

# Your Future - in your Hands!



## Dear Children,



Probably most of you have heard of climate change, having learned about it at school or seen it discussed on the television or come across it via social media. In less than 35 years, Europe's average temperature has increased by 1.5 degrees Celsius! One result is more and more extreme weather events, for example droughts and floods.

You might well then ask: "There are so many people on this planet, what could I alone do about it?"

Well, you can do a lot! Many things can be done which will not only protect the environment but will also make you healthier and/or save you money. And if many others think like this, our future will be much better!

This short brochure introduces children from the world's most populated continents and shares their views on environmental issues and what they suggest doing about it. I hope that you will be inspired and encourage you to come up with – and implement – many other good ideas too!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Balogh László".

László Balogh  
Mayor, Nagykanizsa, Hungary



# Christian Paolo Maynas Rengifo

Age: 16

District of Yarinacocha, Peru



? *Many say the rainforests are the „lungs of our planet“, yet much harm continues to be inflicted on them. Living in the Amazon, what is your perspective?*

 Environmental pollution has grown a lot, the climate is warming, and the loss of our forests surely contributes to this. I am worried that if we continue like this, even if we want to react, it will be too late. My parents told me how beautiful our neighbourhood was when they were small: there were many special animals in the forest, the air was clean and illness was rare. The river was full of fish and less polluted because the boats did not burn oil at the time.

? *And now?*

 There is a lot of illegal logging locally and this affects us directly. The loggers are cruel. One of us, Mr. Edwin Chota [an environmental activist protesting the illegal harvesting of mahogany], was even killed, when he tried to protect his own land.

? *In your opinion, how could we take more care of our natural environment?*

 First, I would pass more environmental laws, that, for example, would forbid the trapping of wild animals, because this is how a lot of parrots, turtles, monkeys and other animals disappear from here. And if one tree is cut, I would like to see three planted in their place because they give us oxygen. Plastic should not be thrown into the river, but rather recycled. When I become an adult, I would like to volunteer in an environmental organisation besides studying law and politics, so that I can help my people, the Shipibo-Conibo.



### TIPS TO PROTECT NATURE:

- Hike and enjoy nature – but leave nothing but foot-prints and take nothing but photographs.
- Volunteer to collect litter from the forest.
- Share the importance of protecting nature via social media.
- Try gardening! Collect seeds and nurture saplings if you live in an apartment, and if you have a garden, ask for a corner.



# Sequoia Spencer

Age: 9

Portland, USA



? *We live in a so-called consumer society in the developed world. How does this look in practice, in your neighbourhood?*

 To limit our food purchases we grow some things in the garden, like tomatoes, parsley, grapes and apples. However, we buy clothes and most other things. If I look around my room, I can see about a hundred things, like toys, books, furniture. But I use little more than half of it. I also see things from other continents: all my stuffies [stuffed toys] which I guess were all made in China. And my shorts are made in Vietnam.

? *What do you do with those items you or your family no longer needs?*

 We donate what we don't use anymore to kids or other people who need it more than us. We also recycle and fix broken things, like notebook binders and our bicycles. We've tried to fix chairs but it never works out.

? *When you are an adult and have money to spend, what will you do differently?*

 I will buy things that aren't wrapped and aren't in packages. For example, just food by itself, like fruit. And I won't use the bags at the store, I'll bring my own. If I get a car, I'll get a Tesla [an electric car], if they get cheaper. If I can't afford that, I'll get a smaller car that doesn't use as much gas.



### TIPS FOR CONSUMING SPARINGLY: ★

- Buy local products instead of those transported from far away.
- Spend on second-hand items: they are not only cheaper, but also better for the environment.
- Purchase only what you really need! See whether you can be happy with less.
- Use things that can be re-used (for example, glass cups or fabric-based shopping bags instead of single-use paper or plastic)



# Samarth Chirayu Bhole

Age: 14

Vadodara, India



? *Modern-day society produces more and more waste. Is the environment being negatively affected by waste in Vadodara?*

 The environment is suffering in my city because there is a lot of garbage. Because of this, viruses are rife and hazardous gases fill the air. Furthermore, there is a poor system to control the use of plastic and its recycling. There is also little civic sense within our society regarding the importance of a clean environment. But what I like is that the State of Gujarat has banned plastic bags – even though some people don't follow this rule.

? *How does your family manage its garbage?*

 We reuse newspaper to make paper bags and to cover our school books. We use bottles for planting seedlings. My mother composts kitchen waste, for example, banana skins which we then use as plant fertiliser. The waste that remains (about 5 kg per week for the whole family) is transported outside our city, to Vadsar.

? *What would you suggest we do to reduce the burden on our environment?*

 To overcome this situation, our government should emphasise one's civic sense for a cleaner environment, through campaigns, advertisements, notices and school education. There should be strict penalties against those who dump waste on the roads, in ponds, rivers or on the beaches. I would rather see cloth bags in use than those made of plastic. We should reduce and recycle our garbage and offer separate dustbins for wet and dry waste.



### HOW TO REDUCE YOUR HOUSEHOLD WASTE:

- Avoid pre-packaged supermarket goods where possible and instead, bring a basket or cloth bag and reuse old paper and plastic bags for holding loose fruit, vegetables etc.
  - Encourage your parents to recycle.
  - Add a label to your family mailbox rejecting advertisements.
  - Dispose of your kitchen waste in a compost bin.
- Given that about a third of the average household waste is compostable, in this way you can have a smaller dustbin, which will also save you money.



# George Coburn

Age: 12

Brisbane, Australia



? *Can you tell us about your eating habits and of those people around you?*

 My family and I eat the food that my mother prepares, whether that be for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Mum prepares meals which usually include a variety of foods including meats, seafood, bread, pasta, rice, fruit, yoghurt and salad. Personally, my favourite dish is Mongolian beef. Once every few months I might eat in a fast-food restaurant, usually a burger joint [bar]. Or we might get takeaway fish and chips. Sweets and chocolate I eat mostly only on special occasions.

? *What do you see as the environmental impact of food?*

 Personally, I don't waste much food or have leftovers. I always eat my main lunch meal at school which is a sandwich or roll. If any food is left in my lunch box it is usually snacks, which can be saved for the following day. At home we do have some food imported from other continents, for example, speculaas [spiced biscuits] from the Netherlands. My parents don't use much deep-frozen food, although we do have it for quick meals if need be – usually frozen chips and fish.

? *How do you think we could eat more healthily and put less stress on our environment?*

 Eating more vegetables and fruit. Also eating more fish and seafood and less red meat, because it takes between 5,000 and 20,000 litres of water in Australia to generate 1 kg of beef. We have huge problems with water scarcity and drought in Australia, so consuming less red meat would lessen the strain on the environment.



### NUTRITION TIPS:

- Eat foods that are harvested at the same time of year that you eat them.
- Avoid eating food transported from other continents. It takes a huge amount of energy to transport things from so far away!
- Buy fresh local vegetables from your market, instead of pre-packaged ones from the shops.



# Ama Boateng

Age: 14

Bohicon, Benin



? *What kind of weather do you have in your country?*

 I live in the tropics. The winter is a dry season in which it does not rain for months. In the summer we experience the monsoon, which means that we get a lot of rain almost every day. I personally don't like winter that much, because the heat is intense, while the wind brings a lot of dust from the desert.

? *Where do you get water for cooking and bathing in your family?*

 We don't have access to running water at home but there are pumping wells not far away, so my mother draws water each morning. Sometimes I accompany her and wash there too. Some of my classmates argue that the water is not safe as it has a yellowish colour.

? *Does flooding cause problems where you live?*

 Where I live there are no creeks or lakes, so it is not a problem. But once we visited Ganvie - it may be a problem over there. It is very interesting, because people built their houses on the lake! So they use boats to move around.

? *In your opinion how can we take greater care of water?*

 Street litter is a grave concern. It also finds its way into our water resources. So in my opinion, we'd need to manage our litter to address water quality.



### FACTS AND TIPS TO SAVE WATER: ★

- Did you know that the average European household uses 150l water per day?!
- Drink from the tap! In our country it is excellent quality and cheap.
- Fill a reusable bottle with tap water rather than buy bottled water. This way you don't produce any plastic waste either.
- Don't throw away waste – especially not in or around lakes and rivers!



# Misell Benkő

Age: 12

Nagykanizsa, Hungary



? *Not so long ago, most children walked to school. But nowadays the majority are taken by car. How do you get to school?*

 I live about a kilometre from school so I walk – except when the weather is bad. Then my father gives me a lift. The majority of students in our class walk to school. Those who live further away take the bus.

? *How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood?*

 I live in a street with four lanes, so riding a bike is not safe. One has to pay a lot of attention when crossing the street. Luckily there is a zebra crossing, and car drivers are courteous enough.

? *What changes would you like to see made to your city's transport system?*

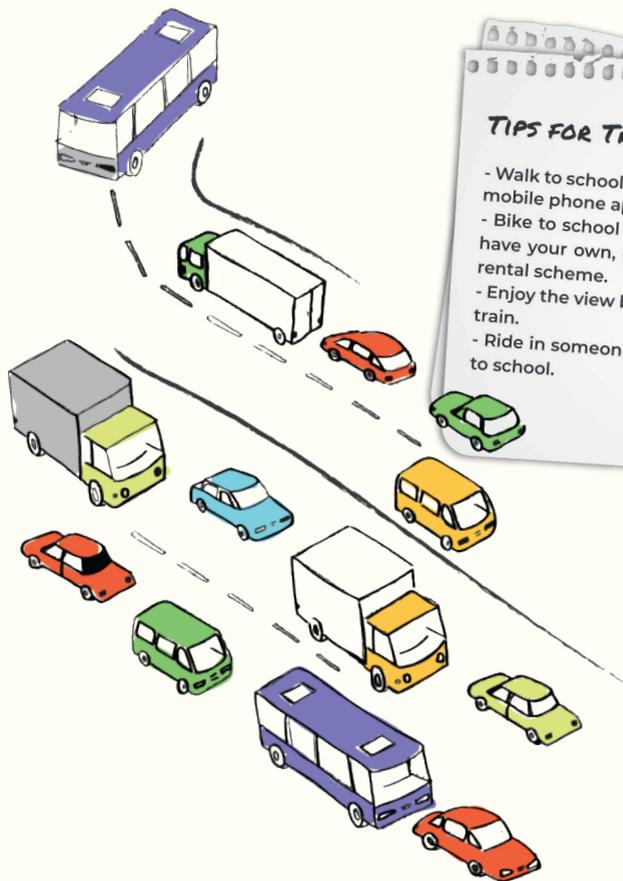
 Overall, I am happy with what we have. Though I would be happiest riding a horse to school! This is because I take riding lessons and this summer attended a horse-riding summer camp. The other thing I would change in our city is to plant trees in place of roads! There is a lot of concrete everywhere, also around the school, so it would be nice to take this space away from cars and turn them into parks.

## TIPS FOR TRAVELLING SUSTAINABLY:



- Walk to school and monitor those burnt calories by mobile phone app.
- Bike to school or if you worry about theft or don't have your own, get a subscription to a shared bike rental scheme.
- Enjoy the view by bus or catch up on homework by train.
- Ride in someone else's car, if you really must drive to school.

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