



CAVU's Evolutionary Journey

CAVU's story began almost 20 years ago in Central America where its founders, David and Jordan Smith, incorporated the aerial perspective with stories from local citizens and leaders to create videos that served as advocacy tools for communities impacted by environmental degradation.

This work led to an Emmy and CAVU is now featured in a permanent exhibition at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum for CAVU's use of flight and film for conservation purposes.

Today, CAVU is developing the next generation of youth leaders through our Climate Innovation Challenge (CIC), our free STEAM program that cultivates student leaders to think innovatively and communicate effectively about adapting to our changing climate. CIC was born out of the understanding that the climate crisis is the defining challenge for today's youth, impacting their environment, health, culture, and future job prospects.

CAVU works with teachers and students to help them create local solutions to the climate crisis. They are then given the opportunity to share their solutions with the world using visual storytelling.

"This was definitely the highlight of our academic year!"

-Wanjiru Waugh, The Living Learning Homeschool Group, Kenya

CAVU works across the Americas and Africa to engage youth, with a focus on those most vulnerable to climate change impacts by adapting our program to be responsive to the communities we serve.

In four years, CIC has grown from a small Santa Fe, New Mexico-based program to serving more than 11,000 students in 15 states and 7 countries. Our three year goal is to reach 100,000 students!



CLIMATE
INNOVATION
CHALLENGE

New Website!
New Website!

New Website!

New Website!

New Website!



ClimateInnovationChallenge.org



2023

30,000 students in 20 U.S. states, and throughout India and Kenya



2024

60,000 students across the U.S., and throughout India and Kenya



2025

100,000 students, regional showcases to international finalists competition



= 250 students

"Native youth engagement on climate change includes building relationships, listening, and learning from incredible knowledge holders who are on the ground protecting ancestral foodways, water, language, and land.

I am inspired by stories of hope and resiliency from Indigenous communities who are coming together to share this knowledge and work together for a healthier and more sustainable future."

Jen Santry, CIC Indigenous Education Liaison

"What an incredible experience it has been to work with other Native educators, students, and tribal members to amplify the local efforts to combat climate change. I am not only grateful for the opportunities to share the tools and stories I have gathered along the way, but inspired to witness all of the ways that our communities are leaning into relationship with the land and each other."

Jacy Bowles, CIC Fellow

Engaging Youth Around the World



"This summer, CAVU sponsored eight learners and five educators to attend the Africa Climate Summit 2023 at the First Lady Learners' Pavilion.

Students had an opportunity to lead an engaging session and showcase their CIC videos tackling a problem caused by climate change. The First Lady of Kenya assured learners of her commitment to involve them in climate change action through government initiatives."

Mercy Wambui, CIC Africa Education Liaison

Uplifting our **OUTSTANDING** CIC teachers!



Morgan Baker

Sage International School of Boise
Boise, Idaho



Nicolas Julian Valdes

Cutler Bay Senior High
Miami, Florida



Tara Dayton

Santa Fe Public Schools
Santa Fe, New Mexico



“My entry point into the Climate Innovation Challenge always comes from a discussion where students feel engaged and inspired. I look for a hook that will capture their interest, intrigue them, provide rigor, and all the while create an authentic learning experience.”

CAVU continues growth

Welcome to the new
members of CAVU's
Board and Staff.

To learn more about
them, go to CAVU.org



Introducing, from left to right...

Board Member: Armon Alex

Co-founder, Co-Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Youth Climate Summit
Corpus Christi, TX

Board Member: Brando Crespi

Founder and Executive Chair of Global Biochar
New Mexico and New York

Team Member: Marina Mertz

Florida Education Liaison
Tallahassee, FL

Support Climate Education Today!

We need your help to reach our goal of engaging 100,000 students! All it takes is an investment of \$30 per student, and as we grow the cost per student goes down!
By investing in CIC, you are investing in tomorrow's visionary leaders.

Our fundraising goal for the year is \$500,000 and we have a pledged \$250,000 dollar for dollar match!

CAVU.org/donate

Donate Today!

