



## Eleanor Margetts - UK

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Good afternoon everyone, my name is Eleanor. First, I want to apologise that this is going to sound quite anecdotal rather than analytical, just because I think it is very important to explain where the inspiration for this solution came from. So, last year I had the pleasure of working on an environmental education program in the Philippines, for a year. I worked with people of all ages, mostly with children, but also with farming communities. So, something that really struck me and sort of jumped out as a problem for me was that we did these workshops with children in the mornings, we would spend the whole morning talking about the importance of taking care of the environment, how littering is a bad thing, how climate change is a really problem and then during their break time the children would be throwing litter on the floor, even though we just told them that is bad.

It just really highlighted an issue for me, that there is such a chasm between learned behaviour and habits when it comes to environmental education. So, before I went to work on this program, I knew that the environment was a problem, but I didn't really register until I experienced that myself. The place I was living in was a coastal community and, for those of you who don't know, the Philippines is one of the worst countries affected by climate change. In the past 40 years typhoons have intensified by 50 per cent, so it's a really dire situation. That's when I realized the injustice of what's happening, being in one of the many countries that contribute the least to climate change, but are most affected. So, that's why I chose to focus on environmental justice, which is now a topic very close to my heart and the inspiration for my solution.

So, my solution is most closely attached to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 15. But, I feel it's really important for all of them – especially 11 to 15 about the environment. By its very nature, the environment as we've heard in other talks this morning, is something that really impacts poverty across the world. It can really exacerbate already existing problems and also cause unemployment, which might lead to further human trafficking and child labour. My solution is kind of two-pronged and it's got both a macro and micro element.

The first one I kind of touched upon already, is moving beyond this sort of "facts and figures" style of learning, or rote learning, where children are exposed to a lot of facts, where adults are exposed to a lot of facts, but the behaviour isn't necessarily enforced. So, my proposal is to develop an effective habit based environmental education program that is sort of a standardized international approach in a form of the guidebook or a program leaflet. The second part of this is to situate it in a movement of a greening of human rights policy and also with an acknowledgement that future generations are rights holders too. So, it fits into that mode. As I've said, it seems that everyone knows about climate change, but everyday people are making decisions that are destroying our planet.

It's such an issue, where we've got this detachment between what we know and what we do. There are so many examples, just this week, in London, they've announced that they're going to build a new runway for Heathrow Airport, even though we know it's bad, which is going to have huge environmental impacts.

So, my solution aims to tackle what I think is the two causes of this disjointedness, whilst recognizing increasing recognition for environmental rights and forming people into environmentally friendly behaviour. So, practically, the more active component of my solution is for a writing of a new environmental education program, because there's a clear need that we need to influence people and to move beyond just environmental learning. So, current United Nations environmental education models, according to the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies, are based on learning models made in the 1970s. Or rather, models that assert that an increase of knowledge will equal an increase of behaviour and, unfortunately, we know that this isn't working; you can see this every day. It is out-dated, simplified and just doesn't work.

Therefore my proposal aims at writing a new normative guideline for environmental education, based on modern human psychology and teaching methods. So, this would require a two-fold approach, first research and planning stage to construct these guidelines. Research itself would be a huge undertaking and would require both an understanding of latest teaching methods and ensuring that all content is culturally relative, in order for it to be implemented across the world. The new environmental education program aims to both lessen the effects of climate change and ecological destruction and to be an opportunity for teaching coping mechanisms and alternative livelihoods. So, that also an immediate need is met, as we see affected communities across the world. In this sense it is both a long and short-term goal. In itself, the proposal seems a relatively simple one: To improve the quality of environmental education and behaviour, through a modernization of teaching practices for effective research and collaboration. I believe that this solution is a very achievable one and one that we could see the fruits of for many years.

So, I'm writing to contribute to the rhetoric that future generations are also rights holders and this proposal fits into that green approach of human rights, that the environment and climate are intrinsic to the enjoyment of all rights. This proposal fits into the idea that green rights education, where environmental behaviour permeates all aspects of education, not just a half an hour lesson once a month. So, I'm looking forward to hearing other ideas about collaborating into something a little more cohesive, but my hope is that all of our discussions, over the next couple of days will have environment pinned to the middle of it. Thank you very much