

Youth Action Team Profile

Prepared by Daniel Roth and Farah Hussain for the
United States Partnership Convocation on the
1st Anniversary of the United Nations' Decade of Education for Sustainable Development



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*“Tell me and I may forget,
Show me and I may remember,
But **involve me** and I’ll understand.”*

Introduction

Over the last 20 years the United Nations, national governments, and local communities around the world have identified young people as critical stakeholders in sustainable development. Youth are active participants in today and tomorrow. We must emphasize the engagement of young people in defining visions of sustainability, bringing diverse people together for collective purposes, and leading our communities toward a healthy, equitable, and prosperous life. A focus on respect and engagement of youth is an honorable acknowledgement of humanity’s creative heart.

Background

The *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* is a coordinated international effort to spend the next ten years (2005-2014) promoting the local and global acceptance of sustainability principles including equity and economic growth, conservation of natural resources and the natural environment, and worldwide social development.

The *US Partnership for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* (USPDESD) is a growing, non-partisan volunteer partnership of organizations in the United States formed to leverage the UN Decade of ESD (2005-2014) to integrate sustainable development in learning and education throughout the nation.

In the service of this role, the Executive Committee of the US Partnership for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development has agreed that, a key goal for the Partnership overall is to: Equip, inspire and develop young leaders (15-30 years old) to be the spokespeople and knowledge-builders who bring practical understanding of Sustainability to America



Youth Action Team: Vision and Mission

The vision of the Youth Action Team (YAT) of United States Partnership is a generation of American youth who have the support, capacity, and vision to lead sweeping societal shifts toward a healthy, just, and sustainable future.

The mission of the Youth Action Team (YAT) of the US Partnership is to optimize the engagement, participation, and leadership of youth (15-30 years old) in the activities of the US Partnership, Partnership organizations, and the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

Overarching Goals (See Appendix for sub-goal details and grassroots activities)

Goal #1 - Encourage and facilitate the effective and meaningful participation of youth-led and youth development organizations, their representatives and individual youth in the USPDESD

Goal #2 – Encourage and enable young members of the US Partnership to take on leadership roles in the USP

Goal #3 - Increase exposure, impact, and capacity of individual and organizational members of the Youth Action Team

Goal #4 – Focus the collective capacities of the Youth Action Team and the overall US Partnership on innovative projects, campaigns, and enterprises that involve multiple partners and show potential for substantial achievement of UN Decade of ESD and US Partnership goals

Goal #5 – Evaluate and celebrate the impact of Youth Action Team goals and activities and the role of the YAT in the achievement of US Partnership and UN Decade goals.



Strategic Initiatives

America's Sustainable Future Campaign: The 5-5 Initiative

Since the founding of the Youth Action Team there was a clear mandate to generate resources that would support the critical and strategic efforts of the Youth Action Team and its members. The goal of this ongoing resource development campaign is to engage 500 companies, foundations, and organizations who will each contribute at least \$5,000 to create a base fund to ensure the Youth Action Team is on firm financial footing to achieve its evolving goals and activities.

National Youth Council for Sustainability (see appendix for details)

On April 16, 2005, 30 Youth Leaders from diverse youth organizations around the country were brought together by the Youth Action Team to begin a strategic planning process to found a National Youth Council for Sustainability. Over several months time, a working group of this meeting developed the following purpose statement.

County Youth Councils for Sustainability (see appendix for details)

Since the first strategic planning meeting to found a National Youth Council for Sustainability, several youth leaders in Oregon and New York have begun to organize intergenerational planning groups at the county level that will seek to pilot a local versions of the National Youth Council model. Both county-based initiatives are collaborating with High Schools, Universities, Cooperative Extension offices, young professional organizations, and a variety of other sectors in their region.

Youth Media Creation (see www.betterdaysalliance.org for details)

Over the last year the Youth Action Team has been in collaboration with members of the Marketing Action Team of the US Partnership to develop a national effort to support college-aged journalists, filmmakers, and digital media creators whose stories can help mainstream America increase its understanding of ongoing U.S. efforts to bring about a future characterized by healthy people, healthy profits, and a healthy planet.

Collaborative Event Planning (see Timeline below for examples)

A critical component of supporting the member organizations of the Youth Action Team has been to facilitate and coordinate collaborative, intergenerational planning processes that result in outstanding, high visibility events where youth leadership is emphasized. Events, such as conferences, forums, summits, at the local, national, and international level offer participating groups a unique opportunity to learn from each other, build new levels of trust across sectors and geography, and enable individuals groups to have a bigger impact.

Youth Delegations and a Youth Speakers Bureau

The Youth Action Team has emerged to become a unique platform to build diverse delegations of youth leaders to attend critical events. Over time our support of youth delegation formation and collaborative planning has brought many capable youth leaders into the Youth Action Team network. These young leaders are interested to develop themselves as public speakers. The Youth Action Team helps identify opportunities for such development and through mentorship and capacity building supports youth leaders to make great strides in their leadership maturation.

Collaborative Learning

In addition to the strategic initiatives of the Youth Action Team there are three areas of continual learning that bridges generations and sectors including:

1. Intergenerational Mentorship
2. Identification of Leadership Opportunities and Professional Development
3. Organizational Capacity Building for Collaboration



Youth Action Team Leadership

Chairperson:

Dan Roth

Steering Committee

Amy Mosher

Ann Gray

Jonathan Tescher

Farah Hussain

Kevin Kalra

Field Leaders (** not confirmed)

Summer Rayne Oakes – *Organic Portraits*

Ryan Legg – *Engineers for a Sustainable World*

Adriene Marie Brown – *League of Independent Voters***

Billy Parish – *Energy Action*

Meghan Fay – *Emerging Green Builders***

Randy Allen – *Sustainable Enterprise Association*

Resource Committee

Douglas Cohen – *The Leadership Center*

Dan Hoyanaki – *Portland State University Cooperative Extension*

Barbara Baker – *Cornell Cooperative Extension*

Cathy Coleman – *The Institute of Noetic Sciences*

Hunter Lovins – *Natural Capitalism*



Youth Action Team Profiles

Daniel Roth

Daniel Roth, 27 years old, is a graduate student of Adult and Extension Education at Cornell University. Born and raised in Albany, NY he received a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies from New York University, and now lives at Eco Village at Ithaca. His academic research explores the intersections of education for sustainable development, collaborative knowledge management, and participatory action research. As an instructor Daniel has worked in the field of youth development and experiential education for nine years. As a project coordinator he has developed broad-based community partnerships, environmental and food security education, service learning programs, and civic engagement projects. In 2005 he joined Planetary Consulting, an international consulting firm that specializes in youth engagement. He is the chairperson of the Youth Action Team of the US Partnership for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. He is a member of the advisory councils to Sustainable Tompkins, Urban Mentor, and the Reflect Respect Project. In addition Daniel is a certified Massage Technician and trained Somatic Movement Educator. Daniel deeply enjoys connecting with diverse people, creative expression, and healthy food.

Summer Rayne Oakes

Summer Rayne Oakes is a model based in New York City who seamlessly combines her image with social entrepreneurship. In July 2005, she founded the branding and consultancy firm SRO (www.gen-s.net), to specialize in her unique work, focused on the nexus of fashion, sustainability, and educational outreach. Summer is one of the principle co-founders of the newly launched branding and consultancy company, ICI (www.itsici.com), with Josh Dorfman of *Vivavi* and Chuck Heckman of *Delano Collection*. Founded in January 2006, ICI positions brands on the nexus of style + sustainability.

Oakes has traveled the world as a spokesperson and collaborator to assist companies with events that seek to tie in style with sustainability, particularly fashion-related events that breach the gap of social, political, and environmental issues. In September 2005, Summer Rayne launched both a pilot pedagogical curriculum entitled "ECOFASHION 101" (www.ecofashion101.com) with Recyclebank. Her own fashion editorial entitled, "Behind the Label" (www.behindthelabel.net) for global fashion magazine, *Lucire*. Oakes is also a host for an international prime time TV show called *Eco4theWorld* (www.eco4theworld.com), as well as the U.S. co-launcher for the brand line, A.D. Schwarz (www.adschwarz.com), a luxury label of hand-wrought sustainably-harvested wooden jewelry and furniture pieces deep from the heart of Mozambique.

Summer Rayne is a Udall Scholar, National Wildlife Federation Fellow, Baccalaureate Service award winner, and a member of the United Nations' US Partnership since January 2005. She graduated with a B.S. in Natural Resources & Entomology from Cornell University.

John Tescher

Jonathan Tescher is a native of Miami, FL. He has found community and home in Atlanta, GA where he works with the City of Atlanta Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs as an organizer of youth programs. He received his BA in Marketing from University of Texas at Austin in 2002. Jonathan's specialty is his ability to build partnerships and avenues for collaboration among diverse disciplines and cultures. Video production and spoken word serve as two of his vehicles for self-expression and transforming sustainable solutions into popular culture.

Amy R. Mosher

Amy R. Mosher, 27, has been involved with the U.S Partnership Youth Action Team since 2003, in multiple capacities. From Worcester, Massachusetts, she is most passionate about exploring the link between individual creativity and community sustainability. Amy believes that when people, particularly young people, have meaningful outlets to creatively express themselves, they are more apt to participate in movements beyond the self -- movements like the shift toward sustainable living for all. She holds a BA in Environmental Studies/Spanish from the University of Vermont and an MA in Community Development and Planning from Clark University. This former AmeriCorps volunteer likes to travel, dance and articulate new ideas for a changing world. She was a U.S. Delegate to the 4th International Convention on Environment and Development and Planetwalk-Cuba through Global Exchange in 2003. In 2005 she presented at the Youth Forum at World Environment Day in San Francisco and the Resurgence Conference on Ecology and Spirituality in NY. Amy is currently the Teen Director at the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester and would love to connect with other youth development practitioners about engaging young leaders in marketing Sustainability.

Kevin Kalra

Kevin Kalra is completing his second year of undergrad at the University of Texas at Austin in Geography, Secondary Education, and Mathematics. A committed teacher and social entrepreneur, Kevin has extensive leadership experience in sustainable development education. While in high school, Kevin founded the Sustainable Development Committee, a group of volunteer students committed to sustainability. Houston Mayor Bill White later recognized the committee's work by declaring March 30, 2004 as Kevin Kalra Day. Kevin also founded The Global Teaching Network, a Texas not for profit, committed to sustainable development and equal education for all. The organization, now in its third year, proposes to construct sustainable schools worldwide, advocating for equal access to education in the Third World. In April 2005, Kevin attended the 13th Commission on Sustainable Development at the UN Headquarters as a US youth representative

Farah D. Hussain

Farah Hussain, 22, is a recent graduate of Cornell University, where she received her B.S in an Interdisciplinary Program of Study focused on International Community Development and Public Affairs. She combined her academic studies with community internships, such as Cornell Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), and worked as a Legislative Aide in the Office of the Assemblywoman, Barbara Lifton. An activist at heart, she was Founder and President of Cornell's Chapter of the Student Global AIDS Coalition (SGAC), a lobbying group that was committed to HIV/AIDS issues through education, informed advocacy, media work, and direct action. Through partnerships with SAFE (Sexual Awareness for Everyone) and Amnesty International, she helped lead campaigns to educate and raise awareness about the social, economic and political issues surrounding sexual health and wellbeing. Farah is currently enjoying her hiatus from the world of higher education. She is serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA with the Alternatives Federal Credit Union, a Community Development non-profit. She supports the development of microfinance enterprises by increasing the financial literacy and small business education of low-income, under-served populations, with an emphasis on outreach to women and minorities. Farah highlights her various projects and other social issues of importance by hosting a public affairs cable access show ("Ithaca Democratic Socialists Presents"). She enjoys promoting free independent media, produced by local citizens for local citizens, as an education tool for civic engagement. A supporter for equal educational opportunities, Farah is involved on the Research and Systemic Solutions Committee of the Village at Ithaca, a non-profit that works to reduce the educational achievement gap of Black and Latino students by working with the Ithaca School District to develop effective education programs and school policies that are more multicultural and inclusive.

Ann Gray

Ann attended the University of California at Santa Clara, Chapman, and finally Oregon State University where she received her degree in Housing Studies in 2004. After some travels in Europe, she began working at an environmental/real estate law firm in Portland, Oregon, where she served as their Marketing Coordinator. In addition, she was the manager of a land-use consulting firm. In pursuit of something more satisfying, she landed her present job as an AmeriCorps VISTA with OSU Extension Service. Ann is presently in charge of coordinating an after-school natural resource science program for high school students. She plans to attend Portland State University in the Fall to pursue her Masters in Urban Studies.

Membership

US Partnership Youth Action Team Members

Energy Action	SustainUS
The Leadership Center	Engineers for a Sustainable World
Ecoventures International	Urban Mentor
California Students for Sustainability Coalition	A Bright 21 st
SRO llc	Planetary Consulting
Life Frames: A Living Library	

US Partnership Youth Action Team Collaborators

City of San Francisco	
United Nations Environment Program	
CNN	
Earth Child Project	Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Project Youth Connect	Transformers
Green Mountain Coffee Roasters	Institute for Sustainability – AICHE
City at Peace	Growing up in Cities
Emerging Green Builders – USGBC	Prison Moratorium Project
Funders Collaborative for Youth Organizing	Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Earth Institute- Columbia University	Level Green Institute
Narrows Crossing	Miracle Corners of the World
Terracycle	Environmental Youth Alliance
California Students for Sustainability Coalition	Native Movement
Ithaca Youth Community Action	The Food Project
Eco Ventures International	Franciscans Int'l
Starting Bloc	Global Youth Action Network
Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County	League of Young Voters
Youth Roundtable for the Environment	Public Citizen
International Association for Peace through Tourism	
Cornell Sustainable Enterprise Assoc.	

Monthly Conference Call

2nd Monday of the month, 7:30 pm EST 1-866-918-5492
 Access Code 479945

Interactive Website

<http://projects.takingitglobal.org/uspyouthactionteam>

Mailing List

uspyouthactionteam-subscribe@groups.takingitglobal.org

Timeline*Summer 2005*

Planning Stage

October 15, 2005

Youth Delegation to SoL Sustainability Consortium (Detroit, MI)

March 1, 2005

Launch Party of Youth Action Team (New York City, NY)

April 16, 2005

National Youth Council for Sustainability - 1st Strategic Planning Meeting

June 2-5, 2005

World Environment Day, Youth Track Coordination (San Francisco, CA)

June 5, 2005

CNN Interview with Daniel Roth, YAT Chair, and Van Jones, Executive Director, Ella Baker Center

June 10-12, 2005

Earth and Religion Conference, Youth Track Coordination, Bard College, NY

June 16, 2005

UN Environment Program DESD Event, Youth Presentation (Washington, DC)

September 10, 2005

Global Clinton Initiative, Youth Facilitation (New York City, NY)

October 5, 2005

Engineers for a Sustainable World Annual Conference, Youth Presentation (Austin, TX)

November 4, 2005

US Green Building Council Annual Conference, Youth Presentation (Atlanta, Georgia)