



Global Citizens[®]
for Sustainable Development



Executive Summary

Name of the Event: Global Citizens Youth Assembly 2011 (GCYA)

Themes of the Event:

- Role of Media for Social Change
- Green Economy in the Context of Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development
- Youth and MDGs

Organizers & Partners: Global Citizens for Sustainable Development, VEDIKE, Oxfam India, Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation (FPH), Forum for a new World Governance, University at Albany, Student Volunteers Abroad, Glasgow and LOYAC, Kuwait.

Date: August 18 – 20, 2011

Venue: Visthar, Bangalore, India

Number of Participants: GCYA is a process more than a conference where more than 1000 youth participants take part virtually through social networking sites and then for quality purpose few are selected to meet person to person in Bangalore. During the assembly we had an attendance of 150 youth college students joined by their faculty members, few young professionals, freelancers, environmentalists, social workers, etc.

Participating Countries: Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, China, USA, UK, France, Chile and India

Concept of the Assembly: The youth represents half the population of the world and therefore have an important role to play in bringing about social change. Therefore, the Global Citizens Youth Assembly aimed at creating a platform for the youth to come forward and talk about their country, to develop a cross-cultural understanding of the themes of the assembly as well as to share their own personal work.

Objectives:

- To dialogue and discuss about the three themes of the Assembly
- To create a platform for local and global youth to represent themselves and express their ideas for social change
- To create a sense of brotherhood among the participating nations
- To make room for a cultural exchange among the youth of the participating nations

Conclusion: In the three days of Global Citizens Youth Assembly the participating delegates engaged in various activities such as panel and group discussions, a workshop on the 'Charter of the Peoples of the Earth,' that is a movement to be presented and declared at the Rio+20 Earth Summit, the Bangalore MDG Champions Competition, an open session for youth to represent their own personal work, the Global Citizens Art & Cultural Festival and finally concluded with field excursion through interaction and games with the children of migrant workers at Living Hope Children's Home, Bangalore.

Participants were very happy with the Urban-Rural and South-North link concept through the WE BUILD program and how it concludes with the Assembly and again a follow up through MDG champions program. They were inspired to do action oriented projects as such and not just have assemblies or

conferences just to meet and interact.

Follow Up:

- GCSD will help and facilitate the MDG Champions to meet their goals of the projects. These projects will encourage other youth participants to work on similar projects.
- The People's Charter will have further discussions and engagement of youth participants to voice their opinions and to be heard by the UN Member States at the Rio+20 Earth Summit.
- The Facebook page will be used as a tool to keep the momentum going and shall be a useful tool to plan the GCYA 2010 much better.

Global Citizens Youth Assembly 2011

The Global Citizens Youth Assembly (GCYA) was held from the 18th to the 20th of August, 2011 at Visthar, Bengaluru, India. The event was organized as follow up and continuity of the Asian Citizens Assembly held in August 2010 which was supported by our partners Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation (FPH) who continue to support our programs. GCYA is held every year as the concluding event of the WE BUILD 2011 4-credit study abroad program. The students of the credit program were engaged in organizing and conducting the Assembly. This year the Organizers and Partners included, Global Citizens for Sustainable Development (GCSD), Vedike Eco-Residential School, The University at Albany, Student Volunteers Abroad, Forum for a new World Governance and Oxfam India.

This assembly provided a platform for young individuals from various states in India, as well as different countries of the world to come together and talk about the happenings in their own local communities. It gave participants the opportunity to meet, interact and engage with each other and discuss three important themes prevalent in our globalized world today. The themes of the Assembly were –

- Role of Media for Social Change
- Green Economy in the Context of Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development
- Youth and MDGs

In developing a cross-cultural understanding of these themes, the youth attempted to obtain a practical action component to implement sustainable development initiatives worldwide.

Opening Ceremony



The Global Citizens Youth Assembly started at 10 a.m. with ice breakers conducted by Mr. Ebenezer John, the Executive Manager of GCSD and Devon Walsh, a student of the WE BUILD 2011 Program. Various games were conducted to allow the participants to acquaint themselves with each other. The Assembly was then inaugurated by the lighting of the lamp, which is a traditional Indian custom that signifies global unity. It was lit by participating representatives from India, Afghanistan, China, Russia

and Sri Lanka. Natasha Rego, Manager of Programs & Public Relations, GCSO, delivered the welcome address and greeted all of the participants to GCSO and Bengaluru

Inaugural Address: Two youth activists representing the diversity and youth spirit of Asia delivered opening keynote addresses. Ms. Pallavi Kaushal of OXFAM, India expressed her views on the tremendous potential of youth in our world today, especially in the necessity to have an action component beyond cross cultural discussions to make change a reality in society. Anugraha John, founder and executive director of GCSO and Vedike Eco-Residential School, then spoke on the youth's role in rectifying the interlinked economic and climate crises that plague our world and the vitality of action now.



After the inaugural addresses, Anugraha John explained the conference schedule and discussed the workshop methodologies for the weekend.

Working Groups

There were a total of three working groups to reflect the themes of the Assembly. Students from the WE BUILD 2011 program facilitated the three workshops on the Role of Media for Social Change, Green Economics in the Context of Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development, and the Youth role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Each working group had 2 facilitators to help advance discussions and a documenter for taking notes. They conducted the workshops in three sessions each, all running parallel to each other.



The first session introduced the theme and helped participants get to know each other through ice breakers and group activities. In the second session, participants discussed the core issues facing the youth in accessing and achieving each respective workshop's theme, and cross-cultural challenges were recognized as common throughout the world. Also discussed were the inherent cultural, socio-economical, and political similarities and complexities reflected in these issues and how the youth can take part in shaping these perspectives. The third session articulated possible responses of the youth generation in overcoming these challenges and the various pragmatic actions that can be taken to engage these issues in our lifetime.



Workshop: The Role of Media in Social Change: This workshop, facilitated by the American WE BUILD 2011 students Emily Finnegan, Andy Archer, and Jodeily Antigua, discussed the benefits and challenges facing the youth in accessing and creating media as a means of social advocacy. Outlined were the three main types of media - mainstream media, alternative media, and social media, and the various benefits and restrictions of using each as a means of communication.

In the first session, participants discussed their own personal experiences concerning adequate access to media on a regional scale as well as in terms of socio-economic status, gender, and urban or rural context. Cross-cultural issues were identified in terms of the dominance main stream media and the limitations in its accessibility worldwide.

The second session then moved on to the possibilities of alternative and social media as a means of overcoming not only the messages of main stream media but moreover, in using these innovative forms of communication to create a venue for individuals to create, access, and share their own messages. In concluding this session, the youth recognized the potential in alternative and social media to create a bottom-up approach of communication and dissemination.

The third session, facilitated by gender and sexuality activist Dhillan Mowli, explored the media's role in understanding sex and sexuality, specifically in the Indian context. Participants discussed the various ways of combating the dominance of main stream media in creating gender roles and how, again, alternative and social media can be used to create an alternative paradigm of sex and sexuality.

Workshop: Youth and MDGs: This workshop was facilitated by Samantha Leuschner, Devon Walsh, and Ariana Dindiyal. It discussed the eight millennium development goals, their standing in various countries, and how feasible they were, to be achieved by 2015, which is the target.

During the first session, the members of the group introduced themselves, and told what country they were from. Conversation began after some group activities. The second session included a presentation that summarized each millennium development goal (MDG). After the goals were listed and summarized, facilitators attempted to begin an open discussion by asking which MDG was most prevalent in a particular region. The discussion led in the direction of child health and maternal health, the fourth and fifth MDGs.

Members from the UK mentioned that they have access to free public education and free health care, and the system seemed to be sustainable. To meet the MDG about maternal health, Indian members mentioned that medical students are required to serve in rural villages before becoming licensed. Everyone agreed that increasing knowledge on the issues would lead to success in meeting goals.

Then, the group divided into sub groups according to the country they belong to. (UK, U.S.A, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and India) Each group was given a large sheet of paper and asked to draw a Venn diagram with the word, “success” in the center. They showed how far they thought their country was from achieving success in regards to each MDG.

In the third session, each group explained their diagrams. Each group’s diagram was different, and the members of each group each had a different explanation about their country.



Workshop: Green Economy in the Context of Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development: The Green Economy workshop began by having each member in the group share their ideas on what exactly green economy was. Some people were very well versed on the topic while others were new to the concept. Through their discussion, the group established that sustainable development was the key to green economy. Group members mentioned notions like solar, wind and water power. Others focused on how big business and big populations along with a lack of governmental support was causing extreme environmental degradation in many countries around the world, especially third world countries and emergent world powers like India and China. The issues that India is currently facing became a highly discussed topic, as well as water crisis and the causes of water crisis like lack of

infrastructure for sewage. Green economies power to create job was also mention.

Though many great ideas were circulated, some people still didn't have a great grasp on the theory of sustainable development, so a small video entitled 'What the Bleep is Green Economy?', which helped bring up new ideas and topics. This video also displayed what green economy was from an American perspective. They began by discussing the cultural differences and similarities when it came to this topic. Though each country faced its own specific challenges, they found that issues related to poverty were something they all had in common. Poverty leads to environmental degradation in impoverished communities as well as an overall lack of education and concern about the related issues. These people (both urban and rural improvised communities) will be most greatly affected by water crisis, pollution and climate change. These people would also benefit most from the jobs created by a transition towards green economy.

Finally they came to the conclusion that education is the key to ending poverty and that the promotion of education on green economy provides a hope for sustainable development and poverty eradication in India's near future, as well as the rest of the world. In order to facilitate the impoverished in accessing the benefits offered by sustainable development initiatives and market opportunities it is vital to promote literacy and a basic education. Some possible solutions to the issues and practical green economy applications, as well as the need for major legislation were discussed. Rain water harvesting, improved public transport systems, taxing carbon emissions were seen as some of the solutions. The problems are huge and the decisions to be made are very difficult, but transitioning towards a green economy is vital to the future of our planet.

Bazaar Model – Concluding the Workshops: After the Workshops concluded, all the groups gathered in the common area. Here they put down their discussions on chart paper and built make-shift shops to make a Bazaar Model to explain their discussions to the other Groups.



With the facilitators of each workshop in charge of their shop, the participants moved from workshop to workshop finding out what was discussed in the three sessions. Through this model, all the participants were able to exchange their ideas about all three themes of the Assembly.

Panel Discussion



Speaker: Role of Media in Social Change: Mr Dhillan Mowli, founder of the Slutwalk Campaign in Bangalore, India, discussed the use of media as both a passive reflection of the status quo and as an active creator of culture, implying that for social change, media and communication should reflect the latter of the two. In order to have an effect on social change, he stressed the necessity of artistic license and freedom from government restriction so as to allow the opportunity for different perspectives to reach all sectors of the population, from the informed to the uninformed.

Speaker: Youth and MDGs: Mr Vikram Aditya, a popular Environmentalist and active campaigner spoke about the millennium development goals set up in 2000 at the Millennium Summit by members of the UN. The targets of these goals were to be met by 2015, but it is unlikely that many will be met by that time. He mentioned some youth movements on environmental issues.

Speaker: Green Economy in the context of Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development: Ms Purnima A. Kumar, an Environmental consultant spoke about Green Economy, defined as improving the well being and social equity of society while keeping in mind environmental risks and environmental scarcities. She mentioned the issues with the existing system and possible solutions such as converting the use of renewable energy, waste management and more efficient transportation.

Bangalore MDG Champions 2011

Bangalore MDG Champions is a competition that allows the students of Bangalore to initiate a Social Reform movement based on the Millennium Development Goals around places of their day to day activities, like in and around the college campus, around their own neighbourhoods, in public places etc. This competition is aimed at students who want better society.



Ten colleges from Bangalore participated by presenting their projects to a panel of international judges who then questioned them on the feasibility of the projects. These projects were also made public through facebook, and were granted certain number of points according to the number of 'like's received. Based on a set of criteria i.e., creativity, sustainability, feasibility, they were marked and 3 of the best projects were selected to implement the projects with the help of Global Citizens for Sustainable Development, by granting them a sum of money under INR 25,000.

1. To achieve Environmental Sustainability by promoting the use of cycles by Mount Carmel College (Autonomous)

The number of students utilizing two and four-wheeler vehicles to commute to and from college is increasing. Therefore, the Green Brigaders team of Mount Carmel College (Autonomous) wants to promote the use of bicycles among the students of the college. For this, GCSD will provide them with a few bicycles, some of which they will give away as prizes and some of which they will keep on the campus of the college to lend it out to students every now and again.

2. Bioremediation of Cyanides by Pseudomonas pseudoalcaligenes by M S Ramaiah College of Arts, Science and Commerce

The Biotech Freaks of M S Ramaiah College had a very scientific approach to achieving Environmental Sustainability. They proposed the use of the soil bacteria Pseudomonas pseudoalcaligenes to remediate the cyanide in water and soil. Therefore they will begin by experimenting in their lab to achieve suitable results. If they are successful, they will work on using their solution in the natural water bodies and the soil of Bangalore City.

3. Cloth Bag Project by Jyothi Nivas College (Autonomous)

The Entrepreneurship Cell of Jyothi Nivas College has in the past engaged students in various entrepreneurial activities with social causes. This year, they have come up with the Cloth Bag project where they produce bags made of cloth and sell it over to the students of their college and other colleges around Bangalore city and they will also attempt selling it at busy places like the mall or shopping streets.

Workshop on the Charter of the Peoples of the Earth

A preparatory workshop discussing on the Charter of the Peoples' of the Earth was co-organized by Gustavo Marin of the Forum for a new World Governance on 27th July 2011 and Anugraha John of GCSD. Participants attended that workshop, continued the discussions during the Assembly. Emily Finnegan and Nikia Brown facilitated a workshop discussing the upcoming U.N. Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June of 2012. Corresponding with the U.N. Summit will be a Peoples Summit which will include discussion on the formulation of a Charter of the People's of the Earth, outlaying the values and principles guiding human thought and action in the 21st century. After presenting a draft of the charter to the group, participants engaged in discussion modifying and reformulating the document so as to more adequately represent the voice of the people in Rio the following summer.

Open Session

The Last day of the Global Citizens Youth Assembly began with an open session that allowed the delegates to come forward and present to the audience the work that they have been involved in. This gave the various participants a platform to share their projects and therefore introduce to the people from around the world the various options that can be benefitted from, in the Social Field.

To begin with, Mr Dinesh Gajendran who runs his own NGO called Audacious Academy, Chennai, came forward and presented the Duke of Edinburgh's Youth Award. As a Gold Award recipient himself, Mr Gajendran spoke about the various avenues this Award introduced him to and therefore enabled him to start his own organization.



Following him, the Students of the WE BUILD 2011 program presented their experiences of working with rural women and children through the VEDIKE Vocational, Educational and Livelihood Centre (VELC). One group of students initiated Self-help groups with these women, teaching them to paint and make greeting cards, to use beads and make bracelets and with the help of an experienced teacher, they introduced sewing.

Another group of students of the WE BUILD 2011 program spoke about their work with the children of the VEDIKE Eco-Residential School. They ran a photography workshop with the children that taught them basic concepts of photography such as –

- The rule of 3s
- Depth of Field
- Light and Dark

They spoke about how the children were able to understand the rules and after being handed a camera each, they went around applying those concepts in the pictures that they took.

Two young Sri Lankan delegates spoke about their experience at the Global Citizens Youth Assembly and how it created an opportunity for them to understand the happenings of the world that are not publicized through conventional methods.

Global Citizens Cultural Show



The Global Citizens Cultural Show was a platform for the participants from various countries to come and showcase the performance art forms of their respective countries. It was an elaborate program with performances from the diverse international participants. Some of them were – Ballet from UK, Odyssey and Bharatnatyam from India, Traditional and folk dances from Sri Lanka, the National Dance from Afghanistan, a Singing performance from Sri Lanka to name a few.

Global Ambassador Award

A Global Ambassador is an official envoy for GCSD, and will represent GCSD in his/her own country or state. He/she should possess qualities of a leader and should be involved deeply in social activities in the vicinity of your neighbourhood, school, workplace, city or state.

At the Global Citizens Youth Assembly 2011, ambassadors were honoured with an award from GCSD to acknowledge their work both locally and globally. The recipients of the award were –

1. Mr Vikram Aditya (India) for his extensive work on environment related issues and his participation as a representative of the youth in various meets around the world.
2. Mr Mohammed Aryan Shams (Afghanistan) for his extensive work on youth related issues.
3. Ms Maria De la Guardia (USA) for her work on adequate housing in different parts of the world.
4. Mr. Manuel Marin (Chile) for his work in France, Chile and India and his commitment in cross-cultural dialogue platform in Asia.

Living Hope Children's Home



Participants spent the last portion of the Assembly at Living Hope Children's Home in Bangalore, India, home to children of local migrant workers. After sharing lunch with the children, participants engaged in various games such as a water balloon fight, building a pyramid and other activities with kids as a final conclusion to the Global Citizens Youth Assembly.

Happenings at the Global Citizens Youth Assembly 2011



Mr Aryan Shams giving his acceptance speech for the Global Ambassadors Award



Delegates being served lunch at Living Hope Children's Home



Enjoying a quiet lunch on the last day of the assembly



Engaging in games with the Children of Living Hope Children's Home



Ms Supriya performing Odissi, a dance form from the East of India



Ms Purnima Kumar making a presentation on Green Economy

We Build 2011

WE BUILD is an annual co-curricular service-learning model program, a four credit academic and volunteer program, designed to connect the theory taught in the school to the application used in the world. This program gives cross-cultural exposure (South-North) to students and also engages them through a labor intensive experience by building houses for the poor communities, interaction with villagers especially children and understand the development issues in India and creating Urban-Rural link. The program brings student and volunteers from across the globe, mostly youth and introduces them to the Indian society and culture by focusing on the three areas - culture, peace and development. Through this program the notion of Global Citizenship is addressed while students are engaged in meaningful action addressing issues related to children's rights to education and poverty alleviation.'

Every year, the WE BUILD program ends with a meeting of a young delegation from around the world such as the Global Citizens Youth Assembly 2011. It gives the WE BUILD students a chance to talk about the house they got to build and the people they got to meet during their time in India.



**Join us for Global Citizens Youth Assembly 2012
August 16-17 in Bangalore, India**