



Planet Green Force: “Seeds of Security” Program

Seeds of Security is a food security/sovereignty educational program that is a key component of Planet Green Force (PGF). In collaboration with UNESCO, PGF is a new initiative for school-aged youth that connects children to global environmental issues with the aim to educate, ignite passion, build awareness and mount meaningful change in eradicating hunger, battling global warming and embracing green initiatives. Participants are encouraged to embrace the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and UNESCO Green Academies’ pillars and share what they learn to families, fellow students and the community.

An agricultural-based program, Seeds of Security addresses the importance of increasing local food production and reducing food waste. For example, in the United States Virgin Islands (USVI), 97% of the food supply is imported, leaving the territory vulnerable to shortages, decreased freshness/nutritional value and increased costs. The level of importation also creates a substantial carbon footprint and causes pollution, such as increased incidence of marine debris resulting from single-use plastic waste. Increased local food production is not only cleaner and healthier, it also encourages and supports local farmers and local business owners.

“Seeds of Security” provides an example of a circular, self-sustaining program, teaching waste reduction and composting while cultivating food security, combating hunger and encouraging good nutrition/healthy eating. It will not only provide a valuable learning platform but also real-world food production, allowing kids to eat, share and sell what they grow.

“Seeds of Security” features:

- Providing each student with fabric grow bags to care for at home, taking them through the steps of planting and nurturing their “crop” with corresponding curriculum on the science behind it
- Supplying each participating school with a hydroponics or aquaponics system as well as traditional garden/greenhouse where possible
- Experiential learning: age-appropriate agricultural concepts in core curriculum
- Field trips to local farms to see and experience authentic, traditional farming and understand its importance and place in society
- Introducing aspects of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the important and growing role they play in sustainable farming
- Tracking of amount of water, daily growth, weight/volume of crops, etc. by students
- Collecting seeds from crops to start next generation of plantings
- Studying nutritional aspects of fresh produce and creating related posters, artwork, songs, etc.
- Introducing composting and hands-on creation and maintenance of school composting pile, with corresponding age-appropriate curriculum on the science behind the composting process
- Where applicable, working with cafeterias to create lunch menu items incorporating “Seeds of Security” produce (and measuring percentage of school lunch sustained through the program); PGF participants help prepare cafeteria menu items (if allowed)
- Possible creation of recipe book (consider selling recipe book with proceeds going back to the program)
- Creating student-run school marketplace days where excess crops are sold, with proceeds going back into the program
- Tracking metrics/percentages on where all crops were used (students will create final age-appropriate projects/presentations to fellow students/families at end of year school event)
- Creating an opportunity that is similar to UN Food and Agriculture Organization’s “Global Chef Challenge” (a Junior Global Chef Challenge)
- Youth encouraged & rewarded for spreading what they learn to families, fellow students, the broader community: **Green Advocacy**
- Competitions, prizes and sense of fun