

# Youth Groups Needed to Achieve the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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## Abstract

*The quest to achieve “sustainable development” has been a quixotic, long-term goal for all people. Sustainable development has been defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Could it ever be accomplished? Starting with the three main pillars of “sustainability”: 1) social, 2) environmental, and 3) economic, which are often referred to as “people, planet, and profits,” a strategy will be proposed here. Some achievements have been made, but there is no larger initiative to face the planet than achieving “sustainable development” in a globalized way. The largest untapped force to achieve the mega-goal is Youth. After discussing more formally the three parts of sustainable development, the UN’s 17 goals of sustainable development, a proposition will be proffered which focuses on the energy of youth to be harnessed to achieve the UN’s 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). This article will present an overview of existing business youth organizations, their work towards the United Nations 17 SDGs, and proposes a concept for a new organization: Business Youth for Sustainable Development (BY4SD). The establishment of BY4SD can accelerate the UN’s achievement of its 17 sustainable development goals.*

**Keywords:** civic engagement, corporate social responsibility, haves, have-nots, globalization, personal social responsibility, service-learning, sustainability, sustainable development goals, United Nations

## 1. Introduction

The concept of “sustainable development” has been discussed for many years, but the conception of the term was put forth in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission, formerly known as the World Commission of Environment and Development (WCED), which issued their magnum opus, *Our Common Future*. The term has come to mean, “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” *Our Common Future* was this UN body’s assessment -- after much analysis, synthesis, expert testimony from industrialists, scientists, NGO representatives, and the general public -- of the dismal future within our commonality. In other words, the world is on an unsustainable path.

This 1987 work led to the 1992 Earth Summit, formerly known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio de Janeiro. The result of the Rio meeting was “hugs and kisses” for all who attended from 172 countries, with 108 heads of state, and a final document: Agenda 21. Agenda 21 set forth the uniform marching orders to reverse the unsustainable path being taken with current development practices.

The 1996 Kyoto Protocol on climate change followed, with less participation than the Earth Summit -- the United States did not participate for fear that participating would lead to a “reduction” in its way of life. The Protocol’s result was agreement that mandatory targets on greenhouse-gas

emissions for the world's leading economies were set and accepted, though not by the United States, and there was the much less hugging and kissing.

*An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), "Rio + 20," and *An Inconvenient Sequel* (2017) followed -- all striving to accomplish the elusive goal of "sustainable development." This goal may have been set forth by senior colleagues, who may all agree what the goal is, but cannot achieve said goal without the concerted effort of all individuals and from all classes of people. The "haves," "have-nots," industrialized, non-industrialized, senior folk, junior folk, man and woman, and must involve "youth." In fact, the United Nations put forth its "17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," all of them need the input of "youth." The concept introduced here is the development of "business youth" programs, worldwide, to achieve the sustainable development needs which have been sought.

## **2. Youth Movement**

For each of the SDGs there are international (and domestic) youth groups that address each SDG with gusto. Youth and youth groups are important to create a "change in life." Remember, driving in the 1970s and before? No seat belt was required, but in 1984, New York became the first state to require the wearing of seat belts. Within a short amount of time, with the regular encouragement of youth to promote safety for mom and dad in automobiles, all got used to fastening them. Remember the commercials, which promulgated the "stop smoking" movement, and youth were employed effectively to encourage older folk to stop. Youth -- in numbers -- are powerful. Recently, the tragic event at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, resulted in a mega student (youth) response to the Valentine's Day 2018 shooting, which got the world's attention.

Many youth programs exist -- ENACTUS, Future Business Leaders of America, Junior Achievement, Operation Enterprise, United Nations Youth Unit -- all striving towards the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include: quality education (No. 4), industry innovation and infrastructure (No. 9), and partnerships for the goals (No. 17). Perhaps there could be no greater facilitator in this realm than the creation of a nonprofit organization, called "*Business Youth for Sustainable Development*" (BY4SD). An international business youth organization will have the energy to get it done by assembling the youth at business schools, state organizations, regional organizations, national organizations, international organizations, which could help "shift the paradigm" for all. The concept of "sustainable development" was re-born in 2012 at the "Rio + 20 Convention" in Rio de Janeiro, where it was "christened" twenty years before at the 1992 Earth Summit. The concept, though, was born to the world in the 1987 book, "Our Common Future" by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED).

## **3. Three-Legged Stool of Sustainable Development**

The confluence of the three needed constituent parts of the sustainable development include: social, environment, economic. Some look at this as the "triple bottom line" (3-P's): people, planet, profits of sustainability -- Social/People; Environment/Planet, Economic/Profit.

All three parts of the "triple bottom line" are needed in equal portions to accomplish sustainability. Anything less is not lasting, as that may lead to either bearable, equitable, or viable result, but not a sustainable result. If it is social and environment, but not economic, it is only bearable or livable. If it is social and economic, but not environment, it is only equitable. If it is environment and economic, but not social, it is only viable. All three parts are need to cover sustainability.

### ***Environment Component***

The *environment* component has been known for years and years and years, from Thomas Robert Malthus, who wrote, “An Essay on the Principles of Population,” published in the 1800s to Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir and our national parks, the environment has been considered greatly. The author, having just returned from the environmental sanctuary of Muir Woods in January 2018, one can only imagine what the world would look like if our focus was on sustainable development for life, from infancy to youth to adulthood. Eyes were opened with some landmarks events: Silent Spring (Rachel Carson, 1962); Three Mile Island (1979); Love Canal (1980); Chernobyl (1986); Exxon Valdez (1989); and BP Oil Spill (2010). The world’s environment is very considered and always current.

The Malthusian Theory of Population shows that while food production and resources grow at sort of an arithmetic rate, the population is growing exponentially. What will happen when the needs of the population outpace the availability of food production and resources? Some say it has. Will conflict, violence, and wars become inevitable? Some say they have. A famous quote of Malthus from 1798:

*“The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race. The vices of mankind are active and able ministers of depopulation. They are the precursors in the great army of destruction, and often finish the dreadful work themselves. But should they fail in this war of extermination, sickly seasons, epidemics, pestilence, and plague advance in terrific array, and sweep off their thousands and tens of thousands. Should success be still incomplete, gigantic inevitable famine stalks in the rear, and with one might blow levels the population with the food of the world.”*

Malthus was not the kind of person to invite to a summer party for levity and a good time. When the needs of the population exceed the available resources, trouble results.

### ***Social Component***

The *social* element came home to roost clearly with the advent of the Internet and advanced modern technology: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Facebook is indeed recognized as a force when causes of the Arab Spring are discussed. With the “shrinking of the world” due to social media, ending of the Cold War, which enabled many countries (and their people) to bond together in trade: EU, NAFTA, ASEAN. Hence, the *social* element is addressed.

The social part is still growing, led by youth, and people are making significant headway in all sorts of realms, from the LGBTQ area to the Donald Trump Presidency to the 2018 “Me Too” movement.

### ***Economic Component***

The *economic* component, which includes *business*, has not yet been as advanced as it should be. The fact is that: Someone has to pay, and it will take time to get there. Differences between haves and have-nots, developed and lesser developed, individualist and collectivist, and more remind people of differences which will take years to decipher. Thus, *business* and *business youth*, who have the time and longevity ahead, will have a key role to play.

How to get business youth involved?

#### 4. Youth Programs for Achieving the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Amidst Globalization

There is no larger initiative to face than “Global Sustainable Development” and no greater project than the creation of a nonprofit organization, called “**Business Youth for Sustainable Development**” (BY4SD). Nonprofits and social enterprises, which are not profit driven, are hence much more balanced in doing what is right, are at the heart of this project.

A youth organization will first assemble the youth at business schools, first locally then state-wide, then regionally, then nationally, into a knowledgeable and then action-oriented cadre of cogs in the wheels grinding towards achieving sustainable development. The outcomes will be many, but here are a few:

- New business courses, highlighting “sustainability” to advance schools and differentiate schools from other business schools,
- New articles and books co-written by students and faculty,
- New financial support, attracted through grants, to advance “BY4SD” to become a “sustainable” part of the business community.

The topic of sustainability interested the world’s diverse interests in a multitude of standpoints -- the haves and have-nots, collective interests and individual interests, long-term vs. short-term, etc. “**BY4SD**” will engage youth (students), who want to “DO,” and engage in *service-learning* and make an impact in managing our collective efforts towards achieving sustainable development. The functions and concepts of the POLC of management are the same - planning, organizing, leading, and controlling - but the mode is very different. Getting individual youth and students involved and energized through service-learning will introduce the topic of “*personal social responsibility*” (PSR), in addition to CSR (corporate social responsibility), whose challenges will be addressed by individuals. CSR is more well-known and involves the corporation. PSR could rightly be a component of organizational behavior, which focuses on individuals within organizations. The corporate social responsibility and personal social responsibility components were based on the growing interest in Eugene Lang’s vision of “service-learning and civic engagement,” which is absolutely imperative for our growth in the globally-interconnected world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Lang 2005).

This concept will consider integrating and raising awareness of the issues around scarcity of resources, environmental costs (contingent liabilities, potential taxes on emissions), markets in environmental attributes (carbon credits, wetlands rights, air pollution rights), employee morale (many employers believe that sustainable practices are important to the generation of new hires), and green marketing (separating authentic brand equity in sustainability form claims based on little evidence). Sustainability, like ethics, is best understood from a business perspective by integration into the basic disciplines.

Various pedagogical models have not been successful for this topic. Indeed, how sustainability is dealt with in a business context and how it would be most relevant for students is critical. The following list illustrates some of the key influential players:

- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- United Nations-Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Environmental Advocates of New York

- Environmental Defense League
- Nature Conservancy
- Citizens Campaign for the Environment
- Center for Clean Air Policy (NY), and
- Earth Justice (NY)

Much more needs to be done, though, if the youth movement is to take hold and progress towards the 17 SDGs is to be achieved.

### ***Globalization Considerations for Youth***

First of all, the issues that abound because of globalization, starting in earnest with the creation of the Internet and the end of the Cold War (De Feis, Grunewald, De Feis, 2016) and the diminishment of communism and its effects must be discussed. Surely, even China, which in the 1970s was referred to as “Red China,” indicating extensive communism, is more or less “red, white, and blue China,” now, with entry into the World Trade Organization in 2002, and the for-profit entrepreneurial success of Alibaba, for instance. But how are the benefits of globalization shared by the industrialized versus the non-industrialized world, leading to arguments for and against, posed emphatically by Bhagwati (2004) and Stiglitz (2002, 2006). Needless to say there are some adverse impacts of globalization on countries that do derive positive benefits. Still some countries fail to benefit, but youth will play a specific role.

Globalization is all around and it is here to stay, and it should be taught and understood by the youth of the world, so one must work towards recognizing it as an influence in today’s world. Also, globalization may be one of the moderating variables towards achieving sustainable development, which again is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). That is, the more globalization is embraced the better are the chances for reaching the goals of sustainable development. If less globalization (and more protectionism) is supported, youth will suffer, and, indeed, the worse are the chances.

With the fall of communism, culminating with the end of the Soviet Union, with the Soviet leaders voting communism out of existence in 1991; the Berlin wall being dismantled in 1989, further spurring the breakdown of the world’s trade barriers; bonding together of countries (EU, NAFTA, ASEAN); and, now, social media, there have been resulting increases in international business, multinational business, and globalized pursuits. Globalization can be seen as: “global competition characterized by networks that bind countries, institutions, and people in an interdependent global economy” (Deresky, 2017). It is the youth today who will reap the bigger and more sustained benefits of the fall of communism.

But the question is: *Will the benefits of globalization for the industrialized and non-industrialized world aid in the ultimate quest to achieve “sustainable development”?* Long before the present day, the world was very simple and very static; now the world has become very complex and very dynamic. Customers are no longer neighbors of the local community, but instead customers come from all over the world. Suppliers, too, are from all over the world. If one thinks about the external environment -- task (industry) environment, general (societal) environment, and natural environment -- and the impacts that globalization has had on all aspects of life, one can see why it is the ubiquitous calling of our day.

Youth will see it through, as youth will be around for eternity, in a sense. When communism fell in the 1990s, and the world moved more towards a free-market realm, it was the older folk who yearned for the return of a “planned economy.” Since it will take years for the vast benefits of a free-market

mentality to take hold, the older folk do not have years to spare, so the older folk prefer the “cradle to grave” guarantee, albeit there are the hardships of reduced freedoms.

The general (societal) environment has elements in it like technological issues, demographics, economic issues, and globalization -- yet globalization impacts all of the other forces. Globalization and technological issues affect countries classified as ‘haves’ and the countries that are ‘have-nots,’ brought together ever more forcefully with the Internet and the open communication of social media. Globalization and demographics, with changing population (less domestic and more global and international), changing desires (less homogeneity, more heterogeneity), and changing attitudes toward religions, cultures, and peoples. Globalization and economic issues, with supply and demand issues, money supply issues, and currency exchange rates tie countries together like no time before.

Trading blocks around the world are now common: European Union, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Mercosur (Southern Market), CARICOM (Caribbean Market), and others. Barriers are being broken down along the way, with the efforts of the WTO (World Trade Organization), and its predecessor GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), the International Monetary Fund, World Bank (2017), and even the United Nations leading the way. Ever since the decline of communism and the rise of democratic, free-market reforms globalization has become part of the way of life.

In the task (industry) or specific environment, where customers exist, who are now global, and suppliers, who are now global, and competitors, who are now global, but is this a good thing? Globalization, apart from economic activity, refers to other aspects of life. The circulation and distribution of information mainly through the Internet and the facilitation of communications among people from different corners of the earth (e.g., social media) are simple examples, which validate the globalization concept. This international communication network allows the transmission of political and cultural ideology, the spreading of fashion trends, and the dissemination of ideas worldwide (Bitzenis 2004). However, globalization and related issues such as outsourcing are hotly debated topics, as there are perceived costs and benefits (pros and cons) (Langenfeld and Nieberding 2005). Indeed, globalization is here to stay and the reduction of trade barriers will yield a more peaceful existence for everybody. Perhaps.

### ***United Nations: 17 Sustainable Development Goals – The Global Goals for Sustainable Development***

In 2015, countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which included the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are:

- Goal 1: No Poverty
- Goal 2: Zero Hunger
- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being
- Goal 4: Quality Education
- Goal 5: Gender Equality
- Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Goal 10: Reduced Inequality
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- Goal 13: Climate Action
- Goal 14: Life Below Water
- Goal 15: Life on Land
- Goal 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institution
- Goal 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goal

Below each goal is be discussed with examples of how youth groups are making strides towards achieving the particular goal.

*Goal 1: No Poverty - End poverty in all its forms everywhere*

The target is to “eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.90 a day” (UN Division for Social Policy and Development Disability website). The need is to take the lead from youth organizations like ENACTUS, which is “a community of student, academic and business leaders committed to using the power of entrepreneurial action to transform lives and shape a better more sustainable world” (ENACTUS website). EN-ACT-US is an acronym from “entrepreneurial, action, and us.” For example, an ENACTUS team in Swaziland developed a plan for vegetable production that would meet the local needs and would generate profits.

ENACTUS was founded forty years ago, and now has more than 72,000 student members, over 1,700 college/university programs, in 36 countries. ENACTUS also has 550 corporate, organizational, and individual partners. The SIFE group (Students In Free Enterprise) merged with ENACTUS, and now orchestrates activities all over the world.

*Goal 2: Zero Hunger - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*

How foods grow, what foods grow, what is transported, and what gets consumed all need to be examined. The national birth of “farmers markets” introduces us to sustainability in agriculture. For example, the author is on the Board of a not-for-profit farmer’s market -- AirSoilWater -- founded in Milford, Pennsylvania, right on the Delaware River, which plays its part as a cog on the wheel of progress. Soils, clean water, forests and what is needed to support the increasing population are becoming irreversibly degraded. The lead can be taken from Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), which was founded in Columbia University in New York City. FBLA, for instance, which is the largest student business organization in the world with 230,000 members. These organizations do positive, creative initiatives for people all around to secure sufficient and sustainable food in entrepreneurial ways.

*Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which is another youth program, has supported implementation plans geared to reduce adolescent pregnancy of the Caribbean, Ghana, Guyana, Myanmar, and elsewhere, working with UNICEF. UNFPA was created in 1969, as the UN General Assembly declared “parents have the exclusive right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of children.” The UNICEF youth program was created over 70 years ago, and now works in 190 countries and territories improving the lives of children and their families defending children’s right.

*Goal 4: Quality Education - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*

The goal of *quality education* is a goal that all youth programs embrace. Quality education is strived for by ENACTUS, Future Business Leaders of America, Junior Achievement, United Nations Youth Unit, recognizing the indisputable positive correlation between education and development. The least developed countries in the world, also hold the lowest educational achievement. It is as simple as that.

*Goal 5: Gender Equality - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*

The diversity statement of Junior Achievement states: “Junior Achievement is the recognized leader in “empowering young people to own their economic success” through volunteer-led, experiential learning. Dedication to providing a positive, enriching learning experience free of bias is the mantra of Junior Achievement. Junior Achievement welcomes K-12 students, volunteers and potential staff regardless of race, religion, age, gender, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or any other legally protected characteristic.”

Junior Achievement boasts that it reached 4,845,904 students; 212,101 classes; 243,756 volunteers; and 21,955 schools in 2016-2017 with a diversity statement (above) that either sex would be proud to have. Thus, youth groups, who all have similar statements and beliefs about equality, must be utilized.

*Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*

The Associate Member Forum (AMF) of the Metropolitan Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has clean water usage and sanitation as its goal. (For one year, 1989-1990, the author served as the president of the AMF of the Met Section.) Youth programs should be tapped for much-needed volunteer work in this area.

*Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all*

“*Kilowatts for Education*” has a mission statement as follows: “Offer a tremendous opportunity for educational institutions through the use of renewable energy projects to offset their power use with a sustainable and responsible resource while educating their students on the benefits of renewable energy.” This student (youth) group would be primed to explore a program, which could even be sponsored by a grant-giving foundation.

*Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*

Karen Higgins, PhD, wrote, “*Economic growth and sustainability – Are they mutually exclusive: Striking a balance between unbounded economic growth and sustainability requires a new mindset*” (2013), which talked about present-day society and our dependence on water, oxygen, and other natural elements and the connection between the economy and earth. Obviously, the aspect of sustainability is important, and the long-term reversal of our non-sustainable ways, which requires the masses to retreat from its. When we talk of the masses, a mindset, and aggressive pursuit with energy, it appears that youth are a natural.

*Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*

The American Management Association’s *Operation Enterprise*, which is its youth program of the AMA -- the author served as executive director for a year and a half -- has wonderful programs for youth, interested industry and entrepreneurship. Through the website of the U.S. Small Business Administration, for instance, entrepreneurs can accomplish new approaches to repair the failing infrastructure of our country. President Trump noted failing infrastructure as one of America’s priorities, which has been highlighted similarly by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

*Goal 10: Reduced Inequality*

In the international community, the most vulnerable nations are the least developed with the least education, so their youth have the greatest time here to work towards a reversal. The reversal is not going to come from people in their eighties. While income inequality between countries may have been reduced, the income inequality within countries has risen. So has the resulting conflict between the haves and the have-nots. The three dimensions of sustainable development -- economic, social and environmental -- need to be addressed by young leaders armed with the youth therein.

#### *Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities*

*Future Business Leaders of America* and *Junior Achievement*, with their network of over 470,000 volunteers serving more than 10 million students in over 100 countries, are two of the many national and international youth groups working towards sustainable cities and communities. As the United States developed and evolved throughout history, development grew from the coastal towns (Boston, New York, Charleston) to the internal cities or hubs, as rail and now air travel have expanded inward. At their best, cities have enabled people to advance socially and economically. Such youth programs prepare cities for the challenges they face, whether it be improving resource use, reducing pollution, and curtailing poverty.

#### *Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production*

The Enactus organization engages in responsible consumption and production, which encourages sustainable resource usage, energy efficiency, minimalist infrastructure, and a better quality of life for all. Once again, Enactus is a worldwide youth organization. Enactus helps to achieve overall development plans, aims to reduce future economic, environmental and social costs, and strives to instill economic competitiveness.

Sustainable consumption and production aims to “do more (and better) with less,” increasing net welfare gains from economic activities by reducing resource use, degradation and pollution within product lifecycle, while increasing quality of life.

#### *Goal 13: Climate Action*

The Climate Reality Project, whose founder and well-known supporter, former Vice President Al Gore, has a youth movement to excite progress towards sustainable development.

From the Project’s website: “Youth movements are emerging all over the world to combat climate change,” including Australia, Nepal, Africa, and Canada, among others. Why? Because they are knowledgeable (social media), with time on their side (youth), and they are aggressive. Climate change is affecting every country on every continent, since the world collectively has one climate. Climate change disrupts national economies, affects individual and group lives, and costs people, communities and countries. Look around the world at what has happened recently. Climate change knows no national borders.

#### *Goal 14: Life Below Water*

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the Department of Commerce has its youth focus too, focusing on lifelong learning to enhance their own knowledge, skills, and competencies from a personal, civic, social, and/or career-related perspective. Rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, sustenance and even the oxygen in the air are all ultimately provided and regulated by the sea. Throughout history, oceans and seas have been vital conduits for trade and transportation.

A very small amount of our water is fresh, clean water -- maybe 2% -- and most of that water is inaccessible (e.g., polar ice caps), so only a fraction of the water on earth (about 0.3%) is accessible and clean. Careful management of this essential global resource is a key to a sustainable future.

#### *Goal 15: Life on Land*

The National Forest Foundation has a youth focus to encourage youth to become involved in forest sustainability. Forests cover thirty per cent of the Earth's surface and, in addition to providing food security and shelter, forests are key to combating climate change, of which we just spoke, and protecting biodiversity and the homes of the indigenous population.

#### *Goal 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institution*

The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development activities, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels could involve the American Bar Association and New York City Bar Association, for instance, and their youth groups.

#### *Goal 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goal*

A successful sustainable development program will require partnerships between for-profit, not-for-profit, government, NGOs, public and private sectors. These inclusive partnerships will be built upon principles and values shared by all, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the center. Entities are needed at the global, regional, national and local level.

### **5. Rationale for BY4SD**

Mobilization, redirection, and measurement towards progress are required to unlock the transformative powers of energized people, particularly youth. Thus, a vitally important new organization: *Business Youth for Sustainable Development* (BY4SD) is needed now. This need is alluded to and discussed outright in many recent research venues (Lior, Radovanović, and Filipović, 2018; Forbes 2018).

Furthermore, after an extensive review of all aspects of sustainable development (three-legged stool), the youth movement at work, youth programs amidst globalization, a plethora of youth group examples, the United Nations 17 sustainable development goals, a proposition is proffered below.

Proposition:

*Achieving sustainable development is a righteous long-term endeavor that can be more readily attained when social, environmental, and economic (business) foci are engaged equally and fully and with the catalyst of an organized business youth movement.*

### **6. 2030 Agenda: A Plan of Action for People, Planet, and Prosperity**

The SDGs just reviewed and their targets for the next fifteen years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet become the 5-P's (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership) of sustainable development:

*People* – End poverty and hunger.

*Planet* – Protect the planet from degradation through sustainability.

*Prosperity* – Ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives.

*Peace* – Foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies (free from fear and violence).

*Partnership* – Mobilize the means required to implement the Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, with the participation of all countries, all stakeholder, and all people.

It is this last “P” (Partnership), which comes directly from the United Nations Sustainable Development website, that calls “silently” for the establishment of the organization “Business Youth for Sustainable Development” (BY4SD) now.

## **7. Business Youth for Sustainable Development (BY4SD)**

*Business Youth for Sustainable Development (BY4SD)* will combine the best efforts of the existing youth organizations and could be the answer. Once again, take a look at some of these organizations to see more broadly their focus (agenda) and priorities.

*Future Business Leaders of America* -- Established 1940.

Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda is a not-for-profit, education association of students preparing for careers in business and business-related fields. The Association has four divisions:

- I. FBLA for high school students
- II. FBLA middle level for junior high, middle and intermediate school students
- III. PBL for postsecondary students
- IV. Professional Alumni Division for business people, educators and parents, who support the goals of the Association.

The FBLA-PBL mission is to bring business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs. Business teachers/advisers and advisory councils (including school officials, business people and community representatives) guide local chapters. State advisers and committee members coordinate chapter activities for the national organization.

FBLA-PBL sponsors conferences and seminars for members and advisers are designed to enhance experience initially developed on the local and state level. Among these programs are the Institute for Leaders and the National Fall Leadership Conference.

*Junior Achievement* -- Established 1919.

In Junior Achievement, the growing number of volunteers, educators, parents, and contributors reach out to 7 million students each year, in grades K-12. Junior Achievement has passionate people behind a movement that seeks to educate and inspire young people to value free enterprise, business, and economics to improve the quality of their lives.

Altogether, Junior Achievement reaches millions students worldwide with their “age appropriate” curricula. Junior Achievement programs begin at the elementary school level, teaching children how they can impact the world around as individuals, workers and consumers. Junior Achievement programs continue through the middle and high school grades, preparing students for future economic and workforce issues to face.

*Operation Enterprise (American Management Association) -- Established 1960s*

Today companies are constantly looking to do more with less in order to keep up with – and outpace – change and competition. Responsibilities may increase at a moment's notice and require different or greater skills. That is why training and education has never been more critical for advancing careers and achieving organizational success. Ongoing learning enables managers to continuously enhance their professional and personal development and increase their value to their organizations.

AMA/Operation Enterprise provides managers and their organizations worldwide with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to improve business performance; adapt to a changing workplace; and prosper in a complex and competitive business world. AMA/Operation Enterprise serves as a forum for the exchange of the latest information, ideas and insights on management practices and business trends. AMA/Operation Enterprise disseminates content and information to a worldwide audience through multiple distribution channels and its strategic partners.

Language, culture and other barriers may separate global business communities. But every organization, regardless of its location needs one thing: access to the best in management training. That is why the AMA/Operation Enterprise network now extends worldwide—reaching thousands of business professionals in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Japan, China, Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

AMA/Operation Enterprise develops youth along three (3) paths: Career Guidance, Career Skills, and Career Development, with high school programs, college programs, and customized programs. Operation Enterprise has been a part of the American Management Association since 1963.

*United Nations Youth Unit -- Established 1950s*

The Youth Unit is a not-for-profit organization (and an NGO – non-governmental organization), and it is the focal point within the United Nations system on matters relating to youth. It has been set up to:

- Enhance awareness of the global situation of youth and increase recognition of the rights and aspirations of youth;
- Promote national youth policies in cooperation with both governmental and non-governmental youth organizations;
- Strengthen the participation of youth in decision-making processes at all levels;
- Encourage mutual respect and understanding and peace among youth.

The focal point within the United Nations system on matters relating to youth issues is the Programme on Youth in the Division for Social Policy and Development, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. These UN bodies have been set up to:

- Enhance awareness of the global situation of youth and increase recognition of the rights and aspirations of youth;
- Promote national youth policies, national youth coordinating mechanisms and national youth programs of action as integral parts of social and economic development, in cooperation with both governmental and non-governmental organizations; and
- Strengthen the participation of youth in decision-making processes at all levels in order to increase their impact on national development and international cooperation.

The United Nations has long recognized that the imagination, ideals and energies of young women and men are vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The Member States of the United Nations acknowledged this in 1965 when they endorsed the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between

Peoples. Besides youth organizations, professional, social, and even sports organizations should be examined and considered as well.

### ***Professional, Social, and Sports Organizations***

Many appropriate professional organizations exist which have a youth component – American Society of Civil Engineers, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, New York Academy of Sciences, Institute of Transportation Engineers, Delta Sigma Pi (established 1907).

Even social ‘club’ or sports organizations, like the United States Chess Federation, United States Backgammon Federation, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, United States Tennis Association, and a slew of organized baseball, football, hockey, and soccer focus on youth.

Professional (technical) societies that focus on sustainable development issues and youth organizations, discussed earlier, must be cohesive and aligned. For example, the Academy of Management and American Management Association, which both focus on management and sustainability, have a natural synergy.

### ***Setting a Uniform Approach to Youth Organizations***

1. Set objectives for aligning social and sports youth groups and management with professional (technical) organizations (really, their individual members).
2. Develop strategic alliances between these youth groups, management, and professional (technical) organizations.
3. Bring sustainable development attention to these youth and management groups – the professional (technical) organizations are already aware of sustainable development. For example, write articles, participate on the web, participate in conferences, handout information, etc. – utilizing all available information technology.
4. Let these youth groups and management know that they are the missing pegs.
5. Convene meetings, regularly, between these youth groups and the others who are aware, or who should be aware (i.e., everyone) of sustainable development.
6. Measure results to ascertain progress to sustainable development objectives.
7. First, one must crawl, before one walks, before one runs. Youth will be instrumental to the cause.

The United Nations’ *Principles for Responsible Management Education* can certainly help in this regard.

Evidence shows that the industrialized world has the economic power to address the world’s environmental problems, but the urgent desire and persistence will be brought to bear by the young people, who have a relatively “longer” standing in the world today (and tomorrow). These are young people from both the industrialized and the non-industrialized world. Haves and have-nots together must uniformly embrace this agenda, which must be embraced into by the young. The young have the energy, long-standing (apolitical) commitment -- if they are allowed to reason through by themselves -- for it is for their children, their grandchildren, and their great grandchildren and so on. For sure, they will be influenced.

## 8. Conclusion

Sustainable development is built on three pillars: economic growth, ecological balance and social progress (Stigson, 2000). All three pillars relate to globalization as well. Corporations face increasingly intense scrutiny to strive for sustainability, and to contend with this, they will have to enforce a set of globalized corporate values throughout their operations. Corporations must be able to demonstrate that sustainable development is good business, is good for globalization, and is good for the world's economy.

Globalization cuts across all of these three, and yet ecological growth and ecological balance receives the lion's share of attention. Interest in social progress is again growing, helped with the ubiquitous-ness of social media. Corporations must show that with "globalized corporate values," the goals set forth in the sustainable development doctrine will be achieved. Balancing equity amongst the *needs of people, optimal resource utilization, the economy, and the environment* is at the heart of sustainable development. This "four-legged stool" needs to be managed well to achieve the objectives of each facet, albeit with compromise and consensus. By only considering the "needs of people," for instance, one may sacrifice tomorrow for today. By only considering "the environment," one may unnecessarily hinder today's pleasure, while have unneeded excesses tomorrow. When thinking of tomorrow, one needs to facilitate the understanding of and "light a fire" under those who will undertake action tomorrow: *Today's globalized youth*.

### *Dissection of the Four-Legged Stool*

#### *1) Needs of People*

The needs of people are what drives innovation today -- without innovating towards these needs people would still be doing math on a slide rule. People are all different -- some individualists, some democratic, some socialist, some collectivist, some free market driven, some government controlled economics, etc. The needs of 7.5 billion people in nearly 200 countries with all different levels of development and mindsets cannot be overlooked.

#### *2) Optimal Resource Utilization*

When should one consume -- now or later? Today or tomorrow? This year or next? Well, that depends -- what will it be worth next year? Understand that the opportunity cost is important to our decision. What is better to have: \$10 cash today or \$20 cash next year? If one considers available "slack," how much slack is needed, which will indicate if waiting is better than consuming now.

#### *3) Economy*

How is the economy? This question is relative. Compared to what, one would ask. Twenty years ago -- 1997-1998 -- then the economy today is better. Ten years ago -- 2007-2008 -- much, much better. Governments, businesses, and people must understand that to embrace sustainable development fully, there will either be payment now in the form of taxes on individuals (increase in tax revenues) and tax benefits to corporations (decrease in tax revenues); or, payment later in the form of clean-ups (De Feis 1994, 1991). "*There ain't no free lunch*" -- there will be a payment.

#### *4) Environment*

"*An Inconvenient Truth*," authored by former Vice President Al Gore, states that deferring attention on the environment cannot continue. Problems must be addressed now. Just like the decision-makers, largely politicians, who decided not to strengthen or heighten the levies around New Orleans for years and years, knowing the city could not withstand a category 4 or 5 hurricane. Instead, these political types decided funding was needed for schools, job development, housing, and other "squeaky" wheels. Arguing, "If the levies had not faced a category 4 or 5 hurricane in the past 100 years, they could surely hold up until they are out of office." People ultimately learned what happened in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina came knocking.

Youth programs abound, and it is in these organizations that the sustainable development movement must take hold. Many of these groups embrace a management and business mindset, with overtones of community service. The whole aspect of “service-learning” for youth is a good example of what could be accomplished along the way to sustainable development. Accordingly, youth programs should be tapped to participate in the much-needed youth force of the sustainable development process.

## **9. Summary**

Sustainable development is a quixotic quest. To develop in a sustainable way may be foolish for some, since they cannot enjoy themselves to the fullest now, when now is their only and utmost concern. Arguments will astound you. Indeed, there are several legs to the “sustainable development” story, with each playing a different and important role. Therefore, communication, sharing information, through social media and the like is essential. Remember the Arab Spring? Partial credit was bestowed on *Facebook* and the like. For first, the beliefs of “I can’t take it anymore!” spread from Tunisia, then to Egypt, then to Libya, then to Iraq, continuing to this day.

Implementation of the vast challenges presents today’s world with a great opportunity to manage the process. This author argues: *Key to this quest is to involve youth early*. Also, the role of government is certainly important to coordinate and facilitate the organization of such an immense network of youth, starting now with the organization: *Business Youth for Sustainable Development (BY4SD)*. This organization will become more critical and more in need as time advances. If youth around there world are encouraged, mobilized, mentored and lead, the results of the innovativeness, resilience, communication and practicality of youth could achieve the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

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