

#08 Moeri Yasuda

One Action, One Ripple

Hello everyone,

My name is Moeri, and I'm honored to speak with you today. I want to share my personal blueprint for creating a more sustainable and peaceful world. This vision is shaped by my journey across four countries—Japan, Brunei, Canada, and now the United States—and by my belief that even as a high school student, I can take meaningful action.

Let me start by sharing the story that brought me to where I currently stand.

I was born in Japan and lived there for the first ten years. Then, because of my dad's work, we moved to Brunei—a small, peaceful country in Southeast Asia. I lived there for eight months. After returning to Japan for two and a half years, I experienced something that shaped our entire generation: the COVID-19 pandemic. That period taught me about uncertainty, resilience, and the importance of community. Then, once again due to my father's work, we moved—this time to Canada.

Canada was a turning point. It opened my eyes to how people can live in harmony with nature and with each other. Finally, in 2023, I arrived in New York, where I live today.

These moves were not always easy. Every time I changed schools, languages, or cultures, I had to start over. But each place taught me something valuable—about people, about the planet, and about myself. And as I saw different ways of living, I began asking a big question:

Why is the world so unequal in how we protect our planet—and how we live together?

That question led me to explore sustainability and peace more deeply. And that journey is what I want to share with you today.

Very recently, I had the opportunity to visit the Expo 2025 in Osaka, in which the theme was “Designing Future Society for Our Lives,” and it focused on the power of individual action in shaping a better world.

The life story of a single tree. That was the one I remember the most. The tree had stood for decades, quietly growing, absorbing carbon dioxide, giving shelter to birds, and providing beauty and shade. Even after it fell, the tree helped build new lives—moss, insects, and eventually, another tree.

That story reminded me: one life can affect many others. Our existence is part of something much bigger—a cycle where even the smallest contribution can have a lasting impact.

Now, let's talk about something we all deal with every day: garbage.

Trash may not sound like a big issue. But how we treat it shows a lot about our values—and about how we see our place in the world.

In Japan, people follow detailed rules for separating trash. Cans, bottles, and burnable garbage are collected on specific days. But often, this is done just to follow the rules—not because people truly understand where the garbage goes or why it matters. The system is convenient, paid for by taxes, but also somewhat invisible.

In Brunei, I noticed something completely different. Trash from apartments was often dumped through underground pipe, and I heard some of it even went directly into rivers. Brunei is still developing its waste management system. But I saw potential there—potential to build a model that respects both the environment and the local culture.

In Canada, things were different again. Recycling, composting, and reducing waste were just part of everyday life. Schools taught us about sustainability from a young age. Students took part in environmental projects, and families composted food waste as naturally as brushing their teeth. I saw how education, culture, and policy could work together to create real impact.

In the United States, I've seen both sides. In some neighborhoods, recycling is advanced and organized. In others, it's barely present. That inequality made me realize something: infrastructure matters—but education matters even more. Because even with great systems, if people don't care, nothing changes.

So, what is the common thread that connects all these places and experiences?

It's education.

In Canada, I studied with classmates from different countries, religions, and cultures. We worked on group projects that involved problem-solving, creativity, and communication. We didn't always agree—but we always listened. That peaceful environment came not just from policies, but from how we were taught to treat each other.

If we want a peaceful and sustainable future, education must be the foundation.

Not just education about climate change—but about empathy, understanding, and cooperation.

With that belief in mind, I want to share my three-part blueprint for creating a better world:

1. Educate and Empower Ourselves

We must first understand the challenges facing our planet—rising temperatures, plastic pollution, biodiversity loss—and believe that we can help solve them.

Schools should teach environmental science, yes—but also critical thinking, media literacy, and conflict resolution. We need to prepare young people not only to survive the future, but to lead it.

As students, we can organize talks, lead workshops, and form clubs to promote sustainability and kindness. We are not powerless. We are powerful—together.

2. Act Locally, Connect Globally

Even small actions can create big change—especially when we share them.

Through social media, international school partnerships, and cultural exchanges, we can connect with young people around the world. We can learn how others reduce waste, protect water, or plant trees—and share our own solutions too.

My own experiences have shown me that empathy can cross borders. But connection doesn't happen by accident. It takes effort—and intention.

3. Promote Empathy and Dialogue

We live in a world full of different opinions, traditions, and beliefs. That can be a source of conflict—or of strength.

We must learn to listen, to ask questions, and to find common ground. Because no matter where we are from, we all want the same basic things: clean air, safe homes, and a future full of hope.

That shared humanity is the seed of peace.

Sometimes people say, “I’m just one person. What difference can I make?”

But here’s what I believe:

One student. One action. One ripple.

At school, we can start by picking up litter, reducing single-use plastic, or turning off unused lights.

At home, we can start conversations with our families, suggest composting, or encourage greener choices.

These ripples may seem small—but they inspire others. And when enough ripples come together, they become waves.

I want to return to something I saw at the Expo—the UN Pavilion.

It reminded me that the world’s nations came together after war to protect peace, human rights, and development. That idea—that humanity can unite for a shared goal—is more important than ever.

We face global challenges: climate change, inequality, conflict. But we also have global solutions—if we choose to work together.

So, what's next for me?

I dream of a world where sustainability and peace are no longer special—they're simply the way things are.

I want to be part of that change by contributing to global education, supporting environmental justice, and lifting the voices of young people around the world.

But I also know I don't have to wait.

Even now, as a student, I can make choices that reflect the world I want to live in. I can speak up. I can lead. I can act.

One student. One action. One ripple.
Together, let's create a wave of change.

Thank you.