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By the time I graduate college, the global temperature of earth is estimated to have risen 1.5 degrees irreversibly. I have only been on earth 16 years and have already been faced with the issues created by my generation's parents, grandparents, and generations before them. For instance, we have witnessed the devastating effects of extreme weather events like hurricanes and wildfires, which are becoming more frequent and intense due to climate change. My children will not live to see living white rhinos. My grandchildren will not live to see living lions, pandas, elephants, and so much more. The climate crisis is real, and here.

The impacts on the environment are often blamed on individuals, for example if they waste paper, or if they consume products such as takeout, where plastics and food waste is nearly inevitable. However, it is crucial to recognize the significant role that large-scale companies play in environmental degradation. These companies are responsible for burning oil and gas to produce energy for consumerism, and their actions have a far greater impact than individual choices. We, as a society, must hold these companies accountable and demand sustainable practices.

ISB's sustainability mission focuses on how we, as individuals, can reduce our carbon footprint and, therefore, decrease our impact on the environment. Our activities, no matter how small, contribute to a more significant collective effort towards sustainability. By using canned drinks instead of plastic bottles, we reduce the amount of plastic waste that can end up in landfills. We can reduce the amount of energy and fumes that are released from recycling plastics. By reducing the consumption of paper at ISB, we decrease the amount of resources spent on deforestation, chemical bleaching and the energy it takes to press and cut paper. Every item we use or consume has invisible by-products.

From the fumes that come off from injection moulding plastic to the chemical by-products of dying clothing, we will not, in the next few decades, be able to achieve perfect environmental sustainability. That is not to say that making efforts towards sustainability will not have an impact. Our individual actions matter and can make a difference.

From a student perspective, we are scared. We have been dropped into a world with a ticking time bomb. The impacts are already taking a toll on us, from the hurricanes in the United States to the severe pollution across the globe. We, as individuals, can help in many ways. To start, take the online carbon footprint calculator. This is the most effective way to measure and understand how big of an impact you have on the environment.

The following way for you to help is to spread the word about ISB's sustainability mission. We need the most individuals to protect and decrease their environmental impacts for large-scale impacts.

The last immediate way to help is to decrease the amount of harmful consumption. Everything from produce in a supermarket to clothing from a mall can have critical impacts on the environment. By decreasing consumerism, we can decrease its effect on the environment.

By Harry P, Grade 11