

Echoes of the Earth



As I boarded another plane, the flight attendant read my name on the ticket. "Aiden," she said. I smiled and walked past her; this time I was off to the Amazon rainforest. I work for a company that is studying environmental issues around the world and working with communities to address sustainability challenges. I was excited to go to the Amazon rainforest! I consider it the lungs of the planet, and I've wanted to go my whole life.

When I arrived, I meet a young woman named Stevie, who explains to me that deforestation is driven by human greed and demand for resources. She is upset by this because it will threaten the species that live in the rainforest and with a loss in trees, less carbon is absorbed. Stevie is greatly concerned about the long-term consequences of this deforestation. As I make notes to send back to the company, I think back to a recent adventure that was very similar.

About six months ago, I travelled to the coastline to meet marine biologist, Emma, who was researching coral reefs in the ocean. She showed me pictures of the coral reefs years ago: vibrant, and alive, pulsating with the rhythm of the sea. Then, she explained that when carbon dioxide gas in the atmosphere is dissolved into the ocean, it causes ocean acidification, which is bleaching the coral reefs and greatly affecting marine life. Emma had great ideas for how she could help but said that no one would listen to her ideas or take her seriously. She also knew funding was limited, so she asked the company I work for to help her. She explained her new project as I took notes, pictures, and even collected samples. I would take the ideas back to the company and hoped they could help. She felt optimistic! Since then, project developers have returned to help her begin developing her project.



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The challenges facing Earth are not only confined to natural landscapes, such as forests and oceans. In big cities, the hustle and bustle of human civilization also takes a toll on the environment. As I walked through the city, I thought about all the skyscrapers and concrete I could see. Here I met Tesfa, an environmental scientist who studies pollution. He expressed concern over the amount of pollution that fills the air, rivers, and soil in the city. He felt passion and excitement over introducing sustainable solutions and shared his ideas with the local community at town hall meetings and protests he organized. I thought about ways that I could help Tesfa implement his ideas and we met to discuss. He was excited at all my ideas, and I was excited about his too. We have set up another meeting shortly to discuss further.

One thing that I love about my job is that, among the concern and destruction, there are glimmers of hope. I get to meet people from all over the world who are trying to make a difference and propose sustainable solutions to help maintain our earth now and for future generations.