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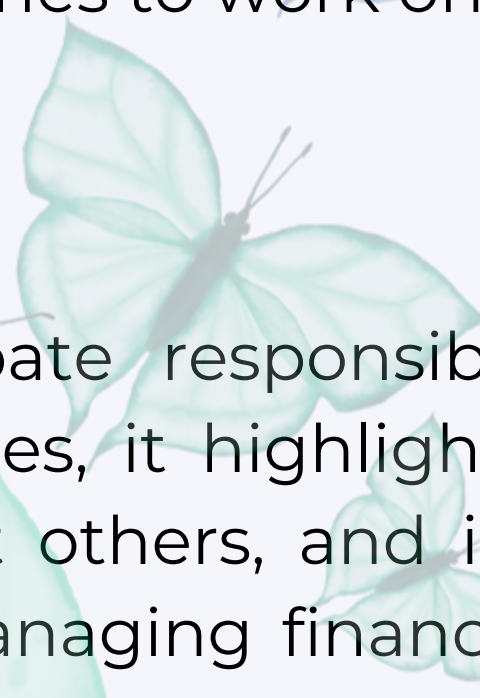
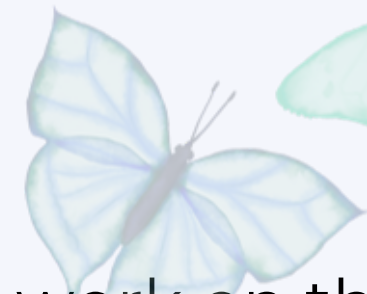
Stories 4 Wings

2024-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000255317

Additional Stories

★ Active Citizenship





This document offers a series of additional stories to work on the concept of **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**.

Active citizenship is the ability to participate responsibly and purposefully in one's community. For inmates, it highlights how their actions affect not only themselves but others, and it helps them develop practical life skills, such as managing finances and making better economic decisions. By fostering civic responsibility and concern for the common good, active citizenship reduces inmates' risk of returning to crime, and it gives them the tools to reintegrate successfully.

The stories selected are:

A Voice for the Earth

This story is inspired by Greta Thunberg and highlights the value of active citizenship through environmental responsibility, participation, and social commitment. By starting a peaceful protest against climate inaction, Greta shows how one person's determination can inspire collective action and raise global awareness. The story emphasizes the importance of using one's voice, standing up for the common good, and actively participating in society to create positive change.

The Courage to Look

This story reflects on active citizenship through empathy, solidarity, and community involvement. After moving to a new city, Giulia becomes aware of the difficult situation of homeless people living in her neighbourhood and decides not to ignore it. Through small acts of kindness and later by volunteering with a local association, she learns that active citizenship means caring for others, participating in the community, and helping create human connections that make society more compassionate and inclusive.



The Doctor Who Healed the World's Wounds

This story is inspired by the life of Gino Strada and highlights active citizenship through solidarity, humanitarian commitment, and social responsibility. Instead of pursuing a comfortable medical career, Gino Strada chose to help victims of war and poverty by founding the organization EMERGENCY. The story emphasizes the importance of taking action to defend human dignity, helping vulnerable communities, and working actively for peace and justice in the world.

The Lake That Fights

This story focuses on active citizenship through environmental protection, community action, and collective responsibility. The discovery of an unexpected urban lake, born in a former industrial area, becomes the starting point for a citizen-led movement to defend it from destruction and real estate development. The story highlights the value of civic engagement, cooperation, and perseverance in protecting shared natural spaces, showing how communities can transform neglected places into protected ecosystems through sustained action and awareness.

The Man Who Planted Trees

This story shows how a farmer transforms a barren, war-affected land into a forest by planting trees over many years, despite initial scepticism from his community. The story highlights the value of long-term commitment, patience, and acting for the common good beyond personal benefit. It also shows how individual initiative can grow into a shared movement, engaging schools and local citizens in the protection and maintenance of a natural space that becomes a lasting community asset.



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Active Citizenship

A Voice for the Earth



On a grey late summer morning in the heart of Europe, a fifteen-year-old girl sat alone in front of the Parliament. She wore a backpack and held a handwritten sign that read: “School strike for climate”. She had always liked school: she loved books, languages, maths and science. But for some time, she had felt a growing urgency within her that she could no longer ignore: it had started at school, during a science lesson on climate change. She had heard about melting glaciers, disappearing species, polluted oceans and devastating fires. She had heard that the Earth was suffering, and that it was human behaviour that was causing it. It had been like a slap in the face for her, and while the others seemed to move on, she couldn't think of anything else. ‘Why isn't anyone doing anything?’ she thought. Faced with all that destruction, with the anxiety rising about a future that seemed increasingly at risk, she felt that her life was becoming small and insignificant compared to the great crisis enveloping the planet and, even more frighteningly, it seemed to her that no one cared. So, one Friday morning, instead of going into class, she sat down on the floor and began her fight. At first, it was almost comical. Some of her classmates secretly took photos of her and shared the images on social media with offensive comments.

Most adults, on the other hand, shook their heads: ‘A little girl who thinks she can change the world with a piece of cardboard... she's naive.’ Or worse, they shouted at her in the street that she was just putting on a show, that she talked about ecology but only wanted to be talked about. Even her teachers were unhappy and surprised by such impulsive behaviour from a student who had always been diligent. The early days were very hard, and her isolation grew. She sat alone for hours with her sign, amid the curious glances and jokes of hurried passers-by. Yet she remained. Friday after Friday, in the cold, rain or sun, she was always there. After a few weeks, one of her classmates joined her. Then a boy from another school arrived. Then ten, then twenty. The local newspapers began to talk about her: “The student who doesn't give up”. The movement grew like a small flame fuelled by the wind. One day, hundreds of young people marched alongside her. They sang, carried banners and filled the squares. Sara was no longer an isolated girl: she had become a symbol.



A year later, a letter arrived. She couldn't believe it: she had been invited to speak at the United Nations. Her hands trembled as she stepped onto the stage in front of dozens of heads of state. She looked at the audience, took a deep breath and began to speak in a firm voice: 'I am not here to ask for a favour. I am here to remind you of your responsibility. We, my generation, are fighting for a future that you are not guaranteeing us. You have the power. But we have the voice. And we will not stop using it.' The room fell silent. Some leaders looked down, others applauded. And in that moment, she realised that she was no longer just a girl with a sign: she was living proof that even a tiny gesture, if repeated with courage, can change history.

A story inspired by the life of Greta Thunberg, climate activist.





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The Courage to Look



As soon as she got off the train, she found herself in a landscape completely different from the one she had left behind. The streets were wider, the buildings tall and grey, and there was a smell of rain and spices in the air that she had never smelt before. She had come to the capital to start an internship at the university, but in reality, what upset her most was not the job, but the feeling of being alone, a stranger, without any points of reference. It was the first time she had been so far away from her family, more than 600 km away from everyone she knew and the places of her childhood. And then the woods, the valley, and the light air of her mountain had now given way to a completely different landscape. Her new home, shared with three other young women, was small and simple, but she thought it would be fine for the short time she would be spending there.

The flat was located in a somewhat suburban neighbourhood, near a covered market that was lively and colourful during the day but emptied at night, leaving behind only cardboard boxes, plastic and a few stray voices. Right there, after a few days, Giulia began to notice figures lying along the walls, under the awnings: men and women sleeping on the street, wrapped in blankets that were too thin and clothes that were too light for the advancing winter. She walked past those people with a strange feeling, a mixture of discomfort, pity and guilt. She kept walking, lowering her eyes like everyone else did, but each time something inside her stirred more and more. She couldn't ignore the fact that someone was sleeping in the cold while she was sheltered in a small but warm room, or that some people had nothing to eat while she saw supermarkets throwing away so much leftover food at the end of the day.

One evening, on her way home from university, she bought some extra bread and a bottle of warm milk from a kiosk. She stopped in front of an elderly man reading a crumpled newspaper under a broken lamp. "Would you like some bread?" she asked hesitantly. The man looked at her in surprise, then smiled softly and accepted. They didn't say much, but that gesture changed something. In the days that followed, Giulia began to bring something with her every day: an old scarf she no longer used, a thermos of hot tea, and a picture book.



Little by little, she got to know some of them: Fatima, who spoke three languages and told her stories about her country; Marko, who had lost his home after an accident at work; and, above all Eleni, a Greek woman who played a small violin to pass the time. Over time, Giulia began to feel less like a stranger.

Chatting with these people had become part of her daily routine, a way to learn a new way of being in the world. She thought that she couldn't do much more on her own, so she decided to join forces with others: she searched the internet and found a local association that helped people in vulnerable situations. Together with a group of volunteers, they began going out almost every evening to bring some comfort and something warm to the people on the streets. She knew that this would not change their lives, but she also understood that caring is not just about giving, but about stopping, listening and sharing a piece of yourself with those around you. One winter morning, as she was leaving her house, she found a piece of paper leaning against her front door. It contained a poem and, at the end, a dedication: "To Giulia, what you do is important." Giulia kept it with her, tucked into her diary. It was proof that, even far from home, you can create a small invisible community, made up of glances, gestures and human warmth, even where you least expect it.





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Active Citizenship

The Doctor Who Healed the World's Wounds



When he graduated with a degree in medicine at the age of 25, his family expected him to have a prosperous career in surgery. He had always been a sensitive and intelligent child and young man, always ready to help others when needed. That was why he had decided to study medicine: to help people who were suffering from illness. While studying, he realised that he was not attracted to an easy career, elegant clinics or academic prestige. What drove him was a deeper need: to restore dignity to those who had lost it. He began his career in Italian hospitals, with state-of-the-art equipment and trained staff. But he soon realised that his true path was not there, among orderly corridors and white walls. He therefore decided to specialise in emergency medicine in order to pursue what would become his true mission: caring for war victims. To this end, he set off for a part of the world that most people only knew through the news. It was there that he saw bodies torn apart by mines, villages transformed into silent ruins, and mutilated women and children clinging to life. For several years, she worked with a large humanitarian organisation in various conflict zones such as Pakistan, Ethiopia, Peru, Afghanistan, Angola, Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina as a war surgeon. Every wound she encountered screamed the same thing: war is never far away, war is here, in the eyes of those who suffer.

Then, together with some loved ones, he decided to found a new humanitarian organisation with the aim of offering free, quality care to the victims of war and poverty. They started with few resources and a lot of courage. Before even beginning to operate, they set about establishing and running hospitals and health centres in the most war-torn places on the planet: Rwanda, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan and Sierra Leone. Each new hospital was a challenge. There were mined roads, hostile governments and a shortage of materials. But there were also faces he never forgot: the boy who could walk again after an operation, the mother who held her daughter close after she was saved from an infection, the village that began to hope again. In the last years of his life, as his body weakened, his gaze remained incandescent. He continued to speak, to travel, to tell stories. He never tired of reminding us that peace is not a utopia, but a concrete daily choice. When he passed away, she left behind a network of hospitals, clinics and projects that continue to treat, train and welcome people to this day.





But above all, he left behind a lasting lesson: that each of us can choose whether to close our eyes to pain or to open them wide and take action. His life shows that you don't need to be powerful to change the world. You just need to have the courage not to look the other way.

A story inspired by the life of Gino Strada, founder of Emergency

Today, EMERGENCY has three hospitals, a maternity centre and a network of over 40 first aid posts in Afghanistan. It has carried out 35 rescue missions in the Mediterranean with its Life Support ship, runs the Salamm centre of excellence in cardiac surgery in Sudan and has treated over 13.2 million people through its projects.





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Active Citizenship

The Lake that Fights



I'll never forget the first time I saw it. It wasn't planned, it wasn't on the map, it wasn't marked by any sign. And yet it was there: a lake, in the heart of the neighborhood, hidden among concrete ruins and rusty fences. The water glistened in the sun, surrounded by reeds and trees that had grown like silent guardians. It seemed like a mirage born from the wounds of a city too accustomed to forgetting its spaces. They'd told me that decades earlier, the large viscose factory had stood there. Thousands of workers, smoke from the chimneys, sirens beating the time. Then came abandonment, emptiness, attempts at real estate speculation. Until, while digging for a shopping center, the bulldozers hit the groundwater. And the water burst in, inexorably, transforming the construction site into a living spring. It was as if the earth itself had decided to say "no." At first, few knew of its existence. Some called it "ghost lake," others "Bullicante Lake" for the bubbles that rose to the surface. But it soon began to become a place of urban pilgrimage: those who managed to squeeze through the grates and hidden passages arrived there, in silence, to contemplate that unexpected miracle. I was among them.

Over time, we understood that it wasn't just a lake, but an ecosystem. The first ducks, dragonflies, even a few turtles found refuge in that water. Where there had been industrial exploitation and abandonment, nature was rewriting its own page. But not everyone saw it that way. For others, that water was merely an obstacle, a bothersome unforeseen event that blocked projects for concrete and profit. Thus began the battle. I remember crowded meetings, in community centers and neighborhood libraries. I remember banners hanging from the fences: "The lake belongs to everyone." I remember the demonstrations, people singing and dancing in front of the gates, mixing anger and celebration.

We, ordinary citizens, found ourselves defenders of a treasure no one had given us, yet we all felt it was ours. It wasn't easy. Every time the City seemed to listen to us, a new threat arose: construction projects, bureaucratic deadlines, legal quibbles. But the lake remained there, stubborn as a heart that never stops beating. And we remained with it. Over time, word spread. Scholars came to study its waters, journalists to tell its story. And every article, every research study, every guided tour reinforced the awareness that this place could no longer be erased.





It had become a symbol of resistance, of care, of a different way of experiencing the city. When it finally received recognition as a "Natural Monument," I remember the feeling of victory. It wasn't just a signature on a decree: it was proof that active citizenship, made up of tireless steps and stubborn voices, could change the destiny of a place.

Today I often return to the lake. I sit on the shore, breathing in that air that smells of grass and water. And I think about how fragile and powerful it is, at the same time. Fragile because it could be threatened again by neglect or greed. Powerful because it was born against all odds, because it united different people under the same banner: the defence of life. Every time I take a friend to see it, I like to tell this story. The story of a lake that shouldn't have existed and yet changed the face of a neighbourhood. The story of how the city, when it decides to fight, can transform a failed construction site into a natural monument, a desert into an oasis, and a wound into hope. And inside me, every time I look at that water, I feel the same thing: that lake belongs not only to the past and the present but also to the future. To those who come after us and will still be able to say, "Here, nature has won. Here, the community has resisted."

Story inspired by the story of the lake in the former Snia-Viscosa area

<https://www.carteinregola.it/il-lago-che-combatte-ha-vinto-di-nuovo/>

<https://animaloci.org/it/il-lago-bullicante/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dcb_Thrq2P8





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Active Citizenship

The Man Who Planted Trees



The road leading from his house to the village was actually a dirt track, beaten into the dry earth. Every day, the young farmer walked half an hour to take the little that the land allowed him to grow to the market to sell. Those were difficult times: the war had left humanity exhausted and the Earth was also in a bad way, having been ravaged by mines and bullets. Many years later, now that energy has given way to the reflectiveness of old age, he cannot say exactly when he decided to take matters into his own hands and try to do something about it. Probably, he thought, it was when the scorching summer had almost killed all the cattle grazing on the land next to his house because the grass on those fields would no longer grow. There were no trees, only barren land. So he began walking across that expanse of land every day, planting rows of seeds one after the other in the hope of bringing trees of all types and shapes to life.

Every day he went out into the fields and planted hundreds of seeds, with the sole purpose of helping the land and the inhabitants of his community return to life. Slowly, word of the young man's endeavour spread throughout the village, and more and more curious people began to visit the fields from time to time to see for themselves what was happening. Many called him deluded: even if the seeds managed to take root in the soil, it would take decades to grow strong, sturdy trees, and by then he would probably be an old man. Why bother putting in so much effort? What most people did not understand was that he was not motivated by selfishness or vanity, but by a deep sense of love and justice that went beyond his own life and needs. In thirty years, he managed to plant and grow 1,000 trees in that desolate area: many seeds had not survived, but the care and dedication he had put into it had led to the birth of a forest. It was a young forest and still growing, of course, but it was the beginning of a green lung that represented an achievement not only for him but for the whole community. In fact, with the reappearance of the trees, the farmers also began to bring their animals back to graze, which benefited their work.



Meanwhile, the farmer also devoted himself to another endeavour: he began to travel around the country telling his story to raise awareness among other people to take care of the trees he had planted. Schools began to take classes to the young forest where children and young people helped the farmer prune the trees, create supports for the seedlings that were suffering, and water them. Gradually, a movement of people of all ages, professions and social backgrounds united by the desire to take care of their local area grew up around the forest. When the farmer was old, he decided, together with others who had become involved in caring for the forest, to set up an association so that this precious public asset could be protected even after his death. In fact, today that mature forest is still there, a common good for its community and named after its creator.

Story inspired by the work “The Man Who Planted Trees” by author Jean Giono.





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