



COMMITTED TO
IMPROVING THE STATE
OF THE WORLD

“The Forum of
Young Global Leaders
is the voice of an
optimistic future,
an energetic catalyst
for change”

Foreword

Let's face it: the world is more complex, interrelated and interdependent than ever. The challenges faced by the next generation of leaders are more daunting and intractable than ever and cannot be mastered with the current set of strategies, institutions, standards and attitudes.

To address these challenges in a meaningful and sustainable way requires fresh thinking, multistakeholder engagement and dynamic new ways of collaborating to develop innovative solutions that are truly global. Recognizing this need, I created in 2004 the foremost platform for young leaders to engage in global affairs to shape a more positive, peaceful and prosperous society.

The Forum of Young Global Leaders is a unique community formed by the most exceptional leaders from every region of the world and every stakeholder in society. These Young Global Leaders (YGLs) have committed their energy and knowledge to the most critical issues facing humankind.

Already successful and accomplished in their own fields, they join and co-create a community of insight and action that is truly committed to improving the state of the world. The Forum of Young Global Leaders is the voice of an optimistic future and an energetic catalyst for positive change.

As you will see from the stories collected here, being part of the YGL Community is also a transformational experience.

YGLs engage with leaders outside their community, serving as sounding boards and advisers to international organizations, governments and private institutions. They initiate new dialogues and platforms for action to address global challenges such as climate change, disease prevention, improving education and eradicating poverty. They develop authentic relationships with global peers far outside their traditional professional networks, giving them unique perspectives into world affairs and resulting in personal friendships that allow them to empower positive change.

In short, the YGL Community helps its members make the transition from success to significance and strives to move from a collection of successful individuals to a community of collective impact. YGLs hold each other accountable to a higher standard of global leadership in their professional and personal lives.

The legitimacy of the community stems from its integrity and impact. YGLs are nominated and selected through a rigorous process to create a truly diverse and representative body, while accepting only the very best leaders who have already demonstrated their commitment to serving society at large.

Whether you are a young leader who has been honoured, a member of the World Economic Forum global community or the media, or a global citizen, we invite you to help us foster the next generation of world leaders.

“We integrate Young Global Leaders into processes that allow them to have a real impact on global affairs and to make sure that global decision-making preserves the interests of the next generation.”



Professor Klaus Schwab

Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum;
Founder, The Forum of Young Global Leaders

Who are we?

The Forum of Young Global Leaders is a dynamic, diverse, global community of the world's most outstanding, next-generation leaders, who commit a portion of their time to jointly share a better future and thereby improve the state of the world. Young Global Leaders represent the future of leadership, coming from all regions of the world and representing business, government, civil society, arts and culture, academia and media, as well as social entrepreneurs.

Set up as an independent, not-for-profit foundation under the supervision of the Swiss government, The Forum of Young Global Leaders works as an integral part of the World Economic Forum platform to engage young leaders into deep interaction with other stakeholders of global society. YGLs are fully involved in virtually all meetings, research and initiatives of the World Economic Forum, representing the views and interests of their generation.

Young Global Leaders have a powerful role in determining the activities of the YGL Community, which is governed by a Foundation Board of respected leaders from business, politics and international organizations and managed by a dynamic team of young professionals in Geneva.



Sketch by Patrick Chappatte (YGL) - Editorial Cartoonist, Globe Cartoon

The World Economic Forum is an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

Incorporated as a not-for-profit foundation in 1971 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the Forum is tied to no political, partisan or national interests.

How do we work?

The Forum of Young Global Leaders is building a next-generation leadership community that is mission-led and principle-driven, while being inclusive but merit-based. Built on the pillars of the World Economic Forum, its objectives are to:

- **Convene a diverse global community of peers** by bringing together Young Global Leaders at summits, regional events, leadership development programmes and community-organized gatherings around the world; YGLs are encouraged to learn from each other and with each other, in a search for forward-looking and innovative solutions to present-day problems
- **Catalyse the next generation of leaders** through personal experiences that enable YGLs to build knowledge and engender a better understanding of global challenges and trends, risks and opportunities, as well as to further enhance their unique role as leaders within their organizations and the broader community; insights come from dedicated educational modules (such as the “Leadership and Public Policy for the 21st Century” module at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government), informal, interactive, off-the-record sessions with high-profile world leaders and peer-to-peer coaching opportunities
- **Positively impact the global agenda** by engaging the YGL Community in initiatives and task forces related to global challenges that they identify collectively; YGLs bring their diverse skill-set to tackle a range of issues using their expertise, knowledge and networks to make a sound contribution to the world; in that sense, the YGL Community is a distinctive balance of rights and responsibilities

Young Global Leaders are actively engaged in the community, integrating into events organized by the World Economic Forum, organizing events of their own as well as launching and leading a number of innovative initiatives and impactful task forces. See www.redesignourworld.org for the latest list of YGL initiatives.

Who can join the YGL Community?

The Forum of Young Global Leaders is not a membership club that anyone can join. The Forum has established a comprehensive selection process for identifying and selecting the most exceptional leaders 40 years of age or younger. Every year, thousands of candidates from around the world are proposed through a qualified nomination process and assessed according to rigorous selection criteria.

Only the best candidates are selected and all efforts are extended to create a truly representative body. The short-listed candidates are evaluated by Heidrick & Struggles, recognized as one of the world’s leading executive search and leadership development firms. As a final step in the selection process, the candidates are screened by a selection committee made up of esteemed leaders.



A Young Global Leader is nominated and selected based on the following criteria:

- Is 40 years of age or younger at the time of nomination
- Has a recognized record of extraordinary achievement, a proven track record of substantial leadership experience as well as a clear indication of playing a substantial leadership role for the rest of his or her career
- Has demonstrated a commitment to serve society at large through exceptional contributions
- Has an impeccable record in the public eye and good standing in his or her community, as well as showing great self-awareness, a desire for learning and a global perspective

This process yields 100 to 200 extraordinary individuals each year who are then honoured with the title “Young Global Leader”. To benefit fully from the YGL Community, honourees are invited to become active members of The Forum of Young Global Leaders and sign the YGL Charter of rights and responsibilities, committing their time to the mission of the organization for a period of five (5) years. The YGL Community currently counts more than 650 active members in every region of the world and stakeholder in society.

Where can I learn more?

This brochure introduces you to some of the amazing Young Global Leaders who are part of the YGL Community and whose collective action, bilateral partnerships or individual achievements inspire and empower others. For more stories, profiles and news about the YGL Community, please visit www.younggloballeaders.org.



“Through various intense activities and conversations, we evolved into a sort of open tribe with a shared ethos and common value system.”

Penny Low
Member of Parliament
Singapore

“ When we first met in Zermatt in 2005, we were a group of over-achievers from a variety of areas and interests, with different lives and priorities. We were not sure what we could or should accomplish as a group, or how to shape a collective future. But through various intensive activities and conversations, we evolved into a sort of open tribe, with a shared ethos and common value system. We realized we could have a real impact on people’s lives while inspiring each other to become better persons. This opened a whole new space for collaboration.

Since then, the Young Global Leaders have become an integral part of my life. As a Member of Parliament in Singapore, I actively draw on YGL narratives in areas ranging from climate change to social equity as input to parliamentary debates and constituency work.

One such example is help in developing my constituency, Punggol 21, into the first eco-friendly satellite town – featuring rain harvesting, solar grids and broad, disability-friendly walkways as well as bottom-up social interaction and community building. Punggol 21 has now become a showcase for urban housing projects across the world.

The YGL Community also gave me enormous psychological support to put my heart and mind into starting the non-profit, impartial Social Innovation Park, which is a movement to educate and empower decision-makers worldwide to create high-impact, sustainable solutions to social concerns. It is now in eight countries and reflects the YGL ethos by being an exchange for ideas and innovations for building a better, more inclusive and sustainable world.

Some of us have been lucky enough to be born in a place and at a time that gave us the opportunity to educate ourselves, develop our character and fulfil our dreams. But despite these gifts bestowed upon us, we also need to make conscious choices – and it is these choices that make all the difference in our lives and in the lives of others.

No matter what it is we have been endowed with, the question is what we do with these gifts – that is what can define or destroy us as a person and as a civilization.



I've always been interested in finding new ways to look at and tackle problems, and this is one of the cornerstones of YGL thinking. My organization, Architecture for Humanity, is one of the few organizations that are on the intersection between international development and the advancement of architecture. We develop and build adaptive architectural solutions in areas of great need, including communities affected by natural disaster or conflict. And by advocating open-sourced innovation, we share our ideas and allow other groups to learn not just from our successes but also from our mistakes.

We're currently working in 18 countries, but historically we've focused on three main regions: Africa, Latin America and South-East Asia, so I try to attend the meetings in these areas. YGL events are not your standard humdrum affairs where you sit behind a desk being lectured to. They are action oriented. You can sit on the periphery and listen and make friends – there are a lot of deep friendships that are made during YGL meetings – but you can also take up an issue if you feel passionately about it. Most importantly, you'll find like-minded people who'll help you take action – not just talk about it.

One of the best examples is the work the YGLs did in Haiti after the tragic 2010 earthquake. Days after the disaster, we met in Davos. We were sitting at the World Economic Forum trying to develop a long-term strategic plan. There were a number of YGLs who had been working in Haiti already, and we decided to share resources and collaborate where it was needed.

Rather than just pour in aid to be directed by foreign entities, we wanted to empower Haitian professionals in the rebuilding effort. We set out to put the Haitians at the heart of the long-term reconstruction efforts by opening a centre staffed with Haitian and international construction professionals working together on schools, clinics and housing. With the support of the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund, we're training 600 Haitian professionals and supporting over 5,000 construction jobs. Eventually, the centre will transfer to the local community – our success is our ability to design our own obsolescence.

At the end of that first meeting about Haiti, the YGLs committed US\$ 30 million of relief work – and we were only a small group. Lots of people talked about the pledges that were received in the days after the earthquake, but they were just pledges, it wasn't real money. We sat down with foundations and government entities and said, 'We're not just a bunch of folks who care about Haiti, we've got US\$ 30 million at stake and we want to make something happen.'

"I've always been interested in finding new ways to look at problems, and this is one of the cornerstones of YGL thinking."

Cameron Sinclair

Co-Founder and Executive Director
Architecture for Humanity



If it were not for the Young Global Leaders Community, Luis Plata and I would not have formed the relationship that enabled us to develop and eventually ratify the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

My friendship with Luis was born well before the agreement was signed. Our first encounter goes back to 2005, followed by further YGL meetings at various World Economic Forum events. Our friendship deepened over a two-year period, when I was Shadow Minister of International Trade in Canada and Luis was Minister of Trade for Colombia.

The FTA negotiations started in 2002 under our Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and then president-elect Alvaro Uribe. However, as time went on, it appeared doomed in the Canadian Parliament. We started discussions in early 2009 to try to turn things around. I proposed an amendment in the form of a Human Rights Treaty that would require annual reporting on the impact that the FTA has on human rights in both countries. We then had a very important meeting in Davos where the idea was presented to President Uribe. He was totally open to it. He basically turned to Luis and said: 'Go ahead and get this done.'

The deal remained very unpopular in Canada. The unions were against it, the Socialists were against it, there was even a coalition against the Human Rights Treaty. It would have been easy to take the politically expedient route and walk away. It took a great leap of faith for Luis and for me to get this agreement ratified. Neither of us would have been able to do it without having total trust in each other – trust born out of our common involvement in the YGL Community.

My friendship with Luis helped open my eyes to Colombia – to take a risk and do what I think is right. I believe we have established a relationship between Canada and Colombia that goes beyond dollars and cents – a true partnership.

There has never been a human rights treaty between two countries tied to a free trade agreement. As we move on, I suspect human rights treaties will become a regular part of such agreements – and all this started with the friendship and trust between two people.

The connections that you build through the YGL Community can lead to remarkable innovation and progress. It is just a matter of finding the right time and the right opportunity – you never know when you might meet somebody who is doing something interesting in another country.

“The connections that you build through the YGL community can lead to remarkable innovation and progress.”

Scott Brison
Member of Parliament
Canada

“ The first time I saw the face of poverty first-hand was during a visit to the slums of Quito after I graduated from Harvard Business School while working for ACCION, a global microfinance pioneer. We went to the home of a very poor woman. Her shack had a dirt floor, the walls were falling apart, her children didn't have clothes and they didn't attend school. Most strikingly, poverty had made the hunchbacked woman wretched, and her appearance showed almost no trace of dignity.

She received a US\$ 50 loan and I went back every few weeks to check on her progress. Soon, she had started a little shop. After a few weeks, she had the floor cemented, the roof fixed and the walls insulated. Before long, people from the entire neighbourhood were coming to her house to buy necessities. Her kids wore clothes and went to school, and the woman walked upright and her eyes exuded a new-found confidence – she was now the definition of dignity.

My encounter with that woman had a striking impact on me. On an emotional level, I realized that for only 50 bucks, a fellow human being can gain their dignity. On an intellectual level, I understood the power of business solutions for poverty – microfinance being a business solution to a societal problem. And it was a good investment at the same time – after a few months, the woman was able to pay back the US\$ 50, including interest.

“I am grateful to my YGL peers for making me aware of the responsibility that I have – that, by luck or destiny, I am in a position where I can do things that matter.”

Alvaro Rodríguez Arregui
Co-Founder and Managing Partner
Ignia Partners



Despite this experience, I went into a typical corporate career. Microfinance and social impact work were something I was going to do once I'd retired. I became a typical corporate executive, doing things that look impressive on paper, like becoming the youngest CFO of a company trading on the NYSE.

Joining the YGL Community started a process that changed my life 180 degrees. Interactions with passionate individuals who dedicated their lives to solving humanity's direst problems made me realize that today was the day to get fully involved. I saw that, by applying the business skills I had developed, I had the aptitude and know-how to develop business solutions to drive real change.

So I stepped out of my very comfortable corporate life and started IGNIA, an impact investment firm focused on commercial enterprises that serve the base of the socio-economic pyramid. In the middle of the financial crisis we raised a fund of US\$ 102 million, and today we're the largest impact-investing BoP fund in the world. We invest in businesses that serve the needs of low-income populations and empower entrepreneurship while making financial returns for investors.

I am grateful to my YGL peers for making me aware of the responsibility that I have – that, by luck or destiny, I am in a position where I can do things that matter, that lead to positive change. Being part of this community is a gift and a privilege.

“When I was invited to join the Young Global Leaders programme, I was intrigued. I get all sorts of invitations to clubs and various other things that I don’t have time to be involved with, but this was different.

At the first meeting in Zermatt, we had wide-ranging discussions about global issues in health, environment and education. As it became clear that concrete outcomes were expected from us, I decided that I really wanted to be a part of this. The group was very impressive and all the YGLs had unbelievable personal stories – it was humbling.

Apart from the remarkable content, what struck me was the immediate creation of a spirit of friendship and mutual respect. When you are young and successful in the business world, you behave in a certain way. Entering a community such as the YGLs, where everybody is highly successful, there’s a totally different spirit and ambience – you can be yourself, not playing a role.

“As it became clear that concrete outcomes were expected from us, I decided that I really wanted to be a part of this.”

Georges Kern

Chief Executive Officer
IWC Schaffhausen

The focus of my working group was on the environment. This was before the release of Al Gore’s An Inconvenient Truth, before the IPCC report and just after Hurricane Katrina – it was at a time when climate change was starting to gain widespread attention. We initiated a campaign to encourage businesses to examine their environmental impact. This included the release of the Book of Love, a motivational guidebook sent to companies around the world to help them reduce their carbon footprint. Our approach was to show that sustainability and profitability are not mutually exclusive – overall, it was a positive message.

I incorporated what I had learned from being part of the YGL Community in business decisions at IWC Schaffhausen, the company I run. I am very proud to say that IWC became the first carbon-neutral watch manufacturer in the world.

The IWC strategy of integrating sustainability into business decisions was heavily influenced by my interaction with the YGLs. For example, David de Rothschild, a fellow YGL, shared with me his plans for the Plastiki expedition – sailing from San Francisco to Sydney in a boat made from 12,500 plastic bottles. He needed a sponsor, and IWC was a perfect fit. It combined three of my passions – adventure, technology and ecology – and was hugely successful in raising awareness of what plastic does to our environment and oceans.

Being part of the YGL Community is intellectually challenging. It also broadens your horizons as you interact with people from all walks of life. And you gain new perspectives – I now have a much better understanding of hunger, education and the environment.

The combination of intellectual challenge, exposure to new experiences and perspectives, and the formation of deep and long-lasting friendships with people from all over the world under the umbrella of ‘let’s do something together’ is truly remarkable. We’re not here just to talk, but to actually do something.



“Curiosity is the most powerful word in the dictionary and I think if you were to look at the YGLs and you wanted to find one thing common to all of them it would be that we’re all curious.”

David de Rothschild
Chief Executive Officer
MYOO

“ There’s a funny thing about being a YGL – every time you go to a meeting you look around and say to yourself, ‘I have no idea why I’m here. I have no idea why I was chosen. Look at these people. How was I chosen to be part of a group that is so talented and so extraordinary?’ I think everyone’s thinking the same thing, because there’s a lot of humility within the YGLs.

I was probably chosen because what I do is slightly different. At MYOO, we address social and environmental issues – but by trying to create a different narrative, one that is multifaceted and seeks to blend education and entertainment.

The other YGL I’ve worked most closely with is Georges Kern. Georges is a fascinating character. I’d heard about him before I even knew about the YGLs. Everywhere I went, people told me I should go and see Georges. His is a company that has decided not to go down the traditional marketing route and has instead put its money into projects that have a deeper purpose. When I finally met him at the World Sports Awards, it was a total breath of fresh air. Here was someone who had a really clear vision about what he wanted to achieve with his brand and how he wanted to spend his marketing money.

Georges came on board with our Plastiki project, the catamaran made out of 12,500 reclaimed plastic bottles that we sailed from San Francisco to Sydney to draw attention to marine pollution and environmental issues caused by global warming. Georges was enormously supportive. Often, we meet CEOs with good intentions but, after the initial meeting, reality set in. But Georges just said, ‘I like what you do, I like the way you’re doing it and it fits with our brand. Let’s make something happen.’ That’s the sort of thinking that you find with YGLs.

The Plastiki project was about recasting waste as a resource rather than just a problem. This way of reframing problems to make them into solutions is something that’s key to YGL thinking. To create Plastiki, we engineered a plastic product that’s a self-reinforcing polymer that is half the weight of fibreglass, three-quarters the strength and much tougher because it cannot shatter. Based on this technology, the plastic bottles that are thrown out every year can now be taken and pressed into car tyres or flat-pack housing for refugees – anything that needs structural integrity or that currently uses fibreglass. We’ve up-cycled, rather than recycling like for like.

Curiosity is the most powerful word in the dictionary, and I think if you were to look at the YGLs and you wanted to find one thing common to all of them it would be that we’re all curious. We ask questions, we help people to learn and we’re eager to learn ourselves. We’re people who are taking things to the next level because we’re not satisfied with just stepping around the problems. Plus, we all have a confidence in our ability. There is no doubt that we can bring about real change.

“The Young Global Leaders bring a great dynamism and freshness to the wider work of the World Economic Forum. As substantial leaders in their own right, with extensive networks and established reputations, they offer expert insights to the Forum’s work as well as benefiting from the contributions of the many global leaders they interact with.

YGL passion and entrepreneurial spirit ensures that, in its work, the Forum is always aware of the need for action on the ground – enabling consumers and citizens around the world to understand the challenges we face and what they can do. With the Forum’s Water Initiative, its largest project, YGLs are making a major contribution through taking the central message of ‘the value of water’ beyond policy-makers to create millions of ‘water champions’ around the globe.”

Andy Wales

Head, Sustainable Development
SABMiller

“ The YGL meetings have a lot in common with the Wiki way of doing things. It’s a very open-ended, peer-to-peer structure. It’s not like there’s an organization assigning us tasks to do – it’s just people coming together to share ideas, help each other and, most crucially, to ask questions. It’s incredible to have so many people from diverse backgrounds there at the meetings. It’s a place where people can get together and share ideas. It’s a space to share problems and bring different viewpoints and areas of expertise into play to help solve them.

The first meeting I went to was in Dalian, People’s Republic of China. It was instantly apparent that this was no ordinary talking shop. The people I met were an inspiration. I don’t know anywhere else you’d come across such diverse participants. And it’s not just a bunch of people trying to do business with each other – there’s a healthy mix of non-profits, academics, media and government people.

More than anything it’s a peer group and a support network for people who have a lot of interesting questions to ask. It’s a place to bounce ideas off people and hear viewpoints from totally different fields. I’ve gone on to achieve a lot of different things with people I’ve met at the meetings. I’ve been helping one guy apply the Wiki method to online translation. He’s a YGL working on a financial literacy curriculum and he wanted to see if he could go global with it, so we launched a Wiki where the user community could help him translate his material. We have two languages online already and we’re working towards a formal launch.

Once, I was on the way to Santiago, Chile, to speak at fellow YGL Paula Escobar’s book launch, only I had a terribly painful but fortunately minor eye injury. When I arrived, I discovered that Paula had arranged for a top eye doctor to meet with me – at midnight – to get a proper diagnosis and treatment.

This is typical of the social aspect of the YGLs. The relationships you forge with the others are not just business-based. Many of the people I’ve met at YGL events have gone on to become close friends. Wherever you are in the world, it seems there’s a YGL who can help you, whether you’re having business problems or you just need some help or advice. We’re an extended family – wherever you go, it’s like there are old friends waiting.



“YGL meetings have a lot in common with the Wiki way of doing things.”

Jimmy Wales
Founder and Trustee
Wikimedia Foundation



I must admit I had no idea what to expect when I got an invitation to become part of the YGL Community. At the time, I was working at the White House and planning to go to Davos anyway. So I decided to give it a chance and discover what it was all about. I went to the first meeting and, when I realized what this group could accomplish and what amazing people were involved, I was completely hooked.

When we met in Davos in 2007 we spoke about the challenges facing the world. At first, I thought it would be just talk and that nothing would follow afterwards. But in our group we discussed education and, as a professor, I care deeply about this issue. I think education is key to raising people out of poverty and dealing with inequality – it gives people an opportunity to have a better life. We focused on the developing world, where so many children don't have the chance to receive any education. We wanted to develop a project that didn't cost much and could truly make a difference.

We had some brilliant economists in our group (Michael Kremer and Esther Duflo) who have tested what works with education – what is the most cost-effective way to get kids to school. And, if they are in school, what increases their learning. They discovered that the most cost-effective way to improve education is to de-worm the children – that was something I knew nothing about.

Four hundred million children around the world have worms and, in many countries, it's seen as a normal way of life. Worms cause fatigue and anaemia; they absorb nutrients and make kids sick more often. This means kids miss school or, if at school, learn less due to lack of energy. Depending on the type of worm, it takes just one or two pills a year to get rid of them – and treating one child costs less than 50 cents a year.

We all left Davos ready for action. Once we formed Deworm the World (DtW) it took on a life of its own, receiving support from organizations worldwide.

Davos got us together and forced us to brainstorm – there is no substitute for such a unique event that fosters such great ideas – and it was the YGL network that made it happen.



Alejandro Ramirez convinced a world-famous director to make a movie about de-worming. I was also part of the Kennedy School class of December 2008, and with my fellow classmates we raised almost US\$ 100,000. Our partnership with YGL Vikram Akula, CEO of SKS Microfinance, also contributed to DtW's success – through his network in Andhra Pradesh and our work with the government, more than 2.2 million children have been de-wormed there. These success stories were initiated by money raised through the YGL network.

There are two great powers of the YGL network. One is that it forces you to step back from your day job and to think about the big picture. The YGL Community taught me how, with just a small effort, you can make a huge difference.

The second is the network of people you are introduced to – the connections we've made and the people we've met through the YGL network have been incredibly important in accomplishing our goals. As a result of all this, DtW helped deworm 20 million children in 25 countries in 2009.

“I went to the first meeting and, when I realized what this group could accomplish and what amazing people were involved, I was completely hooked.”

Kristin Forbes

Professor of Economics, MIT
Sloane School of Management

Deworm the World

Impact of a YGL Initiative

Michael Njoroge Wamukuyu,

12, Kenya

“ I didn't know anything about worms or that worms could be living in my belly or that the worms come when I don't wash my hands before I eat. One day, the teacher told us all this. She said that if you have worms, it can make your stomach hurt and you can get headaches and feel sleepy all the time. I had all these things and the teacher said that at school the next day we would get medicine to make the worms go away. In morning assembly, the head teacher held up a pill and said she and all the teachers would eat one, and then we'd get one in class. I was happy to eat the pill after the head teacher ate hers. I chewed it like they told us and it tasted like a sweet. One girl, Beth, who had a big tummy and often didn't come to school, ate her pill and then vomited and you saw worms come out. One was as long as my finger. Beth doesn't have a big tummy anymore and I don't get the headaches and I feel good now and go to school every day. I am second in class now and I want to be an engineer and build airplanes when I'm big.



Nancy Muthoni,

35, Kenya

“ My sister is Michael's mother. Last year she got sick and started shouting at her children and running after them. They took her to a mental hospital in Nairobi. Our brother asked me to come and live in this house with my five children and to look after my sister's five children. I heard the children talking about the worm treatment. Before they had the tablets, Michael and his sister Lucy, 9, were listless and slept a lot. Michael often said he felt sick. He was doing poorly at school. He couldn't help carry water up the hill from the well. Now he helps me wash clothes in the river and plays football at the community centre. The children all talk about washing their hands now and tell me I have to wash mine. Michael is a good, hard-working boy. His headaches have stopped, and he stays up to read by the light of the paraffin lamp flame. I hope he becomes an accountant because he is good at maths and I'd like to see him be able to look after his mother.





“There’s an amazing network of people in the YGLs. They’re people who’ve had success at an early age or are leaders in their fields, so you have a great mutual respect and you enjoy each other’s company.”

Ian Thorpe

Founder, Fountain for Youth
Five-time Olympic Gold Medallist, swimming

“When you’re an athlete, you have to be the most selfish person on the planet. In order to create your own performance you have a coach, a manager, a physiotherapist, an osteopath, a chiropractor, a nutritionist, a doctor – it goes on and on. That’s probably the first thing to get out of when you’re involved in philanthropy – it’s not about you, it’s about the issue.

From the age of 14, I worked for a number of charities. I was able to see how different organizations operated – I got frustrated with some and felt I was spreading myself too thinly. I wanted to be very specific about what I’d be doing, and that was the foundation for my charity, Fountain for Youth.

We are one of the top charities in Australia in indigenous health and education – we’re focused on remote communities, but also have a presence in the cities. We turned 10 this year, and in some communities where we have the programme in place, the kids perform above the national average. We’re seeing results from a long-term strategy and I’m proud of that.

I didn’t know what I’d be getting into with the YGLs, but it was very clear in my mind that I wanted to be among this group of people, looking at global issues from different perspectives, contributing to this conversation and assisting in areas where I had experience.

There’s an amazing network of people within the YGL community. They’re all people who’ve either had success at an early age or are leaders in their fields, so you have a great level of mutual respect and you enjoy each other’s company. People’s ability to just get on with things is incredible. You’re able to put your hand up and say, ‘Does anyone know someone in this area?’ And usually someone does, so you have a result in the space of a day rather than waiting months.

We don’t speak enough about the work that the YGL community does. Something like this reinforces the best parts of you. There are so many talented people out there and I’d really like to look at who else we can get on board and say: ‘This is available. You’ll meet people who are both like you and completely unlike you. If you feel there’s something you want to do globally, this may be your platform.’

“ The first YGL meeting I went to was in Vancouver, and that’s where we came up with Table for Two, a programme that helps people in the developed world eat healthily, while paying for school meals for children in Africa.

There are 6.7 billion people on the planet. One billion are obese and 1 billion are hungry. Table for Two addresses both these problems at the same time. It provides healthy menus to offices in the developed world to help combat obesity and, for every meal eaten, 20 cents is donated to an organization that provides meals to school children in Africa. Twenty cents is enough to deliver a healthy, nutritious meal to a school kid in Africa. So far, we have 350 companies involved, offering meals that we’ve designed to their employees, and we’ve provided about 5 million meals to schools in various African countries. And all this came about from a YGL meeting in Vancouver.

At the meeting, we were set the task of thinking about how to address the problems of hunger and obesity. Half of us were thinking about hunger and half about over-eating, and 30 minutes into the discussion we realized that these problems are, in fact, two sides of the same coin, and that if we put them together we might be able to find a solution.

That’s exactly what YGL meetings are all about. There are dozens of people from the most disparate backgrounds asking what they can do right now to solve a problem, or to reframe it in a way that makes it easier to tackle.

This was an integrated perspective for a problem facing the whole world. And once we had our solution, we were surrounded by people who could implement it right away – health experts to draw up menus, business leaders to offer it to the largest companies in the world, plus the aid workers who were on the ground in Africa and knew how best to spend the money. In the last case, it was a charity called Millennium Promise, led by a YGL called John McArthur, who became our key partner in delivering the school meals in Africa.

Where other people are satisfied to identify a problem and write a white paper, for YGLs that’s not good enough. They see a problem and ask how to solve it – and then put that solution into effect. They work with an incredible degree of pragmatism. People say, ‘Give me a programme that I can implement tomorrow.’ That’s what happened with Table for Two.

“YGLs work with an incredible degree of pragmatism. People say, give me a program that I can implement tomorrow. That’s what happened with TABLE FOR TWO.”

James Kondo

Counsellor

Office of the Prime Minister of Japan

“ After we joined the founding forum for the Young Global Leaders back in 2005, we were asked how we could make the world a better place by 2020. I came up with an idea – a question, really – of whether we could find a way to run one country without oil – to do it in a way that would be driven by market forces and was based on current technology.

A year later, at Davos in 2006, I teamed up with another YGL, Andrey Zarur. We started to think about how we could make an electric car more practical and affordable than any comparable car currently available, so that consumers would pick it in the market place and not be required to pay more or give up comfort or convenience for a ‘green’ choice. The answer came in part by applying the business model of the mobile phone industry, specifically the notion of a cross subsidy. When you buy a handset, you sign a commercial service agreement that subsidizes the high cost of the device’s acquisition with the ongoing cost of usage.

We applied this to electric cars, separating the car and battery and using the lower operating cost of electricity. The high cost of the technology is offset by the ongoing cost of powering your car by recharging the battery or switching it for a pre-charged battery. Before, car manufacturers considered the battery as a component like every other part – but it’s a consumable, and the savings from driving on electricity can subsidize the network and the cost of the battery.

“Solving problems that affect millions or billions of people can be tackled by people who can look at a broken system and redesign it.”

Shai Agassi

Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Better Place

As we progressed, we discovered something significant. The cost of a complete network for any region or country is roughly equal to one week of gasoline use in that region. Israel uses around US\$ 150 million of gas every week, and that is the approximate cost of our network of charge spots and battery switch stations in Israel. Even the United States, with low gas prices, spends about US\$ 8 billion per week on gasoline – which is approximately what it would cost for a network across the whole country.

I wrote a white paper and my YGL friends gave me advice. Then, at a Forum event, Shimon Peres was in the audience and, in the middle of my presentation, he asked for my paper. Eventually, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert challenged me to find a major car maker to supply the car and investors to fund the network in Israel. By the end of 2011, we’ll have a full network on the ground, with cars from Renault driving on it.

That YGL meeting in 2005 was a transformational moment in my life. We who are young leaders have the duty to use all our abilities to tackle the big problems – whether it’s energy, transportation, climate, healthcare or hunger. Solving problems that affect millions or billions of people can be tackled by people who can look at a broken system and redesign it – with the understanding that we need to design a world different from the one we came into.



“ I run TakingITGlobal, a network made up of young people from all over the world. We enable collaborative learning and encourage young folks to create positive change. We have more than 300,000 members and have reached over four million people across 12 languages and in every country in the world. The idea of TakingITGlobal is for youths to think critically about the world around them. Thanks to the YGL Community and the access it offers, the impact of TakingITGlobal has been multiplied.

The YGL Community is active in all sorts of projects. Take the YGL Youth Task Force, which seeks to promote young people becoming part of established institutions and having a say in decision-making. The 2010 World Youth Conference in Mexico called for a youth-centred approach to the global AIDS response – recognizing young people as a priority and as important agents of change – and this originated in a conversation some of us had with Mexican public figures in Davos a few years ago. Today, you can see the ripple effect.

“Thanks to the YGL community and the access it offers, the impact of TakingITGlobal has been multiplied.”

Jennifer Corriero

Co-Founder and Executive Director
TakingITGlobal

To enable change, it is important to set clear goals and targets that are measurable and tangible. This is how you keep social movements growing. At the same time, you need to keep the bigger picture in mind. You need to be aware that the goal is not simply youth empowerment, say, but to achieve broader community development. You need to keep your eyes on the ball and focus on the bigger idea – and the secret of this lies in a spirit of cooperation and trust.

Before becoming a YGL, I used to see organizations as rigid structures that you couldn't penetrate or influence. But the YGLs showed a human face, and I thought: 'There's a human relationship at the basis of everything. Every organization, every system originates from a bunch of people who spent time together and had a great idea and then made it happen.' This had a real impact on the work that I do.



“Coming from Uganda, where there is a lot of poverty and inequality, I’ve always been interested in development issues and in how business can create transformation. Africa has always been a recipient of models and suggestions for how it should carry out its development, so I was interested in us developing our own strategies. When I started Good African Coffee, it was to position Africa in a new light – we were using the word ‘good’ before Africa when a lot of things people hear in the media are negative. We wanted to create a social enterprise that not only made money for shareholders, but also shared 50% of profits with farmers and communities.

I never thought the work we do at Good African would catch the attention of the World Economic Forum, so I was thrilled to be nominated. I’m working with a few groups and looking at issues of entrepreneurship in Africa and at access to capital and the constraints to bringing products to the market. I feel whenever I meet with fellow YGLs I’m renewing a lot of my enthusiasm and encouragement. I leave every meeting committed to trying to do better and do more.

Every YGL has been recognized for the work they’ve done in their field, so people leave their egos behind. There’s no space for anything but sharing ideas and experiences. I don’t think there’s a better network of young global entrepreneurs, people involved in the social sector and people in government. And I don’t think you could easily find a community so generous with its time, or people so committed to projects other than their own.

“I feel whenever I meet with fellow YGLs I’m renewing a lot of my enthusiasm and encouragement. I leave every meeting committed to trying to do better and do more.”

Andrew Rugasira
Chief Executive Officer
Good African Coffee

“ I love being part of the Young Global Leaders – a community where we are all committed, where we trust each other and learn from one another. In a way, we hold each other accountable.

I run two organizations. The first, KIND, is the Kudirat Initiative for Democracy, which I created in 1996 and named after my mother. She was assassinated by Nigerian soldiers when trying to promote democracy. After her death, I decided to continue her legacy and I wanted to use KIND to address important issues such as low rates of women’s participation in legislatures and rising maternal and infant mortality rates. You can see the relationship between the absence of women at the policy-making table and the priorities that men consider when making decisions.

My fellow YGLs have really helped me with this mission. One of the YGLs, Penny Low, has been my mentor, helping me think about how to push this issue, and YGLs that are good with media have been helping me to pass on the message correctly in Nigeria.

I have a certain credibility as both my parents were killed in the struggle for democracy – so I have a voice and a responsibility. Because of my work with the YGLs, it is an informed voice. Things take time, but I feel that being a YGL equips me to be an agent for change in my country in the best way possible.

When I moved to China in 2006, I saw the Chinese engaging with Nigeria. They convened a meeting with 48 heads of African governments. They all came with their own agendas and I was frightened. I thought it would be devastating to Africa if in 50 years we say: ‘We missed another opportunity.’

That is why I created the China-Africa Bridge Company. The YGL Community has really helped me to position my company, to learn how to leverage resources and provide credible solutions for African governments and businesses that want to engage with China. We seek to create a long-term win-win. Africa desperately requires investment to develop. The Chinese need African resources. Once governments align their agendas and a framework is established, the private sector can realize its potential and positive results will be felt in the lives of ordinary people.

This is where we offer help through our YGL Task Force on Investment between Emerging Markets. It’s very exciting to see how different members of our Task Force pull resources together to make things happen.

“I love being part of the Young Global Leaders – a community where we all trust each other and learn from one another. In a way, we hold each other accountable.”

Hafsat Abiola-Costello

Founder and Chief Executive Officer
China-Africa Bridge

“The YGL/Harvard programme is a unique programme made up of people from different backgrounds and nationalities that creates a unique space for constant learning. And for me, it was an environment that facilitated the transformation of an idea into action. When I decided to tackle the issue of making information available to those who can't afford to pay for it by starting the first high-quality free newspaper in Mozambique, the programme provided me with the first @Verdade newspaper informal advisory group, made up of YGLs who bounced my idea to perfection.

The group – including elements from the media, public service and civil society – provided brilliant insights and made it possible for my newspaper to become the leading publication that we are today.”

Erik Charas

Founder and Managing Director
@Verdade



“ I came to the attention of the YGL Community because of the work I did building an observatory in one of the harshest environments on the planet. I’m an astronomer and I’d been selected by the European Southern Observatory to be one of the first working astronomers to install and run the Very Large Telescope on Paranal Mountain in the Atacama Desert in Chile. That was an extreme environment – it’s the driest desert in the world – but it’s a great place to look at the stars because there’s almost no light pollution. I came back from that trip and decided that the only better place for an observatory would be the South Pole. There are no clouds there, zero light pollution and, best of all, the nights last six months. It’s the closest thing to having a telescope in space, but much less expensive.

I knew the challenges that lay ahead were enormous. The South Pole is the coldest, most inhospitable place on Earth with extreme conditions, not just of temperature and weather, but also pressure and altitude. I assembled a team of 20 people from across the world and we spent six months there, with no soul living less than 1,000 miles away. The site was 3,200 metres above sea level, but with the weather conditions it was like working at over 4,000 metres. We faced temperatures of minus 80 degrees. You can’t imagine trying to complete a task in those conditions. It was our positivity that got us through.

I was team leader and the only woman. Leading people into those conditions was the most difficult thing I’ve ever done – the responsibility and psychological pressure were enormous.

At YGL meetings, I’m surrounded by a lot of entrepreneurs and businessmen. My work coordinating space programmes and working towards an understanding of the origins of the universe is nothing like theirs but, within the YGL Community, I can learn how to improve my strategy and methods for leading large, international teams. I befriend women who are at the top of their fields and who face similar challenges to those I face leading an expedition.

All the YGLs are people who have had to make big decisions that affect other people’s lives. They have to negotiate high-risk environments and stay calm enough to make the right choices. I’ve been able to learn a lot from them about decision-making. There are YGLs in the community who are able to learn from me, too. I teach them about what science can bring to our world, and now – nicknamed Young Universal Leader – I lead a YGL task force to promote science and technology. We came up with the idea of making comic books to introduce kids to science and teach them that science is a wonderful human adventure.

I am proud to be part of the YGL Community. It’s a community like the universe – each YGL is like a star and their experience and skills contribute to the evolution of this universe.

“At YGL meetings, I befriend women who are at the top of their fields and who face similar challenges to those I do when leading an expedition.”

Merieme Chadid

Explorer and Astronomer
Antarctica Research Station



“When I get back to Indonesia I will return to the jungle, and the connections I’ve made with other YGLs will inspire me, and help me forge on with my own work.”

Butet Manurung

Educator and Conservationist
SOKOLA

“ I’m an anthropologist, and in 1999 I went to live in the jungles of Sumatra with the Orang Rimba, a tribe of indigenous people whose traditional way of life is threatened. Education is considered taboo in their society, but their forests are disappearing and, without some education and skills, I could see they were not going to survive.

I lived with the Orang Rimba for nine years, teaching them to read, write and count in their native language – basic skills to empower them in their interactions with the outside world. In the past, they’ve been cheated into selling their land to logging companies or giving away their possessions for nothing because they can’t read the contracts they are told to sign or the measuring scales when they are bartering for goods. It took a long time for them to accept me, but I adopted their ways and they slowly came to understand that I was there to help.

When I got a letter telling me I’d been selected to be a YGL, at first I didn’t understand. Here was an organization of people with political and business backgrounds. What would they want with me?

The first meeting I went to was in Jordan, and I was surprised that these important business people who were dealing with huge sums of money were also interested in the work I had done. Normally, I feel shy talking about my work and I can’t talk to business people at all. But at the YGL meetings you’re thrown together with people from all over the world, from so many different backgrounds. I didn’t have any idea who most of them were, if I’m honest, but it didn’t matter. They were interested in talking to anyone making a positive change, on any scale.

The most useful contacts I made were with journalists and social activists. These are the people who can help me as I carry on teaching and training other teachers, and they’re the people who can learn the most from my experiences. And I would like to talk to business people who might be interested in supporting my indigenous schools in remote areas through their CSR programmes, too.

Right now, I’m studying for my Master’s in Australia, but when I get back to Indonesia I will return to the jungle, and the connections I’ve made with other YGLs will inspire me, and help me forge on with my own work.

“I was moved by the idealism of my fellow YGLs, but also impressed by their resolve to take concrete steps.”

J. Julianne Lee

Senior Advisor
RBS

“ My grandfather served as Prime Minister of Korea, my father was Deputy Prime Minister and many other family members were in government or politics. Growing up, I thought public service ran in our blood and that one day I would carry on the torch. My father’s dedication to public service, in particular, had a deep influence on me.

After a long career as a TV journalist, I moved to work in the President’s Office as Spokesperson for Foreign Press and Spokesperson of the National Security Council. The years I spent in a position of public leadership were some of the most important in my career in terms of understanding the details of policy-making and the heavy responsibility that comes with it. I learned the importance of communicating with the people and working with the various stakeholders of society. But public leadership in Korea was often just as much about politics as it was about the public interest. By the time I left my position, I was ready to explore different types of leadership.

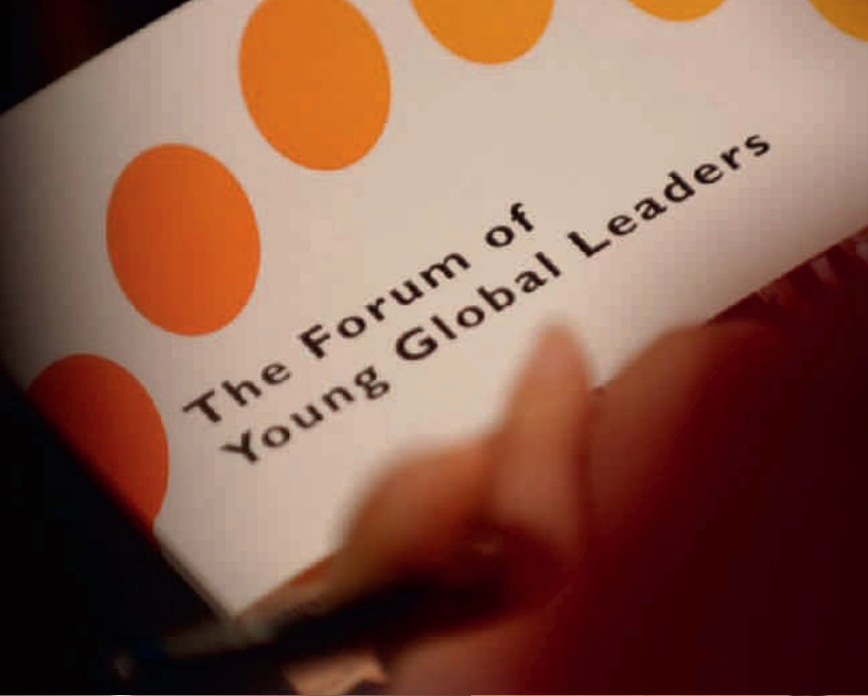
It was around that time that I started to become actively involved in the activities of the Young Global Leaders. I was moved by the idealism of my fellow YGLs, but also impressed by their resolve to take concrete steps. I was particularly struck by everyone’s unwavering belief that they can bring about change and that every little action counts. Over the years, I have seen conversations among fellow YGLs evolve into Global Dignity Day, Deworm the World and Table for Two.



YGL meetings became my source of energy, an opportunity to be inspired, and to feel I was among kindred souls. I learned that passion and ideas are powerful tools, and that the dedication of few can have far-reaching influence. I also found a circle of friends.

Since July 2009, I’ve been involved in a YGL task force to encourage talented young leaders in the private sector to consider public leadership. The initiative was started by six YGLs and we’ve been exchanging ideas and making concrete action plans through weekly conference calls. I’m amazed by the dedication of task force members, who regularly dial in for weekly calls despite extremely busy schedules.

I have also organized gatherings of Korean, Japanese and Chinese YGLs with other young leaders in the region. As Asia becomes more important on the global stage, Asians will become key contributors to the global debate. My experiences with the YGLs have taught me that extraordinary people can create extraordinary things regardless of differences, and that the first step is becoming friends.





**The Forum of
Young Global Leaders**

91-93 Route de La Capite
1223 Cologny / Geneva
Switzerland

Tel.: +41 22 869 1212

Fax: +41 22 786 2744

E-mail: ygl@weforum.org

www.younggloballeaders.org



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YOUNG GLOBAL LEADERS

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