

2017 GRAND PRIZE WINNER: VEDA FERNANDES

Topic: Climate Action (SDG #13)

Veda Fernandes, an 11-year-old at Jumeirah Primary School in the United Arab Emirates, collected the grand prize in 2017 at an awards ceremony at Oxford University in the United Kingdom. In her essay, Fernandes imagined she was a doctor treating planet Earth for a case of “Clima-changeitis.”

Letter from a doctor

By Veda Fernandes, aged 11
(Jumeirah Primary School, United Arab Emirates)

Dear Mr. UN Secretary General,

I request your intervention with my critically ill patient, Earth. Here is her case history.

Code Red!! Rushing into the ER, I took in the paramedics giving first aid to a green and blue orb. Earth's vitals were critical; she was gasping for breath. Symptoms: Elevated temperature of 50F, greenhouse-gastritis at 50% above normal, high CO2 concentrations, deforestation, icecaps melting and sea-level rising to 20cm!!! The causative organism was homo-sapiens. Diagnosis: a classic case of Clima-changeitis, which leads to a slow and painful death.

I put Earth on life-support stat—critical care involved reducing greenhouse gases, mainly carbon-dioxide. An immediate transfusion of sustainable energy to replace fossil fuels was affected. Three doses of 500 mega-gallons of anti-plasticbiotic was injected intravenously, leading to reduction, recycling and reuse of disposables. Natural tree-planting therapy ensured short term increase in oxygenation.

I was relieved to note that Earth's vitals were momentary stabilised. Laboratory tests showed significant changes in homo-sapien eco-behavior post the emergency intervention: countries collaborated at Paris to limit future temperature rise to 2oC.

However, long-term therapy for Earth is imperative. On discharge, I prescribed a strict regimen, which aims to create a sustainable ecosystem on the recuperating Earth. Cardio-greenery resuscitation is advised for eternity—land-use zoning creates eco-cities, bio-belts and conservi-zones to maintain the bio-balance on Earth. Revitalising therapy of flora, fauna and endangered species is infused into Conservi-zones. The Arctic and the Antarctic are declared as 'Bio-belts', off limits to humans. Carbon sequestration is advised through land-use carbon inventory tracking. As wildlife and green cover expand, oxygenation levels rise and CO2 falls.

A complete change in Activities of Daily Living (ADL) is mandatory. Eco-transportation replaces fossil-fuelled modes. Magneto-monorails connect eco-cities. Hydrogen-fuelled buses and trams offer public transport and electric, or biofuel pods are private transport. Public Electric/biofuel charging stations add vitality.

Low-carbon supplements are compulsory to prevent long-term adverse carbon reactions. Clean energy from solar and wind generators power all buildings. Indigenous foliage, watered by desalinated or recycled water, shades roof tops, balconies and streets.

To maintain the momentum of treatment, R&D in low and zero-carbon breakthroughs is required. Tax policies are to reward carbon innovation by homo-sapiens. Quality of Care Indicators are measured regularly through a Global Eco-Green Centre.

With this comprehensive care, I am confident Earth's future is eternal.

Thank you,
Dr. Veda Fernandes (Eco-speciologist)

