

# Bulldogs Going Global

Edition No. 7

January 7th, 2026

By Olivia '27

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**Through the GSP a cohort of Bolles students commits to completing an in-depth, interdisciplinary concentration in Global Learning. In addition to academic courses and independent research projects, the program requires engagement in extracurricular experiences such as a travel abroad program, attendance at student discussions and dialogues, and active participation in globally-focused clubs and programming.**

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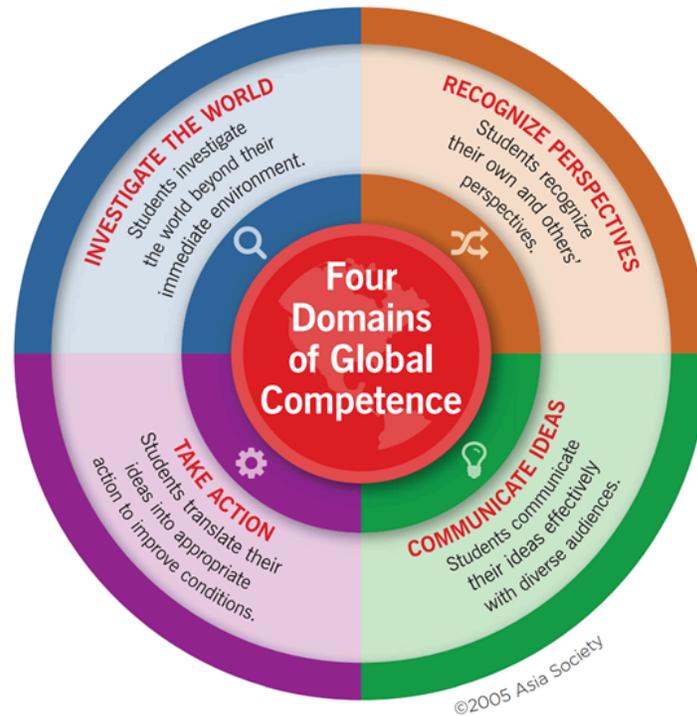
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To learn more about GSP requirements, click the following link:  
[Global Scholar Program](#)

# About Us

In 2023, The Bolles School began the Global Scholar Program. Currently, there are currently 54 Global Scholars in 9th to 12th Grades. All are members of the Student Global Connections Committee. While the GSP requires an application process, the SGCC is a club open for all students to join.



## Our Goals

The primary goal of the program is to build global competency, to prepare students to be active citizens in a modern, interconnected world. Globally competent students have the knowledge and skills to:

1. **Investigate the World** - They're globally aware, understand historical context, and are interested in learning about the world and how it works
2. **Understand Perspectives** - They recognize their perspective and seek to understand the perspective of others
3. **Communicate Ideas** - They effectively communicate their ideas verbally, in writing, and across multiple languages
4. **Take action** - They take concrete action on issues of local and global significance

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# A New Beginning for The SGCC

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By Olivia '27



**Above, members of the SGCC help to raise funds during a bake sale in November.**

**This year, I was fortunate enough to become the President of the Student Global Connections Committee. Our focus for the 2025-2026 school year is to help our local community work towards “Zero Hunger,” one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Our steps toward this goal have been in collaboration with JFCS, a local nonprofit that supports individuals who lack access to healthy, essential foods. A JFCS guest speaker helped us understand food poverty in Jacksonville and drove us to collect funds that purchased \$300 worth of non-perishable food for their food bank. We look forward to a student-led dialogue about our JFCS work in semester two, along with more community service for another special Jacksonville organization! I am so grateful to be a part of this wonderful student-led organization with such a bright future ahead.**

# Our Progress

Kate '28

KATE DEALEXNDRIS

## SPREADING AWARENESS ON HYGEINE AND CLEAN WATER



I created a presentation on the 6<sup>th</sup> SDG, Clean Water and Sanitation. I included facts like how “3.5 million people die each year due to unclean water and no sanitation.” I discussed mental and physical illnesses, the lead-contaminated water children drink every day, the water people consistently waste, and the places struggling with water scarcity and reaching the goal of cleanliness. These places include North Africa, the Middle East, other parts of Central and southern Asia, southwestern North America, and southern Africa. face water scarcity.

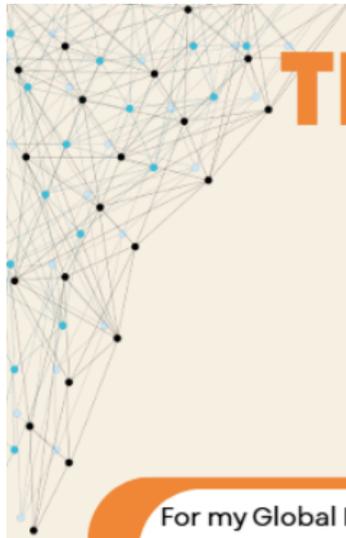
## THE STRUGGLES OF GIRLS HYGEINE (MENSTRUAL CYCLE)

Hygiene is lacking worldwide, mainly in places like India, Africa, etc. Feces and other substances mix in the crops, which causes the water to be unsafe during hygiene practices. No heating pads, medicine, pads, or tampons are supplied for young women during their menstrual cycles.



“Be GIRL” is a program that supports girls who live in India and Africa by providing reusable, washable, and absorbent pads. Its goal is to help the girls stay safe by using proper hygiene for good sanitation.

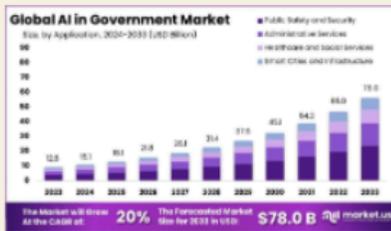




# THE DANGERS OF AI IN GOVERNMENT

Global Leadership Project by  
Matt Jakaj '28

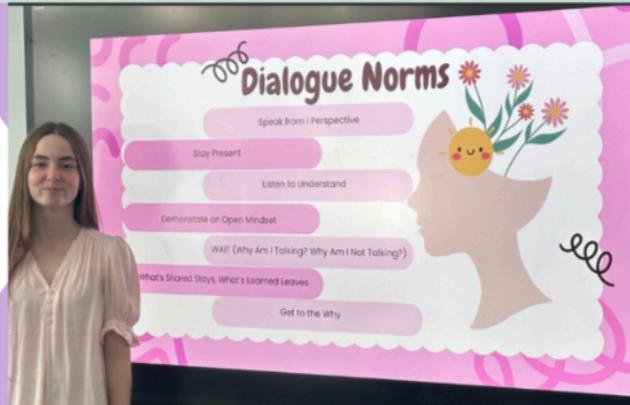
For my Global Leadership Project for my first year in the Global Scholars Program, I decided to study the usage of artificial intelligence in government, and why the usage of AI in government is harmful to global societies. AI is continuously being used to minister countries, control markets, and track data. All of this breaches the privacy and safety of global citizens. For example Albania has adopted a new AI minister in order to combat corruption, but discussion of whether or not this is morally fair has come up. Additionally, the U.S. government uses website cookies to organize personal data into massive online databases that become prey for cyber attacks. Facial recognition is used to track citizens. This has become so extreme that now, companies make glasses that combat the facial-recognition software. Not only does the Albanian and American governments use AI, but an issue has come up in the United Kingdom where citizens are opposed to the usage of artificial intelligence in their government, but their cries go unheard as the UK prioritizes efficiency over the wellbeing of citizens. With all of the artificial intelligence being used, the question of, "Will AI take over the world?" becomes less extreme with each and every technological advancement.



In totality, the usage of AI in government is detrimental to society as a whole as it breaches our rights to safety as global citizens. The idea of AI in government itself is unbelievable, but is still seen as a "revolutionary advancement" by governments. Be sure to become informed on your own government's usage of AI as AI evolves, and if you feel as if something needs to be done, make a change within your own community so that your own voice is heard, not an artificial robot's.



## Noelle Renzelli Cain



# MENTAL HEALTH INTO PHYSICAL NEGLECT

## IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED

- *What's something you've noticed about how your mood or stress levels affect your daily self-care habits?*
- *What experiences or beliefs do you think shape how people care for themselves when they're struggling mentally?*
- *Where do you see opportunities to spread awareness that caring for the mind and body go hand in hand?*

Mental-health challenges often manifest far beyond a person's thoughts, leaving clear physical signs. When individuals struggle to cope, they may lose the energy to maintain basic self-care. This can result in declining hygiene, malnutrition, and other signs of neglect. This link between psychological distress and physical well-being is a worldwide concern, influenced by cultural norms, economic hardship, social stigma, and the availability of treatment. In lots of cases, the body becomes a visible sign of hidden pain. Addressing this global problem requires early awareness, compassion, and comprehensive care that supports all aspects of health. This project continues the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being, which emphasizes equal access to mental-health resources and stronger community networks. The recovery requires caring for both mind and body because one can not function without the other

## GLOBAL & LOCAL

In Jacksonville, Florida, this reality is especially visible among the city's homeless community. For individuals living without a stable shelter, mental health challenges, such as depression, anxiety, and trauma, can quickly intensify, making it even harder to maintain basic self-care. Understanding how mental distress continues into visible decline within our own community, such as the homeless population, is essential for improving global health and well-being.



## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

I shared my findings by hosting the first Bolles student-led on-campus dialogue. Peers talked of how they see the impacts on mental health in daily life, and how to help others struggling with this issue. It was a massive success, with multiple grades attending.

## US - CUBA RELATIONS

SCARLETT BRADLEY

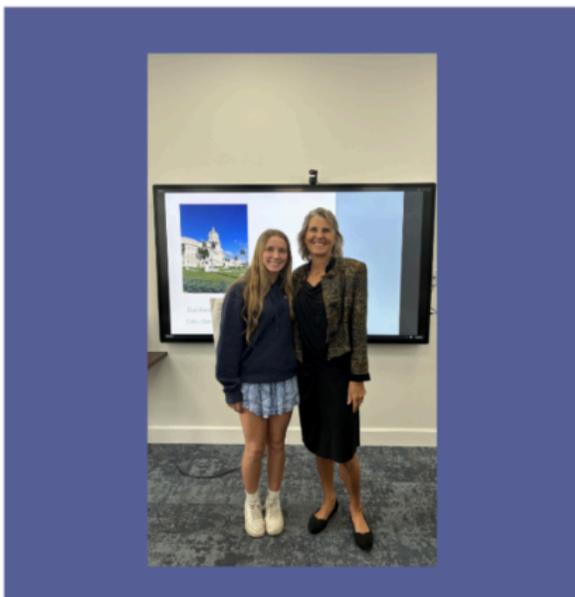
A few years ago, I traveled to Cuba and witnessed firsthand not only the beauty of the country but also everyday challenges the citizens are facing. At the time, I did not fully understand why stores had so few supplies, why blackouts were so common, or why families struggled to access necessities, but those images stayed with me and gave me inspiration for my Global Leadership project.

I began by researching the long and complicated history between the United States and Cuba. I learned about the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the Cold War tensions that followed, and the creation of the U.S. Embargo, now the longest-running sanction in modern history. Connecting the historical context to my personal experience helped me see how political decisions made long ago still shape the daily lives of Cuban families today.

From there, I gathered information from a wide range of sources including human rights reports, United Nations records, economic studies, medical analyses, news articles, and expert commentary. I found facts, statistics, and interviews explaining the limited access to food, medicine, electricity, and economic development on the island. I also examined the U.S. government's initial goals for the embargo and compared them to the actual outcomes documented by researchers and international organizations.



Throughout the project, I worked to combine emotional impact with factual accuracy. My goal was not only to describe the policies themselves, but to show how they affect real people, such as families, children, medical workers, and elderly citizens, who often bear the heaviest burden. As a final part of my project, I invited a speaker to present to a group of students at Bolles. Aileen Hale works directly with underserved communities, such as Cuba, to assist families impacted by shortages and economic restrictions. Her insight brings a personal and humanitarian perspective that goes beyond statistics, which allows us to better understand the realities of Cuban life. Including her voice helped to connect my research to real stories and gave our class a chance to learn from someone who has been actively involved in supporting Cuban citizens.



Ultimately, this project gave me a deeper understanding of the country's ongoing challenges. What I saw as day-to-day challenges is now connected to the context of history, policy, and international relations. Learning how these forces affect ordinary life helped me appreciate the resilience of the Cuban people and reminded me of the importance of sharing their story.

Leadership project



# THE BOLLES NEWS



December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025

FOOD EDITION

## NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES

*Nutritional Deficiencies begin with nutritional choices*

My leadership project was centralized around nutritional deficiencies, focusing on Togo and the USA.

For my presentation, I bought a selection of food as an experiment to see what members of the audience would choose.

With no surprise, many people chose pringles and pop-tarts over carrots and watermelon.

### MALNUTRITION

Malnutrition is a global issue, that not only affects developing countries due to food insecurity but is a major problem in developed countries because of an abundance of the **wrong food**.



### CHALLENGES IN TOGO

- Rising food prices make healthy diets unaffordable
- Many rely on low-nutrition foods to survive
- Diets often provide calories, not nutrients
- Poverty is a major driver of nutrient deficiency



### EFFECTS IN TOGO

- Families reduce spending on essentials
- Some sell household items to buy food
- Many suffer from illnesses such as wasting, stunting, and kwashiorkor, but the majority of people affected are children

### ILLNESSES

- Wasting which is acute malnutrition- this is when one's weight is inadequate for their height
- Kwashiorkor which is a severe protein deficiency in which one's stomach bloats abnormally due to the lack of protein
- Stunting which is chronic malnutrition where one's height is inadequate for their age

### OVERNUTRITION IN USA

- Ultra-processed foods (poor quality) are readily available in large quantities
- The Standard American Diet (S.A.D) is high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats
- Popularity of "quick meals" encourages poor eating habits
- Fast food appeals to all demographics

### CONSEQUENCES

- 150+ million Americans overweight or obese
- Many fatal diseases are food related and could often have been prevented if one had a better diet
- Convenience culture reduces home cooking



### SOLUTIONS

- Global education on nutrition is essential
- Improve access to clean water, nutritious food, and medicine
- Encourage diverse, nutrient-rich diets
- Treatment: supplements, refeeding, weight management



All photos were taken personally in Togo, West Africa, which lies between Benin and Ghana.

In Africa, there is tension between artists expressing themselves and their political views and the government seeking to control the media. This forces songwriter to put hidden messages in their songs that the public knows put the government may not.

In Middle East, no outsiders are allowed on the Gaza strip, which means no reporters. This is a huge problem because the general public does not have access to clear news on a major war.

In the United States of America, reporters have been banned from the White House and the Pentagon. This goes against the First Amendment right of freedom of the press as these people do not have access to these government building. This effects the general public as well as they can't get clear information.



# NEWSLETTER



## GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS

For my Global Leadership Project, I decided to focus on the problem of government censorship of the press. The United Nations says every person has the right to express opinions without interference, and to seek, receive and share information through any form of media. Government censorship of the press is one of the most effective and dangerous methods the government can use to control what the public believes. Democracy suffers when governments take over the press, it hides the truth, and silence opposing voices. In places like Africa, Gaza, and even the United States of America government censorship of the press impacts the informative decision making of billions. Over the last 30 years over 1,200 journalists have died doing their work, these are the type of problems we as citizens should stand up against.

12/8/2025

Max Vicksen



## MY PRESENTATION

FOR MY PRESENTATION I TALKED ABOUT THE BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. I FOCUSED ON THE IMPACTS THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC HAD ON BASEBALL AND HOW IT MATTERS TO THEM AS A COUNTRY. I THEN HIGHLIGHTED SOME NOTABLE PLAYERS SUCH AS DAVID ORTIZ, PEDRO MARTÍNEZ, AND MANNY RAMÍREZ. TOWARDS THE END I TALKED ABOUT THE VARIOUS BARRIERS THAT THE YOUTH FACE THAT INCLUDED THE BARRIERS I PREVIOUSLY MENTION, POVERTY, LIMITED EDUCATION, AND EXPLOITATION OF TALENT. AT THE END I FINISHED WITH A DIALOGUE WITH ALL OF MY AUDIENCE AND IT WENT REALLY WELL, GETTING EVERYBODY INVOLVED



## MY PROJECT

FOR MY GLOBAL LEADERSHIP PROJECT I DECIDED TO FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM OF YOUTH BASEBALL PLAYERS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, FACING BARRIERS THAT LIMIT THEM TO NOT SUCCEEDING THEIR DREAMS. BASEBALL TAKES MANY DIFFERENT FORMS IN COUNTRIES SOME TAKE IT SERIOUSLY LIKE THE U.S. AND SOME DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THE SPORT IS LIKE INDIA. BASEBALL IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ACTS AS A PATHWAY TO A BETTER FUTURE, MANY PLAYERS SEE IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ESCAPE POVERTY. HOWEVER MANY OF THESE KIDS FACE SERIOUS BARRIERS SUCH AS POVERTY, LIMITED EDUCATION, AND THE EXPLOITATION OF TALENT. THESE BARRIERS PREVENT SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION, KIDS PUT ALL THEIR LIFE INTO BASEBALL AND DON'T THINK ABOUT EDUCATION. AS THEY GET OLDER THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND SIMPLE ENGLISH OR ANY SIMPLE EDUCATION LEVEL, SO THEY CAN NOT PROGRESS LATER ON IN LIFE.



## WHY IT MATTERS

THESE KIDS ARE OUR NEXT GENERATION OF BASEBALL PLAYERS, THEY ARE JUST LIKE US AND WANT TO LIVE THEIR DREAM. WE CAN SUPPORT THEIR BASEBALL DREAMS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HELP THEM WITH SIMPLE THINGS LIKE EDUCATION AND ALSO NOT JUST SMART IN SCHOOL BUT ALSO IN LIFE.

Talin Patel

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## The Secondary Effects of Climate Change on South Asia

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**Flooding in an Indian Coastal Village**



**Mumbai under a constant blanket of smog**

For my leadership project, I researched the secondary effects of climate change on South Asia. The primary effect of climate change is increased temperatures, which can heavily effect how and where people can live. Many people know about the effects of primary climate change, however the secondary effects can effect people just as much. The secondary effects of climate change can range from increased natural disasters to increased rates of waste.

I focused my studies on the effects of more frequent floods and higher pollution rates. I found that much of the Indian Ocean's coastline could be pushed further inland if climate change continues to increase. Many countries, such as Bangladesh, that have a large rural population are at risk of losing food sources for villages and growing communities. Unfortunately, urban populations are also largely at risk. Many cities along the coast are home to street markets and homes, all of which get destroyed by the increased flooding each year.

I also focused my studies on how increased pollution, caused by the need to burn fossil fuels to cool buildings, is effecting South Asia. Urban areas, including Delhi, Mumbai, and more, are all being covered by a blanket of smog and heat. The smog is leading to increased sickness, and even death, in these areas. The heat is also increasing illness, through creating harsher work environments it is leading to exhaustion which can be accentuated by the poor air and water quality, slowing recovering. The secondary effects of climate change are causing large-scale issues, however there are ways to help, being more stab and donating to organizations can help stop climate change.



## POSITIVE Body Image



### THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

body dysmorphia and other eating disorder have strong connections to social media and the promotion of different body types by different cultures. Social media can be used to spread body positivity but also can be used to spread misinformation about body dysmorphia and other eating disorders

### WHAT IS BODY DISMORPHIA?

Body dysmorphic disorder is a mental health condition in which you can't stop thinking about one or more perceived defects or flaws in your appearance — a flaw that appears minor or can't be seen by others. It affects mainly women aged 18-21 and can be hazardous if left untreated. It can cause people to become more susceptible to diseases and sometimes even cause underlying conditions due to malnutrition.

For my Global Leadership Project, I did a presentation and project on eating disorders and body dysmorphia, and how globally prevalent they are throughout all cultures globally.



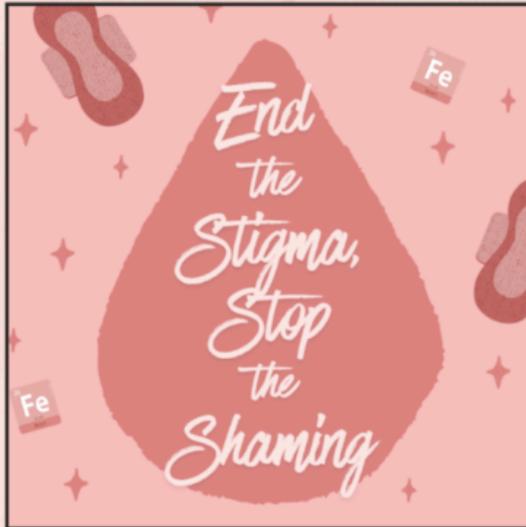
### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The main way individuals can help is by making sure others feel comfortable and secure around them. A way to maintain this is to make sure you are body positive. Another crucial thing to know is your family history, and if you are more likely to have body dysmorphia because it can be passed down genetically.



# Period Poverty

Mei Ning Chen



## My Leadership Project

I reached out to a small organization called **Girl Gang STA** on Instagram to discuss the impacts of period poverty. They are a small non-profit based in St. Augustine/ Jacksonville that have period lockers all over Jacksonville. They set out free period products for women to use in public libraries, schools, etc. After talking with Girl Gang STA, I had a deeper understanding and broader perspective on the stigma of period poverty, and period poverty in general. Later, I gave my presentation to my Global Leadership class, hoping to educate the community in small ways, keeping the quote “Think Global Act Local” in mind.

### WHAT IS PERIOD POVERTY?

Period poverty is the inability to have access to menstrual products and basic hygiene products. It affects millions of females from teens to adults across the globe. Period poverty’s main cause is the fact that people are embarrassed to speak about the issue, also known as the stigma surrounding period poverty.

### STATS AND FACTS

**Stats-** Due to a drought in 2023, prices of period products spiked, which led to a 20%-35% increase in the population of women not being able to afford products. **Ratios-** 1:10 girls miss school. 1:5 females struggle to afford products. 4:5 females know someone who misses school or work because of a lack of access to period products

### CAUSES + EFFECTS

Period poverty is the cause of many issues, including: Gender inequality, being forced to skip or drop out of school, and elevated anxiety/stress/distress. The stigma that surrounds period poverty leads to the global issue often being overlooked or ignored.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

One major and easy way to help prevent period poverty is to spread awareness! The stigma surrounding it is the biggest issue. Another easy way is to support brands and organizations that work towards fixing period poverty, such as U-Kotex or Cora.



# THE PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANITY IN ASIA

## GSP FALL NEWSLETTER

Global Leadership Project by Bella Malhotra



For my project, I focused on the persecution of Christianity happening primarily in Pakistan, India, China, and Afghanistan. I started by researching what is religious persecution: the oppression or ill-treatment of others based on their religious beliefs. It can take different forms, like discriminatory laws, physical violence, destruction of property, and social hostility. Policies in China like Sinicization, and laws in Pakistan and India like anti-conversion and blasphemy laws are employed tools for governments and individuals to persecute Christians. Discrimination is regularized in these countries by several Asian extremist, nationalist, and political groups who scapegoat Christians to justify violence against them. When a culture normalizes oppression, it leads to government persecution and can ultimately result in genocide.

### Takeaways

Overall, this project gave me perspective on global religious freedom. The stories I researched and heard from Dr. Asher revealed that the ability to freely practice your faith is a fundamental right that many are still denied, particularly in South Asia. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, yet that promise is frequently not upheld, portraying the difference between legal recognition and lived realities. The ability to practice one's faith without fear is a gift, and with that comes the need for global vigilance against religious persecution.

### Interview with Dr. Asher Chanan Khan

I began my project by interviewing Dr. Asher Chanan-Khan, a Christian who grew up in Pakistan. His personal experience provided incredible insight into what has been occurring for generations. Due to religious intolerance, homes are burnt, lives are destroyed, and Christians are tortured, raped, and abused. The opportunity to speak with Dr. Asher gave me a glimpse of the raw reality that Christians in Pakistan face, and the fact that there are many stories like his.



# Animal Testing Awareness

BY EVELYN DUNTON



## THIS PROJECT

Through researching this global problem, animal testing, I've been able to present it to classmates to raise awareness of the injustices of this topic.

## WHAT IS ANIMAL TESTING?

Animal testing is the process of using animals to carry out experiments that are usually cruel and dangerous to animals.



## IN AMERICA

Under the United States laws, such as the Animal Welfare Act there is very little protection of animals and their health. Animals are allowed to be burned, shocked, poisoned, isolated, starved, drowned, addicted to drugs, and suffer brain damage. There is no type of experiment that is prevented in the US either. The numbers concerning animal testing, such as how many animals are being used do not have to be legally reported and publicized. It is estimated that in the United States alone, 100 million animals are killed in laboratories for animal testing.

## AROUND THE WORLD

Animal testing is used in 45 countries around the world, some of which have full bans on animal testing, and others only have partial bans. Countries with full bans, such as Israel, India, Norway, Canada, Iceland, Switzerland, Chile, and Mexico. These countries with full bans usually prohibit any form of animal testing whether it is the ingredients or final products. They also ban animal tested products to be sold or marketed anywhere in the country. However, countries with partial bans such as South Korea, Australia, Brazil, Taiwan, and China may still require animal testing for certain instances. Also, they will only ban animal testing for the ingredients or final product, but never both. Meaning that animal testing is still legal to a degree.

## OVERVIEW

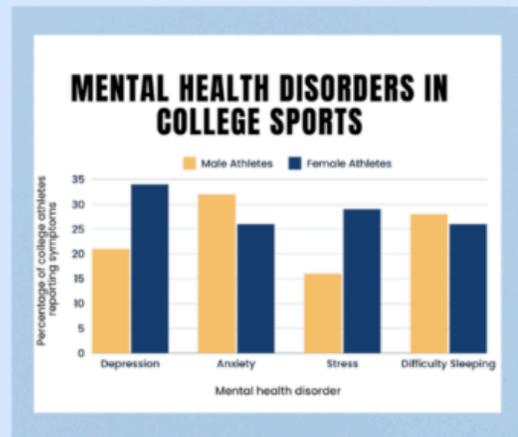
Animals are used around the world for the benefit of humans, even though it rarely leads to solutions, specifically at a rate of 95% of animal approved drugs going on to fail in human trials. Through researching animal testing, it's clear that it is solely negative and unreliable. Animals are not meant to live in laboratories and it causes major behavioral changes because of the stress factors. These stress factors make the tests unreliable.

ANYA SHAH '29

## THE IMPORTANCE OF student-athletes' overall health worldwide



Athletes' overall health is a global issue that needs to be discussed to help decrease injuries, depression, and anxiety around the world. Different cultures perceive mental health in various ways. In some Asian cultures like China, Japan, and Korea, people avoid seeking help when they are struggling mentally because they do not want to bring shame to their family. In African cultures, they believe in witchcraft, and when people are struggling mentally, they may be accused of being witches or possessed by evil spirits. In Latin American cultures like Mexico, Brazil, or Argentina, family and support are important, and people with mental health concerns are more likely to seek emotional help from their family members.



There is also a worldwide stigma surrounding athletes' mental health, where

seeking help is seen as a sign of weakness, rather than strength. Globally, athletes are expected to be mentally tough, and this prevents them from communicating how they feel. Promoting mental health for athletes encourages open communication and supports athletes who are struggling. In countries like the US and the UK, athletes' mental health is at the forefront of issues, and sports psychology has become more prevalent. However, in many Latin American countries, affordability is a challenge, and mental health services are scarce across the region. If people are educated about the worldwide issue of athletes' overall health, then injuries can be prevented, the stigma can be reduced, and athletes can perform their best.



Khan Academy. <https://www.khanacademy.org/ela/8th-grade-reading-and-vocabulary/x435b1de09a877dd7:to-your-health-long-passage-practice/x435b1de09a877dd7:reading-argumentative-texts-to-your-health/e/athletes-and-mental-health>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2025.

Seven, Zuva. "How Do Other Countries Deal With Mental Health?" Very Well Mind. Accessed December 5, 2025. <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-do-other-countries-deal-with-mental-health-7556304>.

I chose to research athletes' health because it is a worldwide issue that deserves more attention. Many athletes struggle with health issues but stay silent because of the fear of being seen as weak or losing playing time. By bringing more attention to this topic, a more supportive environment can be created for athletes.

# EXPANDING PRESS FREEDOM: A GLOBAL NECESSITY

BY: WES COUGHLIN

## Why is This Important?

- ▶ The Press plays an essential role in:
  - ▶ Informing society
  - ▶ Solving critical issues
  - ▶ Holding others accountable (Ernst Turner is a great example)
- ▶ Freedom of the press is a key indicator of how free a nation is
- ▶ Free press is essential for liberty, truth, and accountability



### ABOUT ME AND MY PROJECT

My Leadership Project was based around expanding press freedoms globally. As a fellow member of the Bolles Bugle, I understand what it feels like to have rules and regulations that limit sharing something that you are passionate about. That is exactly why I decided to research this topic, as it is something that I have to face daily. I focused on the press system within our country and globally. However, the most important thing I researched was how free press systems translates to better societies as a whole. Free press systems lead to more educated, innovative, and globally aware societies. Overall, I truly enjoyed research about this topic and I could not be more proud of how my research and presentation turned out

### PRESS FREEDOM IN US

Press freedom is a core American value, protected through the First Amendment, yet the reality of how it functions today is far more complicated. While many Americans believe strongly in this freedom, the United States still ranks surprisingly low in global press freedom measurements. Much of this comes from the limitations put on journalists in the name of national security and privacy. These rules are meant to protect sensitive information, but they can also make it difficult for reporters to share stories that citizens deserve to hear. When boundaries are unclear or overly broad, they risk being used to shield mistakes or discourage difficult reporting. Understanding these limits helps explain why many Americans feel concerned about the future of journalism. The strength of our democracy depends on a press that can operate confidently and openly.

### PRESS FREEDOM AROUND THE WORLD

Globally, press freedom varies widely, and the contrast between countries is striking. Nations like Norway demonstrate what it looks like when journalism is fully supported—strong constitutional protections, updated policies that keep journalists safe, and a national belief that information should remain open and accessible. On the opposite end, countries such as China maintain strict control over the media, blocking platforms and limiting what citizens can see or share. These restrictions can create a population that is less informed and less connected to the world around them. What stood out most in my research is how deeply press freedom influences a country's growth. The nations with the strongest press protections also rank among the most innovative, creative, and globally engaged. When journalists are free to report honestly, societies benefit in every possible way.

### A majority of Americans continue to be concerned about press freedoms

% of U.S. adults who say they are \_\_\_ about potential restrictions on press freedoms in the U.S.

	Extremely/Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	A little/Not at all concerned
2024	41%	29%	28%
2025	43%	26%	29%

Note: Respondents who did not answer are not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 24-March 2, 2025.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

### The State of World Press Freedom

Countries ranked by level of press freedom in 2025\*



\*100 = best possible score. Index based on attacks on journalists, expert interviews covering security, legal, social, economic and political aspects  
Source: World Press Freedom Index/Reporters Without Borders



statista

# WOMENS' RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN

THE TALIBAN'S EXTREME CONTROL

GIANNA GOLL



The Taliban first took control of Afghanistan in 1996 after defeating the soviet invaders who came in the 1970s. The Taliban began imposing strict laws on women's rights, the first being a ban on education for girls. Education is power, so by taking away schooling, the Taliban was able to gain absolute control. In 2001, the US deployed troops in Afghanistan after the terrorist attack on 9/11. This helped the situation until 2021 when the US removed troops from Afghanistan, and the Taliban took control again.

Since 2021, they have taken away almost every right from women. Women are not allowed to attend school past primary school, work in most places, or leave the house without necessity. This has led to extreme depression amongst women and girls because they cannot see any of their friends, and many feel hopeless and angry. In addition to poor mental health, women have poor physical health because male doctors cannot treat them, and hospitals are underfunded and far away. Other restrictions include not being able to travel without a mahram, not being able to visit parks, and not being able to show any skin or hair.

Women's rights in Afghanistan are restricted as a result of the Taliban's extreme control, not Islam. Islam was originally a peaceful religion, but extremist religious groups have changed others' perceptions of the religion as a whole.

## PERSONAL CONNECTION

My mom's side of the family is from Afghanistan, and hearing that my grandma has never been able to go back to her home country since the Taliban took over made me upset. I chose to dive deeper into why Islamic extremist groups are so violent and cruel towards women, when Islam used to be KNOWN as the religion of peace. I also teach refugee children English and art to take action on a cause that matters to me.



My grandparents in Afghanistan in the 1960's on a hike together

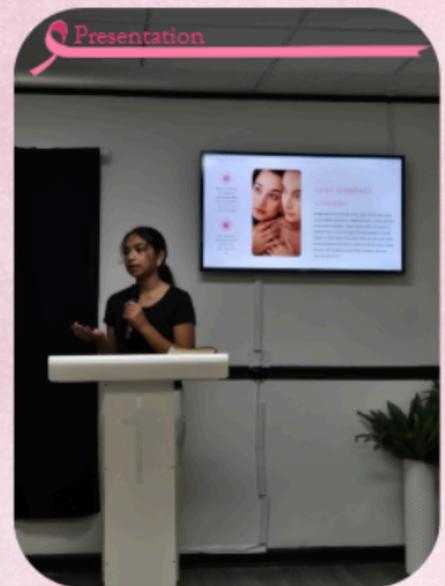
# Breast Cancer Awareness

by: Saanvi Kondu



For my Global Leadership project, I focused on the global issue of breast cancer and the need for greater awareness, education, and access to early detection. My project emphasized the importance of receiving regular mammogram screenings every one to two years, as early diagnosis remains one of the most effective ways to save lives.

Throughout my research, I explored ways to raise awareness and reduce the cultural stigma that often prevents women from seeking help. In many rural regions of Africa and Asia, women diagnosed with breast cancer have faced severe social consequences, including being separated from their children due to harmful misconceptions about the cancer and fears about how it may affect a family's reputation. These situations highlight the significance of global education, compassion, and awareness.



As part of creating real change in my own community, I am organizing a mammogram bus event, after doing a few presentations, in Orange Park to provide local women with accessible, professional screenings. By combining global understanding with local action, my goal is to help women feel safe, supported, and empowered to prioritize their health.

Mammogram Bus



Lynn Ibrahim

# Books, Not Bombs



## Overview of my Leadership Project

For my Global Scholars Program leadership project, I focused on a crisis that is both academically significant and personally meaningful: the collapse of education for Syrian children as a result of the war. As a Syrian myself, I have grown up hearing stories from family members about the dramatic changes the war forced upon everyday life, especially for children. This personal connection fuels my belief that education is not just a universal right but a lifeline. It offers stability, identity, and hope, especially for children experiencing conflict.

My research revealed how Syria's once-strong education system has been devastated by school bombings, displacement, teacher shortages, psychological trauma, and deep economic collapse. Millions of children remain out of school, and many may never return without urgent intervention.

### Dialogue Event: Exploring the Importance of Education

To bring this issue to my community, I hosted a dialogue focused on a central question:

"What happens to a society when education is disrupted, denied, or destroyed?"

Students learned about the physical destruction of schools, the trauma war inflicts on children, and the long-term consequences of a "lost generation." We also explored the broader global importance of education, not only in Syria but in any community facing instability or systemic barriers.

The dialogue encouraged participants to reflect on the power of schooling to rebuild lives, strengthen societies, and create pathways for healing. Many students shared how learning shapes their own sense of identity and opportunity, making the crisis in Syria feel personal and urgent.

### Key Insights from Research

- **Physical destruction:** Thousands of Syrian schools were bombed or repurposed.
- **Displacement:** Millions of children lost access to consistent schooling.
- **Trauma:** Psychological stress from war directly affects students' ability to learn.
- **Economic hardship:** Many families must prioritize survival over schooling.
- **Refugee barriers:** Documentation, language, and financial challenges block access to education.
- **Long-term consequences:** Without intervention, Syria risks losing an entire generation's academic foundation.



## Extending the Impact

### Cultural Fundraising Auction Hosted in My Home

To directly support Syrian children's education, my family and I hosted a community auction at our home.

I delivered a speech and presentation explaining the crisis, the importance of education, and how the funds would be used to support relief organizations focused on schooling and child well-being.

The auction featured handmade, artisan-crafted items imported directly from Syria, including:

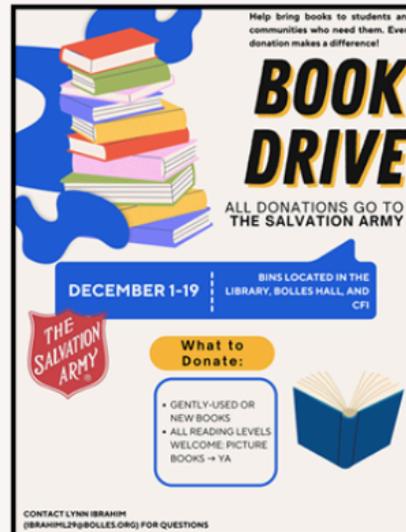
- Handwoven silk textiles made from authentic Syrian silkworm silk
- Traditional mosaics
- Hand-carved wooden pieces
- Gold jewelry crafted by Syrian artisans
- Blown-glass pieces and glassware unique to Syrian craft traditions

The event was incredibly successful. We raised **\$40,000** to support educational recovery efforts and provide resources for displaced and traumatized children. This auction allowed our community to tangibly connect with Syrian culture while contributing to a meaningful cause.



### Book Drive

I organized a school-wide book drive to collect books for children and families supported by the Salvation Army. These books help provide learning opportunities for kids facing hardship, offering both educational value and a sense of comfort. Donating them ensures they reach vulnerable families who need them most and aligns with my goal of supporting literacy beyond just the Syrian context.



### Looking Ahead

This project strengthened my commitment to advocating for children whose education is threatened by conflict. As a Syrian, this issue is deeply personal to me, and as a global leader in training, I believe it is our responsibility to ensure that all children, no matter where they live, have access to safe, consistent, and high-quality learning.

Education is not just a service. It is the foundation for rebuilding communities, strengthening societies, and restoring hope. My goal is to continue raising awareness and supporting programs that protect this essential right for the world's most vulnerable children.

VEDA GALIPALLI

# ANIMAL HOMELESSNESS

## GLOBAL LEADERSHIP PROJECT

My GSP Leadership Project was on Animal Homelessness around the world. I specified the certain causes and effects of animal homelessness based on where it is occurring. I presented my project to Furever Vets Vet Clinic in front of vets and nurses. I learned a lot from this project including ways to prevent animal homelessness all over the world in order to achieve Substantial Development Goal number 15, life on land.



**Life on Land:**  
"A United Nations goal to protect, restore, and sustainably use terrestrial ecosystems"



**Common Causes**

- Lost from home
- Abandoned by pet owner
- Born into homelessness



**Solutions**

- Animal Shelters
- Volunteering
- Fostering and Adoption
- Collars + Microchipping

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP PROJECT

# GSP LEADERSHIP

Valentina Bouras



**One More Child** has a mission to take care of children who have been abused or neglected and give foster or adoptive homes to children in crisis. These kids need necessities to take home over break, where they may not have access to the amount of food they do at the organization. These food items include canned foods, cereals, granola bars, and other snacks. Those who attended my presentation had the opportunity to pack bags with various food items for the children at One More Child.

## Orphaned Children Around the World:

I created a presentation based on **SDG #3** and focused on **Orphaned Children** around the World. I talked about the struggles these children face, what we can do to help, and how this issue connects to SDG#3. Children struggle with **mental health issues** such as anxiety, depression, and trust issues. Many of these kids lose their parents at a very young age due to tragedies such as war. This can leave a lasting impact on these kids health that can carry through their lives. It is important to help these children by volunteering, donating, or even becoming a foster family if possible. Spreading **awareness** will lead to decreased number of orphaned children around the world.

## SDG#3:

SDG #3, or Sustainable Development Goal 3, is the **UN's goal** to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages". It focuses on a wide **range of health priorities**, including reducing mortality rates, combating diseases, ensuring universal health coverage, promoting mental health, and improving access to safe medicines and vaccines.





## PERIOD POVERTY NEWSLETTER

### WHAT IS PERIOD POVERTY

Period poverty is the lack of access to menstrual products. This affects millions of girls and women around the world. Countless girls and women have to miss school, women have to miss work, and too many are forced to use unsafe materials.



### Causes

- Stigma and Cultural Taboos
- Economic instability
- Government Policies

### Growth Over Time

Scotland is the first country to make period products free to everyone

New Zealand provides period products in school

Kenya, India, Australia, and Canada have removed taxes on period products making them more affordable

### STATISTICS ABOUT PERIOD POVERTY

1 in 5 female teens in the US struggle to afford period products

1 in 4 students struggle to afford period products

39% of schools worldwide provide menstrual health education

### ITEMS COLLECTED

Pads

Tampons

Sanitary feminine wipes

### MY IMPACT:

I had given a presentation at St. Augustine Church of Christ to women at Ladies Day to over 200 women to teach them about this global issue. Then we have a Question and Answer section, so I answered any misunderstood thoughts. I then started a donation drive that has collected feminine pads, tampons, and sanitary wipes to give to church congregations in Jamaica, which is experiencing the aftermath of a category 5 hurricane, and Nigeria, a country that is heavily impacted by period poverty. The drive lasted for 4 weeks, and I collected over 8,000 supplies to give those in need. Helping over 2,000 people with giving each person 4 pads and 3 sanitary wipes to help women.



## Cyrus '26- Student Stories

Both Turkey and Iran are facing an extreme financial crisis: their economies are deeply struggling and inflation is rampant. Iran faced a 45% annual inflation rate in 2025, and that has unfortunately led to another surge in revolts against the Iranian regime, as the population is being economically squeezed. Turkey faced a 31% inflation rate in November of 2025, which had officially decreased 9% on an annual basis.

While I was in Turkey, I discovered that the actual (per the people we met) inflation rate was an excess of 40%. Even though Turkey has seen a solid reduction in inflation rates over the last several years (with the inflation rate in 2024 being 60%), core inflation remains high, with unpredictable food prices becoming an ever-increasing risk. As a result of these economic crises, Turkey and Iran have seen no active growth in employment, businesses are struggling, and personal incomes have been declining on a dramatic level. Meanwhile, in the U.S., the inflation rate was reported to be 2.7% in November of 2025. That's quite a significant difference.

During winter break, I had the opportunity to visit Turkey for almost 2 weeks. I was immersed in a unique culture unlike anything I had ever encountered, a culture similar to that of my own Iranian heritage. On New Year's Eve, I was in Istanbul, one of the largest and most heavily visited cities in the world. Around 2 AM, my father and I were frantically searching to find a taxi amidst the packed streets of the city as a heavy snowstorm began. When we convinced a taxi driver to take us to our hotel, we jumped in and after a few minutes, via google translator, the driver told us that the fare was going to be 30 euros, which was close to three times the normal fare. However, it was very late, and finding alternative transportation was not really an option due to the approximate 1 million people who had descended upon the waterfront historic area of Istanbul, so with all things considered, we didn't have much of an option but to say yes.

Several minutes later, while sitting in standstill traffic, another man walked up to our taxi and got in the front passenger seat and introduced himself as a friend of the cab driver. He then informed us that because of traffic, the 15-minute drive to our hotel had transitioned into an hour and the new fare was now 60 Euros. My father tried to gently negotiate the price down, but they only agreed to reduce it to 55 Euros. For my mother and grandparents, who had gotten into a separate cab, the drive back to our hotel was much worse: after they had gotten into the taxi, the driver demanded his payment upfront before taking them to their destination. When my grandfather said he would pay him when they arrived at the hotel, the driver kicked them out of the taxi. My grandfather has difficulty walking long distances due to knee problems, and he was deeply concerned about getting a taxi, but he, my mother, and my grandmother were kicked out of a taxi for a second and third time, before they found a fourth taxi.

Initially, I was upset, but then I recalled a conversation with our guide, a local Turkish man in his late 30s, where he had mentioned that in countries such as Turkey and Iran, if you aren't one of the wealthy elites, you must hustle and do whatever it takes to make a living. Individuals such as our taxi-driving duo can't exactly stroll into an office and apply for a job; reality is much more complicated.

# Ada '27- Student Stories

## Kreuzberg: A Path to Finding Myself

I have always been fascinated by diasporic communities. Different cultures fuse together to cultivate a new society filled with passion and life. Various peoples combine their lifestyles and give the world new art, music and food. I never knew how I was connected to a particular diasporic community until recently. I had just finished eighth grade and was ready to submerge into summer. My parents had planned a trip for our family to go to Germany.

When we arrived, I was amazed by the vast Reichstag Building and the archaic Brandenburg Gate. However, throughout my experience I noticed something peculiar. All of our taxi drivers, all of the hotel cleaners were Turkish. As a Turkish girl myself, I always love meeting those who are native to my culture, but something about this reality did not sit well with me.

Later in the trip, my parents wanted us to visit Kreuzberg, a neighborhood in Germany. I soon realized why. Everyone in this area spoke Turkish! There were authentic Turkish restaurants, grocery stores, and homes. For lunch, we ate Iskender Kebap, a meat dish, which was identical to the one I ate in Turkey. I immediately fell in love with Kreuzberg. For dessert we went to eat at a place that sold Tulumba and Baklava, two of the most iconic desserts in Turkey. As we ate these sweets, we got to know the man selling them. He told us about his life back in Turkey and of the struggles he faced living in Germany. This sparked an interest in me. I thought about how hard it must be living in a country and culture dissimilar to one's own.

After this experience, when I entered high school, I pondered my own Turkish identity. I had never really reflected on this part of myself before. In fact, I was ashamed to be Turkish prior to my reflections. I had been ashamed of my name, my food, and my culture. I felt like I was living a dual life. At home I was speaking Turkish and trying hard not to mix English words into my speech. At school, I was attempting to seem as "American" as possible. After contemplating these thoughts, I came to the conclusion that I needed to embrace my culture.

Afterwards, in my sophomore year, I decided to research Kreuzberg for a project. I discovered that after World War II, Germany lacked many workers. As a result, they admitted many Turkish immigrants to handle cheap work such as janitorial jobs, taxi driving, and so forth. I learned that these people had been pushed into the most destitute parts of Germany. I found out that they were treated inferior to those of their German counterparts. The second generation of Turkish German children of the first-generation immigrants had a hard time in school due to their identities. This second generation, nonetheless, formed their own culture. They created their own music, cinema, cuisine, and more. When I listened to a couple of their songs, I noticed that the lyrics talked about their struggles living in a society where one side was wealthy, and the other side was gloomy and poor. This was like a full circle moment for me. I realized that the thoughts and anger of this second generation were like mine. I know they may not be explicitly exact, but like these Turkish Germans, I felt and still sometimes feel "out of my skin" as someone who is living in a society different than the culture in my home. I feel that we are both isolated inside a community unlike ours.

Oddly enough, it gives me peace and confidence knowing that I am not the only one who feels this way. I soon also saw that my perceptions were not unique to Turkish immigrants' children. Most second-generation kids sense the same identity struggles. Ultimately, however, it is important for these people to acknowledge their identities and hold on to their cultures and histories, like I now do.