

# The Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme

May-June 2019





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Photos by: Isogai Miki, Chema Sarri, Nathaniel Soon, Jose Alfredo Torres.  
Graphic Design: María Pérez

## About Peace Boat

Peace Boat is a Japan-based international NGO with Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC of the United Nations (UN) and in partnership with the UN SDG Action Campaign. Since 1983, Peace Boat has been conducting advocacy and education programmes on board a chartered passenger ship. Peace Boat is a committed campaigner for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and since 2016 has been sailing with the SDG Wheel Logo on the side of the ship's hull. With 35 years' experience organizing educational voyages, Peace Boat strongly believes in the power of personal experiences and testimony as a call to action and regularly uses its ship as a venue to share such first-hand experiences. As part of its voyages, Peace Boat visits many Small Island Developing States (SIDS) where participants learn about climate change and marine degradation.



# Introduction

## The Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme 2019

For the third consecutive year after its launch in 2017, Peace Boat invited youth from small islands on the frontline of the climate crisis to travel onboard its ship to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and ocean degradation. The third edition of the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme began on May 24 in Malta. Young leaders from the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and the Caribbean who are active on these issues in their local communities and internationally traveled from Valletta to New York City (United States) with stops and activities in Granada (Spain), Tangier (Morocco) and Ponta Delgada (Portugal). The programme concluded in New York City where Peace Boat's vessel docked in Manhattan during World Oceans Day. Activities were organized in collaboration with United Nations partners as part of the official United Nations programme for that day. The Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme took place on Peace Boat's 101st Global Voyage as part of Peace Boat's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its partnership with the United Nations SDG Action Campaign.

This programme highlights the stories and experiences of young people at the forefront of injustices brought about by climate change, amplifying their voices calling for action. Press conferences, public events and meetings with government representatives are organized in the

different countries that the youth visit with Peace Boat. The ambassadors have the opportunity to present their experiences to local and national media to amplify their message. They also use their own social media channels to outline the programme and conclusions. After the voyage, participants use the experience and knowledge gained to contribute to their communities and internationally, organizing events with young people to pass the message and keep raising awareness on the urgent need for action for our ocean and climate.

Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme was first held in 2017 and launched at the high-level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (UN Ocean Conference) and recognised by the COP23 Presidency Secretariat as an Endorsed Event of COP23. A second edition was held in 2018 which concluded at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) at the United Nations headquarters. The programme focuses on Sustainable Development Goal 13, "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" (Climate Action) and Sustainable Development Goal 14, "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" (Life Below Water), and explores the relationship between these goals and the other goals of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



# Profiles of Participants



## PACIFIC OCEAN



### **Eparama Qerewaqa (22)** **Fiji**

Eparama is an environmental activist and youth advocate from the provincial highlands of Serua in the Fiji Islands. He has lived and travelled extensively around Fiji's coastal communities, documenting on digital media the pristine beauty of Fiji's extensive reef systems and forests under threat from climate change and environmental degradation. In his final year at the University of Fiji, Eparama is studying environmental science. He volunteers at several youth networks and organizations and currently works as a Project Officer for the Alliance for Future Generations (AFG), a youth network focused on sustainable development. Eparama hopes to empower, inspire and facilitate young people in meaningful and effective participation in the sustainable development of local communities in Fiji and raise awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He is currently working to establish long term sustainable projects in the Western division of Fiji, connecting these to the traditional knowledge of the itaukei (indigenous people of Fiji) who have lived harmoniously with their "vanua" for centuries. Eparama is an avid reader and writer and uses the literary arts to bring attention to urgent contemporary issues including climate change.



### **Tapua Pasuna (24)** **Tuvalu**

Tapua was raised in the beautiful islands of Tuvalu, in the South Pacific. She was studying at the Victoria University of Wellington under the Bachelor of Laws Programme with an interest in marine laws and human rights and is currently working as an Assistant Tourism Officer under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment and Labour. This role provides greater insight to how a small island nation like Tuvalu can promote the eco-friendly development of its tourism sector, at the same time, have a first-hand understanding of the drastic impacts of climate change and marine degradation on the people of Tuvalu, financially, physically and culturally. Tapua holds the current title of Sipi Kana which is held every year during the national cultural festival for Tuvalu. The title not only comes with great honor and privilege, but also an overwhelming task to represent the women and youth of Tuvalu, addressing and advocating on issues that impact Tuvaluan's society, culture, survival and identity.



### **Elsei Tellei (26)** **Palau**

Elsei is a Palauan-American who was born, raised, and educated in the Pacific Islands. She attended the University of Hawaii at Manoa and earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, with a certificate from the Marine Option Program. She is currently living in Palau and works as the Community Outreach and Education Officer for the Palau National Marine Sanctuary Office. She is a Native artist who specializes in graphic design, illustration, and painting, particularly using traditional Palauan aesthetics. She is also an avid paddler and has competed at a regional level for Palau in the sport of outrigger canoeing, most recently winning gold at the 2018 Micronesian Games in Yap, Federated States of Micronesia. Her main interests include environmental conservation and community engagement, with volunteer experience with the YMCA of Honolulu in Hawaii and various organizations in Palau.



# INDIAN OCEAN



## Nathaniel Soon (22) – Singapore

Nathaniel lives and breathes the ocean. Hailing from Singapore, a small-island nation situated near the coral triangle, he is passionate about engaging local communities on issues concerning marine biodiversity, challenges and solutions. A storyteller from young, he is the founder and creative director of the documentary collective – Our Seas, Our Legacy, which works with corporate businesses, schools and non-governmental organisations to use documentary filmmaking to shed light on Singapore's marine environmental challenges and advocate for positive change. The collective was supported by the International Year of the Reef 2018 and first launched at the Singapore Eco-Film Festival 2018. Nathaniel is a certified Divemaster with Scuba Schools International, underwater photographer and filmmaker. He uses diving and imagery to start conversations with divers about ocean conservation and has since published his works in magazines like Asian Geographic. He is currently pursuing his undergraduate studies in environmental anthropology at Yale-NUS College.



## Nathalia Lawen (18) – Seychelles

Nathalia is from Seychelles and is currently studying at the School of Advanced Level Studies. She was part of the first cohort of the Blue Economy Internship Programme where she assisted with scientific research on Silhouette island with the Island Conservation Society. In 2016, together with her twin sister, she co-founded an environmental group in her home district to raise awareness about environmental issues. Nathalia is an active member of SYAH Seychelles and The Ocean Project Seychelles and has led numerous initiatives on behalf of these NGOs including multiple beach clean ups. She is a strong advocate for the oceans and has lobbied the government for numerous causes, most recently, on the issue of marine debris. As part of The Ocean Project Seychelles, she is working on initiatives for public education about the impacts of marine debris, in particular plastic pollution, and a switch from single-use plastic items. In 2017, she was awarded "The most valuable student" as part of the Eco-school programme and got a once in a lifetime opportunity to visit the world heritage site - The Aldabra Atoll.

# CARIBBEAN



## Jevanic Henry (22) Saint Lucia

Jevanic is a young environmentalist and community activist from the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia. He is pursuing undergraduate studies in Economics and Finance at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, while continuing to be involved in climate change advocacy and activism, a passion which was fueled after representing his country at the Regional Youth Climate Change Conference in Jamaica in 2017. Jevanic, along with fellow attendees formulated the Youth Climate Change Activists (YCCA) movement which seeks to raise climate change awareness and action throughout the region. He believes effective climate action must be led by youth with a fervent desire in ensuring the protection of our planet. His affiliation and work with the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) has been a catalyst in his desire to push a sustainable development agenda. Jevanic intends on merging his passions by pursuing postgraduate studies in Environment and Development Economics.



## Khadija Stewart (26) Trinidad and Tobago

Khadija is an enthusiastic environmentalist with a passion for travelling, making her mark on the world by moulding her life around three important words; awareness, appreciation and change. Currently, she is pursuing an MSc in Climate Change and Development. Upon completion of her first MSc in Sustainable Development, she developed a passion for land and water management which steered her towards the World Youth Parliament for Water. As a member of the World Youth Parliament, she has attended the World Water Forum in 2018 and connected with youth advocates across the globe working towards ensuring water for all and youth involvement in the water sector. She is now the Communications Lead of the Parliament. Khadija's love for the environment coupled with her desire to raise awareness led to the creation of Ecovybz which started as an environmental blog and has now grown into an environmental awareness movement with a series of educational and outreach activities aimed at bringing about meaningful change.



## Ashneil Jeffers (21) Montserrat

Ashneil lives in Montserrat, a mountainous Caribbean island, part of the Lesser Antilles chain and a British Overseas Territory. He is a climate activist and has participated in multiple conversation projects which resulted in obtaining an advanced open water diving, reef survey, and Terrestrial surveying certifications. He also volunteers with Fish n' Fins, a non-profit organization based in Montserrat which teaches children swimming, ocean awareness and conservation. Since 2017 he has been leading a project to restart the Montserrat Youth Parliament to empower youth in the country. He is an entrepreneur working as the assistant manager of his family-owned ice-cream parlor, alongside various self-run startups, as well as for the Caribbean Erasmus programme. Taking part in this programme, he wishes to empower fellow youth to use their confidence to better themselves and fight for their goals.

# Small Islands on the frontline of the climate crisis

## MONTSERRAT

Montserrat is a mountainous Caribbean island, part of the Lesser Antilles chain and a British Overseas Territory. Montserrat is the smallest country of the CARICOM states with just over 5,000 residents. Montserrat is at risk from many environmental hazards connected with climate change such as hurricanes, floods and storm surge.

## SAINT LUCIA

Saint Lucia is a small island developing state located in the Eastern Caribbean with a population of approximately 170,000 people. Population centres and economic activities, including tourism, are concentrated along the coast. These are highly vulnerable to the anticipated effects of climate change such as sea-level rise.

- Montserrat
- Saint Lucia
- Trinidad and Tobago

## TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is an archipelagic nation in the southern Caribbean, located northeast of Venezuela and south of Grenada. It is predicted that climate change will result in an increased frequency of extreme events such as storms and hurricanes.

Global sea level has been rising over the past century and it will keep rising in the coming years.

Many small islands are building seawalls against rising oceans.



**C**limate change and ocean degradation affect the development of all nations, regardless of location or size of economy. Yet, no other group of nations is more vulnerable to its devastating effects than the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). With one-third of their population living on land that is less than five meters below sea level, the threat of sea level rise, storm surges, and coastal destruction pose existential risks to SIDS. While contributing less than 1 per cent to the world's greenhouse gas emissions, these countries are among the first to experience the worst and most devastating impacts of climate change with greater risks to economies, livelihoods, and food security. As large ocean states, SIDS are on the frontline of ocean

degradation with their livelihood and cultures deeply connected to the ocean. Yet, despite serious threats and challenges, the SIDS continue to demonstrate global leadership across the areas of climate change, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development. For example, countries like Palau, Seychelles or Fiji have taken the lead at the international stage. With the third edition of the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme, Peace Boat brought the voices of the SIDS to five different ports in Europe and the United States to raise awareness and call for action to protect our climate and ocean. It was an opportunity to share the situation in their own communities and learn about the countries they were visiting, each time sharing both problems and possible solutions.

### SINGAPORE

As a low-lying island, the rise in sea level poses the most immediate threat to Singapore. Much of the nation lies only 15 m above the sea level, with about 30% of the island being less than 5 m above the sea level.

### PALAU

The Republic of Palau consists of 586 coralline and volcanic islands of the Caroline Island Group, only 12 of which are continuously inhabited. 25 percent of Palau's landmass lies below ten meters above sea level meaning low-lying coastal areas are threatened by sea level rise.

### TUVALU

Tuvalu is an extremely small, isolated atoll island nation, located approximately halfway between Australia and Hawaii and consisting of widely scattered, low-lying islands. The country rarely exceeds three meters above mean sea level. The country is extremely vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, variability and extreme weather events which threaten the country's very existence.

### Seychelles

### SEYCHELLES

Seychelles, an archipelago in the western Indian Ocean, relies heavily on tourism and fishing, the two top contributors to its economy. With 115 islands, which include low lying coralline atolls, climate change is a battle Seychelles is already fighting.

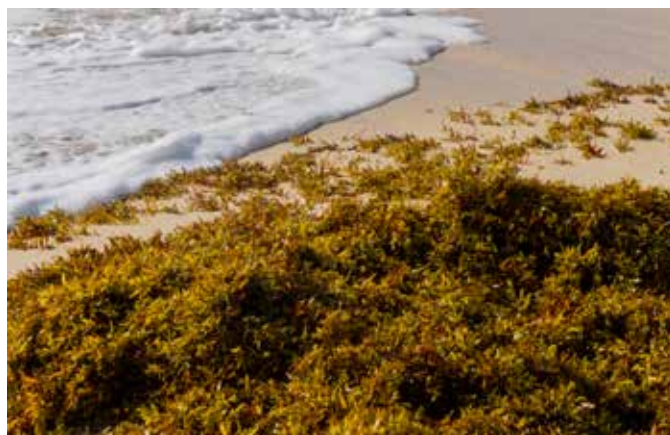
### FIJI

Since 1993, Fiji has recorded 6 millimeters increase in its sea level per year, larger than the global average. The rapid rise in sea levels and the resulting saltwater intrusion that stems from the increased ferocity of coastal floods have made portions of the island nation uninhabitable.

Rising sea levels are quickening the pace of beach erosion around the world.



Since 2011, blooms of Sargassum seaweed have wreaked havoc on tropical shores.







With students and staff at the University of Malta

# The adventure starts in Malta

*By Khadija Stewart*



**E**xcited, scared, nervous, were all the emotions I felt as I boarded my flight for Valletta Malta. May 22 marked the unofficial start of a life changing journey. Eight Youth Ambassadors from Small Island Developing States were selected to participate in Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme.

Upon my arrival at Malta I met with my fellow ambassador Nathalia from Seychelles and the next day, we travelled together to our new hotel where we met the other Youth Ambassadors and Chema Sarri, the Programme Coordinator from Peace Boat. Formal greetings were exchanged and instantly as if fate brought kindred souls together, we immediately connected. Some say it was "an island thing" but I believe each and every one of us was meant to be there to connect and be impactful ambassadors of change. The day was very casual giving us time to prepare for our

formal activities the following day and share stories about ourselves.

With the blink of an eye, May 24 was here with the official start of the programme and on the ocean blue, stood Peace Boat's majestic ship floating on the Mediterranean Sea eagerly awaiting our presence. We said goodbye to the hotel and checked into the boat totally mesmerised at the size and style of the ship. We set forth to our first interactive session in Malta which was held at the University of Malta. We were warmly greeted by Malta's Ambassador of Climate Change, Professor Simone Bourg who had organized the day's activities.

We started by participating in an interactive session in the council room with academia, student representatives, policy makers and NGO leaders all working towards climate action



in Malta. First, we heard from Professor Alen Deidun who specialises in ocean governance. He spoke on the issue of invasive and alien species in Malta linked to climate change. For example, jellyfish and lionfish were once unable to pass through the Suez Canal, but due to changing oceanic conditions this is no longer the case. This information is used as an indication of ocean conditions and climatic conditions which is then used to guide future policies and climate foresight. To monitor this issue, they use citizen science to not only educate the public, but also to get them involved in monitoring and solution development.

Some of the key issues that were discussed by the other speakers were: the importance of policy development and proper context; the use of reliable data and proper data collection methods; transposing data to knowledge; the gap between science and policy and, lastly, the difference between vocabulary and language in terms of educating people on different environmental issues. What really stood out to me was a presentation from Professor Paul Pace who drew the connection between knowledge, attitude and behaviour change as well as the different knowledge to provide people in order to facilitate meaningful action. He also touched on the role that children play through eco-schools and a children's parliament which gives young children the opportunity to have a voice in policy development related to climate change and the environment. We, the youth ambassadors, shared about the activities and solutions in our country and to close the session we were reminded by Professor Bourg that the struggle against climate change is huge, but we must remain positive.

The activities at the university were followed by the experience of a lifetime to travel to the Grand Masters Palace of Valletta where we had the opportunity to meet His Excellency George Vella, President of Malta. The palace was absolutely stunning, and it would be true to say in that moment we all felt like royalty! From the ceiling design to the incredible chairs it was a sight to behold. We had the opportunity to talk with His Excellency who described to us the beauties of Malta and his passion for the environment, explaining to us that he was once the Minister of the Environment. He encouraged us to keep moving forward making a difference in our countries and around the world.



Interactive session with academia, student representatives, policy makers and NGO leaders



Meeting with Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Environment and Education on board Peace Boat



Meeting with H.E. Mr George Vella, President of Malta at the Palace

Following the visit to the Palace, we returned to the ship where we welcomed the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion, MR. Carmelo Abela; the Minister for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Dr. José A. Herrera; and the Minister for Education and Employment, Mr. Evarist Bartol. We were honoured to have the Ministers visit us on board and to be a part of the programme. They all expressed faith in the future by acknowledging our work in our respective countries and encouraged us to continue being ambassadors of change. They also recognised and expressed regret that their generation had not taken ownership of the realities of climate change and ignored supporting evidence, and so emphasised the importance of our generation and future generations using their voices and actions to fight for the environment and protect the climate.

As this session ended, the ministers left the ship and it was time to bid farewell to the beautiful city of Valletta. A departure ceremony was held on the outside deck of the ship with new friends, drinks and laughter as we watched the coastline of Valletta slowly fade into the deep blue sea. We had no idea what laid ahead, but we were all excited to experience life on board Peace Boat and spread our messages in the cities ahead.



Watch a short film about Valletta in Vimeo.







With the Spanish Association for Environmental Education and Fridays for Future



## Second stop, Granada

*By Jevanic Henry*



**A**fter two straight days at sea following our initial departure from Valletta, Malta, our second port as Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors was scheduled for May 27 in Motril, a small town in the province of Granada, Spain. This province in the south of Spain just off the Mediterranean coast, undoubtedly provided a unique learning experience.

From Motril we drove to the city of Granada where we met and held discussions with students at the University. Certainly, the relatively hot temperatures of the area made it feel like home to most of us. Having a few minutes to spare prior to the commencement of our official proceedings for the day provided us with the opportunity to take a short walk around the city before our consultation with the local students. We walked through an old Arabic street en route to visiting the main Catholic cathedral which symbolized for me the importance of multiculturalism and religious unity for world peace.

It was interesting to hear about the rich history of this institution, utilizing buildings of great historical value such as a former hospital. Being one of the largest universities in



Spain with such a diverse international student body, it was an ideal institution for sharing and obtaining a diverse range of views and experiences on ocean and climate related issues. We used “Talanoa” as the basis for our discussions, a form of storytelling or dialogue originating from the Pacific which involves the sharing of views and experiences to find solutions for the common good. It was introduced to the UN Climate Change process by the Fijian Presidency at COP23. The Fijian Presidency used three key questions as a base for the Talanoa Dialogue at the UN: “Where are we?; Where do we want to go?; How do we get there?” and we used the same process and questions in our dialogue.

In our discussions with the students at the university, despite the language barriers, we were able to not only share our views, but also hear their opinions on the ocean and climate issues. We interacted with students from as far as Colombia, to those from the relatively near African coast. Given that the majority of those present though were from what is considered the developed world, and their first-hand experiences with climate change impacts compared to us from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) slightly differ, there was a general agreement that climate change was a serious concern for us all. One of the main issues experienced in Granada highlighted by the students, was the apparent increase in temperatures that have been noticed, coupled with changes in weather patterns, such as longer summers, issues we too were familiar with. Heatwaves have become a common occurrence in the province which undoubtedly can have devastating effects on human health and wellbeing.

It was quite pleasing to hear the great level of concern the students have for small island states on the frontline of climate change, and that they are not casting a blind eye on such developments affecting our islands. While many of the young people we met are taking steps in their daily lives that are in line with a more eco-friendly sustainable way of living, there is still a great need for implementation at the macro policy level in Spain and in Europe, for instance with regards to single use plastics. This certainly was a mutual learning experience, which provided many students a greater understanding of the situation facing our islands, many of whom were not fully aware of the extent of the threats to our survival. It is our desire that the development of such empathy can fuel greater concern and action at all levels.

Following these discussions, we met with the Chairman of the Spanish Association for Environmental Education, Mr. Federico Velázquez de Castro González, to gain a better understanding of the situation in the south of Spain. Their mandate includes making people more aware of the importance of protecting the environment, with a great emphasis on promoting behavioral change in line with sustainability. He also told us about Spain's high vulnerability to the effects of climate change, including the longer dry spells and heatwaves the country had experienced.



Talanoa Dialogue at the University of Granada

However, it was also noted that the city was one of the top five most polluted cities in the country, largely due to the high level of traffic congestion present. This was a rather surprising fact specifically given that on our way to the city there were signs of wind energy being generated, but like many other states not at adequate levels to fully offset the levels of pollution which exists.

It was at this time that we met with the local coordinator of Friday's For Future in Granada, Ander Pérez. Fridays for Future is a people movement following the call from Swedish school student, Greta Thunberg, to strike from school for climate action. Meeting Ander certainly inspired us to take up even greater action, seeing and hearing about how the young people in Spain are taking a stance on climate action, lobbying policy makers, dispelling the belief that youth from developed countries do not care about climate change. Our afternoon session in Granada, culminated with a short visit to the Park Federico García Lorca, named after notable Spanish poet. As lovers of nature and the environment, walking through this area of greenery amidst this city was certainly a pleasant feeling. Within the park we did an exercise led by Federico which sought to enhance our appreciation and love of nature. After all, without these providers of our oxygen, we could not exist.

Upon our return to Motril, prior to getting back on board Peace Boat's ship we took some time exploring this rather tranquil town and took a short dip into what we classify as the cold Mediterranean waters compared to the warm, inviting waters I have been used to in the Caribbean; an opportunity to refresh before proceeding to the blazing heat of Morocco. Our journey was expected to intensify the following day, with a packed programme scheduled for our next stop in Tangier in less than 24 hours.



Watch a short film  
about Granada  
in Vimeo.





High Level Panel of the SDGs and Climate Change with H.E. Mr Philippe Poinso, UN Resident Coordinator in Morocco

# Engaging with the youth from Morocco on the Sustainable Development Goals

*By Elsei Tellei*

**T**he third stop for the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors on the Peace Boat was the city of Tangier in Morocco. For many of us, the port of Tangier was the first time we had seen the continent of Africa. A sunny day greeted us as we disembarked, and from there Morocco welcomed us with open arms. We were there for a day of activities focused around the UN Sustainable Goals (SDGs) organized by Moroccan youth led organizations and supported by the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Port Authorities of Tangiers. On the drive to an event at the Technopark, a gathering place for small enterprises in the port city, we had glimpses of Arabic architecture. Arriving during the Muslim month-long observance of Ramadan, most establishments were closed, but people were still seen out on the streets. Tangier, a cosmopolitan city at the crux of Europe and Africa, is home to nationalities from all over the world.

We were welcomed at the venue for an event organized by the Youth Leadership Council of Tangier, whose goal is to build bridges of communication, a dialogue of peace and trust between them and different institutions, political actors and civilians. They were also joined by the Atlas for Development, a nonprofit. The Founders of Atlas for Development were the winners of the United Nations SDG Action Award for Mobilization and were the main organizers of the day's activities in Morocco. Laura Hildebrandt, Global Policy Specialist of the UN SDG Action Campaign who was a Guest Educator onboard was one of the speakers at the event at the Technopark. It brought us together with students and community members. English, French, and Arabic made up most of the words exchanged, but the personal connection was not diminished because of the language barrier.



“Climate change is real,” said Hatim El Otmani, the President and Founder of Atlas for Development, closing the talk, “and you should panic.” Many laughed at the fatalistic wording he had chosen. But for our islands, we can see the immediate impacts which touch our shores. For the people of Tangier, the youth are sensitive to these issues, but the everyday Moroccan may not feel the same effects. Perhaps an urgent call to action like “you should panic” is necessary to move people. Whether it had the intended effect of humor or urgency, it helped to bring climate change to the forefront of everyone’s mind in that event.

For the rest of the time, the Youth Ambassadors split the audience into groups and used the “Talanoa” concept, or informal storytelling, to build trust, empathy, and dialogue. Life in small islands came together with the life of youth and community in Tangier and Morocco. Many realized that the small actions they had been taking were being duplicated in cities and towns in far-off lands, whether for a Fijian that far-away land was in Morocco or for a student living in Tangier that distant place was in Seychelles.

Once the formal event ended, phone numbers, emails, and Instagram handles were exchanged while lively conversation spilled over the auditorium seats and out the doors. In just a short time, a powerful cultural exchange and human connections were forged, paralleling the link that



With the Youth Leadership Council of Tangier.

the oceans gave all our countries: Pacific, Indian, Atlantic, or Mediterranean Sea, the waves of change and hope had touched us all. I was moved by two young women from the local university who wanted so badly to join us onboard, but there were more people wishing to register for the event than capacity onboard. We exchanged contact information and I left the venue happy to know that there were young people who were so passionate about reaching out to different people and making a change.

Leaving the beautiful city momentarily, we once again boarded Peace Boat. More than 200 people visited the ship to take part in activities including a high-level event focused on “The Climate Crisis and the SDGs” with panels that connected the climate crisis with education (SDG4), peace (SDG16), the oceans (SDG14) and the role of young people. There was a diverse array of speakers, representing environmental, community, and youth advocates from all age ranges, sectors, and countries. Our Youth Ambassadors participated in all three panels: Khadija, an environmental blogger and water activist, spoke on the panel “Climate Change and Education” together with local experts Dr. Latifa Daadaoui - National Coordinator of Erasmus+ Office, Ms Fadila Caillaud, Human Development Expert from the World Bank Group and Ms Rajaa Chafil, Director of the 4C. Nathalia and Epa, both working in youth-led organizations in their respective countries, spoke on the panel titled “Moving Forward: The Role of Youth” which was moderated by Laura Hildebrandt of SDG Action Campaign.



Workshops and Exhibitions on the SDGs to engage the local community



There was a panel entitled “Climate Change: Peace and Ocean,” with H.E. Ms. Merethe Nergaard, Ambassador of Norway to Morocco and H.E. Mr Philippe Poinot, UN Resident Coordinator in Morocco. He highlighted the message of Secretary General, Antonio Guterres during his visit to the Pacific. Of the youth ambassadors’ speeches, the speech that really moved everyone was given by Ashneil about how forced migration can affect an entire country of people. He described the horrors that the people of Dominica had to go through during Hurricane Maria in 2017, and the devastation and hard choices which the people of Montserrat had to face when a volcano erupted in 1995, destroying two thirds of their island. “There’s no picture you can paint that will even



begin the level of hopelessness that develops after you've done all you can... But nevertheless, your home... your life... has been taken from you without any say," he spoke to the crowd solemnly, his voice never wavering. This quiet reminder of the impact of natural disasters set to worsen with the impact of climate change and humanity that hangs in the balance if nothing is done truly appeared to move the crowd.

When the panel was done and it was time for group discussion, we found many people doing their part to try to affect change in the face of so many opposing forces. Some Moroccan youth related a story which highlighted the need for more youth and community involvement: some years ago, a ban on plastic bags had been imposed. However, this had been done suddenly, without a transition period or adequate time to find alternatives. As a result, instead of the ban effectively curbing the use of the plastic bags, citizens bought them on the black market, at a much higher price, to meet their need, highlighting the need for education and community engagement. But the youth in Morocco are playing their part. At the same time that our own high-level event on the SDGs was taking place in one area of the ship, Moroccan youth from Atlas for Development and the Tangier Youth Council were engaging with local school children in another. The Mohammed VI Foundation for Protection of the Environment arranged through their school outreach programme for eighty children three different local schools

in the area to visit the ship for workshops on the SDGs specially designed for children with facilitators from Atlas for Development and the Tangier Youth Council.

At last, with the activities onboard completed all that was left was a golden afternoon spent exploring the lively and enigmatic city of Tangier, as well as its grand coastline together with the youth leaders from Morocco. We marveled as we looked out from the northern coast, past huge fishing boats, across the Mediterranean Sea to Spain, hazy but present in the distance. The coastline gave way to a city with distinctive Arabic architecture, locals walking the streets as the Ramadan fast was drawing to a close for the day. Cityscape then gave way to breezy greenery as we climbed hills up to Moroccan villas in the hills. Then, came upon the Atlantic Ocean, which borders Morocco on the east side. Both people and camels dotted the beaches, much to most of our delight. We visited the spot where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean, and the Caves of Hercules, a legendary spot where the mythical figure Hercules was said to have rested from the labors he had been tasked by King Eurystheus of Tiryns.

By the time we had seen what we could see of Tangier and Morocco, the sun was setting and the day's fasting Ramadan was ending. As we bid farewell to the kind students and youth leaders of the Atlas for Development and as we sailed out the Strait of Gibraltar, we were satisfied knowing that our nourishment for the day had been the human connections forged in the struggle against climate change, and a renewed respect and appreciation for the natural and cultural beauty of Africa and of Morocco.



Hatim El Otmani presenting on behalf of Atlas for Development



Watch a short film about Morocco in Vimeo.







# The beauty of the Azores

**A**fter two days of sailing, we docked in the Azores Island, in Portugal. We stopped in the capital of Sao Miguel island, Ponta Delgada, where another exciting day was waiting for us. In the morning, a group of marine biologists from the University of Azores visited the ship to share insights and research about the situation of the Azores Islands. The local partners in this programme were José Manuel N. Azevedo, a professor at the local university since 1988 who did his PhD on the biology and ecology of littoral marine fishes; Afonso Prestes, a PhD student in Biology with intensive experience in coastal Azorean communities; and Ignacio Moreu, a marine biologist that has been gaining considerable knowledge and experience in algal taxonomy and ecology.

Dr. Azevedo explained to us that the Azores are far from immune from the tragedies of climate change. Rising sea temperatures have caused the introduction of many warm water species such as *Lajolisa mediteranea* and *Antihomonelia* while others such as the fucus- a cold temperature algae- have disappeared. To wrap up the session, our group asked a few questions to the researchers and then we proceeded for an exciting visit around the island.

As we traveled around the beautiful island, we learned more about the impact of ocean degradation and climate change on the area and saw first-hand how coastal erosion is affecting this part of Portugal as well as some local marine history. Once of the main industries on the island at one point was whaling until 1986. Since then the whale population has recovered and nowadays, whale watching is one of the many tourist attractions in Sao Miguel.

Next stop on the tour was the Logo de Fogo (Lake of Fire), a sight I can safely say blew us away. On the way we learned a number of geothermal pipelines running through the mountains as the island runs in large part on geothermal



*By Nathalia Lawen*

energy. According to the local government, in 2018 the Azores were already producing 37% of the electricity from renewable energy, of which 24% is from a geothermal source. On the island of Sao Miguel, renewable resources already represent more than half of electricity production (54%). After driving uphill which literally felt like we were driving to heaven we came to a stop, excited to see this Logo de Fogo that our guides had told us about. It was a sight to behold! It is a massive crater lake resting in the central caldera of the Água de Pau Massif, which is the youngest volcano on the island, formed more than 15,000 years ago.

From there, we also visited the São Roque church, from where it is easy to appreciate all the artificial constructions that are being built in the Azores to protect the coast, especially after a great storm that in 2015 caused serious floods and fatalities. We could see first hand how the Azores are dealing with climate change mitigation with renewable energy and facing climate adaptation with these constructions on the coastline.

As the sun set, our group enjoyed the last time on land before going back to the ship and start to sailing the Atlantic for five days to New York City. Once again, like in every port, we had the opportunity to personally connect with amazing young people and leaders all fighting for the environment. Despite all the lessons learnt and adventures had, I believe those personal connections are truly invaluable and what makes this programme genuinely meaningful. I now have friends in each port who I can honestly say are true environmental warriors in their respective countries.



Watch a short film about Ponta Delgada in Vimeo.





At the United Nations Headquarters

# Celebrating World Oceans Day in New York City



*By Eparama Qerewaqa*

**A**fter five days of sailing across the Atlantic, we woke up on the morning of June 7 to the sight of the Manhattan skyline. Watching the sunrise out on the open decks we passed the Statue of Liberty on our way to the pier, our final destination. We took in the fresh morning air, enjoying the view and a few moments of free time before a hectic schedule. We had a long day ahead of us and we were ready to take it on, the final leg of the Ocean Youth and Climate Ambassadors Programme.

Our first event of the day was the opening of World Oceans Day at the United Nations Headquarters organized by the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) of the Office of Legal Affairs and the NGO Oceanic Global. This year, the theme for World Oceans Day was “Gender and the Ocean”, an opportunity to explore the gender dimension of humankind’s relationship with the ocean. I had the honour of opening the official event

alongside Mrs Hinano Teavi-Murphy, President of the Association Te Pu Atitia in Tahiti where we performed a fusion Pasifika story and chant highlighting the important role women played in the health of our oceans through folklore. With the unmistakable Pasifika flavour we brought to open the event, it set the other ambassadors up for their various other speaking roles throughout the day. We also had the opportunity to listen to other inspirational speakers and storytellers from different organizations who were contributing to the event.

Our next engagement as part of the celebrations at the UN headquarters was a special event for global youth leaders to highlight local initiatives for the SDGs hosted by Peace Boat in collaboration with the UN Office for Partnerships. Khadija, Ashneil, Nathalia and I spoke on a youth panel discussion alongside Ms. Christina Michalski, one of the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP) coordinators.





Peace Boat founder, Yoshioka Tatsuya, during World Oceans Day

We were also joined by Ms. Daniela Fernández, founder of the Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA), Mr. Tre Packard, founder of the PangeaSeed Foundation and Mr. Fabien Cousteau of the Fabien Cousteau Ocean Learning Centre. We had wonderful and fulfilling discussions with all the participants who all had a shared love for the ocean and a need to take action.

We then went later in the afternoon to the Explorers Club, a club founded in 1905 that has served as a meeting point for explorers and scientists worldwide. The event was hosted with other young people and this was a reception and opening for the Ocean Heroes Boot camp, a campaign to empower emerging youth leaders in New York to create their own campaigns and action against ocean plastic pollution. Here, Elsei from Palau delivered a beautiful keynote speech in which she shared about being from a strong indigenous culture connected to the oceans and the bravery we all need and share, being in the same room that day, and advocating for the oceans.

From the Explorers Club we transferred back to Peace Boat. The ship that had been our home for the last two weeks was to host the UN official reception for World Oceans Day. It was an event that was attended by UN officials, Ambassadors, civil society organisations and friends and supporters for the cause for the ocean. Here we had our final presentation for the day, where Tapua from Tuvalu began with a powerful and moving piece on the plight of our island cultures and the threat of rising seas to its survival. We ended with a dance to the 'Toku Kaiga', a Tuvaluan song about a voyager's journey home, using this as a metaphor through dance to describe our own journey as Peace Boat's ambassadors for our oceans. A fitting end to a long day, united through our passion for the survival of our island homes and advocating for the oceans half way across the world in the city that never sleeps, we ended the night in awe of the day we had and ready for what was to come.



World Oceans Day activities on board the ship



Watch a short film about New York City in Vimeo.





# The end of the journey

*By Ashneil Jeffers*

**A**fter an exciting first day of activities in New York City, on June 8 we were ready to celebrate World Oceans Day on board Peace Boat. That day, the ship was host to a family-friendly day of activities, providing a venue for civil society to come together to highlight local initiatives on the SDGs and mobilize youth for an interactive dialogue on why the ocean matters and how to make a difference for our oceans. Each part of the programme highlighted and encouraged youth engagement in raising awareness of the benefits derived from the ocean and our individual and collective duty to interact with oceans with the overarching theme of “Gender and Oceans.” It was an exciting day where we had the chance to meet ocean heroes like Dr Sylvia Earle, National Geographic explorer-in-residence since 1998 and Time magazine’s first hero of the planet among many, many other titles. We also spoke with Mr. Fabian Cousteau, the first grandson of Jacques-Yves Cousteau. Mr. Cousteau is an avid advocate for our ocean’s marine life, in particular sharks. Their passion for the ocean is infectious and the

opportunity to share our work with these extraordinary individuals who have worked so hard and done so much for the planet was priceless.

The main event of the day took place in the largest room of the ship. Mr. Yoshioka Tatsuya, the founder of Peace Boat, made the first speech of the day. He welcomed us all to the ship and spoke about the vision of his non-profit organization, as well as its future. Peace Boat’s flagship project, the EcoShip, is a sight to behold. I hope one day myself and my youth ambassador colleagues will be able to board this amazing ship and present to the thousands of passengers on board. Following Mr. Yoshioka, our very own Jeo from Saint Lucia and Elsei from Palau spoke about the youth ambassador programme including our life at sea and about what we had done at the various ports we visited. The energetic Dr. Earle followed, telling everybody in the room about her life connected to the sea. She spoke on both a professional and personal side, taking us on a journey



through some of her childhood and moved us with her passion for the oceans. Mr. Cousteau continued to inspire us with the amount of work he has done for our ocean's marine life and what he continues to do with his non-profit, the Ocean Learning Center. Ms. Daniela Fernandez, founder of Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) touched on how to achieve inclusivity to ensure that the ocean space is accessible to all, the importance of mentorship and having female role models as well as the need to better understand the obstacles that young girls and women face before prescribing solutions.

After the opening presentations, there were several different activities taking place on different areas of the ship. A number of organizations working on ocean conservation had booths in one area of the ship and we, the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors, had a small booth where we could meet people and talked with them about our experience. I had the privilege to talk to many individuals on what we did aboard the ship and the various ports, as well as discussing future plans and careers. The other youth had presentations to do in different spaces, because many activities were happening at the same time. Nathalia from Seychelles gave a keynote speech in the Youth Leaders Bootcamp with youth leaders from New York City where she shared her experience fighting against plastic in her home country. Nathaniel from Singapore took

part in a session about storytelling and he shared with the audience some of his work with film with his organization "Our Seas, Our Legacy".

Throughout the entire day there were activities going on both inside and outside on the deck. There was nowhere you could go in the ship and find nothing taking place, whether it was talks, panel discussions, movie screenings, bands playing or virtual reality shows on display.

The day passed quickly, and we all enjoyed meeting a lot of interesting people with the same passion and love for the ocean. There was a small closing ceremony and a final picture to mark the end of the day onboard Peace Boat. After that, we left the ship. Goodbye, sea legs and memories, hello solid ground. After spending our second night in New York City, we were ready for the last day of the programme. On June 9, we took part in a beach clean-up organized by 4Ocean at Rockaway Beach. They provided us with the gloves, bags, moral support and anything else we needed to clean the beach effectively. The beach initially looked clean on the surface, but buried underneath the sand was lots of trash. The more experienced beach cleaners managed to find multiple bags full of rubbish while most of us found scraps, except for Nathalia and Tapua, who managed to find a fishing rod. In just a few hours, almost 2000 participants collected 1,345 plastic bottles and 4,695 cigarette butts, among other waste. We did our best and it was a lot of fun. After the closing event where all of us took part, the programme was over. The journey completed. This chapter in our special edition of the book of life was written, signed and ready for print. Illustrations included. Three weeks completed just like that. We all grew more than we ever thought, we met people we didn't think possible and learnt things we didn't know existed. We developed, we persevered, we bonded and most importantly, we became stronger.

It may sound like a cliché, but we all did feel like an extended family. We connected from the first day till the last, and it's not something you get every day with once complete strangers. It was indeed a life changing experience, none of us will sit by idly now that we're back from such an adventure. We became better advocates for a crisis so large that even with our newfound knowledge and drive, we can't do it alone. We all have a duty to start the conversation with someone, anyone, about climate action, about our oceans. It may seem awkward at first, but trust me, people won't bite. They won't think you're crazy, you just have to try. Keep on fighting, keep on talking and, most importantly, keep on protecting the waves that gave us life.



Daniela Fernández, CEO and Founder of SOA, speaking on board the ship



The group before taking part in the beach clean-up in Rockaway Beach



Watch a short film  
about New York City  
in Vimeo.





# Our life on board

*By Tapua Pasuna*

**B**eing chosen to be one of the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors for the third edition, we were fortunate to get the chance to sail on Peace Boat's 101st Voyage. A voyage that started from Malta, sailed across the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean to our final port in New York City. Our time onboard was a once in a lifetime opportunity to meet with so many wonderful people from various cultures and backgrounds – in the middle of the ocean. Our daily experience allowed us to exchange ideas, stories and sometimes jokes with newly found friends who were also participants, staff guest educators and crew on board.

One part of the programme were the closed seminar sessions. This were firstly a chance to share the messages and stories we each brought from home regarding the challenges brought about by climate change and ocean degradation. We compared the situations and some of the solutions from our island nations that were so distant geographically in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Caribbean Sea, but also with shared challenges as Small

Island Developing States. We were joined in some of the sessions by guest educators who were joining the voyage to share their expertise and also hear from us. Ms. Laura Hildebrandt, Global Policy Specialist at the UN SDG Action Campaign led workshops on the SDGs, the campaign and the impact the SDGs are having around the world. Mr. Jeremy Gilley founder of Peace One Day which was responsible for the establishment of and recognition of by the United Nations of International Day of Peace on September 21. Mr. Brandon Levy, Program Director at the Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA)'s sessions dealt with human wellbeing in terms of emotional, mental and spiritual in order to facilitate conscious leadership and personal development. He also spoke on the work of SOA, their upcoming activities and how to address ocean health. We also had sessions with Ms. Kamata Kanoko from Community Organizing Japan (COJ), the students of Peace Boat's Global University, students from the Tübingen University onboard as part of their Masters in Peace and Conflict.



In addition to the seminars and workshops for the programme participants, we were also given an opportunity by Peace Boat to hold a series of presentations for the many Peace Boat participants onboard who were mainly from East Asia including Japan, China, Taiwan and Singapore. These events were facilitated by the youth ambassadors and involved presentations that took the audience on a journey to the forefront of climate change and ocean degradation – a visual visit to our small island states. We talked about the basic facts of climate change, about what's happening in our ocean and how climate change is affecting all of us in each of our countries. We taught people how to be more environmentally friendly and sustainable in their daily lives and answered many questions about ourselves, about where we come from and about the state of the planet.

Being ambassadors of our own cultures, we also made sure that we included a series of cultural exchange events to introduce the diverse cultures of our island nations including dance and music. It is not only our lands that are under threat, but the cultures and history that they sustain. In sharing our cultures with the participants, we taught them our respective traditional foods, lifestyles, main attractions, traditional clothing and of course traditional dances. The dances were always really popular, from the most traditional dances of the Pacific to the most lively of the Caribbean. Even for our part in the event during World Oceans Day onboard the ship, we performed a dance that incorporated dance moves from Tuvalu, Fiji, Seychelles, Palau and Trinidad and Tobago. We also learned about

the cultures of the other participants on board including learning Yosakoi, a unique style of dance that originated in Japan and that is performed at festivals and events all over the country.

Moreover, for the youth ambassadors, sharing the same living space onboard gave us the chance to get to know each other better. We shared our stories from the most innovative ideas to the most 'extraordinary' experiences we have had as individuals and our greatest life lessons. Quite a lot that we awed in admiration, at times cringed in awkwardness but also laughed out loud as if we were the only ones out in the ocean. These are the conversations that truly inspired each of us and opened our eyes to the realities and challenges that we, as youth of small island states, face in life.

Our time onboard Peace Boat was definitely a life changing experience to take home and share with our people. From the amount of in-depth discussions we had on the issues that threaten our very own survival, to amplifying our voices across borders and oceans and finally creating bonds that will continue to inspire and encourage us in our journeys ahead. Like the waves of the oceans we crossed, our experience onboard was at times calm, and at times rolling and pitching with our emotions of missing our families and homes. However, the warm hospitality we received onboard made our journey easier and being surrounded by the ocean every day was a great reminder of who we are, where we come from and what we must do, for our people, our future and for our mother Earth.



Presenting about the impact of climate change on islands



Seminars and workshops onboard



A visit to the bridge with the Captain



The youth performing a Tuvaluan dance

# Guests educators on board

One of the characteristics of the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme are the guest educators on board the ship. These educators travel with the group in different sections of the voyage and share their knowledge with them, facilitating workshops and seminars. On this occasion, the group shared their time on board and experience with Ms. Laura Hildebrandt, Global Policy Specialist of the United Nations SDG Action Campaign, and Mr. Brandon Levy, Programme Director of the Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA). They also had sessions with Mr. Jeremy Gilley, founder of the Non-Profit Organisation Peace One Day. He is an actor turned filmmaker and peace activist that is responsible for the United Nations International Day of Peace on September 21st. Another guest was Ms. Kamata Kanoko, co-founder of Community Organizing Japan (COJ). She focused her session on her passion for social and environmental issues.

## Laura Hildebrandt, UN SDG Action Campaign

The participants of the programme had the opportunity to broaden their knowledge about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) thanks to the presence onboard from Motril, Spain, to Ponta Delgada, Portugal, of Laura Hildebrandt of the UN SDG Action Campaign. The United Nations SDG Action Campaign is a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General administered by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and mandated to support the UN system-wide and the Member States on advocacy and public engagement in the SDG implementation. The campaign intends to create awareness about the 2030 Agenda, empower and inspire people across the world to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while generating political will, and help make the Goals attainable by 2030.



During her time onboard, Laura carried out various activities including several work sessions with the youth focused on the SDGs and the work of the United Nations and the campaign on the 2030 Agenda. She encouraged the youth to take part in the Global Day of Action that takes place every year on September 25. "It was a pleasure to meet and work with such an admirable group of young people. I attended some of their events onboard and I was thrilled on several occasions while listening their stories and see the passion with which they talk about their islands and the need to protect the environment", she said.

Laura also participated in the activities organized in Tangier, Morocco by Peace Boat and local partners including Atlas for Development, the Tangier Youth Council together with the SDG Action Campaign. The main partners and organizers of the event were the winners of the SDG Action Campaign's SDG Action Award for Mobilisation last year, a project which acknowledges the work of movements and organisations around the world working for the SDGs and which Laura herself is greatly involved with. Laura moderated a round table on the role of youth with two Peace Boat youth ambassadors and two young Moroccans as part of the event "The Climate Crisis and the Sustainable Development Goals". "Having Laura onboard has been a fantastic experience. We learnt so much more about the SDGs and the impact they are having around the world. She left us inspired to work harder on our respective projects and ensure that sustainable development for our countries can become a reality", said Ashneil Jeffers from Montserrat.

Laura took part in the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme as part of the continued and developing partnership that the SDG Action Campaign and Peace Boat signed last year at the High-Level Political Forum in New York to carry out joint activities to promote the 2030 Agenda.



## Brandon Levy, Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA)



SOA Programme Director, Brandon Levy, joined the 101st Global Voyage of Peace Boat as a part of the collaboration between Sustainable Ocean Alliance and Peace Boat. Brandon joined Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth from Ponta Delgada to New York City.

On his voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, Brandon hosted seminars and facilitated workshops for the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors. These focused on strategy frameworks (design thinking, systems thinking, and polarity mapping), conscious leadership (cultivating presence, emotional wellbeing, and resilience), climate change (eco-entrepreneurship, policy reform, and youth mobilization) and professional development (building your brand, crafting personal and professional visions/pitches, and how to network authentically). Brandon also delivered lectures on the 'State of Our Ocean' and 'Climate Equanimity: How to Change with Our Climate'. The message Brandon provided the youth ambassadors and all Peace Boat participants is that addressing global ocean health isn't achieved solely through science and policy, but also through consciousness shift and personal development.

On World Oceans Day, SOA and Peace Boat co-hosted a special program on Gender and Entrepreneurship as it pertains to ocean health and UN Sustainable Development Goal 14. Daniela Fernandez, Founder, and CEO of SOA, participated in a panel alongside Marissa Cuevas and Julie Davitz. Together, they shared insights on how entrepreneurship and sustainable financing can drive solutions to ocean issues and amplify the voices of minorities in the sustainability movement.



Workshop with Jeremy Gilley, founder of Peace One Day

# Celebrating World Oceans Day on board Peace Boat

June 8 was designated by the United Nations as “World Oceans Day” to raise global awareness of the benefits derived from the oceans and the challenges facing the international community in connection with the oceans. It emphasizes our individual and collective duty to interact with oceans in a sustainable manner so as to meet current needs without compromising those of future generations. This year’s theme “Gender and the Ocean” was an opportunity to explore the gender dimension of humankind’s relationship with the ocean.

As a dedicated campaigner for the SDGs, and with oceans and climate as key priorities, Peace Boat partnered with the United Nations and various civil society organizations, as part of the Friends of World Oceans Day informal working group, to organize a series of events to celebrate this occasion. The Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme on the 101st Global Voyage was designed to conclude in New York and culminate in the international celebrations for World Oceans Day at the UN and in New York.

A special highlight of the events onboard the ship were the keynote speeches by Dr Sylvia Earle, National Geographic Explorer in Residence and Founder of Mission Blue, known affectionately in the ocean community as “Her Deepness”, and Mr. Fabien Cousteau of the Fabien Cousteau Ocean Learning center. Both are supporters and advisors of Peace Boat’s Ecoship Project. Meeting these champions of the ocean was one of the highlights of the programme for the youth ambassadors.







## Dr. Sylvia Earle, an ocean legend

In 2018, Peace Boat and Dr. Sylvia Earle announced a new partnership. The National Geographic Explorer in Residence and founder of Mission Blue is now an official supporter of Ecoship project and will collaborate with the organization on the development of its onboard ocean and climate research lab, which will monitor the state of the ocean and climate during the voyages. On World Oceans Day 2019, the oceanographer visited Peace Boat's vessel for the first time to meet the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors and take part in the event that was taking place onboard the ship in New York City. .

**Q: Why did you accept to get involved in this project?**

**A:** Peace Boat is addressing the biggest problem of all: the lack of awareness of why the ocean matters. I'm deeply honored to be a part of this project, a part of the Peace Boat movement to do what it takes to make a difference for the ocean to educate people to go around the world with a message of hope.

**Q: Would you say knowing is one of the important keys to change our future?**

**A:** Knowing is the key not just caring but to understanding why it matters to take care of the ocean, why it matters to take care of the air, of life on earth. Go back 4.5 billion years and earth was not favourable to us, we could not survive on a molten planet that was too hot for life to exist. Or even go back 3 billion years ago there wasn't enough oxygen in the atmosphere. Photosynthesis, that magical amazing property of plants to capture carbon dioxide, generate oxygen and produce food, 2.5 billion years ago is when that began to happen. Gradually building up an atmosphere with oxygen. Providing a source of sustenance that made animals possible. And we've seen the development over this long period of time from microbial life to enough oxygen in the atmosphere to support large forms of life, ultimately including us. It's taking us 4.5 billion years to create a planet that works in our favour and 4.5 decades to tear it apart, to contaminate the air, to contaminate the water, to consume the wildlife

that is vital to our existence. Now we know, knowledge is our only hope. But it's not good enough to know if you don't act. But you have to know before you can care.

**Q: In the past, you have said that the next 10 years will determine our future over the next 10,000 years. Do you still think the same?**

**A:** I've been saying the 10-year anticipation for a number of years. Every time it gets harder because we are closing the options that were open 30 years ago. Now, the climate scientists say from now, 2019, we have 10 years to either make the right decisions or lose the chance to really turn from years of consuming the natural world, changing the chemistry, the temperature, destroying wild life. Many species of trees, birds or fish will collapse. They won't be able to recover. But it is the whole world we are looking at with our pressure that we have applied so much stress on so many levels. It's not too late. There will always be a chance to make things better than they otherwise would be, if we just let this time of decline to continue. I think the most important thing now is we know what we could not know even 30 years ago, even 10 years ago. It's knowledge. It's knowing that will make all the difference which is why Peace Boat is so important because on this ship you are learning. You are learning about who we are, about where we have come from, about our relationship to the ocean and to the natural world. And what we can do to turn from decline to recovery. And making peace with nature.



## Fabien Cousteau, the underwater explorer

The oceanographic explorer and environmental advocate Mr. Fabien Cousteau is one of members of the group of ocean and policy experts who supports the development of Ecoship with their ideas and experience. In 2019, the founder of the Fabien Cousteau Ocean Learning Center joined other well-known names such as Sylvia Earle and Christiana Figueres, Mission2020 Convenor and Vice-Chair of the Global Compact of Mayors for Climate and Energy, on this list. On World Oceans Day 2019 in New York City, Mr. Cousteau visited Peace Boat's vessel.

**Q: In 2014, you embarked on a mission to break the world record for the number of days spent living under water. What drives you to do things like this?**

**A:** Curiosity is my main drive. My eyes were opened by my ancestors, by my grandparents, my parents, and I must thank them for that because it's what the curiosity, they exposed me to this underwater world, which is fascinating. It is the last frontier on this planet with so much more to discover and learn from this aquatic world, and so curiosity drives me to do things like living under water for 31 days and many other crazy ideas.

**Q: What was your first contact with the ocean?**

**A:** I was very young when I first went into the ocean. I don't remember this because I was only a few months old, but I was told by my mother. I do remember however that on my 4th birthday I saw my family in Los Angeles for a celebration and I saw a man at the bottom of the pool. He was reading a newspaper on scuba, he wasn't moving, he was just sitting there at the bottom. Being a 4-year old, I was curious. I jumped in and I went down to look at him and he offered me his regulator. I took a regulator and put it in my mouth and so we started doing buddy breathing. Basic aspect of scuba diving. Training. I found it fascinating that you can stand in water for so long!



**Q: Compared to back then and now, how are our oceans different?**

**A:** My grandfather said to my father, there are places I want to take you, but I cannot take you because it has changed so much since I was young, my father has said the same thing to us. Unfortunately, I must also say the same thing to my children. This to me is very sad because over three generations we have seen an enormous change for the worse in our ocean even though we explore so little of it. The places we have gone, they have changed so dramatically. And for me it's about the fact that we've been waging war on the ocean, on our aquatic planet, that we have not been respecting it in a way that we should as if our future's lives depend on it. And it does. The earth and the ocean are a closed loop system. What we put into it, like garbage, what we take out of it, like resources, affects us and our future fundamentally. So far, we have been treating it as an endless resource and a garbage can when we should be worshipping it as if it were our life support system which it is. However, I think there is hope. Because even though we've lost so much time, today young people and adults are starting to learn more about oceans and starting to understand and care more about our oceans.

**Q: Could you tell us what is your focus at the Fabien Cousteau Ocean Learning Center?**

**A:** The Fabien Cousteau Ocean Learning Center is a place where we can generate solutions by bringing different communities of young people of fishermen, of people from different parts of the world to share ideas and successes and challenges and to try and share solutions amongst each other so that those communities can be better by sharing knowledge. It's a place where we come together and go and do restoration projects whether they will be mangroves or sea turtles or coral reefs, all sorts of things, so that we can learn more about our connections with the ocean, how we make our contribution to this natural resource bank account so that we can start learning to live off the interests that bears, rather than eating away what's left over capital. By this, hopefully, we can walk away as students of learning to be able to be better stewards of our planet. And at the end of the day, the mission of Fabien Cousteau Ocean Learning Center is something my grandfather used to tell me all the time as a child, which is people protect what they love. They love what they understand. And they understand what they are taught. To me, it's a privilege and honor to be here on Peace Boat because the message is very much the same. And hopefully on a journey that the passengers take, they will be able to take some of the knowledge with them, so that they can be the stewards of our planet as well.

## The future of the programme

Peace Boat's long-term commitment to ocean and climate action is further expressed in its undertaking to build Ecoship, the world's most sustainable cruise ship, as a flagship for the SDGs and climate action. Ecoship is a transformative solution to protect the oceans, promote higher engagement and trigger creative actions through sustainable tourism and education. It will sail four times around the world yearly, visiting communities on the front line of climate change and ocean degradation, and provide a platform for partnership between civil society, the scientific community, the private sector and governments, including cities and regions. The ship will lead the way in sustainable maritime transport, mitigating climate-change related impacts on the ocean, including ocean acidification, through a 40% CO2 reduction and a zero-emission target in ports. This will be achieved through a combination of energy efficiency in propulsion and accommodation and maximizing the use of renewable energies through its solar and wind power installations. A global group of distinguished experts from fields including climate action, sustainability and renewable energy are providing advice to the Ecoship as official supporters, including Dr. Sylvia Earle and Mr. Fabien Cousteau. Ecoship will be the future platform for the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors Programme, scaling up the programme to provide further opportunities for young leaders in ocean and climate and amplifying their voices calling for action.





B1, 3-13-1 Takadanobaba, Shinjuku  
Tokyo 169-0075, Japan  
Tel: +81 (0) 3-3363-8047

For more information:  
**[pbglobal@peaceboat.gr.jp](mailto:pbglobal@peaceboat.gr.jp)**

**[www.peaceboat.org/english](http://www.peaceboat.org/english) - [www.ecoship-pb.com](http://www.ecoship-pb.com)**