



**YOUR
BIG
YEAR®**

by International Connector

GLOBAL CITIZENS CHALLENGE REPORT

FEBRUARY 2024 - NEW YORK EDITION

THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING PARTNERS



GLOBAL

CITIZENS

CHALLENGE

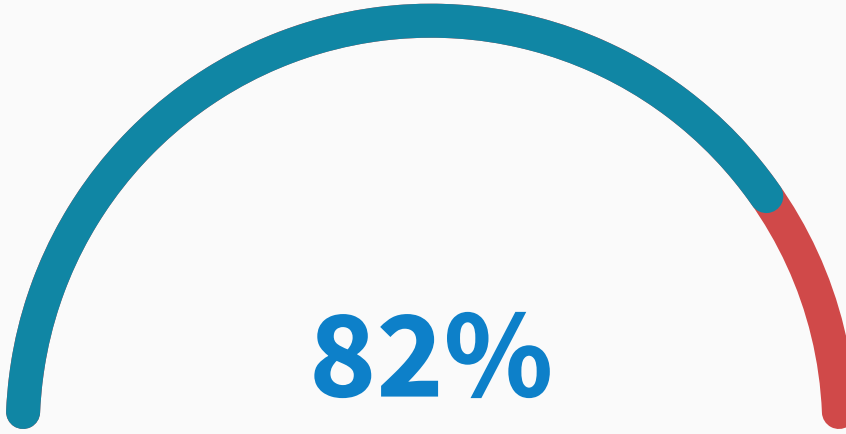
**TRANSFORMS
THE LIVES OF YOUNG
PEOPLE**

224	Participants
52	Countries
14	US States
4	Canadian Provinces
688	Friendships Made
1422	Hours of participation
2500	Interactions on the Intl Action Hub

DUE TO DEMAND, WE HELD A SECOND GCC FOR 21+ YEAR OLDS

119 Participants

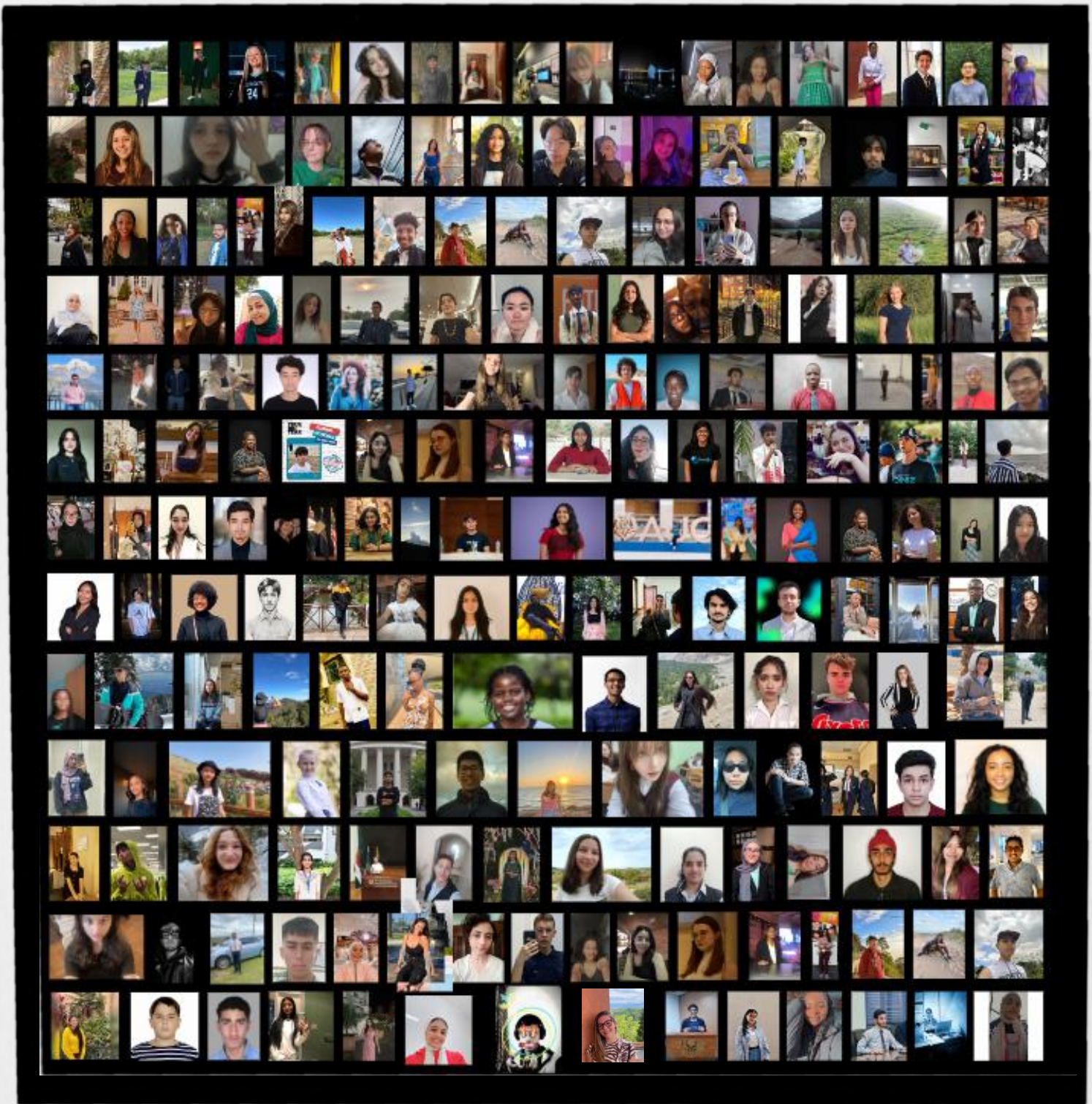
48 Countries



of respondents said they are interested in working within the tourism industry



GLOBAL CITIZENS CHALLENGE



2024

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN DIVERSE CULTURES

Global Citizen Challenge is a 4-day online, dynamic program designed to bridge cultural divides and provide young people with a transformative, hands-on and collaborative way to meet and collaborate with peers from around the world.

Young people learn skills in digital collaboration, social impact and cultural understanding, as well as future career-building opportunities directly from industry professionals. The program is fully funded, creating an equitable platform for a diverse group of youth.



WE SPARK AN INTEREST TO TRAVEL AMONG YOUTH

OUR MISSION

To challenge young people from across the globe to build positive bridges between diverse cultures.

OUR VISION

By connecting young people from different cultures, we are developing global citizens and sparking an interest to travel.



YOUTH GAINED OPPORTUNITY TO MEET PEERS GLOBALLY

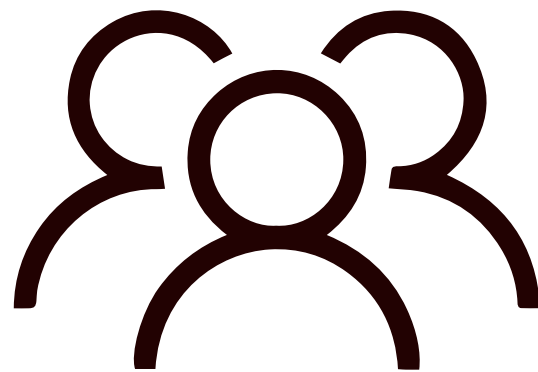


**GOAL 1:
CULTIVATE GLOBAL
CONNECTIONS**

Achieved:

- 52 countries were represented including a diverse group of North Americans with socioeconomic and educational differences.
- The 'PenPal' sessions brought small groups of youth together to socialize and learn about each other's cultures.

YOUTH LEARNED ABOUT PATHWAYS TO WORK IN TOURISM FROM OUR SPEAKERS



**GOAL 2:
BUILDS PIPELINE OF
INDUSTRY TALENT**

Achieved:

- 18 industry speakers participated in the program providing education around tourism industry, opportunities, sustainability and leadership skills.
- International Experience Canada ran a workshop tailored to learning about meaningful travel and opportunities to get a visa to go abroad.

PROGRAM CREATED A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO EXPLORE CULTURES



**GOAL 3:
PROVIDE A SAFE AND
POSITIVE ONLINE SPACE**

Achieved:

- The activities and leadership sessions taught the youth skills on collaboration, empathy and communications.
- We emphasized youth to youth connection and trust to develop safe online discussions.
- 688 new friendships across borders were made among participants.

PROGRAM ACTIVELY CELEBRATED AND EMBRACED DIVERSITY



GOAL 4:
CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

Achieved:

- With over 500 hours spent on Miro with 2,500 unique interactions, the challenge provided interactive questions and activities that focused on cultural pride.
- Throughout all activities we actively sought to emphasize our diverse backgrounds and celebrated everyone's differences.

GCC INCREASED YOUNG PEOPLE'S DESIRE TO TRAVEL

100%

of respondents said the
program increased their
desire to travel more

Mia
Canada

“I would like to travel to Hawaii and Mexico. This is because even though I live in Canada, I am an immigrant and it would be amazing to revisit places I am from and reconnect with my culture, especially being mixed race.”

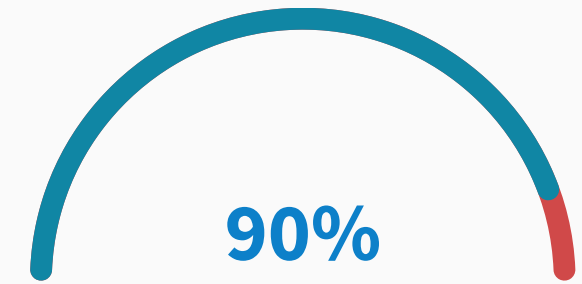


PROGRAM INCREASED YOUTH INTEREST IN OTHER CULTURES AND INCREASED THEIR MOTIVATION

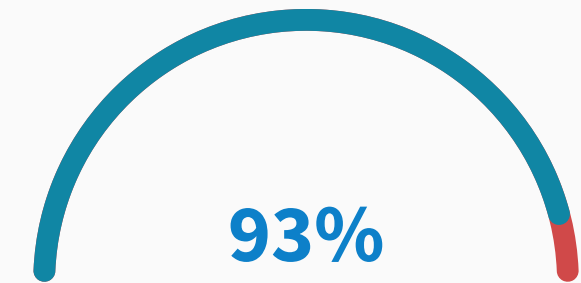


Tristan
United States

"I just wanted to thank you all for the opportunity to connect with people around the world. This was my first truly global thing I've done in my life and I wanted to say thank you for making it possible."



Said the program increased their interest in other cultures



Felt motivated and inspired towards their future

OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS

New friendships globally and increased understanding of the value of these friendships

Increased understanding of the transformative value of travel

Increased discovery about new opportunities to travel abroad

Increased excitement to learn about other cultures

Positive mental health boost and a safe positive experience online

Motivation to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Hands on practice of languages other than their native tongue

Increased appreciation of their own cultural background

YOUTH VOICES

We asked Youth probing questions on relevant topics surrounding impact, travel, social media, and the importance of being a Global Citizen.

GLOBAL CITIZEN
YOUR BIG YEAR

7

South America Railroad

North America Railroad

Monopoly

Citizen

Daniel
It can make you to be more openminded and to take different things from a lot of cultures to life.

1

It is important to be a Global Citizen because it spreads love and unity rather than creating division, hate, and conflict.
- Sophia Shepherd, USA

We all live on the same planet, so we must care for it and each other. If we learn to love our differences and similarities we can prevent conflicts.
- Wiseson Kuang (NZ)

Chloe- As globalisation increases, it is important to collaborate between countries and regions to avoid conflict and solve world issues

I want to help creating peace in my community. I want to study politics, development and economics to improve the living conditions of people
Yulia from Russia

to understand the world from other perspectives. Learning about other cultures can help you be more open-minded
Gabriela

Iza Carneiro - BR
My dream is to travel to Germany and Scotland because of the culture, the culinary and most importantly the weather. They are very different from my country and I would like to travel to a place very different from the one I am used to.

I always think of a quote from the TV show Ted Lasso "Be curious, not judgemental" because being a Global Citizen means approaching the world with curiosity, not judgement.
-Keira USA

To me, being a global citizen means 3 things: 1) recognizing and appreciating everyone's unique background, 2) understanding how borders, both physical and cultural, have shaped us into who we are, and 3) participating, advocating and enacting change that not only benefits our local community, but our global one.
Mia - Canada

Because the world is becoming increasingly more globalised, we need to keep up and be parts of this growing network of people.
Juliana

INSIGHTS FOR TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS



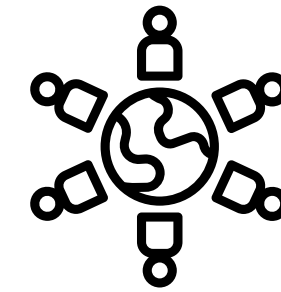
SOCIAL MEDIA

Youth continue to spend hours of their day of social channels. The main way they find out information about travel opportunities and the news.



SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Youth emphasized the importance of sustainability when it comes to travel. They were conscience of their impact through modes of transportation and purpose of travel.

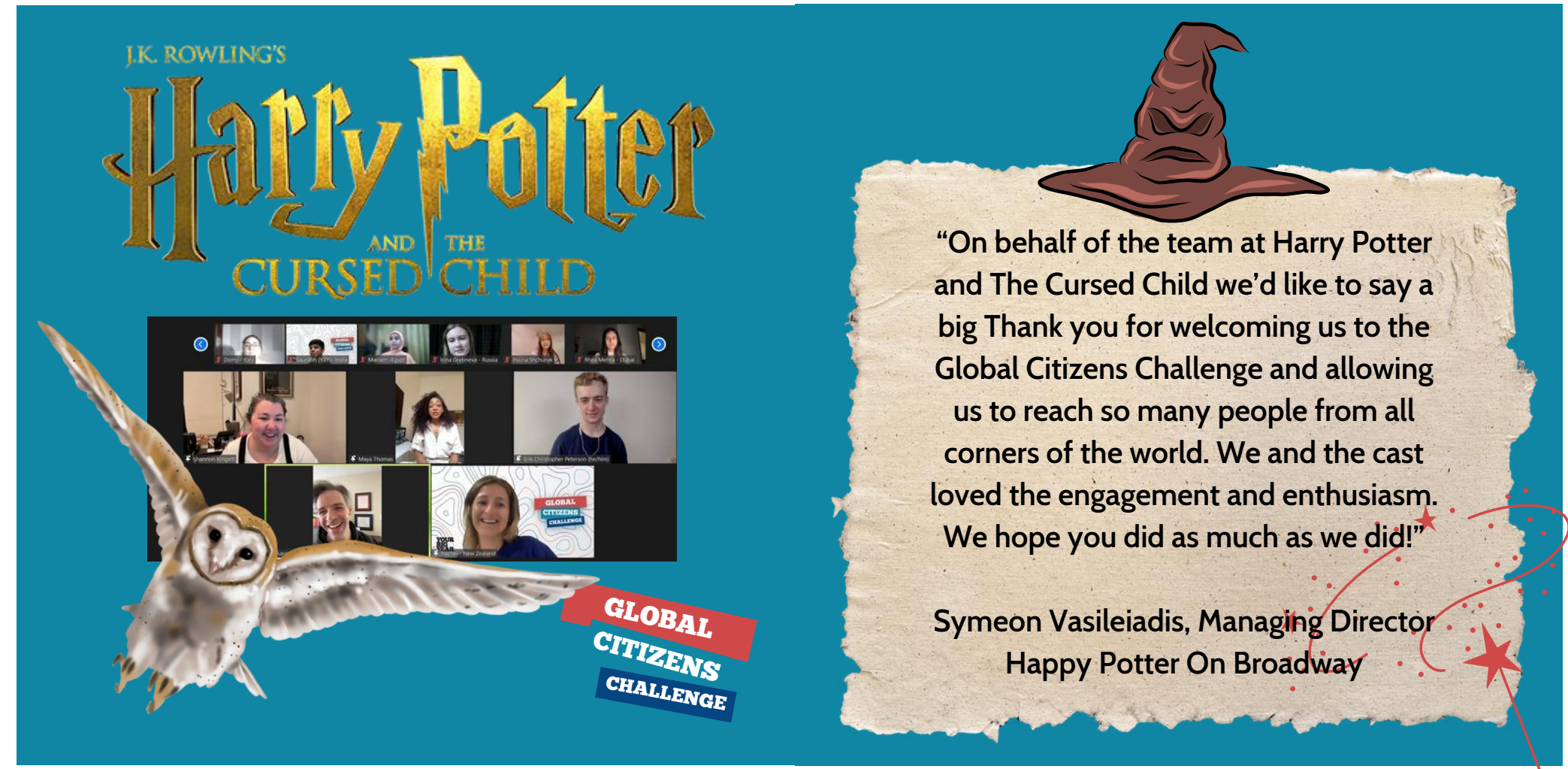


CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Youth are seeking opportunities to meet their peers locally to learn first hand about a different culture.

NEW YORK CITY WAS OUR VIRTUAL HOST

With the support of New York City Tourism, GCC held three 'New York Hour' sessions, the favorite being *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* session. Participants had a backstage tour, meet actors from the show and saw exclusive clips. Not only did the students love it, the actors who participated in a Q&A were enthusiastic about the global group. As stated by one actor, "I don't think I've ever spoken to anyone in Nigeria before!"



"On behalf of the team at Harry Potter and The Cursed Child we'd like to say a big Thank you for welcoming us to the Global Citizens Challenge and allowing us to reach so many people from all corners of the world. We and the cast loved the engagement and enthusiasm. We hope you did as much as we did!"

Symeon Vasileiadis, Managing Director
Happy Potter On Broadway

SYTA SPEAKERS WERE A HIGHLIGHT!



Carylann Assante



Ryan Morris



Allison French



Teresa De Fazio-Crews



Renee Wilson



Jane Tougouma



Sabrina Seminaro

“Participating in a virtual space with youth from around the world was a beautiful experience. The platform provides a fantastic opportunity for like-minded individuals to connect, support each other, and receive guidance in pursuing their dreams. The session was highly interactive. It’s encouraging to see that we are making progress in the right direction!”

IEC'S 'MEANINGFUL TRAVEL' SESSION TRANSFORMED THINKING

Participants learned about how to make their trips more meaningful by designing impact opportunities.



Vincent Paul



Mèlanie Gratton

Meaningful

Experience 1
Biking around Christchurch
Spend some quality time in the outdoors utilizing cycling which is the best form of transportation for the environment!

Experience 2
Snorkel and pickup beach trash
Go Snorkeling and spend time on the beach picking up trash. Hopefully see some fun animals!

Experience 3
Hike around Mt. Doom
Hike around Mordor! Pick up trash that Sauron left behind.



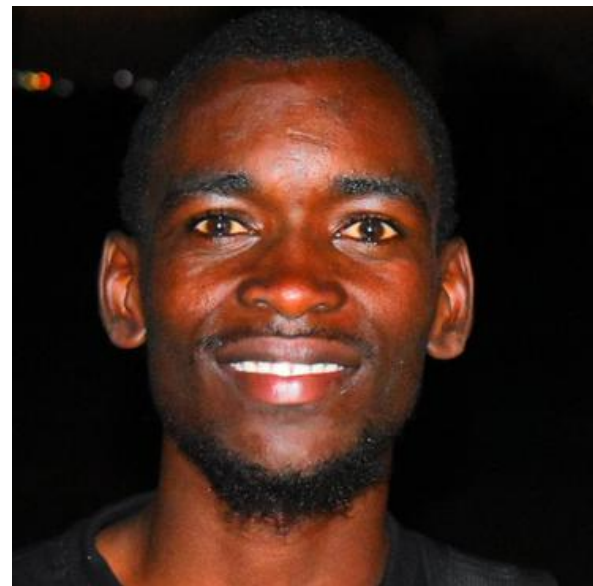
A grid of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) icons, each with a number and a brief description: 1 NO POVERTY, 2 ZERO HUNGER, 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, 4 QUALITY EDUCATION, 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION, 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY, 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH, 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES, 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES, 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION, 14 LIFE BELOW WATER, 15 LIFE ON LAND, 17 PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS, 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS.



A collection of impact maps for various countries including Japan, Italy, and India. Each map shows a grid of colored squares representing different impact opportunities, with a 'W' icon and a '1' in a blue circle indicating a specific impact point.

14 PREVIOUS PARTICIPANTS BECAME YOUTH LEADERS

- 14 leaders with diverse backgrounds inspired the participants and facilitated numerous sessions.
- They were facilitators for the 'PenPal' sessions with the youth and our moderators for panels.
- Leadership sessions were among the most attended and featured high levels of interaction.

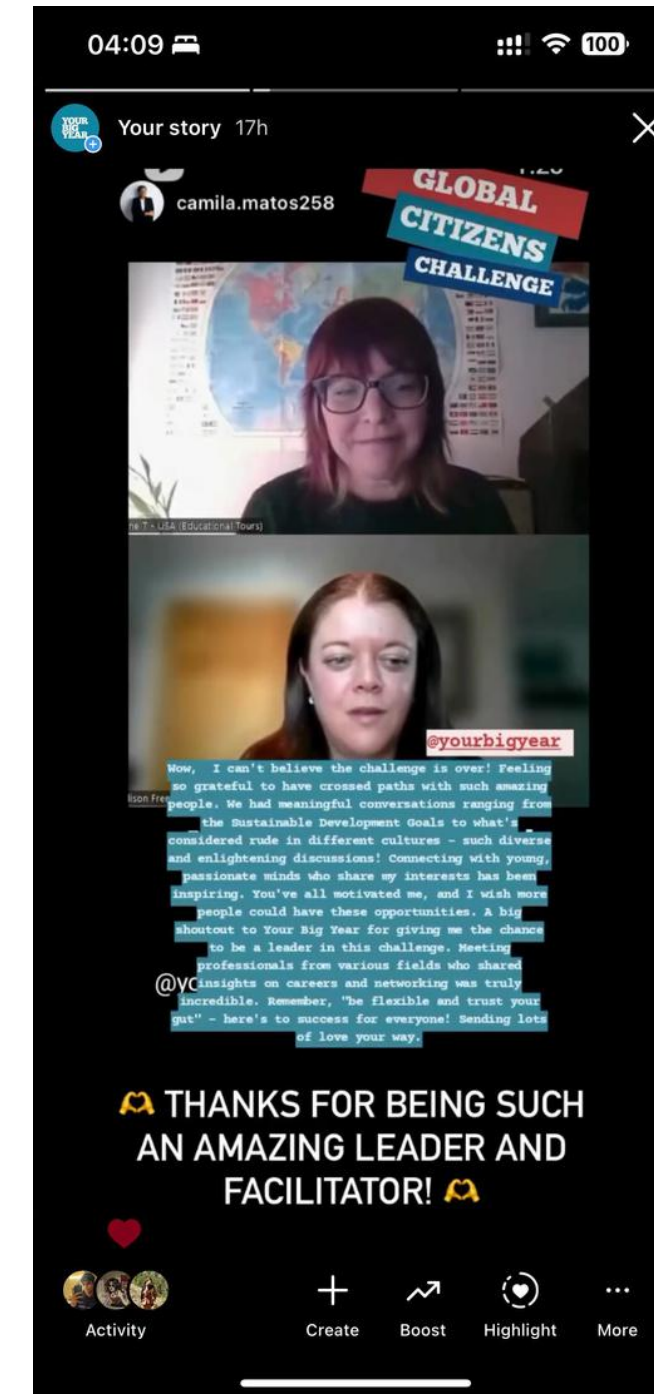
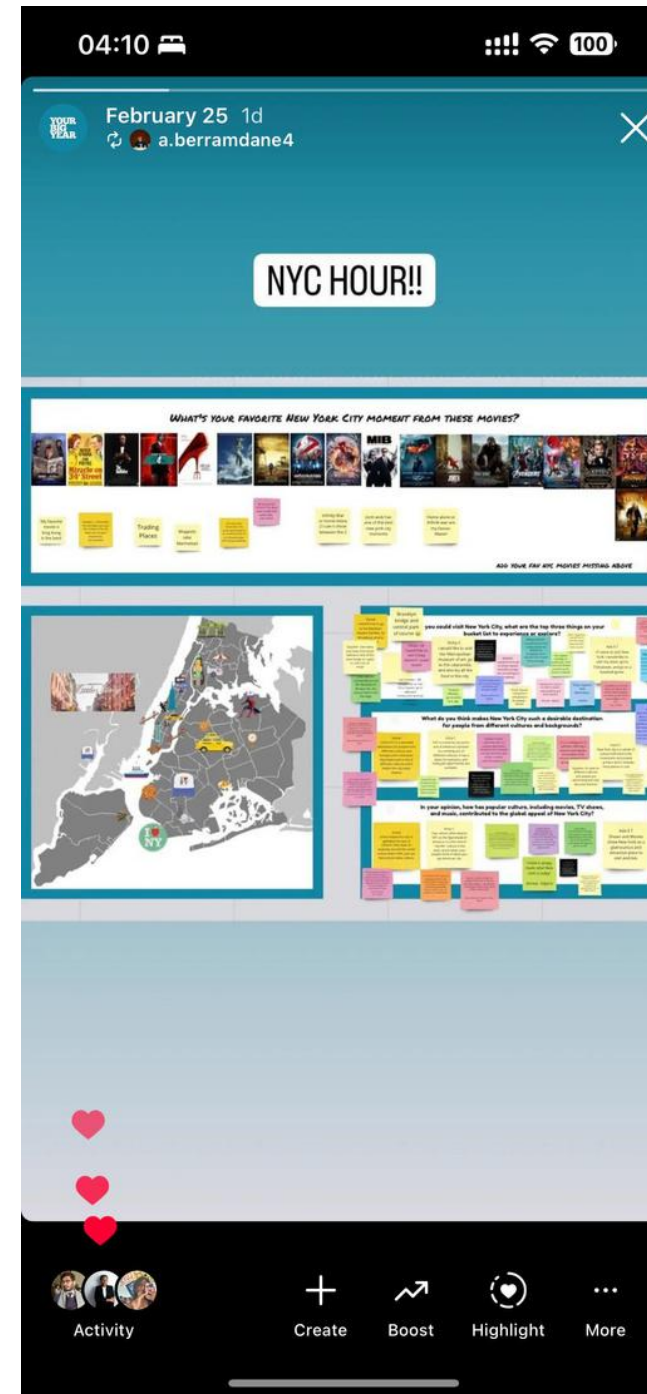
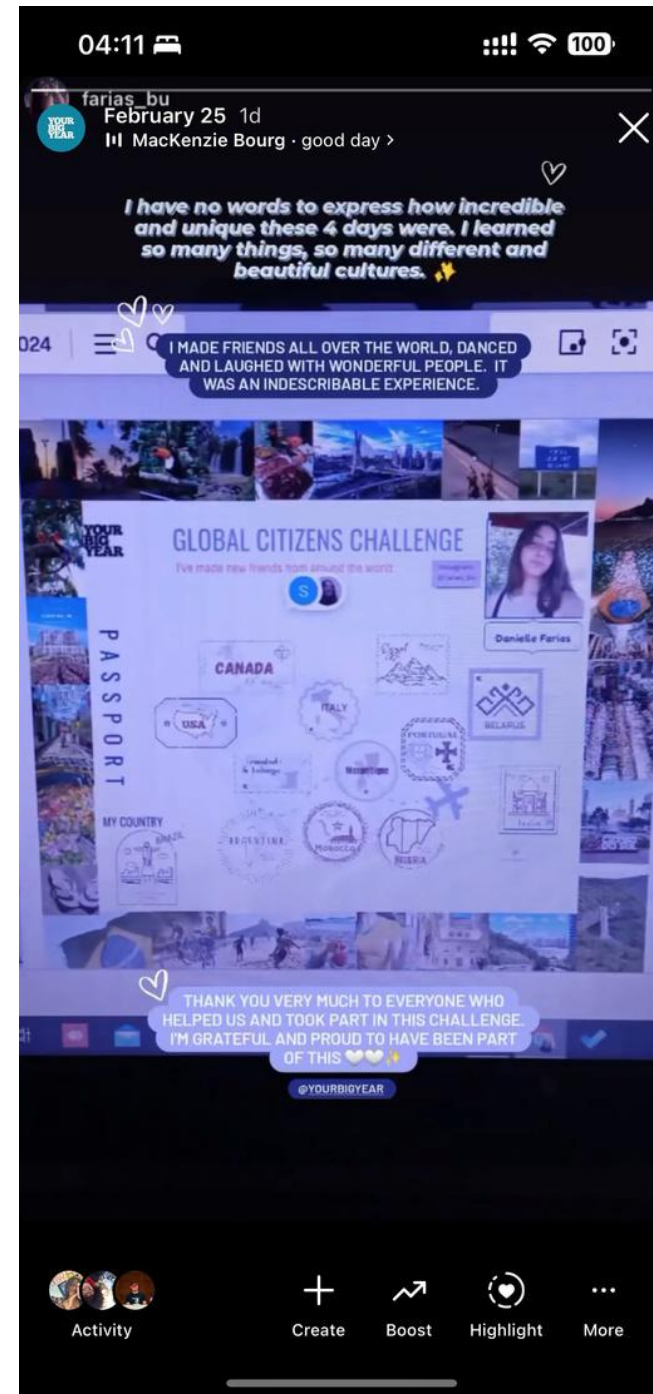
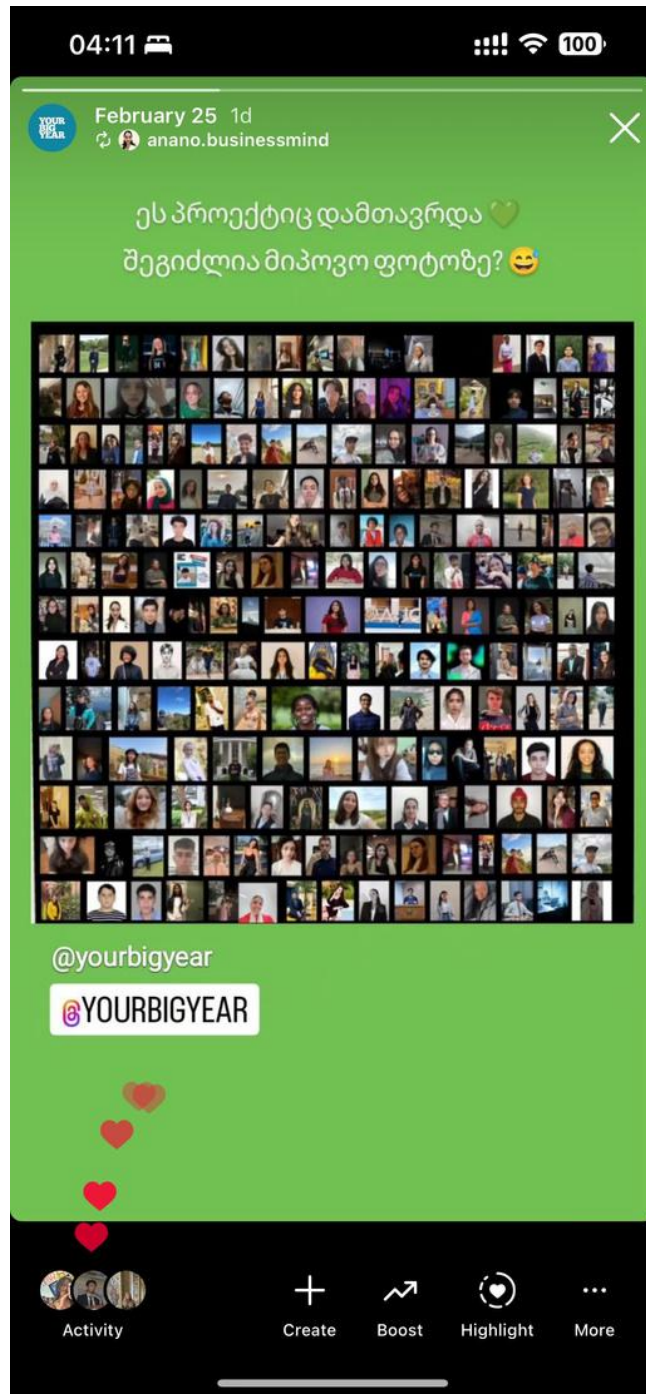


PARTICIPANTS DOCUMENTED THEIR NEW CONNECTIONS VIA THEIR VIRTUAL PASSPORTS!

Each youth created a virtual passport which they stamped as they met new friends in the program. This activity was an example of how we increased engagement through gamification.



PARTICIPANTS POSTED ACROSS SOCIAL



STUDENTS BOASTED ON LINKEDIN ABOUT GCC AS A PROFESSIONAL SKILL BUILDING EXPERIENCE

Vasiliki Avgeri · 1st
Student at Anatolia College | TKS Innovator
3w · 🌐

I'm so grateful I had the opportunity to participate in the Global Citizens Challenge with **Your Big Year**® this past weekend!

🌐 It was an incredible experience that got me involved in conversations about traveling, sustainability and impact making. I was able to meet exciting individuals from all around the world and listen to interesting talks by impressive innovators.

A huge thank you to our amazing leaders who brought their energy in each and every session, particularly to **Rachel Head** and **Sena Bektaş** but to everyone who made this challenge possible.

Thank you so much **Priyanka Chahal** and **Brynn MacDougall** for the fascinating Leadership Sessions. Both of you caused a mindset shift for me and helped me see my purpose more clearly than before. You inspired me to look into leadership and advocating opportunities in my area. Thank you for all the advice and knowledge you shared with me!

Finally, the reason why this challenge was meaningful to me is because it helped me understand my country's value. I tend to focus on the disadvantages and I neglect the benefits it provided the international community with. I was surprised to listen to other people talking about Greece in such admiration that I remembered its worth.

I'm looking forward to unlocking other opportunities with **Your Big Year**® and maybe even becoming a Youth Leader of the challenge in the future!

Ahmed Berramdane · 1st
Biomedical Engineering Student | Award-Winning Director
1mo · Edited · 🌐

Throughout my years of volunteering, I held a skeptical view of online programs, believing they couldn't capture the essence and joy of offline experiences. However, my perspective completely shifted when I had the privilege of participating in **Your Big Year**®'s Global Citizens Challenge 2024.

This program has been an absolute game-changer for me. I had the honor of connecting with individuals from over 50 different countries, each bringing their unique perspectives and cultures to the table. It was an incredible opportunity to share the rich tapestry of my own country's culture with people from around the world, fostering a deep appreciation for our differences and a profound sense of global unity. Moreover, hearing the inspiring stories and journeys of passionate leaders was the true essence of this program, igniting a fire within me to create positive change in my own life and community. The memories and lessons from this experience will forever hold a special place in my heart.


I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the entire team who made this program a reality, from the visionary leaders to the supportive investors and dedicated executives. To the inspirational changemakers who shared their journeys with us, and were there to answer our questions and offered help. Your commitment to fostering global connections and empowering change-makers is truly commendable. I also want to extend my appreciation to my fellow participants. Although we've only spent four days together, the friendships we've formed are already invaluable and I know they will endure far into the future. I wish I could mention each and every one of you individually, as you've all played a significant role in making this experience truly exceptional.

As I move forward, I'm excited to see how this journey with **Your Big Year**® unfolds. I believe it's just the beginning of something truly great, and I'm eager to continue growing, learning, and making a positive impact alongside this incredible community.

Chloe B. (She/Her) · 2nd
Student at Leeds Sixth Form College || Youth Board Member at Brig...
1mo · 🌐

Hello everyone,

I have had the best 4 days with **Your Big Year**® doing the Global Citizens Challenge! I have lost count of the amount of people I have met from all over the world, and I have left this challenge with so many new friends and a wide knowledge of people's culture, language and media. Thank you to everyone who did this challenge with me and to the leaders who made this happen!



Niloy Deb Barma · 1st
Bronze Honor (International Youth Math Challenge) | Mathematics E...
Visit my website
3w · 🌐

🎉 Celebrating Global Citizenship and Cultural Understanding! 🌐

I'm thrilled to share my recent achievement in participating in the **Your Big Year**® Global Citizens Challenge! 🎉

Together with 224 incredible young minds from over 52 countries, we embarked on a transformative journey of exploration and co-creation, bridging diverse cultures and envisioning a better world. Over 72 hours of immersive online experience, we engaged in deep dialogue, exchanged perspectives, and collectively crafted innovative solutions for the challenges facing our planet today.

Through this enriching experience, I honed valuable skills in digital collaboration, social impact, sustainable development, and cultural understanding. The opportunity to learn directly from professionals about impact and career-building has been invaluable.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to **Marti Wigder Grimminck**, Chief Executive Officer of **International Connector**, and **Caryllann Assante, CAE**, Chief Executive Officer of **SYTA: Student & Youth Travel Association** - The Voice of Student & Youth Travel, for their visionary leadership and unwavering support in fostering global citizenship and empowering youth worldwide.

Let's continue to RETHINK, REIMAGINE, and REDESIGN our world for a brighter, more inclusive future! Together, we can make a difference. 🌟
#GlobalCitizenship #YourBigYearChallenge #CulturalUnderstanding #YouthEmpowerment 🌐

Ana Shehrin (She/Her) · 1st
I make impact stories!
3w · Edited · 🌐

From a participant to a part of the behind the scenes - becoming one of the leadership team for Global Citizens Challenge by **Your Big Year**® has been the happiest experience of this new year. 🎉

I had a wonderful opportunity to facilitate two Penpal sessions where I got amazed by how much insights those young people can bring to the table who are just in high schools or have just started their undergrad life. I could not hold my smile back seeing the rigorous enthusiasm and energy they had. 🌟

Thank you **Rachel Head Sena Bektaş** and the whole **Your Big Year** Team for believing in me and letting me have such an enriching experience where I could learn myself a lot from those spirited young minds. ❤️

Mia Gracia · 1st
Biotech/Gene Editing 🌐 | 14 | TKS Innovator 🌟 | YBY Youth Innovat...
1mo · Edited · 🌐

Challenge Completed! 🎉🎉🎉

Over the past 4 days, I have participated in the Global Citizens Challenge 🌐, run by **Your Big Year**® in partnership with New York City! 🗽 Huge thanks to **Una Louder** for connecting me with this program and for the **Your Big Year**® Team for organizing this online program aimed at connecting youth across the world and teaching valuable skills in digital collaboration, social impact, cultural understanding, and more!

During this program, I met individuals all throughout the world, listened in on Q&A's with industry leaders, gained worthwhile knowledge, and connected with other participants and organizers.

My favorite sessions were a Q&A on "Building Leadership from Scratch: Empowering Communities and Embracing Adversity" with **Priyanka Chahal**, "Refocusing Travel Towards SDGs", and the New York Trivia Hour 🗽.

This was a blast to attend and if you are interested I highly suggest looking at the other opportunities **Your Big Year**® offers! Check out the link below!

<https://lnkd.in/gF9DdWqy>

Click on each one to see the full post on LinkedIn

TESTIMONIALS

Venia
Malawi

“My favorite memory was the penpal sessions. I had an amazing time meeting energetic young individuals like me. Very insightful sessions, learning about diverse cultures and learning to embrace our differences. The whole challenge has been such a game changer!!”

Eliza
United States

“Penpal sessions were very interesting and I learned a lot about experiences in other countries that I had no idea were happening.”

Chloe
United Kingdom

“I have loved the opportunity to speak about the SDGs, as this is something I'm really passionate about, and it has been so interesting to hear from the perspectives of other countries.”

Sophia
United States

“I loved the pen pal sessions since I was able to talk to and meet really kind people and learning about their cultures, and I also enjoyed Sunghee's meeting too!”

Danielle
Brazil

“This was my first experience meeting people from different parts of the world. My favorite moment was for sure my first penpal session. It was so light, we laughed and shared our experiences. I felt so happy to be able to be there. But I also loved being able to practice my English, learning new things about other cultures, the incredible music we dance to and adding new travel destinations. I'll be back next year for new adventures.”

Juliana
Poland

“Thank you so much everyone for all the wonderful conversations! I definitely enjoyed every single session I was able to attend and I'll be back next year!”

Wiseson
New Zealand

“For me, I am committed to making a meaningful difference in my local community by actively participating in initiatives that promote education, sustainability, and social well-being. To start, I plan to volunteer my time and skills to local organizations, contribute to community projects, and support businesses with a positive impact.”



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WE'RE EASY TO FIND**



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