

YOUR FUTURE IN GLOBAL IMPACT

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2026

INSIDE:

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A NOTE FROM THE TEENLIFE TEAM

In a world that feels smaller every day thanks to instant communication and evolving technology, the opportunity to make a difference on a global scale has never been greater — or more urgent. A globally minded attitude isn't a bonus; it's essential. If you're looking beyond your own neighborhood and dreaming of tackling world challenges, traveling to deliver humanitarian aid, or curious about diplomacy, sustainability, and economic development, we created this guide for you. Your Future in Global Impact is the first step to exploring exciting, impactful career paths in international relations and global studies, where you can channel your passions and curiosity into real-world change.

We've packed these pages with resources and opportunities to help you identify and build the skills and knowledge you need to become a successful global citizen and changemaker. Check out our articles on the top careers in this field, the best college majors for driving global impact, and more. Discover the important role of social entrepreneurship, learn which languages are your biggest assets, and read inspiring stories of how one person really *can* change the world. We invite you to read the articles, find a career that resonates with your ambition, and start shaping your future where you lead with empathy and make a lasting impact.



YOUR FUTURE IN GLOBAL IMPACT

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YOUR FUTURE IN GLOBAL IMPACT



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Apply to be invited →



HOW ONE PERSON (EVEN A KID) CAN BE A CHANGEMAKER AND MAKE A LASTING IMPACT

By Jodi Ireland

We all want our kids to be happy, healthy, and prosperous. But deep down, don't we also hope they'll make a *difference*? In a complicated world with complex challenges like climate change and social injustice, it's easy for teens (and, frankly, us parents) to feel small and powerless.

"What can I do?" your teen might ask, while scrolling through headlines that scream gloom and doom.

The answer, fellow parents, is *everything*.

Here's the secret: every single massive, incredible movement, every groundbreaking invention, every shift in human consciousness started with one person. One person with an idea, a passion, the courage to take that first step. Your kid has that potential within them right now.

Could you focus on raising the next superstar activist? Sure. But what I'm really talking about is helping your kiddo cultivate the mindset, skills, and belief that their individual actions really matter. *You* can empower them to be changemakers, whether that impact is felt down the street or across the globe.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A 'CHANGEMAKER'?

Forget superhero capes or flashy headlines. Changemakers don't have to be celebrities or politicians. Changemakers are people who:

- **Identify a problem or opportunity for improvement.** They see something that's not working or could be better.
- **Take the initiative to address it.** They don't complain; they act.
- **Create a positive impact.** Their actions lead to a noticeable, beneficial shift for their family, colleagues, community, or, yes, the planet.

Changemakers come in all shapes, sizes, and ages. They might be innovators, advocates, organizers, or caregivers. Their impact may be local, national, or global, but it always starts with the belief that *their efforts can make a difference*.



EVERYDAY CHANGEMAKERS: THE KID NEXT DOOR

Not all changemakers start on Instagram. Take Marley Dias, for example. As a 6th grader, she was frustrated that the only options for her to read at school were "books about white boys and dogs." She began a book drive, [#1000BlackGirlBooks](#). Her goal? Collecting and donating 1,000 books featuring Black female protagonists. When she was 14, she wrote *Marley Dias Gets It Done: And So Can You!*, a book about activism, equity and inclusion, social justice, and volunteerism.

Flint, MI, resident Amariyanna "Mari" Copeny became an activist at age 8 after writing a letter to President Obama about the lead in her hometown's water supply. She later partnered with Hydroviv to start the [Little Miss Flint Clean Water Fund](#) to maximize the impact of donated funds by providing water filters, which eliminate the single-use plastic waste associated with bottled water.

Driven by a simple question for his school science fair — how do blind people read? — and learning that they rely on expensive, clunky equipment to create accessible reading materials, 13-year-old Shubham Banerjee found a mission. Using his love of building LEGO models, he invented Braigo, a low-cost Braille printer that uses raised dots to print text. He's currently a college student at UC Berkeley *and* running [Braigo Labs](#), the company he founded to produce these printers.

THE CHANGEMAKER'S TOOLKIT

Your teen's idealism is a precious resource, but turning that fire in their belly into sustainable action requires tools. Here's how to help them balance their big dreams with concrete skills.

1. Identify the spark. What annoys or inspires them?

Ask guiding questions. Instead of "What do you want to change?" try "What breaks your heart?" or "What specific injustice really bothers you?" or even "What's something you see that just doesn't make sense?" Their answer could be anything from plastic pollution to unfair school policies, or a lack of resources for a specific group.

Connect their answer to their passions. If they love animals, maybe they research animal shelters. If they're into gaming, perhaps they can explore how gaming communities can raise money for different causes. The more connected to their existing interests, the more likely they'll stick with it.

2. Research, research, and do more research.

The power of information isn't something we can understate. Once your teen identifies an annoyance or inspiration, encourage them to dig deeper. What are the root causes of the issue? Who else is working on it? What are the different perspectives?

Guide them toward credible resources of information, like academic papers, reputable news organizations (BBC, NPR, Associated Press), nonprofit organizational reports, not just viral social media posts. This strategy helps them understand the complexity of their issue *and* avoid misinformation.

3. Start small, think big.

There's nothing wrong with incremental steps. The idea of "changing the world" can cause paralysis. Help your teen break down a big problem into manageable, actionable steps. Instead of "ending homelessness," maybe they organize a coat drive for the local shelter.

The power of one is real. A simple, single mission can evolve into something much greater, even when it starts with one person or a small group of friends.

4. Collaboration is key.

Encourage your teen to team up with like-minded peers, teachers, or community leaders. Change is rarely a solo sport. Working with others amplifies impact, provides support, and teaches crucial teamwork skills.

Emphasize the importance of listening to diverse perspectives, especially from those directly affected by the problem your teen is trying to solve. Empathy and humility are key, too.

5. Cultivate core changemaker skills and characteristics.

These skills aren't just for activists — they're skills for life!

- **Adaptability:** The ability to adjust to new conditions; solutions rarely look exactly as planned.
- **Communication:** Clearly articulating ideas, listening actively, and persuading others. It includes written, verbal, and digital communication.
- **Courage:** Standing up for what's right, even when it's unpopular or difficult.
- **Critical thinking:** Analyzing information objectively, identifying biases, and forming reasoned judgments.
- **Empathy:** The ability to understand and share another's feelings. It's the bedrock of all meaningful change.
- **Initiative:** The power or opportunity to act or take charge before others do.
- **Optimism (realistic):** Believing in the possibility of positive change, while understanding the challenges involved.
- **Problem-solving:** The ability to identify issues, brainstorm solutions, and implement effective strategies.
- **Resilience:** The capacity to recover quickly from challenges; toughness. Change is hard, but setbacks are inevitable.

6. Embrace failure as learning.

Normalize setbacks because not every project will succeed. After all, Edison famously said, "I never once failed at making a light bulb. I just found out 99 ways not to make one." Ideas fall flat. People may not respond. Things won't go as planned. Help your teen see these situations as learning opportunities, not personal failures. What did they learn? What would they do differently next time? This introspection builds resilience.

Changemaking is often an interactive process. You try something, see what happens, adjust, and try again. Over and over — as often as it takes.

YOUR ROLE? THE EMPOWERING PARENT

You're your teen's most important coach and cheerleader.

- Listen to their ideas, even if they seem outlandish. Don't immediately jump to "That's too hard" or "You're too busy."
- Connect them with people, books, documentaries, opportunities, and resources related to their interests. Don't do the work for them, but give them the tools.
- Show them how you, in your own life, try to make a positive impact, whether through ethical consumerism, sustainable living, local volunteering, or advocating for a cause.
- Celebrate the small wins and acknowledge their efforts, even if the impact feels minor. Every step counts.

The world needs your teen's unique perspective, energy, and passion. By fostering a changemaker mindset, you're preparing them for a successful future while helping them to build a better one for all. And what more lasting impact could a parent hope for?



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Students choose from over 70 courses in a dozen subject areas taught by expert instructors. Residential & Commuter: Students live on our Morningside Campus, a serene academic community where they will always be mere steps away from classrooms, libraries and amenities. Online Summer: Join our programs from anywhere in the world and experience interactive classes with high-achieving peers and dedicated instructors, engage in co-curricular activities, and access resources like our online library.

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	\$1,950 per credit (Classes are 3 - 4 credits); Additional \$2,879 - \$5,714 for Residential Program
	10th, 11th
	Online, In-Person
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Cornell University's Precollege Studies provides high school students entering their junior or senior year with an opportunity to obtain an Ivy League education prior to college application or attendance. Whether participating in our residential program at the Ithaca, NY, campus or engaging in our online program, students will learn from distinguished instructors through standard undergraduate-level courses and earn college credits. Upon completion of the Precollege Studies program, students will receive a Cornell transcript.

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	\$500 - \$3,000
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	Online, In-Person
	1 Week

Step into the shoes of global leaders, tackle pressing issues, enhance your public speaking and debate skills, get daily feedback from champion mentors, and make friends who care about the world! Experience Model United Nations simulations, public speaking labs, trivia, games, social events, and explore your dream campus. Camp is a vibrant atmosphere with flags, maps, and positive energy. Leave inspired to debate diplomatically in a polarized society, change the world, and do Model UN at your school!

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	In-Person
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Boost your college application with an unrivalled summer program taught by world-leading University of Oxford faculty and industry experts. Dive into cutting-edge subjects like AI, entrepreneurship, climate innovation or leadership. Gain hands-on experience, whilst earning an official Oxford University certificate. Hosted in Oxford's historic city, our two-week residential courses offer an immersive experience to give you a taste of university life while making friends from around the world. Set yourself apart by showcasing your passion and initiative at Oxford University. [Learn more »](#)

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	7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th
	In-Person
	1-3 Weeks

The Global Leadership Academy is an award-winning summer leadership program that offers a transformative experience for teens from around the world. Our experiential learning approach helps the next generation of leaders build self-confidence, develop leadership skills, gain global perspective, and create lifelong international connections while supporting them to create meaningful change in their lives and the lives of others. Choose from immersive programs in Canada (2 or 3 weeks), Kenya (2 or 3 weeks), or Singapore (1 week).

[Learn more »](#)

SMITH PRECOLLEGE SUMMER PROGRAMS

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	\$4,864+
	8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th
	In-Person
	2 Weeks

Experience campus life before college! Live and learn for two weeks this summer at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Session One: July 4–17, 2026 and Session Two: July 19–August 1, 2026

Classes are Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. and 1–4 p.m.

Programs of Study: Creative Writing, Summer Science and Engineering, Women, Gender and Representation, Sustainable Futures, Theater, and College Readiness.

Smith Precollege Programs are open to students entering 9-12th grade in the fall of 2026. Courses are not-for-credit. [Learn more »](#)

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	\$1,800
	8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th
	Online, In-Person
	1 Week

You can make a difference. The Academies by Harvard Student Agencies offers International Politics and Pre-Law programs that push students to think critically, analyze real cases, and explore diplomacy and law in depth. Over one week, you'll study real-world issues, debate global conflicts with peers, and complete a capstone project you design yourself. If you want to expand your knowledge, strengthen your voice, and make an impact in your community, apply to The Academies by Harvard Student Agencies.

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UC SAN DIEGO EXTENDED STUDIES: FUTURES

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	\$390+
	9th, 10th, 11th, 12th
	Online
	1 Quarter

UC San Diego Extended Studies Futures Programs offer online, asynchronous courses that let high school students explore real-world careers through hands-on learning and expert instruction. From robotics and web development to marketing and translation, each program builds practical, job-ready skills students can use right away. Upon completion, participants earn a UC San Diego Extended Studies Award of Completion — a valuable credential for college and career pathways. Learn, create, and prepare for your future on your own schedule.

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UC SAN DIEGO: RESEARCH SCHOLARS

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	\$1,500+
	9th, 10th, 11th, 12th
	Online, In-Person, Hybrid
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Step into the world of discovery with UC San Diego Extended Studies' Research Scholars programs for high school students. Designed for motivated learners, these immersive experiences blend hands-on research, real-world problem-solving, and expert mentorship. From bioengineering and business innovation to marine science, ecology, and sustainability, students explore cutting-edge topics in the lab and the field. Students build critical thinking, leadership, and research skills that prepare them for college, careers, and a future shaped by innovation and discovery. [Learn more »](#)

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	Swansea, Wales, UK
	STEM

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THINK GLOBAL SCHOOL

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	\$94,050 with financial aid offered to all families
	Public
	In-Person
	2 Years

THINK Global School (TGS) is a traveling high school where students live and learn in four countries each year, engaging with diverse cultures and global perspectives. Its project-based curriculum challenges students to tackle real-world issues through creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. In an age of AI, TGS prioritizes what technology cannot replicate: human context, cultural intelligence, and face-to-face relationships. Integrating country-relevant learning with deep immersion, TGS cultivates compassionate, adaptable leaders prepared to navigate complexity and shape an interconnected future. [Learn more »](#)

TOP 15 CAREERS IN GLOBAL STUDIES & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

By Stefanie Tedards

The field of global studies offers exciting opportunities where your work can make a real impact. Governments, non-government organizations (NGOs), media outlets, businesses, and humanitarian organizations need professionals who can navigate complex international issues and connect with people across the world.

Often, you must blend knowledge from international relations

with political science, economics, law, sociology, and cultural studies. This diverse skill set prepares you to tackle challenges and pursue careers in diplomacy, human rights, international development, and other fields where you can drive meaningful change.

If you're drawn to work that combines research, advocacy, and hands-on problem-solving in global affairs, you're in the right place. Explore these 15 careers in global studies and international relations to find your path.

JOB	WHAT THEY DO	SENIORITY & SALARY	PATHWAY
DIPLOMAT / FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER	Members of the foreign service represent their country abroad, helping citizens with visas or emergencies, negotiating agreements, and reporting on political, economic, and social developments. They conduct policy work and problem-solving, often coordinating programs at embassies, consulates, and international organizations like the UN.	Average pay: \$104,084 Officers in hazardous locations may receive "danger pay"; senior officers leading major initiatives or serving in embassies earn more.	Degree in international relations, political science, or economics; internships with government agencies or international organizations; foreign language study; passing the Foreign Service Exam.
AMBASSADOR	Ambassadors lead their country's diplomatic mission, overseeing embassy staff, guiding negotiations, and representing national interests in international meetings. They coordinate policy initiatives and resolve crises, balancing strategic planning with high-pressure decision-making.	Average pay: \$200,086	Most ambassadors promote from the Foreign Service after years of experience; some are political appointees with government or policy backgrounds.
POLITICAL AFFAIRS OFFICER	Political affairs officers monitor and analyze political situations on behalf of a country or organization, preparing reports for decision-makers and coordinating programs or agreements between countries. Some focus on preventing conflicts; others help organize regional initiatives or diplomatic meetings.	Average pay: \$93,332	Degree in international relations, political science, or diplomacy; internships or entry-level positions with government, NGOs, or international organizations; foreign language skills helpful.
FOREIGN AFFAIRS ANALYST	Foreign affairs analysts (international policy analysts) research global political, economic, or security issues and provide reports and recommendations. They may track elections, evaluate trade policies, or analyze conflicts. Some analysts specialize in specific regions or sectors and work with governments, think tanks, or private companies.	Average pay: \$97,449	Degree in international relations, political science, or economics; internships or entry-level research positions; experience analyzing policy, regional affairs, or economic trends.

JOB	WHAT THEY DO	SENIORITY & SALARY	PATHWAY
NATIONAL SECURITY OR INTELLIGENCE ANALYST	Intelligence analysts assess threats (terrorism, cyberattacks, geopolitical crises). They gather information, evaluate risks, and produce reports to inform military, government, or corporate decisions. Roles may include data analysis and field agent coordination.	Average pay: \$87,011 Analysts with top-secret clearance or leadership responsibilities earn more.	Degree in international affairs, security studies, or data analytics; internships or entry-level positions in government, military, or research organizations; coursework or experience in data interpretation, critical thinking, and threat assessment.
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST	International development specialists plan and implement programs to improve education, healthcare, and economic opportunities in developing regions. They design projects, manage budgets, coordinate with local partners, and monitor results.	Average pay: \$77,438	Degree in international development, public policy, or economics; internships or volunteer positions in development programs; project management and field experience.
HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE	Advocates work to protect rights and prevent abuses through research, legal cases, campaigns, and field investigations. They may document violations, lobby governments, educate communities, or coordinate with international groups.	Average pay: \$45,058	Degree in human rights, international relations, social sciences, or law; internships or volunteer work with advocacy groups or legal organizations; experience in research, campaigning, or legal work.
POLITICAL ANALYST	Political analysts study government policies, elections, and political developments to provide reports, forecasts, and recommendations. They work for think tanks, media companies, and governments, conducting research, preparing briefings, and presenting findings to decision-makers.	Average pay: \$77,453	Degree in political science, international relations, or global studies; internships or research assistant roles; experience analyzing government policies or political trends.
INTERNATIONAL LAWYER	Lawyers handle cross-border legal matters (contracts, treaties, trade disputes, or human rights cases). Specializations include corporate law, international arbitration, or human rights law.	Average pay: \$149,198	JD or LLM in international law; bar certification; internships or entry-level legal positions focusing on cross-border contracts, trade, human rights, or dispute resolution.
INTERNATIONAL TRADE SPECIALIST	Trade specialists advise governments or companies on regulations, market access, and compliance. Tasks include negotiating trade agreements, analyzing tariffs, or guiding export strategies.	Average pay: \$94,915	Degree in international business, economics, or finance; internships or entry-level positions in trade, compliance, or export/import management; knowledge of trade regulations and international markets.
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (NGO) PROGRAM MANAGER	Program managers oversee international nonprofit projects, handling staffing, budgets, timelines, and reporting. They may run a single-country program or coordinate projects across multiple countries.	Average pay: \$95,805	Degree in nonprofit management, international development, public administration, or related field; volunteer or internship experience managing projects with NGOs.
HUMANITARIAN AID WORKER	Aid workers provide emergency relief, healthcare, or shelter in crisis situations. They may work in refugee camps, disaster zones, or remote communities as logistics coordinators, camp managers, or program officers.	Average pay: \$35,000 Senior coordinators or operations managers can earn \$80,000+.	Degree in global studies, public health, social work, or emergency management; volunteer or internship experience in humanitarian or crisis response programs; fieldwork experience is important.

JOB	WHAT THEY DO	SENIORITY & SALARY	PATHWAY
INTERNATIONAL JOURNALIST / FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT	Journalists report on global events, politics, and conflicts, covering war zones, diplomacy, economics, or cultural topics. Assignments may be in offices or in the field under challenging conditions.	Average pay: \$50,839 Seasoned correspondents or bureau chiefs in major cities can earn over \$100,000.	Degree in journalism, international relations, or communications; internships at media outlets; experience reporting, writing, or covering international events; language skills beneficial.
TRANSLATOR / INTERPRETER	Translators convert written documents, while interpreters provide live translation during meetings, court proceedings, or conferences. Some specialize in technical, medical, or rare languages.	Average pay: \$63,080	Degree in languages, linguistics, or translation; fluency in at least two languages; internships or volunteer work in translation; experience with cultural and technical subject matter helpful.
IMMIGRATION SPECIALIST	Immigration specialists assist individuals and organizations with obtaining visas, work permits, and asylum. Some focus on policy development, others on direct case management or large-scale relocation programs.	Average pay: \$83,050	Degree in political science, international relations, or law; internships or entry-level work with immigration law firms, government agencies, or relocation programs; understanding of visa and asylum processes.



Swansea University
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STUDY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

At Swansea University, your education is more than a qualification; it's a launchpad for global impact. Ranked among the world's top 300 universities (QS 2026), we combine academic excellence with real-world experience to help you turn ambition into action. Join us and become part of a generation shaping the future.

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- ✓ Stunning Coastal Campuses
- ✓ Research-led Teaching



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HANDS-ON PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Prepare for your future with skills you can use right away! UC San Diego Extended Studies **online, asynchronous** Futures Programs give high school students the opportunity to explore real-world careers through hands-on learning and professional training. Designed and taught by industry experts, these immersive programs help students develop practical, job-ready skills—on their own schedule.

Each program culminates in a UC San Diego Extended Studies Award of Completion, a credential that highlights their accomplishments on college and job applications.

The Futures Programs empower students to think critically, create boldly, and prepare for what's next. Build your future today with UC San Diego Extended Studies.

AutoCAD

Business Management

Digital Circuit Design

Front End Web
Development

Machine Learning

Marketing

Revit

Robotics with JavaScript

Translation and
Interpretation

Wireless Communications
Technologist



COLLEGE MAJORS FOR DRIVING GLOBAL IMPACT



By Jodi Ireland

If you watch the news and think, “I want to do something about that,” you’re thinking like a future global leader. For decades, many people assumed that the only way to have an international career was by studying political science or becoming a diplomat. While those paths are still fascinating and amazing, today’s interconnected world means that you can turn nearly every college major into a tool for global impact.

The challenges our world faces — cybersecurity threats, pandemics, conflicts, endangered species — need diverse minds. Learn about a handful of college majors that could launch a career where your work drives positive change across the globe.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES DEGREE?

If you earn a B.S. in one of the biomedical sciences, you could be preparing to tackle global health crises, from developing vaccines to fighting malnutrition.

This degree gives you a deeper understanding of human health, disease, and medical research. Pair this major with a focus on public health or epidemiology if you hope to work for an organization dedicated to advancing medicine and well-being for populations worldwide.

- **Global health research scientist:** Work for an organization like the World Health Organization (WHO) or a pharmaceutical company to research and develop treatments for infectious diseases, like malaria or a future potential pandemic.
- **Clinical trials coordinator:** Manage clinical research for new drugs in different countries to ensure compliance with ethical requirements.
- **Epidemiologist:** Track and analyze disease outbreaks across borders to guide public health interventions.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY/ADMINISTRATION DEGREE?

Every global initiative, whether a major corporation or a humanitarian supply chain, needs strong management, financial oversight, and smart use of technology. A business degree with a global focus can prepare you for a role where

you bring efficient, ethical, and sustainable practices to global commerce, helping to create jobs and economic stability in emerging markets.

- **International supply chain manager:** Design efficient and ethical ways to move products globally, championing fair labor practices and sustainability from factory to consumer.
- **Microfinance analyst:** Work for an international bank or nonprofit to provide small loans to entrepreneurs in developing countries, fostering local economic growth.
- **International marketing specialist:** Help small businesses or fair-trade organizations from one country successfully reach customers in another.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A CONFLICT STUDIES/PEACE STUDIES DEGREE?

This major focuses on the root causes of war, human rights, negotiation, and nonviolent intervention. You’ll develop a skillset in diplomacy and post-conflict development and potentially work for organizations dedicated to preventing violence, mediating disagreements, and helping communities recover from war and conflict.

- **Humanitarian aid worker:** Coordinate relief efforts for refugees or displaced persons with organizations like the UN or the International Rescue Committee.
- **Peacebuilding specialist:** Facilitate dialogue and reconciliation workshops between former adversaries in post-conflict zones.
- **Political risk analyst:** Advise businesses or governments on political instability in a region so they can make safer, more informed decisions.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A CYBERSECURITY DEGREE?

While earning this degree, you learn how to protect digital information and networks. Since every major organization — from the World Bank to global non-governmental organizations (NGOs) — relies on this data, it’s a critical, in-demand skill. You could become a global defender of data and infrastructure in a world where wars are fought online. Your skills could protect governments, international organizations, and essential global systems like banks and power grids from cyberattacks.

- **Security architect:** Design the digital defense system for a multinational company to protect operations across all countries.
- **Cybercrime analyst:** Track down international hacking rings or state-sponsored cyber threats.
- **Security consultant:** Advise humanitarian organizations working in high-risk areas on how to keep their sensitive field data safe.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A GLOBAL STUDIES DEGREE?

It's a global world, and a global studies degree is your passport to making a real impact. This major is great if you're curious about how the world works and want a career that stretches beyond borders.

This "super major" pulls from a variety of areas, like political science, economics, history, culture, and foreign languages. Instead of studying one country or topic in isolation, you learn about the interconnections on a global scale. This major touches on complex issues such as climate change, human rights, international trade, and migration from multiple viewpoints.

- **Foreign service officer or diplomat:** This job is often seen as the ultimate global career. These professionals represent their country abroad, working in embassies or consulates to promote peace, protect citizens, and manage international relations
- **Human rights officer:** You monitor, investigate, and advocate against human rights abuses worldwide, and may work with organizations like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch.
- **Intelligence analyst:** Work for a government agency like the CIA, NSA, or State Department to assess global threats, political stability, and foreign policy intentions.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A HISTORY DEGREE?

Historians are masters of complex research, analysis, and synthesis of huge amounts of information. This major teaches the understanding of how international relationships, conflicts, and global systems evolved — important knowledge for today's policy-making jobs. You could provide the critical context needed to solve today's global problems by understanding the mistakes and successes of the past.

- **Foreign policy analyst:** Research the history of a specific region or conflict to inform current diplomatic strategies for a government or NGO think tank.
- **Archivist/curator:** Preserve and interpret historical records and cultural artifacts for global institutions like the UN or UNESCO.
- **Intelligence analyst/researcher:** Use your knowledge of a country's history, culture, and politics to provide intelligence assessments to government agencies.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH AN ARTS DEGREE?

While not always an obvious major for someone determined to make a global impact, music, film, and art are powerful tools for diplomacy, activism, and cultural exchange. They allow people to connect and share experiences beyond language barriers. Use the skills you learn — and the power of creativity — to bridge cultural divides, drive social movements, and promote mutual understanding.

- **Art therapist:** Use art and music to help refugees or children in conflict zones process trauma and recover.
- **Cultural affairs officer:** Organize international cultural exchange programs, like film festivals or music tours, to improve diplomatic relations between countries.
- **Documentary filmmaker/journalist:** Use visual arts to bring moving, underreported global stories about human rights or social justice issues to a worldwide audience.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A ZOOLOGY DEGREE?

The study of animals encompasses more than veterinary medicine. Since wildlife conservation, disease transmission (like zoonotic diseases), and protecting habitats are massive global issues, the research and fieldwork you complete as an undergraduate, graduate, and professional are vital to the world's environmental health. This degree empowers you to become a champion for biodiversity, fighting to protect endangered species and fragile ecosystems across the planet.

- **Conservation biologist:** Conduct field research in a rainforest or marine environment to protect endangered species for groups like the World Wildlife Fund.
- **Ecologist/environmental consultant:** Advise governments or companies on how large-scale projects, like infrastructure, will affect local wildlife and biodiversity.
- **Wildlife inspector/forensics specialist:** Work at international borders to stop the illegal trade of protected animals and animal parts.

YOUR GLOBAL IMPACT STARTS NOW

As you navigate the college application process (or if you're an undeclared student preparing to choose your major), remember that a major is just your launchpad.

The world's problems, whether political, environmental, or technical, are interwoven. A solution won't come from one major or one type of job. It'll take history majors who understand past mistakes, cybersecurity experts who can protect vital data, and business professionals who can manage humanitarian supply chains.

No matter what path you choose, ask questions and never stop exploring. You'll find a field you love and your place on the global stage.



SCHOLARSHIPS

- » Action for Nature International Young Eco-Hero Award
- » AFA Scholarships
- » America 250! Scholarship
- » American Foreign Service Association High School Essay Contest
- » American Legion Oratorical Contest
- » Arab American Leadership Program (AALP)
- » ASUS Scholarship
- » Bayar Fellowship
- » Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship
- » Brower Youth Awards for Environmental Leadership
- » Christianson Grant
- » Clark Burrus Public Service Academic Scholarship
- » Cobell Undergraduate Scholarship
- » CVS Health/AACP Community Pharmacy Award
- » David L. Boren Awards
- » Dr. Aura-Lee A. and James Hobbs Pittenger American History Scholarship
- » East Rock Films Video Essay Contest
- » Elie Wiesel Foundation Prize in Ethics
- » FMAA Scholarship Program
- » Fontana Transport Inc. Scholars Program
- » Foundation for Global Scholars
- » Friends of the California State Fair Scholarship Program
- » Fund for Education Abroad
- » Green Futures Award
- » Grow Ag Leaders Scholarship
- » Hispanic Heritage Youth Awards
- » Inherit the Music Scholarship
- » Jim & Anna Hyonjoo Lint National Security Scholarship
- » Kemper Human Rights Education Foundation Essay Contest
- » Lois Britt Memorial Pork Industry Scholarship
- » Lucinda Beneventi Findley History Scholarship
- » Media Fellows Scholarship
- » Muir Way Scholarship
- » MyLLife Scholars Public Policy Scholarship
- » National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) Scholarships
- » National Washington Crossing Foundation Scholarship
- » NEHA/AAS Scholarship
- » Peter Jasin AFIO Endowment
- » The Robert A. Caitlin/David W. Long Memorial Scholarship
- » Society of Exploration Scholarships
- » StudentCam Scholarship
- » United States Senate Youth Program
- » Wild Fish for All Scholarship
- » Zipit Future of Connectivity Essay Scholarship
- » Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award

» VISIT OUR BLOG FOR MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT THESE AND 81 OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS.

EXPLORE REAL RESEARCH BUILD YOUR FUTURE

Step into the world of discovery with UC San Diego Extended Studies' Research Scholars programs for high school students. Designed for motivated learners, Research Scholars combines hands-on projects, real-world problem-solving, and mentorship from experts. Each course empowers participants to think like researchers, gain confidence, and prepare for success in college and beyond.

YOUR FUTURE STARTS HERE—WHERE DISCOVERY MEETS OPPORTUNITY.

BIOENGINEERING

An engaging, hands-on bioengineering program that emphasizes interactive labs, experiential learning, and flexible online instruction.

BIOSPHERE

Arizona: Experience an immersive hands-on research program focused on climate change, ecology, and conservation.

BUSINESS RESEARCH

Analyze real-world venture challenges through case studies, simulations, and discussions that strengthen your skills in business innovation, venture financing, and growth strategy—setting you up for success in entrepreneurship and business.

HAWAII

Embark on a 10-day immersion on O'ahu that blends traditional Hawaiian ecological knowledge with modern marine science to build leadership and environmental stewardship skills.

MARINE SCIENCE

Explore the ocean through hands-on research that blends fieldwork and lab discovery, building scientific skills, critical thinking, and a passion for protecting marine environments.

PUERTO RICO

Explore Puerto Rico's coastal ecosystems through hands-on research, conservation training, and field exploration—gaining real-world skills in marine biology and sustainability.



HOW TO GET YOUR START IN A GLOBAL IMPACT CAREER

By Stefanie Tedards

If you hope one day to work in foreign affairs, for the government, an international business, or a worldwide NGO (non-governmental organization), it's never too early to start building real-world skills and a global perspective. Start with these ideas.

CLUBS AND PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

High school is the perfect time to explore different fields, industries, and career paths, develop your skills, and gain more confidence about the path ahead. Consider participating in extracurriculars like:

Community service organizations: Give you hands-on experience working with others to address real-world challenges.

Debate team: Develops research, public speaking, and critical thinking skills while exposing you to complex global issues.

Foreign language clubs: Build communication skills and cultural awareness by offering an environment to practice new languages and explore global traditions.

Model UN: Uses role-playing and conferences to help you learn about the United Nations and how it functions.

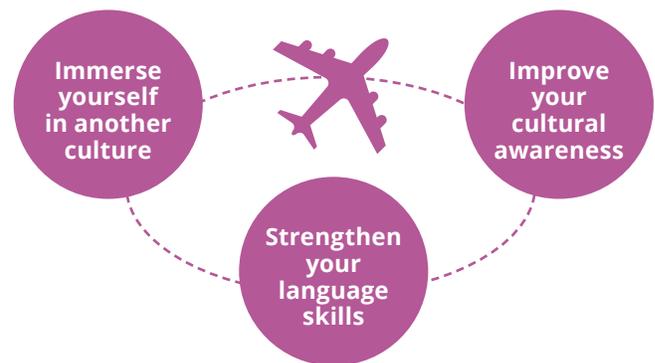
Student government: Strengthens leadership, teamwork, and decision-making skills while you learn how governance and policy affect your school community.

Have a more specific goal, like improving your language or leadership skills or learning more about a particular topic, such as the environment or global health? If you're nodding your head, maximize your school break with a summer program!

Student leadership summits, pre-college classes, cultural immersion, and volunteer programs provide amazing opportunities to work and learn alongside like-minded students. You'll build self-confidence and independence, deepen your understanding of the world, and even leave with a better sense of your future academic and career path.

BENEFITS OF STUDYING ABROAD

Most students want to study abroad at some point during college, but in reality? Only a small percentage (around 10%) actually do. Living and learning overseas offers invaluable, practical experience that far exceeds the typical benefits of college life by allowing you to:



Better yet, you *don't* have to wait until college to study abroad! You can broaden your education beyond the typical high school environment through summer programs, semesters abroad, and full-year gap programs.

GAP YEAR PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON GLOBAL SERVICE AND LEARNING

Unsure about college? A gap year can provide the clarity and real-world experience you need before committing to a degree. Gap year programs focus on volunteer work, research, academics, language learning, and more.

After completing one of these programs, students report feeling more mature, self-confident, and better equipped to interact with people from other backgrounds and cultures. Spending a dedicated year on self-discovery and reflection can also increase motivation and drive once you return to school.

When choosing a gap year program, especially one abroad, prioritize safety. Look for accredited programs that balance freedom and security. Focus on programs that encourage ethical traveling, blending sightseeing and exploration with meaningful engagement in local communities.

ATTENDING COLLEGE ABROAD

Already an adventurous and globally-minded student? These questions can help you weigh the pros and cons of **attending college in another country** for a semester or an entire year.

LIFE DURING YOUR PROGRAM

- How much does the program cost overall? Does the school offer scholarships or financial aid for international students?
- What are typical living expenses (housing, meals, transportation, etc.) in that country?
- How much does it cost to travel home during breaks? If you can't visit often, how will you manage homesickness or stay connected to family?
- Are classes taught in English or another language? Are you prepared and confident enough to study in that language?
- What safety, healthcare, and visa resources are available for international students?

LIFE AFTER YOUR PROGRAM

- Where do you want to live and work after graduation?
- If you plan to stay abroad, does the school or host country provide support for securing work visas or internships?
- Will your degree or credentials be recognized in the U.S. (or your home country) if you return?
- How can you use the experience and global network you build during your program to advance your career goals?
- What are the long-term costs or benefits of staying abroad versus returning home?



INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Prepare for a global impact career now by pursuing internships and volunteer work in high school and college. Seek roles that develop your communication, research, and project management skills. Volunteer with a local nonprofit or complete a virtual internship with an international organization.

Whatever opportunities you choose, view each experience not as a simple check mark but as a rich, formative moment that shapes your path forward. Treat these opportunities like building blocks; every step — from a short-term exchange to a year-long volunteer stint — will guide you toward a meaningful career and open up new perspectives. Be present, stay curious, and say yes to opportunities that stretch your worldview.

RESOURCES

ORGANIZATIONS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- » American Library Association (ALA)
- » Amnesty International
- » Anti-Slavery International
- » Ashoka
- » Direct Relief
- » Doctors Without Borders
- » Fairtrade International
- » Greenpeace
- » Habitat for Humanity
- » Inside Climate News
- » Model United Nations
- » Open Learning, through MIT
- » Peace Corps
- » Red Cross
- » Sierra Club
- » Student Government Association
- » United Nations
- » United Way
- » World Health Organization (WHO)
- » World Wildlife Federation (WWF)

ORGANIZATIONS WITH SCHOLARSHIPS, INTERNSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS & COMPETITIONS

- » AJC Goldman Summer Fellowship
- » Borgen Project
- » Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
- » C40 Cities
- » Center for Climate and Energy Solutions
- » Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program
- » Climate Investment Coalition
- » Colin Powell Leadership Program
- » Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs
- » FAO Climate Change
- » Foreign Language and Area Studies Program
- » The Fund for American Studies: High School Programs
- » International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)
- » International Rescue Committee
- » National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)
- » National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y)
- » Public Policy & International Affairs Program
- » United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

- » United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- » United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- » Youth in Agriculture

ORGANIZATIONS WITH STUDENT MEMBERSHIPS AND THAT WELCOME STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

- » Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- » American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
- » American Society of Animal Science
- » Earthjustice
- » Give Volunteers
- » Humanity First
- » Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)
- » International Leadership Association (ILA)
- » Oxfam International
- » Partners in Health Engage (PIH)
- » Plan International
- » Rainforest Alliance
- » Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Students Program
- » Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP)
- » Society for Nonprofits Alliance
- » Student Conservation Association (SCA)
- » United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- » World Food Program USA
- » World Vision
- » Youth Economics Initiative (YEI)

PODCASTS

- » Green Teens Podcast by the Climate Hub
- » OverHERd Podcast by the Gender Equality Hub
- » PYD Lab Podcast
- » Youth P.O.W.E.R.
- » YVCA Podcast

» VISIT OUR FULL BLOG POST FOR EVEN MORE RESOURCES AND SPECIFIC DETAILS.

WHICH LANGUAGES OPEN THE MOST DOORS FOR A GLOBAL CAREER?

By Jodi Ireland

Forget the 20th-century idea of a “local job.” Your career path is global now. Thanks to digital connections and massive multinational companies, national borders have become invisible for many careers. To win in your future, you’ll need skills and the ability to understand other cultures.

The real question for forward-thinking teens isn’t, “Should I learn a second language?” but “Which language will give me the biggest edge?” If you want a global career, you must think strategically, blending your personal interests with the realities of world economics and diplomacy.

Acquiring a new language is transformative, completely changing how you think, connect, and see the world.

HOW MANY LANGUAGES ARE THERE IN THE WORLD?

Over 7,000 languages are spoken worldwide today. The number fluctuates somewhat as some languages are endangered and others are constantly evolving. But of these thousands of languages, only a tiny fraction dominates global communication, commerce, and diplomacy.

TOP GLOBAL LANGUAGES	(L1) NATIVE SPEAKERS	(L1 + L2) TOTAL SPEAKERS
MANDARIN CHINESE	900 million	1.14 billion
SPANISH	485-500 million	1.4+ billion
ENGLISH	370-400 million	590+ million

WHY LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

Teens often engage with languages other than their own through required school courses, language learning apps, music, TV, and more. But the effort required to gain fluency has many benefits.

Cognitive benefits: A brain workout

Learning another language requires your brain to actively grapple, analyze, and use new grammatical rules, syntax, and vocabulary. This mental workout strengthens and grows your brain, like working out at the gym. **Studies** have shown that learning new languages can increase grey and white matter density, which boosts your brain’s processing power.

Enhanced executive function

Learning and using another language **keeps your mind sharp and adaptable** and strengthens executive function — the set of mental skills that include planning, organization, and problem-solving.

Delayed onset of dementia

The most compelling reason for learning languages is the long-term health benefits it offers. **Research** suggests that consistently speaking a second language may delay the start of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s and dementia by several years.

Increased earning potential

In a global market, second language fluency is a competitive asset. Employees proficient in two or more languages often **earn up to 19% more** than their monolingual colleagues.

Level up your college application

If you’re eyeing a selective university, you might want to learn a foreign language. Fluency in a second language showcases your discipline, intellectual curiosity, and a well-rounded education.

True global citizenship

Learning another language gives you a deeper understanding of other cultures. You see the world from a different perspective, improve your empathy, and increase your adaptability and flexibility — essential soft skills for future leaders.

CHOOSING A LANGUAGE FOR A GLOBAL CAREER

Use these criteria — and what you think you’d like to do after earning your degree — to help you narrow down your decision on the best language to learn.



Economic strength. Is the language spoken in nations with large, growing, or stable economies (e.g., German, Mandarin)?



Geopolitical importance. Is the language used in international diplomacy, major organizations like the United Nations or the World Trade Organization, or politically vital regions (e.g., French, Arabic, Russian)?



Speaker count and reach. Does the language have a vast number of speakers and a widespread geographical reach (e.g., Spanish)?



Competitive advantage (supply and demand). Is there a high demand for speakers of this language but a low supply of proficient speakers (e.g., Arabic, Portuguese)?



TOP LANGUAGES TO LEARN

While English remains a baseline for international careers, mastering one of the following languages will help uncover and expand your opportunities.

MANDARIN CHINESE

- **Career pathways:** International finance, supply chain management, technology (especially AI and manufacturing), government, and foreign service.
- **The learning curve:** For native English speakers, Mandarin's tonal nature and complex character-based writing system present challenges. Expect to spend at least 2,200 class hours for working proficiency. But high difficulty often means high reward and less competition.

SPANISH

- **Career pathways:** Healthcare, real estate, domestic business (especially in the U.S.), tourism, international relations, and energy.
- **The learning curve:** Spanish is an easier language to learn, as it shares a Latin-based alphabet and numerous cognates (words with the same "ancestor"). Students with a strong foundation can reach working proficiency fairly quickly (600-750 hours).

GERMAN

- **Career pathways:** Engineering (automotive, mechanical), international banking (Frankfurt is a world finance center), renewable energy, and scientific research.
- **The learning curve:** While German's grammar is rather complex, the language is structurally similar to English, as both are Germanic languages. This similarity makes vocabulary acquisition smoother than for tonal or character-based languages.

FRENCH

- **Career pathways:** International affairs, diplomatic service, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), humanitarian aid, and sectors like fashion, culinary arts, and tourism.
- **The learning curve:** Like Spanish, French is a Romance language, so it's relatively accessible for English speakers (600-750 hours). It's an excellent choice for a well-rounded academic and diplomatic career path.

ARABIC

- **Career pathways:** Intelligence and government service, energy (oil and gas), international finance, journalism, and defense.
- **The learning curve:** Arabic's unique script, root-based morphology, and divergence between MSA and dialects make it tricky to learn (2,200 hours). The ROI, particularly in government and specialized business sectors, however, is very high.

PORTUGUESE

- **Career pathways:** Banking, tourism, agriculture, and international trade focused on emerging South American and African markets.
- **The learning curve:** Portuguese is typically easier for English speakers to learn than German or Mandarin. Native Spanish speakers generally pick up Portuguese quickly because many words and sentence structures overlap.

Choosing one of these languages and learning consistently and immersively means more than a new skill. You're actively building your future as a global citizen, ready to seize every exciting opportunity the world offers.

» CHECK OUT OUR BLOG FOR TIPS ON LEARNING A LANGUAGE.

HOW TO BE A LEADER ON A GLOBAL SCALE

By Stefanie Tedards

If you're asking yourself how to be a leader, you've already taken the first step toward becoming one. Great leaders paved the way forward in every industry, inspiring others and uniting teams under a shared purpose and vision.

You've already encountered different **leaders** at school — a coach, the choir or band director, and of course your teachers. You've probably also led by taking charge of a group project, becoming a club officer, or starting a volunteer initiative.

While core leadership principles never go out of style, guiding in a global setting isn't quite the same as leading at home. In a world of **constant change**, we must continually reassess our approach to leadership because *how* we lead is evolving, too.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A GOOD LEADER?

Leadership isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. It requires contextualization; every field, company, and team has its own dynamics and standards. And every leader has different preferences and styles.

- **Autocratic leaders** make decisions on their own and run highly structured teams. This approach allows them to act quickly in high-pressure situations but limits team input and creativity.
- **Bureaucratic leadership** operates within clear hierarchical rules and defined roles. This style provides order and fairness but can discourage innovation and create bottlenecks.
- **Coaches** focus on mentorship, developing individual strengths and fostering growth. This approach requires time and a compatible team.
- **Democratic leaders** involve team members in decision-making and encourage collaboration; however, decision-making can be slower and less decisive.
- **Laissez-faire leaders** allow employees to work independently, encouraging confidence and innovation. This approach risks confusion and may decrease motivation.
- **Pacesetters** lead by example, set high standards, and drive rapid results, but they risk increasing stress and misalignment among team members.
- **Servant leadership style** prioritizes employee well-being, empathy, and community, fostering respect and support. However, these leaders can overcommit themselves and become inefficient decision makers.
- **Visionary leaders** focus on long-term goals, inspire and motivate the team, and set clear outcomes, but may overlook short-term issues or employee input.

The takeaway? There's no single "right" approach to leadership. However, successful leaders share several **common qualities** worth cultivating.

KEY TRAITS OF A LEADER

Being a leader isn't as simple as telling others what to do or praising or criticizing teams for their successes and failures. It's a complex process that requires building relationships and inspiring teams through action and support. In addition to having the expertise and experience needed to make strategic, informed decisions, leaders need to cultivate soft skills.

**Intrapersonal
(working with self):**
self-awareness, discipline,
confidence, resilience,
accountability, adaptability

**Interpersonal
(working with others):**
active listening, empathy,
conflict resolution,
influence, collaboration

LEADING IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Culture plays a powerful role in shaping leaders across the world.

- **Communication:** Some cultures favor direct, explicit language and encourage speaking one's mind, while others rely on subtlety, context, and non-verbal cues, expecting others to interpret meaning indirectly.
- **Decision-making:** The ways decisions are made reflect cultural values and traditions. Cultures may favor democratic processes, valuing individual input or consensus within the community, or follow hierarchical structures where decisions come from senior leaders or authority figures.
- **Approach to conflict:** Some view open debate and direct confrontation as normal, while others avoid public disputes and prefer indirect methods for resolving disagreements.
- **Motivation techniques:** Public praise and recognition are effective motivators in some cultures, while others emphasize harmony, group cohesion, or the intrinsic value of the work itself.

Great leaders adapt to different scenarios and embrace cultural perspectives beyond their own.

6 GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS

1. **Cultural intelligence.** Cultural intelligence is the ability to understand, respect, and navigate differences in perspectives, traditions, and communication styles. Leaders observe cultural norms and adapt their approach to ensure inclusivity and effective collaboration.

2. **Ethical decision-making.** Ethical decision-making is the capacity to make choices grounded in fairness, honesty, and integrity. Leaders hold themselves accountable, maintain transparency, and prioritize doing the right thing even when facing challenges.
3. **Communication.** True leadership begins with listening. Effective communication involves both clearly expressing ideas and understanding others' viewpoints.
4. **Adaptability.** Adaptability is the ability to respond effectively to changing conditions, unexpected challenges, or new information. Adaptable leaders remain flexible, experiment with new solutions, and adjust priorities when needed.
5. **Self-awareness.** Self-aware leaders understand their own strengths, weaknesses, and how their behavior affects others. They reflect on their decisions, monitor their impact on team dynamics, and recognize personal biases and areas for growth.
6. **A willingness to grow.** True leaders never stop learning how to lead, even as their experience increases. They embrace new challenges, reflect on successes and failures, and continuously expand knowledge and skills.

COMMON LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

Barriers to communication

Collaborating with global teams is rewarding but sometimes creates communication challenges. Strong leaders know how to handle these difficulties with patience, understanding, and humility. They:

- Clarify, repeat, or paraphrase what team members say to ensure understanding.
- Learn key cultural norms, including basic customs, gestures, and professional etiquette, to avoid unintentional offense.
- Leverage technology and use multiple communication channels (written summaries, visual aids, verbal explanations, etc.) to reduce misunderstandings.

Managing workplace expectations

International teams approach work practices in unique ways, from defining working hours and prioritizing tasks to managing deadlines and organizing meetings. Encouraging an open dialogue can help build mutual understanding.

- Set clear expectations early, including deadlines, communication norms, and decision-making processes.
- Observe and ask — note how team members approach tasks, and ask questions to clarify differences rather than assuming one way is “correct.”
- Be flexible where possible, adapting your own style to accommodate others' approaches without sacrificing key goals.

Creating shared goals

Leaders unite people around a shared vision. Clearly defining the team's objectives and articulating each role's contribution to the bigger picture helps everyone move in the same direction.

- Encourage collaborative goal-setting, which allows each member to contribute their perspective and take ownership of both individual and team outcomes.
- Create measurable milestones; breaking larger objectives into smaller, trackable steps helps keep everyone aligned.
- Schedule updates or briefings to review progress, address conflicts, and adjust priorities.



LEADING AS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Becoming a leader isn't something that happens overnight. But you can start cultivating your leadership skills before heading to college:

- **In the classroom:** Volunteer to present first or lead an activity. In group discussions, speak up, ask questions, and share your ideas. Take responsibility for organizing projects and keeping your team (or class) on track. Active participation builds confidence.
- **Clubs and extracurriculars:** Extracurriculars rely on student leaders to step up, organize activities, and motivate peers, so why not pursue a bigger role? You could be a section leader in marching band, captain of a sports team, editor of the school newspaper, or a member of your club's board. These roles also allow you to set an example for younger students.
- **Work experience:** Summer internships, part-time jobs, or volunteer work help with your professional development. You'll build your soft skills, get practical experience, and expand your network.

Practice leadership in small, everyday moments and embrace both successes and failures as opportunities to learn. You won't always succeed on the first try, but making mistakes is how you learn and grow.



RAISING GLOBALLY-MINDED KIDS: TIPS FOR FAMILIES

By Jodi Ireland

Your student has a blur of school projects and extracurriculars, Instagram and TikTok, and that perpetual hunt for the perfect shoes. It's easy to feel that their world is contained within the boundaries of your neighborhood, their school, or their phone screen. But their future is global.

Raising a globally minded kid doesn't mean packing them off for a world tour, but rather cultivating curiosity, empathy, and adaptability. These traits will enable them to become successful students, ethical adults, and vital contributors to our interconnected world. The most critical skill you can help them develop right now? A global mindset.

GLOBAL-MINDEDNESS IS A 21ST-CENTURY SUPERPOWER

Generations defined success by how high we climbed the career ladder. Today's definition includes how well we navigate the global web.

It's a career necessity, not a hobby

A global mindset has become a hard requirement for leadership. Teaching your teen flexibility and cross-cultural communication now gives them a competitive edge they won't get from a college degree alone.

It builds resilience

Developing a global view involves recognizing that societies operate differently and solve problems according to different rules. This awareness fosters two essential traits:

- **Patience and observation:** Instead of rushing to judgment or assuming their way is the "right way," a globally minded person learns to wait, watch, and listen before acting — a key skill for navigating international conflict and peer-group drama.
- **Empathy and flexibility:** By seeing how other cultures handle adversity, teens build broader emotional vocabularies. This vocabulary can reduce anxiety and help them articulate their own challenges and adapt when their own life plans inevitably hit a snag.

It counteracts entitlement

Tweens and teens are naturally self-focused. Global-mindedness provides a powerful counter-narrative. When kids understand the vast range of human experience — food, shelter, education, opportunities (or lack thereof) — they learn to distinguish between genuine needs and wants. This awareness lays the foundation for gratitude, contentment, and a desire to contribute to the greater good.

THE GLOBAL HALL OF HEROES: INSPIRATION IN ACTION

When talking to your teen, use real-world heroes as examples of compassion and conviction in action on a massive scale.

- **Jane Goodall (The Observer):** Before she became a world-renowned primatologist, Goodall simply loved animals. Her decades of work involved science, but at its core, her work involved dignity, patience, and non-judgmental observation. She modeled how a deep connection to a single species can spark a worldwide conservation movement.
- **David Attenborough (The Storyteller):** A master of the global classroom, Attenborough has used the power of media and narration to bring the world's most vulnerable ecosystems into our living rooms. He taught us that global action requires action and persuasive, compassionate storytelling, and that sharing what you know is a moral responsibility.
- **Greta Thunberg (The Activist):** She's the ultimate example for teens: starting small with a school strike, she used her conviction to mobilize millions. Thunberg proved that age is irrelevant to influence. She embodies the importance of moral clarity and unapologetic action on issues like climate change that transcend borders.
- **Xiutezcatl Martinez (The Indigenous Voice):** An indigenous environmental activist and hip-hop artist, Martinez uses culture and ancestral knowledge to fight for the planet's future. He demonstrates that environmental issues are inherently human rights issues, and cultural heritage serves as a source of strength in global movements.

These heroes show your kids that becoming globally-minded involves finding their own unique voice and connecting it to a larger purpose, whether through science, art, policy, or peaceful protest.

7 WAYS TO RAISE A GLOBAL CITIZEN

This journey begins at home, not on an airplane. Weave global awareness into your kids' everyday lives.

- 1. Bring the world to your dinner table.** Food is the universal language of culture. Try a monthly “global dinner night.” Ask your teen to research a new country, find three facts about its history, and choose a recipe from that region (e.g., Ethiopian *wat*, Korean *bibimbap*, or Indian *aloo gobi*). This “assignment” makes global learning tactile and fun.
- 2. Map it out.** In a digital world, a simple, old-school map is a powerful tool. Put a large map or globe in a common area. Whenever a global event pops up or a new student moves to your child's school, find the location together. This activity builds geographical literacy and grounds abstract concepts in reality.
- 3. Diversify your social circle.** It's natural to gravitate toward people who look, speak, and worship like you, but a closed social circle limits your child's exposure. Encourage your teen to join clubs or activities that attract students from different ethnic, economic, or national backgrounds. As a parent, try to actively seek out and foster friendships with families whose lives and traditions differ from your own.
- 4. Prioritize language learning.** If your teen drops language classes after a couple of years of high school, they're missing a profound opportunity. Support and encourage continued language study, whether in school, online, or through immersion programs. Focus less on fluency and more on the cultural doorways language opens.
- 5. Curate media and literature.** The easiest way to invite your teen to live a thousand lives is through books, movies, and documentaries. Stock your home with literature set in different countries and cultures. Stories foster narrative empathy. Introduce teens to global news outlets and documentaries that examine global issues from multiple perspectives.
- 6. Cultivate “not soft” skills.** The foundation of a global mindset is a strong character. Keep encouraging skills like active listening, curiosity (ask *why* people do what they do), and flexibility. These qualities empower people to thrive in unpredictable, multicultural environments. They teach a teen that success often comes from accepting ambiguity (and adapting) when the familiar rulebook fails.
- 7. Find a cause, not just a charity.** Global mindedness moves beyond charity (giving money) toward engagement (giving self). Help your teen move past vague aspirations of “saving the world” and commit to a specific, sustainable cause that connects local action to global impact. Perhaps they could volunteer for a local environmental cleanup, tutor immigrant students, or participate in ethical consumerism instead of fast fashion.

As Jamie Martin, author of *Give Your Child the World*, says, connecting kids to the role your family plays in a cause fills them with a belief that they can make a difference — even if they can't solve the entire problem. Your teens learn that being a world-changer is a continuous, local commitment.



THE GIFT OF AN OPEN HEART

Raising a globally minded teen might be one of the most selfless parenting acts we can undertake today. We help them see beyond their own immediate sphere of influence to realize the world is a shared responsibility.

This process is, however, evolving and not about perfection. It requires being present, curious, and open-hearted. But the effort benefits the world your teen will inherit *and* enrich their life immeasurably, giving them a breadth of perspective, an adaptability of spirit, and a deep sense of purpose.

So keep that map visible. Experiment with new foods. Get that conversation flowing. And trust that you're preparing the next generation of global citizens, ready to meet the future with courage, determination, and compassion.

START LOCAL, THINK GLOBAL: SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

By Jodi Ireland

Ever feel like the world's problems are just too big? Climate change, poverty, a lack of clean water, poor educational systems... It's easy to feel overwhelmed, throw up your hands and think, "Nothing I do will make a difference."

You do have the power to make a difference in your own backyard, school, or neighborhood. Every small, local action can create a ripple effect that touches lives far beyond what you might imagine. You *can* think global by starting local.

YOUR COMMUNITY: A LAUNCHPAD FOR IMPACT

Does your school require volunteer hours for graduation or a club? Instead of ticking them off as just one more thing you *have* to do, invest in them. The right local project could become a seed for something much larger.

• A food drive that fills more than local pantries

What if you took organizing a food drive a step further? Collaborate with your local food bank to expand a collection's reach. You could also research food waste in your community and advocate for policies that redirect edible surplus from grocery stores or restaurants to those in need.

The global connection: Learn about global food insecurity. How do issues like climate change or conflict affect food supply worldwide? Host educational events or partner with international relief organizations to raise awareness or funds for their work.

• Park cleanups with a planet-sized purpose

Collecting trash in the local park makes it nicer for everyone and can also spark a larger environmental movement. Advocate for better recycling programs or policies limiting certain types of waste. Team up with other youth groups and organizations to lobby for statewide environmental initiatives.

The global connection: Learn how local pollution contributes to global problems like ocean plastic. Connect your efforts to a broader discussion about sustainable living and climate justice.

• Tutoring programs that empower beyond the classroom

Set up a tutoring service at your school or local library. Work with a teacher-mentor to develop training materials and invite other students to join you.

The global connection: Explore the global issue of educational access and equity. Use your tutoring platform to raise awareness about these challenges, perhaps by hosting a read-a-thon to fundraise for a global education charity.

LAUNCHING A SOCIAL IMPACT PROJECT OR NONPROFIT IN HIGH SCHOOL

Dreaming bigger than joining an existing project? High school is perfect for launching your own initiative. You've got energy, ideas, and (hopefully) a supportive school environment.

1. Identify your passion. What could you discuss for hours? Mental health awareness, animal welfare, menstrual products for girls, supporting homeless veterans? Once you find your passion, identify a specific problem related to it within the community.

Example: You care about mental health and notice your school lacks peer support resources for students struggling with stress or anxiety.

2. Research, research, research. Don't reinvent the wheel. See what others are doing. Do local organizations already address this problem? How can your idea complement their work or fill a gap?

Example: You know the school has a guidance department, but each counselor is overloaded. You talk to a friend at a different school and learn about its successful peer support groups.

3. Brainstorm solutions. Get creative here as you think about something achievable you could do to address the problem.

Example: You could start a student-led peer support group during lunch or after school, and also create a discreet resource guide for mental health services in town.

4. Build your dream team and find a mentor. Find friends who share your passion and an adult ally who can offer guidance, open doors, connect you with external resources, and help you navigate other challenges.

5. Develop a plan. Your plan doesn't have to be complicated. Define your goals. Determine the steps you need to take and the resources you need to get started. Make a basic timeline.

6. Launch and learn. Businesses often conduct "lessons learned" sessions after an event or a product or service rollout. Do the same. You don't need to wait for perfection. You'll learn lots along the way. Prepare to adapt, make mistakes, and celebrate every victory, no matter the size.

7. Think "nonprofit." Starting with an informal club or project under your school's umbrella is one option. If your project really takes off and you want to do more fundraising, receive grants, or put a more formal structure in place, you could consider forming a nonprofit.

WHAT IS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

What if you could use the power of business to solve social problems? That's social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs establish an enterprise — a company, foundation, or program — to solve a social or environmental problem or drive social change. The difference between a traditional business and a social enterprise? The bottom line.



A **traditional business's** primary bottom line is making a profit.

A **nonprofit's** primary bottom line is its mission — achieving a social goal with funding generated through donations, grants, or both.

A **social enterprise's** primary bottom line is social impact, but it uses a sustainable business model to achieve it. The income generated from selling a product or service covers the costs and allows the organization to grow its impact.

COULD YOU BE A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR?

If you're interested in business, design, and making a difference, welcome to a potential career path. Here's how this journey *could* look.

- **Identify a market failure related to your problem.** Is there a social need not being met because no one will profit from it, or because existing solutions are too expensive or inefficient?

Example: Fast fashion creates a huge environmental problem. Traditional charities ask for clothing donations. A social entrepreneur might create a consignment app specifically for teens to buy and sell sustainable clothing, diverting waste while offering excellent service.

- **Develop a sustainable solution.** Create a product or service that generates revenue and then commit to using that revenue to further your social goal.

Example: Perhaps you've heard of TOMS shoes (for every pair purchased, the company donates another pair to a child in need) or Patagonia (which uses its business to fund environmental activism). In some communities, local businesses hire formerly incarcerated people or donate a percentage of profits to a specific cause.

- **A high school example.** You could start a small business selling ethically sourced coffee or baked goods. Instead of pocketing the profit, you commit to donating 50% of the income to fund the peer-support mental health group you started. Now, you've created a sustainable funding stream for a social program.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ACTIVISM AND AWARENESS

If you're already a pro with social media, harness its power for the greater good. Use it as a tool for activism and stretch your reach even further.

1. **Choose your platform(s) wisely.** Different platforms excel at different things.
 - **Instagram/TikTok** are great for creating visually engaging content, such as short videos and infographics, and for reaching younger audiences. These platforms are perfect for quick awareness campaigns or showing the behind-the-scenes of your project.
 - **X** is good for real-time news, engaging with journalists or policymakers, and sharing links to longer articles and petitions. Use it to share concise, impactful messages.
 - **Facebook** is definitely a platform for older generations, but it remains strong for community groups and events.
2. **Craft a clear, compelling message.** What do you want people to know? What do you want them to do? You need a strong call to action (CTA).
 - Instead of: "Plastic pollution is bad. Please recycle."
 - Try: "Over 5,000 lbs of plastic waste clog our local river. ACTION: Sign the petition in my bio by Friday, urging the city to invest in commercial composting options! #RiverRescue #ThinkGlobalActLocal #SaveTheSusequehanna"

3. **Be a curator, not just a creator.** You don't have to generate all the content yourself. Follow and share trusted, credible sources. Amplify the voices of those directly affected by the issues you care about. Sharing quality information is a form of activism. Credibility is your currency.
4. **Balance awareness and action.** It's easy to fall into "slacktivism" (liking and sharing without taking real action). Your posts should inspire real-world steps: sign a petition, attend a local meeting, volunteer for a couple of hours, support a social enterprise, or write an email to your school board.
5. **Stay safe and ethical.** Never post pics or info about others without their permission. When arguing a point, stick to the facts and maintain a respectful, professional tone, even if you're passionate.

START YOUR GLOBAL JOURNEY TODAY

Whether you launch a local nonprofit club, start a social enterprise to fund it, or use your phone to rally a flash mob of volunteers for a park cleanup, congrats! You're now part of the solution.

The biggest mistake you can make is waiting for permission — or until you're "qualified." Your passion is your qualification. Start small. Get comfortable with your local domain. And remember that the water bottle you divert from a landfill in your town is a small victory for the ocean across the world.

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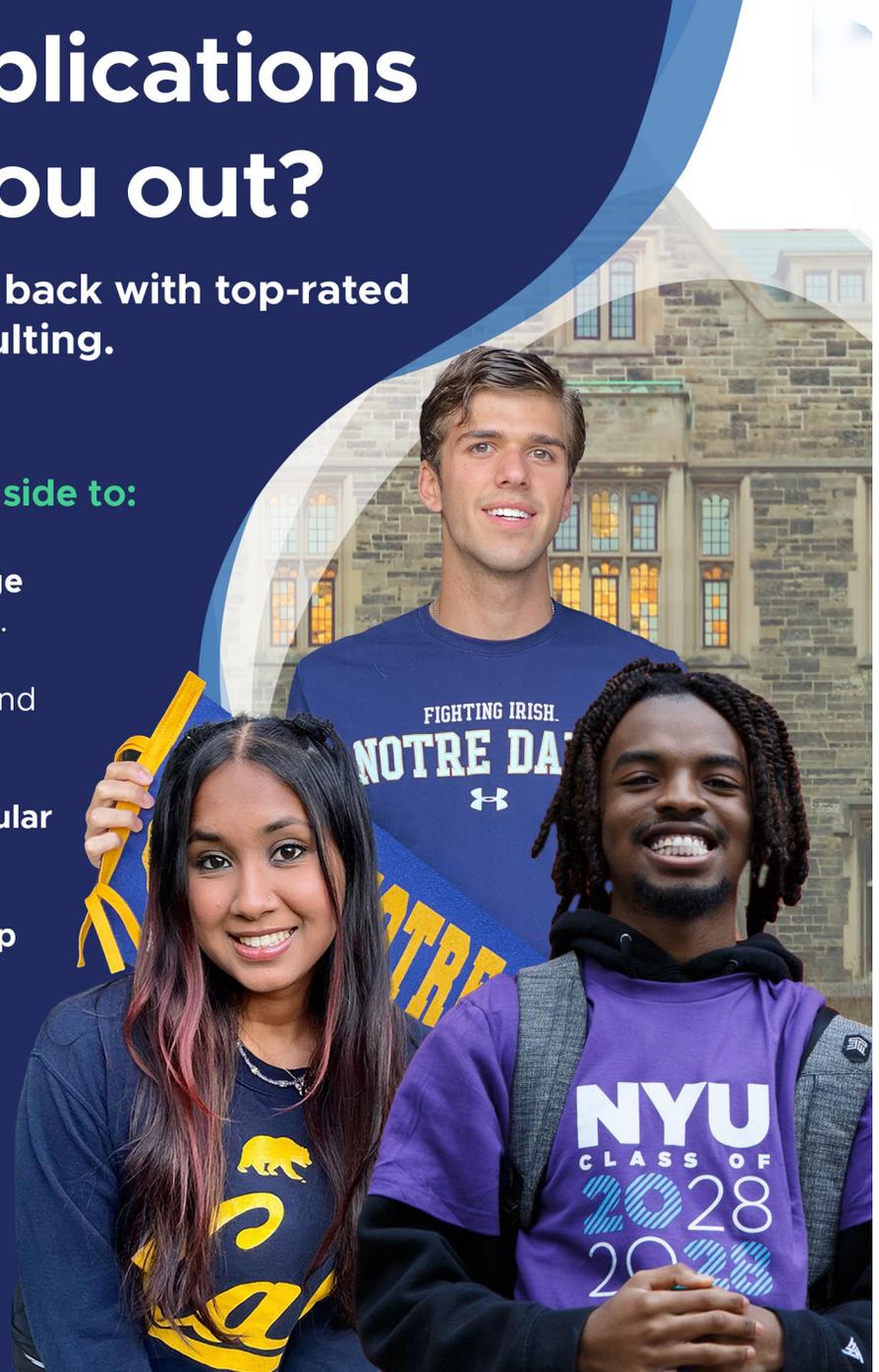
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