

# ABCs of Planetary Health



From the Planetary Health Ambassadors

## **ABCs of Planetary Health**

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## *To all children, caregivers, and teachers...*

“To restore human health we must restore the health of our society and our relationship with the natural environment – with a greater sense of unity, place and purpose”

*inVIVO Planetary Health*

Making sense of the world during the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging. The pandemic marks the beginning of an increasing awareness about our global interconnectedness with nature and calls upon us to sustain our planet together. Climate change, pollution, and other global events can be alarming and challenging to understand as part of the larger picture. Our book, created by a group of “Planetary Health Ambassadors”, is about how “planetary health” can address these worries, leading to more healthy people living on a healthy planet.

With engaging illustrations and words, we hope this book will share with you a range of planetary health concepts from the letter “A” to “Z”. These selected words try to highlight the special connections between the Earth’s natural systems and the health of humans. We hope you can use the book to learn and grow your well-being during challenging times. Maybe these ideas will spark your curiosity about the world and inspire you to be brave, solve big problems, and help support a healthier planet!

Read this book however you'd like! From beginning to end or perhaps choose the words you find the most interesting! We've colored words in green that are connected to other pages in the book as well! What do these linked words mean to you? Put on your planetary health glasses and go forth and explore!

With love,  
Planetary Health Campus Ambassadors

A

is for **Anthropocene**





# Anthropocene

Can you read the clock? 🕒 Look at the clock's hands. What time is it now? 🤔 We measure time in seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, and years. We use time to know when important things happen in our lives and keep track of events, like birthdays! When is your birthday? How old are you? 🗓️

How old do you think the Earth is?

It's about 4.5 billion years old! Scientists who study the Earth say it has different time periods, just like us: 👶 👧 👦 👩 👨 . The Earth was once very young, just like you! In the past, big animals like dinosaurs 🦖 🦕 roamed the Earth. But as time went on, different animals and people began living on Earth. Scientists learn about Earth's past time periods by looking at different rocks, fossils, and layers of the Earth's surface. The deeper scientists dig into the Earth, the older the fossils are. Just like the Earth, dinosaur fossils are VERY old! 🪨

Right now, the time period we are living in is called the "**Anthropocene**". 🧑 🕒 🌴 In this time period, humans are making a lot of changes to the Earth. 🛠️ 🔪 We use energy (like electricity), travel, grow our own food, and build cities 🏙️ . This is **changing our climate** and affects our air, water, and food. In turn, this impacts the health of humans, animals, and plants.

We must be **mindful** of how our actions impact the Earth and everything living on it. We need to work together to protect our planet and take care of each other. 🌍 🌍 🌍

# B

is for **Biosphere**



# Biosphere

Have you done a jigsaw puzzle before? 🧩 The Earth's biosphere 🌍 🌍 🌍 is just like a puzzle – made up of many pieces. The **biosphere** stretches from the sky above your head to the soil under your feet and into the deep water of the **oceans**. 🌊 Let's count the puzzle pieces of the Earth's biosphere:

One, the atmosphere. This is the layer of air that surrounds the Earth. Birds fly through the sky, and plants, animals, and humans breathe in this air to stay alive. 🐢 🐳 🐌

Two, the deep layers of the Earth. The roots of trees 🌳 go underground Earth's many layers. These roots hold the soil in place. Small insects 🐛 eat fallen leaves from trees, which helps make the soil healthy. Healthy soil is important for growing food, like fruits and vegetables! 🌽 🥬 🥕 🍅 🥦 🧑🌾 🍅 🍏

Three, the water cycle. Have you heard of the water cycle? 💧 The sun's heat brings water up into the sky, forming clouds. ☀️ ☁️ When those clouds get too big and heavy, it is time for them to fall back to the ground as rain or snow! ☔️ ❄️ This water fills up rivers, lakes, and oceans, and the cycle starts all over again.

All pieces of the biosphere puzzle are **interconnected** and work together to **sustain** life on Earth. It's important to take care of each piece to ensure the well-being of our planet. 🧩

C

is for **Climate Change**



# Climate Change

When we talk about climate, we are talking about the weather ☁️. We describe climate by looking at weather patterns over many years, like changes in temperature and rainfall ⚡️. What is the weather like where you live? Is it usually hot 🔥 or cold ❄️? Is it rainy or dry? During which seasons? Has it always been that way?

Now let's talk about **climate change**. This is when the typical weather patterns of a place change over a long time. Earth's climate has always changed, but scientists have noticed unusual changes happening. In the past 100 years ⌚, the Earth's average air temperature has gone up by what may seem like a little bit 🌡️. But this small change in temperature has caused some big changes here on Earth. We see heavier rain in some places, not enough rain in others, melting ice in the North Pole and Antarctica, and rising sea levels in coastal areas 🌊. These changes make it harder to grow food and have affected many people 👥, animals, and plants 🌿.

Many activities humans do every day are causing these changes in the climate. To produce energy, like electricity, we burn fossil fuels like coal, petroleum, or natural gas 🔥. Burning fossil fuels releases gases into the air. These gases trap the sun's heat ☀️ in the atmosphere and make our Earth 🌍🌍🌍 warm. It's a bit like how a greenhouse, a glass house that traps heat from sunlight, keeps plants warm. That's why we call this process the greenhouse effect. The increase in temperature from the greenhouse effect is called global warming or global heating. 🔥

Have you heard about the global climate school strikes inspired by Greta Thunberg? Millions of young people around the world are joining together to push politicians to protect our planet Earth for children 🚶 like you and future generations! They want to make sure our big home stays safe and healthy.



**D**  
is for **Diversity**



# Diversity

**Diversity** refers to the range of human differences that make us all unique. There are people with diverse ethnicities, ages, genders, languages, beliefs, and cultures 🧑🏿. Diversity allows us to learn from one another and find new ways to solve difficult problems! 💪

When a place has diverse plants and animals, we call this biodiversity. **Biodiversity** is important because it maintains a balance among all living things on Earth. **Climate change** can cause a loss of biodiversity. As our planet becomes warmer, some animals and plants cannot live in a hotter climate. Improper **land use** destroys habitats, the homes of animals and plants. This happens when we cut down too many trees, home to countless birds, insects, and creatures.

Every plant and animal needs to be protected to keep us and the Earth healthy! 🐾🐝🐢🦜🐟 Have you ever noticed the creatures around you? Where do they live? In a river, lake, forest, marsh, or mountain? Even cities 🏙️ have biodiversity! Can you find any plants and animals there?

**E**  
is for **Equity**





# Equity

Have you ever needed help reaching something high up? Imagine your taller friend can reach an apple on a shelf, but your shorter friend can't. How can you make it fair for both of them to get an apple? 🍏 You can give everyone a stool 🪑, even though the taller friend doesn't need it. This is **equality**: treating everyone the same, no matter what they need.

But how can we help our friends more fairly? We can give a taller stool to our shorter friends so they can reach the shelf too, or the taller friend could help our shorter friend reach the apples. Now everyone can enjoy the apples together! This is **equity**: thinking about what each person needs to succeed.

Equity also means removing any barriers that might be in the way for some of our friends. 🚧 For example, we could build a lower shelf so everyone can reach the apples without needing a stool at all! Can you think of other fair ways to make sure everyone gets an apple? 🍏

Equity is important because we all have different needs and challenges. In your community and around the world, people have different needs. It's important to think about how we can meet **diverse** needs fairly.

Equity is very important for social and environmental justice. **Justice** means treating everyone in a fair manner ⚖️. Sadly, this doesn't always happen. For example, not everyone has access to clean air, water, and food. Some people live in polluted environments because they are unable to move elsewhere. This can be due to many reasons and is not fair. But, together, we can work towards making sure everyone has a safe and healthy home.

# F

is for **Flora and Fauna**



# Flora and Fauna

**Flora and fauna** are our flowery and fluffy friends! 🌲🍃🌻🍄  
🐾🐝🐢🦋🐦🐬

When we say flora, we mean plants, trees, and flowers. What is your favorite type of flora? 🌸 What color is it and where can it be found?

When we say fauna, we mean all the animals on Earth, including those with fur, feathers, and scales. What is your favorite type of fauna? Where does it live in the world?

Did you know that there are 13 million types of flora and fauna in the world? Earlier in the book 📖, you learned about **biodiversity**. Having millions of different types of flora and fauna makes the Earth very biodiverse! 🌍🌍🌍

All flora and fauna are **interconnected** with each other and with us. 🌐 Plants release the oxygen we need to breathe 🫁, and we release the carbon dioxide plants need to make food. Animals can help make us happy when we feel down and keep our soil and environments healthy. We must all look after one another to stay happy and healthy. How do you care for the flora and fauna around you?

# G

is for **Green Economy**



# Green Economy

What is the economy?

The economy is a system that humans have created to make, trade, and buy things. In our economy, we use money 💵 to get food, clothes, books, and toys. To make these things, we need natural resources like soil for growing food or big trees for making paper. But these resources are limited, which means they will eventually run out. ⏳ Using too many of these resources harms our **planetary health**. 🙄

That's why we need a different kind of economy called the **green economy** 🌳 💰. It is about using and **re-using** ♻️ natural resources carefully. Imagine a garden of colorful fruits and vegetables. After we pick them and eat them, the garden becomes empty.

How can we help the plants grow again? We plant seeds, make compost from leftover fruit peels and vegetable scraps, and water the soil. We nurture our garden 🌱🍅 and keep it full of colorful, healthy food. 🥕🍅🥒🥬 We use Earth's resources but also make sure we replenish them in the green economy.

A green economy also means taking care of things we already have. For example, if your T-shirt gets a hole, you can sew it instead of throwing it away. 👕 When we throw away a lot of things, it pollutes the environment. So the less we throw away, the healthier our planet will be.

We should also respect the people who make the items that we buy. In a green economy, we have safe, fair, and healthy environments for people to work in. We need a **sustainable and equitable** economy that helps everyone with different needs, now and in the future, while respecting our planet's natural treasures.



# H

## is for **Home**

What does home mean to you? Home may be a place where you feel happy, safe, and loved. Home is a place for **nurturing**, growing, learning, and creating **visions** for the future. Draw what home looks like for you!

We all live in different homes around the world, but we also have one home in common: planet Earth 🌍. Earth is our home, and it's home to all **flora and fauna**. When we take care of the Earth, we are caring for each other and everyone we love. We are also caring for other children, plants and animals who call Earth their home.



I

is for

**Interconnectedness**



# Interconnectedness

Everything on our planet is connected in some way.

If you look closely, you can see many links between both living and non-living things! When one thing changes, other things will change too. We call this the domino effect. 🎲

Let's imagine you plant flowers 🌹 🌼 🌸 🌺 🌻 🌞 in your schoolyard or garden at home. By **nurturing** these flowers, more bees will come to visit them. The bees can then carry pollen from the flowers you planted to other plants. By doing this, the bees help more plants, fruits, and vegetables grow - this is pollination. This helps feed us and other animals. Also, imagine repurposing plastics to a bin which maybe used as a trash can. All these connected changes came from one simple action: you planting flowers and repurposing plastic!

Connections can have both positive and negative effects. Some connections are easy to see. The plastic we throw away can end up around marine animals' necks or in their stomachs. This can hurt their ecosystem and the biodiversity of our oceans. Other connections can be harder to see. For instance, if someone gets sick, they can spread their illness to others. The origin of these illnesses, like **zoonotic diseases** like the one that caused our recent pandemic, can arise due to our destruction of animal habitats. This is why it is important to learn more about **planetary health**. Once we understand how things are **interconnected**, it's easier to see what we can do to make positive changes.



J  
is for **Justice**



# Justice

**Justice** is important to ensure every person on Earth has the opportunity to be happy and healthy.

Environmental justice focuses on making sure all people can live in a healthy environment. A fair environment provides clean water to drink, clean air to breathe, healthy food to eat, and parks and playgrounds to play in. What would a fair, healthy environment look like to you?

Unfortunately, many people live in unhealthy environments. They may have to breathe polluted air, drink contaminated water, or live in noisy places. This can make them very sick. Many people aren't able to move elsewhere or their home has become polluted by big companies. This doesn't sound fair, does it?

Think about your community and **question** your environment. How would you like your **home** and community to look like? How can we make sure everyone gets to live in a healthy environment?

# K

is for **Knowledge**



# Knowledge

You have come so far, from letters **A, B, C** to letter **K**! You have gained so much **knowledge** about **planetary health** topics! You're almost there!

**Knowledge** consists of the information and skills that you learn at school, from reading this book, and when trying new activities!

To understand how the world works and to solve hard problems, you need lots of knowledge and skills. School is an importance source of knowledge, but you can learn from many other places too.

For example, indigenous communities, like those who have lived in the Amazon rainforest for thousands of years, have so much ancient knowledge and wisdom about nature that has been passed on for generations.

When our knowledge comes from many different sources, it helps us improve **planetary health**! There are many amazing things to learn about, like **transformations** in nature, **flora and fauna**, and what **changes the climate**.

L

is for **Land Use Change**





## Land Use Change

Take a moment to observe the land around you. Do you see **flora and fauna**? Are there houses and playgrounds? Maybe you see tall buildings and busy roads? Now, close your eyes and imagine: what do you want to see on the land around you?

The Earth has many diverse types of land, such as green meadows, forests, or mountains. Some areas are developed for human use, or **urbanization**, and are changed due to human activities. But remember, the land is not only ours—it's also home to living creatures of all kinds. We rely on them and they depend on us for their well-being too.

Today, many forests are being turned into farmland by humans. Can you think of why this is happening?

Farmland is important for producing food to feed many people. But when we clear forests to make room for farmland, many animals and plants lose their homes. Over time, the soil on overused land can become dry and unable to grow food. Eventually, the land is abandoned and left unused.

We need to **nurture** our land and find ways to live in harmony with nature. One example is with national parks, which protect the environment and safeguard wildlife living there. Are there any national parks where you live? Have you ever visited one before?

# M

is for **Mindfulness**



# Mindfulness

**Mindfulness** is about being in the moment and focusing on what is happening right now. Instead of thinking about what has happened or what will happen, mindfulness asks us to focus on the present! If we are feeling sad, anxious, or angry, being mindful can help us calm down and feel better.

Mindfulness takes practice. One of the best places to practice mindfulness is in nature: among plants and animals, in your backyard, in a park, in a forest, or on the beach. When practicing mindfulness, remember your senses: smell, touch, sound, sight, and taste.

*Smell:* Take a deep breath in and out of your lungs. Close your eyes and smell. What does this smell make you think of? Does it remind you of anything?

*Touch:* Reach out to touch something – maybe your pet or something that makes you feel safe. How does it feel? Is it soft and fluffy like a puppy or rough and textured like a lizard?

*Sound:* Close your eyes and listen – what can you hear? Certain sounds can be very relaxing to listen to. Try listening to the sound of the ocean or birds singing for a while! How do these sounds make you feel? What is your favorite sound?

*Sight:* Stand still and look as far into the distance as you can. **Explore** your surroundings and **explain** three things you see aloud. What do you like about what you can see? You can do this from a window in your **home** or even outside in your backyard!

*Taste:* What's your favorite food? Is it salty or sweet? Do you grow your own food or buy it from the store? Fruits and vegetables are important foods that are grown in nature. They contain vitamins that are good for our eyesight, bones, and health. Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables helps keep our minds and bodies healthy!



# N

is for **Nurture**



# Nurture

To **nurture** means to care for and support.

We can nurture living creatures by protecting their homes and our planet. We can give them food, water, and shelter until they become healthy and strong. We can nurture plants by giving them water and sunlight. In return, plants give us clean air to breathe, shade, and food to eat. Through nurturing, we are **interconnected**.

We also nurture others by offering them care, encouragement, and love. When we take care of other people, we become closer to them. This helps us build deeper relationships, like friendship.

Think about what or who you can nurture today. Is it a plant that needs watering? An animal that needs care? Or a friend who could use some support and kindness? Nurturing others and our environment helps create a happier and healthier world.

O

is for **Oceans**



# Oceans

**Oceans** are vast bodies of salty water that cover around 70% of Earth's surface. They are home to amazing **flora and fauna** and provide us with oxygen to breathe. Did you know that up to half of the oxygen we breathe comes from our oceans?

Swimming in the ocean can be a lot of fun. Do you live close to the ocean? What's your favorite marine animal? Oceans have tons of **biodiversity**. Thousands of different species call the ocean their **home**: like plankton, shrimp, mussels, corals, crabs, octopuses, seaweed, dolphins, and whales.

Yet humans have allowed plastic and harmful substances to pollute oceans, harming not only our marine animals but also our own health. For example, the ocean provides important sources of food, so if the fish we eat get sick, so can we. Therefore, it is vital that we work together to protect the health of the oceans. What do you think we can do to protect our oceans? Let's think about the ways we can make a positive difference and take care of our beautiful oceans.



# P

## is for **Planetary Health**

Where do you call **home**? Is home a place, a country, or the people you are with? Everyone's home looks a bit different, but one answer holds true: our common home is planet Earth! Earth gives us all the resources we need to live and is also home to many other living creatures. We all form part of the **biosphere**.

Planetary health is about protecting human and environmental health. We are all **interconnected**; so our actions impact our planet's biodiversity, **flora and fauna**, and climate, which impact our health too. For this reason, we must protect all the life that is around us if we want to live healthy lives.



# Q

is for **Questioning**



# Questioning

Humans are often curious and have questions ? about the world 🌍 around them. This spark helps us to make sense of our relationship with each other and with nature. It helps us understand how the world works and how we can make it better. What questions do you have about the world?

In order for our world to grow and **transform**, we have to ask questions. Questions like: What can we do to improve our own communities? How can we better protect all life on Earth?

**Planetary health** depends on that curious spark inside you! Pollution and climate change, caused by human activity, are harmful to our planet and our health. Many of the existing ways in which we live and interact with the environment are harmful to the planet and our own health. But we can do better! How can we? Put your 'planetary health glasses' on and talk to your friends, parents or teachers – question the world and think about what a safer and healthier world might look like.

# R

is for **Rethink** • **Refuse**  
• **Reduce** • **Reuse** •  
**Recycle**






## Rethink • Refuse • Reduce • Reuse • Recycle

Waste is anything we throw away. If we create more and more waste, the Earth will soon be covered with it! Since the **Anthropocene**, we have been producing mountains of waste. To make less waste, we have to **refuse** buying products we don't need. If we do need something, we must **reduce** the amount we buy to have a **sustainable** lifestyle. A lot of what we buy contains plastic, which can remain on the land and in the **oceans** for a long time – even hundreds of years! Instead of buying a new plastic bottle every time you need a drink, you can use a refillable water bottle. That way, you buy less, save money, and make less waste.

You can also **reuse** your things instead of throwing them away. Or, you can give those things to others who could use them, too! For example, you can give your old clothes and toys to other little kids. Or you can trade with friends and create new clothes and items out of them like our friends do here!

This is the recycling symbol . If you see an item with this symbol, that means you can **recycle** it. Rather than throwing it in the trash bin, you can put it in a recycling bin. From there, the item is taken to a recycling center where it can turn into new materials. Have a look around your **home** and schoolyard for things that you can recycle and make sure they go in the right bin!

There are many new ways we can **rethink** how we use or throw away waste. Practice the **five R's: rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse, and recycle!** By doing so, you can have fun and help to keep the environment healthy!

# S

## is for **Sustainability**

Living on our planet, we need clean air, **water** 💧 , healthy **food** 🍅 , and **reusable** materials for a healthy life. **Sustainability** is taking care of these natural resources so everyone today and in the future can live healthy lives too. We all deserve an equal and fair chance to live a healthy life! Let's continue to learn and make choices that promote a sustainable and happy life for all!

Jump back to **R** to find examples of what sustainable actions can look like.



# T

is for **Transformation**



# Transformation

**Transformation** means change.

It's when something turns into something else or takes on a new form. There are many things in the world that undergo transformation. For example, caterpillars 🐛 transform into beautiful butterflies 🦋. Water 💧 can transform into ice when it gets very cold ❄️ or into gas when it gets very hot 🌡️. Even you are transforming! You grew from a baby into a child, and one day, you will transform into an adult.

Can you think of other things that transform?

Transformation isn't only about individual changes. To achieve planetary health, we need to transform the way we live together. We can make changes that help protect our planet 🌍 and make it healthier for everyone. Here are some ways we can do that:

One way is by using reusable bags ♻️ when we go shopping instead of using plastic ones. This helps protect our ocean friends from plastic pollution.

Another way is by using less paper. When we use less paper, we help protect the homes of animals in the forest. Trees 🌲 are important homes 🏠 for many creatures, and by using less paper, we can reduce the need to cut down trees.

We can also transform the way we generate electricity ⚡. By using solar and wind power, we can harness the energy of the sun ☀️ and wind to create clean and renewable energy. This helps lower the amount of carbon we release into the air, making our planet healthier.

By making these **transformations** in our daily lives, we can make a positive impact on the health of our planet 🌍 and create a better future for everyone.



U

is for **Urbanization**



# Urbanization

Do you know how many people live in cities? 🏙️

Today, more than half of all people in the world live in cities. In the future, even more people will leave the countryside!

Urbanization is when cities 🏙️ grow as people move from the countryside. But as cities grow, nature is replaced by roads and buildings 🏢. This causes problems for the environment. Human activities increase air pollution, leading to warmer temperatures 🌡️ and **climate change**. Temperatures in cities can be 10 degrees Fahrenheit higher compared to the countryside!

Trees 🌲 🌲 play an important role in keeping our air clean! One tree 🌲 can produce enough clean air to breathe for ten people a day. In cities, there are fewer trees, meaning polluted air that can harm our health. That's why parks are important in cities!

Living in a city can also be stressful, and not everyone has the same opportunities. But there are many good things about cities too! Cities bring diverse people together from all over the world. There are more schools for children to attend, more job opportunities for their parents, and plenty of fun activities to do. For some people, living in a city feels like an exciting adventure!



# V

is for **Vision**



# Vision

A **vision** 👁️ is what you hope to see happen. We all have different visions for our lives – do you have a vision of becoming an artist when you grow older? Or maybe a scientist 🧪, a teacher 🍎, a builder, a farmer, or a healer? Having a vision helps us work towards our dreams and make them come true.

Having a vision for a healthy planet is also important. It means imagining what we want the Earth to be like and taking steps to make it happen. Some visions for a healthy planet include a **green economy** (go back to letter “G” to learn more!). Another vision is using **sustainable** energy (go back to letter “S” to learn more!). We also want diverse communities embracing social **justice** (see “J” and “D” to learn more!). To do this we need to transform current systems that harm our health.

**Youth** - just like you - have inspiring ideas about how to make our planet healthier. While environmental problems can feel big and overwhelming, remember to keep your vision strong and your voice loud. No action is too small!

What does your vision for a healthy planet look like? What small steps can you take today to make your vision come alive? Talk to your friends, family, or teachers about their visions too! Share your visions and together we can make a big difference in creating a happier, healthier planet for everyone!

# W

is for **Water and Food  
Security**



# Water and Food Security

**Water and food security** 💧 🌱 means that everyone has access to clean water and healthy food. When we have safe water and nutritious food, our bodies are stronger and can fight off sickness. Water and food are essential for all living beings on Earth, including us! In fact, our bodies contain about 70% water!

Unfortunately, not everyone has equal access to water and food resources. Many people in the world don't have access to food or water. Some people travel long distances and many hours to get water or fresh fruits 🍇 and vegetables 🍅 🥬. Even then, the water might not be safe to drink. In some places, people have more water and food than they need, and tap water is safe to drink.

Think about ways you and your family use water throughout the day, like washing your hands. Can you find ways to use less water and be **mindful** of its importance?

By learning more about water and food security, you can teach your family and friends and help others. Can you find ways to save water, eat locally-grown and sustainable foods, and nurture **flora and fauna**?

X

is for **eXplore**



## eXplore

Take a look around you – what plants 🍀 and animals 🦋🦜 do you see? What sounds do you hear 🦻? What textures do you feel? What foods do you like? **Exploring** through our senses helps us to feel connected with the world around us.

We learn about science from textbooks and teachers at school, but going into nature to learn can be so much fun. We just learned about **biodiversity** ("B") and the many different animals and plants in our world. If you go out into your own backyard or a local park, you will see that this is true. Even in one small area, there are countless species of **flora and fauna**. What kinds of animals and plants do you see?

**Exploring** new ideas can inspire us and open doors! Are you curious about ways to protect our environment and communities? Can you think of people 👥 in your life who care for our planet? Talking with people who have similar goals can help us feel supported and united.

Youth 🧑🏫, like yourself, teach grown-ups so much about exploring the world. In fact, there is no better time than now to be curious and ask questions ❓. When we put our planetary health glasses 🕶 on, we can learn from people's diverse backgrounds and visions 👁. Are you ready to explore the amazing world around you?



**Y**  
is for **Youth**



# Youth

**Youth** are our present and future. That includes YOU. We want you to grow up healthy on a healthy planet! We created this book for you and future generations – to rebuild our connection with nature that many have forgotten.

We hope you will **explore** nature and ask **questions**. We hope you will see the beauty of **flora and fauna** around you. We hope you will listen to chirping birds, smell blooming flowers, taste the rain, and feel the sun's warmth. Experience all these wonders with awe, as they are gifts to be cherished and protected.

Being **interconnected** with nature helps us to live **mindfully** on this planet. It helps us better understand how our actions affect the environment and other creatures. This can then affect our own health and lives. With courage, love, and kindness, YOU can **transform** our world into a healthy one for all living things!

# Z

is for **Zoonotic  
Diseases**



## Zoonotic Diseases

A **zoonotic disease** is a type of disease that comes from animals but can also pass from human to human. These diseases are caused by germs like viruses and bacteria that we cannot see with our eyes. It's hard to believe, but these tiny germs can make animals and us humans very sick!

In a healthy environment, animals have enough space to live. But when we cut trees for farmland or **urbanization**, many animals lose their **homes**. They come closer to each other, and the germs they carry can spread more easily. As cities grow, humans are getting closer to the **homes** of wild and rare animals. This is one of the many way germs can spread to humans.

To stop diseases from spreading, we need to live in harmony with nature and protect the homes of **flora and fauna**. Healthy environments help us all stay healthy on our common **home**: Earth!

## Now it's your turn!

In the space on the next page, draw what a healthy planet, our global **home**, looks like to you.



## **From the authors...**

A note to caregivers and teachers:

If you have thoughts about this book or would like to share your stories and experiences with it, we would love to hear them. Please email [planetaryhealthbook@gmail.com](mailto:planetaryhealthbook@gmail.com)

If you know schoolchildren or teachers who would like a physical copy of the book, please email [planetaryhealthbook@gmail.com](mailto:planetaryhealthbook@gmail.com) with the Subject “ABCs of Planetary Health – Physical Copy Request” and include the following details in the body of the email: name, number of copies, school, and mailing address.

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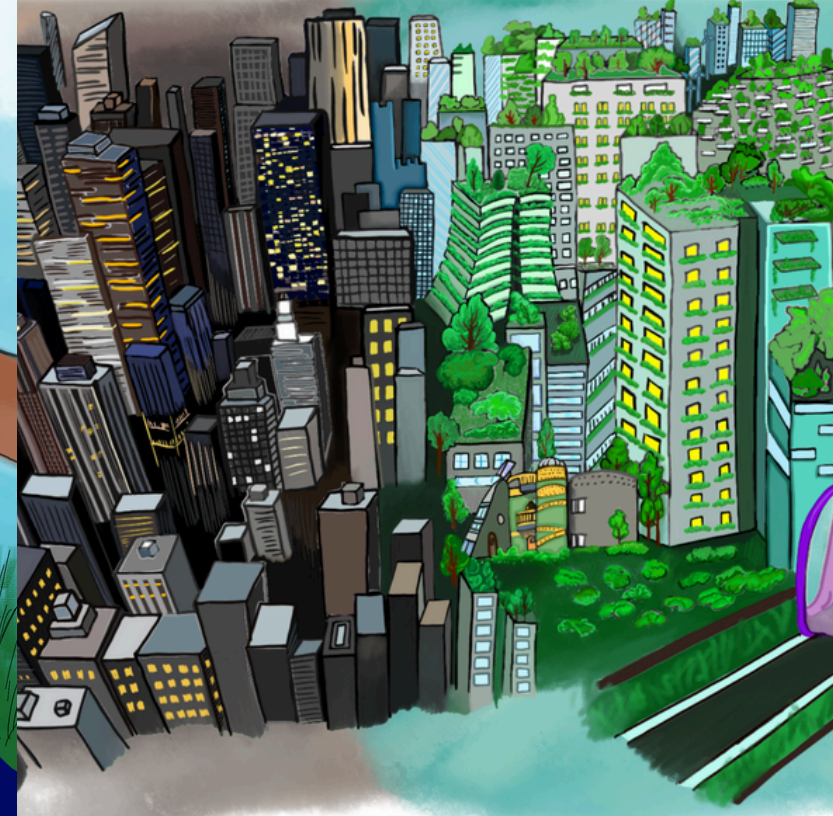
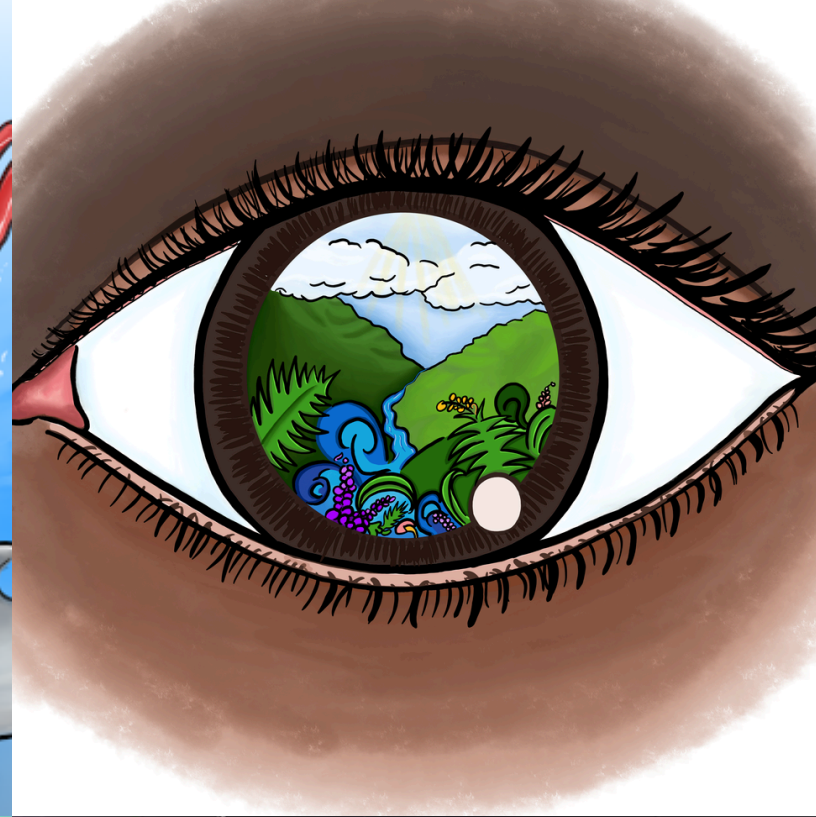
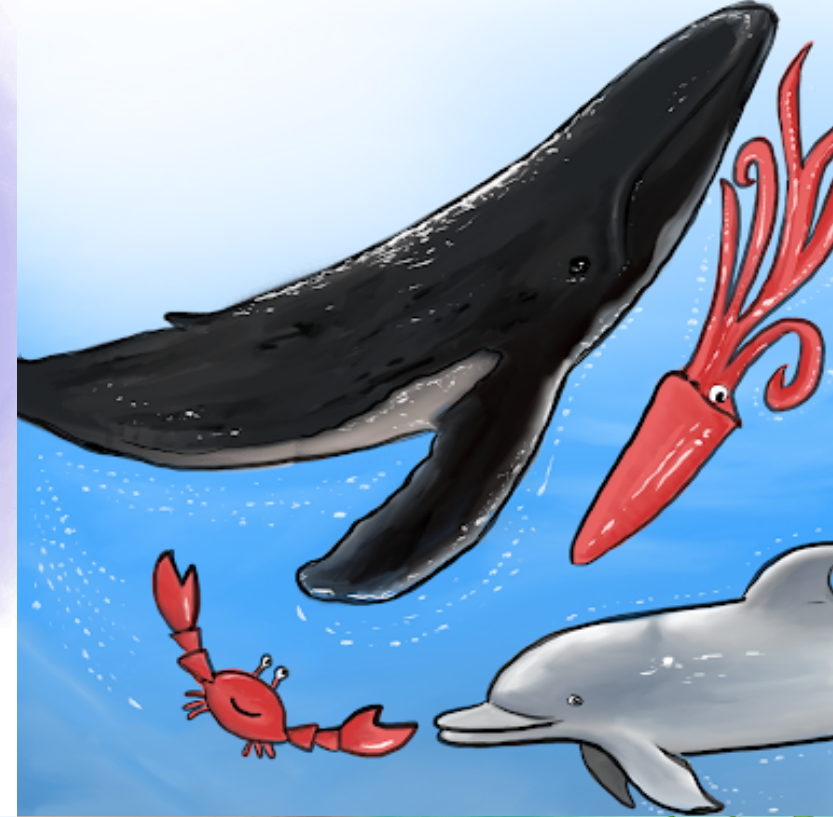
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# ABCs of Planetary Health

## A children's book project



### Background

- Planetary health is a multidisciplinary field that re-envision possibilities to synergistically and collectively protect the environment and human health at the local and global level.
- Planetary health challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic can contribute to feelings of uncertainty and anxiety among children.
- A children's book can serve as an tool to teach children about planetary health and to inspire hope, courage, and actions to promote mental and physical health.

### Results

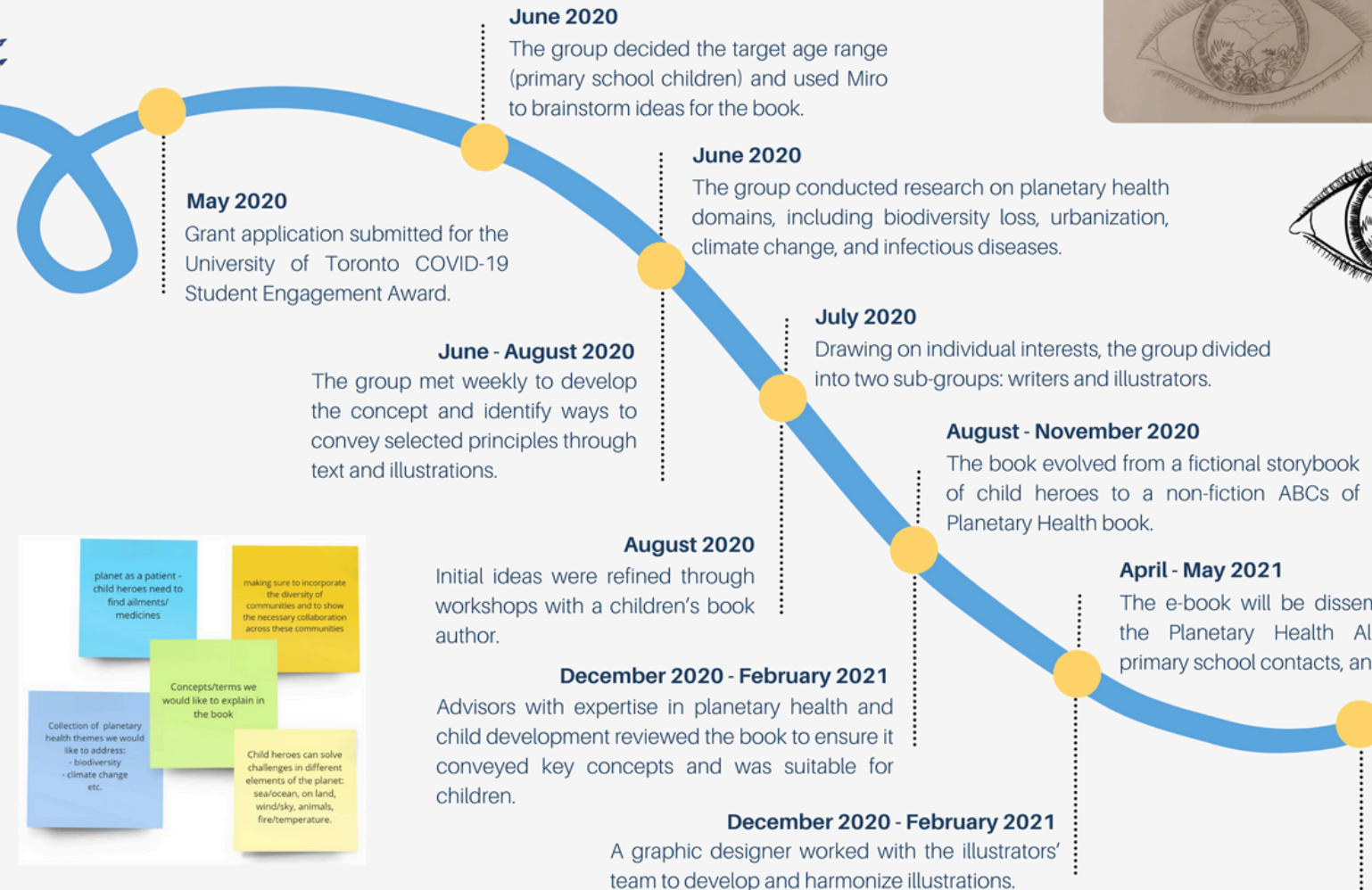
- Our book features 26 words (one for each letter of the Roman alphabet) with accompanying illustrations and descriptions that introduce concepts and principles of planetary health.

### Conclusions

- By creating an educational tool for children on planetary health, we hope to increase their understanding of the interconnections between human health and the state of Earth's natural systems, and inspire sustainable actions and thoughtful conversations.

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sketch - Vision



final



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