



A Citizen of the World

Leila Ndabirabe, Maison Shalom
Burundi

☀ Call to Action

Follow Leila on Instagram: @leila.nda

Support the Maison Shalom & help refugee children in Burundi and Rwanda live their dreams of a brighter future:
www.maisonshalom.org

☀ Values

- Altruistic
- Generous
- Compassionate
- Curious
- Leadership

☀ Lessons Learned

Your own unique experiences, whatever they are, are important. They can teach people to look at the world from a different point of view.

Curiosity is a wonderful asset. It helps you to learn, and to see things in a new way. Be curious! Ask questions. Learn from as many people as you can.

You can become an inspiration to others if you follow your passion and are not afraid to tell your story.

Model, activist, citizen of the world.

Leila Ndabirabe, who grew up in Burundi and Belgium, likes to think of herself as being all three in one. In 2000, Leila and her family fled a violent civil war in their home country of Burundi. At first, arriving in Belgium, Leila struggled to fit in in her new country, and reconcile her previous dreams of what Europe would be like with her new reality. But as she grew, both in age and in confidence, she learned to make the most of her opportunities; and now, as a successful model, she has endeavored to give back as much as she can to help future generations of young Burundian women. She has partnered with Marguerite Barankitse of the Maison Shalom to support Burundian refugees in Rwanda, helping them to achieve their dreams of education and a brighter future.

☀ Language Arts

Create a presentation in which you explain the impact of inhabitants of rural areas migrating to cities. Discuss how migration affects the environment, the food supply chain, and the quality of life for people both in cities, and in rural towns.

Compare and contrast the way migration of the people of Burundi is similar to or different from the migration of Central American people to the United States.

Create a 3–5-minute video (you may use animation software, pictures, videos from the internet, etc.) that explains how the increasing lack of food in Burundi contributed to the civil war.

Write a personal essay about how you would use your own professional success to bring attention to, and help solve an important global problem you feel passionate about, or one that

affects you personally.

STEM Activities

In the United States, fame is something that is often admired and desired. However, the trend of celebrities using their fame for positive change and reform is relatively new. Imagine an alternate reality in 10 years: write a letter to your future self explaining how life felt in 2021, and how you would like to contribute to creating an alternate reality by 2031—and a sustainable future for the world.

One of the most important moments in Leila’s life was the one where she took a chance and committed herself to trying to become a model. Often the greatest ideas present the most risk—but also the chance of the greatest rewards. Design a mock company with a focus on sustainability. Include a timeline, budget, core values and team member goals. Then compare this project to an existing organization or company that has sustainability as a core value, and explain why the potential rewards of your project are worth taking the risk.

- **Example:** Tesla is one of the greatest examples of a sustainable, risk vs. reward company. They went “all in” on their ability to enhance and expand electric vehicles, and are now one of the most successful companies in the world.

Leila is one great example of an influential individual using her fame to create positive change in the world.

Research some of your favorite celebrities and identify 2-3 projects they are working on that are helping to create a more sustainable world. Would you like to participate in any of these projects? If so, why?

Sustainability Innovations

Leila is not the only model making waves in the world of sustainability and giving back to her home country. Miranda Kerr is one of the world’s most famous supermodels: she has shifted her attention to [Kora Organics¹](#), a certified organic skincare product that is known to support women-based organizations.

In addition to supermodels like Leila and Miranda serving as advocates for sustainable products, many fashion companies are following suit by improving their sustainable footprint. [Sustainable Apparel Coalition²](#) is composed of companies such as Target, Patagonia, Brooks, and many others to collaborate on targeting both environmental and societal factors that need attention.

In addition to large retailers, companies like [Econic Apparel³](#) allow you to self-design clothing that is sustainable and ethical. They have supplied the David Suzuki Foundation, LUSH, and the Canadian National Swim Team, among their partners.

Sustainability Career Pathways

Refugee Aid Worker. (Health, Community Well-being and Culture; Policy and Governance) Tragically, as climate change triggers more and more disasters, and increasing sea level rise, in the future there will be a growing number of refugees worldwide. Working with refugees, or in international aid operations can be a difficult but also very rewarding career. Learning other languages is an essential skill, as is the ability to live in very basic conditions, but the reward is being able to assist people who are in great need of help. Here is a set of [tips for becoming a refugee aid worker⁴](#).

Translator. Leila’s knowledge of seven languages certainly helped her adapt to her new home in Belgium, and to develop new educational and career opportunities for herself. Language skills increase a person’s career potential significantly--and open up the field of translation, which can be used in international governance, conferences, publishing, medicine, refugee centers, and many other contexts. If you love languages and want to learn about how to become a translator, [read this seven-step guide](#)⁵.

Model with a Cause. It’s definitely not a job for everyone, but as Leila has shown, any position of fame, from artist or novelist to actor or model to entrepreneur in a variety of areas, can be used as a platform to encourage social change and environmental sustainability. [Here’s an introduction on how to become a model](#)⁶.

1 <https://us.koraorganics.com/>

2 <https://apparelcoalition.org/>

3 <https://www.econicapparel.com/>

4 <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/magazine/basic-tips-for-becoming-a-humanitarian-aid-worker/>

5 <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/how-to-become-a-translator/>

6 <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-become-a-model>

