THE CLIMATE ACTION LAB

Part of the CLEO Climate Resilient Schools Program

“Transforming students into catalysts of change”
About The Climate Action Lab

The Climate Action Lab is a 10-day summer training program held by The CLEO Institute, in partnership with The National Parks Conservation Association. Our goal is for our students to come out of this program understanding climate science and feeling empowered to take action by being exposed to experts and professionals in a variety of fields. Through the Climate Action Lab, students learn skills such as storytelling, advocacy, and effective communication through an intersectional lens that connects climate to equity and civic leadership.

Program Outcomes

Throughout the program, our students did not just learn about the climate crisis. They took action.
Our students:

- Mastered their abilities to communicate the climate crisis through the CLEO Speakers Network
- Wrote their own letters to their school administrators
- Voiced their concerns to their elected officials about various issues
  - Shared their climate stories through social media campaigns and various forms of artistic expression
  - Held climate conversations with their loved ones
- Identified and responded to climate misconceptions in media
- Took a field trip to a solar powered facility to learn about renewable energy
- 23 students became newly certified CLEO Speakers ready to educate their communities about the climate crisis!
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Week 1: Education
- Climate Change 101
- Energy 101
- Extreme Weather
- Sea Level Rise
- Public Health
- Climate and Food
- 2040 Film
- Blue and Green Infrastructure

Week 2: Communication
- Storytelling
- School Climate Resiliency Activity
- How to Interact with Elected Officials
- Stakeholder Mapping
- Civics and Local Government 101
- Meeting Climate Communicators
- Student Climate Meme Project
- Effective Climate Communication
- Artivism
- Climate Misconceptions
- Overcoming Misinformation

Week 3: Mobilization
- Learning from the Past
- Youth Climate Movement Panel
- Settling False Claims
- Advocacy 101
- Speaking with Elected Officials
- National Parks and Climate
- Indigenous Voices in the Climate Movement
- The Role of Marketing and Advertising in Climate Action
- Oceans and Climate
- Online Advocacy and the Power of Social Media

Field Trips
Storytelling Projects
Certifications
Graduation
Student Testimonials
Dear Ms. Luisa Santos,

Climate change is the most urgent matter we must all fight against today. We must switch to greener options to reduce our environmental footprint, and inspire the young scholars in these schools to fight with us. Some greener alternatives to what we currently have are:

- Switching to a renewable energy resource, like solar panels.
  - They could power our lights, cell phones, computers, etc., while not feeding the excessive CO2 already in our atmosphere.
- Have living green walls with native plants.
  - This not only makes the breeze cooler but also makes the school look more aesthetically pleasing.
- Have a community garden where students can get fruits and vegetables.
- Switch our cafeteria utensils to be made out of compostable material.
- Have a composting site where people can throw away their leftover food and compostable utensils.
- Have more plant-based food options other than salads. Perhaps even implement schools to have Meatless Mondays!
  - Salads are a good start, but they cannot fill up a student for the next 2-3 hours of their school day.
- Have the same number of recycling bins as there are trash cans. Additionally, have infographics that say what people can specifically recycle and what they cannot.
  - Wishcycling (which is to unknowingly put unrecyclable items in the recycling bin) hurts recycling companies greatly!
- Have infographics about climate change around the schools.
- Have guest speakers come yearly to all the schools talking about climate change to the students.
- Mandate all schools to have motion sensor lights rather than switches.
  - This saves you money and energy usage.

I am urging you to implement at least 3 of these improvements for schools in your district by the year 2024. I believe you can accomplish this because my school, Miami Palmetto Senior High School, has had a complete renovation in its entirety in just 4 years. I would like to see the same or harder work from my school being put into these greener alternatives.

Do this for our future.

Best wishes,

Amanda

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**Week 1: Education**

Good afternoon Mr. Hover!

This is Reva Sedhian, I am an incoming 9th-grade IB student. This summer I have joined this Climate action lab from CLEO for high schoolers to become certified climate activists. And in today's lesson, we are talking about ways to make a difference in our school to make it more climate-resilient and we have been asked to email a school administrator. And this might be a little strange that I haven't even been there yet and want to make changes but I have ideas on things and wanted to talk to you about them! One idea that I have wanted to start is a school garden if possible. (I'm not sure if you already have that or if there is space for one) But I believe that a community garden would be wonderful because then what we grow can be used at lunch (that way the food didn't have to travel using CO2 to get to school). And it will also be something that everyone who wants to can help out on so we can come together as a school. And in my experience when kids work on something they care more about it so if they can say "oh yeah I watered these" they get more excited as it grows. But obviously, that's a big project to take on so we can start with smaller things like have more recycling bins. And I also feel like it's crucial to inform kids about climate change because people can't care about something if they don't know what it is. So some ideas I have for that is having posters around campus with facts or like if we had an earth spirit day where you learn more about it in science with like a documentary. So whenever you have time I would love to discuss different things that can be done!

thanks,

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Hello Mrs. H, how are you...

As I mentioned to you before I just did an essay to share ideas to make our schools more sustainable and environmentally friendly. I am now interested to share my ideas with someone from our school staff, and I thought about you for this activity. First, one of the ideas I had was to create a composting station at our school, where basically students and staff get to donate things that are in good condition to sell them and eventually donate that money to eco-friendly organizations. The second idea was to buy an electric car for the school. As far as I know, it was another thing we can do, but I didn't know how to implement it.

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Week 1: Education
Students watched a presentation about the fundamentals of climate change science, impacts, and solutions, including topics such as mitigation, adaptation, social justice, and effects in Florida.

What’s All the Buzz About? A Look at Florida’s Energy Systems by Michael Ohlsen, CEM, CPM, Clean Energy Plan Manager, City of Tallahassee

Students participated in a workshop, where they learned how our energy grid works, renewable energy, and energy conservation. They also participated in an energy burden activity where they portrayed the roles of landlords, renters, and utilities.

Weather You Like It or Not, Climate Change is Happening by Irene Sans, Editorial Manager & Meteorologist, Radar & Weather

Students learned about the connections between climate change and extreme weather, as well as best practices when it comes to preparedness.

Let’s Sea How the Seas are Rising by Katherine Hagemann, Resilience Program Manager for Adaptation and Sandra St. Hilaire, Resilience Coordinator, Communications & Outreach, Miami-Dade County Office of Resilience

Students were exposed to the ways in which sea level rise is being driven by climate change, examples of sea level rise impacts in local communities, and different adaptation strategies.
Public Health Saves Lives by Claudia Navarro, Deputy Director, WeCount

Students learned about how climate change leads to heat stress and how this affects agriculture and construction works by participating in a brainstorming activity about heat stress standards and regulations related to rest, shade, water, and education.

An Apple-tite for Change by Hayley Furman, Assistant Program Manager, The CLEO Institute

Students watched a presentation about food’s impacts on climate change, climate change’s impacts on food, growing food, food miles and access, nutrition disparities, as well as community and school gardens.

Imagining the Future: 2040 Film

Gameau directs a film where he imagines what his daughter’s life will be like in 20 years by focusing on practical and achievable solutions to mitigate the climate crisis.

The Grass is Greener: Modern Solutions for a Sustainable World by Aida Curtis, Founding Principal and Landscape Architect; Robert Curtis, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator; Aurora Alcaide, Landscape Designer, Curtis + Rogers Design Studio

Students learned about the importance of integrating grey infrastructure with blue and green infrastructure in sustainable landscaping. They did so by participating in a workshop in which they came up with actual infrastructure plans to help make Jose Marti Park more resilient.
Week 2: Communication

Students created humorous memes related to various aspects of the climate crisis.
There’s an I in Climate Session: Owning Your Story by Jeremy Ornstein, Director of Storytelling, Sunrise Movement and Emily Gonzalez, Youth Activist, Fridays for Future

Students learned how to craft their climate stories, specifically by focusing on a challenge, choice, and outcome structure.

We’re All in This Together: Finding Common Ground through Stakeholder Mapping, CLEO-led

Students participated in a stakeholder mapping activity, where they learned about the importance of identifying and engaging different stakeholders when it comes to climate change solutions.

1st Amendment Writes: How to Interact with Elected Officials by Salomé Garcia, Policy and Campaigns Manager, The CLEO Institute

Students learned about the importance and best practices when it comes to contacting and interacting with their elected officials, such as through lobbying, outreach, and actual meetings.

Changing the Climate on Climate: Civics 101 by Rebecca Pelham, Executive Director, Engage Miami and Engage Miami Civic Foundation

Students watched a presentation about what our local governments do, zoning, county budgets, millage rates, county charters, and how to get involved.

Civic Power: who and what is it for?

Analyze, Strategize, Organize
Effective Communication: Useful Tools session for You and Your Peers (and the Rest of Us) by Ruthie Gold, Manager of Secondary Education Initiatives & Lisa Fernandez, Associate Director, Yale Program on Climate Change Communication

Representatives from the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication spoke to our students about different tools available to use with regards to communicating to others about climate change, such as the Yale Climate Opinion Maps and Yale Climate Communication. They also introduced concepts such as the “Six Americas” and “Climate Spiral of Silence.”

Art + Activism = Artivism, CLEO-led

Students learned how the combination of the creative power of art and strategic planning of activism can lead to social change through artivism.

Overcoming Misinformation by John Morales, Chief Meteorologist, NBC6

John Morales, NBC6 Chief Meteorologist, shared his insights about his own experiences with misinformation about climate change throughout his career, as well as best practices regarding identifying false equivalencies in the news.

Half-Truths Session and Full Lies by Karolyn Burns, Program Manager, The CLEO Institute

Students learned about the importance of discerning whether news sources are reliable and recognizing bias, including one’s own, when it comes to climate change information sharing.
Dear Congresswoman Maria Elvira Salazar,

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, CO2 is the primary greenhouse gas emitted through human activities which can last between 300 to 1,000 years. The amount of CO2 being emitted is so excessive that it is getting trapped in the atmosphere. For this reason, there is warmer air, intensified droughts, heatwaves, rain cycles, and hurricanes—which will continue to worsen. Additionally, with this extreme heat, the oceans would warm so much they would acidify, increase coral bleaching, kill excessive marine life, and increase sea-level rise. These effects would come back to affect us because this would affect our health, agriculture, energy grids, food & water security, biodiversity, and they'd create extreme weather events.

Now, how can this be mitigated this excessive CO2?

My proposal is to change the plastic plant wall decoration on the wall that begins on SW 17th Ave and ends a little before SW 32nd Rd to a living green wall. This would not only look aesthetically pleasing, but it's also great for the environment. Killing two birds with one stone. I would like to meet with you before the end of August to plan this and make it happen. This would be a statement that many Miami citizens have been waiting for.

You may get back to me at amandacollazoo@aol.com or 787-370-1245.

Best regards,

Amanda Collazo

Sources:
https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/overview-greenhouse-gases
https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/features/EnergyBalance

Students voiced their concerns to their elected officials about various climate issues in their communities.

Week 3: Mobilization
Students engaged in an activity where they research different social movements, such as the Dakota Access Pipeline Protests, Women’s Suffrage Movement, and Stonewall Riots, in order to extract lessons and apply them to the climate movement.

Leaders of Today Session: Youth Climate Movement Roundtable by Valholly Frank, Native American Climate Activist & Plaintiff at Our Children’s Trust; Pia Desangles, Civic Engagement Manager, Florida Alliance for Climate Education; Izzy Laderman, Founder, Disability Awareness Around the Climate Crisis

Youth climate activists participated in a panel discussion about their own journeys and experiences in the climate movement, and shared advice and lessons about the importance of intersectionality and inclusivity with our students.

Get Up, Stand Up: Advocacy 101 Session by Cristobal Lagunas, Strategy Director, The Climate Mobilization

Students learned what climate advocacy entails and why it is especially important in the state of Florida through examples of notable climate movements and organizations.
Raise Your Voice Session: Speaking with Elected Officials featuring Rep. Anna Eskamani, Florida House of Representatives and Commissioner Sabrina Javellana, City of Halladale Beach

Representative Eskamani and Commissioner Javellana talked to our students about their daily responsibilities, their own political journeys, how they integrate climate change in their work, and the best ways for constituents to reach out to their elected officials.

Forging a New Trail Session by Dr. Melissa Abdo, Sun Coast Regional Director, National Parks Conservation Association

Our students learned about how national parks will be impacted by climate change, as well as specific examples of different threats that Floridian national parks and preserves are currently facing, such as seismic exploration in Big Cypress.

Seeding Solutions Session and Sovereignty: Indigenous Voices in the Climate Movement by Rev. Houston Cypress, environmental artist and Board of Directors, Love The Everglades Movement, Inc.

Reverend Cypress spoke to our students about ways they can learn about their Indigenous neighbors, land acknowledgements, the Miccosukee Tribe’s efforts against oil drilling in Big Cypress, invited everyone to explore the Everglades, and encouraged us to explore ways to include Indigenous voices in climate advocacy.
PR for the Planet Session: The Role of Marketing and Advertising in Climate by Natalia Ortiz, Director of Development, The CLEO Institute

Students learned about the power of pictures and communicating your issue to an audience by analyzing examples of campaigns such as those of the tobacco industry and CLEO’s very own melting Florida sculptures.

Making Waves Session to Protect our Oceans by Daniel Padilla, Florida Conservation Manager, Ocean Conservancy

Students learned about blue carbon, harmful algal blooms, ocean acidification, ocean warming, and sea level rise.

Online and Onwards! Session by Jennifer Torres, Environmental Organizer, Poder Latinx

Jennifer spoke to our students about how climate change is impacting the Latinx community and what Poder Latinx is doing to empower diverse communities to take action against climate, such as hosting an annual “Virtual Voting is Power Art Gallery” that features artwork about climate change.
FIELD TRIPS

South FL field trip

Students from our Climate Action Lab and GenCLEO programs visited the Cutler Bay Solar Solutions facility to learn about solar energy, explore hands-on engineering, and discuss initiatives to increase energy resiliency in our communities. After learning about ways we can increase energy efficiency at home, the students learned engineering concepts and completed activities with solar panels. They went outside to measure the power of the sun and explored ways to increase the energy potential of solar panels. Students then built and raced their own solar-powered vehicles, and toured a tiny home entirely powered by solar energy. Lastly, the students toured the Cutler Bay Solar facility, a sustainable warehouse powered entirely through solar. They learned about the ways that solar is installed on homes and buildings, and tested the strength of solar panels through a hurricane projectile simulator.

North FL field trip

Tallahassee is home to the largest airport-based solar farm in the world! The city’s clean energy manager and the site manager took CAL and GenCLEO students on a tour of the facility last Friday (July 16th). Solar Farm 1, which is 20 megawatts, sits on 120 acres and Solar Farm 2, which is twice as big at 40 megawatts, sits on 240 acres. This helps us move toward our city’s goal of 100% renewable energy by 2050. We discussed the importance of preparing for future green jobs, from policy-making to engineering and installation.
About October of 2018 Hurricane Michael came around and it was an experience like no other. I was still just a 3rd grader and this was the first time in my life that a hurricane panned through my house. It made me realize everything I was taught in school about climate change and how I’m impacting me in huge ways.

Creating:

All alone, weeds swaying around me lost in this endless cycle of heat
The earth forever changing the climate of this wonderful world
Dryly dying out this water world

Standing up at the beach,
Stained globe is within reach
You put
Other can heal mother earth.

Every time I pass those packed plastic water bottles I had
~ bags I had shoved into
tackles

Making Change Now
By Sarah Hof

My Climate Story: Storytelling

Studying marine biology and working in the field is my passion. After I graduated from college, I got a job in the Florida Keys where I worked with endangered species such as sea turtles and peregrine falcons. But I had no idea how much their lives were affected by climate change.

As a marine biologist, I knew that the oceans were affected by climate change, but I never thought it would affect me so directly. I worked with sea turtles and peregrine falcons, and I saw how their habitats were being destroyed by rising sea levels and storms.

I realized that I needed to do something to make a difference. I started doing research on climate change and how it was affecting the environment. I started giving talks and workshops, and I started to see a real change in people's attitudes. They started to understand how important it was for us to take action.

I decided to write a book about my experiences and my research. I wanted to share my knowledge with others and convince them to take action. I knew that if I could change just one person's mind, then I would have accomplished something.

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When I think of climate crisis, I think of the ways in which human actions have affected our planet by contributing to changes in weather patterns. That alone is alarming. But I believe that in order to get people to realize the urgency of this phenomenon, we need to refer to the climate crisis as the people crisis. Rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns are left to their mark on everyone.

I think of all the talented people I have met, the first responders working to ensure a safe future for everyone. One of the first things that comes to mind is the time when the power went out in my house and my parents had no idea what to do. The people were less prepared to respond to natural disasters.

My high school was turned into a disaster relief shelter, and all of the students were accounted for. It was one of the best celebrations and parties I have attended, and I looked forward to it every year.

I believe that change has the capacity to impact all of us, and that the effects of change can be taken by all of us. Just a small amount of electricity you use, a small bag of plastic you throw away, or even walking or biking instead of driving can make a difference.

My climate story goes something like this: in my freshman year of high school, I was introduced to the topic of climate change. I had grown up with that fact but not with any actual understanding of what it meant. Everything I knew about it was hearing people mention it in the news or on television. But it wasn’t until I finally witnessed it firsthand that I truly understood the impact it had on our lives.

One day, we had a field trip to a nearby park and I was able to see the effects of climate change up close. The trees were burning and there was smoke everywhere. I realized that this was not just something that happened in other places, it was happening right here, in our own backyard. That was the moment when everything changed for me. I realized that I had to do something, and that I couldn’t just sit back and watch the world fall apart.

I decided to educate myself and others on easy changes we could make to reduce our carbon footprint. I started by doing research on everything I knew about climate change, until I finally witnessed it firsthand. Through this, I learned that weather can be unpredictable, and that storms like hurricanes can cause significant damage.

I urge everyone to go do research on everything I know now. In order to better understand the severity of the issue, we need to understand the science behind it. We need to know how climate change is affecting people and the planet.

I want to tell everyone that awareness and action are key in fighting climate change. We need to be aware of the things we can do to help reduce our impact on the environment, and we need to take action on those things.

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X students mastered their abilities to communicate the climate crisis by becoming newly certified CLEO Climate Speakers ready to educate the world!
The CAL team hosted a virtual graduation ceremony to celebrate our students’ completion of this program, what they have learned, and what they accomplished! Some of our students shared their personal climate stories and projects in front of their peers, loved ones, as well as many of our guest speakers and partners. CLEO staff and guest speakers shared words of encouragement and empowerment to inspire our students in their future endeavors.

- 26 students graduated from the CAL 2021 Program
- X students became certified CLEO Climate Speakers
- 42 guest speakers presented and interacted with our students
- 2 field trip opportunities
- 51 letters were sent to school administrators and elected officials
STUDENT TESTIMONIALS
Georgina Ale  Homestead, Florida

I joined CAL because after many instances of being directly affected by climate change and the natural disasters that go with it, I figured that I would inform myself in order to help the environment as I grow older.

Charlotte Caddell  Miami

In CAL, I’ve heard many climate stories from different perspectives. From Native American voices to Latinx voices, I learned a lot about how the climate changing affects people differently. I also learned that we can all collectively help the environment back to its intended state by advocating and using renewable energy sources as well as reducing our waste and promoting a green lifestyle on social media. CAL presenters made participation against the climate crisis attainable. My ability to speak up about climate change has increased and I look forward to protecting the environment with my available resources as a Floridian.

I have been an animal lover for as long as I can remember. I have always enjoyed learning about animals, interacting with them, and doing anything I could to help animals. When I was younger, my family took a trip to Georgia and while we were there, we visited a sea turtle hospital and this visit had a major impact on me. I saw first hand all these sea turtles being treated for injuries that were for the most part caused by humans. It made me feel awful. We were hurting these animals and they could not do anything to stop it. I decided to visit more and more marine hospitals whenever I could to try to educate myself more on how we were impacting marine life and what I could do to help. I noticed one commonality among most of these hospitals was the issue of plastic pollution. I, along with two of my friends, decided to create an educational video to inform viewers about the harmful effects of plastic pollution and how they impact sea turtles and I showed this video to many younger girls in my area at an outdoor event. I also corresponded with my village council to see if we could somehow limit the use of plastic in my area, which later aided in leading to my mayor passing a resolution to encourage just that.

However, something else I noticed to be a common theme was the impact climate change was having on marine life. I always felt like I needed to do something about this issue but I did not think I would be able to make an effect on this global problem. However, I continued to educate myself on the topic and look for things in my area I could do to make some sort of impact, even if it was small. I participated in beach cleanups and dune restoration projects whenever I could. I still felt like I needed to do something more impactful and that led me to the CLEO Institute and the Climate Action Lab.

I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to participate in CAL this summer. I learned so much more about the science behind the climate crisis and was taught how to look at the climate crisis from new perspectives I never would have thought to before. I am also no longer as afraid to reach out to and talk with organization and community leaders regarding climate change. Most importantly for me, I learned that there really are significant ways for me to make a difference. No matter how small, every step I take to fight the climate crisis will make an impact in the long run. After listening to all the speakers present about their climate journeys and hearing the amazing CLEO staff encouraging us to embark on our own, I feel empowered to lead climate initiatives in my own neighborhood.
Amanda Collazo  
Miami, FL
- I joined CAL because I wanted to learn more about climate change while also gaining the confidence to talk about it with others.
- One of my favorite activities in CAL was when we created a meme with another student. The image on the very top right corner was the one we created.
- Some ideas I’m pursuing are hosting more cleanups, doing gardening and composting sessions, and finding different ways to spread information about the climate crisis.
- I feel very grateful for being given this opportunity to participate in CAL. This is an amazing program that has taught me so much, connected me with so many amazing people, and really inspired me to continue the fight against climate change. I would take this program again any day because of how entertaining, impactful, and inspiring it is.

Audlyn Emmanuel  
Miami, Fl
I joined CAL because I was worried about the changes in weather and climate over the last year and wanted to learn more about climate change and its effects on people and the environment. Furthermore, my Climate story compelled me to join since I was concerned about the usage of non-renewable energy in my neighborhood.

By joining CAL, it taught me several things including changing my perception of climate change, its impacts such as Ocean acidification, sea-level rise, extreme heat, etc. Most importantly it taught me some solutions to mitigate climate change like having a plant-based diet, using renewable energy, and taking public transportation. Overall, CAL pushed me to be more creative and innovative with ideas to take action on climate change. CAL was a great experience and I encourage others to join this program as it will be an eye opener of all the detriments climate change has that we aren’t aware of which will in turn, make you more cautious on the decisions you make in life.
Luke Heller  
Tallahassee, Florida  

I joined CAL because I developed an interest in combating global issues after seeing people my age willing to demonstrate for causes they cared about. The climate movement specifically resonates with me because climate change can impact my future just as much as it can the futures of all the wonderful people I’ve met.

During my time at CAL, I enjoyed hearing from a variety of guest speakers sharing their connections to the climate crisis and participating in a variety of hands-on projects exploring ways to adapt to and reduce the effects of climate change. While attending CAL, I realized that I personally am susceptible to the effects of climate change just as much as everyone else, but I feel more confident in myself and my abilities to speak about and propose solutions to climate change.

Sarah Hoffer  
Winter Garden, FL  

Participating in this Climate Action Lab taught me more about climate activism than I ever expected it would. This program completely changed my perspective on how climate change affects people and our world. I have made personal changes as a result of this program, becoming vegetarian and starting my own garden. I’ve also feel empowered to reach out to important figured regarding climate change, including talking to my principal about making sustainable choices in school and emailing the Supervisor of Schools for my district about climate education.

Prior to participating in this lab, my climate story was mainly composed of pushing for recycling in my home and school. I knew it was small but I felt like I was making an impact. After CLEO, I have a renewed sense of understanding. While recycling can be helpful, we should be holding the companies mass producing these plastic products in the first place accountable. I will be shifting my focus from recycling plastic products to reducing their use all together, especially in schools.
Maria Leal
San Cristobal, Venezuela

I joined CAL because I wanted to educate myself on more on all of the ways we could mitigate climate change like in infrastructure, electricity, etc. I also wanted to learn how it affected certain groups of people, and thankfully that is exactly what CLEO taught us. I was so concerned for the environment, I was honestly losing hope a bit but after seeing all of these people invested in fighting for the Earth it all really inspired me and made want to take action even more which is why I joined CLEO.

During my time in this lab the things I have learned have all been so interesting and educational, every single guest speaker had something that inspired me and made want to learn further about each topic. I feel so grateful to CLEO for making us feel included in the conversation about climate change and informing us on what we can do. What I wish to focus on now is trying to further educate the people around me and influencing them to also take action. Also holding people in power accountable by doing things like writing to my representatives, going to marches (when it’s safe to do so) and signing petitions.

Emi Mathew Davie, SoFl

Why I Joined CAL: My climate story began about 2 years ago when I went on a decolonization hike in the Everglades with Houston Cypress and a couple of other friends from FIU’s Global Indigenous Forum. What brought me there was my passion for indigenous activism, but I left with an interest in climate justice as well. We were hiking in the Big Cypress, a national preserve, where I got to see beautiful landscapes, plants, and a few animals. I was amazed by the beauty of this land!

However, on this trip, I learned about the effects climate change would have on this area - Rising sea levels affect cultural practices, access to medicinal plants, and overall the way of living of indigenous communities who use the land. The effect it has on these communities is disproportionately higher than it is to people like me who don’t have the same connection to nature. Ever since learning that, I decided to take action in the climate change movement.
Shea Mendes (Orlando, FL)
Message to future CALsters: “Let us face it, there is no planet B.”

2021-22 Ideas
An idea I am pursuing is an eco group as a school club on my high school campus. Peers and myself would take up meaningful environmental activities and projects.

Why did I join CAL?
I joined CAL because I believed that the program could offer me tools and resources that would help me with my chosen career path: poli sci and international business law. Ethics, lobbying, and communication are essential skills in my field and that is what CAL covers.

My Favorite Session
My favorite session was There’s an I in Climate: Owning Your Story with Jeremy and Emily because it reminded me that we must look back on our trials to be sure of our future.

Takeaways
Something I learned from the CAL summer program was how to communicate with my elected officials to harness their support for my cause. Make it personable, relatable and bring actions home!

mariam orabi
miami, fl

I joined CAL to further my knowledge on climate change as well as learn more about what I can do to help. Over the past year, I have been very involved with the climate movement through a non profit called The Five Dollar Project, we have hosted beach clean ups, online webinars, and more. I felt however that I need to further expand my knowledge which is why I joined CAL. One of my favorite parts was visiting the Cutler Bay Solar Solutions, it was such an experience to be hands on with solar power and learn so much about it. To future CAL students, this will be such an educational program for you. Thank you so much to CAL and The CLEO Institute, this was such a knowledgeable experience for me and I will continue to use the information I learned in furthering my impact in the climate movement.
Isabella Prince, She/Her, Cutler Bay.

Guided us through having an impact at our schools and locally.

(Email assignment to my school’s Principal’s Assistant)

I learned to project my voice through my own story and a creative project!

Insightful learning through fun activities. My personal favorite: The meme project :)

Ana Paula Reig  Miami, Florida

This journey through the Climate Action Lab not only has solidified my knowledge of Climate Change, but also introduced many perspectives that were foreign to me as I had never imagined how so many communities are affected by global warming. This amazing program offered me hope after truly feeling frustrated because I felt like most people didn’t care, or didn’t have the time to learn and become environmentally friendly, while the big corporations put ridiculous amounts of profit over the wellbeing of entire communities and the environment.

The staff, speakers and students were just so insanely inspiring and truly demonstrated how our generation is aware and invested in the climate crisis. We can do this!

Art by Serene Lusano, Emily K Grieves and Alexis Rockman,
Reva Sedhain  
Tampa, Florida

In my time at CAL we wrote emails our school Administrator to talk about making school more climate Friendly and we wrote one to a elected official. This Taught me how I should not be afraid to have my voice Heard. I used to think that only important people could Talk to elected officials, and that I was too young to be Heard. And know I know that you’re never too small to make a difference. At my time here i was inspired to do More I wanted to use my skills and advokate like the Other student that I see on TV. So I created a account to Make digital art and infographics to advokate in a fun Way. The drawing on the right was what I made for my Story and I want to make more posters like this. So I Can inspire change and make it as well. I am so glad that I joined this program it gave me the push I needed to do more. Having all the speakers come in and hear them speak made me Want to make change just like time. So even if my profession isn't climate related I know that i will still continue to be a part of the Climate Movement because it isn't over till we win!

Isha Shah

Hi, my name is Isha Shah I joined because I am passionate about climate because I used to be unaware of my impact on the planet. Before this I would be doing the bare minimum, maybe recycling and trying to use less plastic. Sure this was good but I don’t think it was enough to actually have an impact on the planet. I was signing petitions here and there, and one that caught my interest was one about the arctic circle, and how the polar bears were extremely skinny and dying because they had no food to eat. That image has stuck with me ever since. So when the opportunity came through my teacher to sign up for this program, I didn’t hesitate. I love learning about the various ways that veggies could be grown in your own backyard, and knowing that I could make a small and meaningful difference and actually knowing what is going on an how i can help and better the world has been extremely exciting for me. Knowing that I can have some sort of impact to make some sort of meaningful difference has always been exciting for me to say the least. I love that I know have the tools to advocate for a better future!!
Aditya Tallapragada  Tallahassee, FL

I joined CAL after seeing a march conducted by my school and others in the Tallahassee area. After seeing other students taking a stand against climate change it really inspired me try to make a difference and empower others in my community.

Through CAL I found other students just like me and plenty of role models. CAL helped me figure out ways to educate others on how climate change is impacting them.

Mahathi Tallapragada  Tallahassee, FL

I joined CAL because I wanted to make an impact in Climate Advocacy and to be able to inspire others to join the fight against climate change.

Through this program, I learned a lot about creating a story to connect with others about important climate and social issues. I especially enjoyed the Leaders of Today: Youth Climate Movement Roundtable session because it was so interesting to learn about minority communities, such as Native Americans and Disabled people, who are impacted by climate change and who want to make their mark on the world.
Tessa Tharp  Wellington, FL

I originally joined because I was struggling to find my purpose. I believed that by joining different activities and labs I could find my niche. However, this lab has shown me that I am incredibly passionate about protecting our planet. I have learned so much from this lab and have been completely inspired to not only change my life, but encourage change in our society.

I want to help make an impact. I want to educate other about how they can help fix the climate crisis. One of the aspects of the lab that inspired me the most was reaching out to an elected official. I never realized how easy it is to reach out to such powerful people. This really impacted my perspective because I used to think it was impossible to get politicians to listen, but this project proved that getting attention for climate change is possible.

I hope to continue my climate change journey and be able to help.

Jayden Tran  Largo, Florida

Climate change and global warming has been something I’ve overlooked for the longest time. I first heard about CAL from my local library, and saw it as an opportunity to be productive in the summer. To be honest, I was ready to be in a class-like setting. I was wrong. CAL was not a class. CAL is an engaging lab that opened my eyes to the problems of our climate crisis. It’s more than just rising waters. It’s also declining biodiversity, social injustice, and food and health security. I’m not much of a social person but during this lab, the guest speakers have taught me how important advocacy and our voice is to raise awareness. I plan to implement what Julie, Julieta, Ashley, have taught me in my school, library, social media, and my community as long as I am alive to do so. Thank you CAL for giving me the confidence to take the first few steps of my lifelong climate movement journey.
Gabriela Simon  

Miami, Florida

My climate story began when I moved to Miami, Florida, but I can honestly say that it all became real when I joined CAL. I had first heard about this opportunity at school. My AP Environmental Science teacher was letting everyone know that this was something that could teach us about climate change and how it affects the environment. Before this, I had always wanted to learn more and be able to spread awareness about climate change. That is why I joined CAL. I wanted to be able to tell others how to help, and most importantly why it is important to do it. In CAL I was able to create my own climate story and truly figure out my part in everything. Some sessions I truly enjoyed were those that inspired me to take action. I sent letters to government officials telling them about ideas that I thought would benefit everyone. Without CAL I would have never been able to do that. This lab inspired me to truly be who I have always wanted to be. Not only that, but I am going to pursue ideas I have always wanted to do, such as: spread posters, raise awareness, and try to show people what solar energy can do. I learned so much at this program, and I truly believe that everyone that partakes in it comes out more knowledgeable and educated on what is happening. Therefore, thank you CAL for everything you have taught me and for inspiring me to be who I always wanted to be.

Ethan Sullivan

I joined CAL because, living in Miami, I saw the effects of climate change on the ocean. This inspired me to start learning more about climate change, which led me to CAL. In the Climate Action Lab, I learned a lot about the science behind climate change, and I was inspired by all of the possible solutions. CAL also taught me how to tell my climate story. Through a photovoice project, I was able to depict how climate change had impacted me and how I had been inspired to act.
**Gabriella Vega**  
Miami, FL

Why I joined?
- I joined CAL because I was doing some legislation with 2 other students in my school with our local government, it was a flooding initiative to incentive residents to use permeable pavers.
- We were recognized by the Miami Herald and the CLEO Institute gave us support for what we trying to do.
- I then decided I wanted to take CLEO’s Action Lab so I can learn more on other climate issues other than flooding and solutions for them.

Outcome
- As a result of CAL I know much more issues of climate, one that I am most passionate about how heat is affecting developing countries and agriculture workers. I am also now, able to speak on how we can contribute to lowering our Greenhouse Gas emissions to do our part.

**Favorite Moments**
- My favorite group activities was when we had to make a meme related to climate
- My favorite part was the field trip to Cutler Bay Solar Solutions, it was very fun and I learned a lot about solar energy, I especially liked when we get to make a solar car

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**Gabriela Vieira**  
16 years old - from Brazil São Paulo - joined CLEO to further my knowledge on climate change and activism

Highlights:
- Really loved the section where we created the park area with green blue and grey infrastructure.
- Loved hearing how climate change affects Native Americans and people with disabilities from their perspective, it was incredibly informative.

Thank you Julie, Julieta, Ashley and all of the sponsors! This experience was amazing 😊

The Cleo activism lab for climate change really helped me gain voice and knowledge in the area. It was awesome to hear from so many incredible professionals that are united fighting for change!

I made great friends in this program from all around Florida and now we can all strike forward for climate action together! I really hope to keep up with what this great group has to offer!
Ria Wright  
Hallandale Beach, FL

I joined the CLEO Institute's Climate Action Lab because I wanted to learn more about the climate crisis to properly advocate in my community.

I definitely learned what I wanted and got so much more out of it, including essential information, communication skills, and lifelong friendships.

My favorite part of CAL was the field trip to Cutler Bay Solar Solutions. It was fascinating to see how effective alternative energy sources like solar energy is firsthand.

Because of CAL I have the courage to speak to with school administrators and elected officials about the climate crisis.

We are even working on an operation to paint the roof white in my school and to implement a street litter cleanup program in city!

The climate crisis is urgent, and because of CAL I now have the knowledge and skills to address it.

Join CAL! It’s truly an opportunity of a lifetime and I guarantee you won’t regret it!

Gabriela Trujillo

About some years ago I became aware of what climate change was. I started to realize all the consequences it caused and how damaging all those consequences were to our planet. I then decided it was time for me to inform myself and learn more about climate change, CAL was one of the resources that allowed me to learn so much more than I already knew before, it thought me so many useful things that I will for sure keep with me for the rest of my climate journey.

I learned so much in CAL, advocating was one of the things that I enjoyed learning about the most. Using your voice to raise awareness about serious issues that keep on harming us, making our elected officials accountable for not taking action against climate change and the issues it causes are things that I have always wanted to do but I just didn’t know how exactly. CAL completely helped me with that and it has allowed me to be completely aware of what I am talking about. I also really enjoyed all the sessions that taught us about how natives were being affected by climate change, it really opened my eyes to see all these issues I didn’t even know existed. CAL taught me about all the many ways there are to stop climate change or even cope with it.
We hope you join us for CAL Summer 2022!

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR 2021 PARTNERS