

Youth Movement to solve Global Problems

Human Rights Activist



Nobel peace prize winner Nadia Murad describes her extraordinary journey from suffering at the hands of Islamic State to human rights campaigner

Nadia Murad is a Yazidi human rights activist from Sinjar in northern Iraq, a Nobel Peace Prize winner and a Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. In 2014 she was captured by Islamic State fighters and held as a slave for several months before managing to escape. She eventually made it to a refugee camp and then to Germany. She campaigns tirelessly, telling her story to the world to gain support for Yazidi survivors and defend the rights of marginalized ethnic and religious minorities.

Reference:

<https://www.standup4humanrights.org/en/hr-champions-nmurad.html>

<https://nadiasinitiative.org/about/>

CHALLENGING OIL REFINERY POLLUTION IN A LOW INCOME COMMUNITY



Tammy “Ale” Ramos is a 17 year old from Los Angeles, California, who is a youth organizer with Communities for a Better Environment’s youth group “Youth for Environmental Justice” that filed a lawsuit against the city of Los Angeles over the approving of oil drilling operations in violation of state law.

Tammy lives in Wilmington, a harbor city in Los Angeles, home to the 3rd largest oil field in the U.S. She became a youth organizer with Communities for a Better Environment to address the volume of drilling/refinery operations, threats to her community, and impacts to her local environment. She and other youth organizers became plaintiffs that sued the city of Los Angeles in 2015 for violation of state law that regulates oil-drilling applications. The city of Los Angeles had approved drilling operations without proper environmental review. Amid

settlement of the case, the California Independent Petroleum Association (CIPA) intervened in the case, suing the original youth plaintiffs from Communities for a Better Environment, which Tammy was a part of an appellate court decided that CIPA's claims were baseless and this case was later dismissed. In their next move, CIPA appealed to the Supreme Court of California. The highest court in California denied CIPA's request for review and the court sided with the youth. This officially ended the case.

Since the lawsuits, the city of Los Angeles has begun implementing stronger environmental review of drilling projects. Tammy and the other youth organizers have worked alongside Communities for a Better Environment in teaching the issues in their Wilmington community. They brainstormed ideas on how to inform our community by creating pins, workshops, and going out door knocking. The youth worked alongside the organization's lawyers who shared the same values and worked long hours trying to defend against and protest against big oil.

Tammy hopes that this case serves as motivation for fellow youth leaders around the country to create change in their community. Moving onward, she will keep fighting to live in a just world, using her voice as an organizer to end environmental racism.

FIGHTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COAL PLANT IN WEST OAKLAND



Isha Clarke, a 16 year old from Oakland, California, is one of the original members of Youth vs. Apocalypse, a diverse group of youth activists who came together to protest a coal terminal which was (and still is) to be built in an underserved community of color in Oakland.

Isha's activism began in the city where she lives. In 2017, Isha found herself at a youth-led action targeting a developer who was in the process of suing the city of Oakland to allow him to build a controversial coal terminal through West Oakland, a low-income community of color. Isha learned that this community was already struggling with environmental illnesses such as asthma that would be exacerbated by the coal terminal. This is when she discovered how central environmental racism is to fighting for environmental justice. Isha felt it was right to stand up and speak truth to power.

Isha has broadened her activism and is now one of the leaders of Youth Vs Apocalypse, a group of youth activists from the Bay Area who recently confronted Senator Dianne Feinstein, along with Bay Area Earth Guardians Crew and Sunrise Movement, about her stance on the Green New Deal in a now viral video. This event sparked a vital national conversation about both the Green New Deal, and the role of young people in climate activism. Since gaining this platform, Isha and Youth Vs Apocalypse activists have continued fighting for radical climate action that is centered around frontline communities. They organized the hugely successful March 15th Bay Area Youth Climate Strike, planned a community block party, both aligning

with the Friday's For Future campaign started by Greta Thunberg, and, with Sunrise Movement, organized a powerful series of actions at the California Democratic Convention.

Isha strives to create a movement that reflects the world that young people want to see. She works to make sure the voices of young people, people of color, and disenfranchised frontline communities are the loudest.

INVESTIGATING CHEMICALS THAT LEAD TO CANCER



Shannon Lisa is a 21 year old from Avenel, New Jersey, and the Program Director of the non-profit organization, Edison Wetlands Association, that investigates the effects of chemical contaminant dumping in communities in Indiana and beyond.

Through “environmental detective work,” Shannon is committed to protecting human health and the environment through the investigation of hazardous waste sites. Shannon became involved in the issue of harmful chemicals after growing up in the state with the greatest number of contaminated sites and seeing first-hand the devastating effects it has on communities.

Shannon has led the charge for over two years to crack open a decades-old toxic cold case. In mid-2017, she learned about dozens of children getting sick with rare cancers in and around Franklin, Indiana. Local families long-believed their health was being affected by unhealthy levels of chemicals in the environment, and felt they could not get answers from the government agencies. Shannon and her organization filed extensive requests to the federal Environmental Protection Agency to secure as much information as possible on the history of environmental impacts in the community. After months of pouring through over 40,000 pages of previously hidden documents, she uncovered a bombshell. A nearby industrial site assured by the EPA to be cleaned up had been severely mismanaged and poorly investigated. A cocktail of poison gases, including the known carcinogen TCE, may have been invading what most people consider to be a safe place— their homes— for years. She coordinated with the community group, If It Was Your Child, and environmental technical team, Mundell & Associates, to conduct the first-ever scientific testing of residential indoor air. This research, and the discovery that some homes had detections of industrial toxins as much as 18x over the state threshold, led to the Environmental Protection Agency reopening a wide scale investigation.

Shannon continues to work with the Franklin, Indiana, community as they get closer to achieving a new, permanent clean-up, and advocates for change on a national scale so that no family has to feel unsafe in their homes because of industry’s toxic assaults.

Reference: <http://www.broweryouthawards.org/awards-ceremony/>

THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S EDUCATION



The daughter of a teacher, [Malala](#) Yousafzai was just 10 years old in 2007 when the Taliban seized control of her home region in northwest Pakistan. The next year, the group banned all girls from going to school.

[According to UN Women](#), the United Nations watchdog organization that is "dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women," of the world's 796 million illiterate people, two-thirds are women. Worldwide, only 39 percent of girls who live in rural areas attend secondary schools, compared to 45 percent of boys. In urban areas, 59 percent of girls (and 60 percent of boys) go to secondary schools.

Malala began blogging for the BBC about life under the Taliban and her desire to return to school, but she and her family were forced to flee their home as the Pakistani army returned to the area to fight off the Taliban. The national army was successful, but the Taliban still controlled many rural areas. Malala continued her very public fight for education rights and, in 2012, when she was just 15, masked gunmen boarded her school bus and shot her in the head.

Malala survived, but she and her family moved to England, where she returned to school in 2013 and continued her fight for girls' rights to education. In 2014, at the age of 17, Malala became the youngest winner of the [Nobel Peace Prize](#). She's now a student at the University of Oxford and continues to travel globally in support of women's rights.

TAKING ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Xiuhtezcatl Martinez is the youth director for the environmental group [Earth Guardians](#). He's 16. He's been fighting for his cause for a decade.

[Climate change](#) is still a major threat to the planet, [scientists overwhelmingly agree](#). But Xiuhtezcatl (pronounced "shoe-tez-caht") is meeting it, and its detractors, head on. He's traveled the globe urging young people to get involved, given speeches at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro and to the United Nations in New York, and is the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against the federal government for its failure to protect the environment for future generations.

The [lawsuit](#) calls for the government to "develop a national plan to restore Earth's energy balance, and implement that national plan so as to stabilize the climate system ... before it is too late."

Xiuhtezcatl is the son of an Aztec father and a mother who is dedicated to environmental causes. He may be young, but he insists, he's not alone.

"I'm seeing more and more youth getting involved and trying to make a difference. It's really tough because there are a lot of road blocks, but definitely my generation are becoming more and more rebellious against a system that's setting us up for failure," he told [Huck Magazine](#). "Young people are realising that the system we're living in doesn't work."

CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE



Jasilyn Charger had moved home to the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota in 2015, a 19-year-old dealing with the suicides of some of her Lakota Sioux friends and looking to help. She and her friend, Joseph White Eyes, pulled together some friends and mentors and formed what eventually became known as the [One Mind Youth Movement](#).

The group originally raised money for trips and counseling and basketball tournaments. But, as detailed by Saul Elbein in [The New York Times](#), One Mind soon turned to more political efforts, campaigning against the Keystone XL Pipeline in 2015 and, in 2016, starting a camp in the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. "The youths came to believe that the Dakota pipeline was not only a threat to their drinking water," Elbein writes in the Times, "but also a harbinger of the larger environmental crisis their generation was set to inherit."

The protest at Standing Rock became a protest against corporate greed and for Native American rights, too, and at times drew thousands of protesters. In [December 2016](#), the U.S. [Army Corps of Engineers](#), under the Obama administration, denied an easement to continue construction of the pipeline on its current route. The protesters cheered.

Less than two months later, however, newly elected President Donald Trump signed an executive order allowing the construction to continue. On June 1, 2017, the [first oil flowed](#) through the pipeline.

Court battles continue to try to shut down the line. And the One Mind Youth Movement's work endures.

"It is a common belief among our people that the children literally are the future. They are the sacred seeds of our ancestors, inherently instilled with the values passed down through generations," the [group's site states](#). "We have to water them and they will blossom into the sacred flowers of life they are."

Reference:

<http://www.ourclimatevoices.org/2019/jasilyncharger>

The Struggle for Voting Rights



Teens like Madison Kimrey have long been active on many fronts. Kimrey, a 16-year-old from Burlington, North Carolina, [says she is passionate about](#) "voting rights, women's issues, LGBTQ+ rights, and the humane treatment of animals."

She's keenly aware of what the students in Florida are trying to do to stop gun violence in schools and what they and others face in trying to change the world.

"It's the actions we take when the marches are over and the media has moved on that are going to make the real difference in improving people's lives," Kimrey posted [on Facebook](#) Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2018, "and electing representatives at every level who are interested in moving forward with solutions to the problems we face."

Kimrey first raised her voice when she saw a same-sex couple denied family rates at a Jacksonville, Florida museum. She took on former North Carolina governor Pat McCrory in 2013 over what she and many others saw as restrictive voting rules that targeted young people and minorities. She was especially disturbed by a provision in the law that prohibited 16- and 17-year-olds from pre-registering to vote.

"I didn't like what I saw happening to my state," Kimrey told civil rights activist Al Sharpton on [MSNBC](#), "so I wanted to take action and see what I could do to stop it."

Kimrey continues to speak out and make her voice heard, urging young people to [get out and vote](#) to enact the change that older people won't.

And, like others her age, she's just getting started.

"When all of us get older and we take over the political system," she told the [Huffington Post](#), "it's going to be completely different."

Reference: <https://history.howstuffworks.com/historical-figures/five-times-young-people-changed-world.htm>

water warrior



The 15-year-old activist from Wiikwemkoong First Nation on Manitoulin Island in northern Ontario urged the global community to respect the sacredness and importance of clean water.

Peltier spoke at the Global Landscapes Forum, a platform on sustainable land use founded by UN Environment and the World Bank that's dedicated to achieving development and climate goals.

She used the speech to draw attention to the lack of clean water in numerous Indigenous communities, which she says sparked her activism at a young age.

She has been a "water warrior" since the age of 8, ever since she learned of First Nation communities that couldn't drink their water due to contamination from industrial activity and oil pipelines.

In 2019, Autumn was named the Chief Water Commissioner by the Anishinabek Nation, representing 40 First Nations in Ontario, many of whom lack clean drinking water.

In her role, she visits reserves, meets with leaders of the Anishinabek Nation and speaks internationally about indigenous and water rights.

Peltier called for an end to plastic use as one step in restoring a more sustainable world.

Her speech comes a day after huge crowds took to the streets in Canada as part of a global climate strike.

She was named the [chief water commissioner](#) by the Anishinabek Nation, a political advocacy group for 40 First Nations across Ontario, when she was just 14 years old.

Reference:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/the-teenage-change-makers-at-davos-2020/>

<https://www.citynews1130.com/2019/09/28/indigenous-water-activist-autumn-peltier-speaks-at-un-sustainability-forum/>

live with a low-carbon footprint



Seventeen-year-old Ayakha Melithafa lives in Eerste River on the outskirts of Cape Town in the Western Cape province of South Africa. Her mother works as a farmer in the Western Cape, where droughts there have threatened her income. Because if there is no water, they cannot plant or feed and water the livestock. Between 2017 and 2018, Ayakha, along with other residents of Cape Town experienced a period of unprecedented and severe water shortage, compounded by dam levels that had been declining since 2015 and very limited rainfall.

The changes around her have led Ayakha to become a dedicated climate activist in her community. She is part of the Project 90 by 2030 YouLead initiative and acts as a recruitment official for the African Climate Alliance. Ayakha shares her knowledge and experiences in climate activism with the people in her community and tries to show people how to live with a low-carbon footprint.

Fight for climate change



When Greta Thunberg was eight years old, she watched a documentary in school on something called “climate change,” which she remembers terrified her and her classmates. When the documentary was over, her fellow students seemed to move on, and their worries shifted back to less existential concerns. But, for Greta, once she understood the climate crisis, she could not “un-understand” it – she stopped eating, she stopped speaking, she fell into a depression.

Eventually, Greta sought all the information she could find about climate change and its causes and began changing her own habits to lessen her own carbon footprint. Greta turned to activism. In August 2018, she began protesting outside of the Swedish Parliament during school hours with a sign painted with the words, “Skolstrejk for Klimatet” (“School Strike for Climate”). Greta has continued striking every Friday, inspiring hundreds of thousands of children worldwide to follow her example.

Reference:

<https://childrenvsclimatecrisis.org/>

Remove micro plastics from water



Fionn grew up on a remote island in West Cork, a seaside region in southern Ireland. Fionn spent his childhood creating science projects and paddling around the coasts of Ireland with his kayak. Through his passion for the outdoors, he witnessed the effects of microplastic pollution on the environment. When Fionn was in high school, he invented a new method of extracting microplastics from the water using his own version of ferrofluid, a liquid developed by NASA. Fionn introduced the concept at the 2019 Google Science Fair, where he won the competition for his methodology to remove microplastics from water.

Bye Bye Plastic Bags



Melati grew up on the island of Bali, where she encountered a plastic epidemic. Swimming in the seas just off her childhood beach, Melati recalls emerging from the ocean with a plastic bag wrapped around her arm. Inspired by a school lesson on influential world leaders, Melati founded “Bye Bye Plastic Bags” with her younger sister to organize petitions, awareness-raising campaigns and massive beach clean-ups. Since then, Bali has announced a law banning single-use plastic, thanks in part to Melati’s efforts. Melati and her sister were part of TIME Magazine’s Most Influential Teens and CNN’s Young Wonders in 2018.

Right To An Education



Mohamad grew up in Syria, but fled for Lebanon when life became too dangerous at home. Like thousands of other refugee children in the country, he couldn’t go to school, so he set out to support children in the same situation. Together with his family, 12-year old Mohamad built a school in a refugee camp where 200 children now access their right to an education. He helps children to heal, learn and have fun with games and photography. Mohamad was awarded the International Children’s Peace Prize in 2017 and MTV’s Generation Change Award in 2018.

Protest against gun violence



Naomi's student activism started when she led a walk-out at her elementary school in Virginia to mark the one-month anniversary of the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman High School in Parkland, Florida. Her walk-out was 18 minutes long – 17 minutes for each student and teacher who lost their lives, and another minute for Courtlin Arrington, an African American student who was murdered shortly after the Parkland shooting in her Alabama high school. Naomi's mission is to empower African American girls and she hopes more people will join her effort to remember Courtlin and the many African American girls lost to gun violence.

Fight against child marriage



Natasha was born and raised in Zambia, where she advocates for the health and well-being of young people, particularly against child marriage. Through her roles as junior reporter and journalist and as social accountability monitor in various health organizations, she gathers and shares information on women and girls' rights and tracks stakeholder progress. She also founded the Natasha Mwansa Foundation to promote a world in which young people are heard, valued, and healthy. Through her work, she was selected to be part of the African Union Commission's Youth Advisory Board and became the youngest recipient of the World Health Organization's Global Health Leaders Award.

No Power Or Electricity For At Least A Year



When Hurricane María devastated Puerto Rico in 2017, Salvador was told his community faced the prospect of no power or electricity for at least a year. In response, he created the "Light and Hope for Puerto Rico" campaign to distribute solar-powered lamps, hand-powered washing machines and other supplies to more than 3,100 families on the island. Salvador continues to support the implementation of smart energy systems in Puerto Rico and has launched the "Light and Hope for the

Bahamas” humanitarian initiative. Salvador was named one of TIME Magazine’s 30 Most Influential Teens of 2017 and received the President’s Environmental Youth Award from the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Diana Award for social humanitarian work in 2019.

Reference:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/the-teenage-change-makers-at-davos-2020/>

Pledge for Peace



Eight year-old Bana Alabed is known worldwide for her tweets during the 2016 siege of Aleppo and her call for peace in Syria – and for all children impacted by conflict.

Her tweets became daily dispatches to millions around the world, giving remarkable insight into the horrors of life in the city as her family endured airstrikes, hunger and loss. Dear World is her first book, a story of a brave little girl trapped in a brutal war who inspired the world with a simple message: “I need peace.”

Bana received the Freedom Award 2018 in Berlin

Reference:

<https://bana-alabed.com/>

<https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/film/8-year-old-syrian-bana-al-abed-makes-appearance-at-the-oscars-1.710313>

Fight for Firearm Safety Legislation



Emma González is an American activist and advocate for gun control. González gave a viral speech against gun violence, proclaiming "We call B.S." on the lack of action by politicians funded by the NRA. Subsequently, González continued to be an outspoken activist on gun control, making high profile media appearances and helping organize the March for Our Lives. Speaking at the demonstration, González led a moment of silence for the victims of the massacre; she stood on stage for six minutes, which she observed was the length of the shooting spree itself.

She became the **March for Our Lives** (MFOL) was a student-led demonstration in support of legislation to prevent gun violence in the United States.

Reference:

<https://variety.com/2018/politics/features/emma-gonzalez-parkland-interview-1202972485/>

Protest against policymakers to end “period poverty”



Last December, nearly 2,000 people showed up for a protest outside U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May’s home, led by 18-year-old Amika George. Her goal: convince policymakers to end “period poverty,” as she calls it, by funding the distribution of menstrual products to girls and women who can’t afford them. “It really upset me,” she tells TIME of learning that many girls in the U.K. were routinely missing school during their [periods](#) because they couldn’t afford to buy menstrual products. “The government knew this was happening on their watch, but they were refusing to find a solution.”

She launched the #FreePeriods campaign as a response, gathering nearly [200,000 signatures](#) on her [petition](#) to help eradicate period poverty; the movement eventually garnered the support of over a dozen U.K. policymakers, galvanizing the government to allocate funds to the issue for the first time. But George, who was honored with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s Goalkeepers Campaign Award this fall, says she is just getting started. “We can’t trust our policymakers to take action on issues that seem so obvious to us,” she says. “If we want to see change, it falls on us to create that change.”

Reference:

<https://time.com/5463721/most-influential-teens-2018/>

<https://time.com/5498118/amika-george-free-periods/>