



GYEL NEWSLETTER

Volume 10: August 2026

WELCOME TO OUR AUGUST 2026 GYEL NEWSLETTER!

Our goal is to keep you updated on our program sessions, guest speakers, and showcase our students' global impact projects related to the UN's SDGs. We will also share helpful tips and insights to make your college application stand out, as recommended by some of the industry's most trusted professionals.

[Read more about our program](#)

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MESSAGE FROM THE LEAD INSTRUCTOR OF PROGRAMS

As we approach the end of the Summer Term at GYEL, we are delighted to reflect on the remarkable work of our students and the progress they have made throughout the program. It has been an absolute joy to work with such an outstanding group of young leaders, whose curiosity, determination, and commitment to addressing real-world challenges have been evident in every aspect of their learning.

Over the course of the term, students have taken the ideas and skills developed through their studies of global systems, policy analysis, research, and social innovation, and applied them to a wide range of leadership projects focused on creating meaningful solutions to complex global issues. Their work has demonstrated not only intellectual ambition, but also a genuine desire to understand communities, explore challenges from multiple perspectives, and develop practical approaches that can contribute to positive change.

The diversity of projects this year has been particularly inspiring. Some students have focused on policy and systems-level challenges, exploring ways to streamline taxation systems in Kyrgyzstan, examining approaches to addressing population decline in Japan, or investigating the need for new workplace protection policies to support workers facing increasingly dangerous conditions caused by extreme heat linked to climate change. These projects have required students to engage with complex social, economic, and political factors, while considering how evidence-based recommendations can inform meaningful action.

Others have taken a more community-focused approach, using qualitative research methods such as interviews and stakeholder conversations to better understand lived experiences and identify opportunities for impact. Projects exploring Equine Assisted Therapy as a support mechanism for teenage mental health and strategies to reduce health inequalities in rural India have highlighted the importance of listening to communities and designing solutions that respond to real human needs.

We have also been impressed by the range of STEM-focused projects, where students have used scientific investigation and data collection to better understand environmental challenges. Some students have collected and analysed plastic samples from polluted lakes, investigating the scale and impact of pollution while exploring potential solutions for environmental protection and sustainability.

Across all of these projects, students have demonstrated the qualities at the heart of effective leadership: curiosity, empathy, creativity, resilience, and the ability to turn research and ideas into action. Whether developing policy recommendations, conducting interviews, gathering scientific data, or designing innovative solutions, they have approached each challenge with thoughtfulness and purpose.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this term has been witnessing students grow in confidence as independent thinkers and changemakers. They have embraced complexity, challenged assumptions, collaborated with one another, and developed the skills needed to communicate their ideas with clarity and conviction.

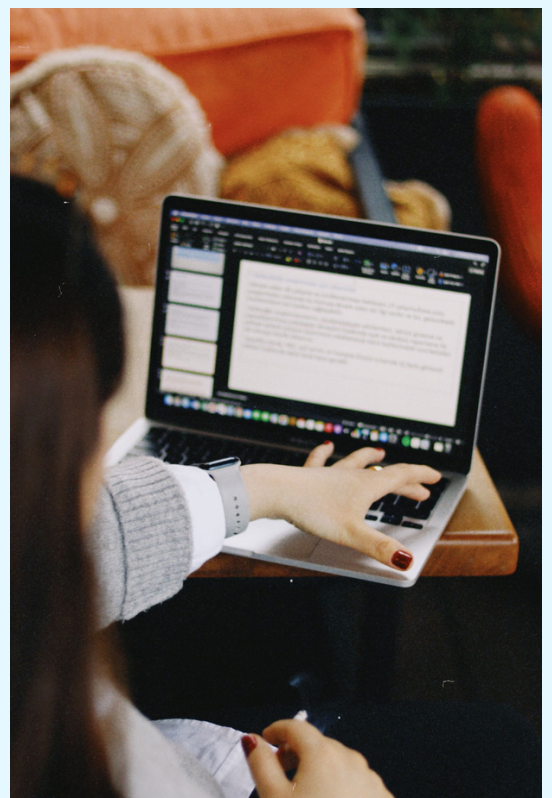
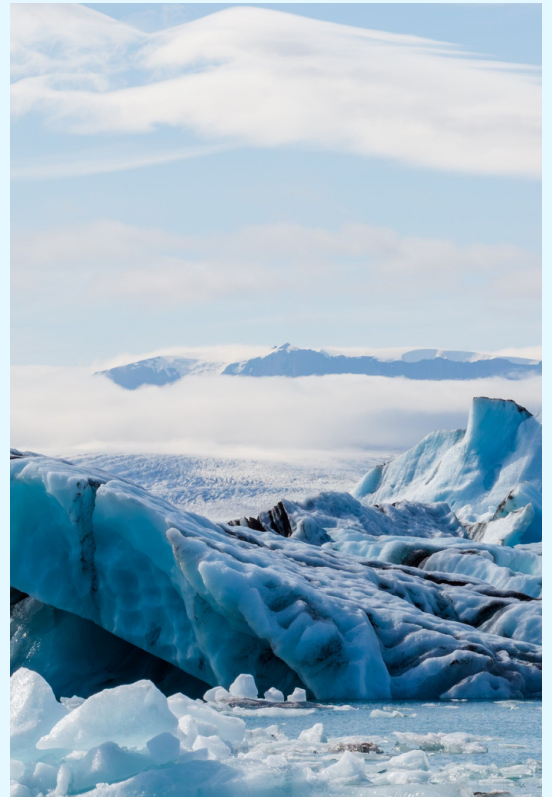
As we celebrate the conclusion of the Summer Term, we are incredibly proud of what this cohort has achieved. Their projects are a powerful reflection of the potential of young people when they are given the opportunity to explore important questions, pursue their passions, and take meaningful action.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to our dedicated instructors, mentors, and the wider GYEL team for their continued guidance, expertise, and commitment to creating an environment where students are encouraged to think boldly, lead with purpose, and contribute to a better future.

Sincerely,
Ms. Hannah Kidner, Lead Instructor of Programs

FALL TERM 2026 UPDATES

- As we enter the final month before the start of Fall Term 2026, we encourage all interested students to complete their applications and prepare for an exciting new season of learning, leadership, and global engagement.
- Applications for Fall Term 2026 are due on August 31st. Classes begin in September, and spots are filling quickly. Apply soon to secure your place before the deadline.
- We are also excited to introduce our new Planetary Health & Climate Change Program. This interdisciplinary course explores the connections between human health, climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable development while helping students develop the leadership and problem-solving skills needed to address complex global challenges. We look forward to sharing more details in the coming months.
- As summer comes to a close, we thank our students, families, alumni, and partners for being part of the GYEL community. We wish everyone a successful start to the new academic year and look forward to another term of learning, growth, and impact.
- Stay connected with GYEL on social media for student spotlights, project showcases, program updates, leadership resources, and admissions announcements.



Start your application today!

EDUCATION INEQUALITY



What is happening?

Despite historic highs in global school enrollment, a severe learning crisis persists. Today, 273 million children and youth remain out of school, meaning one additional child must enter the education system every two seconds to meet SDG 4 by 2030. Worse, classroom access has not guaranteed literacy: 70% of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries cannot read or understand a simple paragraph, a gap severely worsened by pandemic-era school closures.

Why does it matter?

A child's ability to read with comprehension by age 10 is the ultimate bottleneck for all future learning and career success. Individually, each extra year of schooling yields a 9% increase in lifetime hourly earnings; societally, high-quality education reduces poverty and fuels economic growth. However, progress is highly unequal, and deep disparities in educational quality continue to divide students based on wealth, gender, and location.

Why should you care?

The modern economy demands that students move beyond memorization to master digital literacy, critical thinking, and adaptability. Building these flexible skills early is what ensures long-term career resilience in an unpredictable job market. Furthermore, understanding these global gaps empowers student leaders to advocate for educational equity, proving that targeted support for vulnerable groups can successfully dismantle barriers to success.

COLLEGE ESSAY TIPS



[Read More](#)

- Write in your own natural voice. Sharing honest weaknesses and personal growth resonates far more than a glib victory speech.
- Avoid boring lists of achievements. Use vivid anecdotes and scenes to reveal your emotional journey and what makes you tick.
- Start with a powerful opening to grab attention immediately, and close with a punchy final line that beautifully ties your story together.
- Stick to around 650 words. Ensure your ideas flow logically and ruthlessly cut out any wordiness or filler.
- Reading your drafts out loud is the fastest way to catch awkward phrasing. Have teachers, family, or peers review it to clear up any confusion.

Source: Harvard College, "12 Strategies to Writing the Perfect College Essay"

GYEL FALL 2026

Enrollment Open for Fall Term until August 31st
Generous Financial Assistance Available (see website for more info)
Fall Term set to begin in the second or third week of September

[Apply today](#)

[Hear from our students](#)

SMART READS FOR FUTURE LEADERS

Explore articles that empower students and families to make informed choices about their academic and leadership journey.



HOW MANY COLLEGES SHOULD YOU APPLY TO?

How many colleges should students apply to? While there is no “magic number,” research shows there is a big benefit to keeping it on the higher side.

A study by economist Amanda Pallais found that when students submitted college applications to four schools, as opposed to three, there was a major positive outcome. Low-income students, on average, ended up attending more selective schools as a result.

The financial value of this is large: a back of the envelope calculation suggests that low-income students gained about \$10,000 in lifetime earnings as a result.

The fact that the effect was most pronounced for lower-income students suggests that encouraging and creating systems that allow students to submit more applications may significantly help to level the playing field and give more young people access to educational opportunities.

[Read More](#)

A photograph of three young men standing at a podium. The man in the center is speaking into a microphone. The man on the left is wearing glasses and a white hoodie. The man on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with a graphic. They are all looking towards the right. A blue banner with the text 'Student Spotlight' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Student Spotlight

From Vision to Venture – Arnav Shyam's Journey

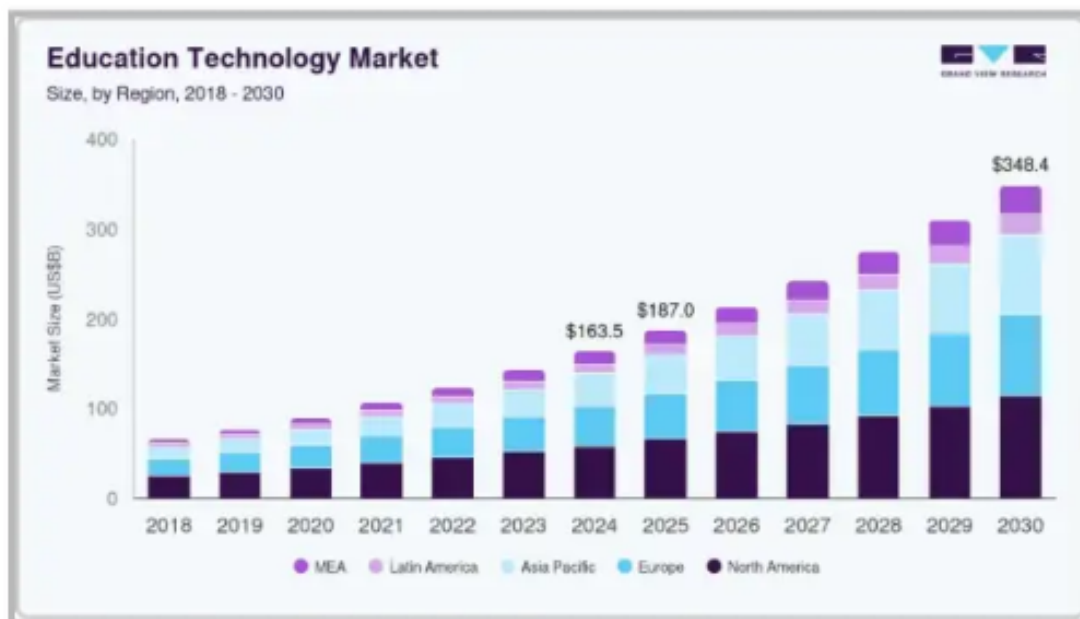
This month, we are honored to highlight Arnav Shyam, a GYEL senior whose passion for expanding educational access and leveraging technology for social impact exemplifies the GYEL mission in action.

ARNAV'S SOCIAL IMPACT JOURNEY

- Developed Quality Education: How To Change a Person's Life as his GYEL final project, exploring solutions to advance SDG 4 through technology integration, policy reform, infrastructure development, and community engagement.
- Designed a mobile learning platform that provides offline access to business and financial literacy education, making quality learning more accessible for students in underserved communities.
- Actively developing an online educational platform offering high-quality AP-level resources in AP Business with Personal Finance and AP Cybersecurity to expand access to rigorous academic content worldwide.
- Applies an entrepreneurial mindset to solving real-world challenges by building a technology startup focused on innovative security camera solutions.
- Advocates for equitable and inclusive education by creating practical, accessible learning tools designed for low-bandwidth environments and basic devices.



Through GYEL, Arnav has strengthened his ability to approach complex challenges through research, innovation, and collaboration. His journey reflects the heart of GYEL: empowering young leaders to transform ideas into meaningful solutions that create lasting impact.



(Grand View Research, 2025)

Over the years, governments have started to acknowledge the importance of how

QUALITY EDUCATION: HOW TO CHANGE A PERSON'S LIFE

This project advances SDG 4 by exploring innovative and accessible approaches to quality education, equipping students with practical skills through technology-driven learning solutions designed to bridge educational gaps worldwide.

WANT TO BE FEATURED IN OUR NEXT STUDENT SPOTLIGHT?

We love celebrating the incredible impact our GYEL students are making around the world. If you'd like to share your journey, achievements, or community project, send us your details at support@un.gyel.org and you could be our next feature!

