



Learner's Name: JP Teaero

Age: 17

Location: Richmond, Virginia (Climate Refugee Camp)

How would you summarize your background?

My family and I are climate refugees from Kiribati. We had family here in the Bay Area so came here when the eviction orders became mandatory. We live at this refugee camp. We've been here for a few years now. It's pretty cool for what it is, but it's crowded. Now that I'm older and my parents are a little more comfortable trusting that I'll be okay here, it's easier to get off camp now and then, and interact more with the American culture around us. It's still a little weird, but I want to get comfortable with how things are here.

Tell me more about your experiences and your family's background.

We were forced to migrate, and came from communities that weren't very well-off to start with, and now we live largely on assistance from a variety of NGOs. Our way of life has also disappeared in reality, although there are lots of elders and scholars who are determined to keep our cultures alive. I think emigration was a big shock for my whole family. My parents are finding it very hard to adjust, even though my mom has an uncle and aunt here.

How do you like to learn?

I like to learn by doing and am hesitant to augment. There's a federal program here to give students here at the camp the opportunity to try some cognitive augmentations. My friend Keola is very ambitious. He wants to be a scientist and has applied for every enhancement available. He takes stuff everyday and is able to stay up for days at a stretch working on things. He says he's waiting to try one of the information implants.

How would you describe your current learning experiences?

Even though I'm at a kind of makeshift school set up for the camp, and we depend on grants for access to any of the cutting-edge stuff, there is enough personalization that I can do advanced study in climate science, and much easier classes in English and Spanish. Changing to the US system was good.

Please provide an overview of your learning experiences so far.

My learning has been very disrupted. Back on Kiribati as a child I did go to school most of the time, but our whole community was very focused on climate change and sea-level rise, and arguing for help from the international community, so we learned a lot about climate science and international politics, but not much else. And then of course every time a big storm came through life was disrupted for weeks at a time.

What do you find most motivating?

I don't know if I feel very motivated about anything particularly. I know a lot of people in the camp feel angry about what has happened to Pacific Island culture, historically and through climate change, and that anger motivates them to fight, or advocate, or whatever. But I'm a roll with it kind of person. This is the way things are. I can't change them. I just want to live my life, earn enough money to cover food and shelter, and spend time with my family and friends.

What you hope to do when you are older?

I know my history has given me a head-start in climate science, so that's probably what I'll end up doing. I think I can probably get work here in the delta, helping with the climate change management program. I mostly want a good job so that I can settle down and get my family out of the camp and into a house of our own.

What worries you as you think about your future?

Am I limiting myself, and my expectations for myself, because other people see me as a poor immigrant, living on the charity of others? Have I internalized being a second-class citizen?