

A neighborhood map produced for our learning community by student, Mash07, Lahore, Pakistan

**Out of Eden Learn invites young people and educators to:**

**Slow down**

to observe the world carefully and to listen attentively to others

**Exchange stories**

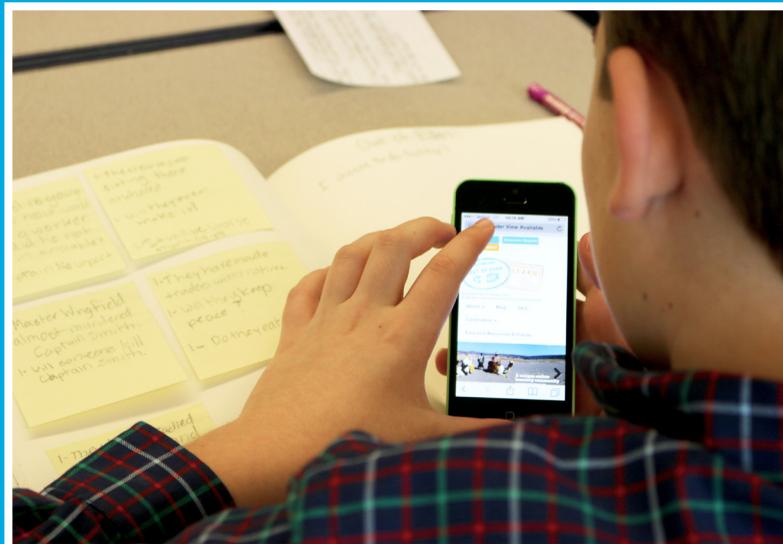
and perspectives about people, place, and identity

**Reflect**

on how their own lives connect to bigger human stories

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Out of Eden Learn student logging in to our platform, Marblehead, Massachusetts, United States

Watch our brief introduction video:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Py-lclmI\\_Ro](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Py-lclmI_Ro)

## Introduction to Out of Eden Learn

[learn.outofedenwalk.com](http://learn.outofedenwalk.com)

In January 2013, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Paul Salopek set off on a seven-year walk from the Rift Valley of Ethiopia, seeking to retrace the migratory pathways of our ancient human ancestors. As he walks, Salopek uses our deep past as a sounding board for interpreting contemporary issues and assessing where we have come in our unfolding human story. His foot-level reporting or “slow journalism” aims to connect the dots between local stories and serve as a counterpoint to the fast-paced, 24-hour news media to which we have become accustomed. His beautifully written dispatches are published by National Geographic (<http://outofedenwalk.nationalgeographic.com>); his journey is documented on a separate, dedicated website (<http://www.outofedenwalk.com>).



Our homepage, where educators and students can register and log in to our interface

Out of Eden Learn is a unique online learning community designed to accompany Paul Salopek’s Out of Eden Walk. Classrooms, after school programs, and individual students from around the world are clustered into small, diverse learning groups to undergo a “learning journey” together. They complete weekly activities, post their responses, and read and respond to others’ posts.

Out of Eden Learn is an initiative of Project Zero, a research center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. With generous support from the Abundance Foundation, our community is open to all schools and students, free of charge.

# Our Research Philosophy is

## Collaborative

We work closely with participating educators and students to incorporate their feedback and ideas. Looking ahead we plan to make our research process increasingly *participatory*.

## Action-oriented

We are committed to developing a high quality, innovative learning space that positively impacts all learners.

## Learning-centric

Our research methods are integrated into our curriculum design, helping to promote student reflection and self-expression.

Some broader questions we are asking:

- What are the benefits of inviting learners to slow down to observe the world carefully and to listen attentively to others?
- What are some challenges and opportunities associated with inviting diverse groups of students to engage in dialogue online?
- How do young people connect their own lives to bigger human stories?



Out of Eden Learn Classroom, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Mapping Out of Eden Learn Classrooms



“I think the most important part of what we learned is to be more open-minded to what’s going on around us and to be more open-minded to what we see...Now, I’m trying to reach out to people that I haven’t reached out to before. I’m trying to learn about people and learn their stories and learn how they’re different from me, and then I’m trying to relate to other people. So, I think that’s how I’ve grown from Out of Eden Learn.”

-King Charles X, Illinois, USA

“Though oceans and mountains may separate us, I have grown a strong bond with many of [the students]. Many of the things they wrote about have touched my heart and left me with a desire to know more. I have lived bits and pieces of their lives through their words. They have shown me the world through several different perspectives. I have learnt the meaning of being a true global citizen.”

-Destiny, 10th grade student, Mumbai, India

“You can’t just explore the world from a textbook. You have to go out and explore it yourself. I just want to hear other people’s perspectives.”

-rvillage, Massachusetts, USA

“Now when they’re looking at stuff they’re that much more aware and they are able to ask people questions about anything they’re looking at... they are constantly now talking about this awareness and asking ‘how is this connected to something else, can I trace this back or is it somehow related to me or to the place I’m in?’ I think there is definitely a lot of perception-changing around anything they’re looking at.”

-Out of Eden Learn Educator, Chennai, India

“I like the new way of learning embodied by this project. In the past, students’ thinking is fairly restricted. But this activity gives them choice and is student-centered. They are slowing down to observe the world around them. They noticed things they haven’t before. I also like the assignments, especially how they take the students outside the classroom. Students are learning by doing and gaining their own personal experience. It’s a good supplement to their classroom learning ... I also liked the posts of students from other countries, through which we see their attitudes towards life. It’s an interaction across the globe.”

-Out of Eden Learn Educator, Shanghai, China

## Project Goals

**Out of Eden Learn invites young people and educators to:**

**Slow down to observe the world carefully and to listen attentively to others**

**Exchange stories and perspectives about people, place, and identity**

**Reflect on how their own lives connect to bigger human stories**

We hope that by taking one of our learning journeys, participants will develop:

- Strategies for slowing down to engage in close looking and careful listening
- A curiosity to learn more about people and places that are not familiar to them
- New insights into their own lives, communities, and identities
- Strategies for situating their own lives within broader geographic and historic contexts
- An inclination and ability to make connections across context, time, and place
- A range of communication skills, including telling stories and interacting with people from varied backgrounds

## Curriculum Overview Core Learning Journey 1: The Present and the Local

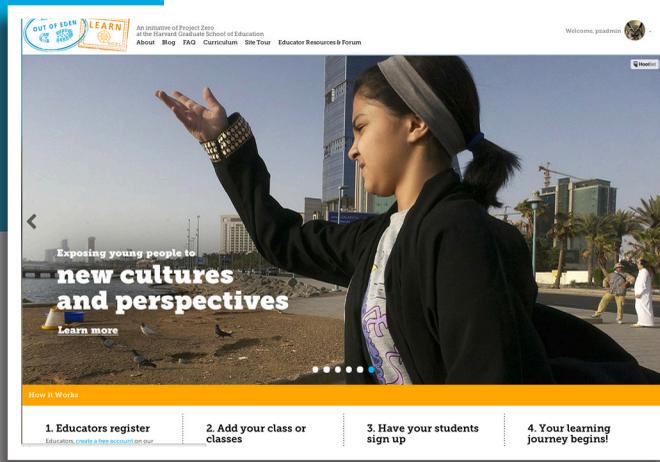
<b>Footstep 1: Setting Off</b>	Students introduce themselves and explain their choice of avatar. They start a conversation about Paul's walk and what interests them about it.
<b>Footstep 2: Create a Neighborhood Map</b>	Students create visual representations of their local area, as seen through their eyes, and share a related story.
<b>Footstep 3: Take a Walk in Your Neighborhood</b>	Students go for a walk in their local area and observe their surroundings carefully; they take photos to share with other participants.
<b>Footstep 4: Listening to Neighbors' Stories</b>	Students interview an adult to learn about someone else's experiences and memories of their local area.
<b>Footstep 5: Documenting the Everyday</b>	Students carefully observe a place they know or something that people in their community do as part of their everyday lives. Drawing inspiration from Paul's work, they create a short video, slideshow, illustrated guide, or evocative description to share with other participants.
<b>Footstep 6: Looking Ahead</b>	Students plan an actual walk they would like to take to try to understand more about the world and/or themselves. Or, they research a place that Paul could walk to from his current location and suggest the kinds of stories he should try to tell; we will pass on their ideas to Paul.

## Curriculum Overview Core Learning Journey 2: The Past and the Global

<b>Footstep 1: Reflecting Back and Looking Forward</b>	Students share some highlights from their first learning journey and select and comment on a photo from Paul's Instagram account.
<b>Footstep 2: Connecting Our Own Lives to the Past</b>	Students make a visual representation of how their own lives connect to the human past or history.
<b>Footstep 3: Learning from Other Generations</b>	Students ask someone aged 50 or over to represent how their lives connect to the past or talk with them about an "old" object that is important to them.
<b>Footstep 4: Connecting Everyday Objects to Bigger Systems</b>	Students closely observe an everyday object, generate questions about it, and then represent how that object connects to a bigger system.
<b>Footstep 5: Noticing Global Forces in the Everyday</b>	Students select a photo from one of the "Everyday..." Instagram sites and observe it carefully, looking for signs of global forces or connections.
<b>Footstep 6: Planning Next Steps</b>	Students design – and ideally complete - their own activity for Out of Eden Learn. Or, they represent their overall learning experience on Out of Eden Learn.

# Inside Out of Eden Learn

Our homepage, where students and educators login



An initiative of Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education  
About Blog FAQ Curriculum Site Tour Educator Resources & Forum

Welcome, pzadmin



## FOOTSTEPS GUIDE

**Setting Off**  
Now it's time for you to do your first post on Out of Eden Learn! The purpose of this first post is for you to...



**DISPATCH**  
**Minaret Dreams**  
Jan 30, 2015  
"When it snowed and the roofs and the people were covered with white snow, the Arabs said, Ash... more"

## LATEST POSTS

**Setting Off**  
44 responses! From Minaret Dreams from NYCSM 1 health issue

Our interface, where students receive instructions, post work, and interact with one another

An example of how each footstep appears on our interface



## Listening to Neighbors' Stories

Now it's your turn to try out your skills at listening and to share a new story with your walking party.

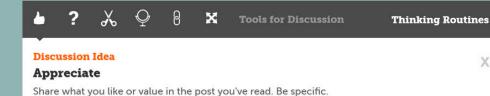
- Your task this week is to talk and listen to an adult who lives or works in your local area. This person could be someone you have never spoken to before or someone you already know. It does not need to be someone who has lived in the area for a long time.
- Ask the person for a story or memory about your local area. For example, how did they come to be in this place? How have they seen the area change over the years? What are some of their memories about the area? Do any particular events in the area stand out in their mind?
- Write up the highlights of your conversation or recreate a story that they told you. Include a short description of the person you talked with – for example, how you know them, the setting where you talked, what they look like, and what they were wearing. Alternatively, you can upload an audio file of you retelling their story in your own words.

## Interact with Your Walking Partners

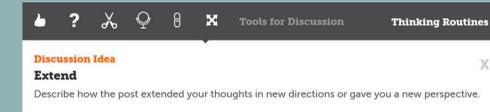
And now we invite you to appreciate someone else's work – in ways that involve you slowing down to listen carefully to what someone else has shared and then giving them some thoughtful feedback. We really look forward to reading your comments.

Read and respond to one post from students in your walking party, using the following two tools:

- Appreciate:** Explain what you appreciate about their work on neighbors' stories. Remember to be specific about what you like or appreciate about their post.



- Extend:** Did the post extend your thinking or give you a new perspective? If so, share how.



- Respond:** Return to your own posts. Respond to anyone who left comments or questions for you; try to carry on the conversation or join in other conversations. Also make sure that you've completed the INTERACT instructions from previous footsteps.

# Inside a Footstep

Parts 1-3 of Core Learning Journey 1, Footstep 4: "Listening to Neighbors' Stories"

Our Dialogue Toolkit, designed to help young people engage with others' work

# Examples of Student Work from Our Learning Community



Vasant10 New Delhi, India • 03.nov.2014

## Take a Walk in Your Neighborhood



Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights, is India's biggest and most important holiday of the year. The festival gets its name from the row of clay lamps or diyas that the Indians light outside their homes to symbolize the inner light that protects us from spiritual darkness. The story is about Lord Rama and his wife Sita's return to Ayodhya, their home, after fourteen years of exile and also about the epic battle between Lord Rama and the Demon Ravan who had captured Sita. The people of Ayodhya lit the way for Lord Rama and Sita with diyas. The above picture is a rangoli made by me. A rangoli is a traditional Indian decoration made particularly during festivals.



Whitedarkness Vail, Colorado United States • 14.nov.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

This is really cool that you have a festival about a battle between Lord Rama and the Demon Ravan. The picture is also really cool and the colors are beautiful.



Epic08978 Vail, Colorado United States • 01.dec.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

The battle sounds very interesting and the art in the photo are very cool.



skiing.lacrosse5812 Vail, Colorado United States • 01.dec.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

This is a very fascinating story. Is religion very important in India? In Vail, we do not have any religious festivals, but we have many music and festivals that are in celebration of our country. Tell me more about the ceremony.



icoyne Durham, NC United States • 12.nov.2014

## Listening to Neighbors' Stories

Something my neighborhood does every year is the Luminaries. Each December, usually the day before the actual event, a bunch of neighbors will sit on our living room floor, and we'll organize all the bags with candles inside. Each house gets a certain amount of bags and candles based on how much sidewalk space they have. We get some of the most, since we live on a corner. Cul-de-sacs get the least, since they're all squished together. After spending an hour or two counting and recounting bags and candles, we head off, with all of the bags in our red wagon. The neighborhood children will all come out to help, be it with the wagon, or going around in a parent's car, running up to doors. The next day, everyone will set out their bags and candles, with something like a brick or sand inside to hold it down. That night, everyone will light their candles, and people will come from all over to see the lights all along the sidewalks. Every year, my family and I will take a walk around the neighborhood and admire the lights. Each house has them set up a little differently, and it's always fun afterwards to go inside and have some hot cocoa and cookies. This is really amazing and beautiful tradition that we do, and I hope that someone will always be around to tell the story when others forget. For good measure, here are some pictures of the Luminaries!



Vickyp6 Barcelona, Spain • 17.nov.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

This looks so nice. What do you do this for? I mean what's the point of doing this? Do you make a wish in every candle you light up?



Vicky Barcelona, Spain • 17.nov.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

Wow! So nice!, I wish we did this too in my neighbourhood. As you said: "This is really amazing and beautiful tradition". Is this tradition typical from your town, or people all over the United States do it? Regards, Vicky



Carla99 Barcelona, Spain • 17.nov.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

Very nice neighborhood, and story



mhmontserrat Barcelona, Spain • 17.nov.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

It's amazing!! Whats the reason for you to do this? What are you celebrating to light up all those candles? I wish that here in Barcelona we could also do it, and decorate all the streets with candles. Its a really beautiful tradition!



minivila99 Barcelona, Spain • 17.nov.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

Nice! Good structure and information! I like so much your photo!



SoyLeyenda99 Barcelona, Spain • 17.nov.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

I love that things! Letting go the candles with a wish! I saw it in many films and I love that film moment, all people together, without discriminating which skin color they have or what they think or like. Just enjoying the special moment.



morgmarg Crystal Lake, IL United States • 02.dec.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

This is super cool and pretty! I wish my neighborhood did fun things like that! It seems as though you have a pretty united neighborhood which is awesome. This is a great idea, maybe I'll share it with my family- thanks for sharing!



MrKrabs123 Crystal Lake, IL United States • 07.dec.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

This is probably the coolest thing that I have ever heard and I wish I could experience this with my neighborhood! This is just a little thing with your neighborhood, but the little things really do bring the most fun and this sounds like so much fun! I also really like the picture!



MiaFia Crystal Lake, IL United States • 08.dec.2014  
[reply](#) [flag](#)

This is so pretty, it looks like something out of a movie. I wish I could experience something like this! It must be so fun and exciting once this day comes since you have been looking forward to it for so long!

Bubblebandit, Tanunda, Australia, "Create a Neighborhood Map"

"If I were to have a walk it would be for endangered species. I would travel all around the world studying

and helping endangered species. This is the map that shows you the trail and animals that I will see. The saola is an animal that is known as the Asian unicorn! There are only a couple dozen in the world. The tree kangaroo is an animal that lives in trees and one of the wonderful animals of Australia. I think of the narwhal as the unicorn of the sea and they have sword fights at sea!"

-*njbvillage, Massachusetts, United States, "Looking Ahead"*

"Very cool idea, njbvillage. This is exactly what scientists and journalists do: travel to different places to study an issue or problem, gather information, think about it, organize it, text it to make certain its true, and then share it with the rest of the world. We are living through a great ecological crisis on our planet now, so knowing more about endangered species is very important—we have to understand what the world holds, so we can prevent

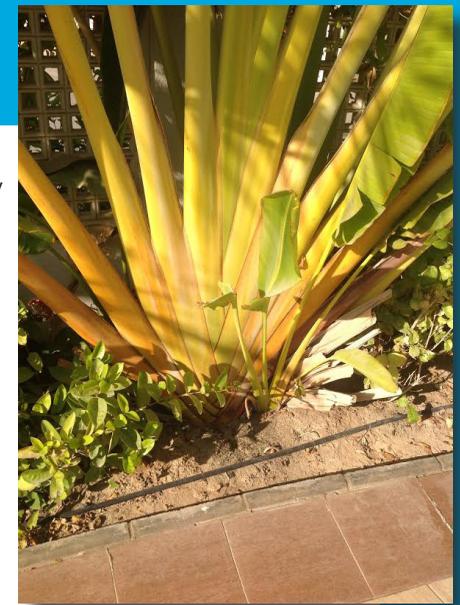
more of its biological riches from being lost. Meanwhile, in my own journey, I have been very lucky to have the assistance of great animal souls—from the mule Kirkatir in Turkey to camels Fares and Seema in Saudi Arabia."

-*Paul Salopek*



"So one of the things that I saw that really fascinated me was this plant! Now why a plant? you may ask. Well, when you see something in real life you'd expect it to be 3D, right? This is 3D, but it looks like its taken right out of a painting! It looks so simple yet its so complicated! I want everyone to understand that if you look closely at something, then that thing might just fascinate you a lot! Enjoy the little things in life..."

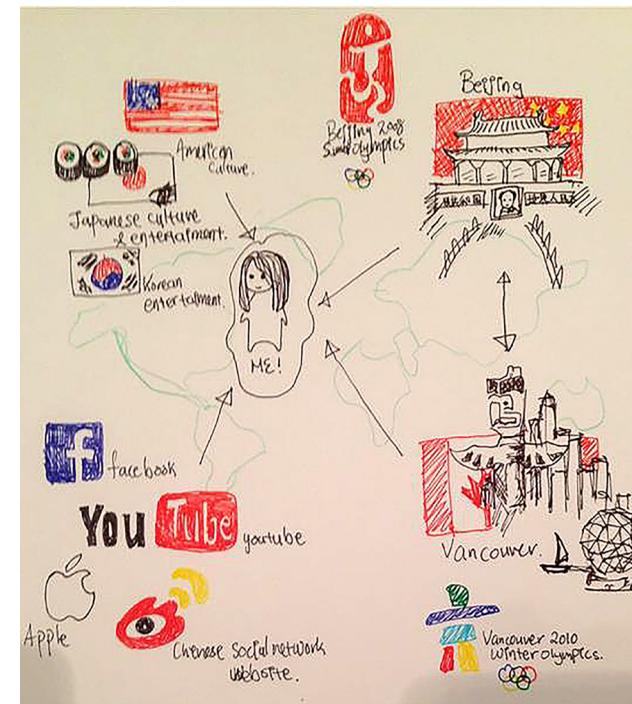
-*PotterGirlDS, Muscat, Oman, "Take a Walk in Your Neighborhood"*



I decided to look at features of China and Canada that have shaped me into who I am. Living in Vancouver, a multicultural society, I am influenced by cultures from all around the world. Being the generation living with lots of technology, I chose to draw various social network

services that I use. Finally, as a Chinese-Canadian who came from Beijing to live in Vancouver, I found myself to be proud of both cities when events like the 2010 Vancouver winter Olympics and the 2008 Beijing summer Olympics happen.

-*Montreal, Vancouver, Canada, "Connecting our Own Lives to the Past"*





**Out of Eden Learn is an initiative of  
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**PZ**



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