more Advocates and Project Officers who will focus on promoting the Global Schools Program agenda in person to school administrations in order to encourage their support for Advocates in their schools.



CREATING COMMUNITY BUY-IN FOR EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Baraka

During his time as an Advocate, Baraka Leonard Mfillinge was a history teacher working in a private international school in Tanzania. The Global Schools Program was the first global project that was introduced to his school, and it allowed Baraka to engage with other educators globally, learning how students achieve Target 4.7 around the world.

In the beginning, it was difficult for Baraka to introduce the program. His school leadership was skeptical about the time required. He met with his headmaster and academic master to prove the importance of integrating sustainable development into education for the betterment of the future. Only after understanding these connections to student achievement and well-being did the leadership agree to implement Global Schools. It took one month for Baraka to create school buy-in.

Teachers also expressed hesitation with the time and resources needed, or alleged that Baraka was being paid to promote the program. Baraka bought soda and snacks and invited fellow educators to join him in a casual session where he explained Global Schools. Fellow teachers accepted the program after this open and interactive session.

As an Advocate, Baraka focused on developing quality ESD lesson plans for history courses. He also wrote songs in Swahili on the SDGs so students could more easily understand and achieve them. As a youth leader and teacher, Baraka formed a group of young people to engage those inside and outside of the school compound. They planned a visit to a hospital, encouraged youth to advocate in other schools, and spread awareness about saving the environment.

Museum and Hospital Visits

were conducted to
connect students with the
community

SDG Songs

were created in the Swahili
language by the students
in the classroom

1,000 Km Traveled across Tanzania to meet other Advocates

40 Teachers applied for the new cohort due to Baraka's dedication and outreach

Baraka highlights the best activities that he carried out as an Advocate were those that involved the local community, especially creating a student visit to the “Legal and Human Rights Center” in Dar Es Salaam during a unit on human rights. The students enjoyed “learning by doing” and observing, making these ESD activities more attractive and enjoyable, and creating fantastic learning moments.



Baraka believes there would be more impact if Advocates went beyond the formal teaching and learning environment. For example, Baraka chairs a task force on the 16 Days of Gender Activism, and suggested using youth to take the Global Schools Program beyond the classroom in his local area.

In his case, having funding to organize events or move around the country would have greatly helped the ESD teacher movement in Tanzania. Baraka recognizes this may be a challenge for other Advocates as well. He also suggests translating all resources into Swahili, the language of instruction of primary schools in Tanzania, and hopes this can be replicated for all other languages being taught at other schools.

Baraka credits the increased number of Advocates in Tanzania to his outreach. He encouraged over 40 teachers to apply for the consecutive cohort, and he has a WhatsApp group of 65 people and counting waiting to join.

Seeing fellow teachers understand and apply ESD proves his work is coming to fruition at the grassroots level. As a Mentor Advocate, Baraka has traveled 1,000km across Tanzania to meet current Advocates, and continues creating a movement for quality education.

TACKLING DEFORESTATION AND HUNGER FROM THE CLASSROOM

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Njihia Wangari is a Geography teacher based in a secondary school in Kenya. Elizabeth's passion for geography and environmental preservation inspired her to join the Global Schools Advocates Program, which she has used as a platform to inspire students to engage in climate action and community service.

During her time as an Advocate, Elizabeth led various activities with the support of her school, which provided her with resources such as transportation to visit other schools in the area to spread awareness about the SDGs. Elizabeth also hosted a workshop which was attended by 25 teachers. She points out that the workshop was so successful that even the local media started covering the SDGs.

[Complete project methodology can be accessed here](#)



250+ trees planted around the school perimeter

Sustainable development is crucial in Kenya, a country that is constantly impacted by flooding and deforestation. To address these challenges, Elizabeth used Global Schools Program materials to teach her students about the effects of the accelerating climate crisis. She also organized various tree planting activities with local schools.

"We have planted 250 trees in our school, and we also managed to plant another 100 trees in neighboring schools. Both students and community members were very excited about this accomplishment."



These impressive numbers did not come without challenges. Elizabeth explains that schools had to confront financial difficulties that required innovative solutions.

“Buying a tree is expensive, so we realized we needed to use locally available resources to plant more trees. In this case, we used seeds from local trees, so the only thing we had to buy was the potting materials. We did everything from preparing the soil, to hand weeding our tree nursery, to planting the trees ourselves.”



Set a goal of planting over 10,000 trees annually which are currently in the nursery



4,000 trees were planted in 14 neighboring schools around the community

In addition to planting hundreds of trees, Elizabeth’s students planted cabbages and other vegetables in their school garden. Once they harvested the crops, they organized a food drive and donated food to a local center for people with intellectual disabilities. Elizabeth notes that the main purpose of this humanitarian activity was for her students to fulfill both SDG 2: Zero Hunger and SDG 13: Climate Action.

The projects described demonstrate that the SDGs are best put into practice with the collaboration of multiple partners. In Elizabeth’s story, collaboration has been key to addressing local environmental and food challenges. Thus, she advises future Advocates to prioritize teamwork and advance partnerships with other teachers, schools, and organizations to implement activities that benefit the entire community.

A FOCUS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

Lilian N.

Lilian Njoki Ngandu is a special unit teacher at a school in the slum area of Kenya and specifically works with students with special needs. During her mandate as an Advocate, Lilian focused on inclusive education for learners with disabilities, improving the school environment for these learners through a school-wide approach. She tackled issues of teacher training, extracurricular opportunities, school facilities, and community partnerships during her mandate as an Advocate.

Lilian explains that she focused her Global Schools trainers-of-trainers workshop on attitudes toward learners with disabilities. Colleagues had the opportunity to discuss challenges working in integrated classrooms, as well as strategies to overcome these challenges. The workshop garnered many positive outcomes, as some teachers expressed they had never been asked to formally consider these topics. Lilian began noting a change in attitude towards these learners across the school, with some fellow educators asking for follow-up training.

A Clean Compound was a major change resulting from Lilian's role as an Advocate



To transform the learning environment, Lilian spoke with her head teacher and others responsible for the school compound about accessibility requirements, as her school infrastructure is not adapted to learners with wheelchairs. The head teachers spoke with local government authorities about rehabilitating the school compound and field. They have already constructed a new classroom block, and Lilian successfully advocated for ramps on the new buildings for learners with special needs.



Also, Lilian started the 4K Club, which tackles agricultural matters. Students have rehabilitated a greenhouse and planted avocado trees and vegetables to promote healthy diets and nutrition. Lilian also ensured every classroom had a waste bin, and facilitated a weekly cleaning of the school compound and proper waste disposal for each class.



“The SDGs give us hope in the difficult life we are living. One day, at one time, these challenges will be over. Things that seem impossible, one day they will be possible. Sometimes, my students find their lives very hopeless in the slums, but I tell them there is a day when the slums will be upgraded and they will have everything. This gives them hope.”

As an educator, Lilian has forged vital partnerships with local NGOs to improve inclusivity. The Association For Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK) is helping the school source funds for a new building for learners with disabilities, including an ICT center, which will allow learners who cannot follow the traditional curriculum to access quality education. Lilian is also working to partner with factories for food, and currently has enough food for everyone with modified diets in her school. She has noticed that other students have also become more aware of their peers and have brought in food for those who have special diets.

One of the biggest challenges Lilian faced was the issue of time, as engaging in sustainable development projects or workshops required a lot of time from other teachers. However, the roll-out of a new competency-based curriculum in Kenya that considers SDGs allowed Lilian to more easily integrate sustainable development and build momentum around these topics.

After garnering support for her Advocate role, Lilian engaged other teachers collaboratively in creating lessons, forming clubs, and conducting school-wide activities. She was highly supported by school leadership throughout the whole process, and her entire school celebrated her graduation from the program.

Lilian has already noticed changes in the school. The school is cleaner, the number of trees in the compound has increased, and discipline has improved. She noted that girls enjoyed celebrating Women’s Day, and she spoke to female students about avoiding teenage pregnancy, composing a song. She attributes her biggest learning to the Global Schools training course.

USING RADIO TO PROMOTE LEARNER-CENTERED OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Shola

Shola Shedrach (aka Uncle Sho) is a teacher and a well-known radio/television host in Jos, Nigeria, who works with a state-owned media organization. Due to the COVID pandemic, he re-focused his Advocacy on five different schools that were open in his local community. He also used TV and radio as a mechanism to spread the message of ESD and the SDGs.

Shola's name and popular radio program allowed him to gain meetings with schools. He used pictures, videos, print-outs of the SDGs, and his Global Schools t-shirt to spark interest in his SDG lectures. Shola conducted many in-person activities with schools, including one on drafting personal values and another on the global water crisis, in which he used a fact sheet on water scarcity to help brainstorm solutions to the water crisis. Shola explained how parents were commenting that "the children came back home and said how their actions today affect the future, and they want to help [us] learn about the SDGs."

Shola greatly impacted the leadership at the schools he visited. One school leader told him that she now understands how her position can be used to promote a better school environment, and she has been inspired to start a school series on sex education and a club to help the girl child.

5 Schools were supported due to Shola's role as an Advocate



However, Shola explains,

"challenges as a result of the pandemic meant it was difficult for schools to give time from their busy school calendars."

The local context in Jos, including e-learning, COVID insecurities, and kidnapping, made it difficult to travel to schools and prevented students from attending classes, so that children from slums and villages were left behind.

Therefore, Shola invited students to join him on the radio and tune in to discuss different topics. He created e-flyers and posters, which were circulated to local parents to get students to tune in and call.

Shola reflects on a memorable moment when he launched a campaign on drugs and crime that featured speakers, slides, and an original song depicting the danger of trafficking and drugs. Pupils were thrilled to produce a campaign song on live radio and took an oath to stay away from drugs and substances. Shola also created a song dedicated to teachers, one on peace due to the ethno-religious crisis, and another campaign about cybercrime. He also created a sex education campaign, using social media and the radio to spread awareness and had students join as radio guests. Parents were grateful for the opportunity for students

“to come on the radio to talk about the SDGs and how they are affected.”



At the same time, Shola continued his YALI project and bicycled around the local community, handing out books to children and reading for a few hours with groups of students. He is also working on a new civic engagement plan, in which he will be meeting with the village head and chief as well as nine war-heads, getting their support for incorporating SDG-related topics in his civic engagement plan. As for advice to other Advocates, Shola encourages the use of media, radio, and other creative ways to reach students in the most vulnerable and rural areas.



EMPLOYING RESEARCH SKILLS TO IMPROVE SANITATION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

Oyigoga

Oyigoga John Onuh is the Head of the Science Department and a biology teacher at Wesley High School in Otukpo, Benue State, Nigeria. During his advocacy, Oyigoga organized various ESD activities incorporating 18 teacher participants and directly impacting 40 students. He conducted a Global Schools Workshop, which led to the inauguration of two ESD Implementation Committees at the school: the ESD Curriculum Committee (ESDCC) and the ESD Activities Committee (ESDAC). The former was in charge of overseeing planning SDG related activities, while the latter focused on integrating the SDGs into the curriculum.

Students created "Young Stars Club" to provide a safe environment for peer-group collaboration and support female peers

Oyigoga's most significant moment was when three of his students approached him to discuss their research and desire to start a student-run club to address many of the challenges around 21st-century skill development, which is a significant social issue in their community. He also noticed that the students who got actively involved in projects improved their skills in research and information technologies for academic purposes.

Empty plastic containers collected and re-used to package new products such as soap in order to address local sanitation needs

Oyigoga wanted to build a lasting effect around his advocacy at Wesley. His plan included creating a leadership framework, though one of the challenges he had to overcome was getting the school management to support the initial stages of his project. Oyigoga set out to organize workshops for the school administrative authorities, introducing them to the project's impact.



As a result, he was able to create a team of parents, teachers, and school authorities to lead the ESDCC and ESDAC. Wesley used what Oyigoga called a “piece-meal approach” to integrate ESD – finding an SDG-related topic in the curriculum and setting up activities that incorporate research and real-life action. This was an important consideration to ensure that the national education policies were not affected as a result of the new ESD initiatives. The approach gained support from all the stakeholders involved, including students, and served as a pilot for neighboring schools.



Debate on SDG 5 and SDG Awareness Campaign held by SDG Student Ambassadors

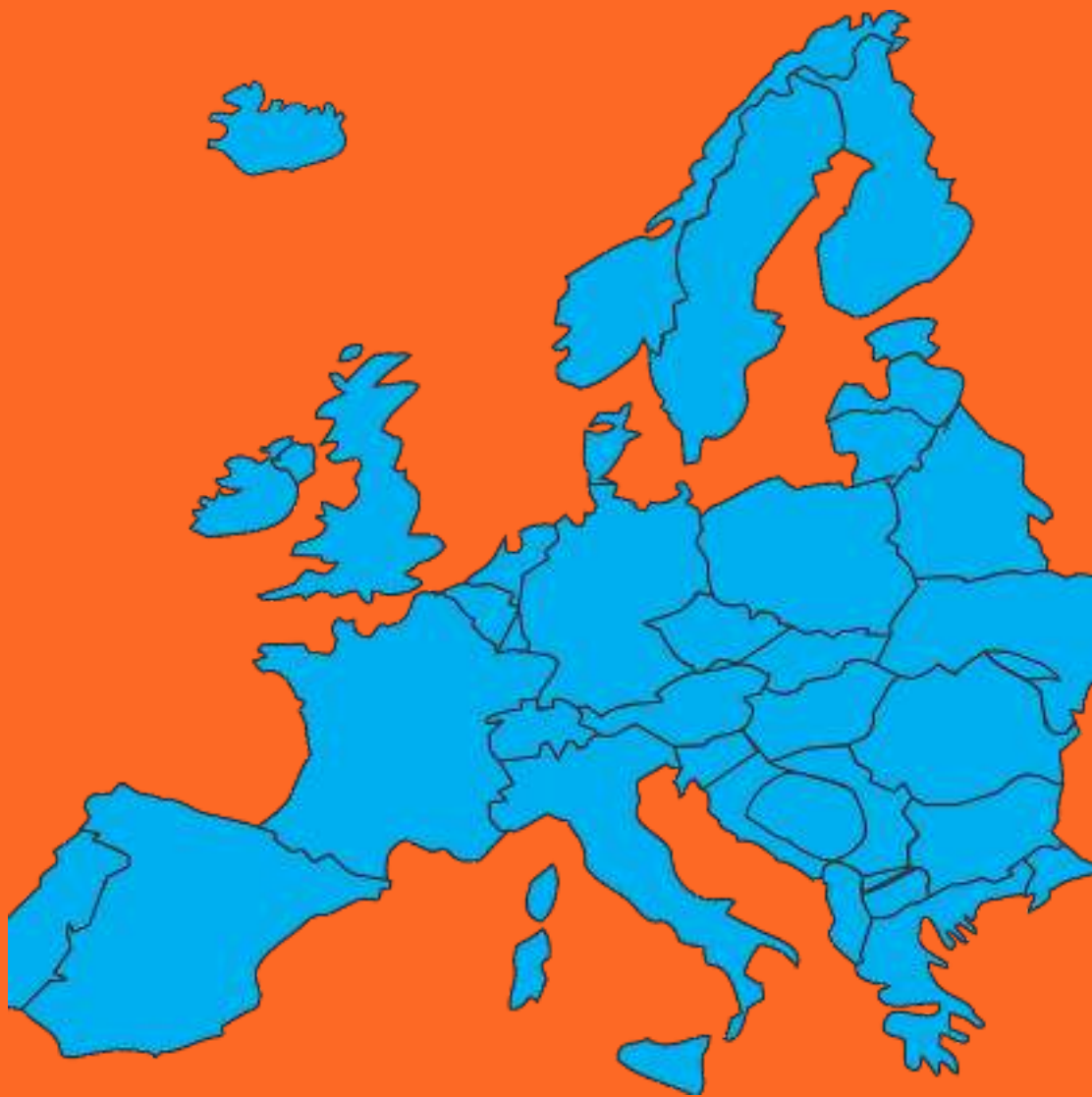


Oyigoga recalls one of the capstone projects that was completed at the end of the school year. Students conducted a survey on solid waste management at nearby resident households and businesses while spreading awareness about waste management. The results were collated and analyzed, showing how little attention is paid to waste management and the poor practices upheld by local business owners. The next steps of this capstone project will be to present the student’s findings to the local government chairman and the Benue State environmental agency for possible action.

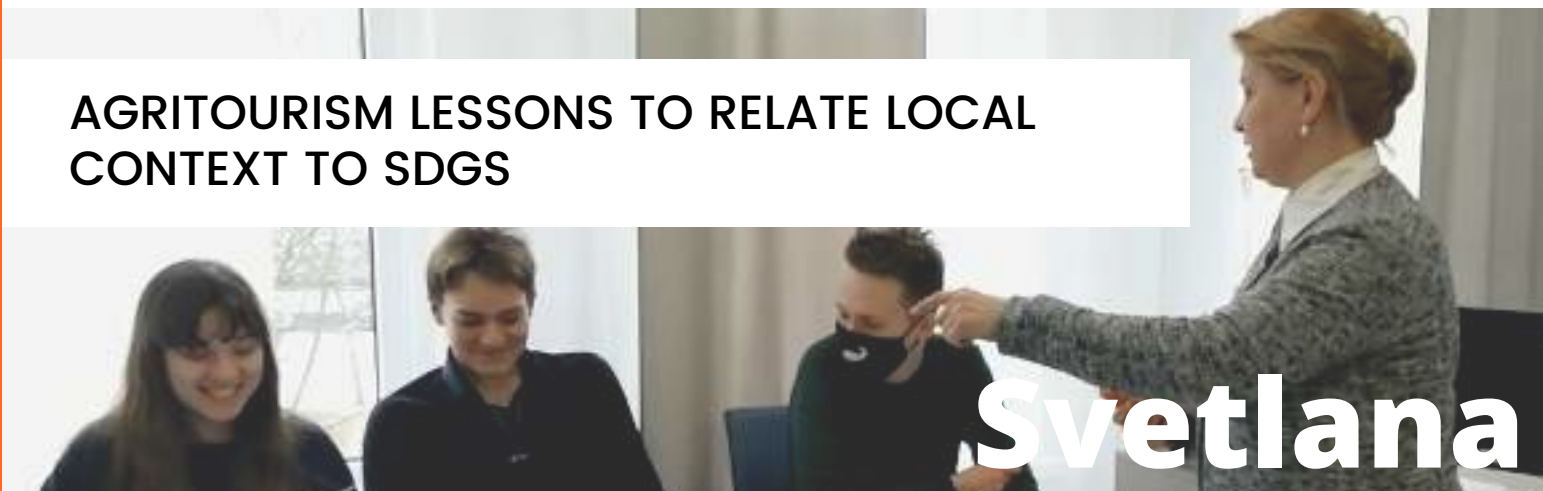
To drive his advocacy, Oyigoga explains that Wesley High School needed to visit the State Teaching Service Board Headquarters and the Ministry of Education at the commencement of the school term to discuss how ESD could be included in teacher professional development training. He stresses how important it is to obtain support from the school’s leadership.

Solid waste management survey conducted by student researchers who interviewed business owners and households to spread awareness on SDG 12

Europe



AGRITOURISM LESSONS TO RELATE LOCAL CONTEXT TO SDGS



Svetlana Slassi Moutabir is a school leader from the Republic of Belarus who has been incorporating issues such as children's rights, ecology, unemployment, and poverty into her lessons. In 2020, Svetlana participated in the Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (an international exchange program for secondary school teachers, administered by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs). She was able to collaborate with teachers around the world and feel the real American spirit. Through this program, she was able to share with other teachers her knowledge of Education for Sustainable Development.

As an Advocate, Svetlana led a lesson on "Agritourism in Belarus", which was blended with the SDGs to discuss the topic with the most important community issues in Belarus. Students presented their ideas about the influence of tourism on economics, taking into account the benefits for and threats to Belarusian society. Moreover, the students worked in groups and came up with recommendations using the SDG framework. Her lesson plan on "Agritourism in Belarus" produced 6+ lessons with different groups of students. During the lessons, ideas sprung to mind as the students continued to talk about ordinary matters. She said, "Every time we have a problem for a discussion in the class, I try to show students that this problem is related to one of [the] SDGs."



Svetlana confirms that she has seen changes occurring in her students since starting her role as an Advocate. The Global Schools resources were useful and assisted her in showcasing the importance and relevance of sustainable development. In particular, she references videos on climate change, and notes that students are interested in promoting sustainable development ideas now. She has been testing their level of understanding for the last five months of the Advocate journey, and she has been impressed with their responses. One of Svetlana's students presented research on "Boosting Financial Literacy among Adolescents through Personal Financial Education" in November 2021 and won first prize in the city district of Minsk.



Student won 1st Prize on their research project in the city district of Minsk

Svetlana strongly believes that very soon Belarus will overcome its most challenging stage of democracy consolidation and will have to integrate into the global community at a high speed. Thus, she hopes that presenting the SDGs to a new generation of school children will make it easier for them to act towards a global aim in the future.



Administrators in Svetlana's school support her actions and the changes she is making in her community. She introduced the SDGs to the administration of Lyceum 2 in Minsk, shared her experience with colleagues from Gymnasium #61, and advises other Advocates to keep moving forward in their work. She notes, "[The] Global Schools Program is a great opportunity to broaden your mind, grow professionally and exchange your experiences. The most important thing you get from Advocates is motivation. When you look at other participants, you want to grow up and create something."



MOBILIZING COLLEAGUES TO EMBED SDGS IN LESSONS, ACTIVITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Katja

Katja Malinowski is the Head of the Humanities Department at the Berlin Metropolitan School, an international school in Berlin, Germany. As an educator, she has been active in promoting sustainable development. School leadership shared her excitement about becoming a Global Schools Advocate, and gave her the space, financial resources, and time in meetings to promote sustainable development.

In the past, her school engaged in community partnerships and interdisciplinary projects as part of a whole-of-school approach to integrating ESD. A partnership with the German Association of the United Nations allows students to join weekend seminars on sustainable development and attend the Global Festival of Action in Bonn. The school also has an SDG Action Club that hosts expert panels involving parents, the community, and local NGOs. The school integrated SDGs into their PYP Grade 6 projects, established a Model UN club, and created display boards linked to sustainable development.

SDG Amazing Race and SDG Newsletter are some of the many initiatives spearheaded by Katja

As an Advocate, Katja invited many guest speakers to visit her classes and arranged for a virtual tour of the UN, followed by an expert briefing on peacekeeping. She also created an inspiring SDG newsletter with the students.



Additionally, she continued with her annual “Amazing Race History Challenge” in Berlin, which is a photo scavenger hunt. This year, the students proposed including the topic of sustainability. Therefore, Katja launched an SDG edition of the “Amazing Race”, encouraging students to walk through their city with open eyes and find evidence of sustainable development. In some cases, students showcased littering in the park or found the SDGs visually on government buildings. The school extended this activity to all students to raise more awareness.

After giving her Global Schools Advocate presentation, Katja's school expanded its work on ESD. "In the past, you had educators doing their own initiatives, but now we have a collective movement throughout the school and stronger motivation." Due to her Advocate role, the school now has a larger SDG/ESD committee that includes all levels of education, parents, and students. Additionally, they created an SDG Ambassadors program at the secondary and primary levels. There is greater awareness and support for ESD in school culture, and the parent community has offered more collaboration based on their professions.



"Empowering the students and taking their concerns for the future seriously made the lessons more relevant and receptive. Now there is a greater awareness to walk through the city with open eyes."

Katja explains, "colleagues and department heads have come up to me and asked for collaboration. Also, the English department has embedded the SDGs into its curriculum. This happened across the entire school. It was a shift in understanding between knowing that you don't have to do something new, but that these topics are already there in the curriculum." Most of the departments are now linked with SDGs and ESD. The librarians have even created budgets for books linked to ESD and are showcasing a book each month on an SDG. Going forward, some of the goals for the whole-of-school include assigning an SDG to each one of the tutor groups to organize collective actions.



For Katja, the COVID lockdown created some challenges when reaching out to students and teachers, as they could not always collaborate in person, but her colleagues mobilized efforts to drive change. Katja advises other Advocates to bring colleagues together, as incorporating ESD is a joint effort, and to be bold and courageous when interpreting their national standards.

She notes that within the current curriculum and standards, there is already room for interpretation, as a few years ago she transformed a geography class into an SDG course, all while following Berlin's requirements. "It's about changing the angles of how we view things. It's an adventure, but it's a good one with very positive learning outcomes; it's what we want to give the students; it's what we owe them."

TACKLING 'ZERO WASTE' THROUGH EMPOWERMENT

Özlem

Özlem Benligil is an English teacher working at Hasan Ali Yücel Anadolu Lisesi in Çanakkale, Turkey. During her time as an Advocate, her most memorable impact was carrying out a Zero Waste Education project. She reflects back on Goal 17, which states, “To build a better world, we need to be supportive, empathetic, inventive, passionate, and above all, cooperative.” Following suit, as a Global Schools Advocate, Özlem conducted research to find like-minded organizations with whom she could partner to promote sustainable development.

This was when she discovered TEMA (Turkish Foundation for Combating Erosion, Afforestation and Conservation of Natural Assets), a Turkish non-governmental organization that has been awarded the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Land for Life Awards.

With the support of Tetra Pak Turkey, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, the Ministry of National Education, and the TEMA Foundation, the Zero Waste Education project aims to raise awareness on issues such as the protection of natural assets, nature-friendly consumption habits, and waste management. Özlem was oriented on bringing the philosophy of “Zero Waste” into practice by teaching her students about the 5 R’s and organizing activities to bring the learning to life.

Through the use of various resources provided by the Global Schools Program, the TEMA Foundation, and videos that improve sustainability literacy, students reflected on their new-found insights in posters to display across the school and participated in a clean-up campaign to collect plastic bottle caps. Her students enjoyed learning about different types of waste and creating charts to measure how much waste was diverted from their classroom by marking their contributions.

66 students benefited from school-wide activities during Özlem's advocacy



As a next step, Özlem hopes to engage her students in designing a system to separate waste in the classroom, with considerations for mitigating excess consumption.

Özlem shares how “the impact of the project on the school made her very happy.” This project inspired other teachers to incorporate similar activities into their own classrooms, with one teacher even bringing the idea to the principal with an aim to start a school-wide initiative that will focus on categorizing, measuring, and reducing waste.

Clean-up campaign conducted across the whole school to collect bottle caps and create charts to measure waste



Colleagues noticed a significant increase in awareness on waste reduction, but this impact did not come without challenges. Özlem explains, “Not every student had the same reaction when I first started this activity in my classroom. Some just didn’t care. Once, the waste measurement chart had even disappeared.”

Similarly, when collecting bottle caps, only four or five teachers decided to help with the campaign. However, as time went on and Özlem spread awareness and knowledge around the reasons for her initiatives, teachers and students gained interest and offered support—so much so that students began bringing their knowledge home to implement activities with their parents.

Özlem leaves educators with a strong piece of advice: “To all my colleagues who want to integrate sustainable development into education; please don’t give up.” With a strong purpose and unwavering support, educators will overcome any challenge, and the positivity created will surely spread to more people. “Believe me, it is priceless to feel the impact at the end of your patience.”

BUILDING AWARENESS AROUND OUR DAILY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



Marti

Marti Hendrichs is a Coordinator for SDG education and a primary school Science Coach at the Vienna International School (VIS) in Austria, focused on developing lesson plans with SDGs for teachers. An ecologist herself, Marti greatly values the environment and believes in the need to teach students from a young age about climate change and the power they have to make a difference.

As a result of Marti's advocacy, students began to develop a consciousness of their everyday impact on the environment. Marti recalls a memorable moment when one of her 2nd-grade students went so far as to question why Nutella was available at the school if the palm oil requires cutting down trees, which directly negates the effects of being an "International Eco-School" to which Vienna International School had committed. Marti communicated this concern to the school's leadership and, as a result, Nutella was replaced with a non-palm oil alternative.

Marti was fortunate to have received full support from her school and its leadership. She began her advocacy by hosting group education sessions with teachers and staff, to help bring awareness and understanding to the current local and global landscape around the SDGs. Using the Global Schools toolkit and lesson plans, Marti helped educators draw connections between the SDGs and the school's current subjects to show how sustainability can be easily integrated without having to start from scratch. Excitement around Marti's plans grew, and by the end of the year, it was clear that commitment to the SDGs had increased across staff, the board, and even parents. Marti reflects on her idea of installing a Green Roof to promote the biodiversity of local pollinators, which would not have been successful without buy-in from the School Board. These types of actions and passion give Marti the energy to continue working hard in her role as an advocate of the SDGs.



Student-led and teacher-supported actions are very much encouraged, allowing students to come up with their own ideas. One project that a teacher initiated with Marti's support allowed students to collect used, plastic bottle caps for a local circular economy project, which sells the caps to recycling companies and donates the earnings to a center for terminally ill children.

One of the largest and most exciting projects that takes place at VIS is Global Action Day, a school-wide initiative that is celebrated every year. (Unfortunately, as a result of COVID-19, this year, Global Action Day has been postponed for early next year). Global Action Day is a chance for the school to come together and showcase all the SDG-related projects completed within the year to reflect back on the impact. Together, the Green Team committee, Marti, students, staff, and the PTA put together colorful visual displays explaining projects related to units on biodiversity, pollination, energy, water, and food production, supplemented with recycling and waste-reduction campaigns.

In addition to Global Action Day, Marti established a new EcoLab. The goal of the EcoLab is to create and run SDG-related activities with the students. As an example, for one of the Grade 1 lessons, students investigated the living and nonliving components of the pond ecosystem found at the EcoLab area in school. The goal was to help students understand the relevance of natural ecosystems, biodiversity loss and how to mitigate the negative impacts humans make on nature through the SDGs. To encourage students to learn about the SDGs and visually see how the Global Goals are interconnected, Marti built SDG boards into the outdoor classrooms. Not only were students able to pin descriptions of their SDG-related projects, but also this was a chance for others to learn and get inspired.

Marti has inspired other worldwide schools to join her efforts and integrate the SDGs into their curriculum.



Marti notes, "It is important to remember that, as an Advocate, you are not there to create more work for other educators and impose strict guidelines. You are there to spread awareness, encourage and collaborate in the transition toward a more sustainability-conscious community. When you focus on what is already being done, you have more energy to come up with creative ways to amend your current progress." With this in mind, a "sustainability strength" KPI was created to be used as a guideline when evaluating the curriculum and level of integration of the SDGs. Marti's school is on a journey to embracing sustainability in multi-faceted approaches, and from this came the opportunity to start changing behaviors among staff and management; for example, replacing plastic cups with reusable mugs and changing printer settings to reduce waste. "As an Advocate, you need the support, teamwork and creativity of other teachers in order to be successful."

1400 students participated and 460 primary students contributed individual projects at Global Action Day

GUIDING NEW GENERATIONS TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL EQUITY

Alessandra

Alessandra Ceriani is a language teacher with a background in Social Sciences and Sustainability. Based in Curtatone, a city located in the Italian Province of Mantua, Alessandra saw the Global Schools Advocates Program as a unique opportunity to introduce sustainability and equity in the classroom not only as a topic but also as an experience for her young students.

Alessandra shares that one of the things she liked the most about the Global Schools lesson plans was how easy it was to adapt them to their local context. The Global Schools materials helped spur conversations about topics that students had never talked about before. Thus, by using Global Schools materials, Alessandra was able to show her students that they are part of a larger international community that experiences similar challenges.

SDG 16 – peace, justice and strong institutions was useful for students to reflect on themselves, their actions and their future objectives

A highlight of Alessandra's time as an Advocate was witnessing her students' engagement with the SDGs, particularly [SDG 5: Gender Equality](#) and [SDG 13: Climate Action](#).

"The individual behavior of kids improved radically and their attention to the SDGs increased very much. Also, I tried to plan my lessons in a more interactive way according to ESD principles, and it had a positive impact on the learning outcomes."

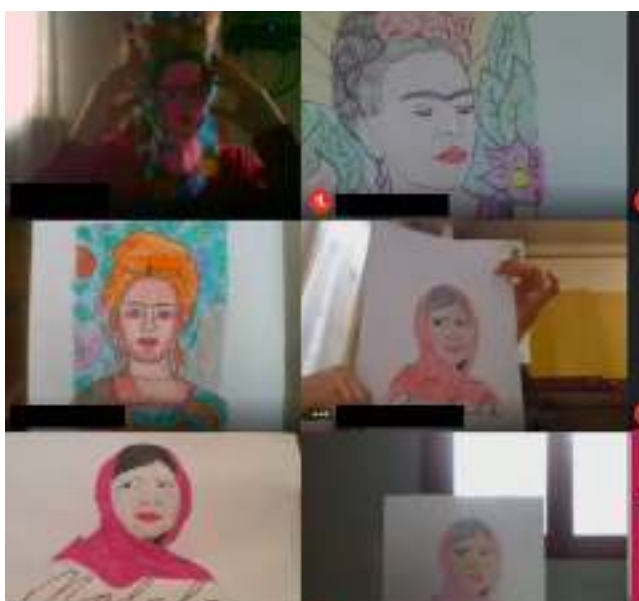
Alessandra explains that, before she participated in the Global Schools Program, her students had no clue about what the SDGs were.



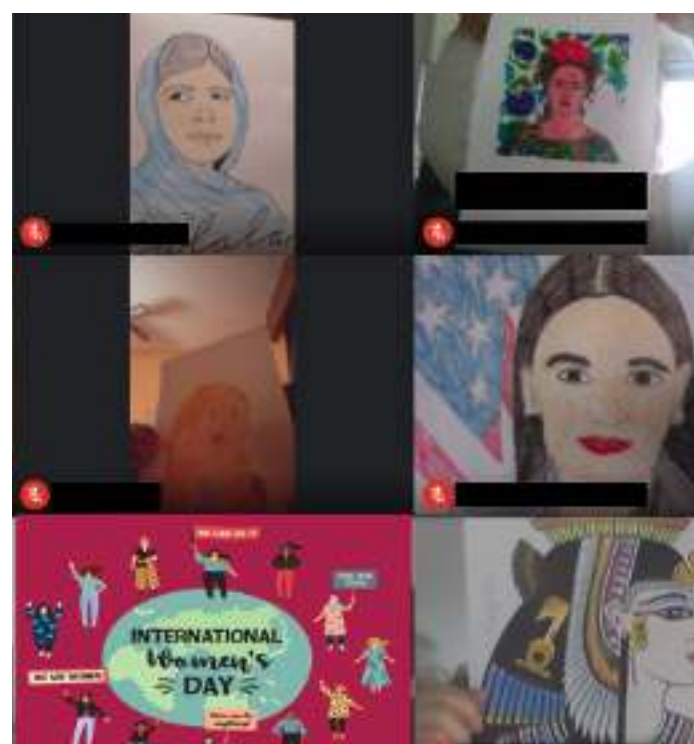
In addition to SDGs 5 and 13, Alessandra's students really enjoyed lessons focusing on social inequities. "I would say that the most impactful moment was an activity around bullying." To execute this activity, Alessandra took her students to a park where they would conduct interviews amongst themselves, raising questions about the impact of bullying. "Talking about personal issues was very impactful for my students. I framed this as a lesson on SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities."



Reflecting on her own experience, Alessandra highly recommends future Global Schools Advocates to start implementing the SDGs "little by little" into their every-day lesson plans. She explains that teachers do not have to drastically change their teaching style, and that by starting slowly, it becomes more natural to talk about sustainability everyday. Alessandra also recommends educators to not be afraid to propose new ideas and reach out to people for help.



To advance the implementation of ESD, Alessandra hosted an online workshop where ten participating teachers showed great interest in project-based learning. While online communication was challenging, Alessandra helped teachers design a lesson plan based on ESD principles. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Alessandra found it difficult to communicate with the school principal; however, she feels satisfied with the work she did while demonstrating to educators how easy it is to incorporate the SDGs into their daily pedagogy.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES TO DRIVE ENVIRONMENTALLY-CONSCIOUS THINKING

Ligita

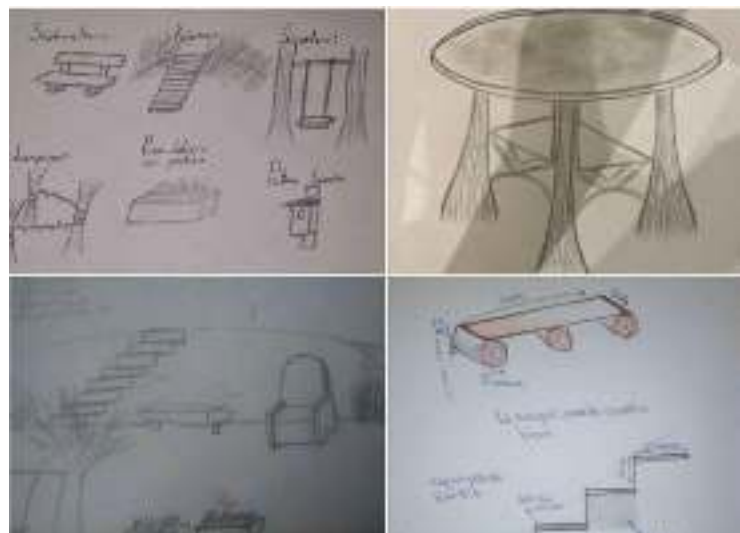
Ligita Ridūze is a school leader at Madlienas Vidusskola, Latvia. Despite the fact that during her Advocacy journey, the school was moved to being fully remote, Ligita implemented a myriad of online classes on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and outdoor activities from which her students could benefit from the comfort of their homes. In addition, she organized workshops, including one on SDG 12: "Implementation of Practical Habits towards Sustainability in Everyday Life".

Ligita highlights her experience conducting an ESD activity with her students. For three months, her 7th grade students participated in the SIA 'ZAAO' Nature and Technology Park 'URDA' project "Create without new creation!" Students were offered six online classes with experts in the field of waste management, circular economy, waste recycling, product life cycle, design-thinking, eco design and non-waste generation in the fashion business; and zero waste lifestyle - where to start, how to stay, how not to overstate.

Through this project, Ligita motivated students to not only listen to and watch online classes, but also to take real-life action through play. For example, Ligita mentions how students engaged in the topic of product life cycle by creating their own homemade projects from reusable materials.

Ligita's advocacy cohort took place during the spring, when the weather was warm and welcoming. As a result, one of the students' favorite school-wide activities was taking care of nature. Ligita organized many outdoor planting activities with her students in order to improve the school surroundings and encourage students to consider the value of spending time in nature to drive environmentally-conscious ways of thinking.

Students created household products from reusable materials to address the product lifecycle



As an example, Ligita explains how her students had a wonderful experience building nesting boxes for migratory birds that arrive in Latvia during the spring. Fortunately, some of the COVID-19 restrictions were reduced in Latvia in springtime, and Ligita jumped at the chance to adapt her planting activities to involve the parents and other members of the community in a collaborative and impactful effort to make a local change.

Main impact was student growth in creativity, initiative-taking, and self-confidence

When asked about her advice for other advocates hoping to promote global citizenship, Ligita shares that “a better understanding of global citizenship, the rights and duties of global citizens, and practical work for a better environment in cooperation with the school and local community will be important.” With this in mind, Ligita developed two themes during the last two months of her Advocacy journey, including “What it means to make a community sustainable”, which included waste management, environmentally friendly habits, sustainable consumption, and “What we can do to make our environment better”, which included keeping the ground clean, planting trees and taking care of plants.



“A better understanding of global citizenship, the rights and duties of global citizens, and practical work for a better environment in cooperation with the school and local community will be important.”

Ligita acknowledges that the main impact she saw on students who took part in small ESD-related projects was the growth in creativity, initiative-taking and self confidence. The students grew fonder and happier seeing their impact during the school year, and felt empowered through their involvement in the many interesting projects connected to sustainable development. She is very proud that she could manage such drastic change. Being part of Global Schools was a new and unforgettable experience.

112 students benefited from lessons and 60 benefited from school-wide activities on sustainable development



North America



ADVANCING MISSION 4.7 THROUGH FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Milton

Milton G. Villarroel Navajas (aka Mr. V) is a high school Spanish teacher based in Gaston County, North Carolina USA. Originally from Bolivia, Milton is part of Educational Partners International (EPI), an Exchange Visitor Program authorized to sponsor teachers for K-12 placements in public, private, and charter schools in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Florida.

300 Students
who study Spanish or French
have incorporated SDGs into
their syllabus this semester
alone



Mr. V became a Global Schools Program Advocate in 2021, spurring his high school to become the first in its county to join the Advocates program. As a foreign language educator, Mr. V has impacted hundreds of students by incorporating ESD activities into his classroom. In fact, he has led other teachers in the languages department to incorporate the SDGs into their lesson plans. "Teaching Spanish [and any language] is a great opportunity to teach about the 17 SDGs. About 300 students who study Spanish and/or French have already incorporated SDGs in their syllabus this semester alone."



During his time as an Advocate, Mr. V gave a special focus to Mission 4.7 by teaching his students about the implementation of Transformative Education around the world, and how this could benefit education systems in Latin America and the United States.

900 Students participated in a classroom decoration competition inspired by SDG Goals



Learning about the SDGs and Mission 4.7 has been a transformative experience for Mr. V's students. "For example, I see a more welcoming attitude towards sustainability goals, such as saving electricity, which is something students can do here in school and also at home."

When asked about the most impactful ESD school-wide activities he conducted, Mr. V thinks back to a mural contest that took place in April during Earth Day week. The murals were a creative opportunity for students to express their vision of a better world and for humanity. He also highlights a video call meeting with Professor Jeffrey Sachs, which he broadcasted in his classrooms. He shares that his students were very excited to see Prof. Sachs on video, and that the call helped his students realize that they were part of a global movement to make the SDGs a reality.

Mr. V advises Advocates to show others that everyone can do more to advance the SDGs if they join forces. He assures that, while it can take time, once you can show results in students' understanding of SDGs, more educators will want to implement ESD into the classroom. Most importantly, he reminds Advocates that it is crucial to break the barriers of comfort in the local community. As he explains, many people do not realize the impact of their actions on the environment. Therefore, Mr. V invites Advocates to use the classroom as a platform to inform students and the entire community about the need for transformative actions, which is what ESD is all about.

"My students understand the importance of the Global Goals."

SOLUTIONS SYMPOSIUM TO PROMOTE GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN THE CLASSROOM

Thomas

Thomas (Tom) C. Stewart is an educator at Indian Mountain School in Connecticut, USA, with a specialization in humanities, including English and Ethics. He has been involved with the SDGs for many years, ever since their adoption in 2015, and through his organization Coalition 2030, has actively searched for like-minded individuals to collaborate. Prior to becoming a Global Schools Advocate, Tom had run events to educate on sustainability, and was recently named his school's Director of Sustainability Programming and Initiatives. This is a newly-created role in which Tom will work directly with the Head of School and the School Board to put sustainability and the SDGs at the center of the overall curriculum and the school's operations.



A driving force in starting SDG programs at the school, Tom lists running a course entitled Global Citizenship and another called Introduction to the SDGs based on Ban Ki-moon's and Fernando Reimers's Harvard materials as one of the most memorable moments during his advocacy. One of his favorite activities from these classes was assigning the students to collectively write a Declaration of Interdependence.

In addition to these classes, Tom enjoys supporting the Poquonook Solutions Project, a 6-week unit in which student teams, with faculty mentors, research an issue of interest related to one or more of the SDGs, then develop and present their own novel solution at the Poquonook Solutions Symposium.



While COVID created some obstacles this year for the project work, resulting in fewer solutions with functioning prototypes, the display of knowledge about the chosen issues and the thought behind the potential solutions left Tom feeling proud and hopeful.

Teachers at the school actively incorporate SDGs into their lessons ranging from English, history and science. For example, in their English classes, teachers encourage students to read 'The Grapes of Wrath' in the context of SDGs, with considerations for economic inequalities, equity, and prejudice all driven by an ecological disaster.

The staff at Indian Mountain School encourage their graduated students to come back and share their sustainability pursuits post-graduation in order to motivate the 9th graders with future study and work opportunities. Recently, for example, students were able to connect with an alumnus who manages Al Gore's sustainable farm. The alumnus shared climate change's effects on agriculture and the food crisis. Similar partnerships have been explored with a special eye on hands-on learning opportunities.

Students wrote a Declaration of Independence which was later used at a World Constitutional Convention Summit, similar to a Model UN



Tom has been fortunate to receive full support from his school and staff; yet he appreciates how difficult it may be to implement such drastic change in a school environment. However, with the abundance of resources online, it is helpful to focus on a few materials that are easily digestible and offer a coherent structure to follow, to assist in identifying the necessary steps to starting the conversations. These include the Global School's lesson plans and activities guides, the World's Largest Lesson, and the SDG Academy. Tom would like to highlight that "sustainability is not only focused on the environmental aspects. It goes beyond that, to include all the connections to diversity, equity, justice, etc."

LEADING SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS IN GREEN SCHOOLS

Michael

Michael R. Cruse is an educator supporting English language learners with special education needs across the general education curriculum at HB Woodlawn Secondary Program, Virginia, USA. He has been familiar with the SDGs for a while and has been on a mission to shape sustainability mindsets through different avenues.

Michael has been fortunate to work in a very democratic school, one which is not founded on the traditional hierarchy like other public schools in the United States. As an example, their town meetings are run by students. His goal has been to raise awareness and excitement about the Global Goals. To achieve this, Michael explains, the school invested in hanging SDG flags in classrooms across the school. Prior to Michael's advocacy, there was already a general interest in sustainability; but it was his advocacy with the Global Schools Program that helped tie the school's initiatives to the SDGs. Given the school's supportive environment, students are encouraged by staff to share new projects or ideas.



HB Woodlawn is looking to be certified by the US Green Building Council through their Center for Green Schools. Recognized as an urban campus with its gardens and stormwater retention facilities, students take on new projects to embrace the environmental culture. Michael highlights that students grow food in the school garden and then donate the produce to food pantries. Proud of their school's sustainability features, students hold open tours of the building to raise awareness of its design, which is meant to mitigate the negative impacts of the building on the local environment.

When asked about what advice he would like to share with other Advocates, Michael notes,

“Advocacy starts by finding the tools you already have and working with your community to capitalize on those resources to expand your impact for the greater good.”

In order to create buy-in with the correct stakeholders of a school community, it is important to explore multiple approaches and promote them through the correct alliances. Now that awareness has been raised and interest has been increased, Michael shares that the challenge for him and others going forward will be to keep the momentum. It will be crucial that the sustainability conversations remain relevant to the ever-changing landscape.

INSPIRING YOUNG MINDS TO TACKLE SOCIAL PROBLEMS THROUGH ART, POETRY AND MUSIC

Abigail

Abigail Martinez Renteria is a Program Assistant at MY World in Mexico, a campaign that helps promote the SDGs in various sectors of Mexican society including non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Abigail comes from Ciudad Juarez, and she was inspired to join as a Global Schools Advocate as a result of her enthusiasm for sustainability, education, and technology.

Throughout her advocacy, Abigail faced the challenges of online education during the COVID-19 pandemic, but she ultimately used technology to her advantage by employing special software to engage her students in sustainability. Abigail employed Global Schools resources, particularly videos about climate change, to trigger her students' interest in protecting the environment.

To enhance her students' knowledge of environmental issues, Abigail decided to go beyond her lesson plans by organizing an intercountry session with other Global Schools Advocates. During the session, Advocates discussed the impacts of climate change in their home countries and shared their own experiences confronting the climate crisis. Most importantly, the Advocates invited students to think about ways in which they can engage in climate action locally.

Slam Poetry Event in which students addressed environmental problems affecting their own community

A major highlight of Abigail's advocacy was a slam poetry event in which her students performed poems addressing environmental problems affecting their own community.

Poems and songs were written by Abigail's students on:

- Indigenous culture and Mexican culture
- Working conditions
- International trade
- The Textile Industry

Importance of reducing poverty

* One of the most consistent findings in epidemiology is that the quality of an individual's health is negatively affected by lower socioeconomic status, particularly impoverishment. Poverty is associated with a host of health risks, including elevated rates of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, infant mortality, mental illness, undernutrition, lead poisoning, asthma, and dental problems.



She explains that using art was a very effective way to engage her students and raise awareness about the importance of sustainability. In addition to slam poetry, Abigail's students took part in an exciting movie project that demonstrated the importance of creativity in promoting climate solutions.

As an Advocate, Abigail also educated her students about the inequities that exist in Ciudad Juarez, a border city where maquiladoras (factories run by foreign companies) create thousands of low-wage jobs at the expense of the environment. Abigail taught her students about alternative careers to industrial engineering—a common path among local youth—such as environmental engineering and sustainability studies, which can prepare local communities to address the environmental harm caused by the maquiladoras.



120 students
benefited from Abigail's
ESD classroom lessons

Today, Abigail continues to follow her passion for pedagogy and sustainable development by pursuing a PhD in Education and Sustainability at the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom.

Abigail's biggest message to her students was that everyone has the potential to make a difference in the world. She strongly advises other Advocates to:

"Try to engage students by making them realize they are not just learners, but allies who can take action against the biggest challenges facing their communities."

DRIVING SDG ACTION IN THE PHYSICS CLASSROOM

George H.

George Hademenos teaches Physics at Richardson High School in Richardson, Texas, USA. In 2018, George received a prestigious Fulbright DAST award to teach in Vietnam, where he developed new ways of teaching physics to gifted students. His international experience inspired George to join the Global Schools Program to incorporate ESD into his pedagogy. Unfortunately, George's term as an Advocate coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as extreme weather conditions in Texas, resulting in an extended school closure. These unprecedented events kept George from implementing ESD activities in the classroom. Nonetheless, he was able to conduct a district-wide professional development conference that introduced teachers to global education. During the conference, George spoke about the role of educators as agents of change, and shared Global Schools resources with participants.

In addition to his school-district presentation, George reached out to five teachers in other countries to develop a project titled 'Using Physics to Drive Action on the SDGs through Project-Based Learning'. The project includes a website and a handout with group activities centered around the SDGs. The purpose of the SDGs on the website, as explained by George, is "to ensure an equal distribution of the world's resources in a just manner, with a commitment to address environmental concerns such as climate change, which pose a threat to the habitability and sustainability of this planet."

Project resources and teaching aids on global education can be found on this site

George's advocacy has inspired other physics instructors at his school to start a group to teach students about the SDGs. He is convinced that the more teachers he can inspire, the more results there will be. He explains, "If you inspire one teacher, there is a chance you will be able to inspire two more, and four, and so on."

Thus, George advises future Advocates to reach out to teachers in their schools and networks and ask them to consider the incorporation of SDGs into their lesson plans. In his own words, "There is no reason why any teacher, regardless of subject matter, can't implement at some degree activities related to SDGs."

The SDGs are cross-curricular and can be implemented in every subject. While he recognizes it might not always be easy to know how to implement SDGs into the classroom, he concludes that

"in the end, it is worth the effort for the benefit of the kids."



PART 3:

Lessons Learned

COVID-19 Pandemic

Lessons learned showed that Advocates faced major difficulties due to the ongoing pandemic. In some cases, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented in-person collaboration and had an impact on the Advocates' abilities to plan activities that brought the school community together. Every educator was faced with exceptional conditions and constraints, including ever-changing policies, activity cancellations, and substantial delays in the reopening of schools. Advocates overcame these challenges by creatively deploying online resources to give the Global Schools workshop or run sustainable development activities with students.

Importance of Supportive School Leadership

Lessons learned from all the case studies showed the important role of school leadership in supporting sustainable development activities and creating an overall vision that benefits the entire community. In the cases where school leadership facilitated sessions for parents, provided time and resources for Advocates, or supported school-wide activities, Global Schools Advocates had an easier journey in carrying out sustainable development projects in schools. Due to the momentum created by school leadership, many of the Advocates' schools exhibited a strong desire to continue integrating sustainable development in school policies and curriculum. Advocates that did not originally gain school buy-in planned meetings and provided research-backed evidence to support their Advocate role.

Need for Localized Resources and Translations

Lessons learned suggested that there is still a need for additional translations to ensure that teachers can spread messages on ESD to their entire school. Even though all Global Schools Advocates speak English, in some cases Advocates required translated lessons to hand out to fellow teachers. In the future, more localized and translated Global Schools resources should be pursued, and the training should be translated into different languages. The majority of Advocates overcame these barriers by using their personal time to translate presentation materials to show to their schools.

Taking Advantage of Resources on Sustainable Development

Lessons learned revealed that the Global Schools resources (Toolkit, lesson plans and/or training course), as expressed by the Advocates, were beneficial to start incorporating sustainable development into lessons and activities. The team received outstanding feedback about the Advocates Toolkit and Activities Guides, and Advocates were able to take advantage of other resources that address sustainable development, such as the World's Largest Lesson, the SDG Academy, among others. In the future, Global Schools can develop more content resources that can be easily localized and tied into specific curriculum standards and objectives within national contexts.

3

Success in Unified Team Culture and Community Partnerships

Lessons learned from the case studies showed that mobilizing other colleagues was essential in creating a sustainable development movement. The more progress the Advocates made in inspiring and empowering their colleagues, the more success they had. Advocates who were able to collaborate, build a community, and partner to ideate solutions and solve issues were successful when carrying out the program. Most of the advice shared by the Advocates points to the importance of getting colleagues on board, creating a team, and engaging with their local community.

Significance of Teacher Autonomy

Lessons learned concluded that some Advocates were able to interpret the curriculum more flexibly than others. This could be due to the fact that they had more buy-in from their school leadership or because they were teaching an elective in which they could control the syllabus of the course. In other cases, because of the rigidity of the curriculum and the subject itself, Advocates were more limited in creating sustainable development initiatives. In schools or countries that followed a curriculum linked to the SDGs, teachers had an easier time showcasing curriculum links and creating buy-in with their school. Therefore, complementary top-down strategies must encourage more sustainable development outcomes in the curriculum via government mechanisms. Advocates navigated curriculum challenges by creatively aligning their current lesson plan objectives with relevant sustainable development activities.

Time Constraints

Lessons learned pointed to time constraints faced by Advocates. Some Advocates faced initial push-back from colleagues due to hesitations on the time required to incorporate ESD, as incorporating ESD was not required by the Ministry of Education. Advocates had to use creative mechanisms to show that ESD is not an additive principle, but it should be interdisciplinary across the lifespan of education. It took the Advocates a significant amount of time and resources to create new lessons and bring the school community together to re-frame the school vision and activities. Due to exceptional motivation and dedication, Advocates had great successes in leading their schools and inspiring their students, despite the significant time required.

Benefits for Students and the Need to Quantify the Results

Lessons learned concluded that in all case studies and focus groups, Advocates shared the tangible benefits in student learning outcomes and student engagement when carrying out sustainable development projects. In some cases, when school leadership did not give an initial blessing for projects, Advocates needed to connect ESD to student achievement and well-being. As time went on and the Advocates spread awareness on the importance of their ESD initiatives, the interest increased among teachers and students, leading to more support being offered by the school leadership. Going forward, it is crucial to quantify and correlate the benefits of ESD in order to convince school leadership, teacher's unions, and/or government policymakers to adopt SDG 4.7.

Advantage of Technology

Lessons learned established that, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, Advocates used technology to their advantage in order to engage students in sustainability. With the help of classroom technology, Advocates conducted many presentations on ESD, employed Global Schools resources, and creatively implemented SDGs into their lesson plans. In cases where internet access was not prevalent, Advocates had to use mechanisms like the radio to ensure no students were left behind. Providing more technological resources is key to ensuring that no students are left behind.

Financial Resources

Lessons learned signify that implementing sustainable development activities not only requires a significant amount of time, but also funding. Teacher salaries are low, and in many cases, Advocates personally financed their sustainable development projects. New strategies should be pursued in this area in order to support schools in hosting field trips, carrying-out creative and hands-on activities, and integrating SDGs via a 'school-wide' approach. Advocates engaged in community partnerships, received resources from their school, or collected donations to support sustainable development projects.



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