

Youth Future Workshop

The Future Is in Our Hands

A workshop for young idealists committed to sustainable development

Defending human rights, fighting the war on poverty, peacefully settling conflicts, fostering religious tolerance, protecting the environment and nature, developing alternative economic models, conserving resources, promoting disarmament, establishing spirituality and ethics in business, politics and everyday life ...

These are the great challenges of our age, challenges that we must resolutely face as we proceed on our path into the future.

Every year, the so-called Alternative Nobel Prize is bestowed on people who have found solutions to these challenges. The anti-nuclear weapons treaty, protecting the rain forest, the invention of the solar cell, consumer protection policing—all of these are projects that give rise to hope, projects that serve as good examples to emulate in these times.

The Youth Future Project is the young people's network of the Alternative Nobel Prize. Its mission is to impart the prizewinners' ideas to young people. The Youth Future Project makes it possible for young people to learn directly from some of these prizewinners and, just like the prizewinners themselves, to boldly tackle global problems in a project of their own.

After all, you don't have to be a prizewinner to face the great challenges of our age. There's a committed idealist in each and every one of us!

Over the course of a three-day workshop jam-packed with discussions, briefings, videos and creative work, we want to take a close-up look at a few global problems and get acquainted with how a few of the prizewinners came up with exemplary solutions to them.

In the second part of the workshop, you'll establish your own project designed to make for a better future and, with the help of the workshop leaders, develop your concept to prepare it for implementation (including, time permitting, developing your own logo and website).

The workshop leaders are students and activists involved in the Youth Future Project network. In conjunction with their commitment to work on behalf of sustainability, they have already gotten to know several of the Alternative Nobel Prize winners and gained a great deal of experience about how to nurture the transition from a good idea to a successful sustainability project.

Outline

- **Title:** Youth Future Workshop – The Future Is in Our Hands
- **Subtitle:** A workshop for young idealists committed to sustainable development
- **Summary:** In an interactive process, participants will learn about the ills afflicting our world and encounter projects that are cause for hope. They'll also hear from people who are setting good examples—the Alternative Nobel Prize winners. Having thereby been inspired and motivated to actively take up the cause of peace, justice and sustainability, young workshop participants will be

able to creatively develop a project idea of their own, which, with the help of the workshop leaders, they'll be able to prepare for actual implementation within the framework of the workshop.

- **Duration:** Three days; each day includes two three-hour workshop sessions, one in the morning, one in the afternoon.
- **Target Group:** Maximum enrollment: 20 young people age 14-19. Participants should come voluntarily because they're interested in the subject matter. Successfully completing the workshop entails attending all six modules; we do not seek occasional drop-ins or part-time attendees.
- **Workshop Leaders:** The workshop leaders are students working on the Youth Future Project on a *pro bono* basis. They have acquired their knowledge and skills in conjunction with their studies as well as their long-term commitment to the Youth Future Project organization. We make a concerted effort to insure that the workshop content is consistent with the latest scientific findings and the staff maintains political neutrality; nevertheless, we can provide no guarantees in these regards.
- **Workshop Language:** German
- **Costs** Reimbursement of actual costs incurred: transportation to and from the site and room & board for (it is assumed) three workshop leaders
- **Premises Necessary:** Workshop space with capacity for about 30 persons; movable seating; tables for creative work
- **Materials & Equipment to be Provided:** Beamer; loudspeaker system for video screenings; flipchart including sufficient paper and markers (4 colors); workshop kit (charts, pens, stickers, etc. for 20 participants), colored DIN A0 cardboard to create posters for presentation purposes; convenient access to a printer and the internet
- **Additional Services:** We will provide the participating young people with all the help we possibly can as they go about developing and fine-tuning their project. Our effort officially ends at the end of the workshop, but we would be pleased to remain on-site after the end of the workshop and make ourselves available for Q&A with the participating youngsters. Nevertheless, we assume no responsibility for their undertaking's success, which is primarily dependent on the commitment of the project participants themselves. Accordingly, the project launched in the workshop will not automatically become a subproject of the Youth Future Project organization, though this is indeed a possibility if the participating youngsters as well as the Board of Directors of the Youth Future Project are amenable to it.

Schedule

1st Session

10 AM – Welcome

Greeting the participants, introduction of the workshop leaders, organizational announcements concerning the workshop agenda

10:15 AM – Meeting the participant:

Playful presentation of the participating young people, which will include each person giving his/her thoughts on: *“What’s wrong with the world? What ought to be changed?”*

11:15 AM – Global Negative Trends. Earth at the Abyss

In an interactive discussion, the young people will collect their spontaneous impressions about what's going on in the world. The workshop leaders will moderate the discussion and supplement the participants' remarks with appropriate background information and video clips.

The aim is to impart to these young people a shocking but nevertheless realistic picture of the world as the Alternative Nobel Prize winners describe it, since inherent in the recognition of a threat is the power to want to effectuate change.

Topics of this morning session:

- Climate & energy crisis
- Environmental destruction & extinction of animal species

In going about this, we will constantly be asking how WE are personally affected by these developments. If these young people are accompanied on their lunch break by the oppressive feeling that the world is beset by problems that have to be urgently corrected, then the first module was a success.

2nd Session:

3 PM – Global Negative Trends. Humankind at the Abyss

We will continue our consideration of global negative trends in the afternoon session. Presentations, videos and briefings will provide an overview of the following topics:

- Gap between the rich and the poor
- World peace, human rights and the nuclear peril

3rd Session

10 AM – Projects of Hope

In connection with a few of the topics treated the previous day, we will stage multimedia presentations of exemplary projects and/or the work of winners of the Alternative Nobel Prize.

- Peace and nuclear disarmament – Alyn Ware – How a kindergarten teacher became a friend and advisor of the UN Secretary-General and convinced 125 countries to sign an agreement renouncing nuclear weapons.
- Climate & energy crisis – Mycle Schneider, Hermann Scheer– Political considerations and scientific facts converge – Regenerative energy autonomy without nuclear and fossil fuels is possible – The 4th Revolution
- Environmental destruction & extinction of animal species – Rene Ngongo and David Suzuki– How a defender of the rain forest went from Enemy of the State to People’s Hero, and what “sustainable life in harmony with the forest” means. Plus: How a scientist became an environmentalist with a hit show on Canadian TV.

Presentations will also include videos, photos and anecdotes as well as personal accounts by the workshop leaders, some of whom have actually met the prizewinners.

After each segment, we will jointly confront the question: “What can we do to support the work the prizewinners are doing? How can we apply this knowledge in our own lives?”

The objective here is to show the participants that there are answers to these global problems. These young people should come to understand that the prizewinners “are people too, just like them” who were motivated in some way to get started with the task of “saving the world.” It should be made clear to these youngsters that ANYBODY can make the world a better place.

By the end of this module, the participating young people will have gotten acquainted with approximately four promising projects and/or approaches to solving the most pressing problems of our time.

4th Session

3 PM – And what can any of us do? What responsibility and what potential do we have to take action?

Horrified by how terribly things have been going lately, inspired and encouraged by the winners of the Alternative Nobel Prize, we now increasingly focus on our own lives.

Which of our deeds have what sorts of consequences? What does it mean for children in the Third World when I buy a pair of jeans at H&M? What can I do in my own life to make the world a better place? What should I stop doing as a way to improve things? What could we achieve if all human beings made a commitment to do the right thing? How can I convince others to change their behavior?

“Activist energy” engenders ideas: How we as a group with a specific project (content, name, objective, etc. determined by the participants) can make a contribution to sustainable development. There are so many opportunities—for instance, installing solar energy equipment, providing training for sustainable development, an environmental protection project, disseminating a manifesto, setting up a downtown facility for consumer education, an art project opposed to human rights violations or in support of nuclear disarmament. Young people should find out for themselves how they can best make a positive difference on behalf of humankind and Planet Earth. The best idea will be chosen as the group’s project.

5th Session

10 AM – From Concept to Implementation

The Youth Future Project itself will be introduced as an example illustrating how a small idea—just like the ones the participants came up with the previous day—can become a big, successful project. What are all the things necessary along the path to implementation? How do you draft a project plan? How do you find sponsors? What factors have to be taken into account?

First of all, the group has to agree on a concrete objective and name a team leader whose job will be to coordinate the project’s progress after the end of the workshop.

When the participants agree on all that has to be done, the group divides up into crews and gets started with the implementation process—with advice and supervision provided by the workshop leaders. The to-do list includes coming up with a name, creating a logo and drafting a project plan.

12 Noon – Prior to breaking for lunch, the whole group reassembles to exchange views about their drafts and to agree upon changes.

6th Session

3 PM – Continuation of the creative phase

The small groups will continue their work in the afternoon session.

4:30 PM – Presentation of results, plans for the future and wrapping things up

The results of the individual crews will be presented. The entire group considers what they’ve accomplished thus far. Then, the workshop leaders and the participants jointly draw up a list of everything that still has to be attended to so that the group has a schedule/flowchart that can serve as a means of orientation during the ensuing implementation phase. Where does the group go from here? When do they meet again? Who will keep in touch?

We reserve the right to make spontaneous revisions to the preset agenda.

Bibliography

Background information, political statements and biographies of winners of the so-called Alternative Nobel Prize are available in the following sources (preliminary, partial list):