

# Generation Next, Finding a Way

As issues of global concern continue to mount—climate change, environmental damage and social injustice—an increasing number of young leaders is emerging, determined to take ownership of these challenges and engage their generation for positive change. We spoke with four young leaders from Generation Z to hear about their commitment to the future.



## Shomy Hasan Chowdhury, Rijve Arefin

(Both) 26, Bangladesh, Co-founders of Awareness 360

1. #SDGs #WASH #YouthEmpowerment

2. Through our activities, such as workshops at Awareness 360, we have been working on improving public sanitation and hygiene with a focus on water. In addition, we have been supporting vulnerable people through grassroots efforts, while also striving to raise awareness about the importance of lifestyle changes for a healthy life. 3. As co-founders, we both have strong personal reasons for our commitment to these activities: for Shomy, the sudden loss of her mother from severe diarrhea led her to act and promote water sanitation. For Rijve, struggles he faced in his own childhood motivated him to protect the rights of children and support youth. 4. Our generation is the last to be able to change the future in 10 years; we need the world to become sustainable, peaceful, equal, and healthy. 5. We don't have to change the whole world at once, but it is critical to each make a big change, realizing the role we all play and making better lifestyle choices every day. This will lead to the world becoming a better place to live in.

(This text is written based on the replies from Mr. Arefin.)

### Five Questions

1. Which three hashtags would you use to describe your work?
2. Please briefly describe your environmental efforts.
3. What prompted you to begin taking action?
4. What do you want the world to be like in 2030?
5. What do we need in order to take the first step for the future of our world?

## Abby Fuirst

23, United States, Community Organizer of OVERDUE

1. #trashpickup #leavenotrace #community

2. The goal of OVERDUE is to develop a network of people who come together to make our communities cleaner and greener by picking up trash together. We believe that our fun and engaging cleanups help keep our neighborhoods clean while improving our volunteers' mental health, offering a positive outlet of support and a place to flourish. Additionally, OVERDUE supports leaders of all ages who prioritize cleanliness in their neighborhoods. 3. Growing up in an area rich with nature and loving time spent outdoors, I always wanted younger generations to have the same experiences I had as a kid. While working to achieve that goal in Los Angeles, I found OVERDUE. I wanted to learn more about the effect overconsumption had on our planet. This idea motivated me to volunteer, picking up trash in my community with OVERDUE. 4. Future generations should not have to worry about climate change, natural disasters, food shortages, the extinction of endangered species, widespread epidemics, or poverty. Unfortunately, situations like these will worsen if we don't act soon and create positive change. 5. To that end, we can start by reducing our consumption and reusing more effectively to lessen the amount of waste we produce.



## Helly Tong

26, Vietnam, Founder of The Yên Concept and Lai Day Refill Station

1. #sustainable #socialimpact #greenvision



2. "I want to be a part of an environmentally-friendly world, striving for better and more sustainable solutions." Everything I have been doing until now came from that desire. The Yên Concept places emphasis on human-nature connection by providing mainly greenery products while Lai Day Refill Station is known for its refill services as described in the slogan "Lại đây, lại đây," which means "refill" in Vietnamese, thereby supporting forestation activities and local communities. 3. I had once doubted myself, and had been convinced that the path to my dream was full of challenges and limitations ahead. Yet, when I reflect on all the blessings I got along the way, I gradually believe that little changes could make big differences. From then on, business models were established, following my inspired love for the environment and nature. 4. What I can clearly see about the world in 2030 is that there should be no boundaries, but diversity and inclusion. Accordingly, creativity should be encouraged to solve problems including climate change. 5. Authentic community, empathy, and a fresh start are the keys to taking action.