

Applied Technology High School.

Ras Al Khaimah, UAE

Global Social Leaders: Youth For Our Planet

About Us: We, The GSL Team 'Youth For Our Planet' (YFOP) are a group of 7 students from Applied Technology High School located in the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, who made it to the GSL final round and successfully bagged the prestigious 'Impact Award' in 2020. Our school is an Apple Distinguished and a Green School with a successful 1:1 iPad learning program in place. We are the 21st century citizens, who can collaborate, think critically, and solve real world problems. The Covid-19 did not stop us from achieving our target and



working towards spreading awareness about eco-friendly and sustainable lifestyle in the local

community. The previous year project initiative has been continued under a new theme with renewed passion and focus on the mission in 2020-2021 too.

Project Aim: 'Small Action, Big Impact'. Our team's main aim of this year was to spread awareness to people in the community and around the globe to save environment and make a better place for our future generations. We conducted various activities in midst of COVID-19 both online and offline in order to achieve our goals.

Project Team: Mohammed Almansoori, Project Lead, Jasem Alsuwaidi, Project Co-Lead, Mayed Alsuwaidi, Mohammed Tareq, Jamal Almansoori, Rashed Saeed, Rashed Aaref, M.s Yasmeeen Shakoor, GSL Adviser.

SDGs Targeted: #3 Good Health And Well-Being: YFOP's mission is to prompt our community to consider the health and well-being and the environment for our future before anything else by basing their choices on the UN SDGs.

#13 Climate Action: Spreading awareness about climate changes and to take urgent action in combatting climate change and its impacts is the team's main aim.

#14 Life Below Water: Cleaning beaches to save marine life and resources for sustainable development

#15 Life On Land: The YFOP spread awareness to protect, restore, reduce land pollution and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems because it will affect terrestrial life in many ways.

Our Learning Experience: Throughout this journey, we learnt teamwork skills, time-management skills, communication skills, leadership skills but most importantly dedication and love towards what we are doing. While spending 3 hours per week on this project, the team learnt how to use social media and digital platforms efficiently to reach out the public, working towards a mission improvising in the creativity skills. Public speaking and interactive skills tremendously increased along with confidence and self-esteem after every task we executed successfully and meaningfully. Also, we got better & more efficient in the use of technology for making YouTube videos, editing, posters & presentations. One of the main experiences was learning to collect & organise data for making better decisions and steps. All the team members increased their knowledge on topic with extensive and intense research.

Our journey: The attitude of caring for the environment and being aware of our actions towards Mother Nature doesn't develop overnight. This requires the creation of awareness in students. Therefore, we first worked together to plan and carry out the Environmental Review. We used Google form to conduct this activity. The activity helped us to review and understand our school's current environmental situation and identify our school's environmental management needs and environmental learning opportunities. We were really concerned about the high energy and water consumption. The major challenges that we faced were the lack of awareness, direction, and the right attitude. We then used all the ideas and information to create our Action Plan and began thinking about ways of creating awareness. We initiated multiple eco-initiatives that were instrumental in developing a sense of responsibility towards protecting our environment.



Our Eco-initiatives & the instant Impact on school environment

Repurposing Plastic Bottles: In October, we managed to involve the whole school in using the leftover soda and water creating useful and decorative things that celebrate Green ideas. Together, students approximately created 100 plastic bottle planters, a few bird feeders and 10 plastic bottles bin for collecting plastic bottles for recycling.



Whole-School Recycling drive: We are currently working on a recycling drive in collaboration with the local environmental body. Under this initiative, we have placed recycle bins in each block and every classroom has a recycling bin. We are an Apple Distinguished School, therefore 90% paperless. The block monitors encourage students, teachers and support staff to drop all recyclable material in the right bins.



Planting Initiatives: Keeping in line with the vision of the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, YFOP relaunched the 'Ghafat Alkhayr' initiative in October which was on hold due to pandemic. This activity involved whole school in planting 500 Ghaf trees on our campus premises and a range of spring flowers. This initiative contributed to raising the environmental awareness of our students, increasing greenery in our beautiful school and further contribute to a healthy, clean atmosphere.



Beach/Desert Clean-Up: As the Covid-19 cases simmered down, the team conducted a beach and desert clean-up program during the month of February in coordination with local environmental bodies. The team members cleaned up the seaside and the desert filled with plastic, paper, etc. Around 30 huge bags of trash were removed that day. We also spent time to converse with the public about keeping our environment clean with a collective effort, thus spreading awareness.



E-Newsletters: We were involved in curating and publishing bi-weekly digital Eco-Newsletters. The newsletters focused on environmental issues and climatic news. They were circulated across social media with wide reachability to inform and involve the parents and the wider community in RAK.



World Creativity & Innovation Week Celebration: YFOP registered with the United Nations International Week of Observance, 15 – 21 April, celebrating the use of creativity and innovation to advance the 17 SDGs. Students and staff members participated in a contest showcasing their creative and innovative products on a digital Padlet Wall [#IAmCreative](#). Over 100 posts were shared by students and staff members with their creative products. This activity was a grand success as we were able to ignite and inspire the minds of the young students.

Earth Hour: We connected to Earth by involving the school students and staff to share their experiences on this Padlet Wall: [#Connect2Earth](#). This activity was very effective in spreading awareness.

Cost reduction in water and electricity bills: All wash basin mixers in all 13 toilets were changed to the sensor type taps to reduce the water consumption. Due to this initiative the consumption of water has decreased overall. Our water costs have been reduced by 27.29%. Due to increased awareness around the school and initiatives from students and teachers and support from IT staff, our electricity bills have decreased. All teachers now switch off lights when they leave the classrooms. All projectors and monitors are turned off while NOT in use. Our electricity costs have been reduced by 7.93%.

Taking action leaves huge impact on the purpose itself, but it also offers a feeling of fulfillment from serving others, the environment, and yourself. Just like we learned a lot about ourselves through our journey, people would be able to develop their keen minds and become exemplary characters.

The Future: To achieve sustainability in our school community, we have also successfully initiated an Eco-Committee which will collaborate and carry out Youth For Our Planet's actions in the upcoming future as we graduate from the school.

Thanks: We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped us make this project a success: Our school principal, Dr Naser ALAshab, the staff, fellow students, teachers, our friends, community leaders, however most importantly our project supervisor Miss Yasmeen Shakoor.