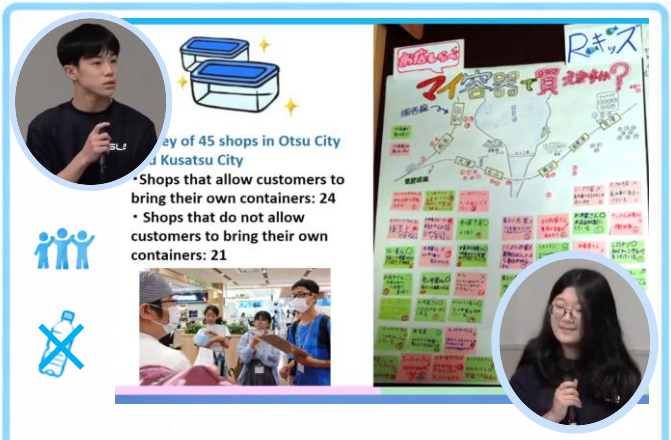
Lake Impact Challenge ー Youth Initiatives



R Kid's Efforts to Reduce Plastic Waste

The Shiga Local SDGs Learners youth team

Japan

“R Kids,” a group of elementary school group, studies plastic waste through surveys along the shores of Lake Biwa. Plastic makes up about 74.5% of the waste on the lakebed, and large amounts of microplastics have also been found.

In Japan, many foods are sold in disposable plastic packaging. R Kids asked local stores if customers could use their own containers instead of plastic trays. Of 45 stores, 24 said yes. The results are shared on the “Kurun Shopping Map,” created by the organization “Kurun Kyoto.”



KOYO SIAGA: THE OXYGEN PULSE OF RANU KLAKAH LAKE (A Local Wisdom-Based Early Warning System for Upwelling Mitigation in Ranu Klakah Lake, Lumajang)

MAN 2 Kota Malang

Indonesia

We propose KOYO SIAGA, an early warning system that uses low cost, solar powered sensors to monitor water temperature and dissolved oxygen. It alerts fish farmers to changes such as falling oxygen levels, allowing them to prevent their fish from mass deaths. KOYO SIAGA combines local wisdom based on observations of water color, wind, and fish behavior with sensor technology. By working with fish farmers, schools, and local government, we aim to reduce fish losses, support stable aquaculture, and protect the lake environment.



Creating Value through Watershed-Based Experiential Learning Connecting Rice Paddies, Waterways, and Lake Biwa

TANAKAMI Children’s Environmental Club

Japan

We see rice fields, waterways, and Lake Biwa as one basin and study local nature and wildlife. By walking along the waterways, we found 37 fish species, including the Hotokedojo, a native loach species which had never been recorded in the area.

We also work to restore connections between waterways and share our findings with the local community. Around Lake Biwa, we study the relationship between wildlife and local industries, including the importance of protecting nature while supporting the pearl industry.

We have also presented our work at events such as WLC, creating opportunities to connect with people from around the world. We value bringing our local learning into international exchange.



For the Sustainability of Our Lake

Kurniawan Palindondaya Bandjolu

Indonesia

We work for Lake Poso in Indonesia to protect its rich biodiversity and habitats. We study native fish, shellfish, and eels, and work with research institutions, government, and local communities on habitat conservation, tree planting, and eel releases. We have released about 5,000 eels to help restore their population.

We also promote local understanding through environmental education in schools and a mini museum featuring aquatic life from Lake Poso.

In addition, we promote ecotourism that makes use of Lake Poso’s biodiversity while protecting its natural environment. We aim to support local livelihoods through environmentally responsible economic activities.



Students as Island Infrastructure

Za Okishima

Japan

On Okishima Island in Lake Biwa, we support local life and traditions that are at risk of being lost due to population decline and aging. Together with island residents, we help organize festivals, clean up traditional houses, restore abandoned farmland, and provide fishing experiences.

Our goal is not temporary support, but continued involvement with the island. We also work on building sustainable activities, funding, and publicity. By passing the baton from one generation of students to the next, we aim to become a “link” that helps support the island’s future.



Be a Researcher Tour in BIWAKO

MLGs Team, International Volunteer University Student Association (IVUSA)

Japan

We organize the “Be a Researcher Tour in BIWAKO,” where children experience nature and think about the future of Lake Biwa. At water treatment plants, forests, and Lake Biwa, they work with local people on water quality surveys, fishing experiences, and spring water research.

Through activities with Lake Biwa fishermen, children learn about the lake’s environment and future by experiencing how to catch, eat, think about, and connect through fish. These experiences inspire curiosity, raise environmental awareness, and help children discover the value of their local community.



Building Youth Communities around Lake Balaton: A Network Open to Everyone

West-Balaton Youth Association / Extázis Youth Organization

Hungary

West-Balaton Youth Association

We take pride in Lake Balaton and encourage young people to care about the lake and take part in its protection.

Extázis Youth Organization

We visit youth organizations around Lake Balaton and interview their leaders, then map their activities. This map helps improve communication and cooperation while showing Lake Balaton as a vibrant place for community, culture, and leisure throughout the year, not just a resort. Our goal is to help local people get to know and support each other and eventually create joint programs. Lake Balaton is more than a lake to us. It is a place where people, cultures, and generations meet.



From Lake Biwa to Japan and the World: University Students Collaborate with the Local Community to Remove Invasive Alien Aquatic Plants

Team OOBANA, IVUSA

Japan

We remove the invasive plant Ludwigia grandiflora (known as water primrose), native to South America, from Lake Biwa. Because it spreads rapidly and affects the ecosystem and fisheries, we work with the Shiga Prefectural Government and companies to remove it regularly.

Last year, about 300 people worked for three days and cleared approximately 4,700 square meters. We also work on the Kamo River in Kyoto and share our methods with local high school students in Mie Prefecture. We hope to bring our experience from Lake Biwa to other communities facing invasive species problems.



Stepping into the Future: How High School Students Connect Through Lake Biwa

Ritsumeikan Moriyama High School

Japan

We help high school students connect with society through Lake Biwa. In project-based learning, students work with companies to turn underused fish from the lake into dog food and sell it as a real product. Their activities have also been featured in newspapers and on television.

We value working alongside companies and government, rather than working alone. Students gain funding, opportunities, and connections, while companies benefit through promotion and community contribution. Through forums like today's, which support high school students in taking on new challenges, we aim to expand these mutually beneficial relationships through the traditional Japanese principle of "Sampo Yoshi," or "three-way benefit," which means benefits for the seller, the buyer, and society, while also helping protect the environment of Lake Biwa.



From Awareness to Stewardship: Empowering Youth through Citizen Science and Urban Lake Action in Kuala Lumpur

The Planet Prodigy

Malaysia

We work to strengthen young people's connection with nature and nurture the next generation of environmental stewards. Urban lakes and green spaces face not only plastic waste and biodiversity loss, but also a growing disconnect between young people and nature.

Through school workshops and lake cleanups, we give young people opportunities to learn about, think about, and take action for the environment through hands-on experiences. By helping them feel connected to nature and motivated to protect it, we aim to empower young people to become stewards of their local environment.

Let's continue our efforts in our respective communities while working together！



Passing the Spirit of the "Soap Movement" to Protect Lake Biwa on to the Next Generation

NPO Ai-no-Machi Eco Club

Japan

In Higashiomi, Shiga, we promote the circulation of local resources and the revitalization of rural communities by making soap from used cooking oil. Inspired by a citizen movement that began in response to a red tide in Lake Biwa, we carry on its spirit of rethinking our lifestyles and protecting the environment. Soap making has continued in the community for 45 years.

Our goal is not only to protect the water environment, but also to pass local connections and activities on to the next generation. By encouraging young people to participate and educating children, we are developing soap making as a local industry. We aim to help people recognize how their daily lives affect the environment and continue taking action in their own communities.

Youth Declaration

On World Lake Day, young people from Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Hungary shared their activities in their respective lakes and communities. Although our locations and themes differ, we share a common commitment to thinking about what we can do and taking action.

Lakes have many environmental, social, and economic values. Protecting lakes means not only protecting nature and ecosystems, but also connecting people and supporting local communities.

We will not let today's exchange end here. We will continue taking action in our communities, engage in dialogue across generations, and learn from each other's experiences and knowledge as we think and act together.

August 27, 2026