



22 Years of Global Education and Empowering Youth

Global Classrooms DC

2025-2026 Annual Report



WHAT IS GLOBAL CLASSROOMS DC?

Established in 2003, Global Classrooms® DC (GCDC) is the flagship educational program of the United Nations Association of the National Capital Area (UNA-NCA). GCDC is a Model UN program that engages students from grades 5-12 in learning about the United Nations and global issues. By providing a unique global education curriculum, Model UN mini-simulations, and opportunities to participate in annual Model UN conferences, GCDC aims to foster globally aware citizens. The program focuses on enhancing essential skills such as public speaking, negotiation, research, analysis, and writing. GCDC is accessible to all public, private, and international schools, as well as homeschool co-ops, leadership organizations, and clubs in the U.S. and internationally.

The 2025-2026 academic year witnessed key program milestones. The year-round program focused on key issues ranging from artificial intelligence and counter-terrorism to food insecurity and access to education, engaging with schools across the country. The program also returned to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to host the Winter Training Conference. PAHO Deputy Director, Mary Lou Valdez delivered the keynote address for the event. Additionally, the 22nd Spring Model United Nations Conference was hosted at the U.S. Department of State, featuring an introductory video welcome by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, keynote remarks by U.S. Department of State Spokesperson Thomas “Tommy” Pigott, and closing remarks by Senior Official for the International Organization Affairs Bureau, McCoy Pitt.



Himaja Balusa

Himaja Balusa is the Manager of Global Education and leads the Global Classrooms DC (GCDC) program. She began as the GCDC Program Coordinator in December 2023 and transitioned to Manager of Global Education in March 2024. Himaja is a proud graduate of the George Washington University and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). Her academic and professional background includes expertise in international affairs, gender studies, and sustainable development. She has previously worked with non-profits such as the Feminist Majority Foundation, RepresentWomen, and AWARE in Singapore.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

Program Participants

1,001+

Students

44

Schools

50

Volunteers

60

Educators

Where GCDC Works



33% of students,
DC



20% of students,
Maryland



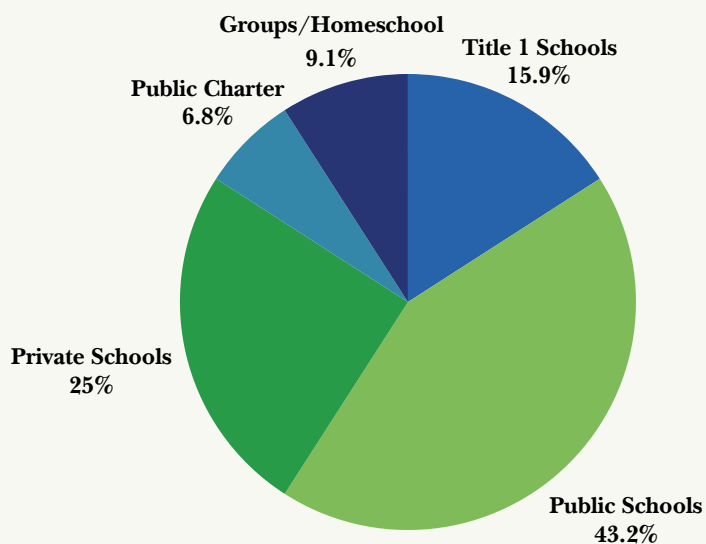
30.4 % of students,
Virginia



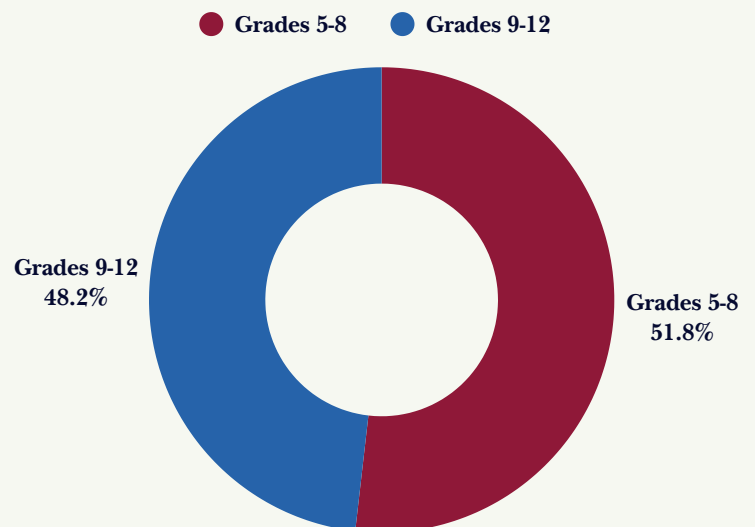
17% of students,
Outside DMV

Types of Schools

15.9 % Title I Schools



Grade Enrollment

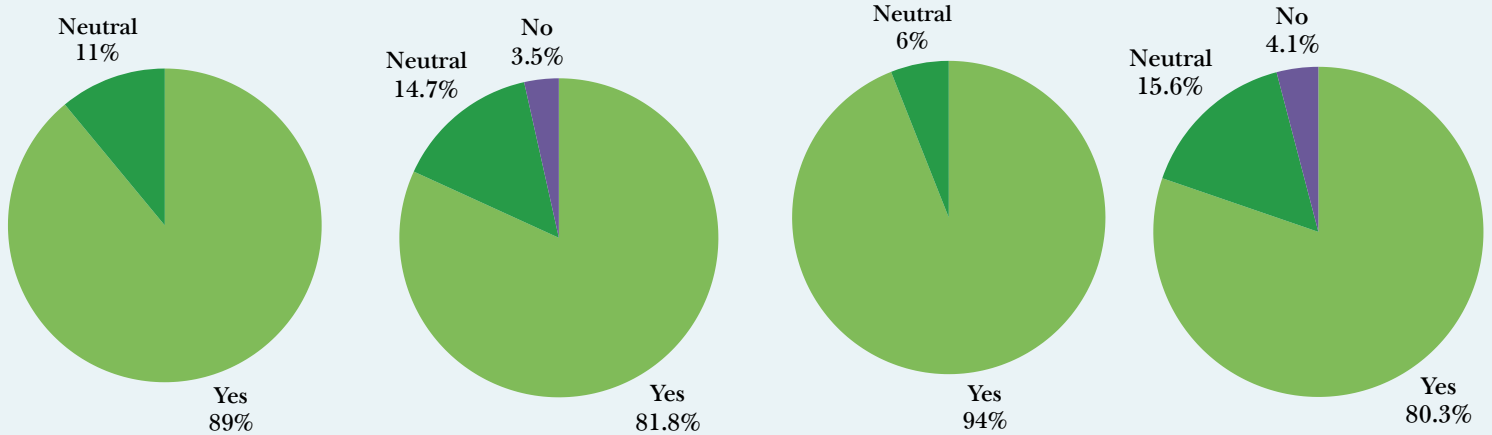


△ Title I : A designation that guarantees federal financial assistance to schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families; helps ensure that all children meet state academic standards, regardless of their families' socio-economic status.

• All graphs and numbers shown here are calculated as percentages of the surveyed students in our programming including our year-round program, Winter and Spring Conferences.

OUR IMPACT

How Do Students Say They Benefit?



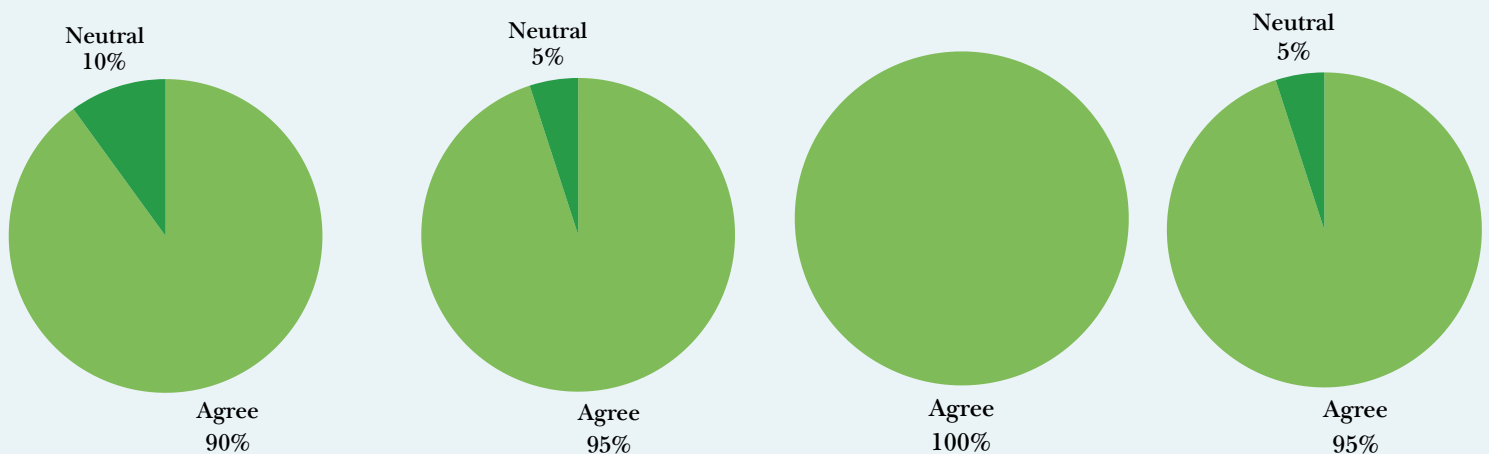
"As a result of the conference, I feel confident using research and facts to support my arguments and decisions during discussions."

"This conference allowed me to work with people from different backgrounds and engage in different perspectives."

"As a result of participating in this conference, I gained skills through Model UN that I can apply to other classes and coursework."

"As a result of the conference, I feel more comfortable applying problem solving and leadership skills in a group setting."

How Do Educators Say They Benefit?



"I was satisfied with the overall conference experience."

"The contents of the conference have made me, as an educator, more confident in encouraging my students to become informed and active global citizens."

"The conference enhanced students' knowledge of the UN & Foreign Affairs."

"I believe my students are now more likely to engage in more meaningful discussions surrounding international topics as a result of concepts from the conference."

△ All graphs and numbers shown here are calculated as percentages of the surveyed students and educators in our programs including our Winter and Spring Conferences.

WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY SAY?

"Through this program, I learned to be a lot more collaborative with other people, especially since we're all from different backgrounds and everyone comes with different ideas... I learned how to connect with other people and bring our ideas together." - Delegate, Spring MUN Conference

"One thing that I think students of this generation tend to grapple with is the idea of how can [they] actually make a difference, and do [they] have any power or responsibility... through activities like Model UN, students can not only understand how the policy process actually works, they can also understand how... their voice can have power if they choose to use it." - Educator, Hardy Middle School

"The best part of being part of this community is the togetherness and the bond that you form... even when you have different ideas, you're all still working towards the same goal." - Delegate, Spring MUN Conference

"If you want to do Model UN, GCDC is the place to go." - Educator, Benjamin Banneker Academic High School



Winter MUN Conference 2026



Winter MUN Conference 2026



Spring MUN Conference 2026

Participants identified these top skills that Model UN helped strengthen:



TEAMWORK



RESEARCH



COMMUNICATION



WRITING

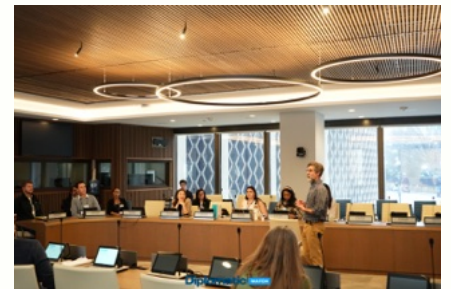


COLLABORATION

Winter MUN Training Conference

March 7, 2026

On March 7, 2026, over 200 students, educators, and partners came together at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for Global Classrooms DC's annual Winter Model UN Training Conference. Held at the Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (WHO), the event focused on global health and international cooperation. The day opened with remarks from UNA-NCA President Paula Boland and PAHO Deputy Director Mary Lou Valdez. Ms. Boland reflected on UNA-NCA's commitment to education and international cooperation, while Ms. Valdez highlighted PAHO's legacy in public health and the importance of collaboration and collective action. Students from across the Washington Metropolitan Area participated in simulations of the WHO and the Historical UN Security Council (UNSC), addressing topics such as viral outbreak prevention and the 1962 health crisis in West New Guinea. Delegates engaged in debate, problem-solving, and resolution-writing, supported by experienced chairs and expert policy advisors from PAHO and UNA-NCA's network, including UNA-NCA Program Assistant Peter Chiu, American University Professor Shannon Hader, National Nuclear Security Administration / Department of Energy professional Caleb Yip, George Mason University graduate students Aidan Fedorochko & Ryan Oh, and Adventist University student Cata Stiehm. The conference also included a session for educators on integrating global education in classrooms facilitated by LearnServe International, and closed with an awards ceremony celebrating student achievement and leadership. The day served as a powerful learning experience that built Model UN skills and deepened participants' understanding of global health and diplomacy.



Annual Spring MUN Conference

April 28, 2026

On April 28, 2026, Global Classrooms DC hosted its 22nd Annual Spring Model UN Conference in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO). Over 500 students, educators, and guests from 30 schools gathered for a day of diplomacy and global dialogue. The Opening Ceremony featured remarks from UNA-NCA President Paula Boland and a special video message from Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who emphasized the importance of international cooperation and the need to reform and renew global institutions like the United Nations. Jarrett James Lash, the 14th UNA-USA Youth Observer to the United Nations, followed, encouraging engagement over cynicism. Student Secretary-General Ronen Yu from Cabin John Middle School delivered a thoughtful address on differing perspectives in diplomacy, followed by keynote speaker U.S. Department of State Spokesperson Thomas "Tommy" Pigott, who encouraged students to advocate strategically and embrace their role as country representatives. Delegates engaged in six committees on topics like outer space, crime, and artificial intelligence. The Educators Session, facilitated by UNA-NCA Global Education Manager Himaja Balusa, sparked conversation on areas for growth. The conference closed with remarks from McCoy Pitt of the IO Bureau, who reflected on the applicability of committee topics to current diplomatic work.



COLLABORATIONS

BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS (U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE)

GCDC collaborated with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO) for the 22nd year to host the annual Spring MUN Conference. Their volunteers served as committee chairs, policy advisors, and supporting logistics.



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION (PAHO)

GCDC returned to PAHO to host the Winter Training Conference. The conference featured two committees focused on public health issues, including viral outbreaks and the 1962 West New Guinea health crisis.

USA FOR UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (USA FOR UNHCR)

GCDC collaborated with USA for UNHCR for the second time on a committee for the Spring 2026 Model UN Conference. Supported by IOM, the committee focused on displacement.



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)



GCDC partnered with IOM for the first time on a committee for the Spring 2026 Model UN Conference. Delegates debated how countries can address issues related to displacement.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON US-ARAB RELATIONS (NCUSAR)

For the fourth time, GCDC partnered with NCUSAR to take members of their summer cohort to serve as program assistants. GCDC also partners on their D.C.-based Model Arab League conferences to open opportunities for GCDC students to participate in additional diplomatic simulations.



GCDC SUPPORTERS

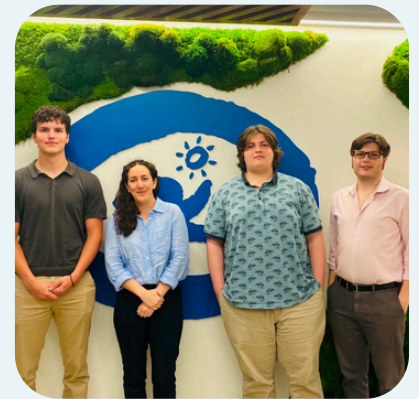
THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE GCDC A SUCCESS THIS YEAR!

Global Classrooms DC Team 2025-26

Himaja Balusa, Global Education Manager

Peter Chiu, Program Assistant
Yuna Chenette, Program Assistant
David Hobbs, Program Assistant
Harper Reuss, Program Assistant

Sarah Soussi, Program Assistant
Cathy Sebastian, Program Assistant
Chelsea Taylor, Program Assistant
Ele Miller, Design Volunteer



2025-2026 GCDC Program Supporters

- Adam Wolf
- Amb. Donald T. Bliss (ret)
- Anne Simmons-Benton
- Billie Ann Day
- Robert Schott
- Charlie & Cordelia Puttkammer
- Katherine Boyce
- Maria Moreno
- Stephen F. Moseley
- Richard Seifman

