



# Never Apologize for Dreaming Big

Daniela Fernandez, Sustainable Ocean Alliance, California

## ☀ Call to Action

Join with the Sustainable Ocean Alliance in finding ways to heal and protect our oceans:  
[www.soalliance.org](http://www.soalliance.org)

## ☀ Values

- Imaginative
- Flexible
- Creative
- Committed
- Enthusiastic

## ☀ Lessons Learned

**Daniela changed her career track so she could help encourage entrepreneurs who were doing something to change things.**

**Communication channels are important so that young people can interact with high-level leaders.**

**Think about the problems we face.**  
Find ways to propose them to those who can make them happen.

## **Daniela Fernandez founded the Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) when she was just 19 years old.**

This organization develops leaders, cultivates ideas, and accelerates solutions in the field of ocean health and sustainability – and is the world’s largest network of young environmental leaders, with contributors from more than 150 countries worldwide. SOA leads the way in innovation by offering a leadership program, as well as an Oceans Solutions Accelerator aimed at supporting brilliant startups that can contribute to the health of the ocean.

For her work, Daniela has been recognized by U.S. Secretary John Kerry and former President Bill Clinton among many others. She is also a member of the World Economic Forum’s Friends of Ocean Action, and has been nominated by the Forbes 30 Under 30 for her environmental achievements.

## ☀ Language Arts

### **Choose a waterway conservation/sustainability project.**

Write a three-minute pitch designed to recruit young people to help with this project. Then, write a three-minute pitch designed to attract investors to your project. Compare and contrast these two pitches: How are they similar? How are they different?

### **Which water conservation/sustainability issue needs attention in your area?**

Imagine that you are deciding to start an organization to tackle this issue. Write a one-page mission statement explaining why this cause is important, what your goals are, and how you plan to achieve them.

**Write a script that could be used by a phone operator in a one-minute recruitment call** to motivate someone to get involved in the water conservation/sustainability project you have chosen.

## STEM Activities

**After her enlightening meeting with the United Nations, Daniela grabbed a pen and paper and turned her realizations into a tangible idea that would become the SOA (Sustainable Oceans Alliance).** Many innovative and disruptive ideas start this way, often as a simple idea jotted on a piece of paper. Think about an issue you are passionate about, then grab a pen and paper and brainstorm about three ways you might make an impact. On the first piece of paper, jot down how you could organize people to help you solve your problem. The second page should be about a technological innovation you could create (or use) to solve the problem. On the third page, combine the ideas from the previous two pages, and imagine how this technology could be used in conjunction with your movement to solve the problem you have chosen.

**[Recent research](#)<sup>1</sup> found that in 2016, the United States put between 1.1 and 2.2 billion pounds of plastic into the oceans,** through “littering, dumping, and mismanaged exports.” Put that number into perspective. What else weighs a billion pounds? Make a comparison.

**Since reducing plastic in oceans is of paramount importance (and is specifically addressed in Target #1 of the 14th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), explore a variety of ways we can reduce plastic production.** SDG Indicator 14.1.1 specifically mentions the measuring of “floating plastic debris density.” What does this mean? Are these numbers equal around the world? What are the concentrations of plastic in various parts of the world? Explain these concentrations in simple terms to your classmates. What are the effects of this plastic on ocean ecosystems? Consult [this report](#)<sup>2</sup> for answers to these questions.

## Sustainability Innovations

**Daniella has assisted in the development of many ocean-focused projects and hopes to improve current ideas with the [Sustainable Ocean Alliance Accelerator Program](#)<sup>3</sup>,** which is designed to assist solutionists who are focused on improving ocean health. Design an idea for a start-up organization and create an “elevator pitch” to present to Daniela.

**[Ocean Conservancy](#)<sup>4</sup>** In addition to nonprofit organizations that focus on the development of start-ups, organizations like Ocean Conservancy focus on ocean policy that is based on science-based solutions at both the federal and state government levels.

**When assessing the health of our oceans, identify the issue that is currently the greatest risk to its health.** Research one organization that is similar to the Sustainable Ocean Alliance that is targeting the issue you have identified.

## Sustainability Career Pathways

**Oceanographer.** An oceanographer is a scientist who studies the ocean, thereby helping to protect, conserve, and restore marine environments. Oceanographers can study the life, chemicals, fluid dynamics and physics, or even the geology of the oceans’ floors. Considering that oceans are the true “lungs” of the planet (producing up to 80 percent of the world’s oxygen)—and that climate change deeply threatens the ocean, both through warming and acidification—the world certainly needs more oceanographers. For more on this field and its vast diversity, visit [here](#)<sup>5</sup>.

**Aquarist.** Do you love marine animals but would rather care for them than study them? Aquarists care for marine life in aquariums and research facilities. This is a niche field and certainly an interesting [one to explore](#)<sup>6</sup>.

**Aquaculturist.** One of the great ways to heal the ocean is growing kelp and shellfish to filter and clean it. [Farming the seas, or aquaculture](#)<sup>7</sup>, is a growth industry, as is working for companies that help seed aquaculture operations. An aquaculturist oversees the breeding and growing of fish, staff management, and the operation of aquacultural systems. [Learn more here.](#)<sup>8</sup>

**Ocean Activist.** If we are to reduce marine pollution, including plastic pollution, and overfishing, we're going to need more activists fighting for the well-being of the world's oceans. Organizing beach cleanups, advocacy efforts, and drawing attention to the [14th Sustainable Development Goal](#)<sup>9</sup> are all ways to get involved right now. As you build your experience in activism, perhaps like Daniela you'll be able to make a career out of this passion as well! One way to get started might be to join the [Sustainable Ocean Alliance's Leadership Program.](#)<sup>10</sup>

**Blue Entrepreneur.** SOA also hosts an [Ocean Solutions Accelerator](#)<sup>11</sup> offering mentoring and micro-grant funding to support new initiatives. Finding strategic ways to heal the ocean and creating a needed product or business service are great ways to make a career, and a difference in our world.

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1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/30/climate/plastic-pollution-oceans.html>

2 [https://onesharedocean.org/public\\_store/publications/lmes\\_report\\_chapters/TWAP\\_VOLUME\\_4\\_TECHNICAL\\_REPORT\\_Chapter7.1\\_1DEC2016.pdf](https://onesharedocean.org/public_store/publications/lmes_report_chapters/TWAP_VOLUME_4_TECHNICAL_REPORT_Chapter7.1_1DEC2016.pdf)

3 <https://www.soalliance.org/ocean-solutions-accelerator/>

4 <https://oceanconservancy.org/>

5 <https://www.environmentalscience.org/career/oceanographer>

6 <https://www.environmentalscience.org/career/aquarist>

7 <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/aquaculture>

8 <https://www.discoveryeducation.com/>

9 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal14>

10 <https://www.soalliance.org/leadership>

11 <https://www.soalliance.org/ocean-solutions-accelerator/>

