

The Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme

“A journey for climate hope”

September-October 2017



PEACE
BOAT



Content

About Peace Boat:	2
Introduction:	3
Profiles of participants:	4-5
Small island nations:	6-7
Barcelona:	8-9
Lisbon:	10-11
Bordeaux:	12-13
London:	14-15
Edinburgh:	16-17
Reykjavik:	18-19
New York:	20-21
An intense three weeks onboard:	22-23
The Costa Rican Hummingbird:	24-26
The Stubborn Optimist:	27
Photography and Poetry:	28-29
The film:	30
Outreach and awareness raising:	31
Call of Action:	32-33
Peace Boat and the SDGs:	34-35

Photos by: Ashwa Faheem, Shunya Mizumoto, Neil Murphy and Chema Sarri
Graphic Design: María Pérez



About Peace Boat

Established in 1983, Peace Boat is a Japan-based international NGO which holds Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN). It promotes peace, human rights, equal and sustainable development and respect for the environment.

Peace Boat carries out its main activities through a passenger ship that travels the world. Guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Peace Boat's activities onboard and in port empower participants, strengthen local capacity for sustainability, and build people-to-people cooperation beyond borders. The voyages, on a social business model, blend sustainable tourism, lifelong learning and friendship activities with educational programmes, cooperative projects and advocacy funded by voyages participation fees.

Peace Boat's next step in our 30 year evolution is to build the EcoShip, the world's most sustainable cruise ship, as a flagship for climate action and the SDGs.

Introduction

With 34 years' experience organizing educational voyages, Peace Boat strongly believes in the power of personal experiences and testimony as a call to action and regularly uses its ship as a venue to share such first-hand experiences. Peace Boat visits many small island developing states (SIDS) where participants learn about climate change and marine degradation. Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme, announced at the Ocean Conference in June 2017, brought youth leaders from states on the front line of climate change and marine degradation to travel onboard Peace Boat's ship in Europe and to New York, engaging in capacity building and bringing their message to citizens and government representatives through the voyage. The programme was recognized by the COP23 Presidency Secretariat as an Endorsed Event of COP23.

The programme brought together youth from small island states in the three geographic regions of the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean and Caribbean, including Fiji, Marshall Islands, Maldives, Seychelles, Trinidad and Tobago and Belize. Dialogue through Talanoa as outlined in Fiji's Vision for COP23 formed a key part of activities on board as participants with diverse backgrounds in science, campaigning, public policy, NGOs, grassroots and international activism shared their skills and experiences, as well as the diverse situations in their own countries. The Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors were joined onboard by guest educators to assist in their capacity building, including Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 2010-2016.

Building momentum and engaging stakeholders in the countries visited

Embarking in Barcelona, the young leaders engaged with local, regional and national governments, civil society and the scientific community taking part in awareness raising and outreach events in ports visited, including in France, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Iceland, concluding their voyage in New York. Participants gave testimony of their experiences and the impact of climate change and marine degradation on their communities, through Talanoa, defined in Fiji's Vision as 'inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue that builds empathy and leads to decision making for the collective good'.

The programme was first announced at the Ocean Conference as one of Peace Boat's Voluntary Commitments to UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14. It was a continuation of the process that took us from the Ocean Conference towards COP23, drawing a stronger link between the health of the world's oceans and seas and the impacts of, and solutions to, climate change as part of a holistic approach to the protection of our planet, also outlined in Fiji's Vision. Furthermore, it explored connections between SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life Under Water) and the other 17 goals including quality education, responsible consumption, gender equality, reducing inequalities and peace and justice as part of Peace Boat's commitment as a campaigner for the SDGs.

Together the young leaders made a Call for Action and in New York reported on their activities to the UN community and wider public as a highlight of Peace Boat's visit.



Profiles of Participants



PROGRAMME COORDINATORS

CHEMA SARRI

Based in Tokyo, Chema Sarri is an International Coordinator for Peace Boat. Before joining the Japanese NGO, he worked as a journalist for different newspapers, magazines and radio broadcasters. He is currently the Communications Manager for Peace Boat's Ecoship and the coordinator of the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme.

KAREN HALLOWS

Based in Europe, Karen Hallows is an International Coordinator for Peace Boat. She has been working on peace and sustainability education programmes and advocacy onboard Peace Boat, sailing on more than ten Global Voyages. She is currently Project Coordinator for Peace Boat's Ecoship and the coordinator in Peace Boat's involvement in the United Nations Climate Change Conferences.



PACIFIC OCEAN



SELINA LEEM (19) MARSHALL ISLANDS

Until she was 16 and moved to Germany to school at UWC Robert Bosch College where she recently graduated from, Selina spent her entire life on her home atoll, Majuro. Representing the Marshall Islands, Selina was the youngest delegate at the COP21 in Paris. During the closing remarks, then Marshall Islands Foreign Minister Tony deBrum gave her the opportunity to give the final statement. She said the Paris agreement, "should be the turning point in our story; a turning point for all of us." Last year, she shared the stage at the Skoll World Forum in Oxford, England with former US Vice-President Al Gore and former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson. Selina has given interviews, written articles, poems, and given spoken word performances about the situation in her country. She is personally connected to climate change and has made it her duty to be an advocate and hopes to continue to grow as an advocate.

KYA LAL (25) FIJI

Kya has spent the last decade working as a climate change advocate, activist and academic. Academically, Kya holds a bachelor's degree in Pacific studies, and both a bachelor's and master's degree in environmental law. Her master's research focused on the legal impacts and implications of climate change in the Pacific. For the last five years, she has used academic conferences and writing as a means to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change in the Pacific. As an advocate and activist, Kya's interest in climate change law has seen her taking part in COP20, COP21, COP22 and COP23. Kya spends her days as a barrister in Fiji and has previously worked on climate issues with the Aotearoa Youth Leadership Institute, the New Zealand Youth Delegation, the New Zealand Centre for Environmental Law, the Low Carbon Research Project and as a writer for The Verb.



MATEA NAUTO (23) KIRIBATI

Matea is an Assistant Secretary at the Kiribati Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an active member of the Kiribati Climate Action Network. His first formal engagement with youth and environmental advocacy work was in 2013, when he attended the UN-SIDS youth preparatory meeting held in Nadi, Fiji as Kiribati's youth representative. He has participated in a number of regional and international youth and environmental summits and conferences, and is a member of the Pacific Youth Environment Network and an Ambassador of One Young World, after having attended the 2013 Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. Matea obtained his bachelor's in aviation management in New Zealand. He enjoys reading non-fiction and writing poems.



ASHWA FAHEEM (26) MALDIVES

Ashwa is a photojournalist and travel photographer from the Maldives, the lowest lying country in the world, and one of the first communities among several other island nations likely to relocate because of sea level rise. Raised in Male' city, she studied photography at Segi College in Malaysia before going on to acquire her master's degree at De Montfort in Leicester, United Kingdom. During her diverse seven-year career she has travelled to more than 30 islands in the Maldives to document the impact of climate change and ocean degradation in the Maldives. She believes that photography can act as a tool to expose the consequences that communities are already facing today because of climate change. She was the recipient of the national 'WOB Distinction and Award For Best Young Woman Professional in 2016'. She is currently on assignment with UNDP to document communities living in the island nation.

LA TISHA PARKINSON (22) TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

La Tisha is a recent graduate with a major in biology and minor in environmental natural resource management from the University of the West Indies, St Augustine. The Caribbean Youth Environment Network Trinidad and Tobago Chapter lit the fire of advocacy in her heart three years ago and it has been burning ever since. As a member of the World Oceans Day Youth Advisory Council, she took part in the United Nations Ocean Conference as well as the Sea Youth Rise Up Mixer, and the Ocean Festival in New York earlier this year. She has been writing poetry for over a decade, both non-fiction and fiction prose, and contributes to various blogs on ocean health. La Tisha's volunteer activities allow her to combine her passions for the oceans, research, writing, and communicating with the public.



INDIAN OCEAN

SHAFIRA CHARLETTE (21) SEYCHELLES

Shafira is an environmental activist with a big passion for the environment, oceans and animal welfare. She enjoys volunteerism and is a member of numerous non-governmental organizations in her country, encouraging young people to engage in environmental and youth activities. She is the Treasurer of SIDS Youth AIMS Hub (SYAH-Seychelles), the Seychelles Chapter of a regional network of young people in SIDS promoting and advancing youth-led sustainable development projects. She has successfully campaigned and lobbied for the "Seychelles Free from Plastic Bag Campaign" and taken part in 'Academy by the Sea' Programme project of Marine Conservation Society Seychelles (MCSS). Shafira currently works as an Accounts Supervisor and is studying for her accounting degree on a self-study basis. She has her own graphic design and photography start-up business, Simple Creativity, and uses her skills to make brochures, posters, and flyers for climate and ocean advocacy.



CARIBBEAN



ZANA KRISTEN WADE (22) BELIZE

Zana is a Belizean whose passion lies primarily in communications with emphasis on the SDGs. Graduating from the University of Belize, her background is in Natural Resource Management. In 2016 she was the first to represent her country at the World Merit's Merit360 program. She and 22 other change makers from around the world created The Climate Express, an initiative to help vulnerable communities across the world fight the growing pressures of climate change., which was presented to the United Nations in New York in September 2016. Zana now works as a communications consultant under the biodiversity finance initiative BIOFIN which is managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the European Union and the governments of Germany and Switzerland. She has her own business Meraki MAD Agency, and seeks to contribute towards the growth of community for job satisfaction and sustainable development.

Small island nations at the frontline of climate and ocean change

Climate change and ocean degradation affects development of all nations, regardless of location or size of economy. Yet, no other group of nations is more vulnerable to its devastating effects than the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). With one-third of their population living on land that is less than five meters below sea level, the threat of sea level rise, storm surges, and coastal destruction pose existential risks to SIDS. While contributing less than 1 per cent to the world's greenhouse gas emissions, these countries are among the first to experience the worst and most devastating impacts of climate change with greater risks to economies, livelihoods, and food security. As large ocean states, SIDS are on the frontline of ocean degradation with their livelihood and cultures deeply connected to the ocean. Yet, despite serious threats and challenges, the SIDS continue to demonstrate global leadership across the areas of climate change, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development. With the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme, Peace Boat brought the voices of the SIDS to seven different ports in Europe and the US to raise awareness and call for action on our climate and ocean.

About SIDS

Recognised by the UN at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992, as a group of nations with distinct and similar challenges to sustainable development, the SIDS comprise the following UN member states: Antigua and Barbuda; Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Cabo Verde; Comoros; Cuba; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Fiji; Grenada; Guinea-Bissau; Guyana; Haiti; Jamaica; Kiribati; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mauritius; Micronesia (Federated States of); Nauru; Palau; Papua New; Guinea; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Samoa; Sao Tomé and Principe; Seychelles; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Suriname; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Trinidad and Tobago; and Tuvalu.

Belize is the most vulnerable country in Central America to sea level rise. By the end of the century, most of Belize City will likely be submerged.

Sea level rise is causing varying degrees of coastal erosion on **Trinidad and Tobago**. Fisheries resources are described as either heavily exploited or over exploited.

The Maldives is the flattest country on Earth. There is a high possibility that the majority of its land area will be underwater by the end of this century.

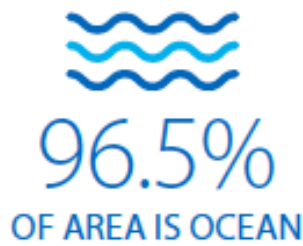
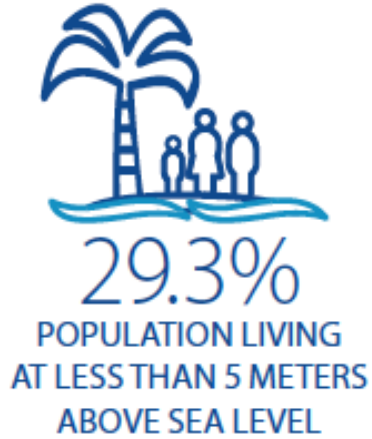
The Republic of the **Marshall Islands** comprises of five islands and 29 atolls in the Pacific Ocean. Scientists have predicted that by 2050, much of the land will be submerged.

Kiribati is made up of 33 small islands, some of which, according to scientific reports could be uninhabitable within decades.

In **Seychelles**, as much as 90 percent of corals in shallow waters are now bleached significantly, with signs of mortality.

Fiji is made up of approximately 330 islands. It is estimated that at least 800 of its communities will need to relocate because of the impact of climate change.

FAST FACTS ABOUT SIDS (AVERAGE)



Source: Small Island Developing States in Numbers, 2013, UN OHRLLS



Barcelona

Let the journey begin!



By Shafira Charlette



The Ocean & Climate Youth Ambassador Programme started in Barcelona, Spain on 21 September 2017, when I was finally able to meet the other six amazing young people from different parts of the world. These few hours that we got to spend together before embarking the ship, were more than enough! It felt like we had known each other months before.

We got to the port where Peace Boat was docking, waited for the passengers to disembark and quickly settled in because we had an onboard event to attend. The event was planned especially for us—students from seven schools that formed part of an environmental group were excited to meet us. After the introduction, each of us was assigned to a school group.

My group was so warm and welcoming, they seemed so interested and asked some very interesting questions: What do I do in the Seychelles? How is climate change impacting my country? How can they help? And most importantly, whether I really believe that the world can be saved, given that there are many climate change deniers and that this might be a hopeless battle, since it is not considered a major problem for many big countries, especially those with power. I had to let this student know that we need to be optimistic that we can do it. Nothing comes easy, if it does, then it's not really worth much.

We took some selfies and group photos. The Minister of Territory and Sustainability of the Catalan Government, Josep Rull, spoke at the event about efforts made by the government to mitigate climate change. Last July, the parliament of Catalonia passed the 'Climate Change Bill', a law that will strengthen the region's climate efforts. Enrique Segovia of the World Wildlife Fund Spain shared the current overall situation in relation to climate change and the perspective of civil society organizations working on the issue. We also had interviews with many journalists.

The next event was a visit to Barcelona Beach Centre, where I got the chance to learn about who they were, their activities and how climate change affects them. They have educational programmes for everyone from kids to elders about environmental issues and sustainable living, including, for example, knowing what type of fish they should buy and consume. They believe that we should not only educate children, but also adults and elders as well, so that they may start acting by changing their ways and thinking about future generations— – their children. They have a beach lab, which is some sort of cart that they use to travel with to go out and talk to people rather than waiting for people to come to them like other organizations might.

“They believe that we should not only educate children, but also adults and elders as well, so that they may start acting by changing their ways and thinking about future generations— – their children.”

What really impressed me during the visit, was a presentation about an initiative that involved the local fishermen. What happens is, sometimes when fishermen throw in the fishing nets, they don't only catch the fish, but waste too. The initiative basically got these fishermen to voluntarily bring this rubbish to shore. Apparently, the motivation behind this is that they want a better image for themselves, to show people that fishermen can do more for the community than just providing them with fish.

Lastly, they spoke to us about marine pollution and how they are collecting data related to the global marine pollution problem, in particular micro plastics. They frequently take samples from the beach (from the shoreline) to examine and determine whether micro plastics are present in the water. It was mentioned that one of the most common waste products they would find during clean ups or around the beach were tissues!

Then, after an intense day, we returned to the ship, had our dinner and enjoyed the departure party that took place on the deck. An amazing way to start an incredible adventure!





Lisbon

My Favourite City in the World

By La Tisha Parkinson

We arrived in Lisbon, bright eyed and bushy tailed! We met up with a group of reporters, scientists, and other interested persons to board a beautiful wooden sailboat, that looked hand carved and painted. Admittedly, I was terrified, because the idea of falling off a sailboat into the sea wasn't very appealing to me. Fortunately, once all aboard, we learned from our skipper that the boat has an engine. It was an antique fishing boat from the 1970s that was refurbished and is used on special occasions. I guess taking Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors to the Pavilhão do conhecimento (Pavilion of Knowledge) counted as a special occasion—we were honoured.

The boat ride was very busy, for everyone else. With every turn an ambassador was being photographed or interviewed. I was recovering from a cold or flu, and so I used that as an excuse to just sit and observe everything, and everyone around me. You can see quite a lot when you look intently. I saw those who struggled to find their confidence on stage, speak fluently, and comfortably one on one with the reporters and scientists. These kinds of observations are helpful when getting to know people, after all, our arrival in Lisbon would have marked the fourth day we were together. These people were strangers to me, but I think that time on the boat taught me a lot about them.

I don't remember who I asked or what the exact question was, but the answer was that we were sailing down a river, not the sea, or the ocean. I had never seen a river that large in my life. In fact, where we were specifically, was an estuary. The Tagus River is 320 km². That size is greater than that of many small island developing states (SIDS). I wish I was being dramatic. Tobago, the second largest island in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is 302 km². I think for anyone who doesn't know or understand what a SIDS is, this comparison can help them understand the spatial struggle. Thankfully though, SIDS are large ocean states, meaning that their ocean space is much greater than their land space—so it's not a hopeless situation, just a matter of reinvention, so to speak. I think all of us learned more about Lisbon travelling down the Tagus River than we did at any other point in time. While some SIDS can fit in their river, it's amazing to learn that the Portuguese still face similar issues. Like many other places, the people settle where there is water, and so 70% of Portuguese live on the coastline. They experience flooding, coastal erosion, and they too are concerned about sea level rise. Their fisheries are also being negatively affected by the changes in ocean currents, which are bringing more warmer currents, causing the fish to migrate. What the scientists were describing to us is a phenomenon known as the "ocean

conveyor belt". It was interesting to be in a place affected by this phenomenon, with climate change being the number one culprit.

After our very enlightening boat ride, we walked to the Pavilion of Knowledge. It was a beautiful walk. Every time I stopped to take a breath, I also took a photo, I just couldn't resist. We arrived late though so we hurriedly ate some finger foods, drank some juice, and used the restroom, before we scurried onto stage. The crowd wasn't quite what we expected. We were expecting a crowd of scientists and technocrats. Assuredly, some of those people were in the crowd, but I think a lot of us were taken aback by the large primary school class presence.



It's hard to remember what everyone said. Selina performed a poem she had written about the effects of nuclear testing and climate change on the Marshall Islands called "More Than Just a Blue Passport". This was the first time I heard it. Zana sat next to me crying. Many people in the audience were crying. I was just shocked. I was befuddled. I didn't know what to think. I had so many questions. I was up to speak after Selina. I couldn't focus. My presentation wasn't great. I had no notes because I knew what I was speaking about. I didn't plan on being distracted though.

Lunch and networking followed our presentations. After this we got a brief tour of the Pavilion of Knowledge which is a science museum. Some of us rode a bike on a tightrope— backwards. Before we left, we all learned that Zana had what it took to be an astronaut!

It was just a day of good fortune for us, because next we got to go to the aquarium – Oceanário de Lisboa. The aquarium had flora and fauna from all the world's oceans. I was more concerned than impressed at first



because I was thinking about how they may have obtained these organisms. I'm no supporter of zoos and aquariums that take organisms out of their natural habitat to place them behind glass in artificial habitats for our enjoyment. However, as I made my way through the aquarium, reading the signs, the aquarium made it clear that their main motive was education. They had the idea that if people could see what is in our world's ocean then they may care more, and be inclined to change their actions to have a positive effect. This is definitely an idea that I can support. Changing my mindset also helped me to remember that sometimes aquariums trade, buy/sell species to/from each other, and so none of them may actually be from the wild. I eventually made my way out of the maze-like aquarium and met up with the group. Some of us took a taxi directly to the boat, some to a supermarket.

Lisbon is so beautiful. I didn't know I liked pastel colours until I saw them on the city, nor did I know I liked cobble stone streets until Lisbon. In fact, there were very few roads made of asphalt. Coming from a country with a natural asphalt lake, I guess I just assumed everyone's roads were made of asphalt too. The last thing I remember seeing before the boat, was a gentleman on a motorbike. He was dressed in a three-piece suit, and riding a motorbike. My window was down, I said "wow", he looked at me and smiled.

Lisbon has survived many things—storms, tsunamis, and earthquakes. But can they survive climate change? That's not really a question I ever considered when thinking about a continental country. However, much like the way the ocean connects us all, climate change affects us all.



Bordeaux

From Lacanau with Love



By Kya Lal

For those of us from islands and coasts, most of our territories are our oceans. We are no strangers to storms, sea level rise and coastal erosion. We are no strangers to the possibility that some or all of our people may have to relocate. We are no strangers to the possibility that the places we call home today may not be the same place our grandchildren call home in years to come. What we never expected was to find these very same issues a world away in Lacanau, France. Onboard Peace Boat we were introduced to Jérôme Augereau, our guest educator and a nature photographer who for the past few years has been documenting the erosion and potential displacement of his home town Lacanau. Lacanau is a sunny sea-side holiday town about an hour's drive outside of Bordeaux, well known for its beaches, ocean, sand and surf. So much so that it's in the running to host the surf competitions when France hosts the 2024 Summer Olympic Games. Lacanau's picturesque landscapes make it a spectacular holiday town, whose usual population of 5,000 jumps dramatically to between 60,000 or 70,000 people during summer months. However, everything Lacanau is built on is literally under threat.

In the winter of 2013, Lacanau was hit with approximately 30 storms in a period of three months, with eight of them considered major storms. Almost overnight they saw 25 metres of sand eroded from their beaches, resulting in building foundations becoming unstable, exposure of additional sand dunes and beach areas and increasing vulnerability to further beach and coastal erosion. While these figures might sound unbelievable, Jerome's work specifically focuses on the erosion of the beaches of Lacanau. While predominantly a surf and ocean photographer, Jerome began cataloguing the beach erosion when the storms began in 2013. To date, he has catalogued hundreds of time lapse photographs, in the months and years since those storms. On average Lacanau now loses one to two metres of coast and sand dunes a year.

During our visit to Lacanau we were fortunate to also meet Mr. Martin Renard of the Responsable du Service d'Urbanisme de la Mairie de Lacanau. He explained to us that Lacanau is not the only coastal town in France facing these issues. Another community about 100km down the coast from Lacanau is facing coastal erosion



at a far greater rate, with almost five to six metres of coast lost every year, even more during storms, flooding and inundation periods. Recent measurements have highlighted that this community has seen a coastal recession and loss of approximately 200 metres of coast in a period of 40 years. Many buildings built close to the ocean during the 1970s economic rush are now within reach of the ocean or already in it. While local campaigns, awareness measures and actions are being implemented in Lacanau, next to nothing is happening in some of the other affected communities. In some cases, people are being displaced without the prospect of compensation by either the government or insurance facilities for loss of land, homes or assets. In some places, significant health problems are rising as now banned building materials from these 40-year-old buildings leach toxics and chemicals into the ground and water surrounding the town as they become inundated.

However, in Lacanau concerted efforts for mitigation and adaptation are being taken. These measures are particularly aimed at sustaining the town until 2100 or beyond. Concerned citizens including Jérôme Augereau and Martin Renard have formed a consultation committee, seeking solutions for these climate impacts. As well as this they also host an annual forum of about 200 to 300 people from in and around Lacanau. Thus far the agenda has predominantly been divided between whether to protect what remains of the sand dunes, beaches and town of Lacanau or to relocate the town further inland and away from the

beaches. Local businessman and Membre du Comité de Concertation de Lacanau, Mr. Gérard Depeyris, is one of many in the relocation zone. He runs a surf shop where he designs, carves surfboards and sells one-of-a-kind surf boards. Mr. Depeyris favours the option of relocation saying that: "We cannot risk the future generations, cannot risk not moving, so it is better to move...My best ally is the Ocean, it's aggressive, it will let people know".

Yet, no matter what these communities want to do or decide what to do, they still face two significant barriers, the French legal system and paying for whichever option they choose. Currently there are no laws in France that can help them; laws both on a national and municipal scale in many of these areas were written long before climate issues became apparent. Secondly, financing either relocation or protection will be a significant cost. Currently, protecting what remains of the beaches and sand dunes, would cost an estimated €50 million and would likely only be effective until 2060. However, relocation measures would likely last well into 2100 but would be closer to €500 million, and include 1200 apartments and 100 shops designated for relocation. It is estimated that these issues of climate change, sea level inundation and coastal erosion are going to effect one third of France's coastal region, including an estimated 850,000 people. Yet, action on both in France remains slow. However, at least for the people of Lacanau, whether they choose to or are forced to relocate, they have land nearby which they can use—for some of our islands, land is a luxury we can't afford.





London

The Art of Optimism

By Ashwa Faheem

I'm a freelance photojournalist based in the Maldives. I have been travelling to several islands within the country for the past three months for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to photograph the communities living in the islands. The most unsettling issue that I've been able to witness during my recent travels is the extent of damage caused to the islands of Maldives because of climate change. I've been able to witness a lot of dramatic changes in our beaches because of intense soil erosion. There is a lack of advocacy and education on the topic of climate change in the Maldives. This issue is highly disregarded and is not being mentioned within policy-making circles. As a photojournalist, I feel that it is my duty to give the Maldives a voice to the broader public and help solve the issue while we still can.

During my 7-year career as a visual storyteller, my photographs had never been published for an international audience before. But that changed on 1 October 2017 during the Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme. My colleagues and I joined the 95th Peace Boat Global

Voyage as participants of this new programme. We have travelled far to share our stories and be the face of what I call the greatest environmental and moral challenge of the 21st century.

We docked in Tilbury, London on 1 October 2017. We were greeted with the breeze of the mid-autumn air and the grey skyline of the United Kingdom. Before we engaged with the main event in London, we enjoyed the diverse company of creative young minds from different NGOs who have been working for various projects via the arts, business and politics to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The youth acknowledged the importance of using artistic media to express the issues of climate change when trying to reach a diverse audience, hence four Pechakucha presentations were conducted during lunch. Zana Kristen Wade, our Climate and Ocean Youth Ambassador from Belize, talked about the role of global politics in the fight for climate change. La Tisha Parkinson, our Ambassador from Trinidad and Tobago, talked about what it means to be an activist in the fight against climate change.

Currently, there are art installation projects that are being conducted in London to create awareness of the amount of plastic waste that we dispose everyday without thinking. They emphasized the fact that art is something that can bring people together and help stir healthy conversations regarding the stories expressed through art, or initiate a social movement towards a much-needed direction. Details of this project and abstract illustrations describing the story of how we humans are gradually disconnecting with the peaceful nature of our planet were presented to us by a local artist in East London. These illustrations together with the photo series "The Last Paradise" of 10 images, expressed the extent of damage caused to the marine environment in the Maldives. The photo series and art illustrations were viewed by the guests and the media officials during the event. It was a wonderful day in the sense that the situation of an island nation like the Maldives, that is extremely affected by climate change, was shared among a wide range of local and international actors. The photo series consisted of images portraying plastic pollution and the extent of soil erosion in the islands of the Maldives. The photo exhibition allowed an international audience to be exposed to a new understanding of what the Maldives is famously known for around the world. The whole world classifies the Maldives as a paradise on earth, when truly I believe that it is more important now that we all focus on its vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

The main event "Conversation with Christiana Figueres" which was held in the art gallery the same day was hosted by Richard Black, former BBC science and environment correspondent and Director of the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit. The issue

with global politics during climate negotiations, the relationship between the evolution of our economies in regard to investment for renewable energy, banning of micro plastics and discussions on nuclear waste were all expressed during the panel discussion with Christiana Figueres, Former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Matea Nauto (Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador from Kiribati) and myself, with great input from the audience which comprised of press, youth leaders and the general public, who were mainly youth.

Finally, the event was concluded with a wonderful poem shared by another one of the Ambassadors, Selina Leem from the Marshall Islands. The poem described the story behind the fight, bravery and the hope of the Marshallese in the face of climate injustice. Selina was greeted with an overwhelming emotional applause from all there that day, including tears and a warm hug from Ms. Christiana Figueres herself.

The words "stubborn optimism" may surprise you, but they hold significance when you have sat face to face with the iconic global climate champion. Christiana Figueres was the champion of progressive climate negotiations that happened after the 2009 disappointment at COP19 in Copenhagen. She assumed the UNFCCC Executive Secretary position shortly after COP10, and in her words her "stubborn, optimistic character" saw her through her term that successfully ended with the highly acclaimed Paris Agreement at COP21. I am inspired beyond words. I am looking forward to sharing my experience with everyone who is ready for implementation towards saving our oceans and climate.





Edinburgh

A tear of sadness followed by a tear of joy



By Matea Nauto



We arrived in Edinburgh aboard Peace Boat on 3 October 2017. My colleagues and I joined the 95th Peace Boat Global Voyage as participants in its Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors programme. Coming from Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Seychelles, Maldives, Belize and Trinidad and Tobago, we have travelled far to share our stories and be the face of what I call the greatest environmental and moral challenge of the 21st century. Peace Boat designed our programme based on its years of experience with the Global Voyage for a Nuclear-Free World: Peace Boat Hibakusha Project, which takes survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings to share their experiences and build emotional connections with people in different countries.

We were very fortunate to learn about the Hibakusha Project onboard. But that did not prepare me or my

fellow youth for the testimony that we would hear that day in Edinburgh. We travelled together with the Hibakusha from the port to the Scottish Parliament. We were briefed that we would share the session with the Hibakusha. We put forward fellow ambassadors Kya and Selina to speak on our behalf at this session. We were warmly received by the Chief Whip Mr Bill Kidd and also had the opportunity to meet Ms. Fiona Jane Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs and Ms. Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform.

Selina Leem from the Marshall Islands and Fijian Kya Lal shared personal experiences and made moving statements on nuclear weapons and climate change. Then came the most shocking testimonial. Ms Kimura, a Hibakusha, recalled her experience on the day the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Tears were rolling down her cheeks and I couldn't fathom the pain this lady must feel reliving the experience as she recalled that fateful day. At that moment, I was infuriated inside. How can human beings want to destroy others without mercy? These weapons of mass destruction are not welcome on our planet and must be eradicated at all costs.

Later that afternoon, the Youth Ambassadors walked down the Royal Mile before joining a dinner co-

hosted by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and Royal Geographic Society at the Edinburgh Castle! On the way, we dropped by a little cozy Scottish pub with Yoshioka Tatsuya, Peace Boat's director, and talked a bit about world issues. I then realized that our fight for climate justice was in many ways similar to that of the Hibakusha. We both wanted to ensure the survival of the human species. We are the face of this issue.

Ms. Christiana Figueres was presented the prestigious Shackleton Medal that night. She assumed the UNFCCC Executive Secretary position shortly after COP19, and in her words, her "stubborn and optimistic character" saw her through her tenure that successfully ended with the highly acclaimed Paris Agreement at COP21 in 2015. She is an amazing negotiator and we had the pleasure to draw inspiration and strength from her basket of knowledge, wealth of experience, and her unrelenting positive attitude that nothing is ever impossible. Towards the end of her remarks, she invited us to join her on stage and the whole room was in awe of her speech, in which she emotionally dedicated her prize to us and the work which we must continue. That was a momentous occasion and as we shed tears of joy, we also gripped ourselves for the tough work ahead of us. I made a wish that night: May we always be stubborn and optimistic so we can achieve our goals in life. There is no denying that my Edinburgh experience will be one that I will always cherish.





Reykjavik

The land of renewable energy



By Selina Leem

Click.

The light turns on. We saw it was 08:00, and we were supposed to leave the ship at 08:30. Immediately, me and my two roommates sprang from our beds and simultaneously started getting ready.

The Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador team had finally arrived in Reykjavik, Iceland. The air was rich with the smell of Sulphur, a strong smell for the newcomers and scentless to the locals. “Brrrrr!”, true to its namesake, the island was cold. The group had bundled up, and off we went to the Hellisheioi Power Plant. Roughly forty minutes away from the port, and city, the power plant stood out in the midst of nature. The natural surroundings appeared untouched, only cuddling the power plant. Reykjavik has come very far in terms of changing their source of energy—from fossil fuels to renewables. We were all extremely impressed with their use of geothermal energy. They use geothermal energy for electricity, and to heat



their houses and workplaces. Their water is naturally heated and transported all throughout the island with pipes under the earth. The hot water melts the snow on the surface, enabling smooth transportation. It also provides hot water to all households so no energy is needed to heat the water. They have been able to use their resources sustainably. Iceland is 100% renewable, an amazing feat for an island up in the freezing north. Whilst driving across the island, the scenery takes your mind away on an adventure. The mountains, hills, volcanoes, and yonder; the earth an interesting colour of grey with green moss in an abundance. I imagined myself galloping on a horse riding in the wind. Finally, back to reality, we arrived at a geothermal garden which has a geothermal oven used to bake bread. In the garden, we witnessed a geyser in action, and it sent a few of us running away frantically, “Oh Lord, it is coming at me!”



In its own unique way, Iceland was romantic. The group split into two, some went to explore Reykjavik, while the rest of us went to an outdoor swimming pool. It was wondrous! We marvelled that it was 80C outside, yet we were swimming in naturally heated swimming pools. We tested out the different water temperatures in different pools, and finally cooled off in a 50C tub. After swimming and going on the slide multiple times, we finally made our leave. We met two representatives from the only youth environmental organization in all of Iceland—Ungir Umhverfissinnar. They recounted how

they visit primary and secondary schools to educate students about environmental issues. They also try to have their say on activities that are or might be harmful to the environment that have been discussed or approved by the government. Finally, they try to suggest policies and get them approved.

Outside, it was becoming even greyer, signaling the arrival of the night. We parted ways with the two representatives, and headed back to Peace Boat. We met with Akira Kawasaki, a member of Peace Boat and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Peace Boat is one of the steering group members of ICAN, which has just won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. He explained the two-stage process of the campaign and why it was successful in bringing about a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations. First, they deepened the recognition of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Then they sought to get a legally binding treaty against the use and testing of nuclear weapons. The treaty has now been passed and 53 countries have already become signatories. Mr. Kawasaki believes that this two-stage process is fundamental in achieving the campaign’s goal of nuclear weapon abolition.

It was a brief meeting, and then we rushed down to the ship’s restaurant to have dinner with Dagfinnur Sveinbjörnsson, CEO and Takeshi Kaji, Director of the Arctic Circle, the largest network of international dialogue and cooperation on the future of the Arctic. It was enlightening to hear that they invite island representatives all the way from Kiribati and other Pacific island nations to the conference they hold every year. We came to the conclusion that Arctic countries and island nations are interconnected as ice from the Arctic countries are melting, putting low-lying islands at risk of being submerged.

Later on that night, we trudged along the streets of Reykjavik. Iceland amazed us, and turned our noses red. It was early the next morning that we heard, and felt the ship groaning, and moving. It was time to say goodbye to this beautiful country.



New York!

The final call



By Zana Kristen Wade

The final leg, 15 October 2017, the beginning of the end. Early Sunday morning, Peace Boat docked in New York City at Pier 90, in Manhattan. With a long journey behind us we now look to influence our futures. That evening was the Peace Boat's Floating Festival for Sustainability. It was a celebration of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the importance of education, partnership and youth engagement which were highlighted through a diverse range of speakers and performers.

The event included a special celebration for the awarding of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), whose International Steering Group includes Peace Boat. First we heard from Mr. Yoshioka Tatsuya, Co-Founder and Director of Peace Boat, who gave us a great insight into the path of moving forward in regard to Maritime travel and the new EcoShip which will be launched in 2020. We then heard from Ms. Marie Paule Roudil, Director of UNESCO

Liaison Office New York, followed by Mr. Gene Bai, First Secretary, Mission of Fiji to the United Nations, who gave a touching speech targeting the need for collaboration, motivation, and to continued work for a future we know we can reach for.

Thereafter, we, the Peace Boat Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors, gave our individual speeches with touching moments ranging from a beautiful poem recited by Selina Neem from the Marshall Islands to the reading of our Call to Action. This was followed by the most beautiful composition created by Mr. Paul D. Miller, aka DJ Spooky, and Ms. Aimee Neimann, violinist. This was a touching melody that grasped the contents of our hearts and left us in thought. The night ended with words from Mr. Kawasaki Akira, Executive Committee Member, Peace Boat / International Steering Group Member, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN); Dr. Kathleen Sullivan, Disarmament Educator, Hibakusha Stories; Ms. Kimura Tokuko, Hibakusha (atomic bomb



survivor) from Nagasaki; Ms. Emilie McGlone, Director, Peace Boat US, who introduced a very fun Eco-Fashion Show; and finally Ms. Cora Weiss, President, Hague Appeal for Peace. Displays of powerful images and performances by amazing, talented artists swept the night, and with an emotional fun-filled night behind us, we then set off for the United Nations the next day.

This was the first time some of the Youth Ambassadors visited the United Nations. With displays of culture and history, as well as powerful images and memorabilia inspiring change and motivation, we were always amazed when walking through its premises. Our session, entitled the "Ocean, Our Future: SIDS Youth Sailing for Climate Action and Peace" was about us sharing our messages for COP23 and the pressing need for more action on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Powerful testimonies were given, bringing most people present to tears. La Tisha Parkinson of Trinidad and Tobago focused on the Youth Call to Action, expressing her deep concern for humanity, which left the room emotional and deep in thought. Following our presentation at the UN, we had a session with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) led by Mr Andrew Hudson, Head of the Water & Ocean Governance Programme, during which we talked more in depth about the degradation of our oceans and seas and what needs to be done to become more sustainable.

This was followed by our final meeting for the day, an exchange with the AOSIS (Alliance of Small Island States) Climate Change Fellows. Established in 2014, this programme brings early-career professionals



from AOSIS member countries to New York for one year to participate as part of each Fellow's national delegation to the UNFCCC and United Nations Headquarters. The discussion focused on general youth involvement, the use of our programmes and a short conversation on the use of the word Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as we, the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors, felt the need to change the dynamics of that word to Large Ocean States (LOS) in order to empower our nations.

With some of the most amazing conversations, the most beautiful forms of art and the vision of a brighter future, in the coming hours it would finally be time to see Peace Boat's ship off. With the cold autumn air and the lights of New York, it was surreal to see the beloved ship we learned and did so much on leave without us. Being on the other side of a farewell party brought everyone to tears. For some it was tears of sorrow in a sense, but for most I believe they were tears of the unknown, an emotional moment where we all realized we came to this moment for a purpose. This is what matters. Looking forward to the future, you have heard of our challenges, of our stubborn optimism and now you can see our growth. As we lead our people into the coming storms, I believe we can all say we are now walking as a chain link. Connected, strong in will and knowledge. We are against the tide; however, this is not a goodbye or an ending in any way. Friends have now turned into family and Peace Boat, our vessel for hope and motivation. We just need to remember that individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.





An intense three weeks onboard



By Matea Nauto

Pease Boat, in its own right, is similar to a floating university or public seminar hall. Throughout the three weeks I was onboard Peace Boat from Barcelona (23 September) to New York City (15 October), I am quite sure I learned more about myself and the world I live in than at any other point I have studied or lived. The Peace Boat experience is very unique too. We participated in onboard activities that were conducted by guest educators from different walks of life who shared their knowledge and understanding on their areas of specialty. Whether these were centred on leadership, nuclear disarmament, or Japanese culture, we had it all.

On top of this, our group of Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors are grateful for the closed sessions that were organized by our amazing coordinator Chema Sarri. We had internal sessions with Christiana Figueres on climate diplomacy and action, Hannah

Stanton on Leadership and Youth Empowerment for SDGs, as well as with Abigail Connolly from Oxfam GB, who taught us the power of advocacy and use of craft in activism. My colleagues were also very skillful in their fields and shared their wisdom and experience on COP negotiations, poetry for advocacy, and communication skills.

These internal sessions have a genuine impact on our confidence levels. They boosted our morale and enhanced our influence on our audiences when we conduct our many public presentations either on climate change or ocean degradation, or about our countries and cultures. The opportunities to learn and grow onboard are limitless. The experience truly opened my eyes to what we can learn, even in a relaxed environment such as on a boat, and then utilise back in our communities to contribute to the social and economic development of our people.



Change Makers



By Hannah Stanton,
director of *TheGoals.org*

What happens if you put a group of dedicated change makers in the same room, simply to do their magic? Exactly, more magic.

This is how I felt joining the Peace Boat Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors as a facilitator and guest educator on the final stretch of their journey across the Atlantic. Being an advocate and activist for sustainable development myself, it was like coming home. As different as we are as individuals, the more we have in common when it comes to passion, drive, curiosity and will power. Stepping into their space was clearly a privilege, to be part of their journey and allowed to influence it even the tiniest bit, an honour.

What combines us also makes us stronger. In our sessions, we discussed activism and the different forms activism can and should take. We discussed driving forces and challenges, what do we have to do to keep our fire burning without burning out ourselves? We explored leadership and what it stands for, from leading ourselves to leading others. We discussed the greatest gift human beings can give one another - feedback - and showered each other in different forms of the same as part of our learning journey to understand ourselves and others better.

Activism, leadership, and feedback go hand in hand with passion, drive, curiosity, and will power. They are all elements of a learning journey about ourselves and how to reach the ambitious goals we as leaders set for ourselves. Dedicated change makers will never settle for the second best option, because we all know what is at stake. Decision makers should never disregard their impact. To keep young people

on the sidelines instead of including them and their visions at the table and in decision making processes is a mistake.

The tipping point for the sustainable development of our planet is close and young people globally want to be part in shaping the future. The spheres in which we operate are as diverse as our backgrounds, but we are all active members of the communities and everywhere that we have the space to shine with our agency, where we fight for agency, and prove that we are already solving problems and making a difference. In my work, it is a privilege to be meeting change makers around the world of the youngest age that all care about the future and how they can play a part in making it better. They are not leaders of tomorrow, they are leading change since way before yesterday. Unlocking their potential and opening spaces for them is my duty, and so it should be for the every individual with the power to do so.

The magic does not just come from the ability to stand up, speak up, and be counted, but our relentless efforts to learn and improve. To be part of the solution and stop being part of the problem. It means to believe in every human being's capacity to contribute to a sustainable world. It means and providing more and more people with the opportunity to do so.

We bring the expertise into discussions and a stop to pointless conversations that do not lead to action. We learn from and with each other and thus create bridges and bonds that are stronger than loose commitments. Instead they are a heartfelt promise for the survival of our planet - on a social, environmental, and economic level.



The Costa Rican Hummingbird

By La Tisha Parkinson

Have you heard the Ecuadorian parable about the hummingbird?

The story begins with the Great Forest catching on fire, and the animals within it fleeing for their lives. All save one, the tiny hummingbird, would not abandon the forest. She flies to the stream, picks up a single drop of water, and drops it on the raging fire. Again, and again she continues her efforts against the inferno at great personal risk. The other animals watch on the outskirts, warning the hummingbird of the dangers; they lament that there is nothing they can do in such a situation. The hummingbird listens, but continues her task. Finally, the bear, one of the biggest creatures in the forest, asks her what she hopes to accomplish.

The story concludes with this final sentence:

Without stopping, the hummingbird looked down at all the animals and said, "I am doing what I can."

We first heard this story told by Peace Boat founder, Yoshioka Tatsuya. After which Christiana Figueres chimed in that he had left out a very important ending:

After the animals saw the hummingbird's determination, they too were inspired, and so one by one, each of them joined in. They carried as much water as they could. They each worked together doing only what they could. Soon after which they successfully put out the fire.

Does that story remind you of anyone? It reminds me of Christiana Figueres. I will always think of her whenever I see a hummingbird, which will be often as I come from what is known as "the land of the hummingbird" (Trinidad and Tobago). The majesty of this bird won't remind me of her because she has a tattoo of a hummingbird on her shoulder, but because she was, and still is in fact the human embodiment of the hummingbird spirit from that Ecuadorian parable. You may know her as the former Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, but we've come to know her as the Costa Rican hummingbird, which is really one and the same. The Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors sat down with Christiana Figueres to ask her a few questions, one of which

was what the hummingbird means to her. To her it represents her true experience for many years: "My little hummingbird reminds me every day that it is not power, but rather it is determination, it is humility and it is collective efforts that make the difference in changing the world, and that we can if we join others who are similarly minded with similar hearts, we can change the world, even if we are not sitting in the powerful governments of the world", she said.

This may seem strange to some of you as she has worked closely with governments for many years. So then, what role is it that you can play if you're not "sitting in the powerful governments of the world"? If you live in a small island developing state you may think that statement applies to your territory; however, in the words of Christiana Figueres, "the leadership by small island states is two-fold. First it is a moral leadership to call the world to work and act at its highest level of consciousness. And second, there is a very important leadership of emissions reduction—not because of the quantity, but because of what it means. Because of the symbolism of islands moving to renewable energy and changing their emission reductions, that is a symbolic contribution that only those islands can make. And it is a very strong call to action on the part of those who can produce many more emission reductions because of the fragility of the small island states." Our states may be small, they may be developing, but our governments are in no way powerless.

What about those in civil society? What can they do? Unfortunately, the UN negotiations are intergovernmental negotiations, and therefore, when it comes to the actual text, only government officials are involved. However, in true hummingbird mentality, under her leadership, "the doors of the United Nations were opened to all constituencies: to young people, to indigenous people, to women, to scientists, to religious leaders, to business, to investors, to every single stakeholder that has a stake in climate change. Because the fact is there is no single person on the face of this earth that is not touched and impacted by climate change, and it was my full conviction that all of these people needed to be consulted, and needed to have the door opened to them", she pointed out.

Are you an individual who is not aligned with any civil society or organization? Fear not, there is sage wisdom for you as well: "As individuals, we can certainly be much more aware about the energy that we consume." This goes far beyond just switching off your lights. The reality is that in many countries

electricity is embedded in everything we do. To combat this, "we should become much more aware of the energy that we use and much more aware about the energy that we waste." Apart from energy, "we can also become much more aware of all the different impacts that we have in our daily lives: the way we eat, what we eat, how we consume, the packaging of what we consume."

Finally, as individuals, there are three very important things Christiana Figueres would like to remind us that we can do. "First, in countries that have democracy and voting, we can choose those leaders who understand the situation that we're in and who are willing to take leadership. So, voting is very important. Second, we can definitely demand from the market goods and services that are less carbon intensive, and, third, those of us who are already at the end of our lives, and who have been fortunate enough to have contributed to some kind of pension fund can ask our pension fund, "where are you investing?" And those pension funds that are investing in high carbon need to get out. They need to get out, and they need to shift their capital to the technologies of the twenty-first century. So as individuals, we actually have much more power than we think we do, and we should exercise it."

"We can also become much more aware of all the different impacts that we have in our daily lives: the way we eat, what we eat, how we consume, the packaging of what we consume."



It's difficult to write this article without sounding like a fan-girl, because the essence of this woman is just truly amazing. If you don't already feel inspired, or moved, perhaps this will do the trick. We asked Ms. Figueres what her biggest achievement or greatest success has been, and really, we think she's had so many, so it was a fair question. She responded quite effortlessly and matter-of-factly: "My biggest achievement is my two daughters. I believe that it is the next generation who is actually going to be the generation who will finally end up really changing the course of history. I think the only thing that we oldies have done is to begin to very, very slowly change the course of this big mother ship that we are on, but it is actually the next generation who will take the credit." Speaking of the next generation, after being so impacted by our very short (maybe two to three days) time with her, we were intrigued to know what she thought about us, so we asked. "The young ambassadors have really been remarkable in their eloquence both about their own individual national reality but also about their collective reality. And those realities are part and parcel of the same thing and I do think that once they get off the boat, first of all, they shall be friends forever, but more than that, they shall be co-walkers along this journey and I hope they invite many young people to join them on this journey." We have similar hopes Ms. Figueres, which we will hopefully discuss more when we meet

again on the Ecoship—a Peace Boat initiative which seeks to bring the maritime industry into the 21st century—finally.

I struggle to be optimistic when I think about the state we, the world, has fallen into. When asked about why we've fallen into such a state, Ms. Figueres answered quite plainly. "We have done that because we have always assumed that the natural environment has a value of zero. We have always assumed that the natural environment would have infinite elasticity and that we would always be able to continue our consumption and production at the cost of the natural environment, and that there would always be more and more and more natural forgiveness." According to Ms. Figueres, we've reached planetary boundaries, and if we'd like to continue living on this planet, we have to live at the surface of nature.

It's easy to feel as though things are hopeless, especially when you keep focusing on the problem, and not on the solution(s). So, we've set our world on fire. What can we do? I am but one person, it won't do me much good to focus on what everyone else isn't doing, but perhaps if I did just what I could do, I would inspire others to follow suit. Christiana Figueres is a stubborn optimist, she is a hummingbird. She has inspired me. I am a harvester butterfly, I will do what I can. What are you? How can you help us put this fire out?

"My biggest achievement is my two daughters. I believe that it is the next generation who is actually going to be the generation who will finally end up really changing the course of history."



The Stubborn Optimist



By Kya Lal

The name Christiana Figueres, is an imposing one. Her track record, work ethic, reputation and dedication to ensuring that the world prevents irreversible climate damage are impressive. Christiana Figueres was handed the keys to a kingdom in ruin when she took over as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) after COP15 in Copenhagen. Many had pinned their hopes on Copenhagen. Expectations were high that a legally binding climate treaty would be reached in 2009. Instead, a lack of transparency, political tensions, insurmountable differences, and pressure became the straws that broke the camel's back. The negotiations at Copenhagen stalled, collapsed, and then rose from the dead as the Copenhagen Accord, a spectre of the climate action actually needed. So being the woman who managed to revive the negotiation process, galvanize a team—and the world—on climate action, and produce the Paris Agreement within only six years, is not something small or inconsequential.

Yet, knowing all of this and more about her, and her work, nothing can ever quite prepare you to meet Christiana Figueres. For our team of Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors, we got all of this and more. For me, I expected to get Christiana the former Executive Secretary, Christiana the negotiator, Christiana the diplomat. Instead we got Christiana in a simple navy sweater, loafers and pearls. Christiana full of colour, warmth, and tears. Christiana, the stubborn optimist. Our team learned more from Christiana in a few short hours than we possibly



could have learned elsewhere in years. And if you are willing to learn, Christiana Figueres will teach you a lot and then some. She sees every moment, anywhere, anytime, as an opportunity to change someone's mind and heart on climate issues.

Our team quickly reached consensus that we would never voluntarily play poker with Christiana. She has a mean poker face. You never know what's coming until it's too late. Whether it be some sage wisdom, profound knowledge, or explaining the intricacies of the Paris Agreement ratcheting mechanism. Or whether it be such a convincing argument that you start doubting everything you thought you knew, or questioning why you even held your initial position to begin with. You can't leave a conversation with Christiana without learning something, whether you agree or disagree with her. However, from our time with her two things will forever and indelibly be imprinted on our team. Firstly, not everyone wants to save the world. But if whatever they are doing, no matter how small or how big or for whatever motivation, helps prevent catastrophic climate change, then we should take this as a positive action towards climate change and encourage them. Secondly, and more importantly, that we need to be stubborn optimists, steadfast in our belief that climate change can be reversed and that we can all be a part of this change. We all need to be a part of this change in order to ensure our collective futures.





By Ashwa Faheem

The power of photography

There is still much needed advocacy and education on the issue of climate change. I believe that once people fully understand the gravity of the climate crisis worldwide they will take action. Many communities around the world have been deceived by false advertisements and propaganda enforced by governments mostly because of lack of education on the topic of climate crisis. What we need is a medium that is straight forward to help communicate with the broader public regarding the alarming effects of climate change that will consequently affect every human being and animal on the planet.

I strongly believe in the power of photography as a medium of communication. I have been using the camera as a tool to investigate the issue, to observe and document the repercussion of sea level rise and the impacts on human life because of overall climate change. Through my journey visiting several islands,

I have discovered that photographs have the capacity to document reality via a medium; that is an image that is understood universally. Photographs are mediums that are understood universally regardless of your political views, economic status or religion. Everybody can understand a photograph, unlike a book which involves the skill of reading that you would have to acquire before you can perceive the information.

It is essential to note that photographs will always remain as a witness to the state a community was in at a given time. These images can be used for educational purposes, inspire generations and perhaps motivate communities to take action.

Therefore, I feel that photography can be instrumental to work on an issue like climate change that needs global attention.



By Selina Leem

Why Poetry and Spoken Word?

Poetry, and spoken word is personal. I have written poems for most of my life. The summer of last year (2016), was the first time I gave a spoken word performance. Since then, I have given only seven spoken word performances, all of them on just one piece, entitled “More Than Just a Blue Passport.”

Speeches on the other hand, are what I am more comfortable giving. I am comfortable because I am not pushing buttons, and boundaries. I am not as specific. I speak as the Marshall Islands. I am composed. I am quiet, but strong. My emotions and frustrations are on a tight leash.

With poetry, I make concrete thoughts and emotions by writing them on a piece of paper. With spoken word, I speak as a small island girl with big dreams, who carries a lot of anger, and feelings of injustice. I am loud. I am quiet. I cackle. I mock. I cry. I go crazy. I am NOT composed. I point fingers. I am fear, love, and vulnerability on a rant, and there is no stopping me. This is what I find scary about poetry, and spoken

word. Because you are being vulnerable with an audience you are not familiar with, you come to the realization that vulnerability is a word in disguise for strength; and you need strength to be this extremely vulnerable. Vulnerability allows me to connect with my audience on a personal, and emotional level—to their humanity—something not often seen in many conferences and talks all over the world.

These conferences tend to be centered around money, and rarely focus on those most affected by the issues being discussed, or the decisions being made. Unfortunately, the similar scene of political/statistical talks has desensitized many of those who were supposed to be representing the ones most affected. They may have gone in passionately, but their passion seems to have run out over the years, as though the issues are no longer as close to home for them. Where is the resilience? Where are our fighters? This is why I believe we need something more personal, more emotional, to remind us of the humanity of the issue. This is why we need poetry and spoken word.



A film for climate hope

By Luis Barreto

During the three-week programme, I was lucky enough to travel with the group of youth to film a documentary about this amazing experience. The result is 'Against the Tide', a film that portrays the voyage of these seven young leaders who joined Peace Boat's first ever Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme.

The experience of producing this short film was very inspiring for all of us involved in the project. The ambassadors not only brought their enthusiasm and optimism to the project; they also shared solutions and inspired others to take simple actions at the individual level in order to make a difference.

For me, it was an eye-opening experience. I didn't know very much about their countries, but I had the chance to learn a lot and realize that climate change is a bigger problem than I could imagine. For many islanders, tackling climate change is a survival issue.

'Against The Tide' was screened for the first time at the 2017 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP23) in Bonn, Germany, to raise awareness about the fragility and vulnerability of the small island states. We hope to show the film in many places to inspire people from all walks of life across the globe to take environmental actions and initiatives which will contribute towards protecting the world that we live in. I hope you enjoy it!

FILMMAKER PROFILE

Luis Barreto is a Colombian national with a background in graphic design who worked for several international agencies in Medellín, Colombia, until he and his wife moved to London looking for new opportunities. While in the UK, he discovered his passion for photography and video, and began to travel around the world applying his skills to assist community-based organizations and NGOs spread their message using multi-media, video, photography and online/print advertizing material through the consulting company Zoom In Projects (www.zoominprojects.com). During their time in Siem Reap, Cambodia, they gave youth media workshops in partnership with Pepy Cambodia and UNICEF Cambodia. They have also helped to develop the online resource Learning Service: Improving Volunteer Travel Through Education. Luis Barreto's work has been featured in multiple magazines and exhibitions including at Kensington and Chelsea College, London, Botanical Garden of Medellín, Colombia, and as part of a collective exhibition in New York entitled Art Takes Time Square. View Luis' work at Luisbarreto.com.

Outreach and awareness raising



Peace Boat strongly believes in the power of personal testimony to raise awareness to build momentum for action. As they travelled through Europe and to New York, the youth ambassadors events were held in collaboration with local stakeholders and communities to share their experiences of the impact of climate and ocean change. Activities and the personal testimonies of the participants were reported in local and national media in the ports the youth ambassadors visited, all serving to raise awareness and build momentum for change.



A Call to Action

From Peace Boat's Inaugural Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors

We, the youth of Large Ocean States, urge policy and decision makers to adopt necessary incentives and policies to immediately reduce carbon emissions and ocean degradation and to stand with us in the fight against climate change. We are hugely conscious of our collective futures and the precipice on which we stand.

We must be given a chance to effect change. We must be given a chance to implement our visions and ideas and to hold conversations with decision makers regardless of race, nationality, gender, sexuality or religion. We will not repeat the mistakes of the past. We will instead focus on the conservation and sustainability of our planet. We will do everything in our power to ensure all nations survive and thrive in a sustainable manner.

We call for immediate cross-sectoral action at every level, including grassroots community groups, corporate institutions and governments. We call for the utilization of available resources, technology and political will to find creative and

long-term solutions to both climate change and ocean degradation. We call for the consultation of indigenous and local peoples in finding these solutions to address their specific needs, considering and respecting their differences and cultures.

We emphasize the participation of media from all levels on these issues in a bid for greater transparency. We need greater access to information, technology and funding to ensure adequate adaptation and mitigation measures are taken in respect to climate change and ocean degradation. Youth involvement is integral to the combat of climate change and environmental degradation, we will not be left behind, outside the conversations and negotiating rooms and decision making processes.

We demand transparency, finance planning, as well as sustainable development across all sectors. We also emphasize the importance of our oceans and seas. The ocean has shaped human history, culture, lives and continues to do so. It is now well past the hour where we decide our collective futures. For we do not inherit the world from our ancestors but borrow it from our children.

In keeping with this spirit, the Ocean and Climate Change Youth Ambassadors:

1. Note the positive actions countries are taking in regards to oceans, and climate change and encourage further ambitions in these respects.
2. *Strongly encourage* a shift-away from using the terminology Small Island Developing States (SIDs) to utilizing the term Large Ocean States (LOS).
3. *Strongly encourage* countries to meet, or exceed their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCS) under the Paris Agreement, and their voluntarily commitments made under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).
4. *Acknowledge* human rights violations that will occur from the impacts of human-induced climate change, and ocean degradation, unless tangible and drastic measures are taken to avert the current business as usual approach (BAU).
5. *Condemn* the ongoing use of single-use plastics and encourages countries to phase out their use by 2025.
6. *Further condemn* overfishing and *expressing* our hope that countries will take positive steps towards the creation of new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

7. *Note* the lack of awareness on ocean degradation, and climate change issues, and encourages the inclusion of these topics within education curriculums.

8. *Deplore* the creation of any new, or additional coal mines, and nuclear power plants and encourages divestment towards a hundred percent renewable energy.

9. *Are alarmed by* the impacts of deep-water drilling, tar sands and fracking and calls upon countries to immediately cease these activities.

10. *Encourage* countries to develop and implement comprehensive finance plans that take into consideration their biodiversity and the impacts of climate change on their natural environments and resources

This call reflects an emerging global consensus on concrete proposals by youth to ensure the future we deserve. Therefore, we demand decisive and immediate action on our call to action. Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors and the signatories of this call, invite you join us in ensuring our collective futures and more peaceful world.



Peace Boat and the SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Having supported the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Campaign since 2009, bearing the campaign's logo on the sides of the ship, Peace Boat renewed its commitment to building a more equitable and sustainable world by pledging its support for the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, otherwise known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a committed campaigner for the SDGs, Peace Boat sails with the vibrant SDGs logo on its hull and uses its global voyages for peace and sustainability to raise awareness of the SDGs. The Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme was focused on Goal 13 (Climate Action) and Goal 14 (Life Below Water).



What are the Sustainable Development Goals?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. These 17 Goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. The goals are interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another. The SDGs work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right choices now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations. They unite us together to make a positive change for both people and planet.

Source: United Nations



Climate change is now affecting every country on every continent. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives, costing people, communities and countries dearly today and even more tomorrow. People are experiencing the significant impacts of climate change, which include changing weather patterns, rising sea level, and more extreme weather events. The greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are driving climate change and continue to rise. They are now at their highest levels in history. Without action, the world's average surface temperature is projected to rise over the 21st century and is likely to surpass 3 degrees Celsius this century—with some areas of the world expected to warm even more.



Oceans, seas and other marine resources are essential to human well-being and social and economic development worldwide. Their conservation and sustainable use are central to achieving the 2030 Agenda, especially for small island developing States. Marine resources are particularly important for people living in coastal communities, who represented 37 per cent of the world population in 2010. Oceans provide livelihoods, subsistence and benefits from fisheries, tourism and other sectors. They also help regulate the global ecosystem by absorbing heat and carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere. However, oceans and coastal areas are extremely vulnerable to environmental degradation, overfishing, climate change and pollution.

10 Things You Can Do to Save the Ocean

1. Mind your carbon footprint and reduce energy consumption

Reduce carbon emissions and their impact on the ocean by leaving the car at home when you can and being conscious of your energy use at home and work. A few things you can do to get started today: switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs, take the stairs, and bundle up or use a fan to avoid oversetting your thermostat.

2. Make safe, sustainable seafood choices

Global fish populations are rapidly being depleted due to demand, loss of habitat, and unsustainable fishing practices. When shopping or dining out, help reduce the demand for overexploited species by choosing seafood that is fished using sustainable methods.

3. Use fewer plastic products

Plastics that end up as ocean debris contribute to habitat destruction and entangle and kill tens of thousands of marine animals each year. To limit your impact avoid single use plastics by carrying a reusable water bottle, storing food in reusable containers, bringing your own cloth tote or other reusable bag when shopping, and recycle whenever possible.

4. Help take care of the beach

Whether you enjoy diving, surfing, or relaxing on the beach, always clean up after yourself. Explore and appreciate the ocean without interfering with wildlife or removing rocks and coral. Go even further by encouraging others to respect the marine environment or by participating in local beach cleanups.

5. Don't purchase items that exploit marine life

Certain products contribute to the harming of fragile coral reefs and marine populations. Avoid purchasing items such as coral jewelry, tortoiseshell hair accessories (made from hawksbill turtles), and shark products.

6. Be an ocean-friendly pet owner

Read pet food labels and consider seafood sustainability when choosing a diet for your pet. Never flush cat litter, which can contain pathogens harmful to marine life. Avoid stocking your aquarium with wild-caught saltwater fish, and never release any aquarium fish into the ocean or other bodies of water, a practice that can introduce non-native species harmful to the existing ecosystem.

7. Support organizations working to protect the ocean

Many institutes and organizations are fighting to protect ocean habitats and marine wildlife. Find a national organization and consider giving financial support or volunteering for hands-on work or advocacy. If you live near the coast, join up with a local branch or group and get involved in projects close to home.

8. Influence change in your community

Research the ocean policies of public officials before you vote or contact your local representatives to let them know you support marine conservation projects. Consider patronizing restaurants and grocery stores that offer only sustainable seafood, and speak up about your concerns if you spot a threatened species on the menu or at the seafood counter.

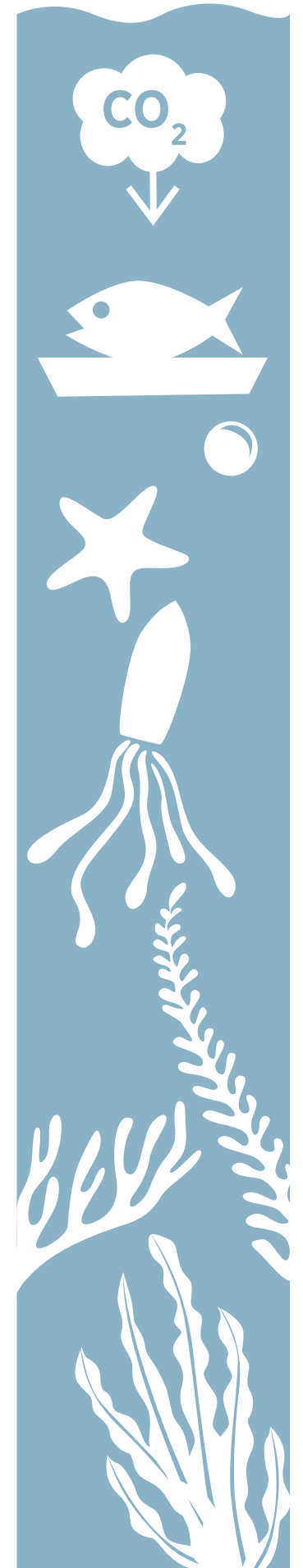
9. Travel the ocean responsibly

Practice responsible boating, kayaking, and other recreational activities on the water. Never throw anything overboard, and be aware of marine life in the waters around you. When you're traveling at sea, consider your impact on the environment and choose eco-friendly options.

10. Educate yourself about the ocean and marine life

All life on Earth is connected to the ocean and its inhabitants. The more you learn about the issues facing this vital system, the more you'll want to help ensure its health—then share that knowledge to educate and inspire others.

Source: National Geographic





B1, 3-13-1 Takadanobaba, Shinjuku
Tokyo 169-0075, Japan
Tel: +81 (0) 3-3363-8047

For more information:
Karen Hallows (karen@peaceboat.gr.jp)
Chema Sarri (chema@peaceboat.gr.jp)

www.peaceboat.org · www.ecoship-pb.com