CONNECT

"The best thing about the Connect Program was the companionship, and the opportunity to connect even during a pandemic."

- Male, 23, American, Connect Program alumnus

EXCHANGE

"I am glad I was able to be part of this amazing program and got the chance to have meaningful discussions with people from all over the world. I have learned so much about my team member's cultures, their life experiences, their countries' situation and traditions. It was so insightful and I feel like in a way I was able to visit their countries and travel the world just by listening to their stories."

- Female, 20, Hungarian, Connect Program alumna

EMPOWER

"The Connect Program has boosted my confidence and it's an empowering experience which I'm super grateful for. Through my participation, I was able to improve my critical thinking, I've learned how to work in a team, I've learned how to ask clarifying questions and how to respect different points of view. It also helped me improve my English and my communication skills."

- Female, 22, Tunisian, Connect Program alumna

Program Description

The Connect Program – Soliya's flagship Virtual Exchange initiative – is a unique cross-cultural education and exchange program that enables college students from around the world to collaboratively explore the relationships between their societies with the aim of improving intercultural awareness and understanding.

Each semester, participants in the Connect Program will congregate into groups consisting of approximately ten students each. Participants are drawn from institutions in North America, Europe, the Middle East & North Africa, and Asia.

Each group will meet for real-time discussions once a week for two hours via an online, videoconferencing platform. To join the group meetings, participants need simply to turn on their webcam and headset and log on to their group's meeting room at their weekly meeting time. Participants are also able to communicate with their fellow students when they are offline on Soliya's Exchange Portal.
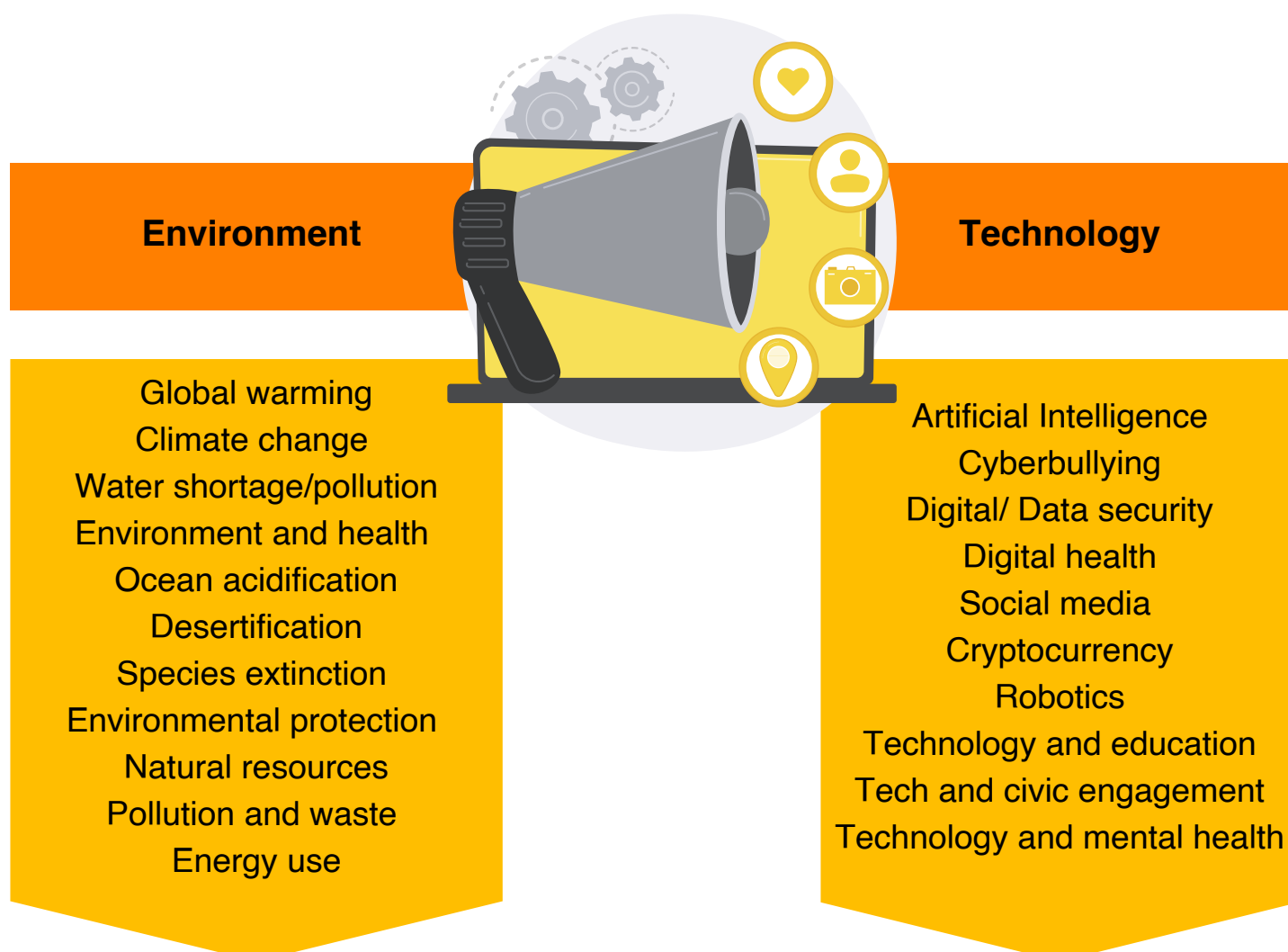
Each participant has access to Soliya's Exchange Portal where you can continue discussions or post messages to other users. You can also engage with the broader Soliya community via the Exchange Portal streams, where you can connect with our diverse network of thousands of young people from around the world. Participants who successfully complete the Connect Program will be invited to continue their journey through Soliya's Continued Engagement activities.
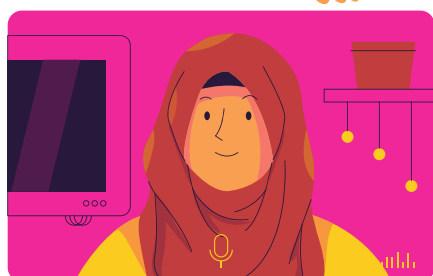
Group Project

You and your fellow group members will work together on creating a social media awareness campaign, and an infographic that will accompany the campaign. Each group will have a focal theme: environment or technology, and will be supported by one or two expert facilitators. You and your fellow group members will have to decide on the scope, message, and content of the campaign. Then, each group's final campaign will be shared on Soliya's primary social media channels, and the Connect Program community members will be invited to vote for their favorite campaigns.

Have questions? Contact us at students@soliya.net

Collaborate Themes

To help you begin thinking about and explore the collaboration themes, here are some recommendations for sub-topics you can explore with your group, within the given theme. You and your group members will be able to explore the different angles you think are important, and you will work together to identify a sub-topic that will be the focus of your group's awareness campaign. Please note these are recommendations, and you will not be limited to these topics.

Environment

Global warming
Climate change
Water shortage/pollution
Environment and health
Ocean acidification
Desertification
Species extinction
Environmental protection
Natural resources
Pollution and waste
Energy use

Technology

Artificial Intelligence
Cyberbullying
Digital/ Data security
Digital health
Social media
Cryptocurrency
Robotics
Technology and education
Tech and civic engagement
Technology and mental health

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Commitments

The Connect Program will run from April 3rd to May 5th

- Prior to to the start of the Connect Program, you will participate in a brief online orientation, and complete some introductory activities.
- During the program, you will spend 2 hours per week meeting with your Connect Program group in your online rooms.
- You will be an active contributor to your group's project, and collaborate with your group members to create an awareness campaign.
- You write a reflection paper at the end of the program.
- You will complete a program evaluation at the end of the program.

Note: to obtain the Certificate of Participation, you will need to attend a minimum of 75% of your sessions and complete the program evaluation.

What You Gain

- An opportunity to engage in a collaborative exploration of the critical current issues that affect the global community and are most important to you.
- A chance to meet your peers from around the world, share your opinions, and hear their ideas about critical issues and build strong contacts with future leaders.
- The opportunity to gain and / or improve upon key 21st century skills such as leadership, analytical thinking, engaging across differences constructively, and collaborative problem-solving.
- The Connect Program Certificate of Participation, attesting to the skills and experiences gained through your participation, if you successfully complete all the program requirements
- Access to Soliya's global network of more than 27,000 alumni from over 100 nationalities worldwide, and continued engagement and learning opportunities.

About Soliya

The Soliya team is composed of a diverse team of talented individuals coming from Egypt, France, Finland, Morocco, Ukraine, Tunisia, Turkey, India, Bangladesh, and the United States of America. In addition to Soliya's staff members, Soliya's operations are based on an extraordinary network of highly trained facilitators from around the world, volunteering their time to catalyze constructive communication. To date, Soliya has worked with around 27,000 students from a diverse cross-section of over 250 institutions in 37 countries. To learn more about Soliya, please go to www.soliya.net where you can read about Soliya's staff, volunteer facilitators, and past Soliya participants.

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