BRIDGING THE INFORMATION GAP WITH REGARD TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

REPORT ON THE KNOW YOUR WORLD INITIATIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS CHALLENGE

MARCH 17, 2018
Be a global citizen. Act with passion and compassion. Help us make this world safer and more sustainable today and for the generations that will follow us. That is our moral responsibility.

BAN KI MOON
FORMER UN SECRETARY GENERAL
The highly anticipated Know Your World Initiative Program was held at the Starehe Boys’ Centre and School on 17th March 2018 marking the first event of the year. The event was a joint initiative by Know Your World Initiative (KYWI), the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) and Octapizzo Foundation to highlight the progress of #SDGChallenge projects in the member schools, challenges and way forward as well as introduce the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPNet) Program to the KYWI member schools.

The event was graced by KYWI member students and key guests from different stakeholder groups including the Embassy of Oman and Miss Commonwealth Kenya Pageant who assembled to anchor the importance of the need to enjoin the KYWI students into the Global network through highlighting the various contributions of the students’ efforts in making the world we live in more sustainable every day. The projects were initiated in the schools in 2017, where the students were required to identify projects aligned to existing SDGs and manage the projects in real life to raise awareness on their selected goals. A total of 8 projects from 8 different schools were presented.

The UNESCO- ASPnet partnership themes focused on intercultural understanding, peace and human rights, intercultural dialogue, education for sustainable development and UN priorities. such as poverty, climate change, gender, and child labor among others. Through the partnership, the Know Your World Initiative member schools, would be able to understand the expectations from the global platform. The enrolment of the schools in the ASP Net Program would ensure that the students’ SDG projects would be benchmarked. This will give them an opportunity to compete with schools from across the world. This was the platform to expand their thinking and understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GALLERY
FIRST SESSION
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AGENDA

INTRODUCTION
During this session, the schools made their presentations on the SDGs and outlined their views on the other speakers reiterated the same sentiments shared by the students. In addition to this, the KNATCOM representatives gave a presentation on the UNESCO AsPNet Program and highlighted its importance and benefits to schools and the students.

Stonehe Boys Centre & School’s Administration acknowledged and appreciated the event while emphasizing the need to include the students in such discussions and stated that it was critical to extend the scope because from that, the process of identifying gaps and solutions would be widened. The students were further encouraged by KYWI that in-order to achieve some of the goals it would require sacrifice, time, resources and energy and that these small but significant efforts would feed to overall goal of helping Kenya achieve some of the goals.

The students were supposed to choose one or more goals from the SDGs and carry out extensive research by identifying gaps around them that are in line with the goal. In addition, the students were required to identify possible solutions in the form of a project that would serve as a tool to overcome the challenges identified from the respective goal/s. The presentations offered a unique opportunity for various schools to provide their perspectives on the Goal and its impact. The points presented by the schools were reiterated and emphasized by all students as well as the other speakers pointing to the need for more technical assistance and capacity building for meaningful cooperation between stakeholders which benefit all.
The students acknowledged the increased efforts by States in providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes that will fuel sustainable economies and benefit humanity at large. However, the students highlighted that there had been a lot of concentration on increasing the Girl child, Access to Education, Prevention of Gender Based Violence, Child pregnancies and child marriages and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) amongst others. However, the boy child who faces related issues were beginning to be left out.

UNICEF states that “Gender equality means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. Gender inequality arises when one group is seen in a society as having more rights than the other”. From their research, the students noted that quite a while now, society has chosen to direct a lot more focus on fighting for the privileges of girls. Today, many organizations are coming up just to ensure girls’ rights are upheld. They expressed that the boy child has been left behind especially in education since there has been overemphasis on the education of the girl child. Their assessment identified the key drivers of exclusion of the boy child to include those related to Boy-child school drop-outs, Drug use and abuse, HIV/AIDS, Emphasis on girl-child at the expense of boy-child, family background and lack of role-modeling for boy-child, lack of job opportunities etc. Under this project, the students’ aim is to achieve gender equality by finding a platform where boys and young men can be empowered, share experiences and develop sustainable solutions that will also up-lift and motivate the boy child to become better members of the society.

Climate action requires we take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy. Life on land requires we “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”

The students recognized that in their daily routines climate plays a role in their decisions from as simple an angle e.g. what to wear or eat. Simply put, our way of life depends on the climate. For their project, they observed their surrounding i.e. their school and Nairobi city they asked themselves what they could do to create and make a better place for themselves and the inheriting future generations. They then identified a project together with the school administration and partnered with the Green Kenya Initiative to plant trees in their school on 4 June in 2017 during the celebration of the World Environment Day and planted 300 tree seedlings and fenced the area. Unfortunately, when they closed school for the holidays, it was impossible to care for the seedlings. This resulted in the cattle encroaching on the piece of land, destroying and feeding on the seedlings. Disappointed by this, the boys collected the remaining seedlings and replanted them. They resolved to counter any problems that would arise there after. Today, they continue to nurture their tress in the hope that their efforts enable them to fulfill the chosen goal.

The students did extensive research on the three and emphatically drew attention to good health. The students did not take part in any activity. Due to fire outbreaks, incidences in the school last year, they were only able to involve themselves in any meaningful and objective initiatives. This was mainly because throughout the entire period, they were usually in and out of the school. Hence, they could not find much time in doing such initiative which would require much of their total attention as well as participation.
The students noted that Nairobi is often subjected to frequent water rationing. The girls gave an example of their school whereby the water distributed to the school by the city county is inadequate to cater to their needs causing the students to wait for long periods before they can get water.

In the context of attaining the goal’s objectives, the students dealt with the water recycling project. The objective is to convert wastewater, surface water or ground water into water that can be reused for other purposes. Reuse may include domestic application e.g. treatment to reach drinking water standards, toilet flushing, irrigation of gardens and agricultural fields or replenishing surface water and groundwater. They explained the seven stages of the recycling process and provided insight into the importance of carrying out this project. Some of the mentioned benefits included being able to enhance water reuse through improvement of wastewater treatment in order to fight water scarcity and promoting a new solution for wastewater treatment to enable disadvantaged communities to obtain clean water.

However, on the day of the event other KYWI members were unable to attend due to various challenges logistical challenges the schools were however represented by the KYWI volunteers that have been monitoring projects at the schools.

To achieve food security through nutrition and sustainable agriculture. The school is located near to a low-income housing area, with low income households. Thankfully, the school carved out a piece of land where the students could plant vegetables such as spinach, kale, onions, tomatoes and cotton which they would later sell to the teachers and the surrounding residents as well as take some to their families. The income obtained would be ploughed back in order to expand their output and make it more successful.

To reduce the effect of waste products on the environment. The students have noted that humans at large dispose what is not needed or in excess and if disposal is not properly done it leads to negative effects to health and the environment. Improper disposal causes the pollution of the environment, diseases, death to wildlife etc. so as to curb these effects students are keen to ensure that improper management and disposal of waste is no more. The students are therefore identifying how to turn waste from kitchen and other places in school into useful material or how best they can be disposed.

The girls' realized the school has students from different backgrounds and financial capabilities resulted in significant difference in their wellbeing whereby some students could not afford sanitary towels. This difficult situation has left the affected girls who go through uncomfortable and unhygienic situations. In some instances, the girls reuse the sanitary towels which leave them susceptible to infections and stigma. As a result, many miss school and end up performing below their standards. The girls have started a school kitty donating small amounts of pocket money and then collecting to provide sanitary towels to fellow needy girls.

Because of the cold and chilly environment in the area, the project concepts looks to realize a modern designed heater system that could be a model across boarding schools in the country to help the students in adjusting to the changing weather patterns and most specifically during the cold seasons.
KNATCOM UNESCO presentation on joint initiative and ASPNET recognized that the program was not just a club affair but it required whole school involvement. KNATCOM reiterating that the SDGs are most useful to incoming generations that will inherit current efforts to create a better world. The students were introduced to KNATCOM UNESCO program and what it intends to achieve.

About the Associated Schools Project Network
The aim of the ASP Network is to promote quality education in schools by building the defenses of peace in the minds of children and young people to become champions of global peace and sustainable development, additionally the students are from different communities therefore it becomes possible to share experiences through the varied cultural representations present. ASP Network projects are student based and the teachers/patrons are only meant to facilitate the sessions. This is what is considered when opportunities for presentations arise allowing for a holistic participation that involves the students and the teachers.
SECOND SESSION
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AGENDA

The students were engaged in an afternoon informal session on what Global Citizenship means and this was to enable them see things beyond their community but also wear global lenses in their approach to life.

Octopizzo Foundation
Henry Ohanga also known as Octopizzo shared his experiences establishing the Octopizzo foundation and how it has shaped lives of Kibera Youths. He encouraged the youths in an interactive session of how to have resilience and self belief that they can change the world no matter what obstacles they might face. Octopizzo also talked about how he supports refugee work with various global international Organizations. Octopizzo has said that adopting a global citizenship attitude he was able to go places and interact with people who have made him push his music but also illuminate the life and struggle of poverty in Kibera. Fighting poverty and inspiring youths that ‘yes they can’ is one of the Octopizzo foundation desire and vision. He wants to do more and certainly encouraged the students to join him in the fight against poverty.

CONCLUSION
Despite the aforementioned success there were several challenges for implementation of the SDG projects in Schools in 2017-18 key among them election and security challenges that made it impossible for KYWI to monitor projects in schools due to disruptions from mass protests. However, various mitigation levels are being discussed to ensure that the projects can be sustained with little political and internal administrative interference issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD
Continued Support
The students would like to be supported to continue with their projects financially and technically, this is because they would like the projects to be upscale beyond the lifeline of the school and to the outside world where the impact will be global.

Increased Partnerships
The work of the SDG Education and Global Citizenship as a whole and need for partnerships. The establishment of new partnerships and commitment by the schools to join ASP net is a step in the right direction. However, more vibrant partnerships will be needed to increase more stakeholders to ensure that the youths get to understand SDGs and what it means for them and their future.
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