

1st Prize / Grand Prize Winner
Our Unique Contribution Counts
by Toluwanimi Wonders Ayeni, aged 12 (Nigeria)

Is it possible for one to live alone, make his clothes, farm for food, build his house, treat himself when sick, the answer is no. Everyone needs a partner. We are all in partnerships, either at work, at home, school or in the environment. There must be a teacher, a farmer, a weaver, a builder, an architect, a doctor, a pilot etc. for the whole world to function properly and comfortably for everyone. A farmer needs a teacher to teach his children, a teacher needs a doctor to treat him when sick, a doctor needs a pilot to fly him and the pilot still needs food from the farmer. Therefore, partnership is important in achieving anything great in life. The power of partnership is very strong that we can achieve anything as long as we partner together. Sustainability is very important to mankind as it helps to keep the world going. To achieve this, everybody's cooperation is needed. Everyone must come together to partner in sustaining the earth, because together we are unstoppable.

Partnership can also be used in sustainability because sustaining life on earth is everyone's job. Only the government, conservationists and environmentalists cannot sustain the whole world. The world does not belong to only them; it belongs to every one of us. The following are some ways in which people can partner to sustain the world.

Partnership in training others: people can partner by teaching and educating others on how to sustain the earth. Since it is a collective effort people need to be educated on how to sustain themselves and their environment to get them to help in sustainability. Teachers should educate their students, parents should teach their children, leaders should educate their followers on sustainability measures, this way we can have a society that produces a sustainable environment for all.

Partnership in enforcement and creation of sustainability laws: people can partner in sustainability by using their positions in the society to help in the enforcement and creation of sustainability laws. As a citizen you can partner by helping the police catch offenders and by not breaking sustainability laws. As a lawmaker you can partner by creating sustainability laws like maximum number of trees that can be cut within a period of time, avoidance of waste disposal on land etc. and making enforcements to the laws to keep the laws functional. As a teacher or parent you can partner by cautioning the children in your care when they do things that can affect the sustainability of all. As an actor/actress you can partner by making films on sustainability. Everyone in their positions have a role to play in sustainability as it is a cooperative effort.

Partnership among leaders: leaders of nations like the Presidents, the Head of states, the Prime Ministers, the queens, can work together to sustain the environment. When we share ideas, partner by assisting each other with gadgets, money, food etc., setting quality criteria for the environment and assist with training on how the environment can be made better. This way the whole world can be enlightened and be made sustainable for all.

Partnership is a key force needed to achieve sustainability. We all have to partner, to cooperate and not to compete to achieve the sustainability goals. The power of partnership helps to get everyone involved in sustainability, make a good environment for us in future, and ensure sustainability for all. Everyone must come together to partner in sustaining the earth, because together we are unstoppable.

2nd Prize

Partnerships for a sustainable future

by Raunak Agarwal, aged 12 (Singapore)

"It's time we admitted that there's more to life than money and it's time we focused not just on GDP but on GWB general wellbeing." - David Cameron

For decades GDP has been considered the elite's go-to number for ranking countries based on their overall growth and success; even though it squishes all human activity into just a couple of digits. Unfortunately, the GDP of a country is not a perfect measure as it misses out on the social welfare and environmental impact and reflects a narrow vision towards the economic output. This results in countries giving low priority on the sustainability of our planet and falling victim to activity in the short term that boosts the economy even if that is hugely harmful to the sustainability of our planet in the long term. On top of that, not all benefits from economic growth are evenly distributed or shared. A rise in GDP often results in a widening of the income and wealth inequality in society thereby creating different classes in society.

To avoid further widening of the wealth inequality, the governments across the world should enforce the adoption of practices such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives encouraging corporates to be conscious of their impact on all aspects of society, including economic, social and environmental etc. Governments should further encourage these initiatives by offering tax incentives to companies.

Apart from the government, schools can ingrain sustainable development in the minds of the youth. Our education system has always emphasized on creating tomorrows engineers, doctors, lawyers etc with little focus on sustainability. Schools should endeavour to integrate local and global sustainability issues into the curriculum while reinforcing interactive, participatory teaching and learning that foster critical thinking and bring about changes in attitude. In fact, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a United Nations program which provides constructive guidelines in this regard.

Lastly, we as responsible citizens of society can also play a pivotal role in creating awareness and working collectively towards the well-being of our nation. In today's world, with the advent of social media, it's possible to take our voice to the entire world. Look at Greta Thunberg, who through her determination towards climate change rose from obscurity to being recently voted as Times Person of the year. We can support her by spreading her message via simply liking her posts on Facebook and Twitter. Another way of supporting her initiatives is by helping fund the organizations and programs that are actively involved in such initiatives.

One such non-profit organisation attempting to do so is the WellBeing Economy Alliance, a collaboration of organisations, alliances, movements and individuals - working closely to bring about changes in the economic system. We can also invite members of this organisation to our respective schools, clubs, community centres and workplaces to educate people about their movement and its importance for the overall wellbeing of society, giving donations, spreading the word by sharing this movement on social media and collecting donations online. If someone wants to be more actively involved with this initiative, he/she may want to consider becoming a WEAll citizen, that will help connect with similarly passionate individuals. One can also be involved in the setting up of a local WEAll hub that will facilitate collaboration and action towards building a sustainable economy.

Its high time and we can't only let our politicians and world leaders be solely responsible for taking care of our future. Time has come for us to play an increasingly significant role in our future and the time is now.

3rd Prize (joint)

Partnerships for Progress of Underdeveloped Populations

by Shivam Manish Garg, aged 16 (India)

With the advent of modern-day technology, establishing partnerships has never been easier. Armed with this fact, I have chalked out a systematic plan to exploit this asset. I propose a scheme Partnerships for Progress of Underdeveloped Populations (PPUP) as a long-term solution (7-15 year) to be implemented nationally or internationally to bring about development. As part of this programme, any two regions, R1 and R2 in short, will be matched based on a variety of factors, such as land geography, population density, economy etc, and policies successful in R1 could be implemented in R2 (and vice-versa). This will reap fruits for both the sides, allowing them to achieve not only the UN Sustainable Development Goal #17 Partnership for The Goals but also realize ALL other SDGs. To further elaborate on this, I will shed light on my own story.

Having stayed in the Developed Financial Hub of the world Singapore and moved to the developing Financial Hub of India, Mumbai, I got the perfect opportunity to experience the potential of this solution. To my luck, various factors (if not all) between the two regions (R) matched, such as their continent (both in Asia), cultural diversity (both are extremely diverse), size (both around 700km square) etc, allowing me to contrast between the conditions. Immediately, the difference in the public transport and road traffic that I took in both the regions was apparent. On one hand were well maintained buses of Singapore, automated fee collectors, and smooth traffic while on the other were old, worn out buses of Mumbai, manual fee collectors (MFCs), and constant traffic jams. All these factors caused inconvenience to both the service users (ride experience worsened as it took longer to pay) and service providers (as very often people exploited backdoors to avoid the fees). Thus, by a collaboration between the officials of Mumbai and Singapore much can be gained: Mumbai gets the benefit of having an improved transit system by mimicking what Singapore has perfected after much toil while Singapore avails the perks of strengthening ties with a country booming with literate youth ready to be employed. This is just one of the instances in one sector where PPUP can be implemented. Its use can be expanded to other sectors such as health, education, road traffic etc.

But much thought has to be put in before its implementation. I think instead of policymakers of the two countries just giving suggestions, it would be more beneficial if an exchange programme is set up, in which officials from either region go to the other to get a feel of the partner's area allowing a better detection of issue and implementation of the solutions. The exchange programme could last for 2-4 years ensuring a firm grasp of the issue. Then, RO1 (region1 officials) could use guidance from RO2 to implement certain policy, RO1 finds helpful in R2, in R1 (or vice-versa). This mutualistic relationship would allow to address the issue with ease, as one region having learnt from its mistakes, would be able to aid its partner in addressing the issue. In my case, it would be Singapore guiding Mumbai in setting up an effective transit plan. Although a scheme successful in one region doesn't guarantee success in a closely related region, it is more effective to implement and/or modify a scheme that is known to work. Furthermore, the probability of a failure can be further minimised through a stricter analysis. Thus, PPUP holds great promise as a cheap and effective solution in tapping the potential of global partnerships to achieve numerous UNSDGs by 2030.

3rd Prize (joint)

Undiscovered Islands

by Alena Boronina, aged 16 (Russian Federation)

In the childhood we looked around with surprise. Everything was wonderful and we dreamt a lot. But time is passing by and we start realising that the world is not as perfect as it is in our imagination. Growing up we are losing our ability to find inspiration in usual things like somebody's behaviour or nature. The sad fact is we are getting used to what is around us because ignoring problems is easier than fighting them. But, after all, what do we have now? Everything around us is polluted: air, water and soil. And it has huge and terrible influence on both us and animals.

Moreover, there is light pollution which is caused by artificial city lights. It changes animals habitats, causes deaths of birds and insects, hinders plants growth and is harmful for people. Soil pollution is also pernicious and damaging for Earth. People leave piles of garbage and our planet is slowly dying under them. Animals are leaving their usual places; plants are not growing on spoiled ground; the smell around landfills is awful. These are all consequences of the life style that we have led for decades.

But I think that the main problem is in people's indifference. We are usually inactive and take a position of onlooker. That is what is actually sad because we could have changed everything a long time ago. So how can we make ourselves more interested in helping the planet?

And I think that the answer is on the surface, we just have to look around more carefully. It is not difficult to notice that people spend a lot of time online: communication, entertainment and of course different apps which help us with everything we might need.

Here is an idea. With my friends from IT class we have decided to create an app called Green actions, where people will be able to share their actions for planet. For instance, cleaning places from garbage or sorting it to make its recycling easier. Apart from self-doing green actions this app would give an opportunity to ask for assistance in any type of public work like trash collecting in large areas.

Everything that the person has to do is to join the Green actions programme by installing the app and start sharing their deeds. It includes taking photos of the place before and right after it is cleaned or improved. Then uploading it on "personal page of success and achievements and describe what he or she has done.

Personal pages will be seen by other users and anyone who wants will be able to see your acts, leave the comment or write a direct message to support you. Also there will be available a feature to follow people who inspire you. Surely I hope that these photos will help people to realise how many good things could be done just by one person. So that we could keep our positive attitude and do green actions together with pleasure. And also I wish this app would become recognisable and popular because the more people know about the app the more people help the planet.

As a conclusion, I would like to highlight the importance of green actions. Because in our life even small things depend on us and it is in our power to change everything. So what the planet will look like in the future? Will the Earth be a nice place with fresh air and clean streets or will piles of garbage be everywhere and resources will have been depleted? It is up to us.

4th Prize (joint)

Building a Plastic Waste Free World through Partnerships

by Amra Arshad, aged 13 (Canada)

Words may inspire but only action creates change. - Simon Sinek

More than 300 million tons of plastic is produced each year. An unbelievable 91% of the plastic is not recycled. Plastic pollution affects not only us but our beautiful planet, animal species, plants and our future generations. In my country, Canada, less than 11% of all plastic is recycled. The rest of the plastic ends up in our landfills, lakes, rivers, and oceans. These toxic chemicals pollute our environment, and harm ecosystems. Using plastic for day to day needs has become a huge environmental problem.

The United Nations has identified 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to create a better world by 2030. Solving the plastic problem will help us achieve several SDGs such as Clean Water and Sanitation, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land and more. Therefore, it is essential that we create partnerships that focus on reducing the amount of plastic we use and substituting products made of plastic with sustainable alternatives. Canada needs to work harder to achieve its Zero Plastic Waste goal.

Reducing and substituting plastic nationally is not easy without setting achievable goals. Therefore, my strategic plan for reducing and substituting the usage of plastic with non plastic products is to start in my school, educating and raising awareness among students to make sure our school becomes a plastic waste free zone. Eventually, our success would spread provincially and nationally. By 2030, all schools in Canada will be plastic waste free, which will make Canadas actions a role model for all countries to follow. But in order for that to happen, I would need to have partnerships with the students and teachers, school board and district, city council, provincial and federal government.

From my perspective and experience as a student, I believe that bringing awareness in schools is an essential step for changing the future. After all, children can influence making changes for a better future with a good action plan. Reducing and substituting products made from plastic as simple as cutlery in cafeterias and educating students on how to create a plastic free community can make a big difference.

I will start by forming a group of dedicated students in my school who are willing to make our school plastic free. Together, we can bring change in our school by giving presentations to students and teachers, teaching them about our goal, using creative poster boards, slogans and getting them involved. This way we can reach families and local communities to join this initiative. Also, we will partnership with our city council to arrange presentations and workshops for students to learn about the projects that are ongoing such as reducing single use checkout bags in the city. At the same time we will reach business communities such as local shops, retail chains, and restaurants using social media platforms and direct meetings to send our messages.

We will also encourage students to participate in our initiative by having students create a public service announcement (PSA) to present to our regional district about ways schools in Canada can be plastic waste free. Getting B.C wide news media platforms aware of our campaign will spread the news and reach communities coast-to-coast-to-coast.

Through partnerships and implementing our action plans, we can reduce the accumulation of plastic waste and increase recycling towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals and building a more sustainable world, starting with the small steps we will take. After all, the man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones. - Confucius

4th Prize (joint)

Growing Partnerships in Biotechnology and Entrepreneurship for SDG Success by Sapna Pramjee, aged 16 (South Africa)

Here is the unfortunate reality: a third of young South African graduates are unemployed. Alongside this, we have many socio-economic challenges, which the UN SDGs aim to combat. However, the UN reports that SDG progress is lacking in the pace and scale required.

Last year, I attended meetings at KRISP, a local research institute, which is part of Stanford's SPARK Global Programme. Some attendees were academia, doctors, lawyers, social entrepreneurs, banking and government who were collaborating to achieve the institute's objectives. That was when I realised the power of partnerships and thus, why SDG#17, Partnerships for the Goals, is important to accelerate SDG progress.

To contribute to SDG progress in South Africa, my solution involves a partnership approach to enable graduates to become entrepreneurs by developing biotechnological solutions to solve Africa's challenges. This will contribute to SDG#8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). My plan consists of five elements: biotechnology, education, research, entrepreneurship and partnerships.

Why biotechnology? Biotechnology is a fast evolving science, which involves manipulating biological systems for health, agricultural, industrial and environmental purposes and is pivotal in achieving most of the SDGs.

Partnerships between educational institutions, government, companies and the public will be integral to the speed and success of my solution. For now, I will focus on biotechnology and entrepreneurship education and funding of incubators.

Imagine working with postgraduates on gene-sequencing strawberry DNA! Last year, I attained a scholarship to participate in this workshop hosted by KRISP in partnership with Thermo Fisher (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmzSRYK7rll>). I was thrilled to experience so much, which I do not normally learn in school. My dream is for companies like Thermo Fisher to provide extracurricular biotechnology programmes in partnership with schools. At university level, I would like the American biotechnology company, Amgen to establish its first Scholars Programme in Africa by partnering with South African institutions so that undergraduate students can experience Biotechnology research in a summer workshop, just like in Canada and Australia. All this contributes to SDG#4 (Quality Education) and SDG#8 by sparking students interest in Biotechnology.

This year, my school partnered with the Allan Gray Challenge, a South African online gamified competition that aims to improve students' entrepreneurial skills. I found this was a fun and engaging way to learn about business, so I thought that I could apply a similar concept where teachers contribute entrepreneurship lesson plans to the Minecraft Education game. At university level, I would like science and technology degrees to include courses in entrepreneurship. Thus, teachers and lecturers are collaborating towards SDG#4 and SDG#8 by enabling students to become entrepreneurs rather than unemployed graduates.

Incubators are an effective partnership model to grow biotechnology entrepreneurs by providing shared facilities, equipment, expertise, mentorship, and access to funding. I would involve a number of partners to set up the incubator, fund research and commercialisation. These will include the governments Technology Innovation Agency, the SA SME Fund (a partnership between the state pension fund and private sector), philanthropic partners like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, strategic alliances with large companies like pharmaceutical GSK, and the public can crowd-fund via social media. The public can also act as citizen scientists, where they can help entrepreneurs to conduct basic research. Thus, partners to the biotechnology incubators are contributing to the achievement of most of the SDGs.

I believe my solution lives up to the expectations of H.E. Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General, To deliver on the promise of a prosperous and peaceful future, development actors will have to find new ways of working together and leveraging genuine partnerships that make the most of expertise, technology and resources for sustainable and inclusive growth.

5th Prize (joint)

My Vision: Partnerships for a Sustainable Future

by Ayomide Ibukunolu Erinosh, aged 15 (Nigeria)

MY VISION: TRUST FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING (NO POVERTY)

The world's development is being affected intensely by poverty which tend to inflate every day. People suffer from starvation, depression, stigmatization, eventually leading to premature deaths. Every man's slogan now is I must survive cajoling them to involve in anything available to engage in especially illegal activities so as to make ends meet. So many suggestions have been made concerning the eradication of poverty to the extent that people now doubt the possibility of reducing poverty. The question frequently asked now is, Can we ever escape poverty?

Yes! It is absolutely possible to achieve the goal, No poverty If all countries can come together, work together to make the world a better place to live in. Partnership can contribute to the successful achievement of this goal in various ways. Partnership with the government to provide adequate storage facilities, mechanization, loans and fertilizers at subsidized rate for farmers will help them to maximize profits, enlarge their scale of production increasing the yield of crops, produce commodities and crops more efficiently, which will eventually result to an increment in their standard of living. Most farmers are skilled but lack the necessary facilities and capital to work resulting to poverty. With the help of this partnership with the government, farmers will be able to work more efficiently. Without farmers there will be famine and without food its not easy to survive.

Partnership between individuals like members of the society to establish NGOs [Non-Governmental Organizations] such as YFO [Young Farmers Organization], YEO [Youth Empowerment Organization] and so on, can help enlighten youths and even people on other productive jobs they can engage in rather than white-collar jobs such as agriculture, baking, catering, shoe making, jewelry making and so on . These organizations could also help train youths on basic skills and provide soft loans to assist them. Naturally youth especially university graduates believe that farming is a job for low class, local people which is not true. In fact, agriculture is one of the most lucrative jobs in Africa. Most agriculturists now eat at least, two square meals a day without blinking an eye. This is also a way of eradicating poverty.

Partnership with the government to build hospitals, industries, companies, schools and also sponsoring the existing schools and hospitals will help to create employment for people especially breadwinners. Some breadwinners have the ability and qualification to be gainfully but due to uncertain circumstances, they remain unemployed. Youths also graduate from the university with high hopes of getting a job immediately, unfortunately remains unemployed for a long period of time. Building schools, companies will create employment opportunities for them.

Partnership between the governments of two countries to establish international organizations to assist the poor, disabled and less privileged by sponsoring their education or making it free for them, making health checkups and treatments generally making things easy for them. Poor people do not have enough resources to vend for their children's education, their health and other necessities so they prefer to involve in street-begging and send out their children to hawk instead of engaging them in school. Education is important for every child because his/her future depends on education. Nobody knows what tomorrow holds. Partnership will contribute a lot to the eradication of poverty if it is adopted in all countries in the world.

5th Prize (joint)

Partner Power

by Nazaha Izdihar Amatullah, aged 15 (Bangladesh)

Have you heard this saying- 'united we stand, divided we fall'? I'm sure you did, and agree too. Because one person can't do everything, he always needs the help of others to accomplish something. That's why men are social beings, right?

Now, what about this phrase: 'one person can make a difference'. Doesn't it seem a bit contradictory to the first one? Because the first phrase says you can't do something alone; you will always need to seek help of others. But then the next one says, you can do something alone. One person can alone accomplish a lot.

Before your head explodes, let me ask you something different. Have you heard of the environmentalist Greta Thunberg? Of course you have. This Swedish teen caused quite an uproar around the globe with her activities: starting the #FridaysForFuture movement all over the world, crossing the Atlantic on a boat, telling off powerful leaders in the Climate Change Conference, blaming their works for the way this earth was now.

Now, you can say the second phrase goes well for Greta, can't you? As just a person, she did make a difference. But look closely, she didn't make a difference by working a lot for the environment. She made a difference through spreading the word among others. She made a difference when she came to limelight, when people started listening to her words. That's how one person makes a difference. Not because he can work a lot (which he can't), but because he inspires others to step out of their comfort zones and work as well. Because he becomes a role model for them. He becomes the example.

Therefore, both phrases are true. You do fall, if you don't have a unity behind you. Greta could not have done what she did if there was no media, no audience, no ready-to-doers behind her. Think about it. You may have made a garden at your own yard. You may have stopped using plastic in your own home. Sure, you'd be contributing to the environment, but by how much? It's like the mass of an electron in an atom; it's so small that it's negligible. Sure, you're reducing the amount of carbon dioxide with your trees and increasing oxygen providing organic fruits and vegetables-but someone else has to know about your work, someone else has to be inspired and moved to take up these activities in their own community. Then, another someone else will be encouraged and another someone else and when everyone's waking up and it's a chain reaction, that's when you've made a difference. That's when you're united and you've made a stand.

But why is that? You may ask, my garden does have trees that are providing organic food and oxygen, why do I have to get people do it too? Aren't I doing enough?

See, the thing is, your garden isn't meant to last. It won't stay that way forever. It won't sustain. That's the word. Sustain. There's another saying-mine, actually-there's no such romance in 'the world against us'. In reality, the world will always win. You can't be a rebel against eight billion people and their homes.

Unless you change the world. Unless you turn these people into rebels too.

So partnership is important. Through partnership, we can make a lasting future. And this partnership should happen between person to person, community to community, city to city and even country to country. It should happen between everyone. Otherwise, we will only be able to save ourselves, for the time being, but not the whole planet. Not the future generations.