

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

List of Winners

Theme: "A Letter from Myself in 2030"

No. of participating countries: 166

No. of entries: 33,632 (Children's category: 9,578 / Youth category: 24,054)

*All ages are as of June 15, 2020.

1st Prize

Children's category (1 entrant)

- *Your future begins today*
Dudley Cojitha Senanayake (Age 12,
Sri Lanka)

Youth category (1 entrant)

- *Boomerang of Hope*
Marta Andriivna Chernychka (Age 18,
Ukraine)

2nd Prize

Children's category (2 entrants)

- *Wiser Guider Future*
Praise Mmesomachukwu
Chukwumereze (Age 12, Nigeria)
- *Lopsided Scale*
Ryoka Tanoi (Age 13, Japan)

Youth category (2 entrants)

- *As we saw in the movies*
Júlia Peixoto Fernandes (Age 17,
Brazil)
- *A Melting Pot of Gems*
Yuka Sone (Age 17, Japan)

3rd Prize

Children's category (5 entrants)

- *A letter from myself in 2030*
Talise Chan Luo Yi (Age 9,
Singapore)
- *A Diamond In The Rough*
Daniela Odong Asianut (Age 13,
Uganda)

Youth category (5 entrants)

- *Technology and Ecology: An
Egalitarian's View*
Aadya Kapoor (Age 15, India)
- *The World on RICE!*
Asumi Shimada (Age 17, Japan)
- *Back To Nature*
Zhou Xiangfei (Age 19, China)

- *Piece by Piece*
Julianne Francesca Berse (Age 13, Philippines)
- *To Myself in 2020: Don't Give Up*
Satoru Ozaki (Age 13, Japan)
- *To my past self*
Kaeno Shimizu (Age 15, Japan)
- *Ne te suicide pas*
Mpihary Mahefa
Razafindrabezandrina (Age 20, Madagascar)
- *The Ripple Effect*
Krisha King Lim (Age 23, Philippines)

Honorable Mention

Children's category (25 entrants)

- Aarvi Malik (Age 9, India)
- Aravind Anandaraj (Age 11, Malaysia)
- Elise Y Chen (Age 11, U.S.A.)
- Eneha Marinova (Age 11, Bulgaria)
- Keiichi Kondo (Age 11, Japan)
- Akiko Takamoto (Age 12, Japan)
- Angela Matilde Quintero Gonzalez (Age 12, Colombia)
- Kosei Yamamoto (Age 12, Japan)
- Mohamed Taha Samaoual (Age 12, Morocco)
- Alex Hayoung Jung (Age 13, South Korea)
- Isha Singh (Age 13, India)
- Opara Chioma Stella (Age 13, Nigeria)
- Riko Miyamoto (Age 13, Japan)
- Shashank Kumar (Age 13, U.S.A. <Living in India>)
- Tayyaba Noor (Age 13, Pakistan <Living in U.A.E.>)
- Ayano Oda (Age 14, Japan)
- Cristiana Gălățeanu (Age 14, Romania)
- Gen Furuya (Age 14, Japan)
- M. Naeem Haseef Bin Mohd Nasir (Age 14, Malaysia)

Youth category (25 entrants)

- Mahlet Bizuneh Bekele (Age 15, Ethiopia)
- Miku Nakayama (Age 15, Japan)
- Anna Raquel Klinger (Age 16, U.S.A.)
- Gina Yum (Age 16, U.S.A.)
- Marco Erano Almarinez Dumale (Age 16, Philippines)
- Mizuki Kage (Age 16, Japan)
- Tianyue Ruby Sun (Age 16, Finland <Living in Canada>)
- Urtė Gedvilaitė (Age 16, Lithuania)
- Natsuki Ito (Age 17, Japan)
- Jeevika Wadhwa (Age 18, India)
- Bashangezi Prince Bishogo (Age 19, Democratic Republic of Congo <Living in Zimbabwe>)
- Diana Jugendliche (Age 19, Belarus)
- Sarah Irdina Binti Sallehuddin (Age 19, Malaysia)
- Aman Majmudar (Age 20, Canada <Living in Japan>)
- Paula Ventura Barroso (Age 20, Spain)
- Soichiro Hirata (Age 20, Japan)
- Diego Iram Rodríguez González (Age 21, México)

- Pratibha Srivatsan (Age 14, India)
- Takeru Tanaka (Age 14, Japan)
- Yuna Nonaka (Age 14, Japan
<Living in Myanmar>)
- Mei Noguchi (Age 15, Japan)
- Tomotaro Suyama (Age 15, Japan)
- Una Muto (Age 15, Japan)
- Ghizlane Elguil (Age 21, Morocco)
- Folajomi Isa Ayomide (Age 22, Nigeria)
- Jeanie Zeng (Age 22, U.S.A.)
- Nant Aye Pwint (Age 22, Myanmar)
- Antonio Ferrara (Age 23, Italy)
- Jenna Hole (Age 23, U.K.
<Living in Turkey>)
- Dave Tampus Pregoner (Age 24,
Philippines)
- Purva Aggarwal (Age 24, India
<Living in U.K.>)

Best School Award (2 schools)

- Koka Gakuen Junior and Senior High School for Girls, Tokyo (Japan)
- Setagaya Junior High School attached to Tokyo Gakugei University (Japan)

School Incentive Award (59 schools)

- Akili Dada, Nairobi (Kenya)
- Assumption Academy, Osaka (Japan)
- Brest Gymnasium No 1 (Belarus)
- Bunka Gakuen Nagano Junior High School & High School (Japan)
- Çağdaş Bilim Anadolu Ve Fen Lisesi, Marmaris (Turkey)
- Centro de Bachillerato Tecnológico, Industrial y de Servicios No. 234, Tamaulipas (México)
- Chicago Futabakai Japanese School-Saturday School, Illinois (U.S.A.)
- Chitoku High School, Shizuoka (Japan)
- Colegio Mundo de Alegria, Shizuoka (Japan)
- Escuela Preparatoria No. 8, Universidad de Guadalajara (México)
- Fuji Sacred Heart School, Shizuoka (Japan)
- Fukuoka Prefectural Ogori High School (Japan)
- Ghiyasuddin International School, Male' (Maldives)
- Gymnasium #12, Minsk (Belarus)
- Honjo Higashi Junior & Senior High School, Saitama (Japan)
- Ikeda Junior High School attached to Osaka Kyoiku University (Japan)
- Inagi 6th Junior High School of Inagi City, Tokyo (Japan)

- Independent Secondary School, Victoria (Seychelles)
- International School of Milan (Italy)
- Japanese Supplementary School of Middle Tennessee (U.S.A.)
- Jonan Gakuen Junior High School, Senior High School, Osaka (Japan)
- Joso Gakuin Junior High School, Ibaraki (Japan)
- Kagoshima Gyokuryu High School of Kagoshima City (Japan)
- Kyoto Gakuen Junior and Senior Highschool (Japan)
- Liceul Mathias Hammer in Anina, Caras-Severin County (Romania)
- Matsumoto Shuho Secondary School, Nagano (Japan)
- Midori Elementary School of Itabashi City, Tokyo (Japan)
- Mukogawa Women's University Junior & Senior High School, Hyogo (Japan)
- Nagano Prefectural Nakano Nishi High School (Japan)
- Nagoya Sangyo University (Japan)
- Nihon Fukushi University Affiliated High School, Aichi (Japan)
- Niigata Seiryō High School (Japan)
- Nobeoka Technical High School, Miyazaki (Japan)
- Okayama Prefectural Yakage High School (Japan)
- Okkawa Junior High School of Handa City, Aichi (Japan)
- Otsuma Ranzan Junior and Senior High School, Saitama (Japan)
- Philippine Science High School-Central Luzon Campus, Pampanga (Philippines)
- Preparatoria 23 de la Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (México)
- Preparatoria Regional de El Salto / SEMS / Universidad de Guadalajara (México)
- Primary school Mahala, Una-Sana Cantton (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Rangpur Cadet College (Bangladesh)
- Rikkyo School in England, West Sussex (U.K.)
- Rosary Sister School/Marj Elhamam, Amman (Jordan)
- Satriwithaya School, Bangkok (Thailand)
- Showa Women's University Junior-Senior High School, Tokyo (Japan)
- SISA - School of International Studies in Sciences & Arts, Punjab (Pakistan)
- SJKC Kong Min Cawangan Kedua, Penang (Malaysia)
- SMJK Chio Min, Kedah (Malaysia)
- SMJK Keat Hwa, Kedah (Malaysia)
- St. Agnes' Junior & Senior High School, Kyoto (Japan)
- Sydney Saturday School of Japanese, New South Wales (Australia)
- Taisho Elementary School of Omuta City, Fukuoka (Japan)

- Teacher Su Centre, Nay Pyi Daw (Myanmar)
- The Lao-American College, Vientiane (Laos)
- Tokyo Metropolitan Koishikawa Middle School (Japan)
- VII Kopernik High School, Slaskie (Poland)
- Yachiyoshoin Gakuen, Chiba (Japan)
- Yamanouchi Junior High School of Yamanouchi Town, Nagano (Japan)
- Zhodino Secondary School 6 (Belarus)

International Essay Contest for Young People

Panel of Judges:

Chairman	Genshitsu Sen	Former Grand Tea Master of Urasenke, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador
	Shinji Hattori	Chairman & Group CEO, CCO SEIKO HOLDINGS CORPORATION
	Koichiro Matsuura	President of The Africa Society of Japan, Former Director-General of UNESCO
	Suzue Miuchi	Cartoonist
	Junji Narita	Senior Advisor, Hakuhodo Inc.
	Masami Saionji	Chairperson, The Goi Peace Foundation
	Shunichi Tokura	Composer
	Kazuhiko Yazaki	President & CEO, FELISSIMO CORPORATION
	Shomei Yoh	Picture book author

Organized by: The Goi Peace Foundation

Endorsed by: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan,
Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, Japan Private High School
Federation, Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, Japanese
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Your future begins today

(Original)

Dudley Cojitha Senanayake

(Age 12, Sri Lanka)

S.Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia

Dear Coji of 2020,

You would never have expected a letter from me in your wildest dreams. However, I am writing to you as your future is my present reality now.

Do you remember how you predicted that in ten years, people will be living on Mars and that every child will beg Santa Claus to bring them jet packs for Christmas? Unfortunately, neither of those things have happened yet.

However, over the last few years, there have been many changes. Changes we didn't expect, have crept up on us slowly so that we didn't even feel it, but when we look back at the world we live in, it has altered considerably.

Scientists have discovered that now, they can treat life-threatening diseases that they earlier thought were incurable. With the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics, doctors have made advancements in the field of medicine, and people are enjoying its benefits today.

Schools have changed drastically in the last decade. Along with subjects like Math, English, and Science; - Self-awareness, Diversity, and Social responsibility have made it into the curriculum. So, as a result, people evaluate their decisions by seeing if it can pass through these three gates: "Is it beneficial to me? Is it beneficial to others? Is it beneficial to the world at large?" These actions have made us more human in the best way possible.

People smile a lot now. They seem genuinely happy from inside out. I thought you'll be pleased to hear that.

War is a thing of the past. People still have disagreements, but they have learned to value each other's differences without expecting everyone to be the same. Communication



and understanding have superseded suspicion and prejudice, and this has made our communities peaceful.

The world has turned more eco-conscious now. The 3R concept of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle is integrated into the very being of people and to their daily lives, but it doesn't stop there. Our generation has built on that foundation. We have introduced a more advanced 3R concept of Rethink, Reimagine, and Reinvent, which we are striving towards, with great enthusiasm. For instance, instead of cutting trees to make way for housing, homes are artfully designed to stand atop tree branches. Needless to say, children everywhere are delighted with this!

I must now tell you about something more personal. Do you remember the rose-apple sapling that you planted ten years ago? Can you remember how you watered it, faithfully, each day and how, as soon as you woke up each morning, you would rush to see if it had sprouted new leaves? Can you also recall how you would measure it painstakingly each day with your ruler, to see if it was any taller than the previous day? I remember how happy you were if it was, and how unhappy you were if it wasn't. A decade has gone by, and you are now at university, miles away from home. Yet the rose-apple tree is still there. Just that it is much taller now, with branches spreading overhead, and it's laden with luscious red fruits. After you left home for your higher studies, your parents were lonely without you. They missed the frolic that you and your friends got up to and the laughter that filled the house each day, whenever you were at home. However, now, there are small children in your neighborhood, who always come into your garden after school, to pluck some rose-apples with your parents' permission. They fill your house with laughter, and their excited, babbling voices make your parents' faces light up once again.

So, as you can see, every action, no matter how small, has a lasting consequence. Sometimes, you get to enjoy its benefits, sometimes you don't, but that doesn't matter. What matters is that we do something good, anyway.

Lastly, let me leave you with this thought: What we do today can make a better tomorrow, so choose your actions wisely, for your future is in your hands.

Lots of love,
Coji of 2030

Boomerang of Hope

(Original)

Marta Andriivna Chernychka

(Age 18, Ukraine)

The Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

Sitting alone in a scantily lit room, I feel my words being addressed to the silence. I write these lines with grief in my heart, guessing how it will be difficult for you to read them. You will be trying with all your might to convince yourself this letter was written by a stranger who doesn't resemble the one that meets you every morning in the mirror.

I see this. No matter what happens, we are the ones who always turn a little problem into gigantic trouble. We pick up a smidgen of reality, combine it with fiction, and from this solution, we inflate a huge bubble to hide inside it from routine.

Fate is not without a sense of irony: you will not recognize me, but we cross each other's path every day, in each of your dreams and thoughts. Although in one exact moment you will avoid looking me in the eye to face this fact.

Let me unlock a secret for you: there will also be disenchantments for you, because there is no way I (you in the future) could equal your hopes. Sorry, but even your lowest bar will be too high for me to jump to. I am not strong enough to climb up on a pedestal and be "the best..." Well, take it from me: you will not forget the moment of realizing that being first in the race is not the main thing.

Looking at the paper, I imagine flocks of your questions emerging and becoming tangled together. They will be apt to find the gaps in my story. In this way, it will be easy to label it incredible.

Anyway, if I still seem to be a pure figment, then, please, listen to this figment.

To imagine the world in 2030, just ask yourself a question: "How do you see it with your own eyes?"

In this very moment, you generate my reality in your mind. Every day, people in your



world throw boomerangs a decade's distance. These boomerangs show us in 2030 the path to follow, and indicate how people in 2020 see their prospects in the future.

I can't even calculate how many of these boomerang-messages each of us gets every minute. Each time, it turns into a gamble of uncertainty. Yesterday, my friend came to know that, in the past, she had decided to do some charity work. She had already sent in her future wish to lead a charity fund.

I expect now to hear your skeptical note that it sounds too easy: just send your wish into the future and it will be fulfilled.

To be honest, I am still waiting for my boomerang. I feel like I am at an impasse point, where I think it could have gotten lost in the sands of time. My boomerang just didn't manage to fly here, because your wish was lacking in faith.

Every day, I live playing by someone else's rules. Hard work in the office has become so annoying for me and my colleagues, whose past selves ordered them to adjust to this life! All that remains for us is to regret that something was done wrong earlier. We had to convince ourselves to move all the mountains along the way, in order to accept who we were.

Believe in yourself!

Remember what your father said: "It is not so important to obey rules as it is not to be hit by a car". The worthiest goal is not to become the perfect version of yourself, but to be a happy person who builds her path from scratch.

Create a new life for me!

We are completely different, yet so connected by an invisible link. It sends your thoughts to me, so they can turn into reality here.

Just look around: your life is like a castle, built with bricks of the dream of one little princess. That one was you, who believed in becoming a kind witch who would make a better world. So please, send your boomerang of faith to fill the hollowness around me.

Wiser Guider Future

(Original)

Praise Mmesomachukwu Chukwumereze

(Age 12, Nigeria)

Surebloom High School, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Dear Praise,

How are you ten years ago? I look back and I see you, full of life, a complete dreamer and believer of a better tomorrow. A lot of events and innovations have taken place, many that would blow your 2020 outdated mind. I need to let you know some, given the fact that you are much younger and would need guidance from me, your future 2030 self.

At 22 years, I have had many good and unpleasant life experiences in the past decade. Though I cannot tell you exactly what they are and how they happened, but I can give you some red flags and words of wisdom on what the future has in store.

The world has developed far more than you can imagine. When you think of the future, you might be thinking only about machines, robots and even more advanced electronic gadgets. Well, you are about to be proven wrong by me.

Agriculture and the environment are playing major roles in the society, though technology has helped make their relevance more impactful. Agriculture has eventually overtaken crude oil as the major source of revenue and the state of the environment is also being taken more seriously. Both are connecting different nations together, brainstorming and offering solutions to our global challenges and with different sectors coming together to support each other. Farm produce are now sourced locally, fresh, and healthy, and there is a ban on the use of chemical preservatives and cancerous food colourings. Many developing countries are functioning better today, and more importantly, children are no longer being used as labourers in our factories and farms.

At the moment, I am an environmentalist and my job is to ensure that there is a healthy ecosystem in Nigeria, applying best practices to protect our environment. I also draft policies that encourage reduction of carbon emissions from our industries and monitor for strict compliance to our environmental laws. Every year, we plant millions of trees to sustain

and promote a green environment. Also, the different government agencies are helping each other; the new ministry of earth conservation continues to provide the much needed funding for our agency, supporting our collective efforts in meeting the United Nations sustainable development goal on climate action this year, 2030.

My career choice as an environmentalist was influenced greatly by our local farmers, climate change activists, and social & healthcare workers. These caring groups of men and women spurred me through their life-saving actions such as campaigning to save our environment from oil spills, seeking important legislations on climate change, caring for the most vulnerable in our society, and very importantly, going all out to care for those with deadly diseases like the Ebola and Covid-19.

The Covid-19, that was introduced to humans in late 2019, that led to a global pandemic, is no longer a problem in 2030. Vaccines have been developed, approved and distributed widely to government authorized hospitals which are administering free to everyone. Although things have not been the same, however, life has improved tremendously since the outbreak; businesses have re-bounced from their losses, and majority of the people have embraced the social distancing rules, and other laid down health protocols to prevent resurgence. Generally, the Covid-19 pandemic has served as a wakeup call to anyone who had not been taking good hygiene practices seriously. The passion and sacrifices of our healthcare workers is a worthy example of the human fighting spirit and remains the hallmark of our victory over the worst pandemic in modern history.

As I conclude, I would like to remind you of who you are; a fearless, hardworking, smart, and multitalented girl who stands up for what she believes are right and true. Always remember that the future is not cast in stone, it is your daily decisions that will determine the reality of this inescapable future; you have the power to make or mar it. But I will always believe in you to stay determined, intentional, and take the right decisions to step into your inspiring future.

I am confident that your exceptional attributes will guide you to this future which I am intentionally creating beyond your 2030 self.

With love,
Praise

Lopsided Scale

(Original)

Ryoka Tanoi
(Age 13, Japan)
Shibuya Junior High School, Tokyo

Dear thirteen-year-old me,

As I drove past a small, homely town in America several days ago, I witnessed a band of sixth graders walking down a street, each holding an ice cream. Teens with blond heads and pale skin licked dark chocolate ice cream that were swirled on top of the cones, while hands of dark skin held onto vanilla ice creams. Between them, there were yellow-skinned Asians eating ice creams of mixed flavors of vanilla and chocolate. Arms opposite to the ones holding ice creams wrapped around one another, and innocent, ecstatic smiles spread across their faces. This is what I wanted to see in 2020. This is what I actually see in 2030.

As always, I captured the moments clearly in my brain like a photo and later wrote it down in a notebook where I kept ideas for my books. As a writer, I am constantly on a lookout for something intriguing. At the same time, I am willing to depict inspiring, captivating moments like the one above into a story so that it can be shared with a wider view of the audience. My only hope in doing this, is that somehow those audiences would be inspired by what they had read. This is the biggest thing that I ask for in my readers. Nevertheless, there is a tiny piece of my heart that is praying for the story to be part of their soul and eventually be passed on to their grandchildren.

When I think of 2020, I remember you, or rather I, writing a short essay titled: Innocent But Black. If my memory proves right, you wrote about how in a book – *To Kill a Mockingbird* – that supposedly took place around 1933, a black man was accused of a crime that he was not responsible for. Moreover, you concluded how despite many

years having past, race discrimination still happened in 2020, and how human thinking failed to develop unlike technologies. However, I can assure you that the next ten years would be the years where we, humans, finally stopped pushing the snooze button to racism. Right now, I am proud to say that we live in a society where not only the term 'racism' is no longer alive, but also the act itself is gone.

When thinking about what to write to my old self, I considered several options. One was telling you about several major events in my life that influenced me in many ways. However, I held off on the idea since it is the unknown that makes a journey of life so thrilling. Secondly, I toyed with the idea of telling you beforehand of mistakes that you are going to make in the upcoming years. But, I decided not to because if those mistakes are not made, then I would not be the person whom I am right now. Finally I decided to go with my third option: giving you a lesson I now know, that I wish I had known before.

I envisioned Earth as a balance scale, and I asked myself: what would world be like if we are all the same in character, gender or race? In my brain, an image of a balance scale being lopsided popped up since only one plate was filled up with identical humans while the opposite plate was empty. However, if there are more races, then the opposite plate of the balance scale could be filled, creating an equal society. In other words, because there are differences between us, we can compensate for the things each lacks. Because there are differences between us, we need each other.

At the same time, one could refuse stepping onto the balance scale if one feels mistreated, misjudged or misunderstood, which would unsteady the balance. Your job is to make sure that none are feeling that way. That each and every one of you are treated the way that they are meant to be treated. This does not automatically mean fund raising or protests. What I am suggesting is to use your voice through your passion – writing – to promote the idea.

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – 2nd Prize]

As we saw in the movies

(Original)

Júlia Peixoto Fernandes

(Age 17, Brazil)

Escola Sesc de Ensino Médio

Brazil, January 1st, 2030.

Dear Peixoto,

I always thought the world would be over by 2012, as the Maya Calendar predicted. I remember being in my father's car, looking to the night sky through the window and imagining how our existence would vanish. When the year came to an end, but we were still here, I realized that what could destroy humanity wouldn't come from far away, it was already here: our lack of empathy, our hate and our prejudices - and only we, together, could save ourselves.

Unquestionably, you have already made this analysis, because by the time I, or rather we, were 17 we could not accept the inequalities that exist in the world. Although, to be true to ourselves, just by being born a girl into a race mixed family in a South-American country we could never understand the reasons why people were worst treated due to their ethnicity, gender, social status, sexual orientation or gender identity.

We no longer have to understand the incomprehensible, or try to justify horrendous discriminations, as many did in the past. Therefore, I must say not even in our best dreams and hopes we had a glimpse of what our world would come to be. It's all so different now, Julia! You would be completely amazed and happily overwhelmed by the changes we managed to do.

The process started through education, as we always believed it would. Schooling - in all its levels - is now free for all, thanks to public education and UNESCO's efforts everybody has similar possibilities of studying, and that makes admission in colleges and jobs much more fair than it ever was, since the line where we start our professional journey is the same for all students. In addition, good education now includes studies in race, religion and

gender, teaching respect, understanding and inclusion of the differences that make each human unique.

As a result of the democratization of education, we've also made significant breakthrough in science, the world is now powered solely by renewable energy, the diseases that affrighted society are curable, vaccines that prevent pandemics to happen are offered to us all with no costs.

Likewise, health care as a basic human right exists all over the planet, we no longer have to wait in long lines for treatments we wouldn't have because we couldn't afford, the medical supplies are never short as they were in war zones and underprivileged areas. Every human being can live in dignity through the medical care offered.

Furthermore, art and cultural expressions are now highly valued as basics rights and seen as essential to the social living. I know, Julia! We never thought art would finally be recognized as a key part of a society reconstruction, but it is. You always felt the importance all forms of art had in preserving memories and paving the way for the future experiences and that is what you have been doing, you are a movie director and an activist as you dreamed.

We documented through our films the changes that were only fiction before. The steps society took in order to become an equitable and fair community are forever recorded in our cameras and in our minds. The movies we directed were protest pieces that showed the inequality spread across the social relations and the enforcement of rights, but now our motion pictures are reminders of where our hate and injustice led us in the past.

You must remember the power of change that exists within art, it will help you into the right path and you shall never forget that, just like in the movies, decisions made in the very first scene have consequences to the final sequences. Our movies are important proof of what happened and can't be forgotten, since knowing humanity previous mistakes and misjudgements help us never let them happen again, otherwise our history will turn to be a repetitive collection of errors and omissions.

No rights should be taken for granted, Julia! Even now when the situation is ideal, we keep fighting, so nobody will ever suffer again.

With great hope in the changes humanity can make,
Júlia Peixoto.

A Melting Pot of Gems

(Original in Japanese)

Yuka Sone

(Age 17, Japan)

Koka Gakuen Senior High School for Girls, Tokyo

This year, 2030, is the year in which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are set to be achieved. We are at a major turning point for the world. And as part of that, Japan has also undergone a big change. That is, we no longer have the policy of being closed to refugees, and we now have many more ‘friends’ in Japan. Today, Japanese people have come to know and live together with people from countries that they knew nothing about ten years ago. When I was in high school, I had the chance to participate in a Model United Nations conference, and it made me pay attention to what was going on in the world. Since graduating university, I’ve been working at a job where I help give support and protection to refugees.

People said that if a lot of refugees came into Japan, it would create disorder in Japanese society, but in truth nothing like that has happened. To be honest, it has brought only good things. With this change in Japanese society, I feel like my perspective has broadened 180 degrees. If you walk to the right, there is a large Christian church. Not only Christian believers, but also people from the neighborhood gather there to enjoy a moment of peace. Over to the left, you can see a Muslim mosque. It’s common to see the Halal mark on food products, and there are lots of restaurants offering Halal dishes. The back streets are bustling with restaurants serving the local cuisines of countries that you’ve never heard of before, as well as shoppers looking for rare cultural items. At the same time, there’s been a revival in shops selling traditional Japanese goods, as foreigners look to deepen their understanding of Japanese culture. It seems that more people are taking another look at Japanese culture. This cultural ‘give and take’ has enriched the citizens of Japan, both materially and spiritually.

In addition, beyond the realm of everyday life, naturalized Japanese citizens have recently been making considerable advances in the political sphere. In today’s global society, it has become absolutely essential to have people with an objective view of Japan.

Through diversified policies, we can expect further growth and development for Japan.

Of course, when I started working with refugees, I sometimes encountered very painful circumstances. But they are the ones who have experienced unimaginable things. They have braved danger and risked their lives, and finally made it to Japan, and as many of them as possible must be allowed to stay. In 2020, that would have been very difficult. At that time, to say the least, I was not aware of the situations that refugees were in. It seemed hard to understand their customs and cultures, and since they were in far off countries, I guess I turned a blind eye to their problems. But over the past ten years, I've encountered many values that I would never have known if those refugees had not been accepted. Each time, my curiosity was aroused, and I embraced their precious culture and spirit—something that no one can take away. That attitude is what I have learned during the last ten years. Compared with that time, when Japan took in less than 50 refugees a year, we have now become a world leader in accepting refugees. It's evidence that each Japanese citizen has begun to move toward greater cooperation with the rest of the world.

At age 17, you will now go to university, and have the chance to meet lots of people, step outside the shell of Japan and learn about all kinds of things. At that time, I hope you will take the initiative to turn your attention overseas, and keep wanting to learn more. At university, you'll exchange ideas through papers and presentations, and when you go out into the world, you'll have the chance to interact with all kinds of people, both Japanese and foreigners. The world is studded with gems you have never seen before—gems known as 'values'. If you can observe as many of those gems as possible, be amazed at their unfathomable variety, and share them with others, I'm sure you will grow into a person with inner riches. Then, by the time it's 2030, you'll have an even better grasp of the world than I do now.

A letter from myself in 2030

(Original)

Talise Chan Luo Yi

(Age 9, Singapore)

Nan Hua Primary School

Dear Talise,

I am your future self from 2030. This is my first attempt at sending out an email through time. You might find this unbelievable, but please read on.

Last December, my team and I found a code that could send emails through time. Cool? Now, we are emailing to our past-selves and future-selves. Knowing you inside out, I am sure your curiosity has been pricked now.

Let me tell you about your future. Our parents are still alive and working tirelessly. Knowing our father, this is definitely not the life he wants, but the cost of living now is higher than in 2020. Unlike ten years ago, senior citizens now are as productive as the younger workers. However, the senior generation is no longer working as cleaners in food courts anymore. The culture of clearing our own plates has taken root in our country and consumers help keep the place neat and clean.

Remember that we used to be paranoid that robots might take over the world? Well, it is now happening. Food courts and hawker centres are fully automated, so robots do most of the manual work or preparing and selling food. I remember that our mother used to order delivered food via FoodPanda and Deliveroo apps. In 2030, drones are used for food delivery. Many jobs have been taken over by robots and automation. Thankfully, jobs that require human touch and human judgement are still retained in the hands of mankind.

You might be wondering why senior citizens are still working now. After COVID19, a lot of money was spent to research cures for different kinds of viruses and illnesses such as flu, dementia, cancer and diabetes. Humans have also adapted and now usually live to around a hundred years old and work till they are around 85. Since most of the senior generation remains healthy, they remain in the workforce longer. The workforce also needs them as the rate of birth globally is declining. There is also more flexibility in work choices. We can

choose to work from home or in the office.

Luckily the luxury of staying home is not a choice for children as they need to learn social skills. To make learning more interesting, all students bring hologram iPads to school instead of bags full of books. Also, all major annual examinations for primary school students were scrapped in 2025. In other words, we now sit for only the Primary Graduation Examination (PGE), which was formerly known as the PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination).

With or without examinations, we still made it to university. My friends and I decided to enrol in a coding and engineering course. My deepest worry had always been robots taking over the world. I figured that an inventor's job can help to stay ahead of technology and not be easily replaced. For my first project, my friends and I are inventing a code to send emails through time. I have worked as an intern before university and hence have some hands-on knowledge in coding and engineering. Anyway, these are all trivial compared to the last change that has been made to the human world.

You are experiencing COVID19 in your time, right? I remember vividly that we were terrified of the virus. However, there is a silver lining to every cloud. After the virus ended people became nicer, kinder, more accepting and more forgiving. After being stuck at home for very long, people started to appreciate everything that we had taken for granted. They missed the simple pleasure of going out, talking to friends and working in teams. They realised that life was very vulnerable and everyone should live life to the fullest and treasure lives.

The virus was indeed a wake-up call to the people in Singapore. We learnt that we must be self-sufficient and not just rely on other countries for our supply of food and necessities. When you are 15 fifteen years old, you will see many gardens sprouting up everywhere that used to be empty spaces, such as rooftops, vacant car parks, and in schools.

I will write to you again. Meanwhile, please ask Mother to start growing vegetables.

Love,
2030 Talise Chan

A Diamond In The Rough

(Original)

Daniela Odong Asianut

(Age 13, Uganda)

Mt St Mary's College Namagunga

Daniela,

You must be wondering why I have chosen to write to you. Why 2030? Why now? Perhaps, it is to tell you that we have achieved world peace. Or that the climate crisis is a thing of the past. Maybe, it is that we can now watch documentaries about the Corona Virus pandemic on History Channel. Would you believe me if I told you the answer lay in a beautiful sunset? As I watch the sun's rays glisten upon the sky's canvas in colours: pink, violet and blue entwined, I believe it is proof that true beauty can only be found in difference.

Let me tell you a tale of my world. A world brought together by the worst of times. Today, the atmosphere is set in a normal like never before. The COVID-19 pandemic was not merely a bend in the fabric of our way of life. It posed a question of significance and priority to many people. What was worth giving away a portion of their lives to and what wasn't? Not once in my wildest dreams would I have imagined that such a tragedy, in the pages of history, could paint such a magnificent future.

Spring cleaning people's priorities, the pandemic created a deeper sense of community. From all the people coming together to build homes for the homeless, to the loving smiles being shared between strangers on the street; kindness has never been more evident. This love is in turn being echoed by our planet. Birds tailored of a thousand colours roam free without fear of being victimised by the sun's rage. The skies are bluer than ever; free from pollution. All these are ripple effects. Not of how much time we had but, what we chose to do with it.

Prior to the outbreak, many people were cyber-focused. They lived life behind their screens and gadgets. They took the people around them for granted. The pandemic seemed to press a pause button on the world. People were detached from the rest of the world and

had their gadgets to keep them company. But, that was not satisfactory enough. They realised the asset in being able to not only be around people but also, to love them and cherish those moments. It is painful to think that only after a calamity like this, which took thousands of lives, did we come to this realisation.

I understand your dream was always to help children with neurological disabilities and give them a chance at a normal childhood. As a paediatric neurosurgeon, this dream is still close to my heart. I now believe my influence should go beyond the operation theatre. That is why I partner with countless child care organisations around the globe to help children with disabilities. I want to help them to realise their worth and show them that they are enough. This is a passion that I would never trade for anything else. These children have more courage than I ever could. Their smiles in the harshest moments are the greatest gifts I could possibly ask for. No matter how bad my day is, I always go home feeling as though I have touched the life of someone special.

Daniela, I hope by the time you read this you appreciate that in difference lies unfathomable beauty. What some may see as a rainy day, you should see as a prelude for a lovely rainbow. It is only in the rough, that we can find a true diamond. Every day, when you wake up to the sun's rays at sunrise, glistening the sky's canvas with colours: yellow, orange and crimson, remember that it is not always that way. Some days, it's calm lavender and is still so endearing. In the same way, let your difference shine like a light illuminating that of others. Your world could use it, maybe now more than ever.

With love,
You,
Only a decade away.

Piece by Piece

(Original)

Julianne Francesca Berse

(Age 13, Philippines)

Dear Younger Self,

What if I told you that the world in 10 years would be occupied by war, inflicted with pandemics and other infectious diseases, or that racial discrimination is commonplace anywhere you go? Would you believe me? Would you run away or accept this supposed fate complacently? If I told you something else did happen, but differently, would you be more willing to believe that? That the world suddenly changed? That people did, too. The air is cleaner, tensions among nations ceased, the environment is much greener, and we all live as one harmonious race despite our occasional shortcomings as individuals. You would love to believe this, would you? You should, because as a matter of fact, it is the truth.

It is the year 2030, and I want to tell you how much change could happen in 10 years, with a little more effort by everyone in the world. Let me give you a picture of how things look from where I am at the moment. Here I am, sitting down on the floor of my airy house, writing this letter as a look at the cluttered desk on my left, with a solar lamp which was a gift to me three years ago. To my right is the door that leads to the kitchen and in front of me is a wide window with a perfect view of the street. Outside, children are playing freely while the adults chat as always with their neighbours, as they all wait in line for ambulant vendors to hand them their goods. The streets are full of people selling food and other items. People don't go to grocery stores as often as before. At the end of the street where I live now is the remnant of a once mountain-like dumpster. The neighbourhood took action and repurposed it to accommodate a small plot of land for alternative crops farming. The healthy soil is being tended by people who suffered financially from the pandemic 10 years ago. With some support from the government and other volunteers, these people who lived in an impoverished state before were given a fresh start.

Things are better now, but that came with a big sacrifice. The world is healing itself, but the marks of abuse are still visible. Majority of the forests in some countries are gone and

have not recovered from the fires that lasted for more than a month. The tsunamis that came a decade ago on some islands ate up some of the most beautiful shorelines one could walk on. Our seas and oceans are still recovering from the years and years of abuse they endured from the piles of trash thrown by irresponsible individuals who could not care less. I can say that our own mistakes as a human race caught up with us, and in a way forced us to work with one another and changed drastically the usual, normal way of how everyone did things. People were compelled to alter the rules, change borders, implement eco-friendly systems, and adopt a more open and equal society. Everyone pushed the planet to its limit, and it gave everyone what they deserved.

I am sending you this letter because I want you to know what is at stake here: it's your future. And that despite the challenges you see around you now, I pray you will remain positive and hopeful. I am writing this to you because I want you to have faith in the future, and a little more faith in yourself. That is all the advice I want to give you for now. I want you to do your best and help while you can, share your opinions without fear, and encourage others to do the same. I leave this task to you with the hope that you may truly have a better future. I promise you, everyone from 2030 continues to learn and fix our ways of living. It may have taken us long, but we learned our lesson and we're slowly building back the world together, piece by piece.

*Love,
Julianne*

To Myself in 2020: Don't Give Up

(Original in Japanese)

Satoru Ozaki

(Age 13, Japan)

Setagaya Junior High School attached to Tokyo Gakugei University

This may seem out of the blue, but what do you think the world will be like ten years from now? You probably thought something like this: If things go on the way they are now, global warming will be getting worse, and many areas will be uninhabitable. In Africa and other places, the gap between rich and poor won't have improved at all. But nowadays, it is improving. Compared with how it was in 2020, people are working harder to create a world that feels better to everyone. And they are doing so voluntarily. People show more gratitude to others than they did in the past. I am one of these people. I give thanks to nature, and thanks to the people who make our everyday goods. Now that I think about it, I really think that gratitude has given me humility and joy in living, and that has given me happiness for both myself and others.

What is your present self like? Are you showing enough gratitude to others? Appreciating the normal, everyday things around us leads us to take action for the future. But right now, you're in junior high school, and it's hard for you to do the same things as an adult would do. However, there are still lots of things you can do. For example, you can share your opinions, as you are doing now. There's always a need for new ideas to help solve environmental problems and poverty issues. The posts you have been writing will definitely be helpful in the future. The volunteer activities we are doing now have been aided many times by various ideas.

The conflicts that were taking place in 2020 have now completely disappeared. I suppose this is because everyone has become happier. Nowadays, everyone is given equal opportunities for things like education, and it is a very fair and just world.

Just like Japan in 2020, now everyone in the world can work toward their own goal. And employment in poor regions has gone way up. In developing countries, lots of volunteers worked together to help advance the primary industry. This was done not by just one person, but with the help of everyone. I myself have been calling on everyone to lend a

hand. Especially because you were born in a wealthy country, I think you could be more proactive. The actions you take can save a lot of lives.

Education has changed a lot, too. First of all, the number of children getting an education has increased since 2020. This is because advances in information technology have been put to use in education. In places where education needs improvement for some reason or other, we have introduced online classes. That way, all children can get an education without any trouble. And the expenses are paid almost entirely by donations. As a member of humanity, I, too, have given donations.

As a junior high school student—or rather, as a human being—I hope you will share some of the things you feel at your age. Especially when it comes to education, we can learn a lot from the things children are feeling. You should value the things that you are able to do in your position.

We created a world that is easy for everyone to live in because each individual thought about what they can do and then put that into action. There are lots of things that you, as a junior high school student, can do. You can share your opinions. You can learn about what is actually going on. You must never give up and say that one person can't make a difference. In the end, it is the efforts of each individual that will save the world.

To my past self
(Original in Japanese)

Kaeno Shimizu

(Age 15, Japan)

Tokyo Junshin Girls' Junior High School

Are you happy right now? I'm sorry for the abrupt question. I am your future self, ten years from now. I have some things I really want to tell you, so I'm writing you this letter.

But first, I'll tell you what the world is like in 2030. In this world, which is my present and your future, progress has been made in many areas. For example, in politics. Recently the number of women in Parliament has been increasing little by little. They are trying their best to solve problems that only women can understand. It is very promising.

In transportation, self-driving vehicles are now normal. The number of accidents is decreasing each year. I hope that someday, there will be no traffic accidents at all.

In the field of education, it's now possible to teach each student in the way that best suits their situation. For example, children who can't attend school can study anytime using video lessons, and for children who don't like studying, they've devised ways to make learning more fun, as if they are playing a game. At every school, they're coming up with different ideas and putting them into practice.

In the field of medicine, new drugs have been discovered to treat all kinds of illnesses. X-rays and other images can now be analyzed more accurately. We can now get test results in less than half the time it took ten years ago, so doctors can quickly determine what the disease is and how to treat it. With these new technologies, hardly any patients are beyond hope for medical treatment. It's a big step forward in medicine.

Speaking of which, I am now working as a nurse in pediatric surgery, helping children who are battling serious diseases. No matter how advanced medicine gets, there are still many diseases about which much is unknown. My job is to support these sick children and give assistance to the pediatric surgeons. The process of becoming a nurse was much more rigorous and more difficult than I imagined. But now that I'm through it, the work is very fulfilling. When a child I have cared for leaves the hospital, the happiness I feel cannot be expressed in words. Of course, when working in a hospital, there are many things that make you feel sad and depressed. But despite that, I couldn't leave this job. That's because I love this job, and even though it's harsh and sad at times, you can't quit what you love. I think that's the reason why I'm able to keep doing it. Since I am you and you are me, I'm sure we think the same way. So please, don't give up on what you want to do. That's the first thing I really want to tell you.

There's one other thing I want to say. It's about what happened in the past. As you know, when I was in grades 3 and 4, I didn't attend school. At the cram school where I went in grades 5 and 6, I was bullied terribly, and then I was bullied again in grade 7, my first year of junior high school. It was a very difficult five years. But those five years were definitely not wasted. Nothing in life is ever pointless or wasted. The day will definitely come when you feel this way. I can't tell you about it in detail, but I will just tell you this: your future is dazzlingly bright. The future I mentioned earlier is just one possibility. The future will change. Your options for the future are infinite, and everything is up to you.

So, have confidence in yourself, and cherish each and every day. Please don't forget my message. When you get a little older, do as I'm doing now—tell your younger self going through hard times whatever you feel is important to say at that moment in time.

Technology and Ecology: An Egalitarian's View

(Original)

Aadya Kapoor

(Age 15, India)

Amity International School Vasundhara Sector 6

Dear Aadya,

How are you? I am good. I just got off the hologram conference for my book release. As it's Thursday night and its weekend already, so, I thought of writing to you (more like reciting it to the self-writing pen). You might be thinking, 'weekend? It's Thursday!' But for past couple of years the week ends on Thursdays.

The weekend might be three days long but on the working days I am snowed with work right up to my ears. For the last three years, I have been working for the Soccer AI refereeing management department, where the drones help the match referees in decision making in critical situations. We maneuver these drones to provide holographic videos replayed from all the angles of the field. Many such technologies and innovations have been introduced for different sports over the years.

As you know that writing has been my hobby for a long time, now I am a professional author. I publish my writings in the daily hologram (the holographic magazine) and I have published two online books. To enthrall the readers, I garnish my books with musical leitmotifs and 3D graphics.

About a decade ago, for the preservation of trees and minimal use of low-grade plastic for packaging, book printing was terminated. Widespread use of reading devices evolved over the years and now we have Holo-pads. They narrate holographic books with meticulous modulation and enthralling graphics. Albeit, I always had a knack for collecting books, so I still have the library of my old paper bound books, tucked safely in preserving shelves, it is one of the few physical book libraries present in the whole world. Nowadays the libraries consist of Holo-pads, holo-projectors, audiobooks and the AI librarians.

Earlier today, when I was in my book release conference, a queer incident happened. I was signing a book when my 'Garuda' drone delivery service dropped the package right on top of my holograph projector, and I was zapped back to my room with a digital pen in my hand and a package of organic and 3D printed groceries on the desk. I thought, how did the sensors of the drone not sense the holo-projector?! When I checked the settings on the widget, I saw it had been changed to emergency delivery (to be delivered upfront to the customer). I believe that this was the doing of my 10-year-old cousin, who might have got her hands on my delivery widget when she was visiting this Tuesday.

I am planning to visit my parents tomorrow; they live in the next town over, 150 kms from here. It is a 20-minute ride by the floating trains which are the major public transport system. The use of cars has been reduced drastically, very few people own private cars, all of which are either electrically powered or run on batteries. A long-distance Superloop has recently been established for interstate and international travel.

In the last quartet years, the major aim of all the countries of the United Nations of United Countries (UNUC) has been the restoration of the Ecology and for the same, a proposal of Technology and Ecology Pact (TEP) was signed. The Green revolution took place again and it started a series of movements for ecology-preservation. There is the Artificial Intelligence TE police assigned by the TEP organization all around the world that work with humans, side by side, to maintain the ecological balance.

I used to believe that AI and IOT will take over the world, but I was wrong. Instead AI and IOT augment us. AI and homo-sapiens make a great team, as someone once said that the brains of AI and wisdom of humans can do wonders.

We need to evolve technologically while preserving the ecology. If we maintain the balance while integrating technology and ecology, the world will never be Grey.

My DIAD (do-it-all-device) has been buzzing for a while, it's time to take Kieran, my dog, on a walk to the dog streets. I wish you well and hope you give your best in whatever you may do.

'The best way to predict future is to create it'

- Abraham Lincoln

Love,
Aadya

The World on RICE!

(Original in Japanese)

Asumi Shimada

(Age 17, Japan)

Senior High School at Sakado, University of Tsukuba

To myself ten years ago:

My 2020 self probably can't afford to think about the future, because my head is preoccupied with my university entrance exam and my impatience with the fact that I still don't have a boyfriend. But please, don't stop learning now. I say this because, in 2030, at age 27, I'm able to feel happy, thanks to the things I have learned so far.

As a matter of fact, nowadays the world is undergoing an unprecedented boom in rice. The problem of decreased rice consumption and what was described as the westernization of food are already things of the past. Today, rice is eaten all over the world, and it's so popular that it has shot to the top among the world's three major grains. How did this happen? For this, we have to talk about the amazing work by people in the integrated course at Senior High School at Sakado attached to the University of Tsukuba.

As an adult, I've pursued a career in agriculture, a field that I love. I started working toward the dream I've held since I was in elementary school—to develop the best rice in Japan. Through many years of research and rice cultivation, and together with others who studied rice production in the high school's agriculture course, we developed a new variety of rice called Tsukusakamai. Tsukusakamai shook Japan by beating out the special AA rank in the taste rankings of the Japan Grain Inspection Association—a rank that even the Koshihikari variety had not attained. Naturally, this achievement was praised by many agricultural institutions and won many awards. But here is the important thing. Collaborating with graduates of the school's international studies course, we used the prize money to donate Tsukusakamai to developing countries that were unable to grow rice. Since it is the best rice in Japan, Tsukusakamai put a smile on the faces of people in many different countries. We also worked to spread the name of Tsukusakamai within Japan. With the help of graduates of the business course, we worked to increase the consumption of rice

by promoting Tsukusakamai on TV and in supermarkets. However, things didn't go that smoothly. In a world where tempting foods like pizza and tapioca stand out, rice didn't get much of a spotlight. I had thought several times about giving up, when suddenly, the rice craze happened. The strong point of Japanese rice—that it goes well with any kind of food—meant that it adapted well to foreign cultures where the rice had been donated, and it won people's hearts. This phenomenon crossed the seas, and finally, in 2030, the rice craze came to Japan.

This rice boom has changed Japan significantly. First, with regard to the problem of people's diets. Rice improved the situation of people eating too much flour, and since it is often cooked in a pot, it taught people the pleasure of sitting down at the table with one's family instead of eating alone. The second change was in agriculture. The rice craze triggered an explosion in agricultural development all over the world. Even in Japan, with its concerns about the aging population, 'smart agriculture,' which places little burden on people's bodies, was developed and implemented throughout the country, thanks to everyone from the engineering course. In addition, since the rice boom arrived, Japanese food has been attracting more attention all over the world. In the West, the term *ichiju-sansai* (a meal of soup, rice, and three dishes) has come into fashion and caused a social phenomenon.

The rice craze has affected the whole world, warmed the hearts of the entire planet, and delivered the happiness of delicious food. And we cannot forget that this phenomenon required the support of many people from different academic disciplines, not only agriculture. These include the international studies course to connect Japan with other countries, the business course to connect producers and consumers, and the engineering course to develop various kinds of machinery and improve the work of cultivation. Through the cooperative efforts of all these specialized courses that make up the integrated course, we were able to affect the whole world.

My 2020 self is probably not so attracted to studying agriculture, which doesn't usually get much attention from society. And yet, just as Tsukusakamai connected the world through delicious food, the seemingly unremarkable field of agriculture can bring people great happiness. There are still a lot of problems in the world. Poverty and war are not completely gone, but rice—the food I love—was able to bring the entire planet together in one bowl. That's why I want you to take pride in learning my beloved subject of agriculture. And never take it for granted that you are able to say "*itadakimasu*" and "*gochisosama*" (words spoken before and after meals in Japan) every single day.

Back To Nature

(Original)

Zhou Xiangfei

(Age 19, China)

Zhongnan University of Economics and Law

Thursday May 30, 2030 Fine

Rural mornings never need any alarm clock. When sparrows' chirping mixed with the first ray of sunlight jumps into my room, I lift down the kitten that crept into my bed at night and open the curtains to start a new day.

I have been a college-graduate village official for 8 years since 2022. This small village, located in Hunan province, though closed and undeveloped, was full of attraction and challenges for me, as I thought it needs educated youngsters to make it better. So I gave up the offer from a big company in Beijing and returned to my hometown. Beijing is a modern city with plenty of ambitious dreamers. They try to keep up with its pace without realizing that they are becoming a contributing factor individually. It sounds a bit like a vicious circle. On the contrary, life in the countryside can be leisurely as there is no sense of urgency caused by the elapse of hours and minutes. People work at sunrise and rest at sunset, closely following the steps of nature.

Breakfast matters to a day so I never slack off. Newly picked dewy cabbages and other vegetable from my garden are always my first choice to prepare breakfast for my family. Then with a pair of cloth shoes and a suit of casual clothes I leave for the village office center to begin work. No traffic jams, no crowded subways, only the sounds of greeting with children who are late for class and old people who exercise in the park help awake the sleeping countryside. Every time I walk on the road that I united the villagers together to built 6 years ago, the most proud thing to see is the peach trees on the hills on either side. It is the end of spring when peaches should be picked and packaged to deliver to the outside world. The fruit tree planting project was introduced a few years ago as I found that the climate here matched the trees' growth requirements perfectly. After experimenting

with my villagers, we made it. Now I am in charge of external liaison and sales, which became an important economic source of the village. Villas have replaced those shabby country-houses for families lived here. And all have changed even at a rate that can be seen by the naked eyes over the past eight years. The future here is full of infinite possibilities as nature brings us endless treasures. We built by the mountains, and live by the water, willing to be integrated with them.

The night here is cool, together with gentle moonlight and pleasant chirping. The elderly may leisurely sit under trees in the rocking-chair, resting to attain mental composure; children run around the tree, chasing each other happily though sweating heavily; some women and I sit there, talking a few words of daily life. I look down the path at the end of the village, which not only leads to distance but also to the future. Noisy cities never lack ambitious youth, but the small closed and undeveloped village here needs the young to stay and open the way to the outside. And I am willing to put down roots here all the time, for my villagers, and for my hometown.

Although the moonlight, the stars and the fireflies along the road are enough to light the way home, I will soon put up street lamps for my villagers, as they are more like lamps of hope and prosperity, directing us to the better. Before I go to sleep, I write this diary to record my feelings and what I experienced today, fold it carefully and put it into a bottle which tomorrow I will put into a river that flows to the past, about ten years ago, namely, in 2020. When I myself receive the letter and see what will be like ten years later, I will not regret the decision that I will make two years later. After all, that is the life I desire.

Tomorrow, the beginning of summer, all are to start a new round of busyness, except this small village.

Ne te suicide pas

(Original in French)

Mpihary Mahefa Razafindrabezandrina

(Age 20, Madagascar)

One Way for Change

Tananarive, 09 juin 2030

Chaque dimanche, je reste chez moi. Mon mari est part à l'hacienda du quarter: un terrain agricole communautaire, entretenu par les riverains, et qui pourvoie à leur consommation quotidienne. Depuis que le WWF a lancé son programme écologique, de nombreux Etats (dont Madagascar) ont accepté d'entamer les démarches pour l'autosuffisance de chaque quarter; grâce à l'aide des entrepreneurs locaux et la coopération internationale, le projet a été un franc succès, mon mari fait partie de ces entrepreneurs.

J'en ai donc profité pour faire le ménage. Au moment de placer le nouveau bonsaï, mon œil fût attiré par un objet sur l'étagère: un crucifix. Cet objet a fait surgir en moi des souvenirs d'il y a une décennie. Cette lettre est pour toi: le moi de 2020.

Oui, c'était au cours de cette année que tes parents ont découvert que tu es un garçon qui aime les garçons. Persuadés du fait que tu iras en enfer, ils ont voulu que tu voies un prêtre, il t'avait donné ce crucifix, dans l'espoir que tu « guérisses » un jour de cette « maladie ». Alors tu as voulu te suicider en avalant une plaquette entière de chlorphéniramine.

Heureusement, tu t'es fait un nouvel ami, cela t'a gardé en vie. Vous êtes tombés amoureux l'un de l'autre, mais sachant qu'il vient d'une famille musulmane, vous avez perdu tout espoir d'une possible vie en commun. Les pensées suicidaires n'étaient jamais loin, ainsi que l'incertitude et la peur du futur.

Aujourd'hui pourtant, une belle journée s'annonce. Dans deux heures, les familles du quarter vont venir pour le déjeuner hebdomadaire d'échange culturelle, une coutume que tu viens d'instaurer. C'est le tour de ta famille cette semaine. Ton mari va rapporter les ingrédients cueillis de l'hacienda, et puis vous cuisinerez pour les voisins. Autour d'une table garnie de plats bios, toutes ces familles pourront échanger dans le but de se comprendre

mutuellement. Cécilia et Sandra vont parler de leur demande d'adoption en cours, Ahmad et Yasmina vont raconter leurs actes de charité lors du dernier ramadan, Olivia pourra se confier à propos des séances de kinésithérapie du petit Nathan.

Tu ne me crois pas? Tu te demandes comment un couple musulman peut-elle accepter de s'installer avec des couples homosexuels? Comment un couple de lesbiennes peut-il envisager l'adoption? Comment tu as pu te marier? Dans un des derniers pays au monde auquel on aurait pensé que de tels changements pouvaient avoir lieu.

Difficile de croire à un monde où la discrimination n'existe plus; difficile d'y croire quand les insultes sont nos pains quotidiens, du haut de nos vingt printemps.

Après avoir eu mon diplôme en journalisme, j'ai réalisé un reportage sur les discriminations envers les personnes LGBT+ à Madagascar. Ayant gagné le prix Pulitzer pour ce reportage, j'ai commencé à être de plus en plus visible sur la scène internationale; alors j'ai profité de cette occasion pour nouer des liens avec des organismes importants, et mon magazine a été créé.

Chaque semaine, depuis la création du magazine, nous avons recueilli des milliers de témoignages de jeunes LGBT+ victimes de violence et de discrimination, nous travaillons avec plusieurs cabinets de psychologues répartis dans toute l'Afrique pour les écouter.

Grâce à mes textes poignants, le magazine a encouragé de nombreux jeunes à s'affirmer en tant que personnes LGBT+, avec l'appui des organismes internationaux, un vent de changements a soufflé sur le continent: les peines de mort liées à l'orientation sexuelle ont été abolies, de nombreux pays ont permis à tous les citoyens de se marier légalement, indépendamment du genre.

Aujourd'hui, je continue à écrire, c'est ma passion. J'utilise l'écriture pour donner une voix à ceux qui ne peuvent pas parler, apporter le soutien à ceux qui se croient seuls, à donner de l'espoir à ceux qui veulent s'arracher la vie, comme moi il y a dix ans, comme toi.

Alors, ne te suicide pas; des millions de jeunes dans ta situation ne peuvent pas parler: sois leur voix. Ne te suicide pas, tu es important. Ne te suicide pas, ils ont besoin de toi.

Do not commit suicide

(English translation)

Antananarivo, 9 June 2030

Every Sunday, I stay home. My husband went to the hacienda in the neighbourhood: a communal farmland, maintained by local residents, which provides for their daily consumption. Since the WWF launched its ecological program, many states (including Madagascar) have agreed to start the process of self-sufficiency of each neighborhood; thanks to the help of local entrepreneurs and international cooperation, the project has been a great success, my husband is one of them.

I took the opportunity to clean up the house. As I placed the new bonsai tree, my eye was caught by an object on the shelf: a crucifix. This object brought back memories of a decade ago. This letter is for you: the me of 2020.

Yes, it was in that year that your parents discovered that you are a boy who loves boys. Convinced that you would go to hell, they wanted you to see a priest, who gave you this crucifix in the hope that you would one day be able to "cure" this "illness". So you wanted to commit suicide by swallowing chlorpheniramine pills.

Luckily, you made a new friend, it kept you alive. You fell in love with each other, but knowing that he came from a Muslim family, you lost all hope of a possible life together. Suicidal thoughts were never far away as well as uncertainty and fear of the future.

Today, however, a beautiful day is coming up. In two hours, the families of the neighbourhood will come for the weekly cultural exchange lunch, a custom you have just introduced. It's your family's turn this week. Your husband will bring back the ingredients from the hacienda, and then you will cook for the neighbours. Around a table full of organic food, all these families will be able to exchange in order to understand each other. Cecilia and Sandra will talk about their current adoption application, Ahmad and Yasmina will talk about their charitable deeds during the last Ramadan and Olivia will talk about little Nathan's physical therapy sessions.

Don't you believe me? You wonder how a Muslim couple can agree to sit down with homosexual couples? How can a lesbian couple consider adoption? How could you get married? In one of the last countries in the world where you would have thought such changes could take place.

It's hard to believe in a world where discrimination no longer exists; hard to believe in a world where insults are our daily bread from the top of our heads.

After graduating in journalism, I did a report on discrimination against LGBT+ people in Madagascar. Having won the Pulitzer Prize for this report, I began to be more and more visible on the international scene, so I took this opportunity to establish links with important organizations, and my magazine was created.

Every week since the creation of my magazine, we have collected thousands of testimonies from young LGBT+ victims of violence and discrimination, and we work with several psychologists' offices throughout Africa to listen to them.

Thanks to these poignant texts, the magazine has encouraged many young people to assert themselves as LGBT+ people. With the support of international organizations, a wind of change has blown across the continent: death sentences related to sexual orientation have been abolished, many countries have allowed all citizens to marry legally, regardless of their gender.

Today, I continue to write, it is my passion. I use writing to give a voice to those who cannot speak, to give support to those who think they are alone, to give hope to those who want to take their own lives, like me ten years ago, like you.

So don't commit suicide; there are millions of young people in your situation who can't speak: be their voice. Don't kill yourself, you are important. Don't commit suicide, they need you.

The Ripple Effect

(Original)

Krishna King Lim

(Age 23, Philippines)

University of the Philippines Manila

Dear Krisha,

I am writing this in a makeshift tent on a mountain. Yes, after several months of planning and preparation, my colleagues and I finally embarked on another mission. This time, it is for a community of Lumads- indigenous groups from the southern part of the archipelago. I am excited to see this tent transform into an equipped, fully functioning, concrete health clinic to cater to the needs of the ethnic minorities. For now, our once a month visit here to conduct health check ups and out-patient surgeries would hopefully suffice and make healthcare more accessible. It is such a breath of fresh air to be outside, to meet a diverse group of people, and to realize that being a doctor does not stop the moment you walk out of the hospital. I know you have always been curious of what the future holds, well let me tell you that a decade has passed since the pandemic. The knee jerk reaction after the pandemic was to strengthen healthcare systems and to revive the economy. After all, everybody was reminded that a strong economy needs healthy citizens, and a strong economy is needed to maintain the population's health. However, the relationship between health and economy is not a dyad; health is multifactorial such that the environment, education, and politics, among others, also affect a person's overall well-being. As I look into this scenic view from where I am, a drizzle is starting and I am reminded of how nature sustains every human endeavor, including the nourishment for our health. You have realized this in your youth, I know that achieving a more sustainable environment is an advocacy dear to your heart and you have already taken small actions. I remember you putting up posters that encourage customers to bring their own reusable lunch boxes and utensils in take out canteens. Well, people today have also realized our dependence on nature, that the relationship that we have with the environment is fragile

and that disruption of even the most basic element in an ecosystem can create a ripple effect that transcends borders. As studies showed that most epidemics like AIDS, Ebola, SARS, the most recent COVID-19, and many more originated from animals and wildlife, the public has become more aware that disease is an environmental issue as much as it is a political one. You would be happy to hear that legislations are being passed and being strictly implemented to stop further deforestation and loss of wildlife habitat, to halt dumping of chemicals, toxic substances and garbage in rivers, to improve practices of the livestock industry, and to shift to sustainable energy sources. Biodegradable and sustainable alternatives to single use plastic bags and cutleries among others are now made available. Our neighborhood, which was once so against plastic bans, has been active in recycling and receptive in patronizing more environment-friendly shops and businesses. As for the healthcare sector where most supplies are single use and disposable, it is still a challenge to do away with plastics as cross reactions and contaminations must be prevented. However, you would be proud to know that I am part of an international collaboration that researches on how to manufacture medical supplies from other sources such as algae and plants which show promising results. We still have a long way to go, but creating lasting change is not a sprint but a marathon. The challenge for the future is making these advancements accessible to everyone, even for people in remote areas like where I am now. For now, never tire of bringing your own reusable utensils for lunch and urging your friends to do the same. You may not realize it, but these small actions can generate a ripple effect that transcends generations and prevent another epidemic. Prepare yourself well so that you may provide the best care for your future patients and the environment, as a doctor and as an advocate. The road ahead will get tougher but always let truth, passion, and advocacy guide and remind you of why you started in the first place. You will never lose your way if you never lose your why. Until then.

With love,
33-year-old Krisha